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B. F. SCHWEIER. THE CONSTITUTION—THE UNION—AND THE ENFORCEMENT OF THE LAWS. Editor and Proprietor.

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CHAPTER VI.—(Continued.)

His voice—the clinging grasp of his hand that evening—had broken open the floodgates of her consciousness, and with mingled shame and fear, Nora saw that she loved this grave, self-contained man with all the force of her young, warm nature. It was suddenly revealed to her how heavenly it would be to know that he loved her, to hear him call her by her name, to feel that she could make him happy, and give him tenderness and sympathy such as his rugged life had never known. But, oh! would he thank her for it? Was it not shameful of her to think thus—to long to offer her heart to a man who had never sought it, who had never shown her any lover-like attention, who simply liked to talk with her, probably because she liked to listen? And even that evening, there was nothing worth thinking twice about in his words or hand pressure, only a friendly acknowledgment of her anxiety—perhaps too boldly expressed! How contemptibly weak and ill-regulated she was, to allow the idea of a man who probably did not care for her, to take possession of her imagination! How was it she had come to love him so dearly? and she did love him! The distress of her conviction seemed to confer a sudden maturity of womanliness on her girlish nature. What sorrow was she storing up for herself, to let any man possess such mastery over her? How was she to regain her self-respect? Only by a steady, consistent effort to stamp out the fire that had been smoldering unperceived in her heart, till the flames began to make their painful burning felt; only by assuming a tone of calmest friendship to the man she loved and dreaded, for he did not care for her, it was not likely. He needed an older, riper, more highly educated companion than herself! She must be careful to guard her secret—already she had been, must have been, foolishly demonstrative, or Mrs. Ruthven would not have hinted at any understanding between herself and Winton! Oh! the shame of being suspected of loving one who did not love her would be insupportable. Cost what it would, she would so guide herself as to escape such humiliation!

She braided up her long hair, prayed fervently for strength and help, and, with tear-bedewed lashes, fell asleep. Winton's last words echoing sweetly in her ears, despite her stern resolution.

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In London, though Mrs. Ruthven neglected to write to her friends at Brookdale, she was by no means idle.

On her arrival at the hotel where she usually put up, she was astonished, and slightly indignant, to find no Shirley awaiting her; nor were these feelings lessened by the receipt of a note late in the evening, informing her that he had called on the detective, whose address he had succeeded in procuring and now inclosed, but the man was away from home, and his wife was not sure when he would return. "I am exceedingly sorry not to see for myself how you have borne your journey," he added, "but a telegram from my sister this afternoon obliges me to start for Ostend to-night. I hope to return speedily, and to be of any use you like to put me to."

Mrs. Ruthven crushed up the note, and thought profoundly for a few minutes, with knitted brows and a look of pain; then she smoothed out the paper, and, having copied the address in her tablets, tore Shirley's missive to pieces, and threw them in the fire.

It was altogether a miserable evening. Marsden promised to look in, if there was time after an interview with the police officials charged with the care of the Austrian embassy; but the hours wore on, and he did not come. Mrs. Ruthven was still unhinged, and unwell from the result of fright, but she was gathering strength and composure. In truth, her nervous system was by no means weak, nor did trifles, whether of fact or fancy, produce much effect upon her; still she was glad to ring for her maid, and retire to rest, with a reading-lamp beside her and a French novel of the strongest description in her hand.

But her own doubts, hopes, fears, were of deeper interest. She did not put implicit faith in Shirley's assertions; faith was not either her strength or her weakness; after a careful examination of her position on all sides, she made up her mind to inquire personally into the whereabouts of the man she wished to employ. She stretched out her hands for her tablets, which lay on the little table by her bed, and read over the address: "Mr. John Waite, 11 Maryland Villas, Camden Road, N. W." Where was Camden Road? A map would soon tell. She would drive there to-morrow morning.

Mrs. Ruthven had none of the helplessness of a genuine fine lady; no shrinking from unaccustomed roughness, if it suited her purpose to encounter it.

Nor had she any fear of what her servants might say or think. To her they were merely machines, more or less well constructed to do her service, and to be kept in working order they must be properly oiled, i. e., fed and lodged; of their independent existence she never thought. Yes; she would endeavor to ascertain all about this man herself; she wished Shirley had not gone away so quickly. He surely was not feeling his feet firm enough to try standing alone? Besides, his sudden anxiety about his sister was curious. That he had a sister, Mrs. Ruthven was aware, but that was all; she did not know she was in Europe. "Well, patience and perseverance will discover most things—even my rubies—perhaps," was her last distinct thought.

As soon as Mrs. Ruthven had had her coffee and roll next day, she dressed very plainly and warmly, for it was a chill misty morning, and informed Virginie, her maid, that she was going to hold a consultation with her dressmaker. To carry out the idea, she directed that certain pieces of lace and Indian embroidery should be made up into a packet, that she might take it to the distinguished artiste she employed.

