

Poetry.

Lament of a Lost Soul.

"What shall it profit a man, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul? Or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?" Robert Hall, impressed by the solemnity of these words, never spoke, asks with awful emphasis, "what would be the funeral obsequies of a lost soul? Where shall we find the tears fit to be wept at such a spectacle; or, could we realize the calamity in all its extent, what tokens of commiseration and concern would be deemed equal to the occasion? Would it suffice for the sun to veil his light, and the moon her brightness—to cover the ocean with mourning, and the heavens with sackcloth; or, where the whole fabric of nature to become animated and vocal, would it be possible for her to utter a groan too deep, or a cry too piercing, to express the magnitude and extent of such a catastrophe?"

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
What terror in the sound!
Well may it spread, in piteous moans—
Well may it spread, in deepest groans,
The whole creation round.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
In God's own image made;
With passions and with powers sublime
To suffer earth, to outlive time—
To live in ruin laid.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
That never can grow old;
March on she must, and still expand,
When years more numerous than the sand
Shall all their rounds have told.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
Immortal as her God;
A soul for whom all nature's given,
For whom her Lord came down from heaven,
To ransom her with blood.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
Who ever might have shone,
Like diamonds of sparkling light,
Like gems upon the brow of night,
Fast by Jehovah's throne.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
In sin's black death she lies—
Severed from peace, accursed by God,
Plunged in despair beneath his rod—
An outcast from the skies.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
On lake of fire! on lake of fire!
She's tossed to and fro in the swell
Of lurid waves of wrathful hell—
She'll never find a shore.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
Above the angry powers of God
Upon her, hopeless, blaze,
Like lightning, in their fiercest swoop—
Like fire, that very rocks burn up—
Through all her endless days.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
The death that soul must die!
Twere more to be deplored by far,
Than the extinction of each star
That decks night's canopy.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
Ye hills and valleys, weep;
Ye mountains, tremble; and ye skies,
Dress you in mourning—and with sighs,
Sing out thy dirge, O deep.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
White bonnets ages roll;
Mourn, winds and floods—mourn, heaven
And earth—
Of mortal and immortal birth,
All mourn—a lost, lost soul.

"A soul is lost! a soul is lost!"
Against that sinning, close thy heart
Which warms thee from the wrath to flee,
The wrath that burns against thee,
Reckless, from above?

Immortal soul, awake—arise—
Shake off thy sensual chains;
Believe—then sing with ecstasy;
I live, because He reigns.

A MATCHMAN FOR SOULS.

The Three Handfuls of Grain.

It was one day in the early spring of the year that Gerard Steiner called his three sons, Adolphus, Henry, and the little Bernard to his side. In his hand he held an open letter. The tears shone in his eyes, and his voice was very sad, as he addressed them:

"You have often heard me speak, my children, of my brother Bernard, who left home many years ago to go into business in a distant country."

"Yes," they replied, and they gazed wonderingly at their parent.

"Well, my sons," he continued, "Your uncle Bernard, having at last amassed a considerable fortune, had determined to return to his native village, and take up his abode with me; for we are the only two that remain of a family of seven brothers and five sisters, he added, as he drew his hand hastily across his eyes.

"And is uncle coming soon?" inquired Henry in an animated tone.

"He should have been here by this time, my son," replied his father, "But an all-wise Providence has ordered it otherwise; and now," he added, "I fear that you will never see him, for this letter informs me that he is lying very ill in a distant city, and he desires me to come to him, that he may see me once more, and that I may assist him in arranging his affairs."

"Certainly, my child. And during my absence cousin Jacob Reimmer and his wife will come and take care of the house, for I shall probably not return until the fall, as I shall have to travel some distance; and in case of your uncle's death, there may be a great deal for me to attend to."

"Perhaps he may get well, and then you will bring him home with you."

"I fear, Bernard, that he may not be, for he writes me word that the doctors say his case is hopeless. Listen now attentively, my children, to what I am going to tell you, for it is a message to each of you from your dying uncle. He says, 'Give a handful of grain to each of your three children when you leave them to come to me, and tell them to do with it what they think best during your absence, and when you return you will decide who has made the best use of it, and I will reward that one accordingly as I shall tell you.'"

It is autumn. The little Bernard stood

watching at the open window, when a carriage drove hastily up to the door, and the aged Gerard stepped from it, holding in his hand a small tin box.

"Oh, there is papa! there is papa!" he exclaimed.

Then the three children rushed from the room and threw their arms around him, saying,

"Oh we are so glad to see you, papa, you have been so long away."

"And I am glad to see you, too, my children, and all looking so well," replied the aged man, as he bent forward and gave each of them a kiss.

Cousin Jacob Reimmer and his wife now approached to welcome him, and he inquired of each of them how the children behaved during his absence.

"Oh, they have been very good boys," he replied.

They all now entered the house; Gerard Steiner then placed the tin box that he held in his hand upon the table, and taking a small key, opened it, and drew from thence the last will and testament of his brother Bernard Steiner.

All gazed sadly upon the old man, as with trembling hands he unrolled it, and said,

"I had the sad pleasure, my children, of closing my brother's eyes in peace, and of laying his remains in their last resting place. In this will he bequeaths the whole of his property to the one that I shall decide has made the best use of the handful of grain that I gave each of you before I left home. Let me now hear, my children," he added, "what you have done with it."

"I said Adolphus 'have saved mine. I put it in a small wooden box, in a dry place and it is just as fresh as the day that you gave it to me.'"

"My son," said his father, in a stern voice "you have laid by the grain, and what hath it profited thee? Nothing! So it is with wealth. Hoard it, and it yieldeth neither profit nor comfort. And you, Henry," he continued, "what have you done with your handful?"

"I ground it to flour, papa, and had a nice sweet cake made of it, which I have eaten."

"Foolish boy!" he replied, "and it is gone, having given thee but a moment's comfort and support. So it is with money. Spend it upon thy pleasures, they also are but for a moment." The aged Gerard now turned toward his youngest son, and drawing him toward him, said:

"What use has my little Bernard made of the handful of grain that I gave him?"

The child smiled, and clasping his father's hand between his own, said,

"Come with me, papa, and I will show you."

They all followed the boy as he led the way toward a field that belonged to his father, but which was situated at some distance from the house.

"See, papa!" exclaimed the happy child; "see what has become of my handful of grain!" and he pointed to a field toward a corner of the field where grew the tall, slender corn, which, laden with its golden ears, waved and rustled beneath the gentle breeze.

The aged Gerard smiled, and, resting his hand upon Bernard's head, said, "You have done well, my son. You sowed the grain in the earth, and it has brought thee forth a bountiful harvest; to you must I award my brother's fortune. Use it wisely as you have the handful of grain. Neither hoard it up nor spend it merely upon thine own pleasures, but bestow it upon the poor, upon the fatherless and widow, upon the little ones of Christ, and He shall remember it with a plentiful reward."

And with that, he turned and walked away, leaving the three children to gaze after him with wondering eyes.

Adolphus, Henry, and the little Bernard, who had been so long away, now stood before them, and they gazed wonderingly at their parent.

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