

WHERE CHOICE IS IMPOSSIBLE

Several years ago the supreme court of the state of New York, disposing of divorce proceedings between the parents of two children—a boy and a girl—awarded one child to the father and the other to the mother, providing: "That the mother and plaintiff in this action is hereby awarded the choice as to the child she may determine to have in her custody."

We are told that the mother was never able to express a choice. Doubtless the court was actuated by the best of motives, yet is there in all the world a good mother who will say that the privilege of choosing the child would be greatly preferable to a judgment that would deprive the mother not only of all choice but of both children? What a heavy task that New York court placed upon that New York mother! If any other than a mother could appreciate the enormity of that task it is the father who—in spite of the fact that in popular discussion "father love" is forgotten in the tribute paid to "mother love"—has at least some acquaintance with the devotion of parent to child.

Is it any wonder that this woman, admittedly a good mother—one without fault and yet between whom and her husband dissension arose such as to make divorce proceedings seem necessary—was unable to avail herself of the privilege conferred upon her by the New York supreme court? What a great task it was! What an uninviting assignment! Parents generally will have an idea of the conflicting emotions that raged in the breast of this New York mother, and there are also throughout the world thousands of parents whose experience particularly qualifies them to deeply sympathize with this good woman's unhappy situation.

Parents whose family circle has been invaded by death; parents whose happiness has been blighted by the dissipation of a loved one; parents who are not yet able to remove their minds from the vacant chairs at their hearthstones, even though the vacancy was made years ago; parents who love and struggle, by day and by night, all in the effort to build a worthy future for their children; parents who always and best remember their offspring as infants, even though the girls are in long dresses and the boys are wearing beards—these will know something of the struggle that raged within the breast of the New York woman concerning whom the supreme court of that state said: "The mother and plaintiff in this action is hereby awarded the choice as to the child she may determine to have in her custody." It was an im-

possible choice. No grave was ever so small but that its digging left a scar upon the parent's heart.

There is something wonderfully elastic about parental love. However often the stork may visit a home, there is "always room for one more;" room for one more at the fireside; room for one more at the table; room for one more participant in the many little things and in the many loving things that go to make up the sum of happiness in domestic circles; room for one more in the parents' affections; and those fathers and mothers who have been denied the privilege of choice, but who have been required to surrender one of their loved ones in response to death's summons—they know how difficult it would be to undertake the task of "choosing the child!" However poignant the parents' grief might be, however woe they might be to dwell upon the striking and admirable traits of the loved and the lost, they could not turn from the dead to the living and in their heart of hearts say: "This one, and not the other."

One of the best mothers whom God ever gave to man, being asked which of her children she loved the most, promptly replied: "The one that is sick." There is a volume in that brief sentence. Every parent will understand it at a glance. We love them one and all, and the measureless affection which we bestow upon all of them is given to everyone of them. The rhetorician may not understand this statement; the parent will have no difficulty in interpreting it.

In "The Reign of Law" James Lane Allen, the novelist, leads his hero through a maze of doubt and unbelief, and finally lands him safely on faith's foundation stones, winning him to that point through the hero's love for a woman. So divine was his affection for the girl of his choice that he concluded that, after all, there must be a God, else there could not be such love. Perhaps the novelist knew what he was doing; and yet there are many who read that magnificent story who felt that he missed an opportunity when he failed to use the parents' love for the child as the highest and best representative of God's love for man and as undeniable evidence of the existence of "our father which art in heaven."

There are, in this grand old world of ours, many perplexities, and among these none is more striking than that so many of the children of today—beneficiaries of the watchful concern, the keen anxiety and the boundless affection of devoted parents—are unable to appreciate the price-

less treasures that in some instances seem to be wasted.

The one burden suggested by Holy Writ which the children must bear to the effect that "the sins of the parents shall be visited upon the children even unto the third and fourth generations," has been interpreted by an observing man as "sins of the parents may be visited upon their children, but it is that the sting may strike back into the parents' hearts."

Long before the world was presented with the incident of "Rachel weeping for her children, and would not be comforted because they were not," the love of the parent for the child has been the greatest and most enduring manifestation of the divine passion.

Whether in number the children be two or twenty, parental love is sufficiently elastic to embrace all that God has sent. Every one is loved the same; and yet the love of each is different. Here, again, the rhetorician may be perplexed—but the parent will understand.

The mother who said that she best loved "the one who is sick," spoke the truth. We love best the boy with the club foot because of his physical infirmity; we love best his brother with the hot temper, because of his mental misfortune; we love best the steady going lad, because of his virtues; we love best the boy who is profligate and dissipated, because he has yielded to temptation, and in his fall draws just as heavily upon our affections as does the one who by reason of his righteous conduct has secured our commendation.

