

# Homespun Philosophy

BY THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.

"Never was a marvel done upon the earth but it had sprung of Faith; Nothing noble, generous, or great but Faith was the root of the achievement; Nothing comely, nothing famous, but its source is Faith. Loonidas fought in human Faith as Joshua in divine. Faith Columbus found a path across the untried waters; Tell was strong and Alfred great and Luther wise by Faith. Faith in his reason made Socrates subtle, as Faith in science Galileo."

"I'm not going to study any lessons to-night," the College Girl said in a low, even voice. The dimples were all smoothed out of her face by the look of quiet determination that had come to it. Her lips were thin and straight and her eyes sombre. Her glance wandered coolly around the little circle of absorbed faces in the circle of freight.

"I don't believe it's any use to work so hard over things, any way. I saw a tramp to-day just walking about aimlessly and I think he was the very happiest person I met. He hadn't a care not a responsibility nor a duty. He was merely living. Now who shall say that a man hasn't a right to walk out into the world and do what he pleases with his life? It isn't a question of goodness, for a lot of thrifty people are bad. It's merely a matter of temperament. A vagabond is simply himself. The people at the other extreme are really much worse off."

"Why, I know a lot of men who never have time to glance at a sunset. They never even think of one except as a change in an overcrowded day. Now my vagabond, ragged and dirty and unkempt, was standing at the end of a street gazing entranced into the gold and crimson glory that escaped the notice of nearly every person that passed him. He was going to sleep under the stars. I fancy, free and happy. Isn't that, after all, the 'Simple Life' I fairly envy him, and so I've rebelled against the silly rules that fence me in and the foolish training that only sets one abreast with others who are running a mad race toward—what?"

The Motherly Woman looked up from her knitting and asked gravely: "Did you think, my dear, of—the tramp's breakfast?"

"It wasn't breakfast time," the College Girl answered coolly. "Do you suppose that at sunset the sparrows thought of theirs?"

The Motherly Woman smiled. "I remember that at sunset I was thinking of yours; the yeast was late getting up to-day and I had time for only a glance at the crimson and gold glory because I was just getting the bread out of the oven. It is unusually fine and I remember thinking of you and planning your favorite toast for breakfast."

"And thereby missed the beauty of the evening when I should doubtless be better off with only an apple and a handful of uncooked grain. But there are bees and butterflies too. I dare say you are a dear little worker bee. I saw some to-day talking through the sunny air that make such lovely playthings for the butterflies. You are a natural worker. I—why, I'm a butterfly!"

There was a low chuckle from the Quiet Man's corner. "Do you think," he said gently, "that any work is in itself pleasant? Most of us are born with ideals. The ideal is the soul's consciousness of something better than anything we know by means of what we call the senses. It is the glimpse we catch, through some unclouded crevice of our prison house, of possible perfection. Using the material at hand we fashion out the pattern as we see it. If this vision is broad and clear we call it genius. If the ideal is very clearly defined in certain beautiful lines so that the man follows one with great success we call it talent. If the man strikes out in many directions and misses all the marks we know his vision is perverted, his ideal is blurred. If there is a man who does nothing at all it is because he has no vision. He is content with what is."

The College Girl straightened up with a sudden flush in her cheeks. "But my vagabond has a far more beautiful vision than a miserly man who works industriously could ever have."

The Quiet Man turned his face to the light. "He has more appreciation of the beauty already created. The miser has lost himself in worldly things. Neither has any vision of better conditions. Both are drones in the hive of real progress. Neither is working toward any ideal. That is what real living always means, though not many, perhaps could describe the ideal that guides them."

"Our neighbor's garden is merely an uninteresting bit of ground enclosed by a fence. It can't be pleasant to dig the soil, to enrich it, to lay it off in beds, to till all day long as his pattern a design that perhaps we may not be able to imagine; a bed of lilies and roses and lovely green things that grow. He works with this vision always before him. If there were to be no green growing things, and he knew it he would throw his gardening tools all away. But he knows that wonderful things are folded up in those tiny brown seeds and tucked away in the uninteresting bulbs. I saw him handling some to-day and his touch was positively loving. He looked as he would see the lilies and he was filled of Paradise. That is what his work means to him. He is a magician and he has control of certain natural laws—and natural law is nothing less than the Supreme Will manifested in matter. The gardener uses these laws to bring about results that he sees in his vision."

