

Always A River To Cross.

There's always a river to cross,
Always an effort to make
If there's anything good to win,
And any rich prize to take;
Yonder's the fruit we crave;
Yonder the charming scene;
But deep and wide, with a troubled tide,
Is the river that lies between.

For the treasures of precious worth
We must patiently dig and dive;
For the places we long to fill
We must push, and struggle, and strive;
And always and everywhere
We'll find in our onward course,
Thorns for the feet, and trials to meet,
And a difficult river to cross.

The rougher the way that we take,
The stouter the heart and the nerve;
The steeper the path we break,
Nor e'er from our impulse swerve;
For the glory we hope to win,
Our labors we count no loss;
'Tis folly to pause and murmur because
Of the river we have to cross.

So, ready to do and to dare,
Should we in our places stand,
Fulfilling the master's will,
Fulfilling the soul's demand;
For though as the mountains high
The billows may roar and toss,
They'll not overwhelm if the Lord's at the helm.
When the difficult river we cross!

JOSEPH POLLARD.

Prayer-Meeting Bore.

What to do with prayer-meeting bores is the question with thousands of pastors and thousands of churches. This class of barbarians roam the land, making fearful havoc. They swing no tomahawk. They sound no war-whoop. But their track is marked by devastation. I mean that class of persons who go from church to church, charged with the mission of talking religious meetings to death. They are a restless tribe, generally disaffected by their own church, for the reason that the church can no longer endure them; and they go about like the roaring lion, seeking whom they may devour. Though never having seen them before, I can tell them as soon as they enter a meeting. They have a brassy face, a sanctimonious way of rolling up their eye, a solemn snuffle and a pompous way of sitting down, as much as to say, "Here goes into the seat an awful amount of religion!" They take off their overcoats, pull out the cuffs of their shirt sleeves, give an impressive clearing of the throat and wait for the time to seize their prey.

The meeting is all aglow. Some old Christian has related a melting experience, or a young man has asked for prayers, or a captive of evil habits has recounted his struggles and cried from the depth of an agonized heart, "God, be merciful to me, a sinner!" "Antioch" has just started heavenward, taking all the meeting along with it. The exorcises have gone to a climax and the minister is about to pronounce the benediction, or invite the serious into an adjoining room for religious conversation, when the prayer-meeting bore begins to slowly rise, his boots creaking, the seat in front groaning under the pressure of his right hand, and everything else seeming to give way. He confesses himself a stranger, but he loves the prayer-meeting. He is astonished that there are not more present. He does not see how Christians can be so inconsistent. He has heard an incident that he feels called upon to relate. He related it that noon at the Fulton Street Prayer-meeting. He related it that afternoon at an old people's meeting. He will relate it now in rehearsal for a meeting to-morrow, at which he expects to relate it. His voice is wooden. His eyes are as dry as the bottom of a kettle that has been on a stove two hours without any water in it. The young people laugh and go out one by one. The aged wipe the perspiration from their foreheads. And the minister begins within himself to recite an extemporized litany, "From fire, and plague, and tempest and itinerant bores, deliver us!" The interloper would hardly have lived through the night if he could not have given vent to this utterance. It was impossible for him to sit still. There was somewhere down in his clothes a spring which lifted him up inevitably. At the close of the meeting he waited to be congratulated on his happy remarks, and went home feeling that he had given the world a mighty push toward the millennium. If such a one is notoriously inconsistent, he will talk chiefly on personal holiness. Perhaps he failed rich, so that unencumbered, he might give all his time to prayer-meetings. We knew a horse-jockey whose perpetual theme at such meetings was sanctification; and he said he was speeding toward heaven, but on which of his old nags we had not time to ask him.

One of the chiefs of this barbarian tribe of prayer-meeting bores is the expository man. He is very apt to rise with a New Testament in his hand, or there has been some passage that during the day has been pressed heavily on his mind. It is probably

