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'Twixt Life and Death

BY

FRANK BARRETT

CHAPTER II.—(Continued.)

"You did seem rather worried, dear."

"Oh, I was. To begin with, I didn't like the part I had to play, as you know. As Mrs. Vic had written it out it was simply ridiculous. Now when the dresser told me how she had seen it played, I saw what a capital part it might be made; and when I thought of this letter, I resolved to play it. So I went to the station for a copy of Goldsmith, and studied it with the dresser, who promised to make me up exactly like the actor she had seen. If I am expelled from one school, it's pretty certain that another won't take me when they hear what they are exposing themselves to!"

"But isn't it rather dreadful to be expelled, Nessa?"

"I shall not be expelled, I shall resign," said Nessa, loftily. "I have not studied the political history of the British constitution for nothing," she added, with a flash of humor in her eyes.

"When are you going to resign, dear?"

"The very first thing to-morrow morning. I made Tinkleton promise she would say nothing about the performance to Mrs. Vic to-night in order that I myself might tell her in the morning. You may be sure she was glad to get out of it. There's another reason why I prefer to resign. If I were expelled, Mrs. Vic would get nothing out of Mr. Redmond; but if I resign, he must send her the payment for a term, and that will help to compensate the poor old soul for the injury I have done the school."

"And where shall you go when you leave here?"

"To Grahame Towers, of course."

"But aren't you afraid, Nessa?"

"Afraid of what—that coward? Not I. If I were a man I'd be a soldier like my father. There's nothing I should like better than a good fight with that villain, Redmond."

"But are you sure he's a coward, dear?" asked one of the girls naively.

"I am certain that he is. I am anxious for to-morrow to come; but, oh!" she added, with a sudden drop in her voice as the tears sprang into her eyes, "I shall never have the heart to say good-by to you, dears."

There were hugging and kissing all around, and then Nessa, bursting away, said, "Come, let us get it over now. There, take these, Dolly; and now, little witch, you're next. Choose what you would like."

But the "little witch," sitting on the bed with her face buried in her hands, shook her head and whimpered. She was a strangely small girl for her age, with long, thin fingers, a dark complexion and black hair, long and sleek as an Indian's. Her ways were odd and seclusive. Sometimes the girls found her seated in the dark, huddled up with her chin resting on her knees, and her weird, vacant eyes half closed, as if her spirit was wandering in some other world. She could interpret dreams, and make sense out of the greatest rubbish. She was an authority on all that concerned signs and tokens and palmistry, and had worn a smuggled pack of cards limp in telling the girls' fortunes. Her title was not unmerited.

The girls gathered about her prepared for some new sensation in the romance of this night. Nessa alone seemed to be unawed.

"What's the matter, you little goose? Is there anything dreadful in giving presents?"

"Don't, don't!" pleaded the little witch, without removing her hands. "It's like Naomi, my sister. When she was going to die she made us take things."

"But I am not going to die. Look at me—do I look like it?"

"You don't know all," said the girl, shivering, and whispering so low that her words were scarcely audible. "Not all that I know. I would not tell you while it might do you harm to know, but I must now that it may save you. Oh, you must not go!" She raised herself suddenly and threw her arms about Nessa's neck; "you, so beautiful and kind," she added, nestling herself in Nessa's ready embrace.

"Why, dear, why?" whispered Nessa, coaxingly.

"You are in danger. Your life is not safe. There is going to be a great change, and there is peril in your path. I have seen it whenever I have looked—in the cards, in your hand. Your line of life is broken in the nineteenth year."

Nessa was the only one of all the little group who was not terrified into silence by the little witch's prophecy.

"Oh, come, this is too bad, after promising me last week that I should have riches and long life," she murmured, playfully, as she smoothed her cheeks upon the girl's sleek hair. "Two things can't be true, you know; and of the two I would prefer to believe your first promise."

"They are both true," said the girl, with feverish eagerness; "you will be happy if you live; but there are three years of terrible danger before you. It was that I dared not tell you. Oh, do, do stay with us till the peril is past."

Nessa herself stood now in silence, subdued with grave perplexity by the earnestness of her little friend. But suddenly a gay of intelligence gleamed in her face, and unclasping the girl's clinging arms from her neck, she put her away, holding her at arm's length.

"You little trickster!" she exclaimed, with mock disdain; "I have found you out. I see through your conjuring. You have been thinking about that clause in the codicil that puts Mr. Redmond in possession of my fortune if I die before twenty-one, and it struck you that he might murder me for my money if he got me under his hand in Grahame Towers. I forgive you, dear," she added, taking the child back to her bosom, and kissing her, "for your sweet love of me; but, oh, you are awfully mistaken if you think that fear would keep me from getting into difficulties."

CHAPTER III.

It was about five o'clock when Nessa reached her destination.

"Is it far to Grahame Towers?" she asked the porter.

