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LIEUTENANT R.,

OR THE

TRACT READ IN THE THEATRE.

Of my old respected friend, Lieutenant R., I cannot tell you much, so many years having elapsed since he entered into glory, and I never having committed to paper any memoranda of his short, though most satisfactory passage from the kingdom of darkness to that of light and immortality. It was about the year 1812 that, in the discharge of my professional duties, I was requested to attend on Lieut. R., who was the subject of severe, but transient disease. I had been struck by the personal appearance and honorable conduct of this young officer. I think I never knew a handsomer man of twenty-five, one of more pleasing manners, or more gentlemanly feelings. He was universally beloved and respected, and for these circumstances his company was so generally sought after, that he became devoted to all the follies and unsatisfying pursuits of pleasure, falsely so called. On recovering his usual degree of health, he called on me to request that I would report him off the sick list, and at the same time tendered me some pecuniary acknowledgment for my professional services, stating that he had been accustomed to remunerate my predecessor. My

answer was, of course, that which Christian principle and integrity would suggest to any honest man paid by the country.

This seemed to strike Lieut. R., and he exclaimed, "By G—d, Dr., there must be something more than I thought in you Methodists!" I give you his own words.

Early in the afternoon of that day, he called at my apartments with a ticket for the theatre, and which, I knew, he could have only obtained by paying an exorbitant price, there being two celebrated performers from London that night, which for some days previously had raised the box tickets to four times their ordinary value. On his presenting it to me, I expressed my sense of obligation for his intended favor, but told him that neither my principles nor inclination would permit me to use it. Being in the act of arranging some tracts, I put into his hand "The Death of Altamont," a tract published by the Religious Tract Society, with merely observing to him: "as you seem so anxious to confer an obligation on me, put this little book into your pocket and read it to oblige me."

He left me to dress for the theatre, to which place he went early to secure a seat. He sat in a corner box, and, as he afterward told me, merely to pass away some part of the previous time before the play began, he took the tract from his pocket and began to read it. So signal and mighty were the operations of the Spirit of God on his mind, that he became wholly and exclusively absorbed in the contents of the tract, and at the termination of the play, after midnight, he left the theatre without having felt the slightest interest in the performances. To use his own words, "conscience was the only performer before me that night."

It was about three o'clock in the morning that, after having on his return from the theatre thrown himself undressed on his bed, and in vain attempted to drown the voice of God in oblivion, he came over to my apartments, and loudly knocking at the door, requested to be admitted. As long as memory retains her seat, I can never forget his haggard looks and his tremulous voice. With a look of despair, and in a manner which seemed to carry with it a conviction of irretrievable ruin, he exclaimed; "Tell me, oh! tell me, is it possible that I can obtain mercy and forgiveness from the offended God of Altamont? Tell me, oh! tell me, if you really think I possibly can?" Hastily dressing myself, we sat together on the sofa, he in a state of restless agony, which expressed itself in incessant weeping and wringing of the hands, reiterating again and again the question he had just put to me. I at once led him to the throne of grace—wrestled along with him, that *He* would reveal himself in all his mighty, enlightening and consolatory power, who ever lives to save to the uttermost all who come to God by him. Whilst on our knees, I brought before him the boundless mercy of Jehovah, and the freeness and fullness of that salvation which, whosoever will may receive without money and without price, and it was worth living for to witness the eagerness with which he listened to the simple tale of redeeming love, and the glad tidings of free and full salvation by faith in the atoning blood of Jesus. The same day and night he scarcely tasted food or took any rest, and no drowning man could more vehemently call for assistance, nor any famishing man more greedily devour the means of support, than he sought for warrant in the promises of the gospel, to lay hold of the hope there set before him.

In a few days it pleased God to enable him to cast himself as a ruined, helpless sinner, into the arms of Jesus, and I can never forget the expression of his countenance, pale and languid as it was with groaning and cries, which had been his meat day and night, when on entering his room early on the fourth morning, it became almost illuminated with tears of sacred joy, and he exclaimed, I have found him whom my soul loveth, the friend of sinners, who his own self says, him that cometh to me, I will in nowise cast out. Look at it, do look at it, in this precious book which you gave me, at the same moment holding up a New Testament, which was to him the pearl of great price. I had, on the preceding day, directed his attention to the following passages of scripture, among several others: Luke ii, 10; John iii, 14-17; vi, 37; Rom. x, 4; 1 Tim. i, 15; Heb. 7, 25; 1 John i, 9; ii, 1, 2. He had committed these and many other passages of holy writ to memory, and dwelt on them with indescribable satisfaction.

From this hour, having credited the simple declarations of truth, he went on his way rejoicing, knowing in whom he had believed, and that he would keep that which he had committed to his trust, to the solemn hour when he should be called to appear at the dread tribunal of a righteous God, where inflexible justice would be satisfied with nothing short of that robe which hides and cancels all our sins.

