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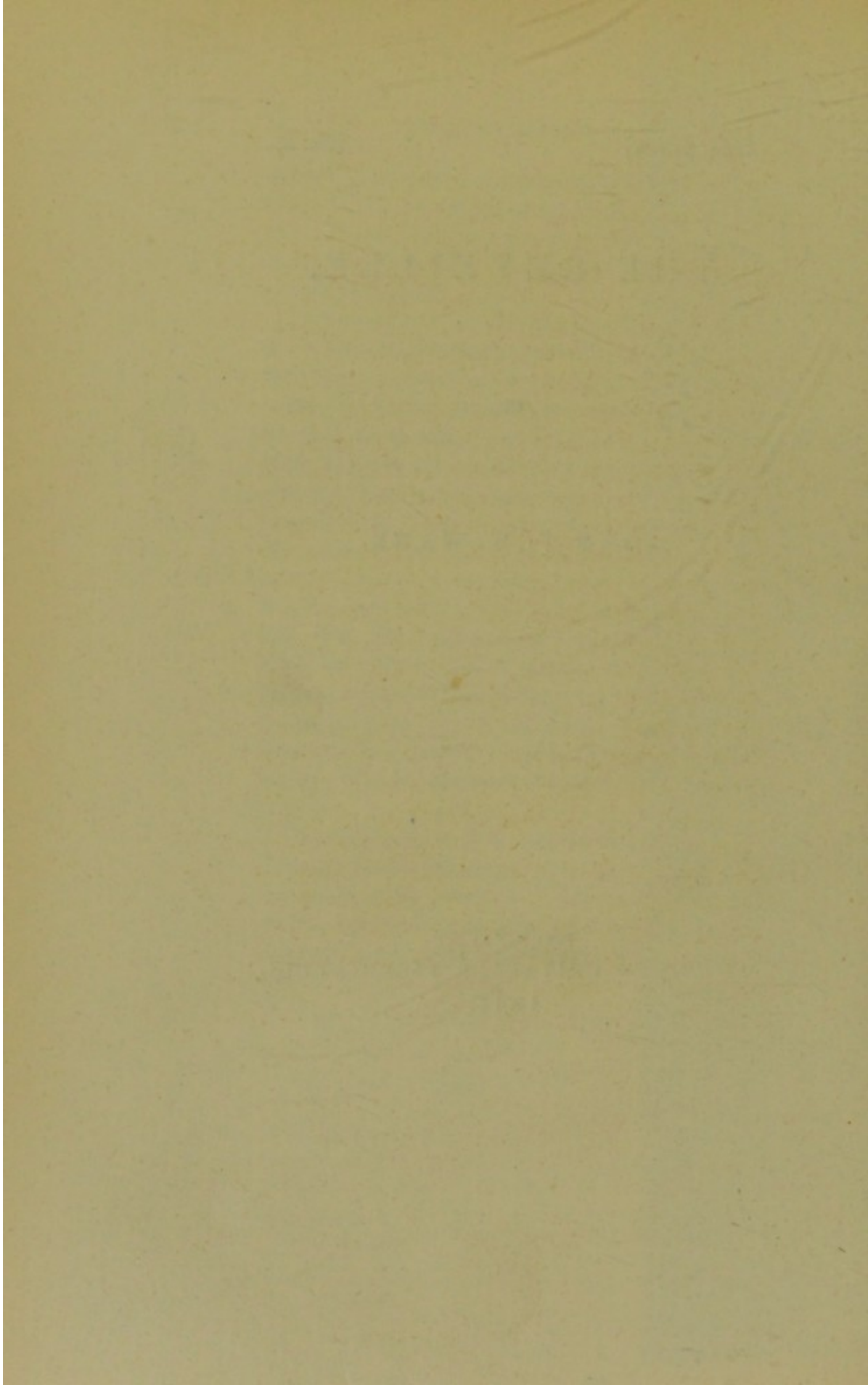
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THE REVEILLE.

BY

JOHN F. W. WARE.

BOSTON:
AMERICAN UNITARIAN ASSOCIATION.
1864.



THE REVEILLE.

HERE is another of the words which has not a home look. It is another interloper. I hear soldiers even pronounce it differently. They do not seem quite sure about it. It does not come out square and honest, as a home word would. And we poor civilians make terrible work with it. We don't know what to call it. I was amused, the other day, at a history of the word *canteen*. It was originally *tin can*, and was good Saxon. The French got hold of it, turned it round, gave a French accent to it, and it became *can-teen*. Some wise man, hunting up a foreign word to annex to his mother tongue, found and laid hold of this, without asking any questions; and so the poor exile got back again, but so disguised that his own knew him not.

What do you think about reveille? How do you like it? Not very well, I suspect, especially after a long march, a hard fight, a day in the trenches, or a turn at picket. I do not believe it is any pleasanter for a soldier to be waked than for any

other man ; and one of the things in camp life that has impressed me most is the turning out of the men in the morning. It did not give me a very vivid impression of individual happiness, or of the collective dignity of an army.

