

COULD WE KNOW.

Could we know the loss and sorrow
That the days to come may bring,
Would we toil on bravely, darling?
Would we ever care to sing?
Ah, I think our steps would falter
And our eyes with tears grow dim,
And our music catch the cadence
Of a sad, despairing hymn.

Could we see the thorns and briars
Growing tall about our road,
Hearts would lose their hope and courage
And sink down beneath their load.
We should shrink before them, crying,
Lo! the thorns will wound our feet;
If we try to venture through them
We shall surely find defeat.

Oh, thank God, the clouds are hidden
That the coming days may bring;
In the sunshine of the present
Let us journey on and sing:
Let us pluck the flowers growing
In the grass above our feet,
And forget about the briars
Till their thorns we chance to meet.

Let us bridge life's snares and pitfalls
With a faith that's brave and strong,
And keep up our hearts by singing,
One and all a cheerful song,
Many a voice will lose its sadness
As it joins the helpful strain
By remembering that the sunshine
Always follows after rain.

JOHN RAY.

Be polite; be agreeable. There is nothing that will bring you such quick returns with so little invested. A smile takes nothing away from your face, but it beautifies it. A good action in a good cause, a civil word to the lowly, a helping hand to the needy, kindness to the suffering, and gentle words for all, will bring you love in return, and will become you more than anything else that I know of.

Mr. Bentley was a young man who did not believe that politeness paid.

'I hate to see an everlasting grin on anybody's face,' he said one day, when he and several others were discussing the subject of politeness. 'In the struggle of life it is every one for himself. I have not time, nor inclination, nor hypocrisy, to be spreading my mouth in a forced smile to every one I meet. Nor do I care to be friendly with every one. I choose my companions and friends, and they are few and select.'

And this was Mr. Bentley's character. He was taciturn, morose, and utterly selfish. He never helped any one in distress or trouble. He never tried to cheer the sick nor solace the bereaved. Even his 'few and select' friends knew he could not be depended on in a case of emergency. He rejoiced in perfect health, with never a thought that his strong frame would some day lie prostrate, languishing, helpless with disease. He was prosperous, not rich, but held a position that was remunerative, never dreaming that he might possibly lose that position. But in less than a year from the time he uttered the above sentiment, he had lost it and was out of employment.

The most prosperous will meet with reverses. Sometimes they teach great lessons. Mr. Bentley should have deducted a lesson from the reverses that followed in the wake of his loss of position. But he did not. He had no friends to rally to his aid, for he had taken no trouble to make friends in his prosperity. He made every effort to procure another position, but all situations in his town seemed full.

He answered an advertisement in an O—paper. The city of O—was some fifty miles away. In a short time he received a reply to his letter of application. The letter was from the firm of Thomas Brothers, and it invited the young man to pay them a visit in person as soon as possible. If his papers personal appearance, etc., suited them, they would employ him on a salary of one thousand dollars a year. This was far better than he expected. His good luck was returning. He donned his finest clothes; his head was lost in the clouds. He did not see Mr. Little nor, nor hear Mr. Small speak. Oh, no! What had he to do with the common herd? He could not see the poor and blind organ grinder, or drop a penny in his box. Not he! He was on his way to O— for the one thousand dollar clerkship.

An old lady at the depot stopped him. 'Will you please tell me—'

But she was interrupted by the would be one thousand dollar clerk.

'Madam,' he said rudely, 'that ticket agent is paid to answer questions—apply to him.'

'Yes—but—sir—' She stopped, for he had walked away and left her. 'Law, what'll I do?' she cried. 'The agent has no better manners than he has. When I was young, men didn't treat old women like that. Well, law me! I wish I was here. This is the very last time I shall go any place alone. Oh, my—oh dear—the train is coming—how will I get on, or how am I to tell when I get on the right one? I'm just sure to get on the wrong one—oh, goodness me! Say, please—Mr—sir! will you help me? again stopping Mr. Bentley. 'Is this the train that goes north? Take this satchel for me—oh! Mr Bentley turned red and hurriedly passed her. 'Oh, I shall be left!'

'Let me help you,' said a kindly voice, and the old lady looked up to find a young man in a threadbare coat, but with a frank and open countenance, reaching his hand for her bundles.

She surrendered them to his care, and thanked him heartily. He took her to the train, saw her safely and comfortably seated, and then found a seat for himself in the same coach, in order to see her safely to the station where she was going.

