

Written for the LADIES' PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

To a Hepatica.

How cam'st thou boldly thus to rise
And, unannounced, to view the skies,
Beaming on thee with starry eyes,
O dainty-hued Hepatica?
The winter wind and blinding snows
Could scarce have sweetened thy repose,
O starry-leaved Hepatica!

As bitter storms have beaten down,
As angry tempests darkening frown
Has lowered upon thine upturned face,
All trusting in its tender grace;
As ever Northern daisy met,
Or deep empurpled violet,
Close-nestled in the mossy heath,
Made odorous with the violet's breath.

But February snows would fain,
Or the wild winds of March, detain
Imprisoned in its native earth,
The blossom bursting into birth.
Then tender April's tears fast fell
Bedewing many a mossy dell,
Where May's bright blossoms blushed thereafter;
Where mingled with the joyous laughter
Of bubbling brooklets, running streams,
Sounds, sweeter than are heard in dreams;
And make divinest harmonies
With sap quick coursing through the trees,
All tremulous on the gentle breeze,
But, like the music of the spheres,
Inaudible to mortal ears,

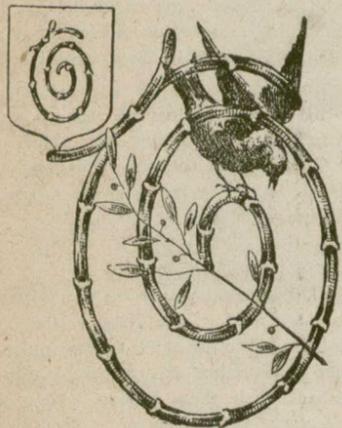
And, when through April's tears the sunlight shone
The dew-dimmed faces of the flowers upon,
The laureate lark poured forth his voice to greet,
With lofty melody, thy blossoms sweet;
And now the notes of the triumphant thrush
In glad some outburst of thanksgiving rush
In unrestrained music on the ear,
And love-awakened linnets' softer strains anear,
Blend in the choral unison, to raise
Alike a song of welcome and of praise.

MARGARET SADIE HENDERSON.

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The Angel of Sorrow.

"Cometh white-robed Sorrow weary and worn, and flingeth wide open the gates she may not enter—almost we linger with Sorrow for very love."
GEORGE McDONALD.



NE morning in the spring-time, before the flowers were fully opened, and while yet the grass was wet with dew, Hildebrande set forth in search of the Land of Day, where the sun never sets, neither is darkness ever known at all. He had heard of the way that it was long, that many dangers beset the travellers who journeyed along its rugged paths. Nevertheless, he started

on his way without fear, and with a joyful heart. For the songs of the birds were in his ears, and the rays of the morning sun gladdened his eyes; and, as he thought of the Land of day, and of the King thereof whom he had never seen, but whom yet he loved, he quickened his steps that he might the sooner reach his journey's end.

Now, as he travelled on, joining his song to the carols of the birds, he saw that many others trod the same path, and had the same quest. And he asked many things of them. They told him that the path soon left this flowery land and took its course through dark forests and across dreary deserts, that it grew thorny and hard to tread, and that false guides arose, tempting the travellers aside into the woods, with promise of gay tents and softer paths, and many more delights. But Hildebrande vowed that they should never so beguile him. The day wore on apace. The sun rose high, the path led upward, and grew very hard to tread; many fainted, many more sought the shade of the woods, saying that they would but rest awhile and then return to the path. Still others were tempted of the evil angels to lie down in the tents, and to drink the wine that, once tasted, made return well-nigh impossible.

Hildebrande grew weary of the struggle at last, and paused and leaned upon his staff.

"Come hither," said a voice in his ear. "Thou art out-wearied, pause and rest."

Hildebrande turned, and saw beside him a man of princely aspect, and of great beauty. At first sight he seemed sad, but after Hildebrande had looked upon him for a few moments, his face appeared full of gayety—save only his eyes, which were very dark, filled with anguish that never left them, even when he smiled.

"To pause beneath this scorching sun would hardly be to rest," said Hildebrande. "There are trees on yonder hill, I must climb that ere I can hope for rest."

"Look," said the stranger, laying his hand on Hildebrande's shoulder, and pointing to the woods.

Hildebrande's eyes followed his pointing hand. A little to the left of the path, and sloping downwards, were trees whose broad branches gave a cool and delicious shade. The silvery murmur of a trickling stream made music to the ear, and near its falling waters

was a natural couch, covered with moss, canopied over by the sheltering arms of a beech tree, and surrounded by climbing plants.

