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Captain Brabazon

BY B. M. CROKER

A Military Romance of South Africa

CHAPTER VII.

But Miles still held the bridle, and declined to accept this broad hint, walking beside his cousin, till Jacky suddenly came to a violent halt at the back gate of a large farm yard, surrounded by high, red-tiled, deep-roofed barns, and a noise of lowing and barking and clucking and crowing.

"Oh, Miss Esme, dear!" cried a ruddy-cheeked, elderly woman, in a large checked apron, who was in the act of feeding a mob of ducks. "She's been asking for you the whole afternoon. Go in and see her like a dear young lady. You've brought the wool?"

"Yes, but I've no time to stop, Mary. Jacky has kept me hours on the road. He went half-way into the horrid green pool near the Belle rising, and was going to lie down, only a boy rushed in and dragged him out; and he got loose in the hay field, and I thought he never would have been caught. I'll give you the fingering, and I'll come in again," evidently anxious to be gone.

"Oh, but here is Tom to hold the pony, and you must just run in for a minute, dear. She's been awful irritable all day, and maybe you'd put her in a good humor for us; you know how she takes to you. Do now," coaxingly. "Tom, go to the pony's head!"—to a youth with a shock of red hair.

Thus adjured, Esme jumped off Jacky, and hastily went into the farm house, followed by Miles, who found himself in a long, low, tiled kitchen, with small latticed-paned windows and well-stored rafters, and in the presence of a little old woman, who was sitting near the fire in a kind of beehive chair, with glittering dark eyes, lighting up a face as wrinkled as a roasted apple and as sharp as a needle.

"Well, so you were not for coming in, missy!" she cried, in a high, reedy voice. "I saw you. My sight is spared to me, though it wotld be as well sometimes if it wasn't, to see the waste going on all around," glaring at her daughter-in-law and lifting, as she spoke, a large ear trumpet to the ear nearest Esme.

"I would have come in, only I'm late, granny," returned that young lady down the trumpet, in her most apologetic tone of voice, "and here is the wool," placing a packet in the old lady's lap.

"It's gray!" she exclaimed. "I don't wanjt gray wool. I said brown," she returned, ungratefully, as she held it up and felt it critically between her claw-like fingers, her eyes all the time fixed on Miles.

"I can change it," said Esme, making animated signs.

"No, no, no; then I would not get it for another long spell. It will have to do," very crossly. And now, suddenly sitting up quite erect, and still staring hard at Miles, she nodded her head confidentially. "And so this is the young man that has come all the way from the other end of the world, hasn't he—" Esme made a quick sign of assent, unprepared for the sequel, "to marry you."

"No, he hasn't!" she shouted down the trumpet.

"It's no use you screaming to me, missy," she returned shrilly. "I never can hear what you say, and it just goes through my poor head," now planting the trumpet in her lap, and thus cutting off any possible reply, "and it's no good shaking your head like that. What's he come for else?" demanded this very terrible old person. "She's a good girl"—in a patronizing staccato—"and you'll get a pretty wife," she cried, raising a high, chirruping voice, and addressing herself specially to Miles, who, now that he had seen Esme, was by no means so averse to congratulations as he had been two hours previously.

As for his unhappy cousin, who knew from years of experience the extraordinary loquacity of Granny Hogben, and the liberties she allowed her tongue, she got herself—how she never exactly knew—once more out into the yard, and was soon in the saddle. Jacky was stepping homeward at a rapid, consequential walk, when Miles overtook them running, saying, as he got up to them:

"Surely you are never going to be so inhuman as to desert me and leave me to my fate in these outlandish lanes? It would be ungrateful, to say the least of it."

"Oh," answering him very reluctantly, "I will point you out the road, and you can easily make your way home. You go up this lane," pointing with her whip, "and take the first turning on the right, then the second on the left, then——"

"Then," he interrupted emphatically, "I shall have lost my way, and shall be rambling about the fields all night. Pray spare me this fate!"

Miles was amazed at his own persistence and his own flow of language, but the rude avoidance of an exceedingly pretty girl is occasionally a sufficient incentive to put a young man on his mettle.

"Come, then, if you like," was the grudging answer; "but you must walk fast, or we shall be late for dinner."

"I'll run the whole way. I'll be your eyes, as if you were in India," he returned eagerly. "Only don't leave me!"

"To hear you, one would imagine you were one of the babes in the wood," returned his cousin, contemptuously, glancing down on her companion as she spoke.

"What an amiable person Mrs. Hogben's aged parent seems to be," he remarked, irrelevantly. "I quite love her."

"Do you? You must be susceptible indeed." Yes, he certainly had a look of Teddy when he laughed.

"I wanted to say something to you,' continued Miles, nervously flourishing his cane about in a manner that excited the ire of Jacky; "and all the way up from the fields I was cudgeling my brains, but I could not say it. I wanted to speak to you about—about—this will, and yonder worthy old woman broke the ice for me at one plunge. You know——"

"I know," interrupted his companion hastily, with averted face, "that if ever you break it any further, I shall never speak to you again. Also, that I shall leave you here to find your own way home as best you can."

