you belong shall be lifted from them. The divine King will make a new law granting them much freedom and many privileges, and all that we promise them shall be written down and witnessed on our part and on yours, as a new covenant binding on our children and our children's children. Now when this shall have been done, with an honest purpose to abide by it forever on our part, and when your people shall have agreed to accept it, will you then consent to be one of us once more?"

"Take upon yourself the office of mediator," the Queen here broke in, in a low voice, and her sad eyes were fixed beseechingly on the Hebrew's face. "I quail before Mesu's wrath, and all that may be done shall be done to win back his former friendship. Speak to him in my name, and remind him of the days when I, Isisnefert, would learn of him the names of the plants I carried to him, and he taught me and my sister their uses or their poisonous powers when he came to see the Queen, his second mother, in the women's quarters. The wounds he has inflicted on our hearts shall be forgiven and forgotten. Be our embassador, Joshua; do not refuse our prayer!"

"Such words from such gracious lips are a command," replied the warrior, "and are sweet to the heart. I will be mediator."

At this the old high priest nodded approval and said: "Then I hope that the fruit of this short hour may be a long period of peace. But mark me. Where medicine may avail, we avoid the knife and cautery; where there is a bridge over the river a man does not rashly try to swim through the whirlpool."

"Yes, verily, we will avoid the whirlpool," said the King, and the Queen repeated his words; then she again fixed her eyes on the flowers in her lap.

Then a formal council was held.

Three private scribes sat down on the ground, close to the high priest, to enable them to hear his low tones, and the interpreters and councilors, in their places, took out their writing things, and, holding the papyrus in their left hands, wrote with reeds or brushes, for nothing might remain unrecorded which was discussed and decided in Pharaoh's presence. Hardly a whisper was to be heard in the hall while this went on, the guards and courtiers remained motionless in their places, and the royal couple sat rigid and speechless, gazing into vacancy, as if in a dream.

Neither Pharaoh nor his wife could possibly have caught a word of the murmured colloquy of the speakers, but the Egyptians never ended a sentence without glancing up at the King, as if to make sure of his approval. Joshua, who was accustomed to the scene, followed their example, speaking like the others in a subdued voice, and when presently the voice of the second prophet, or of the chief interpreter, sounded rather louder Pharaoh raised his head and repeated the high priest's last saying. "Where there is a bridge over the river a man does not try to swim the whirlpool," for this exactly expressed his wishes and the Queen's. No fighting! Peace with the Hebrews, and not force the wrath of their terrible leader and of his god, without losing the thousand diligent hands of the fugitive tribes.

Thus matters proceeded, and when the muttering of the speakers and the scratching of the pens had gone on for fully an hour, the Queen was still sitting in the same attitude; but Pharaoh began to stir and raise his voice, for he knew that the second prophet hated the man whose blessing he received and whose hostility filled him with such dread, and he feared but he should be requiring some impossible conditions of the envoy.

Still all he said was again a repetition of the counsel as to the bridge; but his inquiring glance at the chief interpreter moved that official to assure him that all was proceeding favorably. Joshua had merely demanded that the overseers, who kept guard over the men at work, should not, for the future, be watchmen of Libyan race, but Hebrews themselves, to be chosen by the elders of their people under the sanction of the Egyptian government.

At this Pharaoh cast his look of anxious entreaty at Baie and the other councilors. The second prophet only shrugged his shoulders regretfully, and, feigning to defer his own opinion to the divine wisdom of Pharaoh, conceded this point to Joshua. The god enthroned on earth acknowledged this submission with a grateful bow, for Baie's will had often crossed his; and then, when the herald or rehearser had read aloud all the clauses of the treaty, Joshua was required to take a solemn oath that he would in any case come back to Tanis and report how his people had received the King's advances.

But the cautious warrior, who was well aware of all the snares and traps with which the State was only too ready, took his oath most unwillingly and only when he had obtained a written pledge that whatever the issue, his freedom should be in no way interfered with as soon as he could give them his word that he had done his part to induce the leader of his people to accept these terms.

At last Pharaoh held out his hand for the captain to kiss, and when he had also pressed to his lips the hem of the Queen's robe Ruie signed to the monarch, who understood that the moment was come when he should withdraw. And he did so with good will and a sense of encouragement, for he believed that he had acted for the best for his own welfare and that of his people.

A bright radiance lighted up his handsome, languid features, and when the Queen rose and saw him smile, content, she did the same. At the door the King drew a breath of relief, and turning to his wife said: "If Joshua does his errand well we shall get across the bridge."

"And not swim the whirlpool," replied the Queen in the same tone.

"And if the Hebrew captain can pacify Mesu," Pharaoh went on, "and he persuades his people to remain in the land—"

"Then you must adopt this Joshua into the royal family. He is well favored and of a lordly mien," his wife broke in.

But at this Pharaoh suddenly abandoned his stooping and indifferent attitude.

"Impossible!" he eagerly exclaimed. "A Hebrew! If we raise him to be one of the 'friends,' or a fanbearer, that is the highest he can hope for. In such matters it is very difficult to avoid doing too much or too little!"

As the royal couple went forward toward the private apartments the wailing of the mourners fell more loudly on the ear. Tears started afresh to the Queen's eyes, while Pharaoh continued to deliberate precisely what position in the court Joshua might be allowed to fill if he succeeded in his embassy.

CHAPTER X.

Joshua had now to hasten if he was to overtake the Hebrews in time, for the further they had got on their way the more difficult it might be to persuade Moses and the heads of the tribes to return and accept the terms offered them.

The events of this morning were to him so marvelous that he regarded the issue as a dispensation of the God he had found once more; also he remembered the name of Joshua, that is to say, "holpen of the Lord," which had been laid upon him by Miriam's message, whereas he had hitherto been called Hosea. He was willing to bear it, although he felt it hard to deny the sovereign who had raised him to honor. Many of his fellow warriors had assumed similar names, and his had proved itself nobly true. Never had the help of God been more clearly with him than it had been this day. He had gone into Pharaoh's palace in the expectation of losing his freedom or being handed over to the executioner as soon as he declared his wish to follow his people; and how easily had the ties been severed which bound him to Egypt. And he had been charged with a task in his eyes so great and noble that he could not forbear believing that the God of his fathers had called him to fulfill it.

