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FOR THE CLARION.]

## SEARGENT S. PRENTISS.

No II.

On the 1st of January, 1829, Prentiss entered the law office of Robert J. Walker, who afterward became famous in the political world. Of his character and ability, the following extracts from the pens of two Mississippians will be interesting:

"A comparative pigmy in size, he was a giant in intellect. Subtle as Machiavelli, ambitious as Cæsar, he rose from the bar to the Senate, from the Senate to the Treasury bench, and proved himself to be not only one of the most honest, but the most competent financier that had ever sat as Secretary. Handling millions, he came out as poor as he went in, and left the country in a prosperous condition. But for our civil war, it is more than probable that Mississippi might have had the honor of furnishing the President of the Republic."

"He was a mere whiffet of a man, stooping and diminutive, with a wheezy voice and expressionless face, but like the French minister Louvois, and our Amos Kendall, he concealed under this insignificant exterior a vaulting ambition, seconded by great abilities and consummate cunning." "He was the first to introduce sectionalism." "He whispered into Mr. Tyler's ear the dream of the Presidency. Mr. Tyler yielded to the tempter, and returned to his first love. The great Whig party, brilliant with statesmen and orators, was jock-eyed. Walker was the Delilah that sheared the locks of Sampson. Silent, subtle, capable of the deepest plots, and most intricate complications, he whispered Democracy and the Presidency into the ear of Mr. Tyler, while he was playing for the glittering prize himself."

These extracts will give some idea of the man whom Prentiss chose for his preceptor, and who was then at the head of the bar. He had six months to prepare for examination, and at the time appointed, appeared before Chancellor Buckner, "a Rhadamanthus in exactitude," and passed "a creditable examination." He was not yet twenty-one, and in the eye of the law was still an infant, though what "Mr. Vincent Crummeles" calls "an *infant phenomenon*." After his admission he wrote to his brother: "I am now a lawyer, but how I shall succeed is a doubtful question. * * * If I can make out to get a start, I have no doubt I shall ultimately succeed."

He did not have long to wait. Gen. Huson, a distinguished member of the bar, took him into a partnership, to help him in the drudgery of the office. He is reported as saying, he chose an assistant, and soon found Prentiss "was the leader and he the assistant." His first case was the prosecution of a man for burglary. The man was convicted, and was so impressed with the young attorney's oratory, that he said, "If an angel of light were tried, and that man were the prosecutor, he would convict him." His second case was for the value of a horse, killed under peculiar circumstances, which palliated if it did not justify the act. Prentiss admitted the facts, but denied any legal obligation to pay damage. His speech in this case made his first fame. It was full of ridicule, pathos and satire. The court was moved to "convulsive laughter, and then moved to tears," and for many a day the young and briefless lawyers of Natchez read Prentiss's "demurrer as the highest type of legal wit."

The bar at Natchez was crowded, and young lawyers, whatever their ability, had to wait for business. This determined Mr. Prentiss to remove to Vicksbug. The bar of that city was, as it is now, famed for ability. Joseph Holt and Henry S. Foote were young men, with promise of future fame. In after years the early promise came to fact, and they secured national reputations.

Mr. Prentiss's first case in Vicksburg was a novel one. The small-pox had broken out in a large building, which stood alone on one of the squares of the city. The authorities quarantined the place, and Prentiss was employed to enjoin the ordinance, and have it repealed. He won fame in his management of the case, and succeeded in having the order repealed. No record of his speech exists, but those who listened to him for more than two hours pronounced it a wonderful speech. He had opportunity for wit, invective and pathos, and of all these he was master.

His next case was an important one, and as a bit of the wild life of those days, will be interesting. The country drained by the great river was infested with a gang of robbers, lead by a man named Phelps, of New England birth—well educated and connected. A man of great personal courage, one of the laws of his code was, never to kill a man, unless compelled to for personal safety. He was a daring robber of the rich, and like Robin Hood, a friend of the poor. He had a grim humor in his way of doing things, as the following will show. The Rev. Mr. Colton, a Methodist minister, was returning from his church. A few rods before him he saw a man run across the road. Curious to know what the man was going to do in the woods he followed him. A short distance from the road he found him with rifle cocked.

"Stand, and deliver!" was the imperious command.

The preacher plead his vocation.

"My dear sir, I have nothing. I'm nothing but a poor Methodist preacher."

"I see you have a watch," said Phelps, "hand it over."

There was no help for the preacher, and he began slowly to unfasten the time-piece. Phelps grew impatient.

"Throw it down, you d—d old fool," said he.

"I cant; I might break it," said the preacher.

"That's my lookout, not yours, sir," and the preacher lost his watch.

Before Phelps let him go, he gave him a short sermon on the evils of curiosity.

"This, sir, will teach you a lesson. Remember, when you wish to follow a stranger hereafter, in the manner you have followed me, first to make sure he is not a robber, for if you do not make sure of it, you may have to pay more dearly for your temerity than by the loss of a watch."

