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CH PTER XXI. WITNESSING.

"Aburd! Ridiculous nonsense said Ar. Rivers. The words me Muril, on her return to the drawingroom, one evening after a brief absence. Three or four friends had come to dinner. Lilias was not present, but Mrs. Bertram, handsomely dressed, acted well the part of hostess, with untroubled brow.

Mr. Rivers sat upright and restless in his arm-chair. Opposite, upon the square ottoman, was a young man of low forehead, eagle nose, and complacent mien. Possibly he was amusing himself a little at the old gentleman's expense. Muriel had that impression, as she entered. Montgomery Maxwell was somewhat back beside a table, holding open a book of prints, but listening. The two lady-guests were attentive also, despite Mrs. Bertram's efforts to engage them in conversation.

"Ridiculous," repeated Mr. Rivers. "There is a great deal too much of that sort of thing now. Never used to be. Absurd." What manner of story it was that had roused his ire, Muriel could only guess from remarks gener-

"Very absurd," assented the other. "People ought to keep their conscience in their pockets. Unpleasant to have it flaunted in one's face."

"Conscience! People follow their own fancies and call that conscience. Everything goes down to conscience newadays. Religion is put altogether

into the wrong place." "It would be worth while to have the right place defined," remarked the young man lazily. "Just for the sake of convenience-and as a matter of interest. Don't think I am not agreeing

with you." "The right place for it is where it | had enough of me." was kept in my young days," said Mr. Rivers with sternness. "Religion is a matter of deeds, not words. It ought to be kept in the background- skadows upon the grass, and glittering | be content to have matters thus. It is only its effects manifest. People did | through the glass of the conservatory. not then throw over all authority and | Full-flowering plants rose in dark tiers

call that religion."

young man. for the poor and fatherless," said Mr. Rivers. "That is what the Bible itself declares. Pure religion is providing for the needy."

very little about the poor and needy out beforehand. He had the victory. or the fatherless-quite as little as the young man opposite troubled himself | quietly of her. about religion. He gave subscriptions sometimes, however-when he had not quarrelled with those who asked them of him.

"Very true. A good definition," said the young man. "A healthy sensible view of the question."

Muriel was about to speak, and found herself forestalled.

" Not precisely the Bible view, however," said Mr. Maxwell, with a composure which veiled the greatness of I am not there-not able to help." the effort-if so he felt it. " Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father is this, To visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction."

amazed look, for this was unwonted not give needless offence by going myboldness on his part. "What should self to the Rectory. Banishment is I visit for except to relieve? If I pre- likely to come soon enough without fer to send a five-pound note by some- that." body else, it comes to the same thing." "The personal sympathy would be

wanting," said Mr. Maxwell. Mr. Rivers never did send fivepound notes, or one-pound notes

question did not hinge there. "That is religion," said Mr. Rivers religion. Give me one that provides hospitals for the sick. That is religion. Cant is not religion."

"Perfectly true," said the young man. "I have the greatest imaginable horror of cant.'

"So have I," said Montgomery. "Still, we are looking at the half only of that verse. 'Pure religion ... is to visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction-and-to keep himself unspotted from the world."

Mr. Rivers' moustaches curled and writhed. The young man watched him with amused eyes, and asked the tutor lightly, "What do you understand by that expression, 'the world?'

It has a rather vague sound." "That which is not distinctly of Christ,' is 'of the world,' All who are not ' with Him ' are ' against Him. Then they are part of the world."

Gravely and quietly he spoke. It Maxwell. was a new phase of the man. Muriel knew this to be the outcome of wrest-

had seen him on his knees an hour before. Mr. Rivers looked wrathful.

"Mr. Rivers and I must be dangerous company for good people," said the young man, with a slight shrug. Something contaminating about us. eh ? "

The motion of Montgomery's head might have been assent, might have been dismissal of the subject, might have been unconscious. He went back to his book without a word. Remarks were brewing in another quarter, but | you." before Mr. Rivers had decided what to say, a servant entered, bearing a small salver with a letter.

"For you, sir," she said to Mr. Rivers. "It was left, to be given to you immediately."

