

of all the trees, with wide-spreading branches always outstretched for us. Its smooth crotches offered blissful seats for hours of idleness, and on Saturday mornings we loved to sway and sing up in its breezy top with the pleasant land outspread beneath us—houses and gardens and "fields of yellow corn" stretching away to the horizon. Or down below in the cool grass that flourished in its shade we frequently imbibed a cheering beverage founded on the squeezed lemons that were left from the weekly baking. Do you remember the old brown pitcher? We could fill the old, brown pitcher, two or three times before all the taste was used up.

How green and close the grass was under the trees and down by the tester; how white and sweet with clover in summer, and oh, how bright with dandelions in spring! The streets of Heaven, they told us, were paved with pure gold, and when we tried to imagine how glorious it must be, we could only picture the Old Lot on a May morning, or those country roadsides that led to Aunt Alice's some vernal Sabbath when the little lambs were out and the dandelions in sunny splendor ran all the way beside our happy wheels. Then when Aunt Alice returned our visit at a later season, the clover would be fragrant round her feet as she strolled beneath the branches or went with us in the evening light to watch the cow filling her pail by the gate, or the ineffable pig lifting his pink snout from his supper to acknowledge our affectionate intrusion.

Do you remember the summer they built the pig-pen—in the corner across from the snow-apple tree? Do you remember the wonderful little trough and the pile of clean straw and the smell of the sunny new lumber? How slowly the time passed that Saturday while we were waiting for the pig to arrive, and how bitter it was to be sent off to bed at last with our hopes unsatisfied! Then when the bright morning awoke us and we found that it had come after all, how swiftly we ran through the gate regardless of holy rule, and up to the top of the Old Lot—and can you remember how cozy and comical the little pink pig was peeping out at us from its bed? I am sure we did not forget to feed it for nearly a week.

But "the days that are no more" have left few traces on the Old Lot. Should you pass that way by chance, go softly for old sakes' sake. Cabbages and onions are growing now where the swing used to be. The Old House has been made over into a mere stable, and a commonplace gate has replaced the bars that we lowered for the black-and-white cow each night and morning. The pleasant grass has been shouldered out by greedy clumps of Mayweed and burdock. The apple trees have failed, the cherry trees have ceased, the poplar trees have vanished away. There isn't even a picket-hole.

But the Old Lot has another kind of life—an immortality which it built of happy hours in our hearts. I shall not forget—will you?

Hope's Quiet Hour.

Fighting With God—Or Against Him.

God hath power to help, and to cast down.—2 Chron. xxv: 8.

"The battle's issue hangs on Thee:
In Thy firm hand the scales we see
Of mortal loss and gain:
And tidings carried swift as thought
'Twixt land and land, to Thee are noight
But Thine own will made plain."

If you read carefully the chapter from which our text is taken, you will find in it both encouragement and warning for this time of national testing. It is the story of a man who started out to do right—"but not with a perfect heart." He obeyed God's command at first, even though it meant great financial loss to himself. He realized that it was wisdom to choose God as His Ally, even though he must anger earthly allies by refusing their aid. The result proved his wisdom, and he was victorious over the enemy. So far, so good; but the pride

of success led to his ruin. Fighting with God he was a victor, but fighting against God he was miserably beaten.

Let us look at Amaziah, King of Judah, as he goes out bravely to war, trusting in God. When making preparations to fight against his fierce neighbors—the people of Edom—he has tried to strengthen his army by hiring 100,000 men. Then a man of God gives him a startling message and offers him a free choice. He may go into the campaign relying on this army of hirelings to help his own soldiers; or he may put his trust in God, and prove it by sending home the hundred thousand mighty men of valour who have already been paid 100 talents of silver—about \$200,000.

You see, he must sacrifice something. To disobey God meant certain defeat, as the man of God said: "But if thou wilt go, do it, be strong for the battle: God shall make thee fall before the enemy: for God hath power to help, and to cast down."

Amaziah saw that it would be folly to sacrifice God's favor for the sake of earthly allies, but there was one difficulty. The money had already been paid. Was it to be entirely wasted? The man of God had his answer ready: "The LORD is able to give thee much more than this."

Amaziah made the right choice and won the victory. Then he turned away from his Divine Ally and worshipped the gods of the Edomites—the gods which had proved themselves powerless to deliver their own people out of his hands—and was destroyed by his own sinful folly.

