

MRS. BROOKS' TWO RINGS.

I had engaged rooms in a fine old family mansion, at Barham, the owner of which, a gentle woman of reduced fortunes, had reluctantly consented that a boarder should cross her threshold. I was made to feel more like a guest of the house than an objectionable summer boarder. My hostess treated me with that charming old-time courtesy which, with her, was second nature. At our first meeting her prejudices seemed to vanish. We understood each other at once, and were soon conversing on the broad veranda to drink in inspiration from the majestic river and the distant mountains. I was delighted with my surroundings. The only dwelling-house in sight was a large, square, brick mansion, just across the broad, shaded street.

the bed. "Rest here," I said; "you are weary with grief and care. I will see her for you."

Then I hurried through the darkened house, out into the cruel sunshine. The maid said Miss Wiswall was at home and would see me presently. I did not wait many moments in the shaded parlor before she entered.

"You do not know me," I said, rising to meet her. "I come to you from Mrs. Brooks, with whom I am spending the summer. You have, of course, heard of her son's death."

"You have heard," she replied quietly. I fancied she was very pale, but her face betrayed nothing.

"Mrs. Brooks is in sore trouble," I continued. "Added to her bereavement, she has received a painful shock; perhaps you may be able to assist her in understanding this," and I placed in her hands the certificate of marriage.

I know I was blunt,—or, perhaps, but her coldness prevented my taking any other course. For a full minute there was absolute silence. I fastened my eyes relentlessly upon my victim, but she bore the test well. She did not tremble, she did not change color; she simply sat there, gazing fixedly at the paper in her hands.

The silence was to me unbearable. "Can you tell me nothing?" I cried at length in exasperation. She did not lift her eyes from that fixed gaze, but she said calmly, steadily and unmistakably: "I am Henry Brooks' widow."

At that instant I caught the flash of her wonderful opal. Suddenly a great rage was unkindled within me. I thought of the trusting mother; the son with those firmly closed lips, upon which rested the seal of eternity; of the young Englishman and his hopes; of all the perfidy of this young girl.

"How can you explain yourself?" I cried. "Surely Mr. Brooks' mother has a right to know all."

"Mr. Brooks' mother, yes," she replied coolly, and I understood the question was not for me to ask.

She rose, and I had no wish to prolong the visit. "When may I tell Mrs. Brooks you will come to her?" I questioned.

"To-morrow morning."

"Can you not come to-day?"

"Have you no regard for my feelings?" she exclaimed with cold anger in her voice.

I bowed, and left her in silence.

She came as she had promised, pale and stately in her black robe. For half an hour, perhaps, she was alone with Henry's mother. I saw them part at the door of that quiet best room, and there seemed to be a touch of sympathy between them.

"I feel a little better, my dear," said my poor friend, joining me in the dining-room.

"Did she explain?" I asked.

There was a pause while she turned aside for a moment in surprised thought; then slowly she shook her head.

"She really told me nothing, now I come to go over our talk; but somewhat my heart is easier."

"But did you not question her?" I asked unguardedly.

"Question her?" and the mother looked up in gentle surprise. "Do you suppose I would seem to doubt my dear son's questioning his wife concerning something which he did not deem best to tell me?"

"Forgive me," I said contritely, but she went on:

"What Marion chooses to confide to me I shall know now. The rest I can wait for until Henry himself may tell me. I can trust him."

I thought of that frank, still face in the darkened room yonder, and I felt that she was right in trusting her dead son.

The funeral took place that afternoon. A large number attended. How many came from a sense of mystery and curiosity, I would not like to conjecture. The strange story of the secret marriage had gone abroad through the quiet town. The room was fragrant with flowers, and on the marble mantel, in accordance with a time-honored custom of the place, the photographs of the young husband and wife were entwined with ivy leaves. The widow, clad in deepest mourning, sat beside Henry's mother. Her father and mother were among the mourners. A heavy veil covered her pale face, but when she lifted it a moment, as she bent over the casket for the last time, the strange, wild beauty of her countenance impressed me more deeply than ever before.

Her left hand was bare, and where the wondrous opal had glowed but yesterday I saw a plain band,—her marriage ring.

It was all over. The last hope of an old age of peace and plenty lay buried in the grave of her son. What the brave mother suffered in secret I was not permitted to know. Outwardly, she was still composed, patient, and as gentle as ever.

We were sitting by the window one evening, when I asked a question that had for several days clamored for utterance.

"Mrs. Brooks," I said, "do you really think that woman across the way is your son's widow?"

