THE UNDERTAKER'S STORY.

"I have $100 in my office safe which may belong to the living or the dead." The sallow-complexioned and withered little man with squeaking voice sat in the corner of the village grocery with his stubby and clumsily clad feet resting upon a ridge of the stove several degrees above his head.

It was the undertaker who spoke, and every rumble whose habit it was to smell the slightly coterie at the village rendezvous moved nervously in his seat and wore an annoyed expression as if his train of thought had been unpleasantly interrupted.

Seth Smith, the store-keeper, a local character of recognized importance, arose from the uninviting mackerel-box which had been affording him temporary rest, and, taking a broom-handle, began to savagely poke the dying embers in the egg-shaped stove in a manner which indicated that he was unusually agitated.

For nearly years the undertaker has done nothing but spend his evening at the store, coming so early that no one ever happened in after supper without finding Plodkin—that was the name—perched in the same leather-bottomed chair in an attitude which defied indigestion and propriety. He seldom spoke and it was well that this was so. His voice was a rasping tenor, which fell upon the ear like the sound of an ax in contact with the grindstone, and he had an irritating hesitancy in his manner of speech which exasperated one in short time. When he did talk it was to relate some uncanny ghoulish story of his peculiar professional experiences. There was nothing like a story from Plodkin to reduce the numerical proportions of the company, and cause an sojournment long before the usual hour. First the deacon would arise, shake himself, and smooth the creases out of his jeans before getting into the ladies' blue overcoat, which has served him as a protection from winter's cold blasts for a period which passed the memory of the oldest inhabitant, and there was no authentic information to be had that the coat was ever new.

When the deacon made good his escape Sol Martin, the town clerk, Hiram Ramsey, the constable, and Andrew Jackson Biddle, the postmaster, followed suit in the order named. There never was a time when a story from Plodkin failed to have the desired effect. It seemed as if an hour had closed from the moment of Plodkin's first utterance and the resuming of his speech again, and it was an intermission of uneasiness for all within ear range. Plodkin undoubtedly had some unexplained motive in the narration which usually incited, and, coming his embarrassment he continued apologizing by way of parenthesis. "I don't suppose you care much to hear me talk and it may be that you don't believe the most of my stories altogether. I don't blame you much. I suppose I might talk about something else except the dead and the married brave. I have in mind an experience which happened to me one Christmas eve—just six years ago tonight. It ain't a disagreeable story, calculated to make the cold chills run down your back, but it's how I found a woman dying of starvation with plenty of money in the house."

This statement gained for Plodkin the strict attention of every one in the store, and they all moved their chairs closer to the stove and prepared to follow the speaker uninterruptedly until the close.

"As I was saying," he continued, "it ain't none of your sensational stories, but it's an almighty peculiar one, just the same."

Plodkin's explanations were tedious under any circumstances, but just at the time when he had succeeded in arousing intense interest all expletives were aggravating to a superlative degree."

"Six years ago tonight," he finally resumed, "I had been sitting here with you as usual, but when I started to go home I felt sorter restless, so I thought I'd just go over my place and set down a spell and think. Sometimes I get the blues and nothing does me such a deal of good as a long think—by myself. You may remember what sort of a night it was. There was snow on the ground up to you knees, and the wind it was blowin great guns. That poet hit it off when he said:

"A melancholy sound was in the air. A deep sigh in the distance, a shrill wail wind my welling. 'Twas the wind of night

"I stirred up the fire, which had not yet died in my stove, and sat thinking for at least an hour. I was long past midnight, and I must have been nigh asleep when the infernalest noise you ever heard woke me from my reverie. Who ever it was pounded and kicked and then kicked and pounded, and before I could unkick the door I thought it would fall in. When I opened it and faced a gust of wind which blew everything in the room crosswhirl and the lamp out to boot I heard a man say: 'Come quick! my old woman's dying and he wants to see you.' I recognized the man as the one who, with his family, moved into the old deserted Denney cabin, over the ridge, the spring before. You all recollect who I mean, the people who came from the north and who did no work, and had no means and nobody knew just how they lived. They begged, and they might have stolen, but I can't say that. When he finished he started away again, and I put on my coat and followed him the best I could. I finally got to the cabin, and after I entered I see in one room a woman with pale features and a wasted form lying on a mattress, with no comforts or attention such as the sick should have. Hunger and poverty were evidently nothing new to her. There was a poorly burning candle, which furnished the only light, just like you read about—'a tremulous blaze, which threw fantastic shadows,' as the book-writers say. A motion from the woman's hand drew me to her side, and in a faltering voice she ordered her husband and several sickly looking children to quit the room, and they obeyed just like wooden figures, as if they had been used to being boxed about. When we were alone she propped herself up in the corner and in a low voice told me to take down an old broken vase which was standing on a shelf and hand it to her, which I did. With great effort she drew bits of paper and rubbish from the top of the vase until she came to a roll of bills tied tightly with a string and done up in a bit of muslin. This she handed to me saying: 'I am about to die. For weeks my strength has been failing me, and there isn't a bite in the house to eat. This money I have saved for years, and the only comfort I have had in living for the last year was in knowing that I should get a Christian burial when I died. I pray to God to relieve me from my pains, as heaven knows there is nothing in life but misery and torture for me. There is $100 in that package. Don't ask me how I got it—don't ask me anything—you see that I am buried in a queer position.