Then a cab was called, and having given audible directions where to drive, she alighted at the well-known establishment, dismissed her cab, deposited her parcel, with a verbal message that Mrs. Ruthven would call that afternoon or next day, walked to a little distance, and hailing a hansom, drove to the address which she gave the driver.

Maryland Villas was a row of neat, two-storied twin houses, with gardens, gates, high steps, and side entrances; possibly, they had in the first stage of their existence a country view, but now a range of small shops, with a large assortment of the wares dispensed within hanging about the doors, replaced the green fields of yore.

No. 11 was perhaps the most severely accurate in its cleanliness and air of propriety of all the villas. Mrs. Ruthven desired her driver to wait, and rang the bell.

The door was opened by a pretty little dark-eyed woman, well dressed in black, with a pretty white apron, and a becoming cap, not quite like an English woman yet scarcely foreign.

"Yes, Mr. Waite was at home," she said in reply to Mrs. Ruthven's inquiries, and would no doubt see the lady, if she could sit down for awhile.

Mrs. Ruthven could; she paid for and dismissed the cab, and followed the dark-eyed little woman into a nice front parlor with a bay-window, well shrouded by lace curtains, and filled with good furniture, a little too big for its dimensions.

"The truth is," said the little woman, with a smile, "my husband is asleep. He came home, after a long journey, about six this morning, and I have not yet called him."

"I am sorry to disturb him, but I need his help, and that soon."

"I will bring you the 'Times,' madame, and my husband will come as quickly as he can."

It seemed nevertheless a long weary hour before the door opened to admit Mr. Waite himself.

He was well and carefully dressed, a man of middle height, rather broad, but broad from bone, not flesh, his yellow-pale complexion, thin light hair, wide flat face, and very quiet inexpressive light eyes, were redeemed from ugliness by a pleasant smile and a well-cut chin.

"You wish to speak to me, madame?"

"I do," said Mrs. Ruthven, gazing at him as she thought that Nature had framed him for his work; he was thoroughly unremarkable, not a salient point of any kind on which memory was likely to catch. His voice, too, was even to monotony, yet not unpleasant. "When I tell you," she resumed, after scanning him calmly, "that I am Mrs. Ruthven, whose rubies were stolen at Evesleigh, you will know what I want."

"I understand," he said. "I partly expected to be sent for, and I am glad you came early, for," taking a card from the chimney-piece, "this gentleman expects to hear from me."

"Is the name Shirley?"

"Why do you ask, madame?"

Mrs. Ruthven smiled at his caution.

"Because if it is, the gentleman came on my behalf."

Waite handed her the card.

"I thought so. Well, Captain Shirley has been called away, and I shall explain everything myself."

"Thank you; it is a remarkable case, even as reported in the papers, and there is a good deal generally behind what they get at. Will you allow me?" he drew a chair to the table and took out a large note book.

Mrs. Ruthven then gave a brief, but clear, account of the circumstances under which the robbery was effected. Waite listened with downcast eyes and immovable attention, but did not break silence until she had ceased to speak.

"It is a curious case, very," he then said. "There seems no clew whatever; but you," raising his eyes and letting them rest on hers in a peculiar, impressive way, "you have a suspicion?"

"How do you know?"

"I think you have. I hear it in your voice. Now, will you please tell me, have you any notion if the value of your rubies was known outside your immediate friends?"

"I should think not. I really do not know; except that when in Paris last spring, having occasion to send my necklace to a jeweler's, a large offer was made for it by a man who was collecting rubies for some millionaire."

"Do you remember the name of the jeweler?"

"Yes; Sergier et Moppert, Rue de la Paix."

Waite wrote it down.

"Have you ever mentioned this before? Your maid, for instance—or any one else?"

"I cannot now remember."

"Have you any idea what time elapsed between Mr. Marsden's departure and the appearance of the robber?"

"Not very distinctly. I certainly sat quiet for some minutes, for I was tired; then I thought I would see if my hair was disturbed by the dancing, and I got up to look in the glass—perhaps it was ten minutes. In fact, I cannot tell."

"Mr. Marsden was the first to find you insensible? Who came in with him?"

"Some ladies, relatives of his, and a Mr. Winton, a man in the Civil Service, whom I knew slightly in India."

"Did he know anything of your rubies—of the offer for them?"

"I am almost sure he did not. Besides," smiling, "it would be absurd to suspect such a man—a thorough gentleman."

"Very elegant gentlemen do queer things sometimes under the pressure of necessity. You say Captain Shirley was at the ball; was he among those who came to your assistance?"

"No; I did not see him till the next day."

"He was dancing, I suppose?"

"I really do not know. I have an idea he was smoking a cigarette outside."

Waite sat silent for a moment or two.

"Do you know if your maid had a lover?"

"I do not, indeed!"

"It seems to me that some one within the house must have given information to the robber. How did he know of this tent? Knowing of it he must have lurked in the conservatory till he saw you were alone, locked the conservatory door to secure a few minutes uninterrupted, and then overpowered you with rare promptness. It is the boldest thing I ever heard of. I suppose even a slight cry might have been heard?"