The old lady left the train at L—, as did Mr. Bentley and the young stranger. They hurried off to take the stage, as O—was not a railroad town.

'Madam,' said the stage driver, as the old lady went to get into the stage, 'my order is to collect the fare before starting.'

The old lady fumbled in her pocket a minute, then uttered an exclamation of dismay.

'My goodness gracious! I forgot to bring my money! Eli—that's my husband—told me I'd forget it. What shall I do—oh, what shall I do? And she dropped a bundle, tried to pick it up, and dropped another. I'm going to O—, continued the distressed old lady. 'I'm going there to see my sons. They will pay you, indeed they will, if you will—'

'Won't do, said the driver. My orders are strict. Can't disobey orders. Won't take any risks—for you know I might lose my job. Maybe this gentleman will loan you the money, pointing to our friend, Mr. Bentley, who was seated in one corner of the coach; or, what'll be the same to me, will guarantee the pay.'

Oh, will you? cried the old lady, appealing to that gentleman. Indeed, my sons will pay you. They are—'

But she was interrupted. Never mind what your sons are—I don't care to have their biography just now. Then, turning to the man, he said, Don't be so free with your suggestions, my friend.

'I presumed—' began the driver. 'You presumed in your ignorance,' interrupted Mr. Bentley, harshly. 'If I should give money to all the old beggars I see, I should be unable to pay my wash bill. What are you waiting for? I tell you I'm in a hurry to reach O—'

'I tell you,' said the big driver, in an angry voice, and looking at Mr. Bentley fiercely, 'that I may be presumptuous and ignorant, but I am a man as won't take an insult without resenting it. If you can't be more civil, I'll take the liberty of dumping you out of there in the first mud hole we come to. As for going, I'll go when I get ready, and not a minute before.'

But nevertheless, he immediately prepared to start. The old lady grew wild.

'Oh, must I be left?' she cried. 'What will my sons, Peter and William, think? I wish Eli was here. I'll never leave home again without Eli—oh, stop! Wait! Will some one—' and she ran against the same young man who had helped her on the train at C— 'Oh, I am so glad! I know you will help me!' And she caught the young man's hand in hers. 'I want to go to O—, sir, and I left my money at home—and I must get there to-day.'

'I am on my way there myself,' said the youth with a troubled air. 'I was going there to see the Thomas Brothers about a position in their store. I ought to be there to-day—to-morrow may be too late—but—but—well, you shall go—I—yes—you shall go!'

He took out his purse and emptied the contents to pay one fare on the stage to O—

'Oh, but how will you get there,' asked she, 'if you give me all your money?'

'I can walk,' he answered cheerily. 'Never mind me, I am used to walking.'

'You are an honor to your mother,' said the woman, with emotion. 'A good mother, I'll be bound.' And then, seeing the tears spring to his eyes, she surmised that he had recently lost that mother, and continued, 'Yes, I understand; and you couldn't bear to see an old lady in trouble without helping her for your own dear mother's sake. What is your name? My sons will pay you as soon as you reach O—.'

'My name is John Ray,' he said.

'Well, good-by, John Ray,' said the old lady, as he helped her into the coach. 'I wish you success. I think you will get the place.' She nodded vigorously.

'Yes, yes, I hope you will, John Ray.' And, with beaming eyes, she shook John Ray's hands as vigorously as she nodded. 'Oh, won't Eli—what won't he do when I tell him?'

'Are you all ready?' cried out the driver. 'Because if you ain't, I want you to understand I ain't in any hurry; take your time. All ready, hey! Then off we go!'

And off they went, leaving John Ray to walk twenty miles. And the simple soul filling his place in the coach would shed tears whenever she thought of him walking wearily alone over the road. But her eyes shone through the tears. Could you see those tears, John, the road would seem shorter. Could you know the gratitude in that good heart, your limbs would be less weary.

They at length arrived at O—. Mr. Bentley registered his name, in a large hand, in the most aristocratic hotel in the city.

