



IT HAD been a most successful donation party, every one agreed. The pastor himself was heard to say that he had seldom seen so many of his people together, and the pastor's wife clasped hands that day with some parishioners who had never been in her house before.

The village merchants dropped in for a few moments at supper time, while there was a lull in the business of the day, and even the busy doctor, after making a professional call next door, ran in for a cordial handshake with the pastor, leaving in the latter's hand a receipted bill for all indebtedness.

The doctor's wife had filled at this, and after the doctor had gone he hurried to find his wife alone, the surprise with her, but a thoughtful sister who had observed the scene reached her first, and the little pleasure of telling her was denied him.

Late in the afternoon Miss Black, representative of the most wealthy family in the parish, had swept through the parlor, pausing long enough to superintend the hanging of a fine engraving she had brought.

It was soon after Miss Black's departure that a fine seal pocketbook was first noticed among the gifts spread out in the study. No one knew who put it there. More than one fingered it curiously, and one or two surreptitiously opened it, to see if there was anything inside.

For a moment they looked at each other in delighted surprise. Then the same question sprang to the lips of both: Who could have done it? "You don't think it could have been Maria, do you?" he asked wistfully.

But Mrs. Tyler settled the question with a prompt negative. It wasn't likely that his sister had sent it after neglecting to put in the pocket-book with nothing to put in it around the tired wife, opening it listlessly. But in a moment her manner changed. For accidentally slipping her fingers into one of the pockets, she felt a paper, and drew forth a crisp new bill—a twenty-dollar bill.

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By Harriet A. Nash.



The minister sat silent. In his country parish he had never met a case like this. He could recall nothing in his theological training that fitted it. According to his best knowledge and belief he should speak words of condemnation and warning. But the pity swelling in his heart choked them back.

Presently the boy raised his head with a defiant gesture. "See here," he said, and slipped a little vial into the minister's hand. "I didn't mean to go to prison. If it came to that there was stuff enough in that bottle to have taken care of me. If they'd put me alone in a cell I should have swallowed it before now. I haven't any friends left. My relatives will all refuse to speak to me after this, and I didn't suppose there was any one in heaven or on earth that cared. But I believe you, I never heard it put that way before. And I'm going to stand my trial and whatever comes after it because of what you say."

He staggered back to his corner, as if ashamed of the momentary interest he had shown, and the brief intelligence died out of the hardened face. The boy, worn out with deep emotion, dropped upon the hard cot and slept. The minister sat through the long night wrapped in meditation.

Early that morning, in one of the sumptuous homes of the city, a woman past middle age was partaking of a solitary breakfast, glancing over the morning paper at the same time. For Mrs. Marsh was a business woman and watched the markets closely. Running her eyes slowly down the news columns, she suddenly started so violently as to overturn the coffee urn, and regardless of the amber liquid soaking into the snowy cloth and dripping upon the rug, she sat motionless, her eyes riveted upon these words:

"A suspicious looking character purchased a coat of Claus & Clothier yesterday morning paying for it with a twenty-dollar bill which proved to be a clever counterfeit. The swindler, who was arrested as he was about to take the evening train for New York, claims to be the pastor of a church in Gimfield, and gave the name of Ezra Tyler, which is believed to be assumed."

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"Mrs. Marsh rang the bell for a maid to repair damages, and paper in hand, left the room. "I wish I could think it was a mistake," she soliloquized as she tied on her bonnet. "But it's too much like him. Nobody but Ezra could get himself into such a scrape as this. Well, he was quite right when he declared he had no head for business, and after all I shall have to acknowledge it."

Mrs. Marsh's quarrel with her only brother dated from his entering the ministry. Many years younger than she, he had until that time been entirely submissive to her wishes. She had selected his books, his clothes, his college, even his friends. But when it came to choosing a profession and a wife the young man's will asserted itself.

