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## A Good Story. LIGHT IN THE EVENING.

BY T. S. ARTHUR.

"The days grow darker and drearier as we get older." This came from one of two friends, whose years had fallen into the "yellow leaf."

"But, there shall be light at evening," said the other, in a cheery voice.

"Not unless the order of nature be reversed, Mr. Fairfax," was replied. "When the sun sets, day goes out in darkness."

"And yet, for all this, friend Ascot, there will be light at evening. Not half so dark as feared, will the shadows fall; and, quickly, shall the east grow radiant again. Has it not always been so? Have we not always found light at evening, instead of the famed Egyptian blackness. Take your own experience. Think back over the dark days through which you have passed, and to the close of which you looked with a shudder. Did not light come at evening? The sun broke through lifting clouds; or, day came suddenly, in the east—a purer, calmer day, than any you had ever known."

"I often wish that I could see with your eyes, Mr. Fairfax," replied the friend. "But my natural temperament is different. I am apt to look on the gloomy side of things; to turn my back to the light."

"Of course, if we turn ourselves from the light, we cannot receive its blessing. And yet, sitting down, of our own choice, among shadows, we complain that the days grow darker and drearier as we get older."

The door of the room where the two old men were sitting opened, and a young woman entered with a tray in her hand, on which were two saucers of ripe strawberries. She set them down on a table, saying, with a smile: "They are just from the garden. I thought you would enjoy them."

"Light in the evening!" Mr. Fairfax looked at his friend, as the young woman went out. Dropping his eyes to the floor, Mr. Ascot mused for a little while, then said, partly speaking to himself:

"Yes, it is lighter than I anticipated. I thought this day, in the days of my life, would go down in the very blackness of darkness. I was angry with my wayward son, when he took him a wife, because I fancied he had stooped in marriage. He had never been much comfort to me before that time, and I gave up all hope in him for the future. But there was a good providence in the event, which I did not then see. Even while I was drawing around me the curtains of doubt and gloom, her hand was moving among the overhanging clouds, and bearing some of their heaviest folds aside. To my son she proved a good angel. He loved her, and she was worthy of his love. You know that he died. I did not, at first, feel like receiving the widow home. There were no children, and I said to myself, 'She is nothing to me now. Why should I take up the burden of her support? Let her go back among her friends.' Partly to satisfy public sentiment, and partly because her pure and loving nature had begun to influence me, I took her home. It was the closing of a day of sorrow and disappointment, and yet I say, thankfully, at the evening time there was light. No daughter could be more loving, or more thoughtful of every comfort. What should I do without her?"

"Yet, only a little while ago you complained that, as years increased, the days grew darker," said Mr. Fairfax.

"And so I find them." Mr. Ascot's countenance, which had brightened while he spoke of his daughter-in-law, fell again. "There may be a little gleam here and there—a struggling of light, in feeble rays, through broken spaces—but, I see over all things a steadily increasing gloom."

"From whence does it come, my friend?—This gloom is an effect. Do you see the cause?"

"The causes are manifold. Everywhere disappointment tracks my path. The full promise of spring has never come in the summer-time, nor the promise of summer at fruit-gathering. Always, realization falls below the hope. So it has ever been with me, my friend; until now I have lost all confidence in the future; have ceased to look for any good."

"And yet," said Mr. Fairfax, "even while you are thus complaining, good gifts are showered upon you in rich abundance."

"I should like to see them," answered Mr. Ascot, half amused, yet with a flavor of irony in his voice.

"Sometimes there is obscurity of vision.—The objects exist, but we do not perceive them. I think it is so in your case."

"Ah?" with a faint, incredulous smile.

"Take your natural life," said Mr. Fairfax. "What is lacking to your enjoyment?"

"O dear! almost every thing," was impulsively answered.

"What? Is there lack of pleasant food, or refreshing drink, or soft and warm clothing, for the body? Have you not all things in liberal abundance? Is any thing desired for comfort absent from your dwelling? or, does an enemy threaten to despoil you?"

Mr. Ascot shook his head. "I have nothing to complain of in this respect. But—He paused, grew thoughtful, and remained silent.

"Yet, for all this, your heart is troubled.—There is on your mind a weight of dissatisfaction—you feel a constant yearning after something not clearly seen; the nature of which is not clearly apprehended. Your days are not sunshiny, and you feel, as the evening draws on, that it will go down in clouds."

"Yes. You state the case exactly."

