

# SPARKLE'S SKELETON.

Dr. Philaethes Sparkle was a great man in a small way. He was the vicar of an important suburban church, wherein a highly respectable and not wholly unintelligent congregation was wont to assemble for worship. In that congregation the pastor had no enemies, while he could boast of a large number of thorough-going and ardent admirers. The man was admittedly well fitted for his post. He was kind-hearted, liberal-minded, quick-witted, a fluent speaker, and, in the opinion of many, a thoughtful as well as eloquent preacher. But, in truth, "thoughtful" was just what Dr. Sparkle was not. His great difficulty, and one that increased weekly, was about ideas. When he knew what to say, he could say it well. No man could produce a more "brilliant" or effective flare-up from a petty amount of material; but then, the fuel had to come from somewhere, and that was the doctor's difficulty. He had a reputation to maintain, and he was fully, almost painfully, conscious of the fact.

Under these circumstances, and being sorely harassed by the recurrent drying up of the well-spring of his ideas, Dr. Sparkle had his attention arrested one morning by an artfully worded circular which was found among his letters. It began as follows:

STRICTLY PRIVATE.—Ad Clero.

Moved by the spirit of sympathy, and actuated as he humbly hopes, by a desire to promote the highest ends, the writer addresses himself to his over-tought and sorely oppressed brethren. Having had an exceptionally wide experience of parish work in town and country, among rich and poor, educated and ignorant, he believes himself to be fully conversant with the tastes and requirements of each separate class in the community. No one better than the present writer knows what it is to have to prepare—amid a multitude of other vocations—two, three, or more sermons a week. He has suffered himself, and end, therefore, feel for his brethren who are suffering. Accordingly he is anxious at the lowest price that will cover actual outlay, to impart to his brethren the results of a system of sermon production which has been perfected by himself after years of anxious toil and profound study.

Dr. Sparkle smiled as he read the bombastic document, and was about to throw it into the waste basket, when something stayed his hand.

"I wonder whether many clergymen avail themselves of this sort of thing, my dear?" he said, tossing the circular to his faithful wife, who generally sat with him for an hour of a morning. "To deliberately get up and read another man's sermon seems to me absolutely sinful."

"But all men are not gifted like you, Letha, dear, and I suppose there are some who find it very difficult to preach a good sermon," suggested Mrs. Sparkle.

"It is the dishonesty of the thing that shocks me," explained the doctor. "If a man can't write a sermon, or hasn't time, let him honestly say so. Let him take a printed book and read from it; but to go into the pulpit with a lithograph and deliver it as his own, is a thing I can't conceive any Christian man daring to do."

Some time after this, the vicar found it necessary to appoint a new curate, the old one having married a rich wife and forthwith kicked over the traces. Among several applicants, the doctor's favorite was the Rev. Jonathan Cribber. But as it was necessary, in appearance at least, to consult the wishes of the congregation (who were expected to find the funds), it was arranged that, before arriving at the decision, the young man should be invited to preach on a certain Sunday evening.

When the day arrived on which Mr. Cribber was to try his voice, Dr. Sparkle was suffering from a bad cold. In the morning, being single-handed, he had no choice but to get through the service as well as he could; and, being a man who, when put to it, was always equal to the occasion, he acquitted himself very creditably. He delivered a striking and pathetic address from the words, "the foolishness of preaching," and the physical disability under which he was evidently laboring, only served to heighten the effect of his allusions to the "earthen vessels," to which celestial treasures were so often entrusted. But in the evening, obedient to his doctor's orders, the good man stayed at home.

As the night drew on, Dr. Sparkle became very much depressed, despite all his wife's efforts to cheer him.

"I am sure you would have heard the way the people spoke of you when coming out of church this morning. The Grundys had some friends with them, and they said they had never heard a better sermon."

"And you, my dear—what did you think of it?"

"I think it was the most beautiful sermon you ever preached," replied the lady enthusiastically, "though all your sermons have been splendid of late. Some months ago, you remember, you complained of feeling exhausted, and insisted that the fountain of your ideas was drying up. But it seems to me that ever since your ideas have been brighter and more original than formerly; they have bubbled and sparkled as though to match your name."

