

*Children's Department.**EPICETUS THE SLAVE
PHILOSOPHER.*

Epictetus was a white slave, who lived about seventeen hundred years ago, and his name, which signifies "bought or acquired," itself shows that he was a slave.

He was lame and he was poor; yet in spite of his drawbacks he was a wonderful man, and I will try to tell you just a little about him.

His master was a learned man. His name was Epaphroditus, and he was a freedman and courtier, some say the teacher of the Emperor Nero. Like Nero, Epaphroditus was hard and cruel. In those days if a slave should chance even to sneeze or cough at the wrong time, drop a dish, spoil any food in cooking, or do any other simple thing which they should not do, their masters could torture, behead or kill them in any way they choose. Many a time this was done, so that I have no doubt Epictetus, like other slaves, had a hard time of it.

I said that Epictetus was lame. Some say it was because his master broke his leg as a punishment for some slight offence; others that it was from disease. However it happened, at any rate, he was very lame and small and weak, and not good for work with hands or body, nor pleasant to look at when beside strong men, excepting for his bright mind.

Because he had such a sharp mind and was unfit for anything else he was sent by his master to the brightest teacher of that day and taught all the knowledge of the Ancients. One of his masters was

called Musonius Rufus, a great Stoical teacher. Of course Epictetus was taught thus carefully because in those days men who were stupid or lazy to learn themselves depended upon their slaves for information and even for written discourses, for which also of course, the masters get all the credit.

In the latter part of his life Epictetus was a free man but how he obtained his liberty we do not know. When the Emperor Domitian ruled in Rome Epictetus was recognized as a clever professor of philosophy and when the Emperor commanded all philosophy to leave the city, Epictetus withdrew into the provinces. Then he settled at Nicopolis near the place where the great battle of Actium was fought and there for several years he lived and taught his doctrines as men did then by conversation and lectures. He was never married, nor did he compose any work, but one of his pupils, Havius Arrianus, who wrote the life of Alexander the Great, took special care to preserve his sayings and in this way they are now extant. He was an earnest, practical man, who sometimes was a most pathetic preacher of righteousness.

Epictetus, in fact, spent his life in teaching men to live well, to think wisely, to be good and brave and make the best of all things. He lived in poverty. One writer who knew him well, says all the furniture in his house was a bed, a cooking vessel and an earthen lamp. For this lamp after his death an enthusiastic relic hunter, Lucian says, gave 3000 drachmas.

Each man, Epictetus said, had a guardian spirit within him which never sleeps. The body, he argued,