

THE MORNING AND EVENING HARP.

The normal close of human life is not a climax, but a cadence. Life's music begins in youth, like the nightingale in Ferrisyon's haunted valley, "with long and low preamble." It continues with increasing intensity and force through early manhood and up to the prime of life, its midday. Then it moves forward on a level or slightly declining plane, with perhaps somewhat increasing force for a while, a force whose springs, however, lie back in the preceding stage, and whose activities take the directions determined then. Henceforth it slackens in intensity and movements, although not necessarily in depth or height, and by no means necessarily in beauty, for this is the season when "life takes a sober coloring from an eye that hath kept watch o'er man's mortality," and puts on ripe and tranquil graces impossible before. And then "only waiting till the shadows are a little longer grown," the soul in quiet carries for that season when cadences shall end, and the full-toned, ever deepening music of the eternal shall begin.

It is a beautiful picture, a beautiful song. One would not have it otherwise. Let us not complain when some young life is stopped in mid-current of advancing melody, for God knows how to choose and fit his Heavenly choirs. Let us offer no criticism when He sees best, in the case of some strong servant of his, to substitute for the impending twilight of earth the glow of Heaven's morning. We can see a grandeur in that sudden transfer to the larger sphere, great as was the place that was filled on earth.

And yet we recognize the complete and tender beauty of this other song. The glory of the mellow sunset, so often almost indistinguishable, balances the glory of the eager morning. Each part, like Emerson's shell and seaweed, in its place is best. Each is as significant and as beautiful as the other. Think not that the slackening energies and sober pulses are an evil thing; they are the sweet-toned echoes of past music, the pause before the Heavenly symphonies. Shakespeare's "Seven Ages" are the working's picture of the cycle of human life. One could wish that some poet of the deeper humanity, with Shakespeare's mighty mind and facile hand, but with a greater than his power of insight and comprehension, might tell the story as he sees it under the sky above us, in the light of the Heaven beyond us. The lame and impotent conclusion of the "lean and slippered pantaloon," "sans eyes, sans teeth, sans everything," has no place beside this picture of the tranquil eventide "when there shall be light."

But for us the significance of the fact of the cadence lies in the relations of its different parts, in the truth that each note in the closing measures is the direct descendant of its predecessors, and they of theirs. The key-note was struck in youth, and while rude hands of sin too often play havoc later with the gracious melody thus begun, full, normal manhood is simply the louder, deeper vibration of the earlier chords, and old age carries on the same prevailing air and ruling motif. That last music, indeed, is not possible without the first. No doubt the Heavenly Master can take the harp all unused to celestial tones, and with many a string destroyed, and call forth strains which shall make angels wonder and all Heaven rejoice; but even He, we may reverently say, cannot evoke the music that might have sounded from its strings if through all the years they had grown wanted to the finer melodies. In each present note that sounds, all notes that have been are resounding, and if the higher music has been lacking in the past, the song, however, sweet, lacks the richness it might have had. The tranquil march of age is moving to the measures it learned in manhood and in youth.

And therefore the character of the earlier music, whether marked by ad-

quacy, redundancy, or defect, molds all the later. The later simply expands and develops the earlier. This furnishes the central tone which has attracted to itself and ranged round it the kindred notes; this has been the dominating power which selected out of life's materials the congenial elements and translocated them into its own likeness.

To change the figure for a moment, it is not possible, from our human standpoint at least, to insert into the soul's warp and woof when the fabric is nearly woven, or even well-blocked out, the lacking threads of gold. Late-won polish soon wears off, late-won culture proves itself to be but superficial, late-won virtue has a hard struggle with long-seated passion, and the noble song our minds have learned in maturer years are but evanescent; what remains are tones which sank into the heart in youth, and those which vibrate in unison with them. Make what allowances we may for the transmuting power of development, allow that many of the things in youth that grate upon our nerves and offend our senses are but the acidity and the hardness of the apple incidental to its growth, look with confidence for time and sun and rain to mellow its crass juices into sweetness, consider that there must be a certain necessary shrillness and incelerence in the tones of youth which only time and use can deepen and relate, allow for all external influences that tend to heighten and enrich, nor forget the exceeding power of the grace of God,—yet the fact remains that in chief measure as the harp resounds in the morning, so shall it sing at night.

