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Just Thoughts Now and Then by

Mrs. Edward Bellamy





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JUST A WORD OF PRAYER

Just a word of prayer at early morn, Ere the tasks of the day are begun, For guidance, strength, and wisdom, That our work may be well done. A prayer for ourselves and others, That our feet may be kept aright, And our thots and words and deeds, May be pleasing in God's sight.

Just a simple little prayer, When the clouds hang low and are gray, When gladness seems to have vanished And sorrow has come to stay. When the things we loved most have gone from us, And left us naught but care, But our hearts will grow lighter, and the world will seem brighter, After a word of prayer.

Just a prayer at eventide, As the sun sinks low in the west, A prayer of praise and thanksgiving, For the evening hour of rest. Whether the day has been all sunshine, Or burdened with toil and care, There is peace and joy and comfort, In just a word of prayer.

THE EVENING OF LIFE.

- I am thinking tonight, dear wife,
- Of the day, many years ago, When we started on Life's journey together, And we said, "It's for weal or for woe."
- But our hearts were so filled with gladness. Just to be in our own little home,
- That it seemed as if life was all sunshine. And sorrow could never come.
- And as years went by we labored on, With nothing to make us sad,
- And our hearts rejoiced, as there came to us. Four bright-eved little lads.
- Then our home was filled with laughter, And the sound of tramping feet.
- For the noises made by four robust boys Are pretty hard to beat.
- But a dark cloud gathered about us, And made our hearts heavy and sad,
- We felt crushed to earth, when we laid away William, our oldest lad.
- But we conquered our anguish and sorrow, For the sake of the ones that were here.
- And with laughter and song, our home soon again Was one of love and good cheer.
- There was Davie, so stout, with roguish eyes, And Robbie, tall and slim,
- And our baby, so full of sunshine,
- We just called him "Sunny Jim."
- When his brothers quarreled over marbles, Or some trifle, that should only be play,
- Little Jim, full of love, to the rescue would come, And drive the black clouds away.

But as time sped on, we scarcely knew That our lads were really men, grown,

- 'Til they married, and moved to other homes,
 - And had dear little lads of their own;
- Davie chose for himself the City life,
- And Robbie the college lore,

But Jimmie chose a farmer to be, And live in God's out of doors.

And we count the weeks 'til holiday time,

When our children come home once more,

- And there's shout and laughter and tramping feet, And toys scattered over the floor.
- But we sit now alone, by our fireside, In our cosey ingle-nook.

And together pore over life's comforter, God's own blessed Book.

- But I sit and gaze into the embers, And think of the long ago,
- When we started Life's journey together, And said, "It's for weal or for woe."
- 'Tis true, dear wife, we've had ups and downs, We've had our joys and sorrows, too.
- But thru all we've passed, I can thank the good Lord,

For the companion I've found in you.

A FRIEND.

It is wonderful to have a friend. Just an honest life-long friend; One you can go to in joy or sorrow, One on whom you can always depend One with a love that began in childhood. The time of marbles, and tops, and kites, When you were nigh broken-hearted "Cause the kids did not treat you right." They took your very best marbles. And did lots of things not kind. Then this friend slipped his little arm thru yours And said, "Oh well, just never mind." Then in school time came those problems So discouraging and long. And the teacher grew impatient To find you were always wrong. And you felt like "jest aquittin'," For your work seemed all in vain. Then this friend slipped his arm thru yours. And said. "Come, I'll help you, try again." Then in the glad vacation time, Oh, there was such heaps of fun, Roaming thru woods and meadows, Or just basking in the sun. When at night tho tired and weary. The bells rang out their warning chime, You said, "Good-night," and went home to sleep. But thot it a waste of time. Then you came to the years of manhood, The world seemed bright and fair. There was joy and gladness everywhere, Without even a shadow of care.

Prosperity smiled on every hand,

Love and peace that seemed never could end, And your tenderest secrets were safely kept By this long time faithful friend.