We have set our hearts on righteousness in this war. We want to be on God's side, keeping sacred our solemn pledges, protecting those who appeal to our Empire in their time of deadly peril, and establishing—through costly sacrifice—our determination that Right must prevail over Might. When we have won the victory, as we must do while we are fighting on God's side, let us beware of Amaziah's sinful folly. We are fighting for peace, fighting against the spirit of militarism—dare we end by setting up militarism as our idol? We are determined to put down cruel injustice, let us be careful lest our desire for "reprisals" leads us to imitate the sins we condemn so loudly.

But I want to talk especially about the first part of the chapter, about the question: "Does it pay to side with God?" When the sacrifices required are costly, let us remember the promise made to Amaziah—the promise which was faithfully fulfilled—"The LORD is able to give thee much more than this."

Those who stand out boldly for that which is absolutely truthful, honest and righteous, must, sooner or later, be prepared for earthly loss and sacrifice. This life is a testing-time, and though Satan may not offer to bribe us to worship him—as he tried to bribe our Master—by offering the whole world, he often tries to dazzle us by the glitter of some great worldly advantage which may be won if we will only stoop to degrade our own

souls by deliberate wrong. Or it may not be a large gain. Many people, who would scorn to be dishonest in large matters, boast as if they had done something very clever when they have got the better of someone else in a small transaction.

I once heard a young man tell the following story: A man was getting off a street-car and met a friend who was just boarding the same car. The first man handed over his transfer, remarking pleasantly: "I don't need this, you may as well use it." The second man used it, and he and his son—a boy of twelve—rejoiced together over the way they had cheated the company out of a fare. "If that boy should become a sharper in business," said the young man who told the story, "his father will probably wonder where he learned to cheat."

Seeds may be small and apparently lifeless, but when dropped carelessly they often grow into ugly and harmful weeds which go on spreading and propagating themselves. The few cents gained through cheating may be very costly in the end. It never pays to sell one's honor, even in small things, and it is especially dangerous to lead the feet of little children astray. Our Lord warns us to be very careful not to exert harmful influence over His little ones (St. Matt. 18, 6), and they are very quick to receive impressions.

"Honesty is the best policy," we are told, and when a man is tempted to do a "shady" thing in business, because he thinks it will "pay," let him remember Amaziah. He found it paid far better to dismiss his hired allies, when God demanded the sacrifice, even though it meant the loss of hundreds of thousands of dollars; for he won the battle with God's help, and would certainly have lost it if he had been wilful and disobedient.

Sometimes duty seems to block the road to happiness, and the path which looks most attractive can only be followed by selfishly sacrificing imperative family claims. We honor the men who offer their lives at their country's call; but God may be reserving His heartiest "Well done!" for some who are plodding steadily along at home in the dull round of everyday duty. If you are choosing the path of duty, resolutely ignoring the cost, then it is cheering to remember the promise made to Amaziah: "The Lord is able to give thee much more than this." Those who wilfully choose their own selfish gain will fail to find the happiness they seek, for happiness can only be obtained from God, and He will not accept Duty as its price. But be very sure that if you turn your back on your personal gratification, when conscience demands it, happiness will run after you along the path of Duty, and will soon reach your side.

When a man leaves out the thought of God, in planning for the future, he makes a very great mistake. A small income, with God, is infinitely greater riches than millions without God. It gives more

peace and real happiness, and no man is really rich if he is not happy.

One strange thing about life is that the only way to real success is through sacrifice. This is proclaimed by every seed-time and harvest. Unless the seed-grain be sacrificed generously and ungrudgingly, there cannot be a bountiful harvest. "He which soweth sparingly shall reap also sparingly." Work done for God is never wasted. He is a rich and generous Master, watching closely for every chance to reward bountifully those who faithfully work in His vineyard. The daily drudgery of common days, if accepted with radiant trust, will work out in unexpected gladness. Let us remember, when little vexations or great troubles try to overthrow our confidence, that we are certain to win if we are on God's side. He has power to help, and to cast down. When Asa, another king of Judah, went out with about six hundred thousand men to defend the country against an army of a million, he said: "Help us, O Lord our God; for we rest on Thee, and in Thy Name we go against this multitude." He found the help he sought and returned victorious. But afterwards, when another enemy appeared against him, he took silver and gold out of the treasury of the Lord's house and bribed the king of Syria to be his ally, relying on him instead of on Jehovah. Then the messenger of God said to him: "Herein thou hast done foolishly: therefore from henceforth thou shalt have wars." Asa was angry with the prophet, and imprisoned him, but that only added to his own danger.

