

The Home Circle.

ELEGY IN A COUNTRY CHURCHYARD.\*

BY THOMAS GRAY

The curfew tolls the knell of parting day;  
The lowing herd winds slowly o'er the lea;  
The ploughman homeward plods his weary way,  
And leaves the world to darkness and to me.

Now fades the glimmering landscape on the sight,  
And all the air a solemn stillness holds,  
Save where the beetle wheels his droning flight,  
And drowsy tinklings lull the distant folds:

Save that from yonder ivy-mantled tower,  
The moping owl does to the moon complain  
Of such a wanderer near her secret bower,  
Molest her ancient, solitary reign.

Beneath those rugged elms, that yew-tree's shade,  
Where heaves the turf in many a mouldering heap,  
Each in his narrow cell forever laid,  
The rude forefathers of the hamlet sleep.

The breezy call of incense-breathing morn,  
The swallow twittering from the straw built shed,  
The cock's shrill clarion, or the echoing horn,  
No more shall rouse them from their lowly bed.

For them no more the blazing hearth shall burn,  
Or busy housewife ply her evening care;  
No children run to lisp their sire's return,  
Or climb his knees the envied kiss to share.

Of thee the harvest to their sickle yield,  
Their furrow oft the stubborn glebe has broke;  
How jocund did they drive their team a-field!  
How bowed the woods beneath their sturdy stroke!

Let not ambition mock their useful toil,  
Their homely joys, and destiny obscure;  
Nor grandeur hear with a disdainful smile  
The short and simple annals of the poor.

The beast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike th' inevitable hour—  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave.

Nor you, ye proud! impute to these the fault,  
If memory o'er their tomb no trophies raise,  
Where, through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,  
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise.

Can storied urn or animated bust,  
Back to its mansion call the fleeting breath?  
Can honor's voice provoke the silent dust,  
Or flattery soothe the dull, cold ear of death?

Perhaps in this neglected spot is laid  
Some heart once pregnant with celestial fire;  
Hands that the rod of Empire might have sway'd,  
Or wak'd to ecstasy the living lyre;

But knowledge to their eyes her ample page,  
Rich with the spoils of time, did never unroll;  
Chill penury repress'd their noble rage,  
And froze the genial current of the soul.

Full many a gem of purest ray serene,  
The dark, unfathomed caves of ocean bear;  
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,  
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

Some village Hampden, that, with dauntless breast,  
The little tyrant of his fields withstood;  
Some mute, inglorious Milton here may rest;  
Some Cromwell, guiltless of his country's blood.

The applause of listening Senates to command,  
The threats of pain and ruin to despise,  
To scatter plenty o'er a smiling land,  
And read their history in a nation's eyes,

Their lot forbade; nor circumscrib'd alone  
Their growing virtues, but their crimes confin'd;  
Forbade to wade through slaughter to a throne,  
And shut the gates of mercy on mankind;

The struggling pangs of conscious truth to hide,  
To quench the blushes of ingenious shame,  
Or heap the shrine of luxury and pride  
With incense kindled at the Muse's flame.

Far from the madding crowd's ignoble strife,  
Their sober wishes never learned to stray;  
Along the cool, sequester'd vale of life,  
They kept the noiseless tenor of their way.

Yet even these bones from insult to protect,  
Some frail memorial still erected nigh,  
With uncouth rhymes and shapeless sculpture deck'd,  
Implores the passing tribute of a sigh.

Their names, their years, spelt by the unletter'd Muse,  
The place of fame and elegy supply;  
And many a holy text around she strews,  
That teach the rustic moralist to die.

For who, to dumb forgetfulness a prey,  
This pleasing, anxious being e'er resign'd,  
Left the warm precincts of the cheerful day,  
Nor cast one longing, lingering look behind?

On some fond breast the parting soul relies,  
Some pious drops the closing eye requires;  
E'en from the tomb the voice of Nature cries,  
E'en in our ashes live their wonted fires.

