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Select Poetry.

"LOVE ONLY CANNOT DIE."

BY GRACE H. DUFFIELD

At twilight, once, I entered in a room
Where Death had come before me, and I knelt
Beside a coffin in the dusk, and felt
The all-engulfing silence of the gloom.

And he, who loved me but a day ago,
Had grown a stranger with unseeing eyes,
At whom I gazed, and said, in dull surprise,
"'Tis almost like some face I used to know."

So, for the sake of him I once had known,
Upon dead lips I pressed a living kiss,
And shuddered, tearless still, to know that this
Was he, my friend, whose soul was as my own.

Then went away, nor turned again to see
The face whose pallid calm and icy touch
Had nothing of that face I loved so much;
Almost with smiles I said, "It is not he."

Years after, when his ever vacant place
Was yet unfilled for me, and more and more
I loved him as I had not loved before,
And longed more deeply just to see his face,

I journeyed far, and went a weary way
To lay my cheek on his forgotten grave,
To tell him I was neither strong nor brave,
To weep sad tears above him where he lay;

And there I found, deep-hid where none could see,
A little heart's ease blossom. Then I said,
"This is the kiss I gave when you lay dead,
Which you, remembering still, give back to me."
—N. Y. OBSERVER.

Select Story.

TRIED AS BY FIRE.

Rev. Phineas Dustin's Month at Poke Island.

From the INDEPENDENT.

Rev. Phineas Dustin, of Huckins, near Barnbury, found among his mail one evening a letter in a yellow envelope, addressed in an old-fashioned turned hand. It was from the clerk of the church at Poke Island. Would he hear the Macedonian cry and visit Poke Island, there to break to them the bread of life for one month, with a view to settlement? Rev. Phineas Dustin went home to his wife with glad heart, and that night they offered thanks to God for this providential opening. He had preached in Huckins many years and would have gladly remained many more; but the craze for a younger man had struck the parish. He was not so very old—only fifty-three or thereabouts—but he had not learned all the new and novel methods, useful and otherwise, which the younger generation were using. The young people and some of the older ones demanded a minister who should introduce all the new ways, giving little or no thought to such a thing as individual conversion resulting. So he had resigned, not with resentment but with sorrow.

That was four months before. The church had not settled a pastor though there had been several candidates. Rev. Phineas Dustin had preached as a supply a few times here and there, but no hint of calling him had ever been made; so this letter from Poke Island seemed to him almost a call. It was Wednesday evening when the letter came, and the parson and his wife, after long consultation over the matter, decided that he should start for Poke Island the following Friday by the forenoon coach. This was done. Rev. Phineas Dustin took his departure with light heart and serene face, carrying his inseparable friend, the umbrella, and his hand-bag. This latter was facetiously referred to by the driver as a "gripsack full of gospel;" but he meant no harm, as he gave the parson a free ride to the depot at Barnbury. It was only a two hours ride by railroad to the coach connection for Poke Island, but it was nearly evening when he reached the end of his journey and was left by the roadside at a path leading to a house perched high above on the bluff which gave an unobstructed view of the ocean. This was the home of Deacon Purkis who kept the "ministers' hotel," which in every parish some warm heart usually opens. The deacon and his wife were, from principle, the friend of the minister, and, having no children were still mourning over the death of the deacon's aged mother six months ago, and were very glad to entertain Rev. Phineas Dustin. The next day our parson took a look over his prospective parish, a sort of bird's eye view, geographical and spiritual. It was a crooked, straggling sort of town.

Nearly every street began at a small wharf and, running back a little way into the country, ended in some farmer's door-yard. The one road worthy of the name was the old turnpike by which he arrived, which led along shore to the new settlement at the Bluffs. The people were plenty, hard-working, warm-hearted, many fore-handed. Farming and fishing were the industries, and most families carried on both branches. Before he got back to the house the deacon met him and asked him to go and visit his mother's grave. It was on a bleak hillside, seaward, one of a few mounds composing the family lot, and very dreary because of its location. Over the maternal grave a plain marble slab had been erected, with this remarkable inscription following the name and age:

"Honor, virtue, Love, combine,
This mother is mine. J. P."

It was original; the deacon's masterpiece, carved in marble, with his own initials added. In the eyes of the village and in his own eyes the deacon had at one stroke given honor to his mother and won fame for himself.

