



Is the earth drying up? It is a startling question; and, what is yet more startling, the answer given by science is undoubtedly affirmative. Not that there is any occasion for alarm. The terrestrial water supply is adequate for a long time to come. It is not in our day that the fountains of the deep will fall; neither we nor our children, nor our children's children, are likely to suffer from a general water famine. The question is a real one, none the less, and most serious; for upon the answer depends the ultimate fate of the human race. And this answer, based upon strict scientific reasoning and the most just analogies accessible to us, is, as has been stated, affirmative. Our earth, in very truth, is slowly drying up.

Of all the planets of the solar system Mars bears the closest resemblance to the world on which we dwell this is conceded. Further, it is in every way probable that Mars is, or has been, covered with vegetation; there is much reason to believe that it is even now, like our own orb, a theater of life.

But it is older—in effect, much older—than the earth. Listen to what Percival Lowell, one of the highest authorities on this subject, says of its present condition. After a careful survey of all the evidence he summarizes the matter thus:

"It follows that Mars is very badly off for water. . . . Such scarcity of water on Mars is just what theory would lead us to expect. Mars is a smaller planet than the earth, and therefore is relatively more advanced in his evolutionary career. He is older in age if not in years; for whether his birth as a separate world antedated

the melting ice caps still descend in floods at certain seasons, making a system of irrigation possible; and it is a well known fact that the telescope reveals what appears to be a network of canals all over the planet's disk. The moon, being much smaller, has reached a still more advanced stage. Water is as essential to the life of a world as blood to the life of a man; and the moon is like a dried and shrivelled mummy, dead for ages. Its almost airless sky—if sky it can be called—is without cloud or rain; the basins of its lakes and the beds of its ancient seas are empty; its parched rocks are unclothed with verdure, and appear like a ragged mass of hardened slag. Such a perished world in its last estate, the result of the complete disappearance of water from its surface; and, if scientific reasoning is of any value, there is little room for doubt that the earth is on its way to a condition equally deplorable. For the teachings of geology and chemistry lead to the same conclusion. There is no doubt that there was once far more water on the earth than now—far too much, in fact. Vast oceans of hot and turbid brine raged over almost its entire surface. The murky air was torn with storms of which we can form but the faintest conception. Over what little land there was the acid laden rains poured with incredible violence, eating and wearing the hard rock until finally a soil was formed capable of sustaining vegetable life. Then the waters slowly cooled and cleared and subsided.

Change Now Progressing.

They are still subsiding, though the

atmosphere so slight that we cannot detect it. And owing to this thinness of air there will be few clouds, and little if any rain; even the winds will subside into insignificance. At the poles, however, and on the heights, snow will still fall, and on the—**N snow will still fall, or at any rate frost will be deposited in large quantities; and the melting of the ice caps thus formed will furnish the whole available supply of water. The streams from this source, which will be fairly abundant in season of flood, will be carefully guided through an intricate system of canals and stinging hoarded in huge reservoirs, whence it will be drawn for irrigation and other necessary uses. Gold and silver will not be half so precious as this beautiful, transparent liquid of which we are so lavish; wealth will be measured in cubic feet of water, and a spring or fountain will be more valuable than any mine. Nor can this be called a mere fancy picture. To all appearances it is exactly the state of affairs which obtains on Mars at the present time.

The whole ocean bed, therefore, will be like a vast valley of the Nile—fertile, indeed, but rendered so only by incessant care and the highest engineering skill; while above and around it will lie a chill Sahara, a desolate and deadly waste, unwet with showers, unprotected by any veil of cloud, its impotent atmosphere scarcely sufficient to drift its abounding dust. All over it will be scattered the unvisited remains of the cities that we know, and its plains will be furrowed with the half obliterated channels of our great rivers. It will have but one re-

trary, is remarkably inert, entering into combination with reluctance, and freeing itself with extraordinary facility; its compounds are notably unstable, often to the extent of being violently explosive, and it is as useless for the maintenance of life as ashes to feed a fire.

Our Dead Earth.

