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DEACON II.

"The greatest of these is charity."

The morning meal was completed; and as Deacon H. took his Bible for the usual devotions, he cast a satisfied glance around the room, and on the faces of the rosy-checked little group that surrounded the table.

The chapter chosen was the thirteenth of First Corinthians. "Faith, hope, charity," read the deacon at its close, "but the greatest of these is charity." Then followed a long prayer, in which the deacon, after giving the Lord various bits of information concerning matters of which it was quite essential He should be cognizant, earnestly invoked the graces of the Spirit, and solicited help for the duties of the day.

"Stop a moment, husband," said Mrs. H., as the deacon, at the close of the exercise, was preparing to leave the room.

"I forgot to mention that Mrs. Conner called here yesterday. She wants to know if you can find a place in your store for her eldest boy. Poor woman! she is in great distress. I inferred from what she said that her husband is drinking again; and her boy has for weeks been vainly seeking for work. I gave her some sewing, for which she seemed very grateful, though she looks too feeble to do much."

The complacent smile that had been playing on the deacon's face suddenly changed to a gloomy frown.

"Take that drunkard's boy into my store, Mary? I wonder at the woman's presumption. Like father, like son, is a true saying; I'll have no vagabonds around me."

"But James is a bright, active boy, husband, and if surrounded by the right influences I doubt not he will do well. Surely the family should not suffer for the father's faults. Could you have seen the anxiety of the poor mother, you would try in some way to aid her. It made my heart ache to look at her sad, worn face. Do, husband, consider the matter. I can not bear to tell her you will not try her son."

"Then do not go near her," was the harsh reply. "It is no place for such as you; if they are suffering the town will look out for them. I have enough to do to attend to my own affairs. If you have work for her, give it to her and pay her for it. These drunkards are perfect pests; it is useless trying to reform them. Now, I presume Conner has signed the pledge half a dozen times, but what good does it do?"

"Charity suffereth long and is kind," repeated Mrs. H., softly. "I believe you read that this morning and this verse also: 'The greatest of these is charity.' Do these passages mean anything?"

"Mean anything? of course they do," angrily replied her husband; "but they don't mean that I should support every drunkard's family. You women take everything literally, and I really believe you'd give away your last penny; but my money is my own and I shall use it as I please; and shutting the door in a very undeacou-

like manner, the angry man hastily left the house.

"The silver and gold are mine; I shall require mine with usury," sadly murmured the wife.

Deacon H. and his wife were specimens of that strange dissimilarity of character that is so often seen in married life. He, although an officer in the church, and active, so far as talking and praying were concerned, was extremely penurious, giving to benevolent objects just as little as was possible for one in his position.

With the poor and unfortunate he had no sympathy; he had been successful, why could not they be? How such a man ever became an officer in the church one might well ask. But the fact only proves that the wisest and the best are not always selected for offices so important.

His wife, as before intimated, was just the opposite. Many a dollar found its way from her purse into the channels of benevolence. The heart of many a sad, weary child of poverty was lightened by her sympathy and aid. "She is doing her own duty, and her husband's also," was often the remark of those who witnessed her quiet, unobtrusive deeds of charity.

In a very different dwelling from the commodious one of deacon H., a dwelling so poor and dilapidated that the winds of heaven gained easy admission, there sat a pale, care-worn woman, busily sewing; while over a few dying embers shiveringly hovered two little scantily clothed girls. The room was bare of almost every comfort; and a casual glance was sufficient to show that gaunt poverty had taken up his abode there.

"O mother, can't we have a little more fire?" pleaded Susy, the youngest, whose thin little face wore such a wistful, hungry look, that it added a new pang to the mother's heart. "It is so cold here," and the tears began rapidly to course down the faded cheeks."

"Hush, hush, dear, mother is sorry for her little girl; come here and wrap my dress around you; perhaps it will give a little warmth. James will soon be here; I wouldn't wonder if he had some good news for us; and the poor mother sought to smile into the wan, tear-stained face, as she drew her dress closely around the little one. At that moment the door opened, and a boy entered, drew a chair to the hearth, and strove to impart a little warmth to his chilled hands.

"Well, my son, what news?" and though the smile on her face was sad and forced, the poor mother endeavored to speak cheerfully.

"The same old story, mother; nobody wants a boy—at least nobody wants me—so we must all starve, I suppose. Oh, if father would only be different! What shall we do?" and the boy, leaning his head on his clasped hands, sobbed in agony.

"My son, my son," wailed the poor woman as she laid aside her work and drew the boy's head on her lap. "Don't, Jimmy, don't! there must surely be help for us. God will not utterly forsake us."

"Then why don't He send us

help? I went into Deacon H's store; and though one of the clerks said they needed a boy, the deacon wouldn't take me because father drinks. He said he wanted a respectable boy in his store. The hard-hearted old miser! If he's got religion I don't want any of it."

"It isn't religion that causes him to be so unkind, my son; it is the want of it, rather. Look at his wife, if you wish to know what religion can do. You are not to blame for your father's acts; and no good man will ever think the less of you for them. But cheer up; you know you are mother's principal stay and hope; she cannot bear to see her boy so sad. Here is Mrs. H. now; who knows but what she has found a place for you?"

"Good afternoon, Mrs. Conner," said that lady, entering the room; I have good news for you; but have you no wood? this must not be; you will perish in this bitter weather. I will send some this very afternoon. Poor little girls," glancing pitifully at the shivering children, "how cold you look; come here and wrap these furs around you. Well, James, I have found you a place at last. Farmer B. says you are just the boy for him; and, Mrs. Conner, I have seen some of the reform boys, who have promised to do all they can for your husband. They say he wouldn't have broken his pledge, had it not been for the solicitations of that miserable rumseller at the corner. But the boys will watch him more closely for the future; and I am convinced better days are in store for you."

