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Back-Bone.

When you see a fellow mortal
Without fixed and fearless views,
Hanging on the skirts of others,
Walking in their cast-off shoes,
Bowing low to wealth or favor,
With subject, unswerving head,
Ready to retract or waver,
Willing to be drove or led;
Walk, yourself, with firmer bearing,
Throw your moral shoulders back,
Show your spine has nerve and marrow—
Just the things which his must lack.
A stronger word
Was never heard
In sense or tone,
Than this: "Back-bone."
When you see a theologian
Hugging close some ugly creed,
Feeling to reject or question
Dogmas which his priest may read,
Holding back all noble feeling,
Choking down each manly view,
Caring more for forms and symbols
Than to know the good and true;
Walk, yourself, with firmer bearing,
Throw your moral shoulders back,
Show your spine has nerve and marrow—
Just the things which his must lack.
A stronger word
Was never heard
In sense or tone,
Than this: "Back-bone."
When you see a politician
Crawling through contracted holes,
Begging some fat position,
In thering or at the polls,
With no sterling manhood in him,
Nothing stable, broad or sound,
Destitute of pluck or ballast,
Double-sided, all around;
Walk, yourself, with firmer bearing,
Throw your moral shoulders back,
Show your spine has pluck and marrow—
Just the things which his must lack.
A stronger word
Was never heard
In sense or tone,
Than this: "Back-bone."
A modest song, and plain-told—
The text is worth a mine of gold;
For many men most sadly lack
A noble stiffness in the back.

WHO WAS IT?

We had just finished breakfast. Tom laid down the egg-pan he had been playing with and looked across at mother.

"Aunt Anne, I think I'll take a wife," he said, exactly as he might have said, "I think I'll take another cup of coffee."

"Take a wife?" repeated mother, by no means receiving the information as tranquilly as it had been given. "What for?"

"Well, I don't know," answered Tom thoughtfully. "It's a notion I've got in my head somehow."

"All nonsense!" said mother, sharply. "Do you think so?" said Tom, apparently doubtful, but not in the least put out.

"Think so? I know it. What in the world can you want of a wife? After all these years we have lived so comfortably together, to bring home somebody to turn the house upside down. And then what is to become of that poor child?"

"The poor child?"—that was I—red dening at being brought into the argument in this way was about to speak for herself, when Tom interposed, warmly:

"I'm sure May knows I would never have any wife who would make it less a home for her—don't you, May?"

"Of course," said I.

"And I'm sure she knows nothing of the sort," persisted mother, "nor you either, Tom Dean. How can you answer for what a wife may take into her head to do, once you get her fixed here? You can't expect her to forget, as you do, that May has no real claim on you."

"That I have no real claim on her, I suppose you mean, ma'am, Tom put in for the second time, just as I was getting thoroughly uncomfortable. "But, for all that, I intend to keep her—that is," added Tom, with one of his shortsighted blinks sideways at me, "as long as she'll stay with me, eh, May? And whoever has anything to say against that arrangement will have to go out of my house to say it—not that I'm afraid of any such result in this case—and, on the whole, Aunt Anne, I should like to try the experiment."

Mother smiled grimly, but Tom was so evidently bent on his "experiment," as he called it, that she gave up the argument.

"You can dance if you are ready to pay the piper," she said, shortly. "And, pray, how soon do you mean to be married?"

Tom's face fell a little at this question.

"Well," said he, "I can't say exactly. I suppose we will have to be engaged first."

"What!" said mother, opening her eyes; "why, you never mean to say, Tom, you haven't spoken to her yet?"

"Not yet," answered Tom, cheerfully. "Time enough for that, you know, after I had spoken to you."

"Well," she said, "if it was anybody else I should say he was cracked; but you were never like other people, and never will be, Tom Dean. But, at least, you have fixed on the lady?"

"Oh, yes," answered Tom; "but if you will excuse me, Aunt Anne, I would rather not say anything about her just yet; for if—anything should happen it wouldn't be pleasant for either party, you know." With veiled allusion to his possible rejection Tom took his hat and left the room.

