

# A MATRIMONIAL MISSTEP

One of the Twelve Stories of Solomon.

BY THE "HIGHWAY AND BYWAY" PREACHER

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Scripture Authority—1 Kings 3:1, 11:1-4.

## SERMONETTE.

"Solomon made affinity with Pharaoh, king of Egypt, and took Pharaoh's daughter and brought her into the city of David." Here was the first step in a course which was to work the ruin of Solomon's life.

"Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is the Scriptural admonition. It was one of the laws of the Jewish dispensation on which great emphasis was laid, and it is one of the admonitions of the Christian dispensation which is clearly and positively set forth by the Apostle Paul.

Why should this be so? Why cannot we have happy, successful union between the Christian and the non-Christian? The apostle answers the question when he goes on to ask: "for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?"

There is no relationship in life so intimate and close as that of husband and wife, and hence if such relationship is to be enduring there must be fellowship and communion between the lives thus linked together.

It is then a question as to what direction such fellowship and communion shall take. Will the righteousness dominate the unrighteousness, the light, the darkness? Or will the heart of the worldling lead away from God the one who has pledged himself to God? Will the worldliness stifle and quench the light of God's truth which has shined in the heart?

Almost invariably the marriage of the Christian with the non-Christian works disaster to the faith of the former.

Solomon's union with Pharaoh's daughter was a brilliant political marriage, with every reason from a human and worldly point of view to commend it. It gave him a powerful ally to the south, assuring not only protection from attack from that quarter, but strengthening his hands with the nations to the north and east. It gave a brilliant aspect to the reign of King Solomon and was the beginning of that splendor and magnificence which marked his entire reign. And further, it brought into the national life of Israel a liberal, progressive element which was broadening in its influence, commercially and socially.

And yet in spite of all the temporary advantages which were to accrue, it was an unwise, unsafe, and unwholly alliance.

"Be not unequally yoked together with unbelievers," is a command as binding upon those who occupy the exalted places of life as it is upon those of more humble station.

## THE STORY.

THE choosing of a wife is one of the most important steps of life. It is a matter which must not be considered hastily. Sentiment must not be allowed to run away with judgment or expediency cover up the ob-

ligation which one owes to God and God's law. Where love is based on something deeper than mere physical beauty, and on something higher than mere human attainment; in other words, where love includes in its inspiration and its expression the thought of loyalty and devotion to God, then and then only is love a safe guide. Sentiment and passion are not love, and expediency and convenience are sign posts which point to the matrimonial whirlpool of disappointment and ruin. Man was intended for woman and woman for man, but God intended that they should be mated and not mismatched. What God joins together is never put asunder.

It was no secret in Israel that a wife was being sought for the young and handsome King Solomon. Since his coming to the throne it had been recognized as one of the important matters requiring solution. With the chief men of the nation and those close to the king in the administration of the affairs of the nation it was a question as to where they should look for a consort for their king.

More than one of the chief men of the nation secretly wished that his own fair daughter might be the one selected to be queen, but each with becoming modesty refrained from openly advancing the claims of their respective daughters, so that apparently no progress was made in the quest for a wife for Solomon.

And perhaps the one least concerned over the matter was Solomon himself. His had been a busy life since coming to the throne. The earnest, devout spirit in which he had entered upon the great obligations of ruling a kingdom had kept him steadfast and faithful to his task. He felt his youth, his inexperience, his limitations, and with the benediction and blessing of the Godly David resting upon him and his example pointing him to God as the source of all wisdom and strength, he had sought the Lord with a great yearning to know and do the divine will. This had become known to all the nation, and after his return to Jerusalem from Gibeon after his remarkable vision in which God had promised him wisdom and riches and honor, he found the chief men and leaders of the people and the people themselves moved by one spirit of love and devotion to the upbuilding of the kingdom. So it had come to pass that the nation was solidified and strengthened and immediately began to feel the stimulus of that aggressive spirit which was to ultimately make of Solomon's kingdom the richest and most prosperous and most enlightened of any of the nations about.

Such remarkable development and progress could not but arouse the interest, if not apprehension, of the neighboring kingdoms, and eagerly steps were taken to show friendly spirit towards the nation of Israel and to invite exchange of treaties whereby both the commercial and the political interests of the two would be served. Thus rapidly did there develop a system of trade relationships, so that there was a constant stream of merchantmen passing to and from Jerusalem. And in this way the matter of choosing a wife for King Solomon became known to the nations about, and it was not long ere brilliant embassies were arriving at Jerusalem with proposals of marriage with the princesses of the neighboring nations, even Egypt sending an offer of the hand of the daughter of Pharaoh.