He loved Egypt. It was a glorious land. Where could his people find a fairer dwelling place? The conditions only under which they had dwelt there had been intolerable. Better days were now before them. The Hebrews were to be permitted to return to Goshen or to settle in the lake land west of the Nile, a district whose fertility was well known to him. No one henceforth might compel them to serfdom, and if they laid their hands to labor for the State Hebrews only were to be their taskmasters, and not the hard and cruel stranger. That his people must remain subject to Pharaoh was a matter of course. Joseph, Ephraim and his sons, Joshua's forefathers, had called themselves so, and had been well content to be called Egyptians. If his embassy came to a good end the elders of the tribes were to be allowed to rule the domestic affairs of the people. Moses must be the chief ruler in the new settlement, in spite of the second prophet's objections, and he himself would be captain of the united force which should defend its frontiers and form fresh legions of those Hebrew mercenaries, who had already proved their valor in many wars. Before he left the palace the second prophet had given him several mysterious hints which had remained unsolved, but from which he inferred that Baie was big with portentous schemes, and purposed to give him some important charge as soon as the conduct of the State should fall from the hands of old Ruie into his own; perhaps the chief captaincy of the whole army of mercenaries, a post at present held by a Syrian named Aarsee. This disturbed rather than gratified him; but on the other hand it was a great satisfaction to him to have made it a condition that the eastern frontier should, every third year, be thrown open to the Hebrews, that they might go forth to the desert to offer sacrifices to their god. On this Moses had insisted most strongly, and as the law now stood no one was permitted to cross the eastern limit line, which was fortified at all points, without the expressed consent of the authorities. This concession to their great leader's desires might perhaps gain his assent to a treaty so favorable to his people.

All through these transactions Joshua had felt keenly how far he had been cut off from his tribe; he could not even say what was the aim of this worship in the desert. He had frankly confessed before Pharaoh's council that he knew nothing of the complaints or demands of the Hebrews, and he did so advisedly, reserving their right to alter and amplify the proposals of which he was the bearer. But what could the people or their chief hope for better?

The future lay before him full of hope for his nation and himself. If the covenant should be concluded the time would become for him to found a family, and the image of Miriam rose before him in all its lofty beauty. The thought of winning this noble woman was an intoxicating one, and he asked himself whether he were indeed worthy of her, and if it were not too bold to sue for the possession of this superb inspired maiden and prophetess.

He knew life well, and understood how little trust could be placed in the promises of the irresolute man for whose weak hand the scepter was too heavy. But he had taken precautions, and if the elders of the people could only be pacified the covenant, clause by clause, would be graven on metal tablets, like every other compact between Egypt and a foreign nation, and hung up in the national temple at Thebes, signed by Pharaoh and by the representatives of his people. Such a document—as he had learnt from the treaty of peace concluded with the Kheta—secured and prolonged the brief "forever" of international compacts. He had omitted nothing that might protect the Hebrews against treason and faithlessness.

Never had Joshua felt stronger, more confident, more glad of life than when he once more stepped into Pharaoh's chariot to take leave of his subalterns. Even Baie's mysterious hints and confessions did not disturb him, for he was wont to leave the cares of the future to the future day; but in the camp a trouble awaited him which darkened the present hour, for he there heard to his surprise, wrath and distress that Ephraim had quitted the tent and stolen away, telling no man whither. His hasty questions elicited the fact that the lad had taken the road to Tanis, so Joshua charged his faithful shieldbearer to seek the boy out in the town, and if he found him to bid him follow his uncle to Succoth.

Then, as soon as the Captain had taken leave of his men, he set forth, followed by his old 'squire.

It was a pleasure to him to see that the Adones* and other inferior officers who had served with him, hard warriors with whom he had shared all he possessed in war and peace, in peril and privation, so frankly showed their grief at parting. The tears rolled down the brown cheeks of many a man grown gray in battle as he shook hands with him for the last time. Many a bearded lip was pressed to the hem of his garment, or his feet, and the shining coat of the Libyan charger which bore him through the ranks with arched neck and eager prancing, though firmly held in by his rider. His own eyes were moist for the first time since his mother's death as shout of honest regret and farewell wishes broke from the manly hearts of his troops and echoed along the lines. Never had he felt so deeply as this moment. How closely his heart was knit to these men, and how precious to him was his noble calling.

But the duty which lay before him was high and noble, too, and the God who had released him from his oath and made his way plain to obey his father's behest, and yet be true and faithful, would perhaps lead him back to his crusaders in arms, whose farewell he could fancy still rang in his ears when he was long since out of hearing.

Still, the full glory of the work intrusted to him, the exalted frame of mind of a man who goes forth with a high moral purpose to fulfill a difficult task; the perfect bliss of a lover who flies with well-grounded hopes to crown the purest and dearest wish of his heart, did not wholly possess him till he had left the town behind him and was hastening at a brisk trot across the level plain dotted with palm groves and pools that lay to the southeast.

So long as he had kept his horse at a moderate pace along the streets of the town and about the harbor, his mind was so full of the immediate past and of anxiety for the missing youth that he had paid small heed to the scene around him; the numerous vessels lying at anchor, the motley throng of ships' captains, merchants, sailors and porters of the most diverse races of Africa and Western Asia, who here sought their fortunes, or the officials, soldiers and supplicants who had followed the court from Thebes to Tanis.

And he had also failed to observe two men of higher rank, though one of them, Hornecht, the captain of the bowmen, had saluted him as he passed. They were standing back under the gateway of the temple of Set, for shelter from a cloud of dust blown along the road by the wind from the desert. And as the archer vainly endeavored to attract the rider's attentiom, Baie, his companion, said to him: "It matters not; he will learn soon enough where his nephew has found refuge."

"By your command," replied the soldier. Then he went on eagerly with what he had been saying: "The lad looked like a lump of clay in the potter's shed when he was brought in."

"And no wonder," interrupted the priest. "He had been lying quite long enough in the typhon's dust. But what did your steward want among the soldiers?"

"My Adon, whom I had sent out last evening, brought word that the poor lad was in a high fever, so Kasana packed up some wine and her nurse's balsam and the old woman went with them to the camp."

"To the boy or to the captain?" asked the prophet, with a cunning smile.

"To the sick lad," replied the soldier, decisively, with an ominous frown. But he checked himself and went on, apologetically: "Her heart is as soft as wax, and the Hebrew boy—you saw him yesterday——"

"A handsome fellow—quite after a woman's heart," laughed the priest. "And stroking the nephew down cannot hurt the uncle."

