

IT IS WELL.

"It is well with thee, and with thy husband, and with the child." And she said, "It is well."—2 Kings iv. 26.

Yes; it is well! The evening shadows lengthen;
Home's golden gates shine on our ravished sight;
And though the tender ties we strive to strengthen
Break one by one—at evening-time 'tis light.

'Tis well! The way was often dull and dreary;
The spirit fainted oft beneath its load;
No sunshine came from skies all gray and dreary;
And yet our feet were bound to tread that road.

'Tis well that not again our hearts shall shiver
Beneath old sorrows, once so hard to bear;
That not again beside Death's darksome river
Shall we bewail the good, the loved, the fair.

No more with tears, wrought from deep, inner anguish,
Shall we bewail the good, the loved, the fair;
No more need we in doubt or fear to languish;
So far the day is past, the journey done!

As voyagers, by fierce winds beat and broken,
Come into port, beneath a calmer sky,
So we, still bearing on our brows the token
Of tempest past, draw to our haven nigh.

A sweet air cometh from the shore immortal,
Inviting homeward at the day's decline;
Almost we see wherefrom the open portal
Fair forms stand beckoning with their smiles divine.

'Tis well! The earth with all her myriad voices
Has lost the power our senses to enthral;
We hear, above the tumult and the noises,
Soft tones of music, like an angel's call.

'Tis well, O friends! We would not turn, retracing
The long, vain years, nor call our lost youth back;
Gladly, with spirits braced, the future facing,
We leave behind the dusty, foot-worn track.

—Chambers' Journal.

SINGULAR SIMILES.

"The child of the past and the parent of the future" is not an unhappy simile for the present. Happiness has been likened to a ghost; all talk about it, but few, if any, have ever seen it. Ambition's ladder rests against a star, remarks a clever writer, who also tells us that a proverb is a short truth sandwiched between wit and wisdom.

Eloquence is a coat of many colors judiciously blended. No one thing will make a man eloquent. Flattery has been termed a kind of bad money to which our vanity gives currency. Society, like shaded silk, must be viewed in all situations, or its colors will deceive us. Kindness is the golden chain by which society is bound together; and charity is an angel breathing on riches; while graves have been poetically called the footsteps of angels.

Language is a slippery thing to deal with, as some may find when selecting their similes. Says a writer: "Speak of a man's marble brow, and he will glow with conscious pride; but allude to his wooden head, and he is mad in a minute." The young lecturer's "smiles were gathered in a heap" when he expressed the whole body of his argument on deceit in the following: "O my brethren, the snowiest shirt-front may conceal an aching bosom, and the stiffest of all collars encircle a throat that has many a bitter pill to swallow."

Plagiarists are a species of purloiners who filch the fruit that others have gathered, and then throw away or attempt to destroy the basket.

It has been truly said that the abilities of man must fall short on one side or other, like too scanty a blanket when you are in bed; if you pull it upon your shoulders, you leave your feet bare; if you thrust it down upon your feet, your shoulders are uncovered. The man, we are told, who has not anything to boast of but his illustrious ancestors, is like a potato—the only good belonging to him being under ground.

A man at a dinner in evening dress has been likened to a conundrum: you can't tell whether he is a waiter or a guest. A Yankee, describing a lean opponent, said: "That man doesn't amount to a sum in arithmetic: add him up, and there's nothing to carry." An American critic, in reviewing a poem, said: "The rhythm sounds like turnips rolling over a barn-floor, while some lines appear to have been measured with a yard-stick, and others with a ten-foot pole."

An amusing illustration was given by a parent when asked by his boy, "What is understood by experimental and natural philosophy?" The answer was: "If any one wants to borrow money, that is experimental philosophy. If the man knocks him down, that is natural philosophy." Curious and comical illustrations seem natural to many children. A little girl, suffering from the mumps, declared she felt as though a headache had slipped down into her neck. "Mamma," said another youngster, alluding to a man whose neck was a series of great rolls of flesh, "that man's got a double chin."

on the back of his neck." A little three-year-old, in admiring her baby brother, is said to have exclaimed: "He's got a boiled head, like papa."

Talking of curious similes, among the southern languages of India is the Telugoo or Telinga, so rough in pronunciation that a traveller of the nation, speaking it before a ruler of Bokhara, admitted that its sound resembled "the tossing of a lot of pebbles in a sack." A simile for scarlet stockings is fire-hose; laughter is the sound you hear when your hat blows off; and trying to do business without advertising is said to be "like winking a girl in the dark." An unpoetical Yankee has described ladies' lips as the glowing gateway of beans, pork, sauer-kraut and potatoes. This would provoke Marryat's exclamation of "Such a metaphor I never met afore." Much more complimentary was the old dandy's neat reply to a beautiful young lady whom he offered to lift over the gutter, and who insisted she was too heavy. "Lor, missy," said he, "I've used to lifting barrels of sugar." Wit from a man's mouth is like a mouse in a hole; you may watch the hole all day, and no mouse comes out; but by and by, when no one is looking for it, out pops the mouse and streams across the parlor.

