A MATTER of MILLIONS.

By Anna Katharine Green, Author of "The Forsaken Inn," Etc.

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CHAPTER XXVIII.

Continued.

No wonder the detective stands irresolute—that Hilary forces back the shriek that rises to her lips. Death is hovering doubly over the head of the one they hoped to guard, and nothing they can do will serve to save her. Will not the guardian spirit of her mother see her peril and stop the unconscious girl thus hurrying upon her doom? No. But other help is near—help, sure and potent; for see! just as she floats upon the assassin and the fingers of the murderous wretch close more tightly upon his uplifted dagger another form creeps in behind him, and Byrd, youthful, alert, full of fire and of purpose, flings himself upon the man in front, and, without a word of warning, pinions him in his two strong arms.

The shriek which Miss Aspinwall had been able to restrain in her terror flew from her lips in her relief, and at the sound the signorina, who was now almost upon the two struggling men, paused, and flung out her arms. At the sight Hilary rushed forward, and in a moment the hall was lined with frightened faces, every door having opened as by a spell at these sounds of trouble and danger.

But Hilary saw only one face, that of the signorina. Pale as death, with staring eyes in which life had suddenly leaped into being, she confronted the two men struggling for mastery before her like one suddenly awakened from nightmare into a worse dream of reality. So absorbed was she in the contemplation of what she saw that she did not feel Hilary's arms about her, and only moved when the knife, which the two combatants had equally struggled to possess, flew from the hand of the assassin and fell at her feet. Then she came to herself, and stooping down picked up this weapon, and clutching it with frenzied fingers leaped toward the door of her room just as the man who had raised his hand against her succumbed to the strength of his antagonist, and rolling toward the staircase slipped over its verge and tumbled in a heap to the floor below.

CHAPTER XXIX.

THE VALET.

"Is he dead?"

The question was asked by the signorina, who had come again from her chamber door, and was now pressing with the rest toward the stair.

"No," came up in muffled tones from the young detective, who had bounded down after the fallen man, "he is not dead, and he is in custody. You need not fear this man any more."

But her terrors were not so easily quieted. Though she did not speak, she stood shaking from head to foot, and seemed not to know whither to go or what to do.

"Would there be any harm in my seeing this man?" she ventured timidly, after a somewhat painful pause. "I should like to ask him what he has against me."

"Take my arm," said a benevolent voice over her shoulder. "I shall be very glad to have you see him." And Mr. Gryce stepped forward with such an air of authority that she forgot that his face was strange and took the proffered arm without a word.

He led her to the stairs, down which she went, trembling very much, but otherwise seemingly composed. Lamps had been lit in the hall below, and the forms of Mr. Byrd and Mr. Degraw were to be seen standing above that of the prostrate man. She paused as she perceived her lover, but instantly recovered herself and went on, smiling a little sadly as she passed him.

The man, upon whose wrists the handcuffs had been put, turned his face upward as her light steps approached.

"Why, it is the valet!" she cried. "The man who said he was a detective, and who warned me——" She went no further, and her agitation became so great that the dagger, which she still nervously clutched, fell from her hand on to the breast of the man upon whom she was gazing.

Mr. Byrd stretched forth his hand and took it. She did not notice, she was looking in the face of the desperate assassin and her lips moved mechanically, but no sound came from them.

The wretch, who did not seem in any way overcome by his misfortune, stared back at her curiously.

"You see me down," said he; "well, that is no matter, you will soon see me up again. I am not the man to swing."

"What a fearful wretch!" she muttered, and hardly found tongue to falter: "There seems to be no good reason why you should attack me. What have I done, what has any of us done that you should come here with a knife?"

He laughed and gazed about him with evil eyes. "There are some here who can guess," he cried. Then with a sort of bravado continued: "No matter why I came here, miss. I can come no more, and that ought to suffice you. Good days have begun for you, miss, and I cannot prevent it; the police have been too many for me."

She looked as if she did not understand, as if she wanted to question him further. But her lover, who felt her contaminated by any conversation with this man, advanced at this point and began to draw her away.

"Come," he urged; "this is no place for you."

Instantly the wretch, who had not shown up to this point any real sense of his situation, roused and looked after her.

"Ah, ha!" he cried, "you may lose yet. Eleven o'clock has not yet come."

She started, dropped Mr. Degraw's arm and looked wildly back.

"He is mad!" she whispered, and hastened to hide herself from those eyes.

When she and the artist, who now assisted in following her, were again in the hall above, she found strength to say:

"Is it all a dream? Did that man try to kill me?"

"Yes, darling, but providence was watching over you and you escaped. How can I express my joy? How utter my thankfulness?"

"You are not hurt?" she asked. "You did not have any struggle with this man?"

"No; I have been in no danger; that is, for the last few hours. The fellow did try to poison my wine, but he was detected. Can you realize that, notwithstanding all his fine talk, it is he, and not Mr. Degraw, who has been at the bottom of all the trouble which has been suffered by your various namesakes?"