"She can hardly have had that in her mind," said Hornecht sharply. "And the unembodied God of the Hebrews, it would seem, is no less mindful of his own than the immortals you serve, for when he led Hotepoo to the spot the boy was very nigh unto death. And the old man would have ridden past him, for the dust had already——"

"As you said, turned him into a lump of potter's clay. But what then?"

"Then the old man saw something golden gleam in the gray mass."

"And for gold the stiffest back will bend."

"Very true! So did my old man. The broad gold bracelet, glittering in the sun, saved the boy's life once more."

"And the best of it is that we have got him alive."

*Answering to our adjutants.

"Yes. I, too, was glad to see him open his eyes again. He quickly got better and better, and the leech says he is like a young cat and nothing will kill him. But he is in a high fever, and talks all sorts of nonsense in his ravings, which even my daughter's old nurse, a woman from Ascalon, does not understand. But she believes she can distinguish Kasana's name."

"A woman once more at the bottom of the mischief."

"Cease jesting, reverend father," replied the warrior, and he bit his lips. "A decent widow, and this downy-cheeked boy!"

"At his tender years," the priest went on, in the same tone, "full-blown roses tempt young beetles more than buds do, and in this case," he added, more gravely, "nothing could be more fortunate. We have Joshua's nephew in our net, and now it is your part not to let him escape the toils."

"You mean," cried the soldier, "that we are to keep him a prisoner?"

"As you say."

"But you esteem his uncle highly?"

"Certainly, but higher still the State."

"But this lad——"

"He is a most welcome hostage. Joshua's sword was an invaluable weapon, but if the hand that wields it is guided by the man whose power over greater men than he we know too well——"

"You mean Mesu, the Hebrew."

"Joshua will wound us as deeply as heretofore our enemies."

"But I heard you yourself say that he was incapable of treachery."

"And I say so still; and he has proved my words this very day. It was simply to procure his release from the oath of fealty that he this day put his head into the crocodile's jaws. But if Joshua is a lion, in Mesu he will find his tamer. That man is Egypt's arch foe, and my gall rises only to think of him."

"The cries of woe within the gates are enough to keep our hatred alive."

"And yet the feeble creature who fills the throne postpones revenge, and sends forth a pacificator."

"With your consent, I believe."

"Quite true," replied the priest, with a sardonic smile. "We have sent him forth to build a bridge! A bridge, forsooth! The dried-up wisdom of an ancient sage recommends it, and the notion is quite after the heart of that contemptible son of a great father, who, for his part, never shrunk from swimming the widest whirlpool, especially when revenge was in view. Well, Joshua may try to build it. If the bridge over the torrent only brings him back to us, I will give him a warm and sincere welcome. But we, who alone have any spirit in Egypt, must make it our business to see that as soon as this one man has recrossed to our shore the piers shall give way under the tread of the leader of his nation."

"Yes, yes. But I fear that we should lose the captain if his people met the fate they deserve."

"It may seem so."

"You are wiser than I."

"But, still, in this case you think I am mistaken."

"How could I make so bold?"

"As a member of the Council of War it is your duty to express your own opinion, and I regard it now as my part to show you whither the road leads along which you have come so far with bandaged eyes. Listen, then, and be guided by what I tell you when it is your turn to speak in the assembly. Ruie, the high priest, is very old."

"And you already exercise half his prerogatives."

"Would that he might soon lay down the rest of the burden! Not for my own sake. I love a contest, but for the sake of our country. It has become a deep-rooted habit to accept all that age decides and rules as the language of wisdom; thus there are few among the councilors who do not adhere to the old man, and yet his statecraft, like himself, goes only on crutches. All that is good gets lost in a fog under his weak and half-hearted guidance."

"On this point you may count on my support," cried the warrior. "I will lend both hands to overthrow the dreamer on the throne and his senseless counselor."

At this the prophet laid his finger to his lip in warning, went close up to his companion and said in low, rapid accents. "I am now expected at the palace, so hearken only to this much: If Joshua effects a reconciliation, his people, the guilty with the innocent, will all return, and the guilty will be punished. Among the innocent we may reckon the whole of the captain's tribe, the tribe of Ephraim, from old Nun, the father, down to the boy in our house."

"They may be spared; but as Mesu is a Hebrew, whatever is done to him——"

"It will not be done in the open street; and there is never any difficulty about sowing the seeds of discord between two men who have an equal right to rule in their own circle. I will take care that Joshua shall wink at the death of the other, and then Pharaoh, whether his name be Menephtah or" (and here his voice fell to a murmur) "or Siptah, shall raise him to such a giddy height—for he deserves it—that his bewildered eye will never see anything we choose to hide from him. There is a dish of which no man can cease to eat who has once tasted it, and that meat we shall serve him withal."

"A dish—meat?"

"Power, Hornecht. Immense power. As governor of a province, or captain-general over all the mercenary troops in Aarsee's place, he will beware of quarreling with us. I know him. If we can but make him believe that Mesu has done him a wrong—and that overbearing man will of a certainty give us some ground—and if he can but be convinced that the law prescribes such punishment as we may inflict on the magician and the most of his followers, he will not merely consent, but approve."

"But if the embassy should fail?"

"Still he will come back to us; for he never would break an oath. But in the event of his being forcibly detained by Mesu, who is capable of anything, the boy will prove useful; for Joshua loves him, his people set great store by his life, and he is the son of one of the noblest families. Pharaoh shall at any rate threaten the lad; we, on our part, will protect him, and that will bind us more closely than ever to his uncle, and join him to those who are wroth with the King. Admirable!"

"And we shall yet more certainly gain our end if we can bind him by yet another tie, and now I beseech you to be calm, for you are too fiery for your years. In short, our brother in arms, the man who saved my life, the best warrior in all the army, and who consequently must rise to thy highest honors, must be your daughter's husband. Kasana loves the Hebrew—that I know from my wife."

The frown once more knit the archer's brow and he struggled painfully to be calm. He felt that he must subdue his aversion to calling this man his son-in-law; for indeed he liked and esteemed him, though he was averse to his nationality. He could not, indeed, refrain from muttering a curse, but his reply to the priest was calmer and more reasonable than Baie had expected. If Kasana was so possessed by demons as to be drawn to this stranger, then she should have her way. But Joshua as yet had not wooed her, "and," he added furiously, "by the red god Set and his 70 fellows! neither you nor any other man shall ever move me to force my child, who has suitors by the score, on a man who, though he calls himself our friend, has never yet found leisure to greet us in our own house! Taking charge of the lad is another matter, and I will see that he does not escape."

