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H. T. STEVENS,
MANAGER

THE BIBLE REQUIRED.

Dr. Talmage has been preaching against reconstruction of the Bible, and apparently makes out a fair case. But possibly if the good doctor was a man of the world, and appreciated the fact that the Bible absolutely forbids a lot of liberties that people find it convenient to indulge in, he would realize that to be a comfort giving work to this age it would need to be materially changed. The Bible was written, a good deal of it, for simple minded people, for whose guidance plain directions were amply sufficient, but the world has been advancing, and to-day there is a display of ingenuity in circumventing the intention of the sacred writers, that to a large extent nullifies the original command. For instance, it says in one place, we remember, Thou shalt not steal, and consequently almost none of us would steal, even a radiator, but how many, who would not steal, would defraud his neighbor without experiencing the slightest difficulty with his conscience, or any other reminder of Bible command. The man, for instance, who would not lift a ten dollar bill from your safe in your absence, would get you to endorse his note, knowing that you would have to pay it; or the man to whom you entrusted money or property for certain purposes, would betray his trust and divide the money or property amongst his chums, retaining perhaps a slice for himself. Such men are not called thieves, and the Bible command is so indefinite that they can pray and sing in utter oblivion of the command against theft, yet they are thieves all the same. And the like is true in respect of other acts that the Bible condemns, and society approves—the best society, Christian society, as we call it. Oh yes! the Bible ought to be reconstructed and must be, in fact, before it makes the world happy. How much nicer it would be, for instance, if the command referred to, instead of stopping short with four words, should read something like this: Thou shalt not steal except in a business way and by business methods. Reading that way the command would be appreciated and generally obeyed, and the reconstruction of the bible in that particular would greatly augment human happiness, for the time being at least. Again, what a comfort it would be if the order against bearing false witness could be changed so as to read, "Thou shalt not verbally bear false witness," etc. Reconstruction here would prevent dangerous and unpleasant gossip, but would allow full swing for the acts and deeds of various kinds which good people have discovered as means of bearing false witness. Oh yes, the bible needs to be reconstructed, particularly the commandments, and Dr. Talmage in objecting to it is away behind the age. He ought to have lived a couple of thousand years ago, more or less. If he has not learned any better from his experience in New York than to preach that way, he should take up a residence in Moncton for a while. We can easily point out the necessary teachers or professors with qualifications fully guaranteed.

THE IRONY OF FATE.

Mayor Ryan, of Kentville, who headed the procession of 54 teams to the "Lookoff," on the North Mountain yesterday, was kicked by a horse, on the arrival of the party at that place, and received an ugly cut on the thigh. We infer from this, though it is not clearly so stated, that the mayor was kicked on the thigh, and it is some consolation to know that there was not probably another place on the whole North Mountain where he could have been kicked with less perturbation. The discretion of the animal in choosing this spot would have been appreciated by his worship, as some horses would have selected a place which would have reduced the entire corporation to jelly. There seems a good deal of irony—and certainly there was a good deal of iron—involved in the idea of a mayor being kicked by a horse. Next time his worship will indulge less in lookoff and more in lookout!

A TEST OF LOVE.

"I assure you mother that I do not want to marry yet," said Antoinette to Mme. Odiot. "I am so happy with yourself; but should I enjoy the same happiness, the same peace and the same contentment when I change your fireside for another? I doubt it. No, no, I have plenty of time yet. I am only 18 years of age. While I am much honored by the attentions of M. le Baron de Merillac, I repeat that I must refuse him!"

"My dear child," replied Mme. Odiot, "you should reflect that one of these days you will lose me. I have been suffering for a long time, and very little would suffice to carry me off. You will then find yourself without support, since your dear father is gone, and a husband is the natural support of a young girl when she has lost her parents. Baron Merillac is a very estimable young man. You will probably never get such another offer. He is enormously rich, and he has a title, and is the only son of parents who will adore and worship you as if you were their own child. It would surely be madness to persist in a refusal that has no basis. The baron is a handsome cavalier, and his manners are of the best. What more can you wish?"

"Then you know him?" asked Antoinette, with surprise.

"Without doubt."

"Yet I have never seen him here," persisted the girl.

"No, he has never been here, but I have met him several times at the house of Mme. de Saverny, where you would never accompany me, under the pretext that she displeased you, and it was Mme. de Saverny who spoke to me of the baron as a man who would be suitable for you, from every point of view."

"I shall like Mme. de Saverny still less now," exclaimed the girl. "What business is it of hers? If she is so anxious to get M. de Merillac married let her take him herself. She is a widow."

"You are foolish, ma bonne chérie. M. de Merillac is 25 years old and Mme. de Saverny is 50. She might be his mother. But you should not get angry. One would almost think that you had some other reason than the one you give so vehemently for refusing M. de Merillac."

"Some other reason," stammered Antoinette, lowering her eyes, while a pretty little flush came into her cheeks.

Mme. Odiot watched her smilingly, and several minutes passed in silence.

Antoinette took up her sewing again, and being aware no doubt that her mother's eyes were fixed upon her, presently rose and went over to the piano. Mme. Odiot stopped her as she went.

"We will settle the matter once for all," she said, "never to return to it. The reason you refuse M. de Merillac is because you don't want to marry, is it not?"

"Mais oui, mama," said Antoinette, in a voice that nevertheless lacked the ring of sincerity.

