

The Home Circle.

WAYFARERS.

The way is long, my darling, The road is rough and steep...

HEROISM.

In Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, a short time ago, Rev. Henry Ward Beecher took for the subject of his discourse, "Heroism," which he defined to be "the sacrifice of one's self to some moral sentiment; the sacrifice of the animal man; the putting in peril, if need be, the sacrifice of our lower life for the sake of evincing our faith in our higher life. This could not run from good to bad, but must always from the lower to the higher."

A man may be a hero in a bad cause as well as in a good one. There are a great many men in New York to-day, and, according to the measure of their intelligence, they are heroic; but they are working in a bad cause.

Mr. Beecher then alluded to the present condition of South Carolina, as contrasted with her days of prosperity; and said,—"The times of excitement are gone by, and I think you will sympathize with me when I say that, although they were in a bad corner, there was great heroism among that people. It would be hardly right for me, when the public indignation is so justly excited against the Indians, to say that there is heroism there; but there is."

There is cruelty and meanness and revenge, and almost every vice that disgraces manhood; and nevertheless there are some among them that rise superior to the average of their fellows and really love their nation. They are standing for what they regard to be right in a way that shows them to be heroes. In their darkness, in their narrow limits, let us not fully despise them.

There were multitudes of heroes when the Atlantic went upon the rocks, but there was one—nor am I sorry that he belongs to my own profession, the Rev. Mr. Ancient—under circumstances sufficient to daunt even a professional seaman, amid the storm and raging sea, who went out in the boat and unclasped the man bound to the rigging and brought him in. That was heroic. The man was no relative of his; but he said: What is my life to his humanity—it is good for nothing. That man was ordained then; before that he had somebody's hand put upon him, and so his name will go down in story forever upon the roll of honor. It is proposed to raise a purse and send it to Mr. Ancient. Well, I have no objection to that; I presume a settled pastor on that rock is not overburdened with revenue, yet I should be sorry that he should think that was the only reward he had.

Another one, nearer to our door—I don't know his name, but I mean the engineer on the ill-fated Stonington train—when he was found in the morning he, unwarned, standing out upon his engine, dashing forward at all speed, saw by the head-light the danger that was approaching, and he was found upon the engine with one hand upon the throttle and the other upon the brake. Instead of leaping off, he stood and died at his post. Rushing into death he was a hero. He did not know it; it was not for the sake of having men say he was a hero that he did it. It was easy for him to die; but being dead he yet lives, for such men shall not be forgotten.

OUR MOTHER.

Round the idea of one's mother, the mind of a man clings with fond affection. It is the first deep thought stamped upon our infant hearts when yet soft and capable of receiving the most profound impression, and the after feelings of the world are more or less light in comparison. Even in our old age we look back to that feeling as the sweetest we have through life.

A TRUE SKETCH FROM LIFE.

It was the calm, still hour of midnight, in the little village of S—. All nature was hushed in deep repose, and naught was heard save the peaceful murmur of a distant waterfall, and the hourly striking of a clock on a distant church.

One light only was visible—and that faintly glimmered from an open casement in a lovely cottage situated in the southern extremity of the village. It was almost concealed from the passing eye by the numerous vines and shrubs around it, and from its dream-like seclusion it had long borne the name of the "Happy Retreat," and until a few years previous it had merited this cognomen.

But now sorrow is at work in the hearts of that hitherto happy family, and the angel of death is hovering round them.

A dearly loved son and brother has been cut down in the prime of life by that scourge of many sections of our country, typhoid fever, and is now struggling in the arms of the fell destroyer.

The pale, heart-stricken mother is kneeling by the couch of her first-born son, earnestly praying that this cup may pass from her. She believes there is no sorrow like her sorrow, and in her agony she forgets all save the dying one. For a long time she has remained in this posture, and hope had begun to revive in her breast.