"I feel exhausted and utterly dried up to-night, anyhow. I'm fit for nothing."

"You have studied too hard, Letha, dear. Your brain has been over-wrought," said Mrs. Sparkle, affect-

tionately. "We must go for a nice long holiday when the new curate comes. Only last week Dr. Briggs said that if ever a man had earned a holiday you had."

On Monday morning the vicar was so far recovered that he was able to receive Mr. Grundy in his study. The worthy churchwarden was evidently ill at ease. His inquiries as to the pastor's health were profuse and long-drawn out; his observations on the weather diffusive and inconsistent. At length Dr. Sparkle found it necessary to bring him to the point.

"Well, Mr. Grundy I am waiting to hear how everything went off last night."

"Oh, first-rate, sir, first-rate. Large congregation, beautiful anthem, offertory above the average."

"And Mr. Cribber?"

"A most excellent young man, as I believe, sir. Fine voice, made a good impression—that is on those who hadn't heard you in the morning."

The vicar smiled, and looked well pleased at what he deemed to be a neat compliment intended for himself.

"Well, my friend, you must remember he is but a young man and without much experience. We ought not to be too critical. We all had to make a beginning once."

"It isn't that, sir. It was the coincidence that struck the people."

"The what?" exclaimed Dr. Sparkle, a vague sense of uneasiness creeping over him.

"The coincidence, sir. He gave us 'The foolishness of preaching' over again. I mean his text was the same as that which you so ably expounded in the morning."

"Rather awkward," laughed the vicar. "I fear it would have embarrassed the poor young fellow had he known about it; but, after all, the thing might easily happen. The words are in the evening lesson, though I took them for my text in the morning. You see, the arrangement for Mr. Cribber to preach was somewhat hurriedly made."

"But it isn't only the text—it is the sermon itself the people are talking about, sir. I didn't pay much attention myself but Mrs. Grundy will have it that, though the words were different, the substance, the backbone, the skeleton was just the same."

"The skeleton!" exclaimed the vicar, in a horror-stricken voice.

"Well, that's the word my wife used," said the church warden, apologetically. "I didn't quite follow her myself; for, though I've heard of people having skeletons in a cupboard, I never know of one in a pulpit." Mr. Grundy laughed at his own smartness, but a dark cloud settled upon the broad brow of Dr. Sparkle.

Poor Dr. Sparkle was in a terrible fix. There was Grundy waiting to be gulled, and it was incumbent on him to say something. He gave a little sigh, and spoke in his softest accents:

"Well, you see, Mr. Grundy, not having heard this wonderful sermon, I cannot discuss the matter in detail; nor would I wish to think anything to the disparagement of a young man who has been very highly recommended to me. Several partial solutions occur to me, none of them reflecting unduly on Mr. Cribber. Possibly, we may have looked into the same commentary."

Mr. Grundy gave a knowing nod.

"Possibly Mr. Cribber may have read some article of mine in one or other of the religious periodicals treating of this subject. I say possibly, though I do not at this moment recall having written anything about it."

Mr. Grundy gave another yet more knowing nod.

"And there is yet another hypothesis connected with the obscure topic of unconsciousness, cerebration and reminiscence. I tell you candidly I have preached on that text before—at the abbey once, and elsewhere perhaps. Mr. Cribber may have heard me. My thoughts may have passed into an impressionable mind. There have been most remarkable instances of this phenomenon."

Mr. Grundy was evidently impressed.

"I think," he said, "I can understand how it happened now, and the explanation you have given is very interesting. But, perhaps, under the circumstances, you might find some more suitable gentleman for the curacy."

"I almost think you are right, Grundy," assented the vicar, eagerly. "Mr. Cribber seems scarcely up to the mark for such a congregation as ours. There were several other applicants who were most highly recommended—Mr. Playfair, for instance."

