

URGENT PRIVATE AFFAIRS.

CHAPTER III. OPENING THE DRAWING-ROOM OF GARWOOD HOUSE.

"Dream or fact?—dream or fact?—dream or fact?" thought Nellie Morton, as she lay on the bed of her own room after Mrs Bathurst had left her. Had she heard this man say he was helplessly ruined? Had she dreamed that the old woman indicated that she, Ellen Morton, could save him? If she had not dreamed, what could the words and gestures of Mrs Bathurst mean? Only one thing—only that this monstrous creature should come by whatever money her father had saved. How was it to be done? Only in one way—by this awful, this monstrous man marrying her!

What a horrible, what an intolerable position was hers! Colonel Pickering had bidden her good-bye, and she had no address for him between the leave-taking and Gibraltar. In all the world she did not know a soul on whom she could rely for help or advice. She thought of her old school, but that was in Yorkshire. Most of her acquaintances in Leighton were connected with the regiment, and on the move until this girl was of age—until she was married.

Mrs. Bathurst rang the drawing-room bell, which had not sounded for no one knew how long.

"Let this room be thoroughly done out to-morrow," she said to the servant; "and for the future, when the sun is off this side of the house, let the blinds be pulled up."

While Mrs. Bathurst was taking a first step in arrangements for her son's future, that son was hastening back to London to deal with the present. Having once made up his mind to use Christopher Morton's money for his extrication, there was no difficulty in the way, though there was possible danger of the direst kind.

Christopher Morton being dead, and Colonel Pickering as good as out of the country, it was necessary only to produce the signature of a dead man on a certain document, so as to enable William Bathurst to raise money that very evening. There was no need to tell any one in the City that Christopher Morton was dead. In fact, it would cause fatal delay if the news in the telegram from Brazil got abroad. The message had been forwarded from his office unopened, so he was safe from premature disclosure.

Bathurst had no moral scruple about creating the document he required. It was dangerous work his fabricating signatures, even of a dead man; and dangerous this concealing of the dead man's death, and dealing with his property as though the signature were genuine and the signatory alive. Bathurst did not in his mind use the word fraud or felony, but he was not blind to the gravity of the act he contemplated.

Morton was dead, the girl was under his roof, the other trustee on his way to India; money could be counted on for a moment, but did not become his wife—and in months all could be put right. Even the girl did not know of her father's death, and was not to know of it until there had been time for a letter to come from Brazil.

Truly, as his mother said, fate had played into his hands! If he had been allowed to design the situation, nothing could have been better ordered. Luck! Yes; he believed in luck. He had always been lucky until he touched South America, and the very moment South America proved a ravenous quicksand under his feet, from that same South America a hand of succour was stretched forth to him!

A hand of succour stretched forth to him?—or was he stretching forth his hand to rifle the tomb of a friend? Bah! Such thoughts were childish, and could not be such to a keen man in the City this day of hideous disaster!

He had told his clerks in Langley Court, Finchurch Street, that he was going to Garwood. He had not said anything about coming back. They did not know whether they should see him again that day or not. When he walked in at five o'clock they were not surprised. That day no one was surprised by anything done in the City.

she had disconcerted. "Once you go south of the equator I abandon you," she had said to him long ago when he first broke loose from her counsel. "You're not to mention to me any of your affairs in that region of thieves and revolutions. All I will ever hear of South America is that Christopher Morton's money comes safely out of it, and does not go back there to be lost."

She knew that by this time the amount of Christopher Morton's investments must be thirty or forty thousand pounds. This was not a large fortune, but it ought to be enough to give her son time to recover himself; and she was quite sure William would never again disregard her advice, and that, with the aid of this girl's fortune and her advice, her son would once more be able to hold up his head as a member of the Stock Exchange.

She knew that in the will lodged with Christopher Morton's lawyer the dead engineer had left all his money to his daughter, and appointed her son and Colonel Pickering guardians and trustees. The father was dead; and the other guardian and trustee would be out of England before morning, and would not be back again until this girl was of age—until she was married.

