

So that even when we come to the days when “the strong men shall bow themselves,” there may be more pleasant fruits for our Master, riper and fuller and sweeter, than ever before. For “they shall still bring forth fruit in old age”; and the man that simply “trusteth in the Lord” “shall not be careful in the year of drought, neither shall cease from yielding fruit.”

Some of the fruits of the Spirit seem to be especially and peculiarly characteristic of sanctified older years; and do we not want to bring them *all* forth? Look at the splendid ripeness of Abraham’s “faith” in his old age; the grandeur of Moses’ “meekness,” when he went up the mountain alone to die; the mellowness of St. Paul’s “joy” in his later epistles; and the wonderful “gentleness” of St. John, which makes us almost forget his early character of “a son of thunder,” wanting to call down God’s lightnings of wrath. And “the same Spirit” is given to us, that we too may bring forth “fruit that may abound,” and always “more fruit.”

The third bright side is brightest of all: “*Even to your old age, I am He*”; always the same Jehovah- Jesus; with us “all the days,” bearing and carrying us “all the days”; reiterating His promise—“even to hoar hairs will I carry you . . . ; even I will carry and will deliver you,” just as He carried the lambs in His bosom. For we shall always be His little children, and “doubtless” He will always be our Father. The rush of years cannot touch this!

Fear not the westering shadows,
O Children of the Day!
For brighter still and brighter,
Shall be your homeward way.
Resplendent as the morning,
With fuller glow and power,
And clearer than the noonday,
Shall be your evening hour.

¹OUR SWISS GUIDE

Not the least interesting part of mountaineering is the perpetual upspringing of lessons and illustrations and analogies. Sometimes an idea starts up which has, for one’s self, all the delicious charm of a quite new thought, though very likely it may have flashed upon the minds of scores of other travellers; sometimes a

¹ “Our Swiss Guide” was first published in the periodical *Sunday Magazine* in 1874, and was later published in the posthumous *Swiss Letters and Alpine Poems* edited by her eldest sister Miriam (London: James Nisbet & Co., 1881), pages 304-318. This article can be found on pages 353-356 of Volume IV of Havergal’s *Complete Works*. F.R.H. was utterly fluent in German and French (and nearly fluent in Italian).

Eccles. 12:3
Song. 7:13; 4:16
Psalm 92:14
Jeremiah 17:7, 8

Galatians 5:22, 23

Romans 4:19–21

Deut. 34:1, 5
Ephesians and
Philippians

Mark 3:17

Luke 9:54

1 Cor. 12:13

Phil 4:17; Jn 15:2

Isaiah 46:4

Matthew 28:20

Isaiah 63:9

Isaiah 46:4

Isaiah 40:11

1 John 2:13

Isaiah 63:16

Hebrews 1:11, 12

very old and familiar one presents itself, and we have the pleasure of proving it, perhaps for the first time, by practical experience. In noting one little group of illustrations among many, those which cluster round the idea of a "Guide," we shall not be careful to steer clear of such old ideas, though we may hope to add some freshness to them.

The application throughout will be so very obvious to any mind accustomed to take the least interest in analogies of spiritual life, that we prefer giving the points of illustration only, leaving the reader to supply the "heavenly meaning" which shall underlie each sentence.

Curiously enough, the name of our favourite Swiss guide, the one who inspired us with most confidence, and to whom we should most like to entrust ourselves in any future tour, at once gave the keynote of thought; it was *Joseph*. While we instinctively trusted his sagacity and strength, it was additionally pleasant to find that our bright young guide was a believer in the Lord Jesus Christ, our true Joseph. He had remarked that his great physical strength and health was "the most splendid earthly gift," but on our mention of the most glorious Gift of all, our Saviour Christ himself, he rejoined fervently, "Ah, one can never estimate the value of *that* gift!"

But to proceed to our illustrations.

1. The first duty of a really first-rate guide, when arranging for a long snow or glacier excursion, is to see that we are properly provided with everything needful. He ascertains that you have snow spectacles, without which the glare of the snow is not simply inconvenient, but injurious; and veils, without which you stand a fair chance of finding your face completely flayed, if it should be a sunny day. He examines the spike of your alpenstock and the nails of your boots, and inquires after your wraps, and often gives curiously practical advice as to other points in your outfit. He not only tells you what you must have as to provision, but, if the excursion involves a night in some mountain hut, he sends on the necessary fuel and food, and sometimes even bedding. In all these matters you do not need to trouble at all; if you will only leave it altogether to him, he will think of everything, arrange everything, and provide everything; and when the time comes you will find all in order, your shoes fresh nailed, your alpenstock newly spiked, the porter sent on with provision, and the coil of strong rope and the ice axe all ready for the difficult places which you do not yet know of.

