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Poetry.

THE DOOMED MAN.

There is a time we know not when,
A point we know not where,
That marks the destiny of men,
To glory or despair.

There is a line by us unseen
That crosses every path;
The hidden boundary between
God's patience and His wrath.

To pass that limit is to die,
To die as if by stealth—
It does not quench the beaming eye,
Or pale the glow of health.

The conscience may be still at ease,
The spirit light and gay;
That which is pleasing still may please,
And care be thrust away.

But on the forehead God has set
Indelibly a mark—
Unseen by man, for man as yet,
Is blind and in the dark.

And yet the doomed man's path below
Like Eden may have bloomed—
He did not, does not, will not know,
Or feel that he is doomed.

He knows, he feels that all is well,
And every fear is calmed;
He lives, he dies, he wakes in hell,
Not only doomed but damned.

O! where is this mysterious bourne,
By which our path is crossed,
Beyond which, God Himself hath sworn
That he who goes is lost?

How far may we go on in sin?
How long will God forbear?
Where does hope end, and where begin
The confines of despair?

An answer from the skies is sent—
Ye that from God depart,
While it is called to-day, repent,
And harden not your heart.

—Rev. J. A. Alexander, D. D.

Religious.

JOHN PLOUGHMAN'S TALK.

STICK TO IT, AND SUCCEED.

Rome was not built in a day, nor much else, unless it be a dog-kennel. Things which cost no pains are slender gains. Where there has been little sweat, there will be little sweet. Jonah's gourd came up in a night, but then it perished in a night. Light come, light go: that which flies in at one window will be likely to fly out at another. It's a very lean hare that hounds catch without running for it, and a sheep that is no trouble to shear has very little wool. For this reason a man who cannot push on against wind and weather stands a poor chance in this world.

Perseverance is the main thing in life. To hold on, and hold out to the end, is the chief matter. If the race could be won by a spout, there are thousands who would wear the blue ribbon; but they are short-winded, and pull up after the first gallop. They begin flying, and end in crawling backward. When it comes to collar work, many horses turn to jibbing. If the apples do not fall at the first shake of the tree, your hasty folks are too lazy to fetch a ladder, and in too much of a hurry to wait till the fruit is ripe, and falls of itself. The hasty man is as hot as fire at the outset, and as cold as ice at the end. He is like the Irishman's sauceman, which had many good points about it, but it had no bottom. He who cannot bear the burden and heat of the day is not worth his salt, much less his potatoes.

Before you begin a thing, make sure it is the right thing to do, and call in Mr. Conscience. Do not try to do what is impossible—ask Common Sense. It is no use blowing against a hurricane, or fishing for whales in a washing tub. Better give up a foolish plan than go on and burn your fingers with it: better bend your neck than knock your forehead. But when you have once made up your mind to a good thing, don't let every molehill turn you out of the path. Nothing is so hard but a harder thing

will cut it: set a strong resolution against a strong task. One stroke fells not an oak. Chop away axe, you'll down with the tree at last. The iron does not soften the moment you put it into the fire. Blow, smith, put on the coals, and hit hard with the hammer, and you will make a ploughshare yet. Steady goes it. Hold on, and you have it. He who sticks to his saddle will be in at the death. Brag is a fine fellow at crying "Tally-ho!" but Perseverance brings home the brush.

