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Sermon by the Rev. Myron W. Reed, Pastor of the First Congregational Church, corner of Prytania and Calliope streets, delivered Sunday morning, December 31, 1871.

"But the sinner being a hundred years old, shall be accursed.—Isaiah lxv, part of verse 20.

Earth is a school where the son of man is sent that he may accomplish himself. Days are to speak, and the years are to teach wisdom. There are no dumb days; even the darkest, dullest day, beginning in fog and ending in drizzle, is competent to teach a fine lesson of patience. The most uneventful year has a voice; in the long stretches in which nothing happens the lecture goes on to some purpose.

The regular term is seventy years, and Isaiah says that the man who has used that up and not got his lesson, and then being kept thirty years after school, is still a sinner, is accursed. His stupidity is too dense, days and years can do no more for him. When a child he wrote in his copy book, "The way of the transgressor is hard," and then life taught the truth of it to him. He saw it with his eyes; he felt it in his heart. It has been repeated to him over and over, and still there he goes, a battered old pilgrim in his hundredth year, limping along in the flinty road of the wicked. The accursed folly of sin is leading him as with a rope. Folly in children is excused, the little beginners are not through with their experiments.

The young sinner gives the grace of inexperience to whatever he does. The power of sin is not seen in him, he is taking his master on trial; every spectator hopes that he will be dissatisfied soon and leave his service. The nature of sin is not revaled in youth; it is known by its fruits, and these have not had time to ripen. Meantime the blossom is rather pretty. If you meet the prodigal anywhere on his way down to the far country his appearance will deceive you; he does not look yet like the evil that is in him. It has not yet had time to make him look wretched as he is wicked; he is riotous but not sick.

He has not pawned anything as yet, and his appetite is good. It is not possible to look at him swinging along in the downward path and despair of him. The world is all before him where to choose; he seems just now to have chosen badly, but we look to see him turn back. We have great confidence in the lesson of life. We tell the baby the nature of fire; what it will do to his fingers, but we know he will go on to burn them, and then we believe he will keep out of the blaze. Until the days have spoken and the years taught wisdom, we have hope for everybody. If the sermon fails, why then let life preach.

We say to a man, "love not the world," and then turn him over to a year of failure and fire, sickness and death, and when the year is done, we call him up and ask him if the world seems as solid as it used to seem; or we say, "God is good," and then dismiss the man to twelve months of blessing. Health attends him; honor and power fall on him. In a world of want and sorrow, he is kept above them. He sails the sea in the ship Good Fortune, and comes grandly into port, and we call that man up and question him, "Is God good, even to the wicked and unthankful?" Suppose he says, "I don't remember; wait till I look in the Bible and see." What economy is there in allowing that man to live any longer?

So, my friends, this earth is a trial place, where God is seeing if he can teach us anything—make anything of us; whether we will do to be raised. Last year he gave a man a father's house, soft clothing, banqueting, mirth. At the end of the year he was disobedient, and filled with self-conceit. This year God let him have his own way, and to-day he is hungry, and ragged, and wretched—sick and sad through and through. Now, God is watching to see if he likes his own way, and thinks of going on in it.

Moses is a teacher, and Aaron is a teacher, but what they say is said very much plainer by events. They can not lead the children of Israel out of Egypt by an oration. The slaves must be driven into freedom by the pain of their servitude. The way of the Hebrew was made so fearfully hard that he would take any other way, the way of the sea and the way of the wilderness. But then, if led by God and fed by His hand they would not learn the lesson of dependence upon Him; if they could look at the pillar of cloud all day and at the pillar of fire all night, and not learn who was their guide, if they could see the manna fall from heaven and still stupidly wonder whence it came, denying the sight of their eyes, and if from the path of freedom they longed to turn back, very well; let the school be dismissed. If they can not learn anything from life, let the teacher be withdrawn and the pupils buried.

So the clods of the wilderness covered the clods that came out of Egypt—it was "earth to earth," and anew the experiment began with their children. They were proved to see if they were worth saving. God marched them about in the desert until they knew who was their leader, and had learned to obey, and when the slave had become a soldier and the mob had become an army, then they crossed over. They held life, as the settler holds land, by virtue of their improvements.

What Spenser calls the "survival of the fittest" is a fact of observation. If a man or city or nation will not forget anything and will not learn anything, they are trodden down and left behind by those who will.

The penalties for being and not becoming, for living and not growing, for the privilege of the school and not learning, are set forth in the Bible and seen vividly in the world. The rich man is satisfied; says to his soul, "Take thine ease," and the next day he is in hell. The man that hides his own talent in the earth is cast into outer darkness. The barren fig tree is cursed. The Spaniard and the Turk and the American Indian seem to be sick with the same disease that carried off that fig tree. The nineteenth century is of no use to them—that decides that they shall not have another.

