

many cases where sincere gratitude is shown and I never allowed little experiences like this to lessen my faith in humanity, or to cause me to depart in any manner from our ideals.

I was, however, very much surprised when several hours later I received a message from the state's attorney to come to his office at once, as there were two men there from Kansas who were threatening all sorts of reprisals against the institution, and that I might avoid serious trouble by seeing them before they took action.

It was five miles to the court house, but I proceeded there in all haste, knowing that it must be an urgent matter that prompted the state's attorney to call me. When I arrived there I found the two Kansans, who had been so pleasant in the morning, looking very angry. They scarcely spoke to me as I entered the room, so I asked the state's attorney the occasion for the sudden summons.

He said, "Doctor, these gentlemen claim to have visited the cemetery of your institution this morning, and to have discovered a shocking condition of affairs."

I said, "Gentlemen, I cannot understand this. Our cemetery is known the country over as the most artistic and unique in the institutional world, and instead of being criticised has been pictured and written up in the magazines in the most appreciative manner." I said further that no man held the dead in higher respect than I, and the manner in which I kept my institutional cemetery would justify my claim.

One of the brothers asked, "Do you consider it right to allow the decayed bodies of your patients to lie around among the trees where the buzzards and dogs can get at them? Why, even the scavengers bury the bodies of horses and other animals, and it would seem that the poor insane should be shown at least equal consideration!"

Institutional life is filled with many surprises. It is one constant suspense, for the reason that the most unexpected occurrence is likely to take place at any moment. This, however, was beyond anything that I ever experienced or expected. That my cemetery, my pet creation, should be the subject of criticism was utterly incomprehensible. I wondered if the two men, affected by the atmosphere of the institution, had suddenly lost their senses or had indulged in strong drink to overcome the emotions occasioned by the morning's visit, so I said, "Gentlemen, there is some serious mistake about this. No such spectacle could have been witnessed in our cemetery." And I asked them to be more explicit.

They proceeded to relate that as they were passing along the row of graves seeking that of their sister, they were horrified to come upon the skeleton of a human body with decayed flesh clinging to the bones and a half-rotted shroud covering it. An open grave was near-by and fragments of a coffin lid were scattered about.

They concluded that perhaps a body was being disinterred for shipment, but even then thought it was an exceedingly crude way to handle the dead.

Presently they discovered two other bodies similarly placed, and this made them so indignant that they decided to end their visit right there—that it was useless to look for their sister's grave, as there seemed to be no proof that she was in it after the shocking disclosures they had just witnessed. They thought that the state's attorney should know these facts and came straight to his office and expressed surprise that he should even give me a chance to explain matters, all being so clear to them.

I said, "Gentlemen, in view of what you claim you saw, I can only ask that you proceed with me at once to the asylum and I will go with you to the cemetery, and, if the facts are as you say, I will confess that you have done the state and me a great service."

We entered an awaiting automobile and in a few minutes were at the headquarters of the institution. I called the doctors, including attendant Forner, who, classified as "Patients' Foreman," carried along with other duties that of the disposal of the dead and the care of the cemetery.

As we neared that spot I called attention to the even rows of graves, each marked by its cement headstone with the identifying number plainly visible. I went along with a confident air, detailing the life tragedy of this and that deceased, and every doctor would fail to reveal any of the horrible conditions that the heightened imagination of the two brothers had depicted to the state's attorney.

As we approached a spot in which no recent grave had been dug, I noticed a pile of fresh clay, and as we drew nearer one of the brothers exclaimed, "There it is, just as I told you!"

A closer inspection showed that he was correct. Not only were the hideous features of a corpse visible, but the splintered remain of a coffin lid were scattered about the grave. Our policy being to conceal nothing, we continued the search, and we finally found just the conditions that the two brothers had related, with the exception that this grave was in addition to what they had seen, being in another part of the burial lot.

After satisfying ourselves of the seriousness of the situation, I told the two brothers of the mystery surrounding the entire matter and asked them to suspend judgment and give us time to investigate.