We ought not to be put out of heart by difficulties: they are sent on purpose to try the stuff we are made of; and depend upon it they do us a world of good. There's a sound reason why there are bones in our meat, and stones in the land. A world where everything was easy would be a nursery for babies, but not at all a fit place for men. Celery is not sweet till it has had a frost, and men don't come to their perfection till disappointment has dropped a half hundred weight of two on their toes: Who would know good horses if there were no heavy loads? If the clay was not stiff, my old Dapper and Violet would be thought no more of than Tomkins's donkey. Besides, to work hard for success makes us fit to bear it: we enjoy the bacon all the more because we get an appetite while we are earning it. When prosperity pounces on a man like an eagle, it often upsets him. If we overtake the cart, it is a fine thing to get up and ride; but when it comes behind us at a tearing rate, it is very apt to knock us down and run over us; and when we are lifted into it we find our leg is broken, or our arm out of joint, and we cannot enjoy the ride. Work is always healthier for us than idleness; it is always better to wear out shoes than sheets. I sometimes think, when I put on my considering cap, that success in life is something like getting married: there's a very great deal of pleasure in the courting, and it is not a bad thing when it is a moderate time on the road. Therefore, young man, learn how to wait, and work on. Watch the market, and the price will be right yet. Don't throw away your rod, the fish will bite sometime or other. The cat watches long at the mouse-hole, but catches no mouse at last. The spider mends her broken web, and the flies are taken before long. Stick to your calling, plod on, and be content; for make sure, if you can undergo you shall overcome.

If bad be your prospects, don't sit still and cry.
But jump up, and say to yourself, "I WILL TRY."

Miracles will never cease! My neighbour, Simon Grasper, was taken generous about three months ago. The story is well worth telling. He saw a poor blind man, led by a little girl, and playing on a fiddle. His heart was touched, for a wonder. He said to me, "Ploughman, lend me a penny, there's a good fellow." I fumbled in my pocket, and found two half-pence, and handed them to him. More fool I, for he will never pay me again. He gave the blind fiddler one of those half-pence, and kept the other, and I have not seen either Grasper or my penny since, nor shall I get the money back till the gatepost outside my garden grows Ribstone pippins. There's generosity for you! The title of this bit of talk brought him into my mind, for he sticks to it most certainly: he lives as badly as a church mouse, and works as hard as if he was paid by the piece, and had twenty children to keep; but I would no more hold him up for an example than I would show a toad as a specimen of a pretty bird. Better things are in this world than anything a goldscraper lives for. While I talk to you, young people, about getting on, I don't want you to think that hoarding up money is real success; nor do I wish you to rise an inch above an honest ploughman's lot, if it cannot be done without being mean or wicked. The workhouse, prison as it is, is a world better than a mansion built by roguery or meanness. If you cannot get on honestly, then be satisfied not to get on. The blessing of God is riches enough for a wise man, and all

the world is not enough for a fool. Old Grasper's notion of how to prosper has, I dare say, a good deal of truth in it, and the more's the pity. The Lord deliver us from such a prospering, I say. That old sinner has often hummed these lines into my ears when we have got into an argument, and very pretty lines they are not, certainly:—

"To win the prize in the world's great race
A man should have a brazen face;
An iron arm to give a stroke,
And a heart as sturdy as an oak;
Eyes like a cat, good in the dark,
And teeth as piercing as a shark;
Ears to hear the gentlest sound,
Like moles that burrow in the ground;
A mouth as close as patent locks,
And stomach stronger than an ox;
His tongue should be a razor-blade,
His conscience india-rubber made;
His blood as cold as polar ice,
His hand as grasping as a vice.
His shoulders should be adequate
To bear a couple of thousand weight;
His legs, like pillars, firm and strong,
To move the great machine along;
With supple knees to crouch and crawl,
And cloven feet placed under all."

It amounts to this: be a devil in order to be happy. Sell yourself outright to the old dragon, and he will give you the world and the glory thereof. But remember the question of the Old Book, "What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" There is another road to success besides the crooked, dirty, cut-throat lane. It is the King's highway, of which the same Book says: "Seek ye first the kingdom of God, and his righteousness: and all these things shall be added unto you." John Ploughman presents his humble respects to all wise men, and begs to say that having tried the high road here mentioned, he can strongly recommend it to all who wish to prosper.—*Sword and Trowel.*

QUESTIONS TO THOSE WHO NEGLECT PRAYER MEETINGS.

