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THE MANHATTAN.

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SEPTEMBER, 1883.

NO. III.

THE PHENOMENAL IN WESTERN SCENERY.

NOT even in the Titanic laboratories of Iceland, where ice and fire have done appalling things, is Nature seen in such extraordinary moods as in Western America. In that region the phenomenal predominates, and the rocks have the characteristics of a sort of geologic madness.

There are pure mountain peaks splitting the clouds and shining under the sun at altitudes which the Himalayas alone exceed, and sweeping from these are the undulating, measureless basins of evaporated seas. All the features of Alpine scenery are here; the forest-covered foot-hills with their diminishing vegetation as they close in upon the abutments of the peaks; the still, deep, undefiled lakes, which freeze on midsummer nights and are silvered with the reflections of everlasting snows by day; the riotous, foamy streams; the silent, embattled chasms which divide the heights and the peaks themselves with their spacious outlooks.

But the traveler remembers these less than the grotesque, weird, amazing architecture which detrition and erosion have produced in the "bad lands," the valley of the Yellowstone, the cañons of the Colorado, Monument Park, the Garden of the Gods and that wonderful region southwest of Tierra Amarilla, New Mexico, which is scarcely known at all except to explorers.

Here also are cliffs, chasms and pinnacles, but more wondrous than these are the abounding shapes which seem to have been chiseled by a sculptor in some fantastic mood.

Oddest of all are the eroded sandstones, which are like the figures of a nightmare, the embodied imaginings of a wildly-disordered brain. Among them one seems to be in goblin-land, and the resemblances to unrelated and incongruous objects which they assume are too strong to escape even the least active of observers. In some places the imitation is of an inanimate object, such as an enormous tea-kettle, or an old-fashioned candle extinguisher—and then it is of some living thing, a bear, a greyhound or a cloaked and hatted witch. How came they to have these shapes? The gritty sand which soon finds its way into every pocket of the tourist in Colorado, and which drifts down the mountains like a fog—this and the rain beating down for centuries, unaided by any chisel plied by a crack-brained mason or sculptor carved and fretted these extraordinary figures. Many of the sandstones, isolated and uplifted from the surrounding earth, look like sugar-loaves with plates or trays balanced on their heads, and the cause is found in the fact that each pyramid or cone is capped by a conglomerate of sand and pebbles cemented by iron, which being harder than the underlying yellow sandstone, has resisted the action of the eroding agents.

In the Black Hills, near Sherman, we see more examples of those wonderful rocks—blocks of sandstone which caricature the form of beast and human being; circular and square towers that might have been part of a mediæval stronghold, and preposterous images of things neither seen elsewhere on

EXCOMMUNICATED FOR LAZINESS.

I.

THE VICTIM OF THE TYRANNY—ABIEZER WADDELL.

IT all befell in a charming little city in the southwest, and, although years have fled since then, Abiezer rises slowly, very slowly indeed, out of the past and stands before me as I write. He is a man who has been borne on in an extremely leisurely manner by the sluggish current of time, and without the smallest exertion of his own, until he is about forty years old, when that took place which is about to be told. I say forty years, or thereabouts, should be added, as it is impossible to imagine that he knew with anything like exactness when he was born; in fact, we can scarcely conceive of such a man as being prompt to any definite time in the act even of being born. He has grown during these years, and as a tree would grow in the passive taking in of sunshine and sap, until he is over six feet in height. If he is remarkably erect, considering who it is, the reason thereof lies in the structure of his bones. He certainly has given no thought, effort or energy to the matter. Nor is he badly proportioned, except that his legs are long and lumbering, his feet having a trick of dragging after them and as if the propelling force had nigh run itself out before it reached them from his head or heart. His arms are almost ape-like in their length, laden at the end with hands large-knuckled and bony. The one thing about Abiezer which is wealthy and asserts itself is his really splendid head of hair, the dark and glossy abundance of which no scissors in the hands—poor, thin and trembling hands that they are—of his wife can keep under. His face is of an olive pallor, of a long oval, and would be almost handsome were it not as much without expression as a dogwood blossom is without smell. And he has a loiter in his walk which would be significant of a cultivated leisure were he a rich man. But being exceedingly poor it marks

him out, even in a somewhat sluggish community, as the laziest of men. "He would not walk at all if he could sit," his nephew Andros Warren has been heard to remark. "Nor does he sit when it is possible for him to lie down." Andros never alludes to his uncle when he can help it; and really he should be the last man living to find fault with him, for Abiezer has been a world of benefit to the young man, as we shall see before we are done.

