

Wasted Lives.

"SO TEACH US TO NUMBER OUR DAYS THAT WE MAY APPLY OUR HEARTS UNTO WISDOM."

PETER ANDERSON.

O life so short, and still so sadly wasted, Could we but see how soon thy tale is told, Would we not count the moments, while they lasted, As grudgingly as misers count their gold? We spend our strength in toil for sordid treasure, And all our finer feelings crush, and mar; And never learn that ever lasting pleasure Comes—not from what we have—but what we are. How many hours we fill with empty chatter, What seas of social scandal some explore, For any trivial and unworthy matter To "whirl them from themselves" forever more. What if our consciences are not defeated, Although they grant a seeming day of grace; What if at last they will not thus be cheated, What if ourselves at last we all must face! How shall we face our frailties, our offences, Where all shall know, even as they are known, When stripped of all illusions, all pretences, We stand upon the shores of light—alone,— Alone—with all the travel stains upon us— That never faded, through the troubled years— Alone—alone—with all the evil in us We never wept away—with all our tears— Alone with our dwarfed souls,—our darkened spirits So far below the good at which we aimed; And with the crushing sense of our demerits, So much unlike the Master, whom we claimed. O not alone, dear Saviour, be Thou with us, Thou, only Thou, canst help us in our need; Infinite love alone, at last forgive us, And take the inclination for the deed.

Hold Still.

ANNA D. BRADLEY.

To-day I watched a mother as with loving, anxious care she attempted to remove a splinter from the foot of her little son. The child—suffering, nervous and frightened—was trembling in his mother's arms, and shrank from the approach of the sharp needle as from a cruel something that was intended to wound him most severely. "Hold still, my darling. Mother will not hurt you. She only wants to get the splinter out and make the dear foot well," said the mother in her most loving tones. But the child, already in such pain, was so afraid of the needle he could not hold still. How could he allow that sharply cruel point to be inserted in the tender, already wounded little foot? And though the mother longed to help her dear one, whom she loved so well, yet was she powerless because the little one would not trust her, would not yield to her tender loving care. After a while the child seemed quiet, and again the anxious mother attempted to remove the painful splinter. Before the child was conscious of what she proposed, the little foot was in the hand and the needle applied. But instead of the splinter removed and

the quick, glad relief which the mother expected, there came, instead, a wild scream of agony, while a long scratch from which the blood was oozing showed that the needle had done a very different work from what had been designed.

Why was this? Did the mother—herself suffering so keenly in sympathy with her darling—desire to hurt the child? Was it possible that her hand was unskilful? Or could it be that the severe remedy applied was not the very best to bring a quick relief?

Ah, no! It was none of these. But the poor, little, blinded, ignorant child—blinded by pain and ignorance—had, as he felt the first touch of the friendly needle, drawn the foot suddenly away, and thus received a wound more painful than the first.

As I watched the trembling child, and saw the pain upon the mother's loving face, I could but remember how like a blinded, stubborn, ignorant child I was in the hands of a pitying Father who is always too wise to err, too merciful to be unkind.

In my careless, thoughtless journeyings through life I, too, have received some little wounds that my Father's loving hand would fain restore; and He, with gentlest voice bids me hold still. But I am so afraid I cannot hold still. And so, partly in fear, partly in rebellion, I cry in spirit, "Not Thy will, O God, but mine be done."

Well, it is possible that I may have my way; but an aching frame, a broken heart, a wrecked and disappointed life is sure to be the sad result.

But if, in the mighty hand of God, I could only hold still! If I could only believe that the blows from the divine hammer were only intended to chisel my awkward life into smooth and perfect beauty! If I could only understand that the scorching flames through which I, at times, may be forced to walk are only intended to consume the dross from my nature and to leave the gold undimmed! But I cannot comprehend. Like the little child that feared the needle in his mother's hand, I tremble at the approach of that which only means my good. And, again like the little child, my wildest cry of agony is often caused by wounds received while trying to wrest myself from the loving arms that only long to shield and help me.

