

Sunday Reading.

JOHN STANLEY'S BLESSING.

John Stanley put his prescription into his pocket and quickly left the doctor's office. He knew his mother was watching for him and his mind saw her standing at the sitting room window, long before the blurred eyes behind the dark glasses caught sight of the house. He felt that he would have liked to be alone just then, but he knew the little mother was anxious.

For weeks she had been asking him to go to a certain famous specialist in the city, but John kept putting it off.

'It will be the same story, mother mine,' he would say laughing. 'A pair of new glasses and some new kind of drops. Just let me initiate these last spectacles into the mysteries of Latin. Then he would pore over his books, oblivious, to all around him. And Mrs. Stanley would only shake her head and sigh, feeling at the same time immensely proud of her boy who stood at the head of his large class in the high school.

So time went on and John's scholarship improved, but his poor eyes became weaker and weaker, and it was not until blinding headaches made it physically impossible for the boy to read longer, that he would lay down his books. Then it was that he went to the famous physician, and he sighed dependently when the verdict was given.

'Moderation, my boy!' the doctor had said. 'If you had been practicing that all along, you could still go on with your work. As it is now, you must have entire rest for some months—a year probably. Do not even indulge in one hour's reading, else I cannot answer for the consequences.' And John knew the doctor meant what he said.

The black glasses he had to wear in the sunlight seemed singularly appropriate to him.

'I might just as well be blind as not able to go to school,' he said bitterly.

But his mother shook her head. 'It has all been given for good, my boy. There is always a reason for everything. It is hard to give up school, I know, but we must only wait in patience.'

So John waited, but not in patience. He chafed daily under the yoke he had to bear, until he came to regard his affliction as harder to endure than any other in the world. And because he thought so entirely of himself and nursed his sorrow, the usually happy John became morbid and ill-natured.

Then very suddenly, one day, a ray of sunshine glanced through the black glasses, and it was such a warm ray that it comforted John through the weary months afterward. And this is how it happened.

'John,' called his mother, 'I wish you would go down to Phillips' and have the boys call round for those two kitchen chairs. The cane seats are all broken and I want new ones.'

John looked up slowly. His mind was solving a problem in algebra and it took long for it to come back to kitchen chairs.

'Yes, mother,' he answered. 'It's the last house on Ferry street, you say?'

So on went the dark glasses and then John started. He found the house easily, for a clumsily-written sign hung over the gate: 'Chairs Re-caned with Neatness.'

In answer to John's knock, the door was opened by a small boy, whose eager blue eyes looked at the new-comer curiously.

'Good-morning. Are you one of the Phillips boys?'

'Yes sir,' answered the little fellow. Then as John stepped within, he said: 'That's the head of the business,' and pointed with evident pride to a pale slender young fellow seated in an armchair.

His face lost its sharp look when he smiled, as he did when John entered, and he pointed to a chair in such an easy friendly way that his visitor could not refuse to be seated. John delivered his message and then put on his glasses as though to go.

'Sun hurt your eyes?' inquired the 'head of the business,' as he went on with his repairing.

John laughed. 'Everything hurts them,' he said.

Then, seeing he had a listener, he told the whole story with a certain feeling of relief. And he concluded by saying: 'I'm practically no good, you see.'

'No, I don't see,' said Tom, for that was the chair-mender's name. 'I don't see that you are any worse off than many others fellows. There's myself, for instance, though I haven't much to complain of. But I haven't walked a step for three years and won't for as many more to come. But

as I said, it's not so bad for me, because I have my work.'

'Has this always been your work?'

Tom laughed. 'Dear me, no! he said. 'I was learning a trade. Never thought of mending chairs at that time. Then I had my accident. Fell on my spine, you know, and had to give up everything. So I took to the first work that came to hand. Anything was better than thinking of my troubles.'

'But were you not wretched and unhappy?' asked John.

Tom laid down his tacks and hammer and looked thoughtfully at his visitor.

'No,' he said slowly, 'and that's the strange part of it, too. At first—for a few weeks, you know—I kind of felt I had just as soon die. Then one morning I woke up and the sun was shining through my windows, so glad like, that it made me smile. Then things seemed to come round for me to do. There was Billy here,' pointing smilingly at the small laddie who had opened the door, 'and he was always wanting kites made. And what with that, and one thing or another, the days passed. But I think what made me accustomed like, more than anything else, was Peter Murray.'

