

## I NEVER THOUGHT.

BY REV. GEORGE F. HUNTING.

I never thought my friend could die so soon,  
His morning not yet ripened into noon;  
I never thought that June might have its frost,  
O God, I never thought he could be lost!

I never thought my child could pass away  
Just at the dawning of life's little day;  
That he, so wild, so wayward and untought,  
Could die. O God, forgive! I never thought!

I never thought my glowing, golden sun  
Could set and leave my life-work all undone.  
The day has been so glad and gay and bright,  
O God, I never thought it could be night!

'Never thought!' Oh wretched, worthless plea!  
When God, thy God, O man, shall challenge thee,  
Shall this be thy defence, this thy reply?  
Hear then thy sentence, 'Thou shalt surely die.'

Day is the time to sow the golden grain,  
Night to regret thy indolence in vain;  
Day is the time to reap the fertile soil,  
Night is the time to rest thee from thy toil.

Life is thy day, thy day to think and do;  
Death is thy night—night to rejoice or rue,  
Life is thy seed-time; do thy very best,  
Death is thy harvest, to regret or rest.

—American Messenger.

## 'THAT WHICH IS LEAST.'

BY MINNIE WILLIS BAINES-MILLER.

Everett Barnard was a farmer's son, the youngest of a large family, and lived in the country. His father's farm had many acres, each year, in corn and wheat; but the old orchard, with its rows of gnarled and twisted apple-trees, interspersed here and there with a few peach-trees, had been neglected, and was dying out. Year after year the fruit became less attractive and tempting. No scions from superior stock had been grafted on the branches of the trees, so when an unfruitful season, brought about by drought and the depredations of a troublesome fly, arrived, the Barnard Orchard gave practically no harvest whatever.

This troubled Everett. He was only ten years old; and he knew nothing about the hygienic effects of the use of fruit upon the human system. Unconsciously, however, he agreed with the scientists that fruit is a good thing to indulge in on almost all occasions, and his inability to do this made him feel that he was ill used.

He was sitting under a tree, one beautiful autumn morning, reading 'The Swiss Family Robinson,' and wishing that he could be wrecked on a desert island where people have a greater variety of luxuries than they had 'even over to Xenia,' which was his beau ideal of a city, a place where the boys did not have to do chores, as they do on farms. While he was thinking, he heard his mother's voice, from the vicinity of the back door, calling, 'Ev'rit!

The boy kept very quiet and in a moment more, with a rising inflection in the tone, and increased emphasis on the first syllable of the name, came the call: 'Ev'rit! Ev'rit!

'Wonder what she wants,' muttered he. 'A fellow never gets any rest around this place.'

'Everitt!' called his mother once more, infusing a surprising amount of energy into each separate syllable of his name. Something in this enunciation seemed to tell him that the time in which to make his appearance and response had now arrived.

'Yes, ma'am!' replied he, closing the fascinating volume, and rising in such close proximity to her that he seemed like one of the geni of the Arabian Nights coming up out of the ground.

'Bless me!' exclaimed she; 'I do believe you heard me every time I called.'

Everett affirmed not, neither did he deny; so, after looking at him sternly for a moment, she said, 'Reuben's got another chill, and you've got to saddle Jack and go up to old Mis' Parson's and get some of her cure for ague.'

Everett looked regretfully at the back of the 'Swiss Family Robinson,' and tentatively inquired: 'Why don't you get some quinine over to Dr. Smither's? Heard Jim Flanders telling Mike Fahey that it was enough sight better for the shakes than old woman's roots and arbs; cured all the Flanders family from baby up.'

'I don't hold with no doctors,' said Mrs. Barnard, shortly; 'kill more folks than they ever cure. Doctors! Humph!' Mrs.

Barnard sniffed angrily at the very thought. What should a doctor, who had spent years of time and study in acquiring his profession, and other years in its practice, know about the curing of disease, compared with 'old Mis' Parsons,' who didn't know the difference between the liver and pancreas, and had never even so much as heard of the spleen?

'All right,' said Everett, in a tone that assumed that it was all wrong; 'thought you wanted Reub to get well, but if you don't—'

'Everett,' said she, ignoring this growl-some remark, 'you pay close attention to all the directions. Wait a minute.'

She went into the house, and returned with a pencil and a piece of paper, which she handed to him. 'Write down the directions. I misdoubt Mis' Parsons being much of a scholar.'

Everett took the paper and went his way.

'Mis' Parsons' lived alone, save for a young grandson, and she kept a fierce dog, Everett was fond of dogs in general, but he liked this one a good way off. As this dog came bounding into view from behind some sunflower stalks, and lifted up spirited protests against receiving guests on this particular day, Everett thought it was not worth while to go in; so he sat on his horse outside, and called out 'Hollo!'

