The Color Blindness Of John Macartney

BY FRANCIS LYNDE.

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It came upon him suddenly one tar-black night when he was pulling a special train of "Raymond-Whitcombs" with the Five-naught-seven; and the effect of the visitation was to smash his nerve for the remainder of the run.

The special had been fifteen minutes late out of Grand Butte, the division station, and Macartney was cracking the whip on the curves with the rear Pullman in the endeavor to make Maverick Junction on time. Maverick was his meeting point with a stock "limited"; and whosoever delayed a live stock flyer on the C. & G. R. was likely to hear from the train dispatcher in language more forcible than polite.

Macartney had regained all but two of the lost fifteen minutes when he hurled the 507 at the long grade up the Crow Hills. From the top of the grade the lights of Maverick would be in sight; and with a minute to the good at the summit he would make the meeting point on time.

"Keep her hot, Tom!" he shouted across to the fireman; and Tom, having three good names at stake—his own, Macartney's and the 507's—shoveled the coal with a willing hand.

So it came about that the hill was topped in good time; and with the lunge over the summit, Macartney eased off on the throttle and leaned far out of his window to mark down the lights at the junction.

Everything was as it should be. The stock train was waiting on the siding, and the switch lights on the main line blinked yellow-eyed in the pitchy darkness. Macartney felt for the whistle lever, and in reply to the 507's bellowing call the semaphore eye on the station winked twice, the winks meaning "No orders for you," and giving the train the right to run through the yards without stopping.

"All clear!" sang out the fireman from his side; and Macartney reached for the throttle and sent the tourist special thundering down the grade.

It was when the flying special was within twice its length of the nearest switch—the outlet switch for the siding where the stock train stood—that the appalling thing happened. For a certain dizzying instant the yellow eye of the switch light burned a ghastly blue; then it flicked suddenly to red, and McCartney was down from his box and fighting madly with the big eight-wheeler—not to make the impossible stop, but to lessen, if so he might, by some few wheel-turns, the crash of the inevitable collision with the stock train on the siding.

Miraculously enough there was no collision. The 507 banged over the switch at full twenty miles an hour, her drivewheels sliding in the grip of the wind-jams and a stream of fire fizzing from every brake-shoe on the long train of Pullmans; but never a wheel left the straight track of the main line. The straining engine came to a stand just opposite the station, and in a twinkling McCartney was down and bursting into the telegraph office, a picture of a handsome young giant in a fury.

"Who's running that stock train?" he exploded in white-hot wrath.

"Halsey, engineer; Logan, conductor," said the operator. "Why? What's the matter with you, Jack?" McCartney had the reputation of being the best natured man on the division, and it was a new thing to hear him rave and swear like a buccaneer.

"Somebody was monkeying with that switch!" he stormed. "It went red on me just before I hit it. Who turned it?"

Just then Logan himself came in to ask gruffly why McCartney did not pull his blanked dude cars over the switch to let the stock train out. Explanations followed—hot ones on McCartney's part. There was already bad blood between these two for Phemie Tredwill's sake.

"You're drunk," sneered Logan. "There was nobody near the switch. Get a move on your varnished cars and let me out of here."

"I say there was!" insisted McCartney; but now other witnesses came to refute him. The yardmaster, the engineer of the stock train, three or four of the station employes; they had all seen the switch, and it shown a white light, as it should.

"By the Lord Harry! I don't care who saw it," Macartney was beginning again, when his own fireman drew him aside.

"Let up on it, Jack," he muttered. "'Twas all right; I saw it just as you jerked the air on. Let's go."

John Macartney took his place in the cab of the big eight-wheeler, and the special was presently storming on its westward way again. But for that one night the engineer's nerve was gone. He stood down on the footplate to run, and his hand never left the throttle.

The next time it happened he was "dead-heading" over the division in the caboose of a freight train. Not liking the company around the red lobster of a stove—Logan was of it, dead-heading also—Macartney had climbed to a seat in the caboose lookout. Being off duty, he fell asleep; and when he awoke the train was running into Rockton. He strated up and rubbed his eyes. While you might count five every light in the Rockton yard glared at him with fiery red eye through the glass front of the lookout window. Then the curious hallucination passed and he saw the lights as they ought to be.

