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Captain Brabazon

BY B. M. CROKER

A Military Romance of South Africa

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

"Oh, Esme!" exclaimed her sister, in a choked voice, "you will be the death of me. After your saying you would only bow to him; after hearing that he was so deadly shy. Oh—oh—oh!" holding her sides, and rocking herself backward and forward in absolute convulsions of laughter, while the unlucky heroine of this, to Gussie, killing adventure, stood in the middle of the room, a tall, tragic-looking figure, and surveyed her with stony-eyed resentment.

"And—and—what am I to say?" panted Gussie, recovering her breath at last, and drying her eyes as she spoke. "How is your absence to be accounted for, pray? Am I to tell Mrs. B. that having already embraced——"

"Say," with an indignant gesture, pausing in her walk—"say that I am extremely ill; and so I am, in mind."

"If I give her that message she will immediately send for Dr. Goggin, and your last state will be worse than your first."

"Then say anything you like," irritably. "Say that I'm not going down; no, not if she came and carried me herself. Indeed, Gussie, you must think of some excuse. You know very well," stammering with excitement, "that you yourself would not go into public after such a frightful disgrace; and I think," now recommencing to cry, "that I shall never be able to look anyone in the face again."

"Did he recognize you, do you think? Did he return your embrace with equal ardor?"

"Not he; he rather held back, which naturally surprised me. He was too much astonished to speak, and I never gave him time to open his mouth. I was so sure and certain it was Teddy; only, if I had not been an idiot, I might have remembered that Ted would be in uniform; but I never gave myself time to think, and just sprang on him like a tigress."

"And did he see your face?"

"I'm not sure," slowly. "I think not. I need scarcely tell you that one glance was enough for me, and I ran. I believe you are enjoying the whole thing, and thinking it a splendid joke," said she, angrily; "and it's very unfeeling of you. You may tell Nokes to send me a cup of tea. I'm going straight to bed. And now be sure and give a proper, probable account of my illness. Impress upon them that it will be tedious. I have it—a bad headache. I know I'm going to have one," running after her sister to the head of the stairs, and gesticulating eagerly over the balusters. "Be sure you say a headache, and remember that I'm very bad." To all this Gussie nodded a confidential, smiling acquiescence, as she tripped hurriedly downstairs.

"Where is Esme?" demanded Mrs. Brabazon, in a tone of sharp surprise, as her eldest stepdaughter entered the drawing room alone.

"She is not feeling very well, Mrs. Brabazon, and begs you will excuse her," returned Gussie, avoiding, as she spoke, three pairs of inquisitive eyes.

"Esme ill—rubbish!" ejaculated Florian. "I saw her in the avenue an hour ago." Brothers are sometimes brutal.

"She won't be able to come down to dinner," protested Gussie. "She has a bad toothache—no, I mean to say a splitting headache," becoming very red, and floundering about in a sea of vague excuses, while her mother and brother vollied exclamations and cross-questioned, and Miles sat by, pulling Waggy's ears, with a command of countenance that would have reflected credit on a North American Indian.

CHAPTER VI.

"What fine old timber you have. Splendid trees," remarked Miles, who, under the escort of the sprightly Augusta, was sauntering through the pleasure ground the morning after his arrival, Esme being still in retirement. "We could hardly beat you, even in Burmah."

"Yes, we rather pride ourselves on our old oaks, all but Flo," rejoined Gussie, complacently. "He considers them so much sunken capital, and would give anything to cut down the timber, melt the silver and sell the place."

"Sell the place!" echoed her companion, in a tone of indignant amazement, "that has been in the family since the time of James the First—or was it Elizabeth—"

"Oh, pray don't ask me. Esme could tell you, but my knowledge of history is on a par with the woman's who, pointing out a castle, remarked that 'one of the Johns had died there,'" opening the garden gate as she concluded, and tripping through in her well-starched pink cotton. "I wish you could see Esme!"

"I wish I could," he replied, "for I'm going away to-morrow morning."

"Oh, nonsense!" aghast.

"No; I'm quite serious. Is your sister like you?"

"Oh, dear, no! Far, far better looking. She is lovely. The prettiest girl in Thornshire. Very tall, and slight, and active. Dances beautifully; and you should just see her run!"

He could testify to that, he said to himself, with a smile. "She is younger than you are, I believe?"

"Yes, three years; but she is far more like the eldest. She takes the lead in everything, she has such a strong will, and what Mr. Bell calls 'great force of character.' I hope," laughing, "that you haven't a strong will and a great force of character, for two of a trade never agree."

"Oh, dear no; nothing to speak of," shaking his head. "And I suppose your sister has lots of admirers, too," he added, without raising his eyes from a very striking, almost speaking sketch of Mrs Brabazon, which he was almost unconsciously touching off, with his cane, in the fine gravel before him.

"No, not one," triumphantly; "nor ever had."

"Oh, I say—come," he expostulated, with a vivid recollection of the gate scene.

