

The Sifting of Peter.

A FOLK-SONG.

"Behold, Satan hath desired to have you, that he may sift you as wheat."—St. Luke, xxii. 31.

In St. Luke's Gospel we are told How Peter in the days of old Was sifted; And now, though ages intervene, Sin is the same, while time and scene Are shifted.

Satan desires us, great and small, As wheat, to sift us, and we all Are tempted; Not one, however rich or great, Is by his station or estate Exempted.

No house so safely guarded is But he, by some device of his, Can enter; No heart hath armor so complete But he can pierce with arrows fleet Its centre.

For all at last the cock will crow Who hear the warning voice, but go Unheeding, Till thrice and more they have denied The Man of Sorrows, crucified And bleeding.

One look of that pale, suffering face Will make us feel the deep disgrace Of weakness; We shall be sifted till the strength Of self-conceit be changed at length To meekness.

Wounds of the soul, though healed, will ache; The reddening scars remain, and make Confession; Lost innocence returns no more We are not what we were before Transgression.

But noble souls, through dust and heat, Rise from disaster and defeat The stronger, And conscious still of the divine Within them, lie on earth supine No longer.

—H. W. LONGFELLOW.

Christ is our sun! How striking the figure! The sun's beams penetrate everywhere. We live in them and by them, and yet the sun is undiminished, perfect in splendor and power, forever giving out, yet never exhausted or spent. And we receive of Him just in the measure of our willingness to receive. Will we open to eye and hand? He is here, ever the same, ever offering himself as the Life of life, ever giving himself away. Are we willing He should enter in, take possession of us, and dwell with us, guiding every spiritual faculty, refashioning, invigorating, conforming us to his likeness? This willingness is faith. We have not to go after him. See Rom. 10: 6, etc. He is at hand. He waits, how patiently! "Behold I stand at the door and knock." "If any man open." This receptivity is a thing of degrees. The more we take, the more we may have, the more capacity we have. Infinite grace and loving kindness! Grace upon grace, every faculty, every affection in us renewed. "New creatures in Christ Jesus."—Bishop Huntington.

Siftings.

Life is a flower, love is its honey. Pleasure becomes an ill when it costs regrets.—Rocheburne. Beauty without modesty is like a flower broken from its stem. A small evil ought not to be done, even for the sake of a great good. That civility is best which excludes all superfluous formality. It is very dangerous for any man to find any spot on this broad globe that is sweeter to him than his home. Write your name by kindness, love and mercy in the hearts of thousands you come in contact with year by year and you will never be forgotten.

Anybody can soil the reputation of any individual, however pure and chaste, by uttering a suspicion that his enemies will believe and his friends never hear of.

Events are only the winged shuttles which fly from one side of the loom of life to the other, bearing the many-colored threads out of which the fabric of our characters is made.

N^{HW}

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