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AN HOUR WITH THE EDITOR

THE FIRST COMMANDMENT

It is not by any means clear from the Bible narrative what religion the Children of Egypt professed during the bondage. While it is altogether probable the Jehovistic tradition, which was the guide of Abraham, Isaac and Jacob was preserved, there seems to be no reason to believe that it had anything much to do in determining the lives of the people. Indeed the Decalogue, and the "judgments" which follow it, seem to show that the Israelites had sunk into a condition of heathenism and gross immorality, by no means a matter of surprise in view of the circumstances under which they lived in Egypt. At this period in history, the various nations, with whose records we are most familiar, seem to have worshipped gods, who were supposed to be hostile to each other. The God of Israel was Jehovah, but there is nothing in the story of the exodus and the giving of the law, which requires us to think that the Israelites did not fully believe that there were other gods and that Jehovah, instead of being the true and only Deity, was but one of several with varying degrees of power. Their conception of the Deity seems to have been purely physical. He was a being who conversed with men, who became angry, whose anger could be appeased, who made mistakes and repented of them. They would undoubtedly have claimed supremacy for Jehovah, but neither omnipotence, omnipresence nor omniscience. When they attained to the conception of pure monotheism is an open question.

A great deal of learning has been expended over the Ten Commandments without leaving us much the wiser for it. It seems to be established that in their present form they are not very old, but there appears to be no doubt that Moses instructed his people in the idea that they were specially the subject of Jehovah's care, and that it was their duty to worship Him to the exclusion of every other divinity. This was the corner stone of the system, which he built up, and all through the history of the nation one fact stands out prominently, namely, that in proportion as they remained true to this worship they were prosperous and powerful. This seems to us to be wherein lies the great value of the historical books of the Old Testament. There is much in them that only traditional respect for the Bible enables us to tolerate, much that seems too absurd for credence, and yet throughout it all there stands out prominently this one great fact, that when the Hebrew nation was true to the worship of one God it was mighty, and when it departed from this it was an easy prey to its enemies. Let us once more mention that in these comments upon the Old Testament writings, we are treating them as we would any other book. We neither assert nor deny any claim for inspiration. We take the books as ancient literature, and addressing readers, most of whom probably do not know just what they ought to think of them, we are endeavoring to show the value of them, just as we might endeavor to show the value of the Iliad or any other ancient work.

We have then this indisputable fact, that the observance of the First Commandment "Thou shalt have no other gods before me," lay at the foundation of the existence of Israel as a nation and was its inspiration to national achievements. This is true, no matter in what light you may regard the Bible, and it is a truth, the importance of which cannot be overestimated. Experience is the only way by which we can judge of values. The experience may be short and decisive, as for example the trial of the explosive powers of dynamite, or it may be prolonged through centuries. The experience of the Hebrew nation shows the immense importance of reliance upon God. In the Bible story there are hundreds of instances, each of which has its subordinate lesson, but the whole story bears out the words added to the First Commandment: "For I thy God am a jealous God." Here let it be mentioned that to impute jealousy to the Deity would be properly regarded today as blasphemy; but we must remember for whom the Ten Commandments were written. They were for a people, who had just emerged from bondage, a people, who could not be expected to have arisen to the conception of God possible to us in this Twentieth Century after Christ. They were a people, who, as has just been said, looked upon Jehovah as their particular deity. They were instructed much as we today instruct children. If they had been told that they would enjoy prosperity just as long as they conformed to right rules of living and sought inspiration and counsel from the Source of all wisdom, they would not have had the least idea what was meant by it. They were a people who were convinced of things by the performance of some act, which they could not explain and therefore assumed to be miraculous. But notwithstanding these considerations, the great fact stands out incontrovertible while they trusted in Jehovah and obeyed His precepts they flourished exceedingly.

