

Saturday Night Talks

By F. E. DAVISON
Rutland, Vt.

ORIGINAL DORCAS SOCIETY

March 14, '09—(Acts 9: 31-43).

The instrument which immortalized Moses, the great Hebrew lawgiver, was a rod which he had cut from a thicket on the mountain side, but that ordinary stick became in his hands a scepter, by which he broke the power and humbled the pride of the mighty Egyptian empire. The article by which the Israelite woman is identified was a little oil in a cruse, but that modicum of oil became a veritable oil well which changed her poverty to affluence. Gideon's army wrought its greatest victory with a lamp, a pitcher and a trumpet. The walls of Jericho fell down in ruin when the besieging host blew a mighty blast on a lot of crooked ram's horns, and shouted with a great shout. The memorable incident in the life of Mary, sister of Lazarus, was the alabaster box of ointment of spikenard which she broke upon the feet of Christ. The odor is in the air to-day. The nameless widow in the gospel stands forever as the embodiment of charity and devotion with the offering of her two mites, which make only a farthing. We can hear their jingle every time the contribution box goes round.

Made Famous By a Needle.

And here in this lesson, there is a woman, illustrious forever, because of the implement in her fingers—a common sewing needle. Every sewing circle, Dorcas society, ladies' aid or female benevolent organization of the church of whatever name, is the direct result of the needle in the hands of Dorcas, who lived in Joppa, and who was a Christian disciple. Peter raised her from the dead, and as far as the record goes she has not departed this life since. We can hear the rustle of her garments wherever godly women are gathered together to sew for the poor. And multitudes of widows and orphans are comfortably clad and protected with the coats and garments which Dorcas is still making. She uses a sewing machine in these modern days, but I warrant you her stitches do not rip nor her buttons fly off at the least provocation. She recognizes that even unfortunate widows have some pride in their appearance, and she does not humiliate them by presenting old cast-off, out of date clothing that she would not wear herself, but aims to keep somewhere near the styles in vogue, that her beneficiaries may be fashionably, if not richly dressed. The Creator, who constructed the delicate fingers of Dorcas to hold a sewing needle, by that very act pointed out her realm of usefulness. The sewing machine is the needle a thousand times multiplied, and the necessity for its product has a thousand times increased. "The poor ye have always with you and whenever ye will ye may do them good."

Sewing Circle Slanderers.

There is a great deal of cheap and senseless criticism of Dorcas societies and all kindred organizations. They are charged with being schools of tittle-tattle. Their service is thought to consist of one part needle work and nine parts gossip. While they mend rents in clothing with their needles they are said to tear holes in character with their tongues. Deeply concerned for the welfare of distant heathen it is reported that they turn their neighbors' wrong side out. Gross libel on a worthy institution! A gossip and a scandal-monger will be a gossip and a scandal-monger anywhere, and such unsanctified women may sometimes poison a whole sewing society, but such instances are rare and exceptional. In the majority of cases, love selects the materials, love threads the needles, love pays the express on the goods.

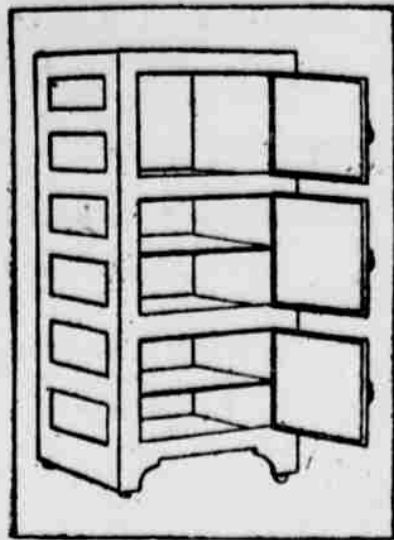
Just as Joppa, in the New Testament was conspicuous for just one thing—that it was the home of Dorcas, so many a church and pastor would never be heard of, were it not for the band of elect women in that community who supports religious worship there. No matter how debased a town or country district may be, some godly woman can always be found there to keep the altar fires burning. And many an otherwise churchless settlement is saved from the fate of Sodom and Gomorrah, on account of a handful of consecrated women. They organize a Sunday school. They conduct a prayer meeting. They clothe the neglected children. They pay the preacher for an occasional sermon. They raise money to pay for fuel and lights, and cabinet organ, and carpet and bell. If such things were left for the men of such communities, it would never be done.

