

UNCLE DAN'S PRESENT.

The Eventful History of a Black Silk Dress.

FROM the very beginning of our acquaintance Uncle Dan seemed to dislike me. You know he was Jack's own uncle and when I was introduced as his nephew's wife, he took my hand gingerly, muttered something about a butterfly and refused to congratulate my proud husband.

But the strongest material will wear out, and mine was no exception to the rule. Jack was unfortunate in business and I was compelled to be so economical that I could purchase only the plainest of dresses. As time went on things were worse; the family grew larger and our income smaller; we were forced sometimes to deny ourselves substantial food. Uncle Dan must have known how reduced we were, and although he was a wealthy man he never rendered us the slightest assistance.

One day Uncle Dan surprised me by asking if I would take a walk with him. I consented. Then he took me to a dressmaker's, who, without any orders from him at the time, cut to my measure a beautiful black silk dress. I submitted, carefully hiding the astonishment that I felt, but when we left the house I questioned Uncle Dan as to his reasons for presenting me with so suitable a gift.

"I expect you always to keep it. Do not part with it under any consideration or I shall never again make you a present. Now get through with the trying on and when the thing is done bring it home and talk no more about it."

A few days the dress was finished and was really very handsome. Had it come in happier times I should have rejoiced in its possession. As it was, Jack and I felt that it was incompatible with our surroundings. Uncle Dan always insisted on my wearing it Sunday afternoons when he was around, and thus I grew to hate the pretty thing with its abundance of frills and flounces.

To our intense relief the old man one day decided to take a trip to Europe for his health. No sooner had he made this startling announcement than I resolved to sell that dress the moment he had really gone. And I did dispose of it, realizing more for it than I had expected.

In six months Uncle Dan returned more miserable than before and shortly afterward died suddenly at our house. Among his effects was found a will and we learned from this that he had bequeathed all he possessed to a distant cousin, a person without a family and one who already owned considerable property. My husband and I were sadly disappointed. Jack was worn out from anxiety and overwork, and we counted on something that would at least pay for the board and lodging that Uncle Dan had taken at our expense. The latter declared that he had drawn up a later will in our favor, but as no other will could be found, even though a thorough search was instituted, the property was turned over to a distant cousin.

A few weeks later a lady called on me. At first I did not recognize her, but she proved to be the seamstress who had made that black dress. "Don't you remember the dress I made for you?" she asked, excitedly. "Well, that later will is sewn up in the drapery. He got me to do it for him and made me promise not to tell you while he lived. He said if you cared anything about him you would never part with the only thing he ever gave you. If you did, you would be the loser thereby!"

Imagine my feelings! The dress had been sold to a dealer in second-hand clothing and was probably now beyond my reach. I took the lady into my confidence, bound her to secrecy and hastened to the shop in which I had left the silk dress. It had been sold and to whom the dealer could not remember. I had nothing to do but to hope that the purchaser was an honest person who would find the will and restore it to me. Fortunately I now remembered that

Will buy a pound of cigar clippings at the 10c. Several counties have...

WAIT AND TRUST.

Advice to a Restless and Yearning Nature.

Two women sat at two windows, one with a book, the other looking, musing, out at the beds of pansies which edged the graveled walk of the garden. Waking up from her brief fit of abstraction, the younger woman exclaimed, disconsolately: "I don't know anything that makes me feel more discouraged, as well as discontented, than to meditate upon the foolish things I did yesterday!"

"But if yesterday's folly makes today's wisdom?" suggested the woman at the other window. "I don't believe it!" rushed on the first speaker. "When I remember how stupid I was yesterday, it seems hopeless to try to be wiser to-day. When I reflect upon the absurd blunders I made in past years, I feel sure I will continually fall in the same pit. When I recall how weakly I acted at various times, I despair ever acting with strength. Sometimes I imagine I shall grow wiser instead of better. Before, when I acted foolishly, I felt confident I was wise. To-day, no matter how wise I try to be, I am sure I am foolish!"

