

BIT ABSENT-MINDED

Important Chapter in the Hum-Drum Existence of a Young Rector.

By MARY MARSHALL.

Case of Autosuggestion. A man was watching a moving picture film of a religious ceremony in Burma. There were pictures of bell players or ringers among the Burmese musicians, while the actual orchestra, with the moving picture exhibition, was composed entirely of stringed instruments. Yet this man solemnly declared he heard the bells ringing. It was autosuggestion, but through that suggestion his sense of hearing had actually informed his brain of sounds that were not—had led to him, as it were.

Old Egyptian Wall Painting. Probably the earliest wall paintings are the ancient Egyptian. They employed a distemper containing dissolved gum, and their principal pigments were white chalk, a vegetable yellow, ochres, Ethiopian cinnabar, blue powdered glass stained with copper and charcoal black. Their drawing was technically skillful, and, as in the case with the modern decorator, their coloring was purely decorative and their designs fanciful and extravagant.

Royalty of Virtue. If there be no nobility of descent, all the more indispensable is it that there should be nobility of ascent—a character in them that bear rule so fine and high and pure that as men come within the circle of its influence they involuntarily pay homage to that which is the one pre-eminent distinction, the royalty of virtue.—Bishop Henry C. Potter.

Twins in Common Suffering. Darwin has recorded a French case of two twin brothers, one living in Paris and the other in Vienna, who were attacked by rheumatic ophthalmia at the same moment. Each was certain, when consulting a specialist, that the other was suffering from a like complaint, and mentioned the fact. Subsequent letters confirmed this.

To Thine Own Self Be True. Although all the world ranged themselves in one line to tell "This is wrong," be your own faithful vassal and the ambassador of God—throw down the glove and answer "This is right."—Robert Louis Stevenson.

Japanned Ware. Japanned ware should be washed with a sponge, dampened in warm water and dried immediately with a soft cloth, says an exchange. Obstinate spots can be quickly removed by rubbing with a woolen cloth dipped in sweet oil.

New York's Big Industries. New York city has twenty-one industries in each of which the annual product is valued at more than \$20,000,000. The largest of these industries is the manufacture of clothing, and next comes the printing and publishing business.

Struggling Against Injury. "What's the terrible fight going on over there?" "Oh, that's just an alderman trying to prevent a corporation agent from crowding a thousand dollars into his pocket."—Detroit Free Press.

An Overflowing Cup. If your cup is small fill to the brim. Let it be multum in parvo. Make the most of your opportunities of honest work and pure pleasure.—Henry Van Dyke.

Flame Without Heat. The invention of a flame derived from electric energy that will not give off heat is claimed by a French scientist who is keeping the details secret.

Uncle Pennywise Says: Very few men will venture to tell you what to do for a sick horse, but anybody will tell you what to do for yourself.

Water Always Best Drink. Water continues to be the best drink, despite the years man has devoted to trying to improve it.—Acheson Globe.

Pessimistic Anti. "A stenographer," said Snowerwell, "seems to be the only woman to whom a man can dictate nowadays."—Judge.

True Mollycoddle. There is nothing more contemptible than a bald man who pretends to have hair.—M. Valerius Martialis.

Have Long and Short Lives. The average life of an elephant is one century, while a rabbit lives seven years and a cow fifteen.

Many Species of Canadian Wood. Twenty-six native species of wood are cut in Canada, spruce yielding one-fourth of the total.

Arkansas' Diamond Mine. Arkansas has the only diamond mine in the world, outside of Africa, in Pike county.

One day, a fresh mild spring day, the rector did not come in to dinner till 8 o'clock, and Maggie always had dinner ready at 6. When she asked him why he was so late as she stood at his side, as he hastily ate his soup, he looked up in surprise at her. Then he drew out his watch and whistled. "By Jove!" he exclaimed, "how the afternoon flew!" and when Maggie waited for an explanation the rector offered none.

After dishes were washed Maggie hastened to the back fence to tell Molly, but Molly had something to say herself.

"I don't know what ever is getting into Miss Hortense," she said. "She never came in to dinner till 8 o'clock, and we always have it at half past six. And the funny thing is that she didn't know she was late. She said she had been walking but she didn't say who with."

Maggie looked knowingly at Molly. "I have suspicioned it all along," she said. "I won't say anything that isn't my affair, but I will say that the Rev. Archibald didn't come in himself till 8 and whistled when I told him he was two hours late. You can draw your own conclusions."

Maggie's suspicion was before long making its way through the parish. There was little room for doubt that Hortense and her neighbor, the rector, were much together, and there was no one in the parish who seemed to keep such a good run of church affairs as Miss Hortense who, until the new rector had come, had been lukewarm, if not a positive backslider.

But in spite of Hortense's interest and help Archibald grew even more absent-minded. On one occasion he read morning prayer at Sunday vesper, and a week later he announced the hour of the ladies' missionary society as 3 o'clock in the morning in the rector's study. But such slips could be overlooked.

It was three hours before vesper on the following Sunday afternoon. Archibald was lazing in his comfortable little study and Maggie was out for the afternoon. A small boy from the country came breathless to the rector's door and between gasps explained:

"Mamma sent me for the doctor and he is away for the day. Baby's got a fit and papa has gone up the river. But I guess you can help if you hurry."

Archibald stopped long enough to reflect that vesper was not till 5 and that it was about 3 o'clock then, and that he could go straight from his visit to church. He put the notes for his address in his coat pocket and with admirable forethought remembered a first-aid-to-the-injured kit from his study desk—one that he used when taking his old boys camping. He did not know much about fits, but still he might need it so he put it with a roll of bandaging and a medicine case into a neat black leather bag that he used to carry his vestments in to weddings and funerals.