"Very good, my friend," replied the priest, laying his hand on his companion's shoulder. "You know how highly I value Joshua, and if he should become your son-in-law he will be the most important and indispensable of all our colleagues, and then I fancy his nephew may grow up to be a valiant officer in our army."

CHAPTER XI.

The midnight sky, sown with innumerable stars, spread deeply and purely blue over the broad level of the eastern delta and the town of Succoth, which the Egyptians called, from its presiding deity, Pittrom, or the city of Toom. The March night was drawing to its close. White mists floated above the canal, a work of the Hebrew bondsmen, which intersected the plain and watered the pasture land and meadows which lay on all sides as far as the eye could reach. To the east and north the horizon was shrouded by the thick haze which rose from the broad lakes by the isthmus. The hot, sandy desert wind which yesterday had blown over the thirsty grass, the desert border land to the east and the houses and tents of Succoth, had died away during the night, and the chill hour which in March precedes sunrise, even in Egypt, was very perceptible.

Anyone who had in former days arrived between midnight and dawn at the humble frontier town with its squalid hovels of Nile mud and modest farms and dwellings, could not have recognized it now. Even its one important building, besides the splendid temple of the god Toom, the spacious and fortified storehouse, presented a strange spectacle. The long, white, lime-washed walls gleamed as usual through the dusk; but it no longer towered in deathlike silence over the sleeping town; all about it was stir and bustle. It did duty as a fortress against the plundering tribes of Shasoos* who had made their way round the outworks on the isthmus, and an Egyptian garrison dwelt within its indestructible walls, which could easily be held against very superior numbers.

This morning it might have been supposed that the sons of the desert had taken it by storm, but the men and women who were so busy round the walls and on the broad marble parapet of the huge building were not Shasoos, but Hebrews. With shouts and demonstrations of joy they were taking possession of the thousands of measures of wheat and barley, rye and doorah, lentils, dates and onions, which they had found in those vast lofts, and had set to work before sunrise to empty the storehouse and pack the contents into sacks and pitchers and skins, into kneading troughs, jars and sheets, let down from the roof by cords or carried up and down on ladders.

The chiefs of the tribes, indeed, took no part in the work, but in spite of the early hour children of all ages might be seen, as busy as the rest, carrying as much as they could lift in pots and bowls—their mothers' cooking vessels.

Above, close to the opened trapdoors of the lofts, into which the stars shown down, and round the foot of the ladders below, women held lanterns or torches to light the others at their work. Flaring pitch brands were burning in front of the ponderous closed doors and armed shepherds were pacing up and down in the light of the blaze. When, now and again, there was a sound within as of a stone thrown, or a kink against the brass-bound door, and threatening words in the Egyptian tongue, the Hebrews outside were ready enough with words of mockery and scorn.

On the day of the harvest festival, at the hour of the first evening watch, certain swift runners had come to Succoth, and had announced to the sons of Israel who dwelt there, and whose numbers were twentyfold as great as those of the Egyptians, that they had started from Tanis early that morning, that their people were to depart thence that night, and that their kindred of Succoth were to make ready to fly with them. At this there had been great rejoicing among the Hebrews. They, like their fellow Israelites of Tanis, had assembled together that night of the new moon after the spring equinox, when the harvest festival began, to a solemn feast, and the heads of their households had declared to them that the day of freedom was now at hand, and that the Lord was about to lead them forth to the promised land.

Here, as at Tanis, many had been fainthearted and rebellious, and others had attempted to separate their lot from that of the rest and so remain behind; but here, too, they had been carried away by the multitude. And as Aaron and Nun had addressed the people at Tanis, so here Eleazar the son of Aaron, and Nahshon and Heu, the heads of the tribe of Judah, had done the same. And Miriam, the maiden sister of Moses, had gone from house to house, and with her glowing words had lighted and fanned the flames of enthusiasm in the hearts of the men and persuaded the women that, with the morning's sun, a day of gladness, plenty and freedom would dawn on them and on their children.

Few had turned a deaf ear to the prophetess, and there was something majestic and commanding in the presence of this maiden, whose large, black eyes, overarched by thick, dark eyebrows which met in the middle, seemed to read the hearts of those they gazed on, and to awe the refractory with their grave gleam.

When the feast was over each household had retired to rest with hopeful and uplifted hearts. But the next day and the following night and dawn had changed everything. It was as though the desert wind had buried all courage and confidence in the sand it swept before it. The dread of wandering through the unknown had crept again into every soul, and many a one who had brandished his staff with the high spirit of enterprise now clung obstinately to the house of his fathers, to his well-tended garden plot, and to the harvest in the fields, of which not more than half was yet garnered.

The Egyptian garrison in the fortified stone house had not, indeed, failed to observe that some unusual excitement prevailed among the Hebrews, but they had ascribed it to the harvest feast. The commander of the fort had heard that Moses desired to lead his people forth into the desert, there to sacrifice to their God, and he had asked for reinforcements. But he knew nothing more, for till the morning when the hot wind had arisen no Hebrew had betrayed his brethren's purpose. On that day, however, as the heat oppressed them more and more the greater grew the dread of the terrified people of marching ever onward through the scorching, sandy and waterless waste. This fearful day was but a foretaste of what lay before them, and when toward midday the dust cloud was yet dense and the air more suffocating, a Hebrew dealer, from whom the Egyptian soldiers would purchase small wares, stole into the storehouse and instigated the captain to hinder his fellow Hebrews from rushing to destruction.

Even among the better sort the voice of discontent had been loud; Tzehar and Michael and their sons, who disliked the power of Moses and Aaron, had gone from one to another and tried to incite them to call the elders together again before they set forth and ask them whether it would not be wiser to make terms with the Egyptians.

While these malcontents had succeeded in assembling many followers, and the traitor had gone to the captain of the Egyptian garrison, two more runners had come in with a message to say that the multitude of the Hebrew fugitives would arrive at Succoth between midnight and dawn.

Breathless and speechless, bathed in sweat and bleeding at the mouth, the elder of the two messengers dropped on the threshold of the house of Aminadab, where Miriam just now was dwelling. The exhausted men had to be revived with wine and food before even the less weary one could speak coherently; and then in a husky voice, but overflowing with thankfulness and enthusiasm, he had told all that happened at their departing, and how that the God of their fathers had filled all hearts with His spirit, and infused fresh confidence into the most fainthearted.

Miriam had listened with flashing eyes to this inspiring tale, and then, flinging her veil about her head, she bade the servants of the house, who had collected about the runners, to gather all the people together under the sycamore, whose broad boughs, growth of a thousand years, sheltered a wide space from the scorching sun.

