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THE GEMS SHE WORE.

By LOUISA T. MEADE, AUTHOR OF "A BAND OF THREE," "MOTHER HERRING'S CHICKEN," ETC.



"WHAT DREADFUL THING HAS HAPPENED?"

Cuzco. Each series of eight consisted of six large towers, in a straight line, with two smaller ones in the centre. The lines of towers were north and south, so that an observer stationed, say in the west group, could, by looking through the spaces, observe the sun rise between the opposite spaces between the towers of the east group. Some writers say there were twelve towers on each side; but in a gold calendar described by me in the work alluded to,

the number of towers in a row is eight. These contrivances are believed to have indicated the solstices and other celestial phenomena. To discover the days of the equinox, they erected a stone column in an open area in front of their temple. This column was in the centre of a circle, and a line was drawn from east to west, and when the noonday shadow of the pillar crossed this line at particular points, the equinoxes had arrived.

THE HOME-PULPIT.

PILATE'S WASH-BASIN.

SERMON, BY THE REV. DR. T. DE WITT TALMAGE, PREACHED IN THE BROOKLYN TABERNACLE.

"He took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see you to it."—MATT. XXVII. 24.

At about eight o'clock in the morning, up the marble stairs of a palace, and across floors of richest mosaic, and under ceilings dyed with all the splendor of color, and between snowbanks of white and glistening sculpture, passes a poor, pale, sick young man of thirty-three, already condemned to death, on this day condemned again. Jesus of Nazareth is His name. Coming out to meet Him on this tessellated pavement is an unscrupulous, compromising, time-serving, cowardly man, with a few traces of sympathy and fair dealing left in his composition, Governor Pontius Pilate. Did ever such opposites meet? Luxury and pain, selfishness and generosity, arrogance and humility, sin and holiness, midnight and midnoon, Pilate and Jesus. The bloated-lipped governor takes the cushioned seat, but the prisoner stands, his wrists manacled. In a semi-circle around the prisoner are the Sanhedrists, with flashing eyes and brandished fists, prosecuting this case in the name of religion; for the bitterest persecutions have been religious persecutions, and when Satan takes possession of a man he makes up by intensity for brevity of occupation. If you have never seen an ecclesiastical court trying a man, then you have no idea of the foaming infernalism of these old Jewish Sanhedrists. Governor Pilate cross-questions the prisoner, and finds right away He is innocent, and wants to let Him go. His caution is also increased. Some one comes to the governor and whispers in his ear. The governor puts his hand behind the ear so as to catch the words, almost inaudible. It is a message from Claudia Procula, his wife, who has had a dream about the innocence of this prisoner and about the danger of executing Him, and she awakens from this moving dream in time to send the message to her husband, then on the judicial bench. And what with the protest of his wife, and the voice of his own conscience, and the entire failure of the Sanhedrists to make out their case, Governor Pilate resolves to discharge the prisoner from custody. But the intimation of such a thing brings upon the governor an equinoctial storm of indignation. They will report him to the emperor, at Rome. They will have him recalled. They will send him up home, and he will be hung for treason; for the emperor at Rome has already a suspicion in regard to Pilate, and that suspicion does not cease until Pilate is banished and commits suicide. So Governor Pontius Pilate compromises the matter and proposes that Christ be whipped instead of assassinated, so the prisoner is fastened to a low pillar, and on His bent and bare back come the thongs of leather with pieces of lead and bone intertwined, so that every stroke shall be the more awful. Christ lifts himself from the

scourging with flushed cheek and torn and quivering and mangled flesh, presenting a spectacle of suffering in which Rubens, the painter, found the theme of his greatest masterpiece. But the Sanhedrists are not yet satisfied. They have had some of His nerves lacerated; they want them all lacerated. They have had some of His blood; they want all of it, down to the last corpuscle. So Governor Pontius Pilate, after all this merciful hesitation, surrenders to the demoniacal cry of "Crucify Him!" But the governor sends for something. He sends a slave out to get something. Although the constables are in haste to take the prisoner to execution, and the mob outside are impatient to glare upon their victim, a pause is necessitated. Yonder it comes, a wash-basin. Some pure, bright water is poured into it, and then Governor Pilate puts his white, delicate hands into the water, and rubs them together, and then lifts them, all dripping, for the towel fastened at the slave's girdle, while he practically says: "I wash my hands of this whole homicidal transaction. I wash my hands of this entire responsibility. You will have to suffer for it, and all that flows from it." That is the meaning of my text when it says, "He took water and washed his hands before the multitude, saying, I am innocent of the blood of this just person; see ye to it."

