LUKE HAMMOND, THE MISER.

By Prof. Wm. Henry Peck,
Author of the "The Stone-Cutter of Lisbon," Etc.

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CHAPTER V.

Continued.

"The strongest in the world, Luke," laughed Nancy.

Kate Elgin stared with surprise. This was the first time she had ever heard Mrs. Harker, the housekeeper, speak in such familiar terms to her uncle, and she felt her heart sink as she noticed it.

"I am now about to visit your father," said Hammond, as he advanced towards the door. "Mrs. Harker," he continued, "I need not advise you to converse as little as possible with our fair prisoner. She she a sharp tongue, and a shrewd brain to back it. She knows how to put black and white together, and make gray."

"Never fear, Luke," said Nancy. "I know what I am about as well as you do. Send Daniel here as soon as you can spare him."

"For your treatment of my poor father," said Kate, darting a glance of abhorrence at Hammond, as he opened the door, "God may pardon you, but I cannot."

"Ho!" laughed Hammond, with his dry, cruel mockery. "You look like a queen, and use a queen's language. I think Elizabeth of England made that remark, and then died of grief. Perhaps you may survive it."

He nodded his long, snakish looking head quickly, laughed again, and departed for the crimson chamber, leaving Nancy Harker eyeing Kate Elgin, as a she-dragon might eye an enchanted lady.

CHAPTER VI.

LUKE HAMMOND'S VILLAINY.

Upon entering the crimson chamber, Hammond found Mr. Elgin bound as he had left him, but conscious of where he was and of what had lately transpired.

Daniel had just ceased to bathe the invalid's sunken temples, and retired aloof as Hammond placed a chair, facing Elgin, and sat down.

The eyes of the invalid and his tyrant met in one long, searching gaze; but Hammond, despite his hardihood, was the first to turn his face away.

There was a dignity of unspoken reproach and scorn in Elgin's dark and still brilliant eyes that made Hammond dwindle to a meagre meanness, even in his own callous mind.

"You have some shame still left in that miserable soul of yours," remarked Elgin. "I have lived nearly fifty years, Luke Hammond, but, by the heaven above us, you are the most contemptible knave unhanged."

"Thank you, Elgin," said Hammond, in a cold, unmoved voice. "You are right to use your tongue, since it must need exercise after so long a repose."

"Incredible!" ejaculated Elgin. "This monster sneers at the misery he has caused! To what extreme of base barbarity will your cruelty reach?"

"To an extreme, Henry Elgin, that shall compass my purposes," replied Hammond, with a face grown stern and hard in an instant.

"When I swear to you, Luke Hammond," said Elgin, in a tone as inflexible as that of his tyrant, "that after a year of your torture and villainous treatment, you are as far from gaining your purpose as ever, can you still retain a hope of moving me to become an instrument of your avarice, crime and infamy? No! Let my flesh rot from my bones, my bones molder to dust before your evil eyes, if you will, but never hope to accomplish your purpose!"

"Bah! Words and wind, Henry Elgin," said Hammond. "I shall tame you yet. There are other levers than imprisonment that I may use to move you."

"You are capable of torturing me—savage that you are!" exclaimed Elgin.

"It would be useless to torture the body of a man like you, Elgin," said Hammond, opening a pen-knife and paring his long, claw-like nails. "Daniel, you must be tired. It is after twelve o'clock. Send Stephen here, and do you go to bed. See that the doors and windows are all secure, and turn the dogs loose in the front and rear."

Daniel nodded, and departed in silence. Luke Hammond then drew his chair nearer to the invalid, and continued:

"To torture your body, Henry Elgin, would only harden your mind, for you are as obstinate as any martyr ever burned at the stake. But now that you have your reason again, I think I may move you by torturing your soul."

"Villain," said Elgin, "to hear you, one would think you had not already tortured both my soul and body! Have you not wasted my body by your drugs and this incarceration? Is it no torture to keep a man sick, weak, half-starved? Is it no torture to rack a man's body and mind with insults, bonds and blows, until his reason reels, falls and lies dead, for six long months? Out upon you, and may God's wrath hurl you to perdition!"

"You have a daughter, Henry Elgin."

"I have—heaven bless her!" exclaimed the invalid, fervently. "And my heart beats as in the good, happy days of health, since my eyes have seen her—since, by her agitation on seeing me, I know she had no share in my misery. Wretched man! you had almost made me believe that Catharine Elgin countenanced this brutality to secure the estate! Dog! I know now you lied!"

Hammond grew pale with rage and shame as Elgin went on.

"For six months after I found myself in the white and gold chamber, you told me my daughter, having learned how I had disposed of the estate, consented to my imprisonment until I should secure the property to you and to her. For months I would not believe it possible that a child could so treat a parent. But you, that woman Nancy Harker, Daniel, Stephen, all you allowed to approach me, said it was true; and the thought, the horrible doubt, preyed upon my mind until reason fled from the torment. You and your creatures lied, Luke Hammond."

