

SOLITUDE.

Laugh, and the world laughs with you, Weep, and you weep alone; For the sad old Earth must borrow its mirth,

Rejoice, and men will seek you; Grieve, and they turn and go; They want full measure of all your pleasure,

Feast, and your halls are crowded; Fast, and the world goes by; Succeed and give and it helps you live,

PROMISES AT RANDOM.

In a small but thriving village in New York lives a man by the name of Albert Brown. At the age of four and twenty he took to himself a wife;

For a while all went on well; he had so much as he wished to do; his patrons were prompt in their payments, and his prospects were bright.

"Albert," said his wife one evening as he came in from the post-office, "Mr Cummings has been here after the funnel you promised to make for him."

"Ah, has he?" returned the young man looking up from the paper that he had just opened.

"Yes, and seemed quite anxious about it, for the weather is cold, and his family are unable to use their sitting room just for want of that funnel."

"Well, I must make it to-morrow." "But you know you have promised to have Mr. Moore's cook-stove ready to-morrow, and you have all the funnel to make for that, besides a boiler and a tea-kettle."

"Yes, I know that; but Moore'll have to wait. I must make that funnel for Cummings."

For some time Alice Brown sat in silence. Her face revealed a troubled mind, and her hand moved tremulously over the silken hair of her infant.

"Albert," she said at length, "you will pardon me, I know, for what I am now going to say. She trembled as she spoke, not being used to reprimanding her husband. She was a mild, modest, little woman, and severity of language was something she could not use, unless, indeed, it may have been once in a while to her little son, who often tried her patience.

"Go ahead, Alice," returned the young man, with a faint smile. "I must speak, Albert, for I am sure you do not realize how you are injuring yourself. You do not realize, I fear, how often you disappoint your customers. Now, I heard Mr. Cummings say he had better have sent to the city at once and then he should have got his funnel in some kind of season."

"Then why didn't he send? I never asked him for his custom."

"Ah, Albert, you do not mean what you say. You have asked for his custom. You have asked for the custom of all the people in town; not only so, but in your advertisement you promise to do your work with promptness and despatch. Now listen to me calmly, for surely I am anxious only for your good. You have often promised people certain things at a given time, and you know how often you have disappointed them. Now why is it not just as easy to have your promises and performances agree as to have them so often at fault? When Mr. Cummings came for his funnel, why could you not have made up your mind just when you could do the work, and then do it at all hazards? Of course, sickness is always a reasonable excuse."

"But you do not understand these things, Alice," said the husband in an explanatory manner. "When I have so much work on my hands, it is impossible always to tell just when such and such things can be done. I do them all as soon as I can."

"And yet, Albert, you disappoint your customers. Now just reflect a moment. You do not do the work you have, but the trouble is you do not do it at the time promised. Now, for instance, when Cummings came for his funnel he asked you if he could not have it by the next day at noon. Instead of carefully considering what you had on your hands, and answering accordingly, you simply wished to please him for the time being, and told him he should have it as he wished. But when he came for it, it was not done, and thoughtlessly you told him he could have it by night. This evening he called again, and again he is disappointed. His wife is now fretting, and he is angry; and he has good cause for it. And now look at to-morrow; if you make his funnel to-morrow, you must disappoint Moore, for his is an all day's job, most surely; and you know how particular he is."

"O, I know what you mean, Alice, but I should like to have you take hold and try. You'd find talking and doing two different things, I'm thinking."

"Perhaps I should, Albert, but yet I'd make them both agree in the end. When I had promised Mr. Cummings his funnel I would have done it. Last night I would have called to mind all the work I had on hand, and if I had been sure that I could turn it off as promised without working in the evening, I would have spent the evening in the house; but had it appeared otherwise, I would have worked till midnight if need be. Ere I would break a business promise I would work all night

while my health and strength lasted. But there would be no need of this. Keep a book, and in it put all your work promised, and then go at it. If a man wants such a thing at a given time, just refer to the work on hand, and if you find you can reach it without disappointing others, then promise him; but if you cannot do so, then tell him so plainly, and also when you can do it. Be sure no sensible man will find fault with this. Let people see that you will be prompt and reliable, and you need not fear of losing custom; but if things go on in this way much longer, you must lose money, it cannot be otherwise."