She started and leaned forward in her chair, the better to see my face in the twilight.

"Why do you ask that, my dear?"

"Because it is all so inexplicable to me. What object could your son have had in keeping this marriage a secret from you? Might he have feared objection on your part in any way whatever?"

"Henry knew I never denied him any right thing in all his life."

"Then why the mystery? And, if she were really his wife, why did she not live with him openly and avoid all this secrecy?"

"I do not know, my dear."

"And if she were his wife, how could she dare, while he was still living, to openly engage herself to that Englishman?"

"I cannot say, my dear."

"Mrs. Brooks, I do not believe that girl is your son's widow."

"My dear," she paused a minute,— "if it were not so, why should she admit it now? If she had wished always to keep it secret, why should she not keep it now, when Henry is not here to contradict her?"

"Was there anything to be gained by her declaration?" I asked.

"Nothing," she knew that Henry died almost penniless. Besides, she has all the money she needs."

"I should suppose this would put an end to her affair with the Englishman," I added. "Perhaps she wanted the notoriety."

"Why, my dear? That could hardly be pleasing to any one of refined tastes."

"And the marriage certificate, too; we have forgotten that. How should your son have had it if it were not genuine? No motive is discoverable, whichever way we turn."

She made no answer at first, but moved

uneasily in her chair. Then she laid her hand gently on mine, as though to soften any sting in her reproach.

"Why seek for one, my dear? Do you think it is quite—quite nice for us to be talking so of Henry's widow?"

I could not refrain from clasping those patient, wrinkled hands in mine and kissing them fervently.

"You dear saint," I cried; "forgive me! How you have made me love you for this forbearance!"

She looked up in gentle surprise.

"Why, my dear?" she said softly. "How could I do otherwise? It is for Henry's sake."

I saw the young widow once before leaving Barham. She was just coming from the house as I returned from my daily walk, and she stopped to say a few words to me, although, hitherto, we had instinctively avoided one another. As her hand rested upon the gate, I noticed again the slender wedding ring, and something uncontrollable compelled me to ask an impertinent question.

"What has become of that wonderful opal, Mrs. Brooks? I never saw a more beautiful stone."

She turned and looked me full in the face, surprise stamped upon every feature.

"Opal?" she exclaimed. "I have no opal. I do not care for stones. I wear only my marriage ring."

And she left me intensely wondering which of us could have been dreaming.

I returned to the hurry and fret of city life. Occasionally came a sweet, old-fashioned letter from my kind thoughts of the summertime. She kept me informed of the happenings of the village and of the monotony of her own life. Henry's wife had gone to Florida, to spend the winter, she said.

The months passed swiftly for me, and one March day I hurried into a glove store on my way uptown to purchase much needed covering for my ink-stained fingers. As I took the first vacant place at the counter I observed a young woman a short distance from me whose face immediately attracted my notice. Impossible to forget that pale countenance. It was Henry's widow. She was not in mourning, however, but she wore a street costume of warm brown and furs. She was being fitted with white gloves, and her mother was beside her. In a moment I, too, was at her side.

"Mrs. Brooks, how do you do?" I exclaimed, extending my hand. She did not appear to hear me at first, but when I spoke again she turned her head, and I repeated my cordial greeting.

"Pardon me, I think you are mistaken," she said, with no recognition whatever in her face. "My name is not Brooks."

I gazed at her in amazement, not even mulling an apology; then I asked impetuously, "But you live in Barham, do you not?"

"My home is here, surely," she responded, "but my name is Wiswall, Marion Wiswall," and she colored slightly.

"Shall I try on the other glove, Miss?" asked the saleswoman at this point.

"If you please," she said, and she pulled the gauntlet from her left hand. On one white finger glowed the wonderful opal; the marriage ring had disappeared.

Amazed, forgetting my own errand, I turned into the street once more.

A few days later came a distressed little note in the well known, trembling hand: "My dear, can you come to me? I am in great trouble."

It is needless to say that I found my way to Barham that afternoon. My poor old friend greeted me with more anxiety and trouble in her face than I had ever seen there. "Have you heard, my dear?" she began at once. "All the town is in excitement over it. The Wiswalls have returned, some months earlier than usual, and the Englishman is with them. Marion completely ignores the fact that she is Henry's widow. She has left off her mourning and called herself by her old name; and she denies that she ever was married. I went to see her, of course, before I knew, and when I spoke of Henry she looked at me as though she did not understand. Her parents refuse to speak on the subject, as they did before, and all the town is in a wonder. Oh, my dear, it seems to me I can hear!"