For thee, who, mindful of the unhonored dead,  
Dost in these lines their artless tale relate;  
If chance, by lonely contemplation led,  
Some kindred spirit shall inquire thy fate—

Haply some hoary-headed swain may say:  
"Oft have we seen him at the peep of dawn,  
Brushing with hasty steps the dew away,  
To meet the sun upon the upland lawn."

"There at the foot of yonder nodding beech,  
That wreathes its old, fantastic roots so high,  
His listless length at noon-tide would he stretch,  
And pore upon the brook that babbles by."

"Hard by yon wood, now smiling as in scorn,  
Muttering his wayward fancies, he would rove;  
Now dropping, woeful, wan, like one forlorn,  
Or crazed with care, or crossed in hopeless love."

"One morn I missed him on the custom'd hill,  
Along the heath, and near his favorite tree;  
Another came—nor yet beside the rill,  
Nor up the lawn, nor at the wood was he."

"The next, with dirges due, in sad array,  
Slow through the church-way path we saw him borne—  
Approach and read (for thou canst read) the lay  
Graved on the stone beneath yon aged thorn."

THE EPITAPH.

Here rests his head upon the lap of earth—  
A youth to fortune and to fame unknown;  
Fair Science frowned not on his humble birth,  
And melancholy marked him for her own.

Large was his bounty, and his soul sincere;  
Heaven did a recompense as largely send;  
He gave to misery all he had—a tear,  
He gain'd from Heaven ('twas all he wish'd) a friend.

No further seek his merits to disclose,  
Or draw his frailties from their dread abode—  
(There they alike in trembling hope repose),  
The bosom of his Father and his God.

MR. MOODY AND THE QUESTIONABLE BOOK.

Some one asked the late Dwight L. Moody if he had read a certain book. He replied, "No, I believe there is poison in it; at least I have heard so on good authority." The friend said, "But wouldn't it be well for you to read it for yourself?" "No," said Mr. Moody; "if I take poison in my stomach the doctor has to come with a stomach pump to take it out. Why should I take poison in my mind? I might never be able to get it out.—Exchange.

A YOUNG MAN'S GLORY.

By REV. JOHN WATSON, D. D. (late MacLaren), in Young People's Weekly.

It is said in the wisest of books that the glory of a young man is in his strength, and every eight-thinking person will agree. A young man who is a weakling affords an abject spectacle; a young man that stands foursquare to all the winds that blow, solid and impregnable, is a bulwark to the Commonwealth. And the object of this paper is to point out that just as a tree strikes its roots deepest where the wind blows fiercest, and as an animal has the thickest fur where the cold is keenest, so the strongest character is formed, not in favorable, but in unfavorable circumstances.

THE VALUE OF STRUGGLE.

When life is easy for a man he is apt to come to little; when life is hard he has a good chance of growing into a hero. It is not the lotus-eater who makes history, although he may contribute a study in poetry; it is the Pilgrim Father who is the founder of a nation, although to sentimental people he may be an offence. It is the man who has to depend upon God and himself, without any bounties given, who has to fight against odds and make his hand keep his head, who has to start at the foot of the hill and climb step by step to the top,—it is that man who comes out in the battle of life. If any young fellow is complaining that all things are against him, then let him pluck up courage and make all things his servants,

"And on the neck of crowned fortune establish his kingdom; and let him be sure that in this manly struggle he is fellow soldier with the strong and brave and pure and and wise of every age.

IMPORTANCE OF A SOUND BODY.