"And still I say," Mr. Fairfax spoke cheerily again, "that there will be light in the evening. Always, even in the most external events of your life, when the period of trial, or sorrow, or misfortune closed—when the day's dreaded termination came—light poured in from the west through rending clouds, on the day of a new and higher state, broke in the purpling east. The instance to which you a little while ago referred is but one of hundreds that stand recorded in your memory, if you will open the book and read. But, for you and for me, my friend, there is a day going down, toward the evening of which thought cannot fail often to look forward. Shall there be light then? Will the last setting of our sun leave us in darkness; or shall it be only the herald of a day-spring from on high?"

"You have touched the key-note of a depressing theme," was answered. "Some men turn from the idea of death stoically, and some with indifference, while others contemplate the event serenely, and see in it only a brief passage to heaven. Not so with me. The thought of this last time comes always in gloom. I turn from it in depression—sometimes with a shudder."

"And yet you are a church-member."

"Yes."

"And have, I think, tried earnestly to keep the divine law."

"As far as I understood the command of God, I have tried to live up to them. The time was when I did not give much heed to this law; but for many years past, I have not wilfully gone counter to its clear enunciations."

"If ye love me, keep my commandments. If ye continue in my Word, then are ye my disciples indeed. What more than this?" The friends spoke in a low, impressive voice. "If we obey the divine law, sincerely; that is because it is the divine law, and not because we may have worldly gain as nominal Christians, we need have no fear of the last time. Death will come as a gentle spirit, and, taking us by the hand, lead us through the valley. There will be light at evening, though the declining day be veiled with clouds."

"Sooner than either of the friends had imagined, this prophecy was closed. A year had not passed, when Mr. Fairfax learned, one day, that Mr. Ascot was sick. He found the daughter-in-law in tears.

"Not seriously ill, I trust," he said.

"We have very little hopes of him," was answered in a voice choked by sobs. "He seems to be failing rapidly."

"I am pained to hear this," said Mr. Fairfax. "How long has he been sick?"

"For some months I had thought him failing; but he made no complaint. Three weeks ago he became suddenly ill, and has been rapidly going down ever since."

"What about his state of mind?"

"He is very calm."

Mr. Fairfax went up to the sick chamber. On the face of his old friend he saw death written; not in fearful lines, but in radiant characters. A smile broke, over the pale features, lighting them up as if a curtain had just been drawn aside, admitting the sunshine. The hands of the two old men were laid within each other and tightened.

"I did not, until now, hear of your illness," said Mr. Fairfax, "or I would have seen you before."

It has been severe, breaking me down rapidly," was feebly answered. "Then, after a brief pause, he added—"The evening about which we talked, one day not long ago, has come."

"That evening which comes, soon or late, to all."

"Yes."

"And is there light?"

"There is light, my friend. For a little while it seemed as if the day would go down in blackness: but angel hands soon commenced folding back the cloudy curtains that shut away the sun-illumined sky, and now, instead of sunset, it is sun-rising. Even as I trembled at the approaching shadow, a sweet voice cried to me, 'Lo, the morning breaketh!'"

"And all fear is gone?"

"What is there to fear?" feebly answered the sick man. "God is just and merciful. He knows what we are; how much we have been tempted; and how sincerely we have tried to keep His law. He is a discerner of the thoughts and intentions. Our purpose to do right, even though we have often failed of right action, will be the witness in our favor. Here, confidently, I rest my case, and tranquilly await my Lord's decision."

"Actions are really good only in the degree that they have the inspiration of good purpose," said Mr. Fairfax. "Only such actions find favor with God. So resting in confidence on your will to do right, you look for the joyful words—'Well done!'"

Mr. Ascot closed his eyes and lay still for some time. The look of heavenly peace did not fade from his countenance. Presently the eyes opened again, but their expression was new. They saw, but not the fixed and circumscribed object in that death chamber. There had been granted a clearer vision—mortal investures were folded away. The lips moved, as the face grew bright. Mr. Fairfax bent to hear:

"It shall come to pass—that at evening time—it shall be—light."

"God's promise fulfilled," whispered Mr. Fairfax. "The evening has come, and it is light!"

"Light—light!" Faint as a sigh the response came, in the last motion of dying lips. The night and the morning had met, day breaking in beauty on a human soul. In the evening time there was light.—N. Y. Ledger.

## WASHINGTON'S VISION.

BY WESLEY BRADSHAW.

The last time I ever saw Anthony Sherman was on the 4th of July, 1859, in Independence Square. He was then ninety-one, and becoming very feeble; but though so old, his dimming eyes rekindled as he looked at Independence Hall, which, he said, he had come to gaze upon once more before he was gathered home.

