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ALL'S FOR THE BEST

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T. S. Arthur

All's for the Best

I

FAITH AND PATIENCE

"*I HAVE* no faith in anything," said a poor doubter, who had trusted in human prudence, and been disappointed; who had endeavored to walk by the lumine of self-derived intelligence, instead of by the light of divine truth, and so lost his way in the world. He was fifty years old! What a sad confession for a man thus far on the journey of life. "No faith in anything."

"You have faith in God, Mr. Fanshaw," replied the gentleman to whom the remark was made.

"In God? I don't know him." And Mr. Fanshaw shook his head, in a bewildered sort of way. There was no levity in his manner. "People talk a great deal about God, and their knowledge of him," he added, but not irreverently. "I think there is often more of pious cant in all this than of living experience. You speak about faith in God. What is the ground of your faith?"

"We have internal sight, as well as external sight."

There was no response to this in Mr. Fanshaw's face.

"We can see with the mind, as well as with the eyes."

"How?"

"An architect sees the building, in all its fine proportions, with the eyes of his mind, before it exists in space visible to his bodily eyes."

"Oh! that is your meaning, friend Wilkins," said Mr. Fanshaw, his countenance brightening a little.

"In part," was replied. "That he can see the building in his mind, establishes the fact of internal sight."

"Admitted; and what then?"

"Admitted, and we pass into a new world—the world of spirit."

Mr. Fanshaw shook his head, and closed his lips tightly.

"I don't believe in spirits," he answered.

"You believe in your own spirit."

"I don't know that I have any spirit."

"You think and feel in a region distinct from the body," said Mr. Wilkins.

"I can't say as to that."

"You can think of justice, of equity, of liberty?"

"Yes."

"As abstract rights; as things essential, and out of the region of simple matter. The body doesn't think; it is the soul."

"Very well. For argument's sake, let all this be granted. I don't wish to cavil. I am in no mood for that. And now, as to the ground of your faith in God."

"Convictions," answered Mr. Wilkins, "are real things to a

man. Impressions are one thing; convictions another. The first are like images on a glass; the others like figures in a textile fabric. The first are made in an instant of time, and often pass as quickly; the latter are slowly wrought in the loom of life, through daily experience and careful thought. Herein lies the ground of my faith in God;—it is an inwrought conviction. First I had the child's sweet faith transfused into my soul with a mother's love, and unshadowed by a single doubt. Then, on growing older, as I read the Bible, which I believe to be God's word, I saw that its precepts were divine, and so the child's faith was succeeded by rational sight. Afterwards, as I floated off into the world, and met with storms that wrecked my fondest hopes; with baffling winds and adverse currents; with perils and disappointments, faith wavered sometimes; and sometimes, when the skies were dark and threatening, my mind gave way to doubts. But, always after the storm passed, and the sun came out again, have I found my vessel unharmed, with a freight ready for shipment of value far beyond what I had lost. I have thrown over, in stress of weather, to save myself from being engulfed, things that I had held to be very precious—thrown them over, weeping. But, after awhile, things more precious took their place—goodly pearls, found in a farther voyage, which, but for my loss, would not have been ventured.

"Always am I seeing the hand of Providence—always proving the divine announcement, 'The very hairs of your head are numbered.' Is there not ground for faith here? If the word of God

stand in agreement with reason and experience, shall I not have faith? If my convictions are clear, to disbelieve is impossible."

"We started differently," replied Mr. Fanshaw, almost mournfully. "That sweet faith of childhood, to which you have referred, was never mine."

"The faith of manhood is stronger, because it rests on reason and experience," said Mr. Wilkins.

"With me, reason and experience give no faith in God, and no hope in the future. All before me is dark."

"Simply, because you do not use your reason aright, nor read your experiences correctly. If you were to do this, light would fall upon your way. You said, a little while ago, that you had no faith in anything. You spoke without due reflection."

"No; I meant just what I said. Is there stability in anything? In what can I trust to-morrow? simply in nothing. My house may be in ruins—burnt to the ground, at daylight. The friend to whom I loaned my money to-day, to help him in his need, may fail me to-morrow, in my need. The bank in which I hold stock may break—the ship in which I have an adventure, go down at sea. But why enumerate? I am sure of nothing."

"Not even of the love of your child?"

A warm flush came into the face of Mr. Fanshaw. He had one daughter twelve years old.

"Dear Alice!" he murmured, in a softer voice. "Yes, I am sure of that. There is no room for doubt. She loves me."

"One thing in which to have faith," said Mr. Wilkins. "Not in

a house which cannot be made wholly safe from fire; nor in a bank, which may fail; nor in a friend's promise; nor in a ship at sea—but in love! Are you afraid to have that love tried? If you were sick or in misfortune, would it grow dim, or perish? Nay, would it not be intensified?