Hildebrande gazed at it for a moment and then looked back at the white glare of the road in front of him, at the pitiless rays of the blazing sun. How far away seemed the hill-top whereon grew the only trees in sight, how hard the pathway to be trodden ere he reached them.

"Why delayest thou?" said the tempter's mocking voice. "If thou had'st to pass through a gate, which might close, and shut thee forever from this path, and its uncertain goal, then could I understand thy hesitation, but who can hinder thee from returning when it likes thee, and thou hast had enough of rest?"

"That is true, and I am no weakling, to love rest more than toil, or the waters of yonder stream better than the wine in the King's Palace, or prefer shelter of those trees to the light of His smile," said Hildebrande. "For a little I will rest, I shall with greater speed pursue my journey, when again I seek the path."

So he turned with his companion, and soon reached the refreshing shelter of the trees, and flung himself on the mossy couch, and drank of the sparkling waters, and then he fell asleep. He was awakened by the touch of an icy hand on his brow. Starting up, he saw before him the white-robed figure of a woman, very pale and sad, and yet, for all its sadness, her face made his heart ache less than did that of the tempter, who stood not far from her, his arms folded on his breast, his lips curled in a scornful smile.

"Hence," said Sorrow, for that was her name, "Idler, Sluggard, the hours of the day are fleeting, and how shalt thou journey when the sun has set?"

"Heed her not, thus would she enfeeble every brave man's heart," sneered the man. "Defy her, and she will be powerless to harm thee—"

"I stay here till I choose to go, thou shalt not affright me," said Hildebrande to Sorrow. "I am a man and no stripling. I judge it well to rest. Hence thyself, pale phantom."

Then Sorrow stepped forward, and laid her icy hand on his heart.

Hildebrande staggered and groaned, then the shade of the trees grew stifling, and the sound of the waters maddened him, and he longed for the fresh air of the mountain path, and the glad some light of the sun.

"I go," he said, turning fiercely to Sorrow, "thou hast made this place and the memory of it hateful to me, but never do I wish to see thy face again."

The tempter stepped to his side and followed him, as with heart still aching from sorrow's touch, he struggled painfully back to the narrow, rugged path—narrower and more rugged by contrast with the place he had left. He continued to urge Hildebrande to take his ease—and reminded him that the woods ran parallel with the road—and that he would arrive at the gates of the kingdom of day just as surely and as soon, if he walked along under the shadow of the trees, as he would by toiling along the stony ground of which the narrow path seemed composed. But Hildebrande turned a deaf ear to his blandishments—and soon with an evil frown, and a muttered threat, the dark angel left his side.

Still the day wore on. Hildebrande climbed the hill, and stopped at its summit to take breath. It had been hard and painful work to reach it. Much of his strength had left him when he drank of the stream in the wood. And the joyousness that his heart had known before he met sorrow, never returned.

Standing on the hill, he looked around him. He was surprised to observe that the path by which he had come was shrouded in a purple haze that made it seem almost beautiful. He looked forward. He saw that he had to descend the hill on which he stood, and, after crossing a desert, at sight of which he shuddered, to climb yet another hill. The summit of that was cloud-capped. Gaze as he would, he could not pierce with his eyes the veil of mist that enshrouded it.

Slowly he began the descent. As he neared the foot of the hill, he was met again by the tempter of the morning. He should have been on his guard, but the evil beauty of the dark angel's face had not lost its charm for him; he paused to listen to his words.

"Sorrow is not here now," said the spirit, "rest awhile and gather strength, ere thou come to yonder sunless desert."

He pointed, as he spoke, to a tent pitched not very far to the left of the path. After some moment's fierce and agonizing struggle, Hildebrande yielded to his enticements, and followed him. Alas! scarcely had he crossed the threshold, when doors, invisible as air, stronger than iron bars, closed behind him, and he was a prisoner.

Not that at first he tried to cross again the threshold. Through the invisible door he looked on the desert, and it seemed too dreary and too terrible to be faced. Yet, resting on the couch in the tent, and drinking of the poisoned wine, he still remembered that he was bound for the Land of Day, and he still looked, and longed to see, its King. But when he would have retraced his steps, and resumed his journey he found he was a captive in the tent.

The sun was now far down in the west. The desert had still to be crossed. Despairing, again he drank of the wine, only too plentifully supplied by invisible hands. And then a numbing apathy came over him; he ceased to struggle against the unseen power that barred his way. Turning back to the tent he saw another door. This opened on the side remote from the road, and the ground sloped with terrific abruptness. Ere he could pass through it, the white-robed form he knew and dreaded, stood before him, and he turned, shrinking from the glance of Sorrow's mournful eyes.