"He? What do you say? Have they found out that?"

"Yes, through Mr. Degraw's explanation. He has been very frank and—— But I must not trench upon his prerogative. He will tell you all you wish to know to-morrow, and, though it is hard for me to acknowledge my error"—he crushed down his jealousy, consulted his honor and continued bravely—"I must say that this valet of his has blinded more than one of us, and that you are exceedingly fortunate to be under the care of so vigilant a police. We both owe our lives to Mr. Byrd, and you——"

But here he found it impossible, to talk further. Though by this time the various inmates of the house had vanished again into their rooms, to dress and reappear again for endless gossip, Miss Aspinwall and the servants were drawing near, and he felt that it was no time for him to express the hundred anxious thoughts which the signorina's deliverance from danger had called forth. Besides, in honor, he should wait till Mr. Degraw had revealed to her the position she was destined to occupy. Signorina Valdi, poor and friendless, might feel very differently from the wealthy Miss Rogers with the world at her feet. How could he tell but that his sympathy even would seem superfluous to her then, much more his love. No, whatever it cost him, he would wait till the morrow had come and gone. No one should accuse him of taking advantage of her weakness. She knew he loved her; and that was enough. But ah! that dreadful to-morrow!

Mr. Gryce, who had accompanied them to the upper hall, now advanced.

"I consider the danger over," said he, "and yet I shall watch beside Miss Rogers' door till eleven o'clock to-morrow morning. Have you any objection to that, miss?"

"Oh, no! Oh, no!" was her eager response. "I have not been afraid before, but I am now. But why till eleven?"

"I believe you have an engagement for that hour."

She blushed deeply and threw a side-glance upon her companion.

"I did not know that I had spoken of it," she cried, naively.

No one answered, but the detective smiled benevolently upon her.

"You are a very fortunate young lady," he observed, "if villainous men do strive to take your life."

These words seemed to fix the blush upon her cheeks, and made the refuge of Miss Aspinwall's room, which was now offered her by a gesture of that lady, more than acceptable.

"I do not know what all this means," she said in withdrawal, "and I cannot wait to find out. Miss Aspinwall is beckoning and I am only too glad to fly to some place of quiet, where I can think. Goodnight, Mr. Degraw." Her gaze was almost lingering. "Goodnight and take good care of yourself, for bound men have been known to escape, and——" She did not say what, but her fearful glance toward the stair beneath which the wretch to whom she alluded still lay seemed to tell something of the anxiety that yet affected her mind. And even after she had passed through the door held open for her by her friend did her last fond look seem to say to the enraptured artist: "Beware!"

"Ah!" thought he, little mindful of the warning itself, "will she cast such a look behind her when she knows herself the possessor of three millions?"

Some time later, Mr. Byrd explained how he came to appear so opportunely at the head of the back staircase. As you will remember he had been appointed to watch the back windows and side entrance of the house. Hearing, about two o'clock, a gentle bird-call which came not from the trees but from the path leading up to this side of the house, he became suspicious and crawled out of the arbor in which he had concealed himself, just in time to discern the form of a man disappearing through one of the lower windows into the house.

Recognizing the valet, and realizing all that his presence in that place meant, he rushed after him and climbed into the same window. He found himself in a narrow hall, and next minute came upon a staircase yet creaking with the assassin's stealthy tread. Mounting it more quietly than the other had done, he came upon the scene which we have already described, and thus, as far as man could see, became the means of deliverance to an otherwise doomed human being.

Mr. Degraw, of Cleveland, had not moved from the place which he had been set to watch.

CHAPTER XXX.

A GREAT HEIRESS.

It was the hour at which lawn tennis or croquet was usually in progress in Miss Aspinwall's grounds. But no games occupied the guests this morning.

The great excitements and broken rest of the night before had prevented early rising on their part, and not one of the doors opening on the wide hall had yet swung back under the watchful eye of Mr. Gryce, who sat like a statue in front of the room occupied by the signorina. Ten o'clock and even Miss Aspinwall herself was not to be seen!

But before another half hour had passed more than one bright figure had stepped into the hall, and in this recess or that of the great house small groups were gathering, ready to resume the talk which had not been exhausted by hours of secret whispering from pillow to pillow. At a quarter to eleven one door only remained shut, the door upon which all eyes rested, for through it they expected presently to appear the heroine of the preceding eve, a heroine around whom this frustrated attempt at murder had woven such an atmosphere of romance and mystery that the coming of a girl with a tray of breakfast caused quite a shock of disappointment to pass through the throng, heroines being supposed to be above such mundane wants, or at least to ignore them at certain periods of peculiar interest or excitement.

But this touch of sentimental feeling in the young men and women of the house was soon lost in the surprise they felt at seeing Mr. Gryce suddenly rouse from his apathy, take the tray from the girl's hand, and after surveying its contents with care, carry it in himself to the signorina. Nor was this astonishment in any wise diminished when, in a minute later, he reappeared with the tray and handing it back to the girl remarked:

"Miss Rogers cares for nothing but eggs this morning. A couple of boiled eggs, if you please."