In response to this call Mrs. Parsons appeared, broomstick in hand, and drove the dog from the field. Then she came up to the fence, pulled down her glasses from the top of her head, and peered at her visitor.

'Sho! Why if 't ain't Barnard's boy. Come in; come right in.'

'Can't this time, thank you. I'm in a sort of a hurry. My brother Reuben's got the shakes. Had 'em now for a good bit, and don't get no better. Folks sent me over for some of your doctor's stuff, if you'd please be so kind.'

'Bless the child's heart! Of course I will. Be back in a minute. Don't take no account of that dog if he does bark. He only does it to amuse himself.'

With this Mrs. Parsons toddled into the house, and soon returned with a bunch of herbs and a paper of bark, which she handed to the boy. 'Now tell your mother—'

'Wait a bit,' said he, fumbling in his pocket, and bringing out his writing materials, and making a desk of the crown of his hat.

'What a thing it is to be a scholar!' said she, admiringly.

And this is what the 'scholar' wrote at her dictation:—

'Stu these yere arbs in a pinter watter, and steep the bark in annuther pinte. Micks um tergather with 2 cups Store Shuggar, and giv rouben a taible spoonfull evry our. kork tite.'

Then old Mrs. Parsons brought some cookies out to Everett, which he ate as he rode along.

Suddenly he gave an astonished exclamation, and pulled Jack up very unceremoniously.

He had come in sight of Mrs. Parson's orchard, and he sat and gazed admiringly at the bowed limbs.

'Nothin' seems to ail them trees,' said he. 'Luscious, and loads of 'em lying on the ground. I might's well have some of 'em as to have em rot, or feed the pigs.'

Then he guided Jack carefully alongside the rail fence dividing the orchard from the road, and climbed down on the other side of it. He took out of his pocket a red pocket handkerchief belonging to his father, and filled it with fruit. He also utilized his jacket and trousers pockets for as many of the apples as they would hold. Then he remounted his horse and pursued his journey home.

'Did you bring it?' asked Mrs. Barnard, meeting him at the big gate, as he approached the house. 'Reuben's shook ever since you've been gone.'

'Yes ma'am,' said he, handing over the desired remedies, and reaching for the scholarly directions.

'What's that done up in that handkercher?' asked she, sharply.

'Them? Oh them's apples.'

'Where did you get them?'

'Out of Mis' Parson's orchard. There's loads of 'em there.'

'Did she say you could have them?'

'Why, no, not exactly. That is—I

s'pose she would, only she was n't there when I came along by the orchard.'

'And have I got a son that will steal?'

'Steal?' repeated the boy, faintly, a great red flush coming up over his freckled face and forehead. 'Why—'t was n't only a few apples, and they's laying on the ground.'

'Things that you take, without asking, from other people, are stolen,' said his mother severely.

'But I—,' began Everett.

'You go right straight back to old Mis' Parsons' and give them apples back; and tell her you stole them.'

Everett felt bound to obey. So, turning the horse, he rode sullenly away.

About an hour later, old Mrs. Parsons' dog rushed around the sunflower thicket at the side of the house, and began to amuse himself with a few furious growls and barks, which almost curdled the blood in Everett's young veins.

The dog's mistress made a second appearance, with the historic implement of witchcraft in hand; and in answer to a very reluctant and quavering 'Hollo' she said, 'Why it's Barnard's boy again. Is Reuben worse?'

Everett did not look in her face. He hung his head and shook it feebly.

'Why what is the matter? That bull of old man Ernst's did n't get after you, did he?'

Another shake of the head, an ineffectual attempt to speak, which ended in a breaking voice and a shower of tears, and Everett threw the red bandanna and its contents over the fence into the yard.

'Why, I 'most think you've took with something catching,' said the good old soul solicitously, as she picked up the bundle to examine it.

'No, I ain't, either,' said he gaining the courage of desperation: 'I took something with me; some of your apples out of the orchard; and mother said I's a thief, and made me bring them back. I did n't think 't was anything like stealing.'

'La, me!' said she; 'your mother's like them Spartan women the schoolma'am used to read about in a book. Not that 't was right to take them along without asking, of course. If you'd only come and asked me, I'd a' given you a wagan-load of them.'

'I did n't think nothing about it being stealing,' said Everett, mournfully.

'Well, now,' said she; 'the sin's in the intention, we all know; but I reckon that mother of yours was in the right of it, too; for like's not, if she had n't given you this lesson, which is sorter severe, it's true, you might a' gone on, kinder not thinking like, and got into wuss trouble than this. Was your folks out to meeting, Sunday?'

Everett shook his head.

