

## Sunday Reading.

### THE BEST VIOLIN.

I have always loved the violin. I shall never forget the first time I ever heard a really great player. It was when Camilla Urso made her first American tour, and I, a green boy, fresh from the farm and the pine trees of the Oregon hills, fell under the magic spell of her violin strings. Her music has been a sweet dream to me ever since.

Speaking of the pine trees, do you know there is a wonderful similarity between the weird and plaintive songs which the mountain winds murmur in the pine branches, and the strains of a violin. Miss Louise Manning Hodgkins has written a very suggestive poem in which she calls the pine tree 'An Old Violin.' A Western newspaper undertaking to copy this poem, its ambitious compositor, having some ideas of music of his own, undertook to improve on it by changing the word 'strings' to 'stump' here is the poet's indignant and amusing remonstrance to the editor, when she saw the vandalism committed on her work:

'It is nothing new, but it is a little the worst I have met with yet. It is almost as bad as the case of Professor Austin Phelps' essay on 'Calinness of the soul,' where the sentence appeared, 'Such a stillness is the stillness of a great clam at sea.' But how could your compositor and proof-reader, with a printed copy for a model, put 'stump' for 'strings' in 'An Old Violin?' who ever heard of music being made by drawing a bow across a stump, and who would not easily see, informed of memory, that the pine needles from time immemorial, have formed 'strings,' violin strings? Would you mind killing the compositor that did it?'

This is the verse in question:

'Older than Stradivarius,' 'on say,  
Greater than all Amati's art?  
Where did you find it? What did you pay?  
Only the gold of an artist's heart,  
Scattered with liberal hand and free;  
Only a reverent ear bent low,  
When across the strings of an old pine tree  
The maestro Bolus drew his bow.'

A very interesting thing about violins happened in New York not long since. Old Pierre Josephs who knew violins and loved them was recognized as an expert the world over, and whenever the courts of New York were perplexed over a case in which a violin was involved, the word of Pierre Josephs was accepted as authority.

Like many other men of genius, the old man was absent-minded. When he felt he was near the end of his life, he was concerned about his rare collections of precious violins, the works of the old masters. He did not want that they should go out of the family. So he wrote to his son in San Francisco. It seemed a very methodical letter at first sight. The violins were enumerated with all sorts of data about their age, make, history, and probable value.

'All these things,' he wrote, 'are in my vault at the Safe Deposit Company's place, where you can get them after my death. I have the keys.'

The old man died a few months ago and the son went on to settle up his affairs. On referring to the letter in order to find out what Safe Deposit Company his father had patronized, he discovered for the first time that the name was not mentioned in the letter. The keys were found all right, but what they were to unlock became food for speculation.

An organized search was at once entered upon, but up to this time no Safe Deposit Concern has been found which will admit having dealings with the old lover of violins.

This search for the lost violins, which will no doubt end in their recovery, has suggested to me the pathetic fact that many another man beside old Pierre Josephs is the owner of rare musical instruments, capable of giving out under the proper touch the sweetest harmonies, which are hidden away in silence. What music there would be in the world, if all its possibilities for music were realized! Some people say they are too busy to smile and be happy, and enjoy the sweet things of life, and exert themselves to please and inspire others by the exhibition of their gifts. Are they not making of their business a Safe Deposit Vault in which they lock up their violins?

It is the noblest work one ever does in this world to discover the hidden music in a human soul and bring it out for the world's comfort and blessing. Jesus Christ is the world's greatest musician, because he has greater skill than all others to take hearts that have become but dark vaults, holding silent violins, and, throwing open the door, make the music swell from long silent strings.

What are you doing with your violin?  
—Louis A. Banks.

### IS HE THE KING.

Why This Motto Should be Regarded as a Badge of Honor.

I want the boys and girls to come with me to France—the sunny land of France—the chosen home of chivalry, the garden of romance. The scene before us is one of the most lively and brilliant at the court of the Grand Monarque. It is a large and splendidly furnished saloon, filled with brightly-moving, gayly-dressed men and women. Among those are many boys of the same age, dressed in purple velvet and silk, with gold and silver trimmings and laces. In their hats are nodding plumes and their manners correspond to their elegant apparel. They are courteous, refined in bearing, and handsome in face and figure.