But, like many unpleasant things, it is not merely necessary, but wholesome. It breaks rudely in upon needed repose, delicious slumber, and precious dreams, interposing the stern reality between you and that so coveted intercourse with home that comes to one in sleep, or that utter oblivion of care and pain and danger which is so essential to the soldier. It comes unwelcomed, but it comes to rouse you to that for which you live, — to toil, to peril, to duty. It gives you reality for dreams ; it brings you back to life, and the work of life ; and, however unpleasant the act at the moment, however reluctantly you answer the demand, I suppose it to be with you as with every true man, — once fully awake, you would not lie down to sleep again if you could. I do not know anything that a man wide awake more wonders at than the feeling of aversion and dread with which he, a few moments before, shrunk from rising.

There is nothing that has any worth, vigor, life, but, from time to time, needs reawakening. It seems as if continuous activity were impossible. There are seasons when everything lags, sleeps. We have action, great and wonderful, and then re-

action, as great and wonderful, — energy, and then lethargy, — as if the vital powers exhausted themselves, and required a rest, and the renewal that comes only of suspended labor. It is so in nature. The vigor of summer is succeeded by the sleep of winter, and before we can have harvest again there must be the *reveille*, at which she rouses herself and puts on the drapery of new life. It is so in the history of the world's progress, the development of the race, either intellectually, morally, or politically. History is just that, — the record of the swings of the pendulum between labor and repose, — and her grand epochs are the sounding of the *reveille*, which starts men from their torpor, and sends them out reinvigorated to new exertion and greater victory, to the onward march of civilization and of life. Not only Judæa, but the whole world, had been in a terrible stupor, the whole religious life overlaid and lost sight of in base superstition and dead forms and trifling ceremonies, when a clear, short, sharp cry came sounding down the valley of the Jordan, "Repent, repent!" and John, in his wild, desert garb, startled the slumbering people into expectation and preparation for Him the latchet of whose shoes neither he nor we yet are worthy to unloose. It was a world's *reveille*. — The name and power of Christianity had all been absorbed by the Romish Church. It was the usurper of every human right. It was a despot

such as the world had never seen. It chained, not men's bodies, but their souls. It robbed them of that which was most precious, — right to their own opinions. It walled up the kingdom of Heaven, then opened a little postern gate, and if you would pay the priest, and acknowledge the infallibility of the Church, and recognize the Pope as Christ's vicegerent, you might be admitted. Under this terrible thrall men's consciences, as their hopes, slept. But the monk Luther startled the sleepers. The reveille was sounded, and with no uncertain sound. Men everywhere sprung up at it, alert, delighted, recognizing it as the call to life, for which they long had sighed; and the power of the Church was broken, and Protestantism born. I remember that after one of those earlier terrible fights at the West — was it at Fort Donelson? — a writer tells us that when he woke in the morning he could see no signs of an army about him, but, so far as his eye could reach, only long, low mounds covered with snow. Then suddenly the morning drum, the quick roll, the *reveille!* and every mound of snow sprung into the air; the snow-wreaths fell away, and revealed the full-armed, ready soldier. Weary with their struggle, they had sunk to slumber as they stood, and the night storm had wrapped them in its mantle. So it has seemed to me that waking cry of Luther startled the sleepers from cold, deathlike slumber, and revealed them to them-

selves and to the world as still men, full-armed and ready. — The history of to-day gives us another illustration. Our fathers, with pain and privation, had founded a grand republic, with a corner-stone called *liberty*. To us that had become little more than a name and a boast. It was an inheritance only, a dower from the past. It was like a family picture, or a silver cup, valuable as a relic, good as an heirloom, but of no use to-day. So we denied our birthright and slept, — slept as no seven sleepers of fable could, — basely as well as deadly. But hark! *The reveille!* It is a solitary gun booming over the waters on a quiet spring morning; and as its missile crashes against the sacred wall that enclosed the sacred band beneath that sacred flag, we, new-born as a nation, roused, sprung to our feet, to *arms*, — all recreance gone, ready to dare, to do, to die! Along the wild mountain-passes, through the narrow defiles, of troubled Scotland, when the foe pressed, the swift runner bore the lighted torch, some unspent foot snatching it from his weary hand and speeding it on, till answering lights from craggy heights showed the clans awake and marshalling for the fray. So, pulsed over the throbbing wire, from State to State, from town to town, from home to home, the tocsin sounded, which you received as a summons to your manhood and your loyalty, and have answered with your devotion. Of all the grand awakenings since John's warning

cry, I read none so grand as this. It touched a deadlier torpor; it broke through social, political trammel; it made men hear the word of God; it turned back the foul torrent of corruption; it gave the true meaning and emphasis to the word *liberty*; it enfranchised a race down-trodden, despised, cursed as race never was, which to-day stands shoulder to shoulder with the proudest blood of our proud civilization, and with it lays and cements the stone of the new corner. Build well on that, O noble friends; stand to your ranks, and strike till every shackle and disability fall; and I think there shall rise a statelier edifice than any builded by human hands, at whose shrine *all* oppressed may find asylum, whose dome shall bear as its top glory, brighter than within the tabernacle of old, the Shechinah of the Divine presence.