Albert Brown tried to laugh, but it was rather a ghastly performance. His wife had spoken the truth and he knew it, but he made no promises, for he did not feel exactly like owing up to the error.

Mr. Cummings was a good customer, and on the next morning Brown made his funnel. It took him until after ten o'clock to do it, and then he went to work upon the things for Moore. After dinner Cummings came in and got his funnel, but he was not so thankful to find it done as Albert hoped his would be.

Just at dusk Mr. Moore came in. He had a heavy wagon with him, for the purpose of taking his stove away; but the boiler and tea-kettle were not done. "I declare," said Brown, "I haven't your job done yet."

"But how's that? You promised me that I should have them to-night without fail."

"I know—but I had a funnel to make for Cummings, and it put me back." "But you should not have engaged your work until mine was done."

"But I had this engaged before I had yours."

"Then you might have calculated upon that and not promised me as you did. Had you set to-morrow night as the time for me, I should not have left my work at a busy period, and ridden seven miles from home for nothing."

"I am sorry, Mr. Moore; but really I could not help it."

"Perhaps you could not," said Moore, with dubious shake of the head, "but you remember you bothered me in the same way last spring about my milk pans. I came twice for those before I got them."

Poor Albert felt ashamed, and he stammered out some apology.

"Now, I'll tell you the truth," resumed Moore, rather severely, "I am just now very busy, and have several hands engaged to work for me, so I cannot leave them again. If you will finish these things and send them up to me to-morrow, I should like it, otherwise I shall not want them."

Brown promised to send them up, and Mr. Moore took his leave. But the young tinman was not cured of his fault. Things went on as before, and Mrs. Brown was obliged to bear much complaint. The winter passed away, and in the spring another tin shop was opened in the village. A young man named Ames came to the place and sought the patronage of the inhabitants. Within a month after this Albert Brown found himself almost without a customer. To be sure he could make up any quantity of tinware for peddlars, but this was not to his taste. The most profitable branch of his business was gone, for all his old customers now flocked to Ames, where their orders were promptly filled.

"I declare, it is too bad," said Albert Brown to his wife as they arose from the supper table.

"It is too bad, Albert, but you should not complain of your customers."

"I don't—but why should Ames come here?"

"He was asked to come here, Albert. You know the people had become tired of waiting your motions. And there is Mansfield, the tailor; he is also obliged to go without customers."

"I noticed that Mansfield's shop was shut up as I came by," said Albert thoughtfully.

"Then he's had to quit," resumed his wife. "I heard some time ago that the people would not put up with his negligence much longer. He is a good tailor, but no one could depend upon him."

For some moments Albert sat in silence and gazed into the fire. At length, while a sad expression rested on his countenance, he said:

"Alice, I cannot deny that I have lost all through my own fault, I remember what you have often said to me, and how you have warned me of this; and I know that all this could have been avoided had I but listened to you. But it's too late now."

"No, no, Albert! not too late," uttered Alice moving to her husband's side and putting her arms about his neck, "you can yet work on."

"But not here. We must give up this little house and move to some strange place."

Further conversation the latter left and returned home. He told his wife how the case stood, and she at once advised him to make the purchase.

"We can raise the money," she said, "and I suppose everything he has will sell."

On the next day Albert accepted Ames' offer, and as soon as a list of the goods was made out he paid the money over, and ere long he had the field once more to himself. He issued a new advertisement, and after enumerating the articles he had for sale, he added these significant words, "Try me."

And now Albert Brown commenced anew. He took a book and set down every order as it came in, and noted the time set for its completion. He now made no promises without referring to his book, and the consequence was that he never failed to meet his engagements, and yet how simple it was. Aye, and how much easier than the old method. How smoothly it all went now. His work was more than before in quantity, and he completed it more easily than before.

The result was soon apparent. Customers flocked in upon him; his old friends returned and within a year he was the most thriving mechanic in town. People from adjoining places heard of his promptness and faithfulness, and they came to employ him. Surely he never regretted the short sojourn of another tinman in the village, nor did he ever fail to bless his wife, as each returning season found his coffers gradually but surely growing full.