Sunday morning dawned bright and clear and Rev. Phineas Dustin entered the church in like condition. A little embarrassed during the preliminaries, he forgot it all during the long prayer, when he uttered the real longings of his heart. The sermon was somewhat lengthy, logical, and full of life and hope. In fact, the preacher thought that night if he had only preached that way in Huckins he perhaps would not now be candidating. The people of Poke Island were delighted. Just what they wanted, they said to one another. Several of the brethren told the preacher so; some of the sisters wanted to. He was invited to call at many places, and then and there made several engagements to dine during the week. Squire Davis became his supporter because of a reference the preacher had made to the Squire's Alma Mater, Tompkins Academy of Barnbury, now gone into a decline. In the Sunday-school and in the evening service our parson strengthened his hold on the people, and he in turn was charmed with them and their homely ways. He was astonished beyond measure that he who had been so snubbed and unappreciated at Huckins should be so admired at Poke Island. What wonder that he went off to sleep that night a happy man?

During the week that followed he faithfully visited among the many families of the parish, going by neither the poor-house at the East End nor the great glaring white hotel at the Bluffs, where the summer boarders congregated. Before the week was over there were none who had not seen and spoken with the sweet-faced minister, and there were few who did not love him. The parish of Poke Island had not drawn the "dead line" in the ministry nor had they harbored the "young-man-for-the-pulpit', craze. He was discussed, of course, and critically analyzed. Spiritually, there was no fault. Corporeally, an erect frame, graceful carriage, a bright, intelligent face, a pleasant smile and ready word for all, dignified, but not austere. Even his clothing was beyond reproach; to be sure it was somewhat the worse for wear, but they were neat and the fit was perfect. Besides, the good wife at home had supplied him so well with white ties and linen that he made these the central point of his attire, and all the rest did well as a setting. All these things were noticed and commented on by Poke Island, and the verdict pronounced on the new minister was a favorable one. The standing committee felt that the work of supplying the pulpit was nearly over, and glad they were to be relieved of the task.

On Wednesday of this week Tom Brierly the local correspondent of the *Jackson Ensign*, went up to Jackson Junction and "dropped in" to see the editor.

Brierly had an insatiable love for gossip and even scandal, which made him not only the spice but the terror of the town. His persistency in gathering news for the *Ensign* had won him favor with the editor, and at the same time had led the people of Poke Island to believe that they were of great importance in the world because paraded so often and at such length in the public print. He was willing to write good of any one; but if there could be a little wickedness mixed into any story, it took on an added interest. The wicked tales were those the people talked about the most. Brierly appreciated this fact, and it was this that made him so eager in his work of gathering and culling his weekly newsbudget for the *Jackson Ensign*.

As Brierly sat down the editor passed a box of cigars and, with his feet on the desk, the two men settled down to a short smoke and gossip; two things which go together even though it be a man who pulls at the cigar. A few moments of silence and smoke—then Brierly began: "Got any thing new for the folks this week? The *Ensign*'s grown drier than a last year's codfish."

"Yes," replied the editor, talking in ejaculatory style between the frequent puffs at his cigar and paying attention to the criticism on his paper. "There's a rich thing this week, column article, fresh matter, startling news, country wild over it, niece brought it from Barnbury. Ever been up to Barnbury?" Brierly nodded. "Remember stone church on square? Bird store underneath, opposite hotel?" Another nod. "Fun alive there." The editor winked and Brierly grinned. "Minister smart, handsome, built 'em up, big salary, imprudent, faction in church, jealous husband, suit for divorce. How's that? Got it all fresh. O, I'll wake things up on the *Ensign* this week."

Puff, puff, puff, and the sanctum is made blue and the men nearly invisible by the smoke.

"Editorial?"

"Of course," loftily; "sad occurrence, misused power of the clergy, wolf in sheep's clothing, and all that, you know." Again the editor winked and Brierly grinned.

"Where is he now?"

"Off on a forced vacation. Reported to be engaged to preach somewhere down along ashore."

Brierly's round eyes snapped when he heard this. "What sort of a looking man is he?" he asked.

"What's up? Have you seen him?"

