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Romance.

"And do you think a man would allow you to sacrifice yourself like that? For I need not point out to you, my dear Mrs. Morrison, that such strait-laced fogies as I and the rest of your acquaintance, whose opinion, of course, you despise, will be too obtuse to see that it is your duty to run away from your husband with another man."

Geraldine blushed, and turned toward the house with firmly set lips and a dangerous fire of resolution in her eyes.

"Now, don't you want to hear what I have to tell you?" asked the old doctor dryly.

She hesitated. Even wounded pride had to give way to her burning wish to know what the fact was of which he was master. She looked up at him imploringly, with a long, sobbing sigh.

"If you please," said she, meekly.

"You know I said from the first that the pains Otway complained of were the result of indigestion." Geraldine glanced up incredulously. "Well, I resolved to find out what could have disagreed with him. So I drove to Goldborough, and hunted along the line just where the trains from London slacken as they come into the station." She listened intently. "In a little cottage garden, a few yards from the rails, I found a piece of white note-paper with greasy stains upon it, and a little way from this some fragments of bread—very small scraps, though, for the owner of the garden kept fowls there, and they had eaten up the rest." The doctor paused, and then continued quietly: "Apparently the sandwiches had not agreed with them any better than they had with James, for the fowls—there were three of them—were dead."

"Oh, Dr. Crosse!"

"I had picked up one, and was examining it with some interest, when the proprietress of the garden came out with an armful of clothes to hang out to dry, and wanted to know what I had done to her hens; and, when I said I was only looking at them, she wanted to know what I was trespassing in her garden for. Of course, the old thief knew that they were dead, for they had been lying in her dirty little cabbage-ground since yesterday; and I dare say she thought me a great flat when I have her half a crown, and after a few inquiries as to the time and manner of their death—which she, now seeing that I was a man of business, thought fit to answer—took up my three prizes, the greasy paper, and the few crumbs I could find, and went off with them. You guess what I did then?"

Geraldine moved her head in assent; she was white to the lips.

"I took them home and shut myself up with them, analyzed the contents of their crops, and found——"

"What—what?"

"Nothing injurious."

"I can't believe it! They must have been poisoned!"

"Yes—but by a poison that defies analysis. There are two tests, however, both of which I applied—the one is taste, the other the effect on living animals. Both succeeded. You have heard of digitaline?"

"Yes," whispered Geraldine, whom the ghastly certainty seemed to paralyze.

"That was the condiment which, by mistake, or—or by design, had been used to flavor James' sandwiches. I dare say the 'too much mustard,' of which he complained, had been used to conceal the taste of the—of the other condiment, which is very bitter."

"Now, do you believe——" began Geraldine, with passionate earnestness.

"I believe nothing, my dear Mrs. Morrison, but that James has been in very bad hands—very unskillful ones, to begin with."

"Unskillful! But Dr. Ledbury——"

Dr. Crosse interrupted her by a contemptuous exclamation.

"That is all a nonsensical story! Dr. Ledbury, not merely a poisoner, but a stupid, dull, bungling one! Why, my chief wonder is how the fool who poisoned James could have got hold of the digitaline, which is not sold to the first-comer, like two-penny-worth of rat poison."

"But, Dr. Crosse," cried Geraldine, seizing his arm, "James knows Dr. Ledbury."

"Knows a man who passes himself off under the shelter of a great name—very likely. Why, do you suppose a fashionable London physician would have the time to potter about with James, and tend him devotedly, and see him off to Dublin, and the rest of it? I can't imagine how Otway himself could be so grossly humbugged. And do you really think that, after messing him about with two different poisons on a system which perhaps was not without ingenuity, he would send him off on a long journey, armed with two final doses, either of which, if James had been traveling in an express train by himself, without the possibility of assistance, would have left him as dead as a door-nail in two or three hours? The thing is absurd!"

"But, Dr. Crosse," she cried in a weak and trembling voice, "how could James make a mistake? He saw Dr. Ledbury when he came to see Sir Charles."

"Then all I can say is, that the man who came to see Sir Charles was not Dr. Ledbury at all."