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was at that moment a felon! Monstrous! His mother knew he was a felon! His mother approved—nay, suggested that he should commit a crime!—commit two crimes! Intolerably monstrous! Masculine as her mind was, still first of all she was his mother, and no man ever yet could believe that his own mother would urge him to crime! Ugh! He would think no more of this ghastly side of the affair. He would dwell altogether on the fact that he had been threatened with destruction and had saved himself.

He reached the door of Garwood in profound cogitation. He had resolved to take his attention away from unpleasant aspects of the affair, and yet no sooner did he for a moment forget this resolution, than, like a spring at the release, his mind flew back to the question: Did his mother know what following her advice involved, a crime on his part?

"There is Mrs Bathurst?" he asked of the servant who opened the door.

"In the drawing-room, sir."

"In the drawing-room?" cried he awaking out of his reverie. "Did you say in the drawing-room?" he asked in astonished incredulity. During all their years in the City she had never awaited him in the drawing-room before.

"Yes, sir; the mistress ordered dinner to be put back, and said that when you came you were to be good enough to go to the drawing-room, where she is alone."

He hastened across the hall, and entered the room which he had not seen for—months—years. His mother was sitting in the arm of an old-fashioned sofa at one of the windows. She motioned him to shut the door and come near her.

"You are surprised to find me here. I have drawn up the blinds in honour of Miss Morton—in honour of your future wife. Sit down here." She pointed to the other end of the sofa. "How did you get on in the City? Did you arrange everything satisfactorily?"

"Yes. There was no hitch." He sat down at the other end of the sofa.

"I am glad of that. I am greatly pleased you acted so promptly. You have taken all means to ensure safety?"

"And there is no going back upon what you have done? Even suppose you thought of changing your mind now, you could not go back?"

"No. I have drawn Morton's money, and the proceeds have been paid away against my undischarged liabilities of to-day."

"What could she mean by asking could he go back? It seemed clear from this that his most horrible suspicion was true. It was now plain she must know he could not have extricated himself without crime. This was terrible."

"I am glad to hear you cannot go back, that you are now obliged to go on towards prosperity once more. Something has occurred since which made me for a moment fear you might be able to go back upon what was this morning resolved to do."

"And you think if I could I would? What is it that has happened?" The cold sweat broke out on his forehead. That morning he had been distracted, driven frantic, made hysterical by the things that had occurred in the City. Never in his life had he felt fear until now. He felt cold with fear, clammy with fear, sick with fear.

"An unexpected event has occurred here since you left."

"What is it?" He was not sure that his voice betrayed the question.

"Colonel Pickering came back."

"Why?"

"He found a telegram for him announcing Morton's death, when he got to town. We never thought of that. We never thought Morton would have said that Colonel Pickering, also, must be telegraphed to if he died."

"No; I never thought of that. Telegrams from Brazil are so dear, I fancied one would be enough."

"Yes; we never could have been prepared for this. Does it make much difference?"

"Perhaps. I do not know; I cannot say yet. What has taken place here?" He groaned and wiped the cold sweat from his forehead.

"He came not thinking we had word of Morton's death. I did not tell him we had a telegram."

"Thank Heaven for that!"

He said he got the cable, and ran out to see the news to Miss Morton. I sent a servant for her. She was in the drawing-room, as her hat had disappeared. Colonel Pickering said he would go out look for her." She pointed to the window. "He had only just left me when you knocked. Does it make much difference?"

"It might if he was leaving London to-day."

"He says if he can get away by a train near eleven to-night he can catch the ship—I asked you, does it make much difference, and you have not answered me. I ask you again, does it make much difference?"

"It might. Again he groaned and wiped his forehead.

"It may." He loosened his collar at the neck and stared. His face was ghastly, his jaw dropped.

THE TEACHING OF ISAIAH.

BY GEORGE HODGES.

