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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

PARTED FRIENDS.

A VINEYARD SONG.

A key of His garden He gave to our keeping,
And bade us beware of the fowler's hid snare;
He bade us work on whosoever was sleeping
And gave us a glimpse of the crown we should wear.

Meridian the beams that brought fruit to our labour,
And secret the dew that gleamed over the flowers;
The voice of His witness within us said ever,
A home in His glory should one day be ours.

'Twas nappa of heaven that was lying around us,
Gold, purer than Ophir's, replenish'd our store;
'Twas the love uncrested that mightily bound us,
And bade us look forth on the life evermore.

"Not always at Elim, My children, My children,"
He said, as he parted our footsteps awhile;
"The Marsh, the desert, the Boehim hide treasures,
That never were found in joy's long-lasting smile."

"There be palms in My gardens, and fountains of
waters
To spread all the journey with love's tropic flowers;
But how could I then lead my sons and my daughters
To where the mown grass drinks the heavenly show-
ers."

"Enough, O our Father, but wilt Thou still give us
To reap Thy one harvest till life shall be done;
Enough, O our Master, but wilt thou not leave us
To slacken our pace till the race shall be run!

Religious.

THE SOUL GATHERER.

No. VIII.

TO STUDENTS.

True friendship is imperishable. In our domestic ties, the work we do, draws heavy payments in return; the sacrifices we make secure large reward. Let us take in the whole sweetness of these, and restore it if we may, fourfold. Let us not receive any of it at the givers' hand as matter of course.

But friendship subsists by a law of its own, and brings out, through the heart of the creature, a special feature of the manifold Divine love. How often it would die out, starved, if it asked anything tangible in return! It is most like God, when it asks nothing. Permission to love; and to purify another heart and your own by the love—this is great part of friendship. From the Son of man it can learn to lay life down, renouncing self for the sake of one beloved.

Where does friendship find a grander field,—where can it meet a kindlier, readier soil, than that of student life? All are brought together by one object to the seat of learning. Attracted by one magnet from distant dwelling-places,—and surmounting difficulties which, but for that magnet's power, had been insuperable,—they are gathered. From all the districts of the land, or even from all the countries of the world, they come; and the choice is perhaps still to make —of a friend. That friendship will influence you more than the learned men who teach, more than the authors you read, more, it may be, than the pastor who preaches to you the word of life. God guide the choice!

You will very soon become like him whom you so love; can you then, even on selfish grounds, do or say thoughtlessly, what will injure him? Can you have the heart to put into his hands a book, which you feel has rather hurt than helped you? Surely you and he will never take one long step away from God, by doing together what you would not venture on alone. May there be no blot- ted page in the history of that friendship; nothing that you would fain cut out, before you lay that precious past away among your heart's treasures!

Do you hope, student for the ministry, that the Lord will use that manuscript sermon you are finishing, to lead a soul to Himself. Twice you have sat down to it by the lamp light, and the grey morning has stolen in on it. How happy it, in the hearing of it, a priceless soul shall pass from darkness into light. How it will help you, in setting down to prepare such, the thought shall not

be so much, "I am going to write a sermon," as that bounding, blissful one, "Perhaps the King may take these poor words out of the page, and point an arrow with them to wound a soul." The text is like the summer's first ripe fruit set down; and from betwixt the soft green leaves, as you hold it up before the sinner's eye, his heart will leap, for it is sore, and his lips are parched. See, see then that the sermon be not like a fence of invisible wire between that fruit and these lips. Yet it is often so. The text allures: it promises food, joy, strength to the famished spirit; but the sermon unmakes the meaning of it, explains away the power, abstracts the sap. It hardly looks like the old text at the end, but a dried, powerless skeleton of the living thing God made it.

"Can I help it?" say you, dear brother; "can I make souls to arise, and feed on God's holy word? Can I speak to please all?" No. But this, by the Lord's power, the weakest, poorest of all preachers can do. He can make the soul in the pew feel thus: "There is a man who has got something I have not got. That man possesses some secret, to me a riddle still. At some part of his soul, where mine is dead and dry, he has a fountain springing. He has a chain binding him to eternal things which to me are still but as dreams." More than this, brother! If in your prayers you were indeed in communion with the Father, by the Holy Ghost,—if your spirit chanced then to lean by faith on the Elder Brother's arm,—if your faith were then responsive to His promise spoken, who knows but that the hearer might catch athwart your soul some trace of a divine Person too? It may be, he goes home saying, "This bare, barren life of mine will do for me no more. I may lose my life in the struggle out of my iniquities after Him; but the Christ I saw to-day in His child, shall be my Saviour too."

