

LIMITATION.

For all philosophy may teach, Only so far can knowledge reach. All that we know, from breath to death, Is life and its great question—Death.

PASTE OR DIAMOND?

"Yes, it belonged to poor Turene," said Wyse as he pulled the ring from his finger and handed it to us for inspection.

Meanwhile the ring was passing from hand to hand, and the universal verdict was that none of us had ever seen a finer stone.

"Turene was rather a wealthy man," said one of our little circle, "but I didn't think he could have afforded or would have cared to spend so much money on an ornament as that ring must have cost."

"He wanted it for some special purpose which afterward turned out," rejoined Wyse. "I know all about it, for I bought it for him myself. I had quite a little adventure on the occasion."

"Tell us the story," we cried. "Well," said Wyse, taking a pull at his cigar and settling himself back in his chair, "it is a good many years ago now. I was playing high comedy characters at the old Princess, and as I had been working very hard I set off for the south of France as soon as the season closed. It happened that Turene, who had proved himself a true friend to me, wanted a good diamond for a purpose I needn't trouble you with, and before I set out on my travels I told him that if I met with a particularly fine one at a moderate price I would buy it for him, and he, being too busy at the time to attend to the matter himself, gladly consented. I was staying at Nice when there came to the hotel one of those tall, loquacious Americans who are now so plentiful all over Europe. There seemed to be nothing objectionable about the man, except that he was vulgar and eternally talking about the United States.

"On the evening after his arrival a few of us happened to be sitting in the billiard room, and by some chance or other the conversation turned on the subject of diamonds.

"I don't know much about the business myself," said the American, "but I'm told by good judges that 'tubs' about as good a stone as you'll see in a day's round."

"So saying he drew a ring from his finger and handed it to me, who happened to sit next him. It was indeed a magnificent brilliant, set in a ring of a peculiar pattern. When the lamp was removed, it seemed to gather into itself the light out of the semidarkness and glittered like a bit of broken glass in the sunshine. 'What is it worth?' asked one of the men present.

"That I can hardly tell you," answered the American, "seen a friend at Buenos sent it to me direct, and I had it cut myself. But I'm tired of it and seldom wear it."

"Would you sell it?" I inquired out of curiosity.

"I might," answered the American, "especially as this European trip is cleaner in me out faster than I expected, and I don't want to go home to Vermont skinned as neatly as a cod. Yes, you may have that diamond for \$80 of your money, stranger, and dirt cheap at that, I should say."

"I looked at the stone again, and the longer I looked at it the more I liked it. Eighty pounds was quite as much as my friend wished to pay for a stone, but what if I could get one for him worth \$100 for \$80?"

"Will you trade?" he asked.

"I am not a judge of diamonds myself," said I, returning the stone to its owner. "I'm afraid I couldn't buy without taking a lapidary's opinion as to its value."

"All right," said the American carelessly: "if you care to hev it, we can go round to a jeweler's in the mornin. And if he puts a lower value on the stone than I did you can hev it at the price he names, if you like to buy. I can't say fairer than that."

"The offer did indeed seem a very fair one, and I went to bed that night determined to secure the jewel for my friend if the expert reported favorably on it."

"Next morning the American and I strolled down to the shop of the chief jeweler of the town, and when we entered the place I first of all paid my footing by purchasing some trifle, and then taking the ring from the hand of my new acquaintance I placed it before the jeweler and asked him to give me an opinion as to its value.

"A ver' fine stone, sir," said the Frenchman. "I congratulate you on the possession of so fine a diamond."

"It is not mine. It belongs to my friend here."

"Ah, if that be the case, then I congratulate beem," said the polite tradesman.

"What do you suppose it is worth?" I asked.

"Oh, it is difficult to say," said the Frenchman, shrugging his shoulders. "Von gentlemen sinks von price mo' for him; another sinks"—

"Yes, but what would you give if you were to buy it? Would you give 1,800 francs?"

"The jeweler did not reply for a few seconds. He popped his microscope once more into his eye, held the ring up to the light, examined the setting and fell to making elaborate calculations with a pencil on a sheet of paper."

"I do not often buy such large stones, but I will give you 2,500 francs for this one."

