

In the Home of a Thousand Babies

BY RUTH SAWYER

PART I.

The Courthouse slept in the heat of mid-August. Once in a while its sleep was broken by some straggler, panting up the two flights of broad granite steps leading to law and justice or slipping shadow-like down to the street floor where charity ruled.

On Fiddler's Alley there had settled a hushed expectancy. Shades were drawn, windows closed against heat and noise; the only sound was the monotonous buzzing of electric fans along the corridor. The Alley stretched from the offices of the County Superintendent of the Poor to the office of the Commissioner for Placing Dependent Children; and all day and every day moved a slow but inevitable procession of Humanity coming to pay the Fiddler in one coin or another.

The big clock over the Superintendent's desk pointed to two-fifteen; both the Superintendent and Commissioner eyed it with a special interest. "Give Boyd ten minutes more, and she'll have the new deputy here." It was the Commissioner who spoke and for all her sixty years she put as much eagerness into the words as any youngster counting off the days before County Fair Day.

"For the Commissioner this was a big moment. For twenty years she had worked, single-handed, worked and fought to make the department what she knew it ought to be. And for the first time she felt old and played out; as if the department had turned over and knocked her over for her trouble. She wanted someone to come in, as she had done in twenty years ago, a reasonably young, fresh in outlook and enthusiasm—someone who would take up the work when she must let it drop and carry on farther and better than she had been able to do.

The Commissioner mopped her forehead weakly with a wad of a handkerchief and smiled at the Superintendent: "You don't know what this means to me—to have a deputy commissioner after all these years of working alone!"

The Superintendent grunted. He had been on his job longer than the Commissioner; and if anybody knew, he should. Small, wiry as a terrier, crabbed outside and mellow in, like the Commissioner he worked for the sake of the work and not for the money the county paid him. He was a man hard to fool, easy to trust and appreciated by few. The Commissioner was one of these few; and if they had been asked apart to name the best friend in the world they had, each would have named the other.

"Look here," the Superintendent jerked himself erect. "I hate a woman who begins by changing her mind. Franklin wrote she wouldn't come until October—needed a vacation—as if any young thing really needed a vacation after six months! Now she wires she doesn't need a vacation—she'll arrive city—two ten—to-day. Probably when she gets here and has one day in this sulphuric heat, she'll change her mind again." He picked up the open telegram that lay on the desk and read aloud the signature, "Signed, Sara Goslin." "Why not Goose? Jumping Jupiter! What a name for a woman!"

The Commissioner closed her eyes from utter weariness and smiled to herself. How the Superintendent disliked and mistrusted everything new—new people, new laws, new methods! He was as rock-ribbed and immovable as the eternal hills; and yet, once convinced, he had always proven her most loyal supporter. And he would fight, shoulder to shoulder with her when she had made him understand that she must have what she was fighting for. It had taken so long to make him see she needed a deputy; and now it would take months to convince him this one was the right one. Very probably he was sitting now all knuckled in, with lips twisted and jaw swinging, looking ready to spring and devour her the instant she stepped foot over the threshold.

The Commissioner opened her eyes and laughed outright at what she saw. "Jim Barnard, you look as carnivorous as a crocodile. What do I care about a name? It's the viewpoint I care for. It means everything to me to have my first deputy commissioner care so much for her work that she is willing to give up a vacation and cut out a month's salary just to learn the ropes. I tell you it's a rare beginning."

"Bah! New brooms! It's the ending I care about. Ever since Franklin wrote, I've had my mind made up she'd turn out one of these hard-bodded, loose-clothed, free-tongued young women that America is specializing in just now. I read Franklin's letter over again ten minutes ago and I tell you I like it less than when I read it first. He picked up a sheet that lay under the telegram and read it; partly to himself and partly in audible outbursts. "Born in society—twenty-five—serious minded and executive—a great personal charm. Bah!—I say it again!" and he slammed the letter back on the desk. "Who wants a deputy commissioner of twenty-five with personal charm? I tell you Gallagher'll get his talons in her before she's been a week on her job."

