Clark University Clark Digital Commons

Education

Harvard, 1902-1904

## An Unknown Sacrifice

Earl Clement Davis

Follow this and additional works at: https://commons.clarku.edu/education

au Mukuom Sacrefice. They were studing, wither and son, just at clusk on a summer evening just in sid the house the one on the forch, the other behind the skreen door, pur the worther was flaging with the door latch in a half newous, half weditative way, as if she were strugghing with a fresent ewobin and at the some time reaching bach when her early drys when she too had stood heritatingly on the fuch, auxims for the new life, and, not yet reding with = ing the old with way a heartaching thright forcing its way into the new bofes. It is always so. The fast with its choicest menories cover rushing in upon our

fresent, as the water of a great river joynish lose themselves in the water of the occas briffy in the worward of return from a long goincy. There is no frescut we fort, we future in our thought, It is all one stand frence. So the worthers Thoughts at this moment leafed joyourly buck to be hoffy dup of bethathol, and book again sulinesed by the jimmey, and without sent the bounded forward to the fartures in hoffy expectation. In sachuers of to day relieved by the joy of yesterday, and lighted by the life of toworrow; the juy of . to day suftened by the sacher of yesterday and lighted by the hope of to = worrent than do we live. Such wer the single mingling

of thrights in the wother mind at she stored just within the firtals of her own home on the eneming before her son wor to be manied without on the firsh stort the son, tall, wanly, strong, half facing the the door where his wother stovel, and half facing the lown, the street, the house across the way, the work hice behind the touse, the world beyond the hiel, He wohed war at his wother, and now out across the street curl once to the hill heyered as the said yes, wother, I how that the education and training which have been forsible for we and are devied other les fortwote flaces you we a responsibility which bick me do what I night to do, what there what

0

my wort natival inclinations from ft, I know that offertunitees we open for we to do a service which hurrowly needs, my our conceptions of duty, the volle record of our fourly, for generations faithful fublic serverts, the debt of love which I our to you and fother, and also the interests of the children which I have me day way give life to our home, - all there considera = Time tell we that I am doing night, that I son do so other thing that what he told we is right, But wother, at times it seems as if the accumulated of love of generation of ancestors, who for loved the single country life, who for token the greatest of sotis fortis

0

and chove deef from the well of toffi = • ven here awarg there hills, and along these rivers, away from all the confusing couplexities of the world outside, avong the quiet fufle of after they lock done their work in the world, - it seems as if all of it were welling up in me and foring me to time book, and his the quiet single life that your and I both love, hot only do my non fuligs, but - or well are con = Timovely calking us book to the country. here away the things and the ferfle that we love," and yet, --- , meee, a shall be bock som, and dave going for a wach ."

An Unknown Sacrifice

Earl C. Davis

Harvard University, Cambridge, MA

1902-041

They were standing, mother and son, just at dusk on a summer's evening, the one on the porch, the other just inside the house behind the screen door. The mother was playing with the door latch in a half-nervous half-meditative way, as if she were struggling with a present emotion, and at the same time reaching back into her early days when she too had stood hesitatingly on the porch, anxious for the new life, and yet relinquishing the old with many a heart aching thought forcing its way into the new hopes. It is always so. The past, with its choicest memories, comes rushing in upon our present in moments of deep emotion as the waters of a great river joyously lose themselves in the waters of the ocean ??? in the moment of return from a long journey. There is no present, no past, no future in our thoughts. It is all one eternal present. So, the mother's thoughts at this moment leaped joyously back to her happy days of betrothal, and back again enlivened by the journey, and without rest then bounded forward to the future in happy expectation. The sadness of today relieved by the joy of yesterday, and lighted by the hope of tomorrow; the joy of today softened by the sadness of yesterday and lighted by the hope of tomorrow. Thus, do we live. Such was the simple mingling of thoughts in the mother's mind as she stood just within the portal of her own home on the evening before her sone was to be married.

Without, on the porch, stood the son, tall, manly, strong, half-facing the door where his mother stood, and half-facing the lawn, the street, the house across the way, the hill behind the house, the world beyond the hill. He looked now at his mother, and now out across the street and over to the hill beyond as he said, "Yes, mother. I know that the education and training which

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> This is from a collection of manuscripts-mostly class paperswritten while Davis was a student at Harvard Divinity School, 1902-1904. This manuscript is undated and not obviously connected to any specific class.

have been possible for me and are denied others less fortunate places upon me a responsibility which bids me [to] do what I ought to do, rather than what my most natural inclination prompts. I know that opportunities are open for me to do a service which humanity needs. My own conception of duty, the noble record of our family, for generations faithful public servants, the debt of love which I owe to you and father, and also the interests of the children which I hope one day may give life to our home, all these considerations tell me that I am doing right, that I can do no other thing than what has told me is right. But, mother, at times it seems as if the accumulated love of generations of ancestors, who have loved the simple country life, who have taken the greatest of satisfactions and drawn deep from the well of happiness here among these hills, and along this river, away from all the confusing complexities of the world outside, after they had done their work in the world, it seems as if all of it were welling up in me and forcing me to turn back, and live the quiet simple life that you and I both love. Not only do my own feelings, but as well are continually calling us back to the country, here among the things and the people that we love. And yet, <sup>2</sup> well, I shall be back soon, and I am going for a walk."<sup>3</sup>

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> These underlines appear as just this, underlines, in the manuscript.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> There the manuscript ends, somewhat abruptly, likely incomplete.