Good old Nathan, the prophet, was not a little perturbed by this latest development of the situation, and lost no time in reminding King Solomon of the restrictions which the Mosaic law placed upon marriage with the nations about. He would have been glad if the king would have summarily bundled the whole company of ambassadors back to the kingdoms from which they had come, but Solomon was too keen a diplomat for that, and while he did not ignore the ad-

monitions of Nathan, he felt attracted by the brilliant prospects which a foreign alliance offered. And where the soul comes face to face with the question of religious duty or expediency which promises rich and glorious present reward, there is apt to be the struggle which only too often is decided finally in favor of expediency, with the hope and purpose that the religious obligations shall not be forgotten or neglected. So it was with Solomon, and when the messengers came from the king of Egypt they found him more than willing to listen to their proposals.

And again the good and faithful Nathan came to the king and urged upon his heart the absolute claims of God, and with a fast parting appeal he left him just as the evening shadows were gathering.

Long the young king sat while the struggle went on in his heart. He was too devoted and loyal to God to willfully and absolutely violate the command of God, but he let questionings arise in his heart as to whether the word of God meant just what Nathan urged it did. Was the law of God intended to narrow the life and limit the possibilities? Was serving God a hindrance to success and power? And so as he let the questions and doubts arise it obscured his vision of right until the heart became less sensitive to God's claims and more alive to the advantages to be gained by following the course which desire and reason indicated.

"Why cannot I make this alliance and still maintain my loyalty to God? And what a splendid opportunity it will be of bringing the knowledge of the true God to the Egyptians. See how such alliance will not only advance the material prosperity of the kingdom of Israel, but how it will advance the cause of the God of Israel."

Thus there grew upon his vision the picture of what Israel was yet to become and again he asked himself the question whether he would be doing right not to take advantage of every opportunity of advancing the material prosperity of his kingdom? And as the matter became settled in his own mind, gradually the voice of God ceased to struggle with him on that point, and so a peace came and a settled conviction that the policy of expediency was the right policy.

And so to Nathan the next day the king sent, saying:

"This thing seemeth good to me. See what glory and honor it will bring to the nation of Israel."

And King Solomon dismissed the messengers of the king of Egypt with rich presents for the princess, and sent his courtiers to prepare for the approaching nuptials.

## Brooklyn's Old Belfry Top.

The belfry top of Brooklyn's borough hall has been in a quiescent state for so many years that a good many folks were startled the other day when the bell began to ring as a welcome to the first subway train. Years ago when folks in Brooklyn heard the bell they began instinctively to count its strokes to learn where the fire was, for that was the way the fire alarms were given. At night a red lantern was hung out on the belfry to indicate the direction of the fire. It was the custom also to ring the bell in case Brooklyn's great anniversary day parade of Sunday-school children had been postponed. Even this was discontinued some years ago.—N. Y. Sun.

## Ice Needed in New York.

New York ice dealers are beginning to look for weather that will bring them a crop. They will need 4,500,000 tons of ice to supply the city next year.

## Export of Chinese Crackers.

The export of Chinese crackers from Canton was 45,197 hundred-weight in 1905, and 22,063 hundred-weight, the average for the previous five years.

## WHAT SHE SHOULD HAVE SAID.

Mike's Addition Added to Discomfiture of Teacher.

A teacher in the Garfield school was teaching a primary class the beginnings of arithmetic.

"Now, I have one pencil in my right hand and one in my left," she said.

"How many pencils have I? Helen, you may answer."

"Two," piped a small voice.

"Then one and one make two, do they not?"

"Sure!"

The teacher frowned at the disrespectful answer.

"That's hardly what you should have said," she said.

"Will some one in the class tell Helen what her answer should have been?"

There was a moment of hesitation. Then one brown fist shot confidently into the air.

"Ah, James, you may tell Helen what she should have said."

"Sure, Mike!" shouted Jimmie, in a tone of triumph.—Kansas City Star.



## "CAP," THE BUSINESS DOG.

Takes Money and Buys His Master His Paper Every Morning.

"Cap" is a wise dog. He buys the paper every morning, and carries it home to his master to read. Unfortunately "Cap" cannot read himself.



Cap Carrying Home the Paper.

If he could, he would also get the news out of the paper.