This time it was the Commissioner who straightened in her chair. For the moment she forgot how hot and tired she felt. "I thought we had settled that when I sent in my report six weeks ago. Every local applicant was gone over carefully; and every one found unfitted for the position. The Commissioner stressed the last words intentionally.

"Maybe they were but that doesn't make Gallagher any more likely to be pleasant, seeing his niece was one of the applicants. Here we are with the first good appointment open to a woman in the county for years; and along come three members of the Board of Supervisors wanting the job

for someone they are interested in—Gallagher for his niece, MacPherson for his sister, and Black for a daughter of a friend. And what do we do? Sweep them all off the slate and ask Franklin to pick out the best one he can from his list of state workers. You know it always makes trouble to import strangers for county jobs."

"I don't care," the Commissioner said it doggedly.

"All right! Don't care. But get ready for another fight. Gallagher said yesterday that he'd picked his niece for deputy commissioner, as good as promised her the appointment and he was going to see she got it. I reckon you know Timothy Gallagher has gotten pretty nearly everything he's gone after since he's been chairman of the Board."

The Commissioner's cheeks flamed. "This is one thing he'll never get. I spent a half hour interviewing his niece and she's made of the same kind of timber he is; hard, cross-grained and full of knot holes. Merciful God! I wouldn't trust her with a dead baby."

With this unusual vent of feelings, the Commissioner wilted into the chair again. The excitement of the new deputy's arrival had made her forget how tired she was. And now if the Superintendent was right—and he generally was right—here was another ugly fight ahead. She caught her head in her hands and the heat had left her. Her work had been a series of fights, one after another; as long as she stayed, there always would be a battle for something in the offing. She had fought for the control of her department, for proper nursing homes for her babies, for rigid requirements for adoption and the careful supervision of the homes that took children. Twenty years ago any person who would take a case-off baby could have it for the asking, no matter how ill fitted and untrustworthy that person might be. All the law demanded was actual housing and food if the baby lived, and Christian burial if it died.

Every time the Commissioner looked backwards she shuddered at the toll those years had taken—diminutive human wrecks who had gone to fill state institutions for feeble-mindedness, tuberculosis and potential criminals. And yet, they had gone into the making of a monument to the fact that fighting paid. Well, she could fight again, this time for the right woman to share her work and fill her place when she was too old and worn out to find another home for one of her babies.

Above the fan's buzzing sounded the sharp staccato click-click of heels against the Alley's flagging. The Commissioner stiffened in her chair and shot a look of challenge at the Superintendent.

"There they are. I'll know two minutes after I've set eyes on her if she's the right one." And if she is, Jim Barnard.

The door flew open and over the threshold stepped a single figure—tall, flat and leaden. It was Boyd, the department secretary.

"Him! Didn't come? Hah!" There was triumph in the Superintendent's final explosion. "What did I tell you? She's changed her mind again."

The Commissioner felt dazed and acutely hurt. It was as if County Fair Day had come and the fair grounds had been found empty. A dozen questions stirred in her mind; she asked but one of them. "What's happened?"

"Ask the court. The secretary's voice was as flat and thin as the rest of her. The Superintendent had once said that he guessed the Lord Almighty must have hewn her out of hickory and planed her down as much as He dared. In her three years of service she had never shown emotion of any sort or interest in any human being. She was more akin to the office furniture than its personnel. Turning back to the door she stopped long enough to give the minimum of information: "Met the two-ten train and that was all. I did meet. The young thing's probably gone off looking for something more exciting than babies."

The Superintendent did not allow his chuckle to escape until the door had swung shut after Boyd then it rumbled forth, a sound out of all proportion to the size of the little man who made it. "Gosh, how Boyd does hate babies! Don't believe you'd get her to touch one with tongs."

He looked to the Commissioner for an answering laugh but none came. For the first time that day he studied her carefully and saw how close she was to the breaking point. Heat, an unbroken summer of overwork; with all the years of strain back of these, had written their mark on a face that showed unnaturally white and drawn.

