

## Wright County Monitor.

PUBLISHED WEEKLY WEDNESDAY BY  
J. C. HARRISON, Editor and Proprietor.

WEDNESDAY, May 30 1888



(In Effect Dec. 25 1887.)

THE IOWA ROUTE

Burlington, Cedar Rapids & N. R'y.

Trains leave CLARION as follows

GOING NORTH

Mail 2:41 p m

Express 3:10 a m

Freight 3:10 a m

GOING SOUTH

Mail 1:40 p m

Express 1:10 p m

Freight 1:10 p m

GOING SOUTH

Mail 7:30 a m

Express 8:45 a m

Freight 8:45 a m

Mixed leave Clarion 3:27 p m

GOING SOUTH

Mail 8:50 p m

Express 9:33 p m

Freight 9:33 p m

Mixed leave Clarion 10:18 a m

GOING SOUTH

Mail 1:00 p m

Express 1:10 p m

Freight 1:10 p m

Mixed leave Clarion 3:27 p m

GOING SOUTH

Mail 8:50 p m

Express 9:33 p m

Freight 9:33 p m

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SICK.—P. H. Goslin's little boy has been seriously ill for several days past, but is now said to be some better.

HERE.—A lady friend of Mrs. E. J. Tillingshast, residing at Raymond, this State, is making her an agreeable visit.

IN JAIL.—The "kid" who was charged with stealing tickets from the C. & N. W. depot was indicted last week and is now in jail at Webster City awaiting trial. He is unquestionably a tough character.

MEET.—The board of supervisors convene at this place next Monday, June 4th, Messrs. Wasem, Pepper and Elder are busy examining the books and vouchers of the auditor and treasurer preparatory to the regular semi-annual settlement.

ATTENDING.—The members of Gen. Lyon Post and Woman's Relief Corps, accompanied by the band and quite a number of our citizens, are at Goldfield to-day for the purpose of participating in the memorial exercises being held there.

ORGANIZED.—A Sunday School was organized at the Shillington school house in Dayton last Sunday with officers as follows: J. E. Rowen, Supt; D. Sheffield, Asst.; Thos. Shillington, Sec.; Miss Yocum and Mr. Fritz Librarian. It starts out with a good membership.

A MISTAKE.—The report was current yesterday morning that the writer was one of the movers in the so-called "Indignation Meeting" held Monday night. The person who started the report either willfully misstated facts or else did not know what he was talking about. We neither advised such a proceeding, printed the bills or in any way had the least thing to do with the affair further than attend the meeting as a listener and looker on.

INDICTED.—A couple of town boys were last week indicted by the grand jury for various misdemeanors. We are informed that they confessed to having broken into Shepler's store last summer, Spangler's billiard hall, Fred Estes' residence and sundry other acts of a questionable character. There is general sympathy for the boys' parents, who are respectable people and do not countenance such deeds even in their own children, but the opinion seems to prevail that the lads should be taught a lesson that will be of benefit to them and not forgotten in future.

GOT A VERDICT.—Last week the case of A. N. Minor and E. Alexander against the B. & N. railway company (for damages claimed to have been sustained by them last fall through an accident that occurred while driving over a "crossing" which was partially obstructed by cars) was tried and resulted in a verdict in their favor, \$400 being allowed in the first case and \$150 in the latter. Nagle & Birdsell appeared as counsel for the plaintiffs and Mr. Tracy, of Burlington, and R. H. Whipple for defense. It was a hotly contested case and was tried for all there was in it.