"Henry Elgin," said Hammond, "your rage is useless. You know I deceived you; your daughter now knows that I deceived her. When you, two years ago, told me that you intended to make a will leaving nearly every dollar of the wealth you enjoyed to James Greene——"

"Aye," interrupted Elgin, bitterly, "you know the name at last! I then thought my brother-in-law—my friend—thought him anything but a black-hearted scoundrel; and I wished to do tardy justice to James Greene, whose father I have wronged, and to whom by right all the wealth in which I moved belonged. That my daughter should not suffer by the act, I had pretended not to see her growing love for James Greene, and used many plans to encourage, while seeming ignorant of it. I withheld this scheme from your knowledge because I knew you were desirous to see Catharine Elgin the wife of your son; and esteeming you, I disliked to wound you by rejecting the suit you urged in the name of your son Charles. I feared, too, that you might attempt, even succeed in checking the love I saw growing in my daughter's heart for James Greene. Therefore, was he never invited to my house, and so you never dreamed of the attachment."

"I would have crushed it if I had," said Hammond. "I would have used any means to create dislike or contempt in Catharine's mind. As for James Greene—well, he should have been provided for. But I have learned the affair thoroughly now, Henry Elgin. But to review the past, all unexplained to you, and that you may know what a man I am to deal with, let me continue.

'When I found that you intended to leave your property to James Greene——"

Henry Elgin again interrupted him with:

"I never mentioned his name. I told you there lived a man whose father I had wronged, and that when I died that man should be made rich—that nearly all my property should go to him. And I told you this, hoping you would give up the thought of trying to bring about a match between my daughter and your son. I feared to tell you the name of that young man, lest you might learn all. I was a fool to tell you anything, but I thought you were an honorable man, though I well knew you were a most avaricious and ambitious one. I cannot divine why so great a villain has not destroyed the will in favor of James Greene, or why Luke Hammond has not murdered me and forged a will in my name."

"I will tell you," said Hammond. "After you told me of your intention, I resolved to discover the name of the young man you wished to make rich. This I failed to do—you held the secret well. During the whole of your imprisonment, you have never breathed his name. Failing to discover him, and being sure you had made a will, I resolved to——"

Here Hammond paused, as if even his soul revolted from a confession that must lower him still more, if that were possible, in the opinion of his victim.

"Poison me," said Elgin, calmly. "I have suspected it."

"True. I resolved to remove you; that dying intestate, your only child would be beyond all dispute, heiress-at-law."

Mr. Elgin groaned in great bitterness of spirit. For he remembered that during his first six months of imprisonment he had sometimes wondered if his child had not consented or helped to the deed. He had committed a great mistake in not having made her his confidant, when he saw that she loved James Greene.

"I did poison you," said Hammond, in a low whisper, and as pale as the sheets of the bed.

"Ha, scoundrel! you confess it!" exclaimed Elgin.

"What need to conceal it now? I tell you that you may know what a man I am."

"A fiend! A demon! Satan himself, but no man!" groaned Mr. Elgin. "And in the white and gold room you always hinted that my child had done it! Oh, God, hear my prayer, and hurl Thy just wrath upon the soul and body of this awful wretch!"

Hammond smiled one of his icy sneers, and continued:

"The drug I gave you worked slowly. You were ill, but never dreamed of dying. You were sitting in this room, little more than a year ago, amusing yourself with your paints and pictures, when a convulsion seized you."

"I remember it as if it happened yesterday," said Elgin. "This crimson chamber was my favorite retreat. I remember no more until I regained my senses in the white and gold chamber."

"You exclaimed," said Hammond, "as you fell: 'Luke—the will—I have done justice—you—seek it in——' and said no more. Your words terrified me. I had poisoned you for naught if you had left a will. For three days you lay like one dead. I knew you were not dead, and by my authority, as your nearest relation in New York, save your child, denied all approach to your apartment, excepting to one or two servants, who thought you dead. Your daughter, on hearing of your sudden death, swooned with the shock, and for two days and more I feared her grief would end her life."

"Poor, darling Kate—my unfortunate child!" sobbed Elgin.

The cruel villain drew forth his handkerchief and wiped away the invalid's tears, for they seemed to run from Henry Elgin's eyes to Luke Hammond's heart, and then to turn to red hot coals of fire.

"Go on, monstrous fiend!" said Elgin, indignant and writhing under the touch.

Hammond returned his handkerchief to his pocket, and continued:

"Your doctor—the family doctor—was not summoned. I summoned a physician—a man of high medical reputation, but much addicted to wine. Before he saw you I plied him with drink. He was intoxicated when he examined you. His certificate of death pronounced your end by spasm of the heart."

"Villain! You told me my child had given out the report that I was mad—that I was necessarily confined as a dangerous lunatic in my own house—that she would consent to my freedom when I should have secured the property to her. And I—great God, pardon me for the injustice, I thought!—feared that if I did, she, instigated by you, Luke Hammond, might—No! I never thought Catharine Elgin would consent to her father's death! Only in half delirium did I believe she knew of my situation."