Marrying a woman for money, says a philosopher, is very much like setting a rat-trap and baiting it with your own finger.

An American writer says: "A man with one idea always puts me in mind of an old goose trying to hatch out a paving stone." An editor's similes of man's career is summed up in the lines: "Man's a vapor full of woes, starts a paper, busts and goes."—*Pall Mall Gazette*.

WHO WAS RESPONSIBLE?

MARY DWINELL CHELLIS.

A casual observer would have thought it a pleasant room in which Mrs. Temple was sitting on this last day of the year; yet to her it seemed utterly cheerless. Her work-basket was beside her, but her hands rested idly in her lap, while she gazed fixedly at the grate, in which a handful of coals were burning. Then she drew a shawl more closely around her, shuddering as she did so, as if the hurrying gusts of wind without chilled her very heart.

At length the door opened and a middle-aged woman entered the room, saying in a pleading tone:

"Oh, ma'am, if you will stay here, let me bring you a hot of coals and make a real fire. You are freezing your very bones, and it is growing colder every minute."

"It does not matter," replied Mrs. Temple, with difficulty controlling her voice. "I cannot waste coal on myself. Have the fire ready to light in the dining-room when Eustis comes in, and be sure that his coffee is strong and hot. He will think cold meat and bread a poor dinner; but it is the best I can afford."

"If you could afford as good for yourself, ma'am, it would be something to be thankful for. It is not my place to find fault, but you will ruin your health with worry; besides, not eating enough to keep soul and body together. And you used to do the best, too."

"Don't, Margaret; don't talk of what has been. I know you mean well, and I can never repay you for what you have done for me and mine; but Eustis is all that is left to me and I must think of him. Perhaps he will come earlier to-night. It is my fault that he is what he is and I should bear the punishment."

"Don't blame yourself, ma'am. He is acting freely, and he knows the right way. Many is the time you have told him, and begged him to do differently."

"Yes, but I did not begin soon enough."

"As soon as you thought there was danger, then you began."

"I did not stop to think before. I was living for pleasure and ease. I knew my husband was safe, and I never dreamed my boys could go wrong. Ten years ago, I might have prevented the sorrow and trouble which have come to me; but now it is too late. It is too late for anything good. I am a poor woman with no power to retrieve my fortune, and no hope for the future. Margaret, I have dreaded to speak the words, but I shall soon have no money to pay your wages, and I must learn to do without you."

"Never, while we both live," answered the faithful Margaret. "I have enough to keep me without wages, and I am sure you have never needed me more than you do now. You will not send me from you, ma'am."

"But I cannot consent to your remaining without wages. The house is still mine. There is a shelter for Eustis and myself and I would rather starve

than see it in another's possession. It may come to that yet. God only knows what deeper humiliation is in store for me."

Ten years ago! How she remembered that day! Some ladies belonging to the church of which she was a member had then organized for what they hoped might prove effective temperance work. She was urged to join them, but declined. She had been accustomed to the moderate use of wine in her father's family, and considered it a harmless indulgence.

"If I thought my husband or sons in danger, I would enlist with you heart and hand; but I have no fears for them," she said, confidently.

"Then thank God for such happiness; and for the sake of other mothers whose sons are drifting away from them, give us your influence," responded the friend who had called upon her in behalf of the new organization.

Even after the lapse of ten years she could recall the look of disappointment with which her persistent refusal was received. She had been asked, also, to banish wine from her side-board on New Year's day; but as usual the sparkling liquor was offered to her guests. Her two sons, then in the flush of early manhood, saw no reason to abstain from the drink their mother proffered to others; and, although she would not have acknowledged it, when they returned to her at night she felt a vague distrust of herself and them. She dated her misfortunes from that day.

Her husband died soon after, leaving ample provision for her support, with a small capital for each of his sons; but one had already gone down to the grave, a victim to disease induced by intemperate habits, every dollar of his patrimony having been worse than wasted. The other son, Eustis, had plunged into such excesses that, in squandering his own property, his mother had made large sacrifices to save him from most disgraceful exposure. Of all that was left to her, only the house remained.

She had practiced the most pitiful economies, denying herself the very comforts of life, and withdrawing herself from the society of those who would have given her sympathy and assistance. As a last resort, she proposed now to dismiss the woman who had been more of a friend than a servant through all of her dark days.

Thinking of all this, and looking to the future with sad forebodings, she took no note of the lapse of time. The windows darkened with the shadows of night, and the coals in the grate burned to ashes, and still she did not move from her chair.

The wind was blowing a gale, but she no longer heeded it. So oblivious was she to all around her, that she started with affright when Margaret stood before her, and taking her by the arm, said:

"You must come with me; I have tea ready in my room, and you must come."