"Look here!" The Superintendent got out of his chair and came over to her; his face screwed up into what the Commissioner knew to be an expression of sympathy but which, for all the world, looked as if he had bitten into sour fruit. "You've got to quit. I've seen it coming but I've held my tongue knowing how you hate personal remarks. But you've got to quit or the Lord'll make you in that final way of His. Take a vacation—get twenty deputies and put 'em right on the job—leave the babies in the nursing home for a couple of months—won't hurt 'em—and let Boyd take care of the new ones. Do anything, only quit!"

This time the Commissioner laughed. "I'll quit when my new deputy gets trained in. You needn't scowl, Jim Barnard—I'm still holding faith with Sara Goslin. I know you think Franklin's a sentimental old fogey but I don't—I have absolute confidence in the girl he picked out. Something's happened to her; she'll have a good reason for missing that train—see if she doesn't. We'll hear something before the day's out. In the meantime

the department is still running—I'd better get back to my desk."

She pulled herself out of her chair as if the going meant untold effort. The Superintendent watched her with an ominous shaking of the head. "Look here!" he shouted after her. "Goose or no goose, if that young woman ever does turn up and she's what you want, I'll fight Timothy Gallagher to blazes and back for her."

Back in her office, the Commissioner took up her work where she had dropped it. The air had grown intolerably humid; it pressed down on one like a great invisible hand. Boyd came in with records to file and reported a storm. "Going to be a cracker," she said and before she had gone the rain was flicking sharply on the windows.

Records to verify, adoption papers to look over, letters from foster parents to read and answer; in the midst of the routine work, a boy from the Orphanage who had been bonded out for the summer, came in to make his monthly report. He carried a great bunch of flaming marigolds which he held out to the Commissioner with bashful eagerness.

"Thank you, Johnny. Like the farm? How do the folks treat you?" "Swell!" The boy grinned a round-faced, freckled grin. "Him and her couldn't treat me better if I was theirs."

"Fine. From what I've heard you've been treating them the same way. Isn't that so?"

(To be continued.)



Author Ruth Sawyer

who has inherited the unique right of keeping his hat on in the presence of the English King. This privilege comes down to him from the time of Henry VIII. The amusing part of the story is that young Forester, cares not a whit for this hat-right, and says that the only time he ever was in the presence of the King was in a bathroom. And then he wasn't wearing a hat!

Diary in Cipher.

Just a hundred years ago was published the world's most extraordinary work. It was by a great public figure named Pepys—pronounced "Peeps."

Half of each night he sat up writing, till he almost went blind—writing the queerest work that has ever occurred to man. This was a Diary of the real truth about himself and everyone else, but written in cipher so that nobody could read it.

Pepys tells us how he bribed, and took bribes, how he got drunk and was sorry next morning; how he once struck his wife and then kissed her and made it up.

Mixed with the bad there is a lot of good.

We read how really fond he was of his wife, and how it troubled him to grieve her when he had been found out. We read also how he set out to reform this and that scandal. For thinking that the Diary could never be read, Pepys put down the truth.

That long after his death somebody would patiently work out the cipher, was the last thing Pepys expected. Still, it gave us in a way the world's most human book.

A Hobo.

What is a hobo? The popular answer would probably be, "a tramp." Not so! There are certain key distinctions to be observed. A hobo, is a migratory worker—a man, like the harvest hand in the West or the lumberjack in the North woods, who moves from place to place, as work offers. A tramp, on the other hand, is a migratory loafer, and a bum a stationary loafer. One should be careful in such matters.

Gloves in Baseball.

Gloves were used in baseball first in 1875.



THE STRAIGHT SILHOUETTE.

This charming one-piece frock of black crepe-satin is particularly designed for the woman of large proportions. The wide underpanel is of contrasting color crepe. This same color makes the collar and the full length revers at each side, which emphasize the front closing in coat effect. Two large buttons are placed at the low waist-line in front, and a narrow belt holds the easy fullness at the back. The revers and collar may be omitted, and short sleeves used to fashion a trim house dress. No. 1101 is in sizes 42, 44, 46, 48 and 50 inches bust. Size 46 bust requires 3 1/2 yards of 36 or 40-inch material, with 1 1/2 yards additional contrasting material for panel, revers and collar. Width of dress around the bottom about 1 1/2 yards. Price 20 cents.

