

A Psychological Wonder

Or Was It a Matter of Contagious Disease?

By GEORGE L. BYINGTON

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I arrived at N. late at night on a visit to my uncle and on arising the next morning, as was natural, went to the window to have a look at my surroundings. There was a hill not far distant, on the top of which was a house built in the form of a hexagon. There were other things to see, but somehow the hexagonal house drew my attention from all of them. It stood out alone. I saw no one moving in or about it, but in some of the windows there were evidences that it was inhabited.

The first thing I said to my uncle at breakfast was, "Who lives in the hexagonal house on the hill?"

"What made you ask that?" said my uncle.

"I don't know," I replied.

"There's just one thing I wish to warn you about while you are here. Let that house alone."

After breakfast I walked up to the hexagonal house and rang the bell.

"I have to stay in town for a few days," I said to the man who opened the door, "and am looking for a place to sleep nights."

It took me an hour and cost half a dozen lies to induce him to rent me a room for just one night. He said no one lived in the house except himself and wife in the rear basement as caretakers. That evening at dinner I told my uncle that it was too lonely for me, and I intended to take the night train for home. Instead of going to the station, I went to the hexagonal house, was admitted and shown to my room, the second story front, east.

"You won't feel creepy sleeping all alone up here, will you?" asked the caretaker before withdrawing.

"No. Why do you ask that? Anything peculiar about the room?"

"Oh, no; nothing especial. Least-ways—"

"Well?"

"I'll tell you in the morning." And he went down the stairs, his footsteps echoing loudly through the house.

I had been slumbering for perhaps an hour when I awoke with a start. For a moment I could not locate myself. Then I remembered I was Napoleon the Great. I was at St. Helena. I was lying in my bedroom in the house at Longwood. I was very uncomfortable. I was ill. My stomach was on fire. Ah, I remembered! I had been ill for some time, and that infernal English doctor was poisoning me.

All these points came to me in quick succession. Why did I get myself into this trap? Why did I surrender to perfidious Albion? I should have known that they would risk no second escape, as from Elba. Ah, if I had had at Waterloo my old guard that I had at Jena, Wagram, Austerlitz! But they had starved or frozen in Russia. I opposed Wellington with troops offered by men they did not trust, and the officers no longer had faith in me. My star had set. Besides, I was ill. This infernal trouble or something like it was on me then.

Why am I left alone by my attendants? Where is my valet? Where is Montholon, Las Casas? Where are they all? I would call the doctor to relieve me of this infernal pain if I did not know he would give me more of his poison. I wish I had now some real poison that would let me out of this—the bag I gave Constant to keep for me, fresh as when I first received it from the chemist. I found it on that dreadful night at Fontainebleau. Had it been its original strength I would have been spared that humiliating abdication.

Some one is coming. It is a man. I can hear his footsteps in the corridor. The door is opening slowly; oh, so slowly! What suspense!

What, you, D'Enghien! Go back to your grave! Go, go, I say! It was not my fault. They carried out an order that I would have countermanded had I known in time. They were always in a hurry to obey me when I wished them to be slow. Go back, I say, or if you must haunt your slayer turn to him who blundered. I hate him, as you do. In shooting you he concentrated Europe and cost me my throne. It put me here on this desolate island to die a lingering death.

Gene? I can't stand this. I must end it. How? My razor? My valet has it. A rope? I have none. With a penknife I can open a vein. The knife I have. Shall I get it? Twice I tried when about to fall from the top of my self-built pyramid, and twice I failed. Fate has never deceived me. Fate has worked in my case on converging lines. Fate will not let me take my own life. Nevertheless I can try.

Constant will get the knife for me. Constant!

No one answered.

I lay deliberating whether I should end it all or let my disease finish me till I fell asleep.

Then I dreamed that it was all over. I was in a casket perched upon an immense funeral car, passing down the Champs d'Elysee. The sidewalks, the windows, the house-tops, were all crowded with vast throngs of people who as I passed uncovered, some of them waving, some crossing their

seives, all excitedly lamenting. Ah, my French people, without your native enthusiasm I could not have humbled Europe!