If Dorcas had a husband he was of so little account that his name is not even mentioned in the New Testament story, and if she was a maiden lady it is apparent that she got along very well without one. She was mother and sister and daughter and friend to a whole city of needy souls. Without ostentation, and without hope of reward, and certainly with not the slightest idea that she was doing anything that would make her name immortal, she piled her needle in the interest of all the needy about her and stitched her name into the very warp and woof of history's unrolling fabric. Dorcas societies have nothing to be ashamed of, either in their present employment or their originator, Dorcas, the needle woman of Joppa.

NO CREVICES OR CORNERS.

Refrigerator Built on the Lines of the Porcelain Bathtub.

An unclean refrigerator can never be a good refrigerator, and the proper care of this very necessary article is always more or less a care to the housekeeper. Great advances have been made in the construction of refrigerators mainly by the elimination of all cracks and crevices which might offer a lodging place for particles of food. The perfection of this scheme



seems to be in the manufacture of the interior lining of the refrigerator in one piece, being pressed out of the sheet metal and enameled in the same manner as the porcelain bathtubs. This leaves all the interior surfaces entirely smooth so that every part may be reached with the cleaning cloth or brush. Another advantage claimed is the positive immunity from leaks.

THE BUTTERFLY MARKET.

Once \$3,000 was Quoted as the Value of a Rare Specimen.

There are many butterflies whose value to collectors is very great, but although \$3,000 has been quoted as the value of a specimen, this is an exaggerated price.

Some years ago the female of a certain variety was much sought after by collectors, and only one or two specimens had been obtained. A clever fellow centred all his efforts upon obtaining a large supply of this particular insect. Unfortunately, he killed his own market by putting them all up for sale at once and instead of realizing a large figure for each specimen he only sold a few.

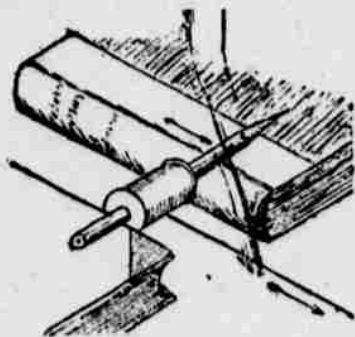
There are specimens at our own Natural History Museum to-day which are of considerable value, and one which has the largest expanse of wing of any known butterfly was once pointed out by a collector who had obtained it as being worth \$1,500. A contrast to this huge insect is a tiny specimen from Ceylon which measures about half an inch across.

The value of an insect varies in proportion to the amount of money spent in getting it, and when some rich collector has had to equip and send out a complete expedition in order to obtain a specimen or two of one particular butterfly, one can understand him pricing such specimens according to the cost of the expedition, and it is in this way that so many fancy values are heard of. Anything up to \$150 a pair, however, is not an uncommon price.

EXPERIMENT IN DYNAMICS.

Odd Movements of a Spool of Thread and Pencil.

A half-unrolled spool of thread is placed on a table and the thread



THE EXPERIMENT.

pulled horizontally from the under side of it, the spool, contrary to general expectation, will roll towards the hand. In connection with this it is interesting to note that if the cylinder is larger in diameter at the point around which the thread is wound than it is at the points on which it rolls, it will roll away from the hand when the thread is pulled. This experiment can be tried by passing a pencil through a spool and resting the ends of it on two books as in the illustration. Also, if the thread be drawn from the under side of a full spool resting on a flat surface the spool will not move in either direction.

The Ocean Cables.

There are about 225,000 miles of cable in all at the bottom of the sea, representing \$250,000,000, each line costing about \$1,000 a mile to make and lay. The average useful life of a cable nowadays is anything between thirty and forty years, according to circumstances. About 6,000,000 messages are conveyed by the world's cables throughout the year, or 15,000 a day, the working speed of any one cable being up to 100 words a minute under present conditions. About 99 per cent. of these are sent in code or cipher.

New Dogging Dodger.

The latest species of professional beggar in New York city asks for a nickel with which to pay his fare to the nearest hospital.

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