A feeble voice pronounces the gentle word "Mother!" She springs up, and bending over her son, her worst fears are all confirmed. She sees the cold, clammy death-dew upon his noble brow, and her heart tells her all hope is vain.

The lips of the sufferer slowly move, and she strains every nerve to catch the almost inarticulate sounds: "Mother, dear, I am dying now, but do not weep for me for I do not fear death. My heavenly father is only calling me home a little before you and the dear ones here. God has been very merciful to me thus far, and even now he is with me in the shadow of the dark valley of death, and I fear no ill." He paused a moment and then said: "I am going now, and I wish you to bury me in the arbor where we have spent so many happy hours in holding communion with our Maker."

The promise was given, and ere another hour was numbered upon time's rapid revolving wheel, his pure spirit had fled from the earth, and, we trust was reposing in its heavenly home.

The sun rose with all its resplendent majesty, but it shed no joy in the hearts of this mourning group. The unfeeling tyrant had entered the hitherto unbroken circle, and a dearly beloved one had passed away forever. Yet they wept not as those without hope, for they felt that their loss was his eternal gain.

Ere the morning had passed, the bereaved family had gathered around the death-bed of the father and husband. He, too, had fallen a victim to the same disease, and well he knew that he must die. He had called his family around him to receive his parting words. It was hard for the friends to bear this, especially at this time, but they felt it to be the hand of the Lord who was thus dealing with them, and they dared not complain.

The hour of midnight arrived and again the pious mother is kneeling by the couch of the dying. She is weeping bitterly, and her low sobs alone disturb the silence of the sacred place. At length she exclaimed, "Oh, father of mercy! can I endure all this?"

A hand of the invalid was placed caressingly upon her bowed head, while the single word "Mary," broke from his lips. It was spoken in a slightly reproachful tone, and the poor woman was silent. "Dear Mary I am dying. The dark-winged angel is even now busy at my very heart-strings—striving to break the brittle thread of life—and the work will soon be finished. But be calm and trust in Him who doeth all things well, for he has said, 'As the day, thy strength shall be.' A little while and we shall meet where parting scenes are unknown. Live faithfully and mourn not for those who are free from the sufferings of earth. I cannot see you now, darling, but celestial music is all around and bright angels are waiting to bear my spirit home to God."

Calmly and peacefully as the sun sinks to rest at the close of day, did the spirit of this good man pass away from earth.

Ten days rolled quickly by, and again the solemn hour of midnight finds this poor, sorrow-laden widow kneeling by the side of another son who is about to enter upon the untried realities of the spiritland.

After a long silence he said: "Is this death, mother? Say, mother dear, can death be so pleasant as this? I am blind, but oh, the sweet peace I feel in my very soul. I am going now dear mother and brother. Bury me by the side of father and Willie, and meet me in Heaven. Father and brother I come," and with a triumphant shout his disembodied spirit fled to God, and the lifeless clay of the once lovely Clement was all that remained to his sorrowing friends.

Days, weeks and months rolled slowly along, and this same mother is closing the eyes of her darling Henry in death's long, dreamless sleep. Calmly she says, "not my will, but thine be done. Teach me to patiently wait thy time. I shall receive thy summons with joy and not grief; for we shall all meet in the better world at last, never more to be separated."

Now she patiently waits her summons to join the loved ones, and ere long a crown of righteousness will deck her pure brow in the realms of bliss.—By ARDILL.

THE MAD ENGINEER.

Daniel Dupont was an Engineer on the Railroad. A good natured, brave, honest and hardy young man. Industrious and attentive to his business, he had become quite a pet of the company. His locomotive, the Prairie Star, was kept in good order, and made the best time of any on the road. He was large, powerful of frame, and the very picture of good health; but he had a wife who was directly his opposite, to whom he was most tenderly attached.

Minnie Dupont was a pale but pretty little woman, twenty-five years of age, who we might say had scarcely enjoyed a day of good health for five years. It was natural for her to cling to her manly husband, who was three years her senior, as her superior in everything.