"Good Lord!" he groaned; "I've got it again! If this thing goes on—" He stopped short, thinking of the lives that he held in his hand every time he climbed to the cab of 507; and being deep in the pit of trouble, he did not hear a stealthy step in the caboose top, or the slamming of the rear door a minute later.

Three days after the "dead-heading" trip Macartney went on the fast mail run. He had objected, as most of the men did, for the run was a hard one. But the objection was only on general principles, and at heart he was twice glad. For the mail run gave him a clear twenty-four-hour lay-over at Lone Pine; and Phemie Tredwill's father was the station agent at Lone Pine.

By that time there was a pretty fair understanding between the handsome young engineer and Phemie, the brown-eyed, though as yet it paused short of housekeeping talk. Macartney was more than willing, but Phemie had a way of changing the subject on him at the critical moment, and for this Macartney feared, in the jealous corner of his heart, that Barton Logan was responsible.

To add to his disquieture on this head, Phemie was always "rubbing Logan in on him," as he phrased it; and she did it again on that first of the mail run lay-over evenings when Macartney was sharing Phemie's watch in the telegraph office while her father went to supper.

"How is Mr. Logan now?" she asked, sweetly. "We don't see much of him since he took 16 and 17."

These were "doubling" trains, with no lay-over for the crew at Lone Pine, a fact for which Macartney was devoutly thankful.

"He's all right, I guess. I don't see much of him myself," said Macartney, wishing that the little might be still less.

"I am afraid you don't like him very well," said the brown-eyed maid, all innocence.

Now, Macartney was a big fellow, with wide-open blue eyes, a thick mane of red hair and a skin as white, under his clothes, as a woman's. Such men are not adepts in concealment.

"I like him about as well as he likes me; and that's precious little. I hear he has been making his brags that he will run me off the C. & G. R. before he gets through with me."

"Why, dear me! I didn't know you were enemies!"

Macartney laughed—the laugh of a good-natured giant. "I'm not an enemy but I guess he is."

"What is the trouble?" asked Phemie, again all innocence.

"You," Macartney blurted it out before he could take time to consider if it were the wise thing to say.

The young girl blushed very prettily, and the lover thought there was no neck and cheek in all the world like a soft brown to color so deliciously under a blush. But if he imagined he had brought matters to a crisis at last, he was doomed to disappointment.

"Do you have any time at all in Grand Butte?" she asked, with one of her lightning changes of the subject; "waking time, I mean."

"O, yes; I have an hour or two in the evening before I turn in."

"Will you do a little shopping for me?"

"I'll buy the whole town and bring it out to you in the cab of the naught-seven, if you say so," he replied, only too eager to serve her.

"O, you foolish!" she said, laughing at him. "I want two yards of this and a spool of silk to match," handing him a bit of dress goods. "Do you think you are equal to it?"

He took the scrap of cloth and held it off. "It's red, isn't it?"

"What a question! Why, of course it is—cardinal red at that."

"I thought it was," he said, musingly; and then the father came in and the talk of possibilities was at an end.

Macartney made the purchase of the dress goods and the silk the following evening; and when the clerk said they were a perfect match for the sample, he thought so, too. But the carrying of the small package to its destination came within a hair's breath of being fraught with disaster.

It was beyond the Divide, on the westward down grade. The mail was late, as usual, and Macartney was pushing the 507 to the limit—which limit, on the Jack mountain down grade, was well up to a mile a minute.

Train No. 7, the regular Overland Express, was just ahead of him, ripping around the curves and racing free for the siding at the foot of the mountain to get out of his way, for the mail had the right to track over all trains in both directions.

Macartney could see the smoke of No. 7 rising over the dun swells ahead, and he was looking out for her, in a way, though under the rules it was 7's business to look out for him. It was on the last of the curves, where the line runs down to a long tangent in the valley that the crux came. Macartney had a glimpse of a patch of bunting—green, as he would have sworn—fluttering between the rails, another of a man running up the track and making frantic signals, and a third of the tail end of No. 7 stopped! Then he went to work.