We do not suggest that the idea of one Infinite and Supreme Deity originated in the First Commandment. We are very much inclined to think it did not. There is a good deal of misty about the dates in ancient Hindu literature, but the monotheistic idea seems to have existed in India for centuries upon centuries. It is true that it was overgrown with all manner of absurdities, until it has been said that the gods of the Hindus are numbered by millions; nevertheless in the oldest writings extant the idea of a Supreme Deity is found. It seems also to be in evidence in the oldest writings unearthed from ruined cities. But as far as we are able to judge, the Children of Israel seem to be the only people, of whom we have any record, who built up their nation upon this truth as a foundation. That they departed from this fundamental principle and shaped their actions in accordance with more material conceptions is quite true, but it is also true that these wrongful acts always brought with them their punishment.

We do not know that it will be of any advantage to pursue this line of thought any further, for what has already been said will repay contemplation. Jehovah was no myth; he was no tribal deity; he was no exaggerated man. He represented the great force, which created and upholds the Universe, and whose mightiest manifestations were of a spiritual nature. One far greater than Moses has said that "God is a spirit and they that worship Him must worship Him in spirit and in truth." If the history of the Israelitish nation teaches that the worship of Jehovah was always associated with national greatness, the history of mankind teaches us no less strongly that in proportion as we worship Him in spirit and in truth, we become strong nationally and individually. Not only to the wanderers in the wilderness around Sinai does the command come: "Thou shalt have no other Gods before me," not only to the nation restored to the Land of Canaan, but to the nations of today and to the individuals of today it has the same authoritative message. We have no right to say that we will disregard it, because we cannot accept all the details of the story which tells how it was promulgated. We have far greater light to guide our path than had the people who followed Moses out of Egypt, and by that light we should read the commandment. Depend upon it, as the Children of Israel learned in tears and bitterness of soul, what was meant by the words: "I am a jealous God," so we as a people will learn the same terrible lesson, if we fail to obey the First of the Commandments.

THE SUPERNATURAL.

In one sense of the word there is nothing supernatural. The fact anything exists shows that it is natural. But in another sense the term is correct; for if we confine the expression natural to things which are tangible, there is a vast domain which may be called supernatural, in the sense that it controls the natural. The commonest illustration of this is the force which we have been in the habit of calling the Attraction of Gravitation. This is invisible, and intangible; yet its laws can be ascertained, and we are just as sure that it exists as if we could cut off a piece of it with a knife, and examine it under a microscope. Even if we admit the contention of a new school of investigators, who claim that Newton did not push his theory far enough, and that what we call by the above name would be better described as the law of vortexes the existence of the force is indisputable, and because apparently it controls the whole visible universe, it may in the limited sense above mentioned be called supernatural. The law of crystallizattion is another instance of the supernatural; so also is the law of chemical affinities. These things control tangible nature, and therefore may not improperly be called supernatural. In like manner the mysterious power which takes out of the soil and air certain substances and combines them to form wheat, or apples or dahlias, and which renders seeds reproductive and always true to their kind, may be called supernatural, because all vegetable nature is subject to it. Thus far all will go. Many will probably be willing to go even further and agree with the statement that the supernatural is far greater than the natural and perhaps even adopt the language of Paul when he said that the things which are seen are temporal, but the things which are unseen are eternal. Certain philosophers claim that the visible universe is only a manifestation of the invisible; others suggest that the forces of nature are inherent in matter and cannot exist without it. There is no necessity for the purpose of this article to inquire which of these seems the more reasonable contention.