Mr. Waddell dresses in a suit made by the same loving hands of his poor wife, of gray jeans—during the week, that is. On Sundays he wears a very clerical suit of what once was black, but is now a foxy brown, and so shiny, not to say thread-bare, in places, that we imagine it may have been his wedding suit. Although Abiezer has to kneel to his invalid wife for her to do it as she lies in bed, a more thoroughly brushed individual does not enter the church at which he worships. His linen, washed and ironed by the hands which have been more to him since he was married than those of many a more vigorous mother to her babe, is more valuable, to the angels looking on, than so much point lace, by reason of the number and minuteness of the stitches Mrs. Helen Waddell has taken in them.

"You are the finest looking man I know," she says to him almost every Sunday, with the kiss she presses upon his forehead as he gets up from his knees. "How I wish I could go with you to church, you dear old Abe," she adds, "I would be so proud of you."

Oh, you'll go very soon now. You are looking ever so much better this morning, Haalen," is his stereotype reply. When he has gone, and his wife has rested a little from her Sunday morning's severe labor at

the hair, and about the neck, fingers, and ears of her other and less burdensome children, she endeavors, as she lies, to recall how splendidly he looked as a young man, and when they were first married. "I was nothing but a plain country girl," she whispers to herself. "Everybody told me I had made the best match in the world, marrying the brother of the great Dr. Waddell. He must distinguish himself; how can he help it when he has come of such stock, has such good blood in his veins? That is what everybody said." The poor woman feeds upon the very thin gruel of that fact to-day, as she has done so long. His kin has, in fact, been the curse of the man. If a divinity doth hedge a king, the revered name Abiezer bears, and the relationship he boasts, are to him as a long and flowing, if shadowy, mantle. Those who know him best and despise him most, give a kind of precedence to him in spite of themselves, and on sight. Anything more unsubstantial than this glamour it is hard to imagine, but it weighs with his worst foe as it does with himself.

"I was so happy, happy those days," his wife reflects. "There never was a prouder woman. And then—how strangely Providence does work!"

The tears are flowing silently down her cheeks as she lies, and for the thousandth time, goes over the old, old hymn,

"God moves in a mysterious way
His wonders to perform;"

that is, if her poor little Eben will permit her to do so. Perhaps it was by reason of her ill-health when he was born—people said she was not strong enough to attend to the child—whatever was the reason, the mite of a thing has sat so long in its bit of a chair that now it cannot walk at all. But it is in no pain. Very rarely, indeed, does it cry, except silently; and for hours on hours it keeps its seat, wondering, perhaps, with its large and pathetic eyes, at the ways of Heaven. The child is not an idiot—is quite bright indeed, considering how it has been shut out all its life from the out-of-door sports of children. Apart from that, to be shut in all the time to the sight of its mother's feeble struggle with that dreadful poverty would be enough to sadden it.

"The strange thing about Eben," as Mrs.

Waddell says to the neighbors, "is that he cannot endure his father. He is almost happy when with the children and with me; the moment his father comes in he is hushed and gloomy-like, and yet," the good wife always flushes up and grows warm upon that topic, "there never was a kinder-hearted father or husband! I am always thanking God that he is so free from all the little vices of some men. My husband, madam, never smoked a cigar in his life, or a pipe. If he ever drank a teaspoonful of spirits I do not know it. He is a man to make any woman happy. I have never had a cross word from him since we were married. He has been strangely unfortunate. Somehow everything he undertakes fails on his hands. I am afraid it is my fault, but then I have not been strong—" Here she checks herself. It is the rarest thing for her to say that much. Nothing but the defense of her husband would allow her to say that at times her mother's heart almost turns away from, if not against, little Eben sitting in its chair, its head so large in comparison with its wasted body, the silence of its eyes so eloquent of sadness and all mystery. For the patient atom of a thing sometimes looks after its huge father as he comes and goes with an almost savage something in its eyes. The old ladies have their theories upon the subject, but they never hint a word of them to the afflicted wife.

