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'Twixt Life and Death

BY

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CHAPTER I.

The Lecture Hall and Literary Institute, Monkton—a long, rectangular room, lit with six gas jets on hanging T-shaped fittings; the drab walls decorated with half a dozen maps; the coloredrepresentation in sections of a very early steam engine; an ethnological chart; and other instructive works of art. At one end a small stage, opening fourteen feet by eight, flanked by red curtains, and furnished with six footlights and a drop-scene, showing Athens, the worse for many falls; a grand piano below the proscenium by way of orchestra. The body of the hall ranged in parallel lines with red-cushioned seats, on which are closely pressed the relatives and friends of pupils connected with Mrs. Vicary Shepherd's High School and Academy for the daughters of gentlemen. An overflow of bashful youths line the walls right and left. Three very warm-looking gentlemen, each with a packet of programs in his hand and a white favor in his buttonhole, are endeavoring, with smiling assiduity, to find places for a crowd of late comers.

There is a general inspection of pink programs, and a buzzing is heard. Even the professors speak in hushed tones, for the general effect of the hall, despite the stage, is that of a Methodist chapel. A lady explains to a gentleman—who seems, by some accident, to have come there without knowing why—what is toward:

"It's a High School, you know. Mrs. Vicary Shepherd—I'm sorry to see that she's not here; she is indisposed, I'm told—this entertainment has been got up to demonstrate the advantage of the elocution and deportment class."

"Oh, I see."

"She wrote to the great tragedian—what is his name?—on the subject. Here is his reply on the back of the program. It was he who suggested what should be acted."

"You don't say so! And what is the play he recommends?"

"'She Stoops to Conquer.' My little Milly takes the part of Diggory. She's only twelve, you know. Mrs. Vicary Shepherd assured me that, if she had only been a year or two older, she should have asked me to let her play old Marlow."

"Ah, indeed! Then all the performers are—eh—young ladies?"

"Oh, of course; and, naturally, Mrs. Vicary Shepherd has carefully revised the play for the use of her pupils. Ah! that is Miss Tinkleton, the music mistress. It's going to begin now."

Miss Tinkleton plays an elaborate sonata of Schumann—brilliant, but rather long. An awkward pause, in which the hurrying of feet, some giggling, and a confusion of whispering tongues are heard coming from the other side of Athens. A voice from the same remote part asks, "Are you ready now, young ladies?" to which a general reply of "No, no! not yet, not yet!" in accents of terror, creates a titter among the audience. Miss Tinkleton, with admirable presence of mind, attacks another sonata; but before she gets to the foot of the page a bell rings, and the curtain rises in three spasmodic jerks. Applause from the parents and friends of the young ladies, who are discovered in the characters of Mr. and Mrs. Hardcastle, facing each other, and in doubt whether they ought to begin before Miss Tinkleton has gone through her sonata. Then Miss Tinkleton stops in the middle of a bar with confusion. The play proceeds, the rigid Mr. Hardcastle and the rigid Mrs. Hardcastle exchanging their quid pro quos with the regular intonation of a well-learnt lesson, and the audience already assuming an air of calm repose and resignation, when a vociferous halloo beyond the red curtain, followed by the brisk entrance of Tony Lumpkin on the scene, fairly galvanizes the audience into life. The entrance is clearly unrehearsed, for Mrs. Hardcastle incontinently forgets her part. What does that matter? Everyone is occupied with Tony, and he has the sense to turn the silence to effect.

There he stands, a strapping, black-eyed young fellow with a red wig, standing looking audaciously at the audience as he cracks his riding whip and whistles through a long row of white teeth. Suddenly, as if recollecting an engagement, he says, "I'm off," and crosses the stage with an unseen wink to Mrs. Hardcastle, and a quickly whispered line that she is to take up. As he goes off, hartling stoutly with Mrs. Hardcastle at the end of the scene, everyone in the audience consults the program. "Surely that cannot be Miss Vanessa Grahame!" is on everyone's lips. But it is, though—Nessa herself, who, taking advantage of Mrs. Vicary Shepherd's absence, has determined to play the part as she conceives Goldsmith intended it to be played, and, in defiance of Mrs. Vicary Shepherd's express injunction that she should not disfigure herself, has painted her pretty face—and especially her dainty nose—with ochre and rouge, and hidden her pretty, waving, chestnut hair with a red wig sent down with the costumes from Bow street. What is more, she has got hold of an unabridged copy of the play, and is determined to say every word of it.

The second scene is set. And here, to the terror of Miss Tinkleton at the piano, Nessa introduced the song of the "Three Jolly Pigeons," which Mrs. Vicary Shepherd had cut out, without a moment's hesitation. Moreover, she introduced a step dance in the final chorus of "Toroddle, toroddle, torrol," as if unable to contain the exuberance of her spirits.