Our household was rather queerly put together. There is no particular reason why I should have been of it at all, for I was not really related to Tom, nor even to "mother," as I called her, though I am sure we were as dear to each other as any mother and daughter could be. She was the second wife of my father, who, like most ministers, had been richer in grace than in goods, and left us at his death with very little to live on. Then it was that Tom Dean had come forward and insisted on giving a home to his aunt and to me, whom he had scarcely seen a dozen times in his life before. That was ex-

actly like Tom—"queer Tom Dean," as his friends were fond of saying, "who never did anything like anybody else." I suppose, in spite of his clear head for business, there is no denying that he was whimsical; but I am sure, when I think of his falling generosity and delicacy, I can't help wishing there were a few more such whimsical people in the world. Naturally at the time I am speaking of, my opinion had not been asked; all I had to do was to go where mother went, and, while she gave her energies to the housekeeping, give mine to growing up, which by this time I had pretty well accomplished. But perhaps for that very reason—for one sees with different eyes at twelve and eighteen—my position in the house had already begun to seem unsatisfactory to me; and the morning's words put it in a clearer light, since it had been used as an argument against Tom's marrying. I knew that mother had spoken honestly, believing that such a step would not be for his happiness; and more resolved to set my mind at rest, I knew him, I reflected, should bring him round to her opinion, and be perfectly capable of quietly sacrificing his own wishes for my sake, who had not the shadow of a claim on him; so it must be on my part to prevent his own kindness being turned against him now. Still, it was not so easy to see how I was to provide for myself, in case it should become advisable. What could I do? Draw and sing and play tolerably, but not in a manner to compete with the hosts that would be in the field against me. Literature? I had read so many stories whose heroines, with a turn of the pen, dashed into wealth and fame. That argument was very nice, only—I was not the least bit literary; I had never even kept a journal, which is saying a great deal for a girl in her teens. The "fine arts," then, being out of the question for me, what remained? There was some sketching on a plain, and a family and—and there was Will Broomley! "That may seem like going away from the point, but it was not. It was matter-of-fact, but I could see well enough what was going on right under my eyes, and I had a pretty clear idea of what was bringing Will to the house so often as he had taken to coming lately. There was a "situation," then, that would give me the home-life I liked best, and felt myself best suited for; but—would it answer in other respects? I overcast the long seam I was sewing twice over. I was so busy trying to make up my mind whether I liked Will Broomley or not, that I forgot to ask my mother, and even then I had not come to any decision when I was called down stairs to Letty Walters.

Letty was the prettiest, I think, of all my friends, and certainly the liveliest. Tom called her the "tonic," and used to laugh heartily at her bright speeches. I suppose it was this that made mother fix on Letty as his choice. When I came into the sitting-room, I found a "kind of cross-examination" going on. It was amusing to any body in the secret, as I was, to watch mother's artful way of continually bringing the conversation round, if by chance to her, on what she wanted to know. But it amounted to nothing, either because Letty was too good a fence, or because she really had nothing to betray. But when Tom came home mother took care to mention that Letty had called.

"What the tonic?" said Tom. "Too bad!"

"But for your choice being already made," said mother, with a covert scrutiny of his face. "I dare say you might have as much of the tonic as you liked."

"But I go on the homeopathic principle, you know," answered Tom, with a twinkle in his eye.

"And she's mother's belief in Letty's guiltness wavered. Her suspicions were transferred from one to another of our acquaintances; but always with the same unsatisfactory result.

"It passes my comprehension," she said to me, despairingly, one day. "I am positive I could tell the right one by Tom's face in a minute, and yet I have mentioned everybody we know."

"Perhaps it is somebody we don't know," I suggested; "some friend of his we have never seen."

"What! a perfect stranger?" said mother, sharply. "Never talk to me, child; Tom's not capable of that!"

I was silent for I did not want to worry her; but that was my opinion all the same.

The same evening—it was rather more than a week since Tom had rallied that thunderbolt of his at us—mother began about it openly.

"When are you going to introduce your wife to us, Tom? I suppose you have come to an understanding by this time."

"Oh, there's no hurry," Tom said, as he had said before; but this time did not speak quite so cheerfully. "The fact is," he continued, with a little hesitation, "there—there's a rival in the case."

"A rival!" repeated mother, with unfeeling briskness.

"Yes, a young fellow—yonger by a good deal than I am, and Tom's face assumed an absurdly doleful look. "He is always there now. I confess I don't see my way clear; I'm waiting for her to make up her mind."

"And she's waiting, most likely, for you to make up yours," said mother, forgetting in her propensity to right matters that she was playing the enemy's game.

