

A FATHER'S LETTER TO HIS SOLDIER SON.

Hundreds of thousands of American fathers are now facing the bitterest moment of their lives; the moment of parting with sons as dear to them as Absalom was to David. All of them will try to say what is in their hearts, but few of them will feel, when the boy has gone, that they have said all that they wished or said it as well as they wished. For those who find themselves mute in the face of the parting there may be help and inspiration in the letter that follows. It was written in Concord, Massachusetts, more than fifty years ago, by Judge Ebenezer Rockwood Hoar, a great member of a great family, and addressed to a worthy son, Corp. Samuel Hoar, then about to enter on his duties as a soldier in the Civil War. Its loftiness of spirit, its practical wisdom and its simple beauty of expression entitle it to rank with the great epistolary literature of our country.

"My Dear Boy: I did not have the opportunity I had hoped to talk with you last evening—and therefore take this opportunity, when we are sending you your mittens, and the envelopes which you forgot, to give you a few last words of affectionate counsel from home.

"One of your first duties as a soldier will be to take all the care you can of your health. The firmer that is, the better you will be to do any service, or undergo any fatigue, required of you. To preserve your health, you must try to lead as regular and temperate a life as is possible. I hope you will not try to avoid your full share of labor, danger, or exposure, where either is necessary or called for. . . . Take every proper occasion for bathing your whole body—and scrupulously regard your personal cleanliness, no matter how much trouble it may give you. . . . Have nothing to do with spirituous liquors of any kind. Take your food as regularly as you can get it, and neither eat immoderately nor go a long time without food, if you can avoid it. Especially be careful not to eat to excess after long fasting.

"I hope you will never disgrace yourself by any profaneness, or obscenity; and will avoid all conversation and companions where they are practiced or allowed.

"Try to preserve a cheerful and contented spirit, and encourage it in others. Bear hardships without grumbling, and always try to do more, rather than less, than your duty. You will have occasion to be patient much oftener than to be brave.

"The duty of a soldier is unquestioning obedience—but beyond this I hope you will cultivate a kind, respectful and considerate temper toward your officers.

"I hope you are going with a love for your country, and your cause, and with a determination to be faithful to every duty you have undertaken. My boy, you bear the name of one who to the end of his honored life never shrank from duty, however painful, nor from a danger to which duty called him. Be sure that you do no discredit to it! Neither by cowardice, by falsehood, by impurity, by levity, nor by selfishness. Remember always your home and your friends—those who will welcome your return with pride and joy if you shall come back in virtue and honor; who will

cherish your memory if, faithful and true, you have given up your life; but to whom your disgrace would cause a pang sharper than death. Remember your obligations to duty and to God. And may these thoughts keep you from temptation, and encourage and strengthen you in danger or sickness.

"And now, my dear boy, I commend you to God—and to the power of His grace. May God bless and keep you. Think of your Heavenly Father in health and in sickness, in joy and in sorrow. Go to Him for strength and guidance. You are very dear to our hearts—and your absence leaves a great place vacant in our home. If it be according to His will, may you come back to us in safety and honor—but whatever is before us, may His mercy and love be ever with you, and His grace be sufficient for you."—Youth's Companion.

ICEBERGS AND SAINTS.

"I don't see," said Robert Kittredge to his mother, "how old Deacon Bradbury can be so serene when he has so much to put up with at home. I think he must have been born a saint!"

"If you had known Deacon Bradbury as long as I have you would know that he wasn't born a saint," said the mother. "I knew Wilson Bradbury long before he was a deacon. I have known him more than forty years, and I can assure you that he wasn't born a saint. He was one of the most impulsive and quick-tempered young men I ever knew."

"Then how did he come to be so patient and quiet?" asked Robert.

"I think," said his mother, "that he would tell you that it is because long years ago he saw the folly of his quick temper, and began deliberately to curb it and to acquire the habit of restraint. That is a hard thing for young persons to understand; you look at the ripened saints about you and you think of only the finished product. You don't see that it has been the achievement of years of striving against desperate handicaps, and so you talk of 'born saints.' There is no such thing.

"Some persons are born with a better start than others, but everyone has had his own peculiar battle to fight. If he hadn't he would be no better than a plaster saint adorning a niche in the wall somewhere. Sainthood, Robert, is built up by years of work. Do you remember the iceberg we saw last year on our trip abroad? Do you remember that you asked me what made it go in one direction, while the wind and surface waves were going in the other? The reason was, as I told you, that two-thirds of the iceberg was below the surface of the water, and there were currents far down beneath that were carrying the icebergs along with them, regardless of winds and surface currents.

"That is the way with people. Two-thirds of us are hidden down out of sight of the world. That is the region of thoughts, ideals, emotions, secret habits and imagination. When some man high in public esteem suddenly falls into disgrace it means that the two-thirds of him that was out of sight was running counter to what he was professing in public. And when some man like Deacon Bradbury lives a life of serenity in the midst of surface currents that are trying to carry him

in the other direction, it means that two-thirds of him you don't see are reaching down into currents of patience and peace, currents that he has been establishing for years.

"I hope you won't be fooled or discouraged by thinking of born saints. Just keep the hidden two thirds of your life—your dreams and ideals and imagination—set in the right direction, and the current some day will set straight and carry you strong into some such haven of peace as Deacon Bradbury enjoys."—Youth's Companion.

SOLDIERS OF THE CROSS.

Far nobler than the knight of old,
Who fought with shield and armour
bright,
Is he who for the truth is bold,
And dares to battle for the right.
Who can like Daniel stand alone,
Without spectators to applaud;
With loyalty to a higher throne,
True to his conscience and his God.
Such men are found in humble spheres,
Hid in the workshop and the mine;
True kinfolk they of holy seers,
Their hearts in tune with the Divine.
True rulers of themselves are they;
Held by a power not their own.
Far nobler this than scepter sway
While slave to sin, yet on a throne.
With eyes to see the hidden things,
And faith to hold what shall remain,
Remembering be the King of Kings
Looks on vain glory with disdain.
Their names are written plain above;
They tread the path the master trod.
Apostles they of perfect love
With power to be the sons of God.

W. E. SMITH.

Monroeton, Pa.

CHARACTER MAKES THE MAN.

It's not the clothes he has on him,
Or the cash he has in his purse,
Or what people say about him
For better or for worse.
It's not the height of his inches,
Or his power to think or plan.
No, if you please, it is none of these,
But Character makes the man.
Fine things make a good appearance,
And some people like a show;
But above there's a different standard
Than most people have below.
'Tis the inner and not the outer
The eyes of the Lord doth scan;
We may play a part but He sees the heart,
And its Character makes the man.
We may lose a good reputation
For the world can daub it with mud;
But it cannot defile the inner
Made clean by the precious blood.
So whether folks approve you
Or put you under their ban,
Just do as you should—it pays to be good,
For Character makes the man.
But its more than a moral standard,
Though morality has its place.
The man this cold world needeth
Is a product of love and grace.
Made free from all cruel passions,
Made after a holy plan.
Like Peter and Paul and some saints we
recall.
Such Character makes a man.

W. E. S.