'Yes?' said John, leaning eagerly forward in his chair, 'and who is he?'

'Oh, he's the blacksmith down yonder. Well, as I was saying, 'twas him, you know, that made me willing after all. He came in that evening—I remember it was just sundown—and when the door opened he stood right in the middle of that big patch of light. And he up and says, in that big, cheery voice of his:

'So you're going to change your trade, Tom?'

'I only smiled at him, and he went on: 'There's sure to be a new trade waiting, Tom, and a new fight to be fought. And now it isn't other people you are to quarrel with, but just yourself. And that's a deal harder, to my mind. But once you have fought it out, Tom, a man is worth something.'

'I thought of all he said and felt that the years of waiting should not be lost.'

'Three years!' thought John as he walked toward home. 'And three have already passed, yet Tom works hard and does not despair, while I cry out, because I have a twelvemonth! Surely he is the more manly.'

Even the dark glasses could not keep the sun from shining behind them that day. So many rays stole through them, indeed, that John's whole face was radiant. And they went ahead of him too, pointing out innumerable bits of work to be done about home. There were his mother's rose bushes languidly waiting to be trailed on the wall; there some pretty flowers being choked by weeds; and here—

But the daylight had faded, 'and it is not half done,' sighed John regretfully.

He always said afterward that those twelve months of waiting were the most peaceful and happy ones of his life. And I think they were also the most blessed. Not because they taught the boy patience and good-nature, but because they made him truly unselfish.

And when those twelve months of waiting had passed away, John returned with renewed energy to his work. But the lessons in forbearance were never forgotten, for truly, 'The hand which hath long time held a violet, doth not soon forego its fragrance.'

From an Unexpected Source.

'Freely ye have received, freely give,' is a teaching that is gladly followed by new converts to Christianity in lands once called heathen. They give their money, their services, their lives, even, with a glad willingness that might well be copied in our own Christian land. A worker in Siam gives, in the 'Missionary Review of the World,' an instance of service gladly rendered. A few months ago, he says, two missionaries reached our field from an unexpected source. They were sent by the native church of Burmah, and are to be supported in their work by that church. They are Peguans, a tribe of lower Burmah, and have come here to labor for the Peguans of Siam, a people that have been

sorely neglected—thousands of them war captives, and the descendants of captives, made during Siam's wars with Burmah. This aged missionary and his wife left a strong church in Burmah and a large family of children and grandchildren, and made their way alone for the joy of proclaiming to their countrymen in this land the story of Christ's love, which had come to them as such a blessed revelation. A few Sabbaths ago, fifteen Peguans were baptized through their labors.

FULL OF ENCOURAGEMENT.

A Life that has Many Bright Things to Offset its Clouds.

Chinanfu, China, seems an especially encouraging field for missionary effort. The Christian workers there are constantly receiving applications for instruction regarding the teaching of Jesus, from those who have heard of Him and are anxious to learn more. A letter written from the field by Elizabeth Neal shows the sort of work which has aroused this extended interest.

We are all housed in the suburb, and freely go about from house to house, and also some beginning has been made by Mrs. Partch and Mrs. Hamilton in house-to-house visiting among the natives. What it means for all of us to be near together and in the open country, as it were, nobody can guess until she has tried living in very close, tiny courts in a most crowded, not over-friendly, city for a few years.

The Boys' School is prospering. Two boys have lately come from well-to-do families in the city to be admitted. Gladly we took them in hoping to throw, through them, Christian influence into their homes. One came first, gave good reports to his friends, and now this second one has been added. Both pay all their expenses. You would be pleased to have seen their wonder over my ability to teach them, to speak to them in their own tongue so that they understood. I go to the school daily at nine, and four mornings teach till about noon. The other two mornings I only stay an hour and a half.

