

### STRANGE STORY OF WILL CLARK

Opinions Differ As To Identity of Man Held in Jail in Asheville

Asheville, Dec. 8.—In the furrow which scars the forehead of Will Clark the sign of passing years or the stamp of a secret sin that has gnawed at his heart during the sleepless nights and uncertain days of two more winters?

Does the brilliant sparkle of his shifting eyes reflect the haunting and horrible scenes of insecurity that incessantly assail the establishment of law in its unjust portion? Or does the light that shines from his unsteady orbs irradiate the troubled terms that only a hunted and hunted man knows, such a terror as overwhelmed Jean Valjean, when, in the flickering light of the street lamp, he saw in the upturned face of the cowering mendicant the inscrutable features of his nemesis, Javert?

There are but a few of the many questions which physiognomists—amateur and professional—are seeking to answer. They are but a small portion of the problems which students of human nature are trying to solve. Wherever newspapers are read in the United States of America, wherever news photographs are printed in this broad land, men and women, members of opposing groups, are gathered about their firesides and dinner tables to advance the theories they have formed about one of the most amazing cases that American jurisprudence knows. For Will Clark plight, strangely suggestive of the situation of Hugo's hero in his epic of oppression, Les Miserables, has gripped thousands many of whom will never feel that justice has been done, regardless of the final outcome of this remarkable case.

**Seven Fight 20 Years Ago**  
Twenty years ago, in a little town of Alabama a pretty girl, courted by two men, accepted the gay, handsome Charlie Gibbs in preference to W. T. Puckett, and soon after posed with her husband for a picture. Gibbs was a quiet spoken bridegroom but a man who worked strenuously and whose life was not vastly different from the lives of his fellows, men who lived hard and sought their pleasures in no effeminate gatherings. In front of the streaked mirror of a lumber camp saloon, upstanding men gathered at dark and drank hard liquor. About the tables in the back rooms, stained with the damp imprints of beer mugs, bearded hangers-on lingered and talked. The man, suspended from the ceiling, glared to watch a sooty shade. The bartender stood, arms akimbo, and surveyed the stragglers and regular customers.

The steady hum of conversation was punctuated by a sharp exclamation. Four short words, hyphenated when spoken and indicated by asterisks when printed, rang out above the din. They were followed by an ominous silence, such a silence as marks the calm before the storm. A crack rang out and the lamp fell. A pistol shot rang twice more and flames flashed in the face of Gibbs, the groom. There was a moment of stunned silence and then a lighted torch. Two figures lay huddled in the corner of the saloon floor. One was a corpse, the other the writhing frame of a dying man. Gibbs was gone.

Years passed and the deserted wife paid less attention to the photograph that had been made of her and the proud husband of her girlhood. Puck-

ett's attention were renewed, his love was quelled. GASP, he pointed out, had disappeared. A divorce could be easily obtained. A marriage could follow. Then came news from a Tennessee mining camp that Gibbs' mangled form had been found after a blast and familiar marks were reported as proof of his demise. The story was accepted at its face value printed in the village paper and the righteous philosophers conceded vengeance to Him who had said "Vengeance is Mine!"

**Moved to Asheville**  
Puckett married Gibbs' widow and moved to Asheville. Eighteen years later he had as next door neighbor in the West End section a bereaved widower, who sought lodging in the Puckett home. Will Clark was his name, he said.

But in his aged and drawn countenance, the married couple professed to recognize the former husband of Mrs. Puckett. In those restless eyes, Puckett thought he saw something other than the suspense that comes from a guarded secret. And in the light that lies in the woman's eyes, he suspected a yearning for the first love bestowed upon a man whose heart was warm even though his trigger finger was nervous. Puckett did not want any revival of a former affection. He visited the sheriff.

And Will Clark—either the best actor who has been confined in Buncombe's walls in a generation or the victim of the most frightful misdeal of fortune—was imprisoned as the murderer of 20 years ago. The papers have told of his legal fights, his successes and failures, his encouragements and discouragements. Presented as evidence against him was the photograph of the bride and bridegroom. From the comparison of the young man's face with that of the older man's countenance, Puckett and visitors from Alabama insist there could be but one conclusion drawn: that the men are the same. And Clark, quite as vehemently, with just as much confidence, has maintained that the comparison's result can be but one: a finding diametrically opposite.

Your correspondent, with the picture of Mr. and Mrs. Gibbs and the photograph of Clark in his possession, has conducted an investigation as to their impression on 12 intelligent people, adults all. Both sexes have been represented and many fully scrutinized. There has been no state. The pictures have been carefully examined. Frank opinions have been sought. Is the older man the younger man old? Has been the question asked. It has been carefully pondered. And the verdict of this jury has been a mistrial. Six have said there is a striking resemblance. Six have insisted there are differences which demonstrate beyond a doubt that the men are different.