Hammond arose and paced the room to and fro to calm himself, for the sight of Elgin's anguish, though not a new thing to him, was harrowing even to his hardened heart.

He soon resumed his seat, and pursued:

"Well, you were coffined, and in your coffin were seen by every servant in the house, by your daughter—she hurried away, unable to bear the grin of agony fixed upon your features."

"Wretch!" cried Elgin. "You take a fiendish delight in dwelling upon her grief."

"Many of your friends saw you through the glass lid of your coffin," continued Hammond. "I stood near, as the throng of sorrowing friends passed around it one by one, and I confess that I trembled lest the drugs I administered might revive you too soon, or fail altogether. If you had revived, your first act would have been to declare the existence of a will, for which I had searched in vain. Had you died, I feared the will might be found by other hands and eyes than mine. Finally, the room in which you lay was cleared, that I and my assistants, Daniel and Stephen, might prepare the coffin for removal to the tomb. Then you were lifted from the coffin and swiftly and secretly removed to the white and gold apartment, prepared for your reception. The coffin was filled with sacks of sand, and entombed in your family vault in Greenwood Cemetery. I assure you, your funeral procession was very large and numerously attended."

"Horrible villain!" exclaimed Elgin.

Hammond nodded sneeringly, and went on:

"Unfortunately for my plans, you recovered your consciousness and hearing before I suspected it, and overheard me telling Mrs. Harker, whom I had just introduced into the house, to search everything for the missing will, and bring it to me that I might destroy it."

"I remember," said Elgin, "and your words put me on my guard, confused as I was; and when I opened my eyes, your first words were: 'You spoke of a will, Elgin; tell us where we may find it, for you are dying.' I called you traitor, and thenceforward you have known that I knew too much for the success of your villainy. Have you forged a will yet?"

"No," said Hammond. "All my search after your will was in vain. I dared not forge one while that remained a hidden mine beneath me, that might explode at any instant. I was ignorant of the date of your will—I feared you might have executed it on the very day you were thought to die. Three of your servants—I have discharged them long ago—told me you had called them into your studio—this apartment—that very day, and signing your name to a document which you affirmed to be your will, caused them to affix their names as witnesses. I dared not forge a will."

"I drew up the will myself," said Elgin. "Thank heaven you did not find it!"

"I found it this morning."

"Ah! The powers of darkness you serve aid you," groaned Elgin.

"You talk too much," said Luke, placing his finger on Elgin's wrist. "You are already quite exhausted."

To be continued.

Booklet and Newspaper.

For a business enterprise which requires to be introduced to the public by long explanations and descriptions an elaborate and costly booklet may be valuable as a form of advertising. It is impossible, however, to reach everybody with such a publication without a liberal use of newspaper space to call attention to it, and even then there will be a very large proportion of the people who will never send for the booklet, and among them may be many of the particular persons it is most desirable to reach. The newspaper, on the contrary, gets into the hands of virtually everybody, and the expenditure of a sum equal to the cost of the booklets for newspaper space will accomplish more than the booklets can.

Snails as Medicine.

According to the London Spectator, one of the current medical fads among the English laboring classes is the following: Snails crawling up a church wall are caught—those crawling down possess no virtue—placed in a pan with a little water and boiled, being stirred meanwhile with a quill plucked from a black crow. When the mixture has boiled down to the consistency of a salve it is ready for use. When rubbed on the soles of the feet it is a sure preventive of disease, being especially efficient in the case of what is locally known as "hinfooenzy." It is also valuable in strengthening weak spines. Snails, whether raw or cooked is not evident, are also considered a valuable remedy for consumption.

Miss Singleton—"How lovely it must be when husband and wife are of one mind." Mrs. Wederly—"Well, my dear, it all depends on which one the mind belongs to."—Chicago News.

A SERMON FOR SUNDAY

AN ELOQUENT DISCOURSE ENTITLED "POVERTY AND PIETY."

The Rev. James Alexander Jenkins Says That the Preaching of the Gospel to the Poor is an Evidence of Far-Reaching Mercy of God.

NEW YORK CITY.—"Poverty and Piety" was the subject of this sermon delivered by the Rev. James Alexander Jenkins, pastor of Immanuel Congregational Church. His text was chosen from Matthew xi: 5: "The poor have the gospel preached to them."

The words of our text constitute part of the reply of Jesus to John when He sent two of His disciples with the anxious question, "Art Thou He that should come or do we look for another?" In this reply the Master assumes that John is familiar with the character of the work of the expected One, so He sets before the messengers His own work as meeting the requirements. The blind see, the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, the deaf hear, the dead are raised up, "the poor have the gospel preached to them."

