

JUDGMENT.

(Continued from page five.)

"His one wish was for your happiness. He said he knew his love for you had brought you sorrow, but he would love you until he died, and that as long as he lived he would pray for your happiness. He said that he knew your love was as true as his, and that nothing could destroy it. He told me to tell you that he would never doubt you, and that whatever you did would be right in his eyes."

The voice ceased, and there was silence. The tears were streaming down Kitty's face, and it was some moments before she could speak again.

"You—you are his friend?" she murmured at length.

"I know him well."

"Will you see him again?"

"Yes."

"Will you take him a message from me?" "Indeed I will!" exclaimed the man, with an ill-concealed note of eagerness in his voice. "You can speak to me as you would speak to him. Every word you say will go straight to his heart."

"Oh, thank you, thank you!" murmured Kitty, with emotion. "This is what I want you to tell him. He must never doubt my love or think ill of me, no matter whatever he hears. To-morrow I am to be married."

The sick man gave a start and put out a hand as though in protest, but almost instantly it fell back to his side, and he lay quite still.

"Mr Foster will hear of that," went on Kitty tremulously. "Still, he must not doubt me. The man I am going to marry is a true and gallant gentleman. He has been a great friend to us both. He knows I cannot give him my love, but yet he wants me to be his wife. I do not understand men. I do not understand!" There was a pitiful note in her voice. "But he wants me, and I—I must obey. For he has saved Dick. It was Mr Chase who got him out of the country, and has promised to look after him. It is he who has done everything, and, in return he has made me promise to be his wife. If I refuse, Dick will be dragged back to prison again, and—"

"Excuse me. Clark has talked enough. Perhaps another time, Miss Millbank."

Pelham Webb, who, while holding Beaumont Chase at bay, had been straining his ears to catch the conversation, had now hurried to the bedside.

But his intervention came too late.

The sick man suddenly sat up in bed and seized Kitty firmly by the hand.

"One minute, Miss Millbank," he said in a stern voice, in which there was no suggestion of age or feebleness, "let me understand. Do you say that Beaumont Chase is saving Dick Foster on condition that you promise to be his wife? Is that what you say?"

Kitty bowed her head, but made no answer. She was sobbing.

"Then I say that Beaumont Chase is a scoundrel!" cried the remarkably rejuvenated old man. "You shall not marry him! I forbid it! Do you hear? I, Dick Foster. Now let Mr Beaumont Chase do his worst."

So saying, he flung his wig across the room, and, throwing out both arms, caught his little sweetheart to his breast.

(To be continued).

EXTRACT FROM "PASSING NOTES."

A PARABLE.

When the Prodigal had returned he said unto his Father: "Father, I have wasted my substance in a good time until there is nothing left, nay, not a bean in my scrip, and lo! I am on my uppers; therefore, Father, I am come to say that I have sinned." And the Old Man said, "Where-in hast thou sinned, O my Son?" Then the Son told him of the red and white wine that bucketh you up, and of the women called Tottie and Flossie, and of the Oprah and the Midnight Feasts, and of the other things that make up a royal time. And the Father was moved in spirit, for he was not yet two score years and ten, and was full of vigour. And he said: "My son, I wist not that such things were, since I have lived long in this Hole, which is forsaken of the Lord. I would fain see for myself the things whereof thou tellest me. Tell me, I pray thee, where the women called Tottie and Flossie are to be found. It may be that I shall be able to lead them again to Righteousness. And I would fain know also where these taverns and feasting houses are." And when the Son had told him all these things the Old Man got him a change of raiment and journeyed to the city by the next caravan. And he said in his heart: "My son hath opened mine eyes to the joys of prodigality, whereof I knew nothing before. Now, therefore, shall I have a roty time." And, lo, it was even as he said. Moral: Obvious.

The Nature Column.

"Student" will be pleased to receive notes on any branch of Natural History. Observations on birds, insects, plants, etc., will be equally welcome. If using a pen-name, will correspondents please enclose real name and address.)