The robbery created intense excitement, and a few days after Phelps was arrested for the murder of a man in Yazoo county. Mr. Prentiss was employed to prosecute him. It was a case of circumstantial evidence, and but for the character of the prisoner would not have convicted him. The prosecution was masterly, and the man was sentenced to be hung. After the trial he sent for Prentiss, and made a confession of his life. He had lived under an assumed name, and his life had been full of events stranger than fiction. Away back in the days when boyhood was widening into young manhood, his life had been crossed and the purpose of early dreams broken off. Following the directed course, it brought him to the murderer's doom. He confessed also to Prentiss that while he was speaking in the case, he intended to rush upon him, and escape in the confusion. Prentiss replied, "I saw it all, and was ready for you."

This was one of the very few cases where Prentiss appeared as prosecutor. He may have feared the intensity of his powers, lest he might convict some innocent man. He always regarded the money made by prosecuting as "blood money." The truth is, no great nature loves to prosecute. Mr. Prentiss was too noble to be bound a criminal. Prosecutors there must be, but no lawyer can build enduring fame as a prosecutor. At the bar, as well as in society, men who hound their fellows in the spirit of a bitter prosecution, are the thugs of humanity, and only wait opportunity to do far worse deeds. Sooner or later the opportunity comes, and the whited sepulchre is opened, and dead bones and uncleanness, so unclean that Milton's devil would disown the sepulchre, is seen by many an exultant enemy.

In 1833, when Mr. Prentiss was but twenty-five years old, he was admitted to practice in the Supreme Court of the United States. His first case before that august tribunal was that of Sampeyrac & Stewart vs. United States, and was a land claim, dating back to the time when Louisiana was a province of France. Prentiss and White were for the appellants, and Fulton and Taney for the United States. The learned and venerable Marshall was Chief Justice, and Taney, who appeared as counsel, was afterward to be known in two hemispheres as the Judge of the Supreme Court who made the famous Dred Scott decision. There were giants before that high court in those days. Pinckney, Wirt, Webster and Clay were often engaged. Before that tribunal the youth of twenty-five moved with the self-possession of a master mind. For three hours he held the court entranced by his oratory. He even captured the Chief Justice, who was charmed by the beauty, strength and uniqueness of the young advocate. He, however, lost his case, and like many young men, no doubt felt the world was out of joint.

This visit to Washington was his first entrance into public life. Jackson was President, and Washington was full of his devoted friends, as well as his bitterest enemies. He visited the White House, and had the honor of an introduction and a fifteen minutes conversation. Of his visit he writes: "General Jackson is an odd looking man, and answers very well to the prints you see of him in the shops. I think him about as fit to be President as I am."

It was on this visit he met for the first time the immortal three—Webster, Calhoun and Clay. Clay made the deepest impression, and he clung to him with surpassing devotion in all the changes and chances of his political life. There was much in common between them, but they were very unlike. Clay was an orator, and no more. Prentiss was an orator and a poet. Clay had a splendid physical presence. Prentiss was of small stature. Clay was a declaimer, whose voice and manner thrilled audiences, but whose printed speeches is dull reading. Prentiss was also a declaimer, but such sentences, beautiful, strong, grand, full of reason's wisest law, full of poetry's subtilest essence. To-day they read like the speeches of the grand old masters. Clay's intellectual horizon had never been widened by reading or profound study. Prentiss had been an omniverous reader from childhood, and his memory retained all he ever read. They were alike in their manly contempt of fraud. Clay would rather have been right than President, and Prentiss stood before audiences who had been lured away from justice by the siren song of repudiation, and hurled into their faces arguments and ridicule, anathemas, and prophecies of what would come to pass when a State consented to wrong.

The case that gave Mr. Prentiss his greatest fame in Mississippi, was the celebrated Vick case—the Vick heirs against the city of Vicksburg. He secured a reversion of the decision of the Chancery Court. His triumph gave him money. It was no longer drudgery for bread, and it enabled him to "help the dear ones at home."

During this time he pronounced his eulogy on LaFayette, which attracted attention from all parts of the country. "The friend and companion of Washington is no more. He who taught the eagle of our country while yet unfledged to plume his young wing, and mate his talons with the lion's strength, has taken his flight beyond the stars beneath whose influence he fought so well. LaFayette is no more."

JOSEPH E. MARTIN.
Grace Church, Canton, Miss.

## THE KNIGHTS OF HONOR.

### Address of Geo. W. Lawson, Grand Reporter, at the McCool Picnic, June 3, 1886.

BROTHER KNIGHTS, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN:

After spending days, weeks and months writing up journal and ledger, filling orders, and answering communications, to be able to spend a day or two in recreation, and to meet for the first time a large number of brothers of a family made such by adoption, and to be greeted by a hearty welcome, as shown by the facial expression and hearty shaking of the hands, a feeling of joy fills the heart which is deeply felt, but can not be expressed by words. There is nothing selfish about a true Knight of Honor. He desires that all men who stand upon the same broad platform of principles with himself—men of social, charitable principles, of good moral character, and of a healthy, physical system—should be allowed the same advantages, both socially and financially. Will all the Knights present, who are in good standing in the Order, please rise to their feet for a moment? Thank you, brethren, please be seated.

