

HOPE'S QUIET HOUR

WHEN A BRAMBLE IS KING

In the ninth chapter of the Book of Judges is a quaint parable which describes the efforts of the trees to find a king to reign over them. The olive tree refused to be promoted over the other trees, the fig and the vine followed suit. Then all the trees appealed to the bramble (in the margin it is the "thistle"), saying, "Come thou, and reign over us." The bramble willingly agreed, calling them to come and put their trust under his shadow, but warning them that fire would probably come out of him and devour the cedars of Lebanon.

Do you know something of the folly of letting the bramble or thistle rule in your life? Perhaps you have had a quarrel with someone. It may have begun about some trifle, but neither party was willing to take the difficult but splendid step of a move towards a reconciliation. "It was all his fault. I never did anything to vex him." How often these words are spoken by one who knows, deep down in the sub-consciousness, that there was originally fault on both sides, and that the sin of not trying to be reconciled, belongs to both parties. And so the bramble is invited to rule in the heart, though it causes nothing but unhappiness. It tears and scratches, in true bramble fashion, giving no pleasure to anybody. Nothing is gained by standing aloof from a neighbor, nothing but soreness of heart and a dull pain, which shows the presence of disease.

Once two girls in one of my settlement classes refused to speak to each other. They had been "inseparables," and one neglected to call for the other one evening when going to "night school." It was a small offence to begin with, but hard words soon made it worse. Things came to a climax when the girls refused to speak to each other in a play they were getting up. On examination, it was discovered that both were very unhappy and would rejoice in a reconciliation—but neither would take the first step, hold out her hand and say the first word. Those of us who know by experience the priceless value of a friendship that began in youth and has glorified the rest of life, can see the sadness of throwing away such treasure at the bidding of the bramble-ruler, Pride. Happily in the case mentioned, the unhappy captives of that haughty, ignoble king, were induced to break loose from his control. The interrupted friendship went on as pleasantly as before. But when people get out of their teens, a quarrel is not so easily mended. Many and many a heart has been tortured for years by the bramble, Pride, a ruler who gives no advantages in return for his stern commands. If he should ever say to you: "Don't stoop to make the first advances!" look in his face and see what a miserable sham his appearance of greatness is. Why, it requires no nobility of soul at all to be proud and obstinate! The most ordinary person can refuse to take the first step towards reconciliation. It is the grand and heroic soul only that can break through the barriers piled up by pride, can "stoop to conquer," can destroy an enemy by the splendid plan of changing him into a friend. If you are submitting to be ruled by the bramble, then fire will come out of it and burn up the cedar of Lebanon—the great cedar called Friendship. Are you willing to sacrifice the cedar at the bidding of the malicious, useless thistle?

"One night upon mine ancient enemy
I closed my door,
And, lo, that night came Love in search
of me,
Love I had hungered for,
And, finding my door closed, went on his
way
And came no more.
Pray you take counsel of this penitent
And learn thereof;
Set your door wide, whatever guests be
sent,
Your graciousness to prove.
Better to let in many enemies
Than bar out Love."

If it takes "two" to make a quarrel "one" can generally end it, if he is resolute and persistent in his efforts.

Then there is another kind of bramble which is often invited to take full control over a life. In Isaiah II., we read that God forsook His people because the land was full of silver and gold, treasures of all kinds, and idols. Soon came a day of great destruction, and these people, who thought themselves so rich and secure, discovered their mistake. Their idols were despised as worthless, and thrown "to the moles and to the bats." (Isa. ii.: 20.) If you read the marginal rendering of that verse, you will see it is "the idols of his silver, and the idols of his gold." Anyone who makes idols of his silver and his gold,

that crushes them, and bow willingly to be under its rule.

Now, I am not foolish enough to deny the value of money—we all know that it is worth having, and that it can be converted into real power. But it is one thing for you to have money, and quite another thing to allow money to have you. To submit to be ruled by an idol of silver or an idol of gold, is to place the glorious cedar of Lebanon (your spirit) under the control and at the mercy of the bramble Mammon. Sometimes this bramble-king commands a subject to sell his honesty for dollars, and he knows himself to be disgraced and dishonored before God and his own conscience. To gain a few dollars and lose one's honor—what a miserable bargain! Sometimes the tyrant demands even more, and insists that his slave shall commit murder for money's sake. Generally, he does not show his thorns so openly, but by slow degrees hardens the loving heart and crushes the generous enthusiasm of youth. The desire

find much happiness in its possession, "He that loveth silver; shall not be satisfied with silver; nor he that loveth abundance with increase . . . the sleep of a laboring man is sweet . . . but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep."—Eccles. v.: 10-12.