"There is a man over on the western coast whom we call The Wizard of Horticulture because he accomplishes wonders in the plant world. He adds petals to flowers, gives them new form and color and fills them with fragrance. From the stardust of the universe he selects what he wants of sunshine, air and earth and the great principle of life resp. He calls and becomes a part of God's creation! This man is a factor in the evolution that is moving toward the New Earth that is to displace the old one, not by sudden change, but by natural growth. Soil, to Luther Burbank, is as fair as sunshine. There is no weariness in his work. His vision is broad and clear. The Great Creator is using him."

"And do you suppose that picking and hammering at a block of marble is a pleasant pastime? Yet I know a sculptor who does it with wrapt face and shining eyes because he sees in the stone a face that he sees im-

prisoned in the block of marble a wonderful angel form and his desire is to release the angel. He forgets aching arms and cramped hands and burning eyes. And we wonder at his patience and skill because, alas, we do not see his angel."

The College Girl leaned forward breathlessly. "And sometimes he finds that his angel is a lovely Galatea and—he falls in love with her."

"Yes," said the Quiet Man. "A worker may lose sight of his broad vision and narrow his view to the workshop of his own handwork. But he has had the vision that far. The master you speak of had one to begin with: wealth became his Galatea and without the human impulse of Pygmalion to give life to the object of his love he is content to blindly adore his unresponsive gold. He has closed his vision with his own creation. He has no idea of the angel."

"Haven't you seen in a mother's tender eyes the reflection of her wonderful vision? She toils at home-ly, daily tasks, cooking dinners, dusting rooms, darning stockings, nursing babies and planning beautiful to-morrows. God pity the woman who has no vision, who is working toward no ideal. She is the woman upon whose breast no little head ever nestled. All mothers have visions, I have watched the faces of home-mothers at work and I have read in them shining beautiful poems far too holy and far too high for any printed page even if one knew any language in which they might be transcribed. For it is the privilege of every mother to hold converse with the Angel of the Annunciation, and not only may she see visions, but she may hear voices that flutter over the walls of Paradise, and feel the touch of the Hand that shaped planet and star and spread the earth and stretched the sky 'A tent for us to dwell in.' And so the beautiful host of mothers work in their homes, strange things in their hearts, though they may speak only of common things because there are no words for the others. The little working mother is building up the bodies which she gave to the new Souls fresh from God! 'Cooking is not in itself pleasant work, but it means help to the man who is working, too, toward his ideal, and it means health and growth to the lads and lassies who, in the dear little mother's vision, are to be transformed, yea, even transfigured, sometimes by some wonderful happening by and by, and how a mother loves to give! She begins being a mother that way. And all work is a form of giving."

"The miserable man is he who sees nothing beyond his task. He is a bridled animal driven by habit or necessity. The world is little bettered by what he accomplishes. He is a tool and another might have answered. His soul is dwarfed because of its having no outlook of inspiring vision. How to help such a man, how to show him an ideal that will mean something to him—all, that is the world's problem. It is the labor question from the inside. The answer to it would wake up your contented vagabond and he would start toward something that no one else could see and we'd call that work. For ideals are of necessity different. The old negro chopping wood out there has a vision of a snug corner, a bright fire and a hot supper. Disappointment may await him, but to-morrow he will work again toward the vision."

"By the sweat of the brow all good things come. Work is not a curse. When all the other angels hid their pure hearts and fled from the man and woman who had sinned, two stopped the gate."

"I shall attend the man," said Work. "He will need me to help him back to the Paradise he has lost. I shall go with him and use his head and his hands in the creation of a new Eden."

