

FEAR DEATH?

Fear death? To feel the fog in my throat,
The mist in my face,
When the snows begin and the blasts denote
I am nearing the place;
The power of the night, the press of the storm,
The post of the foe,
Where he stands, the Arch Fear in a visible form?
Yet the strong man must go;
For the journey is done and the summit attained
And the barriers fall,
Though a battle to fight ere the goal is gained,
The reward of it all!
I would a fighter, so one fight more,
The best and the last!
I would hate that death bandaged my eyes and forehead,
And bade me creep past.
No! let me taste the whole of it, fare like my peers,
The heroes of old, and without being aware of it,
Bear the brunt, in a minute pay glad life's arrears
Of pain, darkness, and cold,
For sudden the worst turns the best to the brave,
The black minutes' end,
And the elements rage, the fiend voices that rave,
Shall dwindle, shall blend,
Shall change, shall become first a piece out of pain,
Then a light, then thy breath,
O thou soul of my soul! I shall clasp thee again,
And with God be the rest.

The Story of Anna Sophia.

It wasn't Anna Sophia's intention to become a missionary. She became one quite by accident, and without being aware of it. I doubt if she could have told the meaning of the word, and I am sure she could not have spelled it, for her education had been sadly neglected. Mrs. Snow had not considered it necessary that a "charity child" should go to school.

Anna Sophia's father and mother were very poor, and when they died suddenly of a contagious fever, within a week of each other, Anna Sophia was taken to the town farm. There she was discovered by Mrs. Snow, who was searching for some one to help in her kitchen, and was taken "on trial" before being formally "bound out." A year had passed, and she was still being tried, the trustees of the town farm having apparently forgotten all about her, and Mrs. Snow not having taken the trouble to remind them of their duty.

Anna Sophia was washing dishes at the kitchen sink when Royal Dent saw her for the first time. He was strolling through the old-fashioned garden before the dew was off the grass, not thinking of the freshness of the morning air, the beauty of the purple hills in the early sunlight, nor of the fragrance of the lilacs by the gate, but wondering "how soon he could decently get away from this stupid place," when he heard a great splashing of water and rattling of dishes and pans, and the kitchen he very naturally looked in.

He thought Anna Sophia the funniest looking little object he had ever seen. She was so short, and the sink was so high, that she had to stand on an inverted bucket in order to reach the dish rack, and she was dressed in one of Mrs. Snow's old gowns, which had been tucked up in front, but hung in a long trail behind. Her light yellow hair was strained back from her forehead, and hung in two tight braids, tied together with a piece of black dress braid. Under her neck was a string of bright blue and yellow beads, which an old lady at the almshouse had given her, and on her feet were a pair of Mrs. Snow's old rubbers.

As Royal looked at her, striving to press his laughter, and wondering what Barnum would give for her, she lifted from the table a large, gilt-edged cup, and ran her finger in it to get the sugar still remaining at the bottom. She was about to put her finger into her mouth when Royal, with a loud "hallo," popped his head into the window. Away went the cup, and fell with a crash to the floor, and down beside the pieces fell Anna Sophia, a look of the wildest consternation on her face.

"See what I've done! Oh, see what I've done!" she wailed. "I've broke his birthday cup, and she'll tear me all to pieces."

Royal understood the situation at once. He had seen Mr. Snow drinking out of that cup at breakfast, and he shrewdly suspected that Mrs. Snow "had something of an importunate son."

Now, that's too bad," he said, "and it was all my fault!"

"Yes," said Anna Sophia, "but she won't lay it on you. You're complicit, you know. She'll just take it out of me!"

Royal considered a moment. Then a bright look flashed on his young, good-looking face—for it was good-looking still, in spite of the marks of disipation it bore.

"I wonder I couldn't get another cup just like it," he said. "It's a common enough pattern."

But a glance at the white, anxious face and fearful eyes upturned to his gaze made him determine to get the cup at any cost, and with a "well, then, I'll walk it," he started off down the country road.

When Mrs. Snow, after finishing the chamber work, came down stairs to look for her guest, who she had supposed languidly leaning in the hammock under the trees, he was nearly two miles away.