"A matter of four or five miles before you got to the park, and then there's the best part of a mile to the house. Take a fly, Miss?"

"Yes, fetch my luggage, please. There are two tin boxes with my name on them—Grahame."

She changed her last half-sovereign at the refreshment bar, where she had a cup of tea, gave the porter a shilling, and looking in the portemonnaie at her slender resources as the fly started on its journey, she said to herself, "If I find no one there whatever shall I do?"

She had taken irrevocable steps; but her courage had been sorely tried by the love of those she was leaving behind forever. Even Mrs. Vic, at the last moment, had broken down, and forgiving her, with tears in her eyes, begged her to stay on. As for Tinkleton and the girls, the way they took on at parting was quite dreadful to remember.

In addition to these memories, reaction after the excitement of last night made the girl's heart very heavy indeed.

Her spirits revived when the driver, turning round, pointed with his whip to a massive building rising boldly out of the dark green oaks on a distant hill, and told her it was Grahame Towers. It was something to feel that a place of such imposing grandeur was hers. The pride of her heart was stirred again when she caught sight of the magnificent avenue guarded by rampant panthers flanking the great gates at the entrance. It was noble!—and, thank goodness, the gates were open.

Half way up the great drive they met a wagon loaded with the trunk of an enormous oak.

"Cutting my timber!" exclaimed Nessa, with indignation.

A little further on the driver pulled up. A gentleman in shooting costume stood with a gun under his arm directly in the way.

It was clear to see by his commanding presence that he was master there. As the fly stopped he came to the side, and, seeing a lady, raised his hat.

It was three years since they met, and for the moment he failed to recognize Nessa. Three make a great difference in the appearance of a girl at that time of life; they make little or none in a man of middle age.

Nessa knew him at once, though his black whiskers, which were formerly trimmed to a point, were now shaved to the fashionable military cut—she knew him by those long, sleepy eyes, and that odious smile. She bowed with severe formality. In that moment he perceived that the haughty young lady before him was the disagreeable child he had seen last in a short dress.

"Nessa!" he exclaimed, the amiability going suddenly from his face, "why on earth have you come here?"

"Because it is my home, and I intend to stay here for the present."

"You will do nothing of the kind. I told you that it was my wish you should stay in the school where I placed you."

"As you see, I have not stayed there."

"Then you will be good enough to return at once."

"Quite out of the question; I have rendered that impossible."

"How?"

"This is hardly a suitable place for discussing our affairs, Mr. Redmond."

"Discussing our affairs, indeed! The discussion begins and ends here. Turn around," he added, addressing the driver, imperatively.

The driver turned about with a grin on his broad face, and said:

"Where am I to take you now, miss?"

"To the nearest magistrate."

"Why, that's Sir Thomas Bullen at the Chase."

"Then drive to the Chase."

The blow stunned Redmond. He had reason to dread inquiry. He could say nothing. His narrow, unsteady eyes betrayed the fear and the venomous hatred in his heart.

"Who-oah!" cried the driver, reining in his horse, as a light phaeton came sharply round the bend in the drive.

"Confusion!" muttered Redmond, furiously, as he caught sight of the phaeton and the lady who drove in it; the next moment, with abject entreaty in his face, he turned to Nessa and said hurriedly, in a low tone:

"For heaven's sake, go away! There's a hotel in Lullingford. I'll meet you there this evening, and agree to anything you like to propose."

Nessa was the last person in the world to be moved by a bribe, and the bare idea of quitting the park as if she had no right to be there was sufficient incentive to stay there. Added to this, the lady in the phaeton so managed her spirited cob as to make it doubtful which side of the road she intended to keep. She wished to know something more about this fly and the horse and the young lady, who even at a distance was strikingly pretty in her close-fitting jacket and neat hat. As she at length pulled up, almost within a hand's reach of Nessa, she bowed, and looked to Redmond for an explanation.

There was no help for it. Redmond, with a sufficiently bad grace, introduced the two ladies.

"Miss Grahame, my—eh—stepdaughter, Mrs. Redmond, my wife."

Mrs. Redmond smiled very sweetly, and bowed again. She was a very showy woman, tall and comely, with a heavy plait of shining yellow hair; dark eyebrows and lashes; and the most lovely pink-and-white complexion. At a distance Nessa thought she could not be more than five or six-and-twenty, but, on closer examination, she suspected herself in error. A little crease in the eyelid, a little pleat under the eye, a certain harness and thinness in the mobile nostrils, and a pucker in her throat when she turned her head, made Nessa believe that she might be five or six-and-thirty, or even more. On the whole, Nessa felt disposed to like Mrs. Redmond—she looked amiable and simple, despite the touch of bistre under her eyes which surely could not be natural.

But, while Nessa had been coming to this conclusion the woman had arrived at a far more definite estimation of her character, and decided, among other things, that she was a young person whom it would be far easier to lead than to drive.

