













Doctrin.

OUR COMMON JOYS.

BY C. D. STUART.

Our common joys, oh! what are they? The brightest and the best, Are with us when we rest; An angel's hand, they hover round; In waking and in dream, And o'er our hearts, in saddest hours, They shed a golden beam.

THE FALL OF THE CURTAIN.

When Augustus Cæsar was dying, at the end of a long reign, full of important action and wise legislation, he called to his counsellors who stood by his pillow, and, with a dramatic and self-understanding air, inquired of them, "What do you wish for me?"

precious property and interests. How was it possible that sentiments of true regard could accompany the death-bed of one, by whose life morals had been outraged, public treasures exhausted, human life counted as an insignificant bubble, and a general nation brought so low, as that the wisest financiers turned with a shudder from the thought of a child who would be his heir?

A MAN OVERBOARD.

The full moon rose on the sea and hung out from the sky like a silver globe, with a clear and steady light that I have never seen. The ship was sailing well under a fair breeze, and we walked the deck in the enjoyment of one of the most delightful evenings. One after another of the passengers went below, and a few only of the younger and more romantic remained to look out on the waves reflecting the beams of the moon now rising far up in the heavens.

As the king's disorder advanced, an anticipation of one of his friends, which had already mortified, was proposed by his physicians. "Will the operation prolong my life?" was the demand. He was told it might for days, or even for weeks. "If that be all, the result will not be equal to the suffering. God's will be done." He now took leave of the members of his family, made his last dispositions, and began to speak of his reign as already past, saying, "When I was king, this incident recurred of my last hours indicated still of my future passion strung in death."

Nothing marks man's humiliation more than the manner in which certain effects survive their authors. Within that proud palace which his hands had raised, every wall of which contained some memorial of his illustrious exploits, Louis XIV at length lay, an insignificant mass of unconscious clay.

Such was the fall of the curtain upon one who had filled a proud niche in Europe's temple of fame; but who did not mind the abjecting shadow of his own structure, leaving contemptuous traces of his fall, to forget the man of whom in that of an unfortunate and insupportable old man; posterity to adore.

It is with far different feelings, however, that the spectator of more modern times walks under the dome of a grand and darkened theatre. In vain he asks, as of some drama, "What purpose, except that which was evil, all these gorgeous means and appliances were tending to? Who now are the actors, and what was the worthy part the mass of them performed?"

Among those scenes exhibited to the stranger in this luxurious palace, no scene of special interest. In the midst of a long gallery lined throughout with mirrors, and exhibiting on its ceiling the most fantastic and grotesque designs, a physiological pencil could point, as it does upon the private and secluded apartments of the monarch, at whose proud bidding all this structure arose.

On that couch lies all that remains of a once petted and applauded monarch of France; whose life, when in his early reign threatened with assassination, was regarded as so important to the welfare of his subjects, that they prayed for him as "Louis the Well-beloved." There are no signs and prayers now; the king is dead, and his long and illustrious reign is over.

The scene was equally remarkable and disgraceful. Two opposite court parties fought almost at his bedside for the possession of the one controlling the king's longer was imminent, and that the last offices of religion ought to be forthwith performed; the other maintaining that the crisis was not yet alarming, fearing lest the guilty minions of his vices should be dismissed from the court.

Death came heavily and unwelcomely upon that infirm old man. As it drew near, it seemed as if he would not die. He met its summons by preclaiming a grand review, and he bore bravely on the last stage of his monarch's life, till the pressure from without, and the severer self-reproach from within, had changed him into a morose old man, from whose presence even his nearest companions shrunk with ennu and disgust.

Reader, who hast before this time own passing away from the stage of life, despise not the admonition that the curtain will close on thee! Neglect not the only means whereby thy last end may become happy and dignified. Thy back will only rise safely in the storms of a dying hour as it is anchored on the hope furnished by the gospel of Jesus Christ.

Never to appear in Society but with a view to improvement and education; never to keep up a single acquaintance the most distantly dangerous to our spiritual interests; never to cultivate friends, or even relations, that are not religious and virtuous; never to omit rendering in the particular duties of our station, the means of salvation to ourselves and others, - this is the Gospel. To neglect occupations the most sacred and important; to run idly, and without choice into every circle that will admit us; to consume our precious time in idle visits and ceremonials; to live only in the confusion of night and day, amidst laborious amusements, which always end in inevitable disgust, - this is the World.

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