The act finished, and Athens is once more in view. There is commotion in the auditorium. The ladies are surprised. They cannot understand how Mrs. Vicary Shepherd could allow such a performance to be given. Deportment and elocution were all very well in their way, and Oliver Goldsmith was, undoubtedly, a very excellent writer, but really such language! And how Miss Grahame, a young lady who, in a few years, would have a position in society with three thousand a year, how could she so forget herself? Little Milly's mamma is quite sure that her daughter would not have played the part in that dreadful manner. It is a most serious thing to have such a person in a school where her example, though, of course, contemned, might possibly influence her fellow-pupils.

Meanwhile a couple of young gentlemen who have been madly in love with Nessa for the past two years, and three or four others who have seen her tonight for the first time and have not that excuse, loiter outside the hall to see her pass to the omnibus that is waiting to take her and the rest of the boarders to the school at Westham. She comes down after the small fry, with her arm linked in Miss Tinkleton's.

The full moon is right overhead; its light glistens on her white teeth and sparkles in her dark eyes as she laughs. She is clearly trying to make the poor governess forget her trouble, and, indeed, succeeds in raising a faint smile on her lugubrious countenance. But though she is laughing and full of fun, Nessa is not hoydenish. Those who have not seen her before to-night can hardly believe that it was she who played Tony. They expected to find her a red-faced, romping, heavy-sided tomboy; they see a pale-faced young lady, dressed with striking elegance, whose every movement is graceful. But there's no mistaking those big, fearless eyes, and that capital set of white teeth.

Mrs. Vicary Shepherd accepted only a limited number of pupils as boarders—just as many, in fact, as could be stowed away in the six rooms on the second floor of Eagle House. Among the many duties of a meek-spirited resident governess, Miss Tinkleton had each night to see the young ladies in bed before retiring to her own. She had visited five of the rooms and extinguished the light in them, when she came to the last in the corridor that night. That was Nessa's. Miss Tinkleton passed it with a slight cough and went downstairs, Nessa having long ago emancipated herself from a rule that was only to be suffered by children.

Five minutes later, the doors up the passage began to creak, and heads were cautiously thrust out; then the white-robed young ladies, seeing the course clear, crept our, treading on their soft, bare toes, clasping the wraps thrown over their shoulders with crossed hands on their bosoms, and made their way noiselessly toward the end room on a visit to their heroine, Nessa. With infinite precaution, one turned the handle, while the rest clustered together for common support, and did their best to keep from tittering audibly. But they ceased to giggle altogether when the door was opened, for there before them was the most unexpected spectacle to be found in this world of surprises. Nessa, who had never before been known to cry, was seated on her bed with a handkerchief up to her eyes, and her bosom heaving with stifled sobs. Her hat and jacket lay on a chair, but she had not begun to undress. Two trunks were open, and her room, never too tidy, was littered from end to side with things taken from the open drawers and put down anywhere.

"I can't help it," she said, brushing the tears away impatiently and heaving her breast with a long, fluttering sigh; "and now it's all over, I wish I hadn't done it. I like Mrs. Vic and old Tinkleton. Oh, I love you all, and there's no one else in the world I care anything at all for, or anyone who cares for me. I'm glad you have come. I've been trying to think what each of you would like best for a keepsake. Now you shall choose for yourselves. I know you like that pearl set, Dolly." She rose in her quick, impulsive way to get the trinkets, but Dolly restrained her, and clinging to her arm, made her sit down again.

"You're not going away, dear," she said.

"Oh, no!" murmured the others, echoing her tone of remonstrance.

"Yes, I am," said Nessa; "that's why I'm such a goose. I can't bear to think of saying good-by, it has been such a jolly term, hasn't it?"

"Do you think Mrs. Vic will be so very angry?"

"Of course she will. Tinkleton says I've ruined the reputation of the school."

"Oh, but you can make some excuse."

"I never did in my life," Nessa said, bristling up. "I will tell her I am very sorry—and so I am; but that isn't making an excuse."

"Oh, she won't let you go away."

"She cannot prevent my going, and she won't try to. I'm not a girl now; I'm a woman, and it's time I left school. I know all the professors can tell me; or at any rate all I choose to learn; and I'm unmanageable. How is Mrs. Vic to punish me when I do wrong? She can't put me in a corner, or send me to bed. And I always am doing wrong."

The voices mingled in unanimous dissent.

"Mrs. Vic says I am. She tells me I encourage those horrid little wretches who stare at me in church and throw letters into the garden; and those professors are quite as bad—if she only knew it, worse. I hate them. It's an insult to make love in that cowardly way. I think all men are mean and horrid, don't you Dolly?"

"Nearly all," Dolly admitted, with reluctance. "Of course, papa is nice, and so are brothers."

"And uncles," suggested another.

"And some cousins," hinted a third.

"Oh, they don't count," said Nessa. "I cannot remember my papa, and I don't think that I have a single relative in all the world."

"Not one?"

"No. A stepfather is not a relative, and," she added, bending her pretty brows, "I'm glad of it, because I hate him with all my heart."

CHAPTER II.

