

Faculty

Mc BURNEY

A PLAY IN ONE ACT

by

William Chauncy Langdon II

with Music by

F.S. Hyde 68584

1922

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William Chauncy Langdon Jr.

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McBurney

The Music begins with good attack, boldly, clearly, sweepingly, the main theme of the McBurney music, based on the first four notes of the hymn "Jesus calls us". The development of the theme presents the feeling of the hymn in the virile spirit of what it was to McBurney, and in contrast with another, the Home theme.

As this Prelude draws to a close the light reveals a room, rather like one in the old 23rd Street Y.M.C.A., bathed in soft brown shadows. But it cannot be really that, because that was torn down long ago. There is one wide door open, looking out into a large outer office or hall. There is another doorway that opens directly on a rather steep stairway going upstairs from a landing three steps up. And a third door. There is a good sized window looking out over the large city, on the side opposite the outer hall. Back against the wall is a roll top desk, closed, with a chair in front of it, pushed up as if not in use. There are a couple of other chairs in the room, a small table in the center, and a bookcase, and a portrait on the wall. Back in a corner in the shadow is a tall old grandfather's clock of mahogany. - - The time is in 1922.

Out in the hall are seen two men talking with each other. As the Music plays they stand out there, absorbed in their conversation. As the Music comes to an end they turn together and walk into the room. One is a Y man; the other is a Writer. They stand together in the middle of the room.

Y MAN- Well, we want you to write something about McBurney. This is the 60th anniversary of his beginning his work with the Y.M.C.A.

WRITER- From what you tell me about him, - I think it would be a very interesting piece of work. He was Secretary, you say.

Y MAN- Yes, Secretary of the New York Y.M.C.A. at the old 23rd Street Branch. He built the old building there at 23rd and Fourth Avenue. In a way he built the whole thing. He made the Secretaryship. He made it what it is. He began as a young fellow and worked it out.

WRITER- He is dead now of course.

Y MAN- Oh yes, long ago. He died in 1898. Wore himself out. Only 61. This was his room by the way. That was his desk. That was his clock. Isn't that a fine piece? He knew good furniture. Loved it. One of his hobbies. Picked up a lot of it, here and there, all over the world.

WRITER- That is a handsome clock, isn't it! Does it still go?

Y MAN- Oh yes, I guess so. - I don't know, as a matter of fact. Everything he touched or had to do with would go, and still goes. The time seems to be right.

The Y Man takes out his watch and compares it with the time of the clock. The Writer listens to the pendulum.

WRITER - It's going all right.

Y MAN- It is exactly correct by my time. It would be strange if it were not. Everything he had - or did - has lasted.

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velopes its theme into richer and richer harmonies and instrumentation of the musical idea. A soft light begins to glow down the stairway seen through the door leading up stairs. It gradually increases into a golden glow. The Writer does not notice it. He is occupied musingly turning over the pages of the books.

W The clock strikes the hour, 7 o'clock. The two men stand listening to it.

Y MAN- Isn't that a fine tone?

WRITER- That has a good ring to it.

Y MAN- He knew what was good. - Well, I must leave you. I have an engagement at 7 o'clock. For material, - here are some books about him.

The Y Man takes some books out of the bookcase and hands them to the Writer or lays them on the table for him.

Y MAN- Here is the memorial volume. Here is a life of him by Dr. Doggett Mr. Morse's History of the Y.M.C.A. Mr Morse and McBurney were very close friends. - There are a number of McBurney's books here too. You can see what sort of books he was interested in. He had some very rare old books. Here is a copy of Cotton Mather's Essays to do Good. Just look at that. See. - McBurney's name is in it. Here is one of his Isaaak Walton's. He had 81 copies of Walton, different editions. McBurney was a great fisherman. And hymns, - he had a fine collection of hymns. He was very fond of hymns and devotional poetry.

Very softly, in the strings, the Music begins to play a simple form of the main theme of the Prelude.

Y MAN- Well, - I will leave you here, if you would like to look these over and see what idea you get of him. I will come back in an hour, or maybe less. I think this engagement will not take me long.

The Y Man starts over towards the door leading into the hall. The Writer goes part of the way out with him.

WRITER- All right. Do not put yourself to inconvenience on my account. Do not hurry. I will be looking over these - books.

The two men informally salute each other. The Y Man goes on out. The Writer comes back to the table and picks up one of the books. The Music continues. With the book in his hand the Writer goes over to the book case, takes out one or two books, looks at them, puts them back, then goes over with his book to a comfortable chair near the window and begins to look it over. As he does so, he speaks musingly to himself.

WRITER- McBurney, - - McBurney, * * * Robert Ross McBurney.

As the Writer continues looking through the book, He goes over to get another book from the table and looks through that, the Music develops its theme into richer and richer harmonies and instrumentation, into a more and more personal presentation of the musical idea. A soft light begins to glow down the stairway seen through the door leading up stairs. It gradually increases into a golden glow. The Writer does not notice it. He is occupied musingly turning over the pages of the books.

WRITER- Hm! - - - Robert Ross McBurney. - - -

A figure, a man, comes down the stairs. He comes down into the room. A Soft light glows around him. It continues to glow around him just enough to make him clearly visible. Otherwise there is nothing extraordinary or even exceptional about him. He has a marked individuality. He is rather short, stocky, has a square head, high brow, somewhat bald, firm jaw, deep-set piercing eyes, a sandy moustache, a humorous smile at times about his mouth and a twinkle hidden in his eyes. He wears a dark suit of business clothes, wing collar and four-in-hand cravat. He stands looking at the Writer a moment. The Writer does not notice him. The Man goes over to the table, looks at the books lying there, picks up one or two of them, feeling them, handling them with the loving touch of a connoisseur, and with the manner of being particular about them, not wanting them to be left lying around, takes them and puts them back in their places in the book case. Then he returns to the table and stands there, his back to the outer hall, looking earnestly and half humorously at the Writer. After a moment the Writer looks up. The Music stops.

WRITER- Oh, - a - is there anything I can do for you?