"The other way, the other door—this leads to ruin and death," she said.

"I cannot," groaned Hildebrande.

Sorrow came close to him. She laid her hand first on his bowed head, and then upon his heart.

"Now try once more," she said.

Writhing from under her touch he sprang forward. The resistance he met was strong, he retreated, but Sorrow was behind him, again he threw all the strength he had into the struggle, and again he failed. Then he thought of the gates of the Land of Day, and longed to pass them, and he pictured to himself the King's face, and his heart grew strong.

"Master, King, send help," he cried aloud. Nor knew that Sorrow had first whispered the words behind him.

The hidden doors flew open. Breathless, fainting, well-nigh dead, he sprang through the opening and sank upon his knees, alone and friendless, the night coming on and the desert yet to cross, but free again at last. He rose and hurried forward. The shadows deepened. The western sky lost all the sunset glow, he dared not look behind, but, straining every nerve, went forward—ever forward—until at last he reached the foot of the one hill he had yet to climb. He had feared it greatly, but, in the gathering gloom, strange misty forms, with shining eyes came near him, gentle hands guided his faltering feet aright, loving voices whispered words of comfort as he passed into the strange and awful shadow he had seen upon the hill.

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When he had passed it, he saw before him, clear and bright and beautiful, the gates of the Palace of the King—the King of the Land of Day. He turned to look back upon the way he had come, for the mist, so penetrable from this side, is clear from the other. He saw the terrible slope of the ground from the lower side of the tent. He saw that the forest, too, led ever downward. He looked further yet to see where they would end. They converged into a hollow. He looked into that, and shrank back, appalled at the sight of all he had escaped. Sick and shuddering, he turned towards the Palace gates, and there stood Sorrow watching him with the shadow of a smile on her wan face. She flung the gates wide open and stepped back.

"Enter, now," she said softly.
"But for thee, I should be far indeed from these blessed gates," he said. "Oh, Sorrow, what do I not owe thee? Enter thou with me."

Sorrow shook her head.
"These gates I open for others, I may never pass myself," she sighed. "But I go to those who like thee, but for my aid would lose their way."

And then she vanished. But Hildebrande passing through the gates, came to the presence of the King of the Land of Day.

LEE WYNDHAM.

Our Weekly Sermons
By Celebrated Divines.

Written specially for the LADIES PICTORIAL WEEKLY.

On Energy.

"Put on thy strength."—Isaiah iii, 1.

This exhortation suggests the possibility of putting on energy. It is a law of physics that force as well as matter is indestructible, and that neither can be created except by God himself. One form of energy may be converted into another. Energy latent or potential may become energy active or dynamical, but no form of energy can be produced by any effort of the human will. In the words of our text we are not asked to do an impossibility, i. e., to create energy, but simply to utilize that which is within our reach. All the power that we require has been placed at our disposal by a gracious Jehovah, and all that we are asked to do is simply to put it on. Those of us who are weak in thought and character are weak not because we have no energy or capability, but because our energies are latent and undeveloped. Like the captive daughter of Zion, we are exhorted to put on our strength; to cultivate our talents, to make use of our privileges, and thereby accomplish the special and important work that God has designed us to accomplish.

In every man's life there are great occasions—times of inspiration—when, in a special sense, he puts on strength and becomes more than an ordinary man. It is impossible for him to live at this supreme point of energy, just as it was impossible for the disciples to live upon the Mount of Transfiguration. He must come down to a normal condition; he must live within the highest point of his capability; otherwise he will soon become exhausted, and life will be a burden and a failure. Very few of us need this caution, so far as our religious work is concerned. We are not in danger of attempting too much for God and living in an overstrained condition. We are rather in danger of neglecting our duty and living far beneath our real capability.

I shall treat this subject largely from the human standpoint, and consider certain elements and conditions of energy that are the outcome of the peculiar constitution of the human mind and the circumstances in which we are placed in this world. The prophet saith: "Put on thy strength." Then there is a strength that is in a certain sense our own that we can put on or off at pleasure.

I. In the first place, a man is strong in the direction of his belief or faith.

When God appeared to Moses on the mountain, and commissioned him to bring forth the children of Israel out of Egypt, Moses felt unable for the task, and said, tremblingly: "Who am I that I should go into Pharaoh? I am not eloquent; I am slow of speech and of a slow tongue." But when Moses believed in his heart that God had called him to this great work, and would give him the necessary qualifications, he received power to go to Pharaoh, or to anybody, in obedience to the divine command. Disraeli wrote, "To believe in the heroic makes heroes." To be-