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IS IT WORTH WHILE?

BY JOAQUIN MILLER.

Is it worth while that we jostle a brother,
Bearing his load on the rough road of life?
Is it worth while that we jeer at each other,
In blackness of heart, that we war to the knife?
God pity us all in our pitiful strife.

God pity us all, as we jostle each other,
God pardon us all for the triumphs we feel
When a fellow goes down 'neath his load on the heather,
Pierced to the heart: words are keener than steel,
And mightier far for woe than for weal.

Were it not well, in this brief little journey,
On over the isthmus, down into the tide,
We give him a fish, instead of a serpent,
Ere folding the hands to be and abide
Forever, and aye in dust at his side?

Look at the roses saluting each other;
Look at the herds all at peace on the plain,
Man, and man only, makes war on his brother;
And laughs in his heart at his peril and pain;
Shamed by the beasts that go down on the plain.

Is it worth while that we battle to humble
Some poor fellow down into the dust?
God pity us all! Time too soon will tumble
All of us together, like leaves in a gust,
Humbled, indeed, down into the dust.

HELP THE POOR—EXTRACTS FROM A NEW YEARS SERMON.

BY THE REV. J. W. LEWIS.

TEXT: Parable of the Rich Man and Lazarus.

The hard season is upon us—the season of want and suffering. Many poor people throng our cities, towns and villages, and are not missing even in the rural districts.

It is admitted by all that cold and hunger mean suffering, but it is only too keenly felt by this vast company of penniless folk. For weeks past they have shuddered at the outlook, and their busy brains have turned this way and that, and all their thoughts have been committees of ways and means.

Winter has fairly opened his door, and they stand on the threshold, silent and sad, contemplating the possibilities of the near future—want, disease, suffering, death.

Side by side with these, in the same community, are the independent classes of every grade, from the man of comfortable competency to the millionaire. 'The rich and the poor meet together.' The Lord so disposes. They cross each other's path at every turn. The mansions of the very rich and the cozy homes of the well-to-do rise everywhere in juxtaposition to the shanties of poverty.

You pass the widow in the street muffled with rags and staggering before the wind, and the tattered shoes of her children shuffle along the sidewalk as they

hurry by your gate. 'The poor ye have always with you.' They creep into church at night and take back seats to avoid being seen, but somehow, you know not why, you see them. They meet you at the market places, and jostle against you in the crowded thoroughfares. Now and then they knock timidly at your back door and reach out their pale, thin hands to your heart and your purse. A merciful providence has thrown them in your midst—a Lazarus is laid at your gate.

Look within your dwelling; blazing fires, bright rooms, warm clothing, soft beds, ample food, pure air, and good cheer from garret to cellar, and from parlor to kitchen. Do not these suggest 'a certain rich man clothed with purple and fine linen, and faring sumptuously every day?' Look without—the gloomy panorama shifts rapidly with ever-varying intensity of woe. It is all told in parabolic terms—'a certain beggar, named Lazarus,' helpless, sore, suffering, dying.

Two things the world has yet to learn in their fullest scope—God's purpose in the rich, God's purpose in the poor, and duly apprehended in themselves their significance as correlatives will also appear.

They are lessons that lie in the depths of the deep things of God. 'Ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that though he was rich, yet for your sake he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich.' Thus Paul commends the grace of giving to the poor as the very core of the redemption method—the essence of Christ's blood. It is according to the divine plan therefore that the rich become less rich by so much as the gifts of charity depreciate their affluence, in order that the poor may be less poor, and both together be saved body and soul alive.

To my mind it is not a fortuitous fact that thanksgiving is at hand so early in the season,

when the snow loads the gates,
And the wintry wind whistles along the wild moor,
And the cottager shuts on the beggar his door.

Nor is it accidental that the celebration of Christ's natal day is had in the midst of the winter. Thanksgiving! Christmas! What thoughts of gratefulness! What impulses of charity bestir in the bosom!