It makes a great deal of difference how one reads the Bible. Some parts of the Bible are so familiar that we know the words by heart. The consequence is that they make little impression upon us. Other parts of the Bible are so difficult that we cannot understand them. The Bible, accordingly, is to many people, one of the dullest books in the world. Leave a man in a room alone with two books, one of them a Bible and the other any stupid book you please, and see if he will not take the other book. The Bible is really the most interesting, the most uplifting the most wonderful book that was ever written. But it has to be read in the right way.

I talked once with a Kentucky farmer who lived five miles from the Mammoth Cave. He was aware that there was such a cave in the neighborhood, and that people came from long distances to see it, and that wonderful things were said about it. But he had never explored it. He informed me, me, however, that he had ventured a tentative exploration, a number of other caves! Somehow, he too knew a great deal about a number of lesser books, while we lack interest in the supreme book.

Let me make some suggestions about reading the Bible. If you know French or German, let me advise you for a time to read these in the original. You will be surprised at the new meanings that will be discovered in it. If you do not know French or German, let me offer another counsel. Read these four books, which follow along the lines of the Bible: Stanley's "History of the Jewish Church," Eder's "Life and Times of Jesus, the Messiah," Conybeare and Howson's "Life of St. Paul," and Farrar's "Early Days of Christianity." You will find that you will presently be reading the Bible in spite of yourself. If, however, instead of accepting either of these suggestions, you desire to read the English Bible in the King James' Version, let me give you a great deal of help in a good commentary. The little Cambridge "Bible for Schools," in quite a number of inexpensive volumes, is the best general commentary I know of.

I want to sit day to-day, the first five chapters of the book of Isaiah. The first of these chapters can be set under four headings: (1) the charge, (2) the defense, (3) the promise, (4) the punishment.

God makes the charges, and the defendants are the people of Judah and Jerusalem. The charge is that they are rebellious children. That sums it all out. God is their Father; He has brought them up, and cared for them, and loved them, and they have turned away from Him.

And what is the people's defense? Why, that the services in the temple are more elaborate and beautiful than they have ever been before that sacrifices are daily offered, prayer is hourly uttered, and all the holy seasons reverently kept. To which God answers that ritual without righteousness is abominable in His sight, that no magnificence of ecclesiastical architecture, no beauty of ornate service, no costliness of sacrifice can be of any value apart from genuine obedience to His moral laws. "Wash you, make you clean, put away the evil of your doings from before Mine eyes. Cease to do evil, learn to do well." Thus alone can man expect to win the approbation of the righteous God. Do justices to the fatherless, protect the widow, help the poor.

That was more than 2,500 years ago! And Jesus of Nazareth has lived in the world since the words were spoken, and essential value of true religion. And yet even to day we need two sermons every Sunday on this same old text. Even to-day we understand but dimly that the theology and sociology go together that Christ himself put them together into two commandments which he pronounced alike in their divine value. And Lowell's poem, which, if it had been written in Hebrew might have fitly set here among the sermons of Isaiah, needs to be read to day.

"With gates of silver and bars of gold,
I have fenced my sheep from their father's fold;
I have heard the dropping of their tears
In heaven these eighteen hundred years.

"O Lord and Master, not ours the guilt
We build but as our fathers built;
Behold thine images, how they stand
So-called, so-called, through all our land."

Then Christ, shouting out an artisan,
A low-browed, stout, rugged man,
And a motherless girl, whose fingers thin
Pushed from her faintly waned sin.

These set he in the midst of them,
For fear of darkness, lest, as he said,
"The images ye have made of me."
Nevertheless, there is a promise. Whoever turns back to God and seeks to do His service, offering to Him the acceptable sacrifice of truth, and helpful life, trying to serve God, not only in the temple, but out of it also, at home, and in the street, and through the hours of business, God will receive and forgive. Yet God knows that the promise of pardon will not be heeded.