The old Cornishman who said gleefully: "I've served the Lord for forty years, and, praise the Lord, it never cost me a cent!" was the penny-wise and pound-foolish. His economy was utter folly. A religion that costs nothing is worth nothing. The man who boasted that his religion only cost him a shilling a year, was assured that it was "more than it was worth."

I have not room to-day to speak of other bramble kings, but we all need to be on our guard lest we sacrifice the greater things to the lower, allowing the weeds of sin to kill the glorious cedars of righteousness. As Browning expresses it:

"For I say, this is death and the sole death,
When a man's loss comes to him from his gain,
Darkness from light, from knowledge ignorance,
And lack of love from love made manifest;
A lamp's death when, replete with oil, it chokes;
A stomach's when, surcharged with food, it starves."

DORA FARNCOMB.

INGLE NOOK

A DAUGHTERLESS HOME

Dear Dame Durden:—Do you know any way to make sausage meat from beef, using liver and head meat chiefly; no pork to be introduced? Can any member give some simple recipes for cooking young mutton? I get such good information from your pages that I feel like trying again. Can some one tell me how to make a non-intoxicating drink from ginger, and a good way to make brown bread? The crust of what I make from yeast is always hard.

Does anyone know of an orphan girl (one 10 or 11 years old) who wants a home, and would be willing to help, according to her size and strength, around the house? She could go to school and grow up learning housework. We would do our best to bring her up right. More particulars, if such can be found, and I am sure there are many if we knew them. I have five boys in ages from 11 to 14 years. We lost our only little maid some years ago after a brief stay of 3½ years, and I feel I need a girl to help me. Any information about a little homeless girl of respectable manners will be gladly received. Yours faithfully

EMERALD GEM.

(If you will write to R. B. Chadwick, Superintendent of Children's Aid Society, Edmonton, Alta., he may be able to find just the very little girl you want. I think you are doing a doubly good deed to put a little girl in your home. You are giving some girl help and love and training, and you are doing your boys a good turn, for boys need a sister's influence in their development. Will you let me know what success you have?

I haven't any recipe for porkless sausage but somebody has it put away among her recipes, I feel sure, and will search it out for your benefit. I know where to get a good recipe for brown bread and will try to get it in time for this issue, or, at any rate, for the next. Some of our English members ought to have some good recipes for cooking mutton. The ginger beverage is not in my books, either.—D. D.)

A REWARD OF MERIT

Dear Dame Durden:—After reading Bella Coola's description of the fair she is entitled to the information asked for, and am pleased to offer my seller of the boxes. I am glad to see one of our readers trying to have the balance at the year's end on the right side, by selling direct from producer to consumer, the only right and proper way to make a business pay. But also I would advise



GRAND RAPIDS ON THE SASKATCHEWAN RIVER.

exalting them to the most important place in his daily thoughts, will find one day that he is serving a bramble—a kind not only powerless to help in the real crisis of life, but one that is cold and heartless at the best of times. An African explorer describes a strange custom of one of the tribes of the Upper Congo. He says that the brass rods, which are the favorite currency, are made into great rings which are welded securely round the necks of the married women. The richer they are, the heavier the load which must be carried. Some poor "rich" women are doomed to struggle miserably through life under thirty pounds of brass. At first, the neck is rubbed into sores, but it gets callous in time. Sometimes, when the women increase in size after the rings are fastened on, they are nearly strangled by their riches. And yet they are proud of the heavy, useless burden,

to grow richer and richer leaves no time for cultivating mind or soul or heart. Reading and meditation do not uplift, because they are only concerned with money-making. The sweetness and richness of fellowship cannot thrive in such a choking atmosphere. A man is terribly poor and wildly extravagant who becomes a millionaire, if he finds to slip out of his life, or if he has not cultivated his mind. And when God's strong messenger calls him to drop all his gold, what a plunge into beggary death will be, if he has laid up no treasure in heaven and has nothing but his name to show for the time wasted on earth. "There is that maketh himself rich, yet hath nothing; there is that maketh himself poor, yet hath great riches."—Prov. xiii.: 7.

The bramble cares little about the pleasure of its slaves, and the people who love money above nobler things, seldom