

**Dr. Colfelt Discusses His Family Affairs.**

**AUTOBIOGRAPHY.**

By Rev. L. M. Colfelt D. D.

Theological unsettlement was accentuated by domestic difficulties which I hesitate to dwell upon and which good taste may forbid. Indeed, the necessity of making this private chapter of my life public property to any degree almost deterred me from undertaking this story of my life. But now that I have adventured this Biography with the prayer that God might help me to make it one of perfect candor and exact truth, and seeing that God helps those who help themselves, however raw the subject and costly the effort, I propose to make the prayer good by neither sparing my own feelings nor glossing my faults. My wife and myself, through no great fault of either but by reason of the powerful influence of heredity, were becoming hopelessly estranged. It was a case of unmitigated incompatibility. I was a country bred boy with perhaps that pragmatism and obstinacy of nature which is inbred in those who win subsistence from a mountainous soil and knock against and are hardened by Nature which has no forgiveness in her composition. She was city bred, an only child, petted and cosseted in the lap of every luxury by doting parents. She was the exact counterpart of the child wife in Dickens' "David Copperfield." No better woman lived, too good indeed for a rough world. Her conscience was hyper sensitive and impracticable and she perhaps held me to standards too ideal for me to measure up to, perhaps too high for any mere man. Suffice it that like the Statute of old, while my head might be gold, my feet were mere clay. I have never through the years failed to take upon myself the blame for the wreck of my marital happiness.

Doubtless my constant absorption amounting to obsession in the preparation of sermons and addresses, after my manner of living in and with the sermon until delivered, rendered me uncompanionable. I must also make the mournful confession that I was too deeply rooted in the home of my childhood to bear transplanting to one even of my own making. The tendrils of my affection never twined about the new home, the fact that it was a gift, completely furnished, made by Mr. McManes to his daughter and not something for which I had given an equivalent in toil and sacrifice as I had for the maintenance of the home of my father and mother may in part account for this anomaly. The greatest problem in this world is to give anything considerable to any person without injuring the recipient. Located also as I was, in a strange city, in the midst of unknown neighbors, with no association but those of present making it was not strange that the city was hateful and I was never subdued to my environment, but pined for the country "like a bird in a cage or an animal in the zoo." My dwelling place was consequently regarded as but a tent for the night and not a tabernacle by the way, a work shop and never a heart's delight. Physical conditions also played an important part, her nervous system having been rendered over tense by the long drawn out Gas Trust suit and the venomous assaults of which her father was a target.

At the same time my nervous system was almost a complete wreck from a desperate and almost fatal attack of typhoid fever which left me super-sensitive and without power of further endurance. I determined to end an impossible situation and we entered into a deed of separation by which I resigned all interest in her fortune, which was then considerable and upon the death of her father and mother amounted to some four millions. She likewise resigned all interest in mine, which was nil and less than nothing. Thus having proved effectually that we were incapable of welding our characters together, but were obstinately obsessed with the idea of leading our own lives, we availed ourselves of the only Scriptural method of dissolving the marriage tie under such circumstances. We parted amicably without animosity or the slightest recrimination. I can add that there was nothing triangular in the situation, no other ever having in the slightest degree usurped her place. Though it may sound cynical and betray lack of proper feeling, I can truthfully record that this irrevocable step thus taken has never been followed by any sense of regret but only resulted in peace of mind, health of body, greater efficiency and world prosperity.

The disposition of the children of whom there were four, three sons and one daughter, constituted a problem more difficult of solution. But the measure of all human devotion is the self sacrifice involved. Consequently after careful deliberation I decided that, not from any lack of natural affection but from a sincere desire for their best welfare, I must surrender them into the care of their mother. This for several reasons, not the least of which was the fact that their grandfather being sincerely devoted to them they would be afforded opportunity for securing the culture of superior education, satisfactory careers and the refinements of life to a degree I could not possibly supply. To take them to my home would doom them to a life of poverty and hardships which while it might be meat and drink, to me, indeed, the ideal life was something to which they were utter strangers. But there was a yet stronger reason based upon the fixed conviction that the father who for any cause takes a child from its mother at any time commits a high crime, not alone against the mother but chiefly against the child, depriving it of that sym-

pathy and affectionate care and character building in the formative period of life for which there is no substitute and the loss of which is irreparable. To rob a mother bird of her fledgelings is a cruel thing and fortiori for a stronger reason to rob a mother of the child for which she has traveled, is infamous. And any law which permits the taking away from a normal mother her child at any age is a blot on civilization, a dishonor to all States that permit such a law to sally their code.