It was the closest possible shave. Luckily, all the conditions were favorable—a dry rail, automatic air in perfect working order, good brake shoes under every truck. Nothwithstanding, the nose of the 507 was fairly under the platform of the rear Pullman of the passenger train when the mail came to a full stop.

As a matter of course, there was instant investigation and profanity enough to pale the normal blueness of the crisp mountain air. Straightened out, the story of it was this: The track repairers had found a broken rail, and had flagged No. 7, after which the foreman had run back to flag the mail. He swore by all the gods known to mankind that he had set up a red flag between the rails to stop Macartney, and, in proof hereof, showed the tattered remains of a flag which he said the mail had run down.

Now Macartney had seen a green flag, or he thought he had; and, since green is merely a "slow" signal, he had done no more than to shut off the steam until he saw the rear end of the passenger train blocking the way.

There was no time to fight it out on the ground, but both crews remarked that after the first burst of profanity Macartney shut up like a clam. And when the two trains were once more speeding on their way Macartney's fireman noticed that his mate did not climb to the box. He stood down on the footplate, with his left hand gripping the throttle—a thing he had been doing a good deal of late, as Tom Barkley remembered.

Macartney did not tell Phemie how near her bit of dress had come to figuring in a wreck on Jack mountain; and since he was so preoccupied as to be almost rude, she was kinder to him than she had ever been before—as is the manner of women. Nevertheless, he went back to his boarding house shortly after Agent Treadwell returned from supper, and did not wait to take Phemie home, as was his custom. There be some things that will strike a man dumb even in the presence of the girl of his heart; and Macartney had fallen upon one of these things—or rather, it had fallen upon him.

On his next lay over in Grand Butte, Macartney turned up at the office of the division surgeon.

"What's that you say, Mac—want to take the eye test?" said the kindly little gentleman whom the men on the division called the "bone-jointer."

"You're the first man on the road to come in for that till he had to. What's wrong with you?"

"Don't know as there's anything wrong. But I thought I'd like to be put through again. And say, doc, make it binding."

Surgeon Kinnebrew did make it binding, as binding as if the blonde giant were trying to qualify as a salesman at a ribbon counter. It was all to no purpose, so far as any discoverable flaw in Macartney's eyesight was concerned. He could distinguish perfectly not only the primary colors, but all the intermediate shades to the very blending point of blue and green by lamplight.

"You're all right," said the doctor.

"Yes," said Macartney; but there was no assurance in him.

"What made you think you were not?"

"Two or three little things that I can't explain; red and white getting tangled, or seeming to get tangled, once in a while."

"It's that d—d electric headlight," growled the little doctor. "I've told 'em it would ruin every pair of eyes on the road."

"Yes, but——"

"But what?"

"The last time it happened in broad daylight."

"Oho, it did, eh? Then it's your liver, most likely. Be careful of what you eat, and make sure of your sleep; no overtime, mind you, till the symptom disappears altogether. I suppose by rights I ought to lay you off, but I shan't. You know your responsibility, and I'm going to trust you not to take any bad chances."

"Thank you, doc," and Macartney went to get some of the pretermitted sleep on the spot.

For a fortnight after this there were no more "symptoms," and Macartney began to breathe freer—and to run less like a man whose nerve is evaporating. Moreover, he won golden encomiums in his masterly handling of the fast mail. There was a $500 government penalty for the non-delivery of the mail on schedule time at the terminals; and to safeguard against this the company gave its mail engineers a substantial bonus for all the lost time regained on any divisional run. Mac's "bonus fund" grew with every trip; and as Phemie seemed to interest herself shyly in its accumulation, Macartney took courage and put in his dead time in Grand Butte haunting the house furnishing shops.

But the disappearance of the "symptoms" proved to be only temporary. Once again, when he was passing a freight train at a blind siding, with the 507 plunging along at a fifty-mile gait, the nearest switch light sputtered and turned first blue and then red. But it went white again before he could do anything more than shut off steam; so nothing worse than another of the terrible nerve-shakings came to him.