"Oh, Nessa!" exclaimed a school girl chorus.

"I know he is a coward, and I believe he is as wicked a man as ever lived. Ah, if you only knew!"

"Couldn't you tell us, dear?"

"Well, papa was a soldier—a general, you know, and he was killed in battle when I was quite a tiny little thing; and mamma was very young and very pretty, and very rich, because papa left her everything. And so, when I was about six years old, she married again; and I believe Mr. Redmond only married for her fortune, and really did not love her at all, I know she was unhappy; for whenever she came to see me at school, she cried over me as she held me in her arms. She did not live two years after her marriage; my stepfather broke her heart."

"Oh, you don't know, dear."

"Yse, I do. I'm sure of it. I have seen Mr. Redmond, and he looks like a man who would break a woman's heart."

"Is he very ugly?"

"Oh, no! I dare say you would think him handsome; but, oh, he has those long, sleepy, treacherous eyes, and those lines down here by the mouth, don't you know, that people get who are always trying to conceal a wicked thought with a smile."

"Oh, I hate those people who are always smiling. They get a shiny look on their faces, don't they? Go on, dear."

"I have only seen him four or five times, but that is often enough for me and for him, too. He knows what I think of him and hates me, and fears me, too, I'm certain. That is why he has kept me all this time at school—why, he would keep me here until he has no longer any legal control over me. He thinks he is safe while I am here—that in this artificial life I can learn nothing about the real world. But he is mistaken, as he shall find. Wait a moment."

Nessa went to one of the boxes and returned with an imposing document tied with pink tape.

"Look at this," she said. The girls gathered closely round her, and looked at the blue foolscap in breathless awe. "This is a copy of mamma's will. I sent to London for it. It's very short. See, mamma leaves all her estate, 'real and personal,' to me, her only child, Vanessa Grahame; but here," turning the page with evident satisfaction in the crackle it made, "here is the codicil. Mamma has evidently been told that she must provide a guardian for me during my minority, and make some disposition of her property in case I should die before coming of age. And here she makes James Redmond my sole guardian, with power to draw eight hundred pounds a year from the invested capital, to provide for my education and personal requirements. And further, in the event of the said Vanessa Grahame dying before the age of twenty-one'—I'm only eighteen now, you know—all the property goes to that horrid stepfather, the aforesaid James Redmond. Now, what do you think of that?"

"Your poor mamma could not have loved him, or she would have left him some money, wouldn't she, dear?" said Dolly.

"Of course she would; but how is it that leaving nothing to him in the will, she leaves me to his tender mercies in the codicil? Can you explain that, any of you?"

None of them could.

"I can explain it," said Nessa, raising her voice in excitement; "this codicil is a forgery!"

"Oh, Nessa!"

"It is, and it's just the sort of forgery a cunning coward would make. He had not the courage to forge a will making the whole estate his; but he had just enough to substitute his own name for one that mamma had written, and so get a nice little income for ever so many years out of the money for my schooling and clothes. He could do that without raising suspicion. What have I cost? Not two hundred a year; that puts him in possession of six hundred pounds, besides the use of my house, Grahame Towers."

She drew a letter from her pocket with impressive gravity, and, opening it, read: "'My dear Nessa'—what right has he to call me his dear Nessa?—'I have not a nominal but an actual authority to control your movements, and while that authority is mine I intend to keep you at Eagle House or some similar establishment. Yours, etc., James Redmond.' The letter is dated from my own house, Grahame Towers. It came this morning, just before we were going to the rehearsal. You can imagine my indignation!"

(To be continued.)

Personals.

The citizens of Victoria, B. C., have presented to Rear Admiral Beaumont a massive gold nugget and a sword which was made especially for him in London. The Rear Admiral has just been promoted to the command of the Austrialian station.

Count Von Waldersee receives $500 a month as commanding officer of the Germans in China, besides $750 a month as Field Marshal and $2500 a month for what is known as "table money."

Miss Clara Barton, head of the Red Cross Society, has placed with a firm at Kittrell, N. C., an order for 1,000,000 strawberry plants. These plants will be distributed among the fruit growers of Texas, who suffered so severely from the great September storm.

The statues of Alexander Dumas, fils, and of his grandfather, the General which will be ready to unveil in a few months, are to be placed close to the monument of Dumas, the novelist, in the Palace Malesherbes, in Paris. This locality is soon to lose its old name, and will soon be known as the Place des Trois Dumas, so that the memory of the celebrated family will be well perpetuated in Paris.

General W. F. Draper, of Milford, Mass., has received from the King of Italy the grand cordon of the order of Saints Maurice and Lazare as a token of appreciation of the former Ambassador's services during his mission in Italy. The grand cordon is one of the highest decorations conferred by the Italian Court.

Odds and Ends.

An ox can carry 200 pounds weight on a day's journey, a camel 400 pounds.

In Australia the street railway systems of the towns are, for the most part owned by the municipalities.