"My dear," said the older woman, with a smile, half protesting, half hesitating, "don't you know—"

"Oh, yes, I know!" the other cried. "You are going to tell me it is good to 'know one's self.' But I think the more I learn of myself, the more dissatisfied I become with my study and its results. This striving and longing to see our selves as others see us tends only to promote self-deception. It fosters self-sufficiency and creates selfishness, pure and simple. It makes self the center, the pivot around which all the rest of the world revolves. I became convinced of that long ago. And if it is so unprofitable to study one's outward man, or woman, how much worse a creature must be developed from the heart which is forever studying its own motives, scrutinizing its own feelings, using a microscope to pick to pieces its own emotions! Such self-analysis becomes degrading! I believe it destroys every spontaneous, honest feeling one can have!"

The older woman laid down her book, and looked, still smiling, at the speaker. The younger sat with her hands folded idly in her lap. She looked far across the pansy beds. She looked across the hedge which divided the garden from the road, across the birches which lined the road and bordered the river, across the river itself, to where the low hills reached the sky upon the other side.

"Sometimes I think," she said, low and passionately, "that it is all a wilderness and all dark. We fall so cruelly, and never can fully right ourselves. We make such pitiful, such terrible mistakes, and, with our hardest efforts, we never can altogether rectify them. We spend our best years on such childish toys, and when we see the true worth of the things we have despised, behold! the time to obtain them has gone by. What is the meaning of it all? What is the meaning?" She caught her breath, and there was a moment's silence.

"Dear," said the older woman, and her voice shook a little. "You have not gone all the way yet. Wait. You can not see why the road given you was the safest until you have traveled to its end. You can not read the word until you have got all its parts. It is not so long, dear. Wait. Wait a little longer." And the advice of its kind, was good. But then, who takes advice? Not youth, which is the season of tempest, of strain, of great extremes. To learn of experience is to acquire knowledge by discipline, and to conquer in the struggle with ourselves. We must await and trust.—Harper's Bazar.

HOW DUST GETS IN.

The Simple Explanation of a Fact Often Observed.

When the air around us becomes condensed—shrinks into a smaller volume—it becomes heavier, puts greater pressure on the surface of the mercury, and makes it ascend in the tube; then the mercury is said to rise. When the air expands—swells into a larger volume—it becomes lighter, the pressure on the mercury is less, the mercury sinks in the tube, and the barometer is said to fall. Therefore, every change of height of the quicksilver which we observe is a sign and measure of a change in the volume of air around us. Further, this change in volume tells us less upon the air inside our cases and cupboards. When the barometer falls, the air around expands into a larger volume, and the air inside the cupboard also expands and forces itself out at every minute crevice. When the barometer rises again the air inside the cupboard, as well as outside, condenses and shrinks, and air is forced back into the cupboard to equalize the pressure; and, along with the air, in goes the dust. The smaller the crevice the stronger the jet of air, the farther goes the dirt. Witness the dirt-tracks so often seen in imperfectly-framed engravings or photographs. Remember, ladies and gentlemen, whenever you see the barometer rising, that an additional charge of dust is entering your cupboards and drawers.

—R. Fridgin Teale, in Popular Science Monthly.

A Contract Unfulfilled.

"Look here," said the adviser to the publisher, "you contracted to put my advertisement next to pure reading matter."

"Yes, sir, and I did so. Here it is, in the column adjoining a love story—a French love story, too."

"Well, my dear sir, I hope you don't call a French love story pure reading matter."—Jury.

All a Mistake.

Police Justice (after passing sentence on a cheeky prisoner)—Did I hear you call me an old fool?

Prisoner—No, yer honor—leastways I didn't intend you to.—N. Y. Herald.

Far From It.

Rose—Does Mr. Verdull know anything?

Lillian—Know anything? He doesn't see me.—Lila.

THE STOUT WOMAN.

She Was Determined to Maintain Her Rights.

The wind blew and the rain fell. When the stout lady first became noticeable by reason of her manifest trials she was only a few steps from the center of the street, struggling bravely in the direction of the nearer curb. In one hand she held an umbrella, a box of candy and a paper pail of oysters. With the other she clutched her skirts. There was an expression of un-mixed apprehension on her face.

"Can't I assist you, madam?" gently inquired the small man in a rubber coat, who had madly rushed to the rescue.

"Nope." A gust of wind struck the umbrella amidships. It careened forcibly against the woman's hat and the latter was knocked forward upon her nose. Simultaneously the candy-box displayed a marked disposition to slip away from all restraint.

"Won't you let me hold your umbrella?" persisted the little man very solicitously.

