

THE HAND TO PLOUGH.

By Prof. W. H. Wynn, D.D.

"I hope and pray for your success"—so says the father in parting with his son. It is a critical moment. There is much pathetic lingering with clasped hands and the intruding tear. For now the boy has become a man, and the great world has issued its summons enlisting him in the ranks of its militant forces, who are expected, each one in its place, to endure the hardships and brave the dangers of the battle of life.

He goes forth hopefully; he is valiant of soul. For the most part the youth is eager for the onset and cannot see why the father should be so anxious, or the mother indulge her tears. The morning of life is like morning on our eastern hills—

"Where Partrius' hoofs stamp heaven's floor,"

fresh, vigorous, restive, like spirited coursers pawing to be gone. It is well. The faint-hearted youth is disabled in advance. Courage, the spirit of adventure, an imagination kindling with hope—these are nature's dowry to the adolescent youth and nascent man.

But as to the father and mother—what shall we say of them at this solemn juncture when they part company with their child? They have preceded him on the road. They know what it means when the poet sings of "the shades of the prison-house closing around the growing boy," and about the fading-out of his "vision splendid into the light of common day." Very properly the ideals of youth mount high; the visions; the day dreams; the flattering consciousness that they most certainly will be able to climb up to these ideals, while others are doomed in disappointment to fall by the way. But the book of experience has not yet been opened to them—that book which the eyes of the aged, often blinded with tears, are studious to pursue.

Experience! The very term signifies to try, and be tried. It is our human allotment to conquer our solid knowledge of life in no other way. The young man in his school-day equipage is likely to dream of a waiting multitude eager to look upon a new wonder when he shall fling his startling personality into the field of the world. A knightly tournament it will be; he will easily carry off the prize. Alas! his first day in the arena may tear into shreds the whole tapestry of his dreams, and he be left a wounded and bedraggled victim strewn upon the sand.

But, now, it is a delicate matter—this thing of opening to the young mind the future, before the future itself has come to be known. It is a dreary theme to speak of disillusion at any time, especially when the soul is expending its early enthusiasms on these youthful dreams. It is ill-advised counsel, a thrust at the vitals of hope, it would seem, to recommend that Pandora's box be peremptorily dropped on the threshold of active life, and that the young man go forth to meet reality with the aggressive push of his unaided fist and foot. In this vaunting tone the noted apostles of "success" are wont to get off the flourish and foam of their gratuitous advice. Cease your dreaming; knot your muscles and clinch your teeth.

There is, indeed, no period in life in which heroic measures of courage and resolution will not be in demand. The will is the man; and life, in all its diversified experiences, is a discipline of the will. But shall we never make the discovery that the will is also a chamber of imagery, where ideals are kindling forever on its sapphire walls? You rise up and nerve yourself to go vigorously in pursuit. That is your will. But meantime this pursuit of yours is no blind movement under the im-

pulse of some dull and irresponsible mood of the mind. You are in chase of an idea, and an ideal is always three-fourths reality and one-fourth dream, the dream being the circumambient halo in which the reality is clothed. The will is the tension of the bowstring, drawn back and leveled to the mark; the ideal is the target toward which the arrow is sped. In this sense we all dream, and never cease to dream, because our ideals are never more than proximately attained.

Nevertheless the success which the fond father covets for his son, by the very etymology of the term, consists in getting under one's burden with heaving breast and shoulder, and bravely carrying it through to the end. It is "sub," under, and "cedere," to go—get under your load; or, otherwise, lift it to your shoulder and, with straining nerve and sinew, push on with it to the point where you may be entitled to put it down.

It is discipline—this life of ours, turn and let in upon it whatever blaze of it whichever way we may for inspection, philosophy or religion we may be able to invite. Discipline! Discipline! There is a harsh and strident accent in the sibilant syllables with which we spell out the term. You know how the athlete drills for the stadium; the soldier for his manoeuvre; the artist for whatever triumphs may await his pencil or his pen.

It is strange that men should hope for coveted inertia when entering the moral world. There is the siren song of rest from labor, rest from plying the oar on stormy seas; rest, rest, which, after all, is but the short-lived ecstasy of a besotted dream. Whether here or yonder, our highest happiness is in ennobling toil. The bliss of heaven will lie in its industries, its myriad multitudes bending to their myriad tasks, there where the spiritual mountains are to be tunneled, and the spiritual seas are to be explored.