"I could make no reply!"

"Not that I cared for her to be his wife," she continued, "but now it puts me in a most unpleasant position. It is a shadow on my dear boy's memory."

"But you have the certificate."

"My dear," she replied, "Marion never returned me the certificate, and I felt she had a right to it."

"But why should she deny it now?"

"That is what puzzles me, except that she is to be married to the young Englishman next week."

"But she was perfectly free to marry him as the matter stood. There is no cause for the denial."

"If we could only know," groaned the poor mother; "it would ease my mind so to know the truth."

"Mrs. Brooks," I said after a pause, "I can remember the wording of that certificate as though I had read it only yesterday. The marriage took place in D—, and Mr. Rand was the officiating clergyman."

"Are you sure?" she asked eagerly.

"Sure," I replied, "and I will write at once and ask him to send me a paper, signed by himself and the attending witnesses, which will prove the truth of the statement. I'll mail the letter this afternoon."

Two days later came the reply in a woman's hand. It was a letter from the Englishman's wife,—my, widow. She informed me that her husband had died a year ago. She had, however, tried to gain the necessary information, but with disappointing results. One of the witnesses had moved away; no one knew where; the other, an old servant of the family, had become hopelessly imbecile, and was living in an insane asylum. She herself had been away from home at the time, and knew nothing of the circumstances; neither could she find record of it among her husband's papers. If any information should come to light she would be sure to inform us immediately.

The wedding took place the following week. The village church was crowded with an eager, curious throng; the street was filled with curious people as the bride and groom drove away in the April sunshine. The next day they sailed for England.

The years passed by, and the mystery, as mysterious, will, slipped into the background, quite falling to trouble any hearts save that of the lonely woman whose life now was all a backward look.

A part of each summer I passed in her quiet home, and at length a day came when for her, at least, the mystery was solved. The tired little woman lay down in her stately old bed-chamber and told me very quietly that she was going to Henry.

I could not be sorry when the gentle eyes closed and I knew that they would never open for me again. It was enough

to see the trouble fade out of that patient face.

Again the best room was sweet with blossoms, and Henry's mother lay where Henry had lain that other summer day.

The hour of the funeral had gathered together the few old friends and neighbors who had gathered together; the clergyman stood up to begin the service. Suddenly the doorway was darkened by a figure,—a tall slender woman in a deep mourning. She glided across the room and took her place beside the casket, as though it were her right to be there. Many eyes were turned to her, but the service continued without further interruption. At last the moment arrived when the friends were asked to come forward and look for the last time on the face of the departed.

Then the strange woman got up and threw back her veil. She was a stranger no longer. Every one started; the pale face was older, more white and thin, but the weird beauty was the same. She felt all eyes upon her and turned to meet them.

"I am Henry Brooks' widow," fell in a whisper from the drawn lips; "my place is here." On her hand shone the slender marriage ring; the opal had disappeared.

One day a few weeks since, on returning from a trip out of town, I picked up a daily paper which a fellow traveler had left in the seat beside me.

The first thing that met my eyes was the following paragraph:

"Yesterday a lady accosted a passer-by on Broadway and asked to be directed to the Strand. As she continued in her questioning, it soon became apparent that she fancied herself in London. She became confused and bewildered, and the gentleman called an officer and had her taken to a hospital."

There she gave her name and London address, and upon being asked if she had friends in America, she spoke of her father, who proved to be a well-known judge in a neighboring town. He was telegraphed for, and arrived last evening. Upon being questioned he explained that for many years his daughter had been the victim of a peculiar mental affliction. What she did at one time was completely forgotten during long months or years, when she would suddenly return to a consciousness of the past, and, forgetting what had intervened, take up that phase of her life where she had dropped it. She never lost her identity during these changes, however, as is very common in such cases.

"To-day, remembrance of her English home had suddenly come to her, and she fancied herself in London. She appeared in great distress at the absence from her finger of a valuable ring,—an opal,—which was, she said, an heirloom in her husband's family and her engagement ring."

The father requested that all names should be suppressed, as the fact of his daughter's maiaudy was not as yet known even among their best friends."—By Kate Whitling Patch, in the Saturday Evening Post.

PLEASANT FIELDS OF HOLY WRIT

Save for my daily range
Among the pleasant fields of Holy Writ,
I might despair
—Tennyson

THE INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY-SCHOOL LESSON.