It is indeed more blessed to give than to receive; and, moreover, it is dangerous not to give. 'In hell he lifted up his eyes, being in torments.'

That man may LAST, but never LIVES,
Who much receives, but nothing gives;
Whom none can love, whom none can thank;
Creation's blot, creation's blank.

What is said in the foregoing remarks does not hint at the intimation of some: 'We have eleemosynary institutions, send them thither.' Yes, to the poor-house, for instance, that miserable excuse for penuriousness. I shudder to think of it. Too often, in truth, a poor-house, and not a house (home) for the poor.

Characteristics of a rich man: The elegance of his carriage and the loftiness of his gate.

THE CHILDREN AT HOME.

THE SAUCER PIE.

'Well, what do you think of our little girl, Eben?'

Mrs. Ruthford asked this question just as they were through dinner, and Jennie had been excused from the table. They had brought her to their pleasant country home a month before, on probation, with a view to keeping her as their own.

Eben laid down his knife and fork, pushed back his plate, and looking through the open door to catch a glimpse of pink-gingham fitting around the corner, answered slowly—

'I like her right well; think, if you're suited, we'd best keep her. She is bright and willing and truthful.'

'And a quiet little thing,' put in his wife.

'Yes; don't know but I'd as lief she wouldn't be so quiet, though. I'll tell you, Sarah, I'm sort of longing for a child's laugh ripping out at anything or nothing. I'd like to see her dancing about, and singing to herself, chatting like a magpie, and all that sort of thing. I've tried to please her. I've told her stories, and taken her round on the farm with me, and let her ride on Charlie's back to the brook; and she likes it all, in a quiet sort of way. But she don't seem downright happy and merry, as it's a child's right to be.'

'Oh, well, I guess she's content enough, plenty to eat and wear, and kindly treated. I'd rather she'd be quiet than like Mrs. Dorr's little Nelly over the way, climbing trees and riding fences, and singing and shouting from morning till night.'

Meantime, Jenny was sitting on a rock by the brook, laving her bare, white feet, and saying to herself,—

'Now, if I thought she'd care anything about them, I'd get her some of those great blue flowers—'they're beauties, looking at the clusters of the iris. I'd as lief wade in as not. But I suppose she'd say 'Yes, yes, child, very pretty, don't clutter the floor with them,' and keep on tying up her curtains or 'ranging her closets. Mamma always liked them so much. Oh, Mamma! And the little figure lay prone on the grass, trembling and sobbing. 'Mamma! O mamma! I want you! She's kind to me, but there's nobody like mamma.'

'Poor child! Poor child!' It was Eben's voice, but tender and gentle. His strong arms lifted the quivering form, and laid her head on his shoulder.

'There, there! dear, don't cry. Want to go to mill with me? You shall have the reins yourself, and drive, if you like.'

A few words from Eben that night set Sarah to thinking; and the new thoughts that came to her were strengthened next day in a neighbor's kitchen. She had 'run in' on an errand, and found 'Aunt Martha,' as she was called in neighborhood parlance, making pies. She stood by her molding-board, with sleeves rolled up, and wide gingham apron on, the picture of a hearty, healthy, blithe old lady. Half a dozen

pies, with rich golden centres, stood by her side. Half a dozen apple-pies were already browning in the oven. She had a little crust left. She rolled it out, spread it in a couple of saucers, filled the centres round and plump with the juicy, sliced apples, and daintily trimmed the edges.

'Do you make saucer-pies, auntie?' Asked Mrs. Ruthford, in some surprise.

'Yes, every baking. Why not?' said auntie.

'Well, when the children are not at home to eat them, it seems hardly worth while. It is easier to put all in one large pie, and tastes just the same you know.'