And so it must always be in all the departments of business life. Try it, ye who need and see.

As to Snuff.

"There's just as much snuff sold today as there ever was," said an ancient tobacconist in Chicago the other day. "Its use, though, is principally restricted to the Germans, Bohemians, Irish and English, with a considerable percentage of the old-fashioned Americans thrown in. The working classes are those that use snuff, it being an economical way of indulging in the nicotine habit, and at the same time does not hinder the snuffer in his work. Women, too, are habitues of the fragrant nostrum, old and elderly ladies especially. Of the females of this generation only a certain class use snuff, and they either chew it, using the Scotch variety, which they conceal between their upper teeth and lip, or mix it with a lather of white-castile soap and rub their gums with this compound placed on a tooth brush."

"In point of price, snuff ranges from between 60 cents and \$1.80 per pound. The finest and most expensive is Lotzbeck, manufactured and imported from Lake, Germany. The Germans and Bohemians use almost exclusively rappee and Lotzbeck, being very pungent in odor, and almost black in color, something like perique smoking tobacco. Maccaboy is brown in shade, and is used by the English. The Irish take to 'high dust,' a dry and fine as powder, and of a bright yellow hue, while the Scotch, of a very light yellow, is consumed by the Scotch, Welsh and Americans."

"Are your customers discriminating when they purchase snuff?" was asked.

"Very much so. You can't deceive an old snuffer. Once he gets the snuff into his nostrils he knows exactly what it is, and, if good, bad, or indifferent. Many people use snuff temporarily, to get rid of a cold or to strengthen their eyes. For certain eye troubles snuff is considered a specific. I remember a woman—she is old at the present time, who began to use snuff ten years ago to remedy her weak eyes, and she told me it cured her completely. Generally speaking, snuff is a form of the tobacco luxury which only adult and mostly elderly or aged people take to. I think the proportion of snuffers to smokers is about one to fifteen. There is one thing about it I shouldn't like, to be obliged to help in the making of snuff. A person unaccustomed to it can hardly breathe in a snuff factory, so pungent and strong is the odor. Of course it's unhealthy, because one cannot help taking a good deal of the fine powder into the lungs and system, and that is bad for the health and bad for the digestion."

Doesn't It?

A writer from Rochester, N. Y., says:—I called recently on a bride of a few months early one morning and found her pouring the breakfast coffee for her husband. She was fairly submerged in the foamy billows of a sea-green robe, and on her head was a cap of more intricate construction than I could clearly describe in half a column. After she had kissed her spouse good-bye for the day and we were alone in her boudoir she threw off the elaborate gown for a plain one.

"Good heavens me!" I said; "is it possible that you achieve such a careful toilet simply for your husband?"

"Safe to bet on it," was the reply. "You mean to marry some time? Well, take my advice. When you have once taken a husband, keep him. Don't let the charm of fascination be broken through your own carelessness. The greatest danger, don't you see, is that the sameness of one wife, right along, will tire him of you. Now, you can't effect any actual changes in yourself. Whatever novelty of person you present must be extraneous. Isn't that so?"

"I guess it is."

"Well, I came to the conclusion that the time to show myself in new aspects to my hubby was in the morning. I have made it a point to get a great number of toilets to appear before him in at breakfast. That captures him anew every morning, makes me think about him all day long, and brings him back to me at night an ardent lover."

I quote this advice for what it is worth. Anyhow, it seems reasonable, doesn't it?

Life does not count by years. Some suffer a lifetime in a day, and so grow old between the rising and setting of the sun.

"Allah, Allah!"

