

mance of his life, the hand of a Nemesis is upon him. In Laban the deceiver has met his match. As he had cheated his brother, so he is cheated of his wife, and only wins his heart's desire by long years of stern service under a master whose fraud matches his own. All this discipline is of God. It is just what Jacob needs. It reminds him that strength and subtlety are not everything in life, that there are great laws of honor which a man can only defy at the peril of his own happiness, and that life is shaped by other things than those of our own contrivance; it teaches him to bow his will to another, and to possess his soul in patience through years of waiting.

These years are fraught with

PROSPERITY AS WELL AS DISCIPLINE.

Children come, and he grows rich in flocks and herds in spite of all that Laban can do to defeat his prosperity; for, after all, he is one of God's chosen. But, all the time, his heart is in the home land, and to that land it is also the purpose of God to bring him back; for it is that and no other land that is to be the peculiar stage of redemption, and every year he stays away the purpose of God must tarry. Yet that purpose is not really tarrying at all, for it is moulding Jacob into his true manhood. So, in the fulness of the time, he leaves Mesopotamia, an older, a wiser and a richer man, richer not only in things material, but in the elements of true manhood. Laban starts in pursuit with vengeance in his heart; but God restrained his vengeance, and so overruled their interview that a treaty of peace was made between them. They part, and there the second chapter ends.

The third opens ominously enough. Jacob is now in the promised land, and his old sin against his brother rises up to meet him.

THE PAST IS NOT DEAD.

The spectre which he had laid and forgotten reappears, and he feels again how strange a thing is life, how haunting and powerful and permanent a thing is sin. That is God's

chance. His soul is wrought with memories and fears, as he tosses in the dark before the morrow of his crossing. Then God wrestles with him, compels him to feel that the victory is not to be won by planning and scheming, and that the things unseen must be taken account of. That was the climax of Jacob's life. The struggle left him a weaker, yet a stronger man; weaker, for he carried the mark of it with him all his days, as all men do with whom God wrestles; stronger, for he bore off from it a blessing, in the profounder consciousness of God, and of His power to do with life what He will.

Jacob's life is still a discipline: there will be in it sorrows and difficulties enough. His sons are soon to be embroiled in a quarrel with the Shechemites, and his own heart is to be sore for Joseph, his son. Yet there is

A CERTAIN DEEP PEACE

about it all. He is not haunted by terrors of the past; his fears of the chivalrous though superficial Esau have turned out groundless. So with glad heart he makes his way to Bethel with its dear and sacred memories. The spot where he met with God is forever holy ground. There he will look again across his life, and his faith will rekindle as he sees the strange way by which his God had led him into the fulness of the manhood in which he now stands.

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The Drink Habit

If the drunkard could only be the witness of his own follies, he might be more easily persuaded to abandon drink.

The craving for strong drink is one of God's ways of warning people of its peril.

It is said that the drinking habit affects the moral nature first of all, so that people who are regarded as truthful and honest have been known to show a speedy change under the influence of liquor. The power of will, and the sense of self-respect, and the love for virtue, are all undermined by this habit. Nothing kills conscience like steady drinking to a little excess.