"I am not sure. The tent was thickly draped, and there was no opening into the house, except the door, which was locked. Had any one been in the conservatory—but then, a waltz was going on, and every one was dancing."

"How many doors were there in this conservatory?"

"Two into the house, and two into the grounds, one of which formed the entrance to the tent."

"It might have been some swindler with your maid; generally, the integrity of young women is about in proportion to that of their lovers. At present I can see no light in this mysterious business, unless, indeed, you can give me a leading idea. I should like to see this conservatory. How far is Evesleigh?"

"About four hours—but I would rather go one at Evesleigh knew you were employed in the matter."

"No one need know; there are plenty of ways to see the place without giving a reason. It will not take me more than a day, and I can make a few inquiries at Oldbridge at the same time. This gentleman," touching the card, "has been called away, you tell me—do you know where he is gone?"

"To Ostend."

"Ostend? Ah! Now, madame, will you so far confide in me as to say what your chief object is, to recover your lost property, to punish the thief, or to get to the bottom of the mystery?"

"I suppose one includes all three. I think I most desire the power to punish."

The detective looked at her again with the peculiar, steady, immovable expression, as before.

"I will do my best. In fact, I shall put my whole experience and powers of observation into my work, for it is no common task you have set me."

"I know it," said Mrs. Ruthven, and paused abruptly, as if she arrested the words which were on her lips. "Must you go to Evesleigh?"

"Yes! I shall know my ground better if I do."

Then she asked his terms. He named a fair remuneration for his time, besides traveling expenses, and all out-goings.

"But should I succeed?" he added, and paused expressively.

"I shall reward you as you will deserve," said Mrs. Ruthven, with emphasis.

"It may be a long and fruitless undertaking, unless, indeed, you can give me some help," returned Waite, looking down and softly tapping the table with his large square-topped fingers.

"If I can I will, most assuredly," she said, in clear, resolute tones, "but I cannot stay longer now; make your inspection of Evesleigh, then come to me, I am visible between nine and eleven. Always send up a note—not your name—and you shall be admitted."

"I thank you, madame. I should like also to see this gentleman," touching the card.

"You shall, Mr. Waite, that I promise," returned Mrs. Ruthven, readily. "Now send for a cab, I must not stay longer."

Mr. Waite dispatched a neat little servant girl for a conveyance, and Mrs. Ruthven returned to her hotel, breaking her journey as before.

(To be continued.)

Pranks of Florida Wood-Rats.

The latest narrative of the queer doing of the Florida wood-rat, the best-known of them all, comes from Mrs. C. F. Latham, of Mexico, Florida. Previous to the destruction by fire of the old Oak Lodge, year before last, it was often visited by a pair of very sociable and quite harmless wood-rats, who nested in a palmetto hut near by, and made it their home until some cats came into the family. The wood-rats were big-eyed, handsome creatures without the vicious look of a common rat, with fine, yellowish-gray fur, white feet, and white under parts. Inasmuch as they never destroyed anything save a pair of Mrs. Latham's shoe-strings, which they had cut in order to get them out of the eyelet-holes, they were tolerated about the premises, and here are some of the queer things they did:

They carried some watermelon seeds from the lower floor, and hid them upstairs under Mr. Baxter's pillow. In the kitchen they found some cucumber seeds, and of these they took a tablespoonful and deposited them in the pocket of Mr. Baxter's vest, which hung up-stairs on a nail. In one night they took eighty-five pieces of wood from a box of bee-hive fixtures, and laid them in a corn-box. The following night they took about two quarts of corn and oats, and put it into the box from which the bee-hive fixtures came. Once Mrs. Latham missed a handful of pecans, and they were so thoroughly hidden that she never found them. About a year later the rats realized that Mrs. Latham had "given it up," and lo! the pecans suddenly appeared one day upon her bed!—St. Nicholas.

"Brought Up" in College.

One of the most original characters of the Welsh pulpit was the late Rev. Lewis Powell, Cardiff. While on a visit to Carmarthen town on one occasion he called at the college, and the students were all for the first time to pay him homage.

"Can I have the help of two of you, my boys, for a minute?" asked Mr. Powell.

"Yes, dear Mr. Powell," answered half a dozen of them at the same time.

"Well, I want two lusty boys, if you please," he remarked, and two of the strongest students were chosen. "Now, my boys," said Mr. Powell, "let me lay a hand on the shoulder of each of you, and you put your arms around me."

This was done.

"Lift me, boys," said Mr. Powell, and the students lifted him until he was head and shoulders above all present in the room. "Thank you, my boys," he remarked. "You may let me down now."

This was done. Then one of the boys asked:

"What is the meaning of this, Mr. Powell?"

The answer was:

"Well, some people look down on the church in Cardiff because Mr. Powell, the minister, was not brought up in college. I can go back to Cardiff now and tell them that I was raised in Carmarthen College, and that I stood higher than all the other students."