"The Yankee did not reply, and the Frenchman, assuming that his offer was accepted, placed the ring on a little ledge behind him and opened his desk for his checkbook."

"Not so fast," said Brother Jonathan. "The diamond's not for sale."

"Two thousand six hundred francs," was the Frenchman's reply.

"The American shook his head. 'Seven hundred—eight hundred!'"

"No!" "Nine hundred—3,000 francs! That is my last offer. Pause, I beg of you, monsieur, before you refuse it. It is a large sum—3,000 francs. And as if he were convinced that no one could refuse such a price he put the stone once more among his own treasures and again turned round for his checkbook."

"Thunder," exclaimed the Yankee, "what do you take me for? I tell you I can't and I won't sell you the ring. It was as good as sold to this British gentleman last night, and it isn't mine to sell any more. Give me the ring."

"So saying the American took the ring rather sharply from the jeweler's hand and replaced it on his finger. The Frenchman next made me an offer for the trinket, but as I had not bought it for myself of course I could not sell it, and we left the shop."

"My mind was clear now as to the prudence of giving \$80 for the diamond. I had heard the best jeweler in the town offer 3,000 francs, or £120, for it."

"Well, I must say you have acted most honorably," said I to the American when we reached the street. "After all, a bargain can't be all on one side, and I had never promised to buy the ring, so you had a perfect legal right to sell it to the Frenchman."

"You needn't say no more, stranger," said the Yankee as if he were tired of the subject. "You can hev the stone now if you choose at the price we fixed on last night." And he held the ring out to me.

"But I had to get my letters of credit cashed, and I agreed to meet the American in the billiard room in an hour's time and coincide the transaction."

"No one was in the billiard room when I entered it, for it was still early in the day, except the American, who was standing by the empty fireplace. The transfer did not occupy more than five seconds, and the Yankee immediately proposed drinks. These being discussed, we separated, and I saw no more of my friend from the States that day."

"That evening after dinner I happened to be sitting not far from the fireplace in the billiard room when I noticed a small round object lying just inside the marble fender. Curious to know what it was, I left my seat and picked it up. It was a jeweler's ring-case, not an uncommon article certainly, yet hardly the sort of thing one often sees on the floor of a billiard room."

"Suddenly I remembered that the American had been standing close to the spot where I found it when earlier in the day I had exchanged my 2,000 francs' worth of notes for his diamond. An uncomfortable feeling crossed my mind. What did he want with a ring-case? He had been wearing the ring he sold to me. He might have kept a case for it of course and might have thrown it away when he parted with the ring."

"I opened the case. The maker's name was inscribed in gilt letters inside the lid, and the address given was Paris. 'Paris!' said I to myself. 'He said the ring had been bought in Brazil.' There was no real ground for suspicion, yet I was uneasy. I went up stairs and took out the ring. The pattern—you see it is a peculiar one—I remembered well. Somehow I judged or fancied that the diamond did not shine as brightly as it had done the night before."

"Next morning I took the ring to a second jeweler and asked him his opinion as to its value. He examined the diamond carefully and laid it down on the glass case before him with one contemptuous word: 'Paste!'"

"'Paste!' I echoed. 'Impossible!'" "Certainly paste, and a very good imitation," he replied, turning away.

"My heart sank within me. Eighty pounds was a sum I could ill afford to lose."

"With a faint hope that the second expert had been mistaken, I took the ring to the jeweler who had offered the American 3,000 francs for it."

"He seemed pleased to see me, but as soon as he had glanced at the ring his face changed."

"This is not the same ring you showed me yesterday," he said in a tone that made it plain that he thought I meant to cheat him. "At least," he added, "it is not the same stone. This is not a stone at all—it is paste."

"So I have been told," I said sadly. "Are you sure the jewel I showed you yesterday was a genuine diamond?"

"I am certain of it," he answered.

"The honorable conduct—as I had thought it—of the stranger in refusing to sell to the jeweler was now intelligible. The jeweler meant to keep the real stone. It was not difficult to see how the fraud had been managed. The swindler had had two rings made exactly alike of a striking and peculiar pattern. In one of them he had placed a genuine and very fine diamond. This was the decoy. In the other he had put a false diamond, closely resembling in size and shape the genuine one in the first ring. The one he wore and offered to sell was the true stone. When he got it back from the jeweler, he had kept it and had given me the sham one in exchange for my \$80. What was I to do?"