1. Are you always better employed? If not, is it well for you to absent yourself?
2. Do you get more good to your own soul, and do more good to others, by staying away? If not, can you be acting wisely?
3. Does your own conscience justify you, or have you not sometimes a difficulty in keeping it quiet on the subject?
4. Will a death-bed commend your present course, or will you then look upon your neglect of prayer meetings with pleasure, thank you?
5. Does your pastor suffer by your neglect? Does it not hurt his feelings, cool his zeal, and hinder his usefulness?
6. Are not your fellow members in the church discouraged by you, and may you not offend Christ's little ones?
7. Is not your own family injured by your neglect? What will your children think of prayer meetings, seeing you habitually neglect them? Is it surprising if they despise them?
8. Is there no reason to fear that the unconverted may be both hindered and led to think lightly of prayer by your conduct?
9. Can you have a proper concern for the prosperity of the Church, the spread of Christ's cause, and the conversion of sinners, if you never meet to pray for them?
10. And are you sure that you fulfil your duty as a church member while you neglect prayer meetings? Is neglect of duty no sin, and is there no probability of your being called to account for it?
11. Did any one ever really gain anything, either in temporal or spiritual things, by neglecting prayer meetings? If you think so, can you prove it?
12. Is there no selfishness, or pride, or worldly mindedness, at the root of your neglect? If so, ought such things to be encouraged?
13. Would it be right to give up the prayer meetings? Do you think this would please God, or improve the cause? But if all the members did as you do, must they not be given up? Could not the rest find excuses for staying away, think you, as well as you? Do you not think they would, if their hearts were as worldly, or as cold, or as indifferent about the prosperity of the cause as yours appear to be?

A STEAMBOAT TRIP.

"Did you have a pleasant trip on the steamboat?"

"Yes, indeed," replied a member of the Young Men's Christian Association, to whom the question was addressed. "I sniffed the sea breezes to my hearts content; but the pleasantest part of the whole was a prayer-meeting we held. I met brother Rhodes on board and for two hours we had a delightful talk about matters pertaining to the Master's kingdom. At last I said, 'Brother, we must have a meeting here to-night.' 'Not to-night,' he replied, it's too late; the passengers have retired.' 'Well,' I responded, 'it isn't too late for those in the fore-castle; let's go down there.' So we started.

"When we reached the place there were about forty persons, consisting of the deck hands, waiters, and steerage-passengers. The steward was busy cutting up meat for the morning's meal, some of the men were telling yarns, some were asleep, and all looked like a rather hard set.

"Well, I just went in among them, and said in a loud voice, 'You all like singing, don't you? Of course I know you do.' And before they knew who I was or what I had said, brother Rhodes and I began to sing 'The old, old story.' I tell you they did n't object, and I did n't give them time to; I just went at it.

"After we had finished singing, I told them I wanted to talk to them a little while, that I was a business-man, and was obliged to work for my bread just as they did; and I endeavored to make them feel that I did n't consider myself better than they.

"Not a voice of dissent was raised. I then took out of my pocket a small Testament and Psalms, and read aloud the first Psalm, 'Blessed is the man,' etc. Well, sir, would you believe it? I talked forty minutes to that set, explained the whole psalm, illustrating each verse by some incident, and a more attentive audience I never had. When I finished speaking, brother Rhodes offered a fervent, simple prayer, after which we sang 'Jesus the water of life will give.' And as they appeared to enjoy it so much, we struck up 'Shall we gather at the river?' and I assure you I was surprised to find so many who could join us; those who did n't know the words hummed the tune, and I do n't believe that sweet hymn was ever sung by a more motley crowd. After that we said good-night, and left them.

"I slept better that night for that prayer meeting, and hope some seed found its way into good ground.

"I expect to hear something from it some day, perhaps for a long time; but we are told to cast our bread upon the waters, and it will come back to us, it may be 'after many days.' At any rate I'm willing to wait."