Parents lean to the afflicted child, to the one with weakness, physical or mental; and yet it is a peculiar leaning, because it is of the kind that while leaning toward one child, it does not lean away from another child.

Until one year ago there lived in a western city a little girl suffering under the greatest affliction that could be visited upon a human being. She was deaf, dumb, blind and an imbecile. Yet for years she was the object of the most solicitous care and devotion. When finally the summons came, the parents of that most unfortunate child consigned earth to earth and dust to dust with the heavy heart and acute pain every parent feels when his offspring is laid to rest—the heavy heart and the acute pain that are indispensable parts of parental love—the love of the father and the mother for the weakest and the strongest, the worst and the best, child—an affection which, like God's love for man, "passeth all understanding."

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AVENUES OF USEFULNESS—THE LAW

So many young men turn their attention to the law that it may seem unnecessary to add a word of encouragement. Whenever a boy shows aptitude in public speaking or fondness for debate he is generally advised to study law, as if felicity of expression were the only requirement at the bar and useful nowhere else.

Speaking is an important part of the lawyer's work in most cases, but only a part, and in a country like ours every citizen should be able to bear an honorable part in public discussion. No one should enter the law with the idea that it affords a means of making money easily. Success at the bar is impossible without great and long continued labor.

Neither should one enter the profession believing that a reputation for cunning and trickery will prove permanently profitable. God has linked indissolubly together virtue and reward. The lawyer who spends a lifetime trying to obscure the line between right and wrong not only grows weaker in character day by day, but he at last finds that he has lost the power to discriminate between right and wrong. The lawyer, on the other hand, who spends a lifetime in the search for truth, determined to follow where it leads, grows stronger in character year by year and his advice grows constantly more valuable because the power to discern the truth increases with the honest search for it.

Just now there is a crying need for lawyers who, spurning the bribes of corporate power, will protect the public from the schemes of exploiters. Nearly all the prominent lawyers in the great cities are selling their brains to predatory wealth and prostituting their talents to the service of Mammon. There is "room at the top" for lawyers with high ideals, mental strength and civic virtue.

Besides furnishing a broad field for the gratifying of a legitimate ambition within the profes-

sion the law is a training school for statesmen—most of those eminent in statecraft having been students of Blackstone. The law is a broadening profession, for its members must not only deal with every subject which affects human rights and human welfare, but fighting their battles in the open they learn that truth alone is omnipotent.

It is not strange that such a profession proves attractive to young men of spirit, energy, and purpose.

CORROBORATIVE EVIDENCE

Referring to the testimony of Vice President Perkins of the New York Life Insurance company in the investigation now in progress, the St. Louis Globe-Democrat says:

The testimony of George W. Perkins, first vice president of the New York Life Insurance company, that that company contributed \$48,000 to the republican campaign fund in 1904, and that it also made contributions in 1896 and 1900, shows in a striking way the discredit into which the democratic party has fallen among the business interests of the country.

Then, with charming disregard for the exposures of chicanery and corruption in the management of the big life insurance companies the Globe-Democrat says:

McCall knew that the triumph of Bryan and debased silver would mean a cut in half in the value of the funds of the policy holders of his corporation. Every dollar of assets in the company would be reduced to 50 cents or less if the democrats had carried the country.

The Globe-Democrat is one of those newspapers that asked the people to believe that free silver coinage would make the mine owner's silver worth \$1.29 an ounce, but would make the silver

dollar worth only 50 cents. Naturally enough such a paper will insist that the men who have been guilty of riotous squandering of trust funds in gambling speculations and worse were impelled by motives of honesty and wonderful regard for the property interests of their clients when they wrongfully contributed money that did not belong to them to the republican campaign fund in 1896.

Then the Globe-Democrat makes this very remarkable statement:

No reputable democrat charges that this or any other campaign contributions was put to corrupt use by the republicans.

Not only have reputable democrats made that charge, but reputable republicans as well. And republicans who have not charged it have admitted it. And that these and other contributions were put to corrupt use by the republican managers in 1896 is so apparent that only a hide-bound organ like the St. Louis Globe-Democrat would have the hardihood to deny it. If Thomas W. Lawson's story of the "\$5,000,000 hurry up call" the closing week of the republican campaign in 1896 is untrue, why has not Mr. Lawson been proceeded against for criminal libel by the men whom he openly charged with this gigantic scheme of political corruption?

The admissions of Perkins and McCall merely give corroborative evidence to prove what not only reputable democrats but reputable republicans have charged—that money was used corruptly by the republican committee in 1896, and that the money was contributed by just such self-constituted defenders of "national honor" and "honest money" as Perkins and McCall.

Mr. Niedringhaus says that Missouri will go republican again next year. When Mr. Niedringhaus visited those St. Louis brewers the last time he evidently carried away something besides campaign contributions to the republican state committee.