Behold in this, that ceremony amounts to nothing if there are not in it correspondences of heart and life. It is a good thing to wash the hands. God created three-quarters of the world water, and in that commanded cleanliness, and when the ancients did not take the hint He plunged the whole world under water and kept it there for some time. Hand-washing was a religious ceremony among the Jews. The Jewish Mishna gave particular direction how that the hands must be thrust three times up to the wrists in water, and the palm of the hand must be rubbed with the closed fist of the other. All that is well enough for a symbol, but here in the text is a man who proposes to wash away the guilt of a sin which he does not quit and of which he does not make any repentance. Pilate's wash-basin was a dead failure. Ceremonies, however beautiful and appropriate, may be no more than this hypocritical ablution. In infancy we may be sprinkled from the baptismal font, and in manhood we may wade into deep immersions, and yet never come to moral purification. We may kneel without prayer and bow without reverence and sing without any acceptance. All your creeds and liturgies and sacraments and genuflections and religious convocations amount to nothing unless your heart and life go into them. When that bronzed slave took from the presence of Pilate that wash-basin he

carried away none of Pilate's cruelty or Pilate's wickedness or Pilate's guilt. Nothing against creeds. We all have them, either written or implied. Nothing against ceremonies, they are of infinite importance. Nothing against sacraments, they are divinely commanded. Nothing against a rosary, if there be as many heart-felt prayers as beads counted. Nothing against incense floating up from censers amid Gothic arches, if the prayers be as genuine as the aroma is sweet. Nothing against Epiphany, or Lent, or Ash Wednesday, or Witsuntide, or Palm Sunday, if these symbols have behind them genuine repentance and holy reminiscence and Christian consecration. But ceremony is only the sheath to the sword, it is only the shell to the kernel, it is only the lamp to the flame, it is only the body to the spirit. The outward must be symbolical of the inward. Wash the hands by all means, but, more than all, wash the heart.

Behold, also, as you see Governor Pontius Pilate thrust his hands into this wash-basin, the power of conscience. He had an idea there was blood on his hand—the blood of an innocent person, whom he might have acquitted if he only had the courage. Poor Pilate! his conscience was after him, and knew the stain would never be washed from the right hand or the left hand, and, until the day of his death, though he might wash in all the lavers of the Roman Empire, there would still be eight fingers and two thumbs red at the tips. Oh, the power of conscience when it is fully aroused. With whip of scorpions over a bed of spikes in pitch of midnight it chases guilt. Are there ghosts? Yes, not of the graveyard, but of one's mind not at rest:

"And thus Brutus amid his slumbering host,
Startled with Caesar's stalwart ghost."

Macbeth looked at his hand after the midnight assassination and he says:

"Will all great Neptune's ocean wash this blood
Clean from my hand? No, this my hand will rather
The multitudinous seas incarnardine,
Making the green one red."

For every sin, great or small, conscience, which is the voice of God, has a reproof more or less emphatic. Charles IX., responsible for St. Bartholomew massacre, was chased by the bitter memories of his days, and in his dying moments said to his doctor, Ambroise Paré, "Doctor, I don't know what's the matter of me, I am in a fever of body and mind and have been for a long while. Oh, if I had only spared the innocent and the imbecile and the cripple." Rousseau declared in old age that a sin he committed in his youth still gave him sleepless nights. Charles II. of Spain could not sleep unless he had in the room a confessor or two friars. Catiline had such bitter memories he was startled at the least sound. Cardinal Beaufort, having slain the Duke of Gloster, often in the night would say, "Away! away! why do you look at me?" Richard III., having slain his two nephews, would sometimes in the night shoot from his couch and clutch his sword, fighting apparitions. Dr. Webster, having slain Parkman, in Boston, and while waiting for his doom, complained to the jailer that the prisoners on the other side of the wall all night long kept charging him with his crime, when there were no prisoners on the other side of the wall; it was the voice of his own conscience. From what did Adam and Eve try to hide when they had all the world to themselves? From their own conscience. What made Cain's punishment greater than he could bear? His conscience. What made Ahab cry out to the prophet, "Hast thou found me, O mine enemy?" What made the great Felix tremble before the little missionary? His

