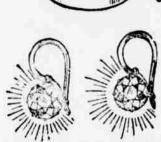




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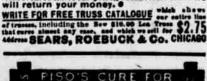
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A DREAM AND ITS CONSEQUENCES

By Rev. CHARLES M. SHELDON Author of "In His Steps," "The Crucifizion of Philip Strong," "Malcom Kirk," Etc.

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[CONTINUED.] CHAPTER XI.

Those words of Clara, "I shall go with you then," filled the family with dismay. Mr. Hardy bowed his head and groaned. Mrs. Hardy, almost beside herself with grief and terror, flew to the side of the girl and, with beseeching cries and caresses, tried to bring back to consciousness the mind that for a moment or two had gleamed with reason and then had gone back into the obscurity and oblivion of that mysterious condition in which it had been lying for three days, but all in vain. The eyes were closed; the form was rigid. The others, George and Will and Bess, grew pale, and Bess cried, almost for the first time since the strange week began. Robert was the first to break the grief with a quiet word. He raised his head, saying:

"I do not believe Clara is going to die when I do."

"Why, father, what makes you think that?" cried Alice.

"I don't know. I can't give any exact reason. I only know that I don't believe it will bappen."

"God grant that she may be spared to us!" said Mrs. Hardy. "Oh, Robert, it is more than I can bear! Only today and tomorrow left! It can't be real. I have battled against your dream all the week. It was a dream only. I will not believe it to be anything else. You are not ill. There is no indication that you are going to die. I will not, I cannot, believe it! God is too good. And we need you now. Robert. Let us pray God for mercy." Robert shook his head sadly, but

"No, Mary; I cannot resist an impression so strong that I cannot call it anything but a conviction of reality; that somehow, in some way, I shall be called away from you Sunday night. I have struggled against it, but it grows upon me even more firmly. God is merciful. I do not question his goodness. How much did I deserve even this week of preparation after the life I have lived? And the time will not be long before we shall all meet there. God grant that it may be an unbroken company!"

Mr. Hardy spoke as any one in his condition could. The children drew about him lovingly. Bess climbed into his lap. She laid her face against her father's face, and the strong man sobbed as he thought of all the years of neglected affection in that family circle. The rest of the evening was spent in talking over the probable future.

George, who seemed thoroughly humbled now, listened respectfully and even tearfully to his father's counsel concerning the direction of business and family matters.

The boy was going through a struggle with himself which was apparent press of my selfishness is stamped on to all in the house. Ever since his this place. It will take years to remother had seen him kneeling down in move it. I might have been far more the night watch he had shown a different spirit. It remained to be seen whether he had really changed or whether he had been for the time be-

ing frightened into a little goodness. Saturday morning found the Hardys weary with the agitation of the week, but bearing about a strange excitement which only the prospect of the father's approaching death or removal

could have produced. Robert could not realize that his week was almost at an end. Why, it service!

As on every other day, he asked himself the question, "What shall I do?" Only until he had prayed could he answer the question. Then the light came. Who says prayer is merely a form? It is going to God for wisdom and getting it. It is crying out for light, and, lo! the darkness flees. It is spreading out our troubles and our joys and our perplexitles and our needs

sible answer to them all. Robert Hardy was finding this out lately, and it was the one thing that made possible to him the calmness of the last two days allotted him.

and finding God himself the best pos-

The day was spent in much the same way that the other days had been spent. He went down to his office about 10 o'clock and after coming home to lunch went down again with the intention of getting through all the business and returning home to spend the rest of the time with the family. Along toward 3 o'clock, when the routine work of the shops was disposed of, the manager felt an irresistible desire to speak to the men in his employ. They numbered about 800 in his department, and he knew how impossible it would be for him to speak to them individually. He thought a minute and then called Burns in and gave an order that made the foreman stare in the most undisguised wonder.

"Shut down the works for a little while and ask the men to get together in the big machine shop. I want to

speak to them." Burns had been astonished so often this week that, although he opened his mouth to say something, he did not seem able to pronounce the words, and after staring blankly at his employer a minute he turned and went out to

execute the order. The great engine was stopped. The men from the casting rooms and the carpenter shops and the storerooms and the repairing departments came trooping into the big machine shop and sat or leaned on the great, grim pieces of machinery, and as the shop filled

the place began to take on a strange aspect never seen there before

Mr. Hardy crossed the yard from the office, followed by the clerks and assistant officers of the road, all curious to hear what was coming. Mr. Hardy mounted one of the planers and looked about him. The air was still full of gas and smoke and that mixture of fine iron filings and oil which is characteristic of such places. The men were quiet and respectful enough Many of them had heard the manager's speech of Thursday night at the town hall. Most of them were aware that some change had taken place in the man. It had been whispered about that he had arranged matters for the men injured in the Sunday accident so that they would not come to want in any way.