But your sky so blue was darkened, The clouds were leaden gray, Adversity and trials sore, Seemed coming along your way.

Your head was bowed down with sorrow, Seemed as if all the world was wrong.

Then this same old friend slipped his arm thru yours,

And silently walked along.

Ah, friendship, a word more beautiful Than the finest written page, With love that began in childhood, And lasted 'til ripe old age.

What better can this old world give, From the beginning of life, to its end, Than to know that in joy or sorrow, You have one true, faithful friend.

IF WE KNEW OUR NEIGHBORS.

If we only knew our neighbors. Those we meet with day by day. And could take them, just for what they mean. Not what they do or say. For we little know the worries. That may be clothed in silk or lace. Or the weary heavy heart-aches, Hid behind a smiling face. If we only knew our neighbors, That are giving of their best. In friendship, love and charity, And are trying to meet the test. And as we see them hurry on. And their head with care is bent. They may pass their dearest friend unnoticed. Without unkind intent. If we only knew our neighbors. And the burdens that they bear. Some may be their very own, And others they only share. We would shoulder up with a cheery word. And a kindly hand extend, For burdens are lighter to carry. When you know you have a friend If we only knew our neighbors, Those we meet along the way, Some tall and straight and stalwart. Others bent and gray, But their problems may be the very same. That we have had to bear. When a friendly word, and a handclasp. Seemed to lighten our load of care.

- If we only knew our neighbors, As we wish that they knew us,
- We would cover up the faults we see, Without a word of fuss.
- We would forget the little slighting things, Without a sign or moan,
- And try to mend their failings, Just as if they were our own.
- So let us try to know our neighbors, Those we meet along the way,
- And take them for what we think they mean, And not for what they say.
- And as we pass them on life's highway,
- Their heads with sorrow bent,
- Let us give them a smile worth a million dollars, But won't cost us a cent.

THE MASTER'S VOICE.

Do we only hear the Master's voice In the thunder's crash and roar, Or in the angry billows As they dash upon the shore?

Is it only when adversity And sorrow come our way, That we have time to stop and listen To what the Master has to say?

For we might hear His gentle voice, In the stillness of the night.

Or in the busy noonday, With showers or sunshine bright.

We might hear His voice in the tree tops tall, Where the song bird builds his nest,

Or in the welcome shade beneath, Where the weary may find rest.

The Master's voice might speak to us, In the forest dark and wild,

Or in the play and laughter Of a happy little child.

We might hear the voice of the Master In the song of the babbling brook,

Or in the plainest little flower That grows in some shady nook,

For there is nothing great or small But the Master hath a part,

We may hear His voice in everything, If we have a listening heart.

When father comes home from work at night, Before he'd wash his hands or face Or hang his cap upon the peg, His eves would wander 'round the place. And if mother's sunny head was not within his vision's ken. He'd search for her from room to room. Upstairs and down and all. And then he'd say, "Where's Mother?" But if he found her sitting in her chair, He'd potter off about the lot. He'd rake the yard, or mend the gate, Or dig up for a garden plot, Or do some other homely chore. With only now and then a glance Up to the open kitchen door. As if to sav, "Where's Mother?" Then comes the stalwart, grown-up son, Glad that evening brings him rest, And another day of toil is done: He casts a glance around the room, First one side, then the other, If he fails to find that loving face. Or hear that gentle voice. He quickly asks, "Where's Mother?" Then the boys and girls of school-day age, With problems of their own, Some are very simple ones, And some far wiser grown: And they rush in eager haste, As if racing with each other, Each one wants to find her first-They shout. "Where are you, Mother?"

Then the little tad in overalls,

Out doors all day at play,

Mud pies and water drains

Is the order of the day,

But now he's tired and cold and hungry,

He stands first on one foot, then the other,

And rubs his eyes with his dirty hands,

And cries, "I want my Muvver."

Then lastly comes the baby,

Last, not least by any means,

For he gets the same love and care,

As the little lad in jeans.