*Bedouins, whose nomad hordes swarmed in the desert adjoining Egypt on the east, now regarded as belonging to Asia.

[To be Continued Next Sunday.]

At Work by the Day.

Yankee Blade.]

She—Oh, see that scarecrow out there in the field!

He—That isn't a scarecrow.

"It must be; see how motionless it is."

"That's the hired man at work."

Make the Best of Wives.

Chicago Globe.]

"Your son has married and settled down, I understand?"

"Yes, and to the best and most submissive little lady in the world."

"How came he to be so fortunate?"

"Oh, he married a typewriter, one who was used to being dictated to."

A HARD-WORKED MAN

One Phase of Railway Life in the Rural Districts as Seen By

THF COUNTRY STATION AGENT.

Acting as Telegrapher, Baggage Man and General Factotum,

PLEASANT FEATURES OF THE POSITION

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

"I should think it would make you crazy."

"So it would, if I was one of the crazy kind."

The station agent seated himself on a trunk, removed his hat and wiped his perspiring brow with a rather dingy looking pocket handkerchief. A cloud of dust in the distance, patches of brown smoke floating in the sky, a low rumbling sound, and puffs that grew fainter and more rapid until they seemed to beat a gentle tattoo, told that a train had just departed. In front of the platform were the shining tracks of steel, behind was the shabby "depot," and down the street was visible the rear end of an irregular procession of men, women and children, making their way to the village.

"You can rest a while now," was suggested.

"Just long enough to take breath," replied the station agent, taking a bunch of keys from his pocket and jingling them.

He was a man of few words. There was decision in his face, quickness in his glance and intelligence in his eyes. It was noticeable that even in moments of repose his mind seemed to be at work, and that a certain look of attentiveness never entirely left his countenance. His shoulders were broad, and, when standing erect in his suit of blue, there was something of the look of a commander about him.

His name was plain John Smith, and he had sole charge of the station at Pikeville, a village of about 400 population. It was on the P. & Q. Railroad, one of the largest corporations in the country. Pikeville is not a place of any considerable importance, but it is a link in the great system, and 20 trains a day pass the station. Passengers get on and off, freight is loaded and unloaded, express matter is received and dispatched, trunks are checked to points hundreds of miles away, dozens of telegrams are received and sent every 24 hours, the arrival and departure of trains are registered and wired to the dispatcher's office, tickets are sold, questions answered, way bills made out, books balanced, considerable sums of money handled and a host of other things attended to.

SMITH'S DAILY ROUTINE.

Pikeville is not a large enough station to warrant the division of its labor into departments and the employment of three or four men. John Smith does it all. He must, therefore, as will be inferred, be a man capable of rapid thought and action, with an eye for details, wits that never get lost, nerves that are not easily shaken and fidelity that is absolutely unquestionable.

Twenty-four hours of John Smith's life at the Pikeville station will afford an excellent example of what it is to be a busy man. If he gets out of bed early enough in the morning he swallows a hasty breakfast; if not, he rushes off to the station with an empty stomach. The first train is due at 6 o'clock. John Smith's first plunge is at the telegraph instrument, where he makes his presence known by a few ticks. In a moment the answering signal comes, notifying him that "No. 14" has passed Middleport on time. Then he makes sure that the switches are all right. Next the window of the ticket office is thrown open, and he begins selling the magic bits of pasteboard, which are passports to near and distant points. He must remember the exact amount of fare in every case, make change rapidly and accurately, and be able to detect instantly a punched coin or a counterfeit banknote. He keeps one eye on the work before him, and the other on the clock. One ear attends to the calls of customers; the other listens to ticks from the telegraph instrument at his right hand. At any instant a message may come which must be taken with unerring accuracy and delivered to the conductor of the incoming train. Any failure in this duty might endanger the lives of hundreds of passengers, for at any time there is the possibility of orders coming to hold a train for ten minutes or half an hour on account of a wreck, a belated freight, a washout or a "wildcat." Meantime there is the hum of busy conversation outside, and a fusilade of questions through the window. John Smith must answer promptly and courteously a myriad of queries regarding time-tables, connections, stopping places, etc., and manifest a fatherly interest in the affairs of the various seekers for information.

SMITH AS A BAGGAGE SMASHER.

Waiting until the last minute before the train is expected—perhaps until the long warning whistle reaches his ears—he leaves the ticket office and rushes to a little cabinet screwed against the wall of the waiting room, and attends to the duty of checking baggage. This may not be completed until the train stands before the station. Then out come five or six trunks from the baggage car, and in go half a dozen belonging to embarking travelers. If any of the trunks are particularly heavy, some friendly bystander is generally at hand to render assistance in lifting them; and it is a peculiarity of human nature that services of this kind are often regarded as a distinction on him who performs them. The stalwart young man who is thus honored is wont to gaze at the departing train as if he owned it, and afterward make a great show of being on terms of good fellowship with the station agent.

The first ordeal of the day is past, and the station is strangely quiet after the five minutes of bustle. John Smith, if he has had no breakfast, hastens home to satisfy his hunger. The next train is due at 8:10, and there is plenty to do, for it carries express matter, and the number of outgoing and incoming passengers will be larger. John Smith is at the station again by 7:30. There are people waiting for him with express packages to be billed, and in many cases he is expected to address them, for he has great skill with the pen and the marking brush. There will be numerous disputes about charges, in all of which the station agent must maintain his position with mingled firmness and urbanity, and an occasional judicious expression of sympathy for the victim of rules which he acknowledges to be oppressive, but which he has no power to amend. While arguing with one man he may be receiving money from another, and at the same time filling in way-bills at available moments. Suddenly he may be compelled to leave all and make a dive for the telegraph instrument. For be it remembered that the express, freight, telegraph and ticket offices are all under the roof of a single small building, where the eye and ear can command the whole situation; and the sharply sounding ticks must be interpreted rightly, or woe be the consequences.

BUT TIME IS FLYING.

The 8:10 troin is due in ten minutes. John Smith must now dispose of the business before him without waste of words. He cannot avoid offending somebody, but abusive words go in at one ear and out at the other. Life is too short for the station agent to indulge in small bickerings and petty resentments.