"May I not say one word on the subject?"

"Not one. Please put the whole affair out of your mind. If you even hint a—I—I—shall hate you."

Here was a threat! He had no recourse but to obey this imperious young lady; but he made a solemn mental resolve to bring forth the subject on some future occasion.

"And what may I talk about?" he asked. "What topics are not labeled dangerous?"

"Oh," pricking Jacky with her whip, "talk of the weather, the crops, the new moon, anything; talk of Burmah."

And thus encouraged he lamely began to make some conversation. But even under their peculiar circumstances young people of their age were sure to find subjects of conversation; and he, perceiving he had an eager and intelligent listener, launched forth about the wonders of Mandaley, that impostor the white elephant, the hill reported to be composed of solid silver. Then he gave a few Burmese legends, a short sketch of Bangkok, said to be the richest city in the world, with its huge golden altar, streets full of gamblers, and river cheery with the celebrated singing fish, when, to his and Esme's astonishment, they found themselves already at the back gate at Baronsford.

Do not suppose that she had been silent all the time. She had, after her interest was aroused, and feeling a conviction that she had overawed and silenced the young man beside her, thawed and thrown in remarks, questions, and nods just as plentifully as opportunity occurred. He had a look of Teddy. Only for this one great point in his favor she would never—so she assured herself—have opened her lips to him, even once. And yet in what did the likeness lie? He was dark and sunburned, and not much above middle height; while Ted was tall and fair.

"Why, we are actually at home!" he exclaimed in surprise. "We must have come by a short cut. How quick we have been."

"Yes," returned Esme, "those stories of yours made the time pass. I don't mean to flatter you," she added quickly, "but those descriptions of Burmah were so interesting, and I do like to hear about other countries—having seen so little myself—no matter from whom; and of course no one, however stupid, goes about the world for nothing."

In this cruel manner did she qualify her compliment; but Miles accepted it, concurring in the time-honored adage that half a loaf is better than no bread.

"We have only ten minutes before dinner," said Esme, glancing nervously at the yard clock. "No, no," waving her cousin away impatiently. "I always dismount alone; but," jumping down, gathering up her skirt and commencing to run, "if you like to follow me in by the back door you may," she called to him condescendingly over her shoulder. "It saves time."

CHAPTER VIII.

Under a shady bank, overhung by two nut trees, a clump of lilacs and a very ancient mulberry, the summer house at Baronsford seeks to screen itself from the vulgar gaze. Its kind old friend, the nut tree, spreads its leafy arms above its pointed thatched roof, and conceals its wigwam proportions from strangers' eyes. Who is the girl in white huddled up on the wooden seat that runs all round the interior, a girl with her dress tightly gathered round her, and the tips of her shoes merely resting on the ground, her whole attitude bespeaking distrust of the insect inhabitants, and with her eyes bent on a young man in uniform, who is sitting on the venerable and rickety table, with his forage cap over one ear, and his arms akimbo? They are Esme and Teddy, of course. He is brown, broad-shouldered and soldierly looking, and in his sister's eyes as well favored a young man as ever wore spurs. She is far prouder of his personal appearance than she is of her own; his mustache she considers simply perfect, and her vanity is divided between that and the three-cornered white patch on his forehead usually covered by his jaunty forage cap. It is duskish in the summer house; not a single moonbeam penetrates from outside, thanks to the careful nut tree.

"You will never guess where I supped and slept last night, Esme," Teddy was saying. "At Aunt Jane's!"

"I don't believe you," returned his sister, politely, after a minute's pause.

"Nevertheless it is a fact all the same. I went down in fear and trembling to wait upon the old lady. When she saw me she stared very hard for about half a minute, and then cried, 'Goodness, mercy, gracious! why, it's Teddy!' She had not expected to see me in uniform, you know; in fact, she had not expected to see me at all. Well, then she put up her arms and drew me down and kissed me—first time, I'll bet, she ever kissed a mustache—and then she turned me round and round as if I was on a pivot, and then looked me all over; and then she kissed me again and made me sit down beside her and tell her all about myself and my career, as she called it. And I did; I showed her my three stripes, and told her of my prospects, and how you had stuck to me through thick and thin, and then—oh, incredulous young woman—she killed the fatted calf and told me I was not to dare to go back to Mrs. Swoffer, but to stay with her. She presented me with fifty pounds, and once I'm promoted I'm to have a large allowance; and for the future I am to consider myself her boy, and by a few little hints she let fall, I fancy you are her girl!"

"Not I," cried Esme, with a laugh of incredulity. "However, as long as she is good to you she is doubly good to me," emphatically.

"And now, Esme—to turn to another subject for a change—what about this chap, Miles Brabazon?"

"Oh, I was going to tell you, Ted; I got a desperate fright this morning, what our Irish laundrymaid calls 'a regular turn.' I was talking to him down by the river——"

"About what?" interrupted Teddy, inquisitively.