We conclude, therefore, that the atmosphere, while it becomes less in volume and density, will at the same time deteriorate in quality, and the lungs of man must needs accommodate themselves to the change by gradually enlarging their capacity. Thus the very constitution and aspect of the human race will in the course of ages suffer marked alteration. And what will be the final outcome? It is a disheartening picture. Even the scanty supply of water which we have thus far assumed, must at length begin to fail; it will no longer be sufficient for the entire population. Unavoidably some must perish. There is no imaginable alternative; and who shall it be? It is impossible to conceive of any other solution than a struggle for bare existence fiercer than anything which history records—a conflict in which the strongest and most unscrupulous will constantly prevail. Such a condition of things means, of course, a rapid reversion to savagery; and that, in turn, will hasten the end, for the elaborate system of works necessary to make this decadent world habitable can be maintained only by a strong and wise government under a high civilization. If this fails, the last degenerate remnant of the race will soon be extinguished—the sooner the better, when that sad stage is reached. And what next? At last poor mother earth, dry and shrunken with age, the bloom of flower and leaf quite faded from her cheeks, her face scarred and pitted with the toms of all her offspring, will lie as dead and silent as the ghostly moon.

ON MARRYING A POOR MAN.

Words of Encouragement for the Girl Who Does It.

"I have been young and now am old," said one of the charming middle-aged women of the period, whose looks belie the baptismal register and who rather enjoy arrogating to themselves the wisdom and experience of age, says the New York Journal. "And I have reached that period of life," she continued, "when I can look back and see results and note how seldom those who are born with silver spoons in their mouths, as the saying is, have the silver fork when they are grown up. When I look back and remember who were the jeunesse doree of my youth—the men whose lives and positions above all others seemed particularly enviable and desirable—and then look about me now and see how few of those men who were called men of pleasure in those days have attained an honorable and useful middle-age, I feel that I can preach a sermon to my boys and their friends with object lessons that ought to make it very impressive. Some are poor, having spent health and substance, like the prodigal, in riotous living. Even those who have apparently not suffered in purse or health, are a set of discontented, blasé, weary worldlings, who go over the same treadmill of fashionable existence year by year without pleasure or profit. Another thing I have noticed from my vantage ground of experience is that, if only as a purely worldly maxim, honesty certainly is the best policy. Many brilliant men I have seen who have destroyed his prospects by the crooked ways in which he sought to better himself financially, politically and even socially, whereas, if he had walked honorably before all men, he would have gained the world's good opinion and in many instances the very things he coveted. And finally there are the young married couple of my youth. In nine cases out of ten those of my friends who married poor young men and who gave up the luxury of their homes to prove veritable helpmeets to the men of their choice are now almost without exception prosperous and in many cases wealthy, while those men and girls who married for money are, as a rule, greatly in want of it. 'Be good and you will be happy' is the old maxim and certainly it seems true from a materialistic as well as from a religious point of view."

High Tides Affect Wells.

The high-water marks of several extraordinary high tides have been kept at Easton Point, St. Michael's and Oxford. What is known as the "centennial tide" of September, 1876, has held the record of the highest water mark, and still holds it, although last Thursday morning's (Oct. 1) tide was within an inch of the centennial mark. The recent flood had a singular effect on the flow of the artesian wells on Tighman's Island. These wells average 400 feet in depth, and many of them have a surface overflow, which increased fully double in velocity and more in volume when the tide was at its highest. It has been noticed before that any unusual high tide is perceptible in the effect it has on the flow of the wells.

A Cheap Meal.

During the past few years, Mr. Lee Jones, honorable secretary of the Liverpool Food association, has labored untiringly to rid the seaport of underfeeding and starvation, and every day he feeds some thousands of school children. Each child is given one pint of thick soup and one slice of jam and bread. For this they pay one-half penny—one farthing defrays the cost of the food, and the other farthing pays the working expenses. The meals provided are, we are informed, practically vegetarian. Mr. Lee Jones conceived and began the scheme, and in view of the anticipated development of the association, he has been appointed honorable director.