But many travellers do not even know that the guide is thus willing and competent; they do not ask, or perhaps they even decline, his aid and advice. Instead of throwing it all upon his responsibility, they take all the trouble themselves, and then generally find something gone wrong or something overlooked.

2. Before you start, the guide has disposed of all those heavier matters which you could not possibly carry for yourself. Very often they are taken completely out of your sight. Encumbered with these, you could not even set out on your

journey, much less progress quickly and pleasantly.

But there are always plenty of little affairs which seem mere nothings at first, but which are soon found to be real burdens. The guide is perfectly willing to relieve you of all these. They are no weight to him; he quite smiles at the idea of its being any trouble to him to carry them, but they make a serious difference to you. He offers to take them at first; and if you decline, though he may not perhaps offer again, he will cheerfully take them when, later on, you feel their weight, and hand them one by one to him, till the very last is given up, and you walk lightly and freely. A beginner says she “would rather carry her little knapsack, it is really no weight at all!” and thinks a parcel or two in her pocket “can’t make any difference,” and prefers wearing her waterproof, because “it isn’t at all heavy.” But she has not gone far before she is very glad, if a sensible girl, to give up her knapsack, tiny though it be; and then she finds that a waterproof won’t do for climbing, and she hands that over; and presently she even empties her pocket, and the guide trudges away with it all. Then she is surprised to find what a difference it does make, and understands why her friend, who knew the guide’s ways better and gave up every single thing to him at first, is getting along so cool and fresh and elastically. But mark that the weight of a burden is seldom realized till we really are going uphill and in a fair way to make progress. Indeed, this very sensitiveness to weight is a quick test of increased gradient. We think nothing about it as long as we are walking on a level or slightly downhill; but as soon as we begin the real ascent the pull of the little burdens is felt at once, and the assistance, which before we did not crave, becomes very welcome. It is then that we feel we *must* “lay aside *every* weight.”

3. One may almost certainly distinguish between a tyro and an old hand by watching for a few minutes the style of march. A novice will walk at an irregular pace according to the irregularities of the ground, making little “spurts” when she comes to an easy bit, and either putting on steam or lagging behind for extra steep ones; stopping to gather flowers and poke at curious boulders; taking long or short steps according to circumstances, and never thinking of such a thing as noticing, much less imitating, the steady rhythm of the guide’s walk. Probably she expresses her astonishment at his unexpectedly slow pace, and would prefer getting on a little faster; very likely she dashes ahead or aside, and presently has to be recalled to the track, which is not so easy to keep as she supposed.

One with more experience is quite content to take the guide’s pace, knowing certainly that it pays in the long run, and saves an enormous amount of fatigue, and therefore of time also. Very short steps, slowly, silently, and steadily placed, but as regular as martial music, never varying in beat, never broken by alternation of strides and pauses—this is the guide’s example for uphill work; and yet it is what one never believes in till one has learnt by experience that one gets through twice as much by it.

4. It is wonderful what a saving of fatigue it is if from the very beginning one obeys the guide implicitly and follows him exactly. You spy such a handy “short cut,” you can see so precisely where you can join the path again, it will

save you such a provoking long round, you can't think why the guide does not choose it! So away you go, exulting in your cleverness, straight uphill, instead of that tiresome zigzag.

But it is rather steeper than you thought, and you get just a little out of breath; and you find an awkward little perpendicular rock right in the way and you must go round it; and then you get into rhododendron bushes which are thicker than you thought, and you get very wet; and then you see your companions reaching the point you are making for, and you scramble and hurry. And by the time you have done with your short cut you find you have not only gained no time, but that the few minutes away from the guide have heated you and taken more out of you than an hour's steady following. Later in the day you recollect your short cuts of the morning, and wish you had economised your breath.

5. The full value of exact following is not learnt in the valleys or pastures. It is on the "high places" and on the unsullied snowfields that one discovers this.

It is when we are high away above the green slopes, seeing no track but our guide's own footsteps, that we learn its safety. He set his foot on that stone: there you must set yours, for the next is loose and would betray you; he planted his alpenstock on that inch of rock: there you must plant yours, for an inch either way would give no firm hold; he climbed by that jut of rock: so must you, for the other would be too hard a step; he sprang but half way over that torrent, and you must do the same at cost of wetting your feet, for he knew that the slab of rock which you could have reached at one bound was treacherously slippery and dangerous.

