

I've Done My Best.

Rev. George Coates in 'The Christian.'

One morning, somewhat early, I was aroused by a knock at the door, and going to see what was wanted, found a young woman weeping. In answer to my enquiry as to what was the matter, she said, 'Oh, sir, will you come and see a young man? He is my husband, and the doctor says he's dying.' She told me where they lived, and shortly afterwards I found the house. It was a working man's home, and in bed lay the husband, evidently at the end of a rapid decline.

'Well,' said I, 'here you are then!' 'Yes, here I am, but I don't think that I shall be here much longer. I've kept thinking that I should get better, but they tell me now that I have got to go.'

'Well, you know, having to go is the lot of us all; but to whom are you going, and to what?' 'I think that's all right,' was his reply; 'I'm hoping that I am going to heaven.'

I told him that I was glad to hear that, and that there was no doubt of his getting there if his hope was centred in Christ Jesus, such hope being the anchor of his soul. I was a little surprised as he replied, 'Well, you see, I never did anyone any harm, and I've tried to pay my way and be honest, and I think that as I've done my best, God will not cast me out at last.'

'But,' said I, 'do you feel that you are a sinner?'

'No, I don't.'

'Look here, my friend,' said I, 'God's Word says that you're a sinner, and when it becomes a question as to your word or His, I'll take His before yours.' At this he got cross, and said, 'You may think what you like, but you won't convince me that after the sort of life I've lived, I'm a sinner.'

With that I got my Bible and began to read—'For all have sinned and come short of the glory of God.' 'If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.' 'There is none righteous, no not one.' And then I asked him what he thought of that. 'Then I'm a sinner after all,' was his reply.

'And now, listen again,' said I. 'The soul that sinneth it shall die.' Then such a look of pain crossed his face as he said in sorrowful tones, 'If that's the case, I'm a sinner, and I'm lost.'

'Well, what are you going to do now?' was my next question. The tears came into his eyes as he said, 'I don't know; I suppose it will just have to be as it is.'

'Yes,' I replied, 'and this is how it is. "For the Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost," and "the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth us from all sin." Again and again I repeated the words, then prayed with him, and left him.'

I called again in the evening, and found him sinking rapidly, but there was such a glad look on his face. On my asking him how he was, he said, 'I'm only a poor sinner, and I'm dying, and am lost, but trusting in the blood of Jesus.' When I called the next morning, I found that he had gone to join the countless host who had washed their robes and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

The Dean of the Boston University law school has posted the following notice in the vestibule of the law school building:

'Students who are unwilling to give up the use of tobacco while in this building may withdraw, and the proper proportion of their tuition fees will be returned upon demand. Further discussion in addition to what has been held seems unnecessary.'

polished granite pillars and the glorious arches and domes of the famed Castle of Dipso. I was young; curiosity was strong; there could be no harm in looking at the outside of a castle; no one at home would be the wiser, for I could take a short cut across the fields and reach our house by my usual path. I did not reflect that since my parents had forbidden me to go by the highway there must be some danger, unknown to me, lurking along it. Man's first sin was disobedience, and curiosity led to it; so with me—the first false step in life was taken through disobedience stimulated by curiosity. There was apparently no harm in going home by another road and visiting a much talked-of scene: methinks that my life's catastrophe began that day. 'Take one false step at the beginning of life,' said a good old Quaker once, 'and thee will go on staggering till the end.'

That pleasant autumn afternoon I took the first false step; listen to the sequel! At four o'clock my companion and I started homewards, along the highway, and past Dipso Castle. It was a glorious evening, just such a glorious evening

'As Florence, might envy,  
So rich was the lemon-hued air.'

Our spirits were light and our hearts beat gaily as we tramped along, he pointing out to me and I admiring and wondering at the many novelties which a new world seemed to reveal to me. After passing by cozy cottages, stately dwellings, goodly acres, and elegant parterres, we finally saw, gilded by the rays of the setting sun, the distant dome and the sparkling turrets of the fairy-haunted Castle of Dipso. At first sight I was struck with the external beauty and wondrous grandeur of that imposing structure. But if at a distance it was glorious to contemplate, on nearer approach it became enchanting to behold. What perfection of detail; the alabaster columns, with capitals carved, as Keats would say, 'with many a quaint device,' birds, beasts, serpents and 'huge jaw of nameless monster,' archways of the Gothic, Ionic, and Doric styles—all combined; windows with Venetian blinds, gilded and of richest rosewoods and mahogany, calculated to keep out the glare of day, while exteriorly scintillating in the rays of light; marble stairways with porphyry banisters, ending in carved lions of most exquisite workmanship; fountains of crystal-like jets playing amongst flowery avenues! Was it a dream? I feared to stir lest the vision might melt into air, like the fairy castles built by wizard hands along Manzanares and Guadalquivir. All thought of home, of the hour, of my parents fled. My companion told me that his uncle was a waiter in the Castle and some day, he would coax him to let us go in. How glorious, I thought! But I could not tear myself away from the scene, until the last rays of the departing sun faded in the west, and as the stars in the blue dome above began to peep out, one by one, the electric lights in the Castle began to fling their splendours upon the picture of elfdom. The shutters were thrown open, and, while gorgeous carriages drawn by spanking horses, driven by liveried servants and occupied by beauty, wealth and rank, dashed up the main avenue to the grand entrance, I could see the shadows flitting, backwards and forwards, across the frescoed walls of the great halls within. But from my position I could only see the shadows; what would I not give to behold the living beings?

But my companion now reminded me that it was growing dark and I was still far from home. I was forced to tear myself away from the scene of enchantment, and just as music with its 'voluptuous swell'

began to awaken the echoes of the place I was obliged to depart. It was later than usual when I reached home; I excused myself with a white lie, I said that I had remained to play and did not notice the time passing until it began to grow dark. My parents were satisfied, and I retired to bed—not to sleep, but to live over and over again the moments spent in front of the Castle of Dipso. My life was changed from that hour! Home seemed no longer the same cozy retreat, the same charmed abode of peace and love; school had lost all its attractions, save inasmuch as it would afford me an opportunity of stealing a glimpse now and again at the enchanted abode of all earthly pleasures; the woodland path became long and uninteresting, the flowers were no longer bright and odoriferous, the birds had no songs of jubilee for me, and



'THEY SEEMED TO KNOW ME.'

even the squirrels and hares became more shy and distrustful. A change had come over the spirit of my life-dream; but was it a cloud or a morning ray of hitherto-unknown glory that caused the transformation? Truly did Campbell sing:

'Coming events cast their shadows before.'

(To be continued.)

A Random Thought.

A dreamer dropped a random thought,  
'Twas old, and yet 'twas new;  
A simple fancy of the brain,  
But strong in being true.

It shone upon a genial mind,  
And lo! its light became  
A lamp of life—a beacon ray—  
A monitory flame.

The thought was small, its issue great,  
At watchfire on the hill;  
It shed its radiance far adown,  
And cheers the valley still.

A nameless man, amid a crowd,  
That thronged the daily mart;  
Let fall a word of hope and love,  
Unstudied from the heart.

A whisper on the tumult thrown,  
A transitory breath;  
It raised a brother from the dust,  
It saved a soul from death.

—Charles Mackay.