In this lies the significance and the encouragement of all work for the young. It seems so disappointing, so crass and crude and little, this drilling of high thoughts but feebly understood into thoughtless minds, this training of adept hands in movements which to them as yet "little meaning, little relevancy bear," this reiteration of noble sentiments to those who for long are silent to our singing, and when the notes do begin to come, seem to utter them forth with but parrot iteration,—this seems, it is true, so trifling and so petty; but we are training earth's most glorious singers; we are striking the key-notes of a whole lifetime of music; we are molding and coloring manhood's deep and thrilling tones; we are directing the rich, sweet music of the sunset hours; we are shaping the whole soaring, glorious, tender cadence of human life; we are preparing for the climax of eternity.

Who at such a task could not be hopeful, patient, content? The notes are yet but shrill; and a hundred times we sound the right one only to hear the same false tone repeated; but when once the right tone is caught and woven by love and habit and the spirit of God into the very chorus of life, its echoes shall be eternal.—Sunday School Times.

PRAYER.

The Lord is in His holy temple, let all the earth keep silence before Him. Because Thou art holy we are afraid; because Thou art love we take heart again, through Thy love we will advance to Thy holiness. We have no answer to Thy claim, we have no defence of ourselves against Thy righteousness; but when Thou dost bend Thyself in tender love, when we feel Thy tears drop upon us in pity, we begin to feel that even we, though chief of sinners, may be pardoned at the Cross of Christ; then the day dawns, then the summer wind breathes upon us, and then we feel all heaven coming down with welcomes and assurances of infinite salvation and defence. Such experience we would now enjoy; we would feel that the temple of God is not made of common clay, that in it there is an altar, and that on the altar there is an ark of the covenant that speaks not of law only, but of grace and mercy, and before that mercy seat we fall, crying, God be merciful unto us sinners.

FRIENDSHIP.

Some Bible Hints.

A friend is best proved a friend when his friendship receives no return (Prov. 17:17).

There may be friendship without a return, but there may be no return without friendship (Prov. 18:24).

The best proof of friendship is in criticism; and the best criticism is deserved praise (Prov. 27:17).

It is well to work for Christ; it is more than twice as well when two work together for Christ (Ecc. 4:9, 10).

Suggestive Thought.

It is hard, but it is possible, to be a friend-alone.

Good things require time, and the best things, like friendship, require the most time.

There is a "genius for friendship;" but it is only a genius for usefulness, and all may win it.

Dr. Trumbull wrote of "Friendship, the Master Passion;" and indeed love is only the higher friendship.

A few Illustrations.

A palace is not built in a day, and a true friendship is a growth; it is a palace that is to last forever.

When a ball falls on the earth, the earth rises proportionately to meet the ball; so friendship is sure of some return from the most stolid.

Friendship is a wireless telegraphy, and communicates less by visible than invisible.

Electric currents along a wire set up current along parallel wires. So friendship between two prompts friendship between other two.

To Think About.

Have I many friends, or few?
Am I really helpful to my friends?
Is Christ my best friend?

A Cluster of Quotations.

Some friends as shadows are,
And Fortune as the sun;
They never proffer any help
Till Fortune hath begun

—Sir Walter Raleigh.

Try to please men and ignore God, and you will get nothing but disappointment.

—General Gordon.
A friend! Deep is calling to deep;
A friend! The heart wakes from its sleep.

—Lucy Larcom.

True friendship is a plant of slow growth, and must undergo and withstand the shock of adversity before it is entitled to the appellation.—George Washington.

DAILY READINGS.

- M., July 9. Ruth and Naomi. Ruth 1: 14-18.
- T., July 10. David and Jonathan. 1 Sam. 18: 1-14.
- W., July 11. David and Nahash. 2 Sam. 10: 1-2.
- F., July 12. David and Hiram. 1 Kings 5: 1-12.
- S., July 13. Paul and Epaphroditus. Phil. 2: 25-30.
- S., July 14. Paul and Timothy. 1 Cor. 16: 10-16.
- S., July 15. Topic—How can I be a true friend? Prov. 17: 17; 18: 24; 27: 9, 17, 19; Ecc. 4: 9, 10.

ANTS IN THE BIBLE.

Dr. McCook says: "I believe in the Bible from beginning to end, and believe in a word of God that has no mistakes. For 100 years natural science declared that Solomon made a mistake about ants being harvesters, and Smith's Bible Dictionary apologized for this mistake in a most learned way. But a minister went down into Texas and Colorado, and camped out among the ants, and as the result of his investigations published a work showing that the naturalists for 100 years had been wrong. The Bible makes no mistakes even about ants."