The preaching of the gospel to the poor may be regarded as only an evidence of the far reaching mercy of the great God, but it may also be regarded as testifying to the preparation of the poor for receiving and spreading the good news from God. If we believe in the fitting of means to ends in the world of nature, if we are upholders of the great law of design, may we not with reason insist that the Father through the course of the ages prepared certain of the sons of men for the reception of the truth. If we concede this we behold in the preaching of the gospel to the poor an arrangement of providence, a far reaching plan of God.

The pages of the gospels reveal Jesus as the preacher to the poor. The rich He regarded as being for some reason less fitted to be chosen as pioneers in the work of establishing His kingdom. Of the rich men of the New Testament, not Dives, not the rich fool, but the young man who came to Jesus with eager inquiry, may be regarded as typical in the mind of Jesus of the hosts of the rich and powerful. Thinking of him Jesus said: "It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God." From this statement we naturally infer that the absence of wealth or poverty is most favorable to the reception of saving truth, to the entering of the kingdom.

Jesus Himself, coming as the founder of the kingdom of God, chose the material upon which that kingdom shall be built. He did not preach to the poor because others would not hear Him. The influential He could have commanded, strength of arms He could have enlisted, wealth would have served Him. But He chose, desired, determined, to preach the gospel to the poor. Says Dr. Bushnell, speaking of the character of the ministry of Jesus: "He adheres to the poor and makes them the object of His ministry. And what is more peculiar, He visibly has a kind of interest in their society, which is wanting in that of the higher classes, perceiving, apparently, that they have a certain aptitude for receiving right impressions which the others have not. They are not the wise and prudent, filled with the conceit of learning and station, but they are the ingenuous babes of poverty, open to conviction, prepared by their humble lot to receive thoughts and doctrines in advance of their age." With equal acumen does this great writer recognize the fundamental and distinguishing nature of the choice of Jesus, as contrasted with the teachings of the statesmen and philosophers who had gone before Him. They began at the top, He began at the bottom, and so His work, because it was true to nature, was lasting, abiding, eternal.

The twentieth century finds society divided, as it has always been divided, into two classes, the rich and the poor. Civilization has crept onward, changing many things, but it has not removed the distinction between wealth and poverty. The distinction may be less brutal, less crude, but it still exists, and the very refinement of the classification of men is often the cause of added bitterness. So to-day the student of men and events, whether he be sociologist, economist or preacher, is confronted by the difficulty of adjusting one part of society to another. We are constantly asking certain questions and clamoring for a reply. Can the poor man secure a just share of the good things of earth? Is it possible for him to get an education? Will society receive him? And now, it seems, another question presses upon us. What is the relation between poverty and piety?

It would seem that the world, in answering this question, has lost sight of the teaching and practice of Jesus, for the conclusion usually arrived at is that the poor man is at a disadvantage in his struggle for the soul culture which every human being should desire. Many, listening to the reasoning of the world, have, because of their poverty, surrendered their religion, deserted the church and rejected the Christ. To them the Christian worker has come to seem the advocate of impossibilities, but this attitude of mind is not confined to the simple and unthinking, for we are reminded that even thoughtful writers seem to assume the existence of a natural hostility between poverty and piety.

Let us keep in mind the attitude of the Lord Jesus toward the poor as He delivered His message, and let us, remembering that, ask ourselves what that piety is, the relation of which to poverty we are to determine. Let us ask whether there is in piety any element to the producing of which poverty is hostile, and let us find, on the other hand, whether it may not be possible that poverty assists the soul in its endeavor to become the possessor of true piety.

Piety is not, primarily, something in the atmosphere; it is the rather something in the heart of man. Among the elements which enter into it, a few of the principal ones may be mentioned: Sensitiveness of things true, beautiful, good; receptivity, or the ability to appropriate the good that appeals to the soul; power to apply the principles of truth; recognition of love as the great animating, sustaining, God-knowing principle. Let us see whether poverty may not be an aid to the soul in its development along the lines indicated.

We may, I think, claim with justice that poverty renders the soul supremely sensitive to the best things. Poverty is too frequently regarded as synonymous with pauperism, and pauperism is the embodiment of grim, unfeeling heedlessness. Pauperism is cold, indifferent, dead, but poverty is warm, alert, alive. Poverty needs its every faculty, its every power. It must fight battles and anticipate the onslaught of unseen foes. It must read the signs of the morrow in the evening sky and adapt itself to sun and shower and storm. "The man with the hoe" is not the poor man, for poverty neither deadens nor brutalizes. Were I to choose my illustration of honest poverty I should find it in the humble toilers of "The Angelus." Clad in the rough garb of workers in the fields, holding in their hands the cumbrous instruments of their daily toil, they are, nevertheless, keenly alive to the beauty, the poetry, the suggestiveness of the sounds wafted upon the gently stirring summer breezes. Truly typical are they, as with bowed heads they stand, of the succeeding generations of God's poor, as, amid toil and tribulation, they seek to find the good, to know God.

