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Poetry.

TIME HOW SWIFT.

While with ceaseless course the sun
Hasted through the former year,
Many souls their race have run,
Never more to meet us here;
Fix'd in eternal state,
They have done with all below;
We a little longer wait,
But how little—none can know.

As the winged arrows flies,
Speedily the mark to find;
As the lightning from the skies
Darts, and leaves no trace behind;
Swiftly thus our fleeting days
Bear us down life's rapid stream;
Upwards, Lord, our spirits raise,
All below is but a dream.

Thanks for mercy past receive,
Pardon of our sins renew;
Teach us, henceforth how to live,
With eternity in view;
Bless thy word to young and old,
Fill us with a Saviour's love;
And when life's short tale is told,
May we dwell with Thee above.

The Lover's Serenade.

Dry dawns again in rosy hue,
And yet thy slumbers have not flown;
The rose awakes, then wake thou too,
And shame its freshness by thine own.
Then from thy pillow, dearest,
From thy pillow of down arise,
For the strain that now thou hearest
Is a lover's song and a lover's sighs.

All nature now calls unto thee,
You sun that gilds the sky above,
You bird that sings its melody,
My heart that tells thee of its love.
Then from thy pillow, dearest,
From thy pillow of down arise,
For the strain that now thou hearest
Is a lover's song and a lover's sighs.

An angel in a woman's form,
Worshipped no less than loved thou art,
Mine eyes adore thy beauty's charm,
My soul adores thy noble heart.
Then from thy pillow, dearest,
From thy pillow of down arise,
For the strain that now thou hearest
Is a lover's song and a lover's sighs.

Interesting Tale.

MILLIE'S DREAM.

A STORY OF NEW YEAR'S EVE.

It was New Year's eve, and the bells from all the churches were ringing merrily. Mildred Seymour, a little girl of twelve years of age, was lying snug and warm in bed in a comfortable room of a good old-fashioned house in one of the best parts of London. She was lying awake listening to the bells, and thinking thoughts which made her face very grave, and even now and then caused tears to fall from her eyes on the soft pillow where her curly head was lying. Mildred's papa and mamma were in India, and she was spending her Christmas holidays at school, but this did not make her cry. She had been with kind Mrs. Lawrence ever since she had come home from India seven years ago; and though there were times when she longed very much to see her dear parents and little brother, she was very, very happy at school; and the very last mail had brought her joyful news, that in the spring they would most likely come to England, and further than that she did not care to look. She was not crying with the cold for she was very warm and cozy. Nor was she so grave because she was poor, for she knew very well there would be plenty of presents for her to-morrow, as there had been on every New Year's Day ever since she could remember. What then made her cry?

It was this. The Holy Spirit of God had for some time been whispering gently into Mildred's young heart sweet thoughts of God's great love towards her, and she had been trying in her imperfect way to show she was grateful for that love by being more patient and kind and good in every way; and it was the thought of her frequent failures that made her cry. Looking back on her efforts and the numberless times in which she had broken her good resolutions, her heart failed her, and she began to feel she should never do better. "She was always trying and never succeeding—was it any good?" she thought. "Oh! if she could but be good all the new year how nice it would be!" And with this thought drowsiness overcame her sorrowful musings, and before she was struck to sleep, she was fast asleep.

Towards morning Millie had a dream. She thought she was in an ordinary looking room very much like the study down stairs, and on the table by which she sat there was suddenly placed before her a beautiful book. It was bound in white and gold, its leaves too were of the purest white, and at the top of each, like the heading of a chapter, there were the words, "Glorious to God." It was a very large book, and so heavy that she could not turn over more than one leaf at a time. Something told her the book was hers and she must fill up every page; so full of glee she began to write.

It was a great variety of things she wrote about, but to her great trouble before she had done half a page she made a great blot, and in trying to remove it smeared the paper and her fingers, and left a great grey mark on the beautiful white cover. The lines too were very uneven, and by the time she had written three or four pages she felt inclined to stop, but she knew she must go on, and so began to try again, but there was no improvement. The writing was straggling, the lines more uneven; and when she thought she had made one page look better than the last, down would come a great blot and spoil all. Then, at last, she was discouraged and began to write at random. "She had to write," she thought, "and she might as well be careless, for with all her care she spoilt the book." And so the next pages were very bad indeed.

