

MRS. DILL'S SHOP

By JOHN TRENT.

It was the most fascinating little shop in the world, tucked away between two big shops on the avenue, and crammed from floor to ceiling with treasures from every country under the sun. One came out of the sunlight into a scented gloom of mingled spice and sandalwood, attar of rose and the tang of opium from ancient Chinese treasures. Soft lights glowed from little nooks curtained by precious hangings where one could drink a cup of tea that was—and nibble at Japanese rice cakes.

Mrs. Dill made heaps of money, so people said, while at the same time she indulged her hobby for collection. Dear as was this hobby to the soul of Patricia Dill, it was whispered that there was not one article in the shop that she would not part with for a price—provided the price was high enough.

Usually Mrs. Dill waited upon the shop herself, emerging from a tiny Oriental retreat in the rear, where a very business-like roll top desk set oddly among the Persian rugs and alluring divans that surrounded the walls.

Mrs. Dill was prowling around the world in search of more treasures to add to her shelves and she had entrusted her shop to the care of a friend. That was why Alice Fenwick sat at the roll top desk in the Oriental room to come gracefully forward when an important customer demanded more expert attention than could be offered by the beady-eyed Japanese clerk.

Today it was all golden sunshine and blue sky outside while within the little shop it was cool and dark and quite sunless. It was very delightful to be surrounded by these treasures of strange countries and to move leisurely to and fro on soft carpets, or to sip tea prepared by soft-footed Hago—but how Alice did long for the open country and the free wind against her pale cheeks! It was bad enough to spend nine months of the year within the walls of the kindergarten where she taught but her mother's recent death made it imperative that Alice work through the vacation period and when Mrs. Dill's offer had been made, Alice had accepted it thankfully and entered upon her duties with much enthusiasm.

But—it was very lonely without her mother in the little flat and the memory of other days crowded heavily upon the idle hours in the shop; there had been a time when she had dreamed of love and a home of her own but those dream castles had crashed to earth with Raymond Borden's departure for the far east. True, they had disagreed over something that seemed trifling enough now but then it had been great enough to make a change in both lives. Alice had put away her half-completed trousseau and taken up kindergartening and Raymond had accepted an offer to go to Shanghai as resident representative of a New York importer.

"It is surprising what a difference five years makes in one's life," sighed Alice on this particular morning. She was in the private room, looking very charming in her soft gown of white with a jet necklace at her throat. She was very fair and slender and the golden hair grew in the most alluring way about her forehead and neck.

The little chime of bells pealed in the outer shop and Alice knew that a customer had entered. Hago had gone out to deliver some parcels and Alice went out to meet the customer.

He was a tall man, so tall that he stooped a little to avoid the swinging lanterns overhead. When he saw Alice he removed his straw hat and spoke in a pleasant, rather deep voice.

"I was advised to see Mrs. Dill," he said; "I am looking for a duplicate of Mr. Dunham's ivory vase. He has told me that Mrs. Dill had an exact duplicate."

"Why, yes," hesitated Alice for the ivory vase was one of the treasures locked away in the safe in the retreat. "Would you like to look at it?"

"If you please, I have been authorized to buy it, if possible," said the stranger.

When Alice went away down the dim vista of the shop he looked after her in a puzzled way but the place was rather dark and he was near-sighted and one makes so many mistakes in identities and he had been deceived so many times by pale, fair-haired women who looked like—

But she was returning now with the small vase of delicately carved ivory lying snugly in its silk-lined lacquer box.

Alice laid the box on a teakwood table and lighted the softly tinted lantern overhead, drawing it down by silver chains until it hung low over the lacquer box.

Her face was in shadow above the lantern as she unlocked the box with a golden key and lifted the lid. Faint odors drifted from the box as if in some older time the precious little vase had held sweet flowers whose fragrance still clung to the exquisite thing of yellow-tinted ivory and fairy-like carving.

The stranger held it in strong, bronzed fingers and looked at it. "It is wonderful," he breathed sharply.