conscience. What made Belshazzar's teeth chatter as with a chill when he saw a finger come out of the black sleeve of the midnight and write on the plastering? Conscience, conscience. Why is it that a man in this audience, with all the marks of worldly prosperity upon him, is agitated while I speak, and is now flushed and is now pale, and the breath is uneven, and then beads of perspiration on the forehead, and then the look of unrest comes to a look of horror and despair? I know not. But he knows and God knows. It may be that he despoiled a fair young life and turned innocence into a wail, and the smile of hope into the brazen laughter of despair. Or it may be that he has in his possession the property of others, and by some stratagem he keeps it according to law, and yet knows it is not his own, and that if his heart should stop beating this moment he would be in hell for ever. Or it may be that he is responsible for a great mystery, the disappearance of some one who is never heard of, and the detectives were baffled, and the tracks were all covered up, and the swift horse of the villain took him out of reach, and there are only two persons in the universe who know of it, God and himself. God present at the time of the tragedy and present at the retrospection, and conscience—conscience with stings, conscience with pincers, conscience with flails, conscience with furnaces, is upon him, and until a man's conscience rouses him he does not repent. What made that farmer converted to God go to his infidel neighbor and say: "Neighbor, I have four of your sheep. They came over into my fold six years ago. They had your mark upon them and I changed it to my mark. I want you to have those sheep, and I want you to have the interest on the money, and I want you to have the increase of the fold, and if you want to send me to prison I shall make no complaint!" The infidel had heard of the man's conversion and he said: "Now, now if you have got them sheep you are welcome to them; I don't want nothing of those things at all. You just go away from me. Something has got hold of you I don't understand; I heard you were down at those religious meetings." But the converted man would not allow things to stand in that way, and so the infidel said: "Well, now, you can pay me the value of the sheep and 5 per cent. interest from that time to this, and I sha'n't say anything more about it. Just go away from me." What was the matter with the two farmers? In the one case a convicted conscience leading him to honesty, and in the other case a convicted conscience warning against infidelity.

Thomas Oliver was one of John Wesley's preachers. The early part of his life had been full of recklessness, and he had made debts wherever he could borrow. He was converted to God, and then he went forth to preach and pay his debts. He had a small amount of property left him, and immediately set out to pay his debts, and everybody knew he was in earnest, and to consummate the last payment he had to sell his horse and saddle and bridle. That was conscience. That is converted conscience. That is religion. Frank Tiebout, a converted rumseller, had a large amount of liquor on hand at the time of his conversion, and he put all the kegs and barrels and demijohns in a wagon, and took them down in front of the old church where he had been converted and had everything emptied into the street. That is religion. Why the thousands of dollars sent every year to the United States Treasury at Washington as "conscience money?" Why, it simply means there are postmasters and there are attorneys and there are officials who sometimes retain that which does not belong to them, and these men are converted, or under powerful pressure of conscience, and make restitution. If all the moneys out of

which the State and the United States Treasuries have been defrauded should come back to their rightful exchequers, there would be money enough to pay all the State debts and all the United States debt by day after tomorrow. Conversion amounts to nothing unless the heart is converted, and the pocketbook is converted, and the cash-drawer is converted, and the ledger is converted, and the fireproof safe is converted, and the pigeon-hole is converted, and the man's improvement is noticed even by the canary that sings in the parlor, and the cat that licks the platter after the meal, and the dog that comes bounding from the kennel to greet him. A man half converted, or a quarter converted, or a thousandth part converted, is not converted at all. What will be the great book in the day of judgment? Conscience. Conscience recalling unimproved opportunities. Conscience recalling unforgiven sins. Conscience bringing up all the past. There will be no need of a great book with lid so ponderous two angels with strain of strength will be required to open it. The leaves will be taken right out of our own memory, and conscience, with potent and tremendous voice, will echo the welcome or the doom.

