

Failing in Good Spirits.

BY REV. A. C. CHUTE.

Again has come under my eye, in one of our religious journals, an utterance of Robert Louis Stevenson's, which one who has once read can hardly forget. It is this: "Our business in this world is not to succeed, but to continue to fail in good spirits." Turn it over in your mind, ponder it and get help from it: "Our business in this world is not to succeed, but to continue to fail in good spirits." That we do continue to fail is a fact. We run a few steps and then stumble. We do our work fairly well for a while, and then very poorly for a season. We hold some evil propensity in check and then there is submission to its pressure. And besides discouragement with ourselves there is discouragement with others. How far short they have fallen of our expectations. How little they have done for us. How slight has been their response to our worthy endeavors. There are times when everything seems to be against us. But he who would proceed in a becoming way, who would act the part of a man, must not for these reasons drop into an inactive and murmuring state. Lend Stevenson thine ear again: "Our business in this world is not to succeed, but to continue to fail in good spirits."

One might think these words were spoken by a man who always had sound health and was always moving amid easy circumstances. But they come not from any such person. The author of "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde" knew great physical weakness, knew protracted separation from home and friends. He has written books which thousands have had delight in reading; but, as one has recently said, and said so well, "The finest thing Stevenson did for the world was his successful experiment of living in ill-health and poverty and exile, working slavishly and suffering much, yet unfalteringly triumphant, exultantly happy on the whole, and everywhere so superior to circumstances as to be for his cheery courage and tender, whimsical winsomeness an almost unrivaled modern saint, canonized by great popular acclaim." He saw vastly more to make him happy than to make him otherwise. His face was turned upward. He saw the mountain full of horses and chariots. And he offered the prayer that God would keep him cognizant of what he had to be glad over; and that if ever his eyes were closing to the mercies of his lot, if ever he were inclined to grow oblivious of divine goodness, that out of this stupor he might be aroused by the wrestling from him of something delightful. We know that often, very often, we are agitated and grieved over trifles quite unworthy of any concern, so that it seems needful for God to come now and again and put upon us some large trouble that the folly of past complainings may be discovered. And Stevenson was willing, even desirous, that God should deal with him in just this manner, if ever there should be forgetfulness of the manifold blessings which were found in his pathway. Hear what he says, and read it the second time:

"If I have faltered more or less
In my great task of happiness;
If I have moved among my race
And shown no glorious morning face;
If beams from happy human eyes
Have moved me not; if morning skies,
Books and my food, and summer rain,
Knocked on my sullen heart in vain—
Lord, thy most pointed pleasure take
And stab my spirit broad awake."

Now the way to continue to fail in good spirits is to trust in the Lord. And he who thus fails is after all the one who succeeds. The word has gone forth, "your labor is not in vain in the Lord." If it is not in the Lord it is vain, no matter how profitable it appears; if it is, it is profitable though it seem vain. Faith makes us happy though the physical strength wanes; though friends prove false; though "the fig tree shall not blossom"; though natural and spiritual harvests are disappointing. Not that there will be anything like indifference about results. Very far from it. Joy in the Lord impels to fullest service, to the most faithful and painstaking sort of endeavor and creates yearning for abundant returns in the sphere of souls. But though hopes are not speedily realized, efforts are not on that account relaxed, nor does the gloom of night settle down upon the heart. Isaiah prophesied respecting the Deliverer: "He shall not fail nor be discouraged, till he have set judgment in the earth: and the isles shall wait for his law." In the victory of the Master his loyal servants shall share. What is required of a steward? That "he be found faithful." And the faithful are always successful irrespective of their defeats. The nobler the aspiration, and the more intense the eagerness to become Christ-like in character and service, the larger the number of failures we are likely to know. That is, we will the more frequently and poignantly feel the pain of falling short of high aims and expectations. Such as set about to achieve little are comparative strangers to disappointment, so that the better the man, the higher the ambition he cherishes, the deeper his love for his Lord, the keener his distress over unfulfilled aims. But if firmly established in God, there is no useless tarrying over by-gones. "Forgetting the things that are behind" he presses on. Back on divine mercy and might he falls, and forward he