"Nope." She was almost half way to the curb now and the oyster-pail seemed inclined to be rebellious and follow the example of the candy box.

"But you're losing your packages, madam." The little man made a grand attempt to save the day and was as grandly repulsed.

"You are mistaken, sir. I am not losing my packages." The wind blew and the rain fell. The stout lady tossed her head and jerked the dislocated hat into place. With a deft movement she deposited the candy box under her arm and the bail of the oyster-pail between her teeth. At the same instant she seized the purse firmly with her third and fourth fingers, devoting all the remaining faculties exclusively to the umbrella.

"No, sir; I am not losing my packages." The little man bowed and murmured helplessly.

"I might remind you, sir," she said as she reached the curb and entered upon a general readjustment, "that the movement for the emancipation of women has been in progress for several centuries, and I am not one, I assure you, to abrogate thus lightly the independence gained at the expense of years of labor near the arduous. I confess I was tempted to yield, but, thank Heaven, I did not."

Half an hour later the little man was still there, staring at a rift in the clouds, as if wondering if he were going to rain all night.—Detroit Tribune.

DIDN'T NEED IT.

A Man Impervious to the Wiles of the Book Agent.

He was sitting on the platform at the railway station in a deep study, while two men stood near him watching. He sat thus for ten minutes, when a hustling individual swooped down on him. "You are looking sad this morning," he said glibly.

The sifter lifted his face wearily, but said nothing. "I've got something here that is just the thing you want," continued the hustler. "It is a little volume, price only twenty-five cents, on Love, Courtship and Marriage. It explains how maidens may become happy wives and bachelors happy husbands in a brief space of time. Also contains complete directions for declaring intentions, accepting vows and retaining affections, both before and after marriage."

The man on the truck shook his head sadly. "It also," went on the hustler, "includes a treatise on the etiquette of marriage, describing the invitations, the dresses, the ceremony and the proper behavior of bride and groom. It also tells plainly how to begin courting, the way to get over bashfulness, the way to write a love letter, the way to easily win a girl's consent, the way to pop the question, the way to accept or decline an offer, the way to make yourself agreeable during an engagement and the way you should act and the things you should do at a wedding. This is just the book that has long been wanted. It speaks in plain, honest words."

The man on the truck spoke. "I'm very sorry," he said in earnest tones, "that I must decline to purchase your book. But really I have no use for it at present, as I am on the way to the penitentiary to serve a ten-year sentence for compound bigamy. If you will call around—"

It was the hustler's turn now, and the way he made himself scarce beggars description.—Detroit Free Press.

A Matter of Size.

"Is the captain of your base-ball team a very good player?" asked Dexter's father.

"No, sir," replied Dexter; "but he said he wanted it, and as he's the biggest boy in school, he got it."—Harper's Young People.

Modern Cooking.

New Cook—I'm told the missus wants things in 'thigh-toned, fashionable style. Sure, I'm afraid it won't suit, for it's only plain cookin' I've done.

Old Cook—It's aisy enough. Make everything taste loike something.—Judge.

—A Bad Break.—Witherby—"I made the mistake of my life this morning. I told my wife I didn't like her new gown." Plankington—"What was she angry?" Witherby—"Oh, no, it wasn't that, but she wants another one."—Cloak Review.

—Amherst college is now among the American colleges which authorize their students to appear in classical garb. The seniors of Amherst have just begun to wear the cap and black gown in chapel.

—"There is such a thing as carrying a joke too far," remarked Funnies, after he had visited a dozen newspaper offices, at all of which his joke had been declined.—Yonkers Statesman.

RELIGIOUS MATTERS.

THOU KNOWEST.

We know not, but Thou knowest! All things, Most Good and Wise! The light is all about Thee. The mist is in our eyes. Thy children love this solace In hours of strain and strife, What we know not Thou knowest, O God of all our life!

Why sicknesses and sorrows Should dare to touch Thine own, Why loving hearts are breaking, And weak ones sad and lone; Why those who cry for morning Are lost amid the night, We know not, but Thou knowest, And all Thy ways are right.

Why from the world that needs them Thou call'st Thy best away, Though hosts besiege Thee for them, And they are faint to stay, We ask, but find no answer, We can not understand, But Thine is perfect knowledge, And our times are in Thy hand.