With the sweetest expression still upon her face, Mrs. Redmond turned from her Nessa to her husband, with the slightest interrogative lifting of her prettily arched eyebrows.

"Miss Grahame came here to pay us a visit," he explained, with ill-concealed embarrassment; "but I have persuaded her to return to the hotel at Lullingford, where she will be much more at her ease. We have no accommodation in this wretched old ruin, you know."

"Oh, we are not so badly off as that, dear. We can certainly find a room, and if Miss Grahame will accept the best we have to offer——"

"Well, settle it as you please," interrupted Redmond. "I'm off for an hour's shooting," and, raising his hat, he turned his back and hurried off—saving himself, as was his habit, from the present difficulty, and leaving the worst for the future.

"Shall we walk to the house, dear? Then we can talk as we go along," said Mrs. Redmond.

Nessa accepted readily. Mrs. Redmond handed the reins to the old man in livery who occupied the seat beside her, and, stepping to the ground, shook Nessa heartily by the hand.

"You will bring the luggage up to the house," she said to the flyman.

"Do you know, dear," said Mrs. Redmond, taking Nessa's arm as they walked toward the house, "this is the first time I ever heard your name! Men are so reserved about business matters, and I suppose you have some business relations with him?"

"Oh, yes; he is my guardian. I came here to have an understanding with him about my position."

"Your guardian! How odd he should never have told me anything about it. I feel quite hurt, dear; it looks almost like a want of confidence. I knew, of course, that Mr. Redmond was a widower when I married him, but he never told me that Mrs. Grahame had left any children. Perhaps he thought I should want to have you with me—as I certainly should, having no children of my own. But you are not a child now. Have you any brothers or sisters?"

"No, I don't know that I have any relations at all; I have never seen, never heard of any," said Nessa; and she gave a brief outline of her life at school, warming up as she went on under the stimulating sympathy of her companion, and telling finally the manner of her leaving Eagle House.

Mrs. Redmond was immensely tickled with her account of the performance, which Nessa gave with considerable humor, being of an impulsive and expansive nature.

"You can't tell how glad I am that you have come here, dear," said Mrs. Redmond; "and I'm sure that, with the money it would cost to keep you at school you can provide amply for your wants. Of course, your mamma left a proper provision for you?"

"Oh, yes; I have a copy of her will in my box. I was to have eight hundred a year during my minority."

"Eight hundred a year! That's quite a great deal. Eight hundred a year!" she repeated, reflectively. "But surely, dear, you will soon be of age; you look quite a woman."

"I shall not be of age for three years."

"Only eighteen! And, of course, when you are twenty-one you will have more even than you have now."

"Oh, I shall have everything. This estate—all is left to me."

Mrs. Redmond stopped with an exclamation that had something of dismay in it; but, quickly recovering her self-possession, she drew Nessa's arm closer to her side, and said:

"You must forgive me, dear. This is such a surprise, and I feel so wounded to think that my husband should not have told me something about his position. I dare say he has his own independent fortune; but beyond that he has nothing whatever to come—to come from this estate?"

"Nothing that he can legally claim; but, of course," said Nessa, her generous disposition overcoming her late hostility—"of course I should never—never——" She hesitated, at a loss to find a phrase that might assure her new friend of a kindly intention without wounding her feelings.

"I know what you would say," said Mrs. Redmond; "that if my husband should happen to be in difficulties, and we found ourselves without a penny in the world at the end of three years, you would give us a home and—and food——" She stopped, choked with disappointment, indignation, envy and malice; but in the next moment masked her feelings under a Judas' kiss, as she murmured: "Oh, you dear, dear, generous, kind-hearted friend."

(To be continued.)

White House Is Rickety.

"In the plan for building a new house for the President elsewhere than on the present site it has been proposed to utilize the present mansion for offices," writes Col. Theodore A. Bingham, U. S. A., in urging the adoption of Mrs. Harrison's plans for enlarging the house, in the Ladies' Home Journal. "One plea therefor has been that the historic building should be left as it is. This is certainly to be insisted on. But it is said the mansion is too pure a piece of architecture to be marred by additions. This, however, is a specious argument, since the original design contemplated side additions, and if the building in its present state were used as offices it would be wrecked in five or six years. Those who have no experience with public buildings or with this building in particular, have no conception of the wear and tear on a President's office. It surpasses that on any other office in the country. The present Executive Mansion was lightly built, and is already expensive to keep in proper repair. Its floor beams are not strong enough to endure office use. Great difficulty has arisen in the past with the few rooms now used as the President's executive offices, and great watchfulness has to be constantly exercised. Several times the floors have threatened to break through. The stairs have already broken down, one flight being now supported by a chain. Still, to remodel for office use only, the whole interior of our historic Executive Mansion, would be not only a very expensive matter, but would fail to meet the requirements of the case, and also, it is believed, the approval of the country at large."