It is manifestly impossible to fiz any limit to the supernatural, as applied to the ordinary processes of nature. New variations of it are being discovered constantly, and probably will continue to be discovered. The debateable ground, and the one which most people think of when the word is used, is that which relates to humanity. Even here we freely concede the existence of the supernatural in the sense it has been used herein. We no longer dispute, for example, the power of some people to be clairvoyant, as the term is. We admit that there is something unexplainable as mind-reading. We are unable to account for some things which are done over and over again under circumstances which seem to render deception impossible. It is proper to observe in this connection that human ingenuity is capable of doing many wonderful things by methods which call for only remarkable skill, and which do not require the exercise of anything, which in the remotest sense can be called supernatural. Whether or not the astounding exhibition given by the Zansics in London come under this class, no one but themselves knows, but although they are absolutely inexploiable by any one who has seen them, it does not follow that the explanation may not be a very simple one or that they call for the exercise of any but the ordinary powers which we use in everyday life. Some of the feats of Indian fakirs appear to be unsolvable without resort to the supernatural, that is to the employment of agencies, the existence of which is not generally admitted and the nature of which is practically unknown. But all these things must be accepted with much qualification. There are men, who can come into your house blindfolded, ask you to open a book at any page and look at a word, to close the book and give them your hand, whereupon they will find the word a great deal more quickly than you yourself could. Some explain this by saying that it is muscle-reading, whatever that may be. We suppose that by this term they mean that you unconsciously guide the operator to the word which you selected, but any one who has ever participated in such an experiment knows that such an explanation is an absurdity. One writer suggests that such feats are due to the operator putting himself in touch with what he calls your "subconscious self." That is, you have a double personality, one aspect of which does things by reason, and the other does them instinctively. According to such an explanation, your sub-conscious self noted the word, and was able to guide the operator with ten times or more the rapidity with which you could do so by the exercise of your reasoning faculties. People who possess in a limited degree this power of what we may call mind-reading, for want of a better term, are quite numerous, and they will tell you that if there is any muscular guidance on your part they are unaware of it. Take another phase of the same thing. Almost any one can try this, if he possesses the faculty of completely abandoning his mind to impressions made upon it. If a dozen persons are in a room and the operator enters blindfolded, all those already in the room concentrating their thoughts upon some one thing which they wish the operator to do, if the latter can get his mind in a state for the reception of mental suggestions, he will do the thing which he is desired to do. Hundreds of people are quite familiar with this experiment. There is something supernatural about it, inasmuch as it is accomplished by the use of a force which is intangible and yet is capable of affecting the action of a person upon whom it is directed.

There can be little doubt that the domain of the supernatural is much wider than that of the natural, and the reason why we have not made greater progress in the investigation of it is that we have not yet advanced far enough in our civilization. What we are pleased to call Twentieth Century civilization is by no means twenty centuries old. True scientific research is of comparatively modern origin. For a long time after they emerged out of the North, our ancestors were chiefly concerned in discovering ways in which to kill their enemies expeditiously. Later they began to pay much attention to the ways and means of adding to their comfort and enjoyment. Our scientific men have confined their attention to things that are tangible, and have had little use for any one, who ventured to suggest that there is a domain of investigation outside of such things. If we know practically nothing about the supernatural, it is because we have never seriously examined into it. But just as astronomers determined that there must be such a planet as Neptune, although they had never seen it, and made their calculations with such exactness that they knew just where to look for it, so may we also feel certain that surrounding the tangible, or what we have called the natural universe, there is an intangible or supernatural universe, with its laws and its forces, by which the tangible is controlled. To what degree we can ever hope to employ these laws and forces for the promotion of human happiness must for the present remain an open question, but there can be no reasonable room for doubt that, when they are once at all fully understood, they will prove exceedingly beneficial.

THE SEA.

As one stands on the Dallas Road on one of these fine Spring days and looks out over the strait, he sees beyond the Race Light the dim pathway to the Ocean. To most of us there is something appalling in the vast expanse of water, which encircles the globe, and over whose surface so many tempests rage, dashing vast waves against rocky shores, where many a good ship meets its fate. If business or pleasure takes us upon an ocean voyage, no matter how good sailors we may be, there is always a feeling that we are facing the unknown and the unknowable. To some of us the most interesting feature of a possible new heaven and a new earth is that of which St. John spoke, when he said that, as he saw it in a vision, "there was no more sea." Possibly many people think that the world would be far better, safer and happier if instead of the ocean we had land everywhere. Yet without the sea the world would be a desert, unfit for the habitation of men or beast or even of vegetable life. It is the sea which makes the world habitable, and so far from regarding it as an object of dread, we ought to learn to know it as the greatest and best of all God's material gifts to men. A few statistics regarding this wonderful part of the globe may be of interest.

