ORIGINAL DEFECTIVE

A TEMPLE OF HYGEIA.

She said she wanted one hundred dollars *dreadfully*. Many people do. But Mrs. Miller expressed herself with an intensity which left no doubt that in her case there was something more than the ordinary and general desire for this convenient sum of money. Her tone bore testimony to a fierce longing, her whole face was screwed into wrinkles by the vehemence of her feelings, and her features gathered together in a bunch so that her mouth, nose and eyes had the effect of taking counsel with one another that they might by their united powers taste, sniff or spy out the desideratum.

But one hundred dollars to Mrs. Miller was a thing to be mentioned with a sigh of despair. She had not for years had so much money in her hands all at once. There was very little ready money afloat in all the town of Stebbinsville, the popular method being to exchange directly the actual goods of this world without resorting to an intermediary handling of dollars and cents. Thus, if the grocer's wife wanted a new dress, the local draper took it out in so many weeks or months of provisions. The doctor had meal from the miller in return for his pills and nostrums. There was even a case on record where a bridal veil had been balanced off in salt pork. There was no bank in Stebbinsville, and you couldn't get a check cashed short of the nearest large town. This system might work very well if it held exclusive sway, but unfortunately it has not been generally enough adopted to make it an entire success, and when Stebbinsvillians have wants which other Stebbinsvillians are not able to supply, then comes the necessity for money. Mrs. Miller's want was of the unfortunate class just mentioned. No amount of butter and milk, her usual legal tender, could serve to purchase its gratification. Nothing but cash—hard cash.

Mrs. Miller's lot had never been an easy one. Very early in her career had come that day that comes to some people—the day on which she discovered almost with a jump that she had nothing more to live for. And soon thereafter had followed the other day—the day upon which she had realized in the midst of mental and moral collapse that it was necessary to live still, nevertheless. She had continued to exist doggedly for a number of years after this. She had even grown to believe, with a kind of stoical enjoyment of the fact, that she could go on so for ever if need be. But she was destined at last to surprise herself just once more. By the time that others had resignedly, comfortably accepted her own theory that her career was practically at an end, she suddenly flamed up with a desperate determination to make the most of what remained of it. The most was not to be very much—it was not to be more happiness—only a little less misery. She demanded for herself the right to draw at least one thorn from her flesh and to spend the last of her days in healing up the wound. The thorn, to descend from figurative hights, was Granny Miller.

It is an ancient and reprehensible custom to speak ill of one's mother-in-law; no doubt many a really charming *belle mere* suffers undeservedly from the "black eye" which the social historian has given to her role. But as for Granny Miller—the mother-in-law of Mrs. Miller—she was, in fact, what is commonly supposed to be the pure type. She had a lively idea of her part in its popular conception, and was not a whit too good to be the butt of all waggish jests, the time-honored witticisms that have been concocted at the expense of her kind. She was a gossip, a scold, a gadabout and a meddler, bitter of tongue and prying of eye; in her old age she had added several troublesome infirmities to her vices. The old woman had made for herself such a reputation that when her only son married her daughter-in-law stoutly refused to take her in.

Granny's husband some years before this episode, dying with a sigh of relief, had left his widow what from a Stebbinsville point of view constituted a comfortable competency, but as time went on this property dwindled and dwindled away unaccountably, as property will, and in her old age the elder Mrs. Miller came to be regarded as little better than a pauper. She was not above accepting assistance from her neighbors, and had a habit of borrowing a pinch of tea here and half a loaf there, which habit was at last openly recognized as begging.

Finally the good people of Stebbinsville, weary of her importuning, made it a matter of scandal that the old crone should be left alone of nights in her ramshackle old house, a mark for practical jokes and marauders (with whom, nevertheless, it may be parenthetically remarked, Granny was abundantly able to cope); and it was at this time that the young Mrs. Miller, weakened by trouble, made a concession and took her mother-in-law in. Adeline Miller had already at this period renounced all hope of a comfortable and decent existence. Her husband, after many fluctuations, had settled into an acknowledged good-for-nothing. Three of her children had died in one winter of scarlet fever, and her only surviving daughter, Susie, who worked in the dairy with her mother, was a young person not destined to comfort the declining years of her parents. "Things is so bad now, they can't be any wuss," argued Adeline Miller—and so Granny came. Granny came, and, to be brief, Satan came also! No pen and ink could depict what followed in the years that ensued. Suffice it to say that Adeline Miller in estimating her own powers of endurance had reckoned without her guest. There came a time at last when, in her own phraseology, Adeline "put her foot down."