Electric fountains have become very popular, especially as attractions for amusement parks. In England, especially, they have lately been installed in large numbers.

Prussian blue does not come to us from Prussia. It is a chemical product of which England makes her full share. Irish stew is not an Irish, but an English dish, and Turkish baths did not originate in Turkey, but in Russia.

A resident of Plymouth, Mass., Dr. Isaac L. Wood, has a couple of apples from an orchard at Kamloops, British Columbia, just the ordinary fruit of that region. One of them measures 15¾ inches in circumference and weighs 23 ounces, and the other is nearly as large. Dr. Wood saw at the agricultural fair at Kamloops an apple which weighed 29 ounces.

The city of Bern, Switzerland, is making the Socialistic experiment of building free—or practically free—workshops for artisans.

A wideawake American has erected steam pumps on the Jordan and is supplying churches all over Europe with genuine Jordan water.

A large Dublin manufacturer has a room entirely furnished with Irish peat. The carpets on the floor, the curtains at the windows and paper on the wall are made from this substance.

Nearly 1,000,000 women in Spain work in the field as day laborers 350,000 women are registered as day servants—that is, they work for their food and lodging. There is no such class anywhere else.

Microbe light is the latest Paris invention. A French chemist, Raphael Dubois, has found a way of nourishing phosphorescent animalcules in glass vessels, which soon emit a light about as bright as the moon. He expects to increase its intensity, and believes that its being entirely free from heat will give it a scientific value.

—At least 15 automobiles are in use in Honolulu.

OUR STORY TELLER

A DOUBLE CHANGE OF OPINION.

HE was a minister of the Episcopalian fold—an "Anglican priest," as he would have expressed it—and he believed most ardently in the wisdom and advisability of a celibate priesthood.

"The church demands and should receive absolute singleness of devotion from her priests," was the way he stated the matter to his friends.

She was an artist, firm in the belief that a real devotion to art admitted of no other loves or devotions.

"One cannot serve the gods and at a family altar," was her manner of stating the case.

They met upon the transatlantic steamer coming over, and the inevitable happened.

He had been in England, studying the semi-monastic orders of the Anglican church in that country. She had been sketching in France and Germany, closing her trip with a flying visit to London and Liverpool. He was from New York; she from Chicago. Their principles were exactly alike, only they didn't know it. But it only took them ten days to discover this fact.

He was attracted to her because of a certain high pureness of face and bearing which set her far apart from the merry, charming, but decidedly flirtatious other women who sat at her table—and his. She came to the conclusion that he undoubtedly "had something in him," because of the quiet reserve of his manner. A long acquaintance with Art had taught her that it is the face—as the picture—which holds something in reserve that usually proves worthy of study and cultivation. Besides, the high vest and large silver cross, which stamped him as a ritualist among ritualists, and, therefore, mostly likely a

QUITE ALONE ON THE ROCKING DECK.

believer in celibacy, made her feel perfectly, delightfully safe in enjoying his company. Mirable Anneston often found it necessary to be extremely careful in her intercourse with the other sex. She was a pretty girl and decidedly charming; since she did not intend to marry—or thought she did not, which amounted to the same thing—it behooved her to be careful how she raised false hopes.

Rupert Hazard—Father Hazard, as he preferred to be called—felt correspondingly safe in talking with Miss Anneston, because self-consciousness seemed to be so entirely lacking in her make-up. They began by talking about art, literature, and the deeper problems of social economics. They didn't begin to talk of love, even in the abstract, until Liverpool had been left behind for seven days. The young woman who had made and broken two engagements in that time led them in this direction unconsciously.

Neither of them were gossips, but the thing seemed incredible—to people who hadn't crossed the ocean often enough to become accustomed to this sort of phenomena—that they couldn't help thinking of it, having been informed of the fracture of the second engagement by their respective stateroom stewards—and several other persons. As the young woman, apparently well on the way toward a third deep-sea engagement, passed by the sunny corner where they were comfortably discussing the condition of the poor in London, New York and Chicago, Mirable spoke out suddenly.

"Doesn't it seem strange that people will play and trifle with the most sacred and holy things of life?" she said, with musing tone.

The Rev. Rupert Hazard came out of his reverie concerning the good work which the church was destined to accomplish among the poor of his own parish neighborhood and sighed.

"It does, it does," he returned, seriously.

This was the opening wedge. From love in the abstract to the question of love of a more ordinary and personal aspect was but a little step. (It never is.) A day later they were telling each other why love was not for them. Two days later each knew that the other had decided never to marry. Three days later the Accomplished Traveler, overhearing a fragment of their conversation, smiled sympathetically as she promenaded on.

"Do you know," the young clergyman was saying, "that, while celibacy has always seemed almost necessary for the priesthood to me (it had seemed absolutely necessary until a few days before), I fail to see how an unmarried, and, perhaps, lonely, existence will cause you to paint better pictures."