The exact area of the ocean is unknown, but as nearly as can be calculated with our present knowledge about 72 per cent of the whole surface of the globe is covered by it. This gives an area of approximately 142,000,000 square miles. Its estimated depth is two miles, and it therefore contains about one nine-hundredth part of the bulk of the globe. If all the water of the ocean could be heaped upon British Columbia it would make a mass 1,000 miles high. The greatest depth ever sounded is in the Pacific Ocean near the island of Guam, where nearly six miles was the distance to which the sounding apparatus descended, but there is no reason for supposing that there are not far deeper places. The Pacific seems to be deeper than the Atlantic, at least the deepest sounding yet obtained in the latter ocean are four-fifths of a mile les than ha been attained in the Pacific. But no matter how deep the ocean is there is life in it everywhere. It is always cold at the bottom of the sea, that is where the water exceeds 100 fathoms, or 600 feet in depth. For that distance the water is affected by the heat of the atmosphere above it, but below it is uniformly cold, the temperature being always close to the freezing point. Sunlight has an appreciable effect for 1,000 feet from the surface, but at a little greater depth all is absolute darkness, except for such illumination as is caused by phosphorescent life, which, some writers think, is so abundant at great depths that the ocean floor is far from being in a condition of dense obscurity. Deep sea fish are brilliantly colored, although there is a conspicuous absence of blue; red, yellow, purple and green being the predominating colors. It seems very certain that at great depths the water is always quiescent. The general belief is that sea water will not freeze, but this is a mistake, for its freezing point averages only about four degrees lower than that of fresh water. The reason that the sea does not freeze anywhere except in th Arctic is that the great bulk of the water prevents the temperature from being sufficiently lowered.

The part played by the ocean in the economy of the world, apart from its being an invaluable means of communication and an unfailing source of the most excelent food, is very great. It is the source of all fresh water. This article is being written by electric light, and it will be put in type by machines driven by electric power, and the press that will print the paper will be driven by the same agency. Whence came this power? From the ocean. Not directly of course, but indirectly. Some time, and probably not very long ago, the sun, shining down upon the surface of the Pacific Ocean, caused a part of the surface to evaporate. Every hour of the day, when the sun is shining, a thin layer of water is taken up from the ocean into the air. In addition to this regular occurrence those phenomena known as waterspouts carried millions of tons of water from the sea up into the atmosphere. The winds drove this water-laden air to the northeast until it came in contact with the highlands of Vancouver Island. Over these the air attempted to lift its load, but could not, so a portion of it fell upon the Sooke Hills and that neighborhood; the Waterworks company caught it as it was running to the sea again, and set it to work developing electricity before it was released to find its way back again to the ocean from which it came. That electricity lights our office and drives our linotypes and presses. Thus we get our light and power from the ocean. And if these things come from that sourse, so also does the water we drink, and the rain which fertilizes and makes possible vegetation. All fresh water no matter where it is found, came from the sea, and all fresh water wherever it is found naturally is seeking the sea again.

Among the most wonderful things about the sea is the manner in which it keeps itself pure. For untold centuries the circulation of water from the ocean through the atmosphere and then down over the land has been going on, and the mass of decayed or decaying animal and vegetable matter that has been thus carried from land to sea is incalculable. Yet excepting within a short distance of the shore sea water is always free from injurious impurities. It contains more or less of every known species of elementary matter, but by some mysterious agency, of which we know nothing it keeps itself pure in the sense that it does not become polluted. If it were otherwise, the world would long ago have become uninhabitable. We cannot imagine what conditions would be like, if instead of pure fresh winds coming to us from across the sea, the air was laden with putrifaction.

As in an article of this nature subjects can only be superficially touched upon, no attempt will be made to deal with the tides, ocean currents or the trade winds. These are all of the greatest interest, and deserve far more popular consideration than they receive. The mysteries of fiction are trivial when compared with the mysteries of fact, and the study of nature is far more attractive, when once it has been engaged in not as a task but as a pastime, than the study of the creations of the fancy. Especially ought British Columbians to know the sea and all there is to be told about it. Our future will be very largely associated with the ocean. We ought to learn to look upon it, not as an enemy to be dreaded, but a a friend to be understood.

