

GERMLESS DAYS.

O, for the good old days! When microbes were unknown When bold bacilli lurked not. In every vein and bone, When we could eat with freedom And were not prone to sigh Because they set before us Some antiseptic pie.

ROBERT HARDY'S SEVEN DAYS.

A Dream and Its Consequences. BY REV. CHARLES SELDEN. Author of "In His Steps," "The Crucifixion of Philip Strong," "Molech's Kiss," Etc.

Therefore ye shall receive the greater condemnation!

O self, god of the earth yet! With 2000 years of the Son of God written into its history, still goes up the cry of those who perish with hunger, who break into the sanctuary of their souls because they cannot get work to do and are weary of the struggle of existence.

CHAPTER XI.

Those words of Clara, "I shall go with you then," filled the family with dismay. Mr. Hardy bowed his head and groaned. Mrs. Hardy, almost beside herself with grief and terror, flew to the side of the girl and, with beseeching cries and caresses, tried to bring back to consciousness the mind that for a moment or two had gleamed with reason and then had gone back into the obscurity and oblivion of that mysterious condition in which it had been lying for three days, but all in vain.

"Why, father, what makes you think that?" cried Alice. "I don't know. I can't give any exact reason. I only know that I don't believe it will happen."

"No, Mary; I cannot resist an impression so strong that I cannot call it anything but a conviction of reality; that somehow, in some way, I shall be called away from you Sunday night. I have struggled against it, but it grows upon me even more firmly. God is merciful. I do not question his goodness. How much did I deserve even this week of preparation after the life I have lived? And the time will not be long before we shall all meet there. God grant that it may be an unbroken company!"

Mr. Hardy spoke as any one in his condition could. The children drew about him lovingly. Bess climbed into his lap. She laid her face against her father's face, and the strong man sobbed as he thought of all the years of neglected affection in that family circle. The rest of the evening was spent in talking over the probable future.

George, who seemed thoroughly humbled now, listened respectfully and even tearfully to his father's counsel concerning the direction of business and family matters.

Robert found George waiting for him. The father was almost faint with the reaction from his address. George gave his arm, and the two walked home in silence.

about 10 o'clock and after coming home to lunch went down again with the intention of getting through all the business and returning home to spend the rest of the time with the family.

"Shut down the works for a little while and ask the men to get together in the big machine shop. I want to speak to them."

"There has been touched by the hand of God," trying to apply the principles of Christianity to the business and traffic of the world. Mr. Hardy crossed the yard from the office, followed by the clerks and assistant officers of the road, all curious to hear what was coming.

"I do not believe Clara is going to die when I do."

"I never made any difference to me when your wives and children grew sick and died. I never knew what sort of houses you lived in except to know that in comparison with mine they must have been very crowded and uncomfortable. For all these 25 years I have been as indifferent to you as one man possibly could be to men who work for him. It has not occurred to me during this time that I could be anything else. I have been too selfish to say my relation to you and act upon it."

"I do not call you in here today to apologize for 25 years of selfishness—not that alone. But I do want you to know that I have been touched by the hand of God in such a way that before it is too late I want to say to you all, 'Brothers,' and say to you that when you think of me hereafter it may be as I am now today, not as I have been in all the years past."

"There are many things which abide the sting of them, I mean. The impress of my selfishness is stamped on this place. It will take years to remove it. I might have been far more to you. I might have raised my voice as a Christian and an influential director of this road against the Sunday work and traffic; I never did. I might have relieved unnecessary discomfort in different departments; I refused to do it. I might have helped the cause of temperance in this town by trying to banish the saloon; instead of that I voted to license a crime and poverty and disease establishment."

"I might have used my influence and my vote to build healthy, comfortable homes for the men who work on this road; I never raised my finger in the matter. I might have helped to make life a happier, sweeter thing to the nearly 1,000 souls in this establishment, and I went my selfish way, content with my own luxurious home and the ambition for self culture and the pride of self accomplishments. And yet there is not a man here today who isn't happier than I am."

"I wish you all, in the name of the good God, who forgives our sins for Jesus' sake, the wish of a man who looks into the other world and sees things as they really are. I do not wish you to think of my life as a Christian life. It has not been such, but as you hope to be forgiven at last forgive all wrongs at my hands."

"You are living in the dawn of a happier day for labor. There are Christian men in business in this town and some few connected with railroads who are

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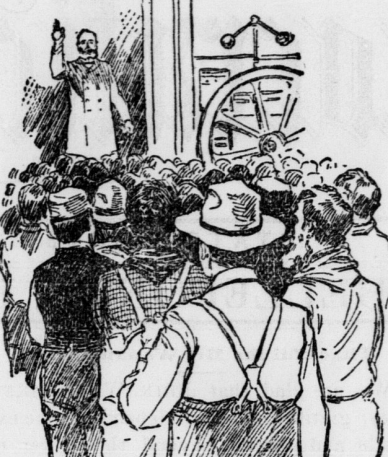
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