I would like to make this sermon practical, and so I now ask, if life is for growth, and for training of what is grown, why, then, are we not glad to be growing old? glad to see the sun turn to the west? Why should John Anderson and his wife climb the hill so blithely, and then, with faces ever saddening as they near the foot, go down the other side? If the new year means branches wider flung and a thick ring of new timber, why should the tree sigh in the wind. The days fly swifter than a weaver's shuttle, but if they are weaving good cloth, the swifter the better. The dislike to old age—the fear of it, the piling of gray hairs, the reaching out of vain fingers to check the flying shuttle, is, then, an admission of bad work, that good material is being spoiled, that life is a failure. The class is soon to be called, and the boy hasn't got his lesson. It is easy to see how it is. The tree has neglected to blossom, and the time of figs is at hand. The coming of June is the coming also of shame—"nothing but leaves" for God or man. The tree sighs because the year is to bring mould and trailing moss.

A man thinks of what he did with last year and what with this—contrasts himself now with himself then. If he dreads old age, it is because he has discovered something. He has ceased growing; he is beginning to shrink and wither; he is failing in wisdom, failing in grace. "In his heart is the wind of autumn, and the first fall of the snow." There are signs that navigation is about to close. The quick impulse and ready belief of youth are being frozen in. It is the coming of this inward winter that man hates—the drawing near of the years when he shall be made to say, "I have no pleasure in them." He notes the fine gradations of the soul's decay, and he can prophecy the end. The sun and moon and stars are darkened; "the clouds return after the rain; they shall be afraid of that which is high, and fears shall be in the way, and the grasshopper shall be a burden, and desire shall fail."

If the outward must perish, and the inward man is not renewed, what will the old man be? If he has forgotten to watch, and never learned to pray, what will the old man do? If, when the world slips from under his feet, he has no hold on God, where will the old man go? An old sinner is the dismalest spectacle earth can show—ugliness without drapery. What shall it profit a man to lose his own soul and gain the world, and then lose that? He never had any faith, and now sight is going.

While Falstaff is fat and witty, there is something pleasant in his wickedness; there is a sheen and color, a ripple and flow to his vile conversation that makes it possible to pass an evening with him. But look at him when he is old; when sin is finished—"How th white hairs become a fool and jester, so surfeit-swelled, so old, and so profane." And then listen to his nurse telling the story of his dying: "Now I," she says, "to comfort him, bid he should not think of God. I hoped there was no need to trouble himself with any such thoughts yet." That is the end of a dying man, whose only comfort is not to think of God.

You see, my friends, that as we grow old sin becomes more and more unbecoming, inexcusable in the sight of others, intolerable to ourselves. "Days should speak, and the years should teach wisdom." The young man's folly is covered by his youth. Take away the youth, and there is the old man's shame. The play is over and the mask is off.

If you can only strip sin of what it wears, it stands hateful even to sinners, offending every sense. That is the use of an old sinner—to exhibit the accused thing as it is. The robber has

"Fair fingers jeweled manifold,
With great gems set in hoop of gold."

He hides his swift sword in sash of silk and sheath of silver. Standing thus in the door of a tent, the picture gives a pleasure to the eye, that deceives the judgment. Now strip off his finery, and throw over him a haggard Mexican blanket, and tie him to a stake—now the eye sees the thief as he is.

Sin needs the fair adorning of success to be presentable in any society. Old age brings weakness and brings defeat. The evil purpose is there as ever in the old man's heart, but the action halts like Macbeth's amen. Being a hundred years old you can hate your enemy, but the years have robbed you of the power to harm him. It is only that which makes hate respectable. Who wants hatred by itself?

Wickedness and strength can make their way in the world and lead a troop; but wickedness on crutches, all of a tremble, and hard of hearing—what an inheritance that is! The young serpent thinks sadly of the day when he shall be full of poison and have no fangs.

The fact is that the sinner, even of the mildest and most agreeable type, can not afford to be old. The pleasure goes with the years, the gloss wears off and leaves the worn thread and ragged edge of pain. It is a short riot and an endless rheumatism.

Look at that most unchristian King Louis XV. In his plan of life he neglected to provide for the last year, made ample arrangements for the career of a gay transgressor; none for the last days of that same transgressor, at the end of the way sick and slowly dying. Let youth abide with him and he is the most splendid sinner that ever cumbered the ground; but the years fly away from him as fast as from the captive in his dungeon. He gets old and sick as any beggar, demonstrates his kinship to his subjects by taking from his gatekeeper, that most democratic of all diseases, "confluent small-pox." People begin not to be anxious to see him, and soon to be anxious not to see him. What once charmed them was made of dust: it is now going back to dust, and to dust of a kind not to be approached.

Here is another man who does not want to think of God! He has not wasted his time, he has crowded the minutes with folly and crime. In the morning he went forth to sow, and in the evening he withheld not his hand.

The years have woven for him a garment of fear. He has worked up his opportunities to bless a nation into what now is a great curse for himself. It covers him from head to foot, shuts out heaven completely. His deeds have gone before him to the judgment, and now come back racing with one another, each anxious to be the first to tell him that he is damned already. This, the "man of pleasure," Louis, the Magnificent!