'Thought I did n't see none of you; though I did n't wait in the graveyard to shake hands with nobody. That new minister he preached a powerful sermon. Took his text from somewhere in Luke; I disremember where; but I know what 't was:

'He that is faithful in that which is least, is faithful also in much; and he that is unjust in the least, is unjust also in much.' And he said 't was just the faithfulness to duty and virtue in little things that make up the sum of our characters. I think that's sound sense, now. If it's wrong to lie fibbing's jest the same; and if we must not—she hesitated a moment out of respect to the boy's feelings, then went bravely on, 'if we must n't steal, we must let everything that's somebody's else strictly alone. You did n't think, Ev'rit; I'm pointedly sure you did n't think. You are as welcome as the flowers in May to them apples, and—as he began to unload his pockets—'all you've got about you. Fact is, I shall feel right sorry if you don't take them along. Sam Seys is going down your way with a load of fodder to-morrow, and I'll get 'im to clear out some of them apples and bring them over to your folks. Neighbors ought to be neighborly; that's what I always say.'

Then she forced the bundle into Everett's reluctant hand, which she patted tenderly, saying, as she did so, 'There's the making of a man in you, my boy; only young creatures has to be careful about the habits they form.'

I hesitate to say how skillful Mrs. Parsons' method of treatment proved to be in Reuben's case; but in that of Reuben's brother it was a decided success.—Golden Rule

## OLIVE OR OLEASTER?

There is a counterfeit of the olive tree which naturalists called the 'oleaster.' It bears a close resemblance in many external features to the genuine tree; but it yields no fruit. Ah, how many such get set out in the plantations of the Church? When I see a man taking up a large space in Christ's orchard and yielding not even one percent of godliness, I say, 'There is an oleaster!' When I hear a professor of religion glib in the store or the stock exchange and yet silent in the prayer room—ready to speak for anybody but his Saviour—I say, 'Ah, what an oleaster!' When I hear of a church member going from the communion table to the deals and the dickers of the party caucus, I say, 'Behold an oleaster!' When I hear a brother pray glibly that he may 'provide things honest in the sight of all men,' and then send his customers away with sleazy fabrics or cheap adulterations, I think to myself, 'You are as arrant a cheat as an oleaster.' When a garrulous 'sister' sheds tears under the pathetic stories of returned missionaries, and goes home to grind a dime out of an overworked laundress or to turn off a sick servant to languish or die in an attic, I want to whisper in her ear, 'Madam, you may be fluent in your professions of holiness, but your oleaster bears 'nothing but leaves!'

The growth of an olive tree may be slow, but it is steady and sure. Such is the growth of a fruit-bearing Christian. A solid, godly character is not to be finished up during a revival or by the mere religion of Sundays and sacraments. Regeneration may plant the roots of grace; but the trunk of character is built up in the solid fibre of Christ within the soul, the boughs spread broadly to the sunlight, and in the face of all men the 'tree is known by its fruits.'—Dr. Cuyler.

## BISMARCK'S ADVICE TO BOYS.

Prince Bismarck received a non-political deputation at Friedrichsruhe—the masters and boys of the Hamburg Wilhelm Gymnasium.

The ex-Chancellor gave the young fellows some good advice as to the manner in which they should utilize their time at the University, and then spoke of his love for music. He said: 'I used to play formerly, but I was only a moderate hand at the piano, and was glad when I could throw it up as it bored me to practise. Afterwards, I was extremely sorry I did give it up, for music is a faithful companion in life. I missed it at many a party, and I recommend all of you who have any talent for music to cultivate it, and take a warning from me so that you need not reproach yourselves with the mistake I have made.'

No less useful were a few words against excessive thought for the morrow which oppresses a great many people.

'If you put your trust in God and yourself,' said the Prince, 'you can surmount every obstacle. Do not yield to restless anxiety. One must not always be asking what may happen to one in life, but one must advance fearlessly and bravely.'—London Daily News Berlin Correspondence.

## POLITENESS.

My little ones, do not be afraid of politeness—it will not hurt you. Have none of that false shame which crushes the life from so many of your good and noble impulses, and causes you to shrink from performing little acts of tenderness and love toward one another. Let your feet, your hands, your voice be the willing servants of that great master of politeness, the heart. Politeness teaches how to obey, gladly, fearlessly and openly. The truly polite child is a good son, a good daughter, for politeness teaches him the duty and respect he owes to his parents; he is a kind and grateful brother; his very willingness to help his sister makes her feel better and stronger. He is a true friend, for he scorns the unkind words that wound those who love him. Politeness and charity are twins—they make the true gentleman, the true gentlewoman, helpful, loving, unpretentious. The world would be better if the young boys and young girls, who are soon to be our men and women, would obey the watchword of true politeness, which is charity.