But this Bourbon king! Fool! How dare he reawaken that spirit which has been slowly dying? Let him look out for his throne. It is more tottering than this casket away up where it sways with every rut in the street.

Well, my body is at the Invalides. Now I may rest.

I was awakened by a slight noise and opened my eyes. It was morning. The caretaker had come into my room and was setting down a pitcher of hot water. I was myself. But I had a crawly feeling from the crown of my head to the sole of my feet as if I had been keel hauled.

"Not feelin' very well this mornin', sir?" remarked the caretaker.

"No; I've had an ugly dream."

"How did the winder get broken, sir?"

"I don't know. I didn't know it was broken."

"And there's blood on the right arm of your nightshirt."

I saw the broken window and the blood and was taken all aback.

"What does it mean?" I asked.

"The sash was nailed, sir," was the only reply.

I arose, dressed myself and went straight down to my uncle, finding him at breakfast. He was astonished to see me, and I told him that I had not gone home, but had slept in the hexagonal house. He started.

"Well?" he asked eagerly.

I gave him my experience.

When I had finished he arose from the table and paced the floor.

"What do you think about the broken window and blood on my night-shirt?" I asked.

"Have you the nerve to hear how you have narrowly escaped death?"

"Yes; I have."

"Well, then, listen. The last man who lived in the hexagonal house was one who had lost his reason. He fancied himself to be Napoleon I. One morning his body was found under the window of the room you slept in."

"Great heavens!" I exclaimed, with a shudder.

My uncle went to the telephone and called up Professor Starkweather of the University of D., located a few miles distant, and conversed with him, after which I was informed that several of the professors would be down within an hour to take my statement.

I was too shaken up to eat any breakfast, so I went and walked in the garden till the professors arrived. They took me into a room and heard my story from beginning to end. Then Professor Starkweather asked me some questions.

"Have you read much of Napoleon's life?" he asked.

"Nothing but a little history, which I have forgotten."

"Did you know that Napoleon believed that the English were poisoning him while he was at St. Helena?"

"No."

"Did you know who were with him there?"

"No."

"Did you know that Constant was Napoleon's valet and that Napoleon gave him a bag supposed to contain poison with which Napoleon tried to commit suicide just before his abdication at Fontainebleau?"

"No."

"Did you know that in 1840 King Louis Philippe brought Napoleon's body to France from St. Helena and that the Napoleonic enthusiasm excited largely contributed to the revolution which dethroned that king and made Louis Napoleon president?"

"No."

"Did you know that Napoleon's shooting of the Duke d'Enghien concentrated the European powers against him?"

"No."

"Gentlemen," said Professor Starkweather to his colleagues, "it's a clear case of reincarnation."

"Rather," said Professor Markland, dean of the medical college, "it proves that insanity may in certain forms be a brain disease and that the germs of the patient who had formerly inhabited the room worked upon this young man."

"Why, then, has he recovered so suddenly?"

"Insanity in any event is affected by pure air, sunlight and other revivifying causes. The young man was not exposed long enough to enable the germs to get a permanent foothold."

"But how do you account for the knowledge the young man did not previously have of events in the life of Napoleon?"

"Psychologically considered, I admit my position is weak, but you must remember that there is such a thing as a transference of soul. However, that part of the problem is in your field rather than in mine. We study the body, you the soul."

"There is one point in the story that looks suspicious," said Professor Blenker. "Napoleon calls on Constant. Constant was not at St. Helena."

"That may be explained," replied Professor Starkweather, "by the fact that Napoleon was near his end and likely delirious. He had formerly called on Constant for everything."

While they were wrangling four more of the faculty of the university arrived, and all agreed that my statement should be taken down at once while the impression was fresh on my mind. One of their number was appointed to write, and as I told the story any one who wished would ask a question. When the statement was finished it was taken in charge by Professor Starkweather, the meeting broke up, and bidding goodby to my uncle, I started for home, glad to get as far as possible from the scene of my adventure.



