

de H. Bain



POETRY.

There is Rest Beyond the River.

HYMN.

{By the Rev. W. A. Brisley Episcopal clergyman, from the last words of Stonewall Jackson: "Let us cross over the river and rest under the shade of the trees."}

I.

There is rest beyond the river,
In the pleasant palm-trees shade,
Where the saints relearned forever
Are in spotless robes arrayed.
When the conflict here is ended,
And the battle's din is o'er,
There is rest beyond the river,
On the sweet celestial shore.

II.

There is rest beyond the river,
There we shall meet again;
We shall see the great Life-giver,
In the splendor of his reign;
Where the faithful and the fearless,
And the tried and true of earth,
In a happy home and tearless,
Enter life's immortal birth.

III.

There is rest beyond the river.
When the Christian soldier falls;
When devoted friends must sever,
And the last loud bugle calls;
And the ancient anthems ringing
Through the ever blessed land,
The beloved ones are singing
As around the throne they stand.

IV.

There is rest beyond the river;
We shall all cross over there;
Faith triumphant fails us never—
Not a sorrow or a care.
Safely to the haven gliding,
Where our patient souls would be,
And in love's own home abiding
Are the friends we long to see.

V.

There is rest beyond the river;
Let us cross into the light—
To the golden dawn of morning,
Where there comes no shade of night;
Where the dear hands we have folded,
And the fond eyes sadly closed,
In the marble features moulded
Are in perfect life disclosed.

VI.

There is rest beyond the river—
O'er its deep and solemn flow—
Where the saints in glory gather
And our heart's dear jewels go.
Let us cross the silent river,
Sweet in Paradise to rest;
Safe to part no more forever,
Where the pure in heart are blest.

A Christmas Story.

"I can't stand it any longer, Jane, I'll go out, and perhaps something will turn up for us."

"It's a cold night, Robert."

"Cold, yes. But it's not much colder out than in. It would have been much better for you if you had married John Tremain," he said, bitterly.

"Don't say that, Robert; I've never regretted my choice."

"Not even when there is not a loaf of bread in the house for you and the children?"

"Not even now, Robert. Don't be discouraged. God has not forsaken us. Perhaps this Christmas eve the tide will turn; better days may dawn upon us to-morrow."

Robert Brice shook his head despondingly.

"You are more hopeful than I, Jane. Day after day I have been in search of employment. I have called at fifty places, only to receive the same answer everywhere."

Just then little Jimmy, who had been asleep, woke up.

"Mother, he pleaded, "won't you give me a piece of bread? I am so hungry."

"There is no bread, Jimmy, my darling!" said the mother, with an aching heart.

"When will there be some?" asked the little child, piteously.

Tears came to the mother's eyes. She knew not what to do.

"Jimmy, I'll bring you some bread," said the father, hoarsely.

And he seized his hat and went to the door. His wife, alarmed, laid her hand upon his sleeve. She saw the look in his eyes; she feared to what step desperation might lead him.

"Remember, Robert," she said solemnly, "it is bad to starve; but there are things that are worse."

He shook off her hand but not roughly, and, without a word, passed out.

Out in the cold streets! There would be their only home next. For a brief time longer he had the shelter of a cheerless room in a cold lodging house, but the rent would come due at the end of the month, and he had nothing to meet it.

Robert Brice was a mechanic competent and skillful. Three years since, he lived in a country village where his expenses were moderate, and he found no difficulty in meeting them. But in an evil hour he grew tired of his village home and removed to the city. Here he vainly hoped to do better. For a while he met with very good success; but he found the lodging house in which he had to live a poor substitute for the neat cottage he occupied in the country. He saw his mistake, but was too proud to go back, although it was his wife's desire they should do so.

But a time of great depression came, and with it a suspension of business enterprise. Work ceased for Robert Brice and many others. If he had been in his old home, he could have turned his hand to something else, and, at the worst, borrowed of his neighbors till better times.

So day by day he went out to seek work, only to return disappointed. If he had been alone he could have got on some way; but it was a sore trial to come to the cheerless room and his pale wife and hungry children, with no relief to offer them.

When on that Christmas eve Robert Brice went into the streets, he hardly knew how he was going to redeem the promise he had made little Jimmy. He was absolutely penniless, and had been so for three days. There was nothing that he was likely to find to do that night.

"I will pawn my coat," he said. "I cannot see my wife and children starve."

It was a well worn coat, and that winter night he needed something more to keep him warm. Weakened by enforced fasting, he was more sensitive to the cold, and shivered as he walked along the pavement.

