

Sunday Reading

A Humble Heroism.

The afternoon had been showery, and the evening air that came in at the open door had a damp freshness mingled with the fragrance of the tall white flowered syringas that stood one on either side of the gate. A girl stood in the doorway, her slim young figure clearly defined against the lighted room within, leaning forward in an attitude of alert listening.

'There they come,' she exclaimed, 'I can hear John laugh,' and turning away she began to make little changes in the already carefully arranged and waiting supper table. 'Mother,' with a critical survey, 'isn't there a little honey left? Maybe John would rather have it than the plum sauce or the jam.'

'Yes, Mary,' answered Mrs. Bennet, looking up from the chicken she was seasoning at the stove. 'But I had been keeping it in case of colds.'

'Never mind the colds,' chimed in a still younger girl who had taken her sister's place in the door, 'it is past the time for them, and besides it isn't every day that John comes home.'

'A good thing for John,' observed Grandfather Bennet, drily, from his arm-chair in the corner, 'that is if you expect him to eat all you have been putting on the table this last hour.'

But Grandmother Bennet looked up from her knitting with a smile. 'I should not wonder if John had quite an appetite for home cooking.'

For John Bennet had been away a year on this his first absence, and his homecoming was in consequence an important event to his household. Ever since it had been known little dainties had been put aside, small festivities, pleasures, all that was brightest and best in their simple life, deferred till 'John comes home.' And now the long anticipated event is at hand, the sound of wheels is in the yard, there is a pressing forward of all, from oldest to youngest, a mingled murmur of greetings, kisses, fond words and rippling laughter. And then the gathering around the waiting table, with so much to hear and so who is not charmed by the beautiful lake which he loved, and interested in every incident in his life with which it is associated.

Not a few of these incidents recall the capricious moods of much to tell, with fun and jest, and happy retrospect, and merry plans for the future. Such was John's welcome home. And later in the evening when John found opportunity to draw his oldest sister aside and asked half shamefacedly if 'Lottie' was well, and she had answered archly, and he had something to say of a certain new ring on her finger, at which she blushed and whispered in his ear, there had been a few words of that confidence which springs with a brother and sister grown up in loving harmony. And Mary's eye was brighter, and the mother's smile was full of a deeper content, and the father looked with a new pride on the group about him. How wide and bright the horizon had grown for every one, and how much more of anticipation and promise it held for the fact that John had come home!

But with the morning came a little cloud. John was not well. 'Only a cold,' he said, making light of it; some of grandmother's doctoring and mother's nursing, and he would soon be all right. So the herb teas were made from the bunches hanging in the garret, and tender hands smoothed his feverish pillow, but remedy and ministry proved alike unavailing, and, rare event in that household, the doctor was summoned.

He came and looked grave, he came again and drew the father one side, and at his words the strong man threw up his hands with a cry of horror. As he was leaving the gate a neighbor stopped him to make friendly enquiry, and at his answer turned his horses and drove three miles to reach his home rather than pass the house, and before night the news was flying from lip to lip that John Bennet had come home with small-pox in its most malignant form.

Mrs. Rachel Windom, long handled shovel in hand, was carefully taking her last loaf of bread out of the great brick oven when her husband, Deacon Luther Windom, came into the low, wide kitchen. 'Rachel,' he said, crossing the room to where she stood, 'I have seen a man from Hartman this afternoon, John Bennet has come home with small-pox, his grandfather and sister have already taken it, the whole town is in a panic, and not a soul will go near them for love or money.'

For a moment husband and wife looked into each other's eyes, not a word passed between them; in a mutual sympathy of love and good works such as was their few were needed, only as she shut the oven

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door she remarked, 'Better go to night, hadn't we?' and he answered, 'The sooner the better, I should say.'

With that he turned and went out, and Mrs. Windom lifted a spinning wheel that stood on one side of the wide fireplace and set it away, saying as she did so to her daughter, a well grown girl who sat sewing by the window, 'You may tell Mrs. Nichol, Anna, that I shall not have enough spun for that piece this week, as I intended and not to put in the warp for it till I send her word.'

Anna Windom had not spoken before, but now she exclaimed in a tone of half protest, 'Mother, why do you do it?'

'Do what?' asked her mother who was now busy looking over a basket of partially mended garments.

'Why, you and father go to these people. You hardly know them. Their own neighbors ought to look after them.'

'Anna,' and Mrs. Windom paused in her rapid movements, 'you know our Lord's question, who is our neighbor?'

'Oh, I know who your neighbor is,' was the reply. 'It is anybody who is sick, be it near or far. The last time it was the Mosier children with the measles, and the time before the Hills with the typhus fever, and now these Bennets with the small pox, the most loathsome of all disease. Other folks don't do so, why is it your duty?'

'Because their need makes it our duty,' was the quiet reply, 'whatever others may or may not do. That is especially true in this case. I have had the kind-pox, your father helped take care of his Uncle Luther who died with small-pox, and has been with cases since. And it there were danger, surely death can find us in no better place than where we believe God would have us be. So while Abram and Matrin tend to things out-of-doors I trust you will look after the house, and make some syrup of squills in case Sally should be croupy, and don't forget to set fresh yeast before you bake again.'