Muriel knew in a moment that the note came from Bushby Rectory. She could not tell why or how. Instinct served in the place of sight, for she was too far off to distinguish the hand-

Mr. Rivers took it up, frowned, walked across the room, and dropped the unopened envelope into the fire.

"Do you treat many of your correspondents in that summary fashion, Mr. Rivers?" asked his much-entertained guest.

"There are some whose communications are beneath attention," said the old man kaughtily.

"Ah-begging epistles, yes. One is fairly pestered with that sort of

Mr. Rivers condescended to give no manner of explanation. Muriel felt sick at heart. Alonging for fresh air came over her, and presently she escaped into the dining-room, taking her stand at the outer conservatory door, where a cool breeze swept round her. Suddenly a figure appeared from

"Muriel! You here?"

"And you, Mr. Maxwell!" "I thought I would make my escape

this way." Ah, you don't like front-doors.

Have you said good-bye?"

over the garden, casting dark elmon either side, with colours faintly dis-"No undoubtedly," assented the tinguishable. Muriel, in a dress of transparent black and maize, statue-"True religion consists in providing like in stillness, had a certain sombre was calm. He had signed the warrant that evening for severing of mest dear ties; yet he knew they needed to be Now Mr. Rivers troubled himself severed, and the battle had been fought

"What is the matter?" he could ask

"Something is wrong at the Rectory," she said.

"How do you know?" "That letter-you saw, did you not? One came a few days ago. They would not write so often without reason. Is there no way of finding out?" He made no answer. Muriel clasp-

eh her hands together. "Mr. Maxwell, how could I bear it, if anything happened to John ! And "You do not know that anything is

"I don't feel any doubt." "No need to make trouble till it "Precisely what I said," observed comes. But you may be right, pos-Mr. Rivers, giving the tutor an sibly. I will try to find out. I must

"Banishment! Not of you?"

"Did you not see that I caused anright. It is well."

"Oh no-not to have more diviseither, in such a fashion; but the ions," said Muriel sorrowfully.

"There's are quarrels enough." decisively. "Give me a man practic- rel, and I will not be one of the two. quickness of shavings; others like dry ally useful to his fellow-men. That is But he may forbid you to hold inter- fine wood to catch from the shavings; course with me, as with John.

" Not for those few words." " It is not unlikely."

Muriel turned her head away, but pain was too sharp to be kept down.

go on?" she asked. "Everything is follow. But, alas! how many comgoing. I shall have nothing left soon. " If God wills-so it must be."

calm of heart-break which was his. "You do not lose all-you are free." Was he so? She did not know of

his shackles. peated. "John and Rose are cut off ing scarcely fires the corners and edges from me. Sybel and uncle Chesney of the souls present. There is no soon will be. Lilias is sinking-don't think I can't see it-dying! And you -you too are leaving. But I will not be denied speaking to you and Mrs.

Coming to our house is no paramount unbroken fuel, then let him provide a ling prayer-knew it plainly as if she duty with you," said Mrs. Maxwell.

me in as you have done, I must have broken loose long ago. Why can't I go to live with John and Rose? How they would welcome me !"

"Does God's providence point there for you?"

Muriel sighed heavily.

"You see your place is here. You have no right whatever to break the ties with which God has bound you. Your mother has the first right to

"She does not care for the right." "My dear child, she does not repudiate it," said Mongomery mildly. He was not thinking of self. His whole mind was bent to a most singlehearted consideration of her position. "If it pleases God to take Lilias, you will be all that is left to her."

"I am nothing to her," said Muriel, with falling tears.

"You may be more. It is impossible to foresee, but I believe things will be different some day. However, I do not expect that your obedience will be put to the test as regarding

"You think he will not forbid us to

"He may-probably will. I do not know. But if he does I cannot stay in Claverton."

"Not in Claverton!" she said dis-

"No. It would be too painful. And-I have reasons. "But your house ?"

"I gave provisional notice last

"Why?" she asked, in surprise. "I thought it would come to this I did not know when. Strange, how hard the speaking-out has looked beforehand-yet so easy at the moment. I marvelled at the help given

"You have not spoken out to-day, because of anything I once said ?" she inquired, struck with a sudden fear.