The sensitiveness of honest poverty! I see it in the little children of the rabble as they followed Jesus through the streets of Jerusalem, and I see it in the children who to-day clutch the flowers carried into the homes of the poor by sweet charity. I see it in the zeal, the devotion of the slaves who first heard the Gospel message, and I see it in the enthusiasm of the multitudes who caught the inspiration of the Renaissance. I see it in the faces of the "common people" who "heard Him gladly," and I see it in the faces of the lowly as they listen to a Chrysostum or a Moody.

Disguise it as we may, deny it if we will, the soul of poverty has been the one attuned to catch the messages sent from heaven out of the heart of God. Wealth can do no more than furnish the material for an Angelo; it can only create the opportunity for a Savonarola; it can but provide Jesus with the stage for His sublime activity.

Again, is it not apparent that poverty tends to the development of the power of receptivity? Rightly understood poverty is a wonderful aid to clear vision, enabling man to distinguish between the essential and the unnecessary. It enables its possessor (not its victim) to develop self rather than to collect "things." It enables him to see the difference between "having" and "being." Wealth shouts: "I have," but poverty whispers, "I am." Poverty comes to know that only spiritual appropriation gives real ownership. This is one of the messages of the old Eden story of Genesis, for God placed Adam in the garden as a poor worker. He was to till and to keep the place and only to enjoy so much of it as he made his own. The supreme joy of his position was that through toil he was able to look upon God and the good and make them his own. In his sin he filled his heart with substitutes for God, and thus shut Him out of his soul. The return to Eden is the return to simplicity and receptivity. It is the becoming sensitive once more to the good and the taking in of truth, beauty, holiness.

It is a false theory which assumes that the activity of poverty is due to recklessness, that the poor may choose any course of action, disregard any existing order, because they have "nothing to lose." Even for the poor it is true that "life is more than meat and the body than raiment." The true cause for the activity of poverty is found in the rugged strength developed by adversity, in the constant need for adaptation to the demands of the passing days, and, finally, in the undying belief cherished that there is "a good time coming" in the golden future.

It is the tendency of wealth to be satisfied with things as they are, industrially, socially, morally. Truth's cartoon, "An English Board Meeting," is startlingly suggestive when applied to morals, as well as when applied to money. "Why," the aged and wealthy directors of the great railway are made to ask, "why must the public interfere with our business? Why must inventors suggest new devices? What's the good of these innovations?"

The great labor saving ideas of the age have come into the minds of the poor; they have been developed amid suffering and stress, and they have been forced upon a reluctant world by men who cared more for progress than for ease. So it is with the men and women who, hungering and thirsting after righteousness, have become possessed of great moral ideas. The grasp of these ideas upon their own souls renders them unrestingly eager to see them enthroned in the heart of the race. They are willing to fight seemingly hopeless battles, to champion despised principles, to advocate unwelcome truths. They know what they have believed, and their knowledge gives them willingness to utilize their hard earned strength for the education and advancement of mankind, and these champions of the principles of piety have been from the days of Jesus and from the apostolic times the sons of poverty. When in the days of primitive Christianity the gospel spread from Jerusalem, it was carried by the poor; when it laid siege to hostile lands, poverty fought for it; when it grew corrupt through the machinations of a wicked priesthood, poor men purified it, when in these last days it has become ready for world conquest, humble servants of the King have been called to carry it.

But we have said that piety has as one of its important elements the recognition of love as the great animating and sustaining principle; this recognition poverty gladly accords. When we are told in the text that the poor had the gospel preached to them, we have, as has been said, more than a mere statement of fact that Jesus delivered sermons to multitudes of the needy; we have the implied declaration of a condition of understanding of sympathy, between His soul and theirs. Men who were dominated by selfish principles did not understand Him, for they were incapable of recognizing love as the supreme motive of a soul. Action, for them, was always dictated by policy, and they suspected a hidden motive behind the activity of Jesus.

The Master declared that for a rich man to enter the kingdom is difficult. What did He mean? He doubtless considered the increasing danger of basing action upon false motive. He knew that it is the tendency of wealth to render action mechanical, careless, and, too frequently, heartless, that the rich man may give his gold to "charity," while his heart is as flint; that he may support the gospel with his money while his heart feels no joy in its message. But he knew that poverty rightly conceived tends to keep the life normal and true to the true springs of action. He knew that the poor who heard Him when they gave their mites gave them because of love, for no other power could cause that to be sacrificed which represented bread, shelter, life. He knew that they were familiar with the ministry of poverty to poverty, and that they were able to grasp the significance of a ministry based upon simple, unselfish love. So He preached to them, unfolding His conception of the approaching Kingdom of God, the kingdom of love. Calmly He revealed to them a life which needed for its realization neither might nor money. Sweetly He discoursed to them of the inward nature of the kingdom, of the hunger, the thirst, the meekness, the poverty necessary in order that men might possess it, and they understood.

Serenity of Character.