"Granny," she said one day, "I wish to goodness you'd go into an old folks' home. I can't stan' you no longer."

"Go into an old folks' home? I ain't got any objection, Adeline," responded Granny unexpectedly, "none whatsoever; but it costs money," she went on with complacency, "a hundred dollars down, I've heard. At least that's what they charged for Aunt Sairy Ma'shall," and the old woman grinned; she knew that this was a poser.

It was very shortly after this that the younger Mrs. Miller confessed to a neighbor that she wanted one hundred dollars *dreadfully*. "Ef I could on'y sell the cows!" sighed Adeline—but she couldn't sell the cows and live. She had a wild plan for supplying a neighboring asylum for the aged with unlimited dairy produce in lieu of the admission fee for her mother-in-law, but she learned upon secret application to the authorities of the institution that this method of payment, even were she able to pursue it, would not be acceptable. She ransacked the newspapers with terrible eagerness in search of chances for money-making.

From time to time her hopes were fanned by promising announcements. She invested a dollar which she could ill spare in materials for work at home, work which, according to a plausible argument, would speedily fill her lap with gold. When the materials came by the mail Adeline tremblingly undid the package that contained them. She could feel the power of Midas already tingling in her hands. The package contained a photograph, a colored photograph of a fat and fatuous young lady smiling vaguely, with lips whose red had evidently been left over from her sash. Her eyes and bonnet ribbons, both blue, had in like manner resigned themselves accommodatingly to the exigencies of an economical palette—but her real glory was her jewelry, or at least her gold, all of which had been highly brought out by an unsparing application of yellow. Adeline looked at this; possibly she thought it fine—but she failed to understand. There were other photographs—uncolored. They seemed to be the photographs of dead people—they had that vague, ghostly uncertainty which marks a reproduction from a daguerreotype. Their watch chains, rings and earrings evidently needed toning up and their complexions solidifying; their features seemed to be floating in the clouds. There was a printed letter in the package which explained to Adeline, after she found it, a number of things. What she made out most plainly in the midst of its seductive phraseology was that the entire success of this money-making scheme involved another remittance from herself—a considerable larger one than the first, for which she would receive a colorist's outfit. She could then enjoy an unlimited opportunity to perfect herself in the charming art of which she held an example—and her many acquaintances would no doubt besiege her with orders for her work.

After the first blow Adeline did not let the failure of this venture trouble her too greatly. She had already something else in mind. She was going to communicate with Mr. Rufus L. Bucks of St. Louis, who had announced in several papers that he would show any lady who should send him a postage stamp an infallible means for making from $40 to $50 a month in her own home; and Mr. Bucks had added in larger type that he was "no humbug." It was only after several disappointing experiences that Adeline learned to detect beneath flowers of rhetoric a call for canvassers. She couldn't go canvassing. Adeline's opinion of human nature had never been very high. It sunk at last to the lowest depth. All hope—all faith deserted her. It was then that something actually came to her and came unsought.

The house in which the Millers lived stood upon what had once been the top of a rounded hill. But in order to make a bed for the railroad that something more than a score of years ago had been run through Stebbinsville, this hill had been cut exactly in two as neatly as one might divide a pound cake, and the half which in the days of more prosperous residents had formed the front yard of the dwelling had been carried off, bit by bit, in cartloads. The house had thus been left to overlook a precipice—a perpendicular escarpment of raw red earth—that refused even with time to be healed with a sod. The great frame structure looming up high and gloomy above this mutilated face of the hill seemed to be perched upon the very edge of the world. Seen from below it stamped itself against a boundless sky.