"What is the greatest comfort to me," she says, in her rare times of unbosoming herself, and to only one or two of her most intimate friends, "is that if ever there was a *good* man my husband is one." But, under all the circumstances, one shrinks from recording any more of the much she has to say on that point; nor, with all her trials, can Mrs. Waddell be said to be unhappy. She has had altogether too many children; but they are good children, devoted to her, and doing what they can as they grow up. There rests upon them a kind of ban. Although as intelligent as most children, they are somewhat slow of speech, not very energetic even in play. You heard them laugh aloud not very often, and their hair is as lank as it is neutral of color. Perhaps they hear things said at school about their clothing, about their father. In a word, we would

suppose, merely to see them; that they belonged to that very definite class in their region—"the poor whites." But they do not. Their father's brother, the Rev. Alpheus Waddell, D.D., is the pastor of one of the largest churches in the Southern seaboard States. One cannot exactly call Mrs. Waddell a lady. She was nothing but a very imperfectly educated country lass when she was married; since then she has had children and troubles so numerous that her whole growth and culture have been a preparation rather for heaven than for earth. For if ever there was a saintly soul she is one.

Rumor has it that Abiezer was sent to college in his earliest years, with a view to the ministry, and there is the faintest smack in the world of books about him still. Something cut his college course off almost at the outset, and, since then, what has he not been? A cross-roads country storekeeper, a school teacher, an agent for the sale of subscription books, a raiser of sheep, a market gardener, and a dozen things beside. Whatever he went into perished upon his hands, and, in a condition of perpetually breaking up and removing with his household somewhere else, the one thing steadily true of him all along has been his ever-deepening poverty. At the time of which we speak he is a carpenter—an amateur one.

No, Mrs. Waddell is not an altogether unhappy woman; were it not for her mysterious illness she would be almost happy. There are hours when lying awake, her vigorous husband breathing heavily beside her—for no man eats more heartily, sleeps more soundly than he—she has her doubts of Abiezer. "He is so strong," she says to herself. "Other men succeed who are not half as smart, why should not he?" With morning, and her husband risen again to his six feet two, she blames herself for doubting him. Next to her faith in God is her faith in Abiezer. She bathes away the traces of her midnight weeping, puts on a smile, and reproaching herself for so cruelly wronging him, she tries to make up for it with more loving words, stronger coffee for him and hotter biscuits.

Abiezer is a member of the church, and he is never so happy as when telling somebody of his celebrated brother.

"He has," he loves to have opportunity to say of this brother, "at least six hundred members to his church. I would not be surprised if there are near a thousand children in his Sunday-school. It is a magnificent church. Their choir must cost them a round price. Did I ever show you a copy of my brother's published sermons? I am told they have had a large circulation. We have not seen each other for many years. Alpheus here, my oldest boy, is named after him—hold up your head, Alph. We hope, Haalen and myself, to educate him for the ministry. He looks like his uncle." It may have only happened so, but no one has heard Mrs. Waddell speak of their relatives. It may have been by reason of this brother that Abiezer was elected superintendent of the Sabbath-school of the church he attended. That was when he first made his home in the town. In some mysterious way he ceased to be superintendent after a while, ceased to be librarian, drifted out of being a teacher. Yet he is always in his seat at church. Very rarely does he fail of attending the weekly prayer-meeting. When he first came he used to lead in prayer, to make remarks on occasion offered. Out of that also he imperceptibly drifted. That is the one word which delineates his course—he has drifted all his life, with as little control over his going as has an autumnal leaf over the slow-flowing stream upon which it drifts its life away.

The one solid stay of Mrs. Waddell—her husband is merely a theory—is her nephew, Andros Warren. In the kindness of her soul she took him into her flock when her sister died, and he has been more to her since than her own children with Abiezer thrown in. So promising a lad was he that his aunt cherished at one time, although she mentioned it to no one, not even her husband, a hope that he might be educated above the average. "Who knows," she whispered to herself, "but that he may come to be—something." Minister? Lawyer? Doctor? She dared not think what. Perhaps Andros found it out. Certainly he had his ambitions, and was studying day and night, assisting to teach now and then. With his bright face and sturdy energy he was the light of the dreary home. The one

thing which shocked his pious aunt was the dreadful way in which he sometimes spoke.

"I can't stand," he said to her, "to hear uncle talk about Providence!" And the moment Abiezer began upon that, upon any religious topic, Andros was sure to have pressing business elsewhere. And here was another of the many inexplicable dealings of Heaven. No man could speak more eloquently upon Providence, or upon any and every theological point. The trouble was, people would not listen to him. From his lips doctrine was so distasteful to his fellow members that his wife was, at last, the only listener he had. Somehow, even to her, his talk was a something she would rather not hear. "How strange it is, and such a good man he is, too!" she thought.