Dr. Sparkle spoke in his most dulcet tone, but as soon as Mr. Grundy left the room he sat down and wrote as follows to the Rev. Jonathan:

DEAR SIR: From what I hear of the sermon delivered by you last night, I regret that I am obliged to conclude that you are altogether unsuited to my curacy. My people have accustomed to original, or at all events independent, thought in the pulpit, and I do not suppose you would yourself maintain the applicability of either of these words to the discourse with which you favored them. I return the testimonials you sent me, and beg to remain, yours faithfully, P. SPARKLE.

Having sent this ill-tempered production to the post, the unfortunate man was forthwith ashamed of himself, and would gladly have recalled it. He blamed himself for all that had happened, and became a victim to horrible remorse and abject fear. His wife had her own suspicions, but kept them to herself.

That very afternoon the Rev. Jonathan Cribber, in hot indignation, sought out the clerical agent who had made up for his own lack of brains and energy, and bearded him to his den.

"I can only say," replied the suave

cleric who devoted his energies to helping his weaker brethren, "that for originality of thought and freshness of treatment, I consider 'the foolishness of preaching' to be among my masterpieces. I could show you numerous letters that I have received in reference to that very sermon. There must, I take it, be something very unfortunate in your voice or mode of delivery. Now, I am about to form a clerical elocution class, and I would strongly urge upon you—

"My voice is excellent, sir! I have been congratulated upon it time and again!" roared the Reverend Jonathan.

"I do not doubt its power, sir," replied the agent, with a deprecatory motion of his hand; but it may need—

"You talk about letters, sir. Read that!" said the irate Cribber, interrupting him, and flinging Dr. Sparkle's note upon the table.

The agent read the letter, and then, after a few minutes' consideration, he remarked:

"Do you mean to say that you gave them 'The foolishness of preaching' in Dr. Sparkle's church?"

"I do; and why not? I paid you for the sermon."

"You told me you were in Lincoln diocese when I sent it to you."

"And so I was; but I came to town to see after Dr. Sparkle's curacy. I had a perfect right to preach the sermon," said the Rev. Jonathan, fiercely.

"Yes, I suppose you had—at your own risk," admitted the agent.

"But it has lost me an excellent curacy," continued the irate Cribber.

"And you have lost me an excellent client. Good morning."

On the following Sunday Dr. Sparkle's pulpit was occupied by Mr. Playfair, and it was announced that the vicar, in obedience to the peremptory orders of his medical adviser, had gone abroad for a few weeks.

The doctor is now, with his faithful wife by his side, recruiting his energies and laying in a genuine stock of fresh ideas. He has resolved for the future to have no secrets from Mrs. Sparkle, and to eschew "skeletons."—London Truth.

**WANTED TO MARRY.**

On a wild mountain road between the Yarkin river and Salisbury, N. C., I came upon an humble cabin in which resided the Widow Watkins and her three children, the oldest being a boy of fifteen and the youngest a girl of 5. I had heard of the widow while ten miles away. Her husband was a justice of the peace and something of a religious exhorter, and what he didn't know about the history of America wasn't worth looking up. His mule ran away with him one day, and fell into a ravine and both were killed. The widow, as one of the natives expressed it, was "the well fixed woman in four counties," having a small farm all clear and considerable personal property. Half a mile from the house I met Jeremiah, the boy spoken of. He was bareheaded, barefooted, coatless vestless, and so freckled that it was hard to say what his natural complexion was. He rose up off a rock as I approached, made an awkward bow and said:

"Cribbins, stranger."

"Cribbins to you, my boy. And who may you be?"

"Jerry Watkins."

"Son of the widow, eh?"

"Yans. Be you'n he 'un?"

"Yes."

"From the north?"

"Yes."

"Come to see ma?"

"Yes, I'll stop for dinner."

"Glad on't. Gwine to hev' chicken. Ma sent me out to meet you 'un."

"Many thanks to both of you."

"Say!" he continued as he trotted along beside me, "Like you 'un; you 'un wears white shirts and clothes, and I'll jigger (bet) you 'un known roots from treetops. Hev you 'un cum to marry ma?"

