

Poetry.

EXPERIENCE AND INCIDENT.

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be,"
Spake the gifted one of old,
As he blessed the tribes of Israel,
Naming all the precious fold.

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be,"
He had tried it—found it gold,
While he led Jehovah's people
Through sore trials unforfeited.

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be,"
Rings it down the "steep of sorrow,"
Making light the heart of sorrow,
Pointing to God's love sublime.

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be,"
Precious words to all mankind;
Precious words to the coming savior,
How they soothe the wearied mind!

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be,"
Fainting one, 'twas spoken for thee!
Looking upward, never doubting,
Thou the truth thyself shalt see.

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be,"
With new courage, bear thy part!
Moses is God inspired,
Asher's promise greets thy heart.

"As thy days, so shall thy strength be,"
Labor on as Christ would have thee,
Heaven's love shall crown the strife.

—F. M. PETER.

The Fireside.

A HERO IN HUMBLE LIFE.

BY JULIA MACNAIR WRIGHT.

(Continued.)

"You see, ma'am, I've always had Kitty's company, and ain't lonely in my old age, and trouble's kept Kitty steady; if she'd been stout who knows but she might have gone astray like so many; there's a heap of temptation around poor girls out earnin' their livin'." To be sure Kitty had a deal of suffering; but suppose she had a drunken ugly husband, and half a dozen of starvin' children, it would have been a deal worse for her and for me. Now nobody looks crosswise at her, and me and Ned are great friends by Kitty. You don't know what a good fellow Ned is. When he was a little boy, he always brought me every cent he made; never got candy or marbles; when he went out working he carried coal and water for me at night, and early in the morning. He never goes to show no weariness; he uses all his money for me and Kitty, and seems as bound to keep us as other men is to keep their wives and children. He's lively and sociable, but he don't look at any young folks, poor fellow, on account of having us to care for, and so not able to think of marryin'. I think pity of him for it; but he, Ned says he likes me and Kitty better than all the rest. He's took care of us for seven long years, and he did a good deal for us before that, and when his father died he paid all the expenses; he said his father had been an honest, hard-working man, and he shouldn't be buried like a pauper. Oh, Ned is a good lad; evenings he sits here and plays on an accordion just heavenly, and he reads out loud to us as good as a preacher, don't he, Kitty?"

Yes, Kitty said that he did, and that he always kept her company; but he, Ned says he likes me and Kitty better than all the rest. He's took care of us for seven long years, and he did a good deal for us before that, and when his father died he paid all the expenses; he said his father had been an honest, hard-working man, and he shouldn't be buried like a pauper. Oh, Ned is a good lad; evenings he sits here and plays on an accordion just heavenly, and he reads out loud to us as good as a preacher, don't he, Kitty?"

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"It seemed a sort of come down to me," said the old lady, "to have him who had always been a steady workman, and with his big muscles, go to cutting goods on the sidewalk, and selling bits of parcels; but you see, Ned, 'Mother, anything is more comfortable than starving, and more respectable than stealing.' Ned, ma'am, said Ned hadn't rather be at hard day's work, but he always was a rare hand for making the best of a bad bargain."

And what was Kitty doing, I asked. She spread out her work—pen-wipers, pocket pincushions, little jointed dolls dressed, kettle-holders, book-marks. I especially noticed button cards, whereon the original buttons were fastened, but the edges were neatly trimmed, and on each card was a dozen of assorted buttons, bone, pearl, china rubber, gilt—the idea came to me that they were made buttons, from store-sweepings and from sidewalks; so there were single rows of pink, but the pins were of all sizes and both black and white; little needle-cases held two or three needles and two or three hair-pins; there was a box of broken candy also, and Kitty was cutting motto papers from bits of tissue and glazed paper, and rolling up the pieces.

"This," said Kitty proudly, "is all waste, and we are putting it to use. Ned was telling me one night what Miss Hips said about living on waste, and it set me to thinking about all the things I need to see when I could run about—for I could run about when I was a little girl, pasted paper, scraps of ribbon from the stores, pins and buttons and all sorts of things, and I told Ned I could get such waste, I could make up the things for his packages, and he could have more variety, and so he does. Some of his parcels have candy and pins, and needle-books and buttons, and lots of things in them—they are real nice packages for ten cents. Ned arranged at first to put in three to get the broken boxes and the handkerchiefs, ribbons, and the bright papers, and he fills his parcels with odds and ends he finds along the sidewalks, and I buy all that a little boy on the first flat can find, and he's a sharp little fellow and goes to milliners shops and offers to clean wools or collars for scraps. I tell Ned may be we'll get some day and set up a factory out of our waste work."

A week or two after this, walking in an unfamiliar part of the city, I suddenly discovered Ned in a new stand. As I came within sight, he saw me, and he came running, and he said, "Ned, here's a new trick, and asking how any gentleman could leave before he had done his great feat of swallowing a razor. Again I stood on some adjacent steps and watched Ned."

"Don't go, gentlemen, without a present for your little girl; you know she'll be watching for you, and won't her eyes shine when you take out this package? Here's a doll dressed to represent Queen Victoria openin' Parliament, and here's a candy and a neat little needle-book, and a pincushion, a pencil and a pen-wiper; it's a fortune, gentlemen, a complete fortune, worth fifty cents and goin' for ten. If you don't take one of these parcels for your little girl, you don't deserve to have any little girl. What did you take her last night? Nothing! that was an oversight. Nor tonight? What, however! Well now, you are a pretty posey of a father to neglect his little girl like that. Here, buy this package, and just observe how these keys, properly stroked, rise to meet the stick. Where is my razor? Now for my grand feat. The Khan of Tartary faints at seeing it. I take the razor so, I hold my head this way—takes five years to learn it, and two and a half years steady practice to learn the keys—and then I hold the razor so. Seats free, gentlemen; reserved seats free. Before I swallow the razor let me sell you this package for your wife; pen, thinkin', pins, buttons—now she'll never leave your shirt buttons off, or say nothing of fastening on your gaiters with a nail—paper, a soap of thread—all for ten cents—worth a fortune, you see."