British Columbia Elections

The elections held in British Columbia on Saturday resulted in the return of the Conservatives to office by a majority large enough to enable Premier McBride to carry on his government without being every hour at the mercy of a little group of quasi-supporters. If the result means anything in particular, it probably signifies that the ability shown by Mr. Mcbride in keeping clear of chaos for the last three years has increased his reputation to the extent that a majority of the voters felt disposed to vote for outright supporters of his. In the last legislature the Socialists held the balance of power, and they never allowed the beneficiary of their goodwill to forget his obligation. The almost open contempt of all things Canadian shown by some of their leaders rendered this dependence a humiliation. If, as appears upon the first returns, there is a Conservative majority strong enough to carry on a government, and a Liberal minority strong enough to make its criticism felt, the new situation ought to be a vast improvement upon the old. The Liberals made a good fight for it, putting men in the field who, if they had been elected, could also have formed a strong government. That they failed may be set down to the fortunes of war, which will change in time. There is no disgrace in being beaten in a fair hard fight.—Montreal Herald. (Liberal.)

The Musical and Dramatic Competitions

The happy inspiration of His Excellency the Governor-General in inaugurating competitions for Canadian musical and dramatic organizations has afforded a week of most instructive and interesting performances, and the result cannot fail to be beneficial to the development of musical and dramatic ability throughout the Dominion. The effect of bringing these organizations into friendly rivalry, enabling each to measure its degree of proficiency against others from widely separated points in Canada, will do much to stimulate ambition and encourage the fixing of a higher standard of excellence. Notwithstanding the slight opportunity existing in the past for fostering dramatic talent in Canada, this country has produced many actors and actresses who, like Miss Margaret Angelin, have achieved an American and British reputation. But this has been rather in spite of drawbacks and lack of opportunity in developing their talents. In the same way our musical growths has been retarded by the absence of that impetus which, it is expected, will be supplied by this competition, which will afford an incentive to the cultivation of music on the part of organizations in our towns and cities. The recurrence of these competitions will provide a constantly advancing standard of excellence for the amateur exponents of music and the drama in Canada, and in all probability will result in the discovery of individual talents whose existence might otherwise not be brought to the public attention.

Another phase of the competitions was accentuated by the presence of the Boys' Brigade band from St. John's, Newfoundland. The good feeling of the Ottawa people towards the islanders took the form of the presentation of a loving cup, and many kind things were said on both sides that will tend to impress on the visitors that, though the old colony refuses to come into confederation, the fact does not affect the high regard in which the sturdy stock of Newfoundland are held by the rest of British America. Those in charge of the band exhibited courage and enterprise in coming so far to compete, and their presence in the competition was highly appreciated. So, too, with all the other organizations, musical and dramatic. Comparison, the interchange of ideas and the forming of new friendships based on the mutual aspirations of kindred spirits will do much to strengthen social ties as well as to provide mediums for the advancement of the musical and dramatic arts.—Ottawa Citizen.

And They Say Figures Can't Lie.

Jones—Do you believe there is safety in numbers?

Skorcher—Sure; whenever I'm exceeding the speed limit, I hang some other chap's number on the back of my auto.—Life.

The Bogey Man

It had been a hard day for Mike Finnegan, the "ragman." Many and varied had been his wanderings, but no one seemed inclined to dispose of rags. As he was making his way homeward at the close of this hot July day, through one of the tenement sections of the city, he heard a cry from above. Looking up he saw a woman at the sixth story window violently beckoning to him. Mike's heart was full of hope as he stumbled up the broken stairs.

At the top he was met by a woman holding a weeping child by the hand.

"Hey, mister," cried the mother to the perspiring Mike, "don't you take bad little boys away in your big bag?"

Explained.

Watson's Magazine.

Mrs. Given—Why are you out of work?

Weary Willy—I was a life-insurance president and made so much money I had to resign.

Naturally..

Watson's Magazine.

Knicker—There goes a man who would rather fight than eat.

Booker—Soldier?

Knicker—No, dyspeptic.

Kept a Diary.

Henry Arthur Jones was giving the students of Yale an address on the drama. "Your American vernacular is picturesque," he said, "and it should help your playwrights to build strong, racy plays. But neither vernacular nor anything else is of moment if perseverance is lacking.