The Holy City of Kairwan in the Mecca of the State of Tunis, and indeed, of Northern Africa. It lies about eighty miles south of Tunis, and some twenty miles inland from the sea. On entering the town I saw a drove of camels coming over the desert, led by their keepers. On the other side appeared a woman riding on an ass, and robed in a mantle of deep dark blue, which was folded over her head and round an infant in her arms. A man walked by her side with a staff to which a gourd was attached. The man was descending behind them, and his teams lit up their figures as they turned away into the wilderness. A little further on, near a solitary palm tree, a man was riding a camel, with a worn woman slowly trailing on foot behind him. At a sign the camel stopped, and the man, dismounting, lay under the tree, and sent the weary woman far into the distance for water. It is here that the Barber of the Prophet Mohammed is buried, who possessed the most precious clippings from his beard—three hairs of which now remain. The town is not interesting, consisting of houses built of small bricks, partly covered in patches with dilapidated plaster. The roofs are flat, and one can walk from one to another almost over the town. The town is surrounded by a thin wall, surmounted with a parapet with semicircular crenellations. The gates are of old wood, studded with iron knobs. The streets are filthy, unpaved lanes, and the house-doors lead downward, as into a cellar. There is no hotel or inn of any description. The whole town is studded with mosques, small, decayed, and poor in appearance, but there are only two of consequence, the Great Mosque and the Tomb of the Barber.

In the Great Mosque there are a multitude of pillars, mostly antique remains, of various colored marbles. On entering, knowing the prejudices of the Turks, I stooped down to take off my shoes before treading on the holy carpet—or rather matting. This appeared to please them, and a priest made a gesture to me, and forthwith caused the matting to be rolled away, so that I could walk upon the floor, thick with dust and dirt. The scene was impressive. Numbers of figures, with the white burnous bound round their heads by a string, were crouching round with their rosaries of beads, and prayer-books, chanting a kind of Gregorian measure. This caused a sort of vibrating hum to pervade the building. At the foot of the pulpit are two red granite pillars about twelve feet high, and some six inches apart. Through these the faithful squeeze themselves into Paradise, having previously reduced their bodies by starvation for the purpose. Nearly two and a half inches of granite have been worn away from one of the pillars by repeated friction, so that the entrance has become easier than it must once have been. A small, slim boy of thirteen years of age was just able to slip through. To a full-grown man it must have been a severe trial. The Tomb of the Barber, placed in an upper room in one of the mosques, is surrounded with trellis-work, covered with rich carpet, and hung round with canopies, banners, painted ostrich eggs, and other offerings of the faithful. Every Friday, and also on other days in the week, penances take place at various mosques or religious houses in the town. The persons who practice these rites have many social and pecuniary privileges, and belong to a special caste of their own.

I went to see one of these ceremonies. It took place at half past 8 in the evening, two hours after dark. I entered a courtyard, and passed thence to a whitewashed room, stepping over the carved barrier about eighteen inches high, which is usual in Moorish houses. I then found myself in a room, as far as I can guess, about thirty or forty feet long by twenty or thirty feet wide. On the right, as we entered, was a sort of alcove with dark marble pillars. The walls of the room, which were somewhat irregular, were daubed with whitewash, and very dirty; the floor was of mud and stone. Opposite the alcove, and on the left of the entrance door, was a huge wooden grating, behind which the women were placed. In the centre hung an enormous chandelier of rough woodwork, perhaps about twelve feet square, and covered with bits of candle, glasses with oil and floating wicks, and scraps of glass, and mirrors; an old glass chandelier being opposite the door, likewise garnished with oil lamps and scraps of tallow candle. The light was very dim, and the room had no windows except in the roof which was high and very irregular in form, leading upward until its shape was lost in the gloom. A piece of yellow matting was in the centre, at the edge of the chandelier. For our accommodation, two wooden divans, in shape and size like camp beds, were ranged along the wall opposite the door. In the centre of the matting was a large iron brazier with tripod feet, filled with glowing embers—I think of charcoal. Around this brazier, with their faces inward, a number of persons were sitting, or rather squatting, in Oriental fashion, their shoes placed in rows outside the edge of the matting. Their dress consisted of a fez, with a white and gold turban wound tightly around the lower part of it; underneath this fez they wear white caps. Their cleanliness was very remarkable, and presented a striking contrast to the houses in which they live. On their bodies they wore common white shirts and loose linen trousers, a waistcoat of embroidered cloth fastened on one shoulder and a loose robe down to the ankles, with loose hanging sleeves. Over all the burnous is worn like the Roman toga, hanging down over the left shoulder, and drawn up under the right into a fold over the breast. About twenty of these in the inner circle near the brazier had musical instruments, the drums, which were the principal instruments, were apparently made of green earthenware bottles, turned upside down, the bottom hammered out, and replaced by thick parchment tied down with a string. They were accompanied by pipes, tambourines, and the clashing of pieces of hard wood and fragments of pottery. After we had been there a short time the music began, under the direction of a leader. At first the measure was slow, but quickened in magnificent crescendo, and diminished, with cries of "Allah, Allah!" This lasted nearly three-quarters of an hour. The music was barbaric, but the religious fervor of the performers gave it a certain artistic merit that was very impressive. By degrees the devotees rose from the carpet and stood along the wall of the room opposite to us. They then began to sway from side to side, keeping time to the music; then, as the music became louder, they swayed more and more, sideward and forward; at last bending down on one knee and rapidly rising again.