Insincerity.

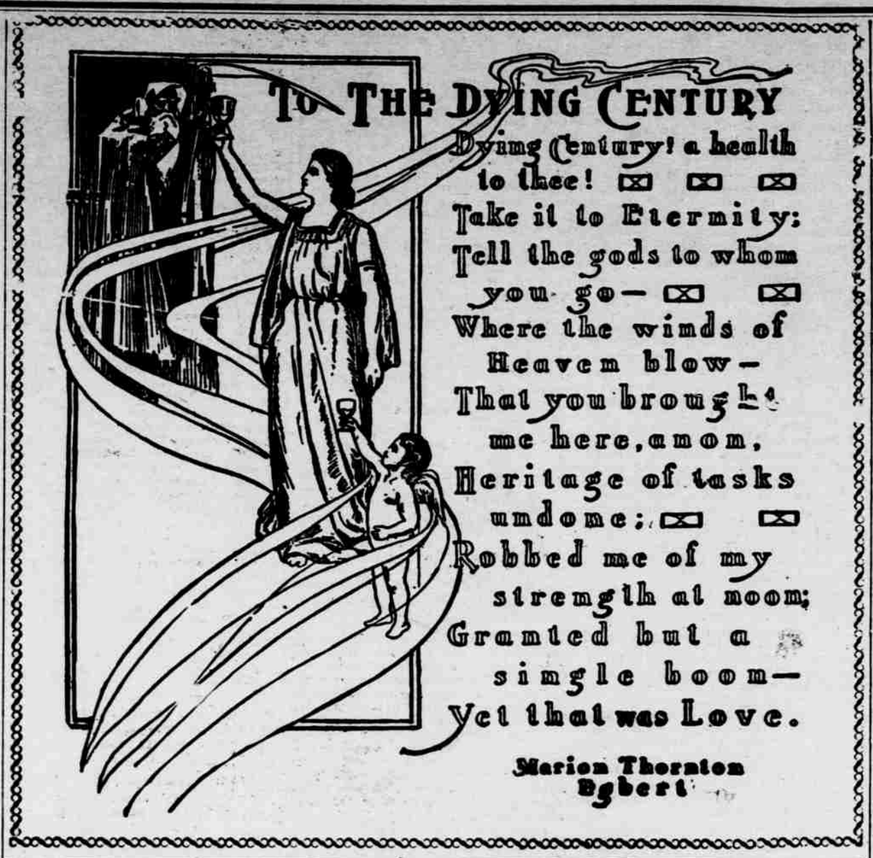
"Our civilization demands a greater or less degree of mendacity," remarked the abstruse person. "We are constantly encountering some empty phrase, some conventional remark which is absolutely devoid of sincerity."

"That's right," answered the book agent. "That's perfectly true. I am reminded of it every time I walk up to a front step where there is a door mat with the word 'Welcome' on it."—Washington Star.

Had Noticed It.

She (gushingly)—There are days when we seem more in unison with nature than other times, when our hearts seem to beat in accord with the sublime harmony of the universe. Have you ever noticed it?

He—Indeed I have. It it always that way with me on pay day.—Tit-Bits.



Science and Invention

A factory for liquid air is being erected at Los Angeles, Cal., for refrigerating purposes.

Careful experiments by Monsieur Brunhes, in France, indicate that the X-rays have a definite velocity which is of the same order as the velocity of light.

There are 120 firms in Germany engaged in the acetylene industry. Most of the burners are made at Nuremberg. There are no fewer than twenty-six small towns in Germany lighted by acetylene gas. The first plant of this kind for lighting small towns in Germany was erected at Hassfurt, a town of 2,500 inhabitants.

In England a lamp-post has been introduced which combines a fire hydrant, tap and fire-alarm box. The hydrant can be used for fire purposes, filling water carts and for street flushing, while the small tap can be used by an individual for domestic water supply. There is a water meter and siphon at the bottom, by which the water is shut off from the hydrant, thus preventing it from freezing.

According to a report published by the Home Office in London showing the mineral productions of the world for the last year, the United States easily leads all its rivals in this form of wealth. Great Britain ranks second, but far behind the leader, the total product of the United States having been about $720,000,000, while that of Great Britain was $400,000,000. Germany stands third, with nearly $250,000,000.

Lord Rayleigh, in discussing our ability to tell the direction from which sound proceeds, calls attention to an interesting difference between the eyes and ears with regard to the size of the waves that strike them. The average wave length of light is about one ten-thousandth of the diameter of the pupil of the eye. On the other hand, "the waves of sound issuing from a man's mouth," says Lord Rayleigh, "are about eight feet long, whereas the diameter of the passage of the ear is quite small and could not well have been made a large multiple of eight feet." One consequence of the minuteness of light waves in comparison with the size of the eyes is that the lenses of the eyes are able to concentrate rays of light upon the retina with great efficiency.