Another and yet more powerful reason swayed my mind which I can best illustrate by a true instance. While pastor at Washington Square a young man in the audience attracted my attention and later my high regard. He was welcomed to the pew of the Misses Neill, and thereafter became a constant attendant. I learned his name, that he hailed from Centre county, was but lately admitted to the bar and had just begun the practice of his profession in a law office on Washington Square. Domestic difficulties, years before, had brought about a separation between his father and mother. His sister chose prosperity and her mother, as she possessed some means. He elected from pity or predilection to abide with poverty and his father, a step never condoned by his mother and sister. The father later on took to drinking and it was a fearful handicap for this dutiful son to gain a livelihood by teaching, put himself through the law school and lug upon his shoulders the dead weight of his father's support until his death. The task proved too great for his physical powers. Just as he had made good his entrance upon a lucrative practice and every prospect pleased, he broke down completely. At this time I met him on the street and was shocked by his changed appearance. He said he was just getting about again after an attack of typhoid fever which had ended in pleurisy. That night, tossing about on my bed unable to sleep through the night, my thoughts reverted continually to his youth and his forlorn condition. The next morning, unable to dismiss him from my thoughts, some inward compulsion drove me, before going to my study, to go directly to his office and to say to him, "John you had best forego plunging in your weakened state into your law work. You should take a month's rest and make a complete convalescence. If you have not the money to go to Florida I will furnish it and you can repay when you are able." He said "I appreciate your kindness but I cannot afford to lay aside my work at the very beginning, especially as it looks rather promising." I came away feeling that he was in more exhausted physical state than he would confess. A week later he staggered into my parlor and said "I am completely spent, you were right and I was wrong." I answered, "I regret that precious time has been lost but the offer is still open to you, get ready as quickly as possible, come to me and the money will be ready."

He went to Asheville and the Carolina mountains, as it was then too enervating to go to Florida, spent some months, and came home with little or no improvement, as unknown to us all consumption had already claimed him for its prey. I sent him next to Colorado where he remained for six months in the high altitudes but was so unhappy, exiled from home and friends that he wrote he would "sooner die in the East than live out there." I brought him back and sent him to my father's home in Virginia where he had the tender care of my mother and sister and was quite happy. But as he grew worse I felt I must not inflict the gratuitous burden of his care on my mother and I brought him once more to Philadelphia and installed him in a comfortable room in my home, where I was glad to give him every care the last few months before he found surcease from all his sorrows and sufferings in merciful death. He was a veritable proof of that scripture which saith, "If thy mother forsake yet will not I saith the Lord."

He was a cousin of a distinguished physician who gave him every medical attention and was closely related to millionaire residents up the State but so proud that he could not brook any obligation to them. More singular perhaps than the use Providence made of myself to ease the pathway of this stranger hitherto down through the valley of the shadow was the fact that the Lord does not do things by halves when He undertakes for his beloved children, as witnessed by the fact that a kind woman, hearing of his plight, sent him \$25 per month to provide medicines and refinements of comforts of an extraordinary character that he might have felt reluctance in asking or permitting me to supply. All this wonder working of the Good God in caring for one of His servants, does not alter the fact that he was ground to powder between the upper and the nether millstones of his father's and mother's differences. This afforded me an illustration that there is no hatred on earth so bitter, malignant and implacable as that engendered by marital differences involving the necessity of children taking sides. His mother married and went to Spain as an Ambassador's wife. Neither she nor his sister ever gave the slightest indication that they were aware of his existence or cared for his fate to the day of his death. Many years after his sister wrote me a letter, asking me where he had been buried. So filled was I with contempt and horror for this belated token of human interest that I could not trust myself to make reply. It was this incident, that if I had no other reason, led me to surrender all my children to their mother and not risk involving them innocently in the deadly rancors of children divided between parents hopelessly estranged.