At last one of them began to roll his head round and round on his breast. Upon this the lesser priests brought him forward on to the matting, and removed the turban, fez, and white cap, leaving his head bare. The head was shaved, with the exception of a long, thick bunch of hair in the centre, which sometimes hung down to the waist. With this the Prophet will lift them into Paradise. The music played louder and louder, and they all began to groan—or rather, I should say, to howl—until the noise was almost insupportable. Then one after another became seized with a delirium, rolling their heads and eyes in a manner that almost frightened me. Then the assistant priests removed the garments from their shoulders, and the brazier was handed from one to another, over which they held their heads to inhale its fumes. Each man then knelt before the high priest, who prayed into each ear in succession. A number of swords were then brought forward. They consisted of broad blades of steel; instead of handles, these swords were fitted into round blocks of wood, about six inches in diameter and two inches thick. The devotees seized them with both hands at the handle and point, and began to raise them over their heads and bring them down with all their force against their waists. Several of them knelt down and placed the points of the swords against the muscles of their shoulders near the neck. The priests then drove the points into the flesh with small wooden mallets, so as to project through the skin on the other side.

Skipping a Cog.

The other morning a citizen of Sproat street, Detroit, who looked the very picture of health, was waiting to take the car, and whistling as a man will when at peace with all the world, when along came an acquaintance who halted abruptly, gazed at him in a doubtful way, and finally held out his hand, with the remark:

"Well, well! Then I was mistaken."

"In what?"

"Why, I thought I heard my wife reading your death notice two weeks ago, and knowing how bad your liver was—"

"My death notice! Why, there isn't a healthier man in Detroit!"

"And knowing how badly your liver was affected," continued the other, "I didn't wonder at it. You are a terribly careless man."

"Why, how?"

"In not taking more care of yourself. The liver is a great vital organ, and no man showing the symptoms you do has any right to neglect searching for a remedy."

"My liver! I'll bet you \$50 that my liver is all right."

"Never mind! If you want to be obstinate that's your lookout and not mine. I simply promise to be one of the pall-bearers. Good morning!"

It was wonderful how the smile faded and the whistling ceased. Instead of taking the car the man headed down town at a slow pace, a half-scared look on his face, and it was only by a great effort that he passed the first drug-store. When he came to the second he walked in, and without even referring to the weather he said:

"Doc, my liver is slightly out of order, and I guess I'll buy a bottle of invigorator."

He got it and hurried off, anxious to reach the office and get down a dose, and no man will see a smile on his face again until he calls upon some doctor that he had gone to the surgeons at the head of two or three hospitals, and they said that their attention had recently been called to the difference in the effects of the two gases. One doctor said that he had pulled through his last patients who had become blood-poisoned by gas by a new method. He had bled the patients, then oxygenized the blood, and purified it in the air, filling up the veins sometimes with salt and water, so that the action of the heart would continue, and afterward put the purified blood back again. The patients came out all right.

Kidd's Money.

On Friday March 7th, the House Committee on Military Affairs, at Washington, directed an adverse report to be made on a bill allowing certain persons to dig for treasure on the government land at West Point. The parties are searching for the treasure said to have been hid along the Hudson river by the famous Captain Kidd. They say they have sought this treasure along other points on the Hudson river, and recently offered the government one-fourth of what they may find for permission to dig for it on the West Point Military reservation. A ghost still guards this money.