"What time is it?" said he, raising his trembling eyes to the clock in the steeple, and endeavoring to shade the former with a shaking hand—"what time is it? I can't see so well now as I used to."

"Half-past three."

"Come then," he continued, "let us go into the Hall; I want to tell you an incident of Washington's life—one which no one alive knows of except myself, and if you live, you will, before long, see it verified. Mark me, I am not superstitious, but you will see it verified."

Reaching the visitors' room in which the sacred relics of our early days are preserved, we sat down upon one of the old-fashioned wooden benches, and my venerable friend related to me the following singular narrative, which, from the peculiarity of our national affairs at the present time, I have been induced to give to the world. I give it, as nearly as possible, in his own words.

"When the bold action of our Congress, in asserting the independence of the colonies, became known in the world, we were laughed and scoffed at as silly, presumptuous rebels, whom British grenadiers would soon take into submission; but, undauntedly, we prepared to make good what we had said. The keen encounter came, and the world knows the result. It is easy and pleasant for those of the present generation to talk and write of the days of Seventy-Six, but they little know—neither can they imagine—the trials and sufferings of those fearful days. And there is one that I much fear, and that is that the American people do not properly appreciate the boom of freedom. Party spirit is yearly becoming stronger and stronger, and unless it is checked, will, at no distant day, undermine and tumble into ruins the noble structure of the Republic. But let me hasten to my narrative.

From the opening of the Revolution, we experienced all phases of fortune—now good and now ill, at one time victorious, and at another conquered. The darkest period we had, however, was, I think, when Washington, after several reverses, retreated at Valley Forge, where he resolved to pass the winter of '77.—

which presently set themselves in battle array, one against the other. As I continued looking I saw a bright angel, on whose brow rested a crown of light, on which was traced the word UNION, bearing the American flag, which he placed between the divided nations, and said: 'Remember, ye are brethren!'

"Instantly, the inhabitants, casting from them their weapons, became friends once more, and united around the national standard. And again I heard the mysterious voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, the second peril is passed—look and learn.'

"And I beheld the villages, towns, and cities of America increase in size and numbers, till at last they covered all the land from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and their inhabitants became as countless as the stars in Heaven, or as the sand on the sea shore. And again I heard the mysterious voice, saying, 'Son of the Republic, the end of a century—look and learn.'

"At this, the dark, shadowy angel placed a trumpet to his mouth, and blew three distinct blasts, and taking water from the ocean, sprinkled it out upon Europe, Asia, and Africa.

"Then my eyes looked upon a fearful scene. From each of those countries arose thick, black clouds, which soon joined into one; and throughout this mass gleamed a dark-red light, by which I saw hordes of armed men, who, moving with the cloud, marched by land and sailed by sea to America, which country was presently enveloped in the volume of the cloud. And I dimly saw these vast armies devastate the whole country, and pillage and burn villages, cities, and towns that I had beheld springing up. As my ears listened to the thundering of cannon, clashing of swords, and shouts and cries of millions in mortal combat, I again heard the mysterious voice saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn.'

"When the voice had ceased, the dark, shadowy angel placed his trumpet once more to his mouth, and blew a long and fearful blast.

"Instantly a light, as from a thousand suns, shone down from above me, and pierced and broke into fragments the dark cloud, which enveloped America. At the same moment I saw the angel upon whose forehead still shone the word UNION, and who bore our national flag in one hand and a sword in the other, descended from Heaven, attended by legions of bright spirits. These immediately joined the inhabitants of America, who I perceived were aigh overcome, but who, immediately taking courage again, closed up their broken ranks and renewed the battle. Again amid the fearful noise of the conflict, I heard the mysterious voice, saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn.'

"As the voice ceased, the shadowy angel, for the last time, dipped water from the ocean and sprinkled it upon America. Instantly the dark cloud rolled back, together with the armies it had brought, leaving the inhabitants of the land victorious. Then once more I beheld the villages, towns and cities, springing up where they had been before, while the bright angel, planted the azure standard he had brought in the midst of them, cried in a loud voice to the inhabitants: 'While the stars remain and the heavens send down dew upon the earth, so long shall the Republic last!'

"And taking from his brow the crown, on which still blazed the word UNION, he placed it upon the standard, while all the people kneeling down, said 'Amen!'

