

Poetry.

SMALL BEGINNINGS.

A traveller on a dusty road strewed acorns on
 the sea;
 And one took root and sprouted up, and grew
 into a tree.
 Love sought its shade, at evening time, to
 breathe its early vows,
 And age was pleased in heat of noon to bask
 beneath its boughs;
 The dormouse loved its dangling twigs, the
 birds sweet music bore;
 It stood a glory in its place, a blessing evermore.
 A little spring had lost its way amid the grass
 and fern,
 A passing stranger scooped a well, where weary
 men might turn.
 He walled it in, and hung with care a ladle at
 its brink;
 He thought not of the deed he did, but judged
 that toil might drink.
 He passed again, and lo! the well, by summer
 never dried,
 Had cooled ten thousand parching tongues and
 saved a life besides.
 A dreamer dropped a random thought; 'twere
 old and yet 'twere new,
 A simple fancy of the brain, but strong in be-
 ing true.
 It shone upon a genial mind and lo! its light
 became
 A lamp of life, a beacon ray, a monitory flame,
 The thought was small; its issue great, a watch-
 fire on the hill;
 It sheds its radiance far adown and cheers the
 valley still!
 A nameless man, amid a crowd that thronged
 its daily mart,
 Let fall a word of hope and love, unstudied
 from the heart;
 A whisper on the tumult thrown—a transitory
 breathe—
 It raised a brother from the dust; it saved a
 soul from death—
 O germ! O fount! O word of love! O thought
 at random cast!
 Ye were but little at the first, but mighty at the
 last.

Family Circle.

SHOULD HE BE PERMITTED TO
PREACH?

Deep shadows on the heart! And why?
 The hand of sin has touched the life;
 And hope and peace forever fly
 Before the darkness and the strife.

The morning air, stirred to motion by
 the uprisen sun, cooled the hot cheek of
 Richard as he sat in unbroken silence be-
 side the dear old father who drove rapidly
 to the depot to meet the eight o'clock
 train. He looked over and beyond the ri-
 pening meadows and fields of yellowing
 corn to the shoulders of the far-away hills
 that formed a jagged and bizarre outline
 against the cloud-checkered horizon.

Richard neither thought nor felt. There
 are moments in life when the will permits
 neither heart nor mind to do natural office
 work, and the being enwraps itself in a
 mantle of semi-unconsciousness and bids
 the world wag on. But after a while the
 flood-gates must open, and then comes the
 deluge. Who can stand before it?

The loving, anxious pastor was on the
 platform to bid Richard "Good-by," and
 give a word of tender farewell counsel.
 His interest in the Landon family was that
 of a faithful Christian brother toward
 those for whom he felt the sincerest re-
 spect, coupled with that leaning for sup-
 port which calls into lasting life, ties of
 the strongest nature. Earnestness of both
 manner and voice told in stronger language
 than his few well-timed words, his love
 for Richard, and his sympathy for the
 father who was now giving up to the
 stern demands of life his first-born, his
 only son. Heartlessness jeers at these ten-
 der epochs: would that life gave us more
 of them.

No word did the father utter as he
 grasped the hand which seemed to him
 more than that of a child at his knee, than
 of the son whose stature out measured his
 own. The pastor said nervously, "Live
 near the cross, Richard, my son. Pray
 much. Temptation will be around you.
 The world is full of snares and trial. God
 bless you Richard."

A moment and he was beyond their
 sight. Then the two old men shook hands
 silently, each going his way homeward.

With the future throwing its halo upon
 us the young mind does not linger long in
 the past, with its tears and partings. Age
 clings to that it is leaving and dreads that
 which is to come. Richard Landon, even
 before reaching the next station, betook
 himself to the warmth of glowing anticipa-
 tion. And his mind ran on, and on—
 through the trial of college initiation, the
 duties pleasant and disagreeable of stu-
 dent life, the regions of knowledge to be
 explored and mastered, the daily contact
 with those whom he should meet—strangers
 from various homes—each with his own
 personality and peculiarity—and then far

on in the future, to that period when he
 should go out from the college into the
 higher life of a theological seminary, per-
 haps the first of his class (for Richard was
 fully aware that he possessed more than
 ordinary mental gifts, that if he had been
 denied silver and gold, he had been made
 the inheritor of a far richer estate—the
 wealth of mind,—and, then, these days
 over, he should come forth crowned cap-
 able with much learning. He pictured him-
 self courted and flattered—the sought of
 many, the worshipped of many. Thus did
 his kaleidoscope turn up to him brilliant
 pictures, and he gazed on them delighted-
 ly, so even the faint echoings of the
 dear pastor's charge—"keep near the
 cross, Richard my son"—died quite out in
 the distance.

