

Contributions.

The River.

PETER ANDERSON.

From the cold northeast the wind is blowing
Over the earth that has blighted again,
And a bitter breath of the winter's snowing
Is borne along with the sullen rain.
The opening foliage, green and tender,
Down from the trees is cruelly cast;
The blossoms shiver, the branches under
Shiver and die in the biting blast.

I wander far by the foaming river,
Under the forest that rocks and moans;
The restless river that wears for ever
With ceaseless current the solid stones;
That foams and rushes and leaps and dashes
Hard, on the ledges of limestone gray,
But—baffled ever—to break and shiver
Into a torrent of tossing spray.

And yet the weight of that tireless torrent
That never turned thro' the ages past,
With its ever broken and baffled current,
Has cut the rock to the core at last—
Through cleft and gorge grown deeper, broader,
Has dashed its turbid and troubled tide,
Till the face of the stone is ground to powder
And borne away to the ocean wide.

But down in the depths of the restless ocean
The rivers are building, far and wide,
Under the water's wild commotion,
Lands that shall rise through the rushing tide;
Rise, through the lapse of the patient ages,
Till they lie in the sunlight a verdant plain,
And over the tracts where the water rages,
Millions shall gather the waving grain.

We dash life's cares and its dark disasters
Off, as the ledges that dash the spray;
But with passing years they shall prove our masters,
And wear, with their friction, our lives away.
O tide of the years! with slow insistence
You quench the fire of the spirit gay,
You break the force of our best resistance,
And clothe our heads with your badge of gray.

You touch the young with the current weighty,
That never has known relenting ruth,
And the furrowed lines of the face of eighty
Begin to form on the brow of youth.
We smooth the lines from our startled faces.
We laugh to scorn the relentless years,

And the scorn but deepens the hated traces,
The laughter dies—in a mist of tears.

The furrows deepen, the footsteps falter,
The mists remain in the fading eye
That looks on a world where all things alter
Save the tide eternal, that bears us by,
By the hopes that we long and fondly cherished,
The islands fair, where we longed to rest;
The lone shore, where earth's hopes have perished,
To the soundless sea in the silent west.

But the tide of time, that turneth never,
In our inmost depths—if we are wise—
Is building, broad and firm forever,
The better life, that never dies;
Till freed from the weakness that pains and tries us,
The spirit mounts upon buoyant wings,
And out of the toil and the turmoil rises
Above all base, material things.

And that sea, from which no sail returneth,
That at sunset sinks in the silent west,
On its farther shore—where the glory burneth—
In music breaks on the islands blest.
And for you and me in the coming morning,
Over the rim of that mystic sea
Shall rise the hills with the radiance burning
That never fades while the ages be.
Hepworth, Ont., May 15, 1895.

It is I, be not Afraid.

ANNA D. BRADLEY.

Once, in the years gone by, I watched with anxious, trembling fear, some threatening shadows which hung above my way. I could not rest for I was sore afraid. I felt so weak and helpless to grapple with this threatened danger. The clouds hung low and angry; the path looked rough before me, yet still I must go on.

I think I murmured some, I fear I even questioned the love and wisdom that could allow my unproved feet to pass this thorny, unaccustomed way. I am very sure that if my narrow road had not been so closely hedged about on either side I would have turned from the path which seemed so to threaten me and have journeyed on some other way.

But I could not help myself; I must go forward, though my coward, doubting heart grew sick with dread.

I remember so well how I prayed—not that my Father, who could see the end from the beginning, would choose my path for me and guide me in safety over all the way, but that He would open some other path for me and lead me where my feet could gladly go in

safe and sweet security. And when I had prayed I opened my Bible. The first words I saw, as though in answer to my prayer, as though to hush my murmurs and to still my doubts, were—"It is I, be not afraid."

I had read the tender words of cheer uncounted times, but never before had they been uttered direct to me. Until this hour I had always heard Christ speaking them to His trembling disciples who watched Him as He walked upon the waves to them. But now the early followers of Jesus were no where near, and my Master was speaking to me. From the threatened danger He spoke, and I plainly heard Him say: "It is I." He spoke to me from the lowering clouds and still said plainly, "It is I." He spoke to me from the rugged path which stretched, or seemed to stretch so far before me, and whispered low: "Child, it is I, be not afraid."

I could not be mistaken. My Saviour spoke to me, and fear gave place to rest and peace.

I read no more that night; I had received my message from my Lord. In trustful joy I went to sleep and awoke in the morning refreshed and calm; for still the voice divine kept whispering to me: "It is I, it is I, oh, do not be afraid."

I journeyed on, for there was no turn in the road for me this time. But better than that, I found that the dangers which I had so dreaded lived only in my affrighted fancy and did not lurk about my way. The shadows—oh, how dark they had seemed—were heavily freighted with rich mercy. I was taught to feel ashamed of doubt, for I, on looking back, could see the love and wisdom which all the while had been guiding me on my way.

And I learned another lesson; and this is the lesson, dear brother, sister, which I want to repeat to you:

I learned that because I am my Father's child, His love is about me all the while. I learned that His watching eye and shielding arm are never absent from me. The troubles that I dread can never reach me if they would do me hurt, for always and always He is close to me to guide and to protect
"It is I, be not afraid."

Because your eye and mine, oh, sister, dear, has such dim sight, we may not always see that yonder seeming cloud is but the shadow of a loving friend hastening to our side to bring us help and comfort. Mayhap the troubles that affright us most would even be gladly welcomed if from their midst we could but hear our Saviour gently calling, "Be not afraid, for it is I."

I take, to-day, a retrospective view of life and I can see that nothing has ever been allotted unto me but what a hand of love has moulded into some good for me or mine.

Always and always, if we will but listen, we can hear our Saviour whispering, soft and low, "It is I, be not afraid."

I do not mean to imply that all of evil can result in good. Alas, alas! Sin must ever bear its own bitter, poisoned fruits. That which we sow the same must we always reap. The wages of sin will never be anything less than death. But of this I am sure—no soul that is clinging to Jesus will ever be forsaken by Him. Always by our side, leading us in safety through every threatened gloom or danger is One who loves us, who can make no mistakes, whom we can trust entirely.

Ah, if we would but learn to trust! If we would but yield our hands to the guiding clasp of Him who is so close beside us, and who is so pleadingly saying—"It is I, be not afraid."

But because we cannot walk by sight, we refuse to walk by faith; and though we are so weak, yet do we refuse to accept the strength so freely held out to us. I am so sure that our Father loves and longs to bless both you and me. Faith says, "Look up, and in the rifted clouds behold your Father's smiling face." But eyes which are weighted by tears can not easily look up; ears listening for discordant tones forget to harken to words of hope and cheer; and hearts oppressed by fear respond most readily to minor strains of woe.

Yet Jesus would not have it thus. Above the angry waves that rise about us and seem to threaten us with death, He walks toward us in fearless calm, and with loving arms out-stretched to save, he hushes our every cry with—"It is I, be not afraid."

Dallas, Texas.

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