Prof. John Trowbridge has recently had installed at Harvard University the most powerful apparatus in the world for the production of electro-motive force. The plant comprises 20,000 storage cells giving 40,000 electrical units of pressure, and this can be increased to 3,000,000 volts. But in order to obtain the full effect of so enormous a pressure, Professor Trowbridge says it would be necessary to remove the apparatus into the center of an open field and elevate it at least thirty feet from the ground in order to avoid loss from the inductive action of floors and walls. With this great battery the highest degree of instantaneous temperature yet attained can be produced. Professor Trowbridge hopes with its aid to obtain some clew to the temperature at which hydrogen exists in the stars. This plant furnishes, he adds, an ideal method of producing the X-rays.

WAYS OF THE OLDEN TIME.

Regulations that Were Once in Vogue at Funerals and Churches.

Diving into the old records of one of the most charming cities of our commonwealth, Northampton, we find much of deep interest as revealing customs and habits of olden times. No fire was found in "the meeting-house" in olden time, and comparatively recently foot stoves were carried to church, as were tallow candles to the evening meetings. In 1787 the important vital question at a legal town meeting was, "Shall men and their wives be seated together in pews?" and the vote was an emphatic "yes."

In 1744, about the beginning of Jonathan Edwards' trouble in the parish, it was voted not "to pay the charge of bringing his daughters from Brookfield." In 1738 this appears on the town records: "Taking into consideration the difficulty Mr. Edwards hath labored under this year and some time past with respect to his firewood, the town voted that those persons who have not this year brought him a load of wood might have liberty between this time and next Tuesday night to bring each one his load of wood." If there was not a sufficiency of wood by that time, the town then voted, the selectmen shall see that the deficiency should be met at the cost of the town.

Later, in 1788, we find in the warrant for town meeting this entry: "To procure firewood for Rev. Mr. Williams, to choose a committee to seat the meeting-house." A most serious business to decide, who should take preference in the broad aisles: The "nigger pew," well remembered by the writer, caused no trouble to said officer, as that was readily accepted by the "colored brethren," like cows in the stable, who went dutifully to their separate stalls.

Not only the living had special rules governing their conduct, but the rules about the dead were very quaint, as by this report of a committee, May 11, 1780, to whom had been referred the conduct of funerals, as follows:

Whereas, It is the opinion of this town that funerals ought to be conducted with great decency and decorum in order to impress on rising and risen generations the importance of the awful solemnity, and to render the house of mourning better than the house of feasting. Be it therefore recommended to all the inhabitants of this town to observe the following regulations at funerals:

1. That the relatives of the deceased follow next the corpse, two and two.

2. If the deceased was a male person the males are to follow next the mourners, two and two, and the women after them, two and two; but if the deceased was a woman, then the women are to follow next the mourners and the men after them.

3. Those on horseback are to follow in after the foot folks, hores two and two, and the carriages are to follow in the rear of the procession. And it is requested that no person walk or ride on either side the procession from the house to the grave.

Ten of the prominent men of the city were appointed and requested to attend at funerals and to regulate the procession thus recommended until the same shall become habitual to the people. In 1745 the question was raised in the annual town meeting "if the town would be at the expense of coloring the meeting house, and it passed in the negative!" Evidently they thought that nature would do it without expense. Not till 1749 were the forts and fortifications of the town demolished and the timber and boards sold for the benefit of the town. Laws were passed relative to the schooling of boys and the amount of wood they should bring to the schoolhouse; girls were of no account in those days.

GREAT BRITAIN'S ELECTORATE.

It Has Increased Nearly Sevenfold During Victoria's Reign.

When the queen came to the throne there were less than a million electors out of a population of more than twenty-five millions. That is as much to say that only 14 in every 100 adult males were possessed of the franchise. And yet five years had passed since the great reform bill had been placed upon the statute book after an epoch-making battle. To-day nearly 70 per cent of the adult males in the United Kingdom possess the franchise. The increase in population, added to the increase in the percentage of representation, has, however, given us an electorate of about six and three-quarter millions.

It is as well to note that during this extraordinary development of the electorate the elected representatives of the people have scarcely increased in number by a score. In 1861, at the union of the British and Irish parliaments, there were 658 members of the House of Commons. Disenfranchisements and suspensions of writs reduced the number in actual practice to 640, round about which figure it remained till Mr. Gladstone in 1885 raised it to 670, the present total of the house.

It is quite probable, therefore, that, should the much-discussed "manhood suffrage" ever come into operation in this country, it will not add a single member to the distinguished gathering at St. Stephen's. Nor, as a matter of fact, will it add to the electorate itself as a large proportion as has been added in the last thirty-three years. For in that time 50 per cent has been added to the rate of adult male representation. A mere 30 per cent more would give every man over 21 a vote—if he cared to use it.—London Express.