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JOASH REPAIRS THE TEMPLE

The temple in Jerusalem was not merely a place of worship. It was in itself a monument to religion. It not merely contained the venerated and historic souvenirs of the faith and afforded a place of devotion to those from far and near who wished to avail themselves of it, but it was also the most magnificent, costly, and appropriate memorial to spiritual religion ever reared upon the earth. The material condition of the temple was therefore significant. It was a barometer indicating the rise or fall of religious feeling among the people. If the sacred structure was kept in repair, beautified, and adorned it tokened the fact that religion was ascending and vice versa.

At this time the sacred fane was in a pitiful plight. A great building needs constant and close attention for its preservation. A corps of workmen with competent overseers needs to be employed, and a large amount of money annually expended. Mere neglect is enough to insure ruin. But in this instance there was not mere inactivity. The structure was lifted and desecrated. It became a quarry out of which the rival temple of Baal was built and furnished.

It is no wonder that King Joash turned to the restoration of the temple as the first act of his reign. It had sheltered him in his defenseless infancy when the monster Athaliah sought his life. In the secret of this tabernacle he had been successfully hidden for six years. Under its splendid porch and between its great pillars he had been anointed, crowned, and proclaimed king. Its high priest had been his fosterfather. The priest and Levites had been his bodyguard on the day of his coronation. Its armor had furnished the weapons for his defense.

The importance of the proposed restoration of the temple is significantly indicated. It is the one event in the long reign of forty years on which the chronicler puts special accent. Joash alone stood out in the midst of the falling temple. That is the important achievement of his reign. He considered the repair a pressing business. The honor of Jehovah required the complete obliteration of Athaliah's sacrilege and the renewal of the old glories of the temple.

The first plan for raising the necessary funds proved inadequate if not futile. The priests were to canvass for subscriptions. There is nothing to indicate that they misappropriated the money. The plan failed as they did not get any. So that there was none to pervert. With the inveterate selfishness of human nature, they looked out for their own support first, and there was no balance to the credit of the building fund. The next device succeeded. The Jews were not solicited at home and remote from the temple, but on the ground, where he could himself witness the ravages of the vaudal Athaliah. After he had sufficiently inspected the ruin of the sanctuary, wrought by the idolatrous princes, he would come across the receptacle, conspicuously and conveniently placed. His open mouth pleaded for an offering for the restoration of the temple. There was no danger of perversion of his gift. What he placed there was exclusively for this purpose. Then, too, the sight of others giving provoked him to generosity.

The measure was instantly and largely popular. A yellow stream poured into the improvised treasury. The strong chest had often to be unlocked by the high priest and its contents audited by the king's scribe. Soon there was enough to spare for the repair, renovation, and refurbishing of the temple. As the building itself was a sign of the covenant, its restoration by the free gifts of the people was a token of the revival of the covenant between Jehovah and his people.

It is a pity the king who wrought this notable deed for God and his country in later years apostatized. A black veil must be drawn over the portrait of Joash like that over the recreant doge of Venice. He became an idolater and encouraged idoly, paradoxical as it may seem. He went one step further in sacrilege, and laid violent hands upon the High Priest Zechariah. If religion had no power to stay him, it would seem that human feeling would have been sufficient. His victim was the playmate of his boyhood. He was the son of Jehoiada, who had sheltered Joash from the murderous spirit of Athaliah and placed him on the throne.

Retribution was swift, as it was merited. Joash was the first king of Judah to come to a violent death by the hands of his own subjects and to be denied a kingly sepulcher.

history of the nation. Names illustrious and ignoble, deeds valorous and despicable, doctrines of faith and usages of ritual,—all are shined and exemplified there. It is the epitome of a thousand years.

It is no wonder that the repair of such a building became a matter of State, and that the king took personal supervision of it. But the crown was not able as in Solomon's day, to carry out the enterprise unaided. The co-operation of the people must needs be urged, and there was the reflex advantage incident to such co-operation.

God is absolutely independent, but He has made Himself relatively dependent, not for His own advantage, but for that of His creatures. For example, in His infinite power He could have built His own temple and kept it in repair. But it pleased the Owner of the universe to make Himself a mendicant and come and ask alms in order that His creatures might have the reflex advantage of voluntary co-operation with Him in His enterprises.

Martha Baptist Church Re-Dedicated.

Sunday Oct. 16th, was a notable day in the history of the Bald Eagle Baptist church and for the people of Martha. It was the occasion of the reopening and re-dedication of the remodeled church. The last service in the old building was held on June 5th. The tearing down and removing of the lower story preparatory to remodeling began on June 7th, and on July 17th the corner stone was laid. The remodeled building is practically a new church. It is beautifully finished inside and out and is heated by a furnace. The interior is divided into a main auditorium and two class rooms, so arranged that all can be thrown together giving a plain view of the pulpit. The interior is frescoed in a pretty design suggesting devotion. There remain sufficient marks of the old building to suggest the past and its sacred memories.