Mother puts him down to rest,

And gently shuts the door,

To keep him safe from any noise,

That he may sleep the more.

But he wakes up, finds himself alone, No loving face in sight,

At first, he cries quite gently, And then with all his might.

As Mother comes to get him, she's startled by a warwhoop

warwhoop

That no wall of stone could smother;

We have to think but once to know,

It only means, "Where's Mother?"

And so the call goes down the line, From Father to baby Brother,

'Tis the same call, the country 'round, In our home town as well as others.

And in far-off lands, across the sea,

With our black and yellow brother;

The call is the same, tho in foreign tongue,

The World asks, "Where is Mother?"

GRANDMOTHER.

Grandmother sits in her old armchair. And as she rocks to and fro. Her thots go back to her childhood days. Those happy days long ago. She thinks of the time spent on the farm, With her brothers, Billy and Fred; The sliding hill behind the barn. And the old home-made wooden sled. The little red school-house on the hill, Where the seats would just hold four, And the long low benches beside the wall. Where the small folks could reach the floor. She smiles as she thinks of the school-mates she loved. Mary, Charlotte and Jane. As she closes her eyes she can see them now, Walking thru the lane. But those school-days soon were over, And she was a woman grown. She stepped, as it were, from the school-house door. Into a home of her own. But those, too, were happy days, So much work to be done, She was busy from early morning 'Til setting of the sun. Her cup of joy was full to the brim. But it overflowed one day, When a beautiful blue-eved baby boy Came into her home to stay. She rocked and crooned a lullaby As only a mother can, She wondered what that babe would be When he had grown to be a man.

- So she guided his toddling footsteps As is always a mother's rule,
- And one bright day in September Her baby started to school.
- She watched him go down the gravel walk, Out thru the garden gate
- He turned and waved a "Good-bye mother, "I must hurry or I'll be late."
- Her tho'ts flew back to years gone by, To a home now far away,
- Where a little maiden started to school On a bright September day.
- And a mother stood on the threshold Waving a good-bye, dear,
- And with her gingham apron wiped What seemed like a foolish tear.
- Now she lives in the home of that same little boy A man with babies three,
- And she pats their curly heads, and says, "You're just like Billy, and Freddy and me.
- She gathers them close about her,
- And as they lean upon her knee,
- She tells them stories of the great dark woods, And the wonderful house in the tree.
- The stories keep on till mother calls, "Come children, bed-time is past,
- You must not ask Grandma for any more, This one must be the last."
- Then she laughingly asks, "How many times Have those same stories been told?"
- The children cry out in unison,
 - "Grandma's stories are the kind we love, and to us they never grow old"
- "So let us just have another one," "No, two more," cries Baby Jule, "The one when Grandma was a little girl, And when our Daddy first started to school."

THE SOLDIER BOY.

There have been so many changes Since the war began, Such a difference of opinion As to the value of a man.

Now to take myself, for instance, When I came off the farm, Where I labored late and early, And work does a boy no harm:

The city chaps just gazed at me, And said, "He's a rube for fair," They wondered how I managed To get the straw out of my hair.

And if I had my pockets filled With clover-tops and beans, Or kept my surplus wealth stored up In the pockets of my jeans.

And about my scarlet top-knot, Did it keep my brain too hot, Or did I have my brogans built On some ten acre lot?

The girls stood by and tittered, And said, "He sure is some country clown," 'Til I tho't I was the butt and laughing stock

Of everyone in town.

When work was done I walked around, I did not have a friend To speak a pleasant word to me Or a kindly hand extend.

Then came the call for volunteers, I said, "Yes, sir, I'm your man. It matters not if I am a gawk I'll stand by Uncle Sam." So they dolled me up in a Khaki suit, That fitted like a book,

And the girls that laughed the loudest Turned and looked and looked and looked.

And the boys that were so mean to me, And filled my heart with hate,

Slapped my back and said, "Well, old boy, You certainly look great."

