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No. 50

THE POOR AT CHRISTMAS.

BY PHOEBE CARY
Fond mothers who hush on your bosoms
Your babes' tender cries;
And sing them to sleep in your cradles,
With soft lullabies;
Proud fathers, whose children are sheltered
In the homes of their birth;
Who see their fair heads, morn and even,
Still safe by the hearth:
When the merciless winds of the winter
Are cruel and bold;
When even the shelterless sparrows
Are crying for cold.
And you listen, safe-housed, to the falling
Of the snow and sleet,
And hear on your roof-tree all harmless,
The wild tempest beat;
When you gather, a circle, unbroken,
Your fireside about;
And shut in your children remember
The children shut out!
Think of wanderers abroad in the darkness
The tempest and rain;
With no hearthstone ablaze for their
coming,
No light in the pane—
Children shivering in horrible places
The earth for their bed;
Wretched groups huddled close in the
darkness,
And crying for bread!

Think of orphans, and, worse, babes de-
serted,
Whom 'twere well if the earth
To her pitying bosom had taken
In the day of their birth.
Ay! think of them tenderly, kindly
Poor, homeless, astray;
For the sake of the holy child Jesus,
You worship to-day.
By all the proud hopes that encircle
Your sons brave and bright;
By your love for the tender-eyed daughters
So fair in your sight.
By the blessings unmarked and unnum-
bered,
You hold so secure,
While you are remembered in mercy,
Remember the poor!

THE BIBLE.

A prayer for enlightenment. If we are
perplexed as we read a book, and can
carry it to the author, he explains his
meaning. So carry the Bible to its au-
thor.

Anoint my eyes,
O Holy Dove!
That I may prize
This book of love.
Unstop my ear,
Made deaf by sin.
That I may hear
Thy voice within.
Break my hard heart,
Jesus, my Lord;
In the inmost part,
Hide thy sweet word.

THE FOUR MYTES A WIDOW GAVE AT CHRISTMAS.

Christmas was coming again, just
as it had come for centuries, and every-
where in the Union there was prepara-
tion in some sort of a way for the time
we love to celebrate. Christmas, with
its holy hush of expectation, its glad-
ness of exultation because Christ was
born; Christmas, with its carols and
greens, its gifts and trees and fires, is,
year by year, drawing the children of
the earth nearer together. The com-
munity of gladness seems to open our
hearts, and we forget many little ills
and enmities, because it comes to us
anew with every year that Christ is
born to set us free from sin.
The people were making ready, and
there was one poor woman who could
not prepare for the day. Possibly the
Divine One was trying her, to prove
her integrity and she was sorely tried.
Her husband died. His property went,
whether dead men's dollars too often go
and are hidden until the Judgment.
There was a little house which was
his—he did not live in New York—but
the little house had a small line of debt
attached to it, that a rich man drew
and drew, until it became a cable that
launched it off and anchored it at
length on the deep of his vast posses-
sions.
The poor woman knew nothing of
business—of course not—for woman is
always cherished and kept from harm
by her natural protector, man, in this
generous land of ours, and has no need
to know aught of anything beyond the
sacred precincts of home, whose walls
are never rocked asunder by the little
money-quaques of poverty, and heart-
quaques of domestic hate. O, no! She

GROUNDLESS ANXIETY.

The "Country Parson," whose rec-
ollections have afforded us so much pleas-
ure, relates the experience of a clerical
friend, which is both amusing and in-
structive. This friend had just been ad-
mitted to orders in the Episcopal
Church. As was very natural, he had
taken the next most important step in
life. He had married, and on a salary
of five hundred pounds had com-
menced housekeeping. With this in-
come, he knew he must manage his af-
fairs with prudence and economy, and
he hoped that he would be able to make
his year's ends meet. But he suspected
as the weeks passed by, and the out-
goes were numerous, and the servants
wasteful, and the calls on his purse
many and pressing, that he was getting
in arrears. The quarter ended. Bills
were all in and paid. The amount ex-
pended was one hundred and twenty-
five pounds, which, as the calculation
was made, was at the rate of six hun-
dred pound a year, one hundred pounds
more than his salary. He was over-
whelmed at the discovery. Visions of
the debtor's prison floated before his
diseased imagination. He would be
disgraced as a clergyman. His reputa-
tion in the estimation of his wife's re-
lations would be sadly damaged. The
poor man carried a heavy load, day
after day, and at night sleep red from
his pillow. At last, as one day he was
brooding over his forlorn condition and
thinking of the dismal prospects before
him, he once more multiplied his ex-
pended one hundred and twenty-five
pounds by four, and found that the re-
sult was five hundred pounds instead
of six hundred pounds—just the amount
of his salary. At once the cloud on his
spirits disappeared. A happier man
could not be found nowhere than he. I
should not be surprised if the next ser-
mon he wrote was from the text, "Be
careful for nothing; but in every thing,
by prayer and supplication, with thank-
sgiving, let your requests be made known
unto God." If his wife's brother or sis-
ter came to dine with him the next day
he met them with a cheerful face, and
welcomed them to the best dinner the
market could afford.