When the trains came plunging into light from a tunnel which ended a few rods farther down the line, the gaunt old habitation, with its flapping "washing" on the line, was the first thing to catch the eye of the westward-bound traveler. Fred Boomer, the advertising agent for a new and promising liver pill, known to commerce as the "Millennium Pellet," raised his eyes to this object one day and had an idea. Fred's ideas always came in flashes, and he acted upon them with lightning-like rapidity, which proved him to be a true child of the electric age. Three minutes after he had from the car window caught sight of the house on the cliff he was jauntily descending from the train as it drew breath at the Stebbinsville station, although his ticket bore the name of a town at least twenty miles farther on. The two rival Stebbinsville hackmen rushed upon him as their prey. Fred sprang into the nearest conveyance. "You may set me down," he said to the triumphant Jehu, "a rod from that big shanty that's perched upon the edge of the hill below here."

"Miller's?"

"Well, I suppose so! What's Miller's line of biz?"

"Unbottlin'," said Jehu with a grin.

"What!"

"Why, bottlin' 's a business, an' so I suppose *un*-bottlin' may be called one tu," and Jehu guffawed at his own wit.

"Oh, yes, I see—drinks. Ha! ha! very funny. But what does his family subsist on?"

"She keeps a dairy."

"Mrs. Miller keeps a dairy? Thank you."

Ten minutes later Fred was lifting the latch of the Millers' gate, and the mistress of the house, who had a keen ear for its click, appeared in her doorway, the doorway which faced on the road at the back of the house.

"I wonder," said the young man with a diffident smile, "if I might ask you to give me a glass of milk?"

"I got milk to sell," said Mrs. Miller whose life had not cultivated in her the amenities.

"Of course, of course," murmured the embarrassed Boomer, struggling with agonies of fictitious bashfulness, "I thought," he went on timidly, "that I heard a cow moo as I was passing by and the sound actually made me homesick. I'm a city man at present, but I was born in the country once."

"Step in," said Mrs. Miller dryly, "and I'll fetch you a glass."

"I'm afraid I'm troubling you," he lisped shrinkingly.

"Oh, I'm used to trouble 's far 's that goes," said Adeline Miller with a hard laugh. "Maybe you'd like to sit down an' rest a little."

"Thank you, ma'am, I am tired." Boomer placed himself modestly on the edge of a chair. The room was the kitchen. A fat, sleepy cat was purring herself a lullaby before the stove; various pots and kettles on the fire hummed and murmured; a Dutch clock on the wall tick-tacked sedately. The atmosphere was steamy and redolent of to-day's cabbage, with just a vague suggestion of yesterday's onions. Boomer began to be conscious that he had breakfasted early, and he promised himself that he should have some cabbage for his luncheon, wherever that meal might be solemnized. Mrs. Miller had gone into another room, and presently returned, bringing the cool atmosphere of the cellar in her skirts. Boomer quaffed the milk which she placed before him as if it had been nectar. "Guess you don't keep a pump in your dairy, do you?" he remarked with emphasis. "You must make a first-rate thing out of those cows." Mrs. Miller responded with a sound in her throat that did not suggest enthusiasm. Then Boomer suddenly cast aside his timidity and assumed a winning and confidential manner.

"I wonder, Mrs. Miller," he said, settling more comfortably in his chair; "I wonder if you'd care to make a little extra money?"

Adeline Miller started. It seemed to her that the young man must be a mind-reader.

"Because if you do," went on Boomer, "I should like to offer you a chance. I have something here"—he drew a much labelled bottle from his pocket—"which—"

"Pshaw!" said Mrs. Miller; "I can't go a canvassin' with a husband and a mother-in-law."

"No—no—you mistake me—of course not," said Fred, smiling. "One moment, my dear madame. My idea, to be entirely frank with you, is to put an advertisement on the front of your house. This house is made for an ad., my dear Mrs. Miller, and it's a pure waste of material to let it go plain. Really, if you'll excuse me for so expressing myself, it's an extravagance for you to be living here without utilizing your frontage for the purpose which circumstances have so obviously destined it. If you'll consent to let me have 'Millennium Pellets' in five-foot white lettering on a deep azure background run across the front of this house I'll make you a handsome offer for it. This sort of thing is going to be all the rage in a year or two, madame, and you'll have the *pas* of all the rest of the townsfolk for setting the style. A house without an ad. five years from now is going to be a rare thing, in my mind. Space is getting precious, I can tell you. We're a great advertising country, ma'am—the greatest in the world. It's something to be proud of—it's something that every private citizen should glory in promoting. I don't say that there are not ads. and ads. The great question of the future is going to be 'what do you advertise?' A man is going to stand or fall by that. Now, Mrs. Miller, I'll tell you what it is, you can't start in on anything better than the 'Millennium Pellets.' It's the pill of the future. It's a sure cure for all the ills that flesh is heir to. In my opinion it is going to affect radically the longevity of the human race. I don't see why it shouldn't bring back the good old times and enable us to count our ages by the century, like Methuselah and the rest of the old worthies. Yes, mark my words, Mrs. Miller, mark my words——" Here Boomer paused for an instant to balance his chair nicely on its hind legs and to settle his shoulders against the wall behind him. "Mark my words——"