THE MAN - Who knows? Maybe there is. - I think it quite likely.

WRITER- I am only a visitor, -

THE MAN- Glad to see you here! I just came in -

WRITER- Any one you want to see? Probably right out there in the office you will find someone -

THE MAN - No, - I will talk with you.

WRITER - But I do not belong here. This is the Y. -

THE MAN- Yes, - yes, I know. You belong here just as much as I do. Make yourself right at home. Don't get up. Sit down; sit down.

The Man walks over towards the Writer with cordial expostulatory gestures.

WRITER All right, - thank you. What can I do for you?

THE MAN- Why, - a - a - I had the idea you wanted to see me.

The Man stands simply, and erect, in the middle of the room.

THE MAN- My name is McBurney.

WRITER- Oh! -

THE MAN- I am always around the Y of course. What is your name?

WRITER- Oh! - But I thought you were - - - I do not understand. - - -

McBurney smiles at the Writer's perplexity and embarrassment, and with provoking humor waits to let him get himself out of his predicament.

WRITER- You are not an old man. - - Was it - - your father that - - ?

The Writer begins to realize that however extraordinary it may seem this is McBurney himself. He rises from his chair respectfully.

WRITER How is it that you can be here?

McBurney The memories of life are always in specific places. You know that. Sit down; sit down. What can I do for you? Count on me freely.

WRITER Then, - thank you, Mr McBurney, - the Y People want me to write something about you. Will you tell me how you happened to come to New York and take up this work? (He feels in his pocket for paper and pencil)

McBurney Newspaper man, eh?

WRITER I have done some reporting. I am not on any paper now, - except - I write a special now and then. This is not for the paper. - A # I guess in fact-

McBurney No. They would hardly consider it fresh copy, would they? (He laughs)

WRITER The 60th anniversary, I believe it is, isn't it, - of your -

Mc Burney Never mind me. If there is any anniversary of any kind coming, celebrate it by doing something for the boy and the young man.

WRITER But you -

Mc Burney I do not count! - As long as there is a lonely boy or a homeless young man in this city, - or in all this country, -.

WRITER I see your point of view.

McBurney You are a believer?

WRITER Why, - a - I -

McBurney But, my dear fellow, if you are not, how can you see my point of view? - A young man may live in a brownstone front and wear expensive clothes and belong to one of the best families, and yet be in the real sense homeless. - Do you believe in the Lord Jesus Christ as your warmest friend?

WRITER Why, my mother brought me up to - - I do not know that I should have thought of putting it that way. - -

McBurney Naturally. How could any one have thought of it that way, of himself? No one could conceive of such a friend. You and I are just alike, and until we find our dearest friend in Christ, - we have no home. - - - I found my long way home at last. And ever since, - I have had to tell each boy I see to hurry up, - and help him on his way. (Silence) Your mother brought you up, but - every one must pick and choose and find his own friends for himself.

WRITER It would be easy to be friends with you.

McBurney I am not worthy having for a friend, - though I will be a friend of yours, my friend, from this day on.

McBurney turns aside and walks up and down a moment. Then comes up to the Writer looking him over critically.

McBurney Your shoes need blacking. - Here, Polish them up, my friend. Always be your best and look your best. Where are these blacking things? I always kept them near at hand. - There.

The Writer starts in to black his shoes. McBurney looks around. He picks up the Writer's hat from the table and looks at it also critically.

Mc Burney This your hat?

Writer Yes. (he laughs)

McBURNNEY When you get another hat, let me go with you. I used to work in a hat store once. I know hats.

The Writer finishes blacking his shoes, puts up the things and pushes the box in under the desk. He straightens up and turns around towards McBurney.

McBURNNEY There, now you look better. Do you smoke? I hope not, but I am afraid you do. I do not approve of tobacco.

WRITER Oh yes, I smoke.

MCBURNNEY Well light up. Have a cigar?

Writer No, thank you, I like my pipe.

McBURNNEY There are the matches. Help yourself. I am sorry you use tobacco. I do. I ought to be ashamed of it, but there is little I do enjoy so much. I cannot get over my love for it. I have tried, - often; tried hard. But at least I do not use tobacco where any boys of young fellows are around. Only up in my own room. I will not set a bad example. Probably not many know that I touch it. No need that they should. I have never denied it of course. My close friends, and

those that I am associated with much, - they know of course, I see to it that they do, - - And - I do like a good chew of tobacco. You do not chew, do you?

WRITER No, I don't chew.

McBURNNEY Good! I am glad you do not. Do not ~~mix~~ ever start it. It is a disgusting habit. - - Well, you smoke your pipe, and I will - - No, I will not.

Mc Burney sits down in his chair at the desk and turns it around so as to be facing the Writer.

McBURNNEY What were you saying about your beliefs?

WRITER My mother brought me up in the old fashioned beliefs and principles. She was a pretty strict religious sort of woman; always ~~gentle~~ gentle and kind, though. I have not kept up very well, and I don't care to go around saying much about it. I don't want to be advertising myself for being very extra good. I'm afraid I'd not be very consistent.

McBURNNEY Of course you'd not be consistent. Who is?

WRITER Then there's - many of the things in the Bible that - frankly I don't believe are so, not when you compare them with what we learn to be the truth from modern science, - say, from Darwin and Huxley and Spencer.

McBurney ~~don't~~ Yes, I know, I know. I have read some of their books too. They agree very well with the Bible apparently. The higher criticism of the Bible interests me very much. I cannot get the whole thing straightened out either. But - it is something like what Tim Campbell said to Grover Cleveland about the constitution, "What's the Constitution between friends?" Well, my friend, - what is Darwinism between friends? - or all Science?

McBurney, getting more and more in earnest as he talks, rises from his chair.

McBURNNEY Have you ever been lonely? or not known what to do? I have

WRITERA Yes, - but, - if you don't mind my saying so, -

McBURNNEY Talk out. Speak right out.

WRITER I grant the story about Christ is beautiful. It would be wonderful if it were true. But it is only a story. At least it seems so to me. And at the best it was 2,000 years ago. So what's the use now?