Ladies and gentlemen, I, personally, am a stranger to most of you, but you see I have a large number of true friends present. There is not one of that number who rose to his feet were I in distress and needed assistance, that would not cheerfully render me all the aid in his power, should I simply speak a word or make a sign to attract his attention. Will any rational mind then tell me that a member of this Order is not fully compensated for the time, talents, and money given to keep him in good standing?

I have been honored by an invitation to participate in this social gathering of Knights, their families and friends and invited to say something for the good of the Order. I, therefore, ask your indulgence and attention for about fifteen minutes, while I shall present for your consideration a few facts and principles that should, in my opinion, be known by every man, woman and child in America, especially the young men and young ladies. For no man should attempt to address an intelligent audience unless he can present some fact, truth or principle for their benefit.

In very ancient times, when man, intellectually, was in his infancy, some one asserted that he—man—was the noblest act of creation. Advancing to a higher plaue of intelligence during the period of youth, and mistaking appearances for realities, his mental vision being obscured by the deceptive, yellow light of the physical man, he still affirmed that man was the noblest act of creation. But passing the probation of youth, and entering the higher state of manhood, by examination into the mysteries of matter and mind, and aided by the higher wisdom of experience, he clearly perceived the error of his former hypothesis, and grasping the truth, proudly proclaimed to the world that *woman* is the noblest part of creation. What words can enter quicker and penetrate deeper into the heart of a true man, than mother, sister, wife, daughter? What, during the varying seasons, —the heat of summer and cold of winter—causes an honest man to toil and labor more than a desire to feed, clothe, shelter and render comfortable and happy those loved ones dependent upon him? What calms the excited, angry man quicker than the pleasant smiles, and gentle touch of a mother, or a wife? What constitutes a garden of Eden, or approximates a heaven in social enjoyment and happiness, better than a family circle consisting of a good, moral man, surrounded with a noble mother, a true wife, and refined, intelligent daughters and sisters? And what, O unfortunate man! causes a deeper pang in the heart of an honest man—when he realizes that the end of his earthly pilgrimage is drawing to a close, than the thought that those dear ones whose lives he has rendered comfortable and pleasant, must soon be left to the charities of a cold world without means for a support, and without friends to aid them in their dire necessities?

Considering these facts, is it to be wondered at, then, that men of philosophical and practical minds—a few years back—devoted their mental energies to formulating a plan of co operative insurance by which, at the smallest reasonable cost, a man may provide means and friends to aid and assist his widow and orphans in their time of greatest need? It is true there are insurance companies with large reserve funds in hand to be distributed to beneficiaries after deducting large amounts for high-salaried officers and agents, and after, in a majority of cases, a costly litigation and then a compromise. But these companies are for the benefit of only a select few, men of sufficient means to pay large premiums upon policies. But the problem presented for solution, required a plan that was adapted to the small means of that large class of men who are the bone and sinew of the land—the healthy, moral men of every occupation and profession in life. No doubt but that nature's plan for collecting and distributing the lifes-ustaining element — water—suggested the idea to those men who were solving the great problem, how to formulate a plan of co-operative insurance which has proven so practical and satisfactory to energetic, practical, business men. Observing that from the great reservoir, or ocean of water—by certain natural laws—vapor in the form of mists continually rises and ascends in clouds to be distributed over those parts of the earth most in need of it to give renewed strength and vigor to the vegetable and animal creation; and perceiving that a large part of the surplus over and above what is essential to sustain vegetable and animal life, collects in springs here and there over the land, and flows thence along brooks and creeks to the larger river channels, thence along these channels in converging lines back to the great reservoir again, mark you, not to accumulate, but immediately to be taken up and redistributed over the same or other parts of the earth most in need of it. They were enabled by applying this principle to collecting and distributing the great and necessary circulating medium—money—to solve the problem. Therefore a plan was adopted and promulgated requiring social, charitable men of a healthy, physical system, and of good moral character to unite themselves into a society for mutual aid; and to bind themselves together by the strongest ties known to man—brotherly love and charity—and to agree to pay out of their daily earnings a small amount to be placed in a central reservoir—the Supreme Treasury—mark you all again, not to accumulate as a reserve fund, but to be taken out daily in sums of two thousand dollars to be distributed over the country, and placed in the hands of the widows and orphans of the deceased members at the time of their greatest need. And although, when first formed in 1873, the reservoir of the Knights of Honor Order was small, its capacity has been increased until to-day, like the mighty ocean, over two and a half millions of money annually is taken out and distributed to feed, clothe, house, and render comfortable the poor man's widow and children. And to day, by their acts, the Knights of Honor proclain to the world that *woman* is the noblest part of creation. And now we appeal to every healthy, good citizen who would be true to the instincts of his own heart to come into this association of brothers, and avail himself of the advantages of procuring friends and means to aid and assist those dependent upon him when he shall have been called to pass over the dark river. My friends, who deserves more sympathy than a widow with helpless children, without a home, and without means for a support in this world of trials and troubles.

