

(CONTINUED FROM TENTH PAGE.)

the dancing was done, and the lads had raised a cheer for the young heir, that you might have heard at Inverness, he came and stood upon the balcony, with her hand in his, and a bright red flush on her bonnie face, and the lads went half mad with delight to know she was to be the mistress.

"Soon the place was being got ready for the bride, and the heir and all his people went to London for the wedding. But, when the day came, and old Hamish was waiting at the house for a message by the telegraph, to set the bells a-ringing and the pipers skirling, the message came that the bride was dead the day before, and there was mourning up at Ardnach for many days after.

"And the old people came back, and the two young ladies, but not the heir; and it was said that he had started for some far-away land, to try, maybe, to forget his sorrow.

"It was fifteen years after, and the old folks were near their end, when he came one night, silent and alone, and would have no rejoicing at his coming, but just settled down quietly.

"The young ladies were both married and away by now—one to a great soldier, out in India, and the other to a gentleman of these parts, who came of a proud and ancient family, but was poor. The second had not been married long, and her son was but a few months old, when she and her husband both died of the same sickness and the poor bairn was brought to Ardnach.

"Then the young master sent for me, Miss Agatha, for I, too, had had a wee, fair-haired laddie of my own, and had lost him and my man both, and I think the master knew that my heart was aching for the touch of a bairn's soft hands, and that no one would tend the little one so lovingly as I.

"The master would take no wife, and, as he was free to will his property to whom he would, it was soon understood that the wee orphan was his uncle's heir, for though there had been another nephew, born in India, it was said that he would have plenty from his father, who was Sir Edward Crawford now, with great estates of his own in England, and the master could never love him as he loved the little orphan.

"The two nephews were never very great friends, though Sir Robert, who was the elder, came often to stay with his mother's folk.

"Then came the day when the master took his last sickness, and the two young men were both with him; but 'twas my bairn, the orphan, whose hands closed the poor, sad eyes that had rested lovingly on him to the last.

"The master's will had been made a year before, and had been witnessed by Doctor MacLellan and old Hamish, and we all knew where the deed was locked away in a drawer of the old oak writing-table in the master's own room.

"The will left everything he had to the master's youngest nephew, his adopted son all excepting just one thousand pounds to his other nephew, Robert Crawford.

"I say we all knew this, Miss Agatha, and knew where the will had been kept for the last year; and yet when the poor master was in his grave, and the lawyer had come from the town to read it, the will was not there—not there, Miss Agatha nor anywhere in all the house, though we searched every nook and every hole in the building from cellar to loft.

"Of course, no name was mentioned; but their was but one person in all our minds that was likely to have taken the deed; for, you see, Miss Agatha, as long as there was no will to say to the contrary, Sir Robert came in for everything, he being the son of the master's eldest sister, and so considered next of kin.

"Everyone, high and low, suspected him, but I knew—only, what is the word of a poor servant woman against a nobleman's son?

"I told it all to the lawyer, and I knew he thought the same as I; but all that I had seen and heard, he said, did not amount to one grain of proof, and would never convict the thief in a court of justice; and so Sir Robert got Ardnach, and the lands and the money, but one thing he'll never get, and that's the love of the people."

"But, Mary," I said, "you have not told me what you saw, or heard, to convince you of Sir Robert's guilt."

"Well, Miss Agatha," maybe you'll say like the others, that 'tis no proof what- ever; but 'twas proof enough for me.

"It happened when his uncle lay so ill, and near his end. I went softly into the room where he lay with my

bairn beside the bed, and Sir Robert standing by the window.

"I came to beg my bairn to go and take his supper, that I had got ready with my own hands, for he had eaten nothing all day; and as the master was sleeping quietly, he gave in to my coaxing and went, and Sir Robert promised to watch by the bed.

"But I meant to stay there myself, too; only, I remembered a thing I had forgotten to do, and just ran back to see to it, and I suppose he thought that I should not return, for when I went into the room directly after, very softly, for fear of waking the sick man, Sir Robert was leaning over the old writing table, that stood deep in the shadow at the far end of the room. I couldn't see rightly what he was doing, but I heard a little clink, like a bunch of keys rattling; and then he heard me coming, and his hand stole to his pocket quickly, and he turned about and spoke to me, as if nothing had happened.

"That was on a Monday night; and I did my best after that to see that Sir Robert was not left alone with the master again, for I had no trust in him, though I did not think so badly of him then as he deserved.

"But on the Tuesday evening, when the doctor had been to see the master, he beckoned to my bairn to follow him from the room, and they went out into the hall to talk. The master was unconscious then, and Sir Robert alone and free to do what he would, though I knew nothing of it until after.