McBURNNEY The use I find of it is when I do not know what to do; or when I do not want to do what is right; or when what I want to do is right ~~ixxx~~ enough and yet for some higher reason, I ought not do it;

- or - I may as well tell the truth, - when all my being and every instinct in me goes against what I know to be my duty, - (He turns his head away & moment) - then, if I think of Jesus Christ and ask myself what He would do if He were in my place, or what He would advise me to do, since He is not in my place, I soon begin to feel He is not so far away, not so long ago, and that I have a friend. That helps! - and does not interfere with Science, and with what I think or others think the least. (He smiles) Your pipe has gone out.

The Writer reaches for the matches, then knocks the ashes out, fills his pipe again, lights it, and puffs quietly. The Music plays again. McBurney stands silently, thinking, a lone figure.

McBURNLEY Do you know that hymn,-

 "Jesus calls us o'er the tumult
 Of our life's wild restless sea"?

I do not know but that is my favorite hymn.

The two men remain silent as the Music plays.

McBurney Life is a wild, restless storm, - for me, at least, - - - Morse, now - Do you know Richard Morse? He is a man of about my age, - a little younger, maybe. Morse always sees the Grace of God in every gleam of life, and so is always calm, serene and confident, while half the time I think that all depends on me. Morse thinks I waste myself, I do. Ah, Morse, Morse! - a fine, educated Christian gentleman, if there ever was one! I am so vehement, tumultuous, that often I have come near spoiling everything. Then just in time the Grace of God and Morse step in to save the situation. - - There are many restless ones like me here in this city. - - The best thing I ever did was to get Morse into Association work.

Through the outer hall an Attendant brings a man and shows him into the room. He is rather rough looking fellow with an unconsciously furtive manner. He hesitates at the doorway.

Attendant Go on in. There's no one there.

ROUGH MAN Yes, there is.

The Attendant goes off. Hearing the man's remark, McBurney turns around. As soon as he sees the man, he holds out his hand to him in welcome.

McBURNLEY Glad to see you! Come right in and make yourself at home!

The man hangs off, stays at the door, silhouetted against the light outside.

McBURNLEY What is your trouble? Come in!

ROUGH MAN Aw, -what the hell's that to you?

He looks at McBurney sullenly and defiantly a moment. Then his manner changes. Still surly, he has a glash of defiant frankness.

ROUGH MAN I been up the river.

McBURNAY Too bad.

ROUGH MAN I just came down.

McBURNAY You came to the right place. One moment. Wait, My friend.

McBurney turns around quickly to the Writer and speaks to him with an abstracted, rather brusque manner.

McBurney I am busy now. About that anniversary, there is nothing more that I can do for you. I am sorry anyone ever thought of it, - celebrating the little I did, when -oh, all there was to do I could not do! (He turns quickly back to the rough man for a moment.) I will be with you in a minute. (To the Writer again) But you, - I want to see you again sometime, - and soon. - - - (Then almost wistfully) Do not forget me.

WRITER I will not forget you.

McBURNAY God bless you; God blessyou. Good-bye.

WRITER I said that I would wait here for -

McBURNAY Oh, then - certainly. Glad to have you stay. But I am Busy, verybusy. You understand?

Without another word or any further attention McBurney turns back again to the rough man in the kindest manner.

McBurney What is your trouble? Tell me.

ROUGH MAN I'm a theif.

McBurney No,no, you are not. You were a theif, maybe; but you are not now. That is not what I meant, though. What do you want?

THEIF Ha! What do I want? What the Hell! - what do I want? Are you a da-- No, I'll not call you that. But you're a queer one, - what do I want? What the hell good would it do me to want anything! Ha! I'd want a job if it was any use to want it. - Do you belong here? I don't ~~like~~ know if I like you or don't like you. --- I guess I don't mind you.

McBURNAY Well, (with a laugh) I do not know exactly whether I belong here or not, or belong anywhere.

THEIF You're like me then.

McBURNLEY Yes, I guess we are a good deal alike. If you want a job, -

THIEF Forget it, Who ~~would~~ give me a job?

McBURNLEY I will give you a job.

THIEF You? Ha! What kind of a job have you to give me?

McBURNLEY I will -

THIEF No, no, you ~~would~~ be a fool to give me a job, or any man, and that's the truth.

McBurney I will make you a Messenger.

THIEF If you made me your messenger, you ~~would~~ be - - You could not trust me.

McBURNLEY Oh yes, I could trust you. You are hard on me. (Laughs) You do not know me. There is no one I cannot trust. I do trust you.

THIEF I will keep it safe, anything you trust to me, - and (reflectively) may God have mercy on my soul! But don't trust to me anything worth much.

McBURNLEY What I want to entrust to you is worth more ~~money~~ than all the money in New York.

THIEF What are you talking about?

McBURNLEY You do not understand? - All right. My watch needs repairing. Will you take it to the jeweler for me? It is in the small drawer of my desk, there, on the right hand side.

The Thief starts, his head jerks guardedly forward, the old gleam comes into his eye, and the furtive manner into every motion as he slowly moves over toward the desk. Half way there, he stops, and shuts his eyes and straightens up.

THIEF No.

McBURNLEY Yes.

THIEF You don't know what you're doing. I could go there, open up the little drawer with you watching me, slip the watch out and into my pocket but you not see me do it, and tell you it was not there.

McBurney No, you could not, - now.

THIEF No? - - I used to could.

McBurney Go, take it. I want to send a message to the Jeweler, - when He makes up His jewels, that there is one more, - I But you do not understand, - not yet.

Thief. I don't know what ~~you are~~ ^{you're} talking about, but whatever you

say for me to tell the diamond bloke, I'll tell him, and whatever you say to take to him, I'll take to him, - and he will get it.

The Thief goes over to the desk and starts to open the little drawer. He looks around him from the old habit and sees that the Writer is looking at him.

THIEF He told me to do it. He told me to take it.

McBurney Yes, I told you to. ~~xxxx~~ ~~xx~~ It is my watch.