"Yes," he he said, "my coat must go. I know not how I shall get on without it, but I cannot see the children starve before my eyes."

He was not in general an envious man; but when he saw the sleek, well fed citizens, buttoned up to the throat in warm overcoats, come out of brilliantly lighted shops, provided with presents for happy children at home while his were starving, he suffered some bitter thoughts upon the inequality of fortune's gifts to come to his mind. Why should they be so happy, while he was so miserable?

There was a time, he remembered it well, when he, too, suffered not the Christmas eve to pass without buying some little gifts for Jimmy and Agnes. How little he dreamed they should ever want bread?

There was one man, shorter than himself, warmly clad, who passed him with his hands thrust deep in the pockets of his overcoat. There was a pleasant smile upon his face. He was, doubtless, thinking of the happy circle at home.

Robert knew him to be a rich cabinet-maker and upholsterer, whose ample warehouse he often passed. He had applied to this man only two days before for employment and been refused. It was, perhaps, the thought of the wide difference between them, so far as outward circumstances were, that led Robert to follow him.

After awhile the tradesman, Mr. Grimes, drew his handkerchief from his pocket. As he did so, he did not perceive that his pocketbook came with it, and fell on the pavement. He did not perceive it, but Robert did. His heart leaped into his mouth, and a sudden thought entered his mind. He bent quickly down and picked up the pocketbook. He raised his eyes to see if the movement was noticed. It was not. Mr. Grimes went on, unheeding his loss.

"This will buy bread for my wife and children," thought Robert instantly.

A vision of the comfort which the money would bring the cheerless room lighted up his heart for an instant, but then—for he was not dishonest—there came another thought. The money was not his, much as he wanted it.

"But I cannot see my wife and children starve," he thought again. "If it is wrong to keep the money, God will pardon the offense. He will understand my motive."

All this was sophistry, and he knew it. In a moment he felt it to be so. There were some things worse than starvation. It was his wife who said this just before he came out. Could he meet her gaze

when he returned with food so obtained.

"I've lived honest so far," he thought: "I won't turn thief now."

It was with an effort he came to this decision, for all the while there was before his eyes that vision of a cheerless home, and he could hear Jimmy vainly asking for food. It was with an effort that he stepped forward and placed his hand on the tradesman's shoulder, and extended the hand that held the pocketbook.

"Thank you," said Mr. Grimes, turning round; "I had not perceived my loss. I am much obliged to you."

"You have reason to be," said Robert in a low voice. "I was very near keeping it."

"That would have been dishonest," said Mr. Grimes, his tone altering slightly.

"Yes, it would; but it is hard to be honest when one is penniless, and his wife and children without a crust."

"Surely you and your children are not in that condition?" said the tradesman, earnestly.

"Yes," said Robert, "it is only too true. For two months I have vainly sought for work. I applied to you two days since."

"I remember you now. I thought I had seen you before. You still want work."

"I should feel grateful for it."

"My foreman left me yesterday. Will you take his place at twenty-five dollars a week?"

"Thankful, sir; I would be for half that."

"Then come to-morrow morning, or, rather, as to-morrow will be a holiday, the day succeeding. Meantime, take this for your present necessities."

He drew from his pocket some notes, and handed them to Robert.

"Why, you have given me thirty dollars!" said Robert, in amazement.

"I know it. The Pocket book contained five thousand dollars. But for you, I should have lost the whole. I wish you a merry Christmas."

"It will, indeed, be a merry Christmas," said Robert, with emotion. "Heaven bless you, sir! Good-night."

"Good-night."

Jennie waited for her husband in the cold cheerless room which for a few days longer she might call her home. An hour passed; there was a step on the stairs—her husband's. It could not be, for this was a cheerful, elastic step, coming up two steps at a time. She looked eagerly to the door. Yes, it was he. The door opened. Robert, radiant with joy, entered with a basket full of substantial provisions.

"Have you got some bread, father?" asked Jimmy hopefully.

"Yes, Jimmy some bread and meat from a cook's shop; here's a little tea and sugar. There's a few coals left. Let's have a bright fire and a comfortable meal, please God, this shall be a merry Christmas."

"How did it happen?" "Tell me Robert."

So Robert told his wife; and soon a bright fire lit up before the cheerless room and there were four hearts that waited in joyful hope for the dawn of a merry Christmas day.

The next week they moved to better rooms. They have never since known what it is to want. Robert found a firm friend in Mr. Grimes, and has an account in the savings bank, and has reason to remember, with a grateful heart, God's goodness on the Christmas eve.