

MY POOR WIFE.

BY J. P. SMITH.

CHAPTER XV.—(Continued.)

"My dear boy, wait a moment, just a moment," pleaded my uncle, his hand grasping my arm. "We will give you all the particulars we have gleaned. Don't—don't be afraid. Unfortunately up to the present we—we have no reliable clue to your wife's whereabouts more than the letter has probably given you; but we hope—"

"There's her hat—the hat she always wears in the garden; it looks all wet and muddy—she must have dropped it in the grass. Give it to me—give it to me! Finlay, what on earth have you jingling there? It—it looks—"

"I don't know what it is; do you recognize it, Mr. Dennys?" he answered, holding up a block of bruised metal from which hung a light rusted chain entangled in a rag of blue ribbon.

"That rubbish?—no. At first in the shade there I thought it looked not unlike a steel girdle and chataine my wife wears—one that I bought her at the Palais Royal last spring. I—I don't know what put it into my head. Give me the hat. Where was it found? Answer me, answer me! Are you all struck dumb?"

Then they told me, two or three of them taking up one another nervously, that the hat was picked up the morning before by the children of the Orange lodge in a bed of rushes down the river; that the chain and mass of metal had been found twisted round the big wheel of the Red Mill, and that it was recognized by Carter, my wife's maid, as part of the chataine she undoubtedly wore the day she disappeared.

"You—you wish me to understand that my wife went down the river under the mill machinery like the girl long ago? You—you want me to believe that? Great heavens!"

"My dear boy—no, no. As long as there is no further confirmation, of course we—we must hope for the best; but—but you see, unfortunately the night was dark, and the river unusually swollen; it is so dangerous down by that broken bridge, so easy to miss one's footing in—the—I say, catch him, catch him! Oh, poor fellow, he's falling!"

I saw their faces crowding round me, the room seemed to heave convulsively, and then I remembered nothing more for many weeks.

CHAPTER XVI.

One cold gusty evening in October, seven years after the pen had fallen from Paul Dennys' hand, two women, wearing the garb of the good Sisters of Nazareth, wended their way across the little country churchyard of Colworth and stood silently before a white marble cross bearing the following inscription—

"Sacred to the memory of Helen, the beloved wife of Paul Dennys of Colworth, who died 22nd of July, 187—, aged 19."

"It stood a few yards away from the huge stone monument under which generations of Dennyses slept, the reeds and rushes from the river, flowing close by, rustling mournfully around it, making the spot so dismal and ghostly that the elder sister, a woman of a vigorous and unimaginative disposition, shuddered involuntarily and exclaimed half-pettishly to her silent companion—

"Well, sister, is our journey at an end? Is this the spot we have traveled over two hundred miles to visit?"

"Yes, I wanted to know if this Helen Dennys was buried here, and I find she is. I am ready to go back now, Sister Agatha, when you wish." She stooped to pick a spray of ivy growing round the cross, held it in her hand irresolutely for a moment, then flung it into the river and moved heavily away.

"No; wait a moment and rest yourself—you look quite exhausted. Don't sit on the grass, child; do you wish to get your death of cold? Sit here on the slab beside me," cried Sister Agatha, laying a motherly hand on her companion's shoulder.

She obeyed, tossing back her heavy crape veil, and lifted a wan listless face to the low murky sky.

"Poor Helen!" she sighed presently, with a weak laugh. "They haven't given her a very dry bed, have they? They might have moved her a little farther, even though it were only her memory mouldering there."

Sister Agatha made no reply, but read aloud the inscription, commenting softly, aged nineteen. That was young to bid good-by to earthly happiness. Was this Helen a relation—any one you loved—Sister Clothilde?"

"I knew her all her life; though she died young in years, she was old in sorrow."

"And yet she was beloved?"

"So the stone says—so the stone says. Oh, sister, sister," burst out the young nun, with a sudden, bitter cry. "Of all the lies, uttered or recorded in this world of lies, there are none—none, I say—so shameful, so barefaced as those that defile the graveyards of our land!"

"Hush, hush, my dear sister!" reproved the elder, in a shocked voice.

"Pray, pray compose yourself—you do not know what you are saying; how becoming—"

me—don't look at me again, and you are safe. Go—go!"

