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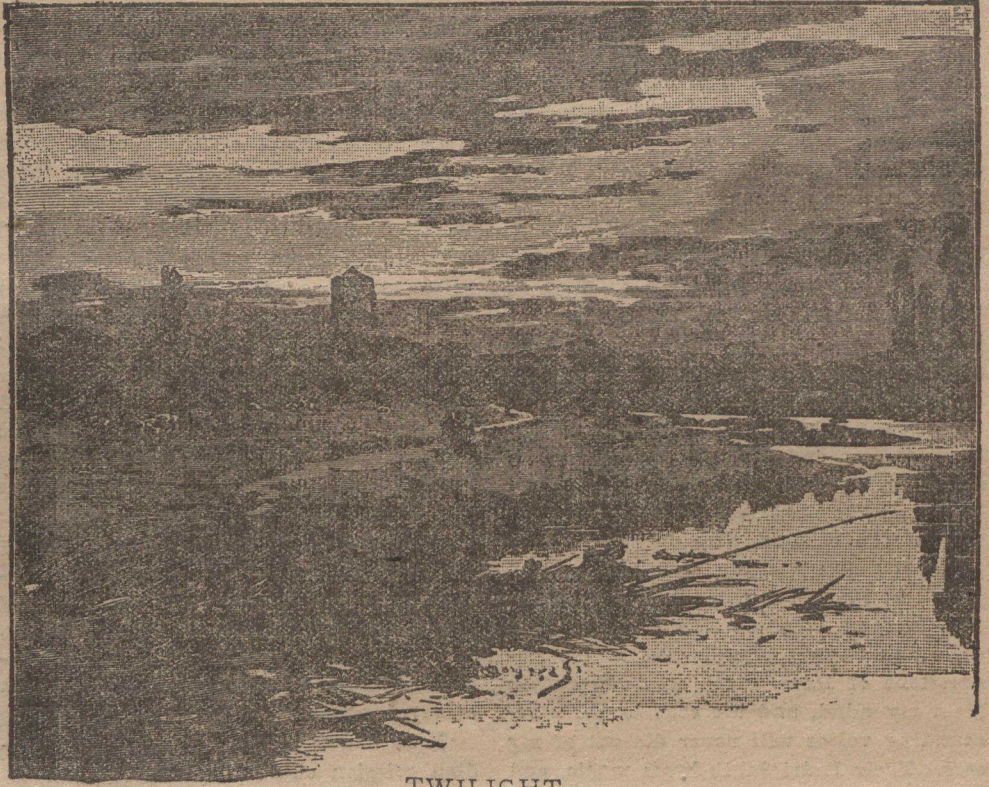
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The Two Stewards A Parable

(The 'Christian Endeavor Herald.')

The problem of Christian finance is a problem of Christian stewardship. Let me illustrate by a parable: A very wealthy landlord appointed two stewards to take charge each of one-half of his estate. In the beginning he gave each steward \$10,000 to invest in the improvement and utilization of the land. The landlord lived at a distance, but had a means, unknown to his stewards, by which he kept in touch with all that was done on his estate. The one steward, whom we shall call the wise, communicated with his master concerning every cent of expenditure, and sought faithfully to reproduce his master's thought in all his work. When in the course of time the whole of the \$10,000 was invested, and he drew upon his master for further funds, he found to his great delight that his draft was at once honored, and an even larger amount than before put at his disposal.

The other steward, to whom may fitly be applied the term foolish, was a very energetic man with a great many ideas of his own. He found it took too long to consult his master on every detail of his plans, and so he rushed ahead, doing what he deemed wisest and best. It was his master's money and his master's estate; so long as one was spent upon the other he thought his master should be satisfied. Thus, only too soon, all the money was gone, and he drew upon his master for more; but to his great surprise and dismay the draft was returned unhonored. It never occurred to him that the explanation might be that his master was dissatisfied with his method of expenditure (though such was indeed the case). What conclusion he arrived at I cannot say. He may have thought his master had gone suddenly bankrupt; but yet that could not be the case since his fellow-steward had all that he needed, and to spare. Whatever the cause of this strange withholding of supplies, his plans must not suffer. It now became a matter of personal reputation. He would be humiliated if his fellow-steward, who was somewhat of a crank in his views about things, should be able to go on without stint, while he was compelled to let all his great schemes lie unfinished for lack of money. No, the money must be gotten somehow. If his master would not give it, then he himself must raise it. So he set himself to devise ways and means; and this is the point where he finally lost all sight of his stewardship, and gave shape and substance to the new money problem of 'How to get the money we want.' There were people all around him who had plenty of money to spend. Some of them, truly, were people utterly indifferent to the interests of his master, if not actually opposed to them; but they had money, and that was the pressing need just then. So he planned a series of entertainments on his half of the estate and charged admission to them. They were very popular, and great crowds came,



TWILIGHT.

(Sunday Reading.)

Ding dong, ding dong for Evensong,
How sweet the sound doth sweep along
The peaceful meadow!

The river flows melodious by,
Whilst painted on its surface lie
The sunset's splendors.

In scattered groups the weary sheep
Now seek their rest in peaceful sleep,
Whilst shadows deepen.

The grey clouds make the sun's soft bed,
The nightingale, when light is fled,
Pours forth his praises.

Ding dong, ding dong, Life's Evensong
Will ring for each of us ere long,
To sweet rest calling.

God grant, when shades of death are near,
That through the stillness we may hear
The angels singing.

and the revenue was good. For some time the programme was unexceptional; all the selections were sacred; but the crowd presently tired of these and refused to come, so the foolish steward had to introduce some secular features. Thus it went on, until he found himself compelled to descend to all sort of indignities and absurdities for revenue purposes only. Every little improvement necessitated some new scheme for getting a silver collection, and it took so much time to raise the money that the poor man, worried and wearied to desperation, had no time left to look after the estate. At last, head over ears in debt, with the estate hopelessly mortgaged to his master's enemies, he was called away to give an account of his stewardship.

Meanwhile our friend, the wise steward, had simply kept on working along his master's lines, doing well what he had to do under his master's approval and direction, and drawing from his master's inexhaustible bank account all that was required in lavish abundance. He had no worry as to ways and means, but gave undivided and unharrassed thought to the development of the estate. Every invest-

ment is paying now in rich returns of fruitage to his master, and when he is called to account he will go gladly, knowing that it means also to his reward.

Brethren, the parable is true, and the interpretation thereof sure. I leave to you its application. One word in closing to show what can be done. The Y.P.S.C.E. of Parliament Street Baptist church, Toronto, were once asked to hold a 'Pumpkin-pie Social' to raise some \$37.75 of church indebtedness. They objected, not to the pumpkin pie—which is a wholly worthy institution—but to the principle of coaxing money for the Lord's work with sections of pie—pumpkin or any other kind. They were advised that it was easier to raise objections than money, and, accepting the implied challenge, they offered to secure the money in a week by direct contributions. They made a draft on God's bankers for some of his money. It was honored of God, and at last reports \$60 had been given and there was more to follow. All honor to these young people and their faith in God's methods. Let their example be followed by every society in the land.