We read that he always had the greatest abhorrence of old age, and could not bear to drive by a cemetery. It is said that he went into a kind of fit when his secretary spoke of the late King of Spain; could not bear an allusion to the possibility of dying. If this, in a humbler degree, suited to our humbler rank as common sinners, is the kind of old age we never want to see and the death we dread, we do right; only let our dislike and fear of these take a logical form. You will have just such an old age and death, or death and old age—sometimes one comes first and sometimes the other—as your use of these present days and years prepare. That is the probability.

When the sickle is thrust in it will take what there is, wheat or thistles; the reaper must gather to his breast the sheaf of his sowing. Let them, these years prepare what you will not dread; what you can hasten to and welcome. It is possible. Consider the last days of "such an one as Paul, the Aged." He stands jubilant on the very edge of death. The lights of heaven are not darkened to him. He is not surprised that the earth, like a fashion, is going out; he said it would. There is the field of a good fight behind him; there is the assurance of a good hope within him; there is the vision of the good God before him; he is going to a coronation. All the years of his life, since he met Christ on the way to Damascus, go to make up the joy of meeting Him again. He had asked, What wilt Thou have me to do? He got the answer and has done the work. It was finished, and followed after him, overtaken him and was blessing him. "Beyond the Alpine summits of great pain lieth his Italy." He had done good as he could—that was all; he had created no duties, but had been very busy doing those laid upon him; simply used his opportunities as well as they deserved, and did good to the man who happened to be nearest to him—Jew, Greek or barbarian; to the [illegible] need him; to the guard that watched him. He was diligent to serve God even in jail, or on a wreck.

"He never looked backward, he never thought of himself; he was always ready to lend a hand, and he was not afraid to die." "To live is Christ." Every year added to his stature, and wrought out in him the mind and spirit, and on him the likeness of his Lord. But life did not satisfy him. It could not. His soul was too large for this world; he had exhausted life, and his purpose was not fulfilled. He wanted to "see him as he is, and be satisfied." Between him and his wish was death; so he said: "To me, to die is gain."

That, then, is the use of our days—to fit us for such living and dying as that. I ask, then, that you, in your plan, arrange to include all the facts—youth and age, success and failure, life and death, the life that now is and the life that is to come. Place your ideal so high that you will need to die to reach it: then you will have something to die for, and eternity will be of use to you. Take your privilege and necessity as an immortal soul, and let the thought of what you are rouse you to become what you ought. So may we never lift up the the lament: "We unto us, for the day goeth away, the shadows of the evening are stretched out."

Specimen of Sharp Practice.

We copy the following from the Shreveport *Times:*

On the last up trip of the La Belle, one of the passengers got off at Hughes' plantation, some seventy-five miles by river below here. Hearing that Mr. Pink Hyams was at Canto Bello, or Ward's store, whither he had gone to auction off goods for Mr. Ward, the stranger immediately suggested that as he knew Hyams well he would go down, a distance of four or five miles, and see him. Borrowing a mule from Mr. Hughes, he soon made his appearance at the store; seemed overjoyed to see Mr. Hyams, and appeared surprised that the latter did not recognize him. He then said he was a brother of the Messrs. Stoner, of Shreveport, in proof of which he wrote a note in pencil to "dear brother Wash," stating that he had just discovered that the freight he was bringing up on the La Belle was 200 barrels short, and that he had got off the boat to take the John T. Moore as she passed down to return to New Orleans and rectify it. Although Mr. Hyams could not locate him, this seemed a settler, as he went on to say that he was one of the firm; that his brother Peter had written to him to hurry on and take charge of the business in Shreveport, and to come by New Orleans and bring up 200 barrels of freight which the firm had there.

We neglected to state that the man had been introduced to Mr. Ward while Hyams was out, by a gentleman who had come up to the store with him. He remained there during Thursday night waiting for the Moore. The next morning Mr. Hyams went out gunning, and upon his return Mr. Ward remarked that he had loaned "Stoner" twenty-five dollars and taken his draft upon Stoner Brothers. Mr. H. suggested that he was suspicious of the man—that he could not remember him, and advised Ward to get his money back. Ward then went to him and told him he would like for him to return the money, which he did very readily, but asked him to let him have seven dollars and to lend him an overcoat. Ward kindly did this.

Friday evening the steamer Ida passed down, when he went aboard and treated liberally to champagne. The boat left after dark, when Messrs. Ward and Hyams returned to the store. Before retiring, the latter asked the former for his watch key. He told him to get it from his vest pocket. Upon searching for it, he found that a very fine gold watch and chain had mysteriously disappeared. Instantly both knew where it had "appeared to," as the old lady said about her lost shears. Horses were immediately mounted, and a moonlight ride of some four miles brought the victims to a plantation where the Ida was taking on cotton. Upon going aboard, they found the stranger had retired to his stateroom, and was sleeping the sleep of the innocent. He was gently awakened, and found two six-shooters leveled on him. Without any remonstrance he "came out" with the watch, gracefully gave up the overcoat, but with tears in his eyes yielded a fine meerschaum pipe of Mr. Hyams', and reluctantly surrendered the $7, less a small amount he had invested in whisky. Ward had to pay for the champagne above referred to, by the way.