Yet it was enough to send him to Phemie in despair; and the next evening, when they were alone together in the office at Lone Pine, he made a clean breast of his troubles eye-wise.

"You poor boy!" she said (he was five years her senior and big enough to make two such men as her father), "why didn't you tell me before?"

"I haven't had the heart to tell anybody. You see, it means a lot to me, Phemie. If I admit it as a fact, I've got to throw up my job."

"It would mean a lot to anyone. Can't you account for it in any way?"

"No. Doc Kinnebrew said it was 'liver,' but, pshaw! I'm as strong as a mule and as well as a man can be and not burst."

She was sewing on a piece of red stuff he had bought for her, and for a time her needle flew in silence. Then she said: "Has it—have you ever thought that somebody might be playing tricks on you?"

Macartney's tilted chair came to the floor with a crash. "By George!" he said; then he shook his head. "I thought I had a notion; but it won't fit all the times."

"Tell me," she commanded.

"The first time it happened was when I was passing Bart Logan's train at Maverick. The next time I was dead-heading with him on No. 18. Last night it was his train again that I was passing at the blind siding. But he had nothing to do with the rip-up on Jack mountain. He was in Grand Butte that day."

"I am afraid he has a spite at you, John, and—I know he is a desperate man. You must be very careful."

That was all she would say, but it was enough to send Macartney off with his heart afire; also with a firm determination to lay the whole matter before the superintendent at the first opportunity. So much he owed to himself, to the company, and to those whose lives he held in his hand on the arrow-flight bursets of the fast mail.

But the climax came, as climaxes are wont to come. When Macartney reached Grand Butte on his return trip the superintendent was away, and Mac went west again the following day, with the fast mail hours late, a stiff head wind blowing a gale to make it still later, and everybody swearing at the tangle the delayed train with despotic rights was bound to bring about on the division.

It was a day of petty disasters. First, a hot box under one of the mail cars began to kill time. Then a freight train jumped the iron on the main line and threw the mail still further off, with a three-hour wait while the wrecking crew was picking up the remains. Last of all, the 507 slipped an eccentric, and though Mac and his fireman worked like madmen to set it, another hour went to the bad.

Taking it all in all, Macartney did as well as the best man on the division could have done under like hard conditions, but it was long past dark when the fast mail thundered into the deep mountain valley where Lone Pine nestles at the end of the mountain division.

Two miles east of the station, when Macartney was getting the last possible wheel-turn out of the 507 in a final spurt, a red glare sprang up between the rails less than 100 yards in front, lighting up the frowning mountains and turning the foaming torrent at the trackside into a river of blood.

Macartney flung himself upon throttle and airbrake like a man possessed, and the big flyer groaned and heaved and buckled, coming to a stand with the sputtering Bengal light fizzing beneath her machinery.

"Now, what in hell—" He did not finish the objurgation. Instead, he whipped out of the cab and sprang to the ground in good time to catch Phemie when she stumbled and would have fallen. "What is it, Phemie dear? Are you hurt?"

She shook her head. "No, not—not hurt," she panted. And then: "He's setting a trap for you, and I—I ran all the way."

"Who is setting a trap for me?"

"Bart Logan. I saw him doing something to the switch just opposite our house. I had no lantern, so I got some of Benny's Christmas fireworks and ran. Oh-h-h! I was so afraid it wouldn't turn out to be a red light, after all! And, John, that was a green flag you ran down on Jack mountain. The section foreman told a—a story to save himself. I heard all about it on the wires this morning."

He put her up into the cab without a word and was stowing her on his boxseat when the mail conductor came engine-ward, swearing piteously at this new delay. Macartney explained in a whispered sentence, and the big conductor climbed to the footboard.

"All right," he said. "Go on, and when you get to the switch, give her the air sort o' sudden, and I'll drop off and nab him. Howdy, Miss Phemie."