The Thief opens the drawer and takes out the gold watch. He holds it, looking at it fascinated. Then he holds it out to McBurney, as if begging him to take it.

THIEF No, no. Here!

McBURNNEY I suppose some of the people here might think that is not my watch any more now, - now that I am dead.

THIEF What?

McBURNNEY I say, now that I am dead, I suppose -

THIEF Are you luney? - -

McBurney laughs pleasantly and starts to walk reassuringly over towards the Thief. He, however, shows an inclination to make for the door, though he merely looks around towards it and takes but one or two steps in that direction.

THIEF Are you - the ghost of yourself?

McBURNNEY No. I am myself, of course.

THIEF I am not afraid of you.

McBURNNEY Why should you be?

THIEF But the idea of - that - is not comfortable. It never was comfortable to me. - - You are the friendliest damned ghost I ever ~~xxx~~ see. I never seen any before, thank God! But you are friendly all right, and I guess there's nothing else counts much, - not for me. Be what you please. - - This watch, - (He feels of it and taps it lightly on the table to assure himself it is not an illusion) - what about it?

McBURNNEY My friends might feel it is not mine any more to do with as I like.

THIEF Never you mind. I'll undertake that they shall never be the wiser. Whatever you want shall happen to it, - and nothing else.

The Thief looks over at the Writer to see if he is listening. The

Writer is reading on of McBurneys books. The Thief steps nearer and looks closer at him to see if he is reading or asleep. He then tip-toes back to McBurney. McBurney smiles, enjoying the humor of the situation. He feels a growing liking for the Thief and his primitive loyalty of his.

McBurney No. For I suspect what I am doing is no better really than some of the mistakes that got you into trouble and run down at the heel. You see there is not so much difference between us after all (He laughs)

THIEF Aw, -

McBurney And then, my friend, when the jeweler has repaired it, how can I pay for it? I gave away my money, all of it, either before I died or in my will. There is none left I have a right to spend for watch-repairing.

THIEF Just leave that to me, sir. There's something I am good for. I'll find a way to pick up the price to pay the man. - And I'll pay it to him too. - After all you have done for me!

McBurney What have I done for you, my friend?

The Thief lays the watch down on the table and leans over towards McBurney with emphatic sincerity.

THIEF That's what. You've made me feel I had a friend.

McBurney You have a better friend than I.

THIEF No, I've not. And I don't want any.

McBURNNEY We cannot have too many friends. Especially we need - And you have given me another friend, a friend that I can trust, and do.

THIEF Who's that you trust?

McBURNNEY You.

THIEF Sure, you can trust me.

The Thief goes back to the table and picks up the watch.

McBURNNEY The watch? - Why, - put the watch back in the little drawer.

THIEF Aw,-

McBURNNEY We'll have to let it go, to be repaired, till someone thinks of it.

THIEF If I'm around again, I'll see that someone thinks of it.

McBURNNEY You will be around. The man who showed you in is coming back to take you to the Secretary. He will offer you a job as his messenger.

THIEF How D'you know? You make me feel uncomfortable again.

McBurnley laughs. The Thief still looks quite dubious.

McBURNLEY And you will take the job.

THIEF Sure, I'll take any job round here where you are.

McBURNLEY And when you find that other Friend, - then you will be His Messenger.

THIEF Well, I don't know. Maybe, if I like him. But if I should get a good job here, believe me I'll hang onto it. That's what I think I'll do.

The Attendant comes through the outer hall to the door, and speaks to the Thief.

Attendant Now come with me. The Secretary can see you now.

THIEF Well, I'll be - !

The Thief turns sharply around to McBurnley.

THIEF How d'you know?

ATTENDANT What is it?

THIEF You're a queer one.

The Thief starts out to follow the Attendant. McBurnley nods to him genially with best wishes. Then the Thief comes back toward McBurnley

THIEF See here, my friend. Just let me put you wise, if you don't mind. Don't go around a-telling people what is going to happen, like you did to me just now, and saying you are dead. If you do, they'll be sending you to Bellevue for observation. You just keep quiet and they'll never know the difference, but think that you're alive, the same as them. Take the tip from me. I'm telling you all right, my friend.

McBurnley All right, my friend. I will follow your advise.

ATTENDANT What is it you're saying? Who are you talking to? Oh, that gentleman over there. (Pointing towards the Writer) He's not listening to you. Come along.

Then the Thief follows the attendant out the door into the hall and off somewhere else. McBurnley stands a moment in deep thought, recovering from the intense outgiving of his talk with the Thief. Then he comes over to where the Writer sits reading a book in a comfortable chair by the window.

McBURNLEY What have you there?

WRITER Old Izaak Walton.

McBURNLEY Are you a fisherman, or
"Not a fisher,
But a well-wisher
To the game?"

WRITER I am a fisher as often as I get the chance, but that is not very often.

McBURNLEY Well, that makes no difference. It would make no difference if you never got the chance. Being an angler is a matter of one's nature. I see the right gleam in your eye. You belong to the brotherhood.

WRITER The Compleat Angler is a great book.

McBURNLEY I have - I had, I suppose I should say, - 81 of the 121 editions published up to 1898. I know a good deal of it by heart.

WRITER Did you use to fish a good deal in your day?

McBURNLEY Like you, - when I could. When I could not, I used to go for a stroll with old I.W. Here, along some stream of his.

The Music plays, in tune with the sweet atmosphere that Isaak Walton brings to all who love his book, flowing along as through flower-decked meadows, at times rippling hilariously down some tumbling waterfall, at times gliding gravely and more quietly through some stretch of deeper feeling, still following the sentiment of the conversation.

McBURNLEY Even on my busiest days, when I had a few minutes, I could lose myself in those pages. As he says, "I could sit there quietly, and I looking on the water, see some fishes sport themselves in the silver streams, others leaping at flies of several shapes and colours; looking on the hills, I could behold them spotted with woods and groves; looking down the meadows, could see, here a boy gathering lilies and lady-smokes, and there a girl cropping culverkeys and cowslips, all to make garlands suitable to this present month of May".

WRITER You certainly know him by heart!