One thing a young man must do if he wants to become a strong man is to make the most of himself physically. Two opposite mistakes have been made about this matter of self-culture; one has been to despise the body, the other has been to ignore the soul. He who does not cultivate his soul will end in becoming a mere animal; he who will not attend to his body is trying to become a ghost. What God intends and the world needs is all-round manhood. Neglect the body, and it will make you suffer; abuse the body, and it will pull down your house of life about your ears. We often fail to localize weakness in character. We see a crack in the second floor and fancy there is something wrong with the wall there, and proceed to patch it up; but the wrongness is at the foundation. If a drain has burst, and is soaking round that foundation, then the earth will sink, and in a little while there will not be a door swinging free upon its hinges, there will not be a room where the air is sweet. Our spiritual weaknesses are often in their origin physical, and the foul vapors which affect the soul spring from the lower path of an ill kept body.

WISDOM.

Be thankful if your manhood rests on the solid rock of a wholesome constitution. But I wish to make a distinction between an unsound and a merely delicate body, and to bid delicate men to be of good cheer. You have not wronged your body and you have no foul taint in your blood; the body God has given you is simply a slender instrument and limited in its power. You cannot play a first rate game, nor walk as far in a day as other men, and you do your work at a greater cost. But you also can play the man, and I would whisper a certain adjective in your ear. If you are not robust, very likely you are *virg*, which suggests tenacity, perseverance, endurance and patience,—all grand qualities.

CONQUERING IN SPITE OF A FRAIL BODY

And history affords a list of men who through weakness were made strong and did royal work. Macaulay has a brilliant passage where he describes how the armies of England were led by an "amatic skeleton" and the hosts of France by "a hunchbacked dwarf." The Anglo-Saxon intellect had never a better representative than Lord Bacon, and he was a frail man; nor modern philosophy a more original thinker than Spinoza, and he was all his life dying of consumption. Mr. J. R. Green, the most popular historian of our time, and Mr. J. A. Symonds, the authority on the Italian Revival of Letters, and Robert Louis Stevenson, that brave, bright soul, each did his work with a delicate body, and left behind him an imperishable

name. And the man who first carried the Cross through the Roman world and planted it at last in the Capital, the most profound of theologians and the bravest of missionaries, was all his public life an invalid and a martyr of incurable disease.

EXERCISE FOR THE STRONG.

If your body is strong and full of blood, see that you make it a servant, as you would ride a mettlesome horse. Exercise it freely, lest it become your master and prove a curse rather than a blessing. The church and the gymnasium should stand side by side, for the flesh has often been subdued, not by texts, but by dumb-bells, and the devil cast out, not at a prayer meeting, but on the cross-bars. But if your body be weak, train it the more carefully, and use it the more wisely, and be encouraged with the thought that a lofty house may stand securely on a slender foundation if that foundation happens to be an iron grider.

Then a young fellow who wishes to deserve the name of man must make the most of himself practically, and I mean he must be prepared to carve his way and shape his career without privilege or favor. The strong man is willing to stand on his own merit and asks nothing of society but an opportunity. He does not want to creep up a back stair, but presents himself boldly at the front door. "Give me," he cries, "a level chance with other men, and let the best man win."

PREPARING FOR LIFE WORK.

Of course we have all to be equipped at the beginning of life within the shelter of some harbor and made ready for the voyage. We ought, therefore, to be grateful for a good father, for a high-toned schoolmaster, for the spirit of a noble university, for the oversight and advice and correction of an able chief, either in our office or profession. They build the hull and rig the sails and store the vessel. Our vessel may also have to be tugged out to sea where there is wind to fill the sails and a free seaboard. We ought to be grateful to the friend who gives us a start in life by his name or by his counsel, and we ought never to forget that friend or his family after him. Those are advantages we all need; those are favors none need be ashamed to receive, because they do not reflect on anyone's manhood.

FIGHTING ONE'S OWN BATTLES.

But there comes a time when the vessel must begin her own voyage, and then every man worth the name will thank his friends for all that they have done, and declare himself ready to start on his own account. There is a small percentage of young men who would prefer to lie all their days in harbor, or to be towed the whole voyage, but if a ship cannot put her nose outside the bay she had better be broken up, and if she has to be towed from Liverpool to San Francisco then there is no reason for her existence. If after proper training and a fair trial, a young man cannot stand alone and earn his living, he falls from the ranks of manhood, and the wisest thing that can be done for him is to secure him a small annuity to be paid weekly. Every man should be determined to count in life by himself, and should make people know that he has his own claim upon the respect of the world.