The captain of the Ida made him leave the boat, and he went forth into the wilderness, since which time we have heard nothing of him. He should, by all means, have been arrested, but the gentlemen were too soft-hearted.

Of course, he was an impostor as well as thief. The following Sunday Messrs. Ward and Hyams came up, and upon interviewing the Messrs. Stoner, learned that the fellow's name is Joseph Bowmar. He formerly lived in Hickman county, Kentucky, but was here about a year ago, at which time he succeeded in victimizing several parties—Brooks among the rest, as a matter of course. Mr. Stoner says he was confined in the Vicksburg jail for two years, and is a hard case.

He is represented to be a fine looking man, about twenty-eight years of age, about 5 feet 9 inches in height, weighs, probably, 155 pounds, hair dark and moustache red originally, but dyed black.

The Vicksburg *News* of the fifth says:

When the circus boat containing Dr. Backenstose's company arrived here last Sunday, it bore the sick and prostrate form of Harry C. Emmet, an attache of the troupe, who had been seized with illness on the passage here, and upon arrival was at once transferred to the hospital. Dr. White-head was called for, to attend the sick man, at Lake Providence, and came with him here.

Mr. Emmet being a member of the I. O. O. F., his case was reported to Macon lodge of this city, and the attention of the brethren given him, but he died yesterday morning at eight o'clock. He belonged to Lansing lodge, No. 50, Waverly, and his body was carefully and tenderly prepared and shipped yesterday to his father at Chillicothe, Ohio, in obedience to a request. The family of the deceased is said to be highly respectable, and even wealthy.

Says the Jackson *Clarion* of the Natchez and Jackson railroad:

General William T. Martin, President of the road, in a private letter to a friend, dated twenty-fifth ultimo, says: "We have contracted for $35,000 for the entire earth work, bridging, and cutting of our railroad to the county line. The work will commence at once. We are selling our bonds at 70 cents and getting subscriptions to stock, and will not go in debt. You must wake up in Jackson. Who knows about the Columbus and Decatur road in contemplation? I wish to get into correspondence with the parties engaged in that to secure cooperation and uniformity of gauge, either three and a half or three feet."

The best woman's rights item of the season comes from a late Paris paper: "A very beautiful lady, living in Boulogne, sent a challenge to the publisher of a humorous journal who had 'twice in succession concerned himself with her private life.' A formal acceptance of the duel was immediately returned, politely waiving the choice of arms, but expressing a decided preference for those of the lady herself. Reconciliation followed the repartee, and when last heard from the lady was treating him after the preliminary manner of a grizzly. The wedding trip is to the United States."

With the burning of the Darmstadt Theatre has disappeared the great mechanical ship invented by Herr Brandt, and used with such immense success three years ago at Gotha in the "Africaine." This vessel, manated by more than two hundred performers, was so constructed that it was made to roll and toss, maneuvred by a simple screw, worked by a single man below the stage.

A groom from Western Virginia, a few days since, while reveling in the luxuries of the table, at a Baltimore hotel, encountered a dish of cranberries, and immediately invited his bride to take some of the delicious "pickled strawberries."

[From the Old and New for December.]

HUSBAND TO WIFE.

First at morning, last at night,
I think of thee.
Key to all my heart's delight,
Substance of each fancy bright,
Prize and crown of every fight,
Art thou to me.

Do I with the good compete
To do or die,
Put myself beneath thy feet,
Flesh and fashion abdicate,
Rise up early, lie down late,
'Tis all for thee.

Art not thou my dream of dreams
For every night?
Every day, with loving beams,
'Tis thy spirit shines and gleams
Like the sun on all my streams
Both warm and bright.

Far or near, how far above me!
Far or near, how near to love me!
Bless me, teach me, trust me, prove me,
Blossom mate,
Gentle mistress, sage and lovely,
My sweet fate!

Did I not, when first we knew,
Plight thee my troth,
Saying thou should'st never rue
Whatever wayward time might do,
Change should never change us two
True one, true oath?

The years a holy hand has laid
Upon our life,
Confirming every promise made
To heart and soul, to board and bed.
Who only waiteth to be said,
Praise God, dear wife!

MR. ANONYMOUS.

[From Chambers' Edinburgh Journal.]

PRESENT.

One afternoon, toward the close of September, the clocks in the city of London struck four, and the daily routine of business in the house of Pumkin Brothers came to a close. These events were not peculiar to that particular day, but a story must have a beginning. The numerous clerks closed their ledgers and stowed away their papers, with far more alacrity than they had shown in bringing them out some six or seven hours before; and as they put on their overcoats, hats and gloves, they began to chat with each other. One had got an order for the theatre for two, and asked another to have a chop with him somewhere, and then go thither; others were members of a volunteer corps, and were in a hurry to get on their disguises, and go and be half-right turned somewhere. All had some personal object, pertaining to love, war, pleasure or dinner, in view; in short, the striking of the clock had a magical power, and turned them from mechanical cogs into men.