From heat of stormy waters, From waves of restless care, From tumult of great trouble And waste of wild despair; Our souls find ample refuge In faith as in an ark. We know not, but Thou knowest, And light shines through the dark. —Marianne Farningham, in Christian World.

AT DEATH'S DOOR.

The Destroyers of Humanity Do Not Grieve for the Dead Soul.

I had a friend at the west—a rare friend. He was one of the first to welcome me to my new home. To fine personal appearance he added a generosity, kindness, and ardor of nature that made me love him like a brother.

But I saw evil people gathering around him. They came up from the saloons and from the gambling halls. They plied him with a thousand arts. They seized upon his social nature, and he could not stand the charm. They drove him on the rocks, like a ship full-winged, shivering on the breakers. I used to admonish him. I would say: "Now, I wish you would quit these bad habits, and become a Christian." "Oh," he would reply, "I would like to; I would like to; but I have gone so far I don't think there is any way back." In his moments of repentance he would go home and take his little girl of eight years, and embrace her convulsively, and cover her with adornments, and strew around her pictures and toys, and everything that could make her happy; and then, as though bound by an evil spirit, he would go out like a fool to the correction of the stocks. I was summoned to his death-bed. I hastened. I entered the room. I found him, to my surprise, lying in full every-day dress on the top of the couch. I put out my hand. He grasped it excitedly, and said: "Sit down, Mr. Talmage, right there." I sat down. He said: "Last night I saw my mother, who has been dead twenty years, and she sat just where you sit now. It was no dream. I was wide-awake. There was no delusion in the matter. I saw her just as plainly as I see you. Wife, I wish you would take these strings off of me. There are strings spun all around my body. I wish you would take them off of me." I saw it was delirium. "Oh," replied the wife, "my dear, there is nothing there, there is nothing there." He went on and said: "Just where you sit, Mr. Talmage, my mother sat. She said to me: 'Henry, I do wish you would do better.' I got out of bed, put my arms around her and said: 'Mother, I want to do better; I have been trying to do better. Won't you help me to do better? You used to help me.' No mistake about it, no delusion. I saw her—the cap, and the apron, and the spectacles—just as she used to look twenty years ago; but I do wish you would take these strings away. They annoy me so. I can hardly talk. Won't you take them away?" I knelt down and prayed, conscious of the fact that he did not realize what I was saying. I got up. I said: "Good-by, good-by." That night his soul went up to the God who gave it. Arrangements were made for the obsequies. Some said: "Don't bring him into the church, he was too dissolute." "Oh," I said, "bring him in. He was a good friend of mine while he was alive, and I shall stand by him now that he is dead. Bring him to the church." As I sat in the pulpit, and saw his body coming up through the aisle, I felt as if I could weep tears of blood. I told the people that day: "This man had his virtues, and a good many of them. He had his faults, and a good many of them. But if there is any man in this audience who is without sin, let him cast the first stone at this coffin lid." On one side the pulpit sat the little child, rosy, sweet-faced, as beautiful as any little child that sat at your table this morning. I warrant you. She looked up wistfully, not knowing the full sorrows of an orphan child. Oh, her countenance haunts me to-day, like some sweet face looking upon me through a horrid dream. On the other side of the pulpit were the men who had destroyed him. There they sat, hard-visaged, some of them pale from exhausting disease, some of them flushed until it seemed as if the fires of iniquity flamed through the cheek and crackled the lips. They were the men who had done the work. They were the men who had bound him hand and foot. They had kindled the fires. They had poured the wormwood and gall into that orphan's cup. Did they weep? No. Did they sigh repentingly? No. Did they say: "What a pity that such a brave man should be slain?" No, no; not one bloated hand was lifted to wipe a tear from a bloated cheek. They sat and looked at the coffin like vultures gazing at the carcass of a lamb whose heart they had ripped out! I cried in their ears as plainly as I could: "There is a God and a judgment day!" Did they tremble? Oh, no, no. They went back from the house of God, and that night, though their victim lay in Oakwood cemetery, I was told that they blasphemed, and they drank, and they gambled, and there was not one less customer in all the houses of iniquity. This destroyed man was Samson in physical strength, by Delilah sheared him, and the Philistines of evil companionship dug his

NOT WITH GOD.

Never Make the Lord a Party to Our Personal Enmities.