"The LORD is with you, while ye be with Him; and if ye seek Him, He will be fond of you; but if ye forsake Him, He will forsake you." These things are written for our admonition. We must be "faithful unto death" if we are to be victors in the hard campaign of life.

DORA FARNCOMB.

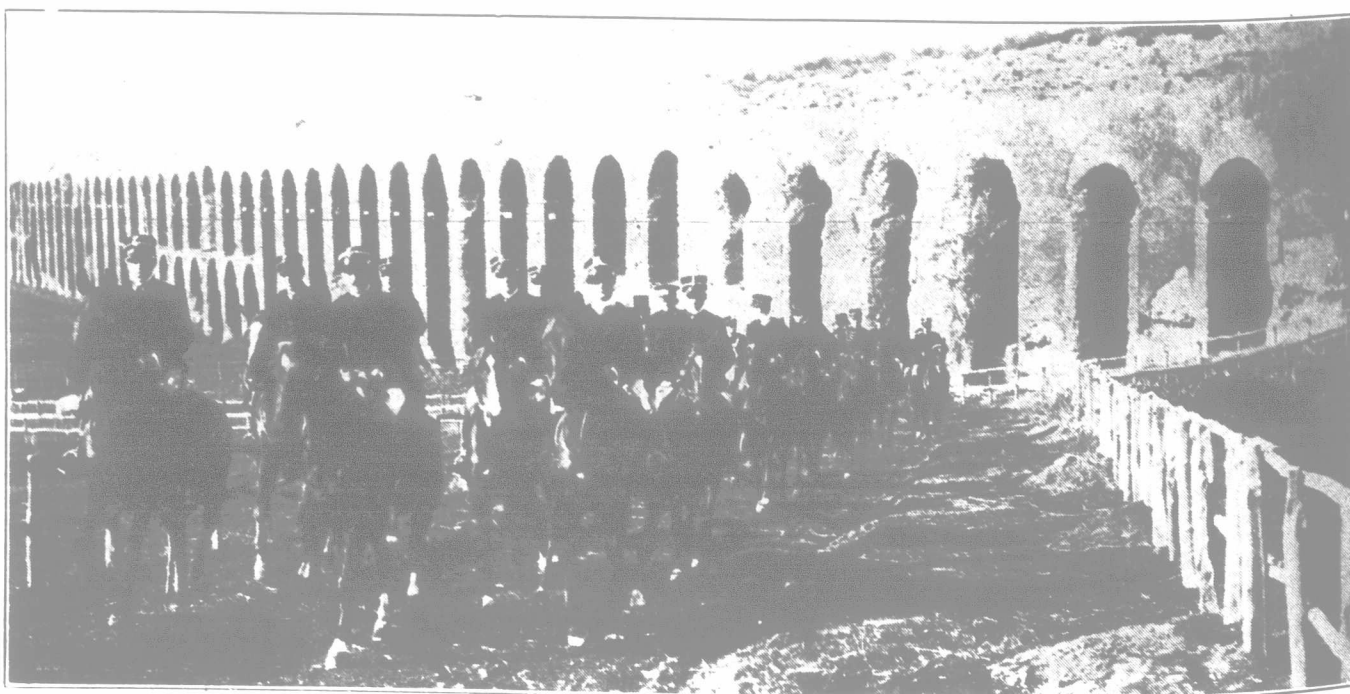
Habit.

Habit is a fixed series of acts. Do a thing once and Tracks are marked. Do a thing twice and a Route is mapped. Do a thing thrice and a Path is blazed, says a writer in Witness.

Do the right thing over again. From the unconscious wink of the eye to the smooth, unnoticed movements of a million words, the law of Habit relentlessly rules its course. Life is a series of Habits.

The Pennies saved to-day make the Nickles in the bank to-morrow. The Nickles in the bank to-morrow spell the Dollars in the bank next year. The Dollar saved, crystallizes into the fortune in after years? Habit either makes or breaks—either leads you up or drags you down.

Do the right thing over again. If you are prompt to-day you will want to be Prompt to-morrow. If you are Square once you will surely seek to be Square again. The fight for a thing Worth While right now cannot help but ease the fight for the thing Worth While later on. It is the law of Habit. And



Italian Cavalrymen on Way to the Front, Passing an Old Roman Aqueduct Built in the Time of the Caesars.

Underwood & Underwood.