Then we had to march away,

To the beating of the drum, And they all shook hands so friendly-like

And hoped we'd soon be home.

The letters and the packages

That from time to time would come,

Were worth their weight in gold to us, Tho they made us long for home.

But now the war is over,

We fought, yes, fought hard, and won,

It was not safety first for us,

But to see the job well done.

Now there are picnics and receptions, We are feasted everywhere,

But sometimes I wonder if it's all for me Or the uniform I wear.

For I am just "Red-top Bill McGinty"

And my freckles are the same,

But my heart is just as loyal

As if Pershing were my name.

And soon I'll shed those nifty duds, And don my overalls;

Will I get the glad hand then And all the social calls?

Will I be met with friendliness And not with jeers and scorn

Will it be love for Bill McGinty Or the khaki uniform?

THE MAN THAT FOLKS LIKE TO MEET.

The man that most folks like to meet Is the man with the wholesome smile, That scatters sunshine in such a way.

As to make life more worth while

Stops to help the little barefoot lad, Whose kite is tied fast in a tree,

- And make peace among a crowd of boys Who just will not agree.
- "Good morning, friend, fine day again," Is all he needs to say,
- To cheer the heart of some down cast chap, And send him happier on his way.

Or some aged man feels safer, As he leans on the strong young arm, And is helped across the busy street, Out of the way of harm.

From the smallest child that toddles along, To the grandsire with the cane,

All are sorry to miss the man with the smile, And will welcome him back again.

He may not have gold or silver To give to those in need,

But a warm handclasp and a kindly word, Makes them feel he's their friend indeed.

The grouch may go by with his head bowed down,

And a sorry sight is he,

In a world so full of beautiful things, But not one can he see.

No little street urchin holds his hand, That hangs idly by his side,

And no troubled one seeks his advice, In their sorrow to comfort or guide. But this other good fellow, the one with the smile,

May have sorrow and trials and care,

But he'll have hosts of friends to reach forth a glad hand,

To help him his burdens to bear.

'Tis the fact that he helps folks in so many ways, That are lonely and sad all the while

Is what lightens the load that may be his own, And helps him to wear his glad smile.

THE TWO ROSEBUDS.

A little rosebud raised its head 'Neath a tangle of weeds and grass, And no one even noticed it As to and fro they passed.

For just beyond was a beautiful garden, With roses here and there

That were watered and tended day by day And gathered with loving care.

But the little rosebud growing alone Knew not of care or love,

Save what came with the tiny dewdrops, And the warm sunshine from above.

But one day a little child walked by Ragged, sad, and alone,

Stopped and cried out from her hungry heart, "Oh, you darling, I'll take you home."

Her small bare feet pressed the briers and weeds,

As she rushed with eager zest,

And plucked the rosebud from among them And clasped it to her breast.

Then she hurried on from street to street, Turned in an alley door,

Up a rickety stairs that led to a room Dingy, dark, and poor.

"Oh, Mother, see what I've bro't you Now I know you will get well.

It's a dear little pink and white rosebud, And it has the sweetest smell."

"Yes, Mother, it's a really rose,

It looked sad and lonely, too, So I stepped into the weeds and picked it And bro't it home to you." The mother smiled and answered,

"Ah yes, and when I was small like you, And lived far away at grandmother's house Where the beautiful roses grew:

"They crept along the high stone wall,

Peeped in the doors and windows, too, But for many years all the rose I've had,

My darling has been you.

"And I pray the Heavenly Father, In your hour of greatest need, Will send a gentle loving hand, To pluck you out from the briers and weeds."

Soon the day faded into twilight, Then came the darkness of night, And the two little rosebuds were alone Ere the dawn sent her mellow light.

But the mother's last prayer was answered, By the dear Father above,

And kind hands came and gathered the child Into a home of love.

Not a home of idle luxury,

But a garden of love and care,

Where the showers and sunshine of Heaven Fell in blessings everywhere.