"Never you mind; I was down by the river, and in pulling out my handkerchief I dragged out that new photo you gave me last night; it fell precisely at his feet. Tableau!"

"Tableau, indeed!" grinning. "And what did he say? what did he do?"

"Of course I pounced on it at once, but he was too sharp for me; he got hold of it first, and handed it back without looking at it; but he did not appear to be over and above well pleased."

"And pray why not?"

"Why not? you ridiculous wooden-headed Teddy; because I believe he thought it was some lover of mine."

"The deuce he did!" puffing out clouds of smoke.

"And I rather fancy that he could be jealous."

"You don't say so! Well, and so could I if I was engaged to a girl and caught her carrying other fellows' portraits about her person. I suppose he asked you no questions, and you told him no—ahem, fibs?"

"No."

"I say, Esme," confidentially, "are you going to marry him? to come to the point, as they say."

"I don't know," she replied, with perceptible hesitation.

"Don't know! what rubbish. You know your own mind, surely, by this time."

"I'm to give him an answer in a week," said his sister, in a low tone. "And now, Teddy, I want to know if you will grant me a great favor," in a coaxing tone, standing up and laying her hand imploringly upon his arm. "Let me tell Miles."

"No; sorry to refuse you, my dear child, but that is just the very thing I cannot allow you to do. Can't you hold on a bit? There's no hurry."

"Oh, but there is," she returned, eagerly. "So many things must seem so strange to him—my rushing out and hugging him by mistake, as I told you; that photograph this morning, and other things. It's like living in a powder mill—any moment there may be an explosion. Do, please, please, let me tell him!" she pleaded eagerly. "If"—becoming extremely red, but the kind darkness concealed the fact—"if I—he," stammering, "we are to be married, the sooner you know one another the better; and I should like to introduce you."

"I dare say," scornfully, "and walk up to him with me in tow, and say, 'Permit me to present my brother Teddy, alias Sergt. Brown, of the Prince's Lancers,' and I would have to salute him and call him 'Sir,' as would befit a non-commissioned officer, and it would be a very pretty little picture altogether. I could never feel the same to him if I met him by and by on an equal footing. It may seem ridiculous nonsense and vanity to you, but it is just my one weakness, and I should like to put my best foot foremost, and appear to the best advantage to your husband, old lady, when we meet as brother officers, and there's no yawning gulf between us; and," with a sudden start of surprise, "here he is; at least, I suppose that this is he, this fellow in evening clothes coming down the middle walk."

"It is, it is!" she gasped. "Oh, Ted," creeping closer to her brother, and speaking in an agonized undertone, "what shall we do if he discovers us?"

"Keep cool," returned Teddy, imperatively. "Get well behind the table and don't sneeze or crunch the gravel with your shoes. It's as dark as pitch in here to anyone outside. Imagine his face," he continued, in a smothered whisper, "if he were to walk in and find his pretty Esme tete-a-tete with a sergeant of Lancers! His feelings would be what you might call mixed! I suppose he would murder me!"

"If he does find us, Teddy, you must tell!" returned his sister hysterically, crowding still nearer to her companion, and scarcely daring to breathe, as she sat with her gaze riveted on the unconscious cause of her trembling trepidation.

(To be continued.)

MIRROR WRITING ODD MALADY.

Its Victims Have Faculty of Inscribing Characters Backward.

An almost unique case of nervous disease was investigated at the last sitting of the French Academy of Medicine. The patient is a young Roumanian, whose malady has been observed by Dr. Marinesco of Bucharest. The most curious manifestation of his disease takes the shape of what is known among scientists as "mirror writing," which means that the characters are written backward, so that when reflected in a mirror they are to be read in the ordinary way. Dr. Marinesco had observed that the hands of his patient when unoccupied were affected with a nervous trembling, which ceased to a great extent when they were used for a definite purpose. Wishing to see what effect this symptom of the malady had on the handwriting Dr. Marinesco asked the patient to write a few lines from dictation. To his astonishment he found that the entire passage had been written backward with absolute accuracy.

The experiment was repeated several times with exactly the same result, and it is, in fact, impossible for the patient to write otherwise. When asked to trace a word with his foot on the ground it, too, was found to be written backward. The patient being a Jew, a final experiment was made with Hebrew. This language, as is well known, is always written backwards, but the patient, reversing, as usual, the normal process, can only write it from left to right. Partial cases of mirror writing have been observed before, but none in which the tendency was so irresistible.—Pall Mall Gazette.

Wrong Basket.

Frank—I knew Penn would be a poet when he was a baby.

Ida—What were the symptoms?

Frank—He was found in a basket on the doorstep.

Ida—I don't see anything in that.

Frank—Yes, but it was a waste basket.—Brooklyn Life.

A Real Genius.