When the switch in front of the agent's cottage came in sight it showed a white light, as it should. But when the 507 was almost upon it, it turned blue and then red, and four pairs of eyes saw it. Macartney had the train well under control, and at the critical moment he checked its flight, and the big conductor leaped from the gangway fair upon the shoulders of a man who was holding a piece of stained glass before the yellow eye of the switch lamp.

Macartney ran on to the station, lifted Phemie down from the cab and turned his engine over to the hostler before he spoke. Then he said: "May I take you back home, Phemie?"

She nodded, and they walked up the track together. Half-way to the winking switch they met the conductor of the mail.

"Confound his picture! He got away from me after all and broke for the hills. But I guess he took your color-blindness along with him, Mac. Shall I report it?—or will you?"

"You report it," said Macartney. "I'll tell the old man all about it first chance I get."

The conductor went on toward the station, and when they were alone again Macartney said: "What made you run so? Were you afraid some of Uncle Sam's mail boxes might get smashed?"

"Of course," she snapped. "How can you ask?"

"I didn't know. But—O, Phemie, girl! now he's out of the way, won't you give me just a little grain of a show?"

She laughed softly and slipped her arm in his; this, though they were fairly at the cottage gate. "Can't you come in and let me get you a cup of coffee and something to eat? Supper is all over long ago at Mrs. Raffley's."

"No," he said, stubbornly; "not till you give me my answer."

"O," with a little stmp of her foot, "I wouldn't be as dense as a man for anything in the world! What do you want me to say?"

"Say 'yes.'"

"But I can't give you a 'little show,' as you put it."

"Why can't you?"

"Because I gave you all there was to give a long time ago—only you were color-blind and couldn't see it. Now will you come in?"

And when he went stumbling beside her in a new blindness—the blindness of love undenied that saw no light save that in the brown eyes that were laughing up into his.

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For full Minnetonka train schedule see time table in this paper.

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New Hutchinson Train via "The Milwaukee."

On and after June 17 an additional passenger train will be put on via C. M. & St. P. Ry. between the twin cities and Hutchinson (daily except Sunday).

New train leaves Hutchinson 7:30 a. m., Glencoe, 8 a. m.; Plato, 8.09 a. m.; Norwood, 8:18 a. m.; Cologne, 8:30 a. m.; and arrives Minneapolis, 9:45 a. m.; St. Paul, 10:20 a. m.

Returning leaves St. Paul, 4 p. m.; Minneapolis, 4:40 p. m.; and arrives Glencoe 6:30 p. m., and Hutchinson, 7 p. m.

Sabbath-School Lesson.

FOR AUG. 4, 1901.

Abraham and Lot.—Gen. 13: 1-8.

By John R. Whitney—Copyright, 1901.

Golden Text—Whatsoever ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them. —Matt. vii., 12.

The keynote of this lesson is choosing. It is the obligation which rests, not only upon the child of God, but upon every other man in all of the affairs of life. His daily conduct is necessarily determined very largely by his daily choice. So, when Abram left Ur of the Chaldees at the call of God to go into Canaan, it was entirely a matter of his own voluntary action. God called him, but he did not compel him. Ur and Canaan were both before him. He could remain in Ur, if he chose, or, he could go into Canaan if he chose. He chose the latter.

Such a choosing, however, did not end the matter with Abram, and it never does with any other man in such a sense that having once made it he has nothing more to do. It only marks the direction in which he proposes that his path henceforward shall lie, but it does not make that path either straight or smooth. As he moves on he must constantly decide for himself whether he will turn to the right or to the left, whether he will go on or go back. So our Commentator in "The Epistle to the Hebrews," speaking of the sojourn of Abram and his household in the land of Canaan, says "truly if they had been mindful of that country from whence they came out they might have had opportunity to have returned." (Heb. xi., 15.) But Abram chose to remain. His choice, as at the first, was dependent upon and regulated by his faith in God and in his promises. So it is with every man. If his faith is strong and pure, his conduct will be one thing; if it is weak and cloudy, or entirely wanting, it will be quite another thing.