"I think, Mr. Fanshaw," continued his friend, "that you have not tested your faith by higher and better things—by things real and substantial."

"What is more real than a house, or a ship, or a bill of exchange?" asked Mr. Fanshaw.

"Imperishable love—incorruptible integrity—unflinching honor," was replied.

"Do these exist?" Mr. Fanshaw looked incredulous.

"We know that they exist. You know that they exist. History, observation, experience, reason, all come to the proof. We doubt but in the face of conviction. Are these not higher and nobler things than wealth, or worldly honors; than place or power? And is he not serenest and happiest whose life rests on these as a house upon its foundations? You cannot shake such a man. You cannot throw him down. Wealth may go, and friends drop away like withering autumn leaves, but he stands fast, with the light of heaven upon his brow. He has faith in virtue—he has trust in God—he knows that all will come out right in the end, and that he will be a wiser and better man for the trial that tested his principles—for the storms that toughened, but did not break the fibres of his soul."

"You lift me into a new region of thought," said Mr. Fanshaw, "A dim light is breaking into my mind. I see things in a relation not perceived before."

"Will you call with me on an old friend?" asked Mr. Wilkins.

"Who?"

"A poor man. Once rich."

"He might feel my visit as an intrusion."

"No."

"What reduced him to poverty?"

"A friend, in whom he put unlimited faith, deceived and ruined him."

"Ah!"

"And he has never been able to recover himself."

"What is his state of mind?"

"You shall judge for yourself."

In poor lodgings they found a man far past the prime of life. He was in feeble health, and for over two months had not been able to go out and attend to business. His wife was dead, and his children absent. Of all this Mr. Fanshaw had been told on the way. His surprise was real, when he saw, instead of a sad-looking, disappointed and suffering person, a cheerful old man, whose face warmed up on their entrance, as if sunshine were melting over it. Conversation turned in the direction Mr. Wilkins desired it to take, and the question soon came, naturally, from Mr. Fanshaw—

"And pray, sir, how were you sustained amid these losses, and

trials, and sorrows?"

"Through faith and patience," was the smiling answer. "Faith in God and the right, and patience to wait."

"But all has gone wrong with you, and kept wrong. The friend who robbed you of an estate holds and enjoys it still; while you are in poverty. He is eating your children's bread."

"Do you envy his enjoyment?" asked the old man.

Mr. Fanshaw shook his head, and answered with an emphasis—"No!"

"I am happier than he is," said the old man. "And as for his eating my children's bread, that is a mistake. His bread is bitter, but theirs is sweet." He reached for a letter that lay on a table near him, and opening it, said—"This is from my son in the West. He writes:—'Dear Father—All is going well with me. I enclose you fifty dollars. In a month I am to be married, and it is all arranged that dear Alice and I shall go East just to see you, and take you back home with us. How nice and comfortable we will make you! And you shall never leave us!'"

The old man's voice broke down on the last sentence, and his eyes filled with tears. But he soon recovered himself, saying—

"Before I lost my property, this son was an idler, and in such danger that through fear of his being led astray, I was often in great distress of mind. Necessity forced him into useful employment; and you see the result. I lost some money, but saved my son. Am I not richer in such love as he bears me to-day, than if, without his love, I possessed a million of dollars? Am I not

happier? I knew it would all come out right. I had faith, and I tried to be patient. It is coming out right."

"But the wrong that has been done," said Mr. Fanshaw. "The injustice that exists. Here is a scoundrel, a robber, in the peaceful enjoyment of your goods, while you are in want."

"We do not envy such peace as his. The robber has no peace. He never dwells in security; but is always armed, and on the watch. As for me, it has so turned out that I have never lacked for food and raiment."

"Still, there is the abstract wrong, the evil triumphing over the good," said Mr. Fanshaw.

"How do you reconcile that with your faith in Providence?"

"What I see clearly, as to myself," was replied, "fully justifies the ways of God to man. Am I the gainer or the loser by misfortune? Clearly the gainer. That point admits of no argument. So, what came to me in the guise of evil, I find to be good. God has not mocked my faith in him. I waited patiently until he revealed himself in tender mercy; until the hand to which I clung in the dark valley led me up to the sunny hills. No amount of worldly riches could give me the deep satisfaction I now possess. As for the false friend who robbed me, I leave him in the hands of the all-wise Disposer of events. He will not find, in ill-gotten gain, a blessing. It will not make his bed soft; nor his food sweet to the taste. A just and righteous God will trouble his peace, and make another's possessions the burden of his life."

"But that will not benefit you," said Mr. Fanshaw. "His

suffering will not make good your loss."