Into the ticket office he darts, and the proceedings of the early morning are repeated on a larger scale and with some additions. The bustle is soon over, but there is no rest. A freight train is due in 20 minutes, and it must be side-tracked to make way for the "Limited Express," which does not stop at Pikeville. Then comes a produce dealer who is clamoring for a freight car in which to send off a load of wheat or potatoes. Another demands to know why a cargo of coal which he has ordered is late in arriving. There are barrels of beer, stoves, plows, household goods and live stock to receive and despatch. Every customer of the road wishes to know the responsibilities and risks assumed by each of the contracting parties, and frequently explanations must be given at considerable length and with patient courtesy. John Smith must have a fund of information at hand ready to dispense to all inquirers. He must be a good accountant and a legible penman. He must not spare his strength when heavy articles of freight are to be handled. He must treat women and children with kindness and respect, and be able to throw a drunken loafer out of the door. He must, in short, center within himself a combination of qualities useful in many and varying emergencies.

The programme that has been sketched refers to the ordinary schedule routine, when everything moves in regular order. If there is an accident or other untoward occurrence, there are new duties, and increased vigilance is demanded. But John Smith is expected to show himself equal to the emergency, and he usually succeeds in doing so.

It may be said that the station agent has an astonishing capacity for work and endurance. This is undoubtedly true; but it is also true that the nature of his duties tends to develop such capacity. Brain work is constantly demanded, and there is always the possibility of something unforeseen occurring. Hence the station agent is under a certain stimulus that cannot exist when only the physical energies are brought into requisition. His life is not without its pleasant features; the probabilities are that he enjoys a large business and social acquaintance and has plenty of friends. His opinions are much sought, and he answers more questions in a day than anybody in the village, except the postmaster and school teacher.

Good luck to the station agent! He is part of a system that links States together and annihilates distances. If ambitious, there may be a future before him. The corporation that employs him may not have a soul, but it has a sharp eye for its own interests; hence the day may come when Pikeville will know John Smith no more. He will be wanted elsewhere, if he is a good railroad man.

WILLIS KENYON.

TOBACCO AS A MEDICINE.

An Octogenarian Who Dislikes the Weed, but Chews to Keep Alive.

Chicago News.]

Peter Coulter, of Russiaville, Ind., declares that he has been kept alive for 70 years by the constant use of tobacco. He is now 84 years of age, says a *Globe-Democrat* correspondent, and commenced smoking and chewing when a boy of 14, although then, as now, he detested both the taste and smell of it. He would gladly quit using the noxious weed, but fears that he would probably not long survive its discontinuance. When a boy, about the age above mentioned, he was suddenly taken ill with fever, and the disease left a very dangerous sore on his left side, that grew quite large and annoyed him with constant and increasing pains. His physician informed him that there was but one remedy, "use tobacco," or he must die. To this he at first objected, but finally began smoking. For four years the smoking made him sick, and did not seem to decrease the size of the sore, though the pain was much lessened. The doctor then recommended him to chew tobacco instead of smoking. He did so and the sore at once began to show an improvement and the pain ceased altogether. But whenever he ceases chewing for any considerable length of time the sore returns and increases in size, and he states that to desist from chewing for a month would be at the risk of his life.

He is one of the most aged pioneers of this vicinity and his ancestors were noted for having lived to a wonderful age, his grandmother on his father's side attaining the almost unprecedented longevity of 133 years, while his two grandfathers and the other grandmother lived to be more than 100 each. His mother's age was also very remarkable. She died at Ames station, Ia., two years ago, at 119, retaining all her senses up to the last moment. At the age of 117 she visited her son Peter at his home with the expectation of making her home with him the remainder of her life. But she soon became discontented and returned to Iowa, where she died. Peter has lived in this vicinity since 1842, and claims to have hauled from Cincinnati the first steam boiler and engine that were brought into the State of Indiana, the machinery being delivered in Wayne county. He can neither read nor write, but his eyesight is still excellent, and he is tall and straight. His first vote was cast for John Q. Adams, and one of his trite sayings is peculiar. "I never put more on my heels than I can kick off." He was born in Delaware in 1805 and came to the State of Indiana in 1828.

THE INDIANS ARE INCREASING.

A Hint to Orators and Novelists to Look Up the Facts.

Boston Advertiser.]

The novelists, reporters and others who write Indian speeches, beginning with the words "I am the last of my race, the red man is vanishing before the white man as the leaves," etc., had better look up the facts. It now seems that any statement to the effect that the number of Indian population is slowly decreasing is not in accord with the truth. The Indian is not dying off and vanishing from the earth any more than the Caucasian is. They have, for the most part, adopted semi-civilized habits and live quiet lives. They are increasing rather than decreasing. In the quiet, orderly communities of the Indian Territory, in the reservations of Dakota, and in the pueblos of New Mexico and Arizona, the Indian is encamped peacefully, and his children are being educated. He is fairly prosperous, provided the Indian Agent and the contractor do not try to starve him, and he is raising his family and increasing in the land.

THE CLOCK WAS GOING.

A Street Car Register Mistaken by Passengers for a Timepiece.

Detroit Free Press.]

"Is that clock going?" inquired a man of the conductor of a Cass avenue car. The clock was going. It went tickety-click all over the car and the hour flew around like a revolving shaft. The man who asked the question struck the hand just as it wobbled to the hour of 10.

"I've got an engagement at 9:30, but I guess I've missed it this time," and he stepped off the car, and began to run up Congress street.

There was an old lady in the corner, who glanced up just in time to see the hand revolve to 12.

"La, say," she exclaimed, "how time do fly, conductor! Is that aire teown time or stranded?"

The conductor said he thought it was standard, and just then the hour hand flew round to 6, and the impression grew on the passengers that the car clock was unreliable.

The Evening Jasmine.

Thrill me, fill me with delight,
Sweet evangel of the night;
Chains of heaviness had bound me,
Sorrow's deepest sorrows crowned me,
When from out the darkness came
One glad spark of rosy flame,
Filled me,
Thrilled me
With such ecstacy of bliss.
Life were worth the living for this.

Whence the subtle incense drawn,
From love's darkness or its dawn,
I knew not nor cared—it proved
Like the breath of one beloved,
To my homesick soul appealing
With a welcome touch of healing,
Holds me,
Folds me,
Giving to each quickened sense
Love's own perfect recompense.

'Tis the evening jasmine's bloom,
Fair and faint it fills my room.
Bloom, dear flower of midnight still,
All my senses steep and thrill.
Press me,
Bless me
With invisible arms caress,
Souls have lost themselves for less.

—*Mrs. M. L. Rayne in Detroit Free Press.*

LOVE IN A COTTAGE.