Plodkin's dramatic recital had affected every one in the room except one, and that was Sol Martin, the town clerk, who at the conclusion of the story tuttened his coat and drew the ear-laps of his coonskin cap in place preparatory to facing the cold night in the direction of home. When Sol laid his hand on the knob of the door he paused, and, looking straight at the undertaker, cleared his throat and said: "That was a sort of queer experience of yours, and you used some pretty highfalutin words in the telling of it, which we and you an't used to, but it hasn't been more than a year since you read me a story like that in that undertaker's paper that comes to you once a month."—*Chicago Mail.*

Peasant Women in Japan.

The peasant woman, clad summer and winter in the same dress of blue cotton, and hardly distinguishable afar from her husband, who wears his hair in a knot like hers, and is clad in a robe of the same color—the peasant woman who is daily seen bowing over her toil in the tea fields or in the liquid mud of the rice swales, protected by a rough hat on days when the sun burns, and having her head completely enveloped when the north wind blows by a dreadful muffler, always blue, that only leaves the almond eyes to view—the small and funny peasant woman of Japan, wherever she may be sought for, even in most remote districts of the interior, is incontestably much more refined than our peasant women of the West. She has pretty hands and pretty delicate feet; a mere touch would suffice to transform her into one of those ladies that are painted on vases or transparent screens, and there would be little left to teach her of mannered graces, of affectations of all kinds. She almost always cultivates a pretty garden around her ancient cottage of wood, whose interior, garnished with white mats, is scrupulously clean. Her household utensils, her little cups, her little pots, her little dishes, instead of being, as with us, of common earthenware daubed with brilliant flowers, are of transparent porcelain decorated with those light and fine paintings that bear witness of themselves to a long heredity of art. She arranges with original taste the altar of her humble ancestors. Finally, she knows how to arrange in her own vases, with the least spray of verdure, slender bouquets that the most artistic among our women would hardly be capable of composing.

She may possibly be more honest than her sister of the cities, and her life may be more regular—from our European point of view, of course; she is also more reserved with strangers, more timid, with a sort of mistrust and dislike of the intruders, notwithstanding her amiable welcome and her smiles.

In the villages of the interior, far from the recent railroads and from all modern importations, in places where the millenary immobility of the land has not been disturbed, the peasant woman has probably changed but little from what must have been, several centuries ago, her most remote ancestor, whose soul, vanished in time, has even ceased to hover over the family altar. At the barbaric periods of our Western history when our mothers still preserved something of the grand and wild rudeness of primitive times, there lived doubtless yonder, in those isles at the east of the ancient world, these same little peasant women, so polite and so mirthful, and also these same little ladies of the cities, so civilized, with their adorable courtesies.—*December Harper.*

A NARROW ESCAPE.

A DOCTOR'S LIFE SAVED BY A PREMONITION.

"I want to tell you a story," said Dr. Mollere, the well known physician, to a *Chronicle* reporter yesterday. "I am not a superstitious man, nor do I believe in dreams, but yesterday, for the third or fourth time in my life, I was saved by a premonition.

"I got aboard of car No 81, on the Sutter Street line, at the ferry yesterday to ride up to my office. As usual, I walked to the forward end of the car, took a seat in the corner with my back to the driver, and pulling a *Chronicle* from my pocket, was soon deeply engrossed in the news. Suddenly something said to me, 'Go to the other end of the car.' Acting on impulse, I changed my seat, and so rapid were my movements that the other passengers in the car noticed them. Remember, I was sitting, in the first place, with my back to the driver. I was paying no attention to anything but my newspaper, and the premonition, if I may so call it, could not have come from any outside influence, such as seeing approaching danger; but, sir, I had not been in my new seat more than five seconds when the tongue of a heavily loaded wagon crashed through the side of the car just where I had been first seated, and had I not changed my seat my back would have been broken by the wagon tongue.

"As I said," continued the doctor, "I am not superstitious, but the incident I have just related, taken in connection with other incidents of a similar nature occurring in my life, makes me believe, in spite of myself, that there is a "destiny that shape our ends, rough-hew them as we will."