"P'raps. We've got a parson at Poke Island that hails from Barnbury or somewhere near by." A silence of smoke. Then the editor drew from Brierly all he knew of Rev. Phineas Dustin. He decided that Brierly should work up the matter at home for the next week's issue, and in tomorrow's paper he would hint at "startling developments in a near by town on the shore."

Friday evening there was the usual company of men and boys at the grocery when the mail arrived; and Brierly took advantage of the opportunity to read aloud the *Ensign*'s news concerning the Barnbury scandal and also the editorial blast about ministers with damaged reputations and without proper credentials, forcing themselves on the people of the shore-towns. Loud and varied were the comments made on the affair by the by-standers. Brierly expressed no opinion publicly, but the chairman of the standing committee, who had listened intently to the reading, went home with his blood tingling at the insinuation the shrewd reporter quietly dropped as to where that minister might be now. In the *Ensign* there was no favorable notice of the presence and work of Rev. Phineas Dustin, an omission which helped confirm the suspicion which now with rapid wings flew from house to house.

Late Saturday afternoon Rev. Phineas Duston had finished his preparation for the next day. He was resolved to do his utmost best for his Master, and strive not only to please, but to help the people who should assemble at the house of God. His meditations were interrupted by the entrance of the chairman, who bluntly announced his errand. There was a divinity student stopping at a hotel on Brant's shore, and the committee would like to have him occupy the pulpit to-morrow. It gave the parson quite a strong nervous shock, but he readily consented to stand aside and let the young man take his place.

Sunday saw a greatly diminished congregation in the church, and a certain restlessness in the people, which the young man, with all his eloquence, could not overcome. The older man sat in the pulpit, and at the request of the young man offered the long prayer at the morning service; with that exception he had nothing to do during the entire Sabbath. At the close of the service only two or three came forward to shake his hand, and they did so in a constrained, unwilling manner that puzzled and hurt him. The Squire was not out for the day. What it could all mean the parson could not imagine. He went to rest that night crushed, so great was the revulsion of feeling from that of last Sunday and all the week. But he laid the burden on the Lord, and laid himself down in sleep, hoping things would be explained on the morrow, if, indeed, it were not all a matter of his imagination, aroused by the fact that another man had been put in his place. He chided himself for such an unchristian spirit.

The morning did not bring relief, nor did the days that followed. He found that wherever he went the women were shy of him and the men did not welcome him. So sharp was the contrast to last week that he was overwhelmed with agony. He asked himself many times: Shall I leave and go home? What reason can I give for doing so? Yet how can I stay?

By the middle of the week he found himself isolated practically by all except Deacon Purkis and wife. With them there was no change at all. Wednesday afternoon he returned from a lonely walk on the shore and sat down to supper with a heavy heart, though he tried hard to conceal it.

During the meal a neighbor's boy brought in the mail, which had just arrived. There were two letters for the parson. One was from his dear little wife; he knew the writing and put the missive in his pocket to enjoy when alone. The other letter he opened and read at once. He frowned, he smiled, and a tear started to flow down his cheek, but was quickly whisked away. He passed the letter without comment to the deacon, who read it aloud as follows:

"*Rev. Sir*: Your game is up. You are known. Poke Island is small, but not small enough for you to hide in. If you remain in town forty-eight hours longer you will be publicly exposed and denounced. A word to the wise, etc."

There was no signature.

Deacon Purkis and his wife were very indignant that such a letter should be sent their guest; but they begged him to excuse them from making such little explanation as they might make, for at least another day, at the same time assuring him of their sympathy and esteem in words and manner unmistakably sincere.

Soon after the parson went to his room and did not return for the evening. He was indignant—eager to go and challenge his unknown correspondent to tell his tale and let him meet it—then would come moments of bitter grief. What was this terrible thing the people believed him guilty of—he so innocent. He decided that he must wait with patience the forty-eight hours' time set in the letter, and then perhaps he could sift the matter. With prayers and tears, and not with sleep, he passed the night.

In all this time the chairman had not been idle. He thought that there must be some foundation for the rumor that the Rev. Phineas Dustin was a fallen and disgraced minister, yet he did not see how it could be true. He refrained from talking about the matter, but, as a cautionary measure, had employed the divinity student to preach the previous Sunday. Then he had written to several well-informed clergymen in the denomination, and had interviewed the editor of the *Jackson Ensign*. The editor could give him little satisfaction, but under the spur of certain remarks of the chairman volunteered to go to Barnbury and investigate.