The man that sharpened shoe pegs at both ends and sold them for wheat was a genius, but he has his equal in Mexico. Some time ago one of the habitual revolutionary flare-ups was about to commence in one of the belligerent little South American Presidencies which masquerade under the title of republics. A couple of hundred men marshaled in opposition to the government, swore solemn oaths, and met nightly in an abandoned hut at the entrance to a swamp. Enthusiasm was plentiful, but arms were scarce; so a purse was made up, and three of the party set off to buy ammunition.

They went to Mexico, where a cargo of powder was delivered to them, and, after inspection, was shipped to the revolutionary headquarters. A signal gun was mounted on a hilltop, and when the day and hour arrived the field marshal of the revolutionary army touched a match to the fuse of the piece. There was no response. The marshal used all the matches in his silver matchbox, but the gun refused to fire. An investigation by the "War Office" followed, and that cargo of powder proved to be nothing but mahogany sawdust, which had been vigorously stirred up with powdered graphite to give it the proper color and appearance.

STORY TELLER

THROUGH OTHER EYES.

HE HAD been sent by one of the large downtown stores to lay a carpet in the spare bedroom. He whistled merrily—in the intervals when his mouth was not full of tacks—and although his face was lined with care, there was a good-natured twinkle in his eye and he went about his work as one who enjoyed it.

The young mistress of the house had come into the room and was watching him from the window seat, the only available resting place in the room. Her frame of mind was of the deepest cerulean hue, and she considered herself an exceptionally unfortunate woman. Her husband had that morning informed her that, owing to unexpected reverses in business, they would not be able to go to the seashore, as they had planned to do, and, in fact, they could not leave the city, but must be content this year to test the attractions of St. Louis as a summer resort. There would be nothing to do, therefore, in the way of recreation but to ride over the well-known boulevards and attend the theater once in a while. The dressmaker who had been engaged to plan and make a number of fetching gowns and other "confections" must be informed that her services would not be needed, and altogether the mistress of the house considered this life to be a very disappointing affair, one which, when taken all in all, was by no means worth the trouble of living.

She watched the man in moody silence. Why did he take any interest in his occupation? How could he be happy when for him the future evidently contained nothing but work? She wondered how life appeared as seen through his eyes. She felt like talking to him; she wanted to learn something of his history; but there was the rat-tat-tat of the hammer to drown all conversation, even had he been able to speak distinctly with the tacks in his mouth.

When his task was nearly finished, and when he was pouring the last remaining tacks from the paper into his hand, she asked tentatively:

"Have you a large family of children?"

"No children at all, ma'am, and I guess it's a blessing I haven't the way things have turned out," he replied cheerfully.

"You have had some trouble in supporting yourself, then, I conclude?"

"Myself? Gracious! It wouldn't be any trouble to provide for myself. Anything's good enough for me. But you see all my life long I've had somebody on my hands to take care of. I was just a small kid, though I was the oldest of five, when my father died. Then mother said:

"'Joe, you are a little fellow, but you must do what you can to support the other children.' And so I went to work, and you might say I never was a child from that minute. Then mother she married again, because she thought it would be better for us children, she said. My stepfather was a good-hearted man, but not one that ever could set the river afire, and after awhile he met with an accident that crippled him for life, and I had him on my hands, too. The other children grew up and married off, but none of 'em ever seemed to have a place in their homes or any money for father and mother. I was the oldest, you know, and they'd got into the habit like of depending on me. I guess it was nothing more than natural that they should.

"Then Aunt Jane, my stepfather's oldest sister, came from Iowa on a visit. She was considerably drawed up with rheumatism, and she said she thought the trip would do her good. That was ten years ago, and she is with us yet."

"Why, you have no right to support her. She is not related to you in the slightest degree."

"That's so, but then, she ain't related to my brothers and sisters, either, so they couldn't be expected to take her. She has no money, no other relatives of her own, and no place else to go. Naturally, I've got to look after her. She'd be a heap more agreeable, though, if she wasn't so cranky and fond of finding fault. If the tea is green she wishes it was black, and if it's black, she's sorry 'tain't green, and so on. But, then, we all have our faults." He placed a tack on the edge of the carpet and hammered it in.

"I should think any home would be unpleasant that contained such a woman," remarked the mistress of the house when the noise of the hammer had subsided.

He smiled. "Well, with her remarks and with father and mother always hectoring more or less, our place ain't always what you'd call gay. But I've found that the best way to be happy is not to think too much about yesterday, but get all the good you can out of to-day. And there's a good deal that's pleasant to be found, after all, if we'll only look for it."

"It is not surprising that you were not able to morry," she said, ignoring his philosophy.

"Oh, but I am married!" and his rugged features were illuminated by a brilliant smile. Then he drove in another tack.

"With four grown people to support—two of them invalids—you must have a hard life, no matter how you look at it, and yet you struck me, somehow, as being a very happy man."

"And so I am," he returned, still smiling. "The richest man in St. Louis or McKinley himself ain't any happier than I am this day. I could sing at the top of my voice. I could even dance if there was nobody to see me, for I guess one of my feet must be a Methodist, I am so awkward on the floor." And he chuckled softly.

