

"It's all a part of it," she said to herself. "It was very courageous of him to marry a lady so many years younger than himself, and one, too, who knows the 'Cities of Many People,' and, to take a further liberty with the Od. i. 3, the minds of many men."

It was while reflecting on the many minds that had interested her, both ancient and modern, that Mrs Cudlip-Gaye thought there might have possibly come within her circumference yet another individualised soul, and that soul the new Canon. He had preached an extraordinary sermon at the Abbey before coming into residence—a sermon which, for harmony of colour and sound, was absolutely perfect.

He had preached on ideals. He had called idealism the new mantle which was descending on a materialistic age. He had waged war, in a perfect torrent of fiery words, against prejudice, bigotry, and all daring repression of the exquisite dreams which, when translated into realism, formed the new avenues which became the home of new thoughts.

Mrs Cadwallader had come out of the Abbey on that particular morning with her lips twisted anyhow, and over her capacious forehead a fine web of puckers suggestive of spiders at work.

"If we can't repose in our cathedrals and abbeys, where can we?" she said, gasping, and clutching at Mrs Cudlip-Gaye's arm as she gasped.

If Mrs Cudlip-Gaye did not show as keen as sense of appreciation of Mrs Cadwallader's honesty as that lady expected, can you blame her?

#### CHAPTER VI.

There were a score of narrow streets, intercepted by little bye-paths, which led away to the water-meadows, and beyond that to the free expanse of downs, in the respectable town of St Swithun's. In one of the narrowest of these crooked, deformed, yet quaintly suggestive streets was an old curiosity shop, kept by an old art-collector and his supposed daughter Angela. That Angela was beautiful was a fact nobody in St Swithun's, from the bishop with his mitre to the crossing-sweeper with his broom, would for one second have disputed. Angela possessed beauty as incontrovertibly as Helen of Argos. She was also surrounded with mystery, and it was this mystery—which was felt, but scarcely ever mentioned—that possessed the key to the curiosity with which folks of high and low degree approached the shop of old Bartimeus Megiddo.

The shop (if shop it could be called) was dingy and dirty enough to be suggestive of many a buried treasure. It was like a city of the dead. Everything bore the appearance of a chrysalis. Only the lovers of art knew that many a winged *objet d'art* would emerge under the tender touch of the initiated collector.

Dirt is the soil in which art is nurtured. A dust-pan, a broom, and a pail, would have been elements as destructive in the domestic economy of Bartimeus Megiddo as an army of locusts on the summer fields.

Bartimeus was no exception to the rule of dirt in which he elected to set his gems. He was hideously dirty and uncompromisingly ugly, after the Jewish style. His long, hooked nose caught his upper lip, and seemed to hold it, as if in disdain of its mean, strike-a-bargain outline. His eyes, with their bilious setting for the small keen pupils, were full of the furtive shifts which are the outcome of thoughts born of cupidity, for gain was the only soil known to the soul of Bartimeus—gain, the child of per cent.

It was Saturday, and it was sunset. The great deep-toned Abbey bells had just chimed the three-quarters of another hour. Bartimeus was standing in the doorway, and one of the shutters which barricaded his windows was in his hand. Conway Hope was passing down the narrow street. As he crossed the road his eyes fell on the figure of Bartimeus, and for several seconds seemed to grow into every detail of the shuffling form and Jewish contour of the Megiddo profile.

Bartimeus bowed. This was the new Canon—the Abbey set patronised him (Bartimeus) largely; and the clerical mind was, when Catholic, mediæval—this man, too, looked mediæval. Bartimeus bowed again. He thought he recognised a customer.

"I have sheveral rare old bits, Canon," said Bartimeus, "but shundown means Shabbath, and Shabbath means light the oil of other lamps. I am the 'sheeing Bartimeus,' not blind to the law of rest."

"I ought to know your face," said Conway Hope; "are you a new-comer?"

"Ten years makes an old resident. Bartimeus Megiddo is as well-known in St Swithun's as the verg r in the Abbey."

"Well, I have seen you somewhere."

"We have all met before, perhaps in Adam," said Bartimeus, and he grinned. O that grin! He displayed just the ruins of those ivory temples which bountiful nature gives but to despoil. It seems hard that the grin should survive its constituent teeth.

"I will come in one day soon and have a talk," said Conway Hope, and then he passed on.

"Accessible," said Bartimeus to himself. "Dignity without a pound of cake and an orange all round. Meet a man as a man.