"The first thing was to ascertain whether my friend had left the hotel. Of course he had—on the afternoon of the previous day. Still the scent was so hot that I fancied I should have little difficulty in tracing him. But when I found him my difficulties would only begin. Of course he would swear that he had sold me the ring with the stone which the jeweler had declared to be genuine. I might conceivably have substituted paste for the true gem as well as he. In any case, when I thought of the difficulty of getting back my money from an American wandering about Europe, my heart sank within me. Even if the jeweler consented to help me, taking my word against his, even if the rogue were convicted, how was I to recover the 2,000 francs?"

"These thoughts passed through my mind as I hurried back to the hotel. Certainly the prospect was gloomy."

"I easily ascertained that the Amer-

ican had taken the train for Paris the day before, and I determined to follow him at once. I did not despair of finding him, as he would probably put up at one of the good hotels."

"On the way up to Paris I could think of nothing but my loss. This fellow I saw had hit upon a very safe and profitable method of swindling. In nine cases out of ten the cheated man would not discover his loss for years after he had seen the last of the American, if indeed the trick was discovered at all. For the paste was quite good enough to deceive a casual observer, and the owner would of course be actuated by a profound faith in his diamond straight from Brazil. Had it not been for the incident of my finding the ring-case, which the rogue had accidentally dropped, I should in all probability have unwittingly cheated poor Turene out of his money, and he might afterward have been supposed to be trying to palm off a spurious diamond for a real gem. In all probability the fellow made a living, and a very good one, by going about Europe and practicing this trick."

"This idea sent off my thoughts on a new track, and by the time I had arrived in Paris I had decided on my course of action."

"First of all, I made careful inquiries at the railway station as to a tall American who had arrived from Nice by a certain train on a preceding day, and by the help of some 5 franc pieces I found the cabman who had driven him to his hotel—the Continental."

"This being ascertained, I chose a quiet, unpretending hotel for myself near one of the railway stations. Then I emptied the contents of a light bagon my bed, and taking it empty in my hand went to a theatrical costumer's, and saying I intended to take part in some private theatricals I hired the costume of a French abbe. It was a part I had often played in a piece that had a pretty long run in London some eight years ago, and I had little doubt that I should be able to acquit myself in it fairly well. I got the proper dress, wig, powder and everything complete, and having put all the articles into my bag I went to one of the railway stations and took a return ticket for a station a little way out in the country."

"To my disgust I found it impossible to get a compartment to myself. The train was too crowded, but I reflected that the trains returning to Paris would probably be much less crowded in the afternoon than those going into the country."

"In this supposition I was right. I hung about the suburban railway station till a return train was about to start. It was nearly empty, and a douceur to the guard secured me the privacy I needed. By the time I returned to Paris I was a stout, benevolent looking French priest in comfortable circumstances. My suit of tweeds I had placed in my bag, which I took care to leave at the railway station. Then I made the best of my way to the Hotel Continental."

"I was just in time for the table d'hotel, and as I took my seat I noticed with great satisfaction that my transatlantic friend was sitting not far off, and that he had not a suspicion of my identity. Nothing, I knew, could be done until after dinner, so I waited through the tedious procession of courses as patiently as I could, and when at last they came to an end I followed the American and a little group of men who surrounded him to the smoking room. It was not exactly the place for a priest, but I could not help that."

"I sat down by a little round table near the American, but slightly behind him, so as to be able to hear the conversation without joining in it unless I wished. From time to time I offered a remark, speaking of course in French, to the man who sat next me, but for the most part I smoked my cigar and sipped my coffee in silence."

"As I expected, it was not long before diamonds became the subject of conversation."

"I don't know much about diamonds myself," said the American, speaking in his native tongue, "but I'm told by good judges that 'tubs' about as good a stone as you'll see anywhere round." Almost exactly the phrases, I said to myself, which the fellow used to me at Nice!