the first chapter of Romans, or some figurative passage from the Old Testament. He says, for instance: My brethren, I call your attention to Hosea, 7th and 8th. Ephraim is a cake not turned. You all know the history of Ephraim. Ephraim was—ah—well! He was a man mentioned in the Bible. You all know who he was. Surely no intelligent audience like this need be told who Ephraim was. Now the passage says that he was a cake not turned. There are a good many kinds of cake, my brethren! There is the Indian cake, and the flannel cake, and the buckwheat cake. Now Ephraim was a cake not turned. It sometimes happens that this religious pest confines himself to the meetings of his own church. Interesting talkers are sometimes detained at home by sickness; but his health is always good. Others dare not venture out in the storm, but all the elements combined could not keep him from his place. He has the same prayer now that he has used for the last forty years. There is in it an allusion to the death of prominent individuals. You do not understand who he means. The fact is, he composed that prayer about the time General Jackson died, and he has never been able to drop the allusion. He has a patronizing way of talking to sinners, as much as to say: Oh! you poor miserable scoundrels, just look at me, and see what you might have been! I wish some enterprising showman would gather all these prayer-meeting bores from all our churches into a religious menagerie, and let them all talk together. We will take five season tickets for the exhibition. Let these offenders be put by themselves where day in and day out, night in and night out, they may talk without interruption. Nothing short of an eternity of gab would satisfy them. What will they do in heaven with nobody to exhort? We imagine them now rising up in the angelic assemblage, proposing to make a few remarks. If they get there, you will never again hear of silence in heaven for the space of half an hour. Alas, the land is strewn with the carcases of prayer-meetings slain by these religious desperadoes. They have driven the young people from most of the devotional meetings. How to get rid of this affliction is a question with hundreds of churches. We advise your waiting on such persons, and telling them that, owing to the depraved state of public faith, their efforts are not appreciated. If they still persist, tell them they must positively stop or there will be trouble. If under all this they are incorrigible, collar them and hand them over to the law as disturbers of religious assemblies. As you love the Church of God, put an end to their ravages. It is high time that the nuisance was abated. Among the Bornean cannibals and Feejee Islanders I class this tribe of prayer-meeting bores.—*Dr. Talmage in N. Y. Observer.*

Hard Work.

Hard work accords with simple common sense. Work gives strength. Unused muscle deteriorates. Sinews in constant service increase in power. Witness the singer's throat and the Blacksmith's arm. It is the brain that is kept at work that solves the difficult problem. We appeal to the heart that carries many burdens when we would have help for one more good cause.

A lady asked Turner the secret of his success. He replied, I have no secret, madam, but hard work. I think it was Agassiz who defined genius as the capacity for infinitely hard work. Over sixty years ago Gladstone formed the habit of shutting himself up with his books out of everybody's reach from ten in the morning till two in the afternoon. See the result. At eighty he is one of England's giants. Said one of our own strongest preachers, wearing seventy with all sails set, Four hours of brain-sweat every day I live. That is my rule. Alcott told us, in his talk on the genesis of an Emersonian essay, that the old Sage of Concord worked in an attic which he reached by a ladder through a trap door, upon which he placed his chair.

If we want to bring anything to pass let us remember the old Latin proverb, *Labor annua vincit*. God's best people have worked hard with their muscle before brain-work was the order. The first man was a gardener. Krummacker, in one of his Parables, tells how the curse was mitigated: Adam had tilled the ground and made himself a garden full of plants and trees. He rested himself with his wife and children upon the brow of a hill. The watcher of Eden came to them, but he was without his flaming sword, and his countenance was kind. He saluted them and said, Behold, no more do fruits grow of themselves for you. You must labor to eat bread in the sweat of your brow; but after your toil you rejoice in the fruits you acquired. His goodness is great, even when he chasteneth, said Adam;

what have we to atone for this? Prayer, answered the watcher. Toi is the earthly gift of Jehovah. Then Adam lifted up his face, gave thanks, and prayed.

Anora Leigh says, God gives us better gifts in cursing than mercy in benediction. David was a shepherd, Elisha a farmer, Amos a herdsman, Paul a tent-maker, and Jesus of Nazareth a carpenter. Our Lord said of His divine service, My Father worketh hitherto, and I work.

The wisest man puts strongly these truths in his antithetic style. He says, The hand of the diligent maketh rich. The way of a slothful man is as a hedge of thorns. The hand of the diligent shall bear rule; but the slothful shall be under tribute. The soul of the sluggard desireth and hath nothing; but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat. The desire of the slothful killeth him, for his hands refuse to labor. Seest thou a man diligent in his business? He shall stand before kings.

Though Paul teaches that God is able to make all temporal blessings abound toward us, yet He enjoins that we be diligent in business, as well as fervent in spirit, serving the Lord. In His parable of the talents Christ sets forth the curse of unused ability and the blessing that comes to one who makes the most of what is lent him.

Let us make up our minds, 1. To work hard; 2. Under divine direction; 3. Trusting God for results. Then shall we make our way prosperous and have good success. Our labor will not be in vain in the Lord.—*Our Youth.*

Speaking to People.

Who in the world is that you're speaking to? said one young lady to her companion of the same sex and age as they walked down one of the avenues the other day.

That man? He is the man that mends my shoes when they need it, was the reply.

Well, said the first speaker, I wouldn't speak to him; don't think it's nice.

And why not? queried the other. He is a kind, faithful, honest, hard-working man. I never pass his window but I see him on his bench, working away, and when I bow to him and give him "Good-morning," he looks as pleased as can be. Why shouldn't I speak to him?

I never speak to that class of people, said the other; they're not my kind.

I do, was the rejoinder. I speak to every body I know—from Dr. Brown, our minister, to the colored man who blacks our stoves and shakes our carpets—and I notice that the humbler the one in the social scale to whom I proffer kindly words, the more grateful is the recognition I receive in return. Christ died for them as much as He did for me, and perhaps if some of them had the opportunities my birth and rearing have given me they would be a great deal better than I. That cobbler is really quite an intelligent man. I've lent him books to read, and he likes quite a high style of reading, too.