Dr. Talmage's Sermon
ROYALTY IN DISGUISE...

Washington, Dec. 13, 1896.—In this sermon from a bible scene never used in sermonic discourse, Dr. Talmage draws some startling lessons, and tears off the masque of deceit. The text is I. Kings 14:6: "Why feignest thou thyself to be another?"

In the palace of wicked Jeroboam there is a sick child, a very sick child. Medicines have failed; skill is exhausted. Young Abijah, the prince, has lived long enough to become very popular, and yet he must die unless some supernatural aid be afforded. Death comes up the broad stairs of the palace and swings back the door of the sick room of royalty, and stands looking at the dying prince with the dart uplifted. Wicked Jeroboam knows that he has no right to ask anything of the Lord in the way of kindness. He knows that his prayers would not be answered, and so he sends his wife on the delicate and tender mission to the prophet of the Lord in Shiloh. Putting aside her royal attire, she puts on the garb of a peasant woman, and starts on the road. Instead of carrying gold and gems, as she might have carried from the palace, she carries only those gifts which seem to indicate that she belongs to the peasantry—a few loaves of bread and a few cracknels and a crust of honey. Yonder she goes, hooded and veiled, the greatest lady in all the kingdom, yet passing unobserved. No one that meets her on the highway has any idea that she is the first lady in all the land. She is a queen in disguise. The fact is that Peter the Great, working in the dry docks of Saardam, the sailor's hat and the shipwright's axe gave him no more thorough disguise than the garb of the peasant woman gave to the queen of Tizrah. But the prophet of the Lord saw the deceit. Although his physical eyesight had failed, he was divinely illumined, and at one glance looked through the imposition, and he cried out: "Come in, thou wife of Jeroboam. Why feignest thou thyself to be another? I have evil tidings for thee. Get thee back to thy house, and when thy feet touch the gate of the city, the child shall die." She had a right to ask for the recovery of her son; she had no right to practice an imposition. Broken-hearted now, she started on the way, the tears falling on the dust of the road all the way from Shiloh to Tizrah. Broken-hearted now, she is not careful any more to hide her queenly gait and manner. True to the prophecy, the moment her feet touch the gate of the city, the child dies. As she goes in, the soul of the child goes out. The cry in the palace is joined by the lamentation of a nation, and as they carry good Abijah to his grave, the air is filled with the voice of eulogy for the departed youth, and the groan of an afflicted kingdom.

The story of the text impresses me with the fact that royalty sometimes passes in disguise. The frock, the veil, the hood of the peasant woman hid the queenly character of this woman of Tizrah. Nobody suspected that she was a queen or a princess as she passed by, but she was just as much a queen as though she stood in the palace, her robes incrustated with diamonds. And so all around about us there are princesses and queens whom the world does not recognize. They sit on no throne of royalty, they ride in no chariot, they elicit no huzzas, they make no pretense, but by the grace of God they are princesses and they are queens. Sometimes in their poverty, sometimes in their self-denial, sometimes in their hard struggles of Christian service—God knows they are queens; the world does not recognize them. Royalty passing in disguise. Kings without the crown, conquerors without the palm, empresses without the jewel. You saw her yesterday on the street. You saw nothing important in her appearance, but she is regnant over a vast realm of virtue and goodness—a realm vaster than Jeroboam ever looked at. You went down into the house of destitution and want and suffering. You saw the story of trial written on the wasted hand of the mother, on the pale cheeks of the children, on the empty bread-tray, on the fireless hearth, on the broken chair. You would not have given a dollar for all the furniture in the house. But by the grace of God she is a princess. The overseers of the poor come there and discuss the case and say, "It's a pauper." They do not realize that God has furnished for her a crown, and that after she has got through the fatiguing journey from Tizrah to Shiloh and from Shiloh back to Tizrah, there will be a throne of royalty on which she shall rest forever. Glory veiled. Affluence hidden. Eternal raptures hushed up. A queen in mask. A princess in disguise.