ILL TIMED.—On Monday bills were posted about town announcing that an indignation meeting would be held at the court house in the evening for the purpose of entering a "protest" against the action of the Grand Jury and Coroner's Jury in the case of the death of Mr. Geo. Diggle by poison. The poster was signed "Many Citizens" and at the hour named the court room was crowded with men and boys. While it is true that the acts of officials are a fair subject for criticism and that every citizen has the legal and moral right to express his opinion on all questions that affect the public good, it is equally true that no benefit could arise from censuring the official bodies named. For this reason we believe the holding or calling of such a meeting was out of place. Any one feeling dissatisfied with the action of the grand jury, and wishing to act, has an undoubted right to go before the proper official and swear out a warrant for the arrest of the person supposed to be guilty. There is a good deal that might properly be said on this subject but we have only one more observation to make at present. For the good of all concerned it looks as though it would have been better to have accepted the statement that Diggle was "subject to heart disease" and buried him next day without any investigation.

A FINE ONE.—It is said that the Memorial Address delivered by Rev. McGwire at the M. E. church last Sunday forenoon was an eloquent tribute to the memory of those who sacrificed their lives in defense of the Nation. It has been promised us for publication.

GONE.—The Ford Troupe played to a small audience on Saturday night, departing for Iowa Falls next morning, to which place Mrs. Diggle went the night before. She evidently prefers remaining with the company to returning to her six months' old babe at Sioux Falls, although the latter is said to be ill and sadly in need of a mother's care.

## WAS IT SUICIDE, OR MURDER?

George Diggle, of Sioux Falls, D. T., Dies suddenly in Clarion on Thursday Evening, Under circumstances that clearly show Morphine Poisoning to have been the cause of Death.

Our usually quiet town was the scene of intense excitement last Thursday evening on the announcement being made that a member of the Ford Dramatic Troupe had been taken suddenly and dangerously ill at the residence of Mrs. S. Overacker—at which place a portion of the troupe had been boarding during their stay in town. Not far from 8 o'clock Dr. Marietta was summoned to attend the sick man, who proved to be George Diggle, of Sioux Falls, D. T., and husband of the leading actress in the Ford Dramatic Troupe. Up to the time of the stranger's illness it was generally supposed by our citizens that Mrs. Diggle (whose stage name was given as Jessie Leland), was the wife of Clint G. Ford. The first one to whom we applied for information was the organist of the troupe, asking him if the man was in a dangerous condition and whether it was true that he had taken morphine as was reported. His reply was that Diggle had not taken morphine, that he was subject to heart disease, had had a "bad spell" during the afternoon, but would soon be all right again. Hearing a good deal of talk about the matter we went to the residence of Mrs. Overacker to see if any additional light could be had on the subject. As we entered the room where Diggle lay Dr. Marietta stood by the bed side with his hand over the sick man's heart and almost instantly after remarked "he is dead." This was not far from 8:30 o'clock; not to exceed five minutes later Mrs. Diggle came to the bed room door and made this inquiry of the doctor: "Is he better?" The doctor answered that he was dead, whereupon Mrs. D. threw up her hands, exclaimed "My God!" and slowly sank to the floor. A member of the troupe who was standing behind her held out his hands to catch her and he and Dr. Marietta placed her in a large arm rocking-chair that stood near by. The doctor at once bathed her temples and wrists with camphor, felt her pulse and returned to the corpse. We stood by the chair watching Mrs. D. as she reclined there apparently unconscious and thought it very strange that her face should remain its natural color; we then felt the pulse of her right wrist and the heat was strong and steady. Knowing from previous experience with fainting persons that such a thing was impossible with a person where the pulse was natural and the color unchangeable we became fully satisfied that her "faint" and "unconsciousness" were a poorly executed piece of acting. In response to an inquiry shortly after as to whether or not the faint was real Dr. Marietta informed us that it was a sham. The doctor pronounced Diggle's death to have been caused by morphine and Coroner Garth was notified, who selected a jury and fixed 9 o'clock the next morning as the time for holding an inquest,—which took place at his office with closed doors, consequently the public knew but very little of the evidence introduced. The testimony in writing shows, in substance as follows:

Bertha Diggle—Am wife of deceased; married him four years ago in Philadelphia; he was 39 years old; had lived in Sioux Falls a year and a half; was boarding there; he came to Clarion Wednesday night at 11 o'clock; came up to the opera house and went home with me to Mrs. Overacker's. He was with me most of the day; acted strange. I first noticed it just before dinner. When sitting on the porch I said I didn't believe I could sing that night; he said "yes, do; it may be the last time you ever will sing for me." I was to go home with him next Tuesday from Iowa Falls. He had an attack of typhoid fever last spring, since then he had been subject to spells of despondency and forgetfulness; I first noticed him sick at supper. Mr. Ford, Mrs. Overacker, he and I were at supper. He had been subject to some trouble with his heart for about five years. I first noticed he seemed sleepy; that was about half past six. He got worse; I sent for Dr. Marietta. I got some morphine from the drug store yesterday afternoon. He had brought me two bottles of beer from Sioux Falls;

about half past five he asked me if I wanted a glass of beer. I went in and he poured out six glasses and set it on the table. He poured out another and handed me and he drank the one he had already poured out. I got 50 cents worth of morphine; it was marked 25 grains. There has been no unpleasantness between us. We were out walking at half past four Thursday. He did not know I took morphine. I told the druggist I wanted 50 cents worth of morphine in six-eighths grain powders. After he laid down on the bed I sat beside him; he tried to talk but could not understand just what he said; this was after the doctor was sent for. I think I put the morphine in the pocket of my wrap, which was hanging in the bedroom. I drank the glass of beer he poured out for me; he drank his at the same time and said to me "you wash these glasses out," and I did. He said at the supper table "I have been nervous all day; I believe that beer went to my head." I left the Andrews Opera Company September 8, '87; joined Ford's March, 10, '88. From September 8th till March 10th was with my husband keeping house in Sioux Falls, Dakota.

Dr. Marietta—Am physician and surgeon; was called to see deceased last evening. He was said to have heart trouble. His wife said "do something, he is subject to heart disease." Examined him. Heart and pulse regular but slow; he was lying in bed with his clothes on; stripped him; gave him sulphate of atropia hyperdermically; he was breathing 15 times in 2 minutes, wholly unconscious; there was a beer bottle with two glasses out; I was looking around and she asked "what are you doing?" I said I am trying to find what the man has taken. She said, "My God! he has taken my morphine." Then she called me to the kitchen and said she was in the habit of taking one-eighth grain at a time; that she had got 50 cents worth that day. After he died she fell over; we put her in a chair, she was not in a faint, recovered in a short time. Every symptom indicated morphine poisoning. In my judgment that caused his death.

S. B. Hamilton—Am a druggist, Mrs. Diggle was in my store yesterday between 5 and 5:30 o'clock. She wanted 50 cents worth of morphine powders, one-eighth grain powders. I told her we had eighth grain pills; she said she didn't want the pills; I went back to the case to put up the powder; I weighed out two grains, which would make 16 powders. She came back and asked if it was 50 cents worth. I told her it was not 50 cents worth, but by dividing it into powders the work was worth more than the medicine. She said then I needn't make it into powders, it wasn't necessary. I asked her if she was in the habit of using morphine, so she could tell a dose; told her an eighth grain was the usual dose. I asked her if I should weigh out 50 cents worth. She said she guessed so. When I asked her if she was in the habit of using it she said not often, probably once in a couple of months. I weighed her out 25 grains; gave it to her in an envelope marked "25 grains sulphate morphine." When I had the two grains she asked me how much a person could take. I told her one-eighth of a grain was an ordinary dose. She asked me if two grains would kill any one. I told her it depended whether the person was used to taking it or not; that some persons might take a bottle full, 60 grains, in three or four days, I think it was after that she said I needn't put it up in powder; I put out on a paper what I thought was an eighth of a grain and showed her that she could tell what was a dose, I went home as soon as I put it up, and when I got home it was half past five.