And now that grimy, hard muscled. hard featured crowd of 800 men all turned their eyes upon the figure standing very erect and pale faced on the great planer, and he in turn looked out through the blue, murky atmosphere at them with an intensity of expression which none in that audience understood. As Mr. Hardy went on with his speech they began to understand what that look meant.

"My brothers," began the manager, with a slight trembling of the syllables so new to him, "as this may be the last time I shall ever speak to you I want to say what is true to me and what I feel I owe to you. For 25 years I have carried on the work in this place without any thought of the 800 men at work in these shops except as their names were on the pay roll of the company.

"It never made any difference to me when your wives and children grew sick and died. I never knew what sort of houses you lived in except to know that in comparison with mine they must have been very crowded and uncomfortable. For all these 25 years I have been as indifferent to you as one man possibly could be to men who work for him. It has not occurred to me during this time that I could be anything else. I have been too selfish to see my relation to you and act upon it.

"Now, I do not call you in here today to apologize for 25 years of selfishness -not that alone. But I do want you to know that I have been touched by the hand of God in such a way that before it is too late I want to say to you all. 'Brothers,' and say to you that when you think of me hereafter it may be as I am now today, not as I have been in all the years past.

"It is not for me to say how far or in what manner I have trampled on the brotherhood of the race. I have called myself a Christian. I have been a member of a church. Yet I will confess here today that under the authority granted me by the company I have more than once dismissed good, honest, faithful workmen in large bodies and eut down wages unnecessarily to increase dividends, and in general 1 have thought of the human flesh and blood in these shops as I here thought of the Iron and steel here. I confess all that and more. Whatever has been un-Christian I hope will be forgiven.

"There are many things we do to our fellow men in this world which abidethe sting of them, I mean. The imto you. I might have raised my voice

as a Christian and an influential director of this road against the Sunday work and traffic; I never did. I might have relieved unnecessary discomfort in different departments; I refused to do it. I might have helped the cause of temperance in this town by trying to banish the saloon; instead of that I voted to license a crime and poverty and disease establishment.

"I might have used my influence and my wealth to build healthy, comfortaseemed but yesterday that he had ble homes for the men who work on dreamed after the Sunday evening this road; I never raised my finger in the matter. I might have helped to make life a happier, sweeter thing to the nearly 1,000 souls in this establishment, and I went my selfish way, content with my own luxurious home and the ambition for self culture and the pride of self accomplishments. And yet there is not a man here today who isn't happier than I am.

"I wish you all, in the name of the good God, who forgives our sins for Jesus' sake, the wish of a man who looks into the other world and sees things as they really are. I do not wish you to think of my life as a Christian life. It has not been such, but as you hope to be forgiven at last forgive all wrongs at my hands.

"You are living in the dawn of a happier day for labor. There are Christian men in business in this town and some few connected with railroads who are



I have been touched by the hand of God." trying to apply the principles of Christianity to the business and traffic of the world. My probable successor in these

shops is such a man in spirit. "God is love. I have forgotten that

myself. I have walked through life forgetful of him. But I know today that he is drawing the nations and the world together in true sympathy. The nations that stand defiant and disobedient to God shall perish. The rulers who haughtily take God's place and oppress the people shall be destroyed. The meu of power and intelligence and money who use these three great advantages merely to bless themselves and add to their own selfish pleasure and ease shall very soon be dethroned. I would give all I possess to be able to live and see a part of it come to pass. Men, brothers, some of you younger ones will live to see that day.

"Love God and obey him. Envy not the rich. They are more miserable than you sometimes dream. True happiness consists in a conscience at peace with God and a heart free from selfish desires and habits. I thank you for your attention. You will know better why I have said all this to you when you come in here to work again next Monday. My brothers, God bless you! God bless us all!"

When Robert stepped down from the planer and started toward the door, more than one black hand was thrust into his with the words, "God bless you, sir!" He felt a strange desire to weep. Never before had he felt that thrill shoot through him at the grasp of the hand of his brother man. His speech had made a profound impression on the men. Many of them did not understand the meaning of certain sentences, but the spirit of the man was unmistakable, and the men responded in a manner that touched Mr. Hardy very strongly.

He finally went into his office. The big engine started up again, and the whir and dust and clangor of the shops went on. But men bent over their work there in the gathering dusk of the winter day who felt a new heart throb at the recollection of the pale face and sincere word of the man who had broken a selfish silence of a quarter of a century to call them brothers.