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GENERAL MENTION.

Brief Bits of Labor News Picked and Piffled From Manywhere.

The Big Four depot in Springfield, Ohio, will be erected by union labor. Labor Unions in Utica, N. Y., own a lot upon which they propose to erect a labor temple.

Chicago, Ill., ironworkers have a scale of 62 cents and hour and are asking for 65 cents.

Machinists employed by the Lake Shore road have secured an increase of 1 cent an hour.

New York City Cigarmakers' Union for twenty years has been unable to effect an increase in wages.

Children under sixteen years of age cannot be employed in New Jersey factories according to a law just passed after July, 1911.

In Rhode Island a new law provides that no child under sixteen years of age shall work after 8 p. m. Nearly 1,000 children in the state are affected.

The general headquarters of the International Hod Carriers and Building Laborers' Union of America has been removed to Albany, N. Y.

Reports from big industrial centers tell of improved conditions of workingmen, many increases in wages being received.

In order to hold their fitting boy employes, three glass factory proprietors at Fasetum, Pa., propose to erect a hotel just for such lads.

During the last seventeen years, 22,840 men have lost their lives in our mines, and 11,000 of these deaths have occurred during the past six years.

Plans are rapidly nearing fruition by which the three separate organizations of carpenters in the country will be amalgamated with the United Brotherhood.

The first National Labor Congress was held at Baltimore, August 29, 1866. This body met annually in different cities for several years thereafter.

The tendency of labor legislation to conform to a standard, which is being raised from year to year, and a consequent increasing uniformity in the provisions of such legislation are clearly in evidence.

Boston, Mass., with a population of 600,000 has a cigarmakers' union with a membership of 2,800. San Francisco, Cal., with a population of 500,000, has a union of that trade with a membership of only 300.

The United Brotherhood of Carpenters will celebrate the twentieth year of its birth next August. The organization has close to 200,000 members, and its treasurer holds nearly \$600,000.

Four hundred and fifty thousand wage earners in Greater New York

are receiving wages smaller than \$800 a year, the "minimum of decency" fixed by the annual report of the committee on congestion of population.

The united garment workers of America and their thousands of members have been great sufferers as a result of the prison output of shirts, overalls, pantaloons and the like, used by working men in their trade.

The Central Federated Union of New York City has issued an appeal to Samuel Gompers and other national labor leaders demanding the organization of a national labor party in this country, modeled on the lines of the British labor party.

The question of establishing an old age pension fund is being considered by several of the big international unions. The old age pension fund of the International Typographical Union has been raised to \$218,000.

The labor organizations that have decided to extend education for their members are the International Typographical Union, Electrotypers, Stereotypers, Photo Engravers, Printing Pressmen, Granite Cutters, Horse Shoers, and the Pattern Maker's League.

The giving of a commission or a bonus to domestic servants or others making purchase for their employers is made an offense in New Jersey and Washington, the receiving of tips by waiters in hotels and restaurants and the giving of such tips being also prohibited in the latter state.

Brick manufacturers in conjunction with the labor unions of Minneapolis, Minn., have succeeded in preventing contractors from taking advantage of the cheaper prices at which convict-made bricks are offered, and in consequence about 2,500,000 prison-made brick are at the city workhouse, which the superintendent is unable to get rid of.

Judged by the number of laws enacted on the subject the employment of women and children is the question most in the legislative mind in so far as labor legislation is concerned, 32 states having enacted 51 laws or amendments thereon in the past two years. In the majority of cases these laws are amendatory.

There will be a demand after May 1 by the members of the San Francisco, Cal., Hod Carriers' Union for double time for working more than eight hours a day. Members of this Union who work with plasterers are paid \$5.62 a day and those who work with bricklayers are paid \$4.50 for eight hours work.