But Mrs. Miller at last broke in. "See here," she said, "What'll you pay me for lettin' it be put on."

Fred suddenly dropped his chair on all fours and leaned forward on the kitchen table.

"Now, that's what I like," he said. "I see you're a woman of business."

Mrs. Miller drew up a chair opposite him, and for the first time sat down. Boomer took out an old envelope from his waistcoat pocket and began to figure on the back of it. He seemed to be multiplying, dividing, adding and subtracting, and he puckered up his lips and whistled the latest popular air.

"I tell you what it is," said Mrs. Miller, who grew impatient at last. "I couldn't let you do it for less than a hundred dollars a year." She thought that she should probably frighten the young man away by her bold demand, but she said to herself that it must be that or nothing.

"You couldn't?" said Boomer looking up with surprise—surprise that she should let him off so easily. "Well, we'll call it a hundred dollars then, Mrs. Miller, an even hundred a year to be paid in monthly installments. And if you're tired of your bargain at the end of the first year we'll paint it all out for you as sober as a Quaker, and any color you like. Now, I suppose, I can have this little job begun at once. I'll send the painters over this very afternoon. I run up and down the road every few days, and the next time I pass in the train I want to see 'Millennium Pellets' as large as life when I look this way. I'm going to leave you a handful of circulars and this little bottle of the pills. Send you up a dozen by-and-by. You'd better try 'em. It's no joke; they're a splendid thing. Perhaps you think you're well, but what's the harm in being better—or even best? Let me see; I owe you for the milk. Now, Mrs. Miller, good-by. But I shall be in in the afternoon with those painters. Well, I am glad to have met you."

Mrs. Miller followed him to the gate. She seemed to be struggling with an idea which she found difficult to express. He had thought he was off, when she detained him by plucking his coat-sleeve to say: "I couldn't 'a' done it once, but I *guess* I can stan' it now. I don't know what the rest of 'em 'll say to it, but as long's I own the house, I d' know 's it makes any great difference." Boomer had a buoyant and reassuring reply for her, and he reminded her that she was about to enroll herself among the benefactors of the age. He even referred to the old house as a Temple of Hygeia. These little flights of fancy were amusing to himself, and he believed that they were none the less effective because they were imperfectly understood by the people upon whom he tried them. In the present instance the face of the woman to whom he spoke caught no reflected light from his radiant, impertinent visage, and he perceived that if he had succeeded this time, he might have done so at a slighter cost of enthusiasm. This woman was evidently influenced from within, rather than from without, in following his suggestions.

When he turned away with a florid salute, and descended the road with the springing step of success, Mrs. Miller against the gate followed him with hollow, lusterless eyes—with eyes that were looking through and beyond him into the consequences of her decision—in whose gaze Boomer was only a small and unimportant speck upon a broad field of vision. After a few moments her fixed look changed. There was a shortening of the focus that brought her back to her immediate foreground, and she drew a sigh in acknowledgment of her return to herself. She walked around to the front of the house. It was a hot summer day, and while the backyard was cool, almost damp, with closely set locust trees in front the sun beat upon the face of the dwelling, peeled off the white paint and warped the timber. The very atmosphere seemed to hum with the radiation of heat. The river, broad and smooth, that lay below the cliff beyond the railway, was a shimmering, white sheet of water, on which the sunlight danced in myriad points of fire. Mrs. Miller threw her apron over her head and looked up at the face of the house with blinking, watering eyes.