Who are those choice youths? They are the flower of France, the sons of the greatest noblemen and gentlemen. Why are they dressed so elegantly? Why must their manners be so free and refined? Why must they be so handsome in form and feature? Because they are in the King's service—his Majesty's pages. If you could speak with them and ask them of what they were more proud—of their fine dress or of their noble name—they would reply, 'Of neither; we are proud only of this: we can say, "I serve the king."'

I have often wondered why boys and girls did not show more pride in the service of the King of kings. Yes, this is a matter in which you can be proud without sin. The page of honor to any little prince is proud of the royal service in which he is engaged. Ought not the Christian boys and girls, in our King's Daughters' Circles, and our Endeavour Societies, and our Epworth Leagues, to have a strong sense of dignity and honor in the service of such a Master as Jesus the Prince of Peace? We do not need the purple dresses, and the gold and silver lace, and the ostrich plumes but we need the sweet temper, and the gracious manners, and the refined habits that commend our Prince's service to the world outside. You are companions as well as servants of this gracious Prince—henceforth I call you not servants, but friends, are his own words. Should we not then reflect his lofty spirit and pure life as pages of honor the courtesy of a palace?

In old times, workers and servants were despised. A menial and a slave was the bitterest of all human conditions; but Jesus said, 'He that is greatest among you, let him be your servant; and he took a towel and girded himself and washed the disciples' feet.' So he showed them that in the Christian life the slave was to be the greatest among them. If we could get into the stately palace of the Emperor Franz Joseph of Austria on a certain day we should find the great head of this proud old dynasty of the Hapsburgs, girding himself with a towel and washing the feet of some old men, an imitation of this action of the Lord Jesus. Thus the menial service is made one of the chief offices of honor in the Emperor's court.

Jesus was a carpenter, and he has honored work; Jesus was the servant of all, and if we are to be true followers of Jesus we must love to do service for him.

The proudest motto on the princely crest of England's heir apparent to the throne is, 'I Serve.' In the battle of Cressy, the young Prince Edward had distinguished himself by his prudence and valor. Among the enemy was the blind king of Bohemia, whose crest was three ostrich feathers, and his motto, 'Ich dien,' (I serve). The young prince, proud of the service he had rendered his father and his country that day, took this crest and motto; and every Prince of Wales from that time till now wears this humble motto of service as his highest honor.

Christian people today are understanding as they never have understood before the meaning of service for Jesus. They know that the way to honor and happiness for one's self as well as of usefulness in the world is the way of service. And I have told you the story of these proud and noble pages and lords to show you that when one really loves one's prince there is no greater glory in the world than His service. But how can we serve Jesus?

There is just one way. Not merely must we be willing, but we must be fitted for service. If you want to go among any of the poor people in the slums of our cities, or into the hospitals or prisons where the needy want help and comfort, you will find that the first thing confronting you is the demand for some ability on your part. Can you sing, or nurse the sick, or cook a meal, or mind the baby? Are you a reader, or violinist, or a teacher or physician, or a lawyer? Have you the good manners of a gentleman? The things the poor degraded people do not need, are ignorance, and incapability, and unbelief; you must have something before you can give it away to others.

I see the boys and girls romping at play, fine athletes, and gay, bright spirits. I want them to take some of their athletic ability and gay spirits among the boys whose lives are full of toil and deprivation. I see the young men and women graduating from our high schools and colleges and academies of music. I want them to go down to some of the dark places of life with their song and science and literature and serve Jesus with it. If he promises a blessing for a cup of cold water, will he not draw you near to his heart when you bring those treasures of your educated and cultured lives to his poor ones—Rev. David Beaton.

### NO PURPOSE.

We can Accomplish Nothing in Life Without a Definite Aim.

We might as well expect to hit a mark without taking aim as to accomplish anything in life without a definite purpose. Great abilities, to a man who is without a great purpose, are like full sails on a ship without rudder in the open sea; both man and ship will become useless wrecks. Let every youth find out how he may make the most of himself for Christ, then early in life set about it. We shall all do well to study the lesson given in the sketch which one of our writers sends us.

The other day I called on a man who has just missed becoming very useful and distinguished. He was a good scholar in school and gained the commendation of a famous educator; he was early associated with reformers whose names are now historical; he has a remarkable memory, and might have become renowned as a writer of annals; he has a gift for agriculture and might have reformed the farming practice of all his region; he is skillful in raising stock and once owned some of the best cattle in America; the leading men of the state, controlling statesmen, even the governors, have often been his guests; yet his influence is nothing, and very few people ever heard his name.