"Beautiful," agreed Alice. Again the silence fell between them and Alice lifting her eyes for one brief instant met a pair of dark eyes in the shadow above the lantern. There was no recognition between them. If there was question in the man's eyes there was no answer in the

girl's. Terror—terror of what?—her cold and rigid. Their glances dropped.

"Have you heard the story of the ivory vase?" asked the stranger in an ordinary tone of voice.

"No, only that Mrs. Dill found it after a long search in a monastery near Quet-ling," said Alice evenly.

"And Mr. Dunham's vase came from a nunnery in North China," said the stranger in a musty tone. "Perhaps you would like to hear the story of how the ivory vases came to be made?"

"I would," said Alice. "Will you not sit down?" "Thank you—the story cannot be very long."

"Well, several hundred years ago there lived in the North of China a very beautiful maiden who was deeply loved by a carver of ivory. They were to be married for, strange to relate, their parents had chosen that they should wed each other and so there was nothing to cloud their happiness.

"One day they quarreled—it was about the details of the wedding feast or the color of the bridegroom's robe or something equally trifling, no doubt; but they quarreled and the carver in ivory went far away, to Quet-ling in fact, and became a monk. The girl became a nun and entered a convent not far from Peking.

"Years passed, and during these years both the nun and the girl repented and grieved for each other. Filled with sorrow and remorse the monk took to his craft again and carved many beautiful articles that went forth into the world and made the monastery famous. In his spare time he engaged upon a task that occupied every moment and it took five years to complete the task. He carved the first of the ivory vases. And in the carving he wrought the story of his love and broken romance. When he had finished one vase he took another beautiful piece of ivory and spent five years fashioning another one exactly like it, and this second one he wrapped in a piece of silk upon which he had written a poem, and he placed it in a box and sent it by a private messenger to that far away nunnery in the north of China, to tell his sweetheart that love still lived within his heart in spite of his retirement from the world.

"The second vase he kept ever before him in his cell and when he died it was held as a wonderful example of his art and occupied for centuries an honored place among the treasures of the monastery.

"The girl's vase was treasured in the same way and was known as the 'nun's vase.' Down through the years these vases have come—perhaps to teach a lesson in forgiveness—to show that love outlives death—may I translate the meaning of the carving to you?" he asked gently.

"Please," whispered Alice. She watched his fingers as they passed over the delicate carving of the ivory, pointing here and there as he spoke.

"Here are the lovers preparing for their marriage—see the exquisite flowers he is sending to her? Here are her parents and even the aged grandmother and all are smiling and happy. Next the lovers in altercation—they turn their backs and each go a different way. See the woman weeps and the man takes a pack on his shoulder and journeys over mountains and streams. Each is in search of forgetfulness. Each one enters a house of silence—they are so far apart, the nunnery and the monastery. Behold their anguish after the irrevocable step has been taken! But the man forgives and labors to perfect the vases so as to tell his sweetheart that lovers' quarrels are pitiful mistakes that can ruin lives and—ah!" Raymond Borden stopped short.

He never finished the story, for Alice was sobbing softly on the other side of the table and it was necessary for him to come around and take her in his arms and comfort her; for what was the use of telling her the story so like their own if he could not kiss away her tears and convince her that it was not too late for them to be happy?

The ivory vase lay neglected on the table, but it had served the purpose of its creator—to bring parted lovers together.

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Perfect Man. It appears that the theosophists are conducting a development from the Aryan race which will result in the perfect man, and that man will be the Messiah. Three young men are undergoing an exalted training, all of whom are expected to be favored with a finer nervous organization and a higher spiritual perception. The three young men referred to have been selected from a long strain of Aryan ancestors, who have been living fine lives physically and spiritually, and the one selected from the three is expected to be the very flower of humanity.

This is a most interesting experiment, and the result will be closely watched, not perhaps for its religious bearings, but to see to what state of perfection a man may be physically and psychically trained. There is a theory, and well founded, too, that a man may be grown into a perfect being like a rose, a peach, or a watermelon, if he lives in perfect harmony with all God's laws, as they do.

