

FROM THE MISSIONARY FIELDS.

Conflict Between Duty and Self.

St. Louis, Missouri,
October 10, 1888.

It is now nearly two years since I bade a fond farewell to loved ones, kindred, friends and associates, and though fond emotion bade me stay, still over and above all such bidding came that still small voice whispering in my ear, pointing out the line of duty, which line lead away from all that was near and dear to me on earth.

Duty pointed away from all these attractions of my dear, old mountain home, and demanded a sacrifice at my hand, and with what might seem cruel, stern, unfeeling firmness would listen to no compromise; but insisted on enforcing her demands against all the pleadings of desire against all the pleadings of fond emotion. Thus the voice of desire was silenced, and duty's commands obeyed; and now I am made to feel as never before, the truth in the following:

"Necessity whom long I dreamed my foe,

Thou cold unsmiling hard visaged dame,

Now I no longer see thy face, I know
Thou wert my best friend beyond reproach or blame.

"My best achievements and the fairest sights
Of my winged fancy were inspired by thee;

Thy stern voice stirred me to the mountain heights—

Thy importunings bade me do and be,

"But for thy breath, the spark of living fire

Within me might have smouldered out at length;

But for thy lash which would not let me tire,

I never should have measured my own strength.

"But for thy oftentimes merciless control

Upon my life which nerved me past despair,

I never would have dug deep in my soul

And found the mine of treasure hidden there."

I have discovered that within me there are, as it were, two persons, I, e., I and myself. Perhaps some of my pupils remember reading the story of "The Fowl on the Larder Shelf," where the dog is made to say "I did not take it, not I, but that naughty myself, when I was not looking, stole up to the shelf." Those who remember reading this will know at once what I mean.

Whenever there seems to be a conflict between duty and desire, I am always found on the side of duty; and here let me remind the boys and girls that duty is always on the right side—the Lord's side. How many have heard Brother Goddard sing "Who's on the Lord's Side," etc. Duty is always on the Lord's side, but that naughty myself often steals up to the shelf and takes sides with desire, and sometimes by such an alliance duty and I are overcome and made to yield to the wishes of desire and myself.

In the case of my leaving home and all that was near and dear to me, there was just such a conflict. Duty and I said "Go, 'tis God who calls you there." Desire and myself said, "You had better stay at home and enjoy yourself; look how much money you can earn in two or three years. Think how comfortably you can live at home, and how many hardships and indignities you would have to endure out in the mission field! Think how much time and money it will cost you, which time and means you

might devote to building up a comfortable home."

Then duty reminded me of the promise of our Savior wherein He says, "If you will seek first the kingdom of God all these other comforts and temporal necessities shall be added in such rich abundance, that we shall not have room to contain it, yea, more, much more. He has promised eternal life, joy and happiness, beyond our power to imagine, to endure throughout the endless ages of eternity, to all who will yield obedience to his laws. "What doth it profit though a man gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" What are the transient passing pleasures of this life—a few brief moments compared with the true and lasting joys and happiness throughout eternal ages!

Thus the conflict went on until desire and myself were made to surrender to the most firm, unyielding terms; no compromise but an unconditional surrender. Since then I have often felt to rejoice over this glorious victory of duty and I over desire and myself. The power and strength developed in this conflict has often come to my aid since that time.

I find that true and genuine happiness is found only along the lines of duty and that the trouble, sorrows and sins of this world result from our own failure to govern our impulsive passions and desires. Solomon very wisely says, "He that ruleth his spirit is mightier than he that taketh a city." Individuals, like nations, find their greatest enemies within themselves. Rome became so great and powerful that she feared no nation on earth, nay not even the combined force of all other earthly powers; yet, within herself arose that power which proved her destruction, a power which the combined nations of earth had failed to produce. Nothing but the great, all-governed power of Rome herself could gain access to this mighty center of political power, undermine its great foundation and bring it to ruin. Thus Rome fell a victim to her own suicidal force.

Thus from the history of nations let us draw this lesson: Earth's greatest powers have committed suicide. The forces which have proved their downfall and destruction have arisen not from without but from within and if this is true with respect to nations, it is not less true with the individual. Our own ill-governed impulses and desires are our greatest enemies, enemies not from without but from within. Solomon says again, "My son, if sinners entice thee, consent thou not," and we might well add if sin entice thee, consent thou not; for the enticement which leads to sin comes from our own ill-governed impulses and desires more often than from the persuasions of others. Therefore that which every boy and girl, young man and young woman, needs above all else is the power of self-control, of self-restraint.

The greatest enemies of nations, or individuals, arise from within themselves. The truth of this may be seen all along the line of history. In our own great and dreadful Civil War this truth was shown very clearly, indeed. Our own dear country was almost brought to ruin by this dread civil strife; note how that terrible conflict sapped the vital force of this great government, reduced her mighty pillars of political and moral strength to a condition from which she has not yet fully emerged. The baneful effects of that fatal drain upon her vital force still appear

as a blight upon this great Republic; yet how grandly she has swerved all, yet how grandly she has survived all, drafts upon her vital strength and today stands transparent among nations—a beacon light to the world, fearing no power on earth, except her own rebellious force—the one great fear of individuals as well as nations.

In reviewing the present grandeur of our nation, I have but one regret, expressed by the following:

"Of all sad words of tongue or pen,
The saddest are it might have been."

But for her own rebellious, ill-governed force, what heights might not have been attained.

The allied force of Lee and Grant, what power dare oppose;

Destroy the band of union and they are each other's foes—

Easy victims they become while in the civil strife;

A foreign foe may conquer both without the loss of life."

If this is true in regard to nations, it is not less true with respect to individuals.

Were duty and desire, united hand in hand,

If the latter would conform,
To the former's stern command,

What victories might be won—
What glorious heights attained;

What miseries might be shunned—
What joys and pleasures gained!

Now how can such an alliance be effected, that our forces may not become divided and exhausted in the civil conflict? How can the great friction within ourselves be avoided, and perfect unity of action established? "United we stand, divided we fall," applies to every individual with no less force that it did in revolutionary days with respect to our nature. "Every kingdom divided against itself is brought to desolation, and a house divided against a house falleth." What our Savior here says of kingdoms is equally true with respect to each of us. Then let us develop this self-denying, self-controlling, self-restraining power in ourselves just as any power, physical, mental or spiritual, is developed, by exercise, and as a means to this end, there is nothing more effective than contact with adversity, tribulation and necessity, provided we survive all these forces. Our greatest men are those that have grown up through such circumstances and survived these most developing forces, while the weak and depraved are those who are overcome by these same forces.

"With the wind of tribulation, God separates on the floor of the soul, the chaff from among the corn." May we survive these trying winds, and pass not off as chaff.

Your loving Brother in the Gospel,
MAHOURI M. STOOKEY.

1502 Kashington Avenue, St. Louis, Missouri.

Home address: Clover, Tooele county, Utah.

The Manitoba Mission.

Brandon, Manitoba.

September 28, A. D. 1898.

As we share in the pleasure given by the letters from our Elders making known their varied experiences in the Missionary fields throughout the world, we trust that a few words concerning the Manitoba mission will not be unappreciated by our co-laborers and the Saints at home.

According to appointment the Elders laboring in this province gathered in Brandon on the 24th inst. and held a brief council meeting as to the plan of procedure during our conference on the two days following.

Notice of our three conference meetings to be held in the Foresters' Hall had been duly given through the news-