Brother Knights, what can give more joy and happiness to a Knight of Honor than the consciousness that he has contributed of his means to relieve from want thousands of the widows and orphans of his brothers in this land? Were the Knights of Honor Order to cease to exist to day, every true member could say, I am fully compensated for every dollar, I, as a charitable being, have invested in relieving distress, and supplying the wants of the needy." For the Supreme Dictator of the world, declares that, inasmuch as you have aided one of the least of these my children in want, you have aided me.

Brother Knights, by this public, social celebration, you demonstrate to the world that the social principle of man, is one of the basil principles of the Knights of Honor Order; and that this is the cement that has held the Order together as a band of brothers; and that the future stability of the Order depends upon the cultivation of the social and charitable principles of men. How pleasant it is to be able, on stated occasions, to forget the cares of business, and spend a few hours in social gatherings, especially, when honored by the presence, the smiles, and charms of ladies such as on this occasion we have the pleasure to behold. Is not life worth living when man, occasionally, is permitted to enjoy such a feast as this? Brothers, let us toil on and appropriate a small amount of our earnings to keep up these social feasts; always extending a cordial invitation to the good citizens of the surrounding country, and never leaving out the ladies, whose presence ever tends to cheer and render pleasant man's life. And may the loved ones dependent upon us ever find in the brotherhood true friends to aid and assist them through life. And should they at any time mistake appearances for realities, or be deceived by the deceptive yellow light of distress, may they behold, written upon the bow that arches them in colors of white, yellow and red, the words, purity, faith and love. For it is indellibly written upon the heart of every true Knight of Honor, that *woman* is not only the *noblest*, but the *loveliest* part of creation.

## KANSAS CITY, MEMPHIS & BIRMINGHAM RAILROAD.

### Some Strictures Upon the Action of the Last Session of the Mississippi Legislature Upon the Subject of the Charter.

MARSHALL COUNTY, June 12, 1886.

EDITOR CLARION: Recent speculations in the newspaper press of Memphis upon the subject of the probable purchase by the Kansas City, Memphis & Birmingham Railroad Company, of the Memphis, Birmingham & Atlantic Railroad, brings forcibly to mind the heated contest, during the last session of our Legislature, over what is known as the "Simonton Amendment," to the bill introduced for the purpose of granting a charter to the former company to build a railroad from a point East of Memphis, on our Northwestern border, to the State line in the direction of Birmingham, Ala. The contest was protracted and not altogether free from bitterness. The bill finally passed with the amendment which restricted the K. C., M. & B. R. R. Co., and forbidding it to build its road within twelve miles of the Memphis, Birmingham & Atlantic Railroad, which had been previously chartered with all the privileges and franchises, that its most exacting friends and advocates demanded. With this the company (which we will call the Richmond Company,) and its friends professed to be entirely satisfied. But when the bill came before the Senate, proposing like privileges and franchises, in behalf of the K. C., M. & B. Company, the Richmond Company, and its friends discovered a "mare's nest," and taking the cue from the lobbyists then in Jackson, urged the adoption of the odious amendment, upon the flimsy, not to say shameless, pretext, that the Kansas City, Memphis & Birmingham Company had no intention of building their road, and only solicited a charter to force the Richmond Company from the field, and the result would be no road Southeast from Holly Springs, to which point the road was then, and had been for six months, in operation. This contention seemed so illogical, and wholly wanting in sound reason and good common sense, that many of the fair-minded members of both Houses could but regard it as a practical joke. Subsequent developments—the determination of Kansas City Company, to build with the restriction fastened upon it by the charter—shows the fareical absurdity of such reasoning.