Clint G. Ford—Am manager of the Ford Troupe; knew the deceased about four years, at Brookings, Dakota, first. I was present when he was taken ill last evening, about six o'clock, at Mrs. Overacker's. We were at supper; I was invited by Mrs. Overacker and Mr. and Mrs. Diggle to take supper; had been down near the church studying; I stopped to get a book I had left there and they asked me to stay to supper. I was just finishing supper when he said "I've been feeling queer all day." I then left the table and went on the porch to study again. I was there a few minutes and came up town. After a short time some one told me some member of the Company was sick. His wife told me before I left he was sick. I went

down; the doctor was there when I got there; I was there perhaps three-fourths of an hour. He told me in Sioux Falls, about April 24th, he was in the habit of taking morphine for the headache and when he was not feeling well. He also told me yesterday afternoon that when he got "blue" or felt bad he took a dose of morphine. His wife also told me that he sometimes took morphine for headache.

Mrs. Caroline Overacker—This deceased was staying at my house; he came there night before last. He was first taken sick at the supper table last night. His wife said to him "What ails you, you look so bad?" He said, "I guess nothing much; I'll be over it in a minute." He went and laid on the bed; she went in with him. We sat down to supper about six o'clock. He seemed drowsy before he left the table. Half an hour or an hour before supper, she took two glasses and went into the bedroom; after she came out she asked me if I liked beer; I told her no. She then had the glasses in her hand and went to the well and washed them, I don't remember her coming out of the bedroom after she took the glasses until she brought them out. I think he was in the bed-room all this time. He seemed in good spirits while at my house. I heard a conversation between them yesterday afternoon about her going back home. He wanted her to go back home. She told me she wouldn't be contented to go back home.

Rev. W. W. McGwire—I was called by Mrs. Overacker about six o'clock to see the deceased. He was then insensible and breathing heavily. His wife said he was dying; she said he was subject to heart trouble; that she first noticed him sick at supper time. The doctor came some 15 minutes after I did. I was there about half an hour and went home to tea; returned in about half an hour and remained until he died.

Clarence Overacker—I was present when deceased was taken sick at the table; it was about six o'clock. He spoke, said he was sleepy. His wife looked at him and said you are sick. He said "I guess it will pass off in a little while." Then he went into the bed-room and closed, or partly closed, the door. She remained seated near the table a short time and he called to her and she went into the bed-room. Went down town soon after. He came to our house after the play Wednesday night. I heard them talking for some time after they retired. I think an hour, could not hear what they said but heard their voices. Mr. Ford was there at different times with her; he came home with her from the play, or some one did, and she said it was him. After I went down town I didn't come back until after the doctor came. I was about the house when he died; was not in the room. After the examination of witnesses the body was removed from Mrs. Overacker's to the rear room in the furniture store, where a postmortem examination was held by Dr. Marietta and Dr. Mullinix, and below will be found their sworn statement to the Coroner's jury.

Dr. Marietta, recalled—Made post-mortem with Dr. Mullinix; took out the heart and stomach and they were placed in the hands of the Coroner; examined the lungs and liver. Found all these organs in a normal condition. My opinion still is that he died of morphine poisoning.

Dr. Ristino sworn—From Dr. Marietta's statement of the case and from what I saw at the postmortem I am of the opinion that the man died of morphine poisoning.

Dr. Mullinix sworn—I acted with Dr. Marietta in making the postmortem examination and I concur in his opinion.

S. B. Hamilton recalled—This paper shown me; I recognize the writing on it as mine. It looks like the same one I delivered to Mrs. Diggle.

D. N. Yarnell sworn—I was present when this man died; I went to-day, with W. W. Courson and H. Alder, and examined the privy vault at Mrs. Overacker's. Found this paper in the vault; there is written on it "25 grains sulph morphine."

F. E. Estes sworn—I was at Mrs. Overacker's soon after the alarm was given that the man there was seriously ill. I saw Mrs. Diggle going from the out-house toward the house, she was crying and that attracted my attention. This was about a quarter after six. When I went there Mr.

McGwire, Mr. Yarnell and Chasley Young were there.