An interference so minute must mean something. What? Curiosity grew rampant, and it was a sorry disappointment to the eager watchers when the breakfast bell rang, summoning them all to the dining room.

Another bell rang about this time; it was the one connected with the front door. As its echoes ceased one or two of the young men who still lingered in the hall beheld the door of her room open and the signorina appear. Ah, how fresh she looked, notwithstanding her night's adventures! Or were her blushes the signal of some coming event not disconnected with the summons they had just heard. They would wait a minute, and they did, noting with a certain sort of stupefaction how the aged detective bowed as she passed him, and with what a look he followed her down the hall to the top of the staircase. Was the old fellow smitten? No, but he was impressed by the sight of this young girl going to an interview from which she would return the mistress of a fortune large enough to make her a queen among her fellows.

At the head of the staircase she met Hilary.

"Mr. Degraw, of Cleveland, is waiting for you in the library," that lady announced. "He is not alone; did you expect to se him alone?"

The signorina drew back.

"Who is with him?" she asked.

"I leave you to find out," returned the other, mischievously. "Only I thought I would warn you to expect more than one caller. Ah, how lovely you look in white!" purusued Hilary, with a short sigh. "No one would think you had not slept a wink all night."

The signorina smiled and took the other's arm.

"How kind you are!" said she, and looked so child-like with her quivering lips half parted that the stronger woman's heart warmed with a sweet compassion as she drew her down to the library door.

"I must go to my other guests," remarked Hilary, "but my heart will remain with you."

And though she could not know and could not guess what this visit portended she went with evidently reluctant feet toward the dining room, looking back more than once upon the slight, white-clad figure standing doubtfully before the library door, as if in dread of an interview which might have a determining influence upon the future fate of more than one in this great house.

When the signorina finally summoned courage sufficiently to open the door and pass in she was startled to observe three gentlemen present, and was greatly confused, notwithstanding the warning she had received when she perceievd that one of them was the artist. Surely this was not the interview she had expected when Mr. Degraw, of Cleveland, had set this hour for saying something to her of special importance!

"Do you wish to see me?" was consequently the question with which she met the greeting she received.

To be continued.

Originality That Paid.

Originality with cabmen gives them about the same measure of success as is acquired in any other business. A traveler who alighted at New Haven a few days ago was surprised as he walked out on the platform to see a fine rig dash up toward him and to hear a well dressed and polite cabby say as he touched his hat: "How do you do, sir? I have been waiting for you."

"Why, how is that?" exclaimed the visitor. "I came out here to look for a five-cent carriage."

"Oh, if that's the case, you'll find them over there," added the cabby, pointing to the trolley cars, "but I'll carry you more comfortably and it'll only cost you a quarter."

"Well, if that's the case, and you've been waiting for me, I would be sorry to disappoint you, and I guess I'll have to let you take me up in the town," and the visitor climbed into the hack, while the bright cabby cracked his whip gleefully as he rattled up the street.—New York Times.

Befogged Cables.

Fogs have been charged with causing considerable trouble with electric transmission on the Pacific coast. It has been found that the lines work well in wet weather, but with a dry spell, followed by a fog, poles become burned off. To overcome this difficulty, the pins and the lower parts of the insulators are buried in a redwood block four and one-half inches deep, with the hole for the insulator of one and one-half inches greater radius than the insulator, and the top of the block two inches below the wire. So far, it is said, the device has prevented dust and fog drifting in under the insulator.—Page's Magazine.

A SERMON FOR SUNDAY

AN ELOQUENT DISCOURSE ENTITLED "COMMERCIALISM."

A Pertinent Talk on a Present-Day Problem, by the Rev. Dr. Reese F. Alsop—Jesus Christ is the Measure of the Stature of the Perfect Man.

BROOKLYN, N. Y.—Dr. Reese F. Alsop, rector of St. Ann's Church on the Heights, preached Sunday morning on "Commercialism." He took his text from St. Luke xii:15: "Man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesses."

Dr. Alsop said:

I heard lately from a brilliant speaker an address on "Commercialism." To the surprise of all, it was a panegyric rather than a diatribe. His argument was that commercial, that is, business activity, the industrial epoch in which we live and whose push we feel, engenders certain useful and even moral qualities, such as thrift, underlying all accumulations of capital: truth telling, which is essential to successful trading; trust, without which the vast credit system of the day could not exist; the sense of responsibility shown in the honesty of the great army of clerks and place holders, among whom breaches of trust, defaults and the like are comparatively rare, the percentage of the honest being surprisingly high. At the same time our Civil War and the Boer War have shown that the commercial spirit did not extinguish heroism and liberality. Witness the gifts of rich men to education and charities.