"My loss is made good already. I have no complaint against Providence. My compensation is a hundredfold. For dross I have gold. I and mine needed the discipline of misfortune, and it came through the perfidy of a friend. That false friend, selfish and grasping—seeing in money the greatest good—was permitted to consummate his evil design. That his evil will punish him, I am sure; and in the pain of his punishment, he may be led to reformation. If he continue to hide the stolen fox, it will tear his vitals. If he lets it go, he will scarcely venture upon a second theft. In either event, the wrong he was permitted to do will be turned into discipline; and my hardest wish in regard to him is, that the discipline may lead to repentance and a better life."

"Your faith and patience," said Mr. Fanshaw, as he held the old man's hand in parting, "rebuke my restless disbelief. I thank you for having opened to my mind a new region of thought—for having made some things clear that have always been dark. I am sure that our meeting to-day is not a simple accident. I have been led here, and for a good purpose."

As Mr. Fanshaw and Mr. Wilkins left the poor man's lodgings, the former said—

"I know the false wretch who ruined your friend."

"Ah!"

"Yes. And he is a miserable man. The fox is indeed tearing his vitals. I understand his case now. He must make restitution. I know how to approach him. This good, patient, trusting old man

shall not suffer wrong to the end."

"Does not all this open a new world of thought to your mind?" asked Mr Wilkins. "Does it not show you that, amid all human wrong and disaster, the hand of Providence moves in wise adjustment, and ever out of evil educes good, ever through loss in some lower degree of life brings gain to a higher degree? Consider how, in an unpremeditated way, you are brought into contact with a stranger, and how his life and experience touching yours, give out a spark that lights a candle in your soul to illumine chambers where scarcely a ray had shone before; and this not alone for your benefit. It seems as if you were to be made an instrument of good not only to the wronged, but to the wronger. If you can effect restitution in any degree, the benefit will be mutual."

"I can and I will effect it," replied Mr. Fanshaw. And he did!

II

IS HE A CHRISTIAN?

"*Is* he a Christian?"

The question reached my ear as I sat conversing with a friend, and I paused in the sentence I was uttering, to note the answer.

"Oh, yes; he is a Christian," was replied.

"I am rejoiced to hear you say so. I was not aware of it before," said the other.

"Yes; he has passed from death unto life. Last week, in the joy of his new birth, he united himself to the church, and is now in fellowship with the saints."

"What a blessed change!"

"Blessed, indeed. Another soul saved; another added to the great company of those who have washed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb. There is joy in heaven on his account."

"Of whom are they speaking?" I asked, turning to my friend.

"Of Fletcher Gray, I believe," was replied.

"Few men stood more in need of Christian graces," said I. "If he is, indeed, numbered with the saints, there is cause for rejoicing."

"By their fruits ye shall know them," responded my friend.

"I will believe his claim to the title of Christian, when I see the

fruit in good living. If he have truly passed from death unto life, as they say, he will work the works of righteousness. A sweet fountain will not send forth bitter waters."

My friend but expressed my own sentiments in this, and all like cases. I have learned to put small trust in "profession;" to look past the Sunday and prayer-meeting piety of people, and to estimate religious quality by the standard of the Apostle James. There must be genuine love of the neighbor, before there can be a love of God; for neighborly love is the ground in which that higher and purer love takes root. It is all in vain to talk of love as a mere ideal thing. Love is an active principle, and, according to its quality, works. If the love be heavenly, it will show itself in good deeds to the neighbor; but, if infernal, in acts of selfishness that disregard the neighbor.

"I will observe this Mr. Gray," said I, as I walked homeward from the company, "and see whether the report touching him be true. If he is, indeed, a 'Christian,' as they affirm, the Christian graces of meekness and charity will blossom in his life, and make all the air around him fragrant."

Opportunity soon came. Fletcher Gray was a store-keeper, and his life in the world was, consequently, open to the observation of all men. He was likewise a husband and a father. His relations were, therefore, of a character to give, daily, a test of his true quality.

It was only the day after, that I happened to meet Mr. Gray under circumstances favorable to observation. He came into the

store of a merchant with whom I was transacting some business, and asked the price of certain goods in the market. I moved aside, and watched him narrowly. There was a marked change in the expression of his countenance and in the tones of his voice. The former had a sober, almost solemn expression; the latter was subdued, even to plaintiveness. But, in a little while, these peculiarities gradually disappeared, and the aforetime Mr. Gray stood there unchanged—unchanged, not only in appearance, but in character. There was nothing of the "yea, yea," and "nay, nay," spirit in his bargain-making, but an eager, wordy effort to gain an advantage in trade. I noticed that, in the face of an asservation that only five per cent. over cost was asked for a certain article, he still endeavored to procure it at a lower figure than was named by the seller, and finally crowded him down to the exact cost, knowing as he did, that the merchant had a large stock on hand, and could not well afford to hold it over.

"He's a sharper!" said the merchant, turning towards me as Gray left the store.

"He's a Christian, they say," was my quiet remark.

"A Christian!"

"Yes; don't you know that he has become religious, and joined the church?"

"You're joking!"

