

Our Women and Children

Conducted by Lucille Skaggs Edwards.

A LESSON FROM THE LIFE OF BOOKER T. WASHINGTON

One of the most beautiful characteristics of our late Booker T. Washington was his cheerful tone of optimism. The note of discouragement ran never through his philosophy nor his work. He realized all the unfortunate conditions that exist and the time that is going to be required to overcome these conditions, but he went cheerfully about his task, reassured by the real facts of the progress of his people, however much it was temporarily obscured.

And what ought not Booker T. Washington's example teach to every Negro boy and girl in the United States? Born in the coal mines, earning his own way, making a struggle that but few white boys have succeeded in; at middle age he found himself as well known and as highly honored as any citizen of this land, found himself in charge of large affairs, and the recipient of a fortune that absolutely relieved him of any further responsibility for provision against any want or accident of old age.

But old age did not come to him; in his strength and activity he was cut off. How keenly we regret to lose him. But the inspiration he has given us and the great work he has accomplished will live through the ages. He once said:

"It seemed to me that a race or an individual should be measured by the progress made, by the depth from which he or it had risen, as Mr. Douglass used to say, rather than by the height which remained to be attained. I am still of that opinion. It seems to me that an individual or race may justly feel proud of any achievement, however humble, as long as it represents advance in the right direction. So I am proud of every achievement of my race, however insignificant—every farm purchased, every acre of land well tilled, every house well built—because I know the effort and the sacrifice they have cost, and because I know that only by the accumulation of just such humble individual efforts as these the race is going to succeed.

I am proud of the possibilities of the Negro race, because of the ardor with which it pursues knowledge and the ease with which it learns, because it is a young race and has its future still before it and not behind it, as some one has aptly put it.

An Anglo-Saxon instinctively admires a nation or individual that will fight for his rights; but it is hard for him to understand that there is anything in the patient endurance and capacity for suffering that has enabled the Negro race to survive transportation to a foreign continent and the hardships of two hundred years of slavery.

But I am proud of these also. I am proud of the quaint, melancholy and beautiful slave songs in which the sorrow and the hopes of my people once found expression. I am proud that these same slaves proved faithful, in their hour of trial, to the southern people; that when their masters were called from their fire-sides to war, they dared trust their wives and children to these faithful servants, and that in all that period of disorder not once was that trust betrayed. I am proud that in all the

discouragements, and sometimes even injustices, to which the colored people in this country must still submit, they have the courage to go calmly and patiently forward.

I am proud of my race, finally, because I see it day by day learning to make itself more useful in those communities of which it has become a part, and because I believe that in the end it will be found that it has something valuable of its own to contribute to the civilization of the world."

Let us keep his hope, let us live with his note of cheer and optimism in our lives. L. S. E.

Not long ago a tired little woman committed suicide because her husband scolded her.

He came home late at night and found her employed in labor which seemed to him suitable for the morning hours, and he spoke angrily about her tardy habits. She flung herself from the window and died in the hospital soon afterward.

There seems to be a mixture of the pathetic, the tragic and the absurd in all this.

It was a small thing to cause a wife to sacrifice her life—just a man's irritable criticism. But we must take into consideration all that preceded this occasion.

There had been scolding after scolding, without doubt. She had been found fault with for so many derelictions, for so many deeds done and undone, that this final criticism was merely the last straw on the camel's back.

A cross, fault-finding wife is a terrible being; but a man can take his hat and go to the club or to the corner grocery when her tongue becomes aggressive.

When the husband comes home and scolds the air of the house blue, there is nothing for a wife to do but to submit or jump out of the window.

I like to think the world is peopled with happy wives and husbands. I know many. Many more exist unknown to me. Happiness is oftentimes secretive and quiet; misery is noisy and communicative. Happiness seeks no confidant; unhappiness wants to be sympathized with.

Happiness thanks God in the silence. Misery cries aloud to the world! And so we grow to think that unhappiness is the rule, and happiness the exception. But I do not believe it.—Ella Wheeler Wilcox, in *New York Journal*.

THE SANDMAN'S MISTAKE.

One night, dear mother said to me,
"The Sandman's coming soon for you,

And then it's hurry off to bed
For sleep the long night through."

I waited for the Sandman then,
Although I did so want to play;
But well I know when Sandman comes
It's time to slip away.

But oh! a little after that,
I saw my mother rub her eyes,
And then she dropped right off to sleep,
So much to my surprise.

I watched her, and I laughed right out;

It was a funny thing to me:
The Sandman went to mother dear,
And not to me, you see!

—Arthur Wallace Peach.

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