"Why!" and the girl's tone was earnest as it was astonished. "I don't see how you can think otherwise. Art demands all the best of one, and no second-rate or second-hand devotion, if one is really to serve and minister to the beautiful. But it has always seemed to me," she added, meditatively, "that an unmarried minister has lost a fine chance, at least, of getting close to the hearts of his people. I wonder which of us is right—or neither, or both?"

Then came the big storm, and after that all things looked different. Mirable was anything but a coward, but she couldn't help feeling a little nervous as the great ship trembled and staggered and rolled under the force of the tremendous waves. The young minister, whose faith was of the real and assertive kind, soothed and reassured her as she sat, trembling but silent, in the music room looking out at the angry waters. The girl was duly comforted and strengthened, and the pleasant feeling of half dependence and intimacy, both of his thoughtful kindness, lasted even after the sun had decided to shine again. And the young minister had also learned something while the storm was raging. It was with a really meek and humble heart that he assisted her to the upper deck, just as soon as this was possible, and stood by her side as she took mental notes of the waves and their form and color.

"Mirable," he said presently—he had learned her name some days before—"I have a confession to make to you. I have found out—the Lord has taught me—that my views upon the question of celibacy have been mistaken. I now agree with you that a clergyman is better with a wife, and I hope—I hardly dare hope, but still I long to—that you will be my wife, some day, by and by."

They were quite alone on the rocking deck. The weather was still too rough for others less interested in art—and one of its exponents—to venture out. The girl, meditating, found that she, too, had changed her opinions in regard to several matters.

"If I tell you," she said at last, as bravely, as shyly, "that I no longer believe that love and marriage lessen one's chances of becoming a great artist, you must not fancy that it is because I am ready to say yes to the question you may want to ask me, possibly, some time. But it has seemed to me, lately—"

"Dear one, let me ask that question now," the man at her side broke in, impulsively. "Will you, dear child and sweetheart, promise to become my wife?"

Again the girl was silent, thinking, thinking. She no longer believed, as she had said, that an unmarried existence was necessary for the highest art, but still—she thought of the picture she was longing to paint, the wondrous thing of graces, nymphs, perhaps, even bacchanals—and wondered how it would do for a minister's wife to paint and exhibit this thing. And yet—with love in the balance—

She turned to him, smiling.

"I will not promise now," she said, quietly; "it is far too early and we know far too little of each other for me to make any such promise, for one thing, and, besides, I have a picture I must paint first. It will take me until well on into next summer. (All this happened last autumn.) And you must not write to me, nor ask me to write to you, until the end of June anyway. Then, if you want to risk the trip on such slight encouragement, you may come to Chicago, and—if you care to ask me that question again—I may possibly think about it."

The next day he came, and soon her studio will be in New York instead of Chicago, and there will be a new name upon the door.—Chicago Tribune.

Not Her Station.

It is characteristic of the perversity of human intelligence to find the most amusing things in the midst of the most serious circumstances—such as railway accidents, for instance.

It is related that a solemn-faced woman was once riding on the train from Brookfield to Stamford. Somewhere between the two stations an accident occurred, and the train rolled down an embankment.

The solemn-faced lady crawled from beneath the wreckage, and asked of a broken-legged man who was near:

"Is this Stamford?"

"No, ma'am," the man gasped. "This is a catastrophe!"

"Oh, dear!" she answered. "Then I hadn't oughter get off here, had I?"—London Spare Moments.

A Beggar's Plea.

"Could you spare a few cents for a sick child, ma'am?" said a woman to a young lady who was about to get on a street car in Bellefield.

Being of a sympathetic nature, the young lady looked in her purse and found she could spare a 5-cent piece. The coin was handed to the beggar, who took it and said:

"Thank you, lady. It'll be a blessing to the child. It'll buy him a pint—a pint of milk," she added as an after thought.

The car came just then, and as the young lady mounted the steps she said:

"O, don't get milk for the child; get him the pint."

The woman scowled and the car rolled on.—Pittsburg Chronicle-Telegraph.

A foolish woman never appears to worse advantage than she does in a dry-goods store.

LITERARY LITTLE BITS

Margaret Armstrong has made a decorative cover for Myrtle Reed's Later Love Letters of a Musician, which succeeds Love Letters of a Musician from the press of G. P. Putnam's Sons.

Miss Sally Pratt McLean Greene's Vesty of the Basins is an elaborately illustrated edition by Harper & Brothers. The pictures are reproductions of photographs taken by Clifton Johnson, who, following the directions of the author, went over the scenes of the novel in Maine.

Apart from its intrinsic merits, The Meloon Farm has a pathetic interest in being one of the last pieces of work done by the late Maria Louise Pool. It is, moreover, very characteristic of the author. It seems odd that Miss Pool should have begun her career as a novelist comparatively late in life, for she had to a high degree the story-telling faculty.

Master Christian, Marie Corelli's new novel, was published through Dodd, Mead & Co. The advance orders for the book, it is said, have been very heavy, while news comes from England that, as far as this author is concerned, the advance orders there have been unprecedented. The first editions of the book, English and American, will together comprise 150,000 copies.

