

[Morgan County Democrat]

THE HOLOCAUST

When a great war breaks loose in the world, when any great disaster overtakes us, the newspapers, true to human nature, play it up to attract the attention of their readers and sell more papers. This is true when some great tragedy happens "in the world," but when the tragedy happens at home, when home property is ruined and the lives of our neighbors whom we meet every day and respect and admire and love are snuffed out in the twinkling of an eye, the home papers have no inclination to exaggerate, no desire to even bring the realization of their loss any more forcibly home to the anxious ones, no desire to keep the horror of it all fresh in their minds. It is an unpleasant task even to present the facts as conservatively as they can be repeated and tell the truth—we wish we could get away from it all — back to the even tenor of our ways. Like in a horrid dream, our subconscious mind keeps wishing that we could awake and find it all only a terrible nightmare; could awake and start down Main Street and find the pretty, Walker garage unmolested, with that brilliant light in front still casting good cheer over the lower end of the street, upon the bridge and across the river into Malta; could step inside and see the long rows of cars on either side of the room, with Ed Sheets and the other boys working away on repairs, with the cheerful faces of Frank and Chester Walker to greet us at the door. The Walker garage always seemed to us like the barometer of prosperity, it was the institution that locally indicated the tremendous strides that the automobile industry has been making all over this country in the last dozen years, its growing business said to us "the people have money, they can take time for pleasure if they really want to, they are outgrowing the old slow ways of transportation, we are in the age of progress."

But, alas! it is no dream. One of the most substantial businesses of the county is wrecked, some of the finest cars owned in the county are junk, two of our brightest young business men are dead, and with them some of their best mechanics. One home is wifeless and motherless, one home is short a dear little ten-year-old boy, several brave men who fought to extinguish the flames from the clothing of the victims are suffering with painful burns, and a community that was happy, prosperous and having a good time in a quiet, orderly way, is bowed in sorrow and wondering if life will ever be the same again.

It is awful.

The dead will be buried by loving hands and their memory cherished for many long years; the suffering ones who live will be nursed back to health perhaps, but bearing many ugly scars; the property damaged so badly, in time, will be replaced and possibly that beautiful corner will be restored and made more beautiful than ever. We'll go on in our regular professions, businesses, pleasures, plans, and pursue our own fond hopes again - but not carelessly, not thoughtlessly, not frivolously. The shock will make us more serious for a long time. Some of us will never forget it. All who have anything to do with gasoline will for a while be more careful, their loved ones will be more uneasy about them, we will "slow up" for a season and be a little more meditative.

If there is any lesson in it all for us, it is only incidental. It was all a horrible accident and teaches nothing but the uncertainty of life and the folly of letting its pleasures and cares blind us to the truth which is impressed and reimpressed upon us over and over again, that this life is fleeting, mysterious, and but the gateway to the great spirit life beyond. Our supreme and eternal happiness can come only in the reunion on the other side, on that peaceful shore whose realms death and disaster may not invade.

And yet, life must not be a funeral march for us. It contains much of mirth, merriment, humor, good cheer which we must have. We must go on, and let's be happy in our journey, but not hilarious, not heedless, a little kinder to each other, more charitable toward our faults, and with hearts full of sympathy for the relatives of the loved ones who perished. The burden which rests heavily on us now will bear down on them for long sad months and years. Their comfort in this dark hour must come from above.