Ah me, how blind we are! How like to trembling, fearing children! Why can we not, ourselves, learn the lessons of trustfulness and submission which we endeavor so earnestly to teach to them? Why can not I hold still and let my Father work His merciful will in me? Alas, I do not know. God knows that, deep within my heart, I long to trust Him. God knows that the real spiritual part of my being bids me yield my hand to his clasp, and to walk trustfully in every path where He may lead the way.

But yet—but yet—ah well, I do not know just how it is. I believe that the little child from whom we received our text, really knew the mother yearned to help him. He was very sure that she had only tenderest love for him, and yet an inward something, which he could neither explain nor comprehend, forced him to shrink from her touch. Did the mother condemn her child for wilful disobedience? Was she angry that he could not trust her? Ah, no! The mother-heart within me rebukes and forbids the thought. She understood, and, with a tenderness which only a mother can feel, she wiped the bleeding wound, and hushed the frightened cries of pain upon her gentle breast.

As I watched all of this, how sweet was the comfort which swept over my spirit. "As one whom his mother comforteth," I whispered softly, and I

believed, as never before, that my ignorant mistakes, my blind folly, my impatient deeds, all that so marred my life to day would one future day—one glad, bright day—be all forgotten and forgiven as I was hushed to rest upon my Saviour's bosom.

But if I could only learn my lesson now! If I could only trust to-day!

"Why should I murmur? for the pain Thus only longer lived will be. The end may come, and will to-morrow, When God has worked his will in me." Dallas, Texas.

The Silver Lining to the Cloud.

"Every cloud has a silver lining." What an old saying that is, and yet how wonderfully true! The night is never so dark but the day dawns at last, and the road is never so long but some time we reach the end. The mother, as she stands by the bedside of her only son and sees the cherished young life ebbing fast away, cannot see where there is any silver lining to the dense cloud now hovering o'er her; but somewhere in the far future she will see that her Father's hand rested only in tenderest love upon her, when as she felt its weight as a cruel blow. Other mothers now are grieving their hearts sore as they think of wayward sons going fast down, down to the lowest degradation that Satan's glittering net can ensnare and drag them to. And she (oh, her son was but human) may rejoice that in his innocent childhood he was taken unto "that school where he no longer needs our poor protection and Christ himself doth rule," instead of the schools of vice and crime of which Satan and his followers are the masters. Bright indeed is the lining to that cloud as we see it when "the mists" of sorrow and selfish love "have cleared away."

The rich man, as he stands on the verge of ruin and thinks of his wife and family now having to toil for their daily bread, curses the fate that brought him down to that. His daughters cannot now be accomplished and reign as society queens, but must go out into the world and climb life's hill alone. His son, who was about to be taken into partnership with one of the leading firms, will now have to work in the office for years to come, for lack of the capital his father would so gladly supply. Ah! it seems hard. He paces the floor, and lines of care and anxiety trace themselves upon his smooth brow. Yes, yes, it does seem hard; but he depended too much in himself and forgot the One to whom he owed it all, and something must bring him back. A good moral man, a loving husband and father, yet unheeding that "Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you." Much of worldly goods had been added unto him, but he must go back to the first and "seek" Him who would add blessings that coffers of gold could not purchase. He feels His own weakness now and insufficiency, and he is led to place dependence upon one Almighty, and has his treasure where the bank never breaks and "moth nor rust doth not corrupt nor thieves break through and steal." The daughters who would otherwise have neglected the talent they possessed are now forced to exercise it and win a name and place in the world far more noble than all the homage paid in elegant drawing rooms. The son looks no longer now to father for aid and strikes out boldly for himself and becomes a trusted and successful business man, and a self-made man at that. Where is the sorrow now? It has flown. The silver lining has forced its way right through the cloud until, now, we can see nothing but its brightness. Ah, God knows best. The day is dark now, but be assured the sun will shine at last. The night of weeping seemeth long, but see: "Joy cometh in the morning." A. E. H.

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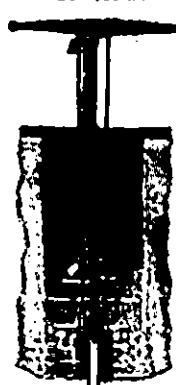
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PUBLISHED BY THE

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Toronto.

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