In the intermediate history between this lesson and that of last week we have a striking illustration of the results when "faith fails." As soon as Abram entered into the land of Canaan, and encamped in Sichem, he found that he had not entered into a region of perfect peace and rich pastures. The record that immediately follows the record of his arrival is "And the Canaanite was then in the land." (xii., 6.) In all the history of God's people "The Canaanites" are always their enemies, to be rooted out and destroyed.

But with the announcement of this fact there came the announcement of a still more important fact. For then "the Lord appeared" again to Abram, and what he had before promised to "shew" him, now he promised to "give" him. (xii., 7.) Strengthened by this promise, Abram continued his journey through the land, everywhere setting up an altar to God. But suddenly we are confronted with the announcement, "And there was a famine in the land." (xii., 10.) And so it is always in every earthly "Canaan" of our experiences. No matter how far, or where we may go, we will very unexpectedly find both the "Canaanite" and the "famine."

Collision with the "Canaanites" was probably avoided in Abram's case by a timely changing of his pasturings; but when the famine came, something more than this was needed. It could not be avoided by simply moving from one place in the land to another. But there is no record that Abram at once built an altar and called upon God for direction. Apparently, he decided the matter for himself, simply from what he could see around him. That "the famine was grievous in the land" of Canaan (xii., 10) was very evident, and that there was plenty in Egypt was equally evident. So, without any explanation or justification, the record is: "And Abram went down into Egypt to sojourn there." But in the Scriptures "Egypt" is the type of "this world," the enemy of God and of his people. It is described in connection with Sodom as "spiritually" the place "where our Lord was crucified." (Rev. xi., 8.) So we are not surprised to find that whilst Abram greatly prospered in worldly and temporal riches, he there fell into grievous sin, suffered reproof, and was finally obliged to leave in disgrace.

Humbled and penitent, he "went up out of Egypt" (verse 1) and journeyed north "even to Bethel, unto the place where his tent had been at the beginning, unto the place of the altar which he had made there at the first; and there Abram called on the name of the Lord." (Verses 3 and 4.) Restored thus to the divine fellowship, his character shines out with resplendent luster in the next incident of his history, which is the one now brought before us. He is now surrounded by new circumstances and conditions, and must again choose, or decide, what he will do. So must Lot.

Abram, as was stated last week, was probably the youngest of the three sons of Terah, although he is the first mentioned in the list given. (xi., 26-27.) For when Terah died his age is stated as "two hundred and five" years. (xi., 32.) Immediately after his death, Abram left Haran, at the age of 75. (xii., 4.) At the time of his birth, therefore, his father must have been 130 years old. But we are told that his father was only 70 years old when his eldest son was born. (xi., 26.) This first born, therefore, must have been Haran, for, as both Abram and Nahor married his daughters, he must have been older than they, or the eldest of the family, and at least 60 years old when his youngest brother, Abram, was born.

Although Abram was thus the youngest son of Terah, yet from natural force and character, strengthened by his wonderful faith in God, when his father died, without any questioning he became the head and leader of the family. Then, when he resumed the journey towards Canaan, he was accompanied by Lot, the first born son of his oldest brother, Haran. By right of birth, therefore—being the eldest son of the first born—Lot should naturally have been recognized as the head or sheikh of the tribe or caravan. He was the head "de jure," but Abram was the head "de facto."

Besides this hereditary right of headship, Lot was also probably considerably older than his uncle Abram. He was also the brother of Sarai, Abram's wife. He was thus, not only Abram's nephew, but also his brother-in-law. Yet, notwithstanding this right of birth—right of age—and right of relationship, Lot appears never to have questioned Abram's right to rule.

But now riches had increased, and Lot's heart was set upon them. There was not room enough to pasture their flocks in the same valleys, or water enough to supply them from the same cisterns. Very naturally the attendants of each strove for the best places, and it was not long before Lot and Abram became involved in the disputes. This brought out the difference between the two men. It did not make the difference; it only made it manifest.

For it is very evident that Lot had prospered because of his connection with Abram, and he was not slow to perceive it. He therefore never questioned his authority or doubted the wisdom of his plans or refused to worship at his altar. All of these things contributed to his worldly wealth, and the sequel shows that this was the one great thing that he desired. The present difficulty also was altogether about temporal affairs. Apparently to him, as to his herdsmen, the only question to be considered was who should have the greenest pastures and deepest wells.