All truth is nonsense to the man who has let a lie make its home in his heart.

Nothing in this world equals the pleasure a mother finds in her good son.

Probably no man approves of the way an old man tries to amuse himself.

A lady—A woman who always remembers others and never forgets herself.

Even very poor people have the fad of collecting something; usually it is a virtue.

When a man accepts charity, some one is sure to say that he is not deserving.

Noble desires, unless filled up with action, are but a shell of gold, hollow within.

Our sympathy is cold to the relation of distant misery.

Shame on those hearts of stone that cannot melt in soft adoption of another's sorrow.

A man always likes to meet people who have the same grievance he has.

Never listen to two sides of a story—for the second story will spoil the first.

It is within the easy emory of people of middle age when a banana was a great rarity in the United States.

There are some things people want to put off until they are dead.

No one should give advice to a bride—not even her husband.

IN THE GREAT CITY.

A Country Boy's Introduction to Life in New York.

Seated on the edge of the iron basin, with a newspaper parcel unrolled in front of him, was a boy, apparently about 12 years of age, who, to the newsboy spectators, looked painfully neat and clean. Skip and his friends saw that the boy was a stranger in the city.

The newcomer had taken from their newspaper wrappings a small cake of yellow soap and a piece of cotton cloth.

Laying these on the iron edge of the fountain basin, he calmly proceeded to wash his face and hands, using a plentiful amount of soap; and then, to the intense astonishment of the spectators, applied the impromptu towel vigorously.

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He finished brushing his clothes, and then packed his "valise" by rolling the different articles carefully in the newspaper. Then, instead of going away, as Skip and his friends seemed to think he should have done as soon as they arrived, he stood with his hands on his hips, as if waiting for them to take their departure. For a minute no one spoke, and the silence was really painful.

The newsboys were mentally taking the measure of this stranger who appeared ready to defy them; and the latter finally asked impatiently: "Well, what're you fellers countin' on doin'? I reckon' I'm no great sight for you to stand lookin' at."

"Do you live here?" Skip asked.

"I'm goin' to now. Had it tough enough gettin' here, an' don't feel like leavin' till I've found out what there is in this city."

"Where did you come from?"

"Up Saranac way."

"Rode down in a parlor-car, I s'pose."

"Then you s'pose wrong, 'cause I walked."

"You don't look it." And once more Skip scrutinized the stranger carefully.

"I don't reckon I do. I count on keepin' myself kinder decent. It doesn't cost anything for a feller to wash his face, comb his hair, or have his clothes clean, an' there's many a time when it'll pull him through in great shape."

"Goin' to live on the interest of your money, I s'p'ose?"

"Well, you s'pose right this time," was the quiet reply. "That's my calkerlation; but it'll be on what I earn, not what I've got.'

"Dead broke?"

"Not quite;" and the boy took from his pocket a number of pennies, holding them in one hand, while he guarded himself against a possible attack. "There were twenty of 'em when I come 'cross the ferry, an' I b'lieve none of 'em have got away since."

"What are you goin' to do here?" Sid asked, beginning to fancy that possibly this stranger was a boy whom it would be worth his while to cultivate; and, in order to show his friendliness, he seated himself in a studied attitude of careless ease on the edge of the basin, while the others immediately followed his example.

"Whatever will bring in money enough for my keep an' a little over."

"Thinkin' of sellin' papers?" Reddy asked.

"I reckon that'll be 'bout the first job 'cause I've got to make money enough for my supper, or dig too big a hole in my capital."

"What's your name?"

"Teddy Thurston."

"Do you s'pose the fellers down here what run the newspaper business, are goin' to have you comin' in takin' the bread an' butter out er their mouths?" Sid asked angrily.

"No, I don't reckon they will; but you see I'm not after that exac'ly. You fellers'l never find me tryin' to get your bread an' butter; but I'll tell you what you can count on for a fact," and now the stranger spoke in a very decided tone: "I'm reckonin' on stickin' to the newspaper business, if there's any money in it, jest as long as I want to. I didn't travel all the way down here to get scared the first day. You see, I figger it 'bout like this: Sam Thompson, he came to the city last summer, an' some fellows—I don't know whether it was you or not—made it hot for him. It wasn't more'n a week before he was glad to walk back, although he came down in the cars. Now I thought I'd begin right where Sam left off; I'd walk the first way, an' then, perhaps, stand a better chance of ridin' the other, if I had to go; but it's got to be boys what are bigger than I am to scare me out er the plan. I've come to stay."—St. Nicholas.

Timbuctoo.

There is a story connected with Tennyson's prize poem of "Timbuctoo," which one may surely tell, with due reverence, of a master who afterward did such wondrous work. The examiners of the prize manuscripts for the year were three, the vice-chancellor, who had a great reputation but a violent temper, and who did not write well; a classical professor, who knew no poetry which was not in a dead language; and a mathematical professor. It was agreed that each should signify what he thought of the poems by the letters "g" and "b," for "good" and "bad."

