

## Beware!

I met him staggering down the street,  
His head seemed ready to join his feet.

He was only some twenty-three years old:  
He had taken a dram, for 'the day was cold.'

His speech was thick, and his eye was dim,  
And the small boys gathered to laugh at him.

But I knew his face, and my heart was sore,  
Though I scarce had seen him for years before.

His limbs were lithe, and his brain was cool,  
When he used to come to our Sabbath School.

And, more than some of the older folks,  
He brought his pence for the mission box.

He never had tasted the fiery cup  
When he signed the pledge at the Band of Hope.

His father's pride and his mother's joy,  
Oh! what has ruined their darling boy?

The serpent's lie on a comrade's lip—  
'Twill do you good, and it's just a sip.'

Dear youths and maidens, beware! beware!  
God keep your feet from the fowler's snare,

And give you His grace your hearts within  
To fight the battle with self and sin!

—'Daybreak.'

## Her Sister's Letters.

(Helena H. Thomas.)

'There, I was just thinking of you!' exclaimed my shut-in friend.

'Of me! Something good, I hope.'

'Oh, nothing personal,' said the semi-invalid, pointing to an easy chair, 'but I have just re-read a letter that will give you the blues for a week, and when I finished I thought of you, and I resolved at the first opportunity to suggest to you a text for future use.'

'All right! What is it?'

'Doleful letters!'

'Well, was the laughing retort, 'I promise to follow out your suggestion, providing you will do by me as I once did by a pastor, who on being urged to speak on an unthought-of subject said:

"Agreed! if the one who seems to be thinking about that line will enthruse me sufficiently to make my task an easy one."

'This I endeavored to do, and when, later on, I congratulated my pastor on this especial effort, he modestly returned:

"To the suggester belongs the credit."

'Well, as to that I am more than willing to suggest, and endeavor to enthruse, too,' said my hostess, with unwonted emphasis, 'but you are certainly open to congratulations, if there is not as much as one doleful letter writer among your correspondents. I don't refer to those, mind you, who are cast down by some special sorrow, but those who never write a cheery letter under any circumstances.'

She paused and looked as if giving me time to review my list, which provoked me to say: 'You have the floor.'

'Yes, I know, but I am so full of my subject that I can hardly put my thoughts into words.'

Then, pointing to a bulky letter, she continued:

'That is from a dearly-beloved sister, but I ought not to have even opened it a day like this, for a gloomy day always depresses me, as do her letters. So, no wonder the two together made me want to run away from the woman of whom I cannot rid myself.'

'Why, is the sister you refer to the charming woman who visited you two or three seasons ago?' queried I, somewhat puzzled

'Yes, the very same. I had forgotten that you met her.'

'Yes, I only met her, but I formed a favorable opinion of her, for she appeared so sunny and bright, that I can scarcely conceive of her writing a doleful letter, unless some great sorrow has come to her.'

'Oh, her life has been more exempt from trials than any person I could name, yet letters from her are, I verily believe, a dread to every relative and friend she has, as they are to me.'

'How do you account for it?'

'Well, like most people, sister has days when life doesn't seem worth the living. Common sense should teach her at such times to turn the key in her desk. But, instead, she locks herself in, and neighbors out, and tells her husband to lunch down-town, and looking her worst, is in a condition to enjoy being miserable, if ever any one is.'

'I should think so!' laughed I. 'But your sister as I saw her hardly answers to that description.'

'Well, she does only on rare occasions, but those are sure to be her letter-writing days. So is it any wonder I have a dread of her doleful letters? To make my meaning more forceful I will quote from the one which came in this morning. She writes:

"Now I am not really sick myself, but there is so much sickness about us I feel as if it is likely to be my turn next. I am worried about Robert, too! He is not looking well, it seems to me. I imagine he is anxious about his business, though he assures me that he has no cause to be. But, oh, dear! I feel as if something dreadful was going to happen!"'