This morning Mrs. Marsh's lawyer, listening to her story, smiled to himself, as he read beneath her calm, almost indifferent manner her longing for a reconciliation. "For he's proved me in the wrong," she said candidly. "As a business man he would have ruined himself and all his friends by this time. And I intend to keep an eye on him after his."

It was a busy morning. But wealth and influence can accomplish much, and before noon Ezra Tyler walked forth a free man, the charge against him withdrawn. He hardly knew how it was brought about. His sister, greeting him as though they had parted but the day before, had

announced the facts to him, and knowing she had attended to it he had not troubled his head with details. He was far more interested in the case of his young friend, and insisted on calling at once upon the employers, where he argued the matter with such persistency that they finally consented not to prosecute if the money was refunded.

Mrs. Marsh grumbled not a little, wrote a check for the amount, and the much-amused attorney added his mite by consenting to give the young man a position in his office, where he would be under strict supervision and out of temptation's way.

Altogether, as Mr. Tyler sat at lunch in his sister's house, he was by no means unhappy, even though his parishioners were yet to be confronted. If he only knew where that bill came from! That was a mystery which must be solved before the world could be entirely assured of his innocence.

As the train drew into Gimfield that night Mr. Tyler stepped from it with the utmost unconcern. It had ceased to be of any consequence what his parishioners thought. The few people he met greeted him warmly. One or two stopped to shake hands and express their regret at his disagreeable experience. He felt his hypocrisy in allowing them to call it an unfortunate mistake. His wife met him at the door, full of questions and comments, but he brushed them all aside, only inquiring, with a sarcasm she had never heard in his tone before, if his overcoat was quite satisfactory.

THE MAN WHO KNEW TOO MUCH

A Fable for the Foolish—By Nicholas Nemo

MR. NAGIT was one of the most competent men in the advising business. He was fully supplied with excellent suggestions for the conduct of anything in general and if he could have had his way all human error would have been eliminated from the face of the earth. His ideas on the political situation were flawless, at least, he said they were, and he had at the industrial troubles that have afflicted mankind since the invention of the common, or garden gentlemen's, agreement settled out of hand before the other people had awakened to the fact that there was anything wrong. The only fault to be found with Mr. Nagit's panacea was that he could never get any one to try it. Day after day he sat around with his feet on his desk and assured the rest of the population that if they would only leave it to him it would be all right.

In politics, too, Mr. Nagit was prepared to solve the problems as fast as any one could put them up to him. The great thing about Mr. Nagit's ability was its ubiquity. He was the real inventor of wireless telegraphy; at least, he had had a dream one night in the cold winter of 1881 that looked like a Marconiogram. He even declared that he could remember having heard of the places mentioned in the war dispatches from the Far East before the Japanese knocked all the vowels out of them with shrapnel.



OPPOSITE HIM WAS A YOUNG FELLOW, HIS FACE BURIED IN HIS HANDS.

to compare with the task of saving the nation and averting a great foreign war and thinking about how much better times used to be before the electric light and the telephone and the wireless corporation were invented.

The conclusion of this tale of a man of genius is one that pains us deeply, but I never thought of a man that knew so much as the minister'd be fished by it. "We are very much annoyed," commenced Miss Black, but her pastor, his face wreathed in smiles, interrupted: "Nonsense, Jimmie," he said. "You're a nice little boy, and I am glad you did it. That is—for Miss Black looked scandalized." "I should say, I am very glad to know who did it. And it has proved how even our mistakes—for I think we won't call it anything more serious than a mistake, Jimmie—may be used for others' good. Some time, when you are a little older, Jimmie, I will tell you a story of another boy who made a mistake."

"Martha," Mr. Tyler said, after the guests had gone, "can we not sing 'Praise God from Whom All Blessings Flow'?" "I'm afraid it would wake the children, Ezra," replied the tired mother.

"Then let us read the 103d psalm; and after that I have a long story to tell you about last night and to-day."

But there was one part of the story that Mrs. Tyler never heard.