We think the theosophists are doing a good work in bringing this idea to trial. It is certainly the grandest aim to see how exalted a human being may become by strictly obeying God's laws. If there is a Messiah still to come, that is the way he would come.—Ohio State Journal.

INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY SCHOOL LESSON

(By E. O. SELLERS, Director of Evening Department, The Moody Bible Institute, Chicago.)

LESSON FOR OCTOBER 12.

JEALOUSY AND ENVY PUNISHED.

GOLDEN TEXT.—"Love envieth not, love vaunteth not itself, is not puffed up, doth not behave itself unseemly."—I Cor. 13:4, 5, 6, 7.

In order the events from Sinai to Kadesh-Barnea were: (1) The marching host, Nu. 10:11; (2) The fire of the Lord at Taberah, 11:1; (3) The Justing after Egyptian flesh-pots, 11:4; (4) The complaint of Moses, 11:10; (5) The selection of elders, 11:16; (6) The two irregular prophets, 11:26; (7) The quails and the plague, 11:31, and (8) Sedition, chapter 12, which forms today's lesson.

Miriam's Leadership.

I. The Accusation, vv. 1, 2. This is not the first nor the last time a marriage has caused a family quarrel. Who this Ethiopian woman was we are not told, though we are inclined to believe that it was Zipporah (Ex. 2:21), and not a second wife whom Moses married recently. Of all people we would least expect jealousy to show itself in this family circle, among these the chosen leaders of Israel. Nothing so hinders the work of God, or gives more delight to the devil, than just such a situation as this one. It brings confusion and delay (v. 15). The occasion was not, however, so much the wife of Moses as it was envy of Moses (See Luke 22:24-26; I Cor. 1:11-15, and 3 John 9, 10). It may have been that Moses was culpable, for no man is perfect (Rom. 3:23), but Miriam and Aaron were not his judges. We must remember in this connection last Sunday's lesson wherein we had presented such a radical change in the form of government. Miriam and Aaron were desirous of having an equal place with Moses and because he did a thing they could not understand they criticized him (Rom. 14:3, 4; Jude 8).

II. The Arrest, vv. 4, 5. "The Lord heard it" (v. 2, 1 c.) God hears what we say in criticism of those whom he has set over us. Instead of being jealous of the preference accorded to others we ought to rejoice (Phil. 2:3). Though we are free to admit such a course often proves the measure of his grace in our hearts. God did not let this matter stand nor run the course of idle gossip. He at once, and in person, came down to champion the cause of Moses (v. 5, 2; see also 16:20, 21).

III. The Arraignment, vv. 6-8. Jehovah pointed out very clearly not only the difference between them and Moses, but also between Moses and all other prophets. They were prophets, so was Moses, and more. To the prophets God revealed himself in visions (see Ezek. 1:1, Isa. 6:1, Dan. 8:2, Luke 1:11), and many other similar instances, but with Moses God spake "mouth to mouth even manifestly," that is, others heard God's voice speaking audibly to Moses (Ex. 19:19 and 33:11). This voice was clear and distinct, it did not demand any interpretation. Verse 8 does not imply that Moses had a full revelation of the person of Jehovah, but he did have a visible manifestation of the similitude ("form" R. V.) of God (John 1:18).

IV. Judgment, vv. 9, 10. The departing cloud from off the tabernacle was a token of God's displeasure. Let us not forget that future time when it will be others who will depart (Matt. 25:41). The lifted cloud revealed to Aaron Miriam smitten with leprosy, that most terrible of all diseases, loathsome, contagious, incurable. Read the stories of Naaman and Uzziah.