"I—I—know what you are thinking of," replied Gussie, mysteriously, "but I assure you," lucidly, "that that was no one."

"And you say that she is the prettiest girl in Thornshire," observed Miles, not wishing to enter upon a discussion of the little episode of the previous evening with the loquacious Augusta.

"I don't say it alone; everybody says it. When we go into a room everybody looks at her; she is what you would call the cynosure of every eye. And so far so good; but once men begin to talk to her their enthusiasm cools. She is so stiff and cold and stand-off; and if they presume, in spite of this, to pay her compliments, or to make sweet little speeches, she smites them so unmercifully that they go away nearly crying, and, I need scarcely remark, never more return. Oh, never, never more."

"A lively lookout for me, isn't it?" expressively.

"Oh, you must not mind her. Don't seem to notice her or admire her, and treat her quite in an every-day manner, as if she were nothing at all out of the common, and she will be as pleasant as possible. She says herself that the moment any man seems disposed to be extra civil—you know what I mean?" nodding her head expressively—"she can't help taking the most violent dislike to him. But it's nearly all shyness, nothing else. She has been to one or two small parties: very slow affairs they were; and do you know that the first time she was going she was just trembling all over, and cold with fright? Now, I'm quite different. I delight in society from first to last. I love dressing, driving, dancing, etc."

"Etc., I suppose, means flirting?" slightly elevating his eyebrows.

"Never mind what it means. I can go into a room with my head in the air, a kind of female Coeur de Lion."

"Exclaiming, come one, come all!" added her companion with a quiet suggestiveness.

"Now, Miles, I won't have you chaff me—yet; and you must not interrupt. But Esme's courage is of a different description. She's awfully brave in accidents, and would face a tramp or a savage dog just like a man; while I would be cowering behind her, my knees literally knocking together and my teeth chattering in my head. And she is the only one of us that dares brave Mrs. B. now."

The last word was suggestive, and suddenly recalled to Miles the gap in the family circle.

"Oh, by the way, Gussie," he said, "I was very sorry to hear about your youngest brother. I never knew of it till last night. Annie never told me. I suppose it happened some time ago?"

"Yes," she returned, looking rather red and embarrassed; but to her cousin's disgust there was not a trace of regret in her little round face. "Please don't talk about him; above all to Esme or Mrs. B."

"What had this young fellow done," Miles asked himself, "that his name was thus tabooed, his memory consigned to oblivion?"

During the afternoon Miles paid a formal visit to his Aunt Jane. The three young people set out for the village together, Gussie and Florian being en route to a "tennis party" at the Rectory, and the former impressing most eagerly on her cousin that he was not to stay long at the White House, but to be sure and follow them in a quarter of an hour, "which will give you five minutes for the weather, five minutes for Burmah and five for Esme. Mind you come. I will never forgive you if you don't turn up!"

Miles resolved to go for a long walk to sort his ideas and to make up his mind which at present was in a somewhat chaotic condition. He was not, it must be confessed, in a particularly urbane or genial humor as he strolled through the fields that lovely August afternoon, cane in hand, viciously decapitating harmless meadow sweets. After walking for some time along a deeply rutted, sandy, shady bridle path, a sudden turn in the lane brought him in sight of a closed wooden gate right across his present track, at the other side of which he beheld, with a thrill of unaccountable recognition, the figure of a girl, in a blue habit, riding a large dun pony. He could see, even at a distance, by the gestures of the young lady, and the shape of the pony's back, that they were having a serious difference of opinion. The human being wished to open the gate from the saddle, without dismounting, and the dumb animal positively declined to entertain the idea for one second. They had been contending thus for quite ten minutes, and Esme was getting hot and angry; and the words, "hideous beast, hateful imp of a pony," were borne to Miles' ears by a gentle little afternoon breeze that daintily rustled the ash trees and the hedgerows.

In her all-absorbing struggle with Jacky, Esme had never noticed that she and he were not alone, that there was a spectator on the scene—a slight, dark young man, in a tweed suit, with a daisy in his buttonhole, rapidly coming to her assistance. No, the stiff-necked quadruped occupied her whole attention. She relinquished the struggle, and jumped off his back, and was hastily proceeding to unfasten the hasp, when her obstinate, unruly animal backed suddenly, threw his head with a violent jerk, and, wrenching the bride out of his mistress' hand, lashed out playfully, and galloped down the field, a loose and triumphant pony.

"Oh, you demon of the deepest dye!" cried Esme passionately. Then suddenly catching sight of a gentleman at the other side of the bone of contention, she exclaimed eagerly: "Oh, do please help me to catch him. He will knock the saddle all to pieces, and perhaps break his knees;" and gathering up her skirt, without waiting for an answer, set a laudable example by starting off at once in hot pursuit.

Of all the cunning, tiresome animals that ever was shod, Jacky must have the precedence. They would succeed in hunting him into a corner, and he would pause, and leisurely crop the grass, with streaming reins and one malicious whitey blue eye cocked in their direction, and just as they fondly imagined they had him, he would give one contemptuous kick, accompanied by a squeal of derision, and thunder past them forty miles an hour.