About fifteen minutes later when Archibald had reached the small two-room cottage by the riverside about a mile from the rectory he found a scene of confusion. There were four peevish children, a smoky fire, a tired worn mother and a vigorous-lunged baby whose "fits" proved to be merely a case of bad temper. Archibald fixed the fire, humored the children, consoled the mother and managed to feed the baby some warm milk. Fifteen minutes before church time he made a break to leave. He could imagine what confusion his absence from church would cause, and yet as the poor mother begged him tearfully to stay "just a while longer," at least till the baby's father got back from the river where he was fishing, Archibald didn't have the heart to leave.

Archibald knew that it was not a case of life and death, but still the mother's tears made it impossible for him to go. He remembered what the rector Stevenson had told him the day before about his duty to the poor people of his parish, and he had a pleasing feeling of doing something of which she would approve as he decided to stay with the poor woman till her husband returned. Fortunately for Archibald the father did return in about a half an hour, and after a few words of advice and good cheer and a little difficulty in collecting his scattered belongings, the young clergyman hastened toward church.

His lay reader, of course, would have begun the service, and he would

still be there in time for the address. Archibald felt an exhilarating sense of being necessary as he hastened toward the church. He would slip into the vestry, quickly don his vestments and slip through the side entrance to the chancel. The eyes of his faithful congregation would be turned toward him—he knew that—and of them all it would be the questioning, anxious eyes of Hortense that would count. Then after service he would hurry away from church, and not stay to answer any of the curious questionings as to what had caused his delay. He would go back to the rectory and then after supper he would slip over to Hortense. Hortense would be expecting him, for it was only two days before that he had told her of his love for her, and that she had given him a properly reticent answer. He had been allowed to hope. Archibald calculated the probable effect that his story of the afternoon's experience would have upon her. He would not make too much of it—that would be boastful—but when she asked, as of course she would, what had detained him, he would in an off-hand way let her know what he had done.

Up to the time of slipping over to Hortense after supper things happened as Archibald had expected. In fact, he found Hortense dressed in the soft pink and white dress he liked so well, sitting by a low electric reading as he entered the drawing room, which the rest of the Stevensons had, with their usual consideration, seen fit to abandon at the time for his call.

Archibald hurried to her with outstretched hands, but Hortense greeted him with a cool raising of the eyebrow that took his breath away. He pulled a chair to the side of the table where she sat, and waited for her to say something.

"I hardly knew whether to expect you or not," she said with a forced laugh calculated to freeze a much more daring heart than that of Archibald Demarest. "Hortense," said Archibald, feeling a curious chinkiness, as he drew up to the foot of his dreams. He had never seen her in this mood, and he was quite unprepared for it. "I couldn't miss this, no matter how busy my day had been."

"No!" said Hortense with a rising indignation. "It would perhaps be more to your credit if you felt as much devotion to vespers as you profess you feel for me."

"Oh, that's it, is it? Do you know, I couldn't make out what made you seem so stand-offish when I came in. That's all, isn't it, dear—dearest?" It was rather hard in the face of Hortense's prolonged frigidity to come out with the newly-permitted terms of endearment, but Archibald was making a great effort. "I never knew till two hours before vesper and I tried to get back in time."

Hortense's eyes were bright with anger. "You needn't make any excuses," she said, drawing from his outstretched hand. "You could have been man enough—"

"Man enough! Why, Hortense, I thought I did the manly thing. I thought it was just the sort of thing—" "Manly thing to come in half an hour late to vespers! A little absent-mindedness isn't inexcusable—What, you didn't forget? You did it on purpose? Wait till you explain! You need make no explanations, Mr. Demarest."

"It was a small matter," said Archibald, helplessly. "A small matter to go fishing on Sunday afternoon and not to get back till vesper was half over! That was a small matter, was it?"

Archibald dropped to his knees before Hortense. "Why on earth do you think I was fishing?"

"Because you weren't clever enough to conceal the fact, I suppose."

"Hortense, Hortense," pleaded the rector. "Won't you think better of me? I went out to help a poor woman whose baby was having fits and—"

"Yes, and stopped to fish on the way, home and forgot all about vespers. I am sorry, Mr. Demarest, but I would rather end our friendship here."

Hortense suddenly regained her composure and Archibald jumped to his feet as Molly came into the drawing room. "Please, sir," she said, with a smile. "Maggie just asked me over the fence, could you step back to the rectory a minute. There is a little boy there says you must have taken his father's satchel of fish home by mistake. He's got your black bag with the bandages in it, and says will you please accept three of the largest trouts in the catch and leave him have the rest?"

As a light of understanding broke over Archibald's face Molly added in an aside to Hortense. "It's all right about Mr. Demarest. He wasn't fishing at all. You see, Mr. Demarest, turning to the clergyman with a confidential air, "Maggie was sure when you brought home the bag of fish that you had been off fishing, and she told me and I told Miss Hortense."

High Diplomacy. The little girl had been so outrageously naughty that it was decided that she should not be allowed to attend the party to which she and her sister had been invited. On the day of the festivity the mother called in person to pick up her unoffending daughter, and bring her home again. "Well," she asked, "and did you explain to Mr. B— how naughty Betty had been and how I kept her at home to punish her?" "Oh, no, mamma," came the answer; "I didn't think that 'ud do. I just said she'd gone to a much bigger party."

Medical.

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