I assured them that the motive could not have been that of grave robbing or body snatching, as in no instance had the corpse been removed. This they plainly saw, and they were considerate enough to return to their homes without giving the matter further publicity, and the state's attorney was kind enough to say that he would hold the entire matter in abeyance awaiting my final report.

We always designated one of our most trustworthy employes to care for the cemetery. He had a detail of about eight rather reliable patients, and could always be depended on to have a grave ready when occasion demanded. For the past three years this assignment was held by the aforementioned Forner, who, while an attendant, had shown special aptness in securing the co-operation of patients when their labor was required by the various department heads of the institution.

I called him into the office and asked for an explanation of the revolting condition of the cemetery.

He had none to give.

I then asked him how long it had been since a body had been exhumed for shipment and he said that the body of a man had been claimed by relatives and shipped to Canada about three months before, under all the safeguards and regulations imposed by the state board of health and the interstate commerce commission. We then concluded that Forner, in opening the grave, had selected the wrong one and, discovering the error, kept opening graves until he reached the right one and that, having accomplished his purpose, he recklessly left the other exhumed bodies without taking the trouble to reinter them. He said that this was impossible, as the incident took place months ago, and the bodies could not have remained there thus exposed without having been discovered a hundred times over.

Nevertheless, the evidence was absolute and incontrovertible, and Forner was suspended on the spot for neglect of duty.

When his case came up for trial before the Civil Service Commission, we simply introduced the witnesses who had observed the nauseating condition of affairs revealed on the occasion of the visit of the two brothers. The case was absolutely conclusive, but Forner was entitled to a

hearing, and the Commission asked him if he had anything to say, whereupon he took the stand and made this simple and direct statement:

"There has been a great mistake made in my suspension: I am not guilty of the charge. I conduct every funeral with the utmost propriety, always banking the earth into a neat mound at its conclusion, and return my detail of patients to the ward in good order.

"To be accused of desecration of the dead is to me a great humiliation, but I accept my dismissal. The evidence is overwhelmingly against me, but I will sift this thing to the bottom if given permission to frequent the asylum grounds for a reasonable time."

We had no objection to his presence and so when we saw him loitering about the place during the next week, paid little attention to him. Occasionally some man of influence would intercede for him, asking for his reinstatement, but in view of the scandal we had so narrowly averted this was wholly out of the question.

Another and more trustworthy man was put in charge of the funeral detail and burials proceeded as usual, but safe from any fear that the resting places of the dead would be molested.

One day Forner came into my office, nearly out of breath, and said, "What have you to say of your graveyard now? I have not been in charge of it for a month and the same thing has happened."

I asked him what had happened, and he said, "Come and see. There are two open graves with the bodies in both of them plainly visible."

Again I summoned my doctors and all others concerned, and Forner let us straight to the two graves and we found the identical condition that had caused us so much concern on the former occasion.

There was nothing to say. My first suspicion rested upon Forner.

We noted the surroundings, excused the employe and proceeded to the office, where I called an extraordinary staff meeting. In the course of our discussion an idea came to my mind and I went to the book shelf and took down the medical dictionary, and turning to the proper page read:

"**NECROPHILE**, A paranoiac whose mania manifests itself in abnormal love for the dead, sometimes extending to cannibalism."

Plainly Forner was a necrophile and had asked the privilege of remaining about the place for no other purpose than to continue his maniacal desire to be with the dead.

Addressing the staff, I said, "Gentlemen, here we have been diagnosing and treating two thousand insane and have remained in total ignorance of the fact that one of the most dangerous lunatics of the state has for two years been an employe of our own institution, a man with whom we have been in daily contact and yet in whom we failed to discover any of the symptoms that stamp him as belonging to that rare group of paranoiacs characterized in the definition I have just read."

I asked each member of the staff in turn what he thought of the Forner case and all agreed that the proof was unassailable.

We called him in and, without letting him know our purpose, put him through a psychological examination. He came out of it unscathed, answering every question with unerring precision.

I remarked to the staff that this was not an infrequent outcome of the examination of a paranoiac—as he usually responded to every test of normality and successfully concealed his particular mania.

We decided that our only prospect of solving this mystery was to have Forner shadowed and catch him in the act of disintering a body. Accordingly we secured a reliable detective and re-