

THE HYPOCRITES

(By Harry H. Kemp)

The church and the school and the golden rule have reigned in the world so long.

Men dare not slay in the olden way and practice the grosser wrong;

So they make small use of the hangman's noose to put their enemies by.

They sell them wealth on paper writ; no more with weapons, they thrust and hit; they kill with the printed lie.

But, you, who prey in a genteel way, on folk, and juggle the truth,

And with the specious-printed lie cast ruined thousands bare and high with neither pity nor ruth—

Remember this as you sell and buy; a death for a death, the soul must die,

And the Law demands an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth.

The Hypocrites lay in the depths of Hell where the sheer black mountains rise;

The night was dense with a fear intense and full of a thousand eyes,

And jagged flames with broken swords stabbed into the lurid skies.

'Plained one to a demon at his side, "I ever revealed the light

In books of worth to the people on earth, and God has given me night."

Then answered a devil, "Full loud you lie. You chained with appearance of truth

A million men in the nine's dank air, and, lolling around in a Morris chair,

You swore that the system in vogue was fair, and slew them, elder and youth—

And a death for a death the soul must die, and the Law demands an eye for an eye,

And a tooth for a tooth."

Wailed a Hypocrite on a bed of ice, with the parchment face of an ape,

Huddled aheap mere life to keep, a grotesque, piteous shape,

"Aye me, aye me, full mercilessly the Father doth me entreat."

Then by his side a devil replied, "You cornered the market in wheat;

You bided till winter came, and then, you juggled the price of coal,

And sent to heaven and eke to hell full many a frozen soul;

To free you of smirch you builded a church and founded a Sunday-school.

With crafty lore your office door was hung with the golden rule.

And this might blind and cheat mankind, but the eye of God, in sooth,

Looks through and through what people do, till it pierces the inner truth:

So you die the death you made men die, for the Law requires an eye for an eye,

And a tooth for a tooth."

They tied One down with a serpent dire, they flayed him bare of his skin

With unclean talons which stung like fire, till his nerves lay white and thin.

They drag him off to a mountainside, him there in a cleft they wedge

Where the knives of the wind with cuts unkind slash like a razor-edge.

For he as a man was seeming-good, through policy, not through heart

He gathered dollars and made them breed; he tithed the church with the gain of his greed,

Invested millions in art—

But even in mine and field and mill he held, at the lowest wage,

Thousands of men with wives to keep, and children to feed; he got them cheap,

And cast them aside in their age.

Yea! He as a man gave none their due, but charity doled, forsooth,

Which means, to rive a million away, and render a dime in ruth—

But a death for a death the soul must die, and the Law demands an eye for an eye,

And a tooth for a tooth.

One, cunningly cruel, they nourished with gruel which ever turned molten lead,

And would he eat of a morsel of meat, he chewed on a cinder instead.

"Now nay, now nay, for I'll have my say; God useth me ill," he said,

"For I have given the thirsty, drink, have given the hungry, bread,"

"Now loud you've lied," a devil replied, "and your tongue plays fast and loose;

What? Coffee and buns, to God's own sons . . . to get your name in the News?

But it isn't what's done that counts with Him; He measures by deeds well-meant,

And back of the deed He aye must read the spirit of good-intent."

And so they sit forever bit by serpents as fierce as fire, Hypocrite crouched by hypocrite, and the demons never tire

At killing them over and over again, just as on earth they did to men;

So the Laws of the Lord require;

For a man may pray till his hair grows gray, may ape the charities, too, parlay, build churches, colleges, every day. . . But his soul must live the truth;

And a death for a death the soul must die, and the Law demands an eye for an eye,

And a tooth for a tooth.

WON HIS BET

General Miles, in company with a friend, was walking down Pennsylvania Avenue, when a person, entirely unknown to the veteran soldier, rushed up to him, and grasping his hand, said, warmly, "Well, Nelse, old boy, I'll bet anything you don't remember me!"

"You win!" coldly and laconically replied Miles, as he released himself from the grasp of the stranger and resumed his walk.

The man who thinks he is a wit should talk into a phonograph—and then be made to listen.

Horace Greely's favorite poem of his own make was:

Man's a vapor
Full of woes;
Starts a paper—
Up she goes.

Having advertised as a widower in search of Wife No. 2, a man of St. Gall, Switzerland, showed the fifty replies and photographs which he had received to his wife, and, stating that if she did not want him there were others who did, he effectually cured her of her "nagging" habits.

Lord Ellenborough once said to a barrister, upon his asking in the midst of a boring harangue: "Is it the pleasure of the court that I should proceed with my statement?" "Pleasure, Mr.—has been out of the question for a long time, but you may proceed."