At last Miles captured Jacky by dint of sheer pertinacity, and brought him triumphantly back to his mistress, who stood under a tree, with her hat off and a small branch of horse chestnut in her hand, with which she had been fanning herself, in the vain hope of cooling her hot cheeks.

The prettiest girl in Thornshire, there could be no doubt about that, said Miles to himself as he approached her, with the bridle of the captive over his arm.

The recent chase had loosened various stray little locks and curls about her temples; her cheeks were an exquisite rose color, her eyes like two sapphires, but both defiant and bashful; and, had he known the truth, she was on the brink of running away; for, now that the excitement of the pony hunt was at an end, she began to realize that at last she was really face to face with her much-dreaded cousin Miles. And now came the critical moment; why was not Gussie there to see?

"I've got him at last," he cried cheerfully, while still at some distance. "What a cunning old beggar he is. I think," now being quite close to her and doffing his hat, "that you must be my Cousin Esme. I," coloring a little, but looking at her steadily, "am Miles Brabazon."

"I suppose so," she returned, becoming crimson, tossing away her impromptu fan, but making no attempt whatever to shake hands. "Just lead him up to that stone, will you; and hold him tight or he will bite," she added, rather cavalierly.

He had fancied that a smile, a word of thanks, would have rewarded his success. But, no, her eyes did not even meet his; all he beheld was an averted, disdainful face.

"May I not put you up?" he asked humbly.

"Oh, no, no, thanks," impatiently, mounting as she spoke with nimble ease, and settling herself in the saddle.

"Does he often play you these tricks?" he ventured to ask, taking, as he spoke, a wisp of grass out of Jacky's reluctant mouth, and putting the reins in her hands.

"Yes, often," snappishly.

"And yet it does not cool your ardor for riding him?"

"No!" very shortly. "And now, if you will be so good as to open the gate, I shall be much obliged," she added, with ostentatious politeness.

The gate was duly opened, and Jacky condescended to pace through, Miss Esme bestowing on her cousin a stately little bow, evidently meaning to part company with him then and there. But no such idea was in Jacky's mind. He planted his feet firmly together, as it were, rooted himself in the soil of the next field, and positively declined to stir one step further, merely shaking his ears disapprovingly, and at last showing a strong desire to lie down. It was a humiliating situation for Esme, and ludicrous in the extreme. She could not honestly say, if she had been asked on oath at the moment, which of the two she hated most, her cousin or the pony. There was a twinkle in Miles' eye that had not escaped her; and, indeed, it was only by putting a strong restraint upon himself that he had been able to command his countenance. After a time a compromise was effected—Jacky was satisfied to proceed, provided that he was gently and indulgently led by the bridle. And in this way the trio slowly left the fields and proceeded along the narrow lanes leading to Mr. Hogben's farm.

Miles struggled bravely to make conversation, about the weather, the beauty of the country, and the lovely wild flowers in the hedges; but his well-meant efforts resembled a monologue, until, by a brilliant inspiration, he touched up the delinquencies of Jacky, and then Esme found speech; her pent-up indignation broke forth.

"Odious, ungrateful, ugly little wretch! Would you believe that he is twenty-four years old, and has hardly a tooth in his head?"

"No, indeed, I would not; he seems to be as lively as a two-year-old," delighted that this fair and disdainful divinity had found voice at last.

"Yes, that he is; and his temper is getting worse every year. Would anyone imagine that ages and ages ago, when he was being led out to be shot, along with the old carriage horses and another pony, I actually went down on my knees to Mrs. Brabazon, I groveled to her, to spare Jacky!"

"And did she?" inquired Miles, thoughtlessly, eager to keep the ball of conversation rolling at any price.

"Did she? What a stupid question!" lifting her eyebrows contemptuously. "If he had been shot, how could he be here now? But he was spared because Jacobs said he had a lot of work in him, and he would do very well for carting. You may let him loose now, thanks; he knows there is no help for it, and that he is going to Mrs. Hogben's."

(To be continued.)

WHAT THE CHINESE WORSHIP.

Their Religion Is a Mere Form, Their Deities Are Indefinite.

The only religious worship the average Chinaman performs, aside from ancestral rites, is a prostration and an offering "to heaven and earth" on the first and fifteenth of each moon, or in some cases on the beginning of each new year. No prayer is uttered, and after a time the offering is removed, and, as in other cases, eaten.

