

ing there with the yellow ball pup... under on forearm and the thin blue... of her cigarette ascending from her lips.

CHAPTER II.

How deeply are our destinies influenced by the most trifling causes? Had the unknown builder who erected and owned these new villas contented himself by simply building each within its own grounds, it is probable that these three small groups of people would have remained hardly conscious of each other's existence, and that there would have been no opportunity for that action and reaction which is here set forth.

Clara was tall and thin and supple, with graceful, womanly figure. Her eyes were strong, quiet soul. Ida Walker was a hand's breadth smaller than Clara, but was a little fuller in the face and plumper in the figure. She was mother to the whole of her dainty little-heeled shoes, frankly fond of dress and of pleasure, devoted to tennis and to comic opera, delighted with a dance, which she called in but was too seldom longed for ever for some excitement, and yet behind all this lighter side of her character a thoroughly good, health-minded girl, the life and soul of the household, and the idol of her sister and her father.

As to the Denvers it was their Mr. Harold who kept them in the neighborhood of London, for the Admiral was an old friend of his, and she was as happy in the sheets of a 2-ton yacht as on the bridge of his 10-ton. Harold was four-and-twenty now. Three years ago he had been in hand by an acquaintance of his father's, the head of a considerable firm of stock-brokers, and fairly launched upon change.

It was not as middleman between the pursuer of wealth and the wealth he pursued, or to stand as a human barometer, registering the rise and fall of the great man's pressure in the market, but as a man who had seen Providence had placed those broad shoulders



PRESENTLY A FRESH SET WAS FORMED.

and strong limbs upon his well-knit frame. His dark eyes, too, with his straight Grecian nose, well-opened brown eyes, and round, black-curling hair, were all of a man who was fashioned for active physical work.

"Good evening, Willie," said Mrs. Hay Denver one evening as she stood behind her husband's chair, with her hand upon his shoulder. "I think sometimes that Harold is a little nervous."

"He looks happy, the young rascal," answered the Admiral, pointing with his cigar. "After dinner, and through the open French window of the dining room, you can see to be had of the tennis court and the players. A set had just been finished, and young Charles Westmacott was hitting the balls as hard as he could swing them in the middle of the ground. Dr. Walker and Mrs. Westmacott were pacing up and down the lawn, the lady waving her rackets and the doctor listening with a patient and little nod of agreement. Against the rails at the near end Harold was leaning in his shirt talking to the doctor, and the doctor was talking to the lady."

"Yes, he looks happy, mother," he repeated with a chuckle. "In love, perhaps, the young dog. He seems to have found some good evening, doctor," said Mrs. Hay Denver, raising his broad straw hat. "May I come?"

"Try one of these," said the Admiral, holding out his cigar case. "They are not bad. I got them from the Messing Co. I'm thinking of signing to you, but you seemed so very happy out there."

"Mrs. Westmacott is a very clever woman," said the doctor, lighting the cigar. "I've very much enjoyed her company. A very sensible one in some things," remarked Mrs. Hay Denver.

"Look at that nose," cried the Admiral with a laugh, as he pointed at the doctor. "You mark my words, Walker, if we don't look out that woman will raise a mutiny with her preaching. Here's my wife's discolored already, and your girls will be no better. We must combine, man, or there's an end of all discipline."

"No doubt she is a little excessive in her views," said the doctor, but in the main, I think as she does. You should come to her next meeting. I am to take the chair. I have just promised that I will do so. I'll be your guest, and after his friend with a twinkle in his eyes.

"How old is he, mother?" "About 50, I think." "About 50? I think." "I heard that she was 43."

The Admiral rubbed his hands and shook his head. "We'll find one of these days that three is a magic number," said he. "I'll bet you a new bonnet on it."

"It was on this same summer evening in the tennis ground, though the shadows had fallen now, and the game been abandoned, that the three young people met. Tell us, Miss Walker? You know how things should be. What would you say was a good profession for a young man of 28, who has had no education worth speaking about and who is not very quick by nature?"

"The girl glanced up at him, amused and surprised. "Do you mean yourself?" "Decidedly. I have no one to advise me. I believe that you could do it better than anyone."