"Not a word of it. Didn't you observe his subdued, meek aspect, when he came in?"

"Why, yes; now that you refer to it, I do remember a certain

peculiarity about him. Become pious! Joined the church! Well, I'm sorry!"

"For what?"

"Sorry for the injury he will do to a good cause. The religion that makes a man a better husband, father, man of business, lawyer, doctor, or preacher, I reverence, for it is genuine, as the lives of those who accept it do testify. But your hypocritical pretenders I scorn and execrate."

"It is, perhaps, almost too strong language, this, as applied to Mr. Gray," said I.

"What is a hypocrite?" asked the merchant.

"A man who puts on the semblance of Christian virtues which he does not possess."

"And that is what Mr. Gray does when he assumes to be religious. A true Christian is just. Was he just to me when he crowded me down in the price of my goods, and robbed me of a living profit, in order that he might secure a double gain? I think not. There is not even the live and let live principle in that. No—no, sir. If he has joined the church, my word for it, there is a black sheep in the fold; or, I might say, without abuse of language, a wolf therein disguised in sheep's clothing."

"Give the man time," said I. "Old habits of life are strong, you know. In a little while, I trust that he will see clearer, and regulate his life from perceptions of higher truths."

"I thought his heart was changed," answered the merchant, with some irony in his tones. "That he had been made a new

creature."

I did not care to discuss that point with him, and so merely answered,

"The beginnings of spiritual life are as the beginnings of natural life. The babe is born in feebleness, and we must wait through the periods of infancy, childhood and youth, before we can have the strong man ready for the burden and heat of the day, or full-armed for the battle. If Mr. Gray is in the first effort to lead a Christian life, that is something. He will grow wiser and better in time, I hope."

"There is vast room for improvement," said the merchant. "In my eyes he is, at this time, only a hypocritical pretender. I hope, for the sake of the world and the church both, that his new associates will make something better out of him."

I went away, pretty much of the merchant's opinion. My next meeting with Mr. Gray was in the shop of a mechanic to whom he had sold a bill of goods some months previously. He had called to collect a portion of the amount which remained unpaid. The mechanic was not ready for him.

"I am sorry, Mr. Gray," he began, with some hesitation of manner.

"Sorry for what?" sharply interrupted Mr. Gray.

"Sorry that I have not the money to settle your bill. I have been disappointed—"

"I don't want that old story. You promised to be ready for me to-day, didn't you?" And Mr. Gray knit his brows, and looked

angry and imperative.

"Yes, I promised. But—"

"Then keep your promise. No man has a right to break his word. Promises are sacred things, and should be kept religiously."

"If my customers had kept their promises to me there would have been no failure in mine to you," answered the poor mechanic.

"It is of no use to plead other men's failings in justification of your own. You said the bill should be settled to-day, and I calculated upon it. Now, of all things in the world, I hate trifling. I shall not call again, sir!"

"If you were to call forty times, and I hadn't the money to settle your account, you would call in vain," said the mechanic, showing considerable disturbance of mind.

"You needn't add insult to wrong." Mr. Gray's countenance reddened, and he looked angry.

"If there is insult in the case it is on your part, not mine," retorted the mechanic, with more feeling. "I am not a digger of gold out of the earth, nor a coiner of money. I must be paid for my work before I can pay the bills I owe. It was not enough that I told you of the failure of my customers to meet their engagements—"

"You've no business to have such customers," broke in Mr. Gray. "No right to take my goods and sell them to men who are not honest enough to pay their bills."

"One of them is your own son," replied the mechanic, goaded beyond endurance. "His bill is equal to half of yours. I have sent

for the amount a great many times, but still he puts me off with excuses. I will send it to you next time."

This was thrusting home with a sharp sword, and the vanquished Mr. Gray retreated from the battle-field, bearing a painful wound.

"That wasn't right in me, I know," said the mechanic, as Gray left his shop. "I'm sorry, now, that I said it. But he pressed me too closely. I am but human."

"He is a hard, exacting, money-loving man," was my remark.

"They tell me he has become a Christian," said the mechanic. "Has got religion—been converted. Is that so?"

"It is commonly reported; but I think common report must be in error. St. Paul gives patience, forbearance, long-suffering, meekness, brotherly kindness, and charity as some of the Christian graces. I do not see them in this man. Therefore, common report must be in error."