With Abram, however, vastly more was to be thought of than pastures and wells. For "the Canaanite and the Perizzite dwelled then in the land." (v., 7.) They were also desirous of pastures and water, and would undoubtedly be quick to take advantage of want of unity among the newcomers. So it is always. There are always Canaanites and Perizzites dwelling in the land, and watching the children of God.

Although quick to discern danger and to deplore its cause, Abram did not undertake to quell the disturbance by mere force of authority. He well knew that a forced union would weaken him and Lot more than a friendly separation. So he said: "Let there be no strife, I pray thee, between me and thee, and between my herdmen and thy herdmen; for we be brethren. Is not the whole land before thee? Separate thyself, I pray thee, from me. If thou wilt take the left hand, then I will go to the right; or if thou depart to the right hand, then I will go to the left." (Verses 8-9.)

Apparently without a moment's hesitation or deference to Abram's position, or recognition of all that he had received through connection with him, Lot accepted the proposition. "He "lifted up his eyes and beheld all the plain of Jordan; that it was well watered everywhere." (Verse 10.) Its luxuriant green delighted him. Its flowing waters were very refreshing. Its towns were active and wealthy. There his flocks could find food in abundance and his family would not be without social enjoyments. To him the "plain of Jordan" contained all that he desired. Therefore, he chose it and journeyed east and "pitched his tent toward Sodom."

Probably in his eyes it seemed a very proper and wise choice and one which he should be congratulated. For, according to his reasoning, his first duty was to provide food for his flocks, and for his growing family the very best advantages of the times. To be sure, the reputation of Sodom was none of the best, but then he did not propose to go into Sodom. He was only going into "the plain," and so would not be injured even if Sodom was in "the plain," provided he did not go into it himself. Besides, his presence might be a restraint upon the prevailing wickedness, and thus he might himself be an instrument of good in their midst. These are very natural, very common and apparently very good reasons. They are the ones urged even yet by those who "pitch toward Sodom."

But it was a fatal choice to Lot. Full of promise to the eye, in the end it led to judgment and to death. In making it he had no thought of God or of his promises or of his worship. He took no counsel from him, or from his servant. He walked by sight and not by faith. As long as his connection with Abram caused him to prosper in earthly things, he followed him and worshipped at the same altar; but when it appeared to him that his earthly prosperity would be better served apart from Abram and God's altar, he willingly separated himself from both.

Such was Lot's choice, made deliberately and freely. What now was that of Abram? It was just as free and deliberate as Lot's. He knew that, by promise and by gift, all the land was his, and that he had left Ur of the Chaldees on purpose to obtain it. Yet he deliberately waived all of these considerations and bade Lot choose whatever and wherever and as much as he pleased, and decided that he would be content with whatever might be left. So he calmly stood by when Lot, on the crest of the mountain, lifted up his eyes and fixed them with delight upon the plain of the Jordan.

But "after that Lot was separated from him" (verse 14) God took him aside and directed his gaze. It reached far up to the north, and rested on the snowy peaks of Hermon. It reached down to the south as far as Egypt and Arabia. It turned to the east and rested upon the great river, the River Euphrates, and it turned to the west until it was lost in the blue expanse or the Mediterranean. It took in the whole land of Palestine, flowing with milk and honey, from Dan to Beersheba. So much greater is the vision of faith than that of sight.

But this was not all. He was not only to look "northward and southward and eastward and westward," and see how great his possessions were, but he was to "arise, walk through the land, in the length of it and in the breadth of it" (verse 17), and learn by his own experience how rich a land it was.

Such are the promises of God to all who trust him as did Abram. "Whether the world or life or death or things present or things to come; all are yours, and ye are Christ's and Christ is God's." (I. Cor. iii., 22-23.) And every heir of God is commanded to walk through the length and the breadth of his promises, which are "yea and amen" in Christ, and by personal experience to know how large and rich and durable they are. But it is a matter of choice. According to his or her faith, the choice will be that of Lot or that of Abram.