In answer to a question as to what similar warning or premonition of danger he had ever received, Dr. Mollere said:

"Well, one time I was riding on the Michigan Central Railroad. It was a bitter cold night, and when I entered the car my feet seemed frozen. I walked forward and took a seat next to the stove in the forward part of the car, putting my feet on the fender. In a short time a gentleman changed his seat and came and sat beside me. The train was running at a high rate of speed, and the draught soon made the heater in the car red hot. Suddenly there came to me a premonition of danger, and turning to my companion I said: 'If we should meet with an accident, a collision, for instance, you and I would be in a bad place. We would certainly be hurled on the red hot stove.' At the same instant, and before my seatmate could reply, the impulse to grasp the end of the seat came upon me so strong I could not resist it, and hardly had my fingers closed upon the rail of the seat when there came a crash, and the car we were in was thrown violently from the track. I clung to the seat and my companion, when thrown forward, narrowly missed the stove. My position in the seat was such that, had I been pitched headlong as he was, I could not have missed the heater. A broken rail caused the accident, but what caused me to grasp the seat as I did I would like to know."

Speaking of Dr. Mollere's story to a well-known sporting man, the latter said:

"Well, I've had the same sort of experience once or twice in my life. I'm superstitious. I admit it. Of course fellows laugh at me, but for all that I believe I've got some sort of a guardian angel that whispers to me when I'm in danger. Maybe it's one of the wrong sort, for they do say the devil takes care of his own; but wrong or right, as to kind, I know one thing certain that my life has been saved more than once. One time I was [illegible] course and was up in the [illegible] and. I was broke and wanted [illegible] saw from the boys. There [illegible] on the stand;

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WARDS.	BISHOPS.
Cannonville	William J. Henderson
Escalante	Andrew P. Schow
Iarion (Coyote P.O.)	Colbert King
Panguitch	Allen Miller

Piute County, Utah.

Grickville	James E. Peterson
Junction	Rufus A. Allen

PAROWAN STAKE.

PRESIDENT.—Thos J. Jones, Parowan.
COUNSELORS.—Morgan Richards, Jr., Francis Webster, Parowan.

Iron County, Utah.

WARDS.	BISHOPS.
Cedar City	Wm. Terry
Kanarra	Wm. Ford
Paragonah	Wm. E. Jones
Parowan	Chas. Adams
Summit	Joseph B. Dalley
Enoch	John P. Jones, J. E
Hamilton's Fort	Geo. Condie, P. E

ST. GEORGE STAKE.

PRESIDENT.—Daniel D. McArthur St. George.
COUNSELORS. — Anthony W. Ivins, Erastus B. Snow, St. George.

Washington County, Utah.

WARDS.	BISHOPS.
Beaverdam	Andrew Gregerson, P. E.
Duncan	David B. Ott, P. E.
Fosters	Wm. Chadburn, P. E.
Glen Eden	Edwin Hamblin P. E
Grafton	James M. Ballard
Gunlock	Franklin G. Holt
Hamblin	George A. Holt, P.E.
Harmony	Wm. A. Redd
Harrisburg	Orson B. Adams, P. E
Hebron	Thomas S. Terry
Leeds	Brigham Y. McMullin
Middleton	Richard Prince
Mountain Dell	Wm. Isom P. E.
Pine Valley	Wm. Gardner
Pinto	Robert Snell
Price	N. R. Fawcett
Rockville	C. N. Smith
Santa Clara	J. G. Hafen
Shoonesburg	Oliver De Mill P.E
Springdale	Wm. R. Crawford
St. George, 1st Ward	Thomas Judd
St. George, 2nd Ward	Walter Granger
St. George, 3rd Ward	Andrew N. Winsor
St. George, 4th Ward	Thos. P. Cottam
Toquerville	Wm. A. Bringhurst
Virgin	Leroy W. Beebe
Washington	Andrew Sprout
Westover	Charles Westover, P.E

Lincoln County, Nevada.

Panaca	[illegible] Hunker, J[illegible]
Pioche	[illegible] Woods, P.E
Caliente	[illegible] P.E

SALT LAKE STAKE.

PRESIDENT.—Angus M. Cannon, Salt Lake City.
COUNSELORS. — Joseph E. Taylor, Charles W. Penrose, Salt Lake City.

Salt Lake City, Wards.

WARDS.	BISHOPS.
First Ward	Joseph Warburton
Second Ward	Leonard G. Hardy
Third Ward	Jacob Weiler
Fourth Ward	Harrison Spencer
Fifth Ward	Samuel M. T. Seddon
Sixth Ward	James C. Watson
Seventh Ward	William Thorn
Eighth Ward	Elijah F. Sheets
Ninth Ward	Samuel A. Woolley
Tenth Ward	Adam Speirs
Eleventh Ward	Alexander McRae
Twelfth Ward	Hiram B. Clawson
Thirteenth Ward	Miles Atwood
Fourteenth Ward	George H. Taylor
Fifteenth Ward	Elias Morris
Sixteenth Ward	Frederick Kesler
Seventeenth Ward	John Tingey
Eighteenth Ward	Orson F. Whitney
Nineteenth Ward	Isaac Barton
Twentieth Ward	George Romney
Twenty first Ward	William L. N Allen
Twenty-second Ward	Alfred Solomon

County Wards.

