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LET NOT ANOTHER TAKE
THY CROWN.

BY REV. R. H. HOWARD.

THE late Joseph Gillott, the celebrated steel pen manufacturer, when twenty-one years of age, in consequence of one of those serious depressions of trade that at times affect all manufacturing communities, was, in common with many others, thrown out of employment, and hence, with but a single shilling in his pocket, was obliged to leave his native city, Sheffield, Eng., and go abroad in quest of work, seeking his fortune. Reaching Birmingham, an important manufacturing town, he entered an old inn, and, seating himself in the tap-room, began to consider the situation. His last penny had been expended. He was weak, hungry,

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and ill. Not a friend had he, or even acquaintance, in all Birmingham. And work there seemed to be none. Scarcely a ray of hope was presented to his mind. For a moment he was tempted to give up and turn beggar or tramp. The naturally buoyant hopefulness of youth, however, soon came to his relief. A new resolution was formed. A fiery energy seized him. "I'll not give up," he said. "Give up? No, indeed. 'While there's life there is hope,' and 'so long as there's a will there's a way.'"

Departing from the tavern, he again sought for employment. This time he was more successful. "Fortune favors the brave." Meantime, as he was not only a skilled mechanic, but naturally very ingenious, he had soon invented sundry very valuable devices. Among these was a machine for the manufacture of steel pens. His fortune was made. Who has not heard of Gillott's "303"?

The practical application to be made of the foregoing interesting incident is, I think, sufficiently obvious. Had Joseph Gillott, when life's prospects seemed darkest, yielded to his emotions of despondency, how very different had been his fortune! Another, doubtless, would have solved the problem that had been waiting for his genius and energies to explain. Another, accordingly, had received the great reward—another had taken his crown.

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As it was, a triumphant success rewarded an unfaltering courage, an indomitable perseverance. Wealth and honors abundant crowned a life of patient persistency and heroic, self-denying toil.

And thus it is generally. Application is the price to be paid for advancement; earnest endeavor, absolute fidelity in even that which is least, is the inseparable condition of promotion of all honorable achievement. Success usually attends those who are worthy of it. Failing, however, as time rolls on, to recognize the golden opportunity, to seize upon and to redeem it; others will be quite sure to press forward and snatch it from us, to take thus our crown, our prize, as it were, before our very eyes.

Before each of us in the race of life there are doubtless many precious opportunities of improvement, attainment, happiness, usefulness. Will we be diligent to avail ourselves of them? Or shall we, through want of heart or through lack of the necessary energy of purpose, suffer these to slip from us, to go by default? Once lost, so far as we are concerned, they are lost forever.

Others, more earnest, consecrated, faithful, zealous, than ourselves, may grasp and improve them and so ride on to fortune—win the golden opinions, the enviable fame, the wide influence and usefulness we might have enjoyed.

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But our theme becomes invested with especial, with transcendent import and with most solemn interest, when considered, not only in the light of things temporal and earthly, but of things spiritual and immortal.

One of the favorite figures of New Testament writers as they set forth human life, with its responsibilities and its rewards, is that of a race, with its glorious prize at its successful, or its triumphal, close. "So run, that ye may obtain." 1 Cor. ix, 24. "Looking unto Jesus." Heb. xii, 2. "Press toward the mark." Phil. iii, 14. "Hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown." Rev. iii, 11. "They do it to obtain a corruptible crown, but we an incorruptible." 1 Cor. ix, 25. "A crown of righteousness." 2 Tim. iv, 8. "A crown of life." Rev. ii, 10. "A crown of rejoicing." 1 Thess. ii, 19. "A crown of glory, that fadeth not away." 1 Pet. v, 4.

A "crown!" What does a crown represent? What but conquest, empire, victorious achievement? The idea plainly involved in this figure is that God's true people are characteristically overcomers, and that those who have thus been overcomers in this world are to receive special honors in the next. Jesus distinctly intimates this when he declares that those who have been faithful over their few things here

shall, by and by, be made rulers over many things in glory; "shall reign with him"—"walk with him in white"—"sit down with him in his Throne."

The sphere of this consecrated activity must be found first of all, in one's own soul; since, verily, what will it profit a man though he gain the whole world and yet lose his own soul, or lose himself; forfeit forever the rich inheritance reserved in heaven for him? Even as spendthrift, profligate scions of English nobility often, as the result of mortgaging, in advance, to scheming money-lenders, their proud inheritances, find, on coming forward at last to claim them, that their ancestral estates are really not theirs at all. Another hath taken them.

In like manner should our zeal kindle in view of opportunities all about us for usefulness, for winning immortal souls to Christ and heaven. "Let him know," says St. James (v, 20), "that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins." O! for the poet's inspiration, not as a transient stimulus, or an intermittent impulse, but as the habit and principle of one's life:

"I live for those who love me,
For those who know me true;
For the heaven that smiles above me,
And waits my spirit too.

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For the cause that lacks assistance,
For the wrongs that need resistance,
For the bright hopes in the distance,
And the good that I can do."

For all such toilers and heroes there is laid up in glory an incorruptible, a fadeless crown.

Will all crowns in heaven shine with equal luster? What if some shall wear lusterless crowns there?

When Princess Beatrice of England was lately wedded to Prince Henry of Battenberg, we are told that the latter inspired but little respect in royal circles. The reason for this was that he is a prince only in name. His title is an empty one. However it may once have been, it now represents nothing—it is but little better than a barren honor. The young man is a prince, indeed, but without a principedom; a nobleman, but without estates. Thus we may imagine that in heaven there may be souls who, though, in a sense, quite near the throne, will yet be of but comparatively little account. There will be those there, however, princes indeed, royal in the very best sense of the word; souls decked with diadems resplendent with the light of many suns, "shining with the brightness of the firmament, and as the stars for ever and ever." These will be those who have been toilers and sufferers in the Lord's vineyard; those who, under God,

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have turned many to righteousness, who have endured hardness as good soldiers, and who have been successful in materially building up the Kingdom of the Lord Jesus in the world; and who, accordingly, in the great future, will receive, as they so richly deserve, special marks of the divine regard.

“And who are these,” we shall be tempted to say, in the day when God shall “make up his jewels,” as we contemplate certain “saints in light” set apart for special honor, “who are these arrayed in white?” “Ah! these are they,” will be the response, “who have come up through great tribulation, the martyrs and heroes of every age, the self-denying toilers, as well as the patient sufferers for Christ’s sake in every generation, those who have been faithful in spite of discouragements, loyal in spite of determined opposition, steadfast unto the end in spite of stripes, in spite of the spoiling of their goods, and literally in spite of the loss of all things earthly; these are they who are thus signally, immortally, honored in heaven.”

Indolent, sluggish, lukewarm, easygoing or nerveless Christian, even if in that hereafter you be not utterly crownless, yours must yet be a comparatively starless, lusterless crown; while others in no wise as highly favored as yourself, yet seizing upon

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opportunities you neglected, and stepping promptly forward into every open door of duty or privilege, will, in the world to come, be found to be wearing honors you might have won, shining with the brightness that might have surrounded you. Lo! another—alas how unspeakable the pathos of this announcement—another hath taken thy crown.

Then watch and fight and pray,
The battle ne'er give o'er,
Renew it boldly every day
And help divine implore.
Ne'er think the victory won,
Nor lay thine armor down;
The work of faith will not be done
Till thou obtain the crown.

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