"No playwright can succeed who is like a man I know.

"I said to this man one New Year's Day:

"Do you keep a diary, Philip?"

"Yes, he answered. "I've kept one for the first two weeks in January for the last seven years."

Ginseng Craze.

The Ginseng cultivation fever, which was at its height four or five years ago, like most other agricultural fads, proved a disappointment to the enthusiast. A representative of the Rural New Yorker, who recently visited three ginseng plantations of considerable size, three or four years old, reports that they were all suffering from a disease peculiar to this plant.

It will be remembered that it takes the ginseng root five or six years to mature, so that when a plantation, after two or three years of care and waiting is affected with blight, the resulting crop failure is much more serious than with almost any other crop.

The productiveness of two of the plantations was so seriously affected that they had been practically abandoned while the third plantation, although damaged to a less extent, had not begun to pay expenses.

THE STORY TELLER

He Lost a Sale.

Chicago Daily News.

The aristocratic young lady was looking at some dress patterns.

"Here is a piece of goods," said the man behind the counter, "that I can especially recommend for service."

"Sir," rejoined the fair party of the shopping part, haughtily, "I am not going out to service."

All Did It.

From Judge.

Stockson—"One day last week, old man Gotrox bought a lot of those 'Do it now' signs and hung 'em around the office."

Bond—"How did the staff take it?"

Stockson—"Almost unanimously. The cashier skipped with $30,000, the head bookkeeper eloped with the private secretary, three clerks asked for an increase of salary, and the office boy lit out to become a highwayman and got as far West as Pittsburg before he was caught and disarmed."

He Got the Ghost.

On one occasion in Scotland a guest arriving rather late at a country house was quartered in the haunted room. Although professing to be a skeptic, like many others, his courage vanished with the light. Determined, however, to protect himself as well as possible, he placed a loaded revolver under his pillow and awaited events. As the clock struck midnight, he saw a fleshy hand at the end of the bed, and steadying his nerve he addressed the visitant thus: "If you do not instantly remove your hand I shall fire without further warning." He counted three and then discharged the bullet.

A howl of pain which aroused the household followed, and it was soon discovered that the successful marksman had shot away two of his own toes.—The Throne.

An Article of His Faith.

Mr. Birrell, the British minister of education, has seen his bill slaughtered at the hands ofthe House of Lords, but he is by no means pessimistic as to the ultimate outcome. "I am afraid your bill is dead," said an Anglican bishop to him, recently. "Yes, it may be, my lord," was Mr. Birrell's good-natured reply, "but you know I am a firm believer in the resurrection of the dead."

He was the Idler.

When the Canadian Press Association, which holds its annual convention in Toronto during the coming week, held an excursion to the Pacific coast a few years ago, Mr. Dan Burke of Port Arthur was a member of the party. As the train drew into one of the small places in the far West, known to the traveling newspaper men for nothing except that at that point a clever but erratic little weekly paper was published, Mr. Burke and other press men walked out on the car steps. There was not the usual crowd at the station, only one man idling there. "Well, say," called out Mr. Burke to his fellow travelers, "that clever, lazy, ragamuffin, drunken local editor ought to be down here to meet us at this point."

"So he is," exclaimed the solitary idler on the station platform. "I am he."

Whitewashing a Murder.

The English Winston Churchill spoke in London recently to a party of pacifists, saying it was astonishing how keenly sensitive to newspaper criticism the ordinary person was, and quoted what he said was a letter received by an editor in the United States, as follows: "Dear Sir,—I regret to inform you that on my way home from the saloon this evening I fell into a political altercation with Col. Jones P. Walker, of this town, in the course of which a slight misunderstanding arose, and I am very sorry to think that in the end I shot him. I should add also that, carried away by the excitement of the moment, I also scalped him. But I earnestly hope that no exaggerated account of this painful episode will appear in the columns of your paper."—Argonaut.

Knew His Audience.

William Dean Howells, the novelist was condemning a certain very popular writer.

"The man could do better work," said Mr. Howells, "but he is always appealing to the gallery. It makes me think of that super of whom Booth used to tell.