A suburban friend tells me that it is going to be an early spring. The sparrows are nesting. The same gentleman informs me that the Little Owl is hard on the sparrows. Before the owls came about his home there were plenty of sparrows, now their numbers are reduced to about half. It does not seem to follow, however, that the owl is able to work much mischief with the tui and bellbird, for he says these birds are often to be seen and are on the increase. The owl is very daring, however, as attempts have been made by him to get at the canaries in the cages on the house. The warbler is still about the hedges in town. It looks as if the race for survival on the part of some of the bush birds has ended in their favour.

A short time ago I was shown a piece of wood, apparently totara, which had formed part of a log pierced by one of the bores at the Waterworks. This bit of wood, part of a log of some thickness, was recovered from, I think, the 120 foot level. How recent must be the strata on which the tower stands. The wood could scarcely last as such for very many hundreds of years, say ten hundred at the outside. The tower hill is now in all probability much lower than it was when the rivers ran over it. If the gravel came, as surmised, from the direction of Stewart Island, what a change has taken place in the land surface. It is well to remember that an elevation of the land of something like 120 feet would make the Poveaux Straits dry land. The soundings down to Macquarrie Island seem to indicate that our lost continent existed in that direction. On the contrary the folding of the rocks in the Southern Alps seem to point to a land mass on the West though a great deep exists in the sea between the Dominion and Australia.

What a tremendous agency exists in the rivers in forming the contours of a country. Who would think at first glance that the valley between the Watertower and Dalrymple road had been formed by such an insignificant little stream as the Puni Creek. Yet there does not seem any reason to call in any more potent power. The creek when in flood sends down an immense amount of water turbid with the solid particles of the lands it drains. If the creek were gauged and the amount of material carried down calculated, I think we would be astonished at the amount of solid matter carried out to sea. Professor Marshall estimated that the Water of Leith, in Dunedin, carried down 65,000 tons of material in a six day's flood. The Mississippi deposits 63,000,000 tons annually, and the Thames, which is not much in the way of a river puts out half a million tons annually. It can be seen from these figures that it would not be a very great task for our local stream to carve out its small valley. Our watercourse is now in middle age. Streams in their first stages cut deep beds with high banks; later, as the banks get cut back, they assume sloping formations similar to our little valley, and finally the land is worn down to a flat plain.

Streams carry their load best in floods. There is a law which states that "the size of the particles varies as the sixth power of the velocity of the stream." If the velocity of a stream is doubled its suspending power is increased 64 times, and if trebled 629 times. When the stream reaches still water its velocity is checked and the sediment drops, and it is thus that the estuary mud flats have been formed. Within the last twenty years some parts of the estuary have shoaled six feet.

At the present time boating men are bemoaning the fact that the channel at the mouth of the harbour has shifted to the north and they cannot get out because of the rough water. Just why this should have happened is hard to say, but presumably it has been caused by heavy freshes in the river, and not through any variation in the ocean current which sweeps along Riverton beach and round the Bluff. Sooner or later this current will force the channel back to the rocks unless spring floods cause another alteration.

Mr Hunter, in his lecture on fishes before the Naturalists' Society, mentioned that the native freshwater fish sometimes called New Zealand trout, thought it is not at all like trout in taste or shape, were to be commonly found in the Waikiki stream. Mr Tapper mentioned that they were often found in ditches up country, a long way from a stream, and that they were the laziest fish he knew. In the discussion on the first fish it was mentioned that they were always found minus the tail. Fishermen say that it always bites

its tail off before it comes ashore. It seems more likely that it come ashore because some predatory fish had bitten the tail off.

Mr Crosbie Smith lectures next on "Have Plants any Feeling." It is to be regretted that the public do not attend in greater numbers. There is no charge or collection and any person may ask questions or take part in the after discussion.

DRAUGHTS.

(By F. Hutchins.)

Draughts Club meets in Athenaeum on Wednesday and Saturday evenings. Visitors invited.

PROBLEM 15.

By N. Wallwork, Bolton.

(No. 49 in "Bolton Chronicle.")

BLACK.