And where by a gentle mother, She was guarded each day and hour, Till she merged from a simple rosebud Into one of God's choicest flowers.

MY BABY.

Where is my baby, the little lad, That used to make my heart so glad, With his funny pranks, and his roguish eyes, Blue as the bluest summer skies, My little lad?

Where is my baby, my little lad, Busy all day, no time to be sad, From early morning till set of sun, His work and play were never done, My little lad?

Where is my school boy, ah, where is he, Merry as any small boy could be, Loved by teachers and playmates, too, Happy-go-lucky, kind and true, My little lad?

Not baby or school boy, but now a man, Meeting life's problems as best he can, Perhaps far away from the old home nest, Far from the ones that love him best, My little lad.

I pray the Heavenly Father's care Will follow and guard him everywhere, Tho the home he may choose far away may be, Still he will always be to me My little lad.

THE THOUGHTLESS WORD.

The shades were closely drawn, Streamers hung outside the door, Tiny rosebuds held the ribbons That almost reached the floor.

I stopped in my hurried walking, And thought if I were inside Could I speak a word of comfort To those hearts so sorely tried.

And while I stood and pondered, Two young girls came walking by, They stopped and ceased their laughter As the streamers caught their eye.

One said in almost a whisper, "Oh, I wonder who has died. There's so much sadness everywhere." And she bowed her head and sighed.

The other answered lightly, "It is only a baby. The way I happen to know, They are strangers from another town,

Moved here some time ago.

"And they bro't this tiny baby With them, when they came, And no one seems to know them, We've not even heard their name.

"And a baby is such a care, When it has been sick so long, I don't think they will miss it much Soon after it has gone."

Her friend looked grieved and answered "Oh, I don't think that is so, For I had a baby sister

Many years ago.

"She was taken sick and died,

And we buried her one day,

And I'm sure we miss her just as much, As when she went away."

They soon left me, and went on their way, Each to live her part,

One who had never known a sorrow, And one with an aching heart.

I stood and watched them out of sight, My heart with sorrow stirred.

To think how much grief is caused, By just a thoughtless word.

'Twas only a tiny baby, But it was that mother's all, And it filled her heart with gladness Altho it was so small.

It filled that home with sunshine, That now seems naught but gloom, Kind friends may 'round them gather, But it is still an empty room.

So I, too, went on my way, Past this home so sad and lone, And tho't it's our loving Heavenly Father, Just gathering in his own.

THE AUTUMN LEAVES.

The Autumn leaves came rustling down, And as on the ground they lay. Some were pink and red and golden. And some just curled up and grav.

Said the bright one to the sister grav. "Why do you still linger 'round,

We are admired and gathered by loving hands, While you're just trampled on the ground."

The answer came so slowly. "Ah, yes, that may be true,

But in the happy Summer days. I was just as green as you."

And in the early Springtime, Children clapped their hands in glee.

To see the buds burst open Into leaves upon the tree.

And they romped and played Beneath the wide-spread boughs.

As they watched the gambols of the lambs And heard the lowing of the cows.

And the aged traveler, tottering on. Mid Summer's sun and heat,

Was glad to step into the welcome shade To rest his weary feet.

The song-birds came from far and near, And built their little homes,

I helped to make a shelter, To protect them from the storms.

Then the chilling Autumn wind Came and scattered us with the rest.

But it matters not what shade we are If we've done our very best.

For soon the snow, so soft and white, Will hide us from light of day, And we'll care not if we're red or gold, Or just curled up and gray."

So those foolish leaves would argue, Till there was nothing more to say, But a blast of wind from the cold northland, Came and swept them both away.

HOW RACHEL AND I BOUGHT THE FORD.

