



Not Lost, but Gone Before.

(Continued from page 239.)

"Promise!" uttered an entreating voice. "I promise," was the earnest answer.

But the voice was languid and weak, for the dragon-fly grub was sick and uneasy. His limbs had lost their old activity, and a strange oppression was upon him. Upwards he must go now, upwards, upwards! That was the strong sensation that mastered every other. And then he thought of the frog's account, and felt a trembling conviction that the time had come when the riddle of his own fate must be solved.

His friends and relations were gathered around him, some of his own age, some a generation younger, who had only that year entered upon existence. All of them were followers and adherents, whom he had inspired with his own enthusiastic hopes; and they would have helped him if they could, in this hour of weakness. But there was no help for him now but hope, and of that he possessed, perhaps, even more than they did.

Then came an earnest request, and then a solemn promise, that, as surely as the great hopes proved true, so surely would he return and tell them so.

"But, oh! if you should forget!" exclaimed one of the younger generation, timid and uneasy.

"Forget the old home, my friend?" said the sick grub, "forget the emotions of hope and fear we have shared together, and which I am bound, if I can, to relieve? Impossible!"

"But if you should not be able to come back to us?" suggested another.

"More unlikely still," murmured the half-exhausted grub. "To a condition so exalted as the one in store for us, what can be impossible? Adieu, my friends, adieu! I can tarry here no longer. Ere long you may expect to see me again in a new and more glorious form. Till then, farewell!"

Languid indeed was the voice, and languid were the movements of the grub, as he rose upwards through the water to the bulrushes that fringed its bank. Two brothers and a few of his friends accompanied him in his ascent, in the hope of witnessing whatever might take place above; but in this they were disappointed. From the moment when, clinging with his feet to the stem of a bulrush, he emerged from his native element into the air, his companions saw him no more. Eyes fitted only for the water were incapable of the upward glance and power of vision which would have enabled them to pierce beyond it, and the discoverers descended, mortified and sorrowful, to the bed of the pond. They waited through that day for their friend's return, at first in joyful hope, then in anxiety, then in a gloomy fear that bordered at last on despair.

"He has forgotten us," cried some. "A death from which he can never awake has overtaken him," said others. "He will return to us yet," said the few who clung to hope.

Thus passed on the hours of the second day; and before night a sort of grim and savage silence was agreed upon among them, and they ceased to bewail either the loss of him they had loved, or their own uncertain destiny. On the morning of the third day one of the grub's favorite brothers came sailing into the midst of a group who were just awaking from sleep.

"Our brother has not returned to us," he said. "But, my friends, I feel that I am going to him, wherever that may be, either to that new life he spoke about or to that death from which there is no return. Dear ones, I go as he did, upwards, upwards, upwards! An irresistible desire compels me to it; but before I go, I renew to you, for myself and him, the solemn promise he once made to you. Should the great hopes be true, we will come back and tell you so. Adieu!"