The next four chapters belong together. They were probably preached at the close of the reign of Jotham, or at the beginning of the reign of Ahaz. These chapters are all one sermon. And they were sent from most other sermons in the Bible, that they began with a text. The text, which was also used by Isaiah's contemporary, Micah, is at the beginning of the second chapter. Nobody knows who wrote it; Micah, now forgotten, sets forth an ideal of the kingdom of God.

One day in Jerusalem the man who had that all from God of which I spoke last week stood up to preach. He was not an evangelist. He was not a professional instructor in religion. He was only a layman, a young man belonging to one of the prominent families of the city.

That is worth remembering. That the greatest preacher of the Old Testament was not a clergyman at all. The idea that all the preaching ought to be left to the parsons, is one of the most mistaken ideas in the world. Every layman, according to his ability, ought to speak every chance he has for the cause of righteousness. The two religious societies which have made the most remarkable progress in the course of recent history are the Methodist Church and the Salvation Army, and in both of these emphasis is laid on the importance of lay preaching.

LATE FOREIGN NEWS.

The sermon which is contained in these four chapters falls into three divisions: (1) The ideal of the kingdom of God, (2) the hindrances to its fulfillment, and (3) the sure punishment that awaits the hinderers.

The ideal of the kingdom is the absolute reign over it of the God of Sion. It is the God of Sion, of the holy city, of the temple, God the father of His people; not the God of Sinai, of the bleak desert, of the law, the terror of the nation; who is to rule over the ideal kingdom. All religion is progressive. God changes not, but our ideal of God grows wider and higher and truer, as we grow. Isaiah knew more of God than Moses. We know more of God, ought to know more of God, than Isaiah.

The God of Sion is to rule some day over all the nations of the earth. Isaiah looked forward to that day; Jesus looked forward to that day, and taught us to pray for it. We are looking toward it still. John Fiske, speaking as the prophet of our most modern philosophy closes the pages of his paper on "The Destiny of Man" with a look into the future such as Isaiah dimly had in the old time. It is this old chapter translated over again, with all the wisdom of the ages brought into it.

"It shall come to pass in the last days," says Isaiah, "that the mountain of the Lord's house shall be established in the top of the mountains and shall be exalted above the hills; and all nations shall flow unto it. And many people shall go and say, come ye and let us go up to the mountain of the Lord, to the house of the God of Jacob; and he will teach us of his ways; and we will walk in his paths; for out of Sion shall go forth the law, and the word of the Lord from Jerusalem. And He shall judge among the nations, and shall rebuke many people; and they shall beat their spears into pruning hooks; nation shall not lift up sword against nation; neither shall they learn war any more."

"The future," says Fiske, "is lighted for us with the radiant colors of hope. Strife and sorrow shall disappear. Peace and love shall reign supreme. The dream of poets and the inspiration of prophet and seer, the light of modern knowledge, and we may look forward to the time when in the truest sense the kingdoms of the world shall become the kingdom of Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever, king of kings, and lord of lords."

The realization of the Fatherhood of God, as Isaiah faintly saw it, as Christ plainly saw it, will be the supreme characteristic of the ideal kingdom. God is our Father, the Father of the meek and the obscure, the poorest, even the most depraved of human we are but beginning to realize the blessedness, the desirability, the supreme necessity of that old ideal.

Isaiah says that that day of the Lord will come not by force, by conquest, by the sword, not by insistence upon uniformity nor by persecutions for heresy, not by strikes nor by lockouts; no, by instruction, by teaching, by the persuasiveness of the simple truth.

Isaiah says that when the day of the Lord comes all unbrotherliness will slink away out of its glorious light. And he singles out for illustration that most unbrotherly of all our institutions—war. All disputes then be settled, he says, by arbitration. God will be the Judge; that is, all troubles will be adjusted by reference to the eternal laws of God. The military establishments which exist in the nations of Europe will be exchanged for industrial conditions; swords will be converted into ploughshares. Nor will there ever be any further instructions given in the art of war.

The two chief characteristics of the ideal kingdom, then, are truth and love; truth, doctrine, for God will be the teacher; and love in conduct, for God will be the judge.