Rachel and I worked early and late. Since the day we bought the farm, But we were strong and healthy then, So hard work did us no harm. And our hearts rejoiced as we looked across Our fields of waving wheat. And corn and beans and 'taters. And all good things to eat. We labored on from day to day. With never a thought of rest. Tho some times, we tired more easily. And were lackin' in pep and zest: But we blamed it on the weather. It was either too hot or cold, But it never seemed to dawn on us That we might be growing old. Till one day I got athinkin' Now this thing is not fair. Here we've worked and saved for nigh forty vears And have never gone anywhere. So I stepped up to the kitchen door Where Rachel was makin' a pie. I says, "Rachel, how would you like to go on a trip, A vacation, just you and I?" She turned around with a beaming face, And said, "Well now, Josiah dear, I've been hungerin' for a vacation This many and many a year. "But I did not feel like complaining, With so much work to do. And when we couldn't go off together I'd rather stay home with you. "But now I think 'twould be splendid To turn our backs on our work. And take a short vacation. Just seein' 'round N' York."

So the plans were made, she began to save On butter and eggs and such,

So she would have some cash to spend-Of course it would not be much.

So one day, dressed in our best, with some travelin' things.

We drove into the town,

The Square was filled with the Town folks. Just standin' all around.

I stopped, awonderin' what it was, When up came Deacon Ward:

And said, "Oh, nothin's happened, Josh, 'tis a chap doin' advertizin'

For a man named Henry Ford."

So I went up to him and said. "Young man, now let me see The workin's of this nifty cart. It might interest me."

He said, "Yes sir, that's why I'm here, Just step around this way.

And I'll show you how it works so quick It will take your breath away."

He says. "Put your foot right here and here, Hold the wheel with both your hands.

For if you give it half a chance It will go to beat the band."

Says I, "Now that looks easy. For when all is said and done.

Those peddlers work quite similar To our old melodeon."

He laughed, and said, "Well, maybe, You don't know until you've tried,

Jump in and I will crank it up.

And we'll go for a ride."

I said, "Now are you sure it's safe,

And there's no danger of it goin' wild?" He said, "Oh no, it is so easy for to handle, It could be driven by a child."

So while he was cranking it, I thot I'd investigate, For the need of all those levers, screws and buttons. I could not calculate. When all at once it gave a plunge, I could not do a thing, One minute it was on the ground, The next seemed on the wing. The crowd just scattered everywhere. Of course I paid no heed, But I thot they were mighty clever To give me the room I'd need. For I've broken fractious colts and oxen. But upon my word, I never handled anything To equal that there Ford. It went both forth and backward. It went from side to side. I couldn't a kept out of people's yards If the street was twice as wide, And while I pumped and peddled, Hung to the wheel with might and main. Rachel was shouting frantically, "Oh Josiah, hurry back, we'll surely miss our train " But at last it stopped in a doorway. I didn't know how or why, The guy came running up and said, "Has anything happened, Mister, or has your 'bus gone dry?" I climbed out very slowly. I was clean out of breath, I said, "Well I don't know if it's dry or not, But I'm 'most sweat to death." He laughed as if 'twas a funny joke, Said, "She's a dandy, bet your life, You'd better buy it while you have a chance, And present it to your wife."

I says, "Young man, you just hold on, I'll try this 'bus again. I've never been beaten, no never before, And now I won't give in." So I handed over the cash to him, Our savings of years of work, And the Ford was ours right then and there. But we did not see New York. Now that was several years ago, And we are doin' fine, Of course we've had no railway trips, But it's vacation all the time. And the money that we paid out that day, Was not money spent in vain, For when we're all tired out we take a spin. And go back to work again. We ride thru the woods and meadows, Thru creeks, over rocks and logs, Sometimes we go at a rattling gait. And again at an easy jog. And sometimes, when far away we find, Our gasolene is gone, We just face towards home, it seems to know, For it rambles right along. Some folks talk of their touring cars, They look like railroad trains, But they stick in the mud, and we haul them out. Most every time it rains. But we're glad to do a friendly turn, Whenever it comes our way, And since automobiles are so plentiful, It comes 'most every day. So I will tell you, here and now, And you may take my word, It's just a heap of livin' To own a little Ford. 31



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