"Cap" is a black and white English setter, owned by A. E. Dayton of 11 Sumner street, Dorchester, says the Boston Globe. He is seven years old, and since puppyhood he has shown himself an unusual dog. All the common tricks of dogs come easily to him,

## THE YOUNG MAGICIAN.

How He Can Do a Coin Trick with Handkerchief and Glass.

The performer exhibits a small glass, allowing it to be examined. He also requests the loan of a silver quarter, which is marked for identification. He exhibits a large colored handkerchief, showing both sides. Next he places the marked coin under the folds of the handkerchief and requests one of the audience to hold it firmly.

He then places himself in such a position as to be able to hold one of

such as sitting up, shaking hands, rolling over, begging, playing dead, and all that. Indeed, they are so easy that "Cap" doesn't care much for them. He is an ambitious dog, and goes in for more serious things.

His chief delight is buying the paper. He is an early riser, and every morning he fidgets and whines about until his master gets up and gives him two pennies, wrapped up in paper, with which to get the newspaper.

"Cap" wags his tail happily when he starts out, with the money in his mouth, for Edward Everett square, which is not far off, for he knows he will find a newsboy at the square, and that the boy will sell him a paper.

If the boy is busy "Cap" waits his turn. Then he thrusts his nose up toward the boy, and opens his mouth. The newsboy takes out the little package, and opens it. "Cap" watches him anxiously when he takes out the money.

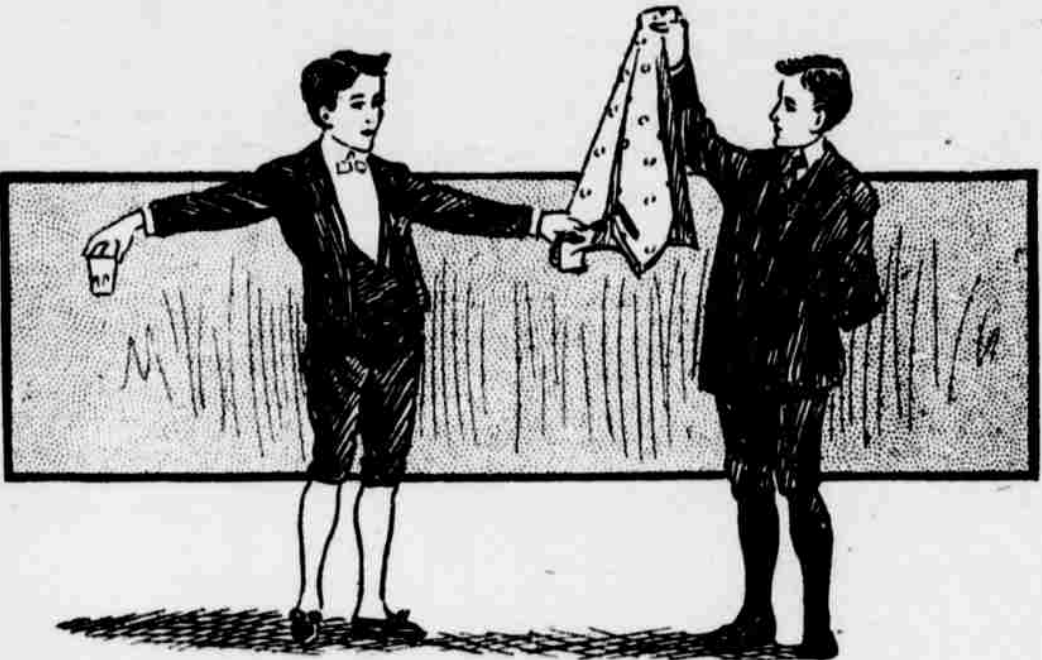
On getting his paper he starts straight home. All the dogs in Boston could not divert him from his path of duty. But "Cap" is cautious, and if he sees trouble coming his way he makes a detour. He is suspicious of strangers until he has satisfied himself that they have no designs on his paper, and takes the middle of the street when he sees anyone approaching he thinks he cannot trust.

When "Cap" gets home, and his master's paper has been delivered, he is a very merry dog indeed. The serious business of the day has been dispatched, and he feels happy and relieved of responsibility.

He watches the reading of the paper with satisfaction, wagging his tail as if to say: "You wouldn't have that if it were not for me."