Finger Nails and Gentility.

In China long finger nails are a mark of gentility. They are an indication that their possessor is a man of leisure. When they are excessively long, approaching the dignity of talons, as they sometimes do, they indicate that the gentleman—or lady—attached to them has passed the mere gentility line, and has become a full-fledged aristocrat. In Annam, where the finger-nail habit has persisted for hundreds and perhaps thousands of years, these signs-manual of extreme gentility sometimes attain by careful cultivation the length of six or eight inches, and instances are on record where a length of sixteen and even eighteen inches has been attained.

This custom prevails generally throughout what is known as Indo-China, which includes Siam, Burmah, Cambodia, Laos, and the Shan states, etc. It is also common throughout the Chinese Empire, more especially in the southern provinces.

It is said that some of the Annamese noblemen never have their nails cut from the time of birth. In such cases, of course, the poor creatures are practically helpless, and have to rely on servants entirely for assistance in the discharge of the most common offices, being unable to either clothe or feed themselves.—New York Sun.

To Lady Voters.

Some years ago a traveler through Minnesota stopped to read a notice in regard to the election of school officers, posted on a tree at a place where three roads met.

The following paragraph, which was appended to the notice, seems to indicate that some student of the dictionary had seized the opportunity to display his knowledge and confound all ignorant passers-by:

N. B.—The wisdom of our laws having tolerated woman to cast the light of her benign influence beyond the confines of the nursery, by permitting her to practically use the genial rays of her susceptible intelligence in directing the moral and mental culture of man, it is therefore desirable that the lady voters of this school district should use their franchise with a steadfast purpose to training of the rising generation, to whom destiny intrusts the guardianship of human happiness in the near future.

Lids of Fruit Jars.

The lids of fruit jars taken from the top shelf of the kitchen closet, where they may have lain long in retirement, should be sterilized before using. Put them into cold water and bring the water to the boiling point; take them out one by one with a clean skimmer and slip each upon its jar. They should not be handled with the fingers except to screw quickly into place, nor should they be left on the table nor wiped with towels that have been hanging in the kitchen. Any of these acts make the sterilizing process useless, as germs may be picked up in this way after it has been accomplished.

Snail Farms.

A snail farm has been started by a farmer of Anet, France. He has already 260,000 of these creatures, and they eat as much green fodder as two cows.

Did you ever notice that a boy hunter never wears a hunting coat, which has game pockets on the inside? A boy wants to carry his game where it can be seen.

SERMONS OF THE DAY

Preached by Rev. Dr. Talmage

Subject: A Way Over Jordan—The Lord Will Send a Boat—From the Other Shore It Will Come to Transport the Faithful to Eternal Life.

[Copyright 1900.]

WASHINGTON, D.C.—From an unnoticed incident of olden time Dr. Talmage in this discourse draws some comforting and rapturous lessons. The text is II Samuel xix. 18, "And there went over a ferryboat to carry over the king's household."

Which of the crowd is the king? That short man, sunburnt and in fatigue dress. It is David, the exiled king. He has defeated his enemies and is now going home to resume his palace. Good! I always like to see David come out ahead. But between him and his home there is the celebrated River Jordan, which has to be passed. The king is accompanied to the bank of the river by an aristocratic old gentleman of eighty years, Barzillai by name, who owned a fine country seat at Rogelim. Besides that, David has his family with him. But how shall they get across the river? While they are standing there I see a ferryboat coming from the other side, and as it cuts through the water I see the faces of David and his household brighten up at the thought of so soon getting home. No sooner had the ferryboat struck the shore than David and his family and his old friend Barzillai, from Rogelim, get on board the boat. Either with splashing oars at the side or with one oar sculling at the stern of the boat they leave the eastern bank of the Jordan and start for the western bank.

That western bank is black with crowds of people, who are waving and shouting at the approach of the king and his family. The military are all out. Some of those who have been David's worst enemies now shout until they are hoarse at his return. No sooner had the boat struck the shore on the western side than the earth quakes and the heavens ring with cheers of welcome and congratulation. David and his family and Barzillai from Rogelim step ashore. King David asks his old friend to go with him and live at the palace, but Barzillai apologizes and intimates that he is infirm with age and too deaf to appreciate the music, and has a delicate appetite that would soon be cloyed with luxurious living, and so he begs that David would let him go back to his country seat.

I once heard the father of a President of the United States say that he had just been to Washington to see his son in the White House, and he told me of the wonderful things that occurred there, and of what Daniel Webster said to him, but he declared: "I was glad to get home. There was too much going on there for me." My father, an aged man, made his last visit at my house in Philadelphia, and after the church service was over and we went home some one in the house asked the aged man how he enjoyed the service. "Well, I enjoyed the service, but there were too many people there for me. It troubled my head very much." The fact is that old people do not like excitement. If King David had asked Barzillai thirty years before to go to the palace, the probability is that Barzillai would have gone, but not now. They kiss each other good-bye, a custom among men Oriental, but in vogue yet where two brothers part or an aged father and a son go away from each other never to meet again. No wonder that their lips met as King David and old Barzillai, at the prow of the ferryboat, parted forever.