There have been great soldierly reviews in France and Germany and England and America, but the greatest review that ever takes place will be when a man's unforgiven sins come up in judgment, in companies, in regiments, in brigades, and they all face one way, and they are at shouldered arms, waiting for the command, and conscience on the white horse of judgment shall ride along with sharp spur and with uplifted sword and command, "March!" and command, "Take aim!" and command, "Fire!" Who could stand before such a volley? Not you nor I, if we have not had something better than Pilate's wash-basin with which to cleanse our hands and cleanse our souls. Alas! for this Governor Pontius Pilate. That night, after the court had adjourned and the Sanhedrists had gone home, and nothing was heard outside the room but the step of the sentinel, I see Pontius Pilate arise from his tapestried and sleepless couch and go to the laver and begin to wash his hands, crying: "Out, out, crimson spot. Tellest thou to me and to God, and to the night, my crime? Is there no alkali to remove these dreadful stains? Is there no chemistry to dissolve this carnage? Must I, to the day of my death, carry the blood of this innocent man on my heart and hand? Out! thou crimson spot." The worst thing a man can have is an evil conscience, and the best thing a man can have is what Paul calls a good conscience. But is there no such thing as moral purification? If a man is a sinner once, must he always be a sinner and an unforgiven sinner? We have all had conscience after us. Or, do you tell me that all the words of your life have been just right, and all the thoughts of your heart have been just right, and all the actions of your life just right? Then you do not know yourself, and I take the responsibility of saying that you are a Pharisee, you are a hypocrite, you are a Pontius Pilate, and do not know it. You commit the very same sin that Pilate committed. You have crucified the Lord of Glory. But if nine-tenths of this audience is made up of thoughtful and earnest people, then nine-tenths of this audience are asking within themselves, "Is there no such thing as moral purification? Is there no laver in which the soul may wash and be clean?" Yes, yes, yes. Tell it in song, tell it in sermon, tell it in prayer, tell it to the hemispheres. That is what David cried out for when he said: "Wash me thoroughly from my sin, and cleanse me from mine iniquities." And that is what, in another place, he cried out for when he said: "Wash me and I shall be whiter than snow." And that is what Job had

failed to reach when he said: "Though I wash in snow-water and make my hand never so clean, yet shalt thou plunge me in the ditch and mine own clothes shall abhor me." What then? How then? Where then? Behold the laver of the Gospel, filled with living fountains.

Did you ever see the picture of the laver in the ancient tabernacle or in the ancient temple? The laver in the ancient tabernacle was made out of the women's metallic-looking glasses. It was a great basin standing on a beautiful pedestal; but when the temple was built then the laver was an immense affair called the brazen sea, and oh, how deep were the floods there gathered, and there were ten lavers besides, five at the right and five at the left, and each laver had three hundred gallons of water. And the outside of these lavers was carved and chased with palm-trees, so delicately cut you could almost see the leaves tremble, and lions so true to life that you could imagine you saw the nostril throb, and the cherubim with outspread wings. That magnificent laver of the old dispensation is a feeble type of the more glorious laver of our dispensation, our sunlit dispensation. Here is the laver holding rivers of salvation, having for its pedestal the Rock of Ages, carved with the figure of the lion of Judah's tribe, and having palm-branches for victory, and wings suggestive of the soul's flight toward God in prayer and the soul's flight heavenward when we die. Come, ye auditory, and wash all your sins, however aggravated, and all your sorrows, however agonizing. Come to this fountain open for all sin and uncleanness, the furthest, the worst. You need not carry your sins half a second. Come and wash in this glorious Gospel laver. Why, that is an opportunity enough to swallow up all nations. That is an opportunity that will yet stand on the Alps and beckon to Italy, and yet stand on the Pyrenees and beckon to Spain, and it will yet stand on the Ural and beckon to Russia, and it will stand at the gate of heaven and beckon to all nations. Pardon for all sin, and pardon right away, through the blood of the Son of God. A little child that had been blind, but through skillful surgery brought to sight, said: "Why, mother, why didn't you tell me the earth and the sky were so beautiful? Why didn't you tell me?" "Oh," replied the mother, "my child, I did tell you often. I often told you how beautiful they are, but you were blind and you couldn't see." Oh, if we could have our eyes opened to see the glories in Jesus Christ we would feel that the half had not been told us, and you would go to some Christian man and say: "Why didn't you tell me before the glories in the Lord Jesus Christ?" and that friend would say; "I did tell you, but you were blind and could not see; you were deaf and could not hear." History says that a great army came to capture ancient Jerusalem, and when this army got on the hills so that they saw the turrets and the towers of Jerusalem, they gave a shout that made the earth tremble, and tradition, whether true or false, says that, so great was the shout, eagles flying in the air dropped under the atmospheric percussion. Oh, if we could only catch a glimpse of the towers of this Gospel temple into which you are all invited to come and wash, there would be a song jubilant and wide-resounding at New Jerusalem seen, at New Jerusalem taken, and hosannas of other worlds flying mid-air would fold their wings and drop into our closing doxology. Against the disappointing and insufficient laver of Pilate's vice and Pilate's cowardice and Pilate's sin, I place the brazen sea of a Saviour's pardoning mercy!

ADVICE, which like the snow, softly falls, dwells longer upon and sinks deeper into the mind.