'Much depends,' he soliloquized, 'on appearances. Should I put up at a less pretentious house than this it might be

the means of my failing to get the position I am after.' Then he thought of John Ray, and the fragment of conversation he had overheard between him and the old lady. 'Ha! ha!' he laughed at the thought. 'What kind of a chance can so shabby a fellow have against me? I am not quite sure but that the 'me' should begin with a capital letter. It sounded so very important. 'He is trudging along now between here and L— Why, what a fool the fellow is! I am sitting comfortably here—shall soon eat a warm supper—while he is dragging himself along, hungry and tired, and without money to buy anything to eat, or a place in which to sleep.'

He seemed to take delight in these reflections. The contemplation of the deprivation and suffering of others seems to be a prodigious comfort to many. It had quite a solacing effect on Mr. Bentley, for he was not rich. It must be admitted that his success depended on his securing this position with the Thomas Brothers.

It was so late in the evening when the stage reached O— that the business house of Thomas Brothers was closed. But early next morning Mr. Bentley waited on the brothers, and presented his recommendations. There were other applicants, among whom was John Ray. Mr. Bentley would not recognize him. Truly, if it depended on appearance John Ray stood no possible chance for the situation.

'Good papers!' cried William Thomas, when he had finished reading Mr. Bentley's references.

'Splendid recommendations!' echoed the brother. 'Best ones we have received yet. Is it not so, William?'

Mr. Bentley flushed with pleasure and swelled with vanity. 'Where are your papers, young man?' asked William, turning to John Ray, who sat quietly with his face averted. No wonder, for his hopes were fleeing away, and he knew his face would show his disappointment.

'I have none,' he said. 'I never filled a like position, sir, and consequently can give you no references.'

'You must have reference, said the brothers, or we cannot consider your application.'

'I have none,' again said John Ray; and now all hopes had flown, and his pale face showed it.

'I think, young man, you come well recommended,' said William. 'Does he not, Peter?'

Peter laughed and nodded, and the brothers got closer to John Ray. 'The best reference in the world,' cried Peter, with such an affectionate look at John that William feared he meant to embrace him, and put out his hand to prevent it, for fear of spoiling the denouement.

John looked puzzled. They both laughed and repeated,—

'Good recommendation! Mother!' they called, and in came the old lady of the day before. 'Mother, which of these young men do you recommend to us for a clerk?'

The old lady walked straight up to John and said,—

'I recommend by all means, my dear sons, the young man who was kind enough to aid a helpless 'old beggar' to reach home; who loved the memory of his mother so well that he walked twenty long miles to let your mother ride. Not for a reward, boys. No, he thought I was poor and helpless; and now, if a deed like that won't recommend John Ray more than all the recommendation that were ever written, indeed, then, I don't know my dear boys.'

And each of the brothers got John by the hand, while Mr. Bentley retired with a crestfallen air.

Let us hope that this little episode taught Mr. Bentley that kindness brings its own reward. That to be loved by our fellow man is the highest earthly pleasure to be enjoyed. That to be kind and sociable to all is to win love. To be accommodating, sympathizing, helpful, is to retain that love when won. That no good action or kind word is lost, but is written with an indelible pen in the Recording Angel's Book, and preserved through eternity.

MISCELLANEOUS

SHE WAS TOO KIND.—One of Buffalo's would-be 'mashers' several times met a young and good-looking girl and determined to become acquainted with her. He tracked her to a prayer meeting at a prominent church one evening recently. After the service noticing that she was alone, he approached her, begged pardon for intruding in the usual way, and walked beside her. She entered into conversation in a pleasant way, and the 'masher' began to think he had made a conquest. At length he asked her to go with him to a certain restaurant. She politely declined, but said that he might go to her home. After a little he said:

'Will I be liable to meet any one there?'

'Oh, yes,' answered the girl; 'you will see my father and mother.'

'But won't they object to my accompanying you?'

'No, sir,' she replied. 'You have done

me no harm, and, though you have not treated me like a gentleman, father and mother do not know anything about it, and they will treat you like one. I am sure they would be glad to see you, and they might, perhaps, offer a prayer in your behalf.'

By this time it was pretty hot for the 'masher,' and he hastily excused himself from proceeding in the direction of the sensible girl's home.