McBURNLEY Yes, I know him by heart. That is the only way you can know anyone, or anything. - by heart. - Is not that so?

The Writer quickly nods his assent to this statement. The two remain silent a moment, thinking. The Music continues.

McBURNLEY Old Master Isaak is full of good talk, "And let me tell you, good company and good discourse are the sinews of virtue." - - - Yes, indeed, I would count myself as of the Noble and Modest Company of Anglers, who one way or another "have eat and drank, and laughed, and angled, and sung, and slept securely; and rose next day, and cast away care, and sung, and laughed, and angled again; which are blessings rich men cannot purchase with all their money."

McBurniey reaches into his pocket, gets out his pipe, fills it and lights it. Both smoke together. The writer, reading along in his book, begins to sneeze.

McBURNIEY What have you struck?

WRITER This about old Oliver Henley.

McBURNIEY Read it; read it aloud. All the Guild of Anglers must confess with Isak Walton, "Of all men I envy him, and him only, who catches more fish than I do".

WRITER { reader "And now I shall tell you that which might be called a secret: I have been a-fishing with old Oliver Henley, now with God, a noted fisher both for trout and salmon, and have observed that he would usually take three or four worms out of his bag, and put them into a little box in his pocket, where he would usually let them continue half-an-hour or more before he would bait his hook with them. I have asked him his reason, and he has replied: 'He did but pick the best out to be in readiness against he baited his hook the next time;' but he has been observed both by others and myself, to catch more fish than I or any other body that has ever gone a-fishing with him could do, and especially salmon; and I have been told lately by one of his most intimate and secret friends, that the box in which he puts those worms was anointed with a drop, or two or three, of the oil of *Lybyberles*, made by expression or infusion; and told that by the worms remaining in that box an hour, or a like time, then had incorporated a kind of smell that was irresistibly attractive, enough to force any fish within the smell of them to bite. This I heard not long since from a friend, but have not tried it".

McBURNIEY Nor have I tried it, or many other of of his recommendations for baiting and fishing. "Chocoloely good" as they may be, I would rather believe and enjoy them as he tells them than try them out and risk the certainty of disillusionment. But he believed them, every one. He never would have said a word that was not true to ~~xxx~~ have saved his life.

WRITER What sort of fishing did you go in for most? Sea fishing, or -

McBURNIEY No, no. I am not very fond of the water. I used to go up into the Catskills and the Adirondacks. Trout fishing is what I like best. Old Isak was wrong on that. He said to fish down stream. Quite wrong entirely mistaken! The trout lie with their heads up-stream. If you bring the fly down to them from up-stream, they have a chance to study it and will refuse it. I do not see how he caught a single trout that way! Bring the fly up-stream, and as it passes over the trout's head he will jump for it before he has a chance to look at it.

WRITER Brook trout you went after, eh? Catch some pretty good ones?

McBURNIEY Oh yes; oh yes! - I had a secret too. Like old Oliver Henley! A special brook I liked to call my own. I really do believe that no one else knew about it, or ever fished it but myself. It was like this. There it joined a larger brook, - ran into it in fact, - it was covered over by large moss-grown rocks, the tail of some

landslide long ago, and fallen trees. So it was easy to pass by and never notice it. I cannot tell how I happened to find it. Just by instinct, I suppose.

McBurnley looks over at the Writer to see if he has caught his deeper meaning and smiles to himself when he perceives the Writer's mind is all on fishing. Then he goes back to the fish with enthusiasm.

MCBURNLEY And, my dear fellow, the trout I would catch a hundred rods or so up that brook of mine, - they were that long! I give you my word-

WRITER Tell me how to find the place.

McBURNLEY You hunt for it. You'll find it, maybe, the same way I did.

They both laugh.

WRITER But you admit that you yourself do not believe a lot that Walton says. Then how -

McBURNLEY I see the point you are driving at, - what I said to you about your beliefs and doubts. It is very much the same. I take all Walton says about the Bible in a friendly way. For instance, - ~~xxxx~~ where's that book?

The Writer leans forward to hand him the copy of The Compleat Angler he has been reading. But McBurnley goes over to the book case

McBurnley No, no. I want my own copy. This is the one I used most and liked best. It is worn out, almost. See? It was the first I ever owned. It was in this first met Isaak Walton.

But as I was saying, - listen to this now: "And if this hold in reason, as I see none to the contrary, then it may probably be concluded, that Moses, who I told you before writ the book of Job, - (Of course he did not) - and the prophet Amos, who was a shepherd, were both Anglers; for you shall, in all the Old Testament, find fish-hooks, I think but twice mentioned, namely by meek Moses, the friend of God, and by the humble prophet Amos. (Charming and absurd, isn't it!) Concerning which last, namely the prophet Amos, I shall make but this observation, that he that shall read the humble, lowly, plain style of that prophet and compare it with the high, glorious, eloquent style of the prophet Isaiah, though they both be equally true, may easily believe Amos to be, not only a shepherd, but a good-natured plain fisherman. Which I ~~xx~~ May rather believe, by comparing the loving, lowly, humble Epistles of St. Peter, St. James, and St. John, whom we know were all fishers, with the glorious language and high metaphors of St. Paul, who we may believe was not." How can you fail to love him as he says these things?

WRITER Of course not. But -

McBURNLEY The higher criticism of the Bible notwithstanding. The higher criticism is not hurt by this.

WRITER Naturally not.

McBURNLEY Nor does the higher criticism affect this.

WRITER I see.

McBURNLEY Dear old Izaak Walton! It matters little what he thought, or what he thought he knew. He loved his fellow men; he loved the pleasant life God gave him in tumultuous times; he loved to go a-fishing. - - - He closed his life of Robert Sanderson, Bishop of Lincoln in these words, - "Thus this pattern of meekness and primitive innocence changed this for a better life. 'Tis now too late to wish that my life may be like his; for I am in the eighty-fifth year of my age; but I humbly beseech Almighty God that my death may; and do as earnestly beg of every reader to say Amen. 'Blessed is the man in whose spirit there is no guile.'"