"It is very flattering," she glanced up at

again at his earnest, questioning face, with his six eyes and drooping fawn moustache, in some doubt as to whether he might be joking. On the contrary, all his attention seemed to be concentrated on her answer.

"It depends so much upon what you can do, you know. I do not know you sufficiently to be able to say what natural gifts you have."

"I have none. That is to say, none worth mentioning. I have no memory, and I am very slow."

"That you are very strong." "Oh, if that goes for anything, I can put up a hundred-pound bar till further orders; but what sort of a calling is that?"

"Some little joke about being called a professional, but it is not a very dignified profession. It is the office of a clerk, and you must be able to do what he likes with it. How's that for confidence, and he only three years ago?"

"I can do a mile on the elder track in 4:30 and across country in 5:20, but how is that to help me? I might be a cricket professional, but it is not a very dignified profession. It is the office of a clerk, and you must be able to do what he likes with it. How's that for confidence, and he only three years ago?"

"I wish I could help you," said Clara. "But I really know very little about such things. However, I could talk to my father, who knows a very great deal of the world."

"I wish you would. I should be so glad if you would."

"Then I certainly will. And now I must say good night, Mr. Westmacott, for papa will be wondering where I am."

"Good night, Miss Walker." He pulled off his fawn cap, and stalked away through the gathering darkness. "Clara had imagined that they had been the last on the lawn, but looking back from the steps which led up to the French windows, she saw two dark figures moving across toward the house. As they came nearer she could distinguish that they were Harold Denver and her sister Ida. The murmur of their voices rose up to her ears, and then the musical little child-like laugh which she knew so well. "I am so delighted," she heard her sister say. "So pleased and proud. I had not about it. Your words were such a surprise and joy to me. Oh, I am so glad!"

"Oh, there is Clara. I must go in, Mr. Denver," she said. "There were a few whispered words, a laugh from Ida, and a 'good night Miss Walker' from the darkness. Clara took her hat and went to her room, and the door closed behind her. The door opened again, and the two dark figures moved across toward the house. As they came nearer she could distinguish that they were Harold Denver and her sister Ida. The murmur of their voices rose up to her ears, and then the musical little child-like laugh which she knew so well. "I am so delighted," she heard her sister say. "So pleased and proud. I had not about it. Your words were such a surprise and joy to me. Oh, I am so glad!"

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We have learned a great deal about a man when we have discovered how much he can do in an hour. It is only in arithmetic and on the faces of clocks that an hour is made up of 60 minutes. The length of an hour, the number of minutes in it, depends not on any pendulum, but on the heart beats of the man into whose life it comes. He gets the most out of life who is able to get the most number of effective minutes into an hour. One of the lessons of experience is the lesson of the value of time. It is only people of experience, only those who have already lived a considerable portion of their lives who know the value of time. It is not a thing that we can do with it. The mere occupation of time is no great matter, but to employ each hour with its most advantage, to be occupied to do at a certain time exactly what ought to be done at that time—that is where we all make more or less of a failure of it.

It is a wise use of time, comes and goes week after week without bringing any great profit to a great many people, not because they have no time—they have 24 hours of it—but because they do not know the value of it. They do not know, it is what to do with the time. They who have a clear definition of the meaning of the first day of the week, who know what Sunday is really for, and who have learned by experience how to get the most good out of it, these are the only people who understand why the keeping of a day is so important to the human race. To everybody else, that is one of the puzzles of religion. It is no wonder that, in many people's estimation, Sunday is the day of the week when the angels are busy. They do not know what to do with themselves.

Everybody who wants to make the best of Sunday, who wants to get a good start on the day to carry him straight through till Saturday night, who wants to turn a day of dullness into a day of daylight, makes out for himself an unwritten code of Sunday living. They need not read the Bible, but they do need to know the value of time. This and this will I occupy myself upon the Christian holiday. I will go to certain best places. I will read certain books. I will devote myself to certain worthy deeds. I will be definitely employed on Sunday as I am on Monday. There is no refreshment in laziness. No permanent profit ever grows out of leaving things to chance. The time is so precious, the opportunity, and that recognition depends on preparation. Unprepared people, half-lazy people who leave things to chance, ignorant people who cannot tell time, miss all the opportunities. Forethought and preparation are the two eyes with which to see opportunities. The unprepared are blind.