"And I," said the other, who is the angel of Pain, "will attend the woman. She will not find me a pleasant companion for she is out of harmony with us and I shall seem a discord in her life. But I shall give her her chiefest blessings."

"And these two have been with us all the way, and not knowing, we call them curses. Work opens the way toward our visions, Pain urges us toward them. The one is not a hard taskmaster, nor the other a cruel driver."

The Motherly Woman laid aside her work and opening one of the worn little books that had a way of creeping often into her work basket, said very softly, "And I think that before long another pitying angel came back, one that opened the tearful eyes to the new vision and strengthened the faint hearts for the journey toward it. And then she rode slowly from the marked path."

"A glowing vision, as I walked at noon. The children of one sun came trooping round me. In shining robes and diamond studded shoes. And they did wing me up with them, and I flew. In a bright dome of wondrous width I found me. And as I looked and looked with dazzled gaze. Until my spirit drank in so much light. That I grew like the sons of that glad place. Transparent, lovely, pure serene and bright. Then did they call me brother, and there I grew. Swift from my side broad pinions gold and white. And with that happy flock a brilliant thing I flew."

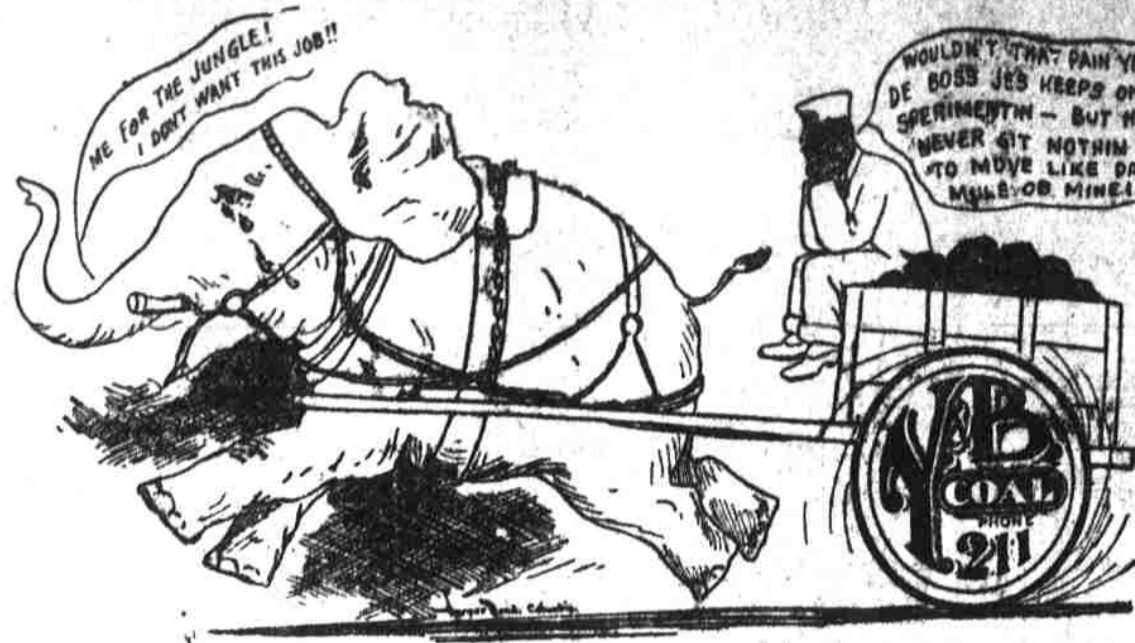
"Yes," the Plain Little Woman, whispered, "And perhaps after Work and Pain and Faith there came another angel still, to join the hands of the two who had lost their Paradise that they might the better find the way back, working, suffering, trusting together."

And it was the College Girl who opened another of the workbasket books and read softly, "God does not wash men to live apart, therefore He has not revealed to them what each needs for himself. He wishes them to live together and reveals to each the other's wants. Though men think the live through care of themselves, they really live by Love alone. And then the four were silent for each Soul was tracing the fascinating line of its own vision."

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