Who does not love a tranquil heart, a sweet-tempered, balanced life? It does not matter whether it rains or shines, or what misfortunes come to those possessing these blessings, for they are always sweet, serene and calm. That exquisite poise of character which we call serenity is the last lesson of culture; it is the flowering of life, the fruitage of the soul. It is precious as wisdom, more to be desired than gold—yea, than even fine gold. How contemptible mere money-wealth looks in comparison with a serene life—a life which dwells in the ocean of truth, beneath the waves, beyond the reach of tempests, in the eternal calm! How many people we know who sour their lives, who ruin all that is sweet and beautiful by explosive tempers, who destroy their poise of character by bad blood! In fact, it is a question whether the great majority of people do not ruin their lives and mar their happiness by lack of self-control. How few people we meet in life who are well balanced, who have that exquisite poise which is characteristic of the finished character!

"Sunshine" in the Voice.

"It wasn't so much what she said as the way she said it." One often hears some such remark, made in tones expressing varying degrees of indignation, grief, anger, pleasure, content, resentment, according as "the way she said it" had stirred one or other of these emotions. Words are mighty and once set forth cannot be recalled, but tones need just as careful watching, and often a sharp or contemptuous tone will rankle long after the words that went with it have been forgotten. Sometimes, on the other hand, a calm, cheerful tone, even though it only observes some commonplace about the weather, helps me out of a momentary depression. In one's own home especially should there always be "sunshine" in the voice. There are many attractions of which most of us must be content to fall short. But a pleasant tone and a gentle manner of speaking is to be acquired by every one who will firmly resolve that no harsh, querulous words shall ever pass her lips.

Gathering Blessings.

This life is big with blessings, if we know the secret of gathering them. It is an art to push back the hard clods and find the matured gift of nature; or crush the burr in which is concealed the luscious kernel. The gifts which satisfy and enrich the soul hang upon the boughs of each common day, and God's tender thoughts concerning our higher good may be plainly read, if with earnestness of heart we but gather His goodness out of the near-by treasure places of each passing day.—Rev. I. M. Chambers.

Righteousness Creates Happiness.

A life of unselfish devotion to God and to righteousness is the unfailing secret of happiness. He who lives for himself alone will dwindle into miserable and petty insignificance. He who lives to glorify God and to make the world better and happier is sure to be happy. No one can prevent it. Usefulness is true greatness and true gladness. If we wish this to be a happy year we must love God and work His holy will.

Think Before We Speak.

Let us think before we speak, since the words we must speak must enter into the life of the world and make it worse or better, and if we err on either side, err in gentleness and tenderness and love.—The Rev. Dr. Savage.

Happiness Lasts.

Misery will not last—happiness will, if only in remembrance. No pure joy, however fleeting, contains any real bitterness, even when it is gone by.—D. M. Craik.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR MARCH 22.

Subject. Paul's Message to the Ephesians. Eph., ii., 1-10—Golden Text, Eph. ii., 8—Memory Verses, 4-7—Commentary on the Day's Lesson.

I. The children of wrath (vs. 1-3). 1. "And you." As Christ fills the whole body of Christian believers with His fulness (chap. 1: 23), so had He dealt with the converted Ephesians who before were dead in trespasses and sins. "Quickened." Made alive spiritually. "Dead." See Col. 2:13. Death is often used by all writers and in all nations to express a state of extreme misery. The Ephesians by trespassing and sinning had brought themselves into a state of deplorable wretchedness, as had all the heathen nations, and having thus sinned against God they were condemned by Him and might be considered as "dead in law." They were incapable of performing any legal act and were always liable to the punishment of death which they had deserved and which was ready to be inflicted upon them. They were incapable of performing a holy act. Their bodies were the living coffins in which their dead souls were buried. "Trespasses and sins." Trespasses may signify the slightest deviations from the right; sins more habitual and daring transgressions, but the terms run together in meaning.

2. "Ye walked." They had sinned continually, not merely occasionally. They lived in sin and followed the evil practices of the heathen world. True Christians separate themselves from the world (Rom. 12: 2; 2 Cor. 6: 14-18) and do not conform to its sinful customs and practices. "Prince—air." This has reference to Satan, the prince of devils. He is also "the god of this world" (2 Cor. 4: 4). The air is represented as the seat of his kingdom. The devil seems to have some power in the lower region of the air; he is at hand to tempt men and to do as much mischief to the world as he can. We live in an atmosphere poisonous and impregnated with deadly elements. "Of the spirit." As the Holy Spirit works that which is good in obedient souls so Satan works that which is evil in wicked hearts. He is prince of the spirit that, not only in Paul's day but even now, "worketh in the sons of disobedience."