The last tack was in now. He stood up and surveyed his work with an expression of satisfaction, and then began to gather up his tools.

"Tell me about your marriage and what it is that makes you so happy," said the mistress of the house persuasively.

He was quite willing to comply with her request. He slipped on his threadbare coat, and, leaning, tall and ungainly, against the doorpost, he folded his arms and began half apologetically:

"I know very well that I hadn't ought to marry, there being circumstances in life when a man has no right to think of his own comfort. The rest all took it for granted that I'd never marry, and I always said I wouldn't. But that was before I'd seen Lizzie.

"She was also alone in the world, poor little thing, and worked in a restaurant downtown. I couldn't afford to take many meals at restaurants, as you may guess, but I used to drop into that one sometimes and order a doughnut and a cup of coffee. If I couldn't get a seat at Lizzie's table, I could watch her wait on other people, and even that was worth a good deal."

"You considered her pretty, of course?"

"Yes, ma'am, as a picture. You'd never see a prettier complexion, or clearer blue eyes, or nicer hair, of a light color, and soft as a child's, and her hands were little bits of white hands like a born lady's. She had such a kind look on her face, too, and wearing her white apron, always so spic and span clean, and that little white cap, she looked like an angel to me, though I expect angels don't ever wear aprons and caps.

"I don't know, I don't indeed, how I ever mustered up courage enough to ask a girl like that to marry me. But I did, and she said 'yes,' though I was a good deal older than she was, and was poor, and nothing to look at. Then there came the dread of telling the folks at home. I knew mighty well they wouldn't like it, and they didn't. Father and mother were both awfully huffy about it, and Aunt Jane was just wrathy, said she'd always known that men were selfish, but she hadn't thought that even I could be so bad as to take the bread out of my own family's mouths to give to a stranger, a silly girl, she said, who'd flaunt 'round and put all my wages on to her own back.

"Well, I did feel a little guilty when they called me selfish, and I could understand just how they felt about it, but I lost my temper and made Aunt Jane keep quiet when she began on Lizzie.

"After we were married—that was four years ago—my wife wanted to keep right on in her old place, but I wouldn't hear to it. I'd married her to take care of her, and I was going to do it if I worked my fingers to the bone. But she was such a good housekeeper and fine manager that she saved money out of what I gave her for the butcher and groceryman, and we just had loads of pleasure on what she saved. Saturday she'd fix a lunch in a basket, and when my work was done we'd meet some place, and go to the park, where we'd have a little picnic all to ourselves. In the winter we sometimes went to the theater, not the expensive ones where they cut and slash around in grand style, but to the 30-cent shows, where they come out and sing and dance.

"It wasn't reasonable to expect that such luxury and happiness could last long, and it didn't. Lizzie was taken sick and had to go to the hospital, and there was weeks and weeks of misery for her and me. When she came out she was like a little ghost, and though her eyes were as pretty as ever, she couldn't see out of them any more."

His voice faltered and his listener said sympathetically:

"That is very sad for both of you."

"The doctors gave us a little hope, but told us not to build too much on it. They said that as her blindness was caused by a surgical operation, and not by a disease of the eye itself, she might get her sight back some time, and suddenly.

"She must have led a miserable life all day with the old people, all of 'em so fretful, and she all in the dark, but the little woman never complained. When I'd ask her about it she'd beg me not to talk about her, but to tell her what I'd seen during the day. And I used to tell her of the fine houses I'd been in and of the ladies I'd seen, and describe what they had on, though I don't think I could write for a fashion book. I'd tell her the funny things that happened to make her laugh, and as I don't see much really, being always so busy when I'm in people's houses, I got to making up lots and lots of things that never happened. Why, it was only yesterday that I told her of a quarrel I'd heard between a fat old man and a cross-eyed woman, and neither of 'em ever lived in this world, or any other. Ananias ain't in it with me!

"But this morning, this blessed morning, while I was taking my breakfast, my wife got up from her chair, and putting her arms around my neck, began to cry. 'Oh, Joe!' she says, just like that; 'Oh, Joe!'

"It wasn't a bit like her to act so, and I says, astonished:

"'Why, Liz, what's the matter with you?' And she says, 'I can see!'"

The mistress of the house turned her head and looked out of the window, but her eyes were veiled by a mist.—St. Louis Star.

BACK TO HIS OLD-LINE BOOKS.

Discouraging Experiences of a Canvasser with a Volume on Dogs.

"I've gone back to my first love, the great 'Celebrated Compendium of Universal Knowledge,' bound in calf and sold at a price within reach of all," said the book agent to a Detroit Free Press reporter. "The other day the head member of the firm that I am proud to represent called me into his private office and showed me a book on dogs, telling how to take care of them, what to feed, what to do for the mange, how to tell a mastiff from a pug, how to handle a mad dog—in fact, it was a regular dog encyclopaedia, bound in cloth, and sold at a popular price.

