

Not Far Off.

BY GEORGE R. SCOTT.

Years ago—while returning home one night from my business—I noticed on the sidewalk, on Cherry street, a father, mother, and three children, and what few articles of household furniture belonged to them. The family had been evicted. The children were fast asleep; but the parents were wide awake.

I felt sorry for them, and told the father so. He took things easy, however, and with a smile said, "Morning is not far off."

That was a dark hour in that man's history; yet he took courage in the thought that the morning was not far off, when there would be more light.

Every night thousands of people are watching for the break of dawn. More light is what they are longing for, and more light they get when morning comes, if their lives are spared.

One night I went into a sick chamber where a little child was supposed to be dying. The mother of the child looked like a wreck. She went to the window, looked out into the darkness, wiped the perspiration from her brow, returned to the bed on which her child reclined, and then looked at me and said, "I am praying for morning to come."

I afterwards learned that after the clock struck four the child began to show signs of improvement. Morning had come, and with it light came into the heart of that loving mother. "Joy cometh in the morning."

There is something so soothing in the atmosphere in the morning. The passing away of the darkness and the appearance of light, as it breaks forth in the east, makes the thoughtful beholder feel that God is so good to those who love Him, and even to those who do not love Him.

The majority of people spend more time in darkness than they do in the light. For some reason they anticipate darkness more than they do the light. They ponder over what troubles may come upon them more than they do what good things will cross their pathway.

Such people are to be pitied, for they get punished when they don't deserve it.

The morning comes after the night; joy after sorrow; heaven after our earthly trials; peace after war; quietness after struggling; calm after tempest; a light heart after a heavy one.

About the best thing to do is to study how best to endure the darkness, for it is no trouble to bear that which makes our pathway in life light and pleasant.

The boys and girls of my boyhood days had an idea that ghosts made it a point to travel around at nights; and with such a belief some of them dreaded the coming of night. But they never saw any ghosts—although one or two of them thought they did.

There is something in the dark hours of night that brings fear to the minds of the timid; and it is a fact that some children, and even grown folks, do not possess much courage.

Blessed be the mornings that come to the relief of those who fear what may happen in the darkness. Blessed be the mornings that permit the sun to shine into the bedrooms of the sick and the dying.

What thought gives the Christian the most comfort as he is about to put his feet into the chilly waters of the River of Death? The resurrection morning!

What a great morning that was for humanity! Since that morning men and women can die in peace if they want to.

I have often done some hard thinking in the dark hours of the night. I have heard the clock strike one, two and three o'clock. Every time the clock struck the passing of an hour came the sweet reflection that morning was one hour nearer.

One evening I saw an old lady sitting on the stoop of her residence watching the clouds as they were getting ready to close up the day. She smiled at me, and said, "Getting dark, Mr. Scott." The next night the emblems of mourning were attached to the door of that house. The spirit of the old lady had passed away. Morning had come to her before she expected it; for her last words were, "All is light."

The morning of life is the sweetest part of our existence. Don't you often think of your happy childhood hours? What pleasant days they were when one cent would make you feel happy. That was the time when you loved father and mother so much that you could not help kissing them whenever you got a chance—and you made many chances.

It was in the morning of life that your heart was as light as a feather, and you skipped along because you were too happy to keep up a regulation walk.

It was in the morning of life that you shut your eyes and went to sleep hardly knowing what you were doing. It was then that you repeated a little prayer that went up to heaven because it was the breathings of a little child. It was at that time in your history when you built pretty castles in the air, that have since fallen about your head in the shape of disappointments.

But the first morning of your life was as nothing to the first morning you will spend in the Better Land. That great morning is not far off; and it will be worth living for.

Let it rain; let it thunder; let flashes of lightning come. They must and will make themselves felt. But rainbows will also make their appearance, and the morning will soon come, when all will be quiet and serene.

It should be morning in the heart of a Christian oftener than night. The heart that is lighted up with the light of the Son of God is not the place where darkness or gloom should be prevalent.

It is in the morning that the song birds sing their sweetest songs. It is in the morning that the atmosphere seems to give us the best it knows how to give.

