

The Golden Lock of Hair

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The little blue tin was hardly ever seen. Usually it came out of the drawer in the fall of the year. Inside was a string of children's beads. Nothing valuable nor special about them in any way, save only, that fastened in the cord of the beads was one lock of golden red hair.

The Christian lady told me about it one day. Her little girl, Helen, or Ella as they called her, was playing with the beads and somehow got them tangled in her hair. Try as they might, they could not unloose them. So at last the mother took the scissors and cut off the lock of hair. She kept that string of children's beads, and the lock of hair still fastened to it, in the little blue tin that I had seen.

Ella was a beautiful child, I learned, with a sweet and gentle nature, the joy of her young mother and father. She took seriously ill and in those days little was understood about her malady. Radical surgery was performed to save her life but at the tender age of four the Lord took her away Home out of what would have been a life of suffering.

The grief and sorrow of the loss of such a lovely little flower can only be appreciated by those who have passed that way. The young father, though a believer in Christ, became bitter and angry with God at the loss of his little darling and in such a way. The wee girl was buried in an unmarked grave and never in his life did the father return to it. He seldom spoke of his Ella and then only with difficulty. The years passed by and when he was seventy he said to me, "I know that I'm truly saved but I have nothing for God. I shall be saved as by fire." Though personally I know there was many a cup of water given along the way that shall not lose its reward.

The mother carried the wound of that loss in her heart right to the grave, but she bowed to the Father's will and out of the furnace of sorrow she came forth as gold and in her quiet way became a minister of comfort to many with the comfort wherewith she herself had been comforted by God.

We all must pass through deep waters at some time in life. For some the waters are deeper and darker than for others but it is the inevitable lot of human experience. In Isaiah 43:2, it is "when" not "if". We all must pass that way some time. But it is "through" not "into" for the waters of trial are not for our *destruction* but for our *instruction*. If by the grace and help of God we can bow to Him in the sorrow we will come forth as gold. If we rebel, despise His chastening or faint under the rod, we will not bear the peaceable fruit of righteousness (Hebrews 12), and we can suffer loss at the judgement seat of Christ.

The years have passed. The mother and father have both been re-united in glory with their darling daughter (2 Samuel 12:23). A lock of hair, be it ever so golden, was not much to be left with, but it was all part of the treasure of memories and the token of hope that one day they would be together again beyond this vale of tears.

After some searching, I found that unmarked baby grave one day in a shaded, overgrown corner of a cemetery in Scotland, and stood alone with my thoughts and prayers, too personal to share with any but the Lord. That grave and that golden lock of hair have had a lesson for me in my life that I hope I shall not easily forget.

Ella, you see, was my sister.

*Jesus, Lover of my soul, let me to Thy bosom fly
While the billows near me roll, while the tempest still is high:
Hide me, O my Saviour, hide, till the storm of life is past;
Safe into the haven guide, O receive my soul at last.*

*Other refuge have I none; hangs my helpless soul on Thee;
Leave, ah! leave me not alone, still support and comfort me.
All my hope on Thee is stayed, all my help from Thee I bring;
Cover my defenceless head with the shadow of Thy wing.*

*Plenteous grace with Thee is found, grace to pardon all my sin;
Let the healing streams abound; make and keep me pure within.
Thou of life the fountain art; freely let me take of Thee;
Spring Thou up within my heart now and to eternity. – Charles Wesley (Dec 18th 1707 – March 29th 1788)*