The two remain silent. The Music draws to a close. After a moment McBurnley breaks forth in the silence with the hidden wish of his soul.

McBURNLEY How powerful is Literature to perpetuate one's work! - And when one knows that what he has striven for is right, - - !

He lapses into silence. The Writer sympathetically respects his outburst of emotion by simply bowing his head as he sits in his chair.

McBurnley Izaak Walton, simple, human, sincere, unforced! The spirit of the man himself descends, a sweet-souled influence, on all who read his book. Through century after century he moulds men, charms them, wins them in his book. And you can see how he affected each generation by its editions of his book. - - - I never wrote a thing. - Re Reports.

McBurnley stands in almost moody abstraction for a moment; then he heaves a sigh and recites a stanza from his favorite hymn as to himself. (Slight stress on words "joy," "pleasures" and "Him").

McBURNLEY "In our joys and in our sorrows,
Days of toil and hours of ease,
Still He calls in cares and pleasures,
That we love Him more than these!"

The Music plays a few measures of the "Jesus calls us" motif. From the outer hall a group of three or four gentlemen come in with architectural plans, which they lay on the table, clearing it of books and everything else for the purpose. McBurnley withdraws back into the half light or half shadow near the door leading up-stairs to his Tower Room.

Secy. ADAMS I want to show you gentlemen these plans for our new building. We claim that we have the last word in Y.M.C.A. buildings.

Adams spreads out the blue-prints on the table for their inspection. The three other Secretaries gather round to look at them with interest.

ADAMS See? The front office is laid out in the regular way, of course. The main entrance opens into it and everything else opens out from that.

SECY. BAKER That was McBurney's idea. He planned that when they were designing the old 23rd Street Y.M.C.A.

ADAMS Fundamental. Without it, the building would not be a Y.M.C.A., would it?

Secy. CHASE McBurney worked out that old 23rd Street Building at the same time he worked out the Secretaryship.

SECY. DONNE The building was a working body for the office, for the Secretary.

CHASE Precisely. Great man, McBurney.

DONNE What would he think if he could see these plans!

McBurney has been interested and has listened. He now comes up and looks at the plans over the shoulders of the others with evident approval and satisfaction. He is much gratified by the next remark.

BAKER That old 23rd Street Building was a wonderful thing in its day, though. There ~~never~~ had never been anything like it.

ADAMS See, we have the swimming pool up on the top floor with the gymnasium.

Donne There was no swimming pool in the old 23rd Street Building, was there?

BAKER Good gracious, no! They had no games or entertainments at all. Even checkers and backgammon were prohibited by the church opinion of the time. But McBurney had them, and charged them on the financial reports as furniture, to avoid opposition and scandal.

The Secretaries laugh, and McBurney looks much amused by the memory.

ADAMS And bowling alleys? Ours, you see, are up here with the gymnasium and the rest of the physical department.

BAKER Those were associated with saloons then. But McBurney even got those into the first Y.M.C.A. Building.

CHASE McBurney was for everything that would attract the young man and bring him within range of good influences.

McBurney shows his emphatic approval of this principle. He starts to speak for himself, but the others continue their talking and ~~th~~ there is no opening for him.

McBURNLEY I - - of course I - -

ADAMS Pretty broad-minded man, for these times!

CHASE Oh, yes, empharically.

McBurney looks quizzically at them, evidently considering it a rather left-handed compliment.

DONNE How have you got this arranged? oh yes. Very good.

BAKER No, I do not think you would say McBurney was a broad-minded man. Rather he was an open-minded man. He was Progressive. He grew with his work. He had no hard and fast theories about conduct, to which he was eternally committed. He was Practical. Whatever would help the work was good.

CHASE In this matter of planning of Y.M.C.A. buildings, look at the great development between the old 23rd Street and the West Side Y.M.C.A. He planned and built that too. That is a marvel!

ADAMS That has a swimming pool.

DOONE Yes, in the basement.

BAKER In 1898 they did not know how to build so they could put a swimming pool up on the top of a building. They were afraid it might leak, and then - !

DOONE You are certainly to be congratulated on these plans!

CHASE Yes indeed. They carry on the McBurney purpose in the Y.M.C.A. building plan.

BAKER The four-fold work was one of McBurney's greatest contributions to the Y.M.C.A. Moody wanted to save the souls of young men, - and of every one else, man, woman, and child. McBurney wanted to save the whole of the young man, body as well as mind and spirit and social instincts. And he thought you had to save the body first.

DONNE Quite right! Of course you have to save the body first.

CHASE And he thought to save young men was quite big enough joy by itself.

McBurney Of course it is! That is where Moody and I differed more than in anything else. He came around to my ~~wix~~ point of view later.

Two of the Secretaries look up, - Baker and Chase.

BAKER & CHASE What is that you say?

ADAMS I said nothing.

BAKER That is curious!

McBURNLEY I had to oppose Moody so earnestly at the Albany Convention in 1866 that he somehow got the idea that I was opposed to him personally. But this was not the case at all, of course. Moody was a wonderful blessing to the Church of Christ in that generation.

Secretary Chase has been studying the plans and has thought it was Secretary Baker who was talking ~~xx~~. Accordingly he directs his remarks to him.

CHASE Yes, And you state the matter in McBurnley's own words.

BAKER I - think I do not understand what you mean.

CHASE You knew you were quoting McBurnley didn't you? McBurnley told us about it once in one of those meetings of young secretaries he used to have up in his room. It was exactly as you stated it. And Moody did come around later. At the Baltimore Convention in 1879 Moody declared himself to that effect in so many words.

McBurnley Indeed he did. Square and frank Moody always was. He said that the work of the Secretary was too important for him to engage in in anything else. That he had tried doing both. So he gave up the secretaryship and became an evangelist. That you cannot do both and succeed.

CHASE That is exactly right.

BAKER Certainly that is right. I never said it was not. Why do you address your remarks to me?

CHASE Just what you said a moment ago, that is all.

BAKER Yes, but - -

McBurnley And young men for young men! No one can help a young man like a young man. All Secretaries ought to be young Men.