'Oh yes, mother, I will do my best. Sally shall have her squills, and the household pot shall be kept boiling. I'm not very good myself, but I am a martyr to your goodness. And yes, I am glad you are going. It must be dreadful to be sick and not have any one dare come near you,' and she shuddered as she thought of pretty Mary Bennet, so quickly become an object of fear and aversion.

So as the afternoon shadows lengthened old Baldy jogged along the road bearing the good old deacon and his wife on their sacred errand, the service of loving ministry.

And never was ministry more needed than in that plague-stricken house, where, while the world stood aloof and friends feared to venture, disease in one of its most terrible forms ran riot, and one by one fell before its touch. And not only were there long days and nights of wearisome watching by beds of suffering, but a still sadder service as the sod of the green meadow just beyond the house was broken, and under it was laid John Bennet in the pride and fullness of his young manhood, and the old grandfather in the weakness of his years, and sweet Mary in

the flush of her happy hopes, and the grandmother so gentle and serene, and last of all, the father, who had helped to lay his first-born in the grave, was himself carried out in the darkness and silence of the night by the hands of a few of his more courageous neighbours, their faces bound in cloths saturated in vinegar to ward off the breath of contagion.

All this happened long ago, and the palings around that group of graves in the open field were grey and mossy when a little girl used to look at them in passing with pitiful eyes, and fancy that the shadow of that dread calamity still hung over the sombre, weather worn house, and wonder how the children of the household, though men and women now, could ever smile again. And sometimes of a Sunday afternoon when the sermon was long or the day was favorable to wandering thoughts, she would look at the toil worn form of the white haired deacon, and the kind, pale face of his wife in its very unfashionable bonnet, and recall the story of those days when they had nursed the stricken and soothed the dying and prayed above the dead, unconscious then or ever of any heroism in the act.

OLD CLOTHES.

We should Never Judge a Person by the Clothes he Sees fit to Wear.

There is in this world a strong inclination to judge of a man by the cut and quality of his coat. Men are too often cried up or cried down in exact proportion to the display of broadcloth which they make. While it does not much signify who despises us so long as we are able to preserve our own self-respect, and that the seedy nature of the coat and the threadbareness of one's trousers do not materially affect the purity of one's character or the uprightness of one's morals yet we must confess that we have comparatively but little compassion for the man who is dressed in rags, for it is generally improvidence or excess which has brought him to it. Many a man who toils hard all the week spends more of his weekly wages in the liquor saloon than would keep him clothed in the finest of broadcloth. He goes himself threadbare and ragged, and compels his family to do the same, that the saloon keeper may wear the fine apparel instead. But this is rather by way of digression.

In the important sense in which we desire to apply our subject, we are all by nature, rich and poor alike, clothed in worthless rags. The mouthing Pharisee, who with upturned eye and mincing lip thanks God that he is not as other men are, and exultingly recounts and magnifies what we call his good deeds, is the most beggarly of all, for he trusts in his own righteousness; and we are unequivocally told that all our righteousness is but as filthy rags. The man who thinks that he is thus paving his way to a rich recompense of reward hereafter, will find, if he attempts to sit down in the costume of his own works at the marriage feast of the Lamb, that he has made a fatal mistake, when he hears the outraged and indignant host order that he be 'cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.'

The idea of anything that we could do making us worthy of a heavenly Father's regard, or giving us a claim upon his love, or a title to his favor, could only occur to those who are completely eaten up with pride. What are all our paltry works, even at their best, to the spotless purity and holiness of God? And there are men who tell us that a blameless life—a life of self-denial and good actions—is all that God can expect of us; and that if we cultivate an amiable and kindly temper and abstain from doing violence to the moral law, God is bound to open heaven's gates to us, and ought to receive us as guests who do him honor. No. If we would be made presentable guests in the bright presence chamber of the King, we must not try to buy our robes of honor for ourselves. We must come as helpless, destitute petitioners on a Saviour's mercy. We must come in our shivering nakedness and ask for the garments of Immanuel's love. We must attempt to bring nothing of our own but our guilt, and we must bring that only that

The Present Month of the Closing Year Must End the Lives of Many if They Fail to Banish Disease.

Paine's Celery Compound, Earth's Great Medical Prescription, "Makes Sick People Well."

Another short month and the year 1898 will come to a close. As the year ends, many loved and dear ones will pass away, severing ties and associations that will bring untold sorrow, agony, and mourning. The victims will come from all classes and conditions of our population.

While it is true we must all leave this transitory life, it ought to be well understood that our years of life should be three-score and ten or fourscore years.

When young and middle aged men and women fail to reach a good old age, the fault is their in ninety cases out of every hundred. It is safe to assert they have violated the laws of nature and have allowed disease to enchain them.

