

RUN TO DEATH

I was lately passing along the streets of a large city, when my attention was attracted to a fine large engraving hanging in one of the shop windows. (It was in Fleet street, London.) It represented a scene in one of the ancient Isthmian games. Two persons nearly divested of apparel, with distended muscles, occupied the course, stretching every nerve, while around, evidently excited with deep interest, was the "great crowd of witnesses."

They were well along in the course, but the attention of the one somewhat in advance of the other is diverted for a moment by a flower or some shining object that has been thrown into the arena by some one of the many witnesses, by which they are "compassed about."

An effort is made to grasp it; evidently the prize for which they are running is lost by this one, and no trace of sympathy is noticeable on the countenances of the spectators, but great rejoicing is apparent among the multitude, at the persistency with which the victor has reached the goal: Ignoring everything else, keeping the prize only in view he finally won it. I thought, that is a true picture of the Christian race which Paul has so faithfully and vividly painted in words, and which we see acted upon the stage of life. But how appropriately and timely the emphasizing of the thought just now. How faithfully that little shining object, whatever it may be, represents the besetments in the path of the one who is running for the prize of our high calling.

How insignificant compared with the prize and the honor at the end of the course. But unless watchful we shall hesitate; one moment may cost all, and may make delay sufficient to reach the Judge's stand too late.

What's that in your path? A little worldly praise? Disdain to notice it, it is of no value whatever; you are worse off with it than without it. At another point do you see an avenue to wealth? Never mind; it would not be abiding if you had it. Press on.

Again; do you begin to think of some of the "weights" of value (?) left behind, fearing you will never see them again? Don't think of them, only to hope you will never be encumbered with them more. Do you say or think: "I fear this race will be the ruination of all my worldly prospects?" Of course it will so far as having any pleasure in them is concerned.

You will be a very foolish man to divide your energies now, or thoughts either. Press on.

But do you say: "Why there's my reputation right there in the dust." Poor fellow! how sorry I am you noticed it; but it's only the reputation you once had. Don't you know that none of those who are noted racers on this course have any reputation? The greatest racer who ever stepped on it "made himself of no reputation."

But do you say: "This awful run will be the death of me? Yes; of course it will; but you are a poor culprit under sentence of death anyway, and if you undertake to save your life you will lose it, but run yourself to death and you'll have a life that is life everlasting, and more – immortal. Don't be foolish now. Press on.

"A heavenly race demands thy zeal
And an immortal crown."

J. C. SUNDERLIN.