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ELISHA MORGAN, MANAGER.

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* **Happy Canyon, Colo.** *

July 1st, '99

Editor Sheridan Road News Letter:

Happy are they to whom the summer time brings sweet solitude and an opportunity to "take stock" of personal resources and find out what kind of "shop-keeping" one is doing with this wonderful opportunity of an earthly existence.

One Swami, who gave lectures in Chicago on "Raja Yoga," told the class that most people live on so low a plane that they are only "shop-keeping," which is to say they give nothing except in the hope of getting as much again, so much kindness for so much popularity, so much politeness for its equivalent. They "give a smile to escape a stab," or indulge in "sweet charity" because it is the only way in which they know how to assert their superiority.

Perhaps it is true concerning "most people"—but who is not glad to testify that it is not true in regard to everybody?

For regret that "the world is selfish," we have always Whittier's ringing lines:

Search thine own heart; what paineth thee
In others in thyself may be.
All dust is frail, all flesh is weak,
Be thou the true man thou dost seek.

The first step toward being true is to think of those who have been true; and if among these we can now and then name one who bore himself with dignity and wrested from the world its brightest jewel, "success," we are weak enough to be glad that he at least proved that sincerity is not always "a mistake," and goodness not invariably "a waste" and greatness not necessarily unrecognized until it is two centuries old.

It may be true that

Ten ancient towns contend for Homer dead,
Through which the living Homer begged his bread.

but sometimes men and women live long enough to hear "Well done, good and faithful servant," even while they are faint with the burdens of life they have borne.

Sometimes saints and angels look at us with patient eyes and do not sadden us by wearing Failure's dark disguise.

Yes, sometimes! It was so with David Swing, Chicago's immortal Prof. Swing. It is so satisfactory to remember that when he died the throng that assembled to express their love and grief over his coffin was so dense that some of his dearest friends could not press nearer than a quarter of a mile to the pale sleeper.

It is satisfactory to remember because it seems inspiring to remember that "the world" is not so dull and cold and blind as sometimes it seems.

Yet, if the memory of his popularity is restful, how much more satisfying is the memory of his personality, which expressed always and everywhere, strength and sincerity? In his presence all the pretenses and shallow make-believes of the socially ambitious and mentally vacuous shriveled and fell away—not because he scorned or reviled them; oh, no! He was too noble for "that Godless passion, contempt," too magnanimous to make any "feel small" in his presence. It was only that beholding what was really great. You could not make obeisance to what pretending to be great, mistook grandeur of "appointments" for greatness of soul.

I love to sit alone in some seques-

tered nook, where I can hear the wind saying its prayers, and think of Prof. Swing. His strength was invincible as the rock-bound coast 'gainst which oceans may hurl themselves in vain.

The enmities, the evil-speaking, the "ignoring of social claims," the neglect and all the waves and billows of human unrest and human misconception might dash in vain against the majesty of that master soul. He gave them "a smile as white as day," and its language was "Let them be forgiven; they know not what they do."

In the Art Institute of Chicago is a vile caricature of a bust of that noble head and face. All honor to the philanthropist who will remove that bust as an atrocious libel of a face whose language was not commercial shrewdness, not cold and calculating impenetrability, but a dream of serenity and a hope of immortality. The man or woman who made that bust should read one of Emerson's biographers, who said of him: "He was applauded by all sorts of people on grounds that would have made his hair stand on end."

The loss of a fitting representation of the greatest man that ever lived and died in Chicago is a loss indeed to the millions destined to look into her sources of greatness.

At least two philanthropists with money and, what is better, aspirations toward the highest, are subscribers to this most dear little Sheridan Road NEWS LETTER. If they will secure a fitting and life-like bust of David Swing for the Art Institute they will build for themselves a monument in the hearts of their countrymen. More anon.

AGNES LEONARD HILL.

The Nickel Plate Road

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