

EXPLOSIVES.

Drifter's Experiences Have Led Him to Steer Clear of Them.

"As you say, I am extremely cautious about handling high explosives," admitted Drifter, "and for a man who has mixed in the mining business, I confess I am unique. Why, I actually avoid fireworks displays, except at a safe distance, and when the big downtown stores blase out with Fourth of July decorations I pass by on the other side."

"I wasn't so easily scared when you first knew me. That's true. Maybe I can explain how the scare developed in me. One day while tramping along over a dusty road in Connecticut—there being no stage line to my destination—I was overtaken by a jolly young chap who was driving such a wagon as cigar and candy peddlers in New England affect. He gave me a lift and put the whip to his horses. He went at a hot pace, and pulled away at a cigar from my case. I enjoyed my smoke, too. That is, until we reached the village. Then the driver tossed his stump in the road and said:

"Young fellow, fix that stump. You're riding on a powder wagon, and the boss would bounce me if he caught us smoking. I'm used to taking chances. Wasn't born to be blown up!"

"The very next day an explosion shook the country. A powder plant went up in the twinkling of an eye, and that careless driver—well, he was too widely scattered to need a funeral."

"I was rattled when I made my first trip to the mining region now famous as the Ledge of the Woods mineral belt. We had to pack all the supplies to our camp, and when we came to a portage I took my share of the work. I picked up a box weighing fifty pounds and toted it half a mile. I wanted to fill my pipe so I carelessly trampled that box—containing canned goods for all I knew—down on the ground. Jack Brown, the foreman of the outfit, lunged back to the trail and said quietly:

"Drifter, don't be so kittenish with that box. It's full of dynamite. Lucky for you and the lot of us that I filled it at the winter cache near Rat Passage and it's frozen."

"I didn't talk about a whisper during the rest of the trip. The next summer I went up to the mine and did my turn on one of the drifts. One day I proposed a fishing trip. Mike, the day engineer, laid off and went with main our canoe. The pickered didn't show up to suit Mike, so paddling to a rock entirely bare of vegetation, he stretched himself and said:

"Now, Mr. Drifter, I'll show you how to catch fish. He had a dynamite cartridge in a bottle. He inserted a fuse, packed the dangerous stuff tightly in the neck of the bottle and said: 'I'll touch this off, toss it in the lake and heaven help the fishes.' Languid against such sportsmanlike slaughter, and Mike got rattled. We were standing on a naked rock. Mike's foot slipped, that infernal bottle dropped from his hand, and we—

"No, we were not blown to kingdom come, for Mike just grabbed the bottle and tumbled it into the lake. He threw it out in the lake. There was a convulsion, a vast jet of water shot up in the air and hundreds of fluttering, dead and dying fish lay on the surface. I couldn't have hunched one to save me from laughing and though Mike 'stomped' said, 'That was close enough,' he suggested a return to the camp, and he was the quietest man in the outfit for the next month."

"From that day to this I have been just a trifle discreet, as you might say. I don't nose around powder mills or try to investigate chemical works, and when I go back to mining the miner who tries to talk me into a dynamite cartridge by the fire in our bank will get out of the camp before he's a minute older, if I catch him."—New York Sun.

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Is the Hand of God Shortened, or Has It Lost Its Cunning?

(N. V. Herald.)

For the hand that will help me, I know how I shall not be ashamed. I know how I shall not be ashamed. I know how I shall not be ashamed.

One of the questions which thoughtful men and women ask is: How long will the consequences of an evil act be an evil habit? Is the soul that has sinned doomed to unending punishment?

I can easily put the answer by a few words. In a very important sense, God does not punish you, on the contrary, you punish yourself. How long, then, do you propose to pursue a course of wretchedness which has already brought direful results, and which will certainly continue to do so until you effect a change in your conduct?

When the prodigal went away from the paternal home he went of his own accord. And when he found himself in wretched poverty, forsaken by his friends his only companions the swine which he guarded, he entered a regime of fearful but self-inflicted punishment. He used his body and his brain badly. He had been endowed with the tremendous and awful prerogative of freedom to choose, and his judgment was defective that he chose evil in the full expectation of getting personal happiness from it. He sought, however, that the universe should make that happiness does not come from dishonesty or abuse of appetite. He found that he could not swim up a waterfall, that lemons are not made sweet by declaring that they are so, and that there is no other way to achieve success known among men except obedience to a moral law which represents both wisdom and omnipotence.

Having made that discovery, he stepped into line with the law, and with extraordinary good sense and admirable power of will proceeded to rectify his error.

The father of this wretched youth did not revenge himself for the disobedience of his son and in that fact he represented the attitude of God toward all of us. There was great rejoicing in the home, and the old relation between father and son, broken by the wayward boy, was re-established.

We cannot ignore the fact that the son suffered great moral loss, but the question is: How far was that loss repaired? And the answer to that question is the important matter for you and me to consider. Can a man do wrong and recover himself? Does the punishment which he brings on himself last forever, or is it possible for him after changing his course of life, to extract from the sad experience of other days a positive good? In other words, is God a king, or does He rule the universe like a king, or He a father, who is more than ready to receive his children when they discover that to sin passes like home?

Let us use another illustration. If you have a violin, you can either get good music or bad out of it. You have the power to break that violin if you choose, but after you have done that, it is no longer a violin. It is now a musical instrument, it is dead, and it will never, never to be used again.

Now some dignities of our theology are taken from that illustration, and we have been led into error and misstatement thereby. The fact of doing a bad thing, in some important respects, the good which Christ loved and produced.

You are not a violin, and you cannot destroy yourself by sinning. There is no extent of self-imposed which renders recovery impossible. God has made the universe a great deal more than a mere machine, for we think for law constantly put into lawless remedy.

You have some habit which destroys yourself respect and hurts the household. You are yourself responsible for that. God made you to be master, but you are not master. So, long as that habit dominates you, you are not a man but a slave. You cannot break it! There is a sword which is as much in the vocabulary of an immortal soul. To think that you cannot do a thing because the worst kind of folly, for thoughts are things, and such thoughts as that are evil. You may not be able to achieve the work of recovery by yourself alone, but you and God, working together, can do anything. You must not simply ask Him for help and then sit idly by in the expectation that He will do the whole work. The law does not act in that way. Remember who you are what you are what your destiny is put your whole soul into the task of emancipation, and then, having done your utmost again and again after repeated failures, you will at last find yourself a free man with a somewhat dreadful past behind you, but a glorious future before you.

Nothing will result, however, until you see the wrong you have done, and see it so clearly that it will be impossible to repeat it. Air will come in strange, mysterious, miraculous ways. What is the good of a heaven whose angels ignore our struggles? Have the loved ones forgotten us? Are they powerless? Is the hand of God shortened, or has it lost its cunning?

Feel that you can do what you know you ought to do, call upon the beneficent powers of the living Lord, who thrums at six but speaks words of comfort to the sinner, and then issuing your declaration of independence, put aside the old things and go on in the new garments of the new man.—George H. Hopworth.

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