"They went; and Helen Dennys, who was supposed to have been drowned seven years ago, sank back into her seat and covered her face with her hands in a passion of despair and stormy revolt, almost as fierce as that which swept her the morning she tried to take her husband's life.

CHAPTER XVII.

Presently the door opened again, and a portly nurse, laden with a gorgeously-clad baby, waddled in, speedily followed by the owner of the gay voice and begemmed fingers, namely, Mrs. Dennys of Colworth, a stately well-conditioned lady, on whose lovely blooming face not the faintest trace of shame, remorse, regret lingered—a face that was the embodiment of supreme self-satisfaction and unshadowed prosperity. Helen looked into it long and deeply with hungry eyes, then turned to the wall, when a shower of hot tears dimmed her sight.

"I tell you, Halpin, the box is somewhere in the station; the porter distinctly saw it being lifted out of the last train, and I won't leave the station until it is found. I really never met such a helpless and stupid woman as you; it is unbearable!" cried Mrs. Dennys angrily, stamping her foot.

"Hullo, Hullo, wife, what's the storm about?" interposed a man's voice. "Is half your nursery missing, or what?"

"My bonnet-box from Elsie's is missing, Mr. Dennys, and I am telling Halpin that I won't leave the station until it is forthcoming; I'll not have the history of my emerald bracelet repeated."

Mr. Dennys made a half-soothing, half-bantering reply; at the same time, seizing his little girl, he perched her on his shoulder. The child clung to him fearfully, her eyes fixed upon the dark figure, which nobody seemed to notice.

Helen's lips moved in incoherent terrific prayer, her hands pressed to her eyes.

"Help me, help me, O Heaven!" she prayed. "Oh, do not desert me after seven years' struggle, don't let my sacrifice be all in vain! I have suffered, I have struggled! Oh, for pity's sake help me now, or I—I ruin—ruin him I love! Paul, Paul, if you love your wife, your children, your happy home, go—go quick, before my strength leaves me, before I look at you—before I look at you again."

She leaned forward rocking herself to and fro in the fever of temptation, moaning feebly, until some one touched her upraised arm, and her hand fell instinctively. Edith's husband was standing beside her, speaking to her.

"I beg your pardon, madam, there is a parcel under your seat. Would you allow me to see if it is the one we are looking for. No, it is not; thanks. I am sorry for disturbing you."

He moved away, not a gleam of recognition in his face, and she looked after him dumbly, her hands lying on her lap.

At first she could not see him plainly for a red mist shrouded her eyes; but it passed away, and he stood clear before her, a man in the prime of life; stalwart and shapely, with a handsome sunny face as insouciant, free from remorse and care as Edith's own, a man whom the world used well, who had obeyed her last request in the spirit as well as the letter. Changed; oh, so little changed since the summer days long ago, when she watched him die on her lips, the tumult in her—her god among men—a little fuller in the body and redder in face, but otherwise unchanged, unchanged!

(To be Continued.)

WHEN TOLSTOI WRITES A BOOK

Count Leo Tolstoi is such an original author that it is not in the least surprising that his modus operandi when writing a book is equally so. As soon as he has decided what the plot of a new novel is to be he makes a rough sketch of the whole, leaving out details, using for the purpose quarto paper of the commonest description, probably from motives of economy, as his handwriting is so large that he uses an enormous amount of paper for very little work; this he gives to his wife or one of his daughters to rewrite and reduce to something like neatness. As soon as the first manuscript is ready he works up the plot and fills in some of the details, writing his own comments and ideas, for future alteration on the margin.

From the first copy a second and third are made, each in the same way. If there is any part with which Count Tolstoi is very much dissatisfied, he will take the trouble to write and re-write it as many as eight or nine times, sooner than pass anything with which he is not quite pleased; he very seldom succeeds at once in describing any very remarkable scene, and when any great difficulty presents itself he adopts the highly original way of getting over it and collecting his ideas by playing a game of "Patience."

Critical as he is about his own work, Count Tolstoi meets with still sharper criticism from his wife and family, and as he places great reliance on their judgment and good taste in all things relating to literature, as soon as a new novel is completed he reads it over to them, in order that they may suggest such alterations as they think advisable; some of which suggestions he acts upon. When the proofsheets are sent in their correction absorbs his whole time and attention, and it is said that no living author gives his publisher so much trouble, owing to the numberless alterations he insists upon.