This class of legislation is always objectionable, and in this particular case, when viewed from the standpoint of sound reason and genuine common sense, it becomes a shocking enormity. One organized company of gentlemen asked for chartered privileges to construct a railroad through certain counties of the State from the Northwestern to the Eastern border thereof. The charter was granted, comprising all the franchises necessary to enable the company to execute its purpose, and with which the company and its friends expressed entire satisfaction. Then another organized company of gentlemen apply for like privileges to construct a line of railroad, to extend in the same general direction, and penetrate the same counties or section of the State, and make the same connections, the effect of which would be to go much further and make many more and much more important connections between the Southeastern and Northwestern or Western sections of the Union. To the granting of this charter the Richmond Company and its friends, which had received from the State all they had asked for, objected, except upon condition that restrictions and difficulties should be engrafted upon it, such as they professed to believe would so embarrass the K. C. Co. that it would not make the venture, and thus defeat the enterprise altogether and create a monopoly in the Richmond Company, whereby it could build and operate a road without interference or competition. To this unreasonable and unjustifiable requirement the Legislature yielded, and undertook to justify their action, as before stated. This action, which passed both Houses, by a very small majority, and was most seriously and justly rebuked by the protest signed and entered upon the journal of the Senate by thirteen distinguished, able and fair minded members of that body. The act became a law with the objectionable restriction embodied therein. This was done with the fact staring the Legislature full in the face, that Missisippi has been striving for years to inaugurate a system for supervising railroads and avoid the evils of monopolies. And the further fact that we had just reached a point, where we could feel secure, upon the late decision of the Supreme Court of the United States, declaring the act of the Mississippi Legislature of 1884, upon that subject, constitutional. Such legislation, establishing this monopoly and in disregard of the interest of our own people, at the suggestion of the selfishness of the Richmond Company, must strike every patriotic Mississippian, whether located on the Tennessee line or on the Gulf Coast, as incomprehensible and egregiously unjust. But when considered from the standpoint of a Marshall county man, it becomes an enormity, and scarcely susceptible of explanation upon the score of *good faith*.

The Richmond Company proposes to complete and operate a railroad connecting Memphis, Tenn., with Birmingham, Ala., penetrating coal fields in the latter State, owned by certain capitalists constituting said company or owning a controlling interest therein.

That the interest in the coal fields of Alabama, was the prompting incentive of the Richmond capitalists to purchase and complete the road to Birmingham, is verified by the public announcement at a banquet given in Memphis on the 14th of May last, in honor of the Vice-President of the Company, by a gentleman who doubtless understands the motives and purposes of the Company, and who was regarded as the leader of the corps of lobbyists who was at Jackson during the contest in the Legislature over the subject of the charter, in the interest of said Richmond Company; he said:

"In December last a party of gentlemen in Virginia interested in Alabama mines purchased a controlling interest in the line." * * "The road is one depending on the mineral wealth of North Alabama at one end and the business spirit of Memphis at the other."

This road will have no connections west of the Mississippi River, nor south east from Birmingham, except by special favor of the trunk lines of railway connecting at these points. Then it starts at Memphis and ends at an interior town in Alabama, with no facilities of reaching beyond either point, but dependent upon other railway systems, for traffic and business, except such as may result from a local trade, and the carrying of their own coal to market. It is universally acknowledged that the local business of a railroad is comparatively a very small affair—whereas the Kansas City Company having extended its road south east from Memphis, its present eastern terminus, to Birmingham, and thence to the Atlantic, it becomes a great national thoroughfare from ocean to ocean. In comparison with which the Memphis, Birmingham and Atlantic, will be but little more than a side-track. This view of the subject addresses itself to the communities of the several counties through which the road may be constructed.

To Marshall county it assumes a much more vital phase. The Kansas City Company constructs its road twelve miles or more north or south of Holly Springs, and at the crossing of the I. C. railway, a rival town will spring up, which, in all probability, will divert and deplete the arteries of commerce, and reduce Holly Springs to a state of dependence and vassalage, and as a consequence the whole county becomes divided into rival communities and neighborhoods, and all to advance no general good, but to gratify the selfish purpose of a railroad company to which the Legislature has yielded its participation and accomplished its consummation.

It is understood that there was an organized lobby, consisting of attorneys and others, active and no doubt paid in the interest of this injustice and wrong through whose influence it was accomplished. (I have not heard it intimated, nor do I believe, that the use of money or other corrupt means was resorted to, with or by any member of either House, to effect this result, but it is nevertheless true that they yielded to influences of some sort, honestly no doubt, which cannot be justified by an intelligent, impartial public sentiment, and I think I am warranted in predicting that, if either of our Representatives or any other citizen of the county, favored or aided in the perpetr tion of this gigantic wrong, they may prepare themselves for the positive and unrelenting condemnation of their course by all good citizens who are not in some way connected in interest with the M. B. & A. R. R. Company.

I am sure I reflect the sentiment of nine-tenths of the citizens of this county, when I assert that the restriction of the twenty-four mile belt, embodied in the act, cannot be justified upon any principle of fairness; that the same does not reflect their wishes, did great injustice to the Kansas City Company, and fastened upon our people an irreparable wrong—a wrong calculated to create the impression that Marshall county people are inimical to the Kansas City Company, who propose to build a railroad through her borders. No such sentiment has ever existed, but on the contrary, our people have looked with vivid hope and anticipation to the time, when by means of the Kansas City, Springfield & Memphis R. R. Company, seeking and obtaining a terminus upon the Atlantic seaboard, penetrating centrally our county and crossing the I. C. railroad at the county seat, would place us in possession of all the advantages consequent upon a location on two great trunk lines of railway, which had been the anxious and intense desire of our people for many years, and they still hope for its successful and speedy consummation, notwithstanding the unjust and unwise action of our Legislature.

FAIR PLAY.