By the time she had come to the middle of the book she was much disheartened and began to shed bitter tears; but this was of no use, she must write, and yet she only wrote so as to spoil the book—what was she to do? Then gently and very lovingly a Voice from some one she could not see, said, "Here is a copy," and then she saw a book on the table before her far more beautiful than her own. Its cover was rich and heavy with ivory and gems, and inside all the writing was in letters of pure gold—so beautiful and yet so simple that there sprang up in Millie's mind a great ambition to copy it, so she began. But what with trying very intently, and her hand suddenly feeling very weak, she could not get on at all; and when the same Voice said to her kindly, "Shall I guide your hand?" she answered very willingly, "Oh, yes, please;" and it was wonderful what a change thereon was. At first the letters were shaky, but still very much better and straighter, and she found that the more she trusted to her guide, and the less she depended on herself, the better she wrote; and so two or three pages went on very fairly.

But after awhile she began to tire of going so slowly, and copying from the beautiful book seemed more tedious than it had at first, and the letters were more difficult to form; so she tried to withdraw her hand; and because it was held tight by her unseen Friend, she began to fret under it, and so the writing grew straggling and uneven again; and, at last, snatching her hand away down fell a worse blot than ever and the page was spoilt!

She went on again by herself till only writing worse and worse—she grew humble enough to ask to be guided again, and in due time the book was finished, and she turned over the leaves to review her work.

The first part of the book was almost too dreadful to look at, and she hurried on to the page where she let her hand be guided. There was an improvement here; but still there was many a blot and uneven line, which she had made when in her unwillingness she had striven to write by herself. The last few pages were better; but oh so different from the copy! Poor Mildred felt very disheartened. The sweet Voice had just said, "Shall the next be better?" when she woke, and was musing over her dream, when Phoebe, the housemaid, came to call her.

There were kind new year's greetings for Mildred when she entered the breakfast room. And oh, such nice presents! They banished for the time all sad thoughts from her mind; and she was so occupied with admiring them, that Mrs. Lawrence had to remind her it was nearly ten, and she must be at her Aunt Barbara's by eleven, before she could resolutely put them away, and run upstairs to dress for her walk to Mrs. Warburton's.

Aunt Barbara was Major Seymour's eldest sister. She was a widow, and had no children; but she was so warm-hearted, and made so much pleasure for all her nephews and nieces, that a visit to her was a great treat. There were no cousins to-day to play with Millie; but Aunt Barbara took her for a walk, to distribute some warm things to some poor children; and then there was dinner, and afterwards—best of all, when the curtains were drawn, and the lamp not yet lighted—there was a cozy talk with dear Aunt Barbara as they sat by the fireside, Mildred on a stool by her aunt's feet, with one little hand held tightly in her aunt's, which the little niece stroked affectionately from time to time. And then Millie said, abruptly, "Aunt Barbara, do you believe in dreams?"

The tone was so earnest, that Mrs. Warburton said quickly, "What do you mean, my dear? Has anyone been telling you any foolish dreams?"

Oh no; but I wonder what they are. They have a meaning sometimes, I think. I wish I knew!

I think we usually dream about what has been most in our mind during the previous day, and before we go to sleep. But why do you ask, Millie?

Because I had such a strange dream last night," said Millie; and then she related it.

I cannot say whether this dream has a meaning or not," said Aunt Barbara, after listening attentively; but I think we may make out a meaning for it. Suppose we call your beautiful book the new year, with all its pages white and pure, for you to write on, in spite of yourself. And what shall we call the writing, and the blots and smears, Millie?

Oh, I know, aunt, said Millie, sorrowfully. The book was last year, and all the bad writing and blots mean when I got cross, and tired of school, and selfish. It is just what I was thinking of last night. I seem always to be trying, and never succeeding.

What made you wish to try, Mildred?

I was thinking about God, and his loving us; and sending his Son to die for us, and I began to try to please him; but I only got worse and worse, till I asked him to help me, and then I did not do much better," she added, half afraid it was wrong to say so.

That was when you first allowed your hand to be guided; and the blots and smears afterwards were when you took it away, and thought you should do better by yourself,—eh, Millie?

Yes.

Ah! you see we are very weak, and can do nothing by ourselves. The last part of the book was better, where you trusted less to yourself, was it not?

Yes, aunt.

And the beautiful book given you to copy must mean the life of Christ, who is our master, and who has given us an example that we should follow in his steps.

But how was it my best writing was so unlike the golden writing? The letters were shaped a little like it,—but so little!

My darling, said Mrs. Warburton, we cannot reach perfection on earth, we can only strive after it. Would you give up learning to draw, because you cannot do it as well as your master?—or learning French, because you cannot speak as well as Monsieur? In the same way you must not be discouraged in trying to do right. You cannot reach perfection on earth; but you must strive after it, and do your very best, with God's help, to set forth his glory on every page,—that is, on every day of your life. Do you understand it now, Millie?

Yes, Aunt.

But give up your hand more entirely to be guided, Millie; for be assured it is only when we trust to God's loving guidance, and work in dependence upon him, that we can truly glorify him.