Now that is all true, and yet there is a bad flavor about the word commercialism. It has another connotation. Is it not a matter of emphasis? Jesus says, "Seek ye first the kingdom of God." He says again, "What will a man give in exchange for his life?" What are men exchanging their life, with all its possibilities of symmetrical development, for? What are they seeking first? Is it not too largely material success? St. Paul says: "Having food and raiment we have enough." The feeling of to-day scorns such moderation. A modest competence is nowadays nothing accounted of. To make a living is not enough; to achieve comfort for self and family is a small thing; men aim and toil and struggle for more dazzling prizes—a success that makes a noise and is talked of; that glitters and dazzles the eye.

This is commercialism as I understand it; the measuring of success by the standard of the market place, the sinking of other aims in the eager rush after gain. There are high things possible for man. Culture of body, mind, growth in moral and spiritual attainments, expansion in faculty and usefulness. There are magnificent careers open to him in science, in art, in literature, in philanthropic service. Over against all these stands the spirit of the age and cries follow me. The ideal is a man who turns everything to gold that he touches; a man who gets and holds and then goes on to get more and hold more.

Two conversations lately overheard illustrate the point. Dr. Rainsford, of St. George's Church, walking down a New York avenue, overheard the talk of three or four university men before him. Looking upon the gleaming equipages and splendid dresses flitting by, one said to another: "I tell you, boys, it is money that goes in this town, is it not?" The belief that it is money that goes—the feeling that it is money that ought to go—are evidences of an almost universal sentiment.

"Who is building that magnificent house?" said one to another. "Oh, that is to be the residence of so and so. He used to be a poor Baptist preacher, but Rockefeller found out that he had business ability, and I tell you he did not leave him long a Baptist preacher. He took him into the Standard Oil Company, and now see what a success he has achieved." There speaks commercialism. There is the voice of the ideal which has almost hypnotized our generation.

Agassiz's splendid reply to the lecture bureau, "I have no time to make money," sounds like a piece of insanity. Gordon's refusal to accept reward from the Chinese Emperor for his help in the Tai Ping rebellion sounds like a piece of Quixotism. The "simple life," as lived by Thoreau in the woods, as pictured by Wagner, sums only an idyllic dream. The pursuit of learning for learning's sake, the service of man with no itch for reward, the quiet, unostentatious sacrifice of personal interest for the good of others, these are repudiated as folly. The maddening crowd's ignoble strife is what makes itself heard. It draws like the song of the siren. Like the suction of a vast maelstrom, it seizes men and draws them in. By and by, dizzied by the fierce whirl, they forget the high things and are content to be simply money-makers. That is what I understand by commercialism; the thrusting into the front place of merely material success. It is a corruption of the spirit in which life is livid. It is a low, wrong motive. It brings in and holds before the soul a false standard of value. It misconceives what is the real success of life. It subordinates the man to his possessions. It is a radical corruption of the ideal—an absolute reversal of what our text says. Commercialism declares and persuades that man's life does consist in the abundance of the things which he possesses. Therefore, it urges let him love supremely those things; let him aim at them, follow after them, sink his very life in them. Let him for them forego, if needs be, mental culture, artistic development, moral elevation, spiritual activity and all that goes to make a full developed manhood. Quench, if necessary, all lofty aspirations. Get things, gather them about you, enthrone yourself on and among them. Let atrophy seize every other faculty so your faculty for getting and getting on grows stronger.

Let me give an illustration or two. There is a story of a man who was so eager to keep safe a very precious thing that he took it with him into a closet, set his candle on the floor and then diligently nailed fast the door, only to find, as his candle flickered out, that he had shut himself in with his treasure. Nailed and encoffined in his own strong box. Here is another: I read some time ago of a young man, who, upon graduation from college, found himself the possessor of $50,000 a year. He had health, strength, education, position. Choices lay open before him. He might go in for political life, for philanthropic service, or college settlement work. He might become a student and a patron of art, of literature. He might throw himself into the civic life of his day. In any of a dozen ways he might find his life by losing it in the service of man and of God. But alas! he was dazzled by the ideal of the age. Ambitious to turn his one million into many, to win the power or notoriety vast wealth can bring, he flung himself into a banking house. All the beautiful opportunities that invited him he forewent simply and only that he might increase his pile—a pile which was already sufficiently large. Grant him all the success he coveted, what would be the end? A dwarfed man, with an immense pile heaped up around him. A life practically sunk and lost in the abundance of the things which he possessed.

As I said, then, a moment ago, commercialism is found in a wrong emphasis. Wealth is good fairly won and nobly used. It is not money, but the love of money, that is the root of all evil. Business is good, commerce is good and necessary, industrialism is good and brings forth a goodly progeny of virtues; zeal, activity, perserevance, cleverness in affairs, are all praiseworthy. Material success is desirable. "The blessing of the Lord it maketh rich." Yes, but to put these things first, to rush after them so eagerly as to forget other and higher things, in a word, to sink in them one's life with its possibilities of growth and beauty and usefulness, that is to have caught the spirit of the commercialism of the day and the age.