Now, in Isaiah's time, what hindered the coming of this ideal kingdom? The preacher, in his sermon, gives an abundance of plain answers. The second chapter, he says, that the hindrances are the soothsayers and the worshippers of idols, and the possessors of inordinate riches. In the third chapter he says that the hindrances are the elders and the princes who oppress the poor, and the aristocratic ladies who think only of their fine apparel. In the fifth chapter he describes the hindrances under the head of idols; woe to the great landowners who to the luxurious lives, woe to the open sinners and sacrificing unbelievers, woe to the teachers of a false morality, who persuade people that stealing and lying are all right when they are carried on upon a large scale in business, and that murder is commendable when it is done by a large army in war, woe to the self-conceited politicians who oppose reform, woe to the unjust judges who oppress the poor.

That is, the root of all real hindrance to the coming of the ideal kingdom was the love of money, which even yet is not extinct.

Then follows the declaration of punishment. Isaiah says two things about this sequence. Really, we punish ourselves. We set in motion the great inevitable laws which visit our transgressions on our own heads. Sin is a cause which always has punishment for a consequence. There is no escape from punishment. And punishment is remedial. God has set this consequence with this cause, not in anger, but in mercy, for our good. All punishment in this world, and in the world to come must be remedial. Or else, God is not as good as we are.

Finally, it is worth noticing that in all those utterances of Isaiah, he addresses not the individual but the nation. We need a great increase of national religion. We need to bring the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Commandments into our national politics. We need to learn that whatever is wrong for an individual is wrong also for a nation.

A Curious Danzer.

Her iron clipper ship Winifred reported on her arrival at Melbourne from London that when in lat. 44 S. and long. 14 E. she became surrounded by icebergs, which ranged from 350ft. to 450ft. high, one of the largest icebergs showed signs of disintegration. Subsequently immense portions became detached, slipping into the sea like an avalanche. The atmosphere was filled with foam and mist, which so obscured the icebergs that the ship was three times threatened by some bergs in a similar manner. The breakage in each instance causing an entire alteration of the outline, appearance, and altitude. Only by constant watch and attention was the safety of the ship secured against this and other mountains of ice. More bergs and a quantity of drift ice were met for a day or two with misty weather and occasionally falls of snow, but the ship being passed to the southward of Kerguelen was without observations for several days, and afterwards got into more favourable winds and clearer weather.

LATE FOREIGN NEWS.

A submarine cable to connect Cuba and some point in Yucatan is to be laid soon. There are ninety licensed public gambling houses in Caracas the capital of Venezuela, all doing a prosperous business.

A French company is now building a street car line in Tashkent, the capital of Russian Turkestan, where, very nearly two years ago, any white man who had visited the place would have lost his head.

A new series of postage stamps has been issued by the republic of San Salvador. All stamps previous to 1892 have been called in, and only the new stamps are accepted in payment of postage hereafter.

The population of Bogota, the capital of the United States of Colombia, decreased 854 during 1891. There were 2,305 births and 3,159 deaths in the city during the year. Emigration and immigration are not factors in the city's economy.

A viaduct over the River Lea, in Bolivia, for the Antofagasta Railroad, is described as the highest viaduct in the world. It is 9,833 feet above the sea level, and the height of the trestle above the river is 4,008 feet. It is 10,497 feet long, the highest pillar is 3,736 feet, and the weight of the structure is 9,115 tons.

A terrible catastrophe is reported from the village of Koaba, in the neighbourhood of Algiers. Seven Arabs had taken shelter for the night in a grotto, when the roof fell in, killing them all on the spot. The bodies were recovered two days later.

A stretch of track across the pampas on the Buenos Ayres to the foot of the Andes is 211 miles long, without a curve, a single bridge, an opening larger than an ordinary drain, a cut greater than one metre in depth, or an embankment more than one metre in height.