Bryn Mawr, Pa.

MILITARY BALLOONING

Self-Propulsion Abandoned — New Steering Devices.

United Service Gazette.

The French Miltaire gives an interesting account of some experiments in militairy aerostation which are about to be carried out by the French military authorities. In the school of military aerostation at Chalais no great belief is entertained of the possibility of driving an aerial machine of any kind, or of directing its course under adverse circumstances, by means of a motor. It is believed, however, that by the aid of proper apparatus the wind may, in very many cases, be utilized to take a balloon in any required direction, and it is to test the appliances which have been designed for this purpose that experiments are about to be undertaken.

The first series of trials will be carried out over the Mediterranean. The balloon used will be spherical in shape, with a capacity of 3,000 cubic metres. It will be filled with hydrogen, and arrangements will be made by means of a contrivance carried in the care to keep the balloon constantly fully inflated. The balloon will ascend from the isthmus of Sablette, from a strip of beach sheltered by Cape Sicie, in front of the great harbor of Toulon, and the object will be to reach the shores of Algeria. As the wind will probably be favorable in June and July, the ascent is announced for the last fortnight in June, the car being occupied by Count Henry de la Vaulx, who last year won the prize offered for long-distance ballooning.

The apparatus carried for the purpose of keeping the balloon in the right direction will consist of two distinct contrivances. One is designed with a view to keeping the balloon for any desired period uniformly at any desired altitude, in order that a layer of the atmosphere moving in the desired direction may be utilized. The invention can only be utilized when sailing over water, and it is for this reason that it has been decided to make the first experiment over the sea. Of course, the altitude of a balloon can always by varied by throwing out ballast, or allowing gas to escape, but as neither gas nor ballast can be replaced, the number of times the height of the balloon can be varied by these means is very limited; whereas, by the contrivance now designed, it is claimed that the altitude may be altered whenever and as often as may be desired without deflating the balloon or changing, except temporarily, the weight carried. The "deviateurs," which it is not pretended wil make the balloon travel against the wind, but which it is believed will cause it to move at an angle to the direction of this latter, are of somewhat complicated construction.

As a general description it may be said that they consist of concave plates so arranged that they can be folded together or expanded at will by simply pulling a light cord. These are suspended below the car by two such cords. When these latter are of equal length the deviator does not act at all, and the balloon simply drifts with the wind, but by pulling on and shortening one or other of the cords the plates of the deviator are made to assume a position more or less oblique to the wind, as may be desired, and thus, much as the direction of a boat is moved by a rudder, the balloon is made to deviate more or less from the direction of the wind.

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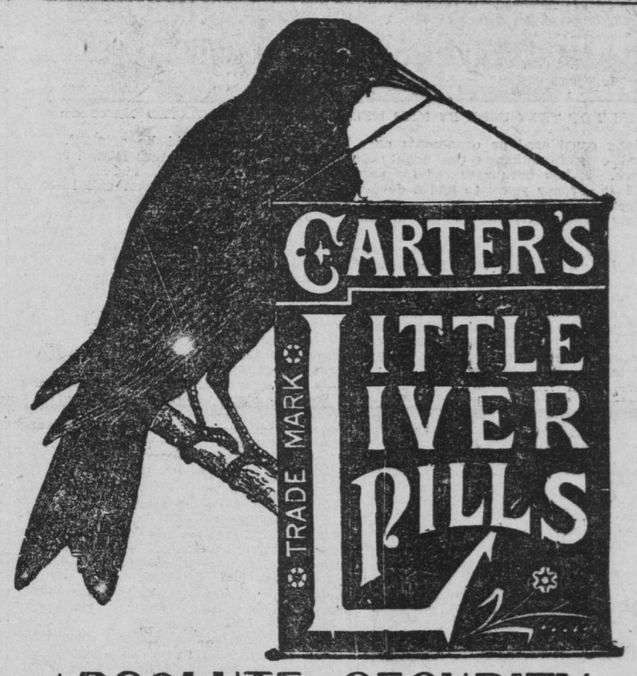

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