Home sewing brings nice clothes within the reach of all, and to follow the mode is delightful when it can be done so easily and economically by following the styles pictured in our new Fashion Book. A chart accompanying each pattern shows the material as it appears when cut out. Every detail is explained so that the inexperienced sewer can make without difficulty an attractive dress. Price of the book 10 cents the copy.

HOW TO ORDER PATTERNS.

Write your name and address plainly, giving number and size of such patterns as you want. Enclose 20c in stamps or coin (coin preferred, wrap it carefully) for each number, and address your order to Pattern Dept., Wilson Publishing Co., 73 West Adelaide St., Toronto. Patterns sent by return-mail.



A Brave Soldier.

Jack-in-the-Box: "That's a fine specimen of a soldier. I must say I've scared all the sawdust out of him!"

Ancient Yet Modern.

Foot corns are so called because of a resemblance to a corn or barley that can be picked out. Three hundred years ago corns were treated precisely as they are to-day and a recipe of 1620 says: "Corns on the feet are to be wet or soaked and rubbed with a pencil of caustic every evening upon retiring. If large corns should be cut out or at least pared with a sharp knife. If a corn hangs by a small neck it should be tied with a silk string and it will come away. To stop the pains of a corn cover the corn with a piece of adhesive plaster with a hole cut through it so that the corn may be pressed and as the corn rises add more adhesive plasters cut like the first."

The wood of the red or Norway pine is heavier, harder and more resinous than white pine, but it is used for the same purpose.

HIS MAJESTY'S HOBBY

The Finest Collection of British Empire Stamps in the World is Kept in an Upper Room in Buckingham Palace. It Was Built Up by its Royal Owner.

H. M. King George takes stamp-collecting very seriously, and when one of the finest collections of postage stamps in the world came under the auctioneer's hammer recently it was only natural that his Majesty should be represented at the sale.

This remarkable collection, whose disposal drew philatelists from all parts of the world to London, was discovered in the attic of a Mayfair mansion. The stamps were bought in the 'sixties for less than £40, and when put up for auction brought in no less than £5,359.

Empire stamps figured largely in the collection, prominent among them being a block of stamps from Ceylon which cost the original collector 5s., and which realized £650. A block, or unbroken sheet, of stamps preserved intact is much more valuable than the same number of single stamps.

Doubtless it was the Empire stamps which interested the King. Though he has often been described as a "collector of foreign stamps," you could look through all the 300 leather-bound volumes that hold his collection without finding a single stamp of a foreign country. His Majesty is actually a collector of Empire stamps, and his stamp library is regarded as the finest of its kind in the world.

Among the King's Treasures.

At times parties of philatelists have visited the Palace to see this wonderful collection, which is kept in an upper room of Buckingham Palace. When they have done so the King has been there, seeking for fresh information on the subject of which he is already a master.

So keen is the King on philately that if he is missing during any of his rare hours of leisure when in residence, some member of his family will say: "He is sure to be in the stamp-room."

One of the King's greatest bargains

is an early Mauritius stamp which he bought years ago for £1,400, and which is to-day worth 4,000 guineas. It is a relic of the days when an old watchmaker "struck the stamps" of Mauritius singly with a hand die.

His Majesty is very proud of a section devoted to "errors" and "curiosities." Typical of this section is a stamp on which "pence" is spelt "pence."

Royalty Leads the Way.

The collection also includes relics of days when small, outlying parts of the Empire ran out of stamps of a particular value. In such circumstances it was the custom to use a stamp of the next highest value, printing the new value over it in black. In one case this overprinted value was put on upside down, making the specimen a curiosity and error in one.

Many of the curiosities and errors relate to stamps of current issue and bearing the King's own head. One might mistakenly imagine that examples of such mistakes would be offered to his Majesty, but it is the duty of the examiners to destroy every stamp that is not entirely correct, and only those that have escaped their vigilance get on the market.