She shrunk back without a word, bewildered, stunned, while the old doctor, on his side, looked disturbed. After walking a few steps past her, he turned and put his hand on her shoulder impressively.

"Now, look here!" said he. "I don't ask you not to tell this to anybody, because, luckily, you have nobody to tell; but I ask you not to suspect anybody."

"I don't suspect now—I know!"

"You don't know anything. Don't put two and two together too fast, or it is sure to make five; and, above all things, leave the interrogation of James to me."

"You must not leave it long, or there will be no James to interrogate. I am sure that Elizabeth guesses something; and Elizabeth is my husband's spy. If he once takes the matter out of the hands of the 'hired assassins' you laugh at me for believing in, he will use a quicker means than poison."

"Hush, hush! I told you not to suspect. But—er—write to Captain Morrison, and get him to answer you; you may as well keep yourself quiet until I come and see him this evening. I will come in directly after dinner."

He shook hands with her and left, and Geraldine returned quickly toward the house. There were fresh marks of wheels and hoofs on the gravel in front of the portico; whoever it was that had called must have gone, for no carriage was in sight. She let herself in, and, as she opened the door she smelled the scent of a cigar. "James downstairs!" she thought, in alarm. But the moment after she heard a man's laugh; and the voice was one she did not know.

CHAPTER XXX.

A fear, so terrible, that it kept her rooted to the spot where the stranger's voice had fallen upon her ears, rose up in Geraldine's heart as she found herself inside the hall. She listened breathlessly, with her face turned toward the door of the study, from which she fancied the sound had come; but for some minutes she heard nothing more. She could almost have believed that the strange laugh which had frightened her was the creation of her imagination, but that the scent of cigars in the hall, though faint, was unmistakable. She walked very softly towards the inner hall, with her eyes fixed fearfully upon the library door; the moment her self-possession returned she was madly anxious to get upstairs to the west wing to ascertain that James was safe, and to learn, either from Johnson or Mrs. Symes—one or other of whom was sure to be about—who the stranger in the study was, and who was with him.

But she was satisfied on the latter point sooner than she wished, for she had not reached the entrance to the inner hall when the door of the library opened and two gentlemen came out. The first was tall and fair; he had a handsome cold face, a long, light, well-cut beard, and was rather bald. Behind him was her husband, who stopped her as she doubled her speed, hoping to escape to warn and save James. She paid no heed to his first call, "Geraldine!" but when she had got half-way up the stairs she heard his step behind her, and felt his hand laid peremptorily upon her shoulder. It was the hardest thing she had ever had to do yet to turn and look, with an affectation of surprise and a smiling welcome, into the dark face of this man, whose very touch on her arm seemed to brand her like hot iron, whose red lips were quivering, and his brown eyes gleaming with passions grown menacing in their fierceness. Her task needed an effort so supreme that she did it well, though not well enough to convince a jealous husband of her sincerity.

To be Continued.

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London Conference.

The Education Report Gives Rise to Warm Discussion.

Chancellor Burwash's Orthodoxy Assailed and Defended.

Change in the Mode of Nominating the Examining Board.

Strong Plea Made by Dr. Potts in Behalf of Victoria University — The Temperance Question Takes Up the Evening Session.

THURSDAY AFTERNOON.

The greater part of the afternoon session of the London Methodist Conference was occupied with hearing the reports and resolutions of the various districts, and the appointment of committees. The educational report furnished an occasion for calling Chancellor Burwash's orthodoxy into question, and an important change was made in the mode of nominating the conference board.

Mayor Little and Ald. Winnett attended the session long enough to extend the visitors a hearty welcome and the freedom of the city. The mayor spoke in complimentary terms of the benefit the city would derive from the gathering here of a representative body of such high character, and after touching briefly on the live question of moral and social reform, wound up facetiously with the warning to the delegates that as the water of London is first-class, there could be no possible excuse for indulgence in any stronger beverage.

Ald. Winnett spoke briefly in a felicitous strain. The conference expressed its thanks individually and collectively.

VICTORIA UNIVERSITY.