In the afternoons I go down to talk with the women patients as they await treatment at the Women's Dispensary. I am often so gratified at the opportunities I have to teach or talk with the women there. A charming old lady came with her two sons, three men servants, a woman and a slave girl, her bedding in heaps, curtains, carpets, cushions, rugs, lamps, dishes and medley paraphernalia, to have a cataract removed. The eye did well for the first few days and we all rejoiced; then severe inflammation set in and now we have little hope of her ever using it. She is so sweet and patient! Pray, as we do, for the true light to enter that heart and life. She and the two sons seem most favorably impressed, and say hereafter they will give up all heathen worship. Dear old lady, how happy I shall be if she really find the blessedness of a saving faith while here!

GLORIFYING WORK.

No one can afford to Worry Over Work if he Wishes Success.

'Get leave to work,' says Mrs. Browning; and Robert Browning says: 'All service ranks the same with God.'

George Eliot wrote something not complimentary about workers who are 'always looking over the edge of their work for the play that comes after.'

To be in true relations with the Maker and Father and to use the forces of body and mind and soul that have been given to us, is, I think, the only happy way of living.

There may be difficulties in the way so that we cannot use our powers happily and freely at the beginning of our life-work. But patience! Every hour's wielding of any tool gives facility in its use. We all know that the body becomes elastic and responsive by a proper use of the muscles. It is the same with the mind. By working, within reasonable limits, we become able to do more and better work every day.

By giving ourselves heartily to our task we lift it to the highest plane, invest it with the dignity of the spirit that we put into it.

Work should never be conceived of as mere drudgery by which one earns a living.

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No one can afford to worry while he works. One needs to be 'all there' if he is to succeed in the highest sense.

When one gives himself entirely to his work, he loses consciousness of that teasing tiring self that causes most if not all of our misery. To quote Browning again: 'Let a man content to the uttermost for his life's set prize, be it what it will.'

A FULL LIFE.

An Interesting Story of Some of the Interest of Missionary Life.

It is a good thing for us to gain some idea of the multiplied interests of a missionary's life. A letter from Mrs. Charles Killie, written from China to the 'Presbyterian,' gives a suggestion of the burdens that must be borne in order that those who are in darkness may learn that the Sun of righteousness has arisen.

I have made four itinerating trips this year and have visited all our stations. Dr. Larson having gone with me on one trip. At two stations I taught classes of Christian women the gospel of Mark. They had either read or had heard this book read before, but did not know the meaning and could not get the good and blessing out of it, there is in it for us, when we make a study of it day after day. We had two chapters a day, one in the afternoon, always beginning and closing with singing and prayer.

These poor women came every day and to every lesson, saying, that as I had suffered so much coming over the long, stony, mountainous road to teach them, they would drop everything and come to study. We also had prayers in the morning and services in the evening. This kind of work used me up thoroughly and I am often weary in my work, but do not weary of it. The closing chapters were so precious and impressive that great tear drops rolled down the cheeks of each woman all during the lesson.

At the other station I made a shorter visit, and only held prayer-meeting services, and taught them to sing. My class of inquirers have come regularly, and four of them have just received baptism at our last annual communion, only a few Sabbaths ago. Counting these four women and three at one of the stations and three of my school girls, ten in all have received baptism this year.

The day school is flourishing and I leave it in Mrs. Chalfant's care when I leave. I have added to my work a Sunday-school for the Christian women, which is held in my dining-room, Sunday at 3 p. m. We are studying the International Lessons. There are about twenty who come and all seem to enjoy these meetings. We drink tea and pass around some little cakes that have been bought on the street, as many of these poor women have not had any dinner nor been home since they came to the 11 o'clock service in the morning.

Dr. Larson comes too and is a great help to us. She generally plays the hymn tunes, and then I can help the women sing lead them better. Dr. Larson also is a help in answering some of the most difficult questions and helping me to explain in a simple way, so that the women may understand, as we have only one class and I am both superintendent and teacher. The school children also have a Sunday-school, which is taught by the teacher of the day school.

The Good of Sorrow.

Great sorrows never leave us what we were before. But even if we are left without sorrow something is daily passing from us, always passing, that something which comes with youth and hope and love. After a great baptism of sorrow we must be different; but what we should pray and strive for is that we may emerge from it better, richer, more faithful, more helpful, more filled with a heartfelt delight in God's will, more able to make a true answer to God's surprise and wonders of love.