On Monday morning, as Daniel was leaving his pleasant little home for his regular trip, his wife complained of feeling unwell, and expressed a wish that he would get some one else to run that time.

The young Engineer, with his hand on the door knob, paused and glanced at his wife. She looked no paler than usual, and he could see no use in remaining.

"Minnie," he said, "I have asked leave so often to stay with you, that I fear the company will become tired of it, and I lose my position."

Daniel Dupont was poor, and his profession was his only means of sustenance. Minnie, patient, darling Minnie, only heaved a sigh, but said not another word.

Her husband went. His conscience felt a pang; but engrossed in the management of his engine, he forgot his suffering wife. The trip was made to the entire length of the road, and two days after Dupont's departure from T—, the train was within 240 miles of his home. As it thundered into a station the operator ran out waved his handkerchief, and shouted: "Dupont!"

"Aye, aye," responded the individual black with coal, and grim with soot, leaning out from the engine room.

"A telegram for you," and handed him a slip of paper. He took the paper and glanced at it. It was brief, but contained enough to drive the blood from his cheek to his heart.

"Your wife is very sick; she cannot live."

To which was added:

"Oh, come home to your dying Minnie."

"Come! yes, I will!" he cried as with his hard, brawny hand he dashed the tears from his eyes. "Jake," he shouted to the negro fireman, "uncouple us from the train."

"Why marse, what?"

"Quick, I say; and ask no questions." The faithful negro obeyed, and quick as lightning—the work was done.

The engine sprang forward with a lurch that sent the darkey to his master's feet.

When he recovered his equilibrium they were leaving the train behind and speeding forward like the wind.

The frightened African glanced at the Engineer, whose face was the picture of stony firmness; his strong hand on the lever told that he was putting on every ounce of steam there was to spare.

"More coal," he shrieked in harsh sepulchral tones. The negro heaped the furnace full. The black smoke rolled in one vast cloud. Faster and faster they flew. The Engineer leaning out, his face although black and grim, displayed a deathly pallor.

They thundered past one, two stations, and although signal flags were waved no heed was paid to them. Jake glanced out at the earth which appeared a mere shimmering shadow. He thought of meeting some up train and the fearful collision it would produce. Faster and faster the locomotive went until its fearful roar became a groan. It reeled and staggered from side to side; the spindles became hot and melted drops of iron ran from them. The negro's face was haggard with fear, and his master's eyes blazed like those of a lunatic. The wire flashed news to a station ahead:

"A mad Engineer is on the road; throw open the switch."

Ere it could be done, the engine rushed by the station, and was speeding, groaning, staggering on.

Several trains had been passed, but luckily all were on the switches, and no impediment had been met. A telegram was next flashed along the whole length of the line:

"Keep the track clear; a mad Engineer is on the road."

Dupont spoke not a word, except to command the fireman and get more speed, or occasionally exclaim:

"Oh! Minnie, I'm coming."

The groaning locomotive was now running at the fearful rate of seventy miles an hour. Trains were rapidly run off the track, and in less than four hours he stopped in the town of T—, and ran up to his house. He was only in time to clasp his darling wife in his arms, and receive her last kiss and parting blessing ere her spirit fled. To express his wild grief would be impossible. For months his life and reason were despaired of; but gradually he became reconciled to his fate, and returned to his business.

It was only a few days ago, as I was waiting at the depot for the train, a fellow-passenger pointed to a sad-faced looking person busily employed upon an engine, with hair prematurely grown gray, and said, "There is the Mad Engineer."—American Journal.

ONE WOMAN'S IDEA.