The two girls were cousins, and they finally agreed to leave the question as to recognizing day laborers, mechanics, and tradesmen to a young lawyer of whom they had a high opinion. So the first time the three were together one of the girls asked him:

If you met Myers, the grocer, on Broadway, would you speak to him?

Why, yes, certainly; why do you ask?

And would you speak to the man who cobbles your shoes?

Certainly, why not?

And the janitor of the building where you have your office?

Of course.

And the boy that runs the elevator?

Certainly.

Is there any body you know that you don't speak to?

Well, yes; I don't speak to Jones, who cheated a poor widow out of her house; or to Brown, who grinds down his employees and gives them starvation wages; or to Smith, whom I know to be in private any thing but the saint he seems to be in public. I speak to every honest man I know whom I chance to meet.

Because we simply want to know replied the young lady who had taken her friend to task for speaking to a cobbler. In fact, she was ashamed to tell him that he was referee in the discussion on this point held a day or two before.

It is the privilege of nobility to be gentle and courteous to all. Kindly words hurt no one, least of all him or her who speaks them.

Aunt Susan's Suggestions to a Frivolous Wife.

Hester! exclaimed Aunt Susan, ceasing her rocking and knitting, and sitting upright, do you know what your husband will do when you are dead?

What do you mean? was the startled reply.

He will marry the sweetest-tempered girl he can find.

Oh, auntie! Hester began.

Don't interrupt me until I've finished, said Aunt Susan, leaning back and taking up her knitting. She may not be as good a house-keeper as you are; in fact I think not; but she will be good-natured.

Why, auntie—

That isn't all, composedly continued Aunt Susan. To-day your husband was half way across the kitchen floor, bringing you the first ripe peaches, and all you did was to look on and say: There Will, just see your tracks on my clean floor!

I won't have my floors all tracked up. Some men would have thrown the peaches out the window. To-day you screwed up your face when he kissed you because his mustache was damp, and said, I never want you to kiss me again. When he empties anything, you tell him not to spill it; when he lifts anything, you tell him not to break it. From morning until night your sharp voice is heard complaining and fault-finding. And last winter, when you were sick, you scolded him about his allowing the pump to freeze, and took no notice when he said, I was so anxious about you that I did not think of the pump.

But, auntie—

Hearken, child. The strongest and most intelligent of them all care more for a woman's tenderness than for anything else in the world, and without this the cleverest and most perfect housekeeper is sure to lose her husband's affection in time.

There may be a few more men like Will—as gentle, as loving, as chivalrous, as forgetful of self, and so satisfied with loving that their affections will die a long, struggling death; but in most cases it takes but a few years of fretfulness and fault-finding to turn a husband's love into irritated indifference.

But, auntie—

Yes, well you are not dead yet, and that sweet-natured woman has not been found; so you have time to become so serene and sweet that your husband can never imagine that there is a better tempered woman in existence.—*Selected.*

Keep the Body Erect.

An erect bodily attitude is of vastly more importance to health than most people generally imagine. Crooked bodily positions, maintained for any length of time, are always injurious, whether in the sitting, standing or lying posture, whether sleeping or waking. To sit with the body leaning forward on the stomach, or to one side, with the heels elevated on a level with the hands, is not only bad taste, but exceedingly detrimental to health. It cramps the stomach, presses the vital organs, interrupts the free motions of the chest, and enfeebles the functions of the abdominal and thoracic organs and, in fact, unbalances the whole muscular system. Many children become slightly hump-backed or severely round-shouldered by sleeping with the head raised on a high pillow. When any person finds it easier to sit or stand or walk or sleep in a crooked position than a straight one, such a person may be sure his muscular system is badly deranged, and the more careful he is to preserve a straight or upright position; and get back again, the better.

Novel Reading.

Rev. J. C. Allen, in the *Christian Inquirer*, gives some suggestive statistics showing the extent of the novel-reading habit. In twenty-two of the principal libraries of the United States, the average of novels read is over seventy five per cent. of the whole reading done in them. As only the better class of novels is put on the shelves of these libraries, and no account is here taken of the rubbish going the rounds through circulating libraries, etc., it can be seen that the reading done by the people of the United States—the young people especially—is chiefly of fiction. May this not be one of the reasons why divorce is so frequent? The young get false notions of life, when the romance of it settles down into ordinary prose, there are disappointments and alienations. The effect of so much reading of this kind must be bad, every way; for, when the taste for this light reading is formed, very little of a higher kind will be chosen.

INTemperance.—I am told that an elephant when he finds himself sinking in a bog, will seize with his trunk any object, dead or alive, that may chance to be on his back, and places it under his knees, in the vain effort to keep himself from sinking deeper. If men would only be content to sink into sin alone! But you will see the drunkard pull down with him into the depths of misery and shame his wife and little ones and every other precious interest which it is his duty to bear up amid the difficulties of life.

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