The re-opening services were largely attended, the building being filled. The morning service began with a Sunday school meeting, which was conducted by superintendent Ernest Ardrey. Brief addresses were made by Rev. A. D. Wirtz, S. S. Miles, Supt. Ardrey and Mr. McKelvey. The church service opened with the reading of the scripture lesson by Rev. Tallhelm and prayer by Rev. Wirtz. Rev. A. C. Lathrop, the pastor, gave a brief review of the history of the church from the time of its organization November 23, 1835, to the present time. An able and appropriate sermon was then preached by former pastor, Rev. S. W. Downing, of Pitcairn. The report of the finance committee showed an expenditure of nearly \$1,100, all of which had been provided for except about \$225. Of this amount \$115 were secured at the morning service.

The afternoon service began at 2 o'clock with a prayer and praise meeting, conducted by Mr. W. R. Heaton. A platform meeting followed and addresses were made by Rev. Tallhelm, of the United Brethren church; Rev. Bergen, of the Presbyterian church; Rev. Wirtz. Rev. Frank Howes, of Tyrone, was then introduced and in a few minutes the balance needed to cover all obligations was pledged. The church was then dedicated to the service and worship of Almighty God. Mr. George Stevens, of the board of trustees, who constituted the building committee, in a brief address presented the keys to the church, pastor Lathrop accepting the same with words of appreciation on the completion of the work. The dedicatory address was made by Rev. Downing.

The evening session opened with a praise and prayer meeting after which Rev. Frank Howes, of Tyrone, preached an able and instructive sermon. The service that followed was participated in by quite a number of persons. Several active citizens, who were not members of the church, spoke of their interest in the work, which they feel was an honor and credit to the community. They had liberally helped in the rebuilding and yet they had not given! all they wanted to. So they proposed to show their appreciation of the pastor and regard for him by making up a purse for him which should be in addition to the salary which he receives. This was speedily done and over \$25 was handed the pastor, who, surprised and embarrassed by the situation, expressed as best he could his gratitude and thanks. This unanticipated climax was one of beautiful joy and thanksgiving. Rev. S. W. Downing conducted the closing service.

The singing of the large choir, under the leadership of Lola Williams, is especially worthy of mention. The service of song and praise was appropriate, and expressive of the heart melody of the people. It was inspiring and enthusiastic. The anthems were excellent, a duet by two small girls was greatly appreciated, and the messages of song given by the male quartette moved all the people.

Thus closed a day that will long be remembered by that community. Nearly the entire population have shared in the work of repairing. They have done so willingly, even joyfully. The trustees deserve especial congratulation for the lasting work they have wrought, and the people of the community are to be commended for their loyal support of the work.

Sticking stubbornly to the first-adopted plan is often a matter of dogged pride. It's the broad-minded person who cancels self, drops the plan which proves futile, and adopts another. Jehoiada did that when he substituted the chest scheme for the personal canvass.

What the Roman Forum is to Rome and the Acropolis is to Greece, the temple is to Palestine. A history of the temple is a

Only a Pin.

An overseer in a calico mill found a pin which cost the company nearly £100. How could that be? Well, calicoes, after they are printed and washed and dried, are smoothed by being pressed over heated rollers. By some mischance a pin dropped so as to lie upon the principal roller, and, indeed, became wedged into it, the heat standing out little from the surface. Over and over went the roll, and round went the calico, winding upon another roller, until the piece was measured off. Then another began to be dried and wound, and so on, till a hundred pieces had been counted off. When they came to be examined, it was found there were holes in every piece, and only three-quarters of a yard apart. Of course, the goods could not be sold now as perfect, but only as remnants, at about half the price they would have brought had it not been for that single pin. So it is with the power of an evil habit. That pin damaged forty hundred yards of new print, and a single vicious indulgence may blight a human life and plunge a soul into the bottomless pit.—Selected.

F. Potts Green says yesterday was a record breaker for Vin-te-na, and five of the bottles sold were to people who had been told of its merit by those who have been greatly benefited or entirely cured by its use. Not one asked for a return of money although I always allow them to be the judge. If you are run down and out of sorts generally, if your appetite is falling off, if your nerves have given way under heavy strain, come in and get a bottle of Vin-te-na at my risk.