"There was an elderly super who in a certain new play was to come on and say to Booth, 'My lord, the carriage waits.' That was his only line throughout the piece.

"Well, the play progressed finely on its presentation, but when the old super appeared he first said, 'My lord, the carriage waits,' as was expected of him, and then instead of retiring he advanced to the footlights, looked up at the crowded gallery and exclaimed with great vigor and animation:

"And allow me to add that the man who lifts a hand against a woman, save in the way of kindness, is unworthy the name of an American.'

"Then, amid overwhelming applause, he made his exit."

Diappointed.

A car had stopped at a busy corner. Just as the conductor had reached to give the signal to start, there were yells of warning, and an answering yell from the outside.

"Wait! wait! I get my clothes on!" cried a shrill voice.

The passengers craned their necks and looked out. A small boy with a basket of laundry was trying to get aboard.

Changing Her Name.

The full name of a bride married at Ham Common, near Richmond, Surrey, was Miss Lyonella Fredegunda Cuthberga Ethelswytha Ideth Ysabel Grace Monica de Orelians Plantagenet Tollemache. She is a niece of the Earl of Dysart. Canon Benham officiated at the ceremony, and in order to correctly give the bride's names during the service he had taken the precaution to write them down on a slip of paper, to which he referred.

England's Farm Lands.

Since 1897 the rateable value of agricultural land in England and Wales has decreased by 2.5 per cent. But of other hereditaments has increased 23.9 per cent. Generally speaking, the average rates in the pound of poor rates are higher in rural than in urban parishes. The average rate for the former was, in 1905, 3s. 8d., and for the latter 3s. 1d., in Essex, however the rate was 4s. 4½d., and in West Suffolk 5s.

Milkman Had Silk Hat.

Hanover is enjoying a laugh at the expense of the members of an exclusive cavalry club who were recently victimized in the following fashion. They adopted the plan of devoting one evening a week in the ancient game of bowls. The secretary accordingly was instructed to advertise for a well mannered youth of good address to act as marker.

A young milkman, Fritz Becker, decided to apply for the post, and wishing to dress the part suitably, he hired a frock coat, tall hat and gloves, and presented himself at the club. Not finding anyone in the hall, he entered the general room, took an easy chair and began to read a newspaper. Presently a lieutenant entered, Fritz gave him a polite bow, mentioning his own name.

The young officer mistook the name, returned the bow and introduced himself. More members appeared and the ceremony was repeated each time. The officers were puzzled over the presence of the stranger, whom none seemed to know. But none ventured to question the stranger, who went on reading his paper. Finally the secretary appeared.

"Have you got your marker?" some one asked.

Up jumped Fritz with a flourish of the hand, exclaiming: "I am your new marker, gentlemen." But he wasn't.

CURRENT VERSE

A Cold World for Tommy.

(Puck).

Father's got the fresh-air craze, and
mother's got it, too,
And I don't know if I can stand this
bloomin' winter through;
We haven't a furnace fire, 'cause father says as where
A fire is unhealthy, so we warm with
his hot air.
He gets up every mornin' an' thaws
out both the cats,
And then goes up in our spare room, and
does some acrobats;
The windows are left up all night, an'
in the morning, gosh-
I have ter crack the ice up in the
pitcher when I wash.
An' mother, too, she's just as bad—
she walks from two to four,
And then comes back an' pulls at
somethin' hangin' on the door;
And then she takes a big long breath
—it's one of her best tricks—
And doesn't breathe till she has
counted up to ninety-six.
We live on malted shavin's and
shredded doormats, too,
An' I can't use my appetite—it's just as
good as new,
An' so I'm goin' to grandma's house,
where I can sleep and stuff,
Till mother gets her lungs filled up,
an' pa gets air enuff.

The Oriole's Nest.

The nestlings are fledged and flown,
And the autumn winds make moan
Round the elm tree's domelike crest;
And there's only an empty door
Where were life and song before
Round the oriole's nest.

To some there is naught of grief
In the bough bereft of the leaf,
In the home without a guest;
But a mother's eyes through the rain,
They see the pathos and pain
In the oriole's nest.