Not long after this I met Ned going home with a sacker, and walked along with him. "Well, Ned," I asked, "how does the street selling suit you?"

"It went pretty bad at first, ma'am; I'd rather by half have toted boxes, or carried a load, or worked in a foundry; but I felt ashamed like, as if I was a beggar, I said to myself, 'Ned, here's the only way to keep mother and Kitty out of the almshouse, it would be a disgrace to see 'em there, and so I stood up to like a man, and if you'll believe it, I make more money by that chaffing on the walk and selling those bits of things, than I did in the foundry. Why, I'm laying up money. It is true, every month and a half, and there must be some one to humor 'em, and its better by half for them to spend their money on a bit of a thing to amuse the children at home, than to lay it out on a glass of grog and go home cross, or treat some lubber with it, who'll maybe pick their pocket in pay. I always give all I promise in the parcel and more than other folks give."

"And where do you get your pens, pencils, paper, envelopes?"

"Kitty and mother make the big envelopes out of paper that I buy by the pound, cheap. As for the other things—you have hardly an idea, ma'am, how cheap they come, of this medium quality, when one goes to the wholesale houses and buys to sell. I get half a gross of pens and pencils, and a box of letter envelopes and a ream of paper, and they are stock in trade for a long while. You mind Miss Help lend me money for the first outfit."

"I should think the police would interfere with you, you have so many admirers."

"Well, ma'am, I think they're easy with me, knowing I'm a decent fellow driven to the wall. I change my beat, too, and if I see a beak coming, I often move along. Sometimes they do say to the crowd, 'Move on,' but I've no fault to find with the beaks."

"And how about the keys?"

"Why you know, ma'am, I've got a magnet in the chip, but they won't see it, and they don't want to see it—they like to be fooled. It is amazin' how they'll stand staring at it."

"And the razor?"

"Why, ma'am, that razor makes me think of a line out of a poetry book I'm fond of readin'—'Man never is, but always to be blest.' You see I'm always just a-going to swallow that razor, and before I do it I'll sell a few more packages. I never tell 'em that they'll see me do it, but that they haven't seen me. I might go on and say that more over they are likely to see me, but if they see me over the other way of putting it, I don't feel bound to stand in their light."

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"If I were a boy again, I would keep 'better hours,' if I were a boy again: that is, I would go to bed earlier than most boys do. Nothing gives more mental and bodily vigor than sound rest when properly applied. Sleep is our great replenisher, and if we neglect to take it regularly in childhood, all the worse for us when we grow up. If we go to bed early, we ripen; if we sit up late, we decay; and sooner or later we contract a disease called insomnia, allowing it to be permanently fixed upon us, and then we begin to decay, even in youth. Late hours are shadows to the grave."

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He kneeled again in his mother's lap, and uttered in his simple and broken language a prayer for the protection and blessing of heaven.—*Christian Guardian.*

A SOUND LIBERAL OPINION.—An honest farmer once called upon the late Roger M. Sherman, the celebrated lawyer, and told him he wanted an opinion. He had been thinking, and how a great value of Mr. Sherman's opinions, and how a great many people went to him to get an opinion and John, who had never had, nor was likely to have, a law suit or other difficulty for a lawyer to help him from, thought he would have an "opinion."

"Well, John, what can I do to help you?" said Mr. S., when John in his turn was shown in the room.

"Why, lawyer," replied John, "I happened to be in town, saving nothing to do, I thought I would come and get your opinion."

"State your case, John. What's the matter?"

"Oh, nothing, I ain't got no law suit; I only want to get one of your opinions; they say they're very valuable."

"But, John—about what?"

"Oh! anything, sir; take your pick and choice!"

Mr. Sherman seeing the notions of his client on the matter in hand, took pen, and writing a few words, folded them up and handed them to John, who immediately placed them in his pocket.

"What's to pay, sir?"

"Four and sixpence." Yankee money—75 cents.

When John returned home the next morning he found his wife, who pretty much took the lead in his business matters, anxiously discussing with his chief farm servant the propriety of getting in a large quantity of oats on that day, which had been cut out on the previous, or of undertaking some other labor.

John, appealed to, to settle the question, but he could not decide. At length he said: "I'll tell you what, Polly, I've been to a lawyer and got an opinion that cost me four and sixpence. There it is—read it out!"

John, by the way, could not read the plainest print; but Polly, who was something of a scholar, opened the paper and read as follows: "Never put off till to-morrow what can be done to-day."

"Enough said!" cried John; "then oats must be got in. And they were 'got in,' and the same night and day a storm came on as otherwise would have ruined them entirely."

John often afterwards consulted the opinion, and acted upon it; and to this day entertains a high estimate of lawyers' opinions generally, and of the lamented Mr. Sherman's in particular.

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"Yes, ma'am, sometimes I buy a second-hand book, and sometimes when there's a neighbor to cheer up mother and Kitty, I go to a free library and read the evening. Since I began to save money at this, and Kitty is so bright in making things, I'm wondering could I ever lay my hands enough to hire a cabin and a couple of acres out in the country and till that and do day's work. I may be I could get Kitty and the old lady moved there, and I think Kitty would enjoy it, and as it don't seem the Lord's way that I'm to have a wife and children, seeing I have Kitty and my old lady to mind, I would like to live where I could keep animals, and raise flowers and corn enough to buy books for the evenings."

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