P. S.—Let it not be forgotten that our Senator, Thomas M. Kemp, made a bold, manly and persistent fight in opposition to the odious feature of the act, introduced therein, by the "Simonton amendment," for which he is entitled, and will receive the gratitude of a brave and grateful constituency. F. P.

## Why the Case was Dismissed.

A young man was arrested for kissing a pretty girl, and she was on the witness stand.

"You say," said the attorney for the defendant, "that the young man kissed you against your will?"

"Yes, he did, and he did it a dozen times, too."

"Well, now, is it not true that you also kissed him during the affray?"

Objected to; objection overruled.

"Now answer my question," continued the attorney. "Did you not kiss the defendant?"

"Yes, I did, replied the witness indignantly, but it was in self-defence."

Case dismissed.

DR. LYMAN BEECHER once travelled twenty miles to see Dr. Hawes, and after the usual salutation said, "Well Hawes, how are you getting on?" The cherry reply came promptly. First rate! first rate! first rate! ever since I stopped trying to run this world." The worry and care and consequent inefficiency which afflict many of us are due to the fact that we are trying to run the wole world instead of being willing to labor in the little sphere which God has given us. We should try do do good to all men wherever they are, but then we must bear in mind that one man cannot perform the duties of all men.

IT is stated that not over fifty per cent of the children in New York attend school.

# BEAUTY'S SECRET

By ALAN MUIR.

*Author of "Vanity Hardware," "Golden Girls," Etc.*

BOOK SIX.

*LADY BEAUTY'S JOY.*

### CHAPTER I.

THE TIMEPIECE OF ONE GAY LIFE BEGINS TO STRIKE THE MIDNIGHT QUARTERS.

Sophia found her mother seated on the edge of the bed pale and exhausted, but with nothing about her to account for her maid's sudden excitement. The old woman passed her hand feebly across her forehead, trying, it seemed, to collect her thoughts, and then began to speak.

"Have I been asleep? I must have been asleep! Where is Jones! Did I not see her here! O, Sophy, I have had such an odd dream! I thought there was a ball here—in this room, and yet my bed was here too and I lying on it, and between the dances a girl in a blue dress, whose face I could not see, came and sat on the bedside, and she had a lover with her, and they were toying and kissing, and then I called out something and afterward awoke. I suppose I awoke. I had not known I was asleep."

The maid subsequently told Sophia that, so far as she knew, her mistress had not been asleep at all; that all of a sudden she began to call out very loud, as if she were scolding; and that in the midst of a torrent of words she became deadly pale and seemed to faint away. Seeing this, the maid had rushed off for Sophia, and upon their return the old woman was come to herself, and sitting down as Sophia had found her. The doctor being sent for, made the usual inquiries and examinations, and ordered his patient to bed for a day or two, saying that she had overtaxed her strength; but when alone with Sophia he told her that there had evidently been an attack in the brain which might be the forerunner of something very grave, or might be only a symptom of weakness and old age.

"The latter I think," he said as he was leaving; "your mother is a very aged person, I should fancy, and her last decay has probably begun. How long she may live no one can say; but she will not be the same woman again, and the rest of her life will be going down hill, how fast or how slow depends on her constitution and our care."

"I told you, Sophy, that I felt a little shaken," the old woman said, when her daughter came back to her bedside. "Don't you remember I said about the poplar trees? A little rest, Sophy, will set me up—a little rest. I have had a hard life of it, enjoying myself; I don't feel tired of that in the least, but every one wants rest sometimes."

There followed the contraction of life which is the sure token of advancing age. Old Mrs. Temple got up late; she seldom drove out, and then only at the sunniest hours, and she had all through the day her little delicacies—turtle soup in tablespoons, champagne in tiny glasses, and all the usual dainty forms of nourishment for wasting lives. Sophia remarked, however, that her mother was more than ever solicitous about expense.

"I declare it is a sin to be eating this soup, she would say. How much is this a quart!—a guinea, I dare say. And as to sending to Gunter's, Sophy, it is waste, sinful waste. You would get it quite as good at the confectioner's here. Fancy if I went on with champagne and turtle at this rate for a year or two, why, money would come to an end, Sophy—money would come to an end."

Everything pointed in one direction: Mrs. Temple was living on capital; and she dreaded the approaching exhaustion of her means. Sophia tried to get some knowledge of her affairs.

"Could not I do that for you, mamma?" she asked one day, as the old woman was figuring over her bank book.

"You, Sophy!" she answered, with a gleam of her former cunning. "You, dear child! you would not know which side is which—which is the mother and which the banker."

"Let Archibald help you, then?" Sophia rejoined.

"Archibald, indeed!" the old woman exclaimed. "That great man stooping to my little bit of business would be like a camel trying to get through a needle's eye. No, thank you."

Elsewhere, too, some gleams of her old spirit broke through the clouds of weakness and illness, but Sophia, watching her narrowly, thought the vivacity only assumed. Even now she fancied she could discern a look of deeper care on the old woman's face as she returned to her calculations. Next day they drove to the bank, and feeble as Mrs. Temple was she insisted on going in alone; and she had a long interview with the manager. When she came out she showed Sophia a roll of notes.