Our religion has nothing higher than "virtue" to commend, and the very term has "nerve" at the root of it—be it "vis," strength; or "vir," man, the idea is one and the same—virtue calls into requisition the utmost manly energy of the struggling man.

It is true the great Master promises rest to the weary, the weary and heavily laden groaning under their load. Ah, yes, that is the one unfailing solace of all our strenuous years; but we may easily miss its meaning and find ourselves miserably mistaken in the end. He does not unharass us of our load and bid us lie down on the grass. We get His secret by yoking up with Him and having our burden lightened by the joint support of his co-ordinating arms. Strange paradox we know it is, that rest should be found under a yoke, or surcease from weariness by simply shifting the burden we may never throw down.

But so it is. In all lines of effort, patient burden bearing is the price of success. The universe, in no apartment of it, has pace for the drone, the lazy man, who will sink into wretchedness rather than shoulder his load. And yet there are many such; and indolence is a social phenomenon we dare not overlook.

Alas! that any word from the kingdom, falsely spoken, of course, should encourage a dream of idleness as the goal of a goodness, without the heroic effort that goodness implies. "There is no good but the good will"—the great philosophers of our modern time have summed up their wisdom in these memorable words, which mean that every form of goodness is the product of the will, and therefore the issue of something done and retained in the moral makeup of the manly man. Put your hand to the plough, and do not look back.—Lutheran Observer.

WELL ENOUGH.

The older ones, and a class highly favored for one reason or another, cry out betimes at the clamors of the restless and impatient mass, "let well enough alone." It is the effect of age which is accompanied ever with a lack both of endeavor and enterprise, which prompts the cry back to appeals for change in the larger and lower classes. The latter because the more fortunate class has a consciousness of being better placed and of doing well enough, who too, want to be let alone by other people. The struggle for civil and religious liberty in Scotland and the story of the revolution and reformations of all time which have marked the progress and uplifting of mankind for the best, attest that nothing is well enough until it is well for the many. The principle applies to public economics and to the religious weal of the world. The people of the world are crying for the bread of life and the cry falls upon the ease-loving, selfishly-satisfied few who are prone to reply, let us alone. But this self-centered and complacent few need the upheaval and new order of things for which the masses clamor.

In the last analysis nothing is really good for any of us unless it is good for our brother also; nothing that hurts and hinders him can really help us. Now in one form, now in another, this stubborn, irrefutable truth confronts all times and generations because of it comes the ceaseless shifts, changes, and overturnings by which the world has slowly climbed upward. That which was "well enough" of the favored few yesterday, is the common right of the common people today; and while God lives, and his Spirit moves on earth, it must be so until humanity shall come to its highest.

The Gospel must be preached in answer to the far cry and it will satisfy the clamors of the world. Nothing else will. Its acceptance will fill the masses in every day life with a preferring one another, arrest strife, hush words of bitterness, and bind the whole together in cords of sympathy and harmony, and thereby happiness will fill the earth.—Presbyterian Standard.

The Essex church has been undergoing needed improvements. A new foundation of cement block was put in. The building was replastered and repainted outside and in. New chairs for the platform, new carpet for platform and aisles replaced the old. The electric wiring was remodelled and a costly and beautiful electro-arc installed. The reopening services were conducted by Mr. Tolmie, of Windsor. On Monday evening, Oct. 12th, a first-class supper was provided by the ladies, after which an entertainment was held consisting of addresses and music. Mrs. Scott, of Windsor, delighted the audience with her Scotch songs, and Miss Parker's solos were highly appreciated. Since Rev. J. A. Ross' induction in Dec., 1904, the church has made rapid strides. An old mortgage was paid off, the old manse sold and a new one purchased near the church. The membership of the church has been doubled and the Sabbath school greatly increased.

The Rev. Dr. Armstrong Black's induction to the pastorate at Silverhill, near St. Leonards, took place on Sept. 9.

At the meeting of the South London Presbytery last week it was heartily agreed to send the cordial greetings of the Court to the Rev. John McNeill on his coming within its bounds in the service of their common Lord, and to recall with gratitude his good work and brotherly bearing while he was a minister of the Presbyterian Church of England, praying that the blessing of God might rest most abundantly upon his ministry at Christ Church, Westminster.