

many of the wooden buildings in Richmond women and children were crushed beneath the ruins. Many bodies were later found half-buried by the bricks from the crumbling chimneys, caught as they were bending over the stove preparing breakfast.

*The Story of That First Day
as Told Me by a Friend.*

It was in the hotel in Halifax two days after the explosion that I greeted my friend Weir, who has since become instrumental in placing this story in the reader's hands.

I was looking for a story of the first days and asked him how he had fared and what he had seen.

"I am one of the lucky ones," he said,—"I was in my room, on Barrington Street, when the first shock of the explosion came. The building rocked and toilet bottles on my dresser were overturned. I had just time to glance out of the window as the thought of "earthquake" passed through my mind, when the big crash came. One window of heavy plate glass was broken into hundreds of pieces and blown across the room onto the bed from which I had risen only a few minutes before. The window sash was torn from the frame and fell across the phonograph on which I had placed a record to play while I dressed. The music ceased and was succeeded by a thousand kinds of noise too terrible and too great to describe.

"Glass from many windows tinkled in my ears and flew about my head. It seemed that the building was falling in upon me. The cries in the street I shall never forget.

"I ran into the hall and down the stairs. Windows and doors rolled down the stairs as I ran. In the street I saw men and women covered with blood.

One man rushing into a building for safety, was met by a terrified girl who cried: 'Don't go in, the building is falling.' She was cut and bleeding and the man grasped her by the arm to prevent her falling. As they hurried in search of a place of safety, a brick fell on the girl's head and she died in his arms.

"As I ran down Barrington street I met another man carrying a child in his arms. Only a part of the little one's head was visible and from the forehead a large splinter of wood protruded. It was at least a half inch thick and about six or seven inches long. The end must have been imbedded in the eye.

"Sickened by the sight I hurried on, only to meet many worse cases. Automobiles bearing wounded and dying were being driven at greatest possible speed toward hospitals.