In the little room off the kitchen furnished by Margaret, when the furnishing had been a pleasure to her employers, now well warmed and well lighted, a table was spread with a dainty supper, of which Mrs. Temple was invited to partake.

"But I cannot afford such luxuries," she responded. "You know I cannot. I wish Eustis was here to eat it instead of me."

"I have prepared it for you and not for Eustis," Margaret made answer. "You have given me many a New Year's present; let me give you this." Weary, faint and suffering for the want of such food as was before her, Mrs. Temple could no longer refuse. Supper eaten, the worn, tired woman seated herself in an easy chair, and, yielding to the soothing influences by which she was surrounded, slept heavily.

Well was it that she did so, for later in the evening came her son, with an officer of the law, demanding surety for his appearance the next morning before a justice, and in default of this prepared to take him to the common "lock-up." Margaret succeeded in satisfying the officer without Mrs. Temple being aware of his presence. Then she turned her attentions to Eustis, who, after what had transpired, could not refuse to listen to her, while she set her sins in order before him. She told him of his mother's privations and prayers, and also of the self-accusations which helped to embitter this mother's life.

"My mother living on bread and water?" he exclaimed.

"Yes, for days together, that she may save money for you."

"And I—but what can I do now; ten years ago, George and I both were almost ready to sign the ironclad pledge, and be teetotallers to the end of the chapter; but mother was not on that side then. If we could only go back ten years, there would be some chance for me."

"You cannot go back, you must go forward. Where will you go? What will you do? It is not too late for you to reform and redeem yourself."

"Reform! Do you mean that I can give up liquor and tobacco, and go to work and earn an honest living?"

"I mean just that. Will you do it?"

"I will," replied the young man, after a long silence. "I will do it or I will die in the attempt."

He did not die, but lived to fulfil the promise almost forced from him as the chiming of bells announced the dawn of a New Year. Eustis Temple is now a man respected by all who know him; and an earnest temperance worker and a consistent Christian.

His mother rejoices over him; yet she can never forget the son she has lost, or cease to reproach herself for his untimely fate.

It may be that she overestimates her responsibility; yet it is true that the mothers, wives, and sisters hold the destiny of our nation in their hands. Let them once place a ban upon the social drinking customs which are now ruining thousands and thousands of young men, and a change would be effected the blessings of which cannot be overestimated. Let them protest against the sale of all intoxicating liquors, emphasizing their protests by such efforts as may be within their power, and the number of saloon-keepers would soon be materially lessened.

Let Christian women pledge themselves to this work, each—it may be—in her own way, and the angels in heaven would, ere long, sing for joy over souls redeemed from the thrall-dom of sin.—*National Temperance Advocate*.

HARD WORK AND PERSEVERANCE.

Boys want to be rich, great or good without working. They think that learned, wealthy and influential men are very fortunate, that they have easily slipped into their respective spheres. They scarcely ever think that by hard work and dint of perseverance most of these men have risen to their present positions. Idlers never rise in the world. God does not reward laziness by "riches and honor." God did not make man to be useless, and live at ease and reap without sowing. When farmers can sow and reap on the same day, and trees blossom and yield fruit on the same day, and not until then, can boys hope to become men of marked influence and acquisition without working for it.

A splendid carriage rolls along the street. Boys look at it and say to themselves, "He's a fortunate man; what an easy time he has! Some day we may have a windfall and not be obliged to work for a living."

They scarcely dream that the occupant of that costly vehicle was probably once a poor boy, who worked hard many years, winning the confidence of all around him by his industry, integrity, and noble bearing. Had he been as idle and loose as many boys are, he would not have owned the carriage or have been a millionaire. Many years of careful toil, struggling to overcome obstacles, practicing the most rigid economy, and bravely holding out against great discouragements, is the secret of his success.

Daniel Webster could make a great speech. Boys heard him, and said, "What a gift!" How fortunate is he to possess such talents! The thought hardly entered their heads that hard work enabled him to do it. The first time he undertook to declaim in a school room he broke down. But persevering industry overcame all obstacles. By hard study year after year, and equally diligent practice, he became the distinguished orator. Take away a quarter of a century from his life, in which he carefully qualified himself for his noble profession, having no idle hours, and no "bed of down," and the world would not have known Daniel Webster. Boys should not forget this. He could make a great speech because he worked for it.

Boys, it is a good rule in this world that nothing valuable can be had without working for it. And the time to begin work is now.—*Ex.*

RANDOM READINGS.

What a man should not say he should not hear. The things which defile a man in going out of his mouth, defile him also when they go in at his eyes and ears.—*Tertullian*.

The longer I live the more I am assured that the business of life is to understand the Lord Christ. Nothing else is to be called the business of life at all. I am extreme you may think; but this is liberty and life to me—to know Christ.—*G. Macdonald*.

What a man, when he comes to die, will wish he had done when in health and strength, he had better do when he is in health and strength; and what he will in his last hours regret he had better not do. The wisdom of the death-

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