How often has the heavenly Father
thus lifted loads of groundless anxiety
from the hearts of his burdened child-
ren. During the years of general de-
pression, which we hope are coming to
an end, what cares have pressed upon
many weary and cast-down souls. The
faith which should make practical our
Lord's injunction, "Take no thought
for the morrow," has sometimes been
very weak. Its trial has been great,
and sometimes the strain so severe on
it that it would seem as if it would snap.
But in thousands of cases it has stood
the test. A gracious Providence has
been found to be better than our fears.
Like our clerical friend, we find we have
made miscalculations. We forecast
troubles which have never come, because
they had no foundation in reality. Our
fears having proved needless, we thought
we should never again give way to them.
At last, we said, we are safely anchored,
and we shall never again be driven out
upon the dreary waste of waters. But
has it been thus with us? When once
more the storm has risen, and the rude
winds have beaten upon us, have we re-
mained at our moorings? In dark hours
of disappointment have we been able to
look up and say, "Though he slay me,
yet will I trust in him?"

DEVOTIONAL PIETY.

We need a devotional piety. There is
a great deal of sentimental religion in
the world that feeds on motion, and ex-
pends its energies in efforts to render
itself attractive by means of amuse-
ments in which the sacred and the pro-
fane are ludicrously intermingled. The
Church of the Holy Fan draws crowds,
but the piety of its members is of a
very peculiar type. It has no solid
basis of truth, no sweet savor of prayer
and praise, no heavenly fervor of devo-
tion kindled at the divine altar. There
is a great deal of levity connected with
religion. Seriousness is made repul-
sive, and the sweet solemnity of coun-
tenance expressive of inward patience
and peace is held up to ridicule by
those who have been so far misled as
to suppose that religion to be cheerful,
the sweetest and most attractive of all
the disciples of Jesus are those who live in
closest communion with him. If Chris-
tians would come down from the mount
of communion with God, their faces
radiant with heavenly joy, they would
be far more attractive and winning in
their intercourse with the world than
they can possibly become by putting on
the mask of Comus, and trying to draw
into the narrow path a class of people
who are naturally lovers of pleasure,
and who would make the pilgrimage to
heaven a holiday excursion.

THE BEST TEST OF CHRISTIAN LOVE.

There are those who seem to suppose
that soft words, kindly congratulations
and smooth things, are the true evi-
dences of Christian love. What a mis-
take! Genuine love will risk some-
thing in the way of candor and plain-
dealing with its object. If a Christian
errs, either from the path of duty or in
the management of his worldly affairs,
an enemy would likely be silent, and
let him go on and reap the reward of
his folly. But true friendship would
seek to "restore such an one in the
spirit of meekness," would risk a mo-
mentary alienation to save a brother.
Blind love may prove our worst snare;
but love directed by wisdom will seek
the highest good of the party who
shares it. While receiving the reproof,
the admonition, and the caution, one
may fret and chafe; but ere long he will
thank from his heart the one who had
the courage to tell him the truth and
save him from his folly.

WHAT HAVE YOU TO SHOW FOR IT?

A young man commences at the age
of 20 years to drink, and from 20 to
23 he drinks but one glass of beer a
day, worth 5 cents a glass; at 23 he
will have spent \$54.75; from 23 to 25,
two glasses a day, he will have spent
\$73; from 25 to 30, three glasses a day,
\$273.75; from 30 to 35, four glasses a
day, \$365; from 35 to 40, five glasses
a day, \$556.25. By this time he will
have spent in all the sum of \$1222.75.
Now, if another young man commen-
ces at 20, and instead of spending the
money named for beer each year, puts
it out at 7 per cent. interest, without
any savings, but this beer money, he
would be worth, at the age of 40 years,
\$3230, having saved his money, his
character, his health, and perhaps his
soul.
Now, if you have been paying out
your money for beer—what have you to
show for it? Are you any better, rich-
er, happier for it? Are you any health-
ier than your total-abstaining friend?
Has your beer-drinking given you any
better position in society? Are your
family any better off for it in any way?
Does your drinking help you to lay up
anything of any sort to offset the bank
account you would have had if you had
paid your beer-money to the cashier?
Or do you expect by means of beer-
drinking to lay up anything for your-
self or your family in the future? If
so, what is it?

When you make a bargain, there are
always two values. You pay your money
for a pair of shoes and you have the
shoes to show for it, and you can wear
them while you are earning money to
buy more; but when you have paid your
money for a glass of beer, and you have
drunk it, what have you to show for it?
Ten chances to one it makes you thirsty
for another glass, and another, and you
get a headache or a stupid feeling that
does not help you work, and perhaps
some other bad things—not worth pay-
ing for; but if you have any good thing
to show for it, what is it?

Perhaps you have not yet drank
enough to count up much; if so, now
is your time to forestall the cost and
make your bargain. Will you pay out
your money for the beer and lose it, or
will you lay it out so that you may
have something to show for it?