Chambray was first made by monks in the seventeenth century.

TALMAGE'S SERMON.

"A NEW CENSUS" LAST SUNDAY'S SUBJECT.

From the Second Book of Samuel, Chapter xviii, Verse 3, as follows: "Thou Art Worth Ten Thousand of Us."

One of the most wondrous characters of his time was David. A red-haired boy, he could shepherd a flock, or carry "ten loaves and ten slices of milk cheese to his brothers in the regiment," or, with leathern thong, stone loaded, bring down a giant whose armor weighed two hundred weight of metal, or cause a lion which roared at him in rage to roar with pain as he flung it, dying, to the roadside, or could marshal a host, or rule an empire, or thumb a harp so skillfully that it cured Saul's dementia—a harp from whose strings dripped pastorals, elegies, lyrics, triumphal marches, benedictions. Now, this man, a combination of music and heroics, of dithyrambs and battlefields, of country quietude and statesmanship, is to fit out a military expedition. Four thousand troops, according to Josephus, were sent into the field. The captains were put in command of the companies, and the colonels in command of the regiments, which were disposed into right wing, left wing, and center. Gen. Joab, Gen. Abishai and Gen. Ittai are to lead these three divisions; but who shall take the field as commander-in-chief? David offers his services, and proposes to go to the front. He will lead them in the awful charge, for he has not a cowardly nerve in all his body. He did not propose to have his troops go into perils which he himself would not brave, and the battlefield required as much courage then as now, for the opposing forces must, in order to do any execution at all, come up to within positive reach of sabre and spear. But there came up from the troops and from the civilians a mighty protest against David's taking the field. His life was too important to the nation. If he went down, the empire went down; whereas, if the whole four thousand of the ranks were slain, another army might be marshaled and the defeat turned into victory. The army and the nation practically cried out, "No! No! You cannot go to the front. We estimate you as ten thousand men. 'Thou art worth ten thousand of us!'"

That army and that nation, then and there, reminded David, and now remind us, of the fact which we forget, or never appreciate at all, that some people are morally or spiritually worth far more than others, and some worth far less. The census and statistics of neighborhoods, of churches, of nations, serve their purpose, but they can never accurately express the real state of things. The practical subject that I want to present today is that those who have especial opportunity, especial graces, especial wealth, especial talent; especial eloquence, ought to make up by especial assiduity and consecration for those who have less opportunities and less gifts. You ought to do ten times more for God and human uplifting than those who have only a tenth of your equipment. The rank and the file of the four thousand of the text told the truth when they said, "Thou art worth ten thousand of us."

In no city of its size are there so many men of talent as are gathered in this capital of the American nation. Some of the states are at times represented by men who have neither talents nor good morals. Their political party compensates them for partisan services by sending them to Congress, or by securing for them position in the war or navy or pension or printing departments. They were nobodies before they left home, and they are nobodies here. But they are exceptional. All the states of the Union generally send their most talented men and men of exemplary lives and noble purposes. Some of them have the gifts and qualifications of ten men, of a hundred men—yes, of a thousand men—and their constituents could truthfully employ the words of the text and say, "Thou art worth ten thousand of us."

With such opportunities are they augmenting their usefulness in every possible direction? Many of them are; some of them are not. It is a stupendous thing to have power—political power, social power, official power. It has often been printed and often quoted as one of the wise sayings of the ancients, "Knowledge is power;" yet it may as certainly be power for evil as for good. The lightning express rail train has power for good, if it is on the track, but horrible power for disaster if it leaves the track and plunges down the embankment. The ocean steamer has power for good, sailing in right direction and in safe waters and under good helmsman and wide-awake watchman on the lookout, but indescribable power for evil if under full headway it strikes the breakers. As steam power or electricity or water force may be stored in boilers, in dynamos, in reservoirs, to be employed all over a town or city, so God sometimes puts in one man enough faith to supply thousands of men with courage. If a man happens to be thus endowed, let him realize his opportunity and improve it. At this time millions of men are atremble lest this nation make a mistake and enter upon some policy of government for the islands of the sea that will founder the republic. God will give to a few men on both sides of this question faith and courage for all the rest. These are two false positions many are now taking—false as false can be. The one is that if we decline to take under full charge Cuba and Porto Rico and the