While the friends of his youth were hard at work reforming and guiding the policy of the nation, he only looked on; while historians have searched our annals and given volumes to libraries, he has been content to send an occasional correction of their mistakes to corners of newspapers. He let his farm grow up to brushwood and feeds three or four cows in a slovenly barn.

I sat with him in his room. The rarest collection of early books and newspapers in the region, almost in the country, was around us; it was in heaps on the floor or piled on tables, without arrangement and uncatalogued—useless to any one but himself, and only hoarded by himself as a miser hoards his gold. The man talked, and his conversation, stored with rare facts and charming anecdotes, fascinated me till I lost all thought of passing hours; I did not wonder at his list of distinguished guests. What is the matter here, I asked, that this remarkable man has lived threescore and ten years in this world an almost fruitless life? The answer is easy to find. He has never had a purpose! He never had a serious wish to serve God. He never followed any impulse, if he ever felt one, to help men. He had merely gratified the whim of a passing moment and, taking up one fancy after another, has brought nothing to pass. A man with ten talents, he has for seventy years been biding time in the earth! Better the humblest and least-gifted laborer in the town, who cares for his household, goes on Sunday to church—who, serving God and doing his best to profit by his grace, will die beloved and

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lamented; better any life with a purpose than the aimless career of this gifted child of fortune!

### THE LANTERN ON SPECTACLE REEF.

The Light to Live by Known no Shadow or Variableness.

The Bible has many different names for God, each with its own meaning and its own beauty, and one of the best is that given by James, 'The Father of lights, with whom is no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'

Out in Lake Huron, miles away from the nearest land, lies Spectacle Reef, and out of the blue water that hides it rises the tall stone tower of a light house. As you sail to the eastward through the north channel of the Straits of Mackinac, on a summer evening, you will see ahead a light that glimmers for a moment low down on the horizon, and disappears. For a few seconds there is nothing to be seen but the dark sky bending over the dark water. Then comes a red flash; then a few more seconds of darkness and the white light appears again. It is the great lantern of Spectacle Reef, red on one side, white on the other, slowly turning round and round all night long, and throwing its beams far out over the lake. Here is a light that is variable, and we see the shadow of its turning; yet surely it is a friend to the sailor, and its very changeableness helps him to distinguish it from any other.

But what is its message? It is always 'Go,' and never 'Come.' It is a warning, not an invitation. The red and white flashes may be a welcome sight to the pilot of the big steamer plying her way to Lake Superior, but he never lingers near them. And even if there were no danger lurking there, who would want to live in a light that is constantly flashing, fading, and shifting? There is a light to live by, and to die by, but it is one that knows 'no variableness, neither shadow of turning.'

### THE ADDED "BUT."

It is a Simple Word and yet a very Important one.

The Germans have a saying, 'Every thing might be well if there was no 'but' added to it. A very simple little word it seems, and yet it is important in getting the proper construction of life.

This new acquaintance with whom you are becoming so intimate is undoubtedly very attractive. His manners are good he has a fund of anecdote that makes him a most entertaining companion. He is agreeable, courteous, winning—but he speaks lightly of sacred things and his jests are not always clean.

There is a certain home where you are always welcome and where hospitality is carried out to a point of an art—but wine is always served at dinner, and with the best of intentions your hosts make it difficult for you to be true to your principles. There are pleasures which you enjoy especially—but they leave you nervous and irritable, unfitted for the next day's work.

'Everything might be well if there was no 'but' added to it.' Yet the 'but' is there and must be taken into consideration, or everything will go wrong. Do not examine half the sentence merely. See what lies on the other side of that significant word of three letters. Do not overlook nor ignore the added 'but.'

### Were Filled With Sympathy.

A most encouraging letter is quoted by the 'Church Missionary Gleaner.' It is from Bishop Ridley, who is working among the Indians of the Northwest, and not only describes the material benefits that Christianity has brought to the Indians but shows as well how it has touched their hearts and awakened their sympathy for those in sorrow and suffering. After describing the comfort, cleanliness and industry of the Christian Indian villages, he writes:

It is impossible to heighten the contrast between the Christless and the Christian people of the same tribes. Great is our present reward in seeing the elevating as well as saving effects of a pure Gospel. The things endured in the process are forgotten in the joy that abideth.

