

A Beautiful Thought

A physician, whose life had been made beautiful with good deeds and a high faith, said once:

"If I have been happy or useful in the world, it is due largely to the effect on my mind of a chance question from a stranger.

"I was a poor boy and a cripple. One day, standing on a cricket-field, I was watching the other boys with bitterness and envy. They were strong, healthy, well clothed, and well fed. Some of the mothers of the players sat in carriages, waiting to see the game, intending to drive their sons home when it was over. I looked at them with an angry scowl, sick at heart. A young man, standing beside me, and seeing, no doubt, the discontent in my face, touched my arm.

"Say boy! You wish you were in the place of those boys, eh?" he said.

"Yes, I do!" I broke out. "Why should they have everything and I nothing?"

"He nodded gravely. 'I reckon God gave them money and education and health to help them to be of some account in the world. Did it never strike you that He gave you your lame leg for the same reason—to make a man of you?'

"I did not answer, and he turned away. I never saw him again. But I couldn't get his words out of my mind. My crippled leg—God's gift? To teach me patience and strength?"

"I did not believe it, but I was a thoughtful boy, taught to reverence God, and the more I thought of it the more it seemed to me the stranger had told the truth. I did believe that God pitied me, and at last came to feel that it would please Him if I rose above my deformity, and by it was made more manly and true. It worked on my temper, my thoughts, and at last upon my actions. Gradually it influenced my whole life. Whatever came to me I looked upon as God's gift for some especial purpose. If it were a difficulty He gave it for me to struggle with, to strengthen my mind and faith; if it were a helpless invalid cast on me for support, or even a beggar, I thought, God has given me another chance to do His work."

Tom's Battle.

"There isn't any use in trying to do good, mother," said Tom Winter, one Sabbath afternoon. "I've tried so hard this week, but it didn't do any good. I get angry so quick. I think every time I never will again; but the next time anything provokes me, away I go before I know it.

"You can conquer your enemy if you meet him in the right way. Remember how David went out to meet Goliath. Who would have thought that he, with only his sling and the little stones he had taken from the brook, could defeat the mighty Philistine? But he did because he went in the name and strength of the Lord of hosts. Now your temper is your giant. If you meet him in your own strength he will defeat you; but if, like David, you go out in God's strength, you will overcome. Try again to-morrow, Tom. Ask God to go with you and help you; and when your enemy rises up against you, fight him down. Say to him that he shall not overcome you because you fight with God's help and strength."

"Well," promised Tom, "I'll try, but I can't help being afraid."

Everything went smoothly next day until play hour. The boys were playing ball, and one of them accused Tom of cheating. Instantly his face crimsoned, and he turned toward the accuser, but the angry words died on his lips. His conversation with his mother flashed into his mind. "I will try, if God will help me," he thought. It was a hard struggle for a minute. He shut his eyes tight together, and all his heart went out in a cry for help, and he conquered.

"David killed Goliath, and that was the end of him," said Tom, that night; "but my giant isn't dead, if I did conquer him once."

"I know," said his mother, "but every victory makes you stronger and him weaker; and when the warfare is over, there is a crown of life promised to those who endure to the end."—*Selected.*

The Children in India.

In India there is much to hinder regular teaching among the children. There are constant festivals among the Hindus, and the children suffer much from fevers and sore eyes; the hot weather is very weakening. The teacher misses a little more of six or seven, and on enquiry, learns that she has gone to be married, or if she is a little older, she has gone on a visit to her husband's people.

A Mohammedan girl of twelve had been a widow, but was married again. If she had been a Hindu she must always continue a widow. At a prize-giving last February, a little girl laden with jewels much amused the *Mem Sahib* who was giving the prizes, by entreating that she might have hers quickly, as she was to be married that evening. A missionary lady writes:

"One evening a grand wedding procession passed our house. There were an immense number of people who held lights arranged like chandeliers, and glittering like silver. The little bridegroom was carried under a canopy. All the people around had been feasted, and every one received a present of a brass vessel."

Another lady writes from the Karachi Mission: "I am much interested in two little wives whom I visit; they are about nine and eleven years old. Their husbands wish them to learn to read, but I don't think the young ladies are very anxious about it themselves. They have no mother-in-law, but are looked after by a woman living down stairs. The men say their wives 'play all day.' Last time I was there, they were much interested in the story of blind Bartimeus, and I taught them a little prayer: 'O God, give me a new heart, and thy Holy Spirit.'"