"The master died at dawn the next morning, and he was scarcely gone before Sir Robert left the room. Directly after, I was crossing the hall to go to the kitchen, and there was he, on his knees before the fire, that was smouldering low, and I caught the glint of something white upon the hearth, though I could not guess at the time, what it might be.

"It was not there a minute after, when Robert had gone, and there was no sign of anything burning, but just the peat logs smouldering.

"When it came to the will being missed, he was the first to begin the search, but it never deceived me, for I remembered all I had seen in the hall and the old master's room; but, as I said, the lawyer could make no case out of that, and my foster-boy would never hear of bringing it into a court of law, so he will never get his rights, and Ardnach will be Sir Robert's forever."

"But, Mary," I objected, "are you sure? Might not the master have changed his mind after all, and destroyed the will himself?"

"Mary shook her head decidedly. "No, Miss Agatha," she said, "that was not possible, for had he not, only four days before his death, reminded his nephews where the will was to be found, and made his heir promise to be a good master to all the old folks on the estate? And a good master he would have been, Miss Agatha, if he had not been robbed of his rights."

"But, Mary," I objected once more, "Sir Robert, you say, was already rich, and had estates of his own. Why, then, should he burden himself with such a crime as that, and risk the disgrace of discovery, for the sake of getting this estate, which, you say, he never cared for, and seldom visits? It does not seem probable."

"Because, Miss Agatha, though he had land and houses in plenty, he had no ready money for his debts and the gambling life he led, and the old master was a great deal richer than most people thought; so you see, dearie, there was quite enough to tempt him!"

"But there is one thing you have not told me," I said. "What became of the real heir, your foster-son?"

"Mary looked up with a new and very soft light stealing into her wrinkled face.

"My bairn?" she said softly and half to herself. "Ah! he is always my bairn to me, though he does stand six feet three, and is—but you will maybe have seen him. Miss Agatha, you have surely been over to Currachmore, and will have seen Ian Macquoid?"

"Ian Macquoid!" I repeated then stopped and my cheeks grew hot as I recalled his look of astonishment at my calm assertion that we had rented Ardnach.

"Yes; I have seen Ian Macquoid," I stammered; and old Mary broke in impetuously: "Then, Miss Agatha, you have seen the finest gentle and the best man that ever you will meet if you search the world through, though he has no stick or stone but the old crumbling house and the bare rocks of Currachmore that were his father's; and there is not a tenant on all the Ardnach land but would give five years of his life to see him master there!"

"The sun was setting, and I could not wait for more; but I had heard enough to set me thinking deeply, as I ran quickly down the hill and over the rocks to Ardnach.

"Isabella," I said suddenly, that night, as we stood at the doors of our rooms, which adjoined in the long wide corridor, "why was I not told when we came here, that this house belongs to Sir Robert Crawford?"

"So you have found that out at last, have you?" she said coldly. "I always told mother that you would manage to worm the information out of someone, and that it was none use to try to keep it from you."

"And what was the reason for keeping me in ignorance of it?" I asked.

"There would have been no reason at all, of course, if you had behaved sensibly," she answered, tartly; "but, as you chose to go through the affectation of refusing Sir Robert, it naturally made it difficult for us to accept his offer of lending us this house for two months, and your folly would have entirely prevented our holiday, had he not decided to treat your refusal as nonsense, and begged us to ignore it and come here all the same."

"But why was I not told?" I asked again calmly, but with growing indignation that I could not conceal, even had I wished to do so.

"Why!" echoed Isabella, scornfully, "because, since you had been guilty of one act of folly, you were quite capable of the

selfishness of upsetting all our plans, by refusing to accept his hospitality."

"You could have left us behind in London," I said, coldly, and Isabella laughed sneeringly.

"Oh, yes!" she said; "we could have left you there, to pose as a martyr and a victim to the cruelties of the proverbial step-mother, but we weren't so foolish, my dear. Good night."

And Isabella's door banged derisively, while I went slowly into my own room, and sat down in the dark at my open window, to think of what I had been told, and of all that had so lately happened.

(CONCLUDED NEXT WEEK.)