Years ago the attention of that celebrated medical expert, Dr. Phelps, was specially directed to the class referred to who die in middle age. He realized the fact that something far beyond the ordinary remedies and prescriptions of the day was required to meet the varied conditions of suffering humanity. His wonderful life-giving prescription, Paine's Celery Compound was the boon bestowed on the hosts who suffer from the common diseases—penalties of nature for transgressions of its wise laws.

it may be taken away. And it matters not how deep our degradation and intense our spiritual poverty, we shall not come in vain. We shall not be cast out.

The first thing to do is to seek Christ. You need not seek him long, for behold, he stands at the door and knocks, and if you will but hear his voice, and open the door, he will come in. Don't seek to adorn yourself first with all sorts of graces, but come to Christ and he will adorn you. He will find your robe for you. He will clothe you in the panoply of his own spotless merit. 'Seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all other things shall be added unto you.' Come to Christ as a sinner, and he will change you to a saint. Don't try to go to him as a saint, lest you should be sent away as a sinner.

We must come in our true character if we come at all. We have broken God's law, and we cannot purify ourselves from the guilt of our transgression. We must come to him as those who are poor and miserable and blind and naked, confessing our need. Our clothes are stained through and through with sin, and all our washing will never rid us of one dark spot. The blood of Christ alone can cleanse us. Our garments are moth eaten and corrupt. Our first duty is then to come to Christ. Come, then, at once, dear sinner! Delay is not only useless, but dangerous, for you can never make yourself better. None but Jesus can do helpless sinners good. To tarry in the vain expectation that at some future time we may be better fitted, will be to never come at all. 'I came,' said Christ, 'not to call the righteous but sinners to repentance.'

Our Father in Heaven.

In teaching His disciples to pray Jesus said: "When ye pray, say, Father." In our hearts must be the child's love and trust and confidence, appealing to the love and tenderness and wisdom of the Father. We cannot pray it we think only of God as a great king and ruler, to whom we owe obedience, and whose gifts we take with thankfulness. A king would not be pleased that his children should come to him in fear and trembling to ask for what they wanted, calling him "Your Majesty;" he would rather have them come to his hands, and nestle in his arms, calling him "dear father," and asking without fear for what they wanted, as if they were sure of his love, and had no doubt he would give them what ever was best. So the very thing for us to do is to say from the heart "Father!" as a child says it when, lost and tired and terrified, he catches sight of his father's face and springs to his arms, sure of safety and love and protection. When we have learned to feel towards God so that every one may know how good and dear He is that they may love Him also. This is the precious name we wish all the world to honour and hold sacred; this is the kingdom which men enter by becoming as little children, and in which the Father's will is done because they trust in His love and let Him direct all things for them. So we shall pray that this name may be honored, this kingdom increased, this will become the will of all men; and what we desire and

Dr Phelps found that nervous diseases blood troubles liver and kidney complaint, rheumatism, neuralgia and dyspepsia were dragging thousands to the grave every year notwithstanding all the well directed efforts of conscientious medical men.

This marvellous prescription of Dr. Phelps was a revelation to the world, in that it cured desperate and long standing cases of disease that had baffled the best medical skill.

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It is to this marvellous banisher of disease—Paine's Celery Compound—that we would direct the attention of all who are run down, tired, sleepless, nervous debilitated and weak—symptoms of the diseases we have referred to above. It will quickly give to every ailing man and woman that vigor, strength and perfect health that insure and guarantee a happy old age.

pray for we shall work for in all possible ways.

A Broad Field.

Go, then, young men, where glory waits you. The field is the world. Go where the abjects wander, and gather them into the fold of the sanctuary. Go to the lazarettoes where the moral lepers herd, and tell them of the healing balm. Go to the haunts of crime, and float a gospel message upon the feculent air. Go wherever there are ignorant to be instructed, timid to be cheered, and helpless to be succored, and stricken to be blessed, and erring to be reclaimed. Go wherever faith can see, or hope can breathe, or love can work, or courage can venture. Go and win the spurs of your spiritual knighthood there.—Wm. M. Punshon.

CONSUMPTION CURED.

An old physician, retired from practice, had placed in his hands by an East India missionary the formula of a simple vegetable remedy for the speedy and permanent cure of Consumption, Bronchitis, Catarrh, Asthma and all Throat and Lung Affections; also a positive and radical cure for Nervous Debility and all Nervous Complaints. Having tested its wonderful curative powers in thousands of cases, and desiring to relieve human suffering I will send free of charge to all who wish it, this recipe, in German, French or English, with full directions for preparing and using. Sent by mail, by addressing with stamp, naming this paper, W. A. Noyes, 820 Powers' Block, Rochester, N. Y.

A Famous Cork Room.

The famous cork room that has been for ten years one of the attractions of New York City is about to be destroyed. The walls and ceiling of the room are covered over in an artistic manner with champagne corks, no fewer than 40,000 representing 30,000 quarts and 10,000 pints, being used in the decorations. There has been more champagne than this consumed in the room during the past ten years, but large quantities of the corks had to be thrown away, so as not to mar the artistic effect of the 40,000 used in decoration. The corks are affixed to the ceiling and walls by strips of felt and sealing-wax.

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