"The scene instantly began to fade and dissolve, and I saw nothing but the rising, curling white vapor I had first beheld. This also disappearing I found myself once more gazing upon my mysterious visitor, who in the same mysterious voice I had heard before, said:—'Son of the Republic, what you have seen is thus interpreted: three perils will come upon the Republic. The most fearful is the second, passing which, the whole world united shall never be able to prevail against her. Let every child of the Republic learn to live for his God, his Land, and Union!'

"With these words the figure vanished. I started from my seat, and felt that I had been shown the birth, progress, and destiny of the Republic of the United States. In UNION she will have strength, in DISUNION her destruction."

"Such, my friend," concluded the venerable narrator, "were the words I heard from Washington's own lips, and America will do well to profit by them. Let her remember that in UNION she has her strength, in DISUNION her destruction."—The Guardian.

Woman may be nearer akin to angels than man is, but she got intimate with the Devil first.

our dear old commander's care-worn cheeks, as he would be conversing with a confidential officer about the condition of his poor soldiers. You have doubtless heard the story of Washington going to thicket to pray. Well, it is not only true, but he used often to pray in secret for aid and comfort from that God, the interposition of whose divine providence alone brought us safely through those dark days of tribulation.

"One day, I remember it well—the chilly wind whistled and howled through the leafless trees, though the sky was cloudless and the sun shining brightly—he remained in his quarters nearly the whole afternoon, alone.—When he came out I noticed that his face was a shade paler than usual, and that there seemed to be something on his mind of more ordinary importance. Returning just after dusk, he dispatched an orderly to the quarters of the officer I mentioned, who was presently in attendance. After a preliminary conversation, which lasted some half an hour, Washington, gazing upon his companion with that strange look of dignity which he alone could command, said to the latter:

"I do not know whether it was owing to the anxiety of my mind, or what, but this afternoon, as I was sitting at this very table, engaged in preparing a dispatch, something in the apartment seemed to disturb me. Looking up, I beheld, standing directly opposite me, a singularly beautiful female. So astonished was I—for I had given strict orders not to be disturbed—that it was some moments before I found language to inquire the cause of her presence. A second, third, and even a fourth time did I repeat the question, but received no answer from my mysterious visitor other than a slight raising of her eyes. By this time I felt a strange sensation spreading through me. I would have risen, but the riveted gaze of the being before me rendered volition impossible. I essayed once more to address her, but my tongue had become paralyzed. A new influence, mysterious, potent, irresistible, took possession of me. All I could do was to gaze steadily, vacantly, at my unknown visitor.

Gradually, the surrounding atmosphere seemed as though becoming filled with sensations, and grew luminous. Everything about me appeared to rarify; the mysterious visitor herself becoming more airy and yet even more distinct to my sight than before. I now began to feel as one dying or rather to experience the sensations which I have some times imagined accompanying dissolution. I did not think, I did not reason, I did not move; all were alike impossible. It was only conscious of gazing fixedly, vacantly, at my companion.

"Presently I heard a voice, saying, 'Son of the Republic, look and learn!' while at the same time, my visitor extended her arm and forefinger eastwardly. I now beheld a heavy white vapor at some distance rising and folding. This gradually dissipated, and I looked upon a strange scene. Before me lay stretched out in one vast plane; all the countries of the world—Europe, Asia, Africa and America.—I saw rolling and tossing between Europe and Asia and America lay the Pacific. 'Son of the Republic,' said the same mysterious voice as before, 'look and learn!'

"At that moment I beheld a dark, shadowy being like an angel, standing, or rather floating in mid-air, between Europe and America.—Dipping water out of the ocean in the hollow of each hand, he sprinkled some upon America with his right hand, whilst he cast upon Europe some with his left. Immediately a dark cloud arose from each of these countries, and joined in mid ocean. For a while it remained stationary and then moved slowly westward until it enveloped America in its murky folds.—Sharp flashes of lightning now gleamed throughout it at intervals, and I heard the smothered groans and cries of the American people.

"A second time the angel dipped from the ocean and sprinkled it out as before. The dark cloud was then drawn back to the ocean, into whose heaving waves it sunk from view. A third time I heard the mysterious voice, saying, 'Son of the Republic look and learn.'

"I cast my eyes upon America, and beheld villages, towns, and cities springing up, one after another, until the whole land, from the Atlantic to the Pacific, was dotted with them. Again I heard the mysterious voice say, 'Son of the Republic, the end of a century cometh—look and learn.'

"At this the dark, shadowy angel turned his face southward, and from Africa I saw an ill-omened spectre approaching our land. It flitted slowly and heavily over every village, town, and city of the latter, the inhabitants of