Who can look abroad without seeing how this spirit tends to invade and even to dominate every sphere of human activity. We read of commercialism in politics, in art, in literature, in education, in the social world, even in religion, and though we may not have a distinct definition ready we have a fairly clear idea of what is meant. The place holder in nation or city or State whose main thought is what he can make and not what he can do; the artist who listens not to the voice of his ideals but to the bids of the market, and paints or carves simply for the money to be got; the author who writes simply what will sell and forgets the truth for which he ought to stand and the service in the way of instruction, or comfort, or amusement which he might minister to his fellows, is each one tainted with commercialism. It has crept even into our universities, tempting boards of trustees and faculties to bow too subserviently to those who can furnish endowments, tempting the young man to turn from courses that cultivate the mind to those which prepare for business. Our theatres have felt the influence, and think more of pieces which will draw than of those which will elevate as well as amuse and recreate those who see and hear.

Yea, it is conceivable that even the church may not escape. The ministry that sets gain above usefulness has caught the contagion. "Put me into the priesthood that I may eat a piece of bread!" So cried one of old. The very thought was a desecration. The ministry that is sought for the sake of "the pieces of bread" for a livelihood, whether it be large or small, is a ministry not to God, not to those among whom it is exercised, but to the man that holds it. The clergy who are in orders chiefly for what they can win in the way of comfort, or respectability or income are unfit for their place. They serve not God nor their fellows, but themselves. And so the church whose chief aim is a large pew rental and a fashionable congregation—forgetting the while that the Master's boast was that to the poor the gospel was preached, is tarred with the same stick.

Yes, commercialism is in the air. It is the spirit that now works—that stealthily penetrates every department of modern activity, always seeking to make gain the dominant motive. There is no line of work, no business, no profession safe against its insidious influence. It invades law and medicine, even divinity, as we have seen. It is felt in halls of legislation and seats of government. Yea, it pervades even society, making the fine raiment and the gold ring and the large bank account more potent to open doors than gentle birth and fine breeding.

How are we to resist this influence—escape this spirit? Just as we resist the contagion of an epidemic, the depression of a malaria, by fortifying the powers of life. A man in whom the tide of life is full and strong will walk unscathed through the plague laden air. The health that is in him resists the disease that rushes upon him. The bacteria that floats into throat or lung, or stomach finds no nidus and dies. It must be thus, then, that we escape the spiritual danger. Fortify the life within. Remember that life is more than meat; that the kingdom of God and His righteousness are infinitely worthy of our seeking. Do not forget the possibilities of your life, what you can make of it in the way of growth, what you can make of it in the way of usefulness. Keep your eye on the Master. In Him see what you may be—in Him see what you may do. Yea, not only keep your eye on Him, but keep in living touch with Him, that the tides of His life may flow into your soul, and carry you on and up to the measure of the stature of the perfect man in Christ Jesus.

Finally, my brethren, "whatsoever things are honest—whatsoever things are just, whatsoever things are pure, whatsoever things are lovely, whatsoever things are of good report, think on these things." Turn your thought and your eyes away from the dazzling bait of the age. Escape its snare. Seek first the kingdom of God. Determine to be a man, mentally, morally, spiritually; determine to be a brother to your fellow man, and do for him a brother's part; determine to be a child of the heavenly Father and obey His will, so far as you know it; resolve that in you the splendid possibilities hidden in the gift of life shall be realized, and you shall have learned how to use this world without abusing it. Then commerce, business, success shall minister to you but not enslave you; shall embellish your life but not absorb it; shall bring you, perchance, an abundance of things to possess, but leave the while strong and pure within you the life of God. Then shall you in very deed possess the abundance of the things which are yours. Let them once get the better of you, climb into the throne of your heart and life, and then they possess you and you are their slave and their victim; nailed and incoffined in your own strong box which has, alas, with your treasure, shut in your soul also.

Living in Hope.

The habit of living in the future should make us glad and confident. We should not keep the contemplation of another state of existence to make us sorrowful, nor allow the transiency of this present to shade our joys. Our hope should make us buoyant, and keep us firm. It is an anchor of the soul. All men live by hope, even when it is fixed upon the changing and uncertain things of this world. But the hopes of men who have not their hearts fixed upon God try to grapple themselves on the cloud wrack that rolls along the flanks of the mountains; while our hopes pierce within that veil, and lay hold of the Rock of Ages that towers above the flying vapors. Let us then be strong, for our future is not a dim peradventure, nor a vague dream, nor a fancy of our own, nor a wish turning itself into a vision, but it is made and certified by Him who is the God of all the past and of all the present. It is built upon His word, and the brightest hope of all its brightness is the enjoyment of more of His presence, and the possession of more of His likeness. That hope is certain. Therefore, let us live in it.—The Rev. Alexander MacLaren.

The Poor Man's Day.