One young man went up to the head of a department, and from him received papers, which he put into the breast pocket of his coat, and then walked off without speaking to his fellow clerks, beyond bidding good afternoon, one to another, and assenting once or twice to the fact of the weather being fine.

"A mean beggar, that Mapleson," said Jones, as he arranged the flower in his button hole.

"Aye," replied Brown. "He dines for a shilling."

"And inks the rim of his hat."

"Perhaps he is poor, said the charitable Robinson.

"Poor," cried Jones, "who isn't? Millionaires are not commonly found on clerk's stools. He has his salary, and is not married, and yet he stints, and never goes anywhere or does anything."

"Perhaps he has a vice," suggested Robinson, who always fought the battles of the absent.

"Ah, he may have, certainly," replied Jones the Just.

"But it isn't only his meanness," said Brown, who had made overtures to Mapleson, which had been met with more politeness than cordiality; "he is so confoundedly stuck up. Now, of all pride, I hate a mean pride."

The unconscious subject of all this disparagement walked down Cheapside to St. Paul's churchyard, where he stopped before a bonnet shop.

"Still there," he muttered—"that is lucky. How well it will become her."

He entered, bought the bonnet which had taken his fancy, and, with the little box in his hand, started off in the direction of Islington. In vain did Hansom cabbies raise their whips, and omnibus 'cads cry, "Ten! Ten!" He walked every step of the way home.

Home was a parlor on the ground floor—a bright and cheerful parlor, the ornaments and furniture of which, though not costly, were in perfect taste. There were flowers; there was a piano, open; music and books lay about in a comfortable, though not untidy way. Home was a girl of nineteen, who welcomed him with a smile, and went into ecstacies over the bonnet. Home presently was tea—tea treated as a meal—not the meaningless supplement late diners understand by the term.

"What do you think, Harry?" exclaimed the young lady, in the course of the meal.

"I think?" replied Henry Mapleson, with his mouth full, "why, I think that if there were many men of fortune who knew that I had a sister who could make such anchovy toast as this, they would soon carry her off from me."

"Young men of fortune do not marry their cooks. The new bonnet is much more likely to rid you of me. But what I was going to say was, we have got a goose."

"It isn't you, pussy, and it is not me," said the brother, turning to the cat.

"O, what grammar!"

"The verb 'to get' takes an accusative, Susan. But about the goose. How did you steal it?"

"Nobow; it came, together with its giblets and a half dozen of sherry."

"What, Mr. Anonymous again?"

"Yes."

"He is very good," said Harry, a serious expression coming over his face; "but there is one thing that I do wish he would send—his name. I hate mystery."

"But you like a goose," added his sister.

"Well, yes; frankly, I do—sherry likewise. He says that he is an old friend of our parents; but if he is ashamed to acknowledge us now, I had sooner be without his charity. However, it is ungracious to say so; and after swallowing a twenty pound note, it would be absurd to strain at a goose and giblets. We will eat the bird on the day set apart for that purpose by the Church. Shall we invite our fellow-lodger?"

"Mr. Nicholson? O, certainly."

When the tea things were cleared away and the lamp lit, Susan Mapleson set to work upon her brother's buttons and socks, and while she sewed and darned, he read a novel aloud, to her—equitable division of labor.

Just as he had finished a chapter, the hall door closed, and observing that Mr. Nicholson had come in, and that it would be a good plan to give him his invitation at once, Harry Mapleson rose and went out, returning in a few minutes, followed by the fellow lodger, an elderly man, with a slight stoop, who placed his hat and umbrella on a chair, and came forward to greet Susan, who took off her thimble to shake hands with him.

"Have you been to the British Museum to-day?" she asked.

"Yes, my dear, as usual. I am a leech applied by the publishers to old books."

"A leech,—no, a bee."

"Well, that is, perhaps, a prettier way of putting it, and more complimentary, both to myself and to the venerable authors I draw from. They are flowery enough sometimes, too. But the bee skips from bud to blossom in a gay, coquettish manner, which would never draw the honey out of a black letter volume, let alone a mediæval manuscript. I fear that the leech is more literal."

"But, then, what term would you have left to apply to the publishers?" asked Harry.

"Nay, nay," said the old man, "I can not complain. They pay me very well. There is not much compensation in my musty line."

A tyro in physiognomy might have pronounced Mr. Nicholson to be intelligent and benevolent, but it would have taken an adept in the art to decipher the expression which habitually spread over his features. There was a weary, hopeless, hunted look, which told of great suffering, either mental or physical—probably the former, for the deep lines around his eyes were of that character which is worn by sustained, rather than by spasmodic action of the muscles. He was a man with a terrible—because a secret—sorrow. I do not say that you would have gathered all this upon the present occasion, for when he was in the society of the Maplesons he was a different being. He was a lonely man. Most workers have two lives—a professional and a natural one, but until quite lately he had been a student, and nothing else; studying for his livelihood, studying for companionship, even at mealtimes; studying to find an opiate. But since he had formed an acquaintanceship, which soon ripened into friendship, with the young brother and sister, life had acquired a new interest for him, and that little parlor was an ark on the salt waste of his existence.