"You kin take a look at it," he added carelessly, drawing off the ring and handing it to one of the group. I bent forward, so as to see more clearly what was going on. One after another the men who were sitting near examined and admired the ring. The man next me was the last to look at it."

"A friend I hev at Buenos Ayres sent it to me, and I had it cut myself."

"At this point I noticed that my neighbor had finished his examination of the diamond, and I touched him, intimating that I, too, would like to have a look at it. He handed it to me as a matter of course."

"It was the very ring which had been exhibited in the same way at Nice. I had the imitation one which had been palmed off upon me ready in my hand, and under pretense of trying the effect of the gem on my finger I easily substituted the one for the other, slipped the false ring on my finger, admired it, as in duty bound, and then pulling it off handed it back to my neighbor, who in turn gave it to the American."

"I put the real diamond, which I had secured, into my pocket and finished my coffee hastily just as Brother Jonathan was making an appointment with a rich young Frenchman to meet at the shop of a fashionable jeweler next morning and take his opinion on the value of the gem."

"And since it has taken your fancy," said the unsuspecting American, "you shall hev it for the same sum the jeweler offers me for it. I can't say fairer than that now, can I?"

"I went back to the railway station, got my bag, changed my hat and coat in the waiting room, slipped into the hotel and next day set off for Cannes."

"My only regret was that I was unable to make a study of the American's face when the Paris jeweler put a price on his beautiful diamond next morning."—Exchange.

A HISTORIC CHURCH.

INTERESTING ANNALS OF DR. TALMAGE'S NEW CHARGE.

The First Presbyterian Church of Washington Has Had Many Famous Statesmen Among Its Members—For Forty Years Dr. Sunderland Has Been Its Pastor.

Although Dr. Talmage, who is soon to begin his ministrations at the First Presbyterian church at Washington, is probably better known to more people than any other American minister, his predecessor, the Rev. Byron Sunderland, D. D., who will also be his coadjutor, has probably been the regular pastor of a much larger number of prominent persons than Dr. Talmage or indeed any other American minister. Dr. Sunderland went to the First Presbyterian church in 1853, and the fortieth anniversary of his first sermon there was celebrated on Feb. 5, 1893. Only four besides him were present who were also present on the Sunday he began his labors there. Then he was a young man. His hair was dark, and his eyes were bright. Now he is an old man, but his eyes still sparkle. His voice is yet round and full, and, although it has been found necessary to divide his work, his popularity with his congregation is still so great that his leaving is not to be thought of.

Four presidents—Jackson, Pierce, Polk and Cleveland—have sat under his ministrations. Singularly enough, they



have all been Democrats. When Dr. Sunderland began his pastorate, the part of the city in which the First church stands was the most fashionable in all Washington. It is not so now, and there was some surprise when President Cleveland selected it as his favorite house of worship. Perhaps he was so moved because he had heard the doctor preach nearly 50 years ago at Fayetteville, N. Y., near Syracuse, where the Rev. Stephen Cleveland was then displaced as pastor by Dr. Sunderland. At all events, it is certain that Grover Cleveland, then but a lad, was greatly impressed by the Rev. Mr. Sunderland's first sermon at Fayetteville. Its subject was the fidelity of the eagles in watching over their young.

There is nothing showy about the First Presbyterian church of Washington. It is a square box, prim and severe in all its lines. The singing is congregational, but is led by a quartet composed of young men whose music reminds the listener of a college glee club. Dr. Sunderland's sermons have been long, but not dull, for he is a sensible man and possesses a fund of dry Scotch humor which the president much appreciates. Out of the pulpit the doctor is companionable and pleasant, and his popularity with his acquaintances is not excelled by any Washington pastor.

Although, as stated, the First Presbyterian church edifice still retains its simple lines of architecture, it has been enlarged by the addition of a second story and is now lighted by electricity, while its aged and infirm attendants are relieved of climbing stairs by an elevator, which was put in some years ago. Immediately before and during the civil war this church was the acknowledged center of Union sentiment in the nation's capital, and the loyalty of the pastor to the federal government aroused extremely bitter hostility on the part of some of the church members. In 1866, when Frederick Douglass secured the use of the church for a lecture on the assassination of Lincoln, the street in front came near being the scene of a riot. Chief Justice Chase presided at that lecture, and several members of the congregation withdrew from the church because of it. In explaining why he consented to the use of the church for that purpose Dr. Sunderland said:

"Douglass' lecture was really the oasis of free speech for the negroes, and there was no roof but that of the First Presbyterian church to shelter him."