A Pretty Picture of a Loving Couple in the Evening of Life

RESTING AFTER THE DAY'S TOIL.

The Troubles of the Wealthy Who Live in Mansions.

HOW TO BUILD A GOOD HOUSE FOR $500

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

A correlative of the petition "give me neither poverty nor riches," might read give me not a large mansion but a small cottage in which to dwell.

The mansion costs a great sum, so great indeed that a good man may well be disturbed sometimes while viewing his superfluous luxuries by the reflection that there are thousands of his fellow creatures who are not provided with the barest neces-

Perspective View.

sities of life; the cottage is of low cost, leaving the conscience clear and the heart merry. The mansion involves the wearisome labor of superintending servants; the cottage imposes the easy tasks of simple housework. The mansion requires workmen to make repairs; the cottage may be easily watched and promptly repaired—"a stitch in time"—by the owner. The owner of a mansion must have a large income; the owner of a cottage and a fertile acre of two is practically independent, the labor of his hands providing fruit, vegetables, poultry, etc., sufficient for his needs.

A PRETTY PICTURE.

A touching picture is seen, suggestive of nobility of character, when an elderly couple resume the simple cottage life of their early wedded years. Their lives have been too unselfish to permit the acquisition of wealth. They educated their children and started them in prosperous careers, and now they have planned to be self-supporting to the end. The sons and daughters, however honored and prosperous, who do not kiss the labor-browned hands of such parents are not worthy of the name they bear.

Following will be found a brief description of the design illustrating this article:

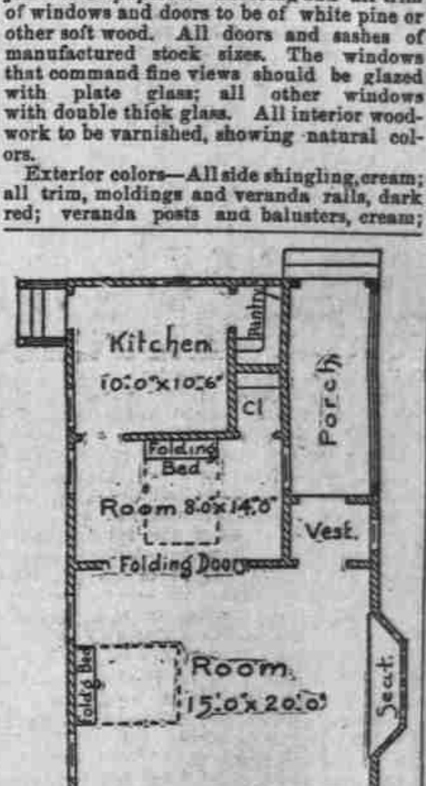
Size of structure: Width, 23 feet; depth, 36 feet 6 inches.

Materials for exterior—Foundations, posts or piers; side walls and roof, shingles.

Height of story, 10 feet.

Interior finish—Smoothed and chamfered studding and ceiling joists to be left exposed. Walls between studding and ceiling joists to be papered. Flooring and all trim of windows and doors to be of white pine or other soft wood. All doors and sashes of manufactured stock sizes. The windows that command fine views should be glazed with plate glass; all other windows with double thick glass. All interior woodwork to be varnished, showing natural colors.

Exterior colors—All side shingling, cream; all trim, moldings and veranda rails, dark red; veranda posts and balusters, cream;



First Story.

outside blinds and doors, roof and chimneys, dark red; underside of roof overhang, cream; porch floor and ceiling oiled, showing natural color of wood.

ACCOMMODATIONS.

All of the rooms are shown by the floor plan. The attic is floored and is reached by a step-ladder. No cellar is provided as this cottage, built as described, is intended for summer occupancy only. To fit it for winter use a cellar under the whole house should be built at an additional cost of about $200; and the interior walls of the cottage should be plastered at an additional cost of $75.

Special features—The large bays may be said to give character to the exterior of this design as well as to provide attractive features within. With cushions provided for the bay window seats the sitting room is indeed a comfortable place. The overhanging roof gives an appearance of large size. The chimneys (one over the kitchen and one over the sitting room) are simple and inexpensive but substantial, built of terra cotta resting on the ceiling joists.

Cost—In all localities where the prices for labor and materials are about the same as those of New York City, $500.

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PAMPERING HER APPETITE.

A Kansas Man's Notions About the Proper Diet for His Sick Wife.

Time.]

"Could I git a little snack o' something to eat for my wife? She ain't very strong, an' she's bin right puny of late an' sich vittles as we've got in the wagon don't seem to satisfy her," said a mover out in Kansas, stopping at a farm house to make the above request.

"Certainly," replied the kind-hearted mistress, "what would she like?"

"Well, she's real finicky an' delikit in her appytite, an' she's been fussin' for two days fer a little biled cabbage an' salt pork, an' hot sody biskits, an' some apple dumplin's, an' a cup o' right strong coffee. If you've anything o' that sort I'd like some. These sick folks hez to be pampered in their appytites, ye know."

Ich Liebe Sie.

The night comes down with quiet feet,
With dusky garments trailing.
And o'er the fields of golden wheat
The southern breeze is wailing.
The starry radiance of the skies
Falls o'er the dew-wet lea,
And gazing in thy tender eyes
I say, "Ich liebe sie."

There is no charm can bind my heart
Away from thy beguiling,
For Cupid pierced me with his dart,
And viewed my struggles smiling;
Then rest upon my heart, dear love,
Thy troth-plight pledge to me,
For while the heavens smile above,
My own, "Ich liebe sie."

The summer flower may fade and die,
The tempest darkly hover;
But at thy feet shall ever lie
The true heart of thy lover.
Then lift thy tender eyes to mine,
And let their answer be,
An echo of the words divine,
"My love, 'Ich liebe sie!'"

—*Clara Beatrice St. George in Inter Ocean.*

SUNDAY THOUGHTS

-ON-

MORALS AND MANNERS

BY A CLERGYMAN.

[WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.]

The secret of successful work to-day is organization. Look at business. See how it is organized down to the minutest detail. Look at politics. See how the great parties study to perfect their organization and make it include the loneliest house of the remotest school district. That man succeeds best in business who saves the most. That party carries the day which gets out all its voters.

Here is a lesson for the church—the local church. It ought to organize the parish, and have a function for all, and see to it that each fulfills his function. This would insure success. The power of the littles is the greatest power. The Mississippi river—the ocean itself, is composed of drops.