"I have paid him a good many hundreds of dollars since I opened my shop here," said the mechanic, with the manner of one who felt hurt. "If I am a poor, hard-working man, I try to be honest. Sometimes I get a little behind hand, as I am new, because people I work for don't pay up as they should. It happened twice before when I wasn't just square with Mr. Gray, and he pressed down very hard upon me, and talked just as you heard him to-day. He got his money, every dollar of it; and he will get his money now. I did think, knowing that he had joined the church and made a profession of religion, that he would bear a little

patiently with me this time. That, as he had obtained forgiveness, as alleged, of his sins towards heaven, he would be merciful to his fellow-man. Ah, well! These things make us very sceptical about the honesty of men who call themselves religious. My experience with 'professors' has not been very encouraging. As a general thing I find them quite as greedy for gain as other men. We outside people of the world get to be very sharp-sighted. When a man sets himself up to be of better quality than we, and calls himself by a name significant of heavenly virtue, we judge him, naturally, by his own standard, and watch him very closely. If he remain as hard, as selfish, as exacting, and as eager after money as before, we do not put much faith in his profession, and are very apt to class him with hypocrites. His praying, and fine talk about faith, and heavenly love, and being washed from all sin, excite in us contempt rather than respect. We ask for good works, and are never satisfied with anything else. By their fruits ye shall know them."

On the next Sunday I saw Mr. Gray in church. My eyes were on him when he entered. I noticed that all the lines of his face were drawn down, and that the whole aspect and bearing of the man were solemn and devotional. He moved to his place with a slow step, his eyes cast to the floor. On taking his seat, he leaned his head on the pew in front of him, and continued for nearly a minute in prayer. During the services I heard his voice in the singing; and through the sermon, he maintained the most fixed attention. It was communion Sabbath; and he remained, after the

congregation was dismissed, to join in the holiest act of worship.

"Can this man be indeed self-deceived?" I asked myself, as I walked homeward. "Can he really believe that heaven is to be gained by pious acts alone? That every Sabbath evening he can pitch his tent a day's march nearer heaven, though all the week he have failed in the commonest offices of neighborly love?"

It so happened, that I had many opportunities for observing Mr. Gray, who, after joining the church, became an active worker in some of the public and prominent charities of the day. He contributed liberally in many cases, and gave a good deal of time to the prosecution of benevolent enterprises, in which men of some position were concerned. But, when I saw him dispute with a poor gardener who had laid the sods in his yard, about fifty cents, take sixpence off of a weary strawberry woman, or chaffer with his boot-black over an extra shilling, I could not think that it was genuine love for his fellow-men that prompted his ostentatious charities.

In no instance did I find any better estimation of him in business circles; for his religion did not chasten the ardor of his selfish love of advantage in trade; nor make him more generous, nor more inclined to help or befriend the weak and the needy. Twice I saw his action in the case of unhappy debtors, who had not been successful in business. In each case, his claim was among the smallest; but he said more unkind things, and was the hardest to satisfy, of any man among the creditors. He assumed dishonest intention at the outset, and made that a plea

for the most rigid exaction; covering his own hard selfishness with offensive cant about mercantile honor, Christian integrity, and religious observance of business contracts. He was the only man among all the creditors, who made his church membership a prominent thing—few of them were even church-goers—and the only man who did not readily make concessions to the poor, down-trodden debtors.

"Is he a Christian?" I asked, as I walked home in some depression of spirits, from the last of these meetings. And I could but answer No—for to be a Christian is to be Christ-like.

"As ye would that men should do to you, do ye even so to them." This is the divine standard. "Ye must be born again," leaves to us no latitude of interpretation. There must be a death of the old, natural, selfish loves, and a new birth of spiritual affections. As a man feels, so will he act. If the affections that rule his heart be divine affections, he will be a lover of others, and a seeker of their good. He will not be a hard, harsh, exacting man in natural things, but kind, forbearing, thoughtful of others, and yielding. In all his dealings with men, his actions will be governed by the heavenly laws of justice and judgment. He will regard the good of his neighbor equally with his own. It is in the world where Christian graces reveal themselves, if they exist at all. Religion is not a mere Sunday affair, but the regulator of a man's conduct among his fellow-men. Unless it does this, it is a false religion, and he who depends upon it for the enjoyment of heavenly felicities in the next life, will find himself in miserable

error. Heaven cannot be earned by mere acts of piety, for heaven is the complement of all divine affections in the human soul; and a man must come into these—must be born into them—while on earth, or he can never find an eternal home among the angels of God. Heaven is not gained by doing, but by living.

III

"RICH AND RARE WERE THE GEMS SHE WORE."

"*HAVE* you noticed Miss Harvey's diamonds?" said a friend, directing my attention, as she spoke, to a young lady who stood at the lower end of the room. I looked towards Miss Harvey, and as I did so, my eyes received the sparkle of her gems.

"Brilliant as dew-drops in the morning sunbeams," I remarked.

"Only less brilliant," was my friend's response to this. "Only less brilliant. Nothing holds the sunlight in its bosom so perfectly as a drop of dew.—Next, the diamond. I am told that the pin, now flashing back the light, as it rises and falls with the swell and subsidence of her bosom, cost just one thousand dollars. The public, you know, are very apt to find out the money-value of fine jewelry."