It should be mentioned that Mrs. Waddell was not without every attention on the part of her neighbors as of the ladies of the church to which she and her husband belonged. However deep the poverty of the household, it was impossible to offer pecuniary assistance direct. That neither Andros nor his aunt would allow, as every one well knew in advance. Almost every Sunday night the flowers from the pulpit were very sure to find their way to her as an invalid, and "the children" were an excuse for many a large supply sent to the house after the church festivals, and whenever it could be, and without giving offense, under pretext of the peculiarity of her case, she had the best of medical attendance.

"It is for our own sake," the doctors

would remark. "We have never had precisely such an ailment before, and we are anxious to understand it. No consumption in your family, you say, madam? No scrofulous affection? Glad to observe that there are no symptoms of dropsy."

It was once when she was so low that a consultation was had that old Dr. Jones no longer withheld his professional opinion. "You understand it as well as I do, gentlemen," he remarked. "The poor woman is as healthy as women ever get to be. I am told she was once a buxom country lass, with cheeks all cream and roses. Nor is it the fast-coming children, women can endure wonders in that way; that is according to nature. But think of her years with such a husband! The only disease she has is—Abiezer Waddell, lazy scoundred that he is!"

The words of the old physician must have been the beginning of the unprecedented event which afterward befell. The pastor of the church was a man of singularly energetic and independent character. He had many a talk with Abiezer. Other men were induced by him to take Abiezer off to himself and talk to him faithfully. It did no good. No measure of talk could have changed the color of Mr. Waddell's eyes or hair, and his defect was as much a part of him as that. But one thing withheld the officers of the church from more energetic action—their regard for the poor wife. Yet not even her religion could enable her to endure more than so much of her husband. That limit reached, she died.

II.

THE EXCOMMUNICATION.

It was the fortune of the writer to see upon the shelves of a museum an exact *fac-simile* in every twist, wrinkle and hollow, of the largest nugget of gold ever found. Duly gilded, the duplication was perfect, except in this, that it was not gold. It was an interesting object. Had it been the nugget itself it would have been more so. Therein lies the value of this sketch—it is essentially true; and the fact has this interest in addition, that in all probability it is the only case of the kind. Whatever of a derogatory

nature may be advanced against Mr. Abiezer Waddell, he is absolutely unique.

"I never heard of such a thing in my life."

It was General Puleston who made the remark, and as one of the session, a ruling committee of the church to which Abiezer belonged, the occasion being the final coming together of the session to decide, after months of preliminary investigation, as to what had better be done with their erring brother.

"Yes, and it is the first also in my somewhat extended experience," said the white-headed pastor. "It will be, I have no doubt, the last."

"It is not that the man does not deserve to be excommunicated," the General added. "Suspension has been tried in vain. I acknowledge that he is the laziest man that ever lived—that he will not support his family; but excommunicate him! He might recover heavy damages against us at law."

"There is no fear of that," Judge Wartens, another member of the session remarked. "Abiezer is too indolent a man to go to law. If he does, I will undertake to defend the church. I ought to know judges and juries by this time, and I know things which will convince them we could do nothing less. I wish"—and in a burst of professional enthusiasm the judge got up from his seat—"he *would* go to law!" He was an old lawyer, reported to be, next to Roger Jones, the ablest at the bar of that circuit. Rumor ran that he undertook no case which he was not convinced was right. Whether this was so or not, he could carry a jury almost in advance and by reason of his aspect of intense sincerity. "Curse his affidavit face," his chief rival often remarked; "I can do nothing against him!" for this rival was almost as widely known for his profanity, intemperance, free thinking and bullyism at the bar as for his really great ability.

"I can almost see Roger Jones," Judge Wartens now remarked, "as lawyer for Abiezer. I know his whole line of argument. I can almost hear him thunder the words tyranny! unprecedented despotism! priestly assumption! and the like. And he has a splendid case of it, a splendid case! But everybody knows Abiezer so well! moreover, I can point to his six children, fed and clothed only by the hard work of Andros, his nephew. I wish he *would* sue! Give me the chance of placing his poor wife in imagination before a jury, killed—yes, gentlemen, killed—by a treatment worse than if he had been a drunkard! Let me have the opportunity of putting that poor woman before the court as I knew her, as everybody knew her! Why, gentlemen, the jury would bring him in guilty of murder instead. It *was* murder!"

"You could very truthfully say," the pastor urged, "that Abiezer was thoroughly informed of what would follow if he did not hear and heed the church; using every other means, and for years, we have conversed with him individually, collectively; have remonstrated, argued, pleaded with him, prayed with him. You know how we have brought Scripture to bear upon him, 'If a man will not work neither shall he eat.' That was commanded him, you observe, by the church, which must, of course, enforce its commands;" and running over whole batteries of Scripture artillery to the same effect.