—Scientists insist that the sun is going to last us another 15,000,000,000 years. What, then is the idea of all this daylight saving?—New York Evening Post.

**Can You Answer These Questions?**

Secretary of Agriculture, C. G. Jordan, has a few questions which he believes will stop the most ardent "ask me another" enthusiast in the State. Here are his questions:

"Which State produces more corn per acre—Pennsylvania or the great corn State of Illinois?"

"Where did Pennsylvania rank in 1925 among all the States in the average acre yield of corn?"

"Which State produces more wheat per acre—Pennsylvania or the famous wheat State of Kansas?"

To relieve the suspense right away, here are the answers:

Pennsylvania corn growers produced seven bushels more corn per acre than the corn growers of Illinois during the five years, 1921-25.

With the exception of New Jersey, Pennsylvania produced more corn per acre than any other State in 1925. The average yield was 51 bushels per acre.

Pennsylvania wheat growers during the five years, 1921-1925, produced six bushels more wheat per acre than the Kansas wheat growers.

"And then even in our own Commonwealth we think of Pennsylvania largely as an industrial State while about everybody in the United States knows of Kansas as a wheat State and Illinois as a corn State," Dr. Jordan adds.

**World War With Insects Coming.**

Perfect specimens of beetles, dragon flies and May flies, which existed 5,000,000 years ago, have been found in shale beds near Wellington, Kan. Wings of some of these fossil dragon flies are seven and one-half inches long and have an expansion of 23 inches. The beetles of those times were not built as ours are today. They had to jump around a good deal like our grasshoppers.

The New Zealand scientist, Tillyard, now lecturing in this country, predicts, man and insects will one day have to contend against each other for the supremacy of the Earth. In the meantime let's hope that "bugs as big as cows" will not be evolved.—Capper's Weekly.

**Trust Companies Rank Newspaper Advertising Highest.**

The outstanding trust institutions of the United States are those that were pioneers in using advertising as a means of selling their services, a speaker told a conference of trust companies held in New York recently. He presented the results of a questionnaire sent out by the Trust Company Division, American Bankers Association, making an inquiry into the advertising practices of institutions doing a trust business. Three out of every four trust companies and banks engaged in extending trust services were found to be advertising. The opinion was expressed by the speaker that their growth would closely follow the amounts spent each year for advertising.

The local newspaper is the most highly regarded advertising medium, it was disclosed. In all, 929 companies answering the questionnaire used the local papers and 338 did not. The institutions buying space in local papers are evenly divided among all sections of the country. Comparing six media for selling personal trust services and considering their effectiveness from the standpoint of producing results, the speaker declared that the local newspapers should head the list. Folders and booklets can reach a limited audience, he observed, but the newspaper is the best medium for acquiring prestige and mass circulation. It should never be omitted, he urged.

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(1) Wife or Husband, parents no children.	Real or Personal Estate to value of \$5,000; one-half of remaining estate.		One-half of Estate over \$5,000			
(2) Wife or Husband, brothers and sisters, no parents, no children.	Real or Personal Estate to value of \$5,000; one-half of remaining estate.			One-half of Estate over \$5,000.		
(3) Wife or Husband, no brothers, no sisters, no parents, no children.	Real or Personal Estate to Value of \$5,000; one-half of remaining estate.				One-half of Estate over \$5,000.	
(4) Wife or Husband, no heirs or relatives.	All					
(5) Wife or Husband, one child, or descendants of one child.	One-half of Real and Personal Estate.	One-half of Real and Personal Estate.				
(6) Wife or Husband, more than one child or one child and descendants of deceased child or children or descendants of more than one deceased child.	One-third of Real and Personal Estate.	Two-thirds of Real and Personal Estate.				
(7) Children, or descendants of children, no wife or husband.		All				
(8) Parents, no husband, no wife, no children.			All			
(9) Brothers and sisters, no husband, no wife, no children or no parents				All		
(10) Relatives, no wife or husband, no children, no parents, no brothers no sisters.					Those of equal degree take all	
(11) No heirs at law, no relatives.						All

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