This River Jordan, in all ages and among all languages, has been the symbol of the boundary line between earth and heaven, yet when, on a former occasion, I preached to you about the Jordanic passage I have no doubt that some of you despondingly said: "The Lord might have divided Jordan for Joshua, but not for poor me." Cheer up! I want to show you that there is a way over Jordan as well as through it. My text says, "And there went over a ferryboat to carry over the king's household."

All our cities are familiar with the ferryboat. It goes from San Francisco to Oakland, and from Liverpool to Birkenhead, and twice every secular day of the week multitudes are on the ferryboats of our great cities, so that you will not need to hunt up a classical dictionary to find out what I mean while I am speaking to you about the passage of David and his family across the River Jordan.

My subject, in the first place, impresses me with the fact that when we cross over from this world to the next the boat will have to come from the other side. The tribe of Judah, we are informed, sent this ferryboat across to get David and his household. I stand on the eastern side of the River Jordan, and I find no shipping at all, but while I am standing there I see a boat plowing through the river, and as I hear the swirl of the waters, and the boat comes to the eastern side of the Jordan, and David and his family and his old friend step on board that boat, I am mightily impressed with the fact that when we cross over from this world to the next the boat will have to come from the opposite shore.

Every day I find people trying to extemporize a way from earth to heaven. They gather up their good works and some sentimental theories, and they make a raft, and they go down. The fact is that skepticism and infidelity never yet helped one man to die. I invite all the ship carpenters of worldly philosophy to come and build one boat that can safely cross this river. I invite them all to unite their skill, and Bolingbroke shall lift the stanchions, and Tyndall shall shape the bowsprit, and Spinoza shall make the maintopgallant braces, and Renan shall go to tacking and wearing and boxing the ship. All together in 10,000 years they will never be able to make a boat that can cross this Jordan. Why was it that Spinoza and Blount and Shaftesbury lost their souls? It was because they tried to cross the stream in a boat of their own construction. What miserable work they made of dying! Diodorus died of mortification because he could not guess a conundrum which had been proposed to him at a public dinner; Zeuxis, the philosopher, died of mirth, laughing at a caricature of an aged woman, a caricature made by his own hand; while another of their company and of their kind died saying: "Must I leave all these beautiful pictures?" and then asked that he might be bolstered up in the bed in his last moments and be shaved and painted and rouged. Of all the unbelievers of all ages not one died well. Some of them sneaked out of life, some blasphemed and raved and tore their bed covers to tatters. This is the way worldly philosophy helps a man to die.

A guide at Niagara Falls said to me, "Do you see that rock down in the rapids?" I said, "Yes." "Well," he said, "some years ago a man got into the rapids and floated down until he came to that rock, and he clutched that and held on. We sent five lifeboats at different times out to him, and they were all broken to splinters. After awhile we got him some food, but he could not eat it. He seemed to have no appetite. He wanted to get ashore, and the poor fellow held on and held on, and, with a shriek louder than the thunder of the cataract, he went over." When a man puts out from the shore of this world on the river of death in a boat of his own construction, he has worse disaster than that—shipwreck, eternal shipwreck.

Blessed be God, there is a boat coming from the other side! Transportation at last for our souls from the other shore; everything about this gospel from the other shore; pardon from the other shore; mercy from the other shore; pity from the other shore; ministry of angels from the other shore; power to work miracles from the other shore; Jesus Christ from the other shore. "This is a faithful saying and worthy of all acceptation that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," and from a foreign shore I see the ferryboat coming, and it rolls with the surges of a Saviour's suffering, but as it strikes the earth the mountains rock and the dead adjust their apparel so that they may be fit to come out. That boat touches the earth, and glorious Thomas Walsh gets into it in his expiring moment, saying: "He has come! He has come! My beloved is mine, and I am His." Good Sarah Wesley got into that boat, and as she shoved off from the shore she cried: "Open the gates!" I bless God that as the boat came from the other shore to take David and his men across so when we are about to die the boat will come from the same direction. God forbid that I should ever trust to anything that starts from this side.

Again, my subject suggests that when we cross over at the last the King will be on board the boat. Ship carpentry in Bible times was in its infancy. The boats were not skillfully made, and I can very easily imagine that the women and children of the king's household might have been nervous about going on that boat, afraid that the oarsman or the helmsman might give out and that the boat might be dashed on the rocks, as sometimes boats were dashed in the Jordan, and then I could have imagined the boat, starting and rocking and they crying out, "Oh, we are going to be lost; we are going down!" Not so. The king was on board the boat, and those women and children and all the household of the king knew that every care was taken to have the king, the head of the empire, pass in safety.