"Miss Harvey is beautiful," said I, "and could afford to depend less on the foreign aid of ornament."

"If she had dazzled us with that splendid pin alone," returned my friend, "we might never have been tempted to look beneath the jewel, far down into the wearer's heart. But, diamond earrings, and a diamond bracelet, added—we know their value to be just twelve hundred dollars; the public is specially inquisitive

—suggest some weakness or perversion of feeling, and we become eagle-eyed. But for the blaze of light with which Miss Harvey has surrounded herself, I, for one, should not have been led to observe her closely. There is no object in nature which has not its own peculiar signification; which does not correspond to some quality, affection, or attribute of the mind. This is true of gems; and it is but natural, that we should look for those qualities in the wearer of them to which the gems correspond."

I admitted the proposition, and my friend went on.

"Gold is the most precious of all metals, and it must, therefore, correspond to the most precious attribute, or quality of the mind. What is that attribute?—and what is that quality?"

"Love," said I, after a pause, "Love is the most precious attribute of the mind—goodness the highest quality."

"Then, it is no mere fancy to say that gold corresponds to love, or goodness. It is pure, and ductile, and warm in color, like love; while silver is harder, and white and shining, like truth. Gold and silver in nature are, then, as goodness and truth in the human soul. In one we find the riches of this world, in the other divine riches. And if gold and silver correspond to precious things of the mind, so must brilliant jewels. The diamond! How wonderful is its affection for light—taking in the rays eagerly, dissolving them, and sending them forth again to gladden the eyes in rich prismatic beauty! And to what mental quality must the diamond correspond? As it loves the sun's rays, in which are heat and light—must it not correspond to the affection of things good and true?"

—heat being of love, and light of truth or wisdom? The wearer of diamonds, then, should have in her heart the heavenly affection to which they correspond. She should be loving and wise."

"It will not do to make an estimate in this way," said I. "The measure is too exacting."

"I will admit that. But we cannot help thinking of the quality when we look upon its sign. With a beautiful face, when first seen, do we not always associate a beautiful soul? And when a lady adorns herself with the most beautiful and costly things in nature, how can we help looking, to see whether they correspond to things in her mind! For one, I cannot; and so, almost involuntarily, I keep turning my eyes upon Miss Harvey, and looking for signs of her quality."

"And how do you read the lady?" I inquired.

My friend shook his head.

"The observation is not favorable."

"Not favorable," he replied. "No, not favorable. She thinks of her jewels—she is vain of them."

"The temptation is great," I said.

"The fact of so loading herself with costly jewels, is in itself indicative of vanity—"

A third party joining us at this moment, we dropped the subject of Miss Harvey. But, enough had been said to make me observe her closely during the evening.

The opening line of Moore's charming lyric,

"Rich and rare were the gems she wore,"

kept chiming in my thoughts, whenever I glanced towards her, and saw the glitter of her diamonds. Yet, past the gems my vision now went, and I searched the fair girl's countenance for the sparkle of other and richer jewels. Did I find them? We shall see.

"Helen," I heard a lady say to Miss Harvey, "is not that Mary Gardiner?"

"I believe so," was her indifferent answer.

"Have you spoken to her this evening?"

"No, aunt."

"Why?"

"Mary Gardiner and I were never very congenial. We have not been thrown together for some time; and now, I do not care to renew the acquaintance."

I obtained a single glance of the young lady's face. It was proud and haughty in expression, and her eyes had in them a cold glitter that awoke in me a feeling of repulsion.

"I wish you were congenial," the lady said, speaking partly to herself.

"We are not, aunt," was Miss Harvey's reply; and she assumed the air of one who felt herself far superior to another with whom she had been brought into comparison.

"The gems do not correspond, I fear," said I to myself, as I moved to another part of the room. "But who is Miss Gardiner?"

In the next moment, I was introduced to the young lady whose name was in my thought. The face into which I looked was of that fine oval which always pleases the eye, even where the

countenance itself does not light up well with the changes of thought. But, in this case, a pair of calm, deep, living eyes, and lips of shape most exquisitely delicate and feminine—giving warrant of a beautiful soul—caused the face of Miss Gardiner to hold the vision as by a spell. Low and very musical was her voice, and there was a discrimination in her words, that lifted whatever she said above the common-place, even though the subjects were of the hour.

I do not remember how long it was after my introduction to Miss Gardiner, before I discovered that her only ornament was a small, exquisitely cut cameo breast-pin, set in a circlet of pearls. There was no obtrusive glitter about this. It lay more like an emblem than a jewel against her bosom. It never drew your attention from her face, nor dimmed, by contrast, the radiance of her soul-lit eyes. I was charmed, from the beginning, with this young lady. Her thoughts were real gems, rich and rare, and when she spoke there was the flash of diamonds in her sentences; not the flash of mere brilliant sayings, like the gleaming of a polished sword, but of living truths, that lit up with their own pure radiance every mind that received them.