Automania in Cactus Land.

Have you seen a whiskered miner
Whose name is Pocket Mike?
He's burnin' up the desert
In a smelly four-wheeled bike;
He struck a pocket somewhere
That paid diamonds to the ton,
And he yells: "Bring me an auto—
I have long been needin' one."

"I'm tired," he says, "of punchin'
Them burro beasts o' mine,
So fetch me a red devil
That can go one-forty-nine;
Don't give me no blamed chuffer,
But let me take the wheel—
I'll play this game lone handed,
So jest watch me make the deal."

He's stamped seven roundups
And he's wrecked an ostrich farm;
And I'm Cactus clean to Kyote,
He has left a trail of harm;
So we hunts' with a posse,
For this bennine crazy cuss,
And he'll see a day of sorrer—
If that thing don't stampede us.

The Little Sister of the Prophet.

(Marjorie L. C. Pickthall.)

"If there arise among you a prophet
or a dreamer."—Deut., XIII., 1.

I have left a basket of dates
In the cool, dark room that is under
the vine,
Some curds set out in two little crimson plates,
And a flask of the amber wine,
And cakes most cunningly beaten
Of savory herbs and spice and the delicate wheaten
Flour that is best,
And all to lighten his spirit and sweeten his rest.

This morning he cried, "Awake,
And see what the wonderful grace of
the Lord has revealed!
And we ran for his sake,
But 'twas only the dawn outspread
over our fathers' field,
And the house of the potter white in
the valley below,
But his hands were upraised to the
east and he cried to us, 'So
Ye may ponder and read
The strength and the beauty of God
outrolled in a fiery screed."

Then the little brown mother smiled,
As one does on the words of a well-
loved child,
And "Son," she replied, "have the
oxen been watered and fed?
For work is to do, though the skies
be never so red,
And already the first sweet hours of the
day are spent."
And he sighed and went.

Will he come from the byre,
With his head all misty with dreams
and his eyes on fire,
Shaking us all with the weight of the
words of his passion?
I will give him salems instead of dates,
And wreathe young leaves on the little
red plates,
I will put on my new head-tyre,
And braid my hair in a comelier fashion.
Will he note. Will he mind?
Will he touch my cheek as he used to,
and laugh and be kind?

The Simple Way.

(By Anna Laetitia Waring)

Anna Laetitia Waring was born at Neath, Glamorganshire, Wales, where she still lives the quiet life of a Quakeress. She has written many beautiful hymns, one of the best known being, In Heavenly Love Abiding. But in the last few years this hymn of simple faith and desire for the quieter ways of life has become by far the most frequently sung. This may be because more are seeking the path beside the still waters.

Father, I know that all my life
Is portioned out for me;
The changes that will surely come
I do not fear to see;
I ask thee for a present mind,
Intent on pleasing Thee.

I ask Thee for a thoughtful love,
Through constant watching wise,
To meet the glad with joyful smiles
And wipe the weeping eyes;
A heart at leisure from itself,
To soothe and sympathize.

I would not have the restless will
That hurries too and fro,
Seeking for some great thing to do,
Or secret thing to know;
I would be treated as a chid,
And guided where I go.

I ask Thee for the daily strength,
To none that asked denied,
A mind to blend with outward life,
While keeping at Thy side;
Content to fill a little space,
If thou be glorified.

In service which Thy will appoints
There are no bonds for me;
My inmost heart it taught "the truth"
That makes Thy children "free;"
A life of self-renouncing love
Is one of liberty.

The Aged Lovers.

He has not won the world's applause,
She knows he never can;
His step is slower than it was,
But he's an honest man.
She wears the bloom of youth no more
Yet side by side they fare,
Poor, bent old husband and gray wife,
Along the humble walks of life,
And still are lovers there.

Unfathomable.

"I can not be your wife," she replied, and added: "That is final."

He paced swiftly to and fro, several times, then halted abruptly in front of her.

"Pray be candid with me," he said, not without the note of masculine impatience. "About how final?"

This was too much. She burst into tears. "How do I know?" she sobbed.—Puck.