What is it that at such times the Chinese people worship? Sometimes they affirm that the object of worship is "heaven and earth." Sometimes they say that it is "heaven," and again they call it "the Old Man of the Sky," (lato ti'ien yeh). The latter term has led to an inference that the Chinese do have a real perception of a personal deity. But when it is ascertained that this supposed "person" is frequently matched by another called "Grandmother Earth" (ti mu nai nai) the correctness of the inference is open to serious question. The word "heaven" is, it is true, often used in the Chinese classics in such a way as to convey the idea of personality and will. But it is likewise employed in a manner which suggests very little of either. "Heaven is a principle" the vagueness of the term is obvious. To this ambiguity in classical use corresponds the looseness of meaning given to it in every-day life. The Chinaman who has been worshiping heaven upon being pressed to know what he means by "heaven" will frequently reply that it is the blue expanse above. His worship is, therefore, in harmony with nature, either individually or collectively. His creed may be described in Emersonian phrases as "one with the blowing clover and the falling rain." In other words, he is a pantheist.

Not Particular.

"She has never ceased to hope."

"For the return of the man who jilted her?"

"No. Any man."—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Where Ignorance Is Bliss.

Jack—The ingenuity of woman is beyond the comprehension of man.

Tom—What's wrong now?

Jack—Young Black's fiancee sent him an elaborately constructed penwiper for a birthday present and he wore it to church, thinking it was a new-fangled cravat.

The Death of a Coward.

THE boy leaned against the bulwark rails, watching the lights as they came up one by one on the coast. The plunging of the ship still made his head reel, and he was weak from want of food. He seemed altogether apart from the stir and life that three hundred emigrants on board created. His whole soul was filled with a dumb and impotent protest against his fate, and the life before him. Old Capt. Malcolm had shown little wisdom when he sent his only son to sea to have some pluck knocked into him.

The ship's doctor came out of the saloon in the poop to go his evening round below. With him was his wife, a slight, girlish figure, wrapped in a heavy cloak. She turned at the ladder which led to the lower deck, and was about to go back, when her eyes fell on the boy. She had noticed him once before, and his white face and lonely air roused the womanly sympathy in her. She touched him lightly on the shoulder and said, "You are leaving home, like me."

"Yes, ma'am," he replied.

"You must feel lonely," she said, "but you will soon be back, and then everyone will think so much of you."

Her voice had something caressing and inviting about it; and so his confidence, overcoming his shyness and reserve, broke bounds. He told her everything—how he would hate this life, how all filled him with fear and disgust, the cold and darkness, the chaff and horseplay of his fellow-apprentices, the indifference of everyone around him. He told how impossible it was to come up to his father's standard, how he felt he was a born coward, and that he would always be one, shrinking instinctively from the danger and excitement that bolder natures took pleasure in.

She listened sympathetically. Her hand had patted him once or twice, and encouraged him to go on. When he ended, she said: "You must not be too hard on yourself. It is not always those who fear the least that are bravest in the end. When the time comes, I am sure you will do your duty."

WITH FEVERISH HASTE HE SHOT THE GREAT IRON BOLTS.

In a few minutes the second mate passed along the deck and told the boy to go below. Then all was quiet.

A few hours later the Pride of Asia was steaming at "slow," with her whistle going every few minutes. The channel fog girt the ship like a shroud. The captain walked the bridge uneasily. No tempest or rock-bound shore gives the anxiety that a fog on this waterway of the nation does. Danger is imminent everywhere and the most careful seamanship is no guarantee of safety. So it is now. A hoarse shout came from the man on the lookout. The captain sprang to the telegraph, and as "Full speed astern" rang out, a large sailing ship took form in the fog, and in a few seconds crashed into the steamer in front of the bridge.

The Pride of Asia shook from stem to stern, heeled over to starboard, and then began to forge ahead, while the other went pounding along her side, wrenching the port boats from her davits and staving them in with her bowsprit. Then she passed away as a ghost in the fog.

The Pride of Asia had met her death wound. At once all was noise and confusion. The emigrants came pouring up on deck, screaming and shouting with terror. Some of the sailors rushed to clear the boats, but a sharp order from the captain stopped them.

In a few seconds the captain had decided on his course. The remaining boats would not carry a hundred and fifty people. There were more than twice that number on board. On the other hand, the land was about three miles off, and a sandy and protected beach meant safety. But could it be done with that hole in her side. He would try. He changed his course, rang "Full speed ahead," and shouted to the mate: "Go down and shut the for'ard bulkheads, Mr. Jones."

The mate ran forward and with the help of the carpenter tore off part of the hatch covering and sprang to the ladder. As he climbed down young Malcolm peered aimlessly over the hatch.

"Bring down a lantern," cried the mate, and Malcolm, galvanized into activity by fear, seized a lantern from the alleyways and clambered down into the hold.

The mate ran towards the iron door in the bulkhead, which had been left open, and pushed it to.

"The light here—quick."

And the boy brought it.

"Blast them!—oh, blast them!" roared the mate. "They've put the bolts on the wrong side. In five minutes we'll all be in kingdom come."

He stumbled for the ladder, and Malcolm followed wild with terror. Yes, everyone would be drowned, and he, too, with the cruel, cold water sucking him down. He dropped the lantern and began to pull himself up the ladder.