"It was in this way," the doctor added, "that Christianity aroused and compelled the indolent Oriental world into that quickened advance of humanity which has continued ever since."

"If any provide not for his own," old Brother Andrews quoted from where he sat, his chin upon the silver head of his cane, "and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel. But Abiezer would never sue us," he added; "he is too good a man."

Dr. Quarterman, the pastor of the church, was on his feet at the word. "Brethren," said he, "if there is a word I hate, it is that word good, in that meaning of it. *Good?* A man does not lie, steal, swear, drink; he goes to church, to prayer-meeting; he sings, has a class in the Sunday-school, leads in prayer, visits the sick—is a good man. When such a man won't pay his debts, lets his children grow up like weeds, weakly yields to bad men, what does his goodness come to? I tell you the word good is coming to mean weak, cowardly, without backbone, indolent, amiably idiotic. I hate the word! Yes, Abiezer Waddell *is* a good man, and the worst reproach to religion in the town. While his wife lived it was different; now she has got her release, and taken her poor little Eben with her to heaven, my mind is clear. We have tried everything else; let us excommunicate him and take the consequences. The effect will be wholesome! It will raise the church in the estimation of men. It will be like the gale which clears away malaria."

Dr. Quarterman was about the only cler-

gyman in the State, of any denomination, who could take such a step. He was known and universally esteemed and beloved by all denominations for his pulpit power, his genial temperament, his unsectarian cordiality toward true men of all sorts. No minister was more successful. Like all Southern towns before the war, there was in that in which he made his home a measure of procrastination, of indolence in regard to everything, which tried the soul of the man. People lounged rather than walked. The best men in town would sit upon horse-block, or door-step, talking for hours about nothing whatever. For years the cemetery was a disgrace to civilization, with the cows striding over its broken-down fences and browsing among the rich grasses of its graves. The doctor had agitated the subject of a new fence, had talked, preached, implored. Everybody said it ought to be attended to; no one did anything. One bright fall evening, having tried everything else in vain, Dr. Quarterman hired wagons and negroes, put on his roughest clothes, and the passing citizens were amazed to see the white-haired, dignified doctor of divinity setting out at the head of the cavalcade, axe on shoulder, for a bit of forest land he owned near town. He would himself see to it that posts were cut and set up; with his own money he would buy plank; with his own hands would he, aided by others, nail on the pickets—paint them if necessary. In half a day the rumor ran through every group of idlers loitering in stores, grouped in offices, whittling sticks, seated upon goods' boxes in the public square, and the next day such an array of helpers was in the field that he could safely lay aside his axe and slouch hat and go back to his books. He knew now, in this instance, of Abiezer Waddell, and very well, what he was about. Deep down in his soul he had a purpose which took in more than his lazy church member.

"You know," he now said to his session, "that we wrote to his brother, the celebrated divine, and you know how he wrote back, long ago. He said he had done all he could for his indolent relative. His brother was a disgrace to any church. It would be an excellent idea to try the efficacy of discipline.

But let us not be too hard upon Abiezer," he added. "Suppose we give him another six months?"

It was agreed to. Meanwhile the pastor did his best with the hitherto incorrigible man. No two men could be more unlike, and when they came face to face upon each other beneath Abiezer's roof, it was a sight worth seeing. Mr. Waddell's home had always been, and wherever for the time he happened to be, a very poor place. The day he took possession of a house the character of its occupant seemed to strike through it. As in Oriental lands, the very walls of a house were smitten in beam and plaster with the leprosy of the leper who lived therein, so was it now. The paling dropped off the fence, the hinges broke on the gates; the weeds ran drunken riot in yard and garden; the shutters hung awry; the paint became a dirty yellow; more than one window showed a hat or a shawl stuffed in to take the place of those panes of glass which one would not have thought the droopy children could muster energy enough to break. In the lifetime of poor Mrs. Waddell, things were, at least, neat. Faithful heart, true wife; like some cruelly overworked horse, she had done her best, harnessed in wedlock to such a man. So long as it was possible, she had dragged her household and him along the stony road, until, falling exhausted, she had died. Since then Andros, the nephew, had done what he could in the intervals of his learning and his teaching. But even the ablest of the lank-haired children was too much like his father to be of much help, and Abiezer remained—Abiezer.

The morning the Doctor called, the head of the house, although he had gone to bed early, was just out of bed. As yet there were no signs of breakfast. The children, half dressed, uncombed, unwashed, were running in and out.