"Wherefore do ye spend your money
for that which is not bread, and your
labor for that which satisfieth not?"—
Bible.

QUIET LIVES.

Christ's lowly workers unconsciously
bless the world. They come out every
morning from the presence of God and
go to their business or their household
work. All day long as they toil they
drop gentle words from their lips, and
scatter little seeds of kindness about
them; and tomorrow flowers from the
garden of God spring up in the dusty
streets of earth, and along the hard
paths of toil on which their feet tread.
More than once in the Scriptures the
lives of God's people in this world are
compared in their influence to the dew.
There may be other points of analogy,
but specially noteworthy is the quiet
manner in which the dew performs its
ministry. It falls silently and imper-
ceptibly. It makes no noise. No one
hears its dropping. It chooses the
darkness of the night when men are
sleeping, and when no man can witness
its beautiful work. It covers the leaves
with clusters of pearls. It steals into
the bosom of the flowers and leaves a
new cupful of sweetness there. It pours
itself down among the roots of the
grasses and tender herbs and plants.
And in the morning there is a fresh
beauty everywhere. The fields look
greener, the gardens are more fragrant,
all life glows and sparkles with a new
splendor. And is there no lesson here
as to the manner in which we should
seek to do good in this world? Should
we not scatter blessings so silently and
so secretly that no one shall know what
hand dropped them? The whole spirit
of the gospel teaches this. "When
thou doest alms, let not thy left hand
know what thy right hand doeth, that
thine alms may be in secret." We are
not to seek praise of men. We are not
to do good deeds to receive rewards
from men. We are not to sound trump-
ets or announce our good deeds from
the housetop.

INFINITY OF BLISS OUR AIM.

When the keen-sighted eagle soars
above all the feathered race, and leaves
their very sight below; when she wings
her way with direct ascent, up the
steep of heaven, and, steadily gazing on
the meridian sun, accounts its beaming
splendors all her own, does she then re-
gard with solicitude the mote that is
flying in the air or the dust which she
shook from her feet? And shall this
mind, which is capable of contemplating
its Creator's glory, which is intended
to enjoy the visions of his countenance;
shall this mind, indued with such great
capacities, and made for such exalted
ends, be so ignobly ambitious as to
fight for the tinsels of State, or so poor-
ly covetous as to grasp after ample
territories on a needle's point? No,
under the influence of such considera-
tions I feel my sentiments expand, and
my wishes acquire a turn of sublimity.
My throbbing desires after worldly gran-
dure die away, and I find myself if not
possessed of power, yet superior to its
charms. Too long, must I own, have
my affections been pinioned by vanity
and immersed in this earthly clod. But
these thoughts break the shackles.
These objects open the door of liberty.
My soul, fired by such noble prospects,
weighs anchor from this little nook,
and coasts no longer about its contract-
ed shores—dotes no longer on its
painted shells. The immensity of
things is her range, and an infinity of
bliss her aim.

A WORD TO PREACHERS.

Warmth that you do not feel. Begin
low at first. Keep down till your sub-
ject forces you up, and then you will
rise naturally and carry your hearers
with you. Take care not to rise so
early that you cannot sustain yourself
to the end.
It is easy to get higher, but difficult
and dangerous to descend.
Sometimes the declamatory swells
into the turgid, and even in this form
attempts to move the passions. But
here it utterly fails. If ever there is
need of simplicity it is when you at-
tempt the pathetic.

FAMILY PRAYER.

Family prayer is the nutriment of
family piety, and woe to those who al-
low it to cease. I read the other day
of parents who said they could not have
family prayer, and one asked this ques-
tion:—"If you knew that your child-
ren would be sick through the neglect
of prayer would you not have it? If
one child were smitten down with fever
each morning that you neglected prayer,
how then?" O, then they would have
it. "And if there was a law that you
should be fined five shillings if you did
not meet for prayer, would you find
time for it?" "Yes." "And if there
were five pounds given to all who had
family prayer, would you have it?"
"Yes." So the inquirer went on with
many questions, and wound up with
this: "Then it is but an idle excuse
when you, who profess to be servants of
God, say that you have no time or op-
portunity for family prayer."

COME NEARER.

But have you come to Christ already
and found relief? Then come nearer,
nearer still. The closer your commu-
nion with Christ the more comfort you
will feel. The more you daily live by
the side of the Fountain the more you
shall feel in yourself "a well of water
springing up into everlasting life"
(John iv. 14). You shall not only be
blessed yourself, but be a source of
blessing to others. In this evil world
you may not, perhaps, feel all the sen-
sible comfort you desire. But remem-
ber you cannot have two heavens. Per-
fect happiness is yet to come. The
devil is not yet bound. There is "a
good time coming" for all who feel
their sins, and come to Christ, and
commit their thirsting souls to his
keeping. When he comes again they
shall be completely satisfied. They
shall remember all the way by which
they were led, and see the need-be of
every thing that befell them. Above
all, they shall wonder that they could
ever live so long without Christ, and
hesitate about coming to him.