The vice-chancellor had the manuscripts first. When they came to the mathematical professor, he found "Timbuctoo" scored all over with "g's." He did not understand why; he did not even understand the poem itself, and being afraid to ask the irascible vice-chancellor for his reasons, he also wrote "g" on the production.

The classical professor thought it rather strange that both his predecessors should admire so unintelligible a work, but, as he confessed, he "did not care one iota about the matter." So he put down his "g" with the rest, and as no other poem had three "g's," the prize was unanimously awarded to the author of "Timbuctoo."

After the affair was over, the three examiners happened one day to meet, and the vice-chancellor, in his absolute fashion, fell to abusing the other two for their taste in admiring the poem. They replied, with some natural indignation, that they should never have dreamt of considering it, if he had not scored it all over with g's.

"G's!" he exclaimed. "They were q's which I put in for queries, for I couldn't understand two consecutive lines of the poem."

KEEP IN YOUR ROCKING-CHAIR

It Will Cure You of Dyspepsia and Is a Great National Blessing.

"Critics of America," said a well-known physician, "have poked fun at us for being a nation of rockers. Americans have been pictured as sixty millions of persons seated in sixty millions of rocking-chairs—some of them cradles, of course. But now comes Dr. Laine, a French West India physician, who says it is good for us. He has been talking of what he calls 'the good effects that the lullaby-chair exercises on subjects affected with atony of the stomach.' Atony is want of tone.

"Laine says that a course of rocking chair after every meal, the oscillations being quiet and regular, 'stimulates gastro-intestinal peristalsis,' and that dyspeptics should take notice. The chair ought to be light, so that rocking requires no effort, and sufficiently inclined backward that the person may lie rather than sit in it. Physicians will agree that Dr. Laine has done Americans a real service. It has always been rather difficult to explain the national passion for the rocking-chair, but now it is only too easy. Americans are the worst sufferers from indigestion and dyspepsia in the world, but it now appears that we have instinctively rushed to what is now proved to be the best system of relief.

"The man who lunches on pie and then balances himself in a rocking-chair is unconsciously doing his best to stimulate his 'gastro-intestinal peristaltism;' he is practically singing a lullaby to his outraged and injured stomach, which is kept from crying aloud only by this method of soothing it. Behold in Americans a nation of invalids vainly endeavoring to rock themselves to sleep. Dr. Laine's theory is too good not to be true."

Old Marital Ceremonies.

"Wedding" comes from an old word, "wad," or "wed," a pledge or token, still used in Scotland to denote a bail or surety. An early English author, one Robert Brunne, writes of laying his glove to "wed;" also Geoffrey Chaucer says: "Let him beware his nekke lieth to wedde." Furthermore, the poet Gower enlightens us on the use of the word "wedde" as follows:

"But first 'er thou be spedde,
Thou shalt have such a wedde,
That I will have troth on houde,
That thou shalt be thyn husbande."

Anglo-Saxon custom ordained that, when the betrothal of young people took place, the youth gave the maiden certain "weds," one of which was a ring. It was put on the right hand then, being subsequently removed to the left on marriage. This is apparently the origin of our modern engagement ring.

The giving of money is assigned to the time of Clovis, who, when married to Princess Clothilde, gave her a "sou" and a "denier." Since then, these have become legal marriage offerings even to this day in France. Of course, the value of the coins depends on the status of the contracting parties. Formerly, a like custom existed in England. The bride or her attendant carried a bag, often handsomely embroidered, to receive the gift for the bride. This receptacle was called a "dow (from 'dower') purse;" and this custom long lingered in country parts. Evidently from it originated the bridal gift of parents or bridegroom called a dowry —Chambers' Journal.

Travels of the Elevator Man.

"Guess how far I travel up and down every day," said one of the elevator men in the Monadnock Building, as he stopped on the sixteenth floor.

The real estate man's clerk thought a moment and answered, "Oh, about two or three miles."

"You're way off," said the elevator man, and he began to figure up. "On an average," he said, "I make two trips every five minutes. That makes twenty-four round trips or forty-eight single trips every hour of the day. The building is 200 feet high. Now, in ten hours I make 480 single trips, each one 200 feet long. That makes in a day 96,000 feet. When you come to divide this by 5,280, the number of feet in a mile, I think you will find that I travel a little more than eighteen miles six days out of every week. In a year this amounts to over 5,600 miles."—Chicago Record.

One More About Napoleon.

It was a habit of the Emperor Napoleon when in a jocund mood to playfully pinch the ears of his marshals and counselors.

One evening, just before retiring, he approached Josephine and, after taking her playfully by both ears and shoving her head through a plate-glass mirror, said, thoughfully:

"Josephine?"

"Yes, sire," she responded, after picking the glass out of her mouth.

"Do you know what's the fare to Sioux Falls, South Dakota?"

"No, sire," she replied.