It would take considerable money to buy "Cap."

marked coin in the right hand (the left being underneath the handkerchief), and as the fingers of that hand (right) pass beneath the folds it nips and carries with it the corner of the handkerchief containing the hidden coin up and underneath to the center of the handkerchief, where it can be felt and held by the observer, at the same time palming the marked coin. Request that the holder grasp the handkerchief for security just beneath with the left hand. This is really to prevent any uninvited examination. The performer now takes a position, one corner of the handker-



The Flying Coin.

the drooping corners of the handkerchief while the other hand grasps the glass. At the word of command the handkerchief is pulled from the fingers of the observer, and at the same instant the coin is both seen and heard to fall in the glass, and both are instantly passed for examination.

Procure two large red and white handkerchiefs, alike in pattern, and stitch both together by the four hems, or sides, having previously placed a quarter of a dollar between the two. This coin, of course, will fall into one of the angles of the double handkerchief as the latter is held in the center.

Then request the loan of a quarter and have it marked. Exhibit this

chief in his left hand, the empty glass in his right, in the palm of which is the marked coin, and at the words of "Presto, pass!" or other word of command relaxes the muscles of the right hand, allowing the coin to fall visibly and audibly into the glass, and at the same instant twirling the handkerchief with his left. Glass and coin are then passed for identification.

## Somewhat Surprised.

Aunt Abby—The minister is going to lecture on "The Manners and Customs of the South Sea Islanders."

Uncle Ben—Is that so? I knew they had customs, but I never s'posed they had any manners.

## "TIT FOR TAT" SOCIETY.

Jessie Was to Darn Jim's Hose and He Was to Shine Her Shoes.

Jim and Jessie were twins, as much alike as two peas in a pod, with this awful difference—one was a boy and the other was a girl. While Jim was small enough to wear long curls and pinafores, you really couldn't tell which was which; but when he got rid of his curls and went into trousers, everything was changed. He began to put on lordly airs and to order Jessie about. Jessie opened her blue eyes at first in astonishment; she never thought about the trousers, but though she was only a girl, she had plenty of spirit, and would not be imposed upon.

"I wish," said Jim one day, "that you'd mend these holes in my stockings, Jess," and he held up a pair of dreadful-looking objects.

"What will you give me?" asked Jessie.

"I'll say 'thank you,' and let you watch me sail my new boat," he an-

swered condescendingly.

"That's not fair," began Jessie, and mamma broke in:

"I should say not! If Jessie is to darn your stockings, there must be tit for tat. Now listen to my plan for the winter, which, understand," and mamma shook her finger warningly, "must be followed rigidly. From to-day I organize a 'Tit for Tat' society. Jessie, I know, will agree to darn your week's supply of stockings, in return for which, every Wednesday and Saturday you must play bootblack. If you fail to polish her shoes on those days you will be forced to carry the holes in your stockings over till the next week; and if Jessie fails to see that you are properly provided, the boots will go unpolished. Now, all in favor of my plan say 'Ay.'"

"Ay, ay," they both cried, and it was adopted at once.

If the boys and girls would like to know how it worked, let them try it and see.

Men drink least in February—it has only 28 days.

## BOAST OF OUR CONTINENT.

America Has the World's Supply of Humming Birds.

Though the art museums of Europe may have some treasures of which America cannot boast, our continent has the distinction of a monopoly of the world's supply of humming birds, the gems of all the feathered creation. Of these there are said to be some 400 species—the 400 we may call them!—nearly all of which are peculiar to the tropical regions. Only 18 cross the borders of the United States from Mexico, and occur only in our southwestern states.

The popular idea is that the hummer lives only on honey, gathered from flowers. This is a mistake. The bird does secure some honey, but its food consists mainly of the small insects which frequent the flowers. Some of these insects are injurious to the blossom, and the tiny bird fulfills a useful function in destroying them. That the hummer is insectivorous is also shown by its habit of catching tiny insects on the wing, which is

occasionally observed.—H. K. Job, in Outing Magazine.

## Properly Advertised.

Western Theater-Manager—Want dates for your company, eh? What's the show about?

Advance Agent—It is an opera company.

"Opera? Won't go, I'm 'fraid. What's your best piece?"

"We have drawn the largest house with 'William Tell.'"

"I'm afraid it won't go here. Nobody would come."

"I think they would if it was properly advertised."

"Well, I'll try it, Jack!"

Jack (an assistant)—Yes, sir.

"Rush over to the newspaper office and tell 'em to announce that next week we're going to have a new and excitin' musical dramma called, 'Bill the Shooter.'"

—N. Y. Weekly.

## Original Use of the Umbrella.

It is said that the first use of the umbrella was as a means of protection from the sun. As a shield against rain it was an afterthought.