I laughed, and he was much put out for a moment. Then he said:

"Wish you 'un would. Then I could hev a gun. If you 'un will I'll mind everything you say."

"Perhaps your mother doesn't want to marry again."

"Mugs! She'd marry you 'un like lightning. Say! If you 'un has her you 'un will git me a gun, won't you? Say! I know whar I could shoot a powerful lot o' coons. Say! I'll speak ter ma fur ye if you 'un will promise the gun."

The widow who sat at the door to give me welcome. The second child, was a 10-year-old girl, was barefooted and freckled and towheaded, and the younger one had on only a single garment and was rolling in the dirt.

"Cum right in and squut, said the widow as we shook hands. Pete McCoy was saying last night that you was headed this way and would stop. Ar ye thinstable? May, jostle him over a glass of butter-milk. We'll cribbins (bet) in about an hour."

We talked about the weather, the state of the roads, etc., as he bustled around to get dinner, but pretty soon Jerry went out of doors and called:

"Ma! ma! Cum outer yere!"

"Jerry, you shet!" replied the mother.

"Ma! will you 'un marry he 'un?" continued Jerry.

"Now, Jerry, if yer don't stop yer guzzum I'll skin yer alive!" she exclaimed, as she stood in the door and flourished a skillet at him.

Jerry made off and sat down on a log, and the widow turned to me to explain:

"Don't pay no seriousness to he 'un, sir. Jerry wants a new pop right bad, and I do say that I'm tired of this yere gittin' along alone, but I'm not gwine to offer myself to anybody."

Just before dinner the oldest girl made friends with me materially assisted by some candy, and she suddenly laughed out:

"Ma! ma! gwine to marry him?"

"Now, Mollie!" chided the mother.

"Wish you would!" added the youngest, who went by the name of Nancy.

"Now, Nancy! While I do go far to say he 'un is the smartest looking stranger I've seen fur a year, mebbe he 'un don't think shucks of me."

I kept fighting shy of the main question, and by and by we sat down to dinner. The blessing had been scarcely asked when Jerry, who had made a tremendous effort to wash his face and comb his hair, looked up at his mother and asked:

"Has he 'un asked you yet?"

"Jerry!" she chided.

"But don't he 'un want yer?"

"Jerry!"

"But don't I want a new pap and a gun?" he loudly demanded.

"Don't serious him," she said to me, as she helped me to the leg of a chicken. "While I will go fur to declare that I have seventy-six acres of land, three mews, a cow, thirty-two hogs, four stacks of hay and \$28 in cash. I've allus sorter disagreed with second marriages. They mayn't be happy."

"Your husband was a good man, I've heard," I replied.

"Yes, a pumpkin. He knowed considerable, and that's considerable he never knowed. He was all goodness—too mu' h of it. Never made a hundred dollars in his life."

"You must have been quite a business woman to have got along so well."

"You jiggee! I kin turn a dollar as well as the best of 'em. While I will go in to say second marriages are not allus happy, the man who gits

**Treatment of Baldness.**

A few words about one of the most common forms of skin diseases among us. Baldness is so widely spread, and so universal among us, that it is quite fashionable. Nevertheless, I shall give a couple of recipes for that form that is accompanied by falling of dandruff, which is technically known as dry seborrhea of the scalp. In nine-tenths of these cases, a cure is possible, that is, hair may be restored if sufficient patience is allotted with other treatment. Owing to barbers' failure to give back to a man his hair, a general impression exists that it is no use to try; once bald, always bald.

This is severely over true of seborrhea, not in fifty per cent. of cases from other causes, and whosoever will try these recipes will be convinced of their efficacy.

For a week, at the outset of treatment, the scalp is to be thoroughly washed with a reliable tar soap, such as any apothecary sells, drying the hair thoroughly, but not rinsing out the tar. If hair has vanished let the lather dry upon bare spots. Then begin with a wash composed of resorcin pure, one dram; castor oil, one-half ounce; bay rum, 7½ ounces. Mix.

This is to be applied morning and night, and well rubbed in. After two weeks of lotion, have the following pomade prepared, and rub into the scalp and hair a portion the size of a hazel nut every morning: Sulfuric acid, ten grains; ammoniated mercury, five grains; cold cream, one ounce. Mix.