pushes to attain yet, if he can, what thus far has been missed. What a boon is such an one to those about him. What a choice companion. How he animates the drooping courage of weaker hearts. How he dispels the clouds from the sky of his neighbor. He makes cold winter to pass and brings in the genial spring. He causes the religion of Christ to appear eminently desirable, gives to it an attractiveness that conforms to its inner worth. Remaining "steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord," he fosters stability among the brethren. At the same time, cultivating the joyous habit which becomes the Christian, the one who is not only saved but kept, his own capacity for enjoyment is enlarging, so that heaven will be much more heavenly to him than to the brother who goes through the world out of sorts with everything and everybody, as if there were no such one as the dear Lord to look to and to please. In God there is enough to make us all glad and peaceful and courageous, and to keep us so. His name be praised for the manly message of the manly Stevenson: "Our business in this world is not to succeed,

but to continue to fail in good spirits."
"Serve God and be cheerful. Make brighter
The brightness that falls to your lot;
The rare or the daily-sent blessing
Profane not with gloom and with doubt."

"Serve God and be cheerful. The winter
Rolls round to the beautiful spring,
And o'er the grim grave of the snowdrift
The nest-building robins will sing."

Letter to a Friend.

DEAR MESSENGER AND VISITOR.—It is one o'clock p. m., Feb. 14th, hot, dusty, slightly uncomfortable. A third-class carriage of the East Coast railway is bearing me along with a crowd of noisy, smoking, lounging, native Telugus. Left Vizianagram at 9.15 this morning. Instead of stopping at Sigadam Station, twenty-seven miles out, where my tents are pitched, and five native Christian helpers are engaged with me in touring among the surrounding villages, a few parcels are put down to be taken to the tents just over there, twenty rods away in the shade of a mango tope. The ticket is given up and a new one bought to Naupada Station, forty-seven miles further distant. A score or two are added to the number of native passengers. The whistle blows, we are off. All soon settle into their places. A young student, an F. A. of the Hindu college at Vizianagram sees me; and he comes striding over the backs of the seats to ask me for the loan of an English paper. He does not want Telugu papers or tracts. The "Watchman" of Boston is at hand. He may read that. Much pleased, he reads intently as one who is seeking knowledge. Several Telugu Hand Bills are offered to those near by who can read. They take them respectfully; and with various expressions in features and attitudes of body, go on reading. The train rushes along over these sun-scorched plains toward the next station.

Why go to Naupada today? There are one thousand rupees in my pocket, a thankoffering to the Lord, dedicated to the spread of His Kingdom among the hill people, the Souras (Savaras). This gift, in Jesus' name, is a sacred trust. Obligation rests upon me to put it into the hands of the Board, appointed jointly by our Telugu Association, and our Missionary Conference at Vizianagram, last month. That Soura Evangelization Board consists of brethren Higgins, Archibald, Corey, B. Subriadu, P. David, B. Tatiad and P. Somalingam, seven in all. Three of these, including the Treasurer, brother Higgins, are at Tekkali today. From Naupada Station to Tekkali, four miles, a bullock bandy wheels me along and leaves me at 5 p. m.

Now you are prepared to hear more about the offering, and the dear Christian sister who made it. Her name is already familiar to many in the Woman's Aid Societies, and Mission Bands in the Maritime Provinces, Miss Eva D'Prazer, strong in faith, devout in spirit, and humble in heart, a member of the Baptist Mission church at Bimlipatam, is the sister of whom we speak. She may not be pleased to have her name mentioned in this connection; but it seems fitting to show forth the praise of the Lord by telling what His Grace has wrought in her. She certainly would have no objection, if thereby, due glory be given unto His name. He has done great things for her. Let many hear thereof and be glad.

During several years past, since the completion of her studies in the Lady Dufferin Medical College in Madras, she has been very closely engaged in medical work for the women in connection with the hospital at Vizagapatam. Although careful to make good use of her opportunities for Christian effort, yet she has been able to meet but very seldom with the church to which she belongs. We thought she would enjoy spending a Sunday with us at Vizianagram in January during the meetings of the Telugu Association, and the Missionary Conference, accordingly our invitation was accepted. It is a run of thirty miles by daily morning and evening train. She was disappointed, for a serious case demanded her presence at the hospital that day. In a letter by a messenger, expressing her disappointment, she enclosed a

currency note for rupees one hundred, to be used in any way that we should think best for the furtherance of the Lord's work. At the Telugu Association on Monday, when the question of the evangelization of the Souras was under discussion, this gift was announced, and all were very much pleased with the thought that it should be devoted to that object. All joined in singing the doxology.