The National Association for the Study and Prevention of Tuberculosis is sending notices to labor organizations that Sunday, April 24, will be "tuberculosis Sunday," when the subject will be discussed in 215,000 churches in the United States.

Homage Paid to Beauty.

There are some very pretty women who don't understand the law of the road with regard to handsome faces. Nature and custom agree in conceding to all males the right of at least two distinct looks at every comely female countenance without any infraction of the rules of courtesy or the sentiment of respect.—Dr. Holmes, "Autocrat of the Breakfast Table."

Retaining Friendship.

Most of us have trouble keeping our friendships in repair. It is necessary, though trying.

Few.

Few men succeed in doing things which will cause them to be pleasantly remembered when they are dead "broke."—Chicago Record-Herald.

A Conundrum.

Why is a musical instrument like the open sea? Because it is often sounded.—Home Notes.

Motto for Success.

You must say nothing. "That is beneath me," nor feel that anything can be out of your power.—Mirabeau

THIS YEAR'S CONVENTIONS.

May 2, Philadelphia, Pa., Chartered Society of Amalgamated Lace Operatives of America.

May 9, Louisville, Ky., Amalgamated Meat Cutters and Butcher Workmen of North America.

May 11, Cincinnati, Ohio, Tin Plate Workers' International Protective Association.

May 11, Cincinnati, Ohio, American Federation of Musicians.

May 23, Buffalo, N. Y., National Print Cutters' Association of America.

June 6, Chicago, Ill., International Association of Marble Workers.

June 13, St. Louis, Mo., International Brotherhood of Boilermakers, Iron Ship Builders, and Helpers.

June 13-19, Omaha, Neb., International Stereotypers and Electrotypers' Union of North America.

June 13, New York, N. Y., International Brotherhood of Tip Printers.

June 13, Cedar Rapids, Iowa, International Brotherhood of Bookbinders.

June, third week, Columbus, Ohio, International Printing Pressmen and Assistants' Union of North America.

July 11, Atlantic City, N. J., Glass Bottle Blowers' Association of the United States and Canada.

July 11, Washington, D. C., Theatrical Stage Employees' International Alliance.

July 12, Dover, N. J., Stove Mounters and Steel Range Workers' International Union.

July 16, Springfield, Mass., American Wire Weavers' Protection Association.

July 18, Ottawa, Ont., International Steel and Copper Plate Printers' Union.

July 18, Atlantic City, N. J., National Brotherhood of Operative Workers.

August 1, Peoria, Ill., International Brotherhood of Teamsters.

August 8, Minneapolis, Minn., International Typographical Union.

August 22, Detroit, Mich., United Garment Workers of America.

September 5-6-7, Chicago, Ill., National Federation of Post Office Clerks.

September 5, Chicago, Ill., International Slate and Tile Roofers of America.

September 5, Boston, Mass., International Brotherhood of Maintenance of Way Employes.

September 6-10, Louisville, Ky., International Photo-Engravers' Union of North America.

September 6, Bangor, Pa., International Union of Slate Workers.

September 8, Boston, Mass., International Spinners' Union.

September 12, Kansas City, Kansas, Coopers' International Union.

September 12, Denver, Colo., International Union of United Brewery Workmen of America.

September 12, Philadelphia, Pa., International Union of Elevator Constructors.

September 12, Streator, Ill., International Brick, Tile and Terra Cotta Workers' Alliance.

September 13, New York, N. Y., American Brotherhood of Cement Workers.

September 19, Des Moines, Iowa, United Brotherhood of Carpenters and Joiners of America.

September 19, Rochester, N. Y., International Association of Bridge and Structural Iron Workers.

September 21, St. Paul, Minn., Brotherhood of Railroad Freight Handlers.

September 26, Columbus, Ohio, Operative Plasterers' International Association of the United States and Canada.

October 18, New York, N. Y., United Textile Workers of America.

October 18, Detroit, Mich., International Association of Car Workers.