

Pastor and People.

THE PULPIT'S PLEA.

"God be merciful to me
A sinner," needing grace,
Thy saving grace, so full and free
To all our guilty race.

"God be merciful to me
A sinner," helpless, frail,
How would I lift my eyes to Thee
Did guilt not make me quail!

"God be merciful to me
A sinner," lost, undone;
If Thou dost not accept my plea,
There's none can save me—none.

"God be merciful to me
A sinner," who can spend
So freely mercy, Lord, like Thee,
Since Thine is without end!

"God be merciful to me
A sinner," here I stand
Waiting from guilt to be set free
At Thy divine command.

"God be merciful to me
A sinner," yea, Lord, now
Are gone my guilt and misery,
My prayer Thou dost allow!

—Rev. W. H. Tuckentach, D.D., in Lutheran Observer.

THE CHILDREN'S PULPIT.

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"The Life was the Light of men." John 1. 4.

There was a king who lived in a beautiful land, far away in the south. It was a land where the roses never lost their blossoms, nor the trees their fruit, a land of gold and precious stones, and in which silver was thought little of. The king was called Righ na Sorcha, or the King of Light, and he had a queen and twelve children, princes and princesses, in Lights Kingdom. The queen and her children wanted for nothing that a true heart could desire, for all the wealth and the beauty of the happy land were theirs. But there came an evil heart into the queen that made her want to go away, away to some far-off country where there would be no king over her and her children, quite forgetting that she was the king's wife, and that her children were his, too. When the bad heart comes in, there is no right thinking, for it hurries people on in the way that is wrong and that leads to pain and loss. Now, the king would keep no one in his own land that had lost pleasure in it, and wanted to go away. So on the sea beach, where the long, soft-rolling waves washed up upon the level sand a margin of pink and purple tinted shells, there were boats lying with paddles in them, all ready for a voyage. The queen found one of them that was large and strong, a coracle made of leather stretched over stout whalebone ribs, and this she took for her own. She said nothing to the king of her going away, nor did she tell the children why, but simply ordered them to follow her down to the beach and into the coracle. Then they turned their back upon the Kingdom of Light.

There were twelve children in all, six girls and six boys, some grown up to more than twenty years, and others so young that the older ones had to carry them. These little ones cried, for the first time, when they left their father's home behind them, but soon they were taken up with the pleasant motion of the boat dancing over the gentle billows. The older boys toiled at the paddles, and the mother steered, while the girls, holding the young children, began to sing songs of the pleasant land of Light, but the mother stopped these songs and bade them think of the new home which lay before them. Many a long day they might have toiled, had not a strong south wind arisen to help them on their way. Then they hoisted a leather sail, and the coracle, feeling the breeze, tore rapidly through the foaming water. It was wild, mad work, this sailing in an open boat over the open sea at such a furious rate, so that the mariners thought little of the cold and darkness that were glowing upon them, or of the fair land of Light long since hidden from view. At last, after long sailing, they sighted a rocky shore on which the great sea waves dashed, and tossed up their crests of foam and spray. It was a dreary, barren looking land over which hung a light so dim that it was hard to tell how very dreary it was. But the mother, queen no longer, seemed happy in a strange, harsh way. And, as she guided the coracle into the mouth of a river, on the bank of which a landing place might be had, she said: "Welcome, children, to our own land of Lochlyn." Then they landed, and pulled up the coracle beyond tide mark, and made it fast to a rugged rock upon the shore.

If the mother was happy, the children were not, for it was a dreary life they began in that far off, northern country. Sun, moon, nor stars ever pierced the gray veil that hung over it, night and day, like a pall. So, because there was no sun there were no flowers and fruit trees, nothing but rank sea-grass and juniper bushes and stunted firs. No rabbits could burrow in the shallow soil on the rocky face of the country; there were no thickets for the bounding deer, no tree tops for the chattering squirrel. The song birds never came to that place of gloom to cheer sad hearts with their warbling. No butterflies of gorgeous wing, or beetle of changing metallic