McBurnley is intent only upon declaring what he feels are and always have been essential principles of Y.M.C.A. work. He has not noticed the fact that his presence was not realized and that his interpolated remarks were therefor not understood.

Donne Something seems to be disturbing you gentlemen. The old Portland Test is to come up again at the Atlantic City Convention. Let us stop talking about McBurnley and think about that.

ADAMS That ought to go through.

BAKER The evangelical test has always been one of the fundamentals

of Y.M.C.A. membership,-

ADAMS Always? Since 1869, you mean.

BAKER Since 1869, of course. For 53 years it has bound the Y.M.C.A. up with the Evangelical Churches.

DONNE Yes, it has. Ought the Y.M.C.A. be bound up any longer?

McBurney shows that this is a question in which he is very deeply interested. His previous efforts to join in the conversation and to be heard have however been discouraging and yet he feels it useless to try again.

BAKER I think most certainly it ought. Has not the half century of great development demonstrated that the Portland Test has been broad enough to secure the largest possible cooperation and narrow enough to insure harmony?

DONNE Largest possible cooperation in 1869, perhaps, but not now. And harmony that is based on narrowness -

CHASE I understand that the proposal is simply to go back to the Evangelical Resolution of the Detroit Convention in 1868, "that membership in good standing in an evangelical Church should be the unvarying test of active membership."

DONNE That is it.

CHASE The International Committee brought that in. Our friend, whom we have just been talking about, McBurney, heartily approved of it. I do not know but he wrote it, - he or Cephas Brainerd.

McBurney shows emphatically explicit confirmation by his manner.

McBurney We both did; we wrote it together.

CHASE They wrote it together, you say? I think it very likely. The Portland Convention was going to reaffirm it, when General Howard must needs get up and raise the fatal question, "What is an evangelical church? Is it one whose members love the Lord Jesus Christ?" Thane Miller promptly called out from the floor, "That is just it." But it was too late. General Howard's question was too much for the clergymen present, and they went at it, discussing a theological question in an organizational field, and trying to decide a practical question on theological grounds. One clergyman went so far as to say he could not associate with any one in Christian fellowship who denied Christ the crown of divinity.

ADAMS That was McBurney himself, wasn't it?

CHASE Oh no.

McBurney By no means. I will associate with any one that God has made.

CHASE McBurney believes that in an avowedly Christian organization active membership should be confined to professed Christians.

McBurnley Yes.

CHASE Well, finally some one moved that the question be referred to a committee, and -

BAKER - And McBurnley took the liberty of naming the committee in an amendment to the motion.

McBurnley Effrontery! Had the effrontery; not took the liberty.

BAKER I should not call it effrontery.

McBURNLEY Certainly it was effrontery; nothing else in the world.

BAKER (to Chase) I am surpris'd at you. Why should speak that way of Mr McBurnley?

CHASE I have said nothing against McBurnley.

BAKER Why, -my dear sir, - - !

CHASE I did not. Either of these gentlemen -

DONNE I certainly - Thought you did.

ADAMS (to D) I thought - - it was you who spoke of McBurnley's amendment as a piece of effrontery.

Baker Oh no. It was not he. I heard the words quite distinctly, and -

CHASE Well, I was saying, -when you interrupted me, - that the question was referred to a committee consisting of four clergymen and General Howard, who formulated the Portland Test, largely compiling it from the words of S cripture.

BAKER And the vote upon the acceptance of this formula was unanimous, and the Convention gave vent to its enthusiasm by spontaneously singing and singing the hymn Coronation, "All Hail the Power of Jesus Name".

CHASE I grant that at that time McBurnley was heartily in favor of the Test and its wording.

McBurnley I was, heartily.

Baker That is the whole point. It shows where he would stand now, where all of them would stand now, -

McBURNLEY It does not.

BAKER (to C) I beg pardon, it does.

CHASE I have said nothing, -though I do not think that it necessarily does prove what his position would be now. He was always growing.

~~BAKER - You have said nothing? If there has been any one way,~~

BAKER You have said nothing? When you flatly and - discourteously contradicted -

CHASE I have said nothing. If there has been ~~an~~ discourtesy, -

McBURNLEY I ---

McBurnley comes to himself out of the heat of the argument and stops short. He realizes the confusion that has arisen from the circumstances and smiles at the pathetic absurdity of it all. He shakes his head sadly, closes his eyes and lifts his head as if in prayer. The two Secretaries do not see him, however and maintain their contention for the moment longer. The two younger Secretaries are puzzled, non-plussed, at the inexplicable contempts between their elders.

BAKER I say that McBurnley, if he were here, -

CHASE - - - I say that McBurnley, if he were here, -

They both stop, struck by their own words, and look across the table at each other.

Both If he were here, - McBurnley -

They instinctively reach out their hands to each other and grasp each other's hands.

BAKER What he would do, -

CHASE He did with me.

The two Secretaries kneel down on either side of the table, in silent prayer. The two younger Secretaries also kneel. McBurnley stands between them in prayer, his hands stretched out to them as they kneel on either side of him. The Music plays softly ethereally.

McBURNLEY Thy Kingdom come! Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in Heaven!

The Music continues, rising to a celestial crescendo.

McBURNLEY For Thine is the Kingdom, and the Power, and the Glory, - forever!

SECRETARIES Amen.

The Music closes with an instrumental Amen echoing the Amen of the prayer. (It may be the Dresden Amen) There is silence a moment. The four men rise from their knees and with kindly smiles grasp each other's hands. McBurnley smiling as he looks at them steps back into the half-light near the door that leads up the stairs.

BAKER Truly it seemed - that he himself was here, - and prayed with us.

CHASE Way may it not be that - he was.

BAKER Now in a spirit more like his we can talk about the work of the Convention.

McBURNLEY I am afraid that all of it was in my spirit. How often I have lost the greater in the less, and had to brigg myself up short and set things straight again!

CHASE We ought to get together, all of us, upon this question of the International Committee and the State Committees. The work of the whole Association should be unified but not too strongly centralized

McBURNLEY They are good fellows!