On Thursday—it was a dark Thursday to Rev. Phineas Dustin—the chairman received several replies to his letters of inquiry, all speaking of Rev. Phineas Dustin as a man above reproach, standing high in the opinion of his brethren and never having been settled at Barnbury; that Huckins was his home and had been for years, and not a temporary asylum from Barnbury.

Then did the chairman's wrath rise high, and he hurried out to find Brierly. After searching for him in both the stores, in all the fish-houses and along the wharves, he finally went to his home and, unexpectedly, found him there. It was owing to a sprained ankle which forbade him the pleasure of going out on a search for gossip. The chairman read the reporter the letters he had received. He listened with amused interest, and then coolly remarked: "Then our parson isn't the Barnbury parson, after all!" The chairman towered, he threatened, he showed the reporter how great was the injury done an innocent man, and also the church. Brierly only shrugged his shoulders, laughed a little, and blew a cloud of tobacco smoke towards the aroused church officer.

While this was going on the editor of the *Ensign* came in, having driven down from Jackson Junction to tell Brierly what a mistake had been made, and to forestall the indignation which he felt sure would be aroused when the whole truth came out. He did not go to Barnbury, but had telegraphed a friend there, and learned that the Poke Island minister was not the man he had supposed, so he had hurried at once to Brierly.

The editor viewed the matter from a different standpoint than did Brierly. He had more at stake in his paper, and he was more of a man. So, when he had read the letters the chairman had received he readily consented to go to Parson Dustin and explain and apologize. Brierly sneered at his weakness, but was a little disconcerted when his chief quietly informed him that he need send no further communications to the *Ensign*, as none from him would be received. He kept his word to the joy of all Poke Island.

Rev. Phineas Dustin received his callers in the sitting room of Deacon Purkis, the deacon and his wife remaining by request. The editor told his story as we have here told it, and the chairman showed what had been his share in the affair and produced the letters. Both of them, like true men, sought to make amends. The parson was amazed. With tears flowing he took these men by the hand and begged them to forget it all, that he bore them only love. Then he prayed such a prayer of thanksgiving for deliverance from evil that he unconsciously showed the four how much he had suffered.

Now the clouds had cleared away and he was again to preach. Carefully did he prepare for the Sabbath services.

By Sunday the news had spread among the people, and that day they seemed to feel that as a matter of penance or apology they should attend church. The result was that when Rev. Phineas Dustin stepped upon the platform he faced a crowded house—and the faces were full of sympathy.

How sweetly did he beam upon them from over his spectacles. He was never so full of love—never so clear and logical and impressive in his sermon. He did not refer to the cruel matter of the past week publicly, and was quite displeased when several of the crowd who came up after the sermon to shake hands, spoke of the affair shamefacedly.

The next night there was a parish meeting. "So sweet a spirit," "so eloquent," "learned," "gentlemanly;" such were the expressions heard at the meeting, which voted unanimously to extend a call to Rev. Phineas Dustin to become their pastor.

The call was accepted, and his labors began at once. He left town only long enough to get his wife and their household effects in Huckins and transport them to the Poke Island parsonage.

Last evening the people gave their pastor and wife a reception in the vestry of the church. All the town was there except Tom Brierly. He has gone out of the newspaper line. The chairman, the deacon and the Squire each made a neat little speech; but by request of Rev. Phineas Dustin no reference was made to the late unpleasant mistake in identity, and only once or twice was it mentioned at the supper-table, and then in a low tone by some of the young people who were glad that for once the male gossips of the place had fired a boomerang.

German Cave-Dwellers.