3. "We also." Paul here changes from the second to the first person, putting himself in with those whom he has just described. "All." Jews and Gentiles alike. "Once lived." The R. V. brings out the meaning. The word "conversation" is misleading. The whole course of the life was wrong. They lived in sin and walked in sin, and sin was interwoven in their very being. "It tinged every temper, polluted every faculty, and perverted every transaction of life." "Lusts." The evil, irregular and corrupt affections of the heart. "Flesh." The carnal, corrupt nature. "Fulfilling," etc. They lived in the actual commission of all those sins which their corrupt natures inclined them to commit. "Mind." Thoughts; mental suggestions and purposes as distinguished from the blind impulses of the flesh. "By nature." Nature, in Greek, implies that which has grown in us as the peculiarity of our being, as distinguished from that which has been wrought in us by mere external influences. Here is an incidental proof of the doctrine of original sin. "Of wrath." The child of anything is one connected with, partaking of, or exposed to anything. The children of wrath are those who live in open disobedience (v 2) and are thus exposed to the wrath of God. See Rom. 2: 5-9.

II. Salvation an act of divine mercy (vs. 4-9). 4, 5. "But God." The apostle now shows the glorious change that had been wrought in them through the gospel. Three words are especially emphasized—God, mercy, grace. "Rich in mercy." God is rich in many things besides mercy. He is rich in worlds; He owns the gold and silver in a thousand hills, as well as the cattle on them. But while a knowledge of these riches is not necessary to our salvation, it is necessary that we know about the riches of His mercy. See Ex. 33: 19; Psa. 85: 10; Isa. 55: 7 and many other Scriptures. God is rich in pity and compassion for the sinner. "Great love." His infinite love for us is the ground of our salvation. He loved us and died for us while we were yet sinners. "Together with Christ." God has given us as complete a resurrection from the death of sin to a life of righteousness as the body of Christ has had from the grave. See Rom. 8: 11. "Grace." Unmerited favor. Their salvation was not of themselves (v. 8)—"not the mere product of any natural abilities or any merit of their own," neither was it by works (v. 9), but it was through the love, mercy and grace of God. "Saved." Not merely saved from sin—justified and sanctified—but gloriously saved from death, the devil and hell; saved to resurrection, Christ and glory, in the full view of the endless ages to come. These people were saved at this time, and so we see there is such a thing as salvation from sin in this life.

6. "Raised—sit." Believers are citizens of heaven and have their places assigned there, which they will soon take possession of (Phil. 3: 20, 21). But this may be understood as referring to sanctified souls in this life. Having been raised from the death of sin, we enter into a heavenly union with Christ, and the soul is indescribably happy in His love. It is heaven begun below.

7-9. "Ages to come," etc. What God had done for the sinners at Ephesus would be proof of His great goodness and mercy and serve as an encouragement to sinners in all ages of the world. "Through faith." Faith is, 1. The condition upon which we are saved. 2. The instrument in God's hands by which we are saved. 3. The means by which we continue saved. "Gift." That is, salvation is the free gift of God. "Boast." We could not purchase salvation, we did not merit it, and good works could not save us; therefore it is not of ourselves, and there is no room for boasting. "So completely is salvation a divine act that the man who refuses to accept it on God's terms must perish; there is no other way."

III. The Christian life a divine creation (v. 10). 10. "His workmanship." Instead of our being the workers, God is the worker and we are the workmanship—the fact accomplished. "Created." The saved soul is created anew—a new creation (2 Cor. 5: 17; Gal. 6: 15; Eph. 4: 24). "Unto good works." "Though we are not saved for our good works, yet we are saved that we may perform good works to the glory of God and the benefit of man." Good works are the fruit of faith. "Ordained—prepared." God has not only created us anew and given us a love for good works, but He has actually "prepared" the works for us to perform. "Walk in them." To do good works will be the established order of our lives.

This Sideboard a Myth.

Colonel Theodore A. Bingham, Superintendent of Public Buildings and Grounds, at Washington, states, after an exhaustive investigation, that the story that a sideboard presented to Mrs. Lucy Webb Hayes by women of the Christian Temperance Union, has passed into the hands of a Washington saloon keeper is untrue. So far as can be learned no such sideboard was ever presented to Mrs. Hayes by the Women's Christian Temperance Union, and of the two from the White House which were recently sold at auction the only one bought by a saloon keeper was obtained for the White House while Arthur was President. Another sideboard, bought earlier, cannot be located.

Mammoth Had Two Brains.

The dinosaur whose mammoth skeleton is being articulated, had two sets of brains—one in the head and the other some sixty feet down the spinal column. The dinosaur, which is said to have lived 10,000,000 years ago, was unearthed by Professor Ferrington and other scientists in the coma beds of Wyoming last year, and is now being mounted in Chicago at the Field Columbian Museum. "It is not unreasonable that such a mammoth being as this dinosaur should need two brains. He is seventy feet long and weighed more than twenty tons when he was alive," declares the Professor.

Colored Rain in England.

During the storms that have prevailed in several parts of England the rain was discolored, apparently by volcanic dust. The downfall left a grayish-brown sediment resembling the dust thrown out by volcanoes.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE

READING FOR THE QUIET HOUR WHEN THE SOUL INVITES ITSELF.

Poem: God's Love—The Meek Inherit the Earth, But the Poor in Spirit Inherit Heaven—Humility Would Seem to Be a Divine Attribute.