He promised to dine with them on Michaelmas day, and then Susan gave him his greatest treat—some of Mendelssohn's music. He would sit and listen until the water came into his eyes; and this was not such a curious phenomena, for the girl, though not a very brilliant performer, treating her instrument as a sort of musical trapeze, and going through all sorts of wonderful gymnastic feats upon it, she played with rare feeling and expression, sending the notes into the heart as it were. At half-past ten the party broke up. Harry Mapleson considered that his sister rose early to look after domestic matters and get his breakfast for him (for even a small establishment requires considerable attention when you have only got the third part of a servant to "do for you") she ought to be early at the other end of the day too; so he invariably yawned and went up to his room at the top of the house before eleven. But when he went there he made no preparations for going to bed, but put writing materials out on a table, and taking from his pocket the papers which he had received from one of the heads of the department before leaving the office, he sat down to work. It was three o'clock before his work was accomplished.

"A slice of luck, this," he said to himself on turning in at last. "Just as I was wondering how I should meet those payments I had overlooked without cutting off some little expense, which would show Susan that I was hard up, I get this extra job of work, which will set me straight. What a manager that girl is! I am afraid she stints herself in dress, which must not be. It shall not be, mother, if I can help it." And thinking of her who was gone he fell asleep.

Susan's bedroom communicated with the parlor, and when her brother and Mr. Nicholson went upstairs she passed into it, returning again soon with a quantity of millinery materials, from which she proceeded to concoct one of those articles of feminine adornment which fathers and husbands pay so highly for.

"Poor old Harry!" her thoughts ran as her nimble fingers worked. "He thinks that I do not see that his salary is too little for our expenses, and I must not remonstrate with him when he wastes his money upon things I really do not want; it would disappoint him so. How fortunate it is that I have got this knack of making things, which secures me employment in my own home. How little he thinks that I so often follow him into London, carrying my work to the shop when it is completed. The ordinary seamstress' work I tried at first was not worth while, but they pay well for this. I wish Harry would spend a little upon himself. I dare not give him a new coat or hat in return for his mantillas and bonnets. The idea of his getting me that bonnet! How surprised he would be to learn that I made it!"

PAST.

The air of Harrow-on-the-hill must be peculiarly bracing, if the proverbial sentiment about the bird of St. Michael, attributed to the boys educated there, be founded on anything like practical experience. The goose, they say, is an awkward dainty, being too much for one and not enough for two. I know that if I had two sons who asked for more after finishing a goose at a sitting, I should write to the *Times*. It is true that there are geese and geese, and the specimens sent to the Mapleson's may have been exceptionally fine, but although they had gone into training, as it were, by dining at six instead of one, and though they had the fellow-lodger to help them, they left pickings; and if some Harrovian curls the lip of scorn, I can't help it. Truth is my hobby.

When they had got their first glasses of sherry after the meal, Harry said: "We must drink the health of Mr. Anonymous, if you please."

"Mr. Anonymous!" repeated Susan, sipping.

"Mr. Anonymous!" echoed Mr. Nicholson, who drank and then added, "Some relative?"

"I don't know," said Harry; "a deed, or rather a succession of deeds, without a name. He sent us the goose; he sent us the sherry; he has made us more valuable presents. Do you think I ought to receive benefits without knowing from whom they come?"

"Certainly," said the fellow lodger. "I think you have told me that in one of his first letters this unknown professed himself a friend of your—your mother's. Am I not correct?"

"Yes. But why such mystery?"

"Oh, there are several probable reasons for that. He may be ashamed of it not being more; you may have substantial claims on him as trustee of those funds which I think you said have been unwisely invested, or he may have a morbid dislike to being thanked."

"It is strange, anyhow," said Harry, "that our mysterious benefactor should not have come forward to assist us when we most needed it."

"When you lost your mother?"

"Yes."

"Perhaps," said Susan, "he was not in England then, and knew nothing about what had happened."

"That is very likely," said Mr. Nicholson, "especially as you were supposed to be well provided for. Have you not said so?"

"Yes," replied Harry, "our poor mother's little property was in a bank which broke, but, thank God! she did not know what had happened. She died in the belief that her children were beyond the reach of sordid cares."

"It was about two years ago, I think you have said?"

"Yes, two years last August. I was at college when summoned away to her bedside, for her illness was sudden and short. And just as we were recovering a little from the shock, ruin came. If I had been alone in the world I think I should have enlisted or emigrated, for I felt very desperate; but fortunately I had Susan to look after, and that steadied me. Well, we must not complain. I was fortunate to get my clerkship, and we managed to save that piano and a few things which were sacred in our eyes from the wreck."