In all our towns, and throughout too large a portion of our country districts, the Sabbath rest is violated and the worship which was the consequence and condition of this rest is abandoned. At the same time the soul is deprived of its nourishment and the body of its repose. The poor man and the workingman are delivered up, unprotected, to the every day increasing influence of error and evil. Thus the profanation of the day has become the ruin of the moral and physical health of the people, at the same time that it is the ruin of the family and of religious liberty. The Sabbath is emphatically the poor man's and the working man's day. And there is no surer way to break down the health, as well as the morals and religion of the people, than to break down the Sabbath. To say nothing of the Divine law, on mere worldly grounds it is plain that nothing is more conducive to the health, intelligence, comfort and independence of the working classes and to our prosperity as a people than our Christian American Sabbath.—Count Montalembert.

Getting All We Deserve.

Happy is the man who realizes he is getting all he deserves in this world. The man who relies upon God is sure of that. We know that God is just with His own. And we know, or ought to know, also, that the world estimates us at about our real value.

We may not realize it so much in our own case as in those of others. We wonder sometimes that persons of certain pronounced abilities have no higher place in the world than they do have, while others who have less talent along certain lines seem to be better appreciated.

The trouble is that we sometimes fail to consider the whole man. The world knows what it wants and will usually select that. It is not the potent intellect which always makes the complete man. Brilliancy may be combined with a disagreeable manner. Tact is sometimes more potent than talent. But the Christian of average intelligence, combined with real humility, will have great power where the spirit is so much like the Christ.—Rev. R. V. Hunter, D. D.

Past and Future.

The past is dead and has no resurrection, but the future is endowed with such a life that it lives to us even in anticipation. The past is, in many things, the foe of mankind; the future is, in all things, our friend. For the past there is no hope; for the future there is both hope and fruition. The past is the text book of tyrants; the future is the Bible of the free. Those who are solely governed by the past stand like Lot's wife, crystallized in the act of looking backward, and forever incapable of looking forward.—H. Kirk White.

A Year of Growth.

One way to be sure of a good year is to make it a year of growth. We are in this world to grow. Every day should show its new line in every life and character. We should be better men and women at the beginning. Yet we must remember that mere largeness is not always growth. One may be richer in estate and yet be poorer in mind and heart. He only is advancing in life whose heart is growing softer, whose blood warmer, whose brain quicker, whose spirit is entering into living peace.—Rev. J. R. Miller.

The Year.

Beautiful is the year in its coming and in its going—most beautiful and blessed because it is always "the year of our Lord."—Lucy Larcom.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

INTERNATIONAL LESSON COMMENTS FOR FEBRUARY 14.

Subject: Jesus Forgives Sins, Mark ii., 1-12—Golden Text, Mark ii., 10—Memory Verses, 3-5—Commentary on the Day's Lesson.

1. A palsied sinner brought to Christ (vs. 1-4). 1. "And again." At the close of the missionary tour in Galilee. "Capernaum." Which was his home or headquarters. "It was noised." The news spread very rapidly. "In the house." Either the house which He occupied with His mother and His brethren (Matt. 4: 13), or possibly that of St. Peter.

2. "Many were gathered." The audience included Pharisees and doctors of the law who had come from the towns of Galilee, Judea and Jerusalem (Luke 5: 17). They had come to inspect and criticise this new Teacher. "About the door." There was a great concourse of people so that the house and court were both filled. "Preached the word." The doctrine of the Son of God. They had come partly to criticise and partly out of curiosity, and now Jesus seizes the opportunity to preach the gospel. We should be instant in season and out of season to point others to Jesus. Preaching and healing went together and made a powerful impression.

3. "Come unto Him." Access to Jesus seemed impossible. There were many obstacles in the way. Should they have waited for a convenient season? No. They must force their way to Christ. "Bringing one." He was young, for Jesus calls him son, but he was full grown, for it required four to carry him. There are many so weak and discouraged that they cannot go to Jesus without assistance; we should always be ready to help such. "Sick of the palsy." Palsy, a contraction of the word paralysis, is a disease that deprives the part affected of sensation, or the power of motion, or both. This patient is utterly helpless. The disease is considered incurable. "Borne of four." Each one holding a corner of the "pallet," or bed, which was merely a thickly padded quilt or mat. There was co-operation in this work. One could not have done it; it needed four. In the union of hearts and hands there is strength. United they had no difficulty.

4. "The press." It seemed quite impossible for the crowd to make an opening sufficiently large for them to pass through. "Uncovered the roof." Luke says, "through the tiling." In the Eastern countries the houses were flat-roofed and joined together, so one could walk upon them from one end of the city to the other. These housetops were places of prayer and meditation, and from the housetops criers proclaimed the times of public worship. Outside stairs always led to the roof. "Broken it up." They took up the tiling. They determined that nothing should stand in their way. "Let down." Imagine the surprise of the crowd as this opening through the tiles appeared, and a pallet was let down before them.