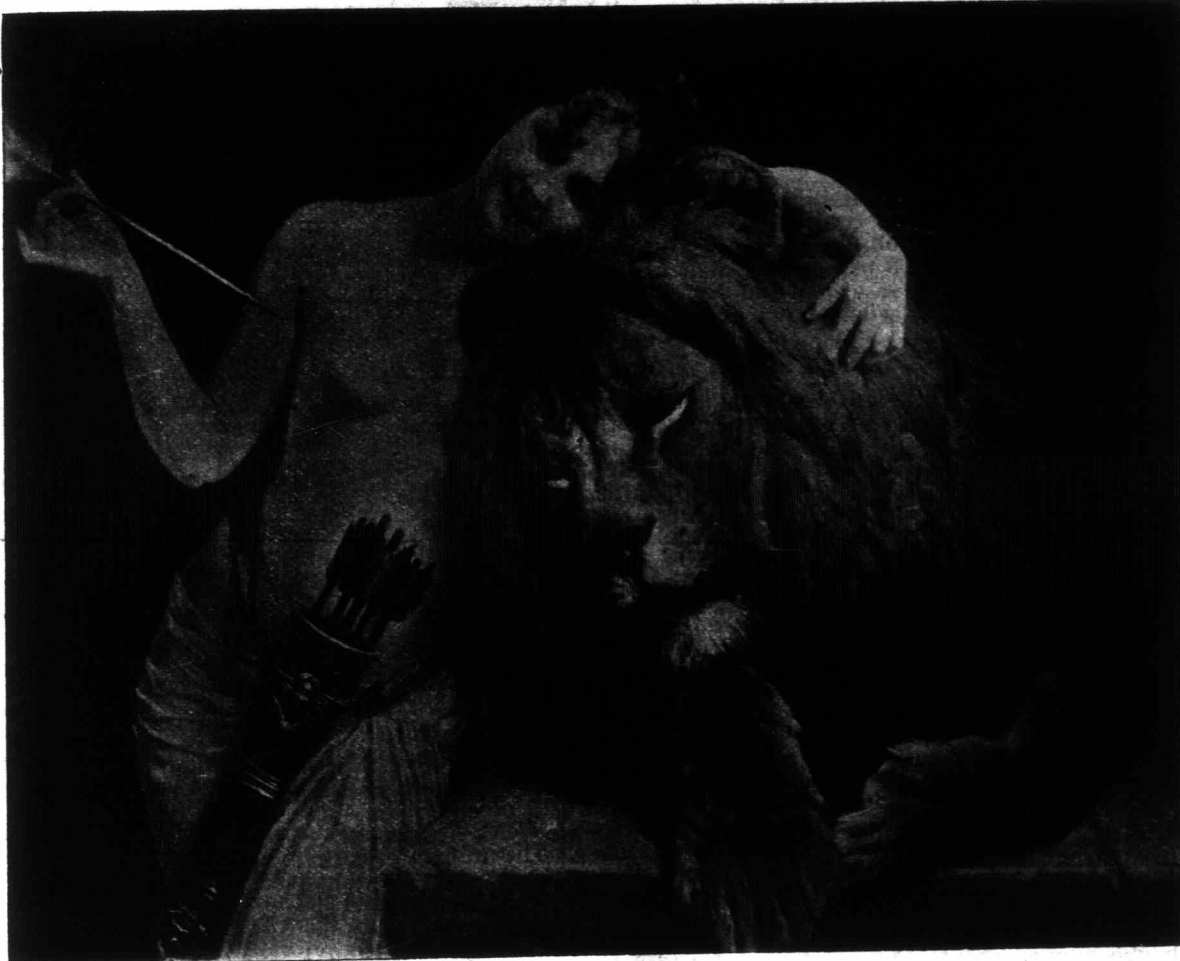
The grub rose upwards till he reached the brink of the pond, then, seizing a plant of forget-me-not, he climbed out of the water into the open air.

The hope he had again awakened died out as the day wore on and he did not return. And after this others went upwards in succession; for the time came to each when the lustrous eyes of the perfect creature shone through the masked face of the grub, and he must needs pass forward to the fulfillment of his destiny. But the result among those who were left was always the same. There were ever some that doubted and feared, ever some that disbelieved and ridiculed, ever some that hoped and looked forward. If they could but have known, poor things! If those eyes, fitted for the narrow bounds of their water world, could have been endued with a power of vision into the purer element beyond, what a lifetime of anxiety would they not have been spared! But belief would, in that case, have been a necessity, and hope must have changed her name.

Was the dragon fly really as faithless as they thought? When he burst his prison-house and rose on glittering wings into the summer air, had he indeed no memory for the dear ones he had left, no recollection of the promise he had made?

Ah! so far from it; he thought of them amidst transports of his wildest flights, and returned ever and over to the precincts of that world which had once been the only world to him. But in that region also, a power was over him superior to his own, and to it his will must submit. To the world beneath he could never more return. The least touch upon its surface, as he skimmed over it with the purpose of descent, brought on a deadly shock, and his wings involuntarily bore him instantly back from the unnatural contact.

"Alas! for the promise made in ignorance and



"LOVE CONQUERS MIGHT."

presumption, miserable grub that I was," was his bitter, constantly-repeated cry.

And thus—divided, and yet near; parted, yet united by love—he hovered about the barrier that lay between them, never quite without a hope that some of his dear ones might come in sight. Nor was his constancy long unrewarded, for, as the days flew past, some fresh arrival of kindred from below added a keener joy to the dragon fly's already joyous existence. Sweet it was to each newcomer, when the riddle of his fate was solved, to find in the new region, not a strange and friendless abode, but a home rich with the welcomes of those who had gone before.