Within a month he was called to embark with his regiment for the West Indies, and scarcely had he reached that unhealthy climate, even before disembarking, when it pleased God, in his mysterious providence, to arrest him by yellow fever, and in a few days to call him to the realms of perfect purity and bliss. On the day preceding his embarkation, he supplied himself

liberally with bibles and tracts, for distribution to all on board, and his separation from me was one which may be imagined, but which I dare not trust myself to describe. I was to hear from him on his arrival at Jamaica, but the first account of him was an official report of his death, and this was soon followed by the return of his faithful confidential servant-man, who told me, with the deepest sorrow, that after a sudden attack of fever, which deprived him of his reason, he recovered his consciousness and requested the presence of all his brother officers, to whom, in his expiring moments, he preached Christ crucified as the only refuge from the wrath to come, and the only source of solid happiness.

During this time he held in his quivering hand the identical tract that he had received from me before going to the theatre, and with this messenger of mercy, grasped more firmly as life fled, he expired amid the lamentations of those who esteemed him as a man and an officer, and was buried with the tract pressed to his heart.

One of our ingenious military friends, says the Richmond Examiner, thinks the colporteurs are doing great harm in our army by circulating terrible tracts in the camps, and on the eve of expected battles, confronting our men with little pamphlets, entitled "Are you ready to die?" "Sinner, you are soon to be damned," etc.

This is more than a mistake. The best stimulation of courage and endurance in the army, is to be found in an inculcation of Christian spirit among the men. With more religion in our camps, we will have less drunkenness, less dissatisfaction, less grumbling, and a courage which becomes invincible, as it is refined by the pure and holy spirit of religious convictions. An

army stands as much in need of moral and religious education as any equal number of men composing a social community; and the colporteurs are doing a work which, even in worldly expediency, is not to be despised.

The higher order of patriotism is closely akin to religion, and the loftiest courage is always associated, if not with religious profession, at least with deep feelings of reverence for the divine mysteries of life and death. The man who blanches at the question, "are you prepared to die?" or worse than that, puts it off with a sneer, is destitute of true courage. Many a man who, in times of peace and safety, hardens his heart and imagines himself to be brave, will, when the battle is raging around him, howl in terrified agony of spirit to God for mercy, while the Christian soldier stands before the red crash of death, not in sight of his "Emperor," as the French soldiers at Solferino did, but in the sight of his God.

We must remark the painful evidences of the loss of the sense of our dependence on God as the war has progressed. It did not commence so. The City of Charleston is said to have been, on the eve of the battle of Fort Sumter, like one vast altar, from which ascended the incense of prayer. The whole nation, from Virginia to Texas, commemorated our early and brilliant victory of Manassas by thanksgiving in the ten thousand sanctuaries of the land. But there has lately been a marked relaxation of this sense of our dependence on the God of battles. It has been impiously said that the battle of Belmont was won by the energetic oaths of our officers. There has been a wretched plausibility that has preached in favor of immoral indulgences in our army, that has given eclat to profanity

of officers in battle, and that has winked at drunkenness in the camps, by questioning the military virtues of water drinkers. We have a great work before us. It may not be assisted by the mere cant and whines of religious pretension, but it certainly will be assisted by that hearty and reverent sense of dependence on Divine Providence, and that practical habit of religious supplication which strengthened our fathers in the times of their trial, and has everywhere left their evidences of reward on the pages of history.

LAST WORDS OF DYING SINNERS.

"Millions of money for one minute of time!" exclaimed a dying lady of rank, of beauty, and of power; but not a minute was to be found for her in the world of time. She had spent her years in the pursuit of pleasure, and never had one moment to spare for the great concerns of the world to come.

"It is too late, I am lost!" was the dying cry of a young man who had passed through a revival of religion, and had not been moved by the power of the Holy Spirit. Sudden sickness seized him, and death stared him in the face, and he was filled with anguish when he saw the danger of his precious soul. He was urged to fly to the Saviour and trust him, as did the thief on the cross. But with the lamentation on his lips, *"Too late, I am lost!"* he expired.

Mr. Hervey called to see a dying man, who thus gave utterance to the deep sorrows of his soul: "I see a horrible night approaching, bringing with it the blackness of darkness for ever. Woe is me. When God called, I refused. Now I am in sore anguish, and yet this is but the beginning of sorrows. I shall be destroyed with an everlasting destruction!"

"I won't die now," cried a young lady, when she felt the pangs of death getting hold upon her. But as they increased, and she saw there was no way of escape, and that, whether willing or not, she must die, she cried out, "Lord, what must I do?" and fell back in death.

A rich man was dying, and when the physician had exhausted his skill in fruitless attempts to arrest the violence of his disease, the sufferer asked, "shall I never recover?" "You are quite sick," answered the doctor, "and should prepare for the worst." "Cannot I live for a week?" "No; you will probably continue but a little while." "Say not so," said the dying man, "I will give you a hundred thousand pounds if you will prolong my life three days." "I could not do it, my dear sir, for three hours," said the doctor, and the man was dead in less than an hour.

"There is no mercy for me now!" said a youth, who had been careless and irreligious in health, and now in sickness he felt that the atonement which he had despised was not within his reach. He died without hope, protesting to the end that there was no mercy for such a sinner as he.

"TO-DAY, IF YE WILL HEAR HIS VOICE, HARDEN NOT YOUR HEARTS."—HEB. IV. 7.

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