II. Christ forgives sins (vs. 5-7). 5. "Saw their faith." Many of the gifts of healing and restoration were obtained through the faith and prayers of the friends of the sufferers. See Matt. 8: 13; Mark 5: 36; John 4: 50. Jesus "saw" their faith. Real faith acts. Their holy boldness pleased Him. "Thy sins are forgiven" (R. V.) Our first great need is the forgiveness of sins. Jesus rightly puts this ahead of the healing of the body. We cannot doubt that this paralytic was a conscience-stricken young man. The conditions necessary to forgiveness are repentance, confession, forsaking sin and faith.

6. "Certain of the scribes." The scribes were the leaders of the nation, the theologians, legislators, politicians. They had come up from Jerusalem and other places for the purpose of opposing him. "In their hearts." They had not spoken openly. 7. "Blasphemies." To blaspheme is to slander God or speak impiously against God. In this case they supposed that Christ was taking to Himself what belongs to God only. He is intruding on the divine rights. The blasphemer was to be put to death by stoning. "But God only." They rightly understood that all sins are sins against God, and therefore only God could forgive them. See Psa. 51: 4.

III. Christ heals disease (vs. 8-12). 8. "Jesus perceived." In telling them the thoughts of their hearts Jesus gave them the fullest proof of His divinity. He "searcheth all hearts and understandeth all the imaginations of the thoughts." No sin escapes His notice. "Why reason ye?" Matthew says: "Wherefore think ye evil?" Why are you putting a misconstruction on my words? 9. "Whether it is easier." Both are equally easy and equally difficult. Everything is equally easy to that power which is unlimited. A universe can be as easily produced by a single act of the divine will as the smallest part of matter.

10. "That ye may know." External miracles are the proof of internal ones. Christ was conscious of divine power. If failure had been the result His humiliation would have been overwhelming and final. He proposes now to prove His divinity beyond question. "Son of Man." This is the title which Christ most frequently applied to Himself, sometimes interchanging it with the "Son of God." He appropriated to Himself the prophecy of Daniel (Matt. 26: 63, 64; Dan. 7: 13). It is applied to Christ more than eighty times in the New Testament. 1. It implies His humiliation (Matt. 8: 20), and that He, the Son of God, became a true man (Rom. 8: 3). 2. That He was the one perfect man, sinless, and complete in every human virtue. 3. That He was the representative man, elevated above individual, class and national prejudices. 4. That He was, officially, the representative of the human race in His life and death for man. "Power on earth." They were thinking of God as being in heaven, and Jesus calls attention to the fact that there is power on earth now to forgive sins. The Son of Man has come to earth and has brought this power with Him.

11. "Arise." Here is the test. Christ shows His ability to forgive sins by His ability to heal. 12. "He arose." The man had a part to perform. Had he not acted at the word of command he could not have been healed. He exercised the power of his will and put forth the necessary effort to arise, believing that strength and healing would be given him. "Before them all." This thing was "not done in a corner." Christ's miracles were performed in the most public manner and were never questioned by those who witnessed them. "Amazed." Luke adds: "They were filled with fear." "Glorified God." They had a high degree of reverence for God and were filled with admiration for His power and goodness. "On this fashion." Christ's works are without precedent. He acts independently and advises with no one. They had seen three marks of His divinity: 1. Forgiving sins. 2. Perceiving thoughts. 3. Healing disease. The works of Christ are astonishing the world to-day. He is the same mighty Saviour as ever, and is still able to forgive sins, perceive thoughts and heal diseases.

A New Genus Seal Lizard.

The Shasta County fossil beds, of California, that have been so prolific in the production of the remains of prehistoric extinct animals, have yielded still another specimen to the scientific world and the zoological kingdom. The animal appears to have been of a family entirely unknown to paleontologists and has been named the thalattosaurus. It is a huge sea lizard and is estimated to have been at least seven feet long. Originally it was a shore form, but became, after a long period, a marine animal. The remains represent not only a new species, a new family and a new genus, but a new order, a statement the importance of which will be appreciated by specialists as a very considerable one.

To Educate Waif of a Battle-Field.

Among the new students at All Saints' School, at Sioux City, S. Dak., is Lost Bird, the Indian baby who was found clinging to her mother's breast on Wounded Knee battlefield two days after the battle. She was adopted by General and Mrs. Colby, then of Nebraska, but now of Washington, and has been sent to Bishop Hare to be educated.

Penalty For Spitting.

To spit on the sidewalk in St. Paul, Minn., is to incur the penalty of cleaning the flagstone under the official eye.

The Sunday Breakfast Table

Trust.

To be content!
That is the best.
Not to be indolent
And simply rest,
But having done what duty calls to do,
And having been to your soul-impulse true,
Then worry not because you do not see
Results. Leave these unto the time to be.
Do what you can. Trust God for the event,
And be content.

To be content!
Who in his soul
Learned this accomplishment
Has gained the whole.
He who can master self alone is great.
He who can work and who likewise can wait.
Greatly deserve, and weary not the Lord
By constant intercessions for reward.
Know that all will be returned that you have lent
And be content.