"The moment I set eyes on that book I saw great possibilities in it. I knew from bitter experience that nearly every one kept a dog, and no matter what kind of a cross-eyed purp it might be the owner couldn't be convinced that his particular dog wasn't the finest dog on earth. I made up my mind that there was a fortune in the sale of that book, and I secured the exclusive right to this city before I left the office. Cautioning the head member of the firm to keep the presses going, so there would be no possible chance for a shortage, I started out to place the great work before the public. The first house I struck my hopes received a sudden chill.

"I was no sooner in the yard than a big dog came tearing around the corner of the house and made for me. There was only one thing to do, and I did it. I made for a tree that was near and managed to get out of the way before the beast arrived. As he showed no desire to leave, I yelled for help. A man came to the door, and after calmly looking the situation over asked what I wanted.

"'I am selling a work on dogs,' I said rather weakly from my position in the tree. 'It tells how to cure the mange what to feed, what to——'

"'Well,' said he, cutting in, 'explain it to Tige, and if he cares about it I'll buy it.' With that he went inside and shut the door.

"For two mortal hours that miserable cur sat under the tree and licked his chops. Then the owner came to the door again and said it was time that Tige had his dinner, and that I could finish explaining the book to him after he got through. If he hadn't called that dog away just as he did Tige would have had his dinner right under the tree, and the firm would have been short one book agent. As far as I am concerned, every cussed dog in this city may die of mange. In fact, I hope they will."

Danger in Veils.

A service has been done to women generally by Dr. G. A. Wood, of Chicago, in tests made by him with systematic care to determine the danger, if any, in the wearing of veils. For this purpose he selected a dozen typical specimens of the article and applied the ordinary tests of ability to read while wearing them, and these tests showed that every description of veil affects more or less the ability to see distinctly, both in the distance and near at hand, the most objectionable being the dotted sort. Other things being equal, vision is interfered with in direct proportion to the number of meshes per square inch, and the texture of the material also plays an important part in the matter. Thus, when the sides of the mesh are single compact threads the eye is much less embarrassed than when the double threads are used, the least objectionable veil, on the whole, being that which is without dots, sprays or other figures, but with large and regular meshes made with single and compact threads. Dr. Wood pertinently remarks that while eye troubles do not necessarily result from wearing veils—for the healthy eye is as able as any other part of the body to resist legitimate strain—weak eyes are injured by them.—New York Tribune.

Philippines' Only Railway.

The Philippine Islands can boast of but one railway, running from the city of Manila to Dagupin, a distance of 123 miles. This railway, however, is first-class, so far as it goes. It has a single track of steel rails, is very well built and the bridges along the route are of iron or stone of excellent construction. The station buildings are all well-built, substantial edifices.

Consumption of Coffee.

The consumption of coffee the world over is growing rapidly. The average annual consumption in the decade 1870 to 1880 was 792,000,000 pounds; in the next decade it was 1,320,000,000. Last year it was 1,580,000,000.

CESSIONS TO FOREIGN POWERS.

Territorial Grants China Has Made from Time to Time.

Each conflict in which China has engaged has resulted in a loss of territory. The principal cessions made by the Mongol government as the price of peace have been the following. The island of Formosa was ceded to Japan in 1895, after the war with China. In 1897 Germany seized the port of Kiou-Chou on the east coast of the Shantung peninsula, her excuse for so doing being a massacre of missionaries which had taken place there. Two months later she received from China a ninety-nine-year lease of the port and district. In 1898 Russia obtained from China a twenty-five-year lease of Port Arthur, Talienwan and their adjacent territories and waters. The lease can be extended by mutual agreement. The same year the Chinese government gave permission for Great Britain to occupy Wei-Hai-Wei for as long a period as Russia shall hold Port Arthur. To compensate France for the concessions given to Great Britain and Russia a ninety-nine-year lease was given her of the bay of Kwang-Chan-Wan, on the coast opposite the island of Hainan, and last year two islands at the entrance of the bay were definitely ceded to her. Hong-Kong was ceded to Great Britain in 1841.

The unlucky man seldom betters himself by changing his position.

SERMON, BY Rev. Dr. Talmage

Subject: Children of a King—The Royal House of Jesus, and the Sun, the Moon, the Stars and All Nature Are Its Heritage—Cross Its Heraldic Sign.

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WASHINGTON, D. C.—In this discourse Dr. Talmage who, during his journey homeward has seen much of royal and imperial splendors, in passing through the capitals of Europe, shows that there is no higher dignity nor more illustrious station than those which the Christian has as a child of God; text, Judges viii, 18: "Each one resembled the children of a king."