Blessed be God that when we leave this world we are not to have a great and perilous enterprise of getting into heaven; not a dangerous Franklin expedition to find the northwest passage among icebergs; only a ferry. That accounts for something you have never been able to understand. You never supposed that very nervous and timid Christian people could be so unexcited and placid in the last hour. The fact is, they were clear down on the bank, and they saw there was nothing to be frightened about, such a short distance—only a ferry. With one ear they heard the funeral psalm in their memory, and with the other ear they heard the song of heavenly salutation. The willows on this side the Jordan and the Lebanon cedars on the other almost interlocked their branches—only a ferry.

My subject also suggests the fact that when we cross over at the last we shall find a solid landing. The ferryboat, as spoken of in my text, means a place to start from and a place to land. David and his people did not find the eastern shore of the Jordan any more solid than the western shore where he landed, and yet to a great many heaven is not a real place. To you heaven is a fog bank in the distance. After the resurrection has come you will have a resurrected foot and something to tread on and a resurrected eye and colors to see with it and a resurrected ear and music to regale it.

Smart men in this day are making a great deal of fun about St. John's materialistic descriptions of heaven. Well, now, my friends, if you will tell me what will be the use of a resurrected body in heaven with nothing to tread on and nothing to hear and nothing to handle and nothing to taste then I will laugh, too.

Are you going to float about in ether forever, swinging about your hands and feet through the air indiscriminately, one moment sweltering in the centre of the sun and the next moment shivering in the mountains of the moon?

That is not my heaven. Dissatisfied with John's materialistic heaven, theological tinkers are trying to patch up a heaven that will do for them at last. I never heard of any heaven I want to go to except St. John's heaven.

I believe I shall hear Mr. Toplady sing yet and Isaac Watts recite hymns and Mozart play. "Oh," you say, "where would you get the organ?" The Lord will provide the organ. Don't you bother about the organ. I believe I shall yet see David with a harp, and I will ask him to sing one of the songs of Zion.

I believe after the resurrection I shall see Massillon, the great French pulpit orator, and I shall hear from his own lips how he felt on that day when he preached the king's funeral sermon and flung his whole audience into a paroxysm of grief and solemnity.

And so you and I will be met at the landing. Our arrival will not be like stepping ashore at Antwerp or Constantinople among a crowd of strangers. It will be among friends, good friends, those who are warm hearted friends, and all their friends. We know people whom we have never seen by hearing somebody talk about them very much. We know them almost as well as if we had seen them.

And do you not suppose that our parents and brothers and sisters and children in heaven have been talking about us all these years and talking to their friends? So that, I suppose, when we cross the river at the last we shall not only be met by all those Christian friends whom we knew on earth, but by all their friends. They will come down to the landing to meet us. Your departed friends love you now more than they ever did.

You will be surprised at the last to find how they know about all the affairs of your life. Why, they are only across the ferry, and the boat is coming this way, and the boat is going that way. I do not know but they have already asked the Lord the day, the hour, the moment when you are coming across, and that they know now, but I do know that you will be met at the landing. The poet Southey said he thought he should know Bishop Heber in heaven by the portraits he had seen of him in London, and Dr. Randolph said he thought he would know William Cowper, the poet, in heaven from the pictures he had seen of him in England, but we will know our departed kindred by the portraits hung in the throne room of our hearts.

On starlight nights you look up—and I suppose it is so with any one who has friends in heaven—on starlight nights you look up, and you cannot help but think of those who have gone, and I suppose they look down and cannot help but think of us. But they have the advantage of us. We know not just where their world of joy is. They know where we are.

But there is a thought that comes over me like an electric shock. Do I belong to the King's household? Mark you, the text says, "And there went over a ferryboat to carry over the king's household," and none but the king's household. Then I ask, Do I belong to the household? Do you? If you do not, come to-day and be adopted into that household. "Oh," says some soul here, "I do not know whether the King wants me." He does; He does. Hear the voice from the throne, "I will be a father to them, and they shall be My sons and daughters, saith the Lord Almighty." "Him that cometh unto Me," Christ says, "I will in nowise cast out." Come into the King's household. Sit down at the King's table. Come in and take your apparel from the King's wardrobe, even the wedding garment of Christ's righteousness. Come in and inherit the King's wealth. Come in and cross in the King's ferryboat.

Captain—I've been noticing lately that many men and some petty officers are often drunk! Acordingly, I order that hereafter when anyone has been drunk he shall himself report it to me the next day.

Petty Officer—I have to report, hic! cap'n, that I was drunk yesterday.

Captain—But you are drunk now!

Petty Officer—Cap'n, I'll, hic! report this drunk, hic! to-morrow!—Unsere Gesellschaft.

English Public Buildings.

The public buildings of England alone are valued at a sum approaching $1,250,200,000.