Two or three times during the evening, Miss Harvey, radiant in her diamonds—they cost twenty-two hundred dollars—the price would intrude itself—and Miss Gardiner, almost guiltless of foreign ornament, were thrown into immediate contact. But Miss Gardiner was not recognized by the haughty wearer of gems. It was the old farce of pretence, seeking, by borrowed

attractions, to outshine the imperishable radiance of truth. I looked on, and read the lesson her conduct gave, and wondered that any were deceived into even a transient admiration. "Rich and rare were the gems she wore," but they had in them no significance as applied to the wearer. It was Miss Gardiner who had the real gems, beautiful as charity, and pure as eternal truth; and she wore them with a simple grace, that charmed every beholder who had eyes clear enough from earthy dust and smoke to see them.

I never meet Miss Harvey, that I do not think of the pure and heavenly things of the mind to which diamonds correspond, nor without seeing some new evidence that she wears no priceless jewels in her soul.

IV

NOT AS A CHILD

"*I DO* not know how that may be," said the mother, lifting her head, and looking through almost blinding tears, into the face of her friend. "The poet may be right, and, "Not as a child shall I again behold him, but the thought brings no comfort. I have lost my child, and my heart looks eagerly forward to a reunion with him in heaven; to the blessed hour when I shall again hold him in my arms."

"As a babe?"

"Oh, yes. As a darling babe, pure, and beautiful as a cherub."

"But would you have him linger in babyhood forever?" asked the friend.

The mother did not reply.

"Did you expect him always to remain a child here? Would perpetual infancy have satisfied your maternal heart? Had you not already begun to look forward to the period when intellectual manhood would come with its crowning honors?"

"It is true," sighed the mother.

"As it would have been here, so will it be there. Here, the growth of his body would have been parallel, if I may so speak, with the growth of his mind. The natural and the visible would have developed in harmony with the spiritual and the invisible.

Your child would have grown to manhood intellectually, as well as bodily. And you would not have had it otherwise. Growth—development—the going on to perfection, are the laws of life; and more emphatically so as appertaining to the life of the human soul. That life, in all its high activities, burns still in the soul of your lost darling, and he will grow, in the world of angelic spirits to which our Father has removed him, up to the full stature of an angel, a glorified form of intelligence and wisdom. He cannot linger in feeble babyhood; in the innocence of simple ignorance; but must advance with the heavenly cycles of changing and renewing states."

"And this is all the comfort you bring to my yearning heart?" said the mother. "My darling, if all you say be true, is lost to me forever."

"He was not yours, but God's." The friend spoke softly, yet with a firm utterance.

"He was mine to love," replied the bereaved one.

"And your love would confer upon its precious object the richest blessings. Dear friend! Lift your thoughts a little way above the clouds that sorrow has gathered around your heart, and let perception come into an atmosphere radiant with light from the Sun of Truth. Think of your child as destined to become, in the better world to which God has removed him, a wise and loving angel. Picture to your imagination the higher happiness, springing from higher capacities and higher uses, which must crown the angelic life. Doing this, and loving your lost darling,

I know that you cannot ask for him a perpetual babyhood in heaven."

"I will ask nothing for him but what 'Our Father' pleaseth to give," said the mother, in calmer tones. "My love is selfish, I know. I called that babe mine—mine in the broadest sense—yet he was God's, as every other creature is his—one of the stones in his living temple—one of the members of his kingdom. It does not comfort me in my great sorrow to think that, as a child, I shall not again behold him, but rays of new light are streaming into my mind, and I see things in new aspects and new relations. Out of this deep affliction good will arise."

"Just as certainly," added the friend, "as that the Sun shines and the dew falls. It will be better for you, and better for the child. To both will come a resurrection into higher and purer life."

V

ANGELS IN THE HEART

THE heart is full of guest-chambers that are never empty; and as the heart is the seat of life, these guests are continually acting upon the life, either for good or evil, according to their quality. As the guests are, so our states of life—tranquil and happy, if good; disturbed and miserable, if evil.

We may choose our own guests, if we are wise. None can open the door and come in, unless we give consent; always provided that we keep watch and ward. If we leave wide open the doors of our houses, or neglect to fasten them in the night season, thieves and robbers will enter and despoil us at will. So if we leave the heart, unguarded, enemies will come in. But if we open the door only to good affections—which are guests—then we shall dwell in peace and safety. We have all opened the door for enemies; or let them enter through unguarded portals. They are in all the heart's guest-chambers. They possess the very citadel of life; and the measure of their possession is the measure of our unhappiness.