And so Millie's dream became a lesson to her, to be pondered over and acted upon. In weakness often, but in ever growing dependence upon Christ, she strove to follow him.

Her papa and mamma and little brother came home, school went on, and Christmas came again. This time the holidays were spent at home at Richmond; but Aunt Barbara claimed Millie for New Year's Day, and there was a very pleasant talk.

Well, Mildred, and how about your book?

Oh, auntie, it is not neat yet. There are ever so many blots, and the lines are uneven still; but I have tried, aunt, and failing so far, has taught me one thing.

And what is that?

That I can do nothing by myself, and that the work is all God's from beginning to end. I could not be saved because of my life, it is so full of sin; and then it makes Christ much more dear to me, added Millie, in a low voice.

Aunt Barbara drew the thoughtful face towards her and kissed it. You are not sorry that you began to serve God as you told me last year? she asked.

Oh no, aunt, said the little girl eagerly. I only wish I had begun sooner.

And this is what Mildred feels now. She has been grown up a long time, and has happy children round her; but her curly hair is hidden under a widow's cap, and there are traces of much care and sorrow on her face; but she has never repented of her childhood's choice—far from it. It makes her very thankful when she thinks how lovingly God has helped and guided her all these years, through much joy as well as much sorrow and perplexity; and if there is one thought from the holy book which she loves to dwell upon more than another, when she thinks of her fatherless children, and all there may be in store for her and them of temptation, sorrow and difficulty, it is this—

This God is our God for ever and ever; he will be our guide even unto death.

Dear young friends you have reached the close of another year,—what sort of a year

have you made of it? Very soon the New Year will be before you, like a new book full of white leaves, which you must fill; for you cannot leave them untouched. What will you write? Shall it be full of the straggling lines of self-will, and the blot and smears of irritation, temper, pride, and ignorance?—or shall there be inscribed on each page earnest desires to fulfil its heading, "Glorious to God?"—and more still patient endeavours to follow, in humble dependence on your Master's guidance, the rules of his most blessed life? Oh, make up your mind! Think of this great love,—ask him to show it to you, and you will not feel your life too much to give up to him. And begin to serve him now,—now, while your hearts are warm with young hopes and affections, and the world looks so full of flowers, you cannot notice its weeds,—begin now; for before me, though happiness may come to those who begin to serve God later in life, there is a special blessing for those who remember him in their youth. Do not refuse him your best days. If you feel unequal to the work before you, take courage!—that is a hopeful sign. Ask for the promised help of the Holy Spirit. Christ's strength is made perfect in weakness. Only lean on Him, and trust Him entirely and He will be your guide,—not only in youth, but even unto death.

Honesty the best Policy.

Where money is the universal object, the possessor of money will be practically honored. The honor will undoubtedly be secured in some degree by the method of obtaining the money. If it is a prince's method or a high wayman's, if we know that thieves have been cut and bludgeoned to obtain it, or if we see the thief actually rilling his neighbor's pocket, we shall hardly invite him to dinner, and that money will not become respectable until the next generation. But if the process is morally unobjectionable; if the money is not labeled offensively, but is quietly converted into such Danish and Champagne as if we do not read on the label and on the tables and cabinets an inscription stating that this beautiful work of art was taken out of the throat of a Spanish trader opened for that purpose, or upon the in-laid ebony lounge that it was extracted from the pocket of a ridiculous old widow who had nothing else—it is nothing of this gross kind, nor, our well bred curiosity is not impertinent, and we sit upon the sofa and quaff the wine without further thought.

It is in this way that honesty has ceased to be considered that respect to which it is proverbially entitled. Indeed to look at many a social congregation, recognizing many of the persons, and knowing their careers, and hearing the precepts of integrity and self-denial of personal holiness and even of martyrdom it need be which are frequent y urged upon them, is vastly sadder than the admission of Carlyle, to the hypocrisy which is so confounded when it is supposed to be being hypocritical. Men measure conduct by the real esteem in which it is held. If a fool mounted profane Thersites, who flings his dinner plate upon the floor at a public hotel to express his dissatisfaction with the banquet, evidently forfeits his social consideration, profanity and ill behavior will not seem to be things to be strenuously avoided. If a sharper who gambles in stocks and cheats his neighbors daily is laughed at and pleased only as an eccentrically queer fellow, an immoral impulse is given to the resolution to be eccentrically queer in the same way. If a politician with the conscience of a fox and the honor of an adder bellows his devotion to the dear people and vociferously appeals to the moral sentiments, while his career insults them all, it is thought first of all a confession of some points, but who always falls upon his feet such politicians will abound, and public affairs falling into their hands will inevitably suffer.