"It 's rayther early, Doctor, but I'm glad to see you," Abiezer remarked, his head, to use a current phrase, "like a hurricane's nest," in respect to its profusion of hair. "Not that chair, Alpheus; can't you find one that isn't broken? How is your family? Glad to see you looking so well."

It was impossible for a man to be more at his ease as he slowly drew on his coat. His

visitor strove afresh to understand him, purely as a singular specimen of his kind. Here was a man of powerful build, in excellent health, intelligent up to the average, undermined by no vice. He had but to bend himself to his work to earn an ample living. Seated in his precarious seat, the robust and energetic pastor strove to understand Abiezer.

"I enjoy my work," he was saying to himself, "find all my happiness in it, cannot have enough of it. I take the interest I do in this man largely because it is work to be done—hard work!"

The secret the minister had his severest work to hide was a sense of almost intolerable disgust at the region in which his lot was cast. In vain he kept his church up to the highest grade of prosperity; in vain he accepted every opportunity to do what could be done in his own line far and wide over his own State, and out of it. Everything was so small and slow and narrow. Twenty years in advance of his time, ardent, enthusiastic, a goodly portion of his piety was devoted to keeping himself down to and within the miserable meanness of things.

"The fact is," he now thought, "this poor sluggard is but the laziest man in the laziest of all conceivable regions. I know not what it is, but something is coming to startle it out of its stagnation!"

Something was on the way—the war; and when it smote there was, and thereafter, a new and hitherto undreamed-of life there, as throughout the South. The Rabbins believe it is the angels who roll the sun upon its pathway, and by sheer strength. Doubtless many a thousand of the bravest, the noblest the land possessed died in prison and battle; but as the grand result, the South, too, lifted by angelic hands to a higher plane by the war, is now being rolled upward upon a more glorious path than were otherwise possible. Is it not so?

Now the Doctor had to do only with this parishioner. Except for a certain shyness of eyes, there was nothing unusual in Abiezer. If he had waxed angry, had stormed, had

hustled his visitor out, it would have been something. Such an idea never entered Abiezer's head. He was lazy as a crow is black, as a lion is tawny, as a horse goes upon four hoofs. Seating himself on a hide-bottomed chair, he tilted it to an easy angle, placed his feet upon another chair, was ready for anything. For half an hour the Doctor did his duty to the man—his full duty. "People are made different," the other said at the end. "Some folks like to be hammering away, rushing around. I don't. Oh, never you mind, we'll make out some way. Providence has provided hitherto, will—" but here his visitor broke in. Even his extra-ecclesiastical protest did not stir the other. "I could tell you things about some of our church members," he began, and went on at some length, his visitor paying little heed.

It was useless. The Doctor gave it up. Perhaps God *had* made Abiezer that way. "I would ask you to stay to breakfast," he said, as his visitor arose to go, "but we are in some little confusion this morning. The church must do what it thinks best. If that is God's will I must submit. Call again, Doctor." But the visitor had not gone twenty steps before the other hurried after him; there was a new animation in his face. "I came near forgetting it," he said, "but—the fact is, the children need a mother. There's a lady I know of, a great strong woman, and she has some money, too. I think of marrying her. Now *she* might not like to have her husband disciplined. Haalen was as good a woman as ever lived, but she was always sick; this woman must weigh over two hundred, red as a peony she is. Don't speak of it, Doctor, as it is not quite fixed up yet. Good idea, don't you think so?" For a full minute Dr. Quarterman looked in the face of the other with frank amazement and then turned and walked away without a word.

"I did think," he said to himself as he went, "that I knew something of human nature. I know nothing of it—absolutely nothing!"

III.

THE RESULT OF IT ALL.

"Really it is quite an interesting story," the successor of Dr. Quarterman remarked when some years afterward he was regaled incidentally with the history of the case by his session. He was a young and somewhat affected Timothy, in everything very different from the Doctor, pale, sad, spectacted, preaching beautiful sermons, a great favorite at tea-tables and, until he was married, with all the ladies of the church. "And he was excommunicated, you say?"

"He was," General Puleston replied, for the talk was in the session room. "We did not put Abiezer out with bell, book and candle, but it was known that he had been cut off from the church."

"May I ask, did it have any effect upon Abiezer? I see he still attends," the new pastor inquired.

"No, sir; Abiezer Waddell was born so, grew up so, will die so—the laziest man that ever lived. What they will do with him in heaven about it I have no idea, for he will go there. He is not a bad man. God made him that way. When we found it made no difference, the Doctor was the first to suggest he be restored. But Abiezer did not care to be. He could go to church still, he said, and there was really no use of our giving ourselves any trouble."