"So that, no matter who else may come to me to ask your hand I may tell him no, and send him about his business?"

"Oh! I didn't say that—perhaps later—when I am older—if the—if I liked him," stammered the young girl, much embarrassed.

"So be it! We will talk of something else. For instance, my dear nephew Gaston has now been with us for three weeks, and has nearly finished his picture. He has been very busy making some sketches in the woods for another one he has in view. I think he is with your uncle at this moment. Let us go across and see him—I mean my brother—he has not been very well of late."

"Oh, no, mother! my uncle is quite well again," said Antoinette quickly.

"Ah! you have some news about him?" Antoinette bit her lips. Her answer had slipped out too quickly.

"The gardener told me," she added naively.

Mme. Odiot pretended not to notice her daughter's embarrassment.

"Will you come with me! I am going at once. As he is your guardian I ought to let him know at once of your decision with regard to M. de Merillac, for he knew all about him?"

"Oh! my uncle knew?"

"Yes."

"And he approved?"

"Yes."

"Then Gaston knew that it was proposed I should marry this baron?"

"Perhaps."

"But he said nothing to me about it!"

"I thought you had not seen him!"

"Oh! yes,—that is—oh! no, I have not," replied the girl, turning her face away in her confusion over her little fibs with which she was inexperienced.

"Let us go. Are you coming?"

Mme. Odiot turned away to hide a smile.

"Is my presence very necessary?" the young girl asked. Then she added: "I think that my uncle and yourself will be able to talk more at your ease if I go away; beside my uncle will question me and I shan't know how to answer him."

"That is quite simple. You will answer him just as you answered me!"

"You are making fun of me, mother," replied Antoinette, peevishly.

"Not the least in the world! It is not quite natural that you should refuse a match so agreeable to your mother and tutor for so plausible a reason; you do not want to get married. But here we are talking again on this subject, which we had agreed to leave alone. It was you that started it again, you must notice!"

"Oh, now, mother, you make me cry!"

And Antoinette burst into tears and threw herself upon her mother's neck.

"Why do you cry, ma mignonne? There is surely no cause for tears in our conversation."

At this moment a servant girl entered the room and announced that the Baron de Merillac and his son were waiting outside.

"Monsieur le Baron de Merillac and his son," she said.

Then she withdrew. Antoinette hurriedly made up her mind to conceal herself, when there appeared upon the threshold of the room her uncle and Gaston. She stood gazing at them without moving and examined them.

"What does this mean?" she stammered, turning toward her mother.

"Ask your uncle and Gaston himself," replied Mme. Odiot.

"It means," said M. Lambert very seri-

ously, "that I come as your guardian to ask for you in marriage to the Baron de Merillac."

"But—the announcement just made by Justine?" interrupted Antoinette, who could not understand why the Baron and his father did not make their appearance, and why her uncle made this request, when they were evidently both waiting in the next room.

Her interrogating glances passed from her mother to M. Lambert and Gaston, the latter of whom appeared a little disturbed and nervous, in spite of his smiling face. Antoinette had dried her tears, but her eyes were still red and swollen from crying.

Gaston noticed this.

"You have been crying, Antoinette?" he asked her, while M. Lambert and Mme. Odiot stood apart and conversed in low tones.

"Yes," she replied to her cousin's question.

"Why?"

"I cannot tell you."

"Oh! was all he said.

"Well, Antoinette," interrupted M. Lambert, "you have given me no answer!"

"Mother has already spoken to me about this gentleman, uncle, and—"

"And?" questioned Gaston's father.

"And—" continued Antoinette, playing nervously with a skein of wool she held in her hands.

"Well?" insisted M. Lambert, "is it difficult to say?"

Gaston made a step in the direction of the young girl as though to encourage her.

"Tell them mother, what I answered you," murmured the poor girl. Gaston's attitude was a torture to her.

"Well?" began Mme. Odiot, exchanging a glance with her brother, "my daughter does not wish to get married!"

Gaston made another step toward Antoinette and seized her hand.

"Not even with me?" he asked with a trembling voice.

"With you?" cried the young girl, blushing and growing pale by turns.

"Yes, with me, for I love you. Do you not know it?"

"I was sure of it," replied M. Lambert, with a wink.

"For goodness sake, explain yourselves!" exclaimed Antoinette, looking at all of them in turn.

"It is easy to explain," said Gaston. "I thought I had guessed your love for me, and I told my father, confessing my love for you at the same time. He and your mother talked it over and laid this trap to see if your love was strong enough to resist a rich and titled lover."

"Oh, Gaston! and you have fallen into the trap?"

"Yes, petite cousine, for I too wanted to feel quite sure that I was being loved for myself alone. Now I know and can no longer doubt, can I? You will be my wife, won't you?"

"But she has not said so," interrupted Mme. Odiot, mischievously, without giving her daughter time to reply, and having hard work herself to keep a serious face.

"Yes I have, mother," cried Antoinette with delightful simplicity.

"Ah! Antoinette! Antoinette! I thank you, my darling little cousin," exclaimed Gaston, mad with joy.

The young girl had flung herself upon her mother's neck and embraced her with all her heart.

"Naughty mother!" she murmured in her ear as she kissed her.

"You are crying still?" asked Mme. Odiot, happily.

"Oh, no, chere petite mere. I am laughing now."

And, turning from her uncle and cousin, she placed her hand in that of Gaston, and allowed him to draw her to his warm embrace.

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