Cave-dwellers in civilized Europe? It seems incredible; and yet, just above the thriving village of Langenstein, in the Hartz Mountains, and forming a part of it, are about ten dwellings hewn in the rocks. They are called the "burg," or "castle," and here some forty persons have their home. In the face of the solid rock is to be seen a row of regular-shaped doors and windows, one door and one window belonging to each dwelling. The most ancient of these dwellings is the work of a young married couple whose extreme poverty gave them no other choice than to seek a home in the rugged mountain-side. Their work must be held deserving of respect, for it is no light task to pick away the rock bit by bit, as one workingman must, with no tool but his pick-axe. Through the doorway one enters a narrow, straight hallway, at the right of which another doorway leads into a good-sized room with a window, the only one in the dwelling. Opposite this doorway, at the left of the entry, is a shell-shaped hollow which serves as a sleeping-room, in which, however, straw supplies the place of a bed. Back of this, at the left, is a storeroom; opposite it, adjoining the living or sitting room, is the kitchen, with fireplace and chimney; and back of the kitchen is another sleeping-room. The latter has no opening for light, yet, as the house-door is usually open the greater part of the year, there is light enough to see by. The walls are of natural rock, and the apartments are perfectly dry, and not badly ventilated with the door, window and chimney, which create a slight draught through the dwelling at all times. The place is warm in winter and cool in summer, and the inmates are rosy and healthy. Some of the cave-dwellers have whitewashed their houses, and made little gardens outside, so that the exterior does not display a forbidding appearance. At any rate, these cave-dwellings are quite as comfortable (and certainly more sanitary) habitations than the cellars of our cities, which are leased to wretched inmates, and are only caves of masonry.

During some manœuvers of the German cavalry at Greig a woman and her little boy got in front of a regiment of cuirassiers charging in full gallop. The leading officer shouted to her to lie down, and she did, lying upon her boy. The whole regiment passed over without injuring her, every horse in whose track she lay having been made to jump over her.

The force which a California pumpkin exerts while growing is equal to the strength of a large horse attached to a stick of timber.

A Boy's First Look at a Girl.

One who has not lived there can never appreciate the picturesque and peculiar lives of the North Carolina mountaineers, says the Washington *Post*. The railroads, the war, the incursions of revenue officials have tended largely to obliterate these racy and racial peculiarities, but you want to get Senator Zeb Vance or Maj. Hugh Waddell to describing the mountaineers of the fifties and earlier. A well-known Washington merchant tells the following story on himself: He was born clear up in the mountains near the Tennessee line. His mother died when he was two months old, and his father and grandmother "raised" him by hand in their lonely cabin on a mountain clearing, miles from the nearest neighbor. He was clad in a single flowing garment on the Mother Hubbard style, made of home spun tow-cloth, which was lengthened as years added length to his limbs.

He never saw a girl until he was 16. That year a terrible drought struck in and his father had to go ten miles down the "cove" to get his corn ground. So he yoked up the steers and threw several bags of corn in the bottom of the cart. The boy, in his peculiar garment, climbed in and sat on the bags. He was going to a new and far off country, and every sight was a wonder. Arriving at the mill, he watched with curious interest the corn making its way from the hopper into the heart of the stone and then spurt out in warm white jets into the trough. He went outside and saw the water pour over and turn the huge overshot wheel, and peered with a sensation of fear into the dark, mossy cavern into which the wheel was forever retreating.

On a rising at a little distance he spied a log cabin, and shortly wandered over through the brush in its direction. A rail fence stopped his progress a couple of rods from the doorway, and he leaned over and looked. There, sitting outside the door on a bench were two girls. One was spinning wool and the other knitting. They were the most beautiful things he had ever seen, and he nearly died right there. They saw him and burst out laughing at his remarkable appearance. He didn't know what to do, but thought it was probably the proper thing to stare at them and laugh back, which he did with interest. This mutual entertainment kept up for some ten minutes, when one of the girls laughed so hard she rolled off the bench. He thought that was queer, but just then he felt something cold on his legs. He turned around. As he did so both girls shrieked with laughter and ran into the house. He found that the cold thing was the muzzle of a bull calf that was chewing away vigorously on what was left of the rear of his dress which had been shockingly mutilated by the animal during the few minutes he was staring at the girls.

He has seen more girls since and bears their smiles with greater equanimity. He is also one of the best dressed men in Washington, but that experience with the calf and the girls will never be effaced from his memory.

Didn't Know His Own Son-in-Law.