From Longmans, Green & Company comes Jane Austen, an Essay in Criticism, by Walter Herries Pollock. Mr. Pollock's criticism is pure praise, but lovers of Miss Austen may feel that this is inevitable in dealing with her books. Of course, he can find little to tell us about her life that is new, though by dint of much browsing he has collected one or two facts hitherto unpublished. Nothing concerning her is too small to interest him. He even devotes himself to puzzling out the meaning of some "family gibberish" with which, it appears, Miss Austen and her sisters were wont to amuse themselves when corresponding with one another. Mr. Pollock touches also upon the novels of Miss Austen's contemporaries—Miss Edgeworth, Miss Burney and Miss Ferrier—to whom allusion is made in a sub-title of his book. The Bookman.

DEATH LURKS IN CACTUS.

Great Plants of Arizona Produce a Liquor That Is Maddening.

Distinctive among all the curious flora of Arizona, where the vegetable productions of the tropics, the temperate and the frigid zones, grow side by side, is the Cereus giganteus, called by the Indians and Mexicans the sahuaro.

Scattered over the waterless plains and rocky, gravelly mesas in every part of the territory, these largest specimens of the cactus family point their candelabralike arms straight toward the cloudless skies, not infrequently attaining a height of fifty feet.

The body of the sahuaro is composed of thin pieces of wood arranged in the form of a Corinthian column, covered and held together by the outside fiber. This fiber is a pale green. At some distance from the ground large branches put out, while the whole surface is covered with sharp, prickly thorns. A large purple blossom springs from its apex in May, which ripens into a pear-shaped fruit by the last of June.

This fruit, which tastes a great deal like a fig, is highly prized by both Indians and Mexicans, who bring it to the ground by the aid of a long hooked pole. Part of the fruit is eaten while ripe, the rest is dried in the sun or boiled down to a jam.

Until the advent of the missionaries to the Pimas and Papagoes, some twenty years ago, the gathering of the sahuaro was the signal for the most bloody orgy of the year. All of the tribe contributed material for the saturnalia, each bringing his quota of fruit to the medicine men. This was mixed with water and allowed to ferment, then boiled—a highly intoxicating beverage being the result. When all was ready, the women, dressed in their best, congregated on top of the wickiups, ten or twenty huddling together for safety from the bucks, who deliberately proceeded to drink themselves into a state of frenzied intoxication. Joining hands, they began a glorious war dance, the dancing being mostly of side jumps, which made the earth tremble like an earthquake. During these bibulous feasts a number of the braves were frequently killed.

The sahuaro is short-lived, usually beginning to decay at its base before attaining its growth. Nearly all the trees are perforated with holes made by the birds in their quest for water.

The Girl and Her Vocation.

"The future wage-earning girl should have in her mind during the latter part of her school life the selection of her profession," writes Margaret E. Sangster in the Ladies' Home Journal. "I think it well for her, too, very frequently, but with intention, to cast about among her friends for suggestions, to ask the kind offices of one and another, and to make known her need of immediate employment so soon as she leaves school. Many good positions are lost because of indecision, or false pride, or unwise reticence on the part of those who seek them. The mental attitude of the girl in search of employment should be neither indifferent nor patronizing; she should set in motion every legitimate means, and let those who may be able to assist her know something of her situation. They can help, and she can seek with much greater hope of success if the goal in view be something definite."

Bacillus to Destroy Rodents.

In view of the presence in Europe of the plague, and the prominent part played by rats in spreading it, the Pasteur institute in Paris has cultivated a cocco-bacillus which destroys mice and rats by wholesale.

There is usually a woman connected with all great undertakings.

SERMON BY Rev. Dr. Talmage

Subject: Lack of Patience—Faith, Hope and Charity Bloom in Many Hearts Where the Grace of Patience is Wanting—Pity Rather Than Condemn the Erring.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.—This discourse of Dr. Talmage is a full length portrait of a virtue which all admire, and the lessons taught are very helpful; text, Hebrews x, 36, "Ye have need of patience."

Yes, we are in awful need of it. Some of us have a little of it, and some of us have none at all. There is less of this grace in the world than of almost any other. Faith, hope and charity are all abloom in hundreds of souls where you find one specimen of patience. Paul, the author of the text, on a conspicuous occasion lost his patience with a coworker, and from the way he urges this virtue upon the Hebrews, upon the Corinthians, upon the Thessalonians, upon the Romans, upon the Colossians, upon the young theological student, Timothy, I conclude he was speaking out of his own need of more of this excellence. And I only wonder that Paul had any nerves left. Imprisonment, flagellation, Mediterranean cyclone, arrest for treason and conspiracy, the wear and tear of preaching to angry mobs, those at the door of a theatre and those on the rocks of Mars hill, left him emaciated and invalid and with a broken voice and sore eyes and nerves a-jangle. He gives us a snap shot of himself when he describes his appearance and his sermonic delivery by saying, "In bodily presence weak and in speech contemptible," and refers to his inflamed eyelids when, speaking of the ardent friendship of the Galatians, he says, "If it had been possible, ye would have plucked out your own eyes and have given them to me."