The recent civil war in Chili cost the victors, the Congressional party \$15,000,000 according to a recent estimate made by the Chilean newspapers. Of that amount \$885,000 was contributed by Senora Dona Juana Edwards, the mother of Don Augustin Edwards, Minister of Finance, from her private fortune. The cost of the war to the Balmaceda partisans has not been figured out, perhaps because they lost everything, and it is a big thing to estimate on.

It is related that at the marriage of Mr. and Mrs. Sumner Soule of Freeport, Me., recently, the minister, in the course of a long prayer, said: "O Lord, give grace to some soul to-day." As the groom was known familiarly as "Sum" Soule, and as his bride's first name was Grace, the prayer was answered, satisfactorily, although the clergyman was unconscious of having said anything so well fitting the occasion.

A remarkable piece of engineering work is the tunnel of the Parana Oroya Railroad through an Andean mountain peak at Galera, Peru. It is at an elevation of 6000 feet above the sea level, and is 3,817 feet long, without a curve, and is located in the highest inhabited region in the world. The town of Galera is 25,636 feet above the sea level, nearly 1,500 feet higher than the hotel on the top of Pike's Peak.

The natives who killed Crampel and dispersed his expedition in Central Africa last summer captured 80 improved rifles, 30,000 cartridges, a number of muzzle loaders, and a good supply of gunpowder and revolvers, all of which has now passed into the hands of the Arabs. De Brazza's lieutenant, who ascertained the facts, says that Arabs are now so well armed that they can interpose great difficulties in the way of any subsequent expeditions north of the Mobang River.

A South African mining journal says the surfaces of numerous boulders have been polished by the constant rubbing of counts herd's large game such as the wildebeest. These examples of the attrition of rocks by animals are found in a good many parts of the Transvaal. The parts of the boulders which offer convenient rubbing places for the animals have been put to as much use that they present highly polished surfaces, which are very unlike anything resulting from glacial or aqueous detrition.

A remarkable invention is said to have been patented by a Japanese gentleman. It is a little instrument which enables the possessor to send "a cloud of blinding dust" into the eyes of a foe at a distance of 12 feet. It is said that the inventor is thereby absolutely deprived of sight, and therefore, of course, at the mercy of his assailant. The claims of humanity, however, are not entirely overlooked, for it is stated that the blindness only lasts for about 20 minutes, after which the sufferer's eye-sight is as good as ever.

Death in Church.

An English medical journal, the Hospital, says that there are hundreds of persons killed in London every winter by bronchitis, pneumonia, and influenza, who contract those fatal diseases while sitting in churches and chapels. This may be considered a bold statement to make, says the Hospital, but it is not more bold than true. There are hundreds of clergymen and ministers who are the victims of chronic sore throat, bronchitis, asthma, and cardiac irritability who owe these troubles to their contracting infections entirely to the insanitary condition of the buildings in which they conduct their religious worship. Many persons make it a rule to abstain from attendance at a church from the beginning of October to the end of March, except on those rare occasions when the weather happens to be both mild and dry. Nobody need wonder at the hoarseness of the clergyman, the continued coughing of the congregation, and the general discomfort of the Sunday morning service in our town churches. We have a climate which in winter is the dampness of the damp, and more changeable even than a fickle woman. To manage the atmosphere which such a climate supplies us with inside a public building requires trained skill and unwearied attention. But what kind of person do we ordinarily employ to cleanse, warm, and ventilate our churches? If not the sexton, the sexton or church officer is very frequently a man, having failed at half a score ordinary occupations, is foisted into his office by some sympathetic patron because every other resource has been exhausted except the parish? A man of this class would be just as likely to make a successful Prime Minister as successful sexton. So rarely from being the case that the workman who has failed at every occupation is likely to make a good enough sexton, that only the very best and most intelligent workmen are in any sense fit for such an office.

A few nights ago a band of masked men broke into a house in Minin, Austria, occupied by a young widow. They found their way into her bedroom, bound her securely to the bed, saturated her clothes with petroleum and set her on fire, and romped, unmoved by the victim's agonies, until the body was a charred mass.