Suddenly he stopped. An idea had been born in his brain; a hideous, unthinkable thought—the door could be closed from the other side. He hung limply on the ladder, and in his mind raged a tornado of conflict.

Oh, to be out of this awful ship, safe once again at home! But the mate had said that all were lost. That meant him, too. And if only that door were shut, all could be saved. Great beads of sweat broke out on his forehead. He groaned and writhed about like one on the rack. Then he began to descend slowly. He stopped again on the last rung. He clung to the ladder as a drowning man to a rope. He could never let go. Why was he not going up the ladder? There were boats left. He had seen that. He could fight for a place, and be saved. He was so young, not old, like the mate and captain. They must give him a place.

All at once he loosened his hold and ran blindly for the door. On the way he tripped and fell heavily on his hands and face, cutting and bruising them. He lay half stunned for a minute, moaning from the pain, then raised himself and crawled the rest of the way. He passed through the door, and with feverish haste shot the great iron bolts. The boy was alone in his tomb. He leaned against the bulkhead, sick, sick to death. Why had he done this? He did not know. They would be saved now, but he—O! God, no more light or life for him! His poor dry lips moved convulsively, and his hands beat aimlessly on the iron wall. He would go back. Hope returned with a rush. He would die in the open—with others around him. It would be good to die thus, not in this hell of darkness and desolateness. He unshot one bolt and fumbled for the other. Then, with a low moan, he cast himself from it, driving his teeth into his lips in his agony.

It was not to be. He was too great a coward to live. He could only die. He would pray. But he could think of nothing—nothing but the "This night when I lie down to sleep" he had learned at his mother's knee.

To sleep—oh, he would sleep long! There was to be no waking this time. How the water was creeping up!

Long shuddering fits shook his frame as he felt the icy fingers of death rising inch by inch. He screamed and raved, dashing his head against the iron, that death might come quickly. He plunged beneath the water, only to come up again, fighting madly for life. Then there was a long drawn sob, and then silence.

The captain stood on the bridge, a figure of stony despair. The land could never be reached with water pouring like a torrent into the forward hold. He cursed his negligence in overlooking such a frightful blunder. It was going to cost 200 lives, and he must not be among the saved. The Pride of Asia was getting low in the water, but he could not understand why she was not sinking more by the bow. She was vibrating from the engines, pushed to their highest pressure, for the firemen stuck gallantly to their posts. Five minutes went and ten, and then, with a sudden shock, she took ground, and all were safe.

Next morning young Malcolm was missing, and the sorrowful news were sent to his father.

A week afterward, the divers entered the forward hold, and found to their astonishment, that the bulkhead door, which they had expected to find open, was closed.

They forced it open, and against it was floating the body of a boy.

Old Capt. Malcolm comes often to the little graveyard by the sea. In it stands a cross on which are inscribed the words, "Here Lies a Hero."—Pall Mall Magazine.

Winter Home of Song Birds.

Captain G. E. Shelley, an English ornithologist who has devoted special attention to African birds, says that Africa may fairly claim to be "the metropolic of song birds." It is the winter home of a large proportion of the most attractive small birds of Northern Europe, including the nightingale, the swallow and many of the warblers, and the bush resounds with their melody. Africa also possesses a great number of remarkable and beautiful birds of its own.

How the Justices Sit.

The seat on the right of the Chief Justice is always occupied by the associate justice who has been longest on the bench; that on the left by the next in order of seniority, and so on alternately from right to left.

One of China's Superstitions.

Black dogs and black cats are the favorites in China in the line of food, because when eaten in midsummer they will insure health and strength.

HAD TWENTY-FIVE BABIES.

Mrs. Swartwood, Married 27 Years, Has 20 Living Children.

Mrs. Samuel Swartwood of Wilkesbarre, Pa., is the mother of the largest family in the United States. Although a comparatively young woman, being only 41 years old, she is the mother of twenty-five children, twenty of whom are living. The youngest is only a few weeks old, and gives promise of being, like his brothers and sisters, hale and hearty.

Mrs. Swartwood is a remarkably well-preserved woman. She was married when very young, and her first baby was born fourteen months after her marriage. There have been but five years since during which the household has failed to be blessed with a baby. These years were 1874, 1883, 1887, 1888, and 1896. But two of them were in succession, and in the succeeding years twins were born.

Of the entire twenty-five children there were but the two sets of twins, which were born in 1889 and 1893. One of each set of twins is dead. Mrs Swartwood can recite the hour and day each child was born.

Regarding her married life, Mrs. Swartwood talked freely. "I was married when I was 14 years old. I loved Will when I was a girl and I wanted to be married. Ever since we have been very happy, and I would not change places with any rich woman. Look at these children! Ain't they riches enough, and every one living at home except the two girls that got married. It's nice for father and me to have them all here, although it does crowd us a bit. We havent got a big house, as you can see, and every bit of the space is used. Walk into the dining-room there and look at the table."

It was a table to look at, of generous width and very long. It bore plates and knives and forks for twenty-two people. At intervals were great piles of bread.

