

his glory became his snare. He did not cease to believe in God; it was not a case of mental perplexity or skepticism, all the time he boasted that God was with him and offered his strength as the proof of this. But he came to have very poor thoughts of God, he is not quickened by any great ideal of purity and righteousness. Samson's thoughts of God became coarse until Jehovah is to him such an object as himself only on a bigger scale, a colossal hero, strong, fitful and violent. Then comes the loss of loyalty, of loyalty in the form needed for those times and for his work.

Then he falls into unlawful friendships. His profession called for separation from the Philistines that he might contribute his share to guard the life and worship of the Israelites. But he forms attachments among the enemy and allows the daughters of Philistia to bewitch him with their allurements. This is playing wantonly with temptation and exposing himself to needless dangers. Were there not pure, beautiful women in Israel? Why should he leave the daughters of his own people to dally with the frivolous reckless women of these alien tribes? We know that real marriages cannot be arranged simply for reasons of business or politics. There must be warm affection and mutual confidence between the wedded pair. Let us, however, not dignify by the name of love a lust that is unlawful, a passion that is only the madness of a few moments and cannot bear the strain of life's trials. The choice of companions in any case is important to a young man, and of supreme importance the choice of one upon whom he is to lavish his strong constant love.

To find a brave thoughtful young woman as one's life companion and help is a great blessing; but woe to the young man who is fascinated by a woman who has no principle except the determination to gratify her own vanity and her own selfish desires. A young girl who spends her thought and strength on trifles may become a weak simpering creature with little influence of any kind, but a woman with strength of will and power of heart must be either an inspiration towards good or an incitement to evil. If purity and righteousness do not accompany our social intercourse our pleasure will be short-lived and will leave many a bitter memory. A man may meet enemies out on the open plain but if he is to contend with treachery in the woman to whom he has given his heart and home he will need a higher strength than that of Samson.

In the testing hour Samson shows the lack of high principle and pure sentiment which is the prophesy of failure. "Tell me thy secret" the woman says, "how is it that thou art so strong?" The hero plays with the temptation, dallies with the dangers and gets glory out of it for himself. It pleases him to give false reasons so that he may display his strength and make sport of his foes. But at last the secret is out, his strength lies in his long, flowing hair. Perhaps in his careless infidelity he only half believed this himself, perhaps it did not matter so much, after all, whether a man's hair was long or short. In itself it may not, but the long hair was the symbol of a principle, it represented a vow of consecration to holy service. The national flag is simply a bit of cloth, in the hour of battle it may look like a dirty rag, and not be worth anything in the world's market, but men fall round it, dying in its defence because

of all that it represents, because of its stern appeal to piety and patriotism. We need not discuss the wisdom of now wearing badges to represent one's self, denial and consecration, but if the man does take a vow and wear a badge he should be true to it. There are moments when to give up a little thing may mean cowardice, an outrage to our own conscience, and a treachery to our dearest friends. It is little at such times that we get in exchange. When Samson cast off his vow, he surrendered the ablest strength of his manhood to a creature who was waiting to betray him.

Samson's Shame:— This cowardice with all its cunning is the prelude of quick defeat. The strong man who yields to private temptation is not far from public shame. If the building is undermined the storm that is to shake the ground will not tarry. Swift shame came upon Samson when once he had yielded his secret to the woman whose smiles and caresses had led him away from his life work. This means failure in the presence of the enemy. The old cry was raised, the cry that had so often stirred his blood, "Samson, the Philistines are upon thee!" He responds to the battle cry as a splendid warhorse answers to the sound of the trumpet. He struggles to arise against the foe but he is helpless. He has cast off God and God has cast him off. He may stretch and shake himself but the long flowing locks are gone, and with them the presence and power of God. His enemies triumph over him, the champion of Israel becomes a byword and a reproach. He who so often publicly displayed his strength is now the laughing stock of those whom he might have despised.