Oh, Robert Hardy, what glorious opportunities you missed to love and be loved! With all your wealth you have been a very poor man all your life until now, on the next to the last day of it!

There is little need to describe the rest of this day. Robert went home. Every one greeted him tenderly. His first inquiry was for Clara. Still in that trancelike sleep. Would she never wake? The wife shuddered with fear. Mrs. Hardy had spent much of the time in prayer and tears. The evening sped by without special incldent.

James Caxton came and joined the family circle. His presence reminded Mr. Hardy of the old quarrel with the young man's father. He spoke to James and said if anything should prevent his seeing his father the next day James might tell his father how completely and sincerely he wished the foolish quarrel forgotten and his own share in it forgiven.

So that day came to a close in family conference, in tears, in fear and hope and anxlety and prayer. But Mrs. Hardy would not lose all hope. It did not seem to her possible that her husband could be called away the next

CHAPTER XII.

Alice, with the quickness of thought that always characterized her, planned that all the rest should go to church while she remained with Clara. Will was able to go out now. So, for the first time in months. Robert and his wife and Bess and the two boys sat together in the same seat. George had not been to church for a year, and Will was very irregular in his attendance.

The opening services seemed espe cially impressive and beautiful to Mr. Hardy. He wondered how he had ever dared sit and criticise Mr. Jones and the way he had of reading the hymns. To be sure, he was not a perfect speak er, but his love for his people and his great love for men and his rare good life every day were so well known that they ought to have counted for more than they ever did.

It is astonishing how many good deeds and good men pass through this world unnoticed and unappreciated. but every evil deed is caught up and magnified and criticised by press and people until it seems as if the world must be a very wicked place indeed and the good people very scarce indeed.

Mr. Hardy joined in the service with s joy unknown to him for years. He had come to it from the reading of his Bible instead of the reading of the morning paper and from prayer instead of from thoughts of his business or a yawning stroll through his library. His mind was receptive of the best things in the service. He entered into it with the solemn feeling that it was his last.

And when the minister gave out the text, "For we must all appear before the judgment seat of Christ, that every man may receive the things done in his body, whether they be good or bad," he started and leaned forward intently, feeling that the message of the preacher was for him and him alone and strangely appropriate for his own peculiar condition. The first statement of the sermon arrested his attention and held him to the argu ment irresistibly to the end:

"The judgment seat of Christ will not be a dreadful place to a man whose sins have been forgiven in this world. but if he comes up to it seamed and scarred and stained with sins unrepented of and unforgiven because he has not asked God to forgive him it will be a place of awful fear to his soul. There are men here in this audience who are as ready to die now as they ever will be. They have made their peace with God. They have no quarrel with their neighbors. Their accounts are all square in business. They are living in loving relations with the home circle. They have no great burdens of remorse or regret

TOMEN are assailed at every turn by troubles peculiar to their sex. Every mysterious ache or pain is a symptom. These distressing sensations will keep on coming unless properly treated.

The history of neglect is written in the worn faces and

wasted figures of ninetenths of our women, WOMEN WHO every one of whom may receive the invaluable ad-NEED MRS. vice of Mrs. Pinkham, without charge, by writing PINKHAM'S AID to her at Lynn, Mass. MISS LULA EVANS, of

Parkersburg, Iowa, writes of her recovery as follows: "DEAR MRS. PINKHAM-I had been a constant sufferer

for nearly three years. Had inflammation of the womb, leucorrhœa, heart trouble, bearing-down pains, backache, headache, ached all over, and at times could hardly stand on

> my feet. My heart trouble was so bad that some nights I was compelled to sit up in bed or get up and walk the floor, for it seemed as though I should smother. More than once I have been obliged to have the doctor visit me in the middle of the night. I was also very nervous and fretful. I was utterly discouraged. One day I thought I would write and see if you could do anything for me. I followed your advice and now I feel like a new woman. All those dreadful troubles I have no

more, and I have found Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound and Sanative Wash a sure cure for leucorrhæa. I am very thankful for your good advice and medicine."

weighing them down, and if God should call them this minute to step up to the judgment seat they would be

"But there are other men here who are not at all ready for such a tremendous event. They may think they are, but they are mistaken. How can they stand before the greatest being in all the universe and have no fear when they are unprepared to answer his questions: 'Why did you not confess me before men? Why did you not do as 1 commanded and bear the burdens of the work instead of pleasing yourself?