"It keeps me and the girls pretty busy looking after the eating and washing for our big family," resumed Mrs. Swartwood when I came out of the dining-room. "Father makes a lot $70 a month, and the boys bring in about $90 a month, and while we get along nicely we have nothing to spare. We've given all the children as good schooling as they can get around here."

"What do you think of married life?" I ventured to ask.

"Well, I ought to know, I guess. Who was it said married life was one long, sweet dream? Grover Cleveland, wasn't it? Well, I agree with him. It has been to me. Every woman should get married, I think. I don't know much about the new woman, but if she don't believe in married life I don't want to know anything about her. What's as happy as having children to love you and you loving them?

"None of my children have given me a pennyworth of grief, trouble, or anxiety to me, and I think God has been especially kind to give me so many. Yes, sir, you can put me down as believing in the married woman who believes in having children."

Mr. Swartwood, is an engineer on the Jersey Central railroad.

POOR PICKINGS OF AUTHORS.

Cash Comes in Most Cases After Publisher Gets It in Hand.

In a brief chat with one of our leading booksellers the other day it was very curious to hear him speak in a purely commercial way of books which we have all read and enjoyed, discussing the sales of this or that volume in the same way that a wholesale grocer or commission merchant would discuss barrels of flour or bags of potatoes. Every now and then a rumor becomes current that some writer has received vast sums for his work. As a matter of fact, there is a certain regular percentage which is all that ever reaches even the most successful. When anyone who is not entirely unknown, and may even, perhaps, already have some literary reputation, brings his manuscript to a publisher, the writer usually is given an advance ranging from $1,000 to $10,000, the largest in recent years having been given to an English author within the past three months. When the novel is finally published the writer will receive 15 per cent. of the actual selling price of each copy, including the advance money, which on a book selling at $1.50 would amount to 22½ cents for each copy sold. Let us suppose that the author had received $10,000 it would be necessary for the publisher to sell about 22,000 copies before he got his money back, because it costs him about $1.05 to put the book on the market. Then for the next 22,000 issued he would make about 45 cents on each book, until the author's total royalties had equaled the advance copyright, at which point the publisher would again be obliged to pay the writer the 22½ cents for each of the books sold.

It will be readily seen from the above figures that even the greatest selling books do not make their authors and publishers millionaires at one jump. Of course, only a very few and fortunate of the many writers ever receive any advance on their copyrights, as no publishers are going to take the risk of paying out money without feeling very certain that they will eventually get it back. Occasionally some well-written story remains unprinted for a long time, but all publishing houses are eagerly keeping watch for novelties and the possibility of discovering new authors is ever in their thoughts; therefore when one hears young writers complaining that they cannot get a hearing it is safe to surmise that their wares are not of any value.—Philadelphia North American.

Canada's Area.

The seven provinces of Canada have a total area of 1,078,000 square miles, and the nine territories 2,331,000 square miles, while the great lakes of the St. Lawrence system have an area of 47,000 square miles.

—One of the wonderful attractions of the Paris Exposition is a collection of glass flowers, representing over a thousand varieties. They were made by a Dresden firm, and closely resemble natural flowers in tint and form.

SERMON BY Rev. Dr. Talmage

Subject: Spiritual Values—Earthly Riches Are Transitory, But the Glories of Heaven Are Everlasting—Compares the Priceless Soul With the Valueless Body

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WASHINGTON, D. C.—From Berlin, where he preached in the American church to a congregation comprising many of his countrymen who are traveling through Europe, Dr. Talmage sends this discourse, in which, by original methods, he calculates spiritual values and urges higher appreciation of things religious. The text is Mark viii, 36: "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

Men of all occupations are to be found in the assemblies of the house of God, but in these days of extensive business operations a large proportion are engaged from Monday morning to Saturday night in bargain making. In many of the families across the breakfast table and the tea table are discussed questions of loss and gain. You are every day asking yourself: "What is the value of this? What is the value of that?" You would not think of giving something of greater value for that which is of lesser value. You would not think of selling that which cost you $10 for $5. If you had a property that was worth $15,000, you would not sell it for $4000. You are intelligent in all matters of bargain making. Are you as wise in the things that pertain to the matters of the soul? Christ adapted His instructions to the circumstances of those to whom He spoke. When He talked to fishermen, He spoke of the gospel net. When He talked to the farmers, He said: "A sower went forth to sow." When He talked to the shepherds, He told the parable of the lost sheep. And am I not right when speaking to an audience made up of bargain makers that I address them in the words of my text, asking, "What shall it profit a man if he shall gain the whole world and lose his own soul?"

I propose, as far as possible, to estimate and compare the value of the two properties.