'Oh, yes; but some child is so apt to happen along on an errand or something. A saucer pie is a great thing to a child. I've made them about every fortnight for fifteen years, and always found use for them. It more than pays for the work to see the little folks so pleased. 'You know, dear,' the old lady added gently, 'the time that trifles gives great pleasure is so short, it passes by before we are aware. Sometimes I think it is only childhood that is content with daily bread.'

'I'll make a saucer-pie for Jenny next time I bake,' said Mrs. Ruthford to herself, as she went home. 'Strange I never thought of it before. I'll—let me see—I'll dress her dolly new for her. It's quite shabby. And I'll keep her with me more, and tell her stories at bedtime. Maybe it is just the little things mothers do that she wants to chirk her up.'

The next morning Mrs. Ruthford concluded it was time to have some pies, and she went to work with a will. When the baking was done, a dainty saucer-pie sugared on top, and plump with ripe, sweet berries, stood on the dresser. 'Here's something for you, dear,' she said, as Jenny came in with quiet footfall, and she placed the little pie in the child's hands. Jenny's face flushed, her eyes brightened up, and then to Sarah's surprise, grew dim with tears, and the sensitive mouth quivered; but only for a moment.

'Thank you, thank you!' she said eagerly.

'It's just like the little pies mamma used to make for me.'

'Ah that's it,' thought Sarah. 'Eben's right to be sure, she wants 'mothering.' And she drew the little girl to her side and kissed her. The dimpled arms were around her neck in an instant, and the kiss returned, and through the day Jennie seemed to feel happier and more at home.

Bedtime came, and Jenny, nestling to the white pillow looked up with wondering eyes as Mrs. Ruthford sat down on the side of the bed, and taking the little hands in hers, said kindly, 'Shall I tell you a story, dear?'

She listened with eager interest to the story of the Highland shepherd's child, lost in the mountain mist, and guarded and fed by his faithful dog. And when Mrs. Ruthford bent down and kissed her, the white arms again wound impulsively around her neck, and Jenny said, for the first time, 'Good night, mamma!' Sarah was startled, the new

name seemed so sweet.

'I see now,' she thought. 'Eben is right. It is mother love and care the child needs and shall have.'

Mrs. Ruthford kept her resolution. She did not, could not, at once feel the intense devotion of a mother. But she was no longer content with feeding and clothing her charge. She tried to satisfy the hungering and thirsting for affection which she had learned to meet and recognize. She sought Jenny's happiness, and in due time she had her reward. Love in her own heart, grateful love in her child's, strengthened day by day. Jenny grew gradually happier, till her laugh and song rang out as merrily as Eben's. And her presence seemed like sunlight in their home. And when a year had passed, neither of the worthy couple would any more have thought of parting with her than if she had been theirs by birth. They knew no difference in the home tie.

'It all dates back,' said Sarah to her husband, as they sat talking one evening after Jenny went to bed, 'all this happiness dates back to the saucer-pie. Jenny seemed from that time to believe I loved her.'

The cure for the evils of this life can not be found in outward surroundings. These help, to some extent. But evil finds its birth in the soul's choices. To meet this want, Christianity is radical. The Word of God reaches to the purposes of men's hearts, and thus seeks to control outward acts. Formalism makes the outside of the platter clean. The Gospel makes the heart clean. It purifies the fountain from whence life issues. Outward influences may restrain in some degree, but no life can be made pure from without. The body may be surrounded by pure air, and yet be filled with disease. But let healthful lungs bring the pure air in contact with the blood which flows to the heart, and disease is driven out. Christ casts the devils out. The Spirit in the heart keeps them out, and so the life remains pure. Seek this inward purity. This only is purity. All else is delusion or deceit. This within, all else is harmless. Temptation may rage, but it must stay outside. It is dangerous only when it is permitted to rest within.

The reason given by the colored man for not going too near the heels of a famous roan male was so satisfactory that we can afford to adopt it as an excuse for not doing a great many other things. 'De reason,' he said, 'why I nebber 'proach dat roan mule from de rear is dat I'm too fond of my family.'—*Ex.*

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