Even if such stamps were offered to the King, it is certain that he would refuse them. He prefers to get his specimens as other people get theirs by purchase and exchange.

It was the King who started the stamp fashion that has become popular everywhere—that of collecting in blocks of four. When he can do so his Majesty always buys in this way.

A block of four is four stamps torn off the sheet not in strip fashion, but so that they are two wide and two deep. They are rare, because in the old days it was the custom of post-offices to serve quantities of stamps in strips.

VICTORS ALL!

The two greatest poisons in life are fear and worry. If these could be eradicated—and they can—then never once need we falter. These poisons affect the blood, dim our outlook, hasten death and disease.

For success we need to enter into relationship with all conquerors and conquering things. Things that promote uplifting thoughts and hopes that the constructive will bring us to the positive principles which defy everything that is destructive.

The challenge is always there, and we ought to accept it and win through. It is always true that love is stronger than hatred, and goodwill is always a stimulating factor. Malice will corrode and tear down, whilst love is always a savour to life. Meet hatred with hatred and you will degrade yourself; meet it with kindness and you become elevated, and also the one who bears you hatred. It is a wonderful fact, but it is real.

Men who have thought in all ages and climates have come to know this truth. There is a Persian sage who said: "Always meet petulance with gentleness, and perverseness with kindness. A gentle hand can lead even an elephant by a hair. Reply to thine enemy with gentleness. Opposition to peace is sin." But he says: "If a man foolishly does me wrong I will return him the protection of my ungrudging love. The more evil comes from him, the more good shall go from me." The Chinese have this proverb: "The wise man avenges injuries by benefits. Whilst the Hindu believes: 'Return good for evil, overcome anger by love, hatred never ceases by hatred but by love.'"

Now the question is: Can this be practised in a world like ours? I can imagine someone saying: "Yes, this is all very well in theory, but if you had to live where I do and among the people I have to meet, you would say less about love and more about holding your own and getting your own back!"

But we were talking about success and the successful, and if one is to return evil for evil and railing for railing, he is not successful neither is he trying to win success.

Every man can decide for himself in these things, and if a man will win he can, in anything and everything. It is his privilege and the power is

within. Never mind whether you have tried and failed. Try again.

You were not able to walk the first time you put your foot to the ground, and you had not conquered the "winged art" when you learned the shorthand alphabet. You had to try much and often, and if one will determine that he will beautify his corner of the world by his kindness and sympathy he will do it.

Psychologists say that if we learn to concentrate on anything, we shall attract that thing to us, whether it be wealth, health, beauty, power, or God, and these things spell victory. If you are passed in the race, don't give up running, for you are not beaten. Whilst life courses in your veins you are not on the losing side. The Old Book says: "All things are possible to him that believeth. Then what ever your task, whether it be learning a language, or pursuing business, or domestic worries, believe that you can and you will."

The Inverted-Jar Trick.

Lay a lemon on the table and place a jar upside down over it. The problem is to pick up the jar and place it on another table—with the lemon still inside it.

Persons who attempt to perform this feat will try to scoop up the lemon. But that is not allowed. The jar must be mouth down all the time.

The real method of performing the trick, requires a little practice, but the knack is soon acquired.

Take hold of the jar and whirl it rapidly about. The lemon will speed around inside the jar, and as soon as it is traveling at a good rate carry the jar over to the other table, whirling it all the time. Set it down and the lemon will still be inside.



True in Their Case.

Hubby (complainingly): "Women seem to think they're head and shoulders above men."