WEALTH A MISFORTUNE TO THE YOUNG MAN.

Occasionally a young fellow is tempted to wish that he had a rich father. But they are not to be envied who are born with a silver spoon in their mouths. Riches are a great trust by means of which a man can do incalculable good; they may also be an entangling snare by which his manhood will be ruined. When a minister comes into a fortune, he usually develops sore throat; and when a doctor becomes rich he is apt to be more concerned about sport than about his patients. It is not the sons of wealthy men who make the best clerks and whom active firms covet for their offices, but lads who come up from the hardy homes of the country. It is not continual sunshine and soft winds which make a hardy race, but gray skies and a strong air, and the sturdy Scot who wrests his living out of the cold soil of his rough land is a stronger man than the graceful Italian who sleeps beneath the shadow of vines and begs his daily bread of the strangers who visit his beautiful country.

It is a misfortune to the average

young man to be an heir to riches; it is a wholesome tonic that he should begin in honorable poverty. Poverty—I do not mean pauperism—is a stern but faithful mother of genius and of success. Alas that Spencer died in want of bread!—but at any rate he wrote "The Faerie Queen"; and Milton, in darkness and neglect—the inward vision of his soul being cleansed—imagined the Puritan Epic. We owe the most of Scott's novels to the loss of his goods; and out of the hardness of his life, like water from the stricken rock, flowed the lyrics of Robert Burns. For the most part the pioneers of science have been poor men, and the prices of commerce have come from a low estate. It remains forever true that the primrose path leads nowhere save to the sluggard's garden, while the steep and rugged path leads upward to the stars.

SOUL STRENGTH.

And let me add that every man should make the most of himself spiritually. It is good to be strong in body, better to be useful in life, best to be victorious in the region of the will. Defeat here is irrevocable; victory here is decisive. If a man falls under the power of any sin, he is a slave; if he conquer any sin, he is so much more a man. This is the ground where each of us must fight his keenest, longest, and noblest battle. We ought not to complain if we be tempted, for temptation means warfare, and warfare makes soldiers. The richest natures are the most severely tried, because they are provinces worthy the winning. Thin natures are seldom invaded, for they are like the sand of the desert in which grows neither corn nor wine. He who thinks will know what doubt is, and he must think on till doubt turns into certainty. It is the man whose emotions are the fullest who will know the dangers of passions, but when his heart has passed through the fire it will be dowered with a love to God and man not given to poorer natures.

Our wisdom is to find the sin that is most cherished by us—going through our nature as with a candle. When we find our sin, we must face it, we must resolve it shall be conquered, we must take off our coat for the wrestle and grip this foe as one who fights for his life. And God will give to every true man the victory. If the circumstances of our life and our work seem to be against us, then we ought to be the more vigilant as fighting in an enemy's country, watching, praying, and standing to our arms. If any man venture on a base word or vile jest in our presence, then let us speak out bravely and sharply till we put him to shame or drive the leper from our company. Soldiers—and we are soldiers—have often to be far from agreeable, and if a man should resent our indignation there will be better men to approve it; and if the man whom we have punished refuses to speak to us again, it will be no loss, and there still will be left one or two friends in the world.

NO ONE NEED DESPAIR

But suppose, young man, you have fallen and stained your manhood; suppose you are in debt and cannot pay; suppose you have been idle and missed your chance. Then let me say to you as a brother, Do not despair. If innocence be gone, repentance is possible. Let me, who in a measure may seem a stranger to you, but yet as one who holds your welfare near his own heart, beseech you in the name of the Lord to break the bonds of sin before the day is closed, and do what you have to do before you lie down to rest. Speak if you have to speak, write if you have to write, confess if you have to confess, make restitution if that be your duty.