The same lady thus describes a Mohammedan school: "I am trying to teach them to sing, but as they have no idea of time or harmony, they all make a different noise which is very laughable. The village schoolroom is very small, and the children sit on the ground, with no desks, maps, or pictures. The little pupils look dismal; I can seldom win a smile from them."

At the Karachi Mission, a little Gujerati child died. During her short illness, she prayed continually; her last words were, "Lord Jesus, take me to Thyself."

How different is such a death from their hideous superstitions of having to be born again into snakes, animals, or even trees!

The Gujeratis believe that all the forest trees are living souls, sent there

for punishment, and waiting to be delivered. At this same Mission, one of the Maraltie school girls knocked down the household idol with a broom, to show her mother that it had no life or power. A child was severely beaten by her mother because she refused to go to an idol temple, and was finally obliged to yield. "I did not worship in my heart," she explained, sadly, to her teacher.

In Bengal, Kali is one of the favourite deities. Pictures and images of this idol show her with a blue face, four arms, and glaring eyes. She wears a necklace of bleeding skulls, and generally holds in one hand a sword, and in the other a child, whom she is about to devour. Poor Hindu children are terribly afraid of offending this goddess, but those who attend the mission schools soon learn that God their Father loves them, and that the ugly image has no power to hurt. A little fellow named Mahadava, the son of a shopkeeper, told one of the missionaries:

"The other day I went with some boys to the mali's (idol maker's) house. He was making a large image of Kali. I began to feel it with my hand, when the mali stopped me, saying, 'Take care; you should not touch the *thakur*.' I gave the thing a push, saying, 'What is the good of a thing that can't speak, or do anything?' And it tumbled over. You should have seen Kali's head and arms break off;" and the boy shouted with laughter.

"A Thousand Thanks."

Rev. M. E. Siple, of Whitevale, Ont., writes, July 24th, 1894: "I had suffered indescribable torture for two years or more, that is at times, from dyspepsia. Fearful pain and load in stomach, pain between shoulders, and sensation as of being pulled right in two, in small of back. I dieted, used patent medicines, and different doctors' medicines, all to no use. Your K. D. C., third dose, completely relieved me, and four bottles, I believe, have cured me. A thousand thanks, I can study, preach, and do my work now with energy and satisfaction, as of yore."

Miss Ames' Secret.

"Mother, I am trying to find out something, and I want you to help me."

"I will do my best, deary; but if you want me to guess a riddle, I tell you now, I am a failure in that direction." And Mrs. Mason smiled lovingly at her daughter Bertha.

"It is this, mother. For a long time I have been wondering why Miss Ames is so much loved. She is not pretty, nor rich, nor brilliant, and yet everybody loves her and goes to her for help. I do too, and I am wondering why? Now, can you tell me the secret of it?"

"Yes, I think I can," Mrs. Mason answered. "Miss Ames and I were school-mates, and for more years than you have lived we have been intimate friends. Long ago a great sorrow came to her, and for three years after she was a sad, despondent woman, and made everybody sad who came near her. She went away from here and was gone a year. When she came back she was quite changed, and we all grew to love her more every day. I, like you, began to wonder why."

"One day, in talking with her, I said: 'Elsie, will you be offended if I ask you what has made such a

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change in you? Her eyes filled with tears, but her lips were smiling, as she said: "I will tell you gladly. While I was away from home that year, I had plenty of time to think and I came to the conclusion that I had thought altogether too much of Elsie Ames and her troubles. I knew that if I ever amounted to anything in this world, or wanted to fit myself for the next, I must begin thinking of other people. So, from that hour, I began praying for strength of purpose in my new undertaking. It was a hard struggle and often I found myself on the point of indulging in my old griefs, but I persevered. Experience soon taught me that the best way to keep thinking of others was by doing something for them, so in little ways I began. To my great surprise I soon found myself growing more cheerful, and it seemed as if everyone about me brightened too. Even now, there are days when my old grief comes back and presses so heavily upon me that I can hardly look up, but I just begin immediately working for somebody who needs my help, and light shines through the darkness and strength comes for the asking."

Mrs. Mason concluded, "I think those words of hers open the secret for you better than any of mine could do."

"Thank you, mother, for telling me all about her," said Bertha. "I think I shall love her even more than ever."

Kneeling at her bedside that night, Bertha asked that her life, like the one she had heard of, might be made a blessing to others, by cheerfulness, thinking little of self and much of duty.