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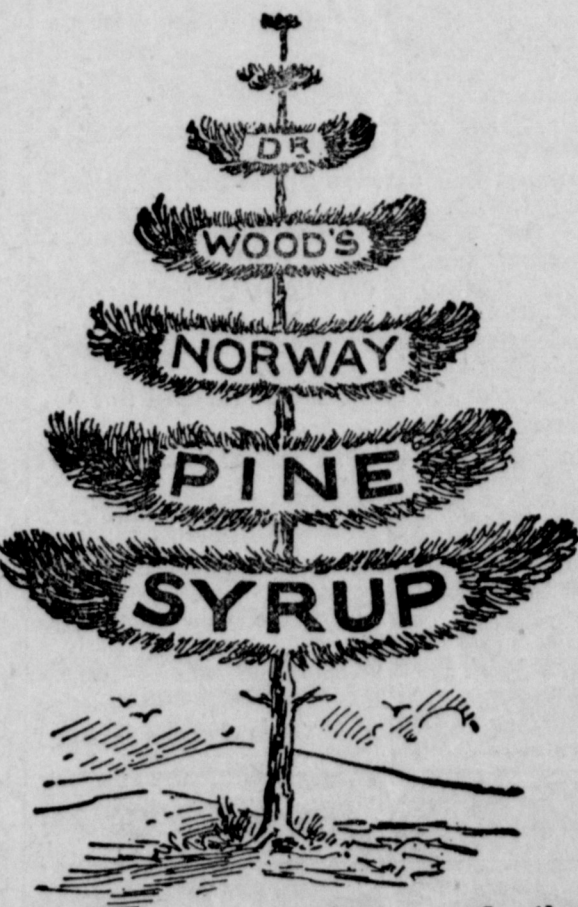
The most valuable book in the world is the Hebrew Bible. At the Vatican, in 1512, the Jews tried to buy it of Pope Julius II. for its weight in gold. It is so large and heavy that two men can hardly lift it, and it would have brought \$100,000 if the Pope had consented to part with it.

The smallest book in the world is not much larger than a man's thumb nail. It was made in Italy. It is four-tenths of an inch long and about a quarter of an inch wide. It contains 208 pages, each having nine lines and from ninety-five to one hundred letters. The text is a letter—before unpublished—written by the famous inventor of the pendulum clock to Madame Christine of Lorraine in 1615. The next smallest book is an edition of Dante's Divine Comedy, and it is a little less than an inch wide, with type so small that it takes a microscope to read the letters.

When it is finished, the official history of the War of the Rebellion will be the costliest book in the world. It is being issued by the Government of the United States, and at a cost up to date of about two million dollars. It will consist of 112 volumes, including an index, and an atlas, which contains 178 plates and maps illustrating the important battles of the war, campaigns, routes of march, plans of forts, and photographs of interesting scenes, places and persons.

The most voluminous encyclopedia work in the world is in the Berlin Anthropological Museum. It is in 1,200 volumes and is in Chinese. It embraces literature, philosophy, astronomy, natural science and industries. Each volume has from 100 to 150 pages. Originally only 100 copies were printed, and those were not put on sale. But recently a new edition was put forth which sells at \$300 for the set. It is splendidly illustrated with maps and pictures.

The largest private library in this country was owned by the historian H. H. Bancroft. It consists of 50,000 volumes, valued at \$200,000. A fine collection of manuscripts in dialect, and manuscripts relating to the early settlement of the Pacific Coast, of the Spanish colonies and of the early ecclesiastical missions is included in the Bancroft library.



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The highest price ever paid for a single volume was \$50,000. It was for a vellum missal, which was presented to King Henry VIII. by Pope Leo X. The missal was accompanied by a document making King Henry the defender of the faith. It is now in the possession of the German government. Charles II. gave it to an ancestor of the Duke of Hamilton, and it was sold a few years ago at the sale of the Duke of Hamilton's library.

It was supposed that only two copies of Washington's first essay in authorship existed, but in 1897 a third copy came to light and was purchased by a gentleman who makes a hobby of collecting Washington's; he quite willingly paid \$1,000. 'The Journal of Major George Washington' appears upon the title-page, and it was printed in 1854.

In Russia miniature bibles are often worn at watch charms. One of these bibles is owned by a Bostonian, who received it from a friend living in Russia. It is about one inch long, three-fourths of an inch wide and three-eighths of an inch thick, and contains the first five books of the Old Testament. The text of the book is in Hebrew and the title in Latin. It can only be read with a help of a powerful magnifying glass.

Not only in number, but also in point of territory, the circulation of the bible exceeds all other books. The American Bible society has printed it in 300 tongues. Thousands of copies even now are travelling through the frozen polar regions to people who have not only never heard of the book, but to whom books are unknown.

NO SUFFERING IN CAMP.

From Dread Catarrh—Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder Kills the Disease Germs and Cures the Distressed Parts—Relieves in Ten Minutes.

Alf. LeBlanc, of St. Jerome, Quebec, says he used Dr. Agnew's Catarrhal Powder for an acute case of catarrh in the head and it cured him. He has 125 men working under him in the lumbering camps, and what it has done for him it has done for many of them. He buys it for camp use and pins his faith to it as the quickest reliever for colds in the head, and sure cure for catarrh. Sold by E. C. Brown.

We are the People.