Zebah and Zalmunna had been off to battle, and when they came back they were asked what kind of people they had seen. They answered that the people had a royal appearance; "each one resembled the children of a king." That description of people is not extinct. There are still many who have this appearance. Indeed, they are the sons and daughters of the Lord Almighty. Though now in exile, they shall yet come to their thrones. There are family names that stand for wealth, or patriotism, or intelligence. The name of Washington among us will always represent patriotism. The family of the Medici stood as the representative of letters. The family of the Rothschilds is significant of wealth, the loss of $40,000,000 in 1848 putting them to no inconvenience, and within a few years they have loaned Russia $12,000,000; Naples, $25,000,000; Austria, $40,000,000, and England, $200,000,000, and the stroke of their pen on the counting room desk shakes everything from the Irish Sea to the Danube. They open their hand, and there is war; they shut it and there is peace. The Romanoffs of Russia, the Hohenzollerns of Germany, the Bourbons of France, the Stuarts and Guelphs of Great Britain are houses whose names are intertwined with the history of their respective nations symbolic of imperial authority.

But I preach of a family more potential, more rich and more extensive—the royal house of Jesus, of whom the whole family in heaven and on earth is named. We are blood relations by the relationship of the cross; all of us are the children of the King.

First, I speak of our family name. When we see a descendant of some one greatly celebrated in the last century, we look at him with profound interest. To have had conquerors, kings or princes in the ancestral line gives lustre to the family name. In our line was a King and Conqueror. The Star in the East with baton of light woke up the eternal orchestra that made music at His birth. From thence He started forth to conquer all nations, not by trampling them down, but by lifting them up. St. John saw Him on a white horse. When He returns He will not bring the nations chained to His wheel or in iron cages, but I hear the stroke of the hoofs of the snow-white cavalcade that brings them to the gates in triumph.

Our family name takes lustre from the star that heralded Him, and the spear that pierced Him, and the crown that was given Him. It gathers fragrance from the frankincense brought to His cradle, and the lilies that flung their sweetness into His sermons, and the box of alabaster that broke at His feet. The Comforter at Bethany. The Resurrector at Nain. The supernatural Oculist at Bethsaida. The Saviour of one world, and the chief joy of another. The storm His frown. The sunlight His smile. The spring morning His breath. The earthquake the stamp of His foot. The thunder the whisper of His voice. The ocean a drop on the tip of His finger. Heaven a sparkle on the bosom of His love. Eternity the twinkling of His eye. The universe the flying dust of His chariot wheels. Able to heal a heartbreak or hush a tempest, or drown a world, or flood immensity with His glory. What other family name could ever boast of such an illustrious personage?

Henceforth, swing out the coat of arms! Great famines wear their coat of arms on the dress, or on the door of the coach, or on the helmet when they go out to battle, or on flags and ensigns. The heraldic sign is sometimes a lion, or a dragon, or an eagle. Our coat of arms worn right over the heart hereafter shall be a cross, a lamb standing under it, and a dove flying over it. Grandest of all escutcheons! Most significant of all family escutcheons! In every battle I must have it blazing on my flag—the dove, the cross, the lamb, and when I fall, wrap me in that good old Christian flag, so that the family coat of arms shall be right over my breast, that all the world may see that I looked to the Dove of the Spirit and clung to the Cross, and depended upon the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sin of the world.

Ashamed of Jesus, that dear friend,
On whom my hopes of life depend;
No! When I blush, be this my shame—
That I no more revere His name.

Next, I speak of the family sorrows. If trouble come to one member of the family all feel it. It is the custom, after the body is lowered into the grave, for all the relatives to come to the verge of the grave and look down into it. First those nearest the departed come, then those next of kin, until they have all looked into the grave. So, when trouble and grief go down through the heart of one member of the family, they go down through them all. The sadness of one is the sadness of all. A company of persons join hands around an electric battery; the two persons at the ends of the line touch the battery, and all the circle feels the shock. Thus, by reason of the filial, maternal and paternal relations of life, we stand so close together that when trouble sets its battery, all feel the thrill of distress. In the great Christian family the sorrow of one ought to be the sorrow of all. Is one persecuted? All are persecuted. Does one suffer loss? We all suffer loss. Is one bereaved? We are all bereaved.

Their streaming eyes together flow
For human guilt and mortal woe.

If you rejoice at another's misfortune, you are not one of the sheep, but one of the goats, and the vulture of sin hath alighted on your soul, and not the Dove of the Spirit.

Next, I notice the family property. After a man of large estate dies the relatives assemble to hear the will read. So much of the property is willed to his sons, and so much to his daughters, and so much to benevolent societies. Our Lord Jesus hath died, and we are assembled to-day to hear the will read. He says, "My peace I give unto you." Through His apostle He says, "All things are yours." What, everything? Yes, everything! This world and the next! In distinguished families there are old pictures hanging on the wall. They are called the "heirlooms" of the estate. They are very old, and have come down from generation to generation. So I look upon all the beauties of the natural world as the heirlooms of our royal family. The morning breaks from the east. The mists travel up, hill above hill, mountain above mountain, until sky lost. The forests are full of chirp, and buzz, and song. Tree's leaf and bird's wing flutter with gladness. Honeymakers in the log, and beak against the bark, and squirrels chattering on the rail, and the call of the hawk out of a clear sky make you feel glad.