Secretary Adams starts to toll up his plans. Secretaries Baker and Donne walk off toward the door to the outer office, talking as they go.

ADAMS We hafe a Tower Room in our building too, you see.

McBurnley at once comes up again to look at the plan, ist ensely intw terested once more as soon as he hears this remark.

CHASE Whenever I am in an Association building that has a room upstairs, - I always feel, somehow, that he is there.

McBurnley stands smiling between them as they look at the plans. Then he steps back to let them pass him as they follow after the others out into the office. He stands smiling, watching them depart. Then he turns back with a sigh to the Writer.

McBURNLEY And what have you been doing? Thought up anything to make a celebration off? I hope not! Being celebrated would be most embag-rassing and disagreeable. Besides, - it would suggest that E - was gone.

WRITER You seem to be still with the Y men, - in^{the}spirit.

McBURNLEY Oh yes, oh yes! Of course I am. - - Still reading?

WRITER I was. And yet, - I do not know, I must have been asleep.

McBURNLEY What? Through all that row I made among those fellows?

WRITER A moment ago I was reading here what Isaak Walton said about the sweet and kindly Bishop Sanderson of Lincoln, and thinking over what you said of him. And then, - a dream within a dream, I guess it must have been.

McBurnley laughs. The Writer looks up at him puzzled.

WRITER ~~xxxx~~ I'm all mixed up. I must have been asleep and dreamed. And yet I do not know which is the dream, - if that, of this.

McBURNEY The one that last the longer is the real. The good will last, thank God! And all the hope and deeper joy of life are just God's dream for us, that go ahead of us a little way and lead us on.

WRITER There were four Secretaries here, I dreamed, who talked about the work most earnestly, with self-abandoning devotedness. I saw you were with them all the time. But it seems as if they could not see. And so - it must have been a dream.

McBURNEY It was the truth. Yes, I am always round the Y. In every Association I have my room "up-stairs". My Tower Room that cannot be destroyed. The old 23rd Street Building has come down, has given way to business. None the less I am always in my Tower Room for those who want to see me. Ask any one if I am not! And for you. The Y.M.C.A. has been for almost all my life the only home I had on earth, since first, a stranger and but just a boy, I came here to New York. The Y has been to me my father and my mother, my daily comrade and my child, - my all.

WRITER Did you not marry?

McBURNEY No.

They are both silent. The Music plays, as there appears as a vision of memory against the wall beside the outer door a young woman, dressed in the dress of the years just after the Civil War. She ~~sits~~ stands there looking at McBurney, smiling and as if waiting. He ~~turns~~ turns and looks toward her. Then he turns and looks anxiously at the Writer a moment and then back again at the young woman. The Music stops.

McBURNEY Can you - not see?

WRITER No.

McBURNEY You see nothing?

WRITER No.

McBURNEY Over There?

WRITER No.

McBurney breathes a sigh of relief.

WRITER Why - .?

McBURNEY It was the boy that always needed me. Whatever was his age, to me he always was a boy. And he always came, - might come at any moment. I must be there to bring him in and lead him to the Father's House. He needed me. And Jesus called me. Always Jesus calls us, in some way or form, and that comes first. For me it was the boy. Sometimes

he came in poverty and loneliness, as I had come. Sometimes he came in wealth and ability from cultured families, from Cristian homes, and yet not seeing -yet - what he could do to help his fellows. Sometimes he came a criminal, his mind and soul defiled and mutilated out of easy recognition as His Father's son. Sometimes he came a boy already consecrate to bear through hardship, loneliness and sacrifice the message of the Christ in his own life to his fellow-men at home or in the mission field. These needed me, these called to me, - yes, most of all. For all the door must be held open wide, the word of welcome ready, and the four-fold help at hand.

WRITER And so you gave yourself entirely? And gave up all - life's happiness?

McBURNLEY That was not much, - myself. For I am weak. It totter back and forth. I often long to leave my place, to shut my door, and take life's love and happiness.

He is silent. The Writer also is silent.

McBURNLEY Though that would be to shut them out.

He is silent again. He turns and looks over at the young woman again, who seems to be in deep unhappiness, her hands clasped in front of her and looking up.

McBURNLEY I never can forget her. - - Oh! - -

He holds out his arms to her. She looks down at him, and shaking her head smiles sadly at him. The Music plays. A boy appears in the door-way from the outer office. He is a poor boy, and alone. The young woman turns and with a smile points McBurnley to the boy. Then she steps back and almost disappears, but still stands there looking at him. McBurnley goes quickly across to the boy with all his irresistible geniality of manner, holding his hand out to the boy. The Writer stands up.

The Music playson, in superlative beauty what can be described only as a heavenly apotheosis. of the themes of the play. The Music rises higher and higher in celestial beauty as with the arpeggios of harps in *ad crescendo* to the end.

McBURNLEY Come in, my boy.

McBurnley takes the boy by the hand and leads him in, putting his arm around the boy's shoulders as they go in to the center of the room.

The BOY This feels like home!

The Y.Man returns. He is coming over to the Writer, raising his hand to greet him. But the Writer points to McBurnley and the Boy. The Y Man Stops. He sees McBurnley and knows who he is. He bows his

head a moment and then stands watching him.

The BOY This Feels like home all right!

McBurney No, this is not Home, -But Almost Home.

From the outer office comes in the young man who was the Thief. He comes in back of the Y Man toward McBurney. He is erect and his whole manner is cheerful and manly. He addresses McBurney as delivering a message.

THE MESSENGER Your Friend, - the real Friend, -you know, - He wants you.

McBurney acknowledges the message with a smile. He turns to the Y Man and gives the Boy over to him. The Young Woman, appearing more brightly again, leans forward toward McBurney with a smile, and he smiles back at her. He turns and goes through the door to the ~~xxx~~ stairs and up the three steps as far as the landing, as the Music reaches its climax fortissimo. Then instantly the Music comes down to piano as McBurney goes on up the stairs and disappears from sight. Only a flood of light pours down the stairs as the Music continues diminuendo to piannissimo and ends with soft high chords on the strings and the harps.

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