The following highly edifying dissertation on the Filipino situation is going the rounds credited to Kansas editor. It is worth reading for the style alone, if not for the many well turned points made against the queer things done by the American people.

"You do not know what you are missing by not wanting to become a citizen of this grand country of ours. There isn't anything else like it under the sun. You ought to send a delegation over here to us—this land of the free—this land of churches and 400,000 licensed saloons, bibles, forts and guns, houses of prayer, millionaires and paupers, theologians and thieves, libertines and liars, Christians and chain-gangs, politicians and poverty schools and scoundrels, trusts and tramps, virtue and vice.

A land where we have men in Congress with three wives and a lot in penitentiary for having two wives, where some make sausage of their wives, and eat them raw; where we have bologna sausage of dogs, canned beef of horses and sick cows and corpses of people who eat it; where we put a man in jail for not having the means of support and on the rock pile for asking for a job of work.

Where we have a Congress of 400 men to make laws and a Supreme Court of nine men to set them aside, where good whiskey makes bad men and bad men make good whiskey; where newspapers are paid for suppressing the truth and made rich for telling a lie; where professors draw their convictions and their salaries from the same source; where preachers are paid \$25,000 a year to dodge the devil and tickle the ears of the wealthy; where business consists of getting property in any way that won't get you in the penitentiary; where trusts holds you up and poverty holds you down; where men vote for what they do not want for fear they will not get what they do want by voting for it.

Where women wear false hair and men deck their horses' tails; where men vote for a thing one day and 'cuss' it 364 days;

where we have prayer on the floor of the National Capitol and whiskey in the basement; where we spend \$5,000 to bury a Congressman who is rich and \$10 to put away a workman who is poor.

Where to be virtuous is to be lonesome, and to be honest is to be a crank; where we sit on the safety value of energy and pull wide open the throttle of conscience; where gold is a substance—the one thing sought for—and God a waste basket for our better thoughts and good resolutions.

Where we pay \$15,000 for a dog and 15 cents a dozen to a poor woman for making shirts; where we teach the 'untutored Indian' eternal life from a book and kill him with bad booze; where we put a man in prison for stealing a loaf of bread and in Congress for stealing a railroad; where the check book talks, sin walks in broad daylight, justice is asleep, crime runs a muck, corruption permeates our social fabric and Satan laughs from every street corner.

Come to us, Filiiest. We've got the grandest aggregation of good things, big and little things, cold things and hot things, all sizes, varieties and colors, ever exhibited under one tent."

SOME WHYS ANSWERED.

The Ancient and Curious Origin of Familiar Customs.

It is not surprising what a number of little things we do without knowing the reason.

Why, for instance, do widows wear caps? Perhaps you may say because they make them look pretty and interesting. But the real reason is that when the Romans were in England they shaved their heads as a sign of mourning. Of course, a woman couldn't let herself be seen with a bald head, so she made herself a pretty cap. And now, though the necessity of wearing it has passed away, the cap remains.

Why do we have bows on the left side of our hats? In olden times, when men were much in the open air and hats couldn't be bought for half a dollar, it was the habit to tie a cord around the crown and let the ends fall on the left side to be grasped on the arising of a squall. They fell on the left side so they might be grasped by the left hand, the right usually being more usefully engaged. Later on, the ends got to be tied in a bow, and later still, they became useless, yet the bow has remained, and will probably remain till the next deluge or something of that sort.

What is the meaning of the crosses or Xs on a barrel of beer? They signify degrees of quality nowadays. But originally they were put on by those ancient monks as a sort of trademark. They were crosses in those days, and meant a sort of oath on the cross, sworn by the manufacturer that his barrel contained good liquor.

Why are bells tolled for the dead? This has become so familiar a practice that a funeral without it would appear un-Christian. Yet the reason is quite barbarous. Bells were tolled long ago, when people were being buried, in order to frighten away the evil spirits who lived in the air.

Why do fair ladies break a bottle of wine on the ship they are christening? Merely another survival of barbaric custom. In the days of sacrifice to the gods it was customary to get some poor victim when a boat was being launched and to cut his throat over the prow, so that his blood baptized.

Why are dignitaries deafened by a salute when they visit a foreign port? It seems a curious sort of welcome, this firing off of guns, but it seems the custom arose in a very reasonable way. Originally, a town or a warship fired off their guns on the approach of important and friendly strangers to show that they had such faith in the visitors' peaceful intentions they didn't think it necessary to keep their guns loaded.

Why do we sometimes throw a shoe after a bride? The reason is not very complimentary. From old it has been the habit of mothers to chastise their children with a shoe. Hence the custom arose of the father of a bride making a present to the bridegroom of a shoe, as a sign that it was to be his right to keep her in order.

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