After one week's careful attention to this treatment, the bald spots will be covered with a fine, thick, silky growth, that is forerunner to a crop worth having.

Try it.—Dr. Hutchinson, in American Magazine.

**A Military Camp in the Elmira N. Y. Reformatory.**

The convicts of the Elmira (N. Y.) Reformatory, an institution in which criminals under age or who have committed their first crime are confined, has been transformed into a military camp. "The Yates' bill," which recently went into effect in the State of New York, which prohibits criminals from working as various trades while confined for misdemeanors, have made complaint of their enforced idleness.

The Elmira Reformatory was affected by the Yates' bill just as much as the other prisons of the State were. To meet the requirements of the new law and to keep his prisoners from idleness, Superintendent Brockway hit upon a plan which works wonders. He organized a regiment in the Reformatory. The regiment has eight companies, a full complement of officers, a band of 60 pieces, and a drum corps of wonderful firing and drumming qualities. The boys drill nearly eight hours a day. The prison is now practically a military camp, with company streets, officers' headquarters and all other departments of a military post in time of war. The men are required to do all the duty they would have to do if regularly-enlisted soldiers in an enemy's country during a war. It keeps the men from idleness, which is the object for which the scheme was devised.

**Felons.**

The medical name of this affection is whitlows. Every one who has been attacked by a felon will admit that it richly deserves its name. The Saxon name whitlow—a white flame—refers to the intense burning pain which attends it, and the whitened skin over the matured abscess.

There are four forms, though if neglected, the first may run into the second, and the second into the third. The first is superficial, and originates at the side of the nail in the true skin under the scarf-skin, or cuticle. The pain is not at first severe, but if the cuticle is not opened and cut away with scissors, the skin may ulcerate, and the pus work its way beneath the nail.

In the second form, the flesh of the first joint (phalanx) is inflamed, in consequence of some injury, or perhaps from the extension to it of the first form. The tip of the finger swells, and throbs with burning pain and pus is soon formed. Unless the abscess is opened early, the pus may burrow into the tendon sheath, thus giving rise to the third form, or even into the substance of the bone, as in the fourth form.

In the third form, the inflammation begins in the sheath that encloses the flexor tendons—those which bend the finger. Unless the pus is evacuated quite early, it destroys the tendon, burrows into the other joints (phalanges), and destroys the finger. It may even extend to and destroy the entire hand. In some cases it has proved fatal.

In the fourth kind,—and this is the kind that is more commonly called a felon,—the inflammation is in the membrane (periosteum) that invests the bone of the first phalanx. It is this periosteum which during the life of the bone depends, and heals it when broken. It can even replace with raw bone large portions which may have been removed.

If left to itself, the pus has to work its way to the surface from the very bone itself, the patient suffering unbearable agony for several days and as many sleepless nights. An incision to the bone alone gives relief.

In such form of the whitlow hot applications are helpful. The incision should be performed by a skillful physician, who will avoid arteries and be sure of the location of the pus, for it often seems to be in front, when it is on the back of the bone.

**How She Won Him.**

"How She Won Him," might well be the title of a little romance of New York City. The heroine is a young lady, formerly wealthy, but who in reduced circumstances, met and loved the hero, who loved in return. The hero is a young lawyer, with so keen a sense of honor that he had resolved never to marry an heiress, fearing it might be said he wedded for money. They were to marry when the hero had gained sufficient foothold to establish his professional success. And lo, while they waited, the lady, through the death of a distant and almost unknown relative, fell heir to a property larger than she had originally possessed. The young man, true to his sense of honor, gave her her freedom in a short note, although the net cost him a great pang.