It had been rather a pretentious house once, with a great classic pediment supported by wooden pilasters which were now all warped out of plumb. Mrs. Miller had owned the place for twenty years; it had been her only inheritance from her father, who had purchased it in the days of its downfall—in the early days of the railway—and who had mortgaged it within an inch of its tenure. It was not a cheerful home, but Mrs. Miller had never been embarrassed by a choice between this and another. It was her home, such as it was. She wondered as she looked at it how the advertisement would appear across the front in "five-foot white lettering on a deep azure background." She fetched two or three sighs that were almost groans. "Temple of High Cheer," she muttered; "that's what that high falutin' chap called it." She was vaguely conscious that he had been amused, that he had made a joke; and she knew that the Stebbinsvillians would not hesitate to make other jokes—jokes which she would understand more perfectly. Adeline had a remnant of fierce pride—pride will lurk in the queerest places and survive the rudest shocks! Her face grew hot with shame as she stood there looking up at the house. Then Granny's voice, rasping, whining, familiarly peevish, came from within.

"A-a-de-li-ine."

"Well, I guess I can stan' it," muttered Mrs. Miller in conclusion as she went in.

Boomer lost no time in completing his arrangements, and in a day or two "Try Millennium Pellets," in huge letters of dazzling whiteness, shone upon Mrs. Miller's house. People pointed at it as they passed Stebbinsville in the trains and said, "There's enterprise for you." The advocate of "Rejuvenum," a rival pill, grew green with envy. This was just what Boomer wanted. The Stebbinsvillians came en masse to take a near look at the advertisement, although many of them could see it from their homes, below the cliff where the principal part of the village nestled from the wind. It was regarded as a magnificent joke—it was the best thing that had happened in Stebbinsville since old Uncle Rastus Bates had put overalls on his pet horse to keep the flies from bothering him. Nothing else was talked of in the post-office. A waggish story became current in the village to the effect that Miller, who had been absent at the time when the advertisement first appeared, had returned home afterward a good deal the worse for liquor, in the company of a Souter John, whom he loved like "a verra brither," and that the two men, appalled at the unexpected appearance upon the front of the Miller residence, and unable to make out the legend with any degree of accuracy, had construed the words of Boomer's "ad" into a dreadful warning—an out-of-doors version of the writing on the wall—a mystifying and unfamiliar form of the terrors.

Small boys, and some who were no longer small enough to be excused on the score of youth, hailed the Millers with derisive epithets when they appeared in the town, and especially Susie, when she went on a daily quest for mail. Pills were a bitterly sore subject to Susie, but strange to say it was the Millennium Pellet which turned a balance favorably for her in the most important matter in her life. Susie had been for years daily and hourly meditating escape from her gloomy home—two dashing young men of Stebbinsville, struck with her charms, and not over-particular in regard to family connections, having urged her to take up her abode in more desirable quarters. The difficulty had always been that there were two of them. If there had been but one, the affair would soon have been settled, but there were two, and to Susie's undiscerning eye the young men were as like as two peas, and so she paused and hesitated and time went on. Seeing that tt was to be only a case of persistency, each of her suitors determined to tire the other out, and there is no knowing to what extent the thing might have been carried had not Boomer's flaming "ad." suddenly changed the aspect of affairs. The Millennium Pellet was too much for Gus Davis—he withdrew from the contest after the first blast of ridicule, and faithful Matt Williams achieved a week later the success which is proverbially promised to patience and perseverance.

The wedding took place, with a conspicuous absence of ceremony, in the "First Reformed Church," and then, with heartless indifference, the bride turned her back upon her mother for ever. Adeline Miller was living with her teeth set now. It had all been harder even than she had feared, but she was "stan'in' it somehow," she said. You had to "stan' " things when it was necessary, and it was necessary to get rid of Granny, and this was the only way. When Adeline thought of this she looked at Granny and felt helped to "stan' " it. But Granny's behavior was very queer. Adeline had had a lively prevision of the old woman's "raisin' Cain" when she saw Boomer's work, but Granny had done nothing of the kind. Her only allusion to the "Millennium Pellet" had been: "Well Adeline, you *must* 'a' wanted money *dreadful*!" From the very beginning of the advertising epoch a change had come over Granny—she had begun to draw into herself and an unwonted stillness had settled upon her. She seemed, in a kind of unholy peace, to be feeding upon thoughts that were agreeable—even amusing. Adeline sometimes caught the old woman's eyes fixed upon her with a curious and uncanny twinkle in them. It gave Adeline the "creeps"—it gave her a sensation that after all Granny was not going to be cornered—that she was meditating some dodge. Adeline frequently said to herself, "What is it?"

