

Contributions.

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

1ST 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
land.

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 cen-
turies 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 ac-
quainted 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 com-
prehend, still does this divinely human
heart throbb'n 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 Sorrows, we forget that even in
His hour of agony and of base betrayal
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
you 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 minor
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
has come a message bidding us shed
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 po-
tentialities 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-
complete.

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 prom-
ise 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 beau-
tiful stream and, as it flows through the
land, it blesses all it touches. Every-
where 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
reads this page is in her dark Geth-
semane to-day. God 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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