Charles F. Humston sworn—Did not know deceased; knew his wife. She was with the troupe when I indicted it. Have only known her since that time. Her time was out the first of June; I wanted her to stay longer and intended to have him go along in some capacity. I have known of her using morphine after performances.

VERDICT OF THE JURY.

STATE OF IOWA,

Wright County.

An examination was held at Clarion, in the county of Wright, and a place of town, before Thomas Garth, Coroner of said county, on the 25th day of May 1888, upon the body of George Diggle, who lying dead by the house whose name is hereunto subscribed. The said jurors upon their oath to do, after having heard the evidence and examined said body, we do find that the deceased came to his death by an overdose of morphine administered by some person or persons to be unknown.

Given under our hands at the time and place of said inquisition above mentioned.

THOMAS GARTH, Coroner.

I do hereby certify that the foregoing is a correct statement and account of an examination taken by and before me and the jurors aforesaid at the time and place aforesaid, and of the result.

THOMAS GARTH, Coroner.

The matter was laid before the grand jury the following morning, and that body, we understand dismissed the case after reading the testimony above given, without calling a single witness or in any way attempting to solve the question of whether or not a crime had been committed. The only reason we have heard given for such a policy is what a grand juror said to us, in answer to the query how it came that no action was taken "I don't believe the woman could have been convicted and to have found an indictment would have been a big bill of expense to the county." It is evident to every one who knows of the case that it was either suicide or murder, and we are any candid, thinking person if there ought not to have been a thorough investigation by the grand jury to determine, if possible, which of the two propositions was the correct one? In a case where there is reasonable ground for thinking that a person has been murdered, no matter how, is it not right and proper that every effort be made to ferret out the one committing the crime, regardless of expense. Is human life to be weighed by dollars and cents? That the grand jury is composed of honorable men no one acquainted with them for a moment doubts, but it is something remarkable that they should pass over so important a matter without more thorough investigation. By perusing this evidence above given it will be seen that the bulk of it relates to the cause of death (as is the province of the coroner's jury,) rather than the manner in which it occurred. If we are correctly informed on the subject the question of thorough and systematic investigation in such cases is not discretionary with the grand jury, but made obligatory by law. From what we know of the affair, and we believe we have investigated it as carefully as any one, we have no hesitancy in saying that we never heard or knew of a case where circumstantial evidence of foul play was stronger than in this instance, and so far as we have heard expression of opinion from five persons entertain similar views, though many express doubt as to the evidence being strong enough to insure conviction. Should so grave a matter be allowed to drop because there is not positive proof to convince with. If so would not the convictions for murder and robbery be few and far between? There is considerable evidence of a circumstantial character known that tends toward pointing out the guilty party, but as the matter is apparently at an end there is now no use in referring to it.

COUNCIL PROCEEDINGS.—The town council met in regular session May 26, 1888. Present: Mayor Ladd, Recorder Peterson, and Trustees Nagle, Gates, Rogers, Jones and Roblin.

Upon motion, the Mayor appointed trustees Jones and Rogers a committee to purchase lamp, slating for engine house, horse troughs and boxes for protection of hose at cistern, for benefit of Fire Company.

On motion, the following resolution was adopted. Resolved, That the owners of property abutting Ives Street, on south side of block 7, and abutting on Maple Street, on east side of block 3, in Rail Road Addition to Clarion, Iowa, be and hereby required to build and construct a sidewalk along the south side of said block 7, and east side of said block 3. Said walk to be built of iron boards laid close together, to be four feet wide and to rest on three stringers 2x4 inches, with bearings under the stringers every four feet, the boards to be securely nailed to the stringers, and all to be done in thirty days.

Upon motion, the following bills were allowed and warrants drawn:

J. R. Lockwood, nails, road fund, \$4.75

D. V. Yarnell, road work, road fund, 1.50

Jerry Fairbanks, " " 1.50

Minor & Jones, " " 1.50

general " " 1.50

On motion, adjourned. Resolved, C. F. Peterson, Recorder.