"Two hundred and fifty pounds, Sophy," she said. "I shall put it in my drawer, and if I am not able to get out again this winter there will be money enough to go on with. I don't wish anyone to go to the bank about my business again—not until I die, and you need not pay any bills just at present. What ready money is wanted we can take out of this."

All this was alarming to Sophia. She was not the girl to give way to covetousness at a time like this; but who, without uneasiness, could face the prospect of supplies perhaps suddenly cut off at the most trying junctures? As to herself, Sophia did not feel much anxiety. Had Percival continued true to her, how gladly she would have put any fortune she might have inherited into his hands to repair his loss, but now she was not interested enough in life to fear poverty. Beyond care for her mother she imagined there was nothing to live for. She had tried even after Mrs. Hands' visit to disbelieve the reports which had seemed so fatally authenticated; but the very next day Sibyl told her that she, too, had heard from another quarter the most damaging accounts of Percival. At this Sophia became hopeless. It was curious that the only person to whom she said anything about her trouble was Prendergast. Whatever had passed at the time of his proposal had set up something like an intimacy between them; and one day when he called, noticing that she looked pale, he made some remark upon the trial her mother's illness must be.

"It is not, mamma," she replied; "that I could bear; but oh, I feel so weary and sick! I have heard such dreadful things about the man I believed loved me. Have you heard anything? Oh, do you believe it all?"

"I am afraid Brent has forgotten himself," Prendergast replied gravely, and said no more.

Meanwhile her sisters, with the above exception, maintained on the subject an ominous and dreary silence; and her mother, whom she carefully kept in ignorance of the reports, never mentioned Percival's name. So poor Sophia, with her broken hopes, went her dull round from day to day, nursing her mother and communing with her own sad heart, and there was not one ray of cheerfulness in her life. She grew pale and worn; and though she tried to be cheerful, every one could see that care was eating her spirit and strength away. Certainly the constraint of her appearance with that of Caroline, or even with that of Sibyl, was a warning against living for an idea in this worldly world. The other sisters might not indeed have grasped the whole substance—in this life who does? But Sophia's very shadow had vanished away, and she was quite alone, and destitute not only of pleasure but of illusion, too.

### CHAPTER II.

MRS. TEMPLE DELIVERS A FAREWELL SERMON ON LIFE.

Winter darkened on apace, and while the old woman's health more visibly declined, Sophia was pained to find that she would not allow the idea of death to near her. From occasional remarks that she let fall, it seemed that Mrs. Temple was willfully maintaining this delusion of returning strength, with an undercurrent of conviction that she was to die after all. But to Sophia she always spoke as if her recovery were a certainty; and she even said one day: "Next year I shall go to Paris and the year after that to Vienna."

"Mamma," Sophia said seriously, when she heard this extraordinary speech, "next year! and the year after that! Does it never strike you how uncertain life is?"

"Of course life is uncertain," the old woman replied briskly. "I never knew the time when it was anything else. But we must make our arrangements, and then take our chance. You were taught to dance when you were seven years old, although you would not require it for nine years more, and life was as uncertain then as now. Still, it would never have done not to have taught you to dance."

"Yes, but when one is weak and sick these things seem to come nearer, don't they, mamma?" Sophia said with the greatest tenderness.

"Seem to come, Sophy! They do come nearer. I wish they did not. But that is no reason why we should bring them nearer still by our own reflections and guesses."

"But, mamma," Sophia said, now resolved to press the matter, "ought we not at such times to think a little about the other world, and prepare for it?"

"Prepare for the other world!" the old woman exclaimed impatiently. "Tell me, how shall we do it? You talk as if one could make ready for the other world like a flower show or a ball. I don't know anything about the other world. I hope everything will be right, but there is nothing I can do."

"See a clergyman, mamma," Sophia said, growing timid before her mother's unwavering hardness. "See Mr. Knox. He is very kind, I am sure, and not the sort of man to excite you."