We all admire most that which we have least of. Those of us with unimpressive visage most admire beauty; those of us with discordant voice most extol musical cadence; those of us with stammering speech most wonder at eloquence; those of us who get provoked at trifles and are naturally irascible appreciate in others the equopoise and the calm endurance of patience. So Paul, with hands tremulous with the agitations of a lifetime, writes of the "God of patience" and of "ministers of God in much patience" and of "patience of hope" and tells them to "follow after patience," and wants them to "run with patience," and speaks of those "strengthened with all might to all patience," and looks us all full in the face as he makes the startling charge, "Ye have need of patience."

The recording angel, making a pen out of some plume of a bird of paradise, is not getting ready to write opposite your name anything applaudatory. All your sublime equilibrium of temperament is the result of worldly success. But suppose things mightily change with you, as they sometimes do change. You begin to go down hill, and it is amazing how many there are to help you down when you begin to go in that direction. A great investment fails. The Colorado silver mine ceases to yield. You get land poor; your mills, that yielded marvels of wealth, are eclipsed by mills with newly invented machinery; you get under the feet of the bears of Wall street. For the first time in your life you need to borrow money, and no one is willing to lend. Under the harrowing worriment you get a distressful feeling at the base of your brain. Insomnia and nervous dyspepsia lay hold of you. Your health goes down with your fortune; your circle of acquaintances narrows, and where once you were oppressed by the fact that you had not time enough to return one-half of the social calls made upon you now the card basket in your hallway is empty, and your chief callers are your creditors and the family physician, who comes to learn the effect of the last prescription. Now you understand how people can become pessimistic and cynical and despairful. You have reached that stage yourself. Now you need something that you have not. But I know of a re-enforcement that you can have if you will accept it. Yonder comes up the road or the sidewalk a messenger of God. Her attire is unpretending. She has no wings, for she is not an angel, but there is something in her countenance that implies rescue and deliverance. She comes up the steps that once were populous with the affluent and into the hallway where the tapestry is getting faded and frayed, the place now all empty of worldly admirers. I will tell you her name if you would like to know it. Paul baptized her and gave her the right name. She is not brilliant, but strong. There is a deep quiethood in her manner and a firmness in her tread, and in her hand is a scroll revealing her mission. She comes from heaven. She was born in the throne room of the King. This is Patience. "Ye have need of patience."

First, patience with the faults of others. No one keeps the Ten Commandments equally well. One's temperament decides which commandments he shall come nearest to keeping. If we break some of the commandments ourselves, why be so hard on those who break others of the ten? If you and I run against one verse of the twentieth chapter of Exodus, why should we so severely excoriate those who run against another verse of the same chapter? Until we are perfect ourselves we ought to be lenient with our neighbor's imperfections. Yet it is often the case that the man most vulnerable is the most hypercritical. Perhaps he is profane and yet has no tolerance for theft, when profanity is worse than theft, for, while the latter is robbery of a man, the former is robbery of God. Perhaps he is given to defamation and detraction and yet feels himself better than some one who is guilty of manslaughter, not realizing that the assassination of character is the worst kind of assassination. The laver for washing in the ancient tabernacle was at its side burnished like a looking glass, so that those that approached that laver might see their need of washing, and if by the gospel looking glass we discovered our own need of moral cleansing we would be more economic of denunciation. The most of those who go wrong are the victims of circumstances, and if you and I had been rocked in the same iniquitous cradle, and been all our lives surrounded by the same baleful influences we would probably have done just as badly, perhaps worse.

We also have need of patience with slow results of Christian work. We want to see our attempts to do good immediately successful. The world is improving, but improving at so deliberate a rate; why not more rapidity and momentum? Other wheels turn so swiftly; why not the gospel chariot take electric speed? I do not know. I only know that it is God's way. We whose cradle and grave are so near together have to hurry up, but God, who manages this world and the universe, is from everlasting to everlasting. He takes 500 years to do that which He could do in five minutes. His clock strikes once in a thousand years. While God took only a week to fit up the world for human residence, geogolgy reveals that the foundations of the world were eons in being laid, and God watched the glaciers, and the fire, and the earthquakes, and the volcanoes as through centuries and millenniums they were shaping the world before that last week that put on the arborescence. A few days ago my friend was talking with a geologist. As they stood near a pile of rocks my friend said to the scientist, "I suppose these rocks were hundreds of thousands of years in construction?" And the geologist replied, "Yes, and you might say millions of years, for no one knows but the Lord, and He won't tell."

If it took so long to make this world at the start, be not surprised if it takes a long while to make it over again now that it has been ruined.

The Architect has promised to reconstruct it, and the plans are all made and at just the right time it will be so complete that it will be fit for heaven to move in, if, according to the belief of some of my friends, this world is to be made the eternal abode of the righteous.