"He's gone walking," said Anna Sophia, who was putting the dishes away in the cupboard. She had consigned the broken china to the trash barrel, and the color had come back to her face. "Yes, 'm, he went walking most an hour ago, I guess."

"I hope he won't take it into his head to walk as far as Hornersville," and Mrs. Snow shut the oven door with a snap. "I want him to keep sober while he's here, anyway. I'll give him all the coffee and ginger tea he can drink if he'll only keep away from Price's saloon."

Anna Sophia's heart seemed to sink right down into the bottom of the old rubber shoes.

She knew all about the evil effects of intemperance, for Mrs. Snow was president of the "cold water society," and there were frequent meetings at Clover-Top Farm, and Anna Sophia had always been an interested listener in the discussions. She had learned to look upon intemperance as the gravest crime of which a man could be guilty, and the thought that she had sent Royal into danger frightened her.

Half-a-dozen times during the next two hours she ran to the front gate and gazed down the road, and when the old clock in the kitchen struck the half-hour after eleven, and still Royal had not come, she was almost in despair.

"I'll have to go after him," she decided. "It was my fault that he went," and slipping from the kitchen when Mrs. Snow's back was turned, she was half-a-mile down the road before she was missed.

She had taken off the old rubbers, so as to be able to run fast, and the sandy road burned her feet, while the hot sun beat down remorselessly on her unprotected head. She began to feel strangely giddy as she came in sight of the spire of the village, and when at last she saw Royal coming, she dropped down with a sob of joy under a big oak tree to wait for him.

"Why, child, how came you here?" he cried, as he caught sight of her.

Anna Sophia started up, took a step forward, and to meet him. Her face was very pale now, and the trees seemed to be whirling around her.

"I—I was afraid you—you were at Price's," she stammered, and then reeled, and before Royal could spring forward to catch her, fell like a log at his feet.

He thought it only a slight fainting attack at first, but when half an hour passed, and in spite of all his efforts to revive her, the closed eyes did not open, he began to be seriously alarmed.

"I'll have to leave her here and go for the doctor," he thought, wishing some farmer would come by in a wagon, and regretting very sincerely that he had lingered in the village so long.

"If she dies I'll never forgive myself. Poor little soul!"

He started up and was moving away from the tree when he heard a tremulous sigh, and there was Anna Sophia sitting up and smiling feebly.

Royal was by her side again in an instant, his face beaming with joy; but he colored deeply under the earnest, search, and she was again in upon him. He knew of what she was thinking.

"Do you feel better?" he asked.

"Yes," she answered. "I guess it's the heat made me feel so bad. Did you get the cup?"

"Yes, I got the cup," and smiling he drew it straight from the pocket of his loose coat. "It's just like the other, and he'll never suspect it isn't the same one she bought."

"Has it got 'Affection's offering' on it?" questioned Anna Sophia.

"Yes, I looked out for that," said the child, quaintly, "and I'm sorry I thought you were at Price's. I ought to have known better. You ain't the kind that goes there. Did I hurt your feelings?" anxiously.

"No," answered Royal, with a very sober face. He didn't feel at all like smiling now, for he had been at Price's, and had spent an hour playing cards with half-a-dozen wild, young fellows he had met there. But, fortunately, he had not taken enough liquor to intoxicate him, and he was ashamed and sorry now that he had taken any at all.

"You ain't the kind that goes there," made him wince. He didn't feel equal to looking Anna Sophia in the face after she had said that.

His father had left him more money than he knew what to do with, and he had spent it lavishly, and had plunged into all sorts of dissipation which he had much better never even have heard about. And the consequence was that people had begun to talk of him as being a very poor, grace. She was doing with a very poor grace. She was very cross all the afternoon with Anna Sophia, who dragged herself wearily about the hot kitchen and tried in vain to please her.

"Poor Royal! There was plenty to help him on the downward road, and none to utter a word of remembrance against the life he led. He was alone in the world, and the tender mother who nursed him kept him out of danger had lain in her grave many years."

He had come to Clover-Top Farm because Mrs. Snow had asked him so often and so urgently to visit her, that he could not refuse any longer without being decidedly impolite, and for the sake of his dead mother—with whom Mrs. Snow had gone to school—he would not willingly offend her.