This brought from the young lady a longer note, asking him to reconsider his action, and requesting an interview. He thanked her by post for her kindness, and told her that as an equal in wealth he would have been honored by a union with her, but that now she was in a position to make a much more desirable alliance. The days that followed this generous renunciation of wealth and happiness were sad ones for the young lawyer. About a week after breaking off his engagement the young man was startled by the appearance in his office of the girl he had given up. She smiled beamingly and said: "If you will not marry me let us at any rate be friends. I need the advice of counsel in a suit which I am about to bring, and for the sake of old times I hope you will do your best for me." "By all means," replied the astonished disciple of Blackstone. "If you will give the facts of the case I will attend to it at once."

"I wish to bring a suit of damages for breach of promise against—"

"I would not do this only I know he loves me still and will not marry me because he thinks I can wait and do better." It is needless to say that the case was compromised and never brought into court.

**A Kiss in the Dark.**

Horace Vernet, the artist, was going from Versailles to Paris by railway. In the same compartment with him were two ladies whom he had never seen before, but who were evidently acquainted with him. They examined him minutely and commented freely upon his material bearing, his fresh old age, the style of his dress, etc. They continued their amusements until finally the painter determined to put an end to the persecution. As the train passed through the tunnel of St. Cloud, the three travelers were wrapt in complete darkness. Vernet raised the back of his hand to his mouth and kissed it twice violently, an emerging from the obscurity he found the ladies had withdrawn their attention from him, and were accusing each other of having been kissed by the man in the dark.

Presently they arrived at Paris, and Vernet, on leaving them, said: "Ladies, I shall be puzzled all my life by the inquiry, which of these two ladies it was that kissed me?"—St. Louis Republic.

**The Measures of a Gentleman.**

Prof. Thomas Davidson in Des. Forum.

English gentlemen of 400 years ago considered the pursuit of literature, art and science unworthy of any of their class, which was expected to live solely for sport. American gentlemen (and this includes all Americans) hold the same opinion with regard to all mechanical pursuits. Are such notions a whit less childish than those of 400 years ago? I think they are even more so, for a man may very well be a gentleman without scholarship, but he cannot be one without being able to earn his living by his own labor. The truth is, while we flatter our vanity with the notion that we are an enlightened people, on the ground that we have a form of Government and certain mechanical contrivances which our forefathers had not, we are sunk in barbarism as regards all ideas of human worth. For well-nigh 2,000 years Christianity has taught that character, and not position or possession, gives value to men. We act and think, for the most part, as if teaching had never existed.

**me don't git no sitter nor complainer.**

I managed to turn the subject for awhile, but as soon as dinner was over Jerry took his mother into the other room for a consultation, and Molly came and sat down beside me and asked:

"Do you 'un like ma?"

"Oh, yes."

"And she likes you. Wish you was my pap. Mebbe you will be by to-morrow."

I went out and sat down under a tree to smoke a cigar, and pretty soon Jerry came out. He had a business look all over his face as he said: "I've axed ma if she would hev ye."

"Have you? You are real kind."

"And she says she will."

"Indeed!"

"And how about that gun? When shall I git it?"

"Say, Jerry, did you ever have a dollar all at once?" I asked.

"Lor no—nor two bits!"

"If I'll give you a big silver dollar will you let up on the gun until I come again?"

"Will I? Hoop snakes and bad fighters, but I will!"

I gave him the dollar and he dashed through the house to show it to his sisters, and then started on a run for a neighbor's two miles away. When I returned to the house and said I must be going I was met by such an avalanche of protests that I had to agree to stay until next day. That night I "sat up" with the Widow Watkins. I got around to it after awhile to state that I was living with my third, and had three sets of children numbering five in a row, and that I couldn't possibly see how I could make her my wife. I was very sorry, but helpless, and I hoped she would let me send her a new gingham dress from Salisbury.

"That's honest and straight," she said in reply. "While I go fur to say I like yer looks, and I believe we could live happily together, if ye can't marry, why, ye can't. Ye would if ye could, wouldn't ye?"

"Quicker'n scatt!"

"That's next to it, and I'll wait five years on ye and see how things turn. Mebbe I'll wait six, but I'll say five fur sartin. I'd as lief be a fourth as a second wife."

And she is waiting, while Jerry writes that "gums hev got so cheapless that he kin git one fur \$5—M. Quad Detroit Free Press.