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THE FORCE OF TRUE LOVE

BY JOSEPH KRAUSKOPF, D.D.

THE press of a fortnight ago told of a suicide by a young and promising artist of Montreal. Pinned to his waistcoat was a little note, containing the words: "Life is a rarebit dream. Ha, ha! Such a funny dream! But enough! I am ready to awake to something less ridiculous."

Many who have read this bit of telegraphic news probably dismissed it from their thoughts with some such words as "Small loss; the world is well rid of him, and would be better off if more like him would follow his example." Others, like myself, probably felt deep pity for the departed. I read the item of news a second and a third time, and every re-reading seemed to tell a different and a sadder story. I seemed to read of a disheartened struggler, of one who sank exhausted under the cruel blows of an adverse fate, of one who had long and vainly yearned for a word of cheer and encouragement, of one, who, comparing a one-time loving home—a fond and caressing mother, a self-sacrificing father, a tender, affectionate sister—with his present environment—a cold, selfish, grasping world, whose only god is mammon and its only altar success—and, not knowing how to commercialize his art, how to crowd himself into circles where he was not sought, or, too proud to force, by brazenry, a recognition that was denied to merit, preferred "to shuffle off his mortal coil" and to have done forever with the tragic farce of life.

Perhaps all this sympathy was wasted. Perhaps he merited no better fate. Perhaps lovelessness and selfishness were all on his side. Perhaps it was he who, having no love in his heart, no cheer in his eye, no word of kindness on his lips, repelled the world, froze its cheer, killed its joy. Perhaps, having cloyed his appetites with bestial sensuality and finding no longer gratification in riotousness, he made a speedy end to a wasted life.

To me, however, the first conjecture seemed the more likely. Many and varied experiences have made it a conviction with me that probably half of mankind's sufferings on earth is due to the lovelessness of others, to envies and enmities, that embitter where love would sweeten, that wound where love would heal, that sever where love would unite. It is because of such want of love that the hand of man is raised against his fellowman, that nations are at war with each other, that castes and classes and races are arrayed against each other in deadly conflict, that more money is being expended weekly for the maintenance of armies and armaments and police, for courts and prisons and almshouses, than for the support of churches and schools.

And preachers may preach and teachers may teach and writers may write and speakers may speak against the evils of war and oppression and injustice, there will be no cessation of them, until love will take the place of hatred, and good-will towards our fellowmen will supplant selfishness.

The love of fellowman was the motive-power of all the great leaders of reform, whether religious or moral, whether social or political. There has never yet been a great reform but that a great heart was back of it. There has never yet been a great movement that made for liberty or right but that took its rise in the well-springs of love. There has never yet been a great sacrifice for human kind but that it was offered on the altar of love. At that altar ministered all the great founders of religion. At that altar worshipped all the martyrs and patriots. Upon that altar sacrificed all the redeemers and emancipators and helpers of men, the John Howards, the Ryersons, the Elizabeth Freys, the Florence Nightingales, and the hundreds of others of equally consecrated name.

Because of the love of men, hundreds leave, to-day, luxuriant homes, attractive and cultured environments, to take their abode in the districts of the poor, in the neighborhood of the lowly and fallen, there where the atmosphere is foul, where the streets and tenements reek with filth and swarm with vermin, where even the blade of grass sickens and dies, where not even the bird can sing or the sun can shine, where "children are spawned, not born, and where they die like flies," where youth easily falls prey to infamy, and the old, by reason of overwork and under-rest and under-feeding, become ready victims of deadly diseases. Into these quarters of squalor and misery and shame go these men and women of the great heart, and plant there light and cheer and hope. They feed the hungry, clothe the naked, heal the sick, comfort the sorrowing and despairing, bring back the lost and straying. They found kindergartens and schools, clubs and guilds. They introduce cleanness in homes, and instil higher ideals into lives. They teach the sacredness of motherhood and the responsibility of fatherhood, the honor of womanhood and the chivalry of manhood. They cultivate the sense of self-respect, and contempt for all that violates decency, honor and honesty.

When contemplating the heart's priceless contributions toward the betterment of man, we cannot but deplore that the attention given to the cultivation of the affections falls far short of that we give to the improvement of the intellect. We are so busy enlarging the mind that we must of necessity dwarf the heart. What a world ours might have been to-day had the culture of the heart been equal to that of the mind! How many centuries ago might not the golden age have dawned, had the first place in the system of education, in the estimate of worth, in the bestowal of honor, been given to the heart!

There is no dearth of mind to-day, but there is a woeful want of heart. We need more heart in our homes. The brute-instinct still plays a large part in our nurseries. We frown where we should smile, and we scold where we should pity. We stifle in our anger what we could develop in our forbearance. We punish with the rod where we should correct with kindness. We harden with rigor where we should soften with gentleness.