Jerusalem Missed Her Opportunity. There was once a great city which, for lack of knowledge of the time, fell into utter destruction. Christ Himself visited that city, did His work of marvel there, spoke His words of revelation and benediction there. The city was given every sort of spiritual chance. It seemed for a moment that the city would recognize its opportunity and know the time as Jesus went along the street crowds went along with Him, before and after, heads were thrust out of all windows, everybody was saying "Who is this Jesus who is called the Prophet of Nazareth, in Galilee," was the answer. But somehow, after that, the city seemed to have no further interest. "Presumably," says Jesus, "the Jews were gathered through the streets, not now in triumphal procession, but as a prisoner, with hands tied and hostile faces turned against Him. The city was given every opportunity, but that answer, paid no heed; except that many of the citizens cried 'Crucify Him!'"

It was for this that Jesus wept over that city. The supreme opportunity had been given and been rejected. Jerusalem knew not the time of her visitation. By and by she paid the penalty, which in some degree every city that ever existed must pay for lack of knowledge of the time.

The Judgment of the World. This is the season of the year at which, for these many centuries, the thoughts of Christian people have been especially directed to the coming of the Lord. The gathering in of the harvest suggests that harvest in which the angels will be the reapers at the end of the world. The death of the plants puts us in mind of the death of the human race. The anniversary of Christ's coming in the old time, taking our flesh upon Him for our salvation, suggests the anticipation of His coming in the new time, in power and in glory, for the judgment of the world.

But all the circumstances of that second coming are overhung with mystery. Nothing is so clear as when it will be, where it will be, how it will be, we may ask as long as we will; there is no answer. Even what is recorded, the living and the dead, the prophets and the saints, fairly declare that no man knows the real meaning. We know that some time the Lord Christ will be the ruler of all the nations of the earth. We know that some time there will be a division between the evil and the good. We know that whatsoever a man sows that he shall also some time reap. We know that "we do not know the day or the hour, but He pays!"

The Time Is Not Set. The time of this inevitable payment, however, is not that time of which St. Paul says that all gods are ignorant to know. "Knowing the time" has no application here. "It is not for you to know the times or the seasons, which the Father hath put in His own power." The time is set, but we do not know it. The best time for us to get acquainted with, to know, is now. The coming of Christ that we ought most to dwell upon is His coming now.

A good while ago some people in Thessalonica were so much occupied in studying the stars, in an attempt to determine the day, and the advent of Christ, and the day of judgment, and calculating the time when the drama of the world would come to that supreme finale, that they neglected their daily business. They stopped work. St. Paul wrote to forbid that. The Lord had not come in His great advent yet; nobody knew just when it would come; in the meantime the best occupation for every man who was waiting for His coming was to attend to his daily labor, and to do that well. The best preparation for the coming of the Lord was not a counting of the days, but a continuance of faithful service.

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THE PRESENT THE ACCEPTED TIME

(WRITTEN FOR THE DISPATCH.) It is a good thing to know enough to be able to tell time. To know when it is time to act and when it is time to wait, when it is time to speak and when it is time to refrain from speaking, is to be possessed of some of the most valuable knowledge in the world. Timeliness is a part of the secret of all good success.

We have learned a great deal about a man when we have discovered how much he can do in an hour. It is only in arithmetic and on the faces of clocks that an hour is made up of 60 minutes. The length of an hour, the number of minutes in it, depends not on any pendulum, but on the heart beats of the man into whose life it comes. He gets the most out of life who is able to get the most number of effective minutes into an hour. One of the lessons of experience is the lesson of the value of time. It is only people of experience, only those who have already lived a considerable portion of their lives who know the value of time. It is not a thing that we can do with it. The mere occupation of time is no great matter, but to employ each hour with its most advantage, to be occupied to do at a certain time exactly what ought to be done at that time—that is where we all make more or less of a failure of it.

It is a wise use of time, comes and goes week after week without bringing any great profit to a great many people, not because they have no time—they have 24 hours of it—but because they do not know the value of it.