In the eighth month of the "ad" (Mrs. Miller reckoned time only with relation to the "ad" now) Granny was found dead in her chair. Then it appeared to Adeline that a ghastly joke had been played upon her. She was positive that Granny had done it "a purpose." Granny had slipped away to add the sting of needlessness to all the mortification that Adeline had been "stan'in'." Her last moments had been entertained by the spectacle of her daughter-in-law's unnecessary struggles to get rid of her. She had been tickled by the consciousness that the offensive legend emblazoned upon Adeline's door would flourish—must flourish for three long months after it had ceased to have a reason for being. They buried the old woman in the graveyard of the First Reformed Church. There was no other inscription on the headstone than name and dates. Adeline Miller framed from her own fancy a little epitaph which jingled in her head—"Provokin' in Life, Provokin' in Death" it ran—but she kept it to herself.

A few weeks after Granny's funeral Adeline began her spring house-cleaning. It was early for it, but she felt a feverish desire to "clean up." The first thing that she attacked was Granny's armchair, a veteran piece of upholstery to to which the old woman had always clung, and which had been transported from her own house at the time of her removal to Adeline's. Adeline Miller ripped off the rags of ancient rep from the seat and back; the hair stuffing was good and she meant to cleanse it and make up the chair anew. It was a windy March day, and Adeline had carried the chair out in front of the house upon the shelf of land that was all that was left there of the yard. She sat down upon the ground to withstand the force of the gale that was blowing, and began to pull the stuffing into her lap. Out from the matted bunches of hair tumbled a shimmering shower of gold—bright, glittering gold that clinked upon the hard ground. Some of the pieces spun, one rolled away; the mass soon lay brilliant in the grass. "Money! money! Mercy! mercy! Money!" cried Adeline. She fell forward upon her knees and began to gather up the pieces with trembling fingers. They were double-eagles. Adeline had hardly every seen the coin before. She began to count, but her hands shook and her head was faint. "Twenty—forty—sixty—eighty—mercy, mercy! an' to think she had 'em all the time! Eighty—a hundred—dear, *dear*—how I wanted a hundred! A hundred an' twenty—an' she never said nothin', an' just set on this all her life. Dear me; an' I gave her my grenadine to keep her decent, because she hadn't a rag to her back! A hundred an' twenty—land! land! She used to beg. She shamed us by beggin' till I took her in! Where was I?—a hundred an' twenty—a hundred an' forty—sixty. *Oh*, dear! *oh*, dear! When little Lizzie died, if I'd just had ten dollars more!"

She lost her count here, and buried her face in her hands to cry. When she got up she carried the gold into her bedroom, and there, by aid of paper and pencil, she made out that there were $4,000 in all—the better part of Granny's property that had "dwindled away." Adeline locked up this fortune in her bureau drawer and went out in front of the house to gather up the scattered hair as if in a dream. Once or twice she stared up at the front of the dwelling, from which "Try Millenneium Pellets" seemed to grimace at her. She had felt for months as if those letters were tattooed upon her face.

She kept thinking: "We're rich now, but it don't make any difference; I be'n through too much." Her husband came and stood in the doorway. Adeline perceived that it was not a lucid interval with him; he had been drinking just enough to cloud his intellect. "I won't tell him now," she reflected. Then she thought: "Why, he can have a new soot o' close!" It occurred to her, too, in the next instant that she could have a new shed built in the cow-yard just as well as not. It all dazzled her and she sat down on the doorstep with her back to "him" and tried to gather her wits. She realized with a feeling of "flightness" that her cousin's daughter Katie would come on from the West now and stay with her and help her in the dairy. Katie had always wanted to come, but there had never been any money before. Adeline had always had a soft spot for Katie because she looked like "Lizzie."

There was something else which fluttered before Adeline's excited imagination. She had a vision—a queer little, quick, unexpected vision—of something that had dangled in the doorway of a shop in the nearest large town where she had been a month before. Adeline had hardly realized that she had thought of the thing at all at the time, but she remembered it distinctly now—she saw it like a flash. It was a shawl, a decent black shawl, and it had a ticket sewed on it which said, "Twelve dollars." When this vision came up before Adeline, a hot flush of joy spread itself over her gaunt and careworn face. The next minute she said to herself, with a kind of internal bashfulness, "Adeline Miller, you're a fool!"