hue, or honey laden bee made Lochlyn glad; all insect voices even were silent, save that of the dull water, drowsy death-watch, whose solemn tick filled the children's hearts with fear. On the high rocks by the sea were the nests of harsh-toned water birds, upstanding Auk and big billed Puffins, greedy Cormorants and helpless Grebes. The dark waters were full of monsters, the whiskered seal and the tusked walrus, spouting whales and many armed Devil Fish. There were ugly crabs and lobsters among the loose rocks, and dull-looking shellfish in the matted seaweed by the shore. The land ran away far into the north, where reigned endless snow and ice, but went no farther south than the point on which the self-made exiles dwelt. No other human inhabitants it had than themselves; and no ship came even in sight to lighten their loneliness by its passing sail. Often the children, who knew enough, thought of the home from which they had come, but, when their mother heard them speak of it, she sternly rebuked them, and pretended to rejoice in the dreary Lochlyn, because, as she said, it was her own land, her very own, and there was no one there to rule over her.

She was no longer the pleasant mother of old who rejoiced in the happiness of her children. She took them for her subjects, and ruled them with a rod of iron. Young and old, they had to work for her, to build her a house of stones dragged with great pains from the sea-shore, and to provide fuel and food. Tender little children, whose years had been spent in play, had to bring in their daily loads of fir branches and juniper roots to keep up the fire in their mother's room, while, when not working, they almost perished with cold outside it. Delicate girls, who had never known what hard labour was, were sent to the sea-shore to gather shell fish and catch crabs and lobsters among the rocks; and the boys' task was to climb up the steep cliffs, at the risk of their lives, to collect the eggs of sea-birds or to stand on the banks of estuaries and angle for fish. When their mother needed more covering or their clothes wore out, the older boys had to make themselves rude weapons, and lie in wait for the seals that came to air themselves upon the flat rocks. Some of them they killed, and with their skins manufactured bedding and clothes. Every day the mother became less like a mother, more selfish, greedy, exacting and tyrannical. She thought her children could never get away from her and the desolate land of Lochlyn, and laid on new burdens daily, till life became a weariness, a thing not worth living. It was terrible for the older children to see the little ones weak and pinched looking for want of proper food, blue and shivering with the horrid cold and damp in their insufficient clothing, dull and lifeless because there was no sunlight to cheer, no life of flower and bird to gladden, no fruit to tempt the young appetite into pleasant eating. Sometimes, when away from the mother's ear, they would tell the young ones stories of the Kingdom of Light, but almost repented afterwards because they made their present life even darker and more repulsive by contrast. The little children, in their simplicity, repeated these stories to their mother, and were beaten for it, beaten cruelly with stripes that left their mark.

The grown-up ones, when they saw this, met together and planned to go away. They did not want to leave their mother, but she was so unlike a mother now that there was nothing else to do. So, one day when she was sleeping in her warm room after a hearty meal, they gathered the younger ones together and went down to the river bank, taking with them a little coarse food, some furs for covering their bodies from the cold, and a rudely-made seal-oil lamp with tinder and fire stones. They pushed off the coracle and got on board. The older boys seized the paddles, and moved away out of the river into the sea, and then away from the shore towards where they thought the south land lay, which they wished to find. They paddled hard and long, and thought that they were getting far away from Lochlyn in the gloom, when at last one of the girls cried out: "There is a light, and they made towards it. The light was on land, they could see, and the land looked very much like that of Lochlyn, but how could it be that after they had journeyed so far away? As they reached the shore a high rock loomed up, on the top of which was the light, and beside it stood the unnatural mother, with a great stone in her two uplifted hands, ready to cast it down in their midst and sink the boat, their only means of safety. Then the paddles backed rapidly, and the stone fell into the sea beside them, drenching them with water but otherwise doing no harm. They heard their mother's awful voice that cursed them, and called for spells upon them, and soon the spell came, a terrible darkness that might be felt, chilling them to the very marrow. Now they lit their lamp, and passed it along from bow to stern to see that no land or rocks were near, and cautiously paddled away from the forsaken mother and her desolate kingdom. Carefully they timed their strokes, so that they should not again paddle in a circle, and return to the point they had left.