#### John W. Davis Says He Is Not A Candidate

Farmington, W. Va., Dec. 9.—Replying to a message notifying him of the organization of a Davis-for-President club to promote his selection as a candidate for President by the Democrat National convention John W. Davis, former ambassador to Great Britain, declared tonight that he did not consider himself a candidate.

"I do not regard myself as a candidate and sincerely believe that such discussion must rest with the party and not with the individual concerned, the telegram read."

#### Ninety Stills Taken in Month of November

Salisbury, Dec. 8.—Federal prohibition agents operating in North Carolina captured 93 stills in November, according to A. B. Coltrane, director.

Quite a quantity of liquor and its ingredients was dumped. A total of 3,503 gallons of spirits, 107,345 gallons of malt liquor, 590 gallons of wine and 688 gallons of mash were poured out. Approximately 700 fermentors were seized. Popover automobiles were captured while hauling liquor and confiscated. Forty-nine arrests were effected by the Federal agents and 94 prosecutions recommended.

Value of automobiles seized was put at \$5,184. Total appraised value of property seized and destroyed was estimated at \$54,299, while the value of property seized and not destroyed was \$5,188.80. Amount of proceeds of sale of seized property turned over to the United States treasury was \$2,802, while the amount of expenses incurred incident to seizure and sale

was \$128.33. Other property seized included 1,150 pounds of sugar and one pair of mules.

The above totals are slightly less than those of the three preceding months. This was probably due to the fact that quite a number of Federal agents operating in this state were sent to Pennsylvania for a special anti-rum campaign.

#### Ford Manufacturers 49 Per Cent Of Cars

Detroit, Mich., Dec. 10.—Approximately forty-nine per cent of the passenger cars and trucks produced in the United States during the first ten months of 1923 were Fords.

This is shown by a comparison of the automobile production figures given out by the United States Department of Commerce and those of the Ford Motor Company here.

The department's figures on cars and trucks, the latter including fire apparatus and street sweepers, shows a total of 3,396,698 for the first ten

months. Ford production figures for the same period, which include, as those of other companies, cars and trucks made here for assembly in foreign countries, totals, 1,639,374. This total, however, does not include the production of the plant at Manchester, England, which manufactures practically all of its parts and which produced 27,606 cars and trucks during the first ten months, nor does it include the ten-month output of 69,452 cars and trucks by the Ford Motor Company of Canada, Ltd.

A comparison of the truck production figures shows that 62 per cent were Fords. The total number of trucks turned out during the ten months from January 1 to November 1 was 320,288, with Ford truck production for the same time totaling 200,996.

#### Mr. Bailey's Tax Idea

(From The Goldsboro News) — Mr. Bailey proposes that taxes be taken as far as possible from land values and placed elsewhere. His idea is that land should be taxed

upon its earning power only. This, of course, means that from 50 to 75 per cent of the land, both rural and urban, would bear no tax, for that proportion is either idle or has a negligible earning power. But while it has a value that would largely be increased by the adoption of Mr. Bailey's policy. He would thus have a tremendous volume of value escaping taxation, with the further necessity of increasing taxes upon production, commerce and labor.

Idle land increases in value without adding any wealth to the State, and that increase would be accomplished by reducing taxes on it. And the higher land goes the more prevalent does tenantry become in the country and fewer people there are who can have homes in urban communities.

Mr. Bailey ought to call his scheme "a proposal to accelerate the already rapid increase in tenantry."

**HUMORIST BECOMES SERIOUS**  
When I say that the State of North Carolina has practically everything I mean literally just that, in the sense

that she has practically everything which conduces to comfortable all-the-year-around living for the average man being. According to the best of my observation and belief, she has within her as complete an assortment of natural attractions and natural glories as is to be found enclosed by any set of state boundaries this side of the Pacific Slope. This witness equally is positive that, taking one season with another, she has on her Piedmont Plateau the most equable and agreeable climate of temperate North America. And certainly, at this present time of writing, she is the most up-and-coming State of the South, if not of the entire Union.—Irvin S. Cobb in Hearst's International for November, 1923.

Fayetteville, Dec. 4.—A negro boy named Thuyton was killed instantly while attempting to repair an elevator in a local hospital here tonight. The negro came in contact with an electric part, owing, it is said, to ignorance of the machinery. Thuyton came to Fayetteville from Georgia, and was little known here.

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