"There's something in that, that never occurred to me," said Tom, his face brightening. Mother saw her mistake and made no comment at either party, you know. "But the ways of my time are old-fashioned now; young ladies nowadays take matters into their own hands. If she cared for you you may be pretty sure she wouldn't have waited till this time to let you know it—that is, I judge by the girls I am in the habit of seeing; but if this one is a stranger to me—(here mother riveted her eyes on Tom's face; oh, dear, my unfortunate words!)—if she is an entire stranger I cannot pretend to form any opinion of her, of course."

"Of course," repeated Tom, absently. "Not that I have any such idea," resumed mother, growing warmer. "I have said and I say again that to bring a perfect stranger under this roof is not my opinion of you, Tom."

I felt mother's words like so many pins and needles; for Tom was looking meditatively across at me, and, though that was just a way of his, it seemed now if he was reading in my face that the opinion was mine and that I had been meddling in what did not concern me. I felt myself for very vexation getting redder every moment, till it grew insupportable.

"It is so warm here," I said, for an excuse, turning toward the French window. "I am going to get a breath of air."

I went out into our little strip of garden ground; Tom followed. I thought I should never have a better opportunity to say what I had in my mind to say, so I waited for him by the bench under the old pear tree. "Sit down here, Tom," I said. "I've something to say to you."

"Have you?" said Tom; "that's odd, for I—well, never mind that just yet. What is it, May?"

"Tom," I said, still surer now he had misjudged me, and more resolved to set my mind at rest, "I want a place."

"A place?" repeated Tom, puzzled, as well he might be by this sudden and indefinite announcement; "what kind of a place?"

"I don't know," I said, for indeed, my ideas were of the vaguest. "I thought you might, being in the way of those things. Now pray, Tom, I went on quickly, "don't fancy I am discontented, or—anything of that sort; the truth is ever since I left off school I have wanted something to do, and had it in my mind to speak to you about it."

With this I looked at Tom, fearing he might be vexed; but he did not look vexed; only preoccupied.

"I do know a place, as it happens," he said after a while, "only I'm not sure how it would suit you."

"That's soon seen," said I. "What is it like?"

"Well, it's a sort of—of general usefulness—"

"By, it must be to run errands," said I, laughing. "And where is it, Tom?"

"Well," said Tom, hesitating again, "it's with me."

"How very nice!" I exclaimed. "How soon can I have it?"

"The sooner the better, so far as I am concerned," said Tom, and with that he turned and wandered at that evening, I met his eyes I knew somehow, all in a moment, what it was meant; and I knew, too, both that I could not have passed all my life with Will Broomley, and why I could not.

I am sure Letty Walters, who interrupted us just then, must have thought my words were wandering at that evening, and indeed they were; for I was completely dazed with this sudden turn things had taken. But Tom, who had the advantage of me there, took it quite coolly, and laughed and talked with Letty just the same as ever till she went away.

It was pretty late when we went in. Mother sat where we had left her, knitting in the twilight.

"Wasn't that Letty Walters with you a while ago?" she said, as we came up.

"Yes," said I, with a confused feeling of an explanation of something being necessary. "She just came to bring me the new crochet pattern she promised me."

"H'm!" said mother, as much as to say she had her own ideas as to what Letty came for.

Tom had been wandering about the room in an absent sort of fashion, taking up and putting down in the wrong places all the small objects that fell in his way. He came up and took a seat by mother. I became of a sudden very busy with the plants in the window; for I knew he was going to tell her.

"Wish me joy, Aunt Anne," said he, "it's all settled."

"Settled, is it?" said mother, in anything but a joyful tone. "So it's as I suspected all along. Well, you have my best wishes, Tom; perhaps you may be happy together after all, I'm sure I hope so."

"That wasn't a very encouraging sort of congratulation, and Tom seemed rather taken aback by it.

"I'm sorry you are not pleased," he said, after a pause; "I had an idea somehow you would be."

"I did not know from what you judged. But, there, it's no use of crying over spilt milk. You'll be married directly. I presume; I must be looking out for a house," and mother stroked her nose reflectively with a knitting needle.

"What for?" said Tom; "I thought of keeping on here all the same."

"I never supposed otherwise," said mother. "Of course I did not expect to turn you out of your own home."

"But what is the need looking out for another, then?"

"Why, for myself."

"For yourself?" repeated Tom, in a tone of utter amazement. "Going to leave us—just now? Why, Aunt Anne, I never heard of such a thing!"