How happy for you who have consecrated yourself to serve in the gospel of the Son of God, to live in such a day as this! Surely His servant need never, in these days, go anywhere, without expecting to see some sign or wonder done in the name of the Lord Jesus. If he is disappointed, it gives him a sorrow that strengthens his soul, instead of weakening it. It makes him pray, it brings out the sympathy of believers with his work.

Praise God for all the means of grace He is surrounding you with, to make you an able minister of the New Testament. Praise Him if, in that School of the prophets where you are trained, there are men erudite, men of gifts, sound in the faith, full of the Holy Ghost; men who are standard-bearers of the cross, ready to hazard their lives for the name of the Lord Jesus; of keen eye to discern, and courage to lead on God's Israel to all that in these days is required. Praise Him again, if He has given you a mind to search, the heart to study well, and read hard, and write accurately. It is the sword of steel, furnished and tempered. Your longing must be to see it sunk in some companion's soul; to see him rise a new creature in Christ; and then you will have him as a brother in this very kind of work, and see the same thing happen again and again. Shall not your whole soul in triumphant love exclaim, "I AM NOT ASHAMED OF THE GOSPEL OF CHRIST, FOR IT IS THE POWER OF GOD UNTO SALVATION—and I have seen it to-day—TO EVERY ONE THAT BELIEVETH."

Do not wait till you are in a pulpit, to try to point souls to Christ. Those whom the Church authorises to preach, those also who are pastors, have many and arduous special duties of other kinds. Less perhaps in the pulpit than elsewhere do those ministers, whom the Lord of the harvest is using for gathering in souls, find in these days that their work is so used. Studying as hard as ever they did, preaching more earnestly, doing all the Lord requires of them to build up and water his heritage, it is yet oftenest at the special service, or the small prayer-meeting, or by the wayside that their work tell's.

There is many a death-bed to which no minister or Christian can penetrate. It is there—Student of medicine—that you shall have the access. You are going to be one of the sentinels on the border land. On your words—or on your silence the beating heart will hang as for doom. The eyes of anxious friends will watch your countenance to know

whether it be the angel of death or of life that is watching by the bed. When any other knock at the door will be counted as intrusion, yours will be hailed. Straight into the very heart of sorrow your way is paved. You shall have glimpses into the hearts of men, that no eye but your own shall ever get. Self-command will hide from others, yes, even from the dearest, many heart-wrings that shall seek no disguise from you.

What a career of loving, gracious usefulness lies before you. And were you to gather up all the influence gained by the healing of the body, to use it wisely for dealing with the soul, the noblest missionary life would open to you. Nor will it require to be strained after or arranged by you. Opportunities will come when cruelly alone could keep you silent. When death is in the cup how differently you will be able to prepare the way to set it before another,—you who see the pathway of life in Jesus brightly opened for yourself, and are so willing to take the hand of your friend as he gropes for the way.

You will not keep all the words about Jesus for the ears of the dying. A faithful pastor who had watched many instances of apparently hopeful deathbed conversions, says, that of those numerous cases who after being given over to die, were restored to life, only one or two in his experience held fast their hope in Christ. Yet what a privilege to be able to tell the dying where to look. They are tossing and fighting with the billow, and the rope is in your hand. In your profession they seem to learn easily to use man's skill as with a woman's tender hand. So it will be easy for you too to learn to deal truly and tenderly with souls. It is not by accusing men of being unbelievers that their hearts will be most likely to get the light as to their being such. When we in love assume them to be Christ's and treat them so, the fact of their being utterly wanting unto God will often rise before honest minds.

You have got an opportunity to say a word to one who knows not Christ, of His love which passeth knowledge. A few minutes more and you are hurrying on again, engrossed with the care of another. But he whom you leave behind lies on the same spot all the day. Each surrounding object is charged with the word that was so kindly whispered. The very medicine will put him in mind of the promise of God you left with him. Sick people have so much spare time, and when they are Christians, they will naturally spend much of it in prayer. You may serve yourself heir to absolute riches of heavenly blessings if you will only drop one kindly word of acknowledgment to your patient, that each of you has a soul and a Saviour. He will then love to pray for your work. A single sentence warm from the heart does more good than a formal ten minutes if you had it to spare. And two sentences of prayer may bring more power into the soul than half an hour spun out in going round the heart, or round the world, instead of at once striking deep into the centre of the soul:

"Life is short, Death is sure;
Sin's the wound, Christ the cure."