Philippines, we make a declination that will be disastrous to our nation, and other nations will take control of these archipelagos and rule them, and perhaps to our humiliation and destruction. The other theory is that if we take possession of these once Spanish colonies, we invite foreign interference, and enter upon a career that will finally be the demolition of this government. Both positions are immeasurably mistakes. God has set apart this continent for free government and the triumphs of Christianity, and we may take either the first or the second course without ruin. We may say to those islands, "We do not want you, but we have set you free; now stay free, while we see that the Spanish phanor never again puts its paw on your neck." Or we may invite the annexation of Cuba and Porto Rico, and say to the Philippines, "Get ready, by education and good morals, for free government, and at the right time you shall be one of our territories, on the way to be one of our states." And there is no power in Europe, Asia or Africa, or all combined, that could harm this nation in its world-wide endeavor. God is on the side of the right, and by earnest imploration for divine guidance on the part of this nation we will be led to do the right. We are on the brink of nothing. There is no frightful crisis. This train of Republican and Democratic institutions is a through train, and all we want is to have the engineer and the brakemen and the conductor attend to their business while the passengers keep their places. We want men in this nation with faith enough for all. We want here and there a David worth ten thousand men.

The warrior David of my text showed more self-control and moral prowess in staying at home than he could have shown commanding in the field. He was a natural warrior. Martial airs stirred him. The glitter of opposing shields fired him. He was one of those men who feel at home in the saddle, patting the neck of a pawing cavalry horse. But he suppressed himself. He obeyed the command of the troops whom he would like to have commanded. Some of the greatest Sedans and Austerlitzes have been in backwoods kitchens, or in nurseries, with three children down with scarlet fever, soon to join the two already in the churchyard, or amid domestic wrongs and outrages enough to transform angels into devils, or in commercial life within their own counting-rooms in time of Black Friday panics, or in mechanical life in their own carpenter shop, or on the scaffolding of walls, swept by cold or smitten by heat. No telegraphic wires reported the crisis of the conflict, no banner was ever waved to celebrate their victory; but God knows, and God will remember, and God will adjust, and by him the falling of a tear is as certainly noticed as the burning of a world, and the flutter of a sparrow's wing as the flight of the apocalyptic archangel. Oh, what a God we have for small things as well as big things! David no more helped at the front than helped at home. The four regiments mobilized for the defense of the throne of Israel were right in protesting against David's exposure of his life at the front. Had he been pierced of an arrow, or cloven down with a battle-axe, or fatally slung from a snorting war-charger, what a disaster for Israel! Absalom, his son, was a low fellow, and unfit to reign, his two chief characteristics were his handsome face and his long hair—so long, that when he had it cut, that which was scissored off, weighed "two hundred shekels, after the king's weight," and when a man has nothing but a handsome face and an exuberance of hair, there is not much of him. The capture or slaying of David would have been a calamity irreparable. Unnecessary exposure would have been a crime for David, as it is a crime for you.

In nine cases out of ten, the fatalities every day reported are not the fault of engineers or brakemen or conductors or cab-drivers, but of the stupidity and recklessness of people at street or railroad crossing. They would like to have the Chicago limited express train, with three hundred passengers, and advertised to arrive at a certain hour in a certain city, slow up to let them get two minutes sooner to their destination, not one farthing of their own or any one else's welfare dependent on whether they arrive one minute before twelve o'clock, or one minute after. You ought to get permission from a railroad superintendent to mount beside the engineer on a locomotive, to realize how many evils of recklessness there are in the world—funeral processions whipping up to get across before the cow-catcher strikes the hearse; man of family, with wife and children beside him in a wagon, evidently having made close calculation as to whether a stroke from the locomotive would put them backward or forward in the journey to the village grocery; traveler on a railroad bridge, hoping that he could get to the end of the bridge before the train reaches it. You have no right to put your life in peril, unless by such exposure something is to be gained for others. What imbecility in thousands of Americans during our recent American-Spanish war, disappointed because the surrender came so soon, and they could not have the advantage of being shot at San Juan hill, or brought down with the yellow fever, and carried on a litter to transport steamers already so many floating lazarettoes, instead of thanking God that they got no nearer to the slaughter than Tampa or Chattanooga, or the encampment at their own state capital, mad at the government, mad at God, because they could not get to the front in time to join the four thousand corpses, that are now being transported from the tropics

to the national cemeteries of the United States! Exposure and daring are admirable when duty calls, but keep out of peril when nothing practical and useful is to be gained for your family or your country or your God. I admire the David of my text as he suppresses himself and enters the gate of his castle, as much as I admire him, when, with his four fingers and thumb clutched into the grisly locks of Goliath's head, which he had decapitated, and Saul admiringly asks, "Whose son art thou, young man?" And David, blushing with genuine modesty, responds, "I am the son of thy servant, Jesse, the Bethlehemite."