"Well, I do, and here's a check for the amount," he murmured; and turning abruptly, he hurried from the room.

This delicate apprisal of his ambitions was too much for "Josie," and she swooned in the arms of Talleyrand, who appropriated the check.—Judge.

Coppers on Wheels.

The officers in the parks of Boston are to use bicycles.

The Volcano of Stromboli.

Mr. Sala, in his gossip in the Sunday Times of London, tells how the volcano of Stromboli came to be known to English sailormen as "Old Booty." The legend is that one Capt. Booty, a master mariner trading to the Mediterranean in the seventeenth century, became so notorious for drinking and swearing that he was seized upon by the fiend and carried off to the interior of Stromboli, from which he has continued ever since to utter profane language by means of tongues of fire and puffs of smoke.

Difficult of Solution.

Toiling—I have a labor problem for you.

Dimling—Go ahead.

Toiling—If four men can do a piece of work in seven days how long will it take six men and a walking delegate.—Life.

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "Shamgar's Oxgoad."

TEXT: "After him was Shamgar, which slew of the Philistines 600 men with an oxgoad."—Judges iii., 31.

One day while Shamgar, the farmer, was plowing with a yoke of oxen, his command of whoa haw gee was changed to the shout of battle. Philistines, always ready to make trouble, march up with sword and spear. Shamgar, the plowman, had no sword and would not probably have known how to wield it if he had possessed one. But fight he must or go down under the stroke of the Philistines. He had an oxgoad—a weapon used to urge on the lazy team; a weapon about eight feet long, with a sharp iron at one end to puncture the beast and a wide iron chisel or shovel at the other end with which to scrape the clumps of soil from the plowshare. Yet with the iron prong at one end of the oxgoad and the iron scraper at the other it was not such a weapon as one would desire to use in battle with armed Philistines. But God helped the farmer, and leaving the oxen to look after themselves he charged upon the invaders of his homestead.

Some of the commentaries, to make it easier for Shamgar, suggest that perhaps he led a regiment of farmers into the combat, his oxgoad only one of many oxgoads. But the Lord does not need any of you to help in making the Scriptures, and Shamgar, with the Lord on his side, was mightier than 600 Philistines with the Lord against them. The battle opened. Shamgar, with muscle strengthened by open air and plowman's and reaper's and thrasher's toil, uses the only weapon at hand and he swings the oxgoad up and down and this way and that, now stabbing with the iron prong at one end of it and now thrusting with the iron scraper at the other, and now bringing down the whole weight of the instrument upon the heads of the enemy. The Philistines are in a panic and the supernatural forces come in and a blow that would not under other circumstances have prostrated or slain left its victim lifeless, until, when Shamgar walked over the field he counted 100 dead, 200 dead, 300 dead, 400 dead, 500 dead, 600 dead—all the work done by an oxgoad with iron prong at one end and an iron shovel at the other. The fame of this achievement by this farmer with an awkward weapon of war spread abroad and lionized him, until he was hoisted into the highest place of power and became the third of the mighty judges of Israel. So you see that Cincinnatus was not the only man lifted from plow to throne.

For what reason was this unprecedented and unparalleled victory of a farmer's oxgoad put into this Bible, where there was no spare room for the unimportant and the trivial?

It was, first of all, to teach you and to teach me and to teach all past ages since then, and to teach all ages to come, that in the war for God and against sin we ought to put to the best use the weapon we happen to have on hand. Why did not Shamgar wait until he could get a war charger, with neck arched and back comparisoned and nostrils sniffing the battle afar off, or until he could get war equipment or could drill a regiment, and wheeling them into line command them forward to the charge? To wait for that would have been defeat and annihilation. So he takes the best weapon he could lay hold of, and that is an oxgoad. We are called into the battle for the right and against wrong, and many of us have not just the kind of weapon we would prefer. It may not be a sword of argument. It may not be the spear of sharp, thrusting wit. It may not be the battering ram of denunciation.

But there is something we can do and some forces we can wield. Do not wait for what you have not, but use what you have. Perhaps you have not eloquence, but you have a smile. Well, a smile of encouragement has changed the behavior of tens of thousands of wanderers and brought them back to God and enthroned them in heaven. You cannot make a persuasive appeal, but you can set an example, and a good example has saved more souls than you could count in a year if you counted all the time. You cannot give $10,000, but you can give as much as the widow of the gospel, whose two mites, the smallest coins of the Hebrews, were bestowed in such a spirit as to make her more famous than all the contributions that ever endowed all the hospitals and universities of all Christendom, of all time. You have very limited vocabulary, but you can say "yes" or "no," and a firm "yes" or an emphatic "no" has traversed the centuries, and will traverse all eternity, with good influence. You may not have the courage to confront a large assemblage, but you can tell a Sunday-school class of two—a boy and a girl—how to find Christ, and one of them may become a William Carey, to start influences that will redeem India, and the other a Florence Nightingale, who will illumine battlefields covered with the dying and the dead.