But—after all, it is such trifles that win us back to life. HELEN WALTER.

Sunday-school teacher—Now, tell me what do you understand by a movable feast? Pupil—A picnic.

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Which will you have, sickness, suffering and despair, or health, strength, and spirit? You can take your choice. All chronic diseases peculiar to women are permanently cured by Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. It restores the functions to healthy action. It removes the obstructions and suppressions which cause trouble and misery. For periodical pains, internal inflammation, ulceration and kindred ailments, it is a positive remedy. The system is invigorated, the blood enriched, digestion improved, melancholy and nervousness dispelled. It's a legitimate medicine, the only *one* that's *guaranteed* to give satisfaction in the cure of all "female complaints."

IN RELIGION'S REALM.

Expressions From the Various Religious Newspapers.

The Religious Thought of the Day as Expressed in the Sectarian Press—Matters of Interest.

The Churchman prophesies as follows: "The decay of the city churches is as certain in the future as the decay of the old village parishes is in the past. Lower New York is already pure missionary ground. Madison and Fifth avenues are on the verge of the same fate, and Harlem sees it coming. By all means 'endow the old churches,' both in city and country; in the country to 'strengthen the things that remain,' and in the cities that they may do such work as Trinity Church is doing, as Dr. Rainsford and Dr. Huntington foresee is coming upon St. George's and Grace Churches, for the populations that must be left in residence when everybody who can afford or contrive to live in the country is gone. The tendency, even among people of wealth and leisure, is already to spend more months in every year in their country homes, and to make their town houses mere hostelries for 'the season,' and the churches are getting their 'year' so shortened at both ends that they cannot half do what they are trying to do in obedience to old custom and habit; while if they do not look sharp they will be caught totally unprepared for what they must do, or the buildings will be sold for building material in the near future."

In discussing the present aspect of the Briggs case the New York *Observer* says: "While the answer of Professor Briggs has relieved many minds as to his personal faith and made them think that he should not be held for trial, it has not formed as yet any part whatever of a complete, exhaustive, judicial consideration of the main question that concerns the church, namely, whether the inaugural address is in harmony with the Westminster Confession and the Word of God. It has seemed good to the Presbytery to leave the whole matter to other and higher courts. These bodies may be equally reluctant to make any decision in regard to a matter so important. If this is the case, then the Presbyterian Church must depend on other influences than the wisdom and authority of its representative bodies to determine what is and what is not in accordance with the Scriptures and its own standards."

"The beauty of the decision," in the eyes of the New York *Evangelist*, "was that the question at issue was no longer a party question, nor the result a party victory, since it was one in which all parties concurred. Dr. Hall helped to frame the resolution that was passed in preparing an amendment which was incorporated into it. That all the professors of Union Seminary, with the single exception of Dr. Shedd, should vote for it, might have been prompted by personal friendship, but such could not have been the motive which led the great body of city pastors to vote the same way. We have been accustomed to consider the New York *Observer* as the bulwark of conservatism in doctrine, and were not a little surprised to hear Dr. Stoddard answer 'Aye!' at the call of his name. One who thought it must be a mistake asked, 'What? Are you voting for Professor Briggs?' to which he returned the manly and Christian answer, 'How could I help it after listening to such a paper as his?' In truth, it was no man's 'victory,' but a decision in which nearly a hundred men combined to put an end to what was disturbing the peace of the church."

The view of the New York *Congregationalist* is as follows: "The Presbytery took care to state that it did not approve of those positions of Professor Briggs which have caused so much disturbance, but declared that it refrained from prosecuting the charges against him because of his declarations of loyalty to the Scriptures and the Westminster standards, and for the sake of peace in the church. We believe this action will be approved by the large majority of Christians in all denominations, and will serve to put a check on trials for heresy, which are becoming much too frequent. No doubt such steps are some times necessary to maintain the faith once delivered to the saints, but they should be taken only as a last resort, as war is made the final appeal of disputing nations. It is certain that by such means victory for the truth will not be won, if at all, without much loss and wounds to the body of Christ which will be long in healing."