"And he got another wife?"

"Two, sir, *two!* Stout, healthy women, both of them!" General Puleston said. "Only the Being who made them knows what a woman will do, or will not do!" The General was an old, a very old, bachelor. "Yes, sir," he said. "There were found in town two women to marry him. Dr. Quarterman regarded it, as his duty to warn them, each in turn, as to the husband Abiezer would make. It did no good. They knew all he could tell them already. When a woman determines to marry a man, she always does so. It doesn't matter a straw who or what the man is; marry him the woman will!"

"You must take what Brother Puleston says with allowance, sir," good old Mr.

Andrews interposed. "He is dreadfully down upon the sex."

"Down upon them! Look at it, sir," the General said with energy. "The first of those two women was a stout, rosy woman. With a little money of her own, *she* would make Abiezer mind! *She* would make him work! And what was the result, sir? Her grave was the result. In three years she died. Stout as she was, Abiezer killed her. You observe, she put her shoulders to him, as a teamster does to a wagon stuck in the mud, bent all her strength in one steady strain against her husband to make him go to work. Start him? Not a bit, sir. She must have broken a blood-vessel in trying to, for one day, in the act of attempting to hurry her husband, she dropped dead."

"And the other wife?" The young clergyman in spectacles was greatly interested. To him the sex was as yet an untried experiment.

"The other woman was not the least like either of Abiezer's other two wives. The first was a rosy-cheeked country girl, the second was a stout widow, the last was an old maid, spare, thin-visaged, sinewy. He's got his match this time, people said. He had, had he?" the General asked in derision. "If ever a woman married six children and their father with her eyes open, she did. But Abiezer is a fine-looking fellow at best. Dress him up and he is not merely as fine a looking six foot of a man as you would wish to see, but he is such a *good* man, too, with never a vice. No man ever saw him in a saloon. He never had a quarrel in his life, never cheated any one. It is impossible, this last woman reasoned in regard to him, that he cannot be properly managed. She accepted him as her mission in life. Gravely, steadily, as persistently as is possible to a woman like her, the toughest article Heaven ever made, she went to work. Two, three years she gave to it. You can imagine with what interest people looked on. Religious people, yes, sir, officers in the churches, laid bets on it. Abiezer could

stand a good deal; such a wife it was impossible anything human could resist." Here the General stopped, took out his handkerchief, wiped his forehead, looking his young pastor gravely in the face.

"Out with it, Puleston," Mr. Warters, the lawyer of the session, remarked. "Bless you! Puleston here was the church officer who betted on it, and betted on the woman. Ah, Puleston!"

"Bets ought to have been declared off!" the General retorted. "She did *not* die."

"No, but she ran away!"

"That woman was," Mr. Warters explained, "as pious a woman as ever served for the heathen, or gave her mite of hard-earned money to every good cause that came along. She had a perfect horror of divorce, said it was foreign to Scripture. After three years of it she deliberately packed up her little hair trunk, took the train for the Indian nation, engaged herself as teacher there to the little papooses, and there she is to this day."

"And her husband—?" began the new pastor.

"Is Abiezer Waddell still. He is as vigorous a man as you can meet, has never been sick in his life; but he never has worked, never will work. He takes things as they come. *He* does not care! The everlasting mountains are frisky compared to Abiezer, the pyramids could not be as inert and immovable let them do their level best," Mr. Warters added. He is a learned and dignified lawyer, but he finds that a joke now and then hurts him no more with other men than it does with juries.

"And that is the end of it?" added the new pastor as he rose to his feet.

"It is *not* the end of it, sir! In connection with the excommunication of Abiezer, Dr. Quarterman preached a sermon," the General said, "on the text 'If a man will not work neither shall he eat.' It was a grand sermon, and a terrible sermon! I suppose the Doctor got swept away by his eloquence, but while we sat there grinning in our pews over the way he was giving it to Abiezer, the first thing we knew, sir, we found it was to us he was giving it—to *us*, sir, for our frightful indolence in matters spiritual, in matters temporal! It was a most excel-

lent sermon," the General fell in his excitement into the odd phraseology of the lower classes, "but it was a most ter-rif-ic discourse, sir!"

As he said it he looked to his brethren of the session, all of whom assented with their heads and unsmiling faces. Evidently that sermon marked an epoch. "Oh, yes," the speaker continued, "it got into the papers, and all the other towns were laughing at us, at least until the Doctor came out-in a letter saying that it was all equally true of the South generally; we were an indolent people, with many noble qualities, but indolent beyond what the climate palliated—indolent, dreadfully indolent! There was a call for that sermon. The Doctor made it about twenty times as strong, preached it everywhere on invitation, printed it, and no document had ever been so read. He was a Southern man, you see, and could say what he pleased."