Miss Margaret Buchanan, in her "Queen of the Kitchen," sets up an argument with those of her sex who are compelled to rely upon their own exertions for a living, that it is more healthful, honorable and profitable to do the work of a family than to work behind the counter of a store, teach school or labor in a manufacturing establishment. Says she:—

"Housework is admirably calculated to preserve a robust woman, and to strengthen one that is weak. An hour in the laundry is better than a vial of iron. For a woman not obliged to support herself, housework is a duty. Housework is easier than running sewing machines, or making dresses. It is easier than teaching; and, while engaged in its lighter forms, a young lady may find more time for mental culture than teachers do. Housework is the natural physical occupation for all women. It is not only women's right, but it is their duty to hold exclusive possession of the kitchen and the dining-room. It gives them great power. Upon the administration of the kitchen hangs a world of weal or woe. An innumerable train of diseases is concealed in the sideboard. No bodily diseases merely, but hypochondria and hysterics, and their blue and stunted offspring. A lady is the mightiest sceptre on earth."

A RULING PASSION.

A few sensible remarks concerning the prevalent love of elaborate dress: The passion for dress, which is at once the expression of and stimulus to vanity, tends to all manner of illusions, pervading all classes; in the first place to preposterous faith in its efficacy. Passion for dress leads to the ignoring of all unpalatable truths; it blinds a woman to her own defects; and consequently betrays her into betraying them; it deadens her to the harmony of things, and tempts the old and plain into humiliating self-comparison with youth and grace, deluding them into the notion that dress makes beauty—that the cowl makes the monk. This it is that tempts the poor into rivalry with the rich; into frippery—content with the barest seeming and rudest imitation; into spending their small means on the merest outside show. And in all cases, passion of this nature is excited and kept alive by a mistaken view, often fatally mistaken, as to the objects to be placed and attracted by the display, so that we might almost say that no woman will be too fine, or in any marked degree unsuitably attired, who is right in the eyes she wishes to satisfy, and who confines herself to her legitimate sphere of attraction.

WHAT BECOMES OF THEM.

What becomes of all the men, who in youth exhibit high talents, and give promise of a brilliant future? How suggestive the question, and how much truth there is in the statement that they may be seen enveloped in white aprons, with hair parted in the middle, dealing out mixed drinks, as bar tenders. The voices that once gave evidence of Ciceroic talent are now heard selling cheap jewelry or prize candy on the street corners. They command canal boats and street cars, and occasionally one with more ambition than the others becomes a manufacturer of root beer, lemonade, and other pleasant and refreshing summer drinks.

Ten chances to one the boy who left school at the head of his class, astonishing the faculty, and making proud the parents by the brilliancy of his genius, has not found his real level in any one of the high positions their hopes had assigned him. More than likely, he is keeping a peanut stand, or is employed in some menial service, at poor compensation. The girl that is always correct, prompt and studious at school, seldom marries well, nor fully meets the expectation of her friends. On the contrary, she connects herself with a man who cannot appreciate worth, and the duties and cares of her position gradually usurp the intellectual and elevating tastes and associations of former years. The rough hands, bulky form, careworn features and commonplace remark, all belong to the one who graduated with such high honors at—Seminary.

There is something wrong about this way our promising young men and women are burning out. The brilliant genius with which they have been credited must have been a mistake, and their acquirements as scholars a purely mechanical matter, or else the whole system of education, so far as they are concerned, is a failure.

Which is it? Is the brain taught to store up useful knowledge by the systems in vogue at our schools, or is it used like a slate—rubbed out when filled? We believe this to be the fault. All the essentials of a perfect education have been traced upon the brain, but when the examination or recitation has passed, all these impressions have been rubbed out or forgotten. We feel safe in saying that a large portion of our modern graduates are no better fitted for successful competition with the world, than those who have had the advantages of a country school for a few terms. The professors and principals of the larger schools and academies we expect will differ with and not thank us for this opinion. But we point them to the fact, undisputed and melancholy as it is, that three-fourths of the young men and women who graduate at their institutions, never fulfill the hopes and expectations entertained of them. They promise well, but don't pay worth a cent.