"It was a sad blow, and the cares of life have fallen on you early, my young friends," said Mr. Nicholson. "But pardon me for having led the conversation into such a melancholy channel," he added, seeing that Susan had much ado to restrain her tears. "I do not know how it happened."

"Oh, Harry and I often talk over old times; I like it," said Susan. "It would be a dreadful thing to avoid speaking of mamma because she has been taken from us. It seems to me that those we love are only really 'lost' when we banish them from our memories."

The old man bowed his head and sighed deeply. "Have you any likeness of her?" he asked after a pause.

"Oh, yes," said Susan, and she rose and placed a miniature in his hand. He gazed at it in silence for some time, and then murmured, "How like!"

"You knew our mother?" exclaimed Harry in surprise.

"I mean how like your sister," said Mr. Nicholson, handing the miniature to him.

"O yes, there is a strong family resemblance," said Harry. "But since you will not have any more sherry, suppose we go up to your room and smoke a pipe while Susan makes tea."

When the old man and the young one had sat down to a mutual absorption of nicotine, the latter referred again to the subject of his personal affairs. "The only thing I regret," said he, "is the way in which my sister is shut up. It must be a dreadful thing for her, poor girl, to be alone all day, and it is bad for her to be entirely without any companions of her own sex."

"Have you no relatives or friends?" asked Mr. Nicholson.

"Our relatives cast us off many years ago on account of a family misfortune. But there were some friends who got me my appointment, and who would have taken charge of Susan. We declined, because of that family affair, for Susan thought and I thought that it would perhaps be brought up against her if she mixed in the society to which these friends would have introduced her. Of course we did not put our refusal on that ground. Susan said she would not leave me, and I believe they think me very wrong and selfish. I am not quite confident that I am right myself, and yet the pride which shrinks from raking up an old shame can hardly be a false pride—can it?"

It is not an easy thing to decide in a moment the degree of pride which every man ought to allow himself—to point out where the proper ends and the false begins—to beat the parish bounds between self-respect and vanity. No wonder that Mr. Nicholson puffed hard at his pipe in silence. It was evidently no lack of interest that held his tongue, however, for he turned away his head and his hand shook as though it were palsied. And probably Harry did not look for a reply; he was thinking aloud as much as talking to the other, and presently he perceived this, and said with a laugh: "A pleasant sort of companion I must be with my sentimental egotism! My excuse is the relief it affords me to speak out, and there is no one else upon whom I can inflict the ideas which sometimes plague me, for, of course, I want Susan to think me as free from care as a lap-dog. And then I seem to have known you all my life; I forget that it is hardly six months since we left the house together one morning, and both walking city-wards, fell into conversation. But I know that you will pardon me."

"There is no need for pardon," said Mr. Nicholson. "You do me a favor by taking me into your confidence. I am a lonely old fellow, who has spent the better part of his life away from his country."

"Ah! where?"

"The last few years at Simancas; before that in Paris; before that at Gottingen. I am little more than a musty old book-worm, crawling from library to library; living so in the past as to have lost all connection with the present. You have recalled feelings, sympathies, associations, which I thought were lost to me forever." He paused for a while and then said abruptly: "How you must hate that member of your family who brought upon it the shame of which you speak."

"O no, no, no!" cried Harry. "You little think— But I will tell you all about it some day. I see that you have finished your pipe. Now, suppose we go down stairs again."

Sad subjects of conversation did not crop out again, and the rest of the evening, though "musical," was not "melancholy."

FUTURE.

One evening in October Harry Mapleson came home at the usual time, but not in his usual state of calm composure. His face was pale, his eyes were sparkling with excitement, his forehead was bathed in perspiration, and he flourished an evening paper about.

"What is the matter?" cried Susan.

"Don't be alarmed—it is good news. We can look the world boldly in the face, my dear; our father was innocent."

"I know it; dear mamma always said so."

"Ay, but it's proved! See here. I don't think you ever knew the details of the matter!"

"No; I never wished to do so."

"Well, then, I will not enter into them now. It is sufficient for you to understand that our father was a man of considerable talent, who took a high degree at his university, and was looked upon as a rising man by the political party whose cause he espoused. Indeed, for some time he was private secretary to a minister, and it was only because of his desiring a more certain income upon his marriage that he resigned that unstable office and accepted an appointment which was not dependent upon one set of men going out of office and another coming in. It was a position of trust, and large sums of money passed through his hands. Well, there was wrong-doing—embezzlement—downright theft—in the department. Our father could not clear himself; his name appeared to fraudulent documents which could not have been used without his signature—in short, he was condemned—sent across the sea—lost; for from that time our mother could hear no more of him. 'I am innocent,' he said when they parted; 'but what does that matter—the disgrace is the same. I hope to die soon; but if that is denied me I desire to be forgotten, as though I had really escaped from this den of thieves. I will not drag you and my children down any lower. Do not speak of me to them—never seek for tidings of me.' Our mother prayed, remonstrated, wept in vain—he was firm, saying that he knew it was for the best. That was eighteen years ago, Susan, when you were quite a baby, and I so young that I have only the vaguest remembrance of calamity and change. Well, our father had no more to do with that crime than we infants had; a man in the same department forged his name and embezzled the money. He is dying—struck down with a painful disease, which leaves him in full possession of his faculties—and in his terror he has confessed, and he appeals to the family of the man he has worse than murdered—to us—for forgiveness. Here it is. See, can you forgive him, Susan? I can't! Forgive him! I wish him well and strong, that I might have my fingers round his throat and my knee in his chest, and watch his black soul stifling in his black heart! Soul! I hope—"

"Harry, Harry!"