"That sermon," Mr. Warters added, "did more good to the people than years of preaching going before and coming after. Oh, if ministers *could* but be as practical as that once in a way! It revolutionized our town! Abiezer? Every man felt as if he himself were the worst Abiezer going. Work? A man dared not be seen standing idle. For a while, at least, it gave such an impulse to our town as astonished us. Abiezer Waddell may be lazy, but, in that way, he brought it about that three new school-houses were erected, also a factory and a rope-walk. Sir, Abiezer paved and lighted our streets, gave us a new life."

"But the Doctor left us," sighed good Mr. Andrews. "He took an idea that he had given offense, and accepted a call to a city church. They say he is doing a grand work there, the grandest of his life!"

"Very interesting—quite so," the young clergyman said, putting on his hat.

"But that was not the end and all of it. Abiezer," General Puleston said, "had as his nephew a bright young man. When his uncle was suspended for laziness, Andros—that was his name—was going to school and teaching. When his uncle was excommunicated he dropped his books, and engaged himself in the machine shop at the new railroad. Nothing but work—hard work—work

to which he could put his whole strength, would do for him after that. I have stopped in passing to look at that young fellow swinging his hammer. He said nothing to a soul, but, with every sweep of his arms, his hammer came down with a bang, I tell you! It made a new man of him. From a handsome but pale-faced youth full of literary aspirations, hoping to be a doctor, lawyer, minister—something of the kind—he developed into a powerful man, with the chest and arms, and legs too, for that matter, of a Hercules. With his beard and all you would not have known him. Before Abiezer was excommunicated he used to write poetry for the town papers—was glad to be called upon to make addresses. After that, no! Nothing but work—hard, persistent work—work that looked like work—would do for him. He was a noble fellow!”

“Yes,” piped poor old Brother Andrews in his shrill key, “he supported Abiezer’s children; that is, as Abiezer’s wives died or ran away. He saw that they studied at school, got places for them afterward. None of them will ever be very much in the world, but if they come to be decent, self-supporting men and women, it will be owing to Andros. But you must tell our pastor, General—”

“About his success in the machine shop? Oh well, in developing his body he evolved, as they say, developed, his mind also. He must have had a latent talent that way, but, for the sake of the work, he turned his attention to improving, inventing. It was in that way he hammered out the steam cut-off we have all heard about. I do not profess to understand it myself,” said General Puleston, “but I know that when his patent was infringed, he got Mr. Warters here to help him, fought like a tiger for his rights, and won.”

“Won! Yes,” Mr. Warters added, “and cleared a fortune! It was in that way he came to marry—”

Good old Mr. Andrews was getting to be very deaf. It made it awkward at prayer-meeting, where he was apt to lead off in his

dear old quavering voice in a hymn, unconscious that Mr. Warters, General Puleston, or somebody else, was leading at the moment in prayer or making a few remarks. He did not now hear what the lawyer had last remarked.

“We must tell our pastor,” he said, “how the daughter of the president of the railroad fell in love with him. Or was it Andros fell in love with her? She is a beauty, they say, and very, very rich. They live in a fine house in the city, I am told, and have two or three beautiful children.”

But here the sexton, weary of waiting, was actually turning off the gas; for it was Sunday night, and after service the session had lingered behind, as is the wont of sessions, to talk over the events of the day.

“And so,” said the new pastor as they went out together, “even our lazy friend was not without his uses in this world? To me it seems a small matter that Providence guides the energies of men, even of very wicked men, for its own purposes. The clearest evidences of a providence is when we see, as in this case, how Heaven can work out noble results by the most stupid blundering of people, by the laziness, say, of Abiezer Waddell. You remember the lines, General Puleston?” The General did not remember them, but the young clergymen, he was at just that stage of his ministry, repeated them none the less:

“That not a woman is clever in vain,
That not a moth with vain desire,
Doth perish in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another’s gain.

That nothing walks with aimless feet,
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete.”

“It is all very fine, very fine,” good old Elder Andrews said, as he tottered off home by himself, “but he will never make as strong a preacher as Dr. Quarterman, never, never! Abiezer Waddell a providence? Well, yes, it is wicked not to think so, but none less than the Almighty could make any providence out of a man as lazy as Abiezer.”

WILLIAM M. BAKER.