The sun, which kindles conflagrations among the castles of cloud and sets minaret and dome aflame, stoops to paint the lily white, and the buttercup yellow, and the forgetmenot blue. What can resist the sun? Light for the voyager over the deep! Light for the shepherd guarding the flocks afield! Light for the poor who have no lamps to turn! Light for the downcast and the lowly! Light for aching eyes and burning brain and wasted captive! Light for the smooth brow of childhood and for the dim vision of the octogenarian! Light for queen's coronet and for sewing girl's needle! Let there be light! Whose morning is this? My morning. Your morning. Our Father gave us the picture and hung it on the sky in looms of fire. It is the heirloom of our family. And so the night. It is the full moon. The mists from shore to shore gleam like shattered mirrors, and the ocean under her glance comes up with great tides, panting upon the beach, mingling, as it were, foam and fire. The poor man blesses God for throwing such a cheap light through the broken window pane into his cabin, and to the sick it seems a light from the other shore which bounds this great deep of human pain and woe. If the sun seem like a song full and poured from brazen instruments that fill heaven and earth with great harmonies, the moon is plaintive and mild, standing beneath the throne of God, sending up her soft, sweet voice of praise, while the stars listen and the sea. No mother ever more sweetly guarded the sick cradle than all night long this pale watcher of the sky bends over the weary, heartsick, slumbering earth. Whose is the black framed, black tasseled picture the night? It is the heirloom of our family. Ours the grandeur of the spring, the crystals of the snow, the coral of the beach, the odors of the garden, the harmonies of the air.

You cannot see a large estate in one morning. You must take several walks around it. The family property of this royal house of Jesus is so great that we must take several walks to get any idea of its extent. Let the first walk be around this earth. All these valleys, the harvests that wave in them, and the cattle that pasture them—all these mountains, and the precious things hidden beneath them, and the crown of glacier they cast at the feet of the alpine hurricane—all these lakes, these islands, these continents, are ours. In the second walk go among the street lamps of heaven, and see stretching off on every side a wilderness of worlds. For us they shine. For us they sang at a Saviour's nativity. For us they will wheel into line, and with their flaming torches add to the splendor of our triumph on the day for which all other days were made. In the third walk go around the eternal city. As we come near it, hark to the rush of its chariots and the wedding peal of its great towers. The bell of heaven has struck 12. It is high noon. We look off upon the chaplets which never fade, the eyes that never weep, the temples that never close, the loved ones that never part, the procession that never halts, the trees that never wither, the walls that never can be captured, the sun that never sets, until we can no longer gaze, and we hide our eyes and exclaim: "Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love Him!" As these tides of glory rise we have to retreat and hold fast lest we be swept off and drowned in the emotions of gladness and thanksgiving and triumph.

Almost every family looks back to a homestead—some country place where you grew up. You sat on the doorsill. You heard the footsteps of the rain on the garret roof. You swung on the gate. You ransacked the barn. You waded into the brook. You thrashed the orchard for apples, and the neighboring woods for nuts, and everything around the old homestead is of interest to you. I tell you of the old homestead of eternity. "In My Father's house are many mansions." When we talk of mansions we think of Chatsworth and its park, nine miles in circumference, and its conservatory that astonishes the world; its galleries of art, that contain the triumphs of Chantrey, Canova and Thorwaldsen; of the kings and the queens who have walked its stately halls, or, flying over the heather, have hunted the grouse. But all the dwelling places of dukes and princes and queens are as nothing to the family mansion that is already awaiting our arrival. The hand of the Lord Jesus lifted the pillars and swung the doors, and planted the parks. Angels walk there, and the good of all ages. The poorest man in that house is a millionaire, and the lowliest a king, and the tamest word he speaks is an anthem, and the shortest life an eternity.

It took a Paxton to build for Chatsworth a covering for the wonderful flower Victoria regia, five feet in diameter. But our lily of the valley shall need no shelter from the blast, and in the open gardens of God shall put forth its full bloom, and all heaven shall come to look at it, and its aroma shall be as though the cherubim had swung before the throne a thousand censors. I have not seen it yet. I am in a foreign land. But my Father is waiting for me to come home. I have brothers and sisters there. In the Bible I have letters from there, telling me what a fine place it is. It matters not much to me whether I am rich or poor, or whether the world hates me or loves me, or whether I go by land or by sea, if only I may lift my eyes at last on the family mansion. It is not a frail house, built in a month, soon to crumble, but an old mansion, which is as firm as the day it was built. Its walls are covered with the ivy of many ages, and the urns at the gateway are a-bloom with the century plants of eternity. The Queen of Sheba hath walked its hall, and Esther, and Marie Antoinette and Lady Huntingdon and Cecil, and Jeremy Taylor, and Samuel Rutherford and John Milton, and the widow who gave two mites, and the poor men from the hospital—these last two perhaps outshining all the kings