"Now, Tom," said mother, speaking very fast, and making her needles fly in concert, "we might as well come to an understanding at once on this subject. I am fully sensible of your past kindness—now just let me finish—I say I appreciate it, and have tried to do my duty by you in return, as I hope I should be always ready to do. I wish all good to you and your wife, and shall be glad to help her if I can, but to live in the same house with her is what would turn out pleasantly for neither of us, and, once for all, I can't do it."

"Aunt Anne," said Tom, pushing back his chair and staring in mother's excited face, "either you or I must be out of our wits."

"It's not me, then, at any rate," retorted mother, getting nettled.

Amusement and a certain embarrassment had kept me a silent listener so far, but there was no standing this; I tried to speak, but could not, for laughing.

"I think you are all out of your wits together," said mother, turning sharply. "What is the child? It's no laughing matter."

"You don't understand each other," I gasped; "oh, dear! it's not Letty—oh, dear!" and I relapsed again.

"Not Letty?" repeated mother, turning to Tom. "Then why did you tell me so?"

"I never told you so," said Tom.

"Why, yes, you did," persisted mother. "You came in and told me you were going to be married."

"Yes, so I am," said Tom, still at cross-purposes.

"Now, Tom Dean," said mother, rising and confronting him, "what do you mean? Who is going to be your wife?"

"Why, May, of course," answered Tom.

"May!" and then, after a pause of inexpressible astonishment, it was mother's turn to laugh. "Do you mean Tom, it was that child you were thinking of at the while?"

"Why, May, of course," answered Tom, simply.

"Well," said mother, "I ought to have remembered you never did do anything like anybody else. But, still, why in the world did you go to work in such a way?"

"I wanted to see how you took to my idea?" said Tom.

"And how do you suppose we were to guess your idea meant May?" mother asked.

"Who else could it be?" repeated Tom, falling back on what he evidently found unanswerable argument. It was no use talking to him. Mother gave it up with a shake of the head.

"And you won't want another home then, Aunt Anne?" said Tom, suddenly. That set mother off again; Tom joined with her, and altogether I don't think we ever passed a merrier evening than that night, when we were acquainted with Tom's wife.—Kate Putnam Wood.

Tables in Ancient Times.

The Greek lady of leisure in Athens employed herself at the spinning wheel, and had little need of a table, and beautiful in design and form as all Greek furniture was, one striking natural characteristic proclaimed itself in the furnishing of the home. They never had that for which they could find no practical use, and consequently as tables were only needed for the purpose of meals, they appeared only at those times, were more slabs of wood, which were brought at the dinner hour, and set down loosely upon their legs. The meal over, the table vanished with the empty plates. In Homeric days each person had a separate table, and it was only when luxury crept in that a larger table was played so entirely a subordinate part that we never read of it as being of handsome material or, indeed, as being of any importance at all, except to groan under the food, which was the most luxurious description.

The Romans, on the contrary, held the table in the highest estimation; they even made collections of them. Seneca possessed 500 small ones. It is curious to trace in the accounts old writers give us of Roman luxury in this respect a sort of likeness to the taste of modern days. No article of furniture in the Roman house cost so much as the table. These were one foot, or pedestal, fetched enormous prices. Pliny says that tables were brought in the first instance from the East and were called *orbis*, not because they were round, but because they were massive plates of wood, cut from the trunk of a tree in its whole diameter. Yet, oddly enough, we hear very little of tables in the East or in ancient history. Moses made a table for the Tabernacle, as if it were something unimportant, upon which to lay the show bread. Philo Judeus describes it as having been two cubits long and one and a half high, and dwells upon it as a remarkable piece of furniture.

Fashionable tables in the luxurious Russian homes were called "monopodia," and were made of a massive plate of ivory, resting upon a column of ivory; such tables were enormously expensive, and, according to Pliny, the Roman made generally of coarse linen. Yet, oddly enough, we hear very little of tables in the East or in ancient history. Moses made a table for the Tabernacle, as if it were something unimportant, upon which to lay the show bread. Philo Judeus describes it as having been two cubits long and one and a half high, and dwells upon it as a remarkable piece of furniture.

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SUNDAY READING.

Sermonic Results.