The wall of that temple is going up, and my only anxiety is to have the one brick that I am trying to make for that wall turn out to be the right shape and smooth on all sides, so that the Master Mason will not reject it, or have much work with the trowel to get it into place. I am responsible for only that one brick, though you may be responsible for a panel of the door or a carved pillar or a glittering dome.

So we are God's workmen, and all we have to do is to manage our own hammer or ax or trowel until the night comes in which no man can work, and when the work is all completed we will have a right to say rejoicingly: "Thank God, I was privileged to help in the rearing of that temple! I had a part in the work of the world's redemption."

Again, we have need of patience under wrong inflicted, and who escapes it in some form? It comes to all people in professional life in the shape of being misunderstood. Because of this, how many people fly to newspapers for an explanation. You see their card signed by their own name declaring they did not say this or did not do that. They fluster and worry, not realizing that every man comes to be taken for what he is worth, and you cannot, by any newspaper puff, be taken for more than you are worth nor by any newspaper depreciation be put down. There is a spirit of fairness abroad in the world, and if you are a public man you are classified among the friends or foes of society. If you are a friend of society, you will find plenty of adherents, and if you are the foe of society you cannot escape reprehension. Paul, you were right when you said, not more to the Hebrews than to us, "Ye have need of patience." I adopted a rule years ago which has been of great service to me, and it may be of some service to you. Cheerfully consent to be misunderstood. God knows whether we are right or wrong, whether we are trying to serve Him or damage His cause. When you can cheerfully consent to be misunderstood, many of the annoyances and vexations of life will quit your heart, and you will come into calmer seas than you have ever sailed on. The most misunderstood being that ever trod the earth was the glorious Christ. The world misunderstood His cradle and concluded that one so poorly born could never be of much importance. They charged Him with inebriety and called Him a winebibber. The sanhedrin misunderstood Him, and when it was put to the vote whether He was guilty or not of treason He got but one vote, while all the others voted "Aye, aye." They misunderstood His cross, and concluded that if He had divine power He would effect His own rescue. They misunderstood His grave, and declared that His body had been stolen by infamous resurrectionists. He so fully consented to be misunderstood that, harried and slapped and submerged with scorn, He answered not a word. You cannot come up to that, but you can imitate in some small degree the patience of Christ.

There are enough present woes in the world without the perpetual commemoration of past miseries. If you sing in your home or your church, do not always choose tunes in long meter. Far better to have your patience augmented by the consideration that the misfortunes of this life must soon terminate.

This last summer I stood on Sparrow hill, four miles from Moscow. It was the place where Napoleon stood when he looked upon the city which he was about to capture. His army had been in long marches and awful fights and fearful exhaustions, and when they came to Sparrow hill the shout went up from tens of thousands of voices, "Moscow, Moscow!" I do not wonder at the transport. A ridge of hills sweeps round the city. A river semicircles it with brilliance. It is a spectacle that you place in your memory as one of three or four most beautiful scenes in all the earth. Napoleon's army marched on it in four divisions, four overwhelming torrents of valor and pomp, down Sparrow hill and through the beautiful valley and across the bridges and into the palaces, which surrendered without one shot of resistance because the avalanche of troops was irresistible. There is the room in which Napoleon slept, and his pillow, which must have been very uneasy, for, oh, how short his stay! Fires kindled in all parts of the city simultaneously drove out that army into the snowstorms under which 95,000 men perished. How soon did triumphal march turn into horrible desolation!

To-day while I speak we come on a high hill, a glorious hill of Christian anticipation. These hosts of God have had a long march and fearful battles and defeats have again and again mingled with the victories, but to-day we come in sight of the great city, the capital of the universe, the residence of the King and the home of those who are to reign with Him for ever and ever. Look at the towers and hear them ring with eternal jubilee.

Look at the house of many mansions, where many of our loved ones are. Behold the streets of burnished gold and hear the rumble of the chariots of those who are more than conquerors. So far from being driven back, all the twelve gates are wide open for our entrance. We are marching on and marching on, and our every step brings us nearer to the city.

At what h... we shall enter we have no power to foretell, but once enlisted amid the blood washed host our entrance is certain. It may be in the bright noonday or the dark midnight. It may be when the air is laden with springtime fragrance or chilled with falling snows. But enter we must and enter we will through the grace offered us as the chief of sinners. Higher hills than any I have spoken of will guard that city. More radiant waters than I saw in the Russian valley will pour through that great metropolis. No raging conflagration shall drive us forth, for the only fires kindled in that city will be the fires of a splendor that shall ever hoist and never die. Reaching that shining gate, there will be a parting, but no tears at the parting. There will be an eternal farewell, but no sadness in the utterance. Then and there we will part with one of the best friends we ever had. No place for her in heaven, for she needs no heaven. While love and joy and other graces enter heaven, she will stay out. Patience, beautiful Patience, long-suffering Patience, will at that