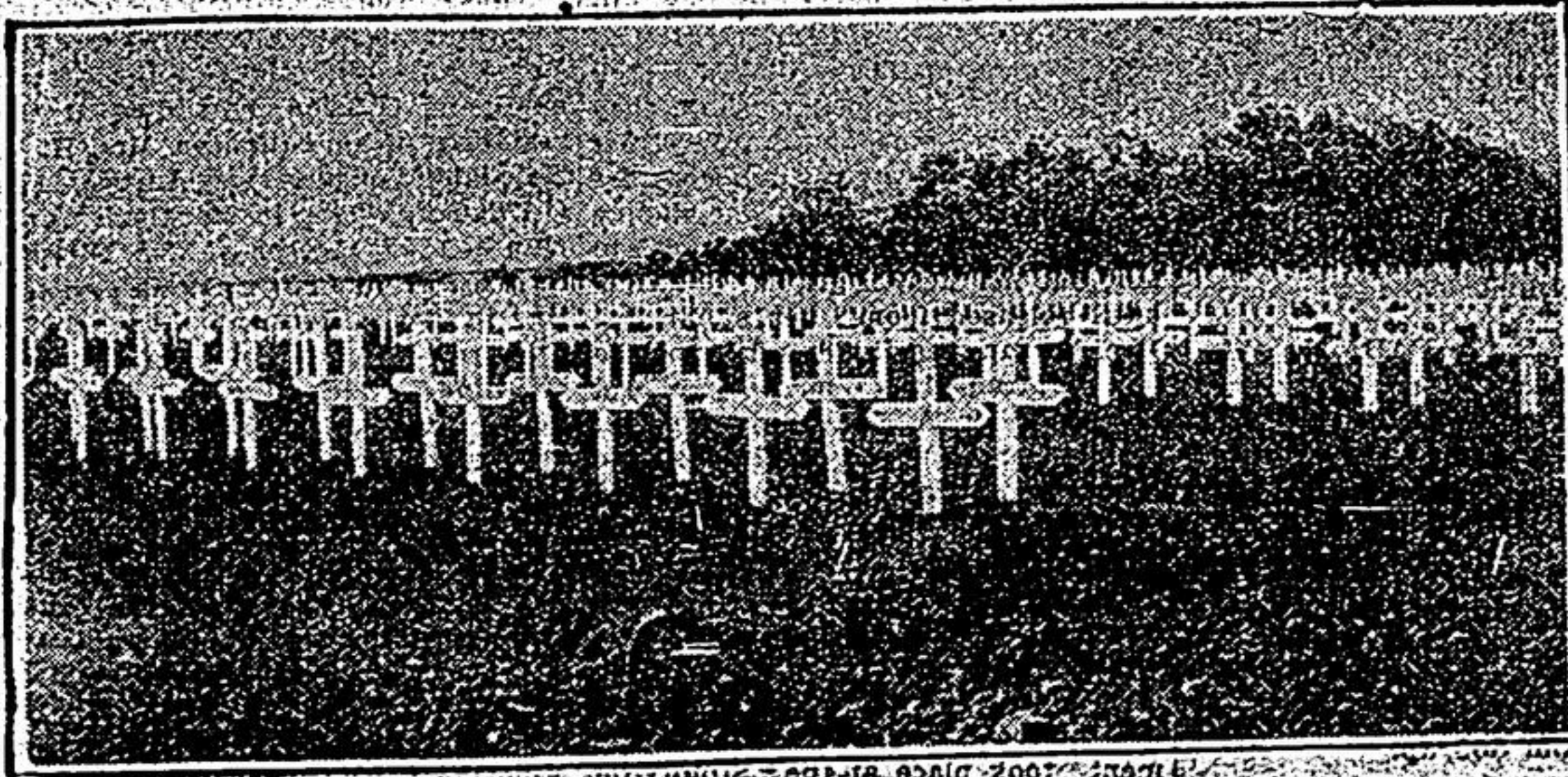
Wife (shortly): "Well, it's sometimes quite true!"

A Famous Hymn.

The hymn, "From Greenland's Icy Mountains," was composed at Wrexham in 1819. On Whit-Sunday in that year Dr. Shipley, Dean of St. Asaph and Vicar of Wrexham, preached a sermon in his church on behalf of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel. Heber was son-in-law to Dr. Shipley and was on a visit. The doctor, on the previous Saturday, asked Heber to "write something for them to sing in the morning," and in a few minutes Heber produced the hymn now so well known all over the world.

India's Industrial Growth.

India is now the eighth largest industrial country in the world, according to reports presented at a recent meeting of the East India Association in London.



The Canadian-English cemetery at Saloniki is shown above in a recent photograph.