During the early years of the civil war Dr. Sunderland's exertions were so severe that in 1863 he broke down completely and went abroad, spending some time in Paris, where he took charge of the American chapel. It is understood that he offered then to resign, but his Washington congregation refused to have it so and gladly welcomed him back when his health was recovered. His extra work consisted largely of his services as chaplain of the senate and of sermons preached at the military camps around Washington. It was Dr. Sunderland who preached the first sermon to the famous Seventh regiment of New York after its arrival at the capital. This sermon was preached in the house of representatives, where the regiment was then quartered, and the text was, "Endure hardness as a good soldier."

Naturally enough, Dr. Sunderland's memory is stored with reminiscences of the republic's great men. He lives in the house on C street which was once occupied by General Fremont, the Pathfinder. Seward and Broderick, Chandler and Sumner sat under his ministrations in their day, and Stewart, Toucey, Webster and Benton were all his neighbors. Besides he has been personally acquainted with almost every prominent American statesman for the last four decades, and he pronounced the words that made Grover Cleveland and Frances Folsom one.

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New belts are of soft, gay plaid silk, knotted under a metal clasp at one side, and are suggestively named Toreador.

Framboise or raspberry red is a color that will be much seen in millinery, felt bonnets and hats being shown of this tint.

Wide effects continue in millinery. The early autumn hats look very much overloaded in their abundance of ostrich plumes, wide ribbons and elaborate ornaments.

All browns with a reddish tinge are in especial favor for the coming cool season, though no wardrobe will be complete without one good black gown for the street.

The pretty fichus of the summer in gauze mull and chiffon are to be continued for autumn wear in heavier materials. They are of the regulation Marie Antoinette cut and are trimmed with lace or ruffles.

The women who come back to town with black mohair gowns lined with colored silk to match the bodice worn with them need only a small, full cape of black velvet, trimmed with jet vandykes, to have handsome early autumn toilets.

Although the skirts of gowns remain plain for the most part, and the godet skirt is still the fashionable one, frills are seen on some of the imported gowns. The road back to trimmed skirts undoubtedly lies by way of flounces.—New York Times.

ODDS AND ENDS.

Monazite, a rare mineral which neither melts nor burns, is found in the rich metallic heart of the Appalachian mountains that lie in North Carolina.

It is estimated that 293 hairs on the head, 39 on the chin, 23 on the forearm and 19 on the back of the hand are respectively contained in an area of a quarter of an inch.

If there were but one potato in the world a careful cultivator might produce 10,000,000,000 from it in ten years, and that would supply the world with seed once more.

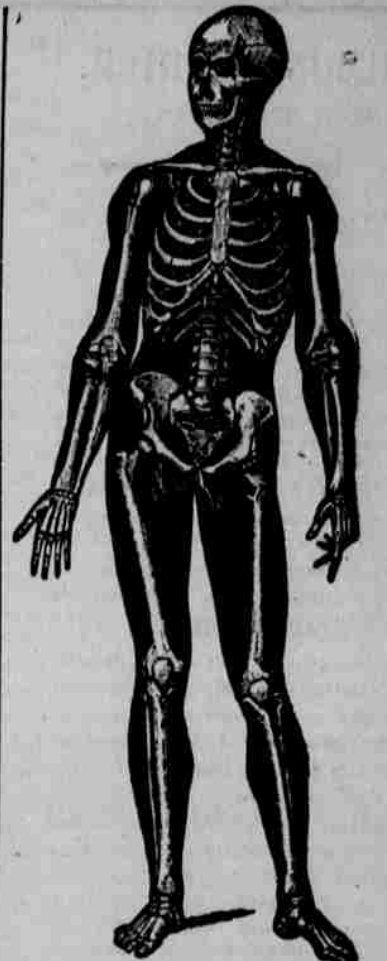
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