It is here also that we get into the way of instant and unquestioning compliance with every word our guide utters. I was struck with the remark of a Swiss Alpine Clubbist in a description of his ascent of the Tödi. His guide suddenly shouted to him, "Turn sharp to the right!" He saw no reason whatever for this, but obeyed instantly. The next moment an immense block of stone fell upon the spot where he would have been had he hesitated an instant or even looked round to satisfy himself. The quick and practised eye of the guide saw the trembling of the loosened mass which the traveller could not see. A query would have been fatal. He added, "In these high places one learns to obey one's guide without stopping to ask 'Why?'"

But when the snow slopes, so cool and pure and beautiful, are reached, another phase of following is learnt. There is not the excitement and effort of the rock climbing, and at first it seems very quiet and easy work, with a special exhilaration of its own, making one feel as if one had started quite fresh, all the rest of the journey counting for nothing. Once we set out on such a slope, tracking after our guide in a general sort of way, rather interested in making our own footprints, and hardly distinguishing his from those of our companions. If we turned to look back, it was surprising what a number of unconscious little curves our feet had made. But the snow was rather soft, and we soon found it much harder work than we expected. One of us was walking, as she always did, close behind the guide, because she was not quite so strong as the rest, and was therefore under his especial care. Suddenly she called out, "Oh, do set your feet

exactly in the guide's footsteps, you can't think how much easier it is!" So we tried it, and certainly should not have believed what a difference it would make. All the difficulty and effort seemed gone; the fatiguing sinking and laborious lifting of our feet were needless; we set them now exactly where the guide's great foot had trodden, keeping his order of right and left, and all was easy, a hundred steps less toil than twenty before. But, to have the full benefit of this, one needed to keep also very near to the guide, for the last comers trod rather in their companions' footmarks, and were often misled by some false or uncertain treading of these, which marred the perfectness of the original steps.

6. Thorough knowledge of the guide's language adds both to the enjoyment and safety of our following. He has much to tell us by the way, and is always ready to answer questions and give information. One who does not easily understand loses a great deal. A companion may be very willing to translate, but may do so incorrectly, and in any case the freshness and point of many a remark is lost; while it often happens that the usual interpreter of a party is not near enough for appeal or too tired to keep up the interchange. In sudden emergencies too it may be really important that each should personally understand, and thus be able instantly to obey, the guide's directions.

Moreover, it is very desirable not only thus to "know his voice," but to be able to speak to him for one's self. Once one of us slipped in a rather awkward place. She called out, "Stop a moment!" but the guide in advance knew no English, and therefore did not heed her, and but for the quick call in German of another who saw the slip, she might have been frightened and hurt.

7. When we come to really difficult places, or glaciers with hidden crevasses, we find the use of the coil of rope. This is fastened first round the guide himself, and then round the rest of the party, allowing a length of eight or ten feet between each. Once I questioned the strength of the rope, upon which the guide untwisted it a little, and showed me a scarlet thread hidden among the strands. He told me that this was the mark that it was a real Alpine Club rope, manufactured expressly for the purpose, and to be depended upon in a matter of life and death. It is remarkable that this typical "line of scarlet thread" should have been selected as the guarantee of safety.

Once roped thus, you have a sense of security in passing what would otherwise be very dangerous places, especially concealed crevasses. And not only a sense but a reality of security. You feel the snow yield beneath your feet, you sink in, and you have neither hand nor foothold; you get perhaps a glimpse of a fathomless blue depth below you. If you struggle you only break away the snow and enlarge the cavity. But you are in no real danger, and if you have confidence in your guide and the rope, you wait quietly, perhaps even smilingly, till you are hauled out of the hole, and landed on firm snow again. Why? Because you are firmly knotted to your guide, and also to all the rest of your party. You had not even time to call out ere he felt the sudden strain upon the rope, and instantly turned to help you, drawing you easily up to his side without hurt. Your friends felt the shock too but they could not do much to help, only they watched and admired the guide, and found their own fears (if they had any) lessened, and their confidence in him and his rope greatly increased.

But it is the guide himself who bears the brunt of these difficulties. He goes first, carefully sounding the snow, avoiding many a crevasse which we should never have suspected, and sometimes getting a fall which would have been ours but for his trying the way for us. If we really follow his steps exactly and patiently, the probability is that we never go in at all, for the snow that has borne his weight never gives way under ours. But if we swerve even a few inches from his footmarks, we may soon find ourselves in the predicament described above.

8. Sometimes we come to a slope of frozen snow so steep that it looks absolutely impossible to climb it. And so it would be, but for our guide. Our impossibilities only develop his resources. Now he unshoulders his ice axe, and with wonderful rapidity cuts steps by which we ascend even more easily than hitherto. And we notice that these extra-difficult slopes are a positive advantage to us, because while he has all the hard work we have time to take breath. When the steep bit is passed, we have gained greatly in height, and yet we feel quite freshened for further ascent, instead of fatigued.