As we pass from childhood — which is nearer to heaven than many get again — into the life and temptations of youth and manhood, we settle into indifference at least, as regards things pure and holy and of good report. We swing from innocence to indifference. As we get on in life, this indifference hardens into something more positive, — a dislike, a rebellion, if not an unbelief. It is virtually the language of the grown men of the land, as it was of the king's servant in the parable, "We will not have this man to reign over us." The love of God is not in our hearts, nor is his law the law of our lives.

It oftentimes is not a very distinctly marked condition that ensues. We are respectable, trusty men still. There is something that keeps us from being very bad. We have self-respect, and self-interest too. Men find no special fault with us. We do well enough for their purposes. Between this state and that of the hardened sinner there is every possible gradation.

From all this, the least as the greatest, men need to be roused. I think it is better and truer to say they need to rouse themselves. They must not wait for the reveille to come from without, but sound it themselves through all the turns and secret places of their own being, — sound till the whole man is up. The whole tenor of the Gospel is this way. The Apostle cried, "Awake, thou that sleepest, and arise, and Christ shall give thee light," — the gift after and because of the sleeper's own act. So with Christ in his miracles; — "Stretch out thy hand," "Rise, take up thy bed, and walk," "Go wash in the pool of Siloam," — the thing desired comes after the action of the sufferer. So with God in his grace. You may think of exceptions, and exceptions to rules are always striking; but the rule is, that man shall toil, pray, have faith first, and then, as consequent, as in some sense a reward, God's help and blessing. It is not first the harvest and then the spring, first the ripe fruit and then the sowing of the seed, nor is it

first a full Christian experience and character and then the means for reaching it. The children of light should be as wise as children of the world, who know that means must precede ends. There are very many who spend their time waiting for God to act upon them; who expect to be wrought upon, taken by force out of their sins, and made saints; who stand and listen for some startling word out of heaven; and so they wait unclean and unhealed as that man at Bethesda who waited years for somebody to put him into the healing water, instead of putting himself in. I do not believe that God will work a miracle on a soul to save it. It must rouse itself from stupor by the means patent and available to every one. That is the first step toward salvation. It does not need any machinery of church or priest, the passing through any cast-iron, formal experience, but a real, stirring self-rousing.

You cannot do this all at once. You may decide at once, you may begin at once; there may be a marked change, as a crisis or epoch, to your existence, which you will always date from; but a true awakening is not like that at the drum-beat or bugle-call, but a thing of time. I think there is the mistake of revivals, and the weak point in individual experiences, which result so much in harm to the Church, and harm to the man. Men are taught to regard conversion as a sudden thing,

to expect it to be like the voice at night which sent the young wonderer to the equally wondering Eli. To use the military phrase, they think it is to be "right about face, *march*." If they have no such experience, they think they are lost, though they may be earnestly striving to please God all the while; if they have, they think it is enough. But the first start of the sleeper is not his complete waking; the first impulse of a startled soul does not secure it in the strength and virtue of the Christian. It is this which makes the after effect of "revivals," "conversions," so bad, which makes so many backsliders. They have not been thoroughly awaked; they have only tossed uneasily in their sleep; when the pressure was off, they have slumbered again, probably more deadly than before, with the chances increased that they do not thoroughly awake till the *great reveille* shall sound.

The great duty, then, is not only to awake thoroughly, but to keep awake. As the hymn says,

"Awake my soul when sin is nigh,
And keep it still awake."

You may wake ever so thoroughly, but if you are going to drop off again, — if you are to be after that kind described in the parable of the sower, who have no root, who become offended, choked by cares of the world and the deceitfulness of riches, — you might as well not wake at all. What good

the drum-beat, if, after your morning parade, you are going to sleep again, instead of passing the day in active, vigilant duty? It is the *keeping awake* which is to make you serviceable as a soldier; it is the *keeping awake* which is going to make you serviceable as a Christian. If you will do that, rouse yourself at the call made, and pray God ever for strength to keep awake,—if you will be alive to duty, vigilant against evil, doing always everything you possibly can to make yourself a better man, preparing by fidelity in the lower service of this life for a loftier service in the life beyond,—you will accomplish the great purpose of your warfare here, and can depart with that honest self-approval which the Apostle had,—“I have fought the fight, I have kept the faith; henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day: and not me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.”

“Arise! it is the Master's will:

No more his heavenly voice despise;

Why linger with the dying still?

He calls: arouse you, and arise!

No longer slight the Saviour's call:

It sounds to you, to me, to all.

Arise!”