"One can hardly see the good of an appeal to the Synod unless Dr. Briggs can again be called to trial," observes the *Christian Enquirer*. "It may, however, be that it is the Presbytery which will have to take the role of defendant, for the committee evidently feel aggrieved by its action. It will be a rather startling issue if about a hundred of the Presbytery—ministers and elders—should be censured by the Synod. In some form the matter will doubtless reach the Assembly. Unless the Presbyteries send men to the Assemby of much broader views, and who appraise peace and unity far more highly than the last did, there will be an ecclesiastical storm of large magnitude."

"What the Presbytery accomplished by its vote was the postponement of the trial for two years, during which the question will be a constant ground of contention and dispute, and will disturb the peace of the church as it could be disturbed in no other way," says the New York *Examiner*. "A surgical operation is no doubt to be dreaded, but it is soon over; while a running sore is a constant menace of death and a drain on the system. In a case like this it is vain to cry, 'Peace, peace.' Years ago Professor Briggs drew the sword, threw away the scabbard, and has ever since been brandishing his weapon in the eyes of his brethren and daring them to come on. His challenge accepted, his friends at once bestirred themselves to restore peace. They are too late. An irrepressible conflict has been begun in the Presbyterian Church, and the matter will have to be fought out. It would have been a manlier course for the New York Presbytery to have the thing out at once. Until Dr. Briggs is tried, and either acquitted or condemned, his case cannot be considered ended."

"The dismissal of the case was, it is evident, largely due to the impression created by Dr. Briggs' statement in defense, and to the desire to avoid a trial," according to the *Independent*. "Perhaps, also, there was a feeling that conviction was improbable, and that a result which is not acquittal nor conviction, which is not a quashing of the indictment, nor a declaration that there was not probable cause, was preferable to an uncertain issue. While we cannot see that the action of the Presbytery has at all placed Dr. Briggs in a better light before the church, his own words have. It is clear that on some points he does not hold what he was understood to hold—that we are glad to know; but it is equally clear that for a theological teacher he has a peculiar faculty for rash and unguarded statements. If he had been as careful in guarding what he said in his inaugural address as he was in his defense, he would have saved himself much criticism. It is to be hoped that he appreciates the importance, as never before, of making himself clearly understood."

The *Christian Union* declares that the "real ground of the action of the majority is doubtless correctly interpreted in the declaration attributed to the Rev. Charles Cuthbert Hall of Brooklyn, whose Presbyterian soundness no one will question, that the Presbyterian Church ought to be broad enough to include the entire range of theological thinkers from Dr. Briggs to Pusey House. It is an indication of that breadth which is so characteristic of our times, and against which the late-lingering spirit of the sixteenth century intolerance contends in vain; an indication that loyalty to Christ is taking the place of creeds and hierarchies as the only true bond of union, and that the church is tardily learning the meaning of the apostolic declaration that where the spirit of the Lord is there is liberty."

"Those conservative brethren who had gathered fagots and proposed to burn Dr. Briggs at the stake were surprised and disappointed at the wet blanket which was thrown over them and their work," says the Boston *Christian Register* (Unit.). "They may console themselves with the thought that Dr. Briggs' heresies will not spread so rapidly as they would have spread if the trial had actually taken place. They had already succeeded, however, in advertising very extensively the Professor and his views."

"The fact is," says the Chicago *Living Church*, "that an 'era of good feeling' is not necessarily a good thing for Christianity. It is too likely to be brought about at the expense of men's convictions of truth. The human heart, affected by the principles of love and good will which underlie the gospel, naturally yearns for the time when the ideal of peace shall be realized. The sin involved somewhere in division and conflict cannot but rest heavily upon the conscience of the Christian world. It is seen and acknowledged that the work of Christ is hindered by it and religion made a stumbling-block to many souls. But what shall be done? The temptation, the strength of which we see in much of the discussion upon the reunion of Christendom, is to treat truth, or the conviction of truth, as a matter of secondary importance, and to inquire, not what men ought to believe and do, but what they are willing to believe and do. Men's convictions may be wrong, but so long as they remain convictions they are bound to abide by them. Not to do so is to violate the law of conscience. No unity acceptable to Christ can be effected by simply waiving everything about which men differ. This is to play fast and loose with truth."

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