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And Agag said, "Surely the Bitterness of Death is Past."

IST SAMUEL XV. 32.

Old as I am, that story ever brings, As in the days long gone, a mist of tears:

No sadder story of the death of kings Comes to the world from all the savage years.

Over the dead he reigns-a ruined king, A captive in the hard, relentless hand

Of him who has not left a living thing, Human or brute, in all his ravished

A man whose every fount of hope was dry,

Who never more might see a friendly face,

A flash of love from an human eye; The sole survivor of a slaughtered race.

I do not wonder that that silent tongue Should thus have voiced his dumb despair at last.

That from his quivering lips the cry was wrung,

"Surely the bitterness of death is past."

All the deep pathos of that dying cry Comes to my heart across the centuries dim.

And my rebellious human sympathy, Without permission, all goes out to him.

It may be wrong, perhaps, I cannot tell, But all within me has indignant grown:

I cannot think, O Prophet, it was well Hopeless and helpless thus to hew him down.

I can but see thee, as to me thou art--Forgive the wrong, if any wrong be mine-

I never saw his cruelty of heart, Oh Prophet stern, but stand aghast at thine.

PETER ANDERSON.

The Singing Saviour.

BY ANNA D. BRADLEY.

To hearts bowed down: "And they sang a hymn." "And Jesus said, Follow thou me."

We are all accustomed to think of Jesus as the Man of Sorrows and acquainted with grief. And when our own heart is bursting with its weight of woe, we find our sweetest comfort in remembering that we have a High Priest touched always with a feeling for our infirmities, that in all points He is like unto ourselves; that in all of our afflictions He is afflicted, and in our sorrow which no earth-born hand can assuage and no human heart can comprehend, still does this divinely human heart throb in deepest sympathy with our own.

And it is sweet that in our darkest hour we can remember this. There is never a moment so black with gloom that Jesus does not pity and will not lead us to the light. There is never a burden so heavy that Jesus does not comprehend and will not bear for us.

But while we dwell upon Him as the Man of S rrows, we forget that even in His hour of agony and of base betraval He could still look up in His Father's face as He joined His brethren in their song of praise. And we forget that to vou and me-His blood-bought ones-He still is saying, " Follow me."

Greater grief had no man. And yet, mid the deepest trial, He could still find voice to sing, for well He knew that bitter cup was held by a Father's hand—a hand which could only mean love to the child.

Jesus sang while His feet yet lingered on the threshold of Gethsemane; and though He knew that the darksome valley must lead at once to Calvary's cross. Yes, He sang; but because He was the Son of Mary, I fancy that on that awful night He sang in a miner key, and the words of His song I think must have been, "It is the way my Father leads."

Standing in the presence of a sacred grief, I would not, even if I could, dare try to hush the sob of anguish or press back the rising tear. Tears are the gift of God. From heaven there ne'er e'en one tear less for our beloved dead. Instead, an angel whispers to us and says: "In all of your afflictions He is afflicted" Then in a moment Jesus Himself draws near, and His command is, " Follow Me."

We do follow, and though He was fitly named the "Man of Sorrows," and though He early learned how tears were shed, still do we find that never once did He allow those tears to cripple His life's great work. Trial only made His life more glorious. Without His crown of sorrow, His mighty potentialities would have never been but half discovered. Yet if He had never risen above His tears, then would the perfect life have been so woefully in-

To heads bowed down I want to say once more, tears are the gift of God. But the hand that brings the gift of tears is also the same hand of love that wipes all tears away and gives the mourner songs in the night.

It is only the burdened heart that awakes in the night; and it is only when we have consecrated that burden to the service of the Master that we will seek for the midnight song. Yet the promise stands sure and steadfast that they who seek shall always find.

Oh, heart bowed down, lift up your gates, and the King of Glory will come in. Who is this King of Glory? He is the One who alone can wipe all tears away, and teach to willing hearts that midnight song. What though the song be sad? No matter; if thus, it bears a greater blessing to the world.

On the still, calm day we listen in vain for music from the sweet æolian harp. The strings are mute. But hark! The wild storm rages and the fierce winds blow; now, high over all, the music, rich and grand and mighty, is heard by all around.

And still our Guide is calling, follow Me. Oh, mourning heart, just listen. Jesus Himself is sounding the key note, and He will lead your song. Let faith take up the strain and follow as your Lord shall lead He who gave us His gift of tears did not design that those tears should check the purpose of our work.

The river Jordan is a laughing beautiful stream and, as it flows through the land, it blesses all it touches. Everywhere glad life plays beneath its waves, and commerce thrives upon its bosom. Suddenly the river empties itself in the Dead Sea, and its joy and usefulness are gone forever. God never designed that our life should exhaust itself in the Dead Sea of hopeless grief.

To every one, sooner or later, a Gethsemane may come; and one who has come a message bidding us shed reads this page is in her dark Gethsemane to-day. Gad forbid that it prove to you a Dead Sea of despair from which you will seek no outlet. Rather do I pray and believe that you emerge from this dark Gethsemane singing-tremblingly, and even with voice broken with sobs and tears-

> "It is the way my Father leads, His will, not mine, be done."

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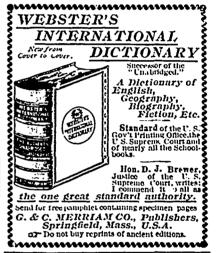
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