Rev. Dr. Potts, secretary of the Educational Society, presented the report of Victoria University on behalf of Chancellor Burwash. During the year the Victoria College property at Cobourg was disposed of to the Ontario Government for $25,000, payable in five annual installments, without interest. The net enrollment of students reached 282, of which 226 are in arts. About one-third of the theological students are not in training for the ministry, many of them being young women supplementing the arts course with Biblical study. The financial statement shows a deficit in the current account for the year of $8,758 98. The assets foot up $631,885, with corresponding liabilities. The chief item of expenditure is for salaries, amounting to $28,242.

Dr. Potts made a strong plea for support for the university. "We have never yet reached the living point," said the doctor, "and there is now a total deficit since federation of about $18,000, and which is represented by an overdraft at the bank." After reading the report, Dr. Potts offered to answer any questions concerning the university.

At this point Rev. Wm. McDonagh, of Kingsville, arose, and after a few preliminary purposeful questions which tended to commit Dr. Potts as Chancellor Burwash's representative, he started in to arraign the chancellor for his views as expressed in an introduction written by Dr. Burwash to Dr. Workman's book, "The Old Testament Vindicated as Christianity's Foundation Stone." "Are we to understand," said he, "Geraldine!" but when she had got half-way up the stairs she heard his step behind her, and felt his hand laid peremptorily upon her shoulder. It was the hardest thing she had ever had to do yet to turn and look, with an affectation of surprise and a smiling welcome, into the dark face of this man, whose very touch on her arm seemed to brand her like hot iron, whose red lips were quivering, and his brown eyes gleaming with passions grown menacing in their fierceness. Her task needed an effort so supreme that she did it well, though not well enough to convince a jealous husband of her sincerity.

Dr. Potts admitted that if Dr. Workman had not resigned he would have been dismissed on the ground that he had become unpopular with the conferences. The board had not gone into the exigetical side of the question, but had acted on purely business grounds.

Rev. Mr. McDonagh resumed: "If we support the theological college at Victoria, we have a right to inquire into the kind of theology taught there. As Methodists, we are not in accord with Goldwin Smith. If Dr. Burwash's indorsement of Dr. Workman means partial indorsement of Goldwin Smith, it is contrary to Methodist doctrine."

"If the conference," said Dr. Potts, "wishes Dr. Burwash to appear before it and explain his position, he will undoubtedly be very ready to do so."

Chairman S. Bond was applauded when he said: "I believe that every man who teaches in our university should be indorsed by the supreme court of our church as to his character and orthodoxy."

Dr. Potts here came to Dr. Burwash's denfense, declaring that Canadian Methodism from ocean to ocean never had a finer man than Chancellor Burwash. "There is not today," said he, "a man in Queen's Park who commands the influence educationally that Dr. Burwash commands. He is a man whose brilliant scholarship is commanding the attention of the university authorities more than any other man in Queen's Park today. Dr. Potts concluded with the assertion that he, personally, was one of the ancient Methodists who retain traditional beliefs, which have made Methodism what it is today.

Then a number of Dr. Burwash's friends found their voices. "We have confidence in Dr. Burwash," said Rev. E. M. Baker. "It is unfortunate that this discussion should have been brought up here, and it is to be hoped that none of those utterances will be misunderstood as representing a feeling of hostility to Dr. Burwash."

Mr. McDonagh was on his feet in a moment protesting against the last speaker's remarks, and declaring that this conference would not be browbeaten by the name of "scholarship."

"Dr. Burwash is all right, and Dr. Workman's book is a good one," declared Rev. A. Cunningham, and the discussion was allowed to drop.

THE EXAMINING BOARD.

The following resolution was then adopted: Moved by E. N. Baker, and seconded by Andrew Cunningham, "That we have heard with pleasure the address of Dr. Potts, the secretary of education. We hail with delight the success which Victoria University has enjoyed during the year. We assure the board of regents that the London Conference not only sympathizes with them in this work, but that we will do all we can to assist them in promoting the interests of the university."

The report of the examining board was read by the secretary, Rev. C. T. Scott. It contained a recommendation which the secretary put in the form of a resolution submitting thirteen names selected by the board as suitable persons to become members of the examining board, ten of whom would be elected by the conference.