"No-but because it was needful. As a servant of Christ, my livery must "Yes. One of the ladies made a be worn. You first helped to open move-and I saw that Mr. Rivers had my eyes; but I have thought and prayed much since. It has been a Montgomery stood looking into the struggle. I have known so well all moonlight, which came in a silver flood | that it would entail. But I have counted the cost, and you and I must best and wisest in the end. I am afraid I have done evil that good might come. I alone shall suffer, and that is my comfort."

Muriel did not see it so. Life looked heavy to her just then. She found gravity of look. Montgomery himself | anything of cheerful acceptance a difficult matter.

A GOOD FIRE-MAKER.

There are two ways of making a fire. One way is to lay the shavings first, then fine wood, then coarser wood, and last of all the usual fuel. When so arranged the light blaze of the match soon grows into a good fire. The second method is to bring a mass of live coals sufficient to fire everything that touches it. Put the mass of coals where the fire is desired, and add the ordinary fuel, from which a good fire is the result. But alas! housekeepers know of many other ways in which unskilled hands attempt to start the fire. They know of the shavings laid under coarse wood, only to blaze up quickly and die out quickly, leaving the wood with here and there a burning splinter along the sides and corners, and giving the cook a half-hour's hard fussing to complete the fire. They know how long it takes to coax a few weak flames that may show themselves among black smoking blocks of coal into a working heat. The prayer-meeting in the household of grace is much like the fire in the household ordinary. There are noyance? But it must be so. It is likewise two good ways of starting the prayer-meeting.

It may be freely admitted that the ideal prayer-meeting is to have plenty of good people, representing all kinds "Two are needed to make a quar- of fuel; some that will kindle with the still others of more weight to catch from the fine wood, and so on until the most ordinary are set on fire. With such material well laid, the pastor need only serve the purpose of a match in "How long is this kind of thing to starting, and a glowing fire will always munities where prayer-meetings must be held, have only one sort of material "You don't know-it isn't so much | to offer-the plain, ordinary fuel. And to you," she said, not knowing the yet how many pastors persist in the unskilful attempt to start their prayermeetings with the mere blaze of a match, such, for instance, as "a brief exhortation that every one should feel at "I am losing everything," she re- home and take part." His brief openstrong blaze, only weak, flickering flames or smoke, and the whole effort

of spiritual fire-making is a drag. Now let a word be put in for the second method. If the pastor knows "If he forbids, you will obey. that the rest will bring only unsplit, mass of live coals, large enough and know by the name of God "

"Duty! Ah if you had not drilled | hot enough, to fire the heaviest sticks of wood and the hardest blocks of coal, and he may be blest with a good fire. Let him be full of love and faith, so full that he will not want any one else to make the first prayer. Let him be full of some definite subject, so full that he will not want any one else to make the first speech. Let him go to the place of prayer with heart and mind so warm and full that he will be in haste to let the warmth and fulness out, and if there be fuel of any sort in the house, it will speedily catch fire. It may not be an ideal prayer-meeting, but it will be far better than a smoking, sizzling drag. It will at least be warm and comfortable. The indifferent will take interest, the lukewarm will begin to blaze, and the pious heart will fairly glow. The prayers, too, will be different. The brother who always uses the same prayer will vary enough to get in a few fervent petitions on the subject in hand. Bro. Verbosity will likely forget half the world in his interest over the present hour. Bro. Timidity will almost forget himself, and will pour out his whole heart, while Bro. Faithful will just take the kingdom by storm. When the flame is strong enough, everything is drawn up with it. - Journal and Messenger.

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RANDOM READINGS.

If clouds begin to darken the light

of hope, drop deeper the anchor of

faith. There is always a rock below for

Enjoy the blessings of this day, if

God sends them, and the evils of it

bear patiently and sweetly; for this

day only is ours; we are dead to yes-

terday, and we are not yet born to

first question I ask about him is always,

A celebrated Scotch divine said

"The world we inhabit must have an

origin; that origin must have consist-

ed in a cause; that cause must have

been intelligent; that intelligence must

have been supreme; and that supreme,

which always was and is supreme, we

does he work?-Ruskin.

those who trust in the Lord.

to-morrow.

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