That was a tough case in a town of England where a young lady, applying for a Sabbath-school class, was told by the superintendent she would have to pick up one out of the street. The worst of the class brought from the street was one Bob. He was fitted out with respectable clothing by the superintendent. But after two or three Sabbaths he disappeared. He was found with his clothes in tatters, for he had been fighting. The second time Bob was well clad for school. After coming once or twice he again disappeared, and was found in rags, consequent upon fighting. The teacher was disposed to give him up, but the superintendent said, "Let us try him again," and the third suit of clothes was provided him. Thereafter he came until he was converted, and joined the church, and started for the gospel ministry, and became a foreign missionary, preaching and translating the Scriptures. Who was the boy called Bob? The illustrious Dr. Robert Morrison, great on earth and greater in heaven. Who is teacher was I know not, but she used the opportunity opened and great has been her reward. You may not be able to load an Armstrong gun; you may not be able to hurl a Hotchkiss shell; you may not be able to shoulder a glittering musket. but use anything you can lay your hands on. Try a blacksmith's hammer or a merchant's yardstick or a mason's trowel or a carpenter's plane or a housewife's broom or a farmer's oxgoad. One of the surprises of heaven will be what grand results came from how simple means. Matthias Joyce, the vile man, became a great apostle of righteousness, not from hearing John Wesley preach, but from seeing him kiss a little child on the pulpit stairs.

Again, my subject springs upon us the thought that in calculating the prospects of religious attempt we must take omnipotence and omniscience and omnipresence and all the other attributes of God into the calculation. Whom do you see on that plowed field of my text? One hearer says, "I see Shamgar." Another hearer says, "I see 600 Philistines." My hearer, you have missed the chief personage on that battlefield of plowed ground. I also see Shamgar and 600 Philistines; but, more than all and mightier than all and more overwhelming than all, I see God. Shamgar with his unaided arm, however muscular, and with that humble instrument made for agricultural purposes and never constructed for combat, could not have wrought such a victory. It was omnipotence above and beneath and back of and at the point of the oxgoad. Before that battle was over the plowman realized this, and all the 600 Philistines realized it, and all who visited the battlefield afterward appreciated it. I want in heaven to hear the story, for it can never be fully told on earth—perhaps some day may be set apart for the rehearsal, while all heaven listens—the story of how God blessed awkward and humble instrumentalities. Many an evangelist has come into a town given up to worldliness. The pastors say to the evangelist: "We are glad you have come, but it is a hard field, and we feel sorry for you. The members of our churches play progressive euchre and go to the theatre and bet at the horse races, and society and fashion have taken possession of the town. We have advertised your meetings, but are not very hopeful. God bless you." This evangelist takes his place on platform or pulpit. He never graduated at college, and there are before him twenty graduates of the best universities. He never took one lesson in elocution, and there are before him twenty trained orators. Many of the ladies present are graduates of the highest female seminaries, and one slip in grammar or one mispronunciation will result in suppressed giggle. Amid the general chill that pervades the house the unpretending evangelist opens his Bible and takes for his text, "Lord, that my eyes may be opened." Opera glasses in the gallery curiously scrutinize the speaker. He tells in a plain way the story of the blind man, tells two or three touching anecdotes, and the general chill gives way before a strange warmth.

A classical hearer who took the first honors at Yale and who is a prince of proprieties finds his spectacles becoming dim with a moisture suggestive of tears. A worldly mother, who had been bringing up her sons and daughters in utter godlessness, puts her handkerchief to her eyes and begins to weep. Highly educated men who came to criticise and pick to pieces and find fault bow on their gold-headed canes. What is that sound from under the gallery? It is a sob, and sobs are coughing, and all along the wall and all up and down the audience there is deep emotion, so that when at the close of the service anxious souls are invited to especial seats or the inquiry room, they come up by scores and kneel and repent and rise up pardoned; the whole town is shaken and places of evil amusement are sparsely attended and rum holes lose their patrons, and the churches are thronged, and the whole community is cleansed and elevated and rejoiced. What power did the evangelist bring to bear to capture that town for righteousness? Not one brilliant epigram did he utter. Not one graceful gesture did he make. Not one rhetorical climax did he pile up. But there was something about him that people had not taken in the estimate when they prophesied the failure of that work. They had not taken into the calculation the omnipotence of the Holy Ghost. It was not the flash of a Damascus blade. It was God, before and behind and all around the oxgoad. When people say that crime will triumph and the world will never be converted because of the seeming insufficiency of the means employed, they count the 600 armed Philistines on one side and Shamgar, the farmer, awkwardly equipped, on the other side, not realizing that the chariots of God are 30,000 and that all heaven, cherubic, seraphic, archangelic, deific, is on what otherwise would be the weak side. Napoleon, the author of the saying, "God is on the side of the heaviest artillery," lived to find out his mistake, for at Waterloo the 150 guns of the English overcame the 250 guns of the French. God is on the side of the right, and one man in the right will eventually be found stronger than 600 men in the wrong. In all estimates of any kind of Christian work do not make the mistake every day made of leaving out the head of the universe.

