

SOWING AND REAPING.

"What a deformed, unsightly creature that Alic Forester is!" said Frank Boyd to his friend Jack Donnell, as a diminutive, hunch-backed boy, leaning on the arm of his tall, handsome brother, Dick, came down the walk from college.

"Yes, poor fellow; he has a sorry time of it in this world," assented Jack, looking pityingly after the brothers. "He must feel his misfortune, though Dick's devotion makes up for much that he has lost."

"He owes him all the devotion he can lavish upon him," retorted Frank, with a suggestion of impatience in his voice. "If I had brought such a calamity on a brother, I would feel that nothing I could do could ever atone for the injury done. Nothing! I could never forgive myself—never! The fact that I had spoiled the life of one of my kindred would haunt me to my dying day."

"It was an accident, you know," Jack said, persuasively. "No doubt he suffers almost as keenly as Alic when he looks upon his crooked form, knowing, as he does, that the poor fellow must go through the world always a cripple."

"He would be a strange kind of a brother if he did not," replied Frank, sharply. "I don't see how he can get any pleasure out of life with that monstrosity continually before his eyes, to remind him of what might have been avoided, but was not."

"There are other injuries inflicted sometimes, by those who profess to love us, which leave deeper scars, and more surely blight the soul than the very worst of physical deformities. I refer to moral contaminations, which are as enduring as the soul itself," replied Jack.

"If there can be worse deformity than the one carried about in the poor, distorted, body of Alic Forester, I have not been so unfortunate as to be brought in contact with it," replied Frank, obstinately.

"And yet, my dear fellow, you have inflicted deeper wounds, made more hideous disfigurements upon the souls of some of your associates in this very college, than those carried about in the twisted and warped body of unfortunate Alic Forester," insisted Jack, with decided emphasis, keeping his eye fixed squarely on the face of the astonished critic before him.

"Explain yourself," demanded Frank, with chilling civility. "When, or in what manner, have I been guilty of such base crimes charged upon me?"

"All the days of your life, in which you have promulgated your sceptical views, mark periods wherein you have left scars on the souls of those whose faith you have undermined," asserted Jack. "How many students in this college will carry the impress of your defilement out into the world, and in turn stamp other pure lives with the stain with which you have tarnished theirs! It is a very serious thing to uproot the faith of others, particularly when you have nothing to offer them instead."

"I force my peculiar views on none," retorted Frank, icily, "but I insist that I have the same privilege of expressing them that belongs to you, or any other man. I proselytise no one."

"But views, such as you entertain, disseminate poison, and no one has a right to scatter such germs broadcast to the world," Jack returned, with decision.

"If the tares grow, uprooting the wheat, you have only to pluck them up and sow good seed again in their place," said Frank, more disturbed than he would have cared to own by Jack's argument.

"Ah, but that is not so easily done," remonstrated Jack. "You must have learned by this time that it is next to impossible to undo a wrong of this kind. It is much easier to pollute a field with thistle seeds than to gather up the crop after the destructive plants have, in turn, cast their germs into the prolific earth. Go to some of those whose faith you have unsettled, and persuade them to return to their allegiance to their father's God."

The conversation was interrupted at this point, but Jack's pungent words had made too vivid an impression on Frank's mind to be soon forgotten. He had been reared in a Christian home, and the thought that he had turned his back on the teachings of a praying mother worried him more than he would have cared to acknowledge. After his discussion with Jack he never saw the crippled hunchback without recalling Jack's words about the distorted souls he had made, and the more he thought on the subject the more he became convinced that he had been a moral scourge among the boys in college. He began to read his Bible carefully, and, before many weeks, prayerfully as well; and soon thereafter he came knocking at the door of the church for admission—confessed Christ, was baptized, and at once laid himself on God's altar—to be used how and when and where the blessed Master should choose to employ him. His first thoughts, after he had consecrated himself to Christ, were for those whom he had led astray, but it was, just as Jack had said—much easier to sow the tares than to uproot them. As he labored and prayed with, and for, some of those for whose souls he felt he would be held accountable, he realized how utterly impossible it was to undo the wrong he had done; how hard it was to erase disfigurements from souls he had defaced.

"Be not deceived; God is not mocked, for whatsoever a man sows, that shall he also reap."
—*Philadelphia Presbyterian.*

"IF I HAD MY LIFE TO LIVE OVER AGAIN."

This is the subject of a sermon recently preached in this city. What the preacher made out of it we are not advised, but it belongs to a class of reflections that are as useless as the reading of the most rapid fiction. No one has any business with his past life except as the consequences of his actions project themselves into the present, involving moral honesty. If he stole in the past, true repentance requires reparation; if he traduced, it demands retraction and the publication of the retraction as conspicuously as that of the original utterance. No person living can know that if he had his life to live over again he would do any better than he has done. Those who waste time in such reflections imagine themselves beginning life over again with the ideas and feelings that they now have. It is equally unnecessary, unreasonable, and un-Christian to waste a second's time in thinking what might have been.

From the Christian point of view one is to forget the things that are past and press forward. He should only remember his sins, after having repented, as reflecting light upon his tendencies. Peace with God, a humble acknowledgment of sinfulness, and the thoughts absorbed in the discharge of present duty, with occasional glances at the glorious recompense of reward, compass the sphere of personal thought. It is well to exhort a man to live as he will wish he had lived when he comes to die, for that relates to the present.—*Christian Advocate.*