Ah, who, in looking on the plain, come-
 ly youth as he sat there in his cassinet
 suit, the possessor of a small trunk and of
 a small and poorly-filled purse, with mien
 so quiet and unobtrusive, would think that
 in that bosom covered by the home-made
 vest were revelling thoughts, the outlook
 of which was a lasting national fame? And
 yet it was so. Every man would be
 a hero were but the tithe of his aspirations
 met. But the word jostles us on, and For-
 tune—fickle goddess—beats us about and
 around so capriciously, and fierce storms
 burst where we had looked for sunlit skies
 and favoring gales, until we are so dazed
 that the light without grows dim, and the
 light within becomes darkness, and the
 life-purpose is lost sight of, and we find
 ourselves often drifters on the great sea
 of life to be wrecked at any time.

Each soul is a world in itself—a won-
 derous immortality, with powers to develop
 eternally. What grand revealings when
 each shall come up to present his clear
 life record before the gaze of the attentive
 myriads that shall stand with him in judg-
 ment. No mist then—no hypocrisy. Each
 life-sheet true in every jot and tittle.
 How many Dives then shall go down to
 torment—how many Lazaruses be carried
 to rest in Abraham's bosom. A great deal
 of tropy turviness and loose jointedness,
 now,—but, then, a complete and eternal
 righting-up and setting down in just po-
 sitions. So let not the humble Christian
 fear nor dare to murmur because the
 wicked triumph and the unjust man ruleth.
 Only let him possess his soul in patience
 and wait ye a little while. The Great
 Rectifier—even our Lord Jesus—will come
 and quickly bring light out of darkness
 and make crooked paths straight. What
 a glorious hope is that, of final justice.
 What folly that men delve and toil through
 distracting days and feverish nights to
 work out their own ruin! We need much
 of the other world in this. We shall need
 nothing of this world when we come to
 the final reckoning—and yet the A. T.
 Stewarts must make fortunes—must barter
 their souls for this world's pelf, driving out
 by so doing all the divinity within them,
 and for greed of gold setting the seal to
 their own condemnation. Thousands do
 this for money, while thousands, like Rich-
 ard Landon, write their own doom for
 fame.

In making his forecasts for the future,
 Richard did not entertain the thought of
 entire consecration to Christ and ceaseless
 effort to save his fellow-men. "Son, give
 me thine heart," was nowhere a motto on
 the walls of the glorious temple he would
 rear to his own honor. And yet his con-
 science was tender. He did desire to be
 useful, provided it did not cost too much
 for self-sacrifice. The way smooth, he
 could get forward bravely. But he could
 not find courage to pluck out the right eye
 of his self love and cut off the right hand
 of his worldly ambition, that he might en-
 ter into the full favor of his Master with
 an eye single to His glory.

What scores of ambassadors that now
 stand for Christ seem to have forgotten
 the power that sent them forth, and en-
 tirely ignore the message of salvation
 through Christ, they have been sent to
 proclaim. They do not realize that there
 is power in the Gospel to save the world,
 therefore they resort to all other themes
 to attract and please the people. Not
 having their minds stayed on the sure word
 of promise spoken by the Master Himself,
 "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the
 end of the world," they will not fearfully
 tell men the whole truth, whether they
 will hear or forbear, but will let them rest
 at ease in their sins, neither stirring up
 their conscience by the requirements of
 the law, nor persuading them to be recon-
 ciled to God through Christ. Without en-
 tire consecration to Christ and a full and
 through faith in the promises He has left
 on record, no man is prepared to preach
 with that measure of success which every

minister should have. We do not make a
 full surrender to Christ. There are mental
 reservations, there are practical denials,
 and so the light of the people of God shows
 so feebly and so flickeringly that those
 who look to it are misled by its uncertain
 guidance.