Here I began laughing so heartily that the reader, throwing aside the letter, joined in, saying:

'Really it is no laughing matter, though! At least, it did not seem so before I had some one to share it.'

'But why do you allow her letters to depress you if you know that she never writes on any but blue days?' I queried.

'It is foolish, I know, especially when I have many times seen sister the gayest of the gay, after a day spent writing doleful letters.'

'That is her escape-valve, evidently,' suggested I.

'Yes, it seems so; but how so kind-hearted a woman as my sister can thus torture her friends has long been a puzzle to me. When I see her hand-writing I try to school myself, but the depression is sure to follow the reading, nevertheless.'

'On the contrary, I have a friend whose letters always come as a benediction. She has much to vex and annoy her, I am well aware, but her letters are so sunny that one who did not know to the contrary would imagine her life to be all rose-colored. Consequently her pen visits are a veritable tonic to me. She never even refers to anything of an unpleasant nature, but pictures only the brightness that comes into her life. Her letters always give me fresh courage to go bravely forward. A stranger even would be benefited by reading them. Just listen.'

She then read a letter from this ideal correspondent, and when she had finished, I exclaimed:

'Such pen-thoughts are worthy to live! Would that your friend were the rule, not the exception.'

'I must tell you how discerning our mail-carrier is,' was the evasive response. 'He has been on this route so many years he says that

those he serves have come to seem like friends. Anyhow, he shows a genuine interest in us. I had noticed several times, as he approached my door, that he turned the letters he had in his hand over and over, as if placing them to his liking. So, one day as I saw a letter from this friend, to whom I referred, uppermost, I said:

"Did you put this letter first intentionally?"

'He hesitated, blushed like a school-girl, and then said:

"Yes, I have learned what letters are the most welcome, and I always put those on top. I've noticed that this hand-writing always brings a smile to your face."

'Why, how thoughtful of him!' said I, and then a bit jokingly added, 'How about your sister's letters?'

'Oh, they are the last on the pile, was the rueful answer.

'But it is your turn now. Can you not give a like experience? Or are you so fortunate as not to be the recipient of doleful letters?'

'No, indeed! I have had my full share,' responded I, 'but some good has resulted from them, for I long since determined to let my pen lie idle when my heart was too heavy to write any but doleful letters.'

'Just so in my case,' was the rejoinder. 'My relatives often express wonder that I can write such sunny letters when so shut-in, but I tell them that one doleful letter-writer in the family is sufficient. But really I think that one too many, for golden silence is better than a depressing letter, such as sister persists in writing.'

'I think there would be fewer doleful letters,' I replied, 'if when people are on the point of unburdening real or imaginary ills they would do as did Paul, when in writing to Corinth he refrained from going to them in "heaviness" because, as he puts it, "if I make you sorry, who is he then that maketh me glad, but the same which is made sorry by me."'

'Yes, indeed!' was the emphatic rejoinder; 'Following Paul's example would put an end to doleful letters.'

The manager of a bank gives this advice to young men:—Save a little money every week. Deposit it where it will be safe and at your command. When the right opportunity arrives invest it in a business of which you will have personal control. Avoid debt and the allurements of speculation. Move ahead step by step, establishing a reputation for reliability and integrity.

## Satisfied.

'I don't see how she is going to live at all,' said Ruth Anstey to her sister as she settled herself in a garden chair at her side.

'Who's she? and what's the matter?' inquired her sister, looking up from her book.

'Why, they say Gertrude Dean has become religious.'

'What!' said her sister, looking up in astonishment, 'Gertrude Dean! Nonsense!'

The thing that filled the sisters with such amazement was true notwithstanding.

Gertrude Dean, the young and beautiful wife of perhaps the richest man in the town, who up to this time had set the fashions, and occupied almost the front rank in the social life of the locality, had become religious. She and her husband had been from home for some months, and this was the news that surprised the town when they returned.

Ruth Anstey did not like it. Gertrude Dean