This discovery of weakness when it was too late. Up to the very moment of his failure Samson had boasted in his strength; the hour of supreme strain came but "he wist not that the Lord had departed from him," and hence he shook himself as at other times but with far different results. His defeat is a surprise as well as a shame. It is the moment of struggle that reveals the hollowness that has crept slowly but surely into the man's life. Often it has been so with nations and churches as well as individual men, after a period of sloth and indulgence the call to battle comes they shake themselves as at other times not knowing that God has left them. Then, even though they drag the ark on to the battlefield, and make great parade of the outside of their religion, the lack of simple faith and resolute righteousness brings its own prompt retribution.

Then there comes to Samson slavery, and to the cause for which he ought to have fought shame. The Philistines can cry "Great David hath subdued our foe and brought out boasted hero low." It is not simply the fall of a man so much as the betrayal of a cause and treachery to a principle. The man may be forgiven, his strength may return, he may teach his scornful foes that it is dangerous to exact over a fallen foe, but a wound has been inflicted upon a great cause that cannot easily be healed. Let the young man who is strong and useful guard himself against inward deterioration and outward disgrace by keeping close to Him who has given us the supreme example of self-sacrifice and the highest ideal of service.

### Popular Canadian Playgrounds.

The traffic over the Grand Trunk Railway System to the summer resorts located on their line during the past season has been somewhat phenomenal, especially the heavy tourist travel that made the Highlands of Ontario their objective point. From statistics compiled to date over 25,000 passengers were carried into the Northern Districts during the past summer from points all over the continent; in fact, in view of the growing popularity of the regions, it is found necessary every year to increase the accommodation in this district by the building of new hotels and making additions to the hotels that are already located throughout the locality. First class summer hotels are being erected at a cost of thousands of dollars, one now being in operation on Lake Rosseau, Muskoka Lakes, with accommodation for 250 people, and built at an outlay of over \$100,000. The region is bound to be popular as there is no finer country on the continent of America for health, pleasure and recreation than the Highlands of Ontario, and which include the Muskoka Lakes, Magnetawan River, Lake of Bays region, and the 30,000 islands of the Georgian Bay, not forgetting the many pleasant summer resorts situated on the shores of Lakes Simcoe and Couchiching.

Many are the expressions of praise emanating from travelers who have been in this region. A letter just received by a Grand Trunk official, from Mr. Chas. F. Cutter of New York City is a specimen of what is thought of these districts, and reads as follows:—

"We are wishing we were on Lake Rosseau in sight of the autumn glories of 'Fairyland,' this very minute. More and better should be said about Muskoka than the bit of enthusiasm in that hasty personal note, more and better than I am artist enough to say, and in spite of the dictates of selfishness, which say 'Don't tell everybody; Muskoka is too good to give away!'"

"Indeed, the kindness of United States and Canadian friends encouraging my wish for a vacation in high and dry air with waterside delights, and free from swarms of men or insects have just given me and mine the best vacation of our lives. In the first place the trip to get there is easier, less expensive, though grander than any other between the Rockies and Switzerland. Rivers, lakes, Niagara Falls and the Gorge, and Lakes Ontario and Simcoe, stretch from New York City to Muskoka Wharf.

The Grand Trunk trip, including all round the island-tudded waters of Lakes Muskoka, Rosseau and Joseph, at one's leisure in charming little steamers, with courteous officers and crew, substantial dinners, soft waters, clear exhilarating air the whole continuous round is perfect. Then camp, cottage, boarding house, or hotel life in this peace and grandeur, with refined friends, good books, and well behaved children, canoes and boating, bass-ribs at your dock, pickerel around the next point, the finest bathing, sleep refreshing, no noise but one's own exuberance, dress to suit yourself, no business but fun, no roads but the trackless princely forests—the whole "shooting match" challenge comparison with all other vacation grounds known to New Yorkers. Our only regrets are at leaving this paradise short of a six months stay."