Big Cottonwood (Brinton)	D.B Brinton
Bluff Dale (Mossley)	Lewis H Mousley
Brighton	Frederick W. Schoenfeld
care E. Schoenfeld, Z.C.M.I., S.L. City	
Draper	Wm. C. Allen
East Mill Creek (Neff)	John Neff
Farmers (S.L.City)	Henry F. Burton
Granite (Butler)	Alvin Butler
Granger (Taylorsville)	Danl. McRae
Herriman	Robert Daniels
Hunter (S L. City)	William Miller
Mill Creek	James C. Hamilton
Mountain Dell	William B. Hardy
North Point (S. L. City)	Levi W. Reid
Pleasant Green (S L.C.)	L N. Hardman
Riverton (Gale)	Orin P. Miller
Sugar House	Apollos G. Bitner
South Cottonwood	Jos. S. Rawlins
Sandy	Enchel Holman
South Jordan (Gale)	William A. Bills
Union	Ishmael Phillips
North Jordan (Taylorsville),	Heber Beaulon
West Jordan	Archibald Gardner

ST. JOHNS STAKE.

PRESIDENT.—David K Udall, St Johns
COUNSELORS.—E. N. Freeman, Wm. H Gibbons, St. Johns.

Apache County, Arizona.

WARDS.	BISHOPS.
Alpine	Edward Noble
Brastus	C. L. Kempe
Nutrioso	John Brown P. E
Springerville (Union)	G. H. Crosby
St. Johns	Willard Farr

Valencia County, N. M

Ramah	James R. McNeil

Socorro County, N. M.

Luna (Heber Ward)	Gilbert D. Greer

SAN JUAN STAKE.

PRESIDENT.—F. A. Hammond, Bluff
COUNSELORS. — Wm. Halls, Mancos; Wm. Adams, Monticello.

San Juan County, Utah.

WARDS.	BISHOPS.
Bluff City	Jens Nielsen
Bueno	Geo. W. McCorkle, P. E

Emery County, Utah

Moab	R. H Stewart
North Monticello (Bluff)	F. I Jones

La Plata Co., Colorado

Mancos	George Halls

New Mexico

Burnham	Luther C. Burnham
La Plata	Jesse Steele

SAN LUIS STAKE.

PRESIDENT.—S. S. Smith, Manassa.
COUNSELORS.—E. Dalton, Wm. Christenson, Manassa.

Conejos Co., Colorado.

WARDS.	BISHOPS.
Manassa	J. C. Dalton
Sanford	S. C. Bertholsen
Los Sertos	L. M Peterson, P. P
Jerome	J. H. Jack, P. P
Richfield (La Jara)	E. Coombs, P.P.
Morena (La Jara)	J. J. Smoles

SANPETE STAKE.

PRESIDENT.—Canute Peterson, Ephraim.
COUNSELORS.—Henry Beal, Ephraim; John H. Malmen, Manti.

Sanpete County, Utah

WARDS.	BISHOPS.
Chester	Christen Christensen
Ephraim, North Ward	L. S. Anderson
Ephraim, South Ward	C. C. S. Dorius
Fairview	James C. Peterson
Fayette	John Bartholomew
Fountain Green	James Yorgason
Gunnison	C. A. Madsen
Indianola	Hyrum Seeley, P. E
Manti, North	Wm. T. Reid
Manti, South	Hans Jensen
Mayfield	Parley Christiansen
Milburn	Wm. Stewart
Moroni	J. W. Irons
Mt. Pleasant	C N. Lund
Spring City	Jas. A. Allred
Stirling	J. L. Peacock
Wales	John E. Reese

SEVIER STAKE.

PRESIDENT.—Wm. H. Seegmiller, Richfield.
COUNSELORS.—George W. Bean, W. H Clark, Richfield.

Sevier County, Utah

WARDS.	BISHOPS.
Annabella	Joseph S. Staker
Aurora	Harry M. Payne
Burrville	Wm. H. Chouard
Elsinore	Jens I Jensen
Glenwood	[illegible] H. Bell
Inverary	Barnard H. Greenwood
Joseph	Gideon A. Murdock
Monroe	Thomas Cooper
Redmond	Hans Rasmussen
Richfield, 1st Ward	Paul Poulsen
Richfield, 2nd Ward	Joseph S. Horne
Salina	James S. Jensen
Vermillion (Sigward)	P. Gottfredson
Gooseberry (Salina)	A. J. Russell, P. E

Piute County

Blue Valley (Teasdale)	Henry Giles
Fremont	James A. Taylor
Grass