What will the man say then? "It is true that Christ is all merciful, all loving. But will it make no difference with a soul whether it comes up to his judgment seat out of a life of selfish ease and indulgence or out of a life of self sacrifice and restraint? When every possible offer of mercy is held out to men on earth and they will not accept it, will it be all the same as if they had when they come before the judgment seat of Christ? Why, that would be to mock at the meaning of the incarnation and the atonement. It would be to cast scorn and contempt on the agony in the garden and the crucifixion. It would make unnecessary all the prayer and preaching. What possible need is there that men preach gospel of salvation unless there is danger of the opposite?

"If we are all going to be saved anyway, no matter whether we accept God's love in Christ or not, what use is the church? And why should we be anxious any more about our children? And what difference does it make whether they go to the bad here in this world if in the world to come they will all be saved? For eternity will be so much grander and sweeter and enduring than time that we might as well take it easy here and not pay much attention to the message, 1God so loved the world'-that is, if we are going to be saved anyway.

"Why should we care very much if it does say in the revelation of God's word that the wicked shall go away into everlasting punishment if we don't believe it? Why, the wicked will stand just as good a chance of eternal glory as the good if the judgment seat of Christ does not mean a separation of the good from the bad. Let us close our churches and go home. Let us eat and drink and dance and be merry, for tomorrow we may die; and after death the judgment, and after the judgment glory and joy and power and peace and life eternal in the presence of God.

"It is true we scorned him on earth, but that won't make any difference; he will receive us just the same. It is true we refused to believe in his only begotten Son after all he suffered of shame and agony for us, but that makes no difference; he will say, 'Enter into the joy of thy Lord.' It is true we made fun of Christians and mocked at prayer and speered at faith, but that is not much to be afraid of. It is true we hated our neighbor and would not forgive an insult, but that is a little thing. It is true when the Holy Spirit pleaded with us a year or six months ago to confess Christ in public we told him to leave us; we were ashamed to do it in the presence of men, to confess him who spread out his arms on a cross of bitterest agony for us, but for all that we feel sure that when we march up to the judgment seat of Christ he will treat us just the same as he treats the disciples who have laid down their lives for the Master.

"Then let us tear out of the Bible every line that speaks of retribution or punishment or judgment-for we don't like those passages; they hurt our feelings-and let us leave only those words that speak of love and mercy and forgiveness, for those words are the only ones that can be true, for those words don't make us feel uncomfortable.

"Away with everything that hurts our feelings, that makes us anxious, that sends us to our knees in prayer, that makes us confess Christ and live a life of self denial and service, for

when the judgment seat is prepared and Christ sits down there and we appear before him he will receive us as we come before him-the pure and the impure, the selfish and the proud and the humble and the believer and the disbeliever and infidels and scoffers and cowards and despisers of God's love on the earth, all the class of men who fell back on weak and imperfect Christians as an excuse for their own weak lives, and the drunkards and the liars and the oppressors of the poor, and everybody who heard a thousand sermons full of gospel and despised them because of some imperfection in the delivery or elocution, and all those men who went through the earth betrayers of the home, and the selfish politicians who betrayed their country. and all the men who read the Bible and believe only the parts that didn't burt their sensitive feelings, and the young men who lived fast lives and sowed wild oats because a wicked and false public sentiment

think it was excusable t necessary, and all the othwomen who lived as they gardless of God and eternia all these shall appear before ment seat of Christ, he will them all as one soul and with : of gracious pardon will reach o almighty arm and sweep then all

power, world without end! "But is this what Christ taught the world? Suppose what we have said is true. It turns his whole life into a splendid mockery. Foolishness and absurdity could go no further than to create a life like his and to put into his mouth such teachings as we have received if at the judgment seat all souls, regardless of their acts in this world. are received on an equal footing and all received into eternal life. And where is there any room in the teachings of Christ for a purgatory? Do we believe that? Is it not the plain teaching that after the judgment the destiny of souls

alike into a beaven of eternal buss.

there to reign with him in glory and

is fixed forever? "But what could man wish more?



"I had female trouble for eight years," writes Mrs. L. J. Dennis, of 828 East College St., Jacksonville, Ills. "Words cannot express what I suffered. I sought relief among the medical profession and found none. Friends urged me to try Dr. Pierce's Favorite Prescription. When I com-menced taking this medicine I weighmenced taking this medicine I weighed ninety-five pounds. Now I weigh one hundred and fifty-six pounds—more than I ever weighed before. I was so bad I would lie from day to day and long for death to come and relieve my suffering. I had internal inflammation, a disagreeable drain, bearing down pain, and such distress every month but now I never have a pain—do all my own work and am a strong and healthy woman."

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