"God bless you, God bless you," sobbed the poor woman, grasping the lady's hand, while the tears coursed silently down her cheeks. "God will reward you; we never can."

"The greatest of these is charity." Oh, that charity, that world-wide, all-embracing charity. That love to God and love to man. Would to God there were more of it.—*Morning Star.*

SUNDAY STROLLS.

I have heard of lads who have gone out walking on Sabbath afternoons, because they were too big for Sunday school, and I very sincerely hope that you are not bent on the same folly. Perhaps you may say to me: "What's the harm of walking out on Sundays?" Well, I will tell you. I have seen some of the best lads I ever knew, whom I really hoped were converted who have taken to this walking business, and not one of them is now worth a button for any good purpose whatever. My hope was that in time they would have been among my best workers, flourishing in business and happy in the service of God, but it is not so. The day they left the house of God for "pleasant strolls" was the day of their doom; they became, by degrees, careless, idle, boastful, loose in talk and loose in life, and made Satan more and more their Lord. Whether a thing is bad or not may be seen by its fruit, and there's the fruit of being "too old for Sunday schools and classes."

A DESERVED TRIBUTE TO A CHRISTIAN HERO.

Miss Lizzie K. Pershing, daughter of Rev. Dr. Pershing, of Pittsburg, has been writing to the *Evening Chronicle*, of that city, a series of very interesting letters from the Pacific coast. In her last, dated in San Francisco, she makes the following pleasant mention:

"In the afternoon we visited the Chinese Mission, under the charge of the M. E. Church, in which we had spent many a pleasant hour during our Winter sojourn in the city. They were holding prayer-meeting as we entered. The folding doors were thrown open between two large, pleasant dressed Chinese women; while in the other was an equal, or larger number of their brethren. The light of intelligence and Christian hope beamed from many a dark face, once hideous with depravity or sullen with despair. They were all listening attentively to the earnest voice of the missionary, Rev. O. Gibson—a man to whom they may well listen, for they owe much to him; a man deserving of all respect and worthy of the highest regard of Christians every where; a man who, almost single-handed, fought against a whole city in defense of an oppressed people; a man who dares suffering, contempt, everything for what he believes to be right. Very gladly did we look upon the familiar countenance of Mrs. G., an intelligent Christian lady, and her husband's faithful co-worker. We recognized the sweet, girl-face of Miss Laura Templeton, the noble woman who is devoting herself to the elevation of less fortunate women, who is proving that these poor creatures are capable of a higher life than that into which they have been (many of them unwillingly) thrust, and who is doing much toward developing a true womanhood in them. As we looked upon the bright faces around us and contrasted them with those of their race which we had observed upon the streets, as we remembered the work we had seen done within those walls, we could not but feel that the manly Missionary and his earnest fellow-laborers were making a very noble effort toward the solution of the vexed Chinese question, and we heartily bade them God-speed in their holy work.—*Northern Christian Advocate.*

THE WORST PUNISHMENT.

"You do not look as if you had prospered by your wickedness," said a gentleman to a vagabond one day.

"I haven't prospered at it," cried the man. "It is a business that doesn't pay. If I had given half the time to some honest calling which I have spent in trying to get a living without work, I might be a man of property and character, instead of the homeless wretch I am." He then told his history, and ended by saying, "I have been twice in prison, and I have made acquaintance with all sorts of miseries in my life, but I tell you, my worst punishment is in being what I am."

WE ALL HAVE FAULTS.

I have been a good deal up and down in the world, and I never did see either a perfect horse or a perfect man, and I never shall until two Sundays come together. The old saying is, "Lifeless, faultless." Of dead men we should say nothing but good, but as for the living, they are all tarred more or less with the black brush, and half an eye can see it. Every head has a soft place in it, and every heart has its black drop. Every rose has its prickles, and every day its night. Even the sun shows spots, and the skies are darkened with clouds. Nobody is so wise but he has folly enough to stock a stall at Vanity Fair. Where I could not see the fool's cap, I have, nevertheless, heard the bells jingle. As there is no sunshine without some shadow, so is all human good mixed up with more or less evil; even poor law guardians have their little failings; and parish beadies are not wholly of heavenly nature. The best wine has its less. All men's faults are not written on their foreheads, and it's quite as well they are not, or hats would need wide brims; yet as sure as eggs are eggs, faults of some sort nestle in every man's bosom. There's no telling when a man's sins may show themselves, for hares pop out of a ditch just when you are not looking for them. A horse that is weak in the legs may not stumble for a mile or two, but it's in him, and the rider had better hold him up well. The tabby-cat is not lapping milk just now, but leave the dairy door open, and we will see if she is not as bad a thief as the kitten. There's fire in the flint, cool as it looks; wait till the steel gets a knock at it, and you will see. Everybody can read that riddle, but it is not everybody that will remember to keep his gunpowder out of the way of the candle.—*John Ploughman.*

An interest is being developed in Europe on the Sunday question. A conference is to be held at Geneva, where reports will be made from every country and two popular conferences will be held in France and Germany.

In the last quarter of a century the population of London has increased from 2,373,000 to 3,445,160. In 1841 the average number of persons living on an acre in all London was 25, in 1871 it was 42.

We learn from the *Raleigh News* that \$100,000 in machinery and 600 skilled English operatives will be brought from England to work the gold mines of Montgomery county. Hurrah for the Old North State.—*Masonic Journal.*

Christian graces are like perfumes—the more they are pressed, the sweeter they smell; like stars, that shine brightest in the dark; like trees—the more they are shaken, the deeper root they take, and the more fruit they bear.