It was on a recent Sabbath morning that I heard the church bells of the cathedral, at Garden City, Long Island, pealing forth sounds that ravished my ears. And it was on that same morning that my eyes beheld lambs at play. How they enjoyed the fun; and so did I. Nature smiled on man and every creeping thing. The green fields looked so pretty; for they had on their Sunday-go-to-meeting clothes. It was a morning of mornings—the best God had on hand to give.

Troubled readers, stand fast and look up hopefully, the morning of your deliverance is not far off. Keep cool and wait patiently to see what a wonder-working God is yours. You are not forgotten. On certain nights the moon is hung out to cheer you, and the little twinkling stars glitter to please you. Then the sun feels sorry that so many days you have felt the effects of chilly winds, and sees to it that you are once more made to feel its warmth. Warm rains take the place of cold rains; and Nature's hallelujahs seem to ring in your ears.

Waiting for the morning is not so bad a task as some imagine. It will come soon to those who watch for it in a prayerful spirit. And with it the Dove of Peace will come with healing in His wings. The poor evicted man I have mentioned was no doubt greatly cheered by the bright light that followed his night of gloom.

Get ready for the morning, even while it is night. Wipe away your tears; say to your sorrows, "Farewell." Hug your little ones more closely to you. Love your neighbor more than ever. Try to do good and eschew evil. Get ready, as best you know how; for the morning cometh that will reunite you to the loved ones who left you when it was so awful dark.

Take courage, for we live in the days when Jesus is the Light of the World. Hope for the best every hour of your lives; and if you will only do your best while hoping for the best, the Light of the World will guide you safely over the dark spots that you may come across.

All hail Morning Star that dispels so much darkness. Blow hard every breeze that comes from Beulah Land; for the good readers of this journal love to be thus fanned while waiting for the morning when their unalloyed happiness will begin.—[N. Y. Witness.

The Feeling of Insignificance.

The greatness and glory of the universe weigh heavily upon those who contemplate it. The vastness of creation starts the haunting question, "Can one so weak and insignificant as man be of any consequence to him who has made it?" It was an inspiring thought with the devout Israelites that he who called the stars by name likewise healed the broken in heart. They were not so troubled as we are with the immensity of things. Little was known by them of infinite space and of myriad worlds revolving beyond the reach of human vision. A few thousand stars comprised the whole of God's estate, but we know that computation fails and distances only bewilder the mind that thinks of them. Increasing knowledge puts added strain upon our faith, making it more difficult to believe in a personal providence and fatherly care on the part of God. Our personal littleness is set against the greatness of things, and the temptation becomes strong to think of ourselves as mere organized dust, as bits and fragments of a boundless creation.

But the infiniteness of God and the boundlessness of the universe may be justly thought of as a reason for faith and ground for rejoicing. A God who is infinite in power must also be infinite in every other attribute. His knowledge and power are equal to his wisdom and power. It is not a hard thing for him who balances the world upon nothing and scatters stars and planets like dust upon the pavements of the sky to hold in personal knowledge and love those who carry his image in their nature and turn their trustful eyes towards him as to a father. It is not less reasonable to say that God cares for us than to say that he made us. If creation is a fact, then providence is a fact also, and he who brings into life can have no difficulty in providing for those who live. The very greatness of creation is a ground for believing in the possibility of God's minutest care of us. Because he is great and powerful and very high we can trust in him and live in conscious security.

Then it will help faith to remember that the divine care over the small is as complete as over the great. The leviathan of the sea is not more to him than animalcules which live and revel by the thousand in a drop of water. The power needed to create a sun is likewise needed to hang a dewdrop on the petals of a flower, or to fringe a field daisy or wing an insect. If the limitlessness of the universe depresses us with a feeling of littleness, we may comfort ourselves in knowing that littleness is not slighted by God. The small share his care, and bear witness to his power no less than the things we call mighty or great.

