

## "MOTHER, OH, WHERE IS THAT BETTER LAND?"

This is the language of childhood; the first outreaching of the soul after the Spiritual and Divine. There is a sweetness about it, a soothing measure, that lingers on in the life of man. It is fitting that there be childish thoughts for childhood's days. They somehow dovetail into the maturer years of life, but not to die. The child thought is father to the man thought. Not as the seed produces the plant. The seed of character is in the soul, awaiting a call from the outside. A call not to another land, but to a fuller adaptation to this land, and a fuller knowledge of its possibilities. Somehow or other, if we could carry over with us from childhood years more of childhood's simplicity and openness, the life struggle would be lighter. There is really no more difficulty in adjusting life in mature years than in childhood. If the burden is heavier, the back is stronger. I don't like the word burden. I have just, from force of habit, used it. It does not call up the right thoughts. The child starts with the thought of a better land. It has to learn the lesson that this land is the best for the present training, and that in some way, somewhere, there is a "Divinity that shapes our ends, rough hew them as we will." There is no boundary line between childhood and manhood; it is a gradual rise, enlargement. It is not a question of one fitting into the other; but of being carried into the other. It is a broad outstanding truth, that the child is father to the man. Thoughts of childhood are slowly changed, but no doubt a substratum in some way is carried forward into the maturer life. It is thus that we see the necessity for guarding the child mind from error in every form, of every shade. Is there not a suggestion of error in this Better Land thought? We know this is the best of all lands for the opening soul of man. There is no better land for us until we have somewhat unfolded. It is not untrue to say there is a better land. It is sure. We stand related to it. We have inheritance; it now. But like the child at school, we need to be educated before we can use it.

This suggests to us the real business of life. The place, our place, is right. We were not consulted about it. The All Wise fixed it up for us. It is the how of life, not its where, that is all-important. It is all-important that the child mind, at an early stage, should know this. Could we improve those beautiful words, "Mother, Oh! where is this better Land?" They sound so sweetly, have cheered many in the past, that it seems almost sacrilegious to say a word against them. Yet there is a more excellent way. It is well to impress the childish mind with the fact that we have not reached the best in life yet. By all ways, and every way, assure the opening mind that life holds better things than have yet reached us. It has an interest in a better land; but only when we are ready for the change. We don't need to withdraw anything said about the better land. It is all right, only there is something comes before it. This, what we may name a primary quantity, needs to be added in some way. It is not a case of subtraction, but addition. Possibly the better land suggests more than another country to most minds. God-given life seeks more than place, more than land, however bright. Man is Spirit, and Spirit seeks Spirit. Man is God-made, and only God can satisfy the soul's desire. But the thought of a better land may help, may draw higher, nearer to fitness.

We all know, in later life, that Love is the great transformer that fits us to fill a better land. It can go far to make earth like heaven, and the best heaven we may dream of, could not continue without Love. It is in the highest degree desirable that children should know this in early life. It is a germ truth, that opens and grows in the soul, producing fruit of its kind, always sweet, bright, good.

All human love is mixed, we may say, with human characteristics, is human. This seems, may be, like playing on words, but there is a truth very near it. We may put it another way: All earth love is mixed with personal qualities. It may be correct to say it is human. Love, as we meet it every day, is a compound of the best, and we may say the ordinary. It may sometimes seem only to have a veneer, but it is always good. There may be good love and better love

down here amongst men. We hear the goldminer speak of good gold, but he does not want us to think there is any bad gold about. He only means there is substance of less value mixed with it. "God is love," and love is from God; it is our highest conception of excellence.

## THE SPREADING DROUGHT.

The wetter grows the weather, why the dryer grows the land—  
The drought is spreading like a leak out far on every hand.  
Dry States are getting dryer, the wet ones grow less humid—  
It's "high and dry" is living, for the moisture all is doom-ed.

It's Southern States, and Western, East, North, and Central, too,  
The districts, territories, and the island spots a few—  
They are all a-hieing, drying, one or two or three a day—  
It's the pro-hi and the so dry\* is this anti-wetness way.

They won't let you make it, keep it, sell it, give it to a friend,  
Can't store it, ship it, imitate it—no one will defend  
Old Demon Rum these sober times, and few will drop a tear  
For this departed spirit, or put flowers on his bier.

—D. G. Bickers, in "Macon (Ga.) Telegraph."

## TO-DAY.

Sure, this world is full of trouble—  
I ain't said it ain't,  
And I've had enough and double Reason for complaint.  
Rain an' storm have come to fret me,  
Skies were often gray;  
Thorns an' brambles have beset me  
On the road—but say,  
Ain't it fine to-day?

What's the use of always weepin',  
Makin' trouble last?  
What's the use of always keepin'  
Thinkin' of the past?  
Each must have his tribulation,  
Water with his wine.  
Life it ain't no celebration,  
Trouble! I've had mine—  
But to-day is fine.

It's to-day that I am livin',  
Not a month ago,  
Havin' losin', takin', givin',  
As God wills it so.  
Yesterday a cloud of sorrow  
Fell across the way;  
It may rain again to-morrow,  
It may rain—but, say,  
Ain't it fine to-day  
—Douglas Malloch,