But there was a grander disguising. The favorite of a great house looked out of the window of his palace and he saw that the people were carrying heavy burdens, and that some of them were hobbling on crutches, and he saw some of them lying at the gate exhibiting their sores, and then he heard their lamentation, and he said: "I will just put on the clothes of those poor people and I will go down and see what their sorrows are, and I will sympathize with them, and I will be one of them, and I will help them." Well, the day came for him to start. The lords of the land came to see him off. All who could sing joined in the parting song, which shook the hills and woke up the shepherds. The first few nights he has been sleeping with the hostlers and the camel-drivers, for no one knew there was a king in town. He went among

the doctors of the law, astounding them; for without any doctor's gown he knew more law than the doctors. He fished with the fishermen. He smote with his own hammer in the carpenter's shop. He ate raw corn out of the field. He fried fish on the banks of the Genesaret. He was howled at by crazy people in the tombs. He was splashed of the surf of the sea. A pilgrim without any pillow. A sick man without and medicament. A mourner with no sympathetic bosom in which he could pour his tears. Disguise complete. I know that occasionally his divine royalty flashed out, as when in the storm on Gallilee, as in the red wine at the wedding banquet, as when he freed the shackled demoniac of Gadara, as when he turned a whole school of fish into the net of the discouraged boatmen, as when he throbbed life into the shriveled arm of the paralytic; but for the most part he was in disguise. No one saw the king's jewels in his sandal. No one saw the royal robe in his plain coat. No one knew that that shelterless Christ owned all the mansions in which the hierarchs of heaven had their habitation. None knew that that hungered Christ owned all the olive groves, and all the harvests which shook their gold on the hills of Palestine. No one knew that he who said "I thirst" poured the Euphrates out of his own chalice. No one knew that the ocean lay in the palm of his hand like a dewdrop in the vase of a lily. No one knew that the stars, and moons, and suns, and galaxies, and constellations that marched on age after age, were, as compared with his lifetime, the sparkle of a firefly on a summer night. No one knew that the sun in mid-heaven was only the shadow of his throne. No one knew that his crown of universal dominion was covered up with a bunch of thorns. Omnipotence sheathed in a human body. Omniscience hidden in a human eye. Infinite love beating in a human heart. Everlasting harmonies subdued into a human voice. Royalty en masque. Grandeur of heaven in earthly disguise.

My subject also impresses me with how precise and accurate and particular are God's providences. Just at the moment that woman entered the city, the child died. Just as it was prophesied, so it turned out, so it always turns out. The event occurs, the death takes place, the nation is born, the despotism is overthrown at the appointed time. God drives the universe with a stiff rein. Events do not just happen so. Things do not go slipshod. In all the book of God's providences there is not one "if." God's providences are never caught in dishabille. To God there are no surprises, no disappointments and no accidents. The most insignificant event flung out in the ages is the connecting link between two great chains—the chain of eternity past and the chain of eternity to come. I am no fatalist, but I should be completely wretched if I did not feel that all the affairs of my life are in God's hand, and all that pertains to me and mine, just as certainly as all the affairs of this woman of the text, as this child of the text, as this king of the text, were in God's hand. You may ask me a hundred questions I cannot answer, but I shall until the day of my death believe that I am under the unerring care of God; and the heavens may fall, and the world may burn, and the judgment may thunder, and eternal ages may roll, but not a hair shall fall from my head, not a shadow shall drop on my path, not a sorrow shall transfix my heart without being divinely arranged—arranged by a loving, sympathetic Father. He bottles our tears, he catches our sorrows, and to the orphan he will be a Father, and to the widow he will be a husband, and to the outcast he will be a home, and to the most miserable wretch that this day crawls up out of the ditch of his abomination crying for mercy, he will be an all-pardoning God. The rocks shall turn gray with age, and the forests shall be unmoored in the last hurricane, and the sun shall shut its fiery eyelid, and the stars shall drop like blasted figs, and the continents shall go down like anchors in the deep, and the ocean shall heave its last groan and lash itself with expiring agony, and the world shall wrap itself in a winding sheet of flame and leap on the funeral pyre of the judgment day; but God's love shall not die. It will kindle its suns after all other lights have gone out. It will be a billowy sea after the last ocean has wept itself away. It will warm itself by the fire of a consuming world. It will sing while the archangel's trumpet is pealing forth and the air is filled with the crash of broken sepulchres and the rush of the wings of the rising dead.