How many men do as Richard Landon
 preferred to do—make the ministry the
 hand-maiden of material good, converting
 the pulpit into a mere medium for the
 gratification of their love of fame, of self-
 culture, of social position, and, in many
 cases, of food and raiment. How many
 would not preach if they could make a
 living elsewhere? How fearful is the con-
 dition of all such before God, who is a
 jealous God, and who "will not give His
 glory to another!"

The sun was soberly setting beyond the
 western hills, withdrawing his softened
 light from plain and river, as Richard
 Landon reached the quiet town of L., and
 wended his way to the student's board-
 ing hall. He was a stranger, amid strangers.
 The next day he entered college, and was
 assigned the Sophomore class. His pride
 revolted against grade with boys younger
 than himself, but his judgment approved;
 so he mastered himself, and took posses-
 sion.

Two weeks of students' life have passed.
 Richard Landon sits beside the little table
 on which burns his untrimmed lamp.
 Richard was the pet of his mother and
 two sisters, so he had not learned any of
 those little household accomplishments
 which a student and a bachelor so much
 need. He could not tell why, but some-
 how there had crept into his soul a pecu-
 liar restlessness. It had no focal point,
 but was generally diffused, giving to all
 his thoughts that peculiar distressing be-
 wilderment which so unfits for concentra-
 tion of purpose or feeling. The day had
 been dull. Unceasing rain had pattered
 down from the thick, still clouds over-
 head. The whole aspect of the earth was
 such as to make one feel desperate; and
 Richard Landon did.

His Cicero lay open before him. He
 had made ineffectual efforts to study, but
 he was not one whit wiser for the attempt.
 He laid the book aside with a sigh, and
 fell a thinking and wondering, mixing up
 past, present, and future in such salma-
 gundi style that no Aristotelian philoso-
 phy could have ever analyzed the olio.
 However, they came along with each plan
 the gigantic "ego," which threw its shad-
 ow over all the ground, and served to give
 interest to every scheme.

Suddenly, as if a revelator had whis-
 pered in his ear, there swept through his
 soul the parting words of his pastor, "Live
 near the cross, Richard, my son; pray
 much." His plans dissolved, his pur-
 poses stood still, as did his heart. It was
 a strange monition. He heeded it. He
 bowed to pray, his mind still confused.
 As he looked at himself he felt his need
 of guidance and of strength. A sense of his
 utter helplessness came over him. Heavy
 sobs burst from his bosom, while his tears
 fell as from the eyes of a whipped child.

Richard Landon was honest in desire.
 He did long to do right but he did not
 strive to learn the right. He wished to do
 the will of God, but he did not—would not
 learn that will.

Thousands do just so—supinely rest in
 mere undefined desire, without arousing
 themselves to search to know what the
 Master would have them both believe and
 do.

Men who possess marked positivism in
 all material affairs will strangely live, mys-
 tified in all matters pertaining to their re-
 lation to God as Creator and to Christ as
 Redeemer; and with the revelation of
 God in their hands, so simple that the
 wayfaring man, though a fool need not err
 therein, they stumble on, self-blinded and
 self-deceived, never possessing any assur-
 ance of eternal good, and pass away with
 as little hope and evidence of happiness be-
 yond the grave as does the Hindoo Suttee
 or the Indian of the Rocky Mountains.

Would that men could rise to the dig-
 nity of their position as immortal beings.
 Would that Christians would live daily in
 the full possession of all the sublime and
 glorious privileges of their birth-right as
 children of the Most High God.

The earnest pleadings had ceased long
 before Richard arose from his knees. The
 attitude was consonant with his unvoiced
 feelings. He arose, opened his trunk and
 took out his writing material. His pur-
 pose was to send a letter home. The pic-
 ture of Minnette Joy looked up into his
 face. He changed his purpose and wrote
 to her; it was his first letter. The result
 of this natural, indeed seemingly necessary
 act, we shall trace hereafter. Our appa-

rently trivial deeds are often fraught with
 greatest moment.

"A tender babe is born—'tis Attila, scourge
 of the nations.
 A seeming benefactor dieth—it is Jesus the
 Saviour of men."
 To be Continued.

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