They knew that the long night had passed by the burning of the oil in the lantern, but no light of day dawned upon them. The girls and the little ones vainly tried to get warm under the skins, and so little food had they taken, and that so cold and untempting, that they were afraid the more tender ones would perish by chills and starvation. The four who worked the paddles felt their arms and all their bodies becoming numb and stiff, and still the terrible pall of darkness lay all about them. But a little wind arose, a cold, chilling, icy wind from the north, and they hoisted the

leather sail. Now the paddlers were free to clap their arms violently over their chests, and then to rub the palsied limbs of their little brothers and sisters, and speak words of hope in their ears. The lamp went out, for the oil was done, but still they kept on, for they knew the wind would not blow in circles, and its keen edge told them from whence it came. It grew fiercer and more violent, as if wishing to destroy them, and raised the surface of the sea into great waves. After a while these waves broke over the coracle, and when, at last, a gray light appeared before them, they saw what one of them had left besides the salt water about their feet, it was a branch of a fruit tree with fruit upon it. The girls picked off the rosy apples, off which they wiped the brine, and gave them to the children to eat, the first fruit, save juniper berries, that they had seen since they had left the Kingdom of Light behind them. The apples amused the little ones, and filled all hearts with hope, although they could not tell how many hundreds of miles the branch had been drifted into the north and then back again towards the shore it came from. "It is the light that makes these grow," they said, "and our father's kingdom which we are seeking, is full of light."

The north wind ceased its rage, and the thick, black, misty clouds that had been above and all around their boat, fell behind them as the wind fell. Still it was dull and cheerless, save where light seemed to be struggling in the south. The boys took down the sail because it was useless and recommenced paddling, but soon stopped. There was no need for it, since they found themselves in a strong current setting in towards the light, and a log of driftwood some distance to the right was travelling along it as fast as the coracle could go. By this time they were all very weary, so that even the biggest and strongest lay down to sleep, with the sail pulled over all. After a long rest, during which, all unknown to them, the air grew warmer, the elder children were awakened by the little ones crawling over them, and crying in their ears "See the light." Then they opened their eyes to a pleasant, temperate early dawn, and before them, on the horizon, beheld a light. In a little while, they saw land, and as they approached it, lo! it was covered with leafy trees, which made them shout for joy. Eager to reach the shore, they seized the paddles again and helped the tide to wait them inwards. No rough, jagged rocks were there, no fierce breakers dashing against the cliffs, but a gentle swell carried them along to a shelving beach of pure white sand, and finally carried them on its smooth crests up to the water line. What joy it was to lift the cramped, benumbed limbs out of the boat and stretch them on the sand, to run about and gather the shells strewn over it, to stroll to the leafy margin of bush and tree, there to search for a chance wild flower, which should tell them of more light coming. Then, their curiosity satisfied, the strong young men took the children in their arms, while the older girls led those who were better able to walk by the hand, and away they went towards the place where the light was shining.

(To be continued.)

MY DAILY CROSS.

If I have no cross to bear to-day I shall not advance heavenward.

A cross (that is, anything that disturbs our peace, is the spur which stimulates, and without which we should most likely remain stationary, blinded with empty vanities, and sinking deeper into sin.

A cross helps us onward in spite of our apathy and resistance. To lie quietly on a bed of down may seem a very sweet existence, but present ease and rest are not the lot of the Christian, if he would mount higher and higher it must be by a rough road. Alas for those who have the daily cross. Alas for those who repine and fret against it!

What will be my cross to-day?

Perhaps that person with whom Providence has placed me and whom I dislike, whose look of disdain humiliates me, whose slowness worries me, who makes me jealous by being more beloved, more successful than myself, whose chatter and light-heartedness, even his very attentions to myself, annoy me; or it may be that person that I think has quarreled with me, and my imagination makes me fancy myself watched, criticized, and turned into ridicule.

She is always with me, all my efforts to separate are frustrated by some mysterious power, she is always present, always near. This is my heaviest cross—the rest are light in comparison.

Circumstances change, temptations diminish, troubles lessen, but those people who trouble or offend us are an ever present source of irritation.

How to bear this daily cross.

Never manifest in any way the dislike, the involuntary shudder that her presence produces, force myself to render her some little service, never mind if she never knows it, it is between God and myself. I try and say a little good of her every day, of her talents, her character, her tact, for these are all that is found in her. Pray honestly for her, even asking God to help me to love her.

Dear companion, blessed messenger of God's mercy, you are without knowing it the means for my sanctification, and I will not be ungrateful!

Yes, though the exterior be rude and repellent, yet to you I owe it that I am kept from greater sin, you, against whom my whole nature rebels, how I ought to love you!—*Gold Dust.*