Sweet also it was to know that even while they had been trembling and fearing in their ignorant life below, gleams from the wings of those they lamented were dropping like star-rays on their home, reflected from the sun that shone above. Oh! if they could but have known! MRS. GATTY.

"Love Conquers Might."

This is a well-known picture by Van Courten, and shows us a splendid specimen of the king of beasts, and what a pass he seems to have come to! Poor, poor fellow, the tender passion evidently has him fast, and he is as helpless as that other poor fellow in the fable who had his teeth drawn and his claws cut. He looks so soft, both physically and mentally, that one almost feels like leaning on him too, but then, my friends, he's not in love with us, you see, and would probably quickly assume a different aspect. He is a beauty, though, and looks very happy just now. Love makes a good foil, but it is Might that really makes the picture.

THE QUIET HOUR.

Temper.

"When it drizzles and drizzles,
If we cheerfully smile,
We can make the weather,
By working together.
As fair as we choose in a little while.
For who will notice that clouds are drear
If pleasant faces are always near,
And who will remember that skies are grey
If he carries a happy heart all day?"

The truest test of anyone's Christianity is the test of the home life. If you want to know what a person is like, don't study him in society, where he has his "company manners" on, but in the monotonous round of his everyday life. As a little girl of my acquaintance said once, when people had been praising her: "They don't know me when I am at home!"

Some people, especially semi-invalids, seem to think that they have a right to be as irritable as they choose. We hear a great deal about "nerves" nowadays, and sometimes when the nervous system is out of order, it is hard to keep them under control. But do we always try? Don't we sometimes act as though we had a monopoly of nerves, and no one else had a right to have any? Have we any real right to speak impatiently and crossly just because someone else—a restless child, perhaps—is fidgeting uneasily in his chair? Is it in obedience to the command, "Be courteous," that we look as black as a thunder cloud if a little brother or sister bothers us by asking questions, or chatters when we want to be quiet?

It surely is not Christian love which makes us dislike other people because of little tricks of manner which, as we say, "make us nervous," as if that were an excuse! If you really want to let your nerves run away with you, if you want to lose all control over them, then you are going the best way about it when you get sullen and snappish over trifling annoyances. Perhaps the person who offends you by little peculiarities and mannerisms, is living a life of noble self-sacrifice, beside which your refined self-seeking existence is very mean and petty.

God floods the world with sunshine, and no one has any right to pull down the blinds of his soul, and then complain that his life is sad and dreary. It is always possible to find something to fret about, if one is determined to be miserable; but this manufactured-to-order misery is a sin, and a great sin, too. The Bible is full of commands to rejoice and be glad, and our own common sense agrees with the Bible most entirely—when we see the irritability in someone else.

How do you like to live with people who are sometimes pretty cheerful, but can never be depended on

for evenness of temper? The least thing ruffles them. A door banging suddenly, a badly-cooked dinner, an east wind, or any other trifling annoyance, makes them ill-tempered quite long enough to destroy the comfort of the rest of the family. It is easy to see this in others; it is so hard to understand that our own frowning looks and fretful tones not only make the home uncomfortable, but also are a disgrace to our Christian profession.

Worldly people are watching professed Christians, watching eagerly to see if they really do possess a pearl of great price, which it would be to their advantage to gain, even if they had to sell everything they owned to obtain it. If they see a joyful spirit, rising triumphant over the petty vexations of life, shining always, because living always in the light, they are attracted by it, and are inevitably drawn nearer to God. But what if they see just the reverse? Are they not repelled, and inclined to look for happiness in the service of the world? Do you want to drive anyone from the Living Fountain to the broken cisterns, to quench this spiritual thirst? Oh, be very careful, for your everyday life has tremendous influence on those around you. It has far more effect than the great acts of heroism which you feel you could do if you only had a chance. Even if you did shine in them, which is doubtful, they would not help others, in the daily battle with little temptations, half as much as you can help them now by being always sunny and pleasant.

A good temper is not easy to cultivate, but it is far more valuable than wealth, beauty or fame. It is more valuable to its possessor, for it ensures his happiness, which none of these things do, and it is