The story is told of a Scotch woman who had a violent disagreement with her pastor, in which each held their ground with true Scotch persistence. The good woman, however, continued her regular attendance at Divine worship. The pastor ventured to express his gratification and surprise at her conduct, when she quietly remarked: "My quarrel is with you, not with the Lord."

Church quarrels are always unfortunate, but human nature being what it is, they are certain to happen. How fortunate it would be, however, if they could all be conducted in the spirit shown by the old Scotch woman. Usually the exact reverse is the rule. When members of a church have been unable to see eye to eye, and when neither side has had enough of good sense or Christian grace to yield or to make some reasonable compromise, a very bitter feeling soon comes to prevail. The members on one side or the other, sometimes on both sides, forget that their quarrel is with each other, and proceed to quarrel with the Lord. They refuse to perform any of their duties to the church; they cease to attend public worship and the prayer meetings; they give up their pews or cancel their subscriptions; and they refuse contributions to missionary and benevolent objects; they even absent themselves from the table of the Lord because they have a quarrel with some of His people. One could laugh at the absurdity of such conduct if his wickedness were not so gross. The idea that a Christian's obligations toward his Lord are changed because he can not get on comfortably with his brethren! No matter if he is right in the controversy, no matter if he has been unjustly treated, no matter if he has been deeply wronged, his conduct is still indefensible. The chances are that he is not wholly in the right, for there are few quarrels in which either party is blameless, though one may be more blameworthy than the other. But no sort of treatment by his fellow Christians justifies a Christian in quarrelling with his Lord. He did not submit himself to Christ as his King only so long as others are loyal to the same Master, but for this life and the next. He has not pledged obedience only on condition that others obey, but has pledged unconditional obedience to every command of Christ. And this is how he keeps the pledge!

It is evident that the ideas of many Christians, regarding their relations to Christ on the one hand and their brethren on the other, need a complete reconstruction.—N. Y. Examiner.

The Course of Trouble.

It is common for us to regard our troubles as coming from an unfortunate combination of circumstances, or the ill-behavior of others, rather than to recognize them as sent of God, for our spiritual benefit. "As many as I love I reprove and chasten," was the message of our Lord to the church at Laodicea. The trouble we are made to know, whatever the form in which they may come, are under God's control and are to fulfill His purposes. In them He remembers our frame, and takes care that they shall be suited to His purposes. He may not answer prayer for the removal of trouble as we desire, but He will undoubtedly give us grace to bear it. Paul's thorn in the flesh was not taken away, but there was an assurance richly fulfilled: "My grace is sufficient for thee."—Christian Inquirer.

Make Some One Happy.

When too low spirited to be cheerful yourself, do something to make somebody else cheerful and happy. You won't feel any the worse, and may by you will feel better. Says Kuskin: "You will find the mere resolve, the honest desire to help other people will, in the quickest and most delicate way, improve yourself."—Itm's Horn.

CHOICE SELECTIONS.

—Faith makes the Christian. Life proves the Christian. Trial tests the Christian. Death crowns the Christian.—N. Y. Observer.

—It is a thousand times better to fail in trying to do something for God than it is to succeed in trying to do something for ourselves alone.—Ram's Horn.

I have lived to see every one of my most cherished hopes one after another disappointed, and to see that it was better so.—Alexander Mackay, of Uganda.

—The lot which God provides, the trouble which He pities, the soul that he loves and visits, can not be beneath our patience and reverence.—Martineau.

—Let not one of your talents rust for want of use. If you have but one do not bury it; let it be said of you: "She hath done what she could."—Chicago Standard.

—Do you fear? Is the coming of the hour of trial regarded with dread? Does it seem impossible for you to stand in your place against the strong forces of evil? Now open again and read: "Thy right hand shall hold me."—United Presbyterian.

—Theories in religion have a beauty of their own, but if they result in no warmth of Christian life, it is the beauty of hornblende and feldspar. Do not call such coldness and hardness religion. The river of life never freezes over. Icicles never hang on the eaves of Heaven.—Talmage, in N. Y. Observer.

—Christians often preach to the Almighty under the forms of prayer. They inform Him, catechize Him, direct Him, exhort Him and sometimes even scold Him. This is not prayer—it is scribbles. If you want anything, pray for it. If you don't want anything, then thank God. Do it simply. Do it heartily. A mechanical prayer—what could be more abominable?—St. Louis Republic.