FOOD FOR THOUGHT.

There is no other sin but selfishness. Life is the childhood of Immortality. Hasty conclusions are the mark of a fool.

The best thing is to do the present thing well. Nothing is politically right which is morally wrong. Love is the perpetual source of fears and anxieties. Heaven is never deaf but when man's heart is dumb.

The young are slaves to novelty; the old to custom. Make method your slave, but be not a slave to method. If any man offend not in word, the same is a perfect man.

All have the gift of speech, but few are possessed of wisdom. Poverty may excuse a shabby coat, but is no excuse for shabby morals. All honest men will bear watching. It is the rascals who cannot stand it.

There is no vice that doth so cover a man with shame as to be found false and perfidious. It is a great misfortune not to have enough wit to speak well, or not enough judgment to keep silent. Let men laugh when you sacrifice desire to duty, if they will. You have time and eternity to rejoice in.

He is incapable of a truly good action who knows not the pleasure in contemplating the good actions of others. Truth, justice and reason lose all their force and all their lustre when they are not accompanied by agreeable manners. Our incomes are like our shoes; if too small, they gall and pinch us; but if too large, they cause us to stumble and trip.

Discretion is more necessary to women than eloquence, because they have less trouble to speak well than to speak little. The real wealth of a man is the number of things which he loves and blesses, and by which he is loved and blessed. When you give, take to yourself no credit for generosity unless you deny yourself something in order that you may give.

Few things are more unchristian and mean than habitual detraction. And yet the habit is one into which we may easily fall. The secret of all opposition to religion is in the fact that it interferes with the world's love of gain and selfish indulgence. Emerson says: "The way to make the world better is by reforming number one, then there is surely one less villain in the world."

If you wish to be happy you must learn to be just deaf enough not to hear some things, and just blind enough not to see others. Nothing helps you so much to feel content, as the taking of what share may, from the nature of the thing, be possible to you. The difference between a defaulter and a thief is very simple. The one steals enough to hire good lawyers and the other don't.

Experience shows that success is due less to ability than to zeal. The winner is he who gives himself to his work, body and soul. Be what nature intended you for, and you will succeed. Be anything else, and you will be ten times worse than nothing. The world is full of fools, and he who would not wish to see one, must not only shut himself up alone, but also break his looking-glass.

It is not so much the mental vision that is desired to discern truth and goodness as the moral courage that dares openly to espouse it. The present hour is always wealthiest when it is poorer than the future ones, as that is the pleasantest site which affords the pleasantest prospect. No persons, be they ever so humble circumstances, but have some quality of mind that entitles them to an equality with their fellow beings. So great a happiness do I esteem it to be loved that I fancy every blessing, both from gods and men, ready to descend spontaneously upon him who is loved.

Tempests may shake our dwellings and dissipate our commerce, but they scourge before them the lazy elements, which otherwise would stagnate into pestilence. A holy life, spent in the service of God and in communion with Him, is without doubt the most pleasant and comfortable life that any man can live in this world. If all men were to bring their misfortunes together in one place, most would be glad to take their own home again, rather than take a portion out of the common stock. It is a solemn fact that, of every three persons walking on this vast globe, two have never heard of the Savior, have never seen a Bible, know nothing of heaven or hell. It is never right to do evil that good may come, but always right to conciliate confidence and good will by conforming to others' feeling when no principle is at stake. To be always intending to lead a new life, but never to find time to set about it, is as if a man should put off eating and drinking from one day to another, till he is starved and destroyed. A cottage will not hold the bulky furniture and sumptuous accommodations of a mansion; but if God be there, a cottage will hold as much happiness as would stock a palace. To think we are able almost to be so; to determine upon attainment is frequently attainment itself. Thus earnest resolution has often seemed to have almost a savor of omnipotence. The virtue which the world wants is a healthful virtue, not a valetudinarian virtue; a virtue which can expose itself to the risks inseparable from all spirited exertion, not a virtue which keeps out of the common air for fear of infection and eschews the common food as too stimulating.