First, I have to say that the world is a very grand property. Its flowers are God's thoughts in bloom. Its rocks are God's thoughts in stone. Its dewdrops are God's thoughts in pearl. This world is God's child—a wayward child, indeed; it has wandered off through the heavens. But about 1901 years ago, one Christmas night, God sent out a sister world to call that wanderer back, and it hung over Bethlehem only long enough to get the promise of the wanderer's return, and now that lost world, with soft feet of light, comes treading back through the heavens. The hills, how beautiful they billow up, the edge of the wave white with the foam of crocuses! How beautiful the rainbow, the arched bridge on which heaven and earth come and talk to each other in tears after the storm is over! How nimble the feet of lamplighters that in a few minutes set all the dome of the night ablaze with brackets of fire! How bright the oar of the saffron cloud that rows across the deep sea of heaven! How beautiful the spring, with bridal blossoms in her hair! I wonder who it is that beats time on a June morning for the bird orchestra. How gently the harebell tolls its fragrance on the air! There may be grander worlds, larger worlds than this, but I think that this is a most exquisite beauty. Some one on the bosom of his ancestry may come to me and say, "take my soul; give me that world!" I am willing to take it in exchange. I am ready now for the bargain. It is so beautiful a world, so sweet a world, so grand a world!"

But let us look more minutely into the value of this world. You will not buy property unless you can get a good title to it. After you have looked at the property and found out that it suits you you send an attorney to the public office, and he examines the book of deeds and the book of mortgages and the book of judgments and the book of liens, and he decides whether the title is good before you will have anything to do with it. There might be a splendid property and in every way exactly suited to your want, but if you cannot get a good title you will not take it. Now, I am here to say that it is impossible to get a good title to this world. If I settle down upon it, in the very year I so settle down upon it as a permanent possession, I may be driven away from it. Aye, in five minutes afterward I give up my soul for the world I may have to part with the world, and what kind of a title do you call that? There is only one way in which I can hold an earthly possession, and that is through the senses. All beautiful sights through the eye, but the eye may be blotted out; all captivating sounds through the ear, but my ear may be deafened; all lusciousness of fruits and viands through my taste, but my taste may be destroyed; all appreciation of culture and of art through my mind, but I may lose my mind. What a frail hold, then, I have upon any earthly possession!

In courts of law, if you want to get a man off a property you must serve upon him a writ of ejectment, giving him a certain time to vacate the premises, but when death comes to us and serves a writ of ejectment he does not give us one second of forewarning. He says: "Off of this place! You have no right any longer to the possession." We might cry out, "I gave you $100,000 for that property;" the plea would be of no avail. We might say, "We have a warrantee deed for that property;" the plea would be of no avail. We might say, "We have a lien on that storehouse;" that would do us no good. Death is blind, and he cannot see a seal and cannot read an indenture. So that, when you propose that I give up my soul first and last, I want to tell you that for the world you cannot give me the first item of title.

Having examined the title of a property your next question is about insurance. You would not be silly enough to buy a large warehouse that could not possibly be insured. You would not have anything to do with such a property. Now, I ask you what assurance can you give me that this world is not going to be burned up? Absolutely none. Geologists tell us that it is already on fire; that the heart of the world is one great living coal; that it is just like a ship on fire at sea, the flames not bursting out because the hatches are kept down. And yet you propose to palm off on me, in return for my soul, a world for which, in the first place, you give no title, and, in the second place, for which you can give no insurance. "Oh," you say, "the water of the oceans will wash over all the land and put out the fire." Oh, no. There are inflammable elements in the water, hydrogen and oxygen. Call off the hydrogen, and then the Atlantic and the Pacific oceans would blaze like heaps of shavings. You want me to take this world, for which you can give no possible insurance.

Astronomers have swept their telescopes through the sky and have found out that there have been fifteen worlds, in the last two centuries, that have disappeared. At first they looked just like other worlds. Then they got deeply red—they were on fire. Then they got ashen, showing they were burned down. Then they disappeared, showing that even the ashes were scattered. And, if the geologist be right in his prophecy, then our world is to go in the same way. And yet you want me to exchange my soul for it. Ah, no; it is a world that is burning now. Suppose you brought an insurance agent to look at your property for the purpose of giving you a policy upon it and while he stood in front of the house he should say, "That house is on fire now in the basement," you could not get any insurance upon it. Yet you talk about this world as though it were a safe investment, as though you could get some insurance upon it, when down in the basement it is on fire.

Here is a man who has had a large estate for forty or fifty years. He lies down to die. You say: "That man is worth millions and millions of dollars." Is he? You call up a surveyor, with his compass and chains, and you say: "There is a property extending three miles in one direction and three miles in another direction." Is that the way to measure that man's property? No! You do not want any surveyor, with compass and chains. That is not the way to measure that man's property now. It is an undertaker you need, who will come and put his finger in his vest pocket and take out a tape line, and he will measure five feet nine inches one way and two feet and a half the other way. That is the man's property. Oh, no. I forgot. Not so much as that, for he does not own even the place in which he lies in the cemetery. The deed to that belongs to the executors and heirs. Oh, what a property you propose to give me for my soul! If you sell a bill of goods you go into the counting room and say to your partner: "Do you think that man is good for this bill? Can he give proper security? Will he meet this payment?" Now, when you are offered this world as a possession I want you to test the matter. I do not want you to go into this bargain blindly. I want you to ask about the title, about the insurance, about whether men have ever had any trouble with it, about whether you can keep it, about whether you can get all or the ten thousandth or one hundred thousandth part of it.