He then gives a touching account of the reception by his Indian converts of the news of the massacre at Ku-cheng, China.

As soon as we had told them the news, they began to pray, and one prayed thus: 'Say again, dear Jesus, "Father forgive them, for they know not what they do." O

gracious Spirit, Thou art not quenched by blood; let it make thy garden soil strong to grow Chinese believers in.'

'Love is the magic atmosphere through which no evil can pass. In this atmosphere of love, in making haste to be kind, one becomes a part of all that spiritual potency which surrounds him. Then can he say, "I and my Father are one."'

### The Stick and the Crust.

A stick and a crust of bread. Like the hands of a clock these two articles told the time of day for nearly a year in a certain man's life. Yet, unlike the hands of a clock, they were not visible at once. When he needed the stick he had no use for the crust; and when the crust was welcome he had no further occasion for the stick.

Albeit he was a young fellow of twenty-six, you would be wrong in supposing this stick in the nature of a weapon for attack or defence. In that case the crust and the stick would have harmonized. As it was they did not. For the stick was a support not a club.

Now, when a man feels the pressure of eighty or ninety years he is apt to want a travelling companion of that sort; but one in the very heyday of youth, not suffering from any injury, and not constitutionally feeble or malformed, should commonly be able to walk without a stick. And so this young man had always done up to the time when he fell out with the crust and with all that the crust stood for or represented.

His own account of the circumstances runs thus:—'Up to October, 1893, I had been a strong, healthy, and active man. Then I commenced to feel weak and out of sorts. I was heavy, tired, and had no ambition or energy. What had come over me I could not imagine. I had a foul nasty taste in the mouth, and was constantly spitting up a thick, dirty phlegm. My appetite left me, and what little I ate lay on my stomach like lead, causing me great pain about the chest. A short distressing cough settled upon me and troubled me day and night.

'At night my sleep was disturbed and broken, with night sweats and frightful dreams. I had great pain at the left side around the heart, and my breathing was hurried and short. Next I began to spit blood and was greatly alarmed at it. I wasted away rapidly, losing over a stone weight in a month, and became so weak that I was unable to rise on my feet without assistance.

'Although only a young man of twenty-six I was obliged to hobble about with a stick, and could walk but a short distance even at that. Worried and anxious I attended the York County Hospital, where the doctors sounded me, and said I was in a consumption.'

Here we have another of the serious and often fatal mistakes that are made in cases like this. Misled by symptoms which in some respects resemble those of consumption, medical men hastily (or ignorantly?) decide that the lungs are affected, treat the patient perfunctorily for the hopeless disease he is not afflicted with, and leave the result to chance. Hence he often dies of dyspepsia and its complications—his true disease—which, unlike consumption, is easily curable by the remedy our friend finally employed.

'They gave me cod liver oil,' he continues, 'and medicines, but I got no better. Indeed, I was so low spirited and miserable I didn't care what became of me. As time passed I grew weaker and weaker.'

'After I had endured ten months of this, Mr. R. W. Dickinson, the chemist in Walmgate, advised me to try Mother Seigel's Syrup. After taking it a few days I felt much better, my appetite reviving and my food giving me no pain. I continued to take this medicine only, and soon the cough and breathing trouble left me, and I began to gain strength and flesh. When I had taken three bottles I was strong as ever, and could eat and enjoy even a dry crust. I have since had good health. You are at liberty to publish this letter and refer all inquirers to me. (Signed) Isaiah Lewis, 124 Walmgate, York, April 8th, 1894.'

If the reader wonders how a man could suffer so much, become so emaciated and weak, and be pushed so near the grave's edge through what is sometimes flippantly called 'mere indigestion,' he has yet to learn that the digestion is the arbiter of life and death. The 'crust' (food), enjoyed and digested, means life and strength. Rejected it means the 'stick,' to supplement swift-coming weakness; and then the prone position, when help is vain. Mother Seigel's Syrup enabled Mr. Lewis to substitute the crust for the stick. It cured his dyspepsia.

### The Color of Arctic Animals.

Nature is a very considerate and provident protector to her children. In winter many of the arctic animals become perfectly white and can move over the vast snow-fields with safety, when if they retained their summer color they would be an easy mark for beasts and birds of prey, or the hunter's rifle. The fox, squirrel, ermine and other creatures of their class have dark fur during the summer to correspond with the rocks among which they live.

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