Unsaved student, turn to God! May there be a crown for you in the hand of the Judge, on the glorious day of final award. In view of that day, will you promise to go "alone with God and offer this prayer?"—"Gather not my soul with sinners, nor my life with bloody men!" He who uttered the prayer was a saved man. He was the man after God's own heart. Yet he sometimes cast his eyes over the precipice down to the congregation of the wicked, and thought of all the vile who are gathered there. He sometimes gazed with prophetic eye into the future, and saw Tophet lighted, deep and large, and the wicked being turned into fuel for the pile that shall be kindled to burn on unconsumed for ever.

David could never forget the proofs he had himself given of what men are, when they forget to call in the mighty hand of grace to keep their corruptions down. And as he drew back shuddering from the spectacle of sin let loose, and the scum of earth gathered into the pit, his cry went up to Him that sitteth between the cherubim, "Gather not my soul with sinners!" Who can endure the thought of being shut up with the drunkard,

the tyrant, the murderer, the blasphemer, the unclean, as companions to all eternity. Bereft of the power to resist God, they will be furnished with resurrection strength to endure suffering; their vile passions raging still, while all gratification of them is paced for ever beyond their reach. The atheism, the deism, will all have vanished then before the presence of the great God, and His crowned, eternal Son. Does not the very thought of being shut up with them, as they blaspheme God and the Lamb, and the blessed Spirit whom they grieved away, make the heart to melt and tremble?

THE SHIP POLAND—LITTLE KARL.

When I was in Philadelphia at a school for young ladies, a little boy used to come there every day. He was a pretty little fellow about four years old, bright, rosy, and loving. His mother was a Philadelphia lady, but went with her husband to Sweden, where little Karl, or Charles, was born; and now the mother and her little son and his nurse Amolya were returning to Sweden, and took passage from New York in the good ship Poland.

The sky was clear and bright, and the sea was gently rolling when the ship Poland sailed forth upon the ocean far out of sight of land. But soon a strong wind blew up and brought heavy black clouds and driving rain; and loud thunder and fierce lightning.

A gentleman walking the deck of the ship, noticed a little flake of cotton lying near him. It suddenly smoked and blazed. He set his foot on it and put it out, and passed on without further thought. A little while after he perceived a smell like scorching. Others smelled it too. "Is any thing on fire?"

They looked round the stoves; they looked around the lamps; no, nothing had taken fire, nothing that they could see. But the strange scorching smell grew stronger and stronger; and at last, between the boards of the lowest floor a thin white smoke began to creep and curl. Then they knew how it was. They glanced at one another and whispered, "Fire in the hold! cotton—lightning!"

The hold or lowest part of the ship, was filled with cotton. The lightning had passed from the clouds to the mast of the ship, and along the mast down, far down into the cotton in the hold. It was burning there beneath them. The cotton could not blaze up, because it was packed in so tight and covered up so close; it only smouldered along below, like red coals under ashes; but then they knew that if any air came to it, or if it reached the wood and burned a hole or found a crack or crevice, it would burst through, and all would be in flames. So every one went to work as quick possible to stop up every opening, even the smallest. They shut in every little curl of smoke; they turned the ship's head towards New York, and then waited; it was all they could do. The wind was driving them further out to sea; the hidden fire was slowly working upwards; they knew their ship would never reach New York; they could only wait and pray. Oh, if God would send them help!

Dark night closed in. Morning came, but there was nothing to be seen but the tossing waters. The floor of their rooms grew warm beneath their feet. They came out from them upon the deck above, and shut down all the doors and stuffed them up. Then they lowered the longboat, and placed in it Karl and his mother and Amolya, and all the other women and children. They let the boat float behind the ship, to which it was tied fast by a strong rope. They meant, if the fire burst out suddenly, to cut the rope and row the boat away. But the pouring rain and the dashing foaming waves made all in the boat so cold and miserable, that they thought it better to bring them back for a while to the deck of the ship. As they walked or as they lay, they could feel it growing hot and hotter and hotter. Daylight came at last. The storm-clouds cleared away. Oh, how they looked over the broad blue ocean. They looked, but no land was in sight, no ship was near. All they could see was the pale, anxious faces around them; all they could hear was half-spoken prayers, or at times the deep, steady voice of their captain bidding them not to despair.