FUEL OF THE FUTURE.—The house of the near future, the *Boston Journal of Commerce* thinks, will have no fireplace, steam pipes, chimneys, or flues. Wool, coal oil, and other forms of fuel are about to disappear altogether in places having factories. Gas has become so cheap that already it is supplanting fuels. A single jet fairly heats a small room in cold weather. A New York artist has produced a simple design for heating entirely by gas at a mere nominal expense. It is a well known fact that gas throws off no smoke, soot, or dirt. The artist filled a brazier with chunks of colored glass, and placed several jets beneath. The glass soon became heated sufficiently to thoroughly warm a room 10x30 feet in size. This design does away with the necessity for chimneys since there is no smoke; the ventilation may be had at the window. The heat may be raised or lowered by simply regulating the flow of gas. The colored glass gives all the appearance of fire; there are black pieces to represent, coal, red chunks of flames, yellowish white glass for white heat, blue glass for blue flames, and bits for all the remaining colors of spectrum. Invention already is displacing the present fuels for furnaces and cooking ranges, and glass doing away with delay and such disagreeable objects as ashes, kindling wood, etc.

PAPER RAILS.—According to the *Organ des Mines*, of Paris, the paper rail is to become a practical reality. That paper states that a company is about to establish large works for making rails from paper near St. Petersburg. The paper is subjected to great pressure, and it is said that the material is extremely durable, and can be produced at one-third the cost of steel rails. A further advantage would be in their lightness, not only on account of the saving of the cost of carriage and laying but also because they could be made in longer lengths than is the case at the present time, therefore the number of joints will be fewer, and consequently less oscillation to the carriages, and the wear and tear to both permanent way and rolling stock reduced to a minimum. A greater adhesion also would be offered by these rails to the driving wheels of the engine, and the working expenses reduced accordingly.

Johnny, who had been sitting in the room while his father had been reading Bacon aloud to his wife, put his own construction upon several of the passages. He dwelt particularly upon the phrase, 'Reading maketh a full man,' and pondered over it the balance of the day.

During the ensuing evening one of the prominent men of the place dropped in to make a short visit. During the conversation which followed Johnny asked him:

'You must do a great deal of reading, don't you?'

'Well, yes, my little man, considerable. Why?'

'Why, ma said you were full about all the time.'

The gentleman did not wait to have Johnny explain the allusion, and the young man was compelled to have his Bacon anointed by his father's slipper.

'Robert, what did you say to the bad boy this morning when he taunted you for going to the Sabbath school?'

'Didn't say nothin,' I just went right on without sayin' a word back.'

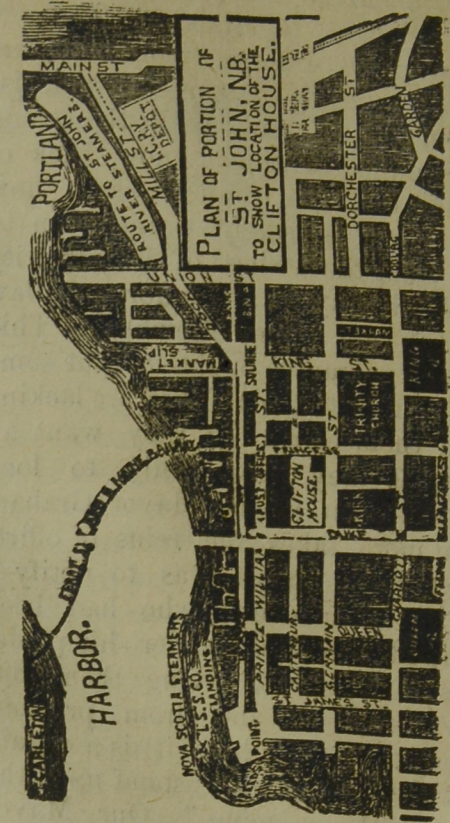
'That was right, my son, and I am glad to see you had manliness enough not to notice him.'

'Yes, but you ken bet if he hadn't been bigger'n me I'd thumped blazes out'n him.'

A Chinaman whose life was heavily insured, fell from a waggon and was badly injured. There was some doubt as to his even getting better, and at length one of his brother Chinamen wrote to the Insurance Company.—'Charley half dead; likee half money.'

'How old are you?' asked a justice of the peace of 'Jim' Webster, who was under arrest for stealing chickens. 'I dunno,' said the darkey. 'When were you born?' 'What am de use of my tellin' you 'bout my buffiday; you ain't gwine ter make me no buffiday present.'

Girls who wish to have small, pretty-shaped mouths should repeat at frequent intervals during the day: 'Fanny Finch fried floundering fish for Francis Forbes' father.'



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