There is the world now. I shall say no more about it. Make up your mind for yourself, as I shall, before God, have to make up my mind for myself, about the value of this world. I cannot afford to make a mistake for my soul, and you cannot afford to make a mistake for your soul.

Christ is glorious to our souls now, but how much grander our appreciation after awhile! A conqueror comes back after the battle. He has been fighting for us. He comes upon the platform. He has one arm in a sling, and the other arm holds a crutch. As he mounts the platform, oh, the enthusiasm of the audience! They say, "That man fought for us and imperiled his life for us," and how wild the huzza that follows huzza.

When the Lord Jesus Christ shall at last stand out before the multitudes of the redeemed of heaven and we meet Him face to face and feel that He was wounded in the head and wounded in the hands and wounded in the feet and wounded in the side for us, methinks we will be overwhelmed.

We will sit some time gazing in silence until some leader amid the white robed choir shall lift the baton of light and give the signal that it is time to wake the song of jubilee, and all heaven then will break forth into "Hosanna! hosanna! Worthy is the Lamb that was slain."

I calculate further the value of the soul by the price that has been paid for it. In St. Petersburg there is a diamond that the Government paid $200,000 for. "Well," you say, "it must have been very valuable or the Government would not have paid $200,000 for it."

I want to see what the soul is worth and what your soul is worth by seeing what has been paid for it. For that immortal soul the richest blood that was ever shed, the deepest groan that was ever uttered, all the griefs of earth compressed into one tear, all the sufferings of earth gathered into one rapier of pain and stuck through His holy heart. Does it not imply tremendous value?

I argue, also, the value of the soul from the home that has been fitted up for it in the future. One would have thought that a street of adamant would have done. No, it is a street of gold. One would have thought that a wall of granite would have done. No, it is the flame of sardonyx, mingling with the green of emerald.

One would have thought that an occasional doxology would have done. No, it is a perpetual song. If the gates of heaven marched in a straight line, some day the last regiment might pass out of sight. But no, the ages of heaven do not march in a straight line, but in a circle around about the throne of God, forever, forever, tramp, tramp! A soul so bought, so equipped, so provided for must be a priceless soul, a majestic soul, a tremendous soul.

If a man sell a bill of goods worth $5000, and he is cheated out of it, he may get $5000 somewhere else, but a man who invests his soul invests all. Saving that, he saves all. In the light of my text, it seems to me as if you were offering your soul to the highest bidder, and I hear you say, "What is bid for it, my deathless spirit? What is bid for it?" Satan says, "I will bid the world." You say, "Begone, that is no equivalent! Sell my soul for the world? No! Begone!"

Well, there are a great many people who say, "I will not sell my soul for the world. I find the world is an unsatisfying portion." What, then, will you do with your soul? Some one whispers here, "I will give my soul to Christ." Will you? That is the wisest resolution you ever made. Will you give it to Christ? When? Tomorrow? No, now. I congratulate you if you have come to such a decision.

Oh, if the eternal Spirit of God would now come down upon you and show you the vanity of this world and the immense importance of Christ's religion and the infinite value of your own immortal souls, what an hour this would be!

What a moment this would be! Do you know that Christ has bought your soul? Do you know that He has paid an infinite price for it? Do you know that He is worthy of it? Will you give it to Him now?

I was reading lately of a sailor who had just got ashore and was telling about his last experience at sea. He said: "The last time I crossed the ocean we had a terrific time. After we had been out three or four days the machinery got disarranged, and the steam began to escape, and the captain, gathering the people and the crew on deck, said, 'Unless some one will go down and shut off that steam and arrange that machinery at the peril of his life we must all be destroyed.' He was not willing to go down himself. No one seemed willing to go. The passengers gathered at one end of the steamer waiting for their fate. The captain said: 'I give you a last warning. If there is no one here willing to imperil his life and go down and fix that machinery we must all be lost.' A plain sailor said, 'I'll go, sir,' and he wrapped himself in a coarse piece of canvas and went down and was gone but a few moments when the escaping steam stopped. The captain cried out to the passengers: 'All saved! Let us go down below and see what has become of the poor fellow.' They went down. There he lay dead." Vicarious suffering! Died for all! Oh, do you suppose that those people on the ship ever forgot, ever can forget, that poor fellow? "No," they say, "It was through his sacrifice that I got ashore." The time came when our whole race must die unless some one should endure torture and sorrow and shame. Who shall come to the rescue? Shall it be one of the seraphim? Not one. Shall it be one of the cherubim? Not one. Shall it be an inhabitant of some pure and un