Ex-Senator Camden, of West Virginia, used to tell the following story upon himself. He was absent-minded, but not so much so as a certain Methodist Bishop who used to forget his own name. Senator Camden said: "I was summoned from Washington to my home in Parkersburg to attend the wedding of my daughter to Lieut. Spellman, a gentleman whom I very highly esteemed. I had forgotten about the wedding, and might not have gone but for a telegram which reminded me of it. After reaching Parkersburg I walked down town and stood talking with a political friend when a young man came along and, referring to a recent excursion of mine, said: "What luck did you have as a fisherman, Senator?" I gave the evasive reply: "Only tolerable," and the young man passed on. Turning to my friend I inquired who that young man was, and he astounded me by saying: "That is Lieutenant Spellman, who is to marry your daughter." Of course I hastened to overtake him and apologize for my abrupt manner towards him."

Near Elmer, Ore., a farmer cut down a fir tree on his farm. He got $12 for the bark. From the lumber he built a house 14x20, 8 feet high; a shed kitchen 8 feet wide and 20 feet long, a woodshed 14x20 and had 500 boards 6 inches wide and 2 feet long. He also cut 334 railroad ties and fifteen cords of wood—all this from one tree.

Two flocks of sparrows at Moundsville, W. Va., engaged in a pitched battle, and when they had finished eight birds lay dead upon the ground.

On Another Errand.

A Vermont Baptist minister, who is not too grave and dignified to enjoy a good joke, even when it is on himself, narrates a ludicrous incident of his early life. Soon after being settled over a new congregation, he one day received a note asking him to be at home that evening at eight o'clock. The writer added that he was intending to be married at that hour, and would call at the parsonage with his bride.

It was but a few minutes before eight o'clock when the door-bell rang, and a moment later the servant announced that a young couple awaited the minister in the parlor.

Going down into the parlor, accompanied by his wife, the pastor found a neatly-dressed, intelligent-appearing young man and a bright-looking young woman, who rose to receive him.

"I am Mr. Homer," said the young man, "and this is Miss Cross."

Having another engagement for the evening, the minister said, immediately: "I received your note this morning, and we will proceed with the ceremony at once. Please join your right hands."

In great bewilderment, which the minister mistook for natural embarrassment, the young couple timidly clasped hands, and the ceremony was about to begin when the young man said:

"I—we—what ceremony is it?"

"Why, the ceremony of marriage, of course."

"O-o-o-h!" shrieked the young lady, withdrawing her hand, and covering her face with a handkerchief.

"I don't understand this at all," said the young man, sharply. "We came here simply as a committee from the Young People's Society of the Methodist church to ask you and your wife to be present at a public entertainment we are about to give, and—"

It was now the minister's turn to say "O-o-o-h!" and he said it in genuine astonishment at the very moment that the maid ushered in the young couple who had "matrimonial intentions."

The mistake evidently started the first young couple into new lines of thought, for, a year later, their own pastor being ill, they called upon the Baptist pastor, and did not protest that he was going too far when he asked them to join hands.

Couldn't See a Tree.

A Pittsburger, who recently returned from a trip to Europe, was relating some of his experiences to a group of relatives and intimate friends the other night, and the recital proved interesting enough to all present, but particularly to an aunt of the voyager, an old lady of 70 odd, who had never been at sea.

"I think that nothing impressed me so much," said the traveler, "as a burial at sea which I witnessed on the voyage home. The poor fellow who died was a sailor—he fell from a yard and crushed his skull upon the deck. The funeral service took place in the afternoon of a warm June day. It was inexpressibly solemn. The sea was as calm as the Ohio is to-day—hardly a ripple on the waves, hardly a cloud in the sky.

"A clergyman, who happened to be on board, read the Episcopal service for the burial of the dead at sea, and very beautiful it was. The coffin lay in the middle of the group of his fellow seamen, with the passengers in a great circle beyond them. A gangway had been opened in the bulwarks to allow the launching of the coffin into the sea.

"There the coffin lay, with the Union jack wrapped around it. The sea seemed to have grown more calm than ever. It was like polished glass. Not a sign of life over it; not a ship in sight; not even a gull or flying fish to break the barrenness of that great watery desert, only the great steamer cleaving her way—"

"But, John," broke in the aged aunt, "couldn't you see a tree—not even a tree?"

The irruption of laughter at this point knocked a pathetic situation into a cocked hat. The story of the burial at sea has never been finished.