Act quickly and with all your might; strike for liberty, that liberty which is alone found when we open the door of our heart to Christ. Had you given Him possession earlier, this would not have happened. Now let him have the throne of your nature, and you will stand before set of sun a man free in Christ Jesus.

"There's been another engagement," said young Mr. Dolley, who had been reading the latest war news. "Oh, dear," sighed Miss Frocks, "I wish I could be in an engagement." And in a few minutes she was right in one.—Harper's Bazar.

As long as THE PROGRESSIVE FARMER maintains its present standard I must have it.—Adam Williams, Wayne Co., N. C.

A MUSICAL ROMANCE.

I heard a new "guessing game" recently. It was called "A Musical Romance." Profiting by a lull in conversation, the young hostess announced that a lovely story of the Civil War would be related in musical numbers, and to the one who should best interpret them a prize should be awarded. All were provided with cards and pencils and a young woman seated herself at the piano. The hostess then asked, "What was the heroine called?" Whereupon the familiar notes of "Sweet Marie" were heard, and it began to be understood that the names of popular airs—given with much spirit by the pianist—would furnish the answers to the questions propounded, to be recorded upon the cards. The story progressed thus:

What was the hero's name? "Robin Adair."

Where was he born? "Dixie." Where did they meet? "Comin' thro' the rye."

At what time of the day was it? "Just as the sun went down." When did he propose? "After the ball was over."

What did he say? "Only one girl in this world for me."

What did she say? "I'll leave my happy home for you." What did he then bid her? "A soldier's farewell."

What did the band play? "The girl I left behind me." Where did he go? "Georgia."

Where did he spend the night? "Tenting on the old camp ground." What did the band play when he came home? "When Johnny comes marching home."

Where were they married? "Old Kentucky home." Who were the bridesmaids? "Two little girls in blue."

Who furnished the music? "Whistling Rufus." Who furnished the wedding feast? "Rory O'Gandy."

Where did they make their home? "On the banks of the Wabash." What was their motto? "Home, sweet home."

Where did they always remain? "America." The music was a new feature, and the fact that the airs were so well known made it the more enjoyable. The advantage of the winner being so slight, the pleasure of success was the more general.—February Ladies' Home Journal.

While one boy is regretting his want of opportunities, his lack of means to get a college education, and remains in ignorance, another with half his chances picks up a good education in the odds and ends of time which other boys throw away. From the same material, one man builds a palace and another hovel. From the same rough piece of marble, one man calls out an angel of beauty which delights every beholder, another a hideous monster which demoralizes every one who sees it.—Success.

MAKING IMPRESSIONS ON A CHILD.

It takes but a moment to make an impression. The impression so quickly made may endure for centuries. In one of the bricks brought from the ruins of ancient Nuffar by Professor Hilprecht is a mark made by a workman's hand in the long gone ages. Meantime kingdoms have risen and have fallen, and generations have come and have gone, but that impression has never changed. As it is with the clay brick, and even more so, it is with the mind and heart of the child whom we teach in the home or in the Sunday-school. Impressions are being made every hour that the ages of eternity shall not wholly remove. Ought we not to prize our privilege of impression-making on the child's mind and character?—Sunday School Times.

NOT THE SHIRKS.

Hard muscles are not grown by soft living. Strong brains are not made by feeble exercise. Useful, capable, brave-hearted men and women do not grow out of boys and girls who always shun the difficult tasks and seek only their own ease and pleasure. To "endure hardness as a good soldier" may not be a wholly agreeable experience, but it has its compensations. Do you enjoy yourself most on a cold day when you dawdle around the fire dreading to do something outside that needs to be done, or when you march out and go vigorously about it? The enviable people in this world are not the shirks. The enviable people are those who strive after and obtain "the godlike power to do and know" whatever for their own or the world's betterment needs to be done or known.—Selected.

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