"I'll go down for a week and have it over," he had thought. "I suppose I shall be bored to death, but at least I'll get some of the things I've been bothered every summer in this way."

And so he had come, and a little kitchen maid had unwittingly opened his eyes to the fact that he had still some sense of shame left.

Mrs. Snow was very indignant with Anna Sophia for having run away, and in anything but a good humor with Royal, for she thought he ought to have come home in time for dinner. The table was cleared now, and the dishes washed and put away, and though she was tired to set out a cold lunch, it was done with a very poor grace. She was very cross all the afternoon with Anna Sophia, who dragged herself wearily about the hot kitchen and tried in vain to please her.

"Don't you think that child had better go to bed?" asked Royal at supper, as he noticed how languidly Anna Sophia waited on the table. "She looks sick."

"She can go to bed after she gets the dishes washed—not before," answered Mrs. Snow, sourly. "I had to do 'em for her at noon, and I didn't pick her up from the almshouse to have her play the lady while I work. And after this she'd better wait for orders before she runs out to look you up. I can't afford to have her sick on my hands, and if she isn't a little more particular how she acts, I'll send her back to the almshouse."

Royal said no more, but he set his teeth hard, and wished it would not be impolite for him to tell his hostess "what he thought of her."

In an hour later, when he was strolling in the garden smoking a cigar—a luxury in which Mr. Snow did not indulge—he heard a queer noise in the direction of the wood-pile near the hen yard. It seemed to him if something or somebody was "choking and gasping for breath."

Of course he started for the wood-pile to investigate, and found poor little Anna Sophia lying on the ground, all alone in the dark, gaunt, black kitten pressed to her breast, over which she was sobbing and sighing as if her heart would break.

"Why, Anna Sophia, what's the matter?" and Royal's voice was very tender as he stooped down and laid his hand on the yellow braid.

"My kitty! my poor little kitty!" moaned the child. "She threw it at me. I don't feel dead, I feel just like it's the only kitty I ever had! It used to sleep with me every night, and I loved it so. Oh, dear, I wish she would send me back to the almshouse. I liked it better there."

Royal was silent a moment. His heart was swelling with tenderness and pity, emotions to which it had long been a stranger.

"Wouldn't you rather go to school?" he asked at last. I knew a good boarding-school where my sister was educated, and the kind lady at the head of it used to be a great friend of mine. I will send you there if you will go, Anna Sophia, and you can learn something better than how to wash dishes and clean shoes."

Anna Sophia didn't say anything for a moment. She looked at Royal as if not clearly understanding his proposition. Then suddenly she sprang up, and holding the kitten with one arm, threw the other lovingly about his neck.

"Oh, how good you are!" she cried. "I liked you from the first minute I saw you, because you had such a kind face. But would cost a lot of money to get me taught. I don't know a blessed thing but my alphabet."

"You shall be my sister, Anna Sophia," the young man said; "and you shall be taught, no matter what the cost. I think I'll make a pretty good kind of a brother, don't you?"

"Yes, I do," answered Anna Sophia, frankly. "I'll be real proud of you!" and she wondered why he grew red so suddenly.

"I hope you will be proud of me," he said, beginning to feel already the satisfaction of having some one for whom to care.

He succeeded in persuading Mrs. Snow to give Anna Sophia up, and they arranged matters with the trustees of the almshouse; so a week later Anna Sophia found herself in a big boarding school for ten years younger, but today there are more than a hundred of them.

She proved Royal's good angel. She believed in him so thoroughly and loved him so well that he tried to become worthy her trust and affection.

"Your name just suits you," she often said. "You are Royal, dear brother."

"Bless the child!" said Mrs. Arde, who had once been the most intimate friend of Royal's mother, and silently mourned over his reckless life. "Bless the child! She's a little home missionary, if ever there was one."

Royal called three or four times a week to see his little sister, and told himself that Sophie, as he now called her, was worth all he had given up for her sake. So firm a belief did she have in his possession of an office, and so frequently did she ask to be taken to it, "to see where her dear brother works every day," that from very shame Royal rented two rooms, and hung out his lawyer's shingle again.

This was noticed by his father's friends, and they soon began to come around him once more, and showed, in every possible way, how glad they were he had turned over a new leaf.