Guizot said "he did not believe in the sovereign power of machinery." True enough. But if the machinery is driven by intelligence and will what can it not accomplish? Mere organization is a delusion and a snare. But if it is operated by consecration it may work miracles. Good intentions alone are not enough. They must be stereotyped into good acts. Profession—put it into practice.

Once on a time a rustic swain and damsel lived near each other. He became smitten with her charms, but had not courage to tell his love. At length, finding she was becoming an object of attraction to other swains, and that he was in danger of losing her, he was induced to invite her to walk with him to a spot where lovers are fond of rambling—up a shady lane. His heart was full, but his lips were closed; he could not bring his courage to the popping point; while she, poor thing, cast down her eyes, and was perfectly mute, though she understood for what purpose he had brought her to that lonely spot. At length a bird began to sing on John's side of the road, and a lucky thought struck him.

"Bessy," said he, with a gentle squeeze of the arm, "dost hear you bird?"

"Ay, lad," she answered.

"What does it seem to thee to sing?" he asked.

"I cannot tell," she said. "What does it seem to thee?"

"Whist, Bessy," cried he; "it seems to me to sing, 'I love thee! I love thee!'"

They walked on in silence, until a bird began to sing on the damsel's side of the road.

"Johnny," said she, "dost hear that bird?"

"Ay, lass," he answered.

"Well," she went on, "what does it seem to thee to sing?"

"I cannot tell," he said.

"What did thy bird sing?" she asked.

"Why, my bird sang," he said with another gentle squeeze, 'I love thee! I love thee!'"

"Well," said she, "my bird sings, 'Show it! Show it!'"

A Startling Array of Figures.

In the November number of the *Forum* appears a startling expose in which the owners of the United States are indicated.

We have been in the habit of saying with a sneer that England, for example, was only a pocket borough—that a couple of hundred thousand owned the kingdom, and illustrated the cynical remark of Carlyle that "the population of England consists of 30,000,000 persons—mostly fools."

Well, according to the keen, hard lawyer who gathered the statistics for the *Forum*, and from whom it would be as impossible to extract sentiment as to extract sunbeams from a cucumber, in the phrase of Dean Swift,—we republicans are worse off than those "effete" monarchists. A form of government and a pattern of social and religious order which were relied on to distribute privileges and republicanize wealth, have played Benedict Arnold and betrayed us, instead—have ministered to the very evils they were warranted to avert.

In a succession of surprising tables the magazine displays British incomes and American incomes side by side, showing the enormous preponderance of the latter. Next it flashes on the screen a table showing the distribution of wealth in this country; from which it appears that the disproportion between the rich and the poor is greater here than in England, and is increasing here while diminishing there. Finally, the amazing conclusion is reached that "the United States of America are practically owned by less than 250,000 persons, constituting less than 1 in 80 of its adult male population, and that within 30 years the United States of America will be substantially owned by less than 50,000 persons, constituting less than 1 in 500 of the adult male population."

The Church and the State have some huge problems to solve. The future requires both faith and courage. The trend of wealth, and the resultant concentration of privileges, is unrepublican and unchristian. How, by whom, shall the Niagara rapids be dammed and the final plunge averted?

An Age of Competition.

This is an age of competition. Life is a hippodrome. We are all racing with another, and even with ourselves. Therefore it is not strange that this should invade the house of God.

How far is it to be given play? What are the limits—we mean in the church?

Clearly, the service ought not to be humdrum. Let the singing be lively, and have plenty of it. Let the building be inviting and well ventilated (why do sextons hate fresh air?). Let the preacher study to brighten his discourse with the charms of decorous anecdotes, pat illustration and warm appeal. There is no sanctity in platitudes. Sin is not to be taken out of a man as Eve was taken out of Adam—by putting him to sleep. It is impossible to make a church too attractive in its pulpit, its chair and its environment. All this is well within the limits of the legitimate.

But when it comes to the deliberate adoption of a sensational plan, then the boundaries of the permissible are overleaped. Ministers are set to preach the gospel of Jesus Christ—not the gospel of self display. What must be thought of topics like these: "The Ugly Husband," "The Gadding Wife," "Let Go Your Neighbor's Umbrella," "Pull on Your Own Boot Strap?" These are announcements actually made of sermons actually preached. They may raise the curiosity of grown-up children—they disgust men and women. They repel in the end the very class they are meant to attract. For the church is not a circus ring, nor is a Christian pastor of right a clown. It is noticeable that these sensation mongers soon play to empty benches. For awhile they may draw a congregation of "religious tramps;" in the end, the last state of such a church is worse than the first. A strong and useful church can only be built up and maintained by preaching and practicing the gospel.

The Social Problem.

Ominous voices are heard in England as well as on the continent respecting socialistic tendencies. Call not those who utter them fanatical; it is more probable that they are animated by the spirit of the prophets than by that of fanatics. If only they could arouse the church! Rev. Father Barry in the *Nineteenth Century* for August, says: "There have been times when the handwriting on the wall was hard to read. But such is not the time in which we live. * * * It is an age of confusion. The social organism as we have received it from our fathers is deeply decayed and its spirit gone. What man is there but confesses in private that great and unknown changes are hanging over us? * * * The present state of society is doomed by its inherent contradictions to pass away. I am convinced that society must undergo a transformation or perish. And it is on this account that every thoughtful observer must wish religion would take up the far-reaching problem of the distribution of wealth; the relation of physical science to the prosperity of the masses: the rights and wrongs of property; the claims of the individual to be trained for his place in life and recompensed by a secure old age for the toils of his years of strength; in short, the whole question of national civilization, on its human and social side. I cannot say too emphatically that it seems to me this thing has not been done. It is yet without a place in our books of theology, to speak of, and requires doing in all manner of ways. To find a solution will task the energy and make severe demands on the good will of our best teachers; nor will they find it at all useless, while keeping one eye on their books, to keep the other on things as they are outside the books. For all the sciences are now fast resolving themselves into one—the social science. And all the problems are resolving themselves even faster into one—the social problem."

One-Minute Sermons.

A MAN may be religious and not be good.—*Dr. Hodge.*

IF there is one fact or doctrine, or command, or promise in the Bible which has produced no practical effect on your temper, or heart, or conduct, be assured you do not truly believe it.—*Payson.*

SEE there be no sermon without two R's in it: Repentance—Righteousness.—*Rowland Hill.*

THE world proposes to rest by removing the burden. The Redeemer gives rest by giving us the spirit and power to bear the burden.—*F. W. Robertson.*

IN questions of law or of fact conscience is often confounded with opinion.—*Ib.*