Angela said he was more able to carry his starch than is usual. Angela is as 'cute as 'cute.} {Clever enough to sit on top of my old bits and cheap-Jack 'em round the country, and cunning enough to buy a pound of butter with a smile instead of a coin."

Again Bartimeus grinned. After his best-loved child, "gain," came Angela with her many-rivered soul, big enough to aspire to the minarets, and small enough to satisfy and manage Bartimeus Megiddo.

The shutters were closed, and Bartimeus had withdrawn into the porch, when the dark shadow of a man was thrown forward at his feet. The shadow remained stationary; Bartimeus thrust his head out and looked round the corner. As he looked he paled, and on his wrinkled mouth grew an expression of misery, fright, and rage, which seemed to add a score of years to his appearance. The shadow moved, and the tall, gaunt figure of a man darted forward, and, before Megiddo could expostulate, a hand with a clanking chain on the wrist had banged the door, and the man confronted him.

"Just in time to share your Sabbath! Come, ain't you glad to see me, escaped again to your city of refuge? You will shelter me for to-night, and by to-morrow I'll be off to Manitoba. That hole, Dartmoor! Here, get this chain off, and show me less of your gums and more of your hospitality. Food—I'm hungry! Best bed—I'm dog-tired! Loose my chain! Play the father to the prodigal."

"Let the day be cursed I begot you!" said Megiddo slowly; he was breathing hard, as those whose rage is pain.

"Well, must I go to the larder?" The man was busy with his chain all the time he was speaking, and had at last, by some inexplicable process, divested himself of it and flung it from him with a chuckle. Then he said, "Keep it and sell it. There are worse chains even than that worn by many who come in here. I've learnt that bit of philosophy. Where's Angela? My—my—well, never mind who she is, or what she is, or where she came from; Angela will do. It bothers the old 'un, I know, when I mention Angela. Well, come old man—as you won't own up to fatherhood—I brought you a dainty bit of goods when I landed her on your greedy hands. For greedy they ever were. But come, no recrimination. Food, food; sleep; and then Manitoba."

The man was laughing. He blew a kiss at his chain as it lay in a heap not far from his dusty, patched boots with their untied strings.

"Prison is respectable enough now," he said. "Why, things have come to a merry pass in the house where the makers and the breakers of law meet. Look up, old man."

"Cursed be the day I begot you!" said Megiddo again; and then he moved away, holding by the wall to support himself. "How long will you stay?" he said, turning at the door. "Oh, till the larder's empty and the moon round! That means to-night, for your larder was ever fit food for a mouse only. Well, the body revenges itself on the mean fare afforded it. Why, Père Megiddo, a mouse would turn up his nose at your larder—sing 'La-de-da' at it! I know it of old," and the man laughed.

"Cursed be the day I begot you!" said Megiddo for the third time, as if in the trinity of curses he found a valve for his hatred, whether natural or unnatural.

With stumbling steps, as if stricken with a sudden blindness, Megiddo got to the passage. But what was this rushing, surging, ringing noise, this rising of the tides which hold the ebb and flow of life at his vitals? With a crash Megiddo fell in the narrow doorway, and lay insensible across it, while over his prostrate form towered the figure of the man with a villainous face and a scar across his features from forehead to chin in one deep vertical line—the man who called Bartimeus Megiddo father!

*To be continued.)*

#### THE MAORI MISSION.

(London *Universe*, October 31.)

HIS LORDSHIP THE RIGHT REV BISHOP LUCK, O.S.B., last Sunday morning, at St Dominic's Priory, Haverstock Hill, said:—I come to plead the cause of a very distant mission. Our Divine Master gave His apostles a special and divine mission to go forth and preach His name to every creature. I was a Benedictine monk, happy and contented in the solitude of the cloister, when I received a command from the Supreme Pastor of the faithful to go to the utmost limits of this globe to carry the name and the love of the faith of our Adorable Master and Saviour Jesus Christ. There is a very reasonable prejudice probably felt by many here present about which I would at the outset speak. You may inquire, why does the Bishop of Auckland come here and dilate on behalf of a prosperous British colony? That, no doubt, is a reasonable objection to which I have a reasonable answer. I shall place it before you by informing you of the fact that I am placed in the position of having two flocks—one of them distinct for the European emigrants who have emigrated there during the last ten years. There are men and women with generous hearts, and whose charity is not slow in manifesting itself when called upon by their pastor and bishop, but, however willing they may be, they