But they were not half so glad as Royal himself. He did not have any cause now to shrink from meeting Sophie's clear eyes, and though he laughed and called her "silly child" when she said she was proud of him, he knew that she was the pride and joy of his life, and that he must earn his trust she showed him, and had given him strength and courage to begin a better life. Long before little Anna Sophia graduated, which she did with honors, Royal was married to a loving, sensible, and honest woman, and her heart to the little missionary to whom she owed so much. —*Examiner.*

Earning One's Way.

Mr. Chauncey M. Depew, who is well known throughout America, not only as a successful business man and an eminent railroad president, but also as one of the most celebrated orators of our times, said, in a speech recently, that when he was a boy in college he thought the work required of him was prodigious, but knowing that his father was rich he looked forward to his graduation as the time when his labors would cease, and he would have an easy time. But when he had obtained his diploma his father kindly but firmly announced to the young man that he should never receive a penny more from him, and that he must earn his own living and promotion in the world as other young men did. This attitude of the father, which appeared to Mr. Depew unduly severe at the time, threw him on his own resources and made a great man of him, whereas, if he had been indulged in idleness, he would doubtless have been as worthless as others similarly situated. In our day wealth is accumulating with unparalleled rapidity, and scores of rich men's sons are being wrecked every year, always on the same rock. It is time for parents to consider. —*Christian Advocate.*

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How She Made Him Do It.

Harry was standing in the road, on the way home from school. There had been a heavy shower an hour before, and there was a large puddle in the road. He had a switch, and was switching the water from side to side.

Nettie came along and looked very crossly at Harry.

"You stop that!" she said. Harry did not like the way she spoke, nor the look on her face.

"I'm not going to say please!" he said. "I'm not going to say please!"

"Then I shall do it as long as I like," he said. "I can't get by till you stop."

"Yes, you can. I'm not hindering you," she said. "I shall get all splashed."

"Then stay where you are. You can't make me stop."

Now the truth was that Harry did not care a bit about switching the water any longer. If Nettie had spoken pleasantly, he would have stopped at once. But she felt as if he would stay there all day just to spite her.

"I shall tell your mother, you mean boy, if you don't stop," went on Nettie.

Harry laughed louder as Nettie tried to run by. He gave her a harder switch and laughed more loudly than ever as he saw Nettie's white apron spotted with water.

She scowled back at him as she went on.

Nettie had just turned a corner when Ruthie came up. Harry looked at her a little anxiously, for he did not feel half so pleasantly as he did before Nettie came.

"Do you wonder why? Was it because Nettie had been so cross? Partly so; for no one can speak or look cross without leaving a shadow behind. But Harry felt that he had been wrong too, and that is worse than to suffer wrong from others."

"Stop a minute, and let me go by, Harry," said Ruthie.

"I don't have to stop," growled Harry.

"I can't get home till you let me pass," said Ruthie.

"I don't care. You can't make me stop."

"Oh, yes, I can," said Ruthie, with a laugh.

"I should like to see you try," said Harry, holding his switch tighter than before, while he looked at Ruthie.

"You're as big as I am; but who cares for that?"

"I can though," said Ruthie.

"How do you think she did it?" said Harry, smiling and saying.

"Harry, please, let me pass. You wouldn't be ugly to me, I know."

He gave a little laugh, as he stood back to let her pass, saying:

"Well, if that's the way you're going to make me, I guess I'll have to give up."

Try it, little children. You have all seen how one angry word or look will bring on another, and how little good they do, and how much harm. Try how much power there is in a gentle word.—*Our Little Ones.*

Tricky Boys.

What is the reason we hear so many boys saying "honour bright" to each other, when they are making trades or promises? Is it because boys cannot trust one another, and are obliged to put their oaths on a pedestal, and mean to fulfill their obligations?

A few days since I heard one boy say to another, "You'd better look out for Fred Wilson, he is a tricky boy." Enquiring into the matter I found that Fred was a fine talker; the boys said he was really a better man than the boys they are representing; making certain promises that he never fulfilled, and did not expect to fulfill when he made them.

He was a boy who was not reliable, and nobody could depend upon him. Yet Fred was a fine talker; the boys said he was really a better man than the boys they are representing; making certain promises that he never fulfilled, and did not expect to fulfill when he made them.

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