Oh, I thought, why are we not as Christians more alive and faithful! How many opportunities we lose each day of working in the Master's vineyard!

THE ECHO AT PISA, ITALY.

I once heard a traveler speak of a visit to the baptistry at Pisa, at whose font there is so remarkable an echo. The baptistry, it is known, is a rotunda of most magnificent proportions, with a dome almost sublime in its expanse and elevation. The guide stood near the font and sang a few notes. His voice was not remarkably melodious; but lo; upward it rises, and from the dome comes back to us in tones of inexpressible sweetness. A pause—and again, farther upward are heard the notes; finer, fainter, sweeter; transfixing one to the spot, and making it easy to imagine some angel had caught these imperfect notes of human utterance, and imparted to them his own celestial sweetness and pathos, causing us to hear a melody which never belonged to them while in this lower region.

Does not this afford a faint illustra-

tion of what may be, when through the divine Mediator, our imperfect praises are made acceptable to the ear of him who is worshipped by angels? Borne upward by our great Intercessor, they lose the imperfections which belong to earth; for he imparteth to them his own unutterable sweetness, and they become identical with heavenly harmonies.

GROWING LOWLINESS.

It is worthy of remark that soon after Paul was converted, he declared himself "unworthy to be called an Apostle." As time rolled on, and he grew in grace, he cried, "I am less than the least of all saints." And just before his martyrdom, when he had reached the stature of a perfect man in Christ, his exclamation was, "I am the chief of sinners."

WHITE.

Dr. Spencer, some days before his death, gave orders that nothing—not even as much as a thread—of black should be on his coffin. "For," said he, "I have been a sorrowful man these many years—lamenting the deplorable state of Christ's church militant here on earth; but now, being on the point of retiring into the Church triumphant in heaven, I will not have the least mark of sorrow upon me; but my body shall be wrapped up in white, for a testimony that I die in expectation of a better and more glorious state to come."

THE TRUE IDEA OF WEALTH.

The *Methodist* thus concludes an article on this subject:

We would not have men desist from the lawful pursuit of wealth, but we would have them comprehend the true character of the enterprise in which they are engaged. Riches bring an increase of responsibility which cannot be transferred to another. The faculty to acquire money, which is given to some while denied to others, is a talent, and is subject to the same laws which regulate the possession of other talents. Some men have a gift of public speaking; this gift they are to use only for the promotion of the right, whether in the pulpit, the forum or at the bar. In like manner others have the gift of money-making. Every thing they touch seems to turn into gold. God has bestowed this gift on them that they might bless the world. If they employ it merely to hoard money, or to squander on themselves, they are recreant to a most sacred trust, and must account to God.

STRANGE ACCOUNTS.

Deacons' Courts in South Africa have strange accounts to keep. The following is a note of a collection made at the Presbyterian station of Shesugu, near Lovedale:—

Sauli.....A ewe, she-goat, and a kid.
Leya Mzimba.....Two shillings and sixpence.
Noyai Savundhla.....A he-goat.
No entli.....A bag of Kafir corn.
Xelolo's Children.....A bag of Kafir corn.
Zokufa's Son.....Basket of corn.
Pulani.....Seven shillings.
Dyakatya.....Three-pence and a ewe.
Zokufa's Wife.....A she-goat.
Sauli's Wife.....A ewe.
Nolenti Kala.....One shilling and a sheep.
Mause.....A bag of Kafir corn.
Noliziti.....A cock.
Name.....A bag of maize.
Sebenz.....A hen and chicken.

THE GOSPEL ON A TOMBSTONE.—
On the tomb of Dr. John Condor, in Bunhill Fields, London, is this inscription:

I have sinned, I have repented,
I have trusted, I have loved,
I rest, I shall rise,
And through the grace of Christ, however unworthy, I shall reign.

"The deepest longing of my heart would be to go once all around the world before I die, and preach one Gospel of invitation into the ear of every living creature."—*Rev. W. C. Burns.*