Again, my subject springs upon us the thought that in God's service it is best to use weapons that are particularly suited to us. Shamgar had, like many of us, been brought up on a farm. He knew nothing about javelins and bucklers and helmets and breastplates and greaves of brass and catapults and ballistas and iron scythes fastened to the axles of chariots. But he was familiar with the flail of the thrashing floor and knew how to pound with that, and the ax of the woods and knew how to hew with that, and the oxgoad of the plowman and knew how to thrust with that. And you and I will do best to use those means that we can best handle, those weapons with which we can make the most execution. Some in God's service will do best with the pen; some with the voice; some by extemporaneous speech, for they have the whole vocabulary of the English language half way between their brain and tongue, and others will do best with manuscript spread out before them. Some will serve God by the plow, raising wheat and corn and giving liberally of what they sell to churches and missions; some as merchants, and out of their profits will dedicate a tenth to the Lord; some as physicians, prescribing for the world's ailments; and some as attorneys, defending innocence and obtaining rights that otherwise would not be recognized; and some as sailors, helping bridge the seas; and some as teachers and pastors. The kingdom of God is dreadfully retarded by so many of us attempting to do that which we cannot do, reaching up for broadsword or falchion or bayonet or scimeter or Enfield rifle or Paixhan's gun, while we ought to be content with an oxgoad. I thank God that there are tens of thousands of Christians whom you never heard of and never will hear of until you see them in the high places of heaven, who are now in a quiet way in homes and schoolhouses and in praying circles and by sick beds and up dark alleys saying the saving word and doing the saving deed, the aggregation of their work overpowering the most ambitious statistics.

In the grand review of heaven, when the regiments pass the Lord of Hosts, there will be whole regiments of nurses and Sabbath-school teachers and tract distributors and unpretending workers, before whom as they pass the kings and queens of God and the Lamb will lift flashing coronet and bow down in recognition and reverence. The most of the Christian work for the world's reclamation and salvation will be done by people of one talent and two talents, while the ten talent people are up in the astronomical observatories studying other worlds, though they do little or nothing for the redemption of this world, or are up in the rarefied realms of "higher criticism" trying to find out that Moses did not write the Pentateuch or to prove that the throat of the whale was not large enough to swallow the minister who declined the call to Nineveh and apologizing for the Almighty for certain inexplicable things they have found in the Scriptures. It will be found out at the last that the Krupp guns have not done so much to capture this world for God as the oxgoads.

Years ago I was to summer in the Adirondacks, and my wealthy friend, who was a great hunter and fisherman, said, "I am not going to the Adirondacks this season, and you can take my equipment and I will send it up to Paul Smith's." Well, it was there when I arrived in the Adirondacks, a splendid outfit, that cost many hundreds of dollars, a gorgeous tent, and such elaborate fishing apparatus; such guns of all styles of exquisite make and reels and pouches and bait and torches and lunch baskets and many more things that I could not even guess the use of. And my friend of the big soul had even written on and engaged men who should accompany me into the forest and carry home the deer and the trout. If the mountains could have seen and understood it at the time there would have been panic among the antlers and the fins through all the "John Brown's Tract." Well, I am no hunter, and not a roebuck or a game fish did I injure. But there were hunters there that season who had nothing but a plain gun and a rug to sleep on and a coil of fishing line and a box of ammunition and bait, who came in ever and anon with as many of the captives of forest and stream as they and two or three attendants could carry. Now, I fear that many Christian workers who have most elaborate educational and theological and professional equipment, and most wonderful weaponry, sufficient, you would think, to capture a whole community or a whole Nation for God, will in the last day have but little except their fine tackling to show, while some who had no advantage except that which they got in prayer and consecration will, by the souls they have brought to the shore of eternal safety, prove that they have been gloriously successful as fishers of men, and in taking many who, like the hart, were panting after the water brooks.

What made the Amalekites run before Gideon's army? Each one of the army knew how much racket the breaking of one pitcher would make. So 300 men that night took 300 pitchers and a lamp inside the pitcher, and at a given signal the lamps were lifted and the pitchers were violently dashed down. The flash of light and the racket of the 300 demolished pitchers sent the enemy into wild flight. Not much of a weapon, you would say, is a broken pitcher, but the Lord made that awful crash of crockery the means of triumph for His people. And there is yet to be a battle with the pitchers. The night of the world's dissipation may get darker and darker, but after awhile, in what watch of the night I know not, all the ale pitchers, and the wine pitchers, and the beer pitchers, and the whisky pitchers of the earth will be hurled into demolition by converted inebriates and Christian reformers, and at that awful crash of infernal crockery the Amalekitish host of pauperism and loaferdom and domestic quarrel and cruelty and assassination will fly the earth. Take the first weapon you can lay your hands on. Why did David choose the sling when