To be content!
Is wisdom true.
Know what for you is meant
Will come to you.
Cry up the heights your motto, "Onward, on!"
Then climb, nor pause to count the distance gone.
Think not of self; but if some other soul
Is faint, assist and point him to the goal.
Thus mount and help until life's day is spent
And be content.

To be content!
This is the best.
Life's sun and storm are blent
And both are blest.
All glory, love and joy that soul secures
Who strives, who overcomes and who endures.
For God is all and you with Him are rife—
Know this and you have gained the goal of life.
Take you this blessing that is heaven-sent
And be content.

—J. A. Edgerton.

How to Get a Fresh Start.

The closing year preaches its own sermon. Many texts from the pages of the last twelvemonth memory offers, and conscience applies them with a pointedness, a power and a particularity that no human pulpit ever equals. As memory turns the leaves, pausing now with a smile to re-read this, or lingering over that page stained with tears, how strange it all seems that this atmosphere which we so lately breathed has now become a part of the irrevocable past! We look back, and the point where memory seems to touch the quick as we look is that we shall never pass that way again! Ah! says conscience, how much of good that you might have done as you passed through that year has been left undone; how many kind and cheering words might have been said that were not; the thirsty child, that cried, how easy to have given it a cup of cold water, and it went sobbing away; the old man who fell away back there, after staggering along in the heat under his heavy load, how little it would have been for you to have carried it awhile for him, and you did not; perhaps he might not have fallen, and, hardest of all, that dear one of your own who lay down to rest so suddenly; oh, how many, many things you would have done for him if you had only known he was so soon to die! All these and many more memory leads by in review. The lesson from them all is, let the new year be better than the old; brighter, happier, holier for all around me and for myself, for I pass this way but once!

And so we have fallen into the habit at these mile posts of the years of putting on record a set of new resolutions—poor, feeble things, many of them, that lie broken behind us as we make our way through them to the next year's account.

What is the fault with all our resolves, and why are the leaves that we turn over invariably as soiled and blotted, while the year is still new, as the ones that are past?

The majority of us have tried honestly every year since we have taken Christ as our guide to put off the old man. This "old man," with his lying tongue, with his corruption and deceit and thievery, his anger and his laziness, is not a pleasant character for us to wear. We know it. We long to be free from it. And yet our attempts to do away with him are so often vain. Why?

Is it not because in putting off the old man we have forgotten to put on the new? We are to put on Christ Jesus, and that we have forgotten to do. We are to let Him live in us, just as if He came to earth again and grew to years in our body instead of His own. When we go about the house we are to remember that it is Jesus Christ that is to do the work this morning, and if we remember that, how thoroughly will it be done, and how will the humble work be glorified! And when we meet the neighbor upon the street who is thinking of buying our old horse we will tell him plainly about that limp he has and not seek to hide it as we had intended, because that is what Jesus would do. For we are members of one another, and lying to another is lying to ourselves. And as we come out of church next Sabbath and meet upon the steps the man who has spoken slightingly of us, we shall not turn away and pretend not to see him, for we shall have to remember that we have put on Christ Jesus, and we must be tender-hearted, forgiving one another, "even as God for Christ's sake hath forgiven you."

There is something wistful and pleading about these words of Scripture, recognizing all the evil that is in us, and appealing to the possibilities of good. Yet Paul has put his finger boldly upon the source of all our trouble, and tries to show that there is only one way in which we may take a fresh start with any hope of keeping on that way, and that is by putting on "the new man"—Christ Jesus.—Grace Livingston Hill, in the New York Mail and Express.

The Steps of a Ladder.

If every new year we effected even a radical change in ourselves, and in the course of the year made it a confirmed habit, the total effect would soon be remarkable, and thus would our new year be the steps of a ladder by which we should rise to the perfection which is our goal.—James Stalker, D. D.

The Oil of Joy.

Christianity wants nothing so much in the world as sunny people; and the old are hungrier for love than for bread; and the oil of joy is very cheap; and if you can help the poor on with a garment of praise it will be better for them than blankets.—Henry Drummond.

New Year Thoughts.

The thoughts of the new year are not thoughts of the ease of attainment, secured or anticipated, but they are thoughts of the severity of the pilgrim path of life and of the toilsomeness of the track, and these thoughts would prove disheartening to the bravest of us if we could not have faith in Him who has passed this way before, and who invites us to an unfailing trust in Him in hours of despondency or of cheer. He who has helped us hitherto will not desert us now.—Sunday-School Times.

In giving us the Sabbath I feel as if God had given us fifty-two springs in every year.—Coleridge.

To Educate Waif of a Battle-Field.

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$7250 For Two Stamps.

Two penny Mauritius postage stamps of 1847 were sold at auction, at London, England, for $7250. It is understood that they were bought by the Prince of Wales, who is an eager philatelist.