

## THE CHILDREN'S RECORD

### IS LIFE WORTH LIVING.



On a bright day, not long ago, two men who, forty years before had been friends and classmates at Harvard, met under the elms of Boston Common, and passed each other without recognition.

Mr. A — went down Beacon Street, and entered a stately house in which a famous literary club met that afternoon. They discussed the hackneyed question, "Is life worth living?" Mr. A— read a paper, which, in a cynical, indifferent way, proved to the satisfaction of his hearers that it was not worth anything.

He was a slight man, with a keen, intellectual face. In his native State he was well known for his wealth, his learning, and his high social position. All the resources from which affluence and brilliancy and power can be forced into a man's career had been within his reach since boyhood; but his face bore no other record than that of a sickly refinement and weary discontent, and when he pronounced human life a failure, his hearers knew that he gave the honest verdict of his sixty years.

It did not occur to them that they had been sixty useless years; sixty years in which the intellect had grown diseased from self-absorption, and the heart had withered like an unfruitful plant.

The other old man, in his patched shoes and coarse coat, crossed the Common with a swift, energetic step, and entered Tremont Temple. There was a meeting there of delegates from the mission fields of the far West.

He came to report the progress of civilization and Christianity along the wonderful Columbia River, on Puget Sound, in the valleys of the Frazer, whose mountain walls rival the Alps, in the ports of Alaska, and in the fog bound islands of the Pacific.

He was a tall, powerfully built man, his hair as white as snow. His rugged face bore marks left by self denial and severe privations, but through it shone the light of a lofty purpose and a high faith.

"That man," said a by-stander, "chose,

forty years ago, to give up the agreeable associations which he would have enjoyed in New England, to do God's work on the Western frontier. His salary has never been more than three hundred dollars a year. But he understands the importance of his work.

"The political future of our nation lies largely in the development of the great Western empire, and he with hundreds of other obscure martyrs, has given his life to found the new towns and future cities of our Western world upon Christian principles."

When the perils which he had met, and the hardships which had ground down his life from youth to old age, were described by one of the speakers who introduced him to the audience, he answered cheerfully that they had only fitted him the better for his work. His voice rose like a trumpet as he told of great provinces yet to be civilized, and of masses of men, Indians, Chinese, negroes, and corrupt whites, but all his brothers, needing, and some of them waiting, to be told of Christ.

That evening a friend met him hurrying to the station. "What going back to your work again?" he exclaimed. "After forty years' absence you ought to give a few days to your friends, and to rest in your native New England."

"I have not time," he said, smiling, "I am an old man, and there is so much to do!"

An hour later he sat in the train, rushing toward the setting sun. As he thought of the vast provinces in the West, filled with tribes of men from every quarter of the globe, waiting to hear the message of hope and cheer which he had to bring, the blood throbbed in his old body, and his eyes glowed with joy.

"Dear Saviour!" he whispered, "I thank thee that I have still a little more life for this work which thou hast given me to do."

So these two men went each his way. One was like a noble ship aground on a desert coast, its sails hanging idle in the sun, its hull crumbling to dust, unused and worthless.

The other was happy and eager in his work, his influence a blessing and a benison in every community in which he had lived.

Can the story of these men help the young to decide whether life is worth living?—Sel.