Rev. G. H. Cobbledick moved in amendment that the nomination be made not by the board but by the conference as a whole.

After a lengthy and at times warm discussion the amendment carried.

TRANSFERS AND OTHER MATTERS.

Communications received from General Superintendent Dr. Carman call attention to the following transfers: J. N. Chant, superannuated, out of London, into Bay of Quinte Conference; J. N. Watts, superannuated, out of London to Hamilton; J. E. Moore, London, into Bay of Quinte, May 31, 1897; W. C. Beer, Bay of Quinte to London, May 31, 1897.

The secretary of the Prisoners' Aid Association of Toronto invites the members of the London Conference to attend the 24th annual session of the National Conference of Charities and Corrections of the United States and Canada, to be held at Toronto, July 7 to 14. This is the first time this important body has ever met in Canada, and an effort will be made to organize a Canadian conference of charities and corrections. The object of the organization is the study of defective, delinquent, dependent and criminal persons.

F. S. Spence, secretary of the Dominion Alliance for the total suppression of the liquor traffic requests that this conference appoint four delegates to attend the annual meeting of the council to be held in Toronto July 14.

Rev. E. B. Lanceley was appointed first assistant secretary of conference, and A. C. Crews journal secretary.

A resolution was passed extending the congratulations of the conference to the congregations of the First Methodist and of Dundas Center churches on the erection of two such handsome church edifices.

A vote of thanks was tendered the retiring president, Rev. Geo. Jackson.

TEMPERANCE ANNIVERSARY.

The evening was devoted to temperance anniversary addresses.

Mr. T. Hayne, of Brigden, was the first speaker. In part, he said: "We have been told that we must keep this thing out of politics. Not so. We have to keep our petty prejudices and selfishness out of politics. But I thank God this thing is in politics. I was never so proud of the Methodist Church as when the executive head of that church went to Ottawa and demanded recognition on this question, saying: 'We represent one-third of the voting people of Ontario.' Some years ago Oliver Mowat's answer to a deputation of ladies which waited upon him was that the question was not yet within the domain of practical politics. This objection could be no longer urged. Dealing with the individual rights cry, the speaker declared that it was not only the right, but the duty of the state to prohibit, to prevent the slaughter of 4,000 people annually. He maintained that the right of the state to protect its citizens from the ravages of the liquor traffic is just as clear as is its duty to protect them from any form of outrage and crime. Coming to the matter of revenue, the speaker said that the expenditure for intoxicating drinks in this country is $40,000,000 annually, while the falling off in revenue would be, taking the extreme figures, from $6,000,000 to $10,000,000, by reason of a prohibition law. "I fail to see the need of pressing the bugbear of direct taxation into being at this juncture, and dangling it before the eyes of the Canadian public. The liquor men say it would cost $500,000 annually to enforce the law. Well, if it were done for that amount, the money would be well spent. This question should be settled on a moral, and not on a mercenary basis. The Methodist Church should let the Government know that the Methodists of Canada are behind it in a solid phalanx, not only to carry its measure, but to help enforce the law. He condemned Mr. Macpherson, M.P., of Hamilton, for speaking against prohibition in the House of Commons.

Rev. W. Smythe, of Petrolea, charged the Mowat Government with having failed to keep its pledges to the temperance people. "The Hardcourt bill," said he, "was an awful disappointment to them." It did not fulfill the pledges given. The Liberal party owed its return to power in a large measure to the prohibition plank. The party had pledged itself to a fair and square plebiscite on the prohibition issue, and the temperance people would demand a vote on that issue alone, without any direct-tax rider, emanating from the liquor party, and added for the palpable purpose of defeating the measure." The speaker expressed a doubt as to whether, if the Government persisted in the direct taxation rider, it would be worth while going into the fight at all.

Rev. B. F. Austin, who had been announced to speak, was not present.

Music by the Dundas Center choir added greatly to the evening's enjoyment. Rev. S. Bond presided.

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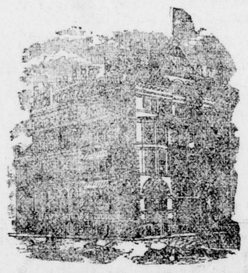

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