Reports come constantly from St. Petersburg of the ever-increasing use of naphtha dregs as fuel. Russian manufacturers and railways are adopting it in place of wood and coal, and it is even utilized for domestic purposes in stoves of special construction. It is about thirty-five per cent. cheaper than wood or coal, and it occupies less space in storage.

An eagle weighing nine tons recently arrived in Brooklyn from its home in the mountains of Maine. It is of granite, and will be placed over the main entrance of the new post-office.

The American Desert.

Professor Dodge, of the Agricultural Bureau, in his September report, says: "The desert of a few years ago, so bare and barren and so hopeless in the view of all beholders, estimated only at the value of its carrying capacity for range cattle and sheep, is rapidly changing in appearance and in public appreciation. Its Eastern portion, as a newly-found "rain-belt," has been carved into homesteads and farmed without regard to irrigation. It was held alike by sage and citizen twenty-years ago that half of Nebraska was agricultural, the other half pastoral, that successful agriculture could not be expected to succeed beyond the 100th meridian. The settler gradually moved westward, and, utterly regardless of this dictum, passed the desert line, building his cabin and turning the soil and growing corn, stopping not even at the Colorado line; and to-day he is growing a better crop of maize in all the Eastern counties of the Centennial State than is the farmer of Michigan or Northern New York. He has been told that a year of drought and starvation would come, and some pinching droughts have confronted him as they have the farmer of Illinois; still he has pushed westward with heroic determination, breaking and subduing the soil, and showing by his improvements that he is there to stay.

In a visit to Yuma, Col., there were found farmers who had fled from the droughts of Illinois, some old men of sixty starting anew on a desert homestead, who had broken the soil deeply with horses and cattle and even cows, and are getting wheat yielding twenty bushels per acre, cribbing hundreds of bushels of corn, growing oats and potatoes, hay and vegetables, and converting a former scene of desolation into one of beauty and bloom. Deep breaking, subsoiling, and frequent cultivation, processes the very reverse of those practiced by the pioneer farmer, are the sources of the new prosperity.

Colorado agriculture is contesting with mining for superiority in value of production, and her wisest publicists assert that one-third will this year be produced without irrigation. The eastern counties, the great divide between the Platte and the Arkansas that extends eastward from the base of the mountains, and other areas where potatoes and other vegetables, alfalfa or millets, will grow without irrigation, and the range with its natural pasturage, will give this year of the fruits of the earth many millions of dollars in value by virtue of the rainfall properly utilized.

What is the cause of this magical change? As the mines in which the ores have been hidden for ages were discovered, so a new agricultural country, that has also existed for ages, has been discovered by the light of practical experience and a higher science. Has there been an increase of rainfall? The records of the rain-gauge do not show it very conclusively, though it is now said that this instrument is no true test of the real precipitation. Yet there is a change of climate. The agricultural values of the climate have increased. The moisture that was before carried away, flowing from the surface like water from a duck's back, is held in the soil, and a marked increase of humidity of the atmosphere is the result, which is shown in dews unknown before. This humidity is a factor in plant growth, though it is not made apparent by such a measure of precipitation as the rain-gauge.

The Electrical Plant of India.

There has been discovered in the forests of India a strange plant which possesses to a very high degree astonishing magnetic power. The hand which breaks a leaf from it receives immediately a shock equal to that which is produced by the conductor of an induction coil. At a distance of six meters a magnetic needle is affected by it, and it will be quite deranged if brought near. The energy of this singular influence varies with the hour of the day. All powerful about 2 o'clock in the afternoon, it is annulled during the night.

At times of storm its intensity augments to striking proportions. During rain the plant seems to succumb and bends its head during a thunder shower; it remains there without force or virtue, even if one should shelter it with an umbrella. No shock is felt at that time in breaking the leaves, and the needle is unaffected beside it.

One never by any chance sees a bird or insect alight on the electric plant; an instinct seems to warn that they would find sudden death. It is also important to remark that where it grows none of the magnetic metals are found; neither iron, nor cobalt, nor nickel, an undeniable proof that the electric force belongs exclusively to the plant. Light and heat, phosphorescence, magnetism, electricity, how many mysteries and botanical problems does this wondrous Indian plant conceal within its leaf and flower?

It has been decided that Kemmler, the Auburn (N. Y.) murderer, must die by electricity.

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