Oh, walk with God, and thou shalt find
How He can cheer thy way,
And lead thee with a quiet mind,
Into His perfect day.

His love shall cheer thee like the dew
That bathes the drooping flower;
That love is every morning new,
Nor fails at evening hour.

The Inheritors of the Kingdom.

"Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." Matt. 5: 3. Christ sets forth what we are apt to consider as the minor virtues as the conditions of the major beatitudes. Our estimates of such things are often mistaken. Humility, purity, peaceableness seem all of lesser significance than many things we might mention. Yet these little things together make the large life and character. The greatest joys of life are made up of pleasures so small that, in the analysis of a happy day, we cannot always define its particular parts. And a truly great character is such not because of some immense illuminating virtue, but because of its almost innumerable minute perfections.

The meek inherit the earth, but the poor in spirit inherit heaven. The greater blessing is attached to the virtue least esteemed of men. What is it to be poor in spirit? The poor in spirit are not spiritually poor. A man is not poor-spirited because he is poor in spirit. But it is that consciousness of our own imperfections, of our own moral poverty and destitution, that we have no means to buy our way into heaven, nor any attractiveness of our own that would win us a way there, that we are such as must, in moral and spiritual things, before God, stand like suppliants at the gate, unable either to take the kingdom by violence or by purchase, but dependent on the wondrous love and grace that will surely freely give it us. No man seeks this kingdom without early discovering how poor he is in spiritual, moral, soul wealth. It is a blessing to come to this self-knowledge. Just as the gateway of confession of ignorance lies at the beginning of the path of knowledge so does conscious poverty of spirit lie as one of the first steps that all the sons of God and inheritors of the kingdom must take.

The poor in spirit are humble in life. They have seen themselves as God sees them, and this humility is the first step toward their being seen in all the glory of the likeness of His Son. Humility would seem to be a divine attribute, seeing, that it is said of Christ that He was meek and lowly, and of the Holy Spirit that "He shall not speak of Himself." The best preparation for heaven will be found in the practice of humility, and the best practice of this virtue in the following of the Man who pleased not Himself, who made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant.

But there is a false humility of which we need to beware. God does not think any the more of you because you tell Him that you are a poor miserable sinner; He knows it without your volunteering the information. He knows whether you mean it when you say you are a poor worm of the dust. Perhaps it does not please Him. Christ came to save men and women, not to save worms. If God has made you in His own likeness it is not well to compare it to a worm. Humility does not need to wear a badge or to call itself names. The poor in spirit may be the most dignified, elevated in life; witness the character of the Master.—Ram's Horn.

"Let Us Tell Jesus."

The incident is related of a young man who was inclined toward infidelity, and, like others of his age who have imbibed such notions he was more or less proud of his advanced ideas. He took occasion one day to go to the study of a minister of his acquaintance and state to him his doubts and disbelief in Christianity, thinking, of course, that the minister would undertake an elaborate argument to prove the truth of the Scriptures and the reality of the religion founded on them. This would give him just what he wanted—the opportunity to argue and combat.

But the pastor, with a wisdom not born of earth, after listening until he had concluded his harangue, said quietly: "Let us tell Jesus about it," and dropped on his knees. The young would-be infidel was surprised into following his example. As the two knelt side by side the man of God poured out his petition from a full heart for the young man beside him, but without any allusion to his condition of skeptical unbelief. He simply pleaded for him as a sinner needing salvation. The prayer was answered. Before he rose from his knees the doubter doubted no longer. Instead, he was convinced and converted, and ready to ask, with Paul, "Lord, what wilt Thou have me to do?" The answer came, and that young man now preaches the gospel he once sought to destroy with his infidel arguments.

The Mid-Continent, emphasizing the suggestiveness of this little incident, says:

"There is the lesson. Will soul-winners learn it? Go tell Jesus—alone, if need be, with those you would win if you can—but tell Jesus, and ask of Him the needed grace. It is not argument with man that is needed so much as telling Jesus. Take Him at His word, 'Ask what ye will, and it shall be done unto you.' Go and tell Jesus."

Have Faith in God.

Dean Farrar tells how an English clergyman visited two fine ships about to sail on their voyage of Arctic discovery into the land of snow and darkness. He found the brave captains full of confidence, and, raising his eyes in the cabin he saw there, as almost its only ornament, an illuminated text, which read, "Have faith in God." "Ah, there," he said, pointing to the text, "there is the true pole."

The Christian Commonwealth, of London, referring to this incident, utters some highly suggestive notes on the power of faith as a guide to the Christian life. It says:

"We like to think of those gallant men carrying with them into the cold and midnight that faith, that hope. It is a faith which will lighten their darkness more than the stars that glitter over the floes of ice. It is a hope which will make the heavens glow with a more vivid splendor than the aurora which flushes the fields of snow.

"Take with you that faith, that hope. You, too, may sail, hereafter, in your little boat of life, into the cold, into the hunger, into the darkness, into the exploration of unknown hopes. Be sober, be vigilant. Have faith in God