

The Songs of Life.

Each epoch in history and each era in life has its own song. The song of childhood is the song of innocence and inexperience.

Infancy knows neither temptation, sin, nor sorrow. Simple merriment is its song. Blessed are they who can recall this singing, and in later years repeat some strains from it. For all innocence is not lost, whatever pessimistic philosophy may say. There are women who will read these lines who are as pure in thought as when they lay laughing in their mother's lap, and some men as honest as when they looked out of frank eyes into the mother's eyes. Intermingling with songs of penitence for sin is also, as might and ought to be, the singing of so much of this innocence of childhood as has not been lost. Job's affirmation of his innocence of the sins imputed to him by his comrades is not presumption. The Psalmist's glad declaration that his Father can keep him innocent from the great transgression is not an idle hope in God. He who keeps himself near to childhood keeps something of childhood's innocence in his heart life. It is well sometimes to be merry with childhood's laughter. For if there is a merriment of fools which is like the crackling of thorns under a pot, there is also a merry heart which doeth good like a medicine.

The song of youth is the song of love.

The youth comes to a time when he longs for some woman whom his strong arm may protect and his labor may support. The aspirations of the knight errant stir within him. The maiden comes to a time when she longs for some strong arm to protect her, some knight whom she can reverence and in whom she can trust. This song of love the Bible well calls the Song of Solomon; that is, the song of the wise man. For the wise man sings this song, even if he sings it sadly to himself in solitude, never having found the maiden whom he may protect and for whom he may labor. The wise woman sings this song, for in any true woman there is a dormant wifehood and womanhood, though some never are repaid for their love by husband's love or child's love. But even they are happier than the unwomanly woman. For to give and never to receive is better than to be so poor in love as to have no woman's wealth to bestow. Nor is this love a mere honeymoon experience, ending with the bridal trip. It is no

"Bird's song and bird's love,
Passing with the weather;"

but

"Man's song and man's love,
To love once and forever."

And so it leads on to:

The song of manhood and womanhood; the song of labor, service and sorrow.

Man's song is the song of labor—the labor of love. Drudgery is labor without love, and has no song; but all labor that has love for its inspiration and love for its reward is songful. Bryant has interpreted it in the "Song of the Sower," and Longfellow in "The Village Blacksmith." The political economy which treats man as a mere wealth-producing creature knows nothing of either man or life. For man lives to love, and love is the inspiration of his toil. Love for home, for wife, for children.

Woman's song is service—a quieter labor. See her going about the household, busy in what men miserably misinformed call menial services, singing as she goes. It is an evil age which drives her out from home to be a bread winner, which to her work—the work which only she can render, child-rearing and child-training and home-keeping—adds the work which belongs alone to man, that of battling with nature and with life for bread. It belongs to man to win the bread for women's mouths, and civilization will not be wholly Christian until it ceases to call her from the home to the store, the factory, the mine, to do man's work for him. Hers is the song "Home, Sweet Home;" she makes it sweet by her singing. Her's is the slumber-song, "Sleep, baby, sleep." she sings rest into husbands' and brothers' hearts as well. Her voice is the echo of the sweet song Christ sang to weary humanity. Come unto Me and rest.

but both man and woman sing the song of sorrow, and draw nearest to each other, nearest to heaven, and nearest to God when the dark-robed angel of God's love comes to teach them this song. There is no song of the morning

hour sweeter than the song of the whippoorwill in the gloaming. It was when the weeping women came to the grave that they saw the angels. There is no brightness of the garish day to compare with the somberer beauty of the starlit heavens.

"Then sorrow touched by Thee grows bright
With more than rapture's ray,
As darkness shows us world's of light
We never saw by day."

Last of all comes the song of old age, the song of peace: "I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness." And this is the best song of all. The labor ended; the battle fought; the victory won; the sins forgiven; a conscience at rest, looking back upon a life full of mercies; a hope exultant, looking forward to a life full of glory.

What a splendid symphony is life, to one who knows how to interpret it, with its four movements and its one theme! For that one theme is love and God; and love and God are one. First the dance-music of childhood; then the love-music of youth; then the labor and martial music of manhood, mingled with the sweet home-music of womanhood, with strains of pathetic minor enriching both, and last of all the peace-song of old age, leading on to the yet unheard song of "blessing and honor and glory and power unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb forever." The first is the song of the boys and girls playing in the streets of the city of the King; singing, "He that is of a merry heart hath a continual feast." The second is the song of the lover: "As the lily among thorns, so is my love among the daughters." The third is the song of manhood and womanhood, the song of a love that "beareth all things, trusteth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things." Last is the song of old age, the song of a "peace of God which passeth all understanding."

And from first to last in all, and binding all together and making them one, is the one theme, love and God, for God is love, and life is love, and all the songs of life are songs of God and of His love.

Sleeplessness and Worrying.

BY WILLIAM FUTHEY GIBBONS.

As many cures for worrying are proposed as there are different cures for sleeplessness, but no one "sovereign remedy" has been found. It does as little good to say, "Don't worry," as it does to say, "Don't lie awake." The poor sufferer, in his present condition, cannot help either.

We all know how useless worrying is; most Christians know how sinful it is; some Christians know that it is their besetting sin—a form of doubt to be mourned over and repented. Those who have reached the last stage are on the way to deliverance.

Many who assume to prescribe cures for worrying, treat it as if it were not a disease of the heart, but of the intellect. They appeal to the reason of the sufferer instead of joining with him in prayer to the Physician of souls, "Lord, increase our faith." One would-be comforter says, "Don't allow your mind to dwell on your trouble." He might as well say to a sufferer from insomnia, "Don't think." Unfortunately neither sufferer can help doing just what he does. Power of will does not avail to soothe the brain when it is clogged with blood, or the heart when it is filled with worries. Another adviser tells the fretting Christian to go to work at some pleasant or routine employment. Still another would prescribe change of scene. But the trouble lies deeper, it is not outward circumstances, but inward conditions, which make the mischief. Just as the weary, sleepless one counts hundred after hundred or walks the floor in vain, until the physical conditions of the brain are such that sleep can come, so the soul which is consumed with self-distractions and worries finds no permanent comfort until perfect faith in God heals all irritation. "He giveth his beloved sleep"—rest for body and soul. All artificial cures for worrying are as little productive of permanent good—and perhaps as much productive of real harm—as opiates for producing sleep. The one, certain preventive for worrying is to put the soul into such relation to God that it will be willing to accept anything from His hands. Given perfect faith, and there will be no fretful Christians.