Markland was an unhappy man; and yet of this world's goods, after which he had striven, he had an abundance. Wealth, honor among men, luxury; these were presented to his mind as things most to be desired, and he reached after them with an ardor that

broke down all impediments. Success answered to effort, with almost unerring certainty. So he was full of wealth and honors. But, for all this, Markland was unhappy. There were enemies in the house of his life; troublesome guests in the guest-chambers of his heart, who were forever disturbing, if not wounding him, with their strifes and discords. Some of these he had admitted, himself holding open the door; others had come in by stealth while the entrance was all unguarded.

Envy was one of these guests, and she gave him no peace. He could not bear that another should stand above him in anything. A certain pew in the church he attended was regarded as most desirable. He must have that pew at any cost. So when the annual choice of pews was sold at auction, he overbid all contestants, and secured its occupancy. For all the preceding year, he had failed to enjoy the Sabbath services, because another family had a pew regarded as better situated than his; and now he enjoyed these services as little, through annoyance at having given so large a price for the right of choice, that people smiled when they heard the sum named. He had paid too dear for the privilege, and this fact took away enjoyment.

Envy tormented him in a hundred different ways. He could not enjoy his friend's exquisite statuary, or paintings, because of a secret intimation in his heart that his friend was honored above him in their possession. Twice he had sold almost palatial residences, because their architectural attractions were thrown into the shade by dwellings of later construction. Thousands of

dollars each year this troublesome guest cost him; and yet she would never let him be at ease. At every feast of life she dashed his cup with bitterness, and robbed the choicest viands of their zest. He did not enjoy the fame of an author, an orator, an artist, a man of science, a general, or of any who held the world's admiring gaze—for while they stood in the sunlight, he felt cast in the shade. So the guest Envy, warmed and nourished in his heart, proved a tormentor. She gave him neither rest nor peace.

Detraction, twin-sister of Envy, was all the while pointing out defects in friends and neighbors. He saw their faults and hard peculiarities; but rarely their good qualities. Then Doubt and Distrust crept in through the unguarded door, and soon after their entrance Markland began to think uneasily of the future; to fear lest the foundations of worldly prosperity were not sure. These troublesome guests were busiest in the night season, haunting his mind with strange pictures of disasters, and with suggestions touching the arbitrary power of God, whom he feared when the thought of him was present, but did not love. "Whom He will He setteth up, and whom He will He casteth down." Doubt and Distrust revived this warning in his memory, and seeing that it gave his heart a throb of pain, they set it close to his eyes, so that, for a time, he could see nothing else. Thus, night after night, these guests troubled his peace, often driving slumber from his eyelids until the late morning watches. If there had been in his heart that true faith in God which believes in him as doing all things well, Doubt and Distrust might never have gained an entrance.

But he had trusted in himself; had believed himself equal to the task of creating his own prosperity—had been, in common phrase, the architect of his own fortunes. And now just as he was pluming himself on success, in crept Doubt and Distrust with their alarming suggestions, and he was unable to cast them out.

Affections, whether evil or good, are social in their character, and obey social laws. They do not like to dwell alone, and therefore seek congenial friendships. They draw to themselves companions of like quality, and are not satisfied until they rule a man as to all the powers of his mind.

In the case of Markland, Envy made room for her twin-sister, Detraction; Ill-will, Jealousy, Unkindness, and a teeming brood of their malevolent kindred crowded into his heart, possessing its chambers, ere a warning reached him of their approach. Is there rest or peace for a man with such guests in his bosom?

Doubt and Distrust only heralded the coming of Fear, Anxiety, Solitude, Suspicion, Despondency, Foreboding. Markland had only to open his eyes and look around him, to see, on every hand, the unsightly wrecks of palaces once as fair to the eye as that which he had raised with such labor and forethought, and as he contemplated these, Doubt, Distrust, and their companions, filled his mind with alarming thoughts, and so oppressed him with a sense of insecurity that, at times, he saw the advancing shadows of misfortune on his path.

Thus it was with Markland at fifty. He had all good as to the externals of life, yet was he a miserable man, and, worse than

all, he felt himself growing more and more unhappy as the years increased. Was there no remedy for this? None, while his heart was so filled with evil affections, which are always tormentors. He did not see this. Though his guests disturbed and afflicted him, he called them friends, and gave them entertainments of the best his house afforded.

Sometimes Pity came to the door of his heart and asked for admission, but he sent Unkindness to double bar it against her. Generosity knocked, but Avarice stood sentinel. Envy was forever refusing to let Good-will, Appreciation, Approval, Delight, come in. Detraction would give no countenance to Virtue and Excellence. Doubt made deadly assault upon Faith, and Trust, and Hope, whenever they drew near, while Ill-will stood ever on the alert to drive off Charity, Loving-kindness and Neighborly regard. Unhappy man! Fiends possessed him, and he knew it not.

It so happened on a time, that Markland, while standing in one of his well-filled ware-houses, saw a child enter and come towards him in a timid, hesitating manner.

"A beggar! Drive her away," said Unkindness and Suspicion, both arousing themselves.

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