And we need more heart in our schools. Heart culture has no place in our curriculum of studies. We have gymnastics for the limbs and acrobatic feats for the mind, but no exercise for the heart. The relationship between teacher and pupil is often that of open hostility. There are systems of recitation, discipline, marking, examinations that develop deception rather than honor, hatred rather than love. There is often little regard for the psychical nature of the pupil,



little consciousness that the most censured pupil is often the backward pupil, who, though laboring hard in preparing and following the lesson, cannot keep pace with the more gifted classmate who receives all the praise and all the honors for but little exertion. Little notice is taken of the fact that the pupil of the poorer mind is frequently the pupil of the better heart. There is little knowledge of the home-environments of some of those pupils whose untidy and irregular appearance at school calls forth all sorts of punishment and disgrace. There is little knowledge that some of the pupils scolded for poor or indifferent work are bread-winners of families, toiling from dawn to school-time, and from end of school till far into the night. What cheer, what encouragement might not a teacher's loving heart and sympathetic word infuse into such a life! What vistas of hope might they not open! What avenues of darkness and misery and abuse might they not close!

And we need more heart in our intercourse with our fellowman. We have heard too much of the doctrine "Each for himself, and the devil take the hindmost." It is a doctrine that may fit well enough into the life of the brute, but it is the distinction of man that he alone, out of all animal creation, is possessed of the sense of active fellow-feeling. And he alone is a man who shows his manhood by active sympathy with his fellowman. The greater his fellow-feeling the further removed is he from the brute. Through it he is led to act justly and kindly toward others, and moved to abstain from doing to others what he would not like to have others do to him. Through it he is led vividly to realize another's sorrow and suffering, and to hasten to his succor. And the more his sense of fellow-feeling is developed the richer grow his affections, and the richer his affections the larger is his and others' happiness.

If in our social relationship we are arrogant and selfish and unkind and unjust we must not look for kindness and sympathy and love from others. Unkindness begets unkindness; selfishness breeds selfishness. Lovelessness is paid in its own coin.

If, however, we are unselfish, thoughtful of others, sympathetic, loving, we receive back all we give, and often more. Our own heart's approval alone is worth all the gain that selfishness procures. A pleasant smile, a word of cheer to an employee, a thoughtful enquiry after a neighbor's health, an encouraging word to one sorely tried, these are in themselves trifles, but what a world of happiness they may kindle in the heart of the bereaved, the unbefriended, the uncheered! We speak of wonderful echoes in our and in foreign lands, but I know of none as melodious as our heart's cheer and love echoing and re-echoing in another's breast. It heals where medicine fails. It kindles where fuel refuses to ignite. It divines a "soul of goodness in things evil" and "distills it out." It sees the pure in the impure as the scientist sees the lustrous diamond in the blackest coal. It draws the particles of good out of a mass of sinfulness as the magnet draws specks of iron filings out of tons of sand. It effects reformations where appeals and reproofs fall on deaf ears. There are hearts that thirst for a word of love and sympathy as the parched flower thirsts for the drop of rain. There are lives that need but a brother's sympathetic grasp of hand to check their downward course.

Oh, the powers for good in the human heart that are daily allowed to go to waste! It is said that there is latent power enough in the Falls of the Niagara to answer the needs of all the world. There is power enough in the human heart to turn the whole world's evil into good, power enough to disband every army, to turn every battalionship into a ship of commerce, to close every prison, court and almshouse. There is power enough in the human heart to make of every sinner a saint, and of every beggar a nobleman.

Tolstoi tells us that one day a beggar asked him for a *kopec*. "Brother," said Tolstoi, after searching in his pockets in vain for a piece of money, "I have not a coin with me." "You have given me enough," answered the beggar, "you have given me more than anyone has yet given me, you have called me 'brother'." And away he walked with a firmer, prouder step than that with which he had approached Tolstoi but a short time before. How many are not waiting to be called "brother," "sister" this very day, by you, by me! How many of them

(Concluded on page 33)

- ❑ Half of mankind's sufferings is due to the lovelessness of others.
- ❑ When love takes the place of hatred, wars will cease.
- ❑ What a world ours might have been to-day had the culture of the heart been equal to that of the mind.
- ❑ We need more heart in our homes.
- ❑ Lovelessness is paid in its own coin.
- ❑ Oh, the powers for good in the human heart that are daily allowed to go to waste.
- ❑ There is power enough in the human heart to disband every army.
- ❑ Love is the golden cord that ties our hearts to a thousand other hearts.