Our Conference meetings would continue over another Sunday. She might be able to come. Why not do so? She came, and was present at the meetings. On reaching home, she made no delay, but wrote as follows: "My visit was short, but it did my heart good to meet so many of the Lord's children, and all filled with the single aim and purpose in life—the salvation of perishing souls."

"Since hearing from you of the intended work among the Souras, I have been moved to make an offering to the Lord, of rupees one thousand, for this purpose. It is an exceeding great joy to me to be allowed the privilege of helping in this work; and if this feeble gift could be the means of giving life to one soul dead in trespasses and sins from among the Souras, I shall be humbly thankful. May our gracious God bless it to this end. My prayers are with you and all the workers in Jesus Christ."

"I am prepared to send you the amount as soon as you are ready to receive it."

These, her own words, show something of what the Lord's Spirit has wrought in her. She did not need to be asked to help in the Lord's work.

It is remembered by some that in the early part of her religious experience, when struggling hard for an education, and having to depend upon her own efforts for the means to meet necessary expenses, she gave the rupees fifty, which she had been carefully gathering to buy a sewing machine, toward the building of the Mission Chapel at Bimlipatam instead. Her words was to this effect: "I can do without the sewing machine better than I can do without the chapel." Her help on occasions since has been hearty and generous, as Brother Morse has testified. Probably the pecuniary help, in all, would equal \$500. When all the circumstances are considered, this means a very great deal. Her faith has been an inspiration to others, and particularly so to the missionaries.

In the providence of God, she is looking forward to a visit of three months among the hospitals in England, for the sake of improvement in medical knowledge. Probably those three months will be May, June and July of the present year. After that, if possible, before her return, she would like to make a brief visit to Nova Scotia. She often has expressed the desire "to see how Christianity appears in a Christian country." Her life, thus far, has been spent in heathen India. The Christianity which she knows by experience, is that which the Lord has planted here through the agency of your missionaries. She would like to see the people themselves who sent the gospel of salvation to her when she was wandering "without God and without hope in the world." She feels very grateful to you. Doubtless she would be ready to tell you all about it.

Yours sincerely,
R. SANFORD.

Peter.

Out in the darkness he weeps out his heart;—
He has vowed that in Jesus he has no part;—

O fear-mad Peter!
How shall he face the light of day?
Those rash, mad words could he but unsway,
Life would be scarce too much to pay.
Remorseful Peter!

What is he thinking of out in the dark,
Where looms the palace sheer and stark;—

O boastful Peter!
Does he think how he said he would ne'er forsake?
Does he think how he said his life he would take
And lay it down for the Master's sake?
Impulsive Peter!

What does he see in the shadow and gloom?
The Christ, and the scene in that upper room;—

O prayer-sought Peter!
He sees the glance of reproachful eyes,
Where grief is mingled with sad surprise,
And the cold walls echo his moans and cries.
Repentant Peter!

At dawn a sound of hurrying feet;
A voice by deepest joy made sweet;

With face of morn the Magdalene;—
Brother, mine eyes the Lord have seen!
Yes Peter,—
Mine ears have heard those tones most sweet,
These hands had stretched to clasp His feet,
When lo, that voice so dear did say,
Not worship is thy lot today;
A better part I have for thee,—
I go to hallowed Galilee,
There shall be filled joy's cup of bliss,
Go tell my sorrowing brethren this,—
And Peter."

"Did he speak that name, say, woman, say?—
Call me the Rock—who have been as clay?
There were hope in my sorrow if 'eter I be;
To grief's night a glad morrow of joy do I see?"
"Yes, verily, Peter."

Thy Bethels the days when that name has been thine,—
When in Israel's Messiah faith saw the Divine,
And when faith, in the Naz'rene Messiah did see,
The Rock (He has prayed for thee) thou shalt yet be.
Go, obey Him, and meet Him in loved Galilee."

"Was it thee I denied, thou than mortals more fair?
Am I waking, or dream I? The nail-prints are there,
Yet mine eyes see the King in His beauty; woe's me!
Mortals see not this glory and live, as I see.
Quick or dead, must my soul now pass under the rod—
Nay, I live! He loves, pardons! My Lord and my God!"

—CONSTANCE MACK.