POSTSCRIPTS.

A rector sixty years old in Annapolis is learning to ride a wheel.
A license is required to sell ginger beer in England after 10 o'clock at night.
Thousands of bushels of tomatoes are rotting on the farms near Dimondale, Mich.
At English dispensaries over \$250,000 worth of medicine is annually distributed gratis.
She—Isn't the rule "When in doubt, play trumps?" He—The usual rule is, "When in doubt, ask what are trumps."—Scottish Nights.
In the British isles during the present century seven instances have been recorded in which the bride has married the best man by mistake.
Ohio's production of coal last year amounted to the great quantity of 13,682,879 tons, an increase of 1,773,660 tons over the preceding year.
"Mr. Whoozley, if you will only say that I can have your daughter, I am willing to wait for her forever." "It's a so, young man. You can have her when the time's up."—Detroit Free Press.



ours or not his smaller size, by causing him to cool more quickly, would necessarily age him faster.
"But as a planet grows old its oceans, in all probability, dry up, the water retreating through cracks and cavities into its interior. Water thus disappears from its surface, to say nothing of what is continually imprisoned by chemical combinations. Signs of having thus parted with its oceans we see in the case of the moon, whose so-called seas were probably seas in their day, but have now become old sea bottoms.

As on Mars.

"On Mars the same process is going on, but would seem not yet to have progressed so far, the seas there being midway in their career from the real seas to arid and depressed deserts, no longer water surfaces, they are still the lowest portions of the planet, and, therefore, stand to receive what scant water may yet travel over the surface." (Mars, pp. 122-123.)

Here, then, are not one, but two, impressive object lessons, and any careful reader will readily perceive that Mr. Lowell assumes as unquestioned that this analogy is strictly applicable to the earth. Mars has gradually dried away, until its surface is like a desert, through parts of which the streams

process is so gradual as to be imperceptible to man. Just as of old, some portion of moisture is constantly sinking deeply into the bowels of the earth, never to reappear; while another portion is every moment entering into chemical combinations which convert it into solid substance, and little of this is ever released. The world now is in a transition state, and probably is near that stage of evolution most favorable to the existence and development of intelligent beings. In the remote past the conditions were incompatible with life; in the remote future life will again become impossible, and the lack of water will presumably be the prime cause of its final disappearance. Let us now endeavor to trace the series of changes by which this will be brought about, and their progressive influence upon man and human institutions. Only the drained fields of what is now the bed of the ocean will be suitable for occupation by the human race. Even there little water will remain, though in the lowest depths a few intensely saline lakes will linger, their desolate banks crusted with salt, their waters more intolerable than those of the Dead Sea. Just as the waters will have become scant, so the air will have become thin. Such apparently is the case on Mars to-day, and the moon has no air at all, or has

maining use—it will have become the cemetery of the world, both the old and the new. The great valley below, which is to us the bottom of the sea, will be densely crowded with a population which will admit of no increase. How the people of that late and declining age will solve the difficult problems that will confront them it is hardly possible even to conjecture, but meet them they must, or perish. A highly paternal form of government would seem to be inevitable, for the water must be parcelled out with the utmost wisdom and impartiality, and no waste can be tolerated. Navigation, of course, will be a thing of the past; even the fishes will become almost or quite extinct. More than this, man will doubtless have suffered actual physical modifications, gradually brought about by the changes in his environment. Some of these will be due to atmospheric changes, for the air, besides being much diminished, will almost surely be impoverished in its most vital element. It is a very suggestive fact that to-day the proportion of oxygen is only about one part in five; we are pretty safe in assuming that the proportion was once considerably greater. Oxygen is an extremely active element, eagerly entering into combinations of various kinds which lock it up in solid or fluid form. Nitrogen, on the con-