"Very well, Sophy," her mother retorted, getting a little flushed with excitement, but speaking with sarcastic self-repression. "Let us suppose Mr. Knox comes to see me. I can tell you what will happen. He will have a black book with him, which at first he will try to keep out of sight, and he will edge it into view as he is talking about the weather. That will be a signal to me of what is coming. Then he will begin by saying that this is a world full of pain and care and trouble." She hit off the clergyman's voice exactly, but more, it seemed, from her old habit of ridicule than from any present wish to be flippant. "If I say what I think, I shall answer, 'Not a bit of it; it is a cozy, bright world enough, and I never complained of it.' Then he will go on and talk about loving the world. 'Well,' I ought to say, 'I do love it, and never more than now when I am shut out from it.' 'Yes,' he will say, 'but people ought to be serious.' 'Serious!' I shall answer. 'Believe me, the person who produces one hearty laugh from another does good in the world. Serious, indeed! give me round faces, not long ones.' Won't this be improving talk, Sophy, and do good to me and good to Mr. Knox? Then he will talk about sickness being a blessing, and if I give him my mind I shall say that sickness is one of the few things I know which is an unmitigated bother and perplexity. Won't that make Knox whistle! He will feel he must put me down; and next he will say we are all sinners. What then! If I say the truth I shall answer: 'I don't see it. I have done my best in life. I have not been a liar, or a thief, or cruel. Enjoyment came to me, and I took it, and what a fool I should have been if I had not taken it! But I have tried to be a good mother and a kind friend, and though I don't mean to say that I have not often been in fault like other people, still I have never done anything to make a fuss about. The Almighty won't judge us for mistakes and little slips of temper—that I am quite sure of. I have always gone to church when I could, and if there is any better way to heaven than that I don't know it, nor anybody else! So please, Sophy, don't have Mr. Knox here; either I say what I do think and shock him, or I say what I don't think, which is not likely to do any good to anybody."

"But, mamma," Sophia went on, "do you never feel as if you wanted something better than this world? It is very happy and all that while it lasts; but do you never wish for another?"

"Never, Sophia!" her mother replied, now with distinct harshness in her voice. "I have told you a hundred times. I am satisfied with the world, and with other people, and with myself. I tell you I find only one fault with the world—I want it to last, and it won't."

This reply was delivered in a way that finally closed the conversation, and Sophia never dared again allude to the subject.

December drew to its close, and she saw that her mother was more and more declining in strength, and that even her insatiable appetite for the world itself was departing. She no longer cared to hear the talk of the town. Her beloved Morning Post would lie day after day unopened. The little meals, which she used to take with the eagerness of one who is determined to overcome illness, were now languidly put aside to another hour. She slept more frequently, and everything showed plainly that she was quitting the stage of the world, where, a popular actress indeed, she had so long and so brilliantly figured.

### CHAPTER III.

SOPHIA HAS THREE COUNSELORS.

Nor was poor Sophia left alone with her sorrow. We have all friends in this world—some who wish us well, and some who wish us nothing of the kind. Ill wishers and well wishers sometimes are equals in making us uneasy. And thus it was with Sophia, for while she was shut up with her mother in the sick house various persons found opportunity to distribute her with counsel or warning. The indefatigable Mrs. Hands, who had fully made up her mind that the young woman must and should marry young John Done, managed to work her way into the house several times. Sophia now feared and hated the widow in equal parts, although she could not deny that, in telling her the truth about Percival, she had acted the part of a friend.

"My dear Sophia," this energetic dame said, "I hear that Brent is coming home—bankrupt, they say; character and cash both gone! I should like to see you comfortably settled before that time, and in a position to treat him as he deserves. Now, while your mother is still living, and able to be comforted, settle yourself, Sophia, settle yourself. My dear, I know one young man, at least, who would be at your feet in an hour after the time I told him there was a hope that you would change your mind and say 'yes.' I know the young man."

"Thank you," Sophia replied, hastily. Her cheeks were on fire at the bare idea of seeing Percival again. "I shall stay with mamma to the last; and I am not going to marry any one."

"Certainly not a man who has treated you badly," the widow said, resolved to pledge Sophia to this much, at least.

"I am not going to marry anybody," Sophia repeated, tartly.

She had another counselor. Egerton, having heard that Percival was returning, ventured to advise Sophia on the whole subject.

"It is not his being a little wild, Sophia, that I would so much object to," he said. "We are all that sometimes. I mean all young fellows, not girls, though I said 'we.' I had what we call an affair with Miss Johnson at that glove shop myself many years ago, and it went so far that once or twice we were on the point of going out walking together, and all that sort of thing—you know what I mean, Sophia; but it was the time for the equinoctial gales, and the weather got unsettled and that stopped it; and then I got engaged to Caroline, and she was such a tremendously fine girl that she steadied me. I don't want to find fault with Percival Brent, who is not half a bad fellow, I think. But you are not the woman for him, Sophia, that is where it is—you are not the woman for him. In every case a woman ought to be the woman for a man. A man of Percival's sort ought to be engaged to a woman with a whip in her hand. Some of us—I mean the fellows with 'go'—want to be influenced, and things to be brought to bear on us, and we want forcible feminine character about us, and the rest of it, and in such cases there is nothing like a woman with a whip in her hand."

More solemn and weighty words were addressed to the poor heart-sick girl. Goldmore no sooner heard that Percival was coming back than he became sincerely alarmed for Sophia's future.

"I tremble for that girl," he said to his wife one morning, "kind, impressible, virtuous as she is. I wish she would accept Prendergast, who is as much in love with her as ever. He would make her happy, and protect her. I fear—I very greatly fear—that Sophia will be very poor at her mother's death. Everything points that way. But she is the sweetest of girls," he added in tones of solemn approval; "she is a sister you may well be proud of, and she shall never want a brother while I live, Sibyl. She