9. The guide decides your rest as well as your progress, if you are wise enough to let him. He very soon measures your powers, and not only knows precisely when a crevasse is just too wide for you to leap without help, or a rock just too awkward for you to climb, but he also seems to know precisely when you had better make longer or shorter halts. Sometimes you are unwilling to rest when he proposes it, and perhaps he lets you have your own way and go on, and then you are quite certain to be sorry for it. But more often he insists, and then you always find he was right, and that he had timed the halt better than you would have done. Then, without waiting to be asked, he unfastens your wraps, contrives a seat upon the snow, and folds a shawl round you. It is no use saying you do not feel cold, he is responsible for you, and knows what is safe, and will not let you risk getting chilled by the subtle glacier wind. Then he gives you the provision he has carried for you, meat, and bread, and wine, and leaves no little stone unturned towards making your halt as refreshing and pleasant as possible. There is no need for you to be calculating time, and fidgeting about going on; he knows how much is yet before you, and he will tell you when it is time to be moving again.

10. I mentioned that the weakest of our party was specially cared for. Sometimes while the others had merely general orders, she had his strong arm, and thus escaped the slips which the more independent ones now and then made. Weakness or ailments proved his patience and care. On one occasion the "mountain sickness" which sometimes befalls travellers on great heights suddenly attacked one not accustomed to fail in strength, and then nothing could exceed Joseph's kindness and attention. He made a wonderfully comfortable couch on the snow, told us what was the matter, administered advice and wine, and waited patiently and sympathetically till his patient, completely prostrate for an hour, felt able to stand. Then in a firm decided tone he said, "*Ich übernehme die Kranke!*" (*I undertake the sick one!*) and leaving the other guides to attend to all else, his powerful arm helped "die Kranke" down to a level where the less rarefied air soon set all to rights.

11. It is understood that a true Swiss guide is literally “faithful unto death,” that he does not hesitate to risk his own life for the sake of his charge, and that instances are known in which it has not only been risked but actually sacrificed. We have never been in a position to prove this, but the undoubted fact completes the illustration. Yet this completion only shows the imperfection. For that poor faithful guide may perish *with* the traveller, and not *instead* of him; the sacrifice may be all in vain where the power and the will are not commensurate. In such illustrations we may learn as much by the contrasts as by the similarities; and how often, as in this instance, does the very failure of an earthly type bring out the glory and perfection of the Antitype. Our glorious Guide, who has called us to the journey, and whose provision for it is “without money and without price,” cannot fail in His undertaking. All who are in His covenant hands are “kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation,” and “shall never perish.” What He hath begun He will perform, for He “is able to keep you from falling, and to present you faultless before the presence of His glory with exceeding joy.” He is not merely willing to lay down His life, but He hath laid it down for us, and now death cannot touch our Leader any more; He hath “the power of an endless life,” and we are united to that life by the strong cords of His eternal purpose and His everlasting love, which no friction can weaken and no stroke can sever. However tremendous the gulf beneath us, if thus united to Him, He will lead us on till our feet, no longer weary, stand far above the clouds upon the mountain of our God, never to retrace the toils and dangers of the ascent, never to return to the valley, never to part from the strong and loving Guide who has led us to such a Hitherto of rest and wonder, and to such a Henceforth of joy and praise.

‘I DO NOT FEAR DEATH

Extract from F. R. H.’s MS., in answer to a remark:
 “Death, which we ALL dread.”

No, not “All!” One who has seen and *accepted* God’s way of salvation, does *not* dread death. Perhaps I shall best express myself by doing it very personally—just giving my own experience.

I do not fear death. Often I wake in the night and think of it, look forward to it, with a thrill of joyful expectation and anticipation, which would become impatience, were it not that Jesus is my Master, as well as my Saviour, and I feel I have work to do for Him that I would not shirk, and also that *His* time to call me home will be the *best* and *right* time; therefore I am content to wait.

¹ This piece, a clear, powerful presentation of the truth of salvation in Christ, was taken from a manuscript by F. R. H., published in Mrs. Stephen Menzies’ valuable compilation *The Traveller’s Guide from Death to Life* (London: S. W. Partridge & Co., no date, likely 1880-1900). This is found on pages 690-691 of Volume II of Havergal’s *Complete Works*. Mrs. Menzies was a colleague of F. R. H. in the Young Women’s Christian Association, and at least 200,000 copies of her book were printed, likely more.