But assurance of faith will never be reached until we grasp firmly the truth of our moral and spiritual nature. An explorer in Africa in an hour of danger and despair, chanced to see a bit of flowering moss which preached to him a lesson which put new hope into his heart. The

thought came to him that the God who made that little flower and watered and nurtured it in the heart of Africa would surely care for those made in his image. He rose from his fear and despondency and pressed on in his exploration with this new thought in his heart. It made him strong and brave until his work was done. Let us reason on the basis of our spiritual nature, let us think of ourselves as belonging to God, even as children belong to a father, as gifted with capacities for prayer and aspiration, and, above all, as those for whom our Lord lived and died, and we shall not be overcome with the burden of insignificance, but will rise up to claim all the help and comfort that rightly belong to them who are known and loved by the Eternal.—The Commonwealth.

The Appeal to Duty.

BY LILY RICE FOXCROFT.

There is an obvious tendency with parents of the present day to attempt to make everything which children have to do easy and attractive for them. It is a reaction, of course, from the old-fashioned idea that children were to do what they were told, whether they liked it or not. There is a good deal to be said in its favor and a good many people have been saying it for a good many years now. But are we not pretty nearly ready for the counter reaction?

The old habit of submission to authority was not in itself, perhaps, so bad as some have seemed to think. Said a woman who had come back to health after years of wearisome sickness, "They called me a good patient at the hospital, because I did just what they told me." And she added, reflectively, "I learned to mind when I was a child, and sometimes I think it was the best thing I ever did learn."

Certainly a surprising number of the relations even of mature life call for the exercise of this faculty of subordination. Every man who works for any other man must have it, in less or greater degree. Employees along the lines of women's work need it equally. Perhaps the mother of a family—an American family—can dispense with it better than almost any one else, and that may be the secret of her failure to appreciate its value for her children. But let us not linger over this contested point. Everybody seems to be agreed, nowadays, as to the importance of developing individuality, independent judgment and will power in children. But some of the very best opportunities for such development are missed if all tasks are to be easy, all lessons attractive.

More than all this, we are untrue to the facts of life, we older people, if we try to make them so. Pills are not sugar, even if they could be always sugar-coated. There is no royal road to learning, and the brightest child, with the most charming teacher, will find it out before he leaves the primary grades. Being good is being happy, perhaps, if one uses "happy" in a carefully-defined sense; but being happy is very far from equivalent to being good.

No, the children must be re-enforced, as we are, by the sense of obligation. We do them a wrong, a far-reaching wrong, if we delay too long to awaken it. They will respond earlier than perhaps we have thought to the appeal to duty. They have a right to hear it, and to hear it often.

This is especially true in reference to religious matters, and with reason, since the appeal to the lower motive is there most incongruous. We try to make the Bible "attractive" to our children, and none of us try too hard. But there will be days when, in spite of illustrated Bibles, sacred photographs and all the rest, the child would rather hear something else. Then the remedy is not to be found in more strenuous parental exertion, fresh pictures, more elaborate forms of story-telling. The difficulty is to be faced honestly and candidly, and the child told that these books which teach us about God, help us to be good more than other books in the world, and that we think it pleases God to have us take some time regularly to read in them, even if they did not always seem to us so interesting as St. Nicholas or Little Lord Fauntleroy.

The thought that duty and inclination are so often at variance is a significant and a sad one to us all. We shrink from admitting, as we think of the little children we love, that they have reached a point where the antagonism begins, where the struggle must be taken up.—Congregationalist.

"I Will Show Thee What Thou Shalt do."

1 Sam. 16:3.

What shall I do, my Saviour Lord,
I wish to see
With breastplate, shield and girded sword
On bended knee.

I long to know, and do thy will,
Though it should lead
By crag and fen to rugged hill,
Or flowery mead.

I do not care which way I go
Or what the task;
If thine own hand but point it out,
'Tis all I ask.

Thy pierced hand, that on the cross did bleed,
Shall lead me now;
The meanness of that thorn crowned head
Shall teach me how,

To bow to sorrow, suffering, pain,
If 'tis thy will;
Though all life's labor should seem vain,
To trust thee still.

Oh show me Lord, I pray thee give
A clearer view,
From morn, through heat of day—till eve;
What I shall do.

'Twill be enough when all my tasks are o'er,
And life's fair sun
Shall set to rise for me no more,
To hear—Well done.

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