"Well, well, I forgot myself; don't look frightened, Susan. It is well that the wretch has spoken at last, at all events; our poor father's memory will be cleared from reproach, and you can stay sometimes with those good Poynter people and see a little society."

Susan was protesting that she was quite content and happy under present circumstances when she was interrupted by a knock at the door, and the fellow-lodger entered the room. He too held a newspaper in his hand; he, too, was evidently under the influence of strong emotion, for he stood glancing from one to the other with a strange, yearning expression in his eyes; twice he essayed to speak, and twice his voice failed him.

"You have seen this account in the evening papers, and have concluded that we belong to the family of Mr. Mapleton, whose cruel story is told here?" asked Harry.

The old man nodded.

"You are right; we are his children. This sympathy is indeed kind."

"Perhaps you yourself are a connection?" said Susan, with a woman's penetration.

The fellow-lodger at last forced words to his lips.

"Yes," said he; "I—I—"

"Look at him, Harry!" cried Susan, and if they had not run forward to support him the old man would have fallen.

They got him into a chair, bathed his forehead, gave him sherry, and he soon came out of his faint.

"The emotion was too much for me," he said presently. "I am myself again now. No, no, do not go for a doctor. I am not ill. It is nothing but an over dose of happiness; a medicine," he added, with a sad smile, "that I have not been much accustomed to."

"You were a great friend of his, perhaps?" asked Harry, who looked puzzled; but Susan glanced rapidly from the youthful features of her brother to the time and care-worn face of the other, and a light flashed upon her.

"Father!" she cried.

"My girl! My children!"

In the course of that evening he told them all. How that, when a few years of his sentence had expired, he was allowed to live as a free man within the boundaries of the colony; how his bookcraft had gained him the situation of librarian to a wealthy settler, who had a touch of bibliomania, which it was difficult to gratify out there; how he nearly died of the gnawing desire to communicate with his wife, but fought the battle out with what he felt to be self, and conquered; how at length, when free to return to Europe, he had engaged in certain literary pursuits, which there is no occasion to specify, but in which he was eventually so successful as to be in receipt of an income far beyond his wants; how that, hearing of his wife's death, and certain that his children could not recognize him, he had come to England and had contrived to obtain lodgings in the same house and to make their acquaintance.

"And it it had not been for this happy confession would you never have told us who you were, papa?" asked Susan.

"After the trial I have gone through," replied her father, "I think I may boast I never would."

It is felt in certain influential circles that "something should be done" for "poor Mapleson," something is also to be done for his son Harry. This vague announcement sounds, I grant, wofully like "chops for two!" but I am in a position to state that Mapleson will have a pension, and that Harry will get a nomination, and when it comes to competitive examination, within certain limits, I'll back him. Meantime, father and son and daughter are settling down to their relationship, and Harry has been relieved of a nightmare. It was this: He fancied that the man—since dead, by the bye—who committed the crime his father suffered for, had made him various presents which he had accepted, and one evening, when the three were together, he owned that his suspicions made him wretched.

"Silly! cried Susan; "why of course, Mr. Anonymous was papa!"

"Is that a fact, father?"

"Susan is right, my boy."

QUITE A MISTAKE.

What Happened to a Pair of Confidence Men on a Pullman Car.

[From the Kansas City Times.]

The other night an elderly and clerical-looking individual came aboard a Pullman car at a point about two hundred and eighty miles east of here, and engaged a berth for this city. He took the lower berth of a section, the upper half of which had been engaged by two dapper-looking individuals, who, shortly after the train started, came back from the smoking car and took seats in their section. The trio soon struck up a traveling acquaintance, and, judging from the pleased expression of the three countenances, this acquaintance was mutually agreeable, and, as will presently be seen, profitable.

The elderly gentleman, whom, for the sake of identification, we will call Mr. Greene, was a retired merchant from Central New York, who was on his way to these parts to invest a few surplus shinplasters in corner lots and Kansas lands. He was one of those benignant old sunflowers whose smiles beam alike upon the just and the unjust, whose well-filled pocket-book is always forthcoming to change a ten or a twenty for some casual companion who doesn't happen to have any small bills about him, and whose worldly goods are but as legitimate spoils for the confidence gentry—that is to say, judging from outside appearances. His two companions, whom we will call Messrs. Sharpe and