There are periods in life, years and years, when no great trouble visits us. Then the storms of sorrow fall, and we are apt to say, I have passed through and I may hope for an immunity for the future. It is not so.

The troubles may come back, they may come back again worse. As has been said, our Pharaohs are seldom drowned in the Red Sea, and we do not often behold their corpses stretched upon the sand. The bitterness of death may return. What then? At the very worst the memory of the past will help us. We shall trace the slow, difficult way to peace; our trust in God will be deepened, and we shall realize that, after all, the range of sins and sorrows is limited, though the sea of troubles may roll its white-crested billows as far as the horizon. What are truly numberless are God's mercies. What is truly infinite is God's love.

A Bit of a Savage.

'Oh, do let things alone! What good is it your worrying about them? All you can do to prevent or to cure the evils of this world won't amount to a row of pins. And what's the use of making yourself miserable over the misery of other people? Matters always were as they are now, and ever shall be, world without end, as far as you can tell. If people will dig holes and then tumble into them, why, let them stay there till they learn how to climb out. Folk will fall ill and they will die; and why fret over it? You have your own burden to carry and nobody offers to help you; don't bother your head about the burdens of others. That, I take it, is the only philosophy of life that is going to work. All the rest is nothing but shilly-shally sentiment.'

The man who talked this way to me the other night is a familiar acquaintance. He is not half a bad fellow, but he has an idea that he knows the world and has seen through the humbug of it. He says that in ninety-nine cases out of a hundred it is a sheer waste of nerve substance to invest any feeling in what happens to your neighbours. Pick 'em up if they are right in your road, he says, but don't slobber over them. He often calls me a fool for being too sympathetic. Yet this very man, when a baby, was found abandoned on a doorstep; and but for the kindhearted stranger who took him in, possibly he should never have had the benefit of his philosophy. Funny, isn't it? Yes, and sad too.

Tell me, then, what there is better than to have a heart for the troubles of others and a hand at their service when they need it. Take a case like the following, for example? To be sure it is common-place enough, but what of that? Every pain has a million like it, every white-faced sufferer lying helpless on a bed is but one of a countless multitude of such, and the language of pain is always the simplest words that can issue from drawn and parched lips.

'For many years—even as a girl'—says this woman, 'I have suffered from weakness, feeling languid and tired, never knowing what it was to feel properly well. After meals I had great pain at the chest and around the sides. I had also a gnawing pain at the pit of the stomach, which nothing relieved. I was constantly spitting up a clear, sour fluid. I was in such agony that I groaned with the pain, and was a misery to myself and those around me. I was almost too weak to get about, and my life was a burden to me.'

'In this weak and exhausted state I kept on year after year, sometimes feeling a little better and then bad as ever. I took different kinds of medicines, but nothing helped me. In July, 1894, a book was left at the house, and I read of a case like mine having been cured by Mother Seigel's Curative Syrup. I got a bottle of this medicine, and after taking it began to improve. I could enjoy my food and it caused me no pain, and I felt better than I had done for many years.'

'I continued with it, and got stronger and stronger. I have since kept well, taking an occasional dose of the medicine when needed. My husband, who suffered from liver complaint, has also taken Mother Seigel's Syrup with great benefit. You can publish this statement as you like, and refer anyone to me. (Signed), (Mrs.) M. J. Philby, 33, Lilley Road, Castelnau, Barnes, London, July 17th, 1897.'

In order to be short, Mrs. Philby tells her story as in a few words as she could. She merely touches on the main points and leaves the rest to our imagination. If she had remembered and set down all, or even a good part of, the painful and melancholy incidents in her lifetime of suffering, what a tale it must have been! Her disease was a prevailing one among women—chronic dyspepsia—coming upon her in childhood and growing worse as the weary years dragged by. No doubt she received plenty of pity, as such a case must need excite it. But of all the mass of drugs she took, none helped her, because none (up to the time she used Mother Seigel's Syrup) was adapted to her complaint. That cured her, for the reason that the woman who discovered and prepared it sympathised with her sex and employed this medicine successfully in their behalf long before it was made known to the world at large. And I prefer her precepts and example to the philosophy of my acquaintance—who is virtually a savage anyhow.

It is a good thing, therefore, to take note of the illnesses of our neighbours, and let them know where a remedy is to be found.

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