A sermon that is to accomplish an end, and to be worth listening to, must embody real thoughts, thoughts that have some connection with the interests and issues of life, and must be instinct with the living convictions of the preacher. To such a sermon, it must come from the preacher's mind and heart, warm with the very life-blood of his soul at the very moment of his delivery. But how a preacher can stand up before an audience and proceed to read as a message to living men a sermon which he wrote thirty, twenty or even ten years ago, I cannot understand. When written the sermon, doubtless, was a real transcript of the writer's thoughts, convictions and emotions. But during the rush of intervening years, what changes, if there has been any within him, have passed over his spirit? To sermon now would be simply impossible. And yet he tries to put himself into it, and in that guise he presents himself to an audience of thinking people. An old coat that he wore twenty years ago might be aired and the dust whipped out of it, and he present himself in it with much more propriety than in that old sermon. No treatment of the sermon can relieve it of its smell of age. Like an old bouquet of flowers, its once delicate fragrance has sunk into a sickening odor.—President Robinson.

Religious News and Notes.

There are over 6,000,000 children in America still outside of any direct Sunday-school influence.

Over 100,000 Bibles were given to emigrants during the past year upon arriving in this country by the American Bible society.

Bishop Payne, of the Methodist Episcopal church South, is very old, and in the Christian ministry sixty-five years, thirty-six of which he has been a bishop.

The National Baptist says that the man who complains of paying ten dollars for his church pew went to the circus last week, taking his wife and five children, and paying a dollar apiece for reserved seats. He is going to take a cheaper pew next year, and to advocate a reduction in the salary of the pastor.

King John, the monarch who rules Abyssinia with a rod of iron, is severely opposed to missionaries. He has banished a party of them who recently arrived at Massowah. These missionaries had distributed some Bibles to the natives, but, under the influence of the native priest, King John caused orders to be made for these in the houses and huts. In cases where copies of the Bible were found the owners were chained and otherwise treated with great cruelty.

The Danekards have a different way of holding their great ecclesiastical gatherings from that pursued by any of the other sects of the world. They do not crowd in immense numbers. They have been holding their national conference at Arnold, near Wabash, Ind. About 20,000 of them were present. They are very plain, both in their dress and their manners, but are conspicuously thrifty, and many of them are possessors of great wealth. They do not invest in costly clothing or jewelry, but despise everything in the way of personal adornment and luxury. They are, however, very fond of good eating. They settle all their disputes in a friendly manner, and never go to law against each other.

The following figures are from the general summary of the statistics of the United Presbyterian church for 1882: Synods, 9; presbyteries, 60; pastors and stated supplies, 641; without charge, 179; total ministers, 1,799; ministers ordained, 32; ministers installed, 52; ministers released, 35; licentiates, 39; students of theology, 50; congregations with pastors and stated supplies, 601; congregations vacant, 185; total congregations, 825; congregations organized, 16; mission stations, 98; new stations during the year, 20; houses of worship erected, 37; average cost, \$3,087. Total members reported, 84,573; adults baptized, 629; infants baptized, 3,720; total number of Sabbath-schools reported, 809; officers and teachers, 8,647; scholars reported, 72,956; contributions by Sunday-schools, \$36,147. Contributions for congregational purposes, \$930,125—an advance of \$76,584 over the preceding year; for missionary objects, \$17,898. The average contribution per member was \$1.40. The average salary of pastors was \$868.

Given a New Trial.

Jones was tried for a homicide in St. Louis. Alpeora Bradley was his counsel. He was acquitted, and a few days' edge of law is meager; but he makes a stirring speech, and his reliance is on his power with the jury as an orator. Throughout this trial he made the most ridiculous motions and objections, one of his propositions, for example, being that the State could not introduce proof of the killing without first showing that the man was alive. Eloquence in summing up could not save the prisoner then detained, and a verdict of murder was rendered. The prisoner demanded a new trial on the ground of his counsel's "ignorance, imbecility, incompetence and mismanagement." The supreme court denied the motion, but this decision has been reversed by the court of appeals, which held that the record of the case showed Bradley to have made "an exhibition of ignorance, stupidity and silliness that could not be more absurd or fantastical if it came from an idiot or lunatic." The court admits that such conduct on the part of counsel would not call for a new trial unless the prisoner had lost legal rights or advantages by it; but in this case witnesses whose testimony might have saved Jones were not called, and "the prisoner in effect went to his trial and doom without counsel such as the law would secure to every person accused of crime." Counselor Bradley replies very hotly in a card, quoting Shakespeare in this remarkable manner: "The thief who robs me of my money and rights or advantages by it; but in this case witnesses whose testimony might have saved Jones were not called, and 'the prisoner in effect went to his trial and doom without counsel such as the law would secure to every person accused of crime.' 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