Aaron's Sin. **V. Intercession, vv. 11-16.** Aaron in his appeal to Moses acknowledges his equal transgression with Miriam, his foolishness and his sin, and in turn Moses revealed his noble Christ-like character. Christ prayed for his enemies (Luke 23:34). Moses was not overcome of evil but overcame evil with good (Rom. 12:12). His prayer was an effectual one (James 5:16). Some have viewed this episode in a typical light. Moses representing Christ is rejected by his own people; the Ethiopian bride as the church, chiefly Gentiles; Aaron and Miriam as Jews opposed to any such union; the leprosy as divine judgment upon the Jews who are interceded for by those whom they oppose; the Christian church; Miriam shut out of the camp, the period of Israel's rejection after which period she will be restored to her land and her God in Christ Jesus.

This lesson is a great teaching of the jealousy of Jehovah for those upon whom he confers honor. We serve him by his appointment and he will defend us. We should think highly of any service to which he calls us and say with Paul, "I magnify mine office." God will not hold those guiltless who call in question the wisdom of his appointments or the rights of his appointees who do his work. Miriam and Aaron broke the tenth commandment by coveting authority. Let us beware of this form of sin. Such envy is not only a lack of love for man but also of God.

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Turn About is Fair Play. "A famous tenor," said Giulio Gattil-Casazza, "was invited one night to dinner by a Chicago trust magnate. The dinner was superb, but at its end the trust magnate asked the tenor to sing. This, of course, was as bad as inviting a doctor to dinner and then asking for a free prescription. So the tenor politely declined. The trust magnate, however, insisted. After five or ten minutes of this, the tenor said, with a laugh: "Oh, well, every one to his trade. Let me see you pick a pocket. Then I'll sing."

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Not This Time. "Did you take in boarders this summer, Sam?" "No, sir; they was on to us."

Egyptians Had 12-Hour Day. The early Egyptians divided day and night each into 12 hours, a custom adopted by the Jews or Greeks probably from the Babylonians. The days is said to have been divided into hours from 293 B. C., when L. Papius' cursor erected a sundial in the temple of Quicinus at Rome. Before water clocks were invented in 158 B. C., time was called at Rome by public criers. In England the measurement of time was, in early days, uncertain; one expedient was by wax candles, three inches burning an hour, and six wax candles burning 24 hours—scribed to Alfred, 886.

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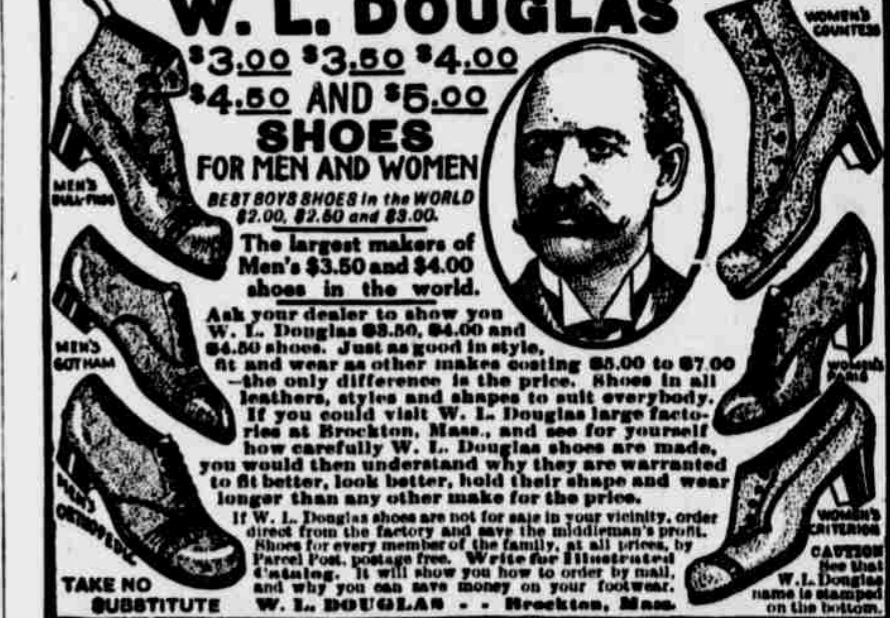
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