

The Wayside Philosopher.

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NOTES ON TWO POEMS ON "DEATH"

Recently a learned divine sought to justify Whittier's use of the following reference to death:

"When on my day of life the night is falling
And in the winds from unsunned spaces blown,
I hear far voices out of darkness calling
My feet to paths unknown."

Lyte, he urged, used similar language in his great hymn "Abide with me."

Let us analyze the situations. Is it not true that Lyte, who was ill unto death, fixes his mind on the physical night descending to close the day. It may be that he sees some likeness in the fact that as eve closes the day so death closes the "day of life" as it is so often unwisely called. But the darkness that deepens is not the darkness of benumbing sense as some would have us believe. Had sense so failed from whence the ability to write or think much less to express the glowing truths of that beautiful hymn? The deepening darkness is not in his brain, his soul, but on the fading landscape. Rather as his thoughts turn again to himself, there is the realization that in the physical helplessness so soon to overtake him, there is a "helper of the helpless" who is all sufficient.

Lyte passes on in his train of thought till he contrasts the night now fallen around him with death, and then his soul kindles, not at the resemblance, but the contrast. In the physical world the pall of black darkness has settled at best only broken by the moon and stars. No promise of a bright day soon to dawn. In the path of his life he had looked for night, for "sweet forgetfulness and dreamless sleep" it may be. Instead he realizes he has but found the light. The darkness, instead of closing down over his life and shutting out the bright blessings of life which God so freely showers upon all, is broken and shattered with a glorious light such as he ne'er had dreamed of. "Heaven's morning breaks and earth's vain shadows flee."

With this glorious truth burning into his enraptured soul he can sing and one can almost hear the triumphant voice of that final peal.

"In life, in death, (no longer a dreaded darkness) Lord abide with me."

What a glorious contrast to Whittier's picture of a strained ear listening for dim voices from out a shadowy cloud that fills with blackness all around, a dark veil, in constantly increasing darkness shutting out what has been the pleasant light of life. The very winds that breathe upon him from the unknown spirit land whence his feet are turning blown from "unsunned spaces." Well for Whittier that he had a faith which while it could not see God's radiance beaming in a fuller glory around him, could yet believe that somehow, somewhere, through a God beyond whose loving care he could not drift he would reach to where the happier isles of the blest "lift their fronded palms in air."

Gaze on Whittier's picture and on Lyte's, then ask which is the most fitting tribute to a God of life and love. Which tells the truest story of the preparation made by God for man in that life eternal, of which the Bible gives us the pen picture and all Light and Life and Love are the world wide, world filling, and eternal illustrations.

THE IRISH QUESTION.

Carson asks Ulster to accept the present Home Rule Bill. Is this a patriotic endeavour to help solve Ireland's problems or only a political move to intensify Nationalist and Sinn Fein opposition to the measure? Who can tell? If the for-

mer, it is a noble act whether it succeeds or fails. If the latter, it is but another terrible illustration of the awful "playing politics" that has been referred to in these columns before.

THE FORWARD MOVEMENT.

Now that the returns are available, we have the fact announced that the churches have succeeded in a great movement practically without the aid of the wealthier class of church members. The large contributions were few. It was the widow's mite and the cheerful givings of the many little ones (from the standpoint of riches) that did the deed. If this means that the church will be freed to a large extent from its fear to alienate the sympathies and support of its rich adherents by plain speaking and by manly denunciations of the evils with which the wealthier classes were cursing our political and commercial and social circles, it will be welcome indeed.

THE PROHIBITION MOVEMENT.

"Save me from my friends" should be the cry of Prohibition at this time. "Whom the Gods destroy they first make mad" is fittingly illustrated in the course of an Executive which proposes mischievous amendments to the Prohibition Act, and a Convention that, in the face of a very powerful reaction against Prohibition now taking place in British Columbia is asking that a "Bone Dry" referendum be held in the Province.

Blindly tearing ahead to change the Act, reckless of consequences, regardless of a lack of enforcement of existing provisions that would be laughable if it were not so gravely serious in its consequences to organized society in the Province, heedless of a fountain head of crime and disorder in a Government profiteering in the traffic they seek to stop, the Prohibitionists had, perhaps, better rein in their steeds and consider well where they are at.

Let the Moderationists sneer and ask if Prohibitionists have the courage of their convictions. They have but they claim also, to have horse sense and some respect for the moral issues in the liquor question.

Prohibitionists know that they will see the day when people generally will not have two ounces, let alone two quarts, in their houses when, perhaps, no one will be permitted to have liquor except for strictly medicinal or commercial or manufacturing use. They also know there is a time and place for all things. There is a time for active strenuous labour, a time for watchful waiting, a time for prayerful steady holding of the ground gained till the next forward movement can be taken.

Whatever may be in place and keeping at this time, certainly the amendment seeking to restrict the amount of liquor a man may keep in his home is not such. Why throw on an administration, so inefficient that it cannot prevent carloads being brought in and sold,—not in private dwellings but largely in the business section of Vancouver, to take one instance,—the added burden of seeking to enforce a provision, wholly, uncalled for at this stage of our liquor traffic fight.

Is the repression of bootlegging so sought? Granted! Let us then compel every importer to register the amount imported, each holder the quantity held. Let the possession of two quarts, or more, be prima facie evidence of liquor selling. Have both provisions if you will. But do not alienate hundreds of prohibitionists, to say nothing of those outside prohibition ranks, who wish a fair game and will support prohibition in all fair measures, by a measure which can only be founded in the most intolerant bigotry or in a desire to overthrow the prohibition movement and turn back the clock to darker days.

The bar has gone. All decent people rejoice. Let the prohibitionists now give decent people the opportunity to follow them in a clean, hard manly fight for law enforcement rather than tilting at a windmill by advocating either a bone dry referendum or the vicious amendment recently presented to legislature.