All these figures are well known to us in this country; and when the eloquent preacher exclaims, "Beyond peradventure brethren, honesty is the best policy," we all turn and look at the richest man in the congregation, whose invitations we do not dare to refuse, who leads us unchanged to his triumphal chariot as the Roman generals led Dacian Kings, and whose money was all stolen, not earned. And near him sits another whom we should not care to invite to our houses, but for whom we vote, upon some theory that a political intriguer and traitor will make good laws. And in the next mood, some friends, whose health we publicly drink in his own wine when he sends it to us at table. We see them, we delineate their careers, we consider their property, and we gaze at the good preacher who repeats, "Once more, dear brethren, lay it to heart, honesty is the best policy." Might he not as properly murmur "Mesopotamia?"

But when circumstances, as lately in New York, suddenly scatter the glamour of prosperity and reveal the naked dishonesty, then the old truth which is lodged in the very substance of things appears, that honesty is the best policy, and that indeed, that there is no other. The time comes when, as we seat ourselves in the dazzling drawing room, upon the luxurious

sofa, we suddenly see the inscription frightfully legible, "Stolen from poor widows." And as we rise in trepidation and move toward the bull cabinet, the legend flashes out all over it, "Stolen from starving orphans." The moment that is seen the proverb is vindicated. The bull remains, but contempt stays with it. Dishonesty has bought money at the cost of every thing that makes money valuable. The prosperous good man at whom we all look down when we heard that honesty is the best policy is recognized and branded as a thief. Was not the preacher right? Is not the dishonesty bad policy? The great national benefit of the developments in New York is moral. Events there have destroyed the prestige of smartness and have shown practically that mere money is not enough even for success, and that prosperous swindling is not good policy.—[Harpers's for December]

Beecher on Lying.

Henry Ward Beecher, in a late amusing article discusses the questions whether men can remember what never happened. He shows that such a stretch of memory is possible by one or two instances. We extract a part of the article:

Some eighteen or nineteen months ago, soon after coming to Brooklyn, I heard the following story told of the now venerable Dr. Samuel Cox, the father of many brilliant sayings, and as well as Bishop Cox of Western New York. The story ran thus: On a Sunday morning in August, Dr. Cox rising to the pulpit, without waiting or preface, began, "It is a-d-d hot!" Looking around in a calm and pious way, he wiped his forehead, and again said "It is a-d-d hot!" Waiting until he proceeded, "These words my brethren, I heard from the lips of a pious young man as I entered the doors of the church." Thereupon the story goes, he proceeded to give an edifying discourse on the sin and folly of profane swearing.

When I first heard it, I recognized the story. It was an old acquaintance. It had been doing service in England. It was told of Rev. Rowland Hill, only in this case the topic was not the weather, but the theatre, on which the young man's profanity was expended. But it took stories, like countries, live to change horses. Before I knew it the saddle was shifted to my back, nor have I ever been able to shake it off. I have derived it twice in print, many times by letter, and a hundred times in conversation, all in vain. The saddle sticks, and every month we find a new fool riding it.

Denying one of these stories is like fighting Canada thistles. If you cut them up, ten more will spring from each root, and if you let them alone, a million will spring from the seed. The only way to exterminate the Canada thistle is to plant it for a crop and propose to make money out of it. Then worms will gnaw it, bugs will bite it, beetles will bore it, aphids will suck it, birds will peck it, heat will scorch it, rains will drown it, mildew and blight will ride it. All nature lifts its weapons and runs down crops. We are afraid to deny it. It would start off walking like Webster. A new batch of letters would come mounting and inquiring at our door. Five vigor would be given to its withered limbs, and like the wandering Jew, it would go tramping up and down creation till the last day. No, for safety's sake, we do not propose to deny it any more! It would be the ruin of innocent souls, as this narrative which I now shall give will prove.

And the narration of the incident brings me back to the question whether one can remember what never happened. It will be seen that he can.

Sitting at a friend's table one evening, I was telling an incident that befel me, in this wise.

A young man from Buffalo called to see me today. He said that he had heard a young lady in a large company relating the story of my beginning a sermon with the phrase, "It is a-d-d hot." Heat once contradicted it. She affirmed it positively. He replied, "I have lately read a published denial of the story from Mr. Beecher himself." She answered, "Why I was present at his church and heard it with my own ears." Of course he could not say what he thought but replied, "I am going to New York, and will myself call and ask Mr. Beecher."

The case seemed so flagrant, that I said to him: "When you go back I wish you would take occasion, before witnesses, to say to this lady, from me, that she lies, and she knows that she lies, and she knows that I know that she lies."

This was very improper language, but I was angry, and, besides, had been reading the Tribune.

Pistol Shot.—Wound in the heart generally result in almost immediate death; but they are not of necessity or invariably fatal. There are many well authenticated cases of men and animals living after a wound in the heart.