The world has had other conquerors, yet they subdued only a nation or a continent; but here is One who is to be a Conqueror of hemispheres. Other physicians have cured sufferings, but here is a Doctor who gave sight to those who were born blind, and without surgery straightened the crooked back, and changed the numbness of paralysis into warm circulation, and who will yet extirpate all the ailments of the world, until the last cry of the world's distress shall change into a song of convalescence. Other kings have ruled wide realms, but here is a King that will yet reign in all the earth as he now reigns in heaven. There have been other historians who told the story of nations, but here is One who tells us of things that occurred before the world was. There have been other generals who commanded men, but here was a General who commanded seas and hurricanes. There have been other prophets, but here is One out of whose life and career, Moses and David and Jeremiah and Ezekiel and Micah and Malachi and Zechariah dipped their inspiration. There have been other merciful hearts all up and down through the ages, but here is One who loves us with an everlasting love, and whose mercy antedates the birth of the first mountain, and the wash of the first sea, and the radiance of the first aurora, and the chant of the morning stars at the creation, and will continue after the last rock has melted in the final conflagration, and Atlantic and Pacific oceans have rolled out of their beds, and the last night shall have folded up its shadow, and our Lord shall have cried out in the same words that sounded through the night of John's banishment on Patmos, "I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last." Then all the mightiest of heaven will gather around the incarnated God of whom I preach, each one saying it for himself, but altogether uttering it in mighty chorus, "Thou Son of David, thou Son of Mary, thou Son of God, thou art worth ten thousand of us!"

But I must not close without commending to you this wonderful Christ here and now as your pardon for all sin, and your solace for all grief, and your triumph in all struggle. Down at Norfolk, Virginia, a few days ago, a gentleman was telling me of one of our war-ships in Cuban waters. Before it left a northern harbor, some Christian ladies, at much expense and with fine taste, bought and furnished for that war-vessel a pulpit, from which the chaplain might read the service and preach while on shipboard. The pulpit was made in the shape of a cross, and it was beautifully damasked and tasseled. The ship got into the battle before Santiago, and the vessels of the enemy began to sink, and their crew were struggling in the waters, when, from this ship I speak of, the officers and sailors began to throw over chairs, planks, tables, to help the drowning save themselves. After a while everything movable had been thrown overboard, except the pulpit in the shape of a cross. After objection by some that it was too beautiful and valuable to be cast into the waters, the cross was dropped into the sea. One of the drowning men seized it, but let go, and another seized, and the shout went from many on deck to those struggling in the waves, "Cling to the cross! Cling to the cross!" Several of the drowning took the advice and held on until they were rescued and brought in safety to deck, and shore, and home, and I say to all the souls today sinking in sin and sorrow, now swept this way and now that: Though the guns of temptation and disaster may splinter and knock from under you all other standing, and everything else goes down, take hold of the cross and cling to it for your present and everlasting safety. Cling to the cross! For he who died upon it will save to the uttermost, and he is so good, and so lovely, and so mighty that he is worth infinitely more than ten thousand of us.

The Play of Spanish Children.

At Fuerterrabla the place was on fete for four days in honor of the patron saint. The mornings were divided by the natives between long services in the Cathedral and letting off rockets in the streets; the afternoons were entirely devoted to bull fights, four bulls being generously provided each day. Somehow we did not go. In the market place were a group of tiny children playing the only game they knew. That was a mimic bull fight. Every stage was faithfully reproduced. Only a few small boys and girls were not taking part in the game. They had managed to capture a live sparrow, and were enjoying the more fascinating pleasure of twisting off its legs and wings. We should think the patron saint must have felt both pleased and flattered by the spectacle.—Chambers' Journal.

History tells us the ancient Egyptians honored a cat when dead. The ancient Egyptians were wise in their day and generation.