

evidently blessed it, and you know you promised to give him all the proceeds.'

'Well, I don't know about that,' said Ensor. 'I didn't expect to raise more than one bushel of corn on it, and there will be five at least. I think I will give the bushel I expected to raise to the Lord's work, and the rest must go to supply the needs of my family. I have quite a family, you know.'

The minister expostulated, but could get no satisfaction from the 'close-fisted' farmer, and with a kindly warning he left him.

In a few weeks there came an untimely frost, and the minister, falling in with his parishioner, asked him if the frost had damaged his crops at all.

'I should say it did!' he replied, almost angrily. 'Every particle of my corn has gone but that little corner piece I staked off.'

'Oh, the Lord's lot is all right, is it?' said the minister.

'I suppose you'd call it the Lord's lot, but I call it mine, and intend to use it, every ear of it. "Circumstances alter cases," and nobody with any sense would expect me to give any of it away, with such luck as I have had.'

'My brother,' said the good minister, 'there is no such thing as luck in this world. "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." Take heed how you sow.'

The man turned hastily away, and the minister went sorrowfully homeward, saying to himself, 'What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?'

Months after, being in the neighborhood of his friend Ensor, he stepped into a store to make a needed purchase, and inquiring of the proprietor, who was also the clerk, of the welfare of the people, was met by the remark:

'I suppose you didn't know about Ensor's loss, did you?'

'No, what was it?' was the reply.

'Why, you know that fine horse of his, worth \$250 if it was a cent. Well, the other night, the horse tried to jump out of the enclosure—never known to jump before—but this jump was too much for the poor creature, for he ran a stake into his side, and they had to kill him at once. Doctor said he'd die, anyway. What luck that man has had the last year or two!'

The minister only said, 'I'm very sorry for him,' but he thought a great deal more than he said.

One change after another took the minister to a different part of the state; but years after he was again in the vicinity of the scene of our story. As he sat on the piazza reading in the cool of the day, a man shabby enough as to his clothing, with a shambling gait and an old pipe in his mouth, drew near and seated himself on the stone step at the end of the piazza, rather remote from the place where the minister was sitting. He had evidently been on a tramp and wanted to rest. The minister after a minute or so began to pace the piazza. Drawing near, he spoke to the man. Something in his appearance seemed strangely familiar, and as he continued to study the face a conviction flashed upon him that it was his old friend Ensor. To forestall any denial he accosted him at once by his name. The man rather unwillingly responded, but knowing he was recognized, did not try to conceal his identity.

'Where are you living now?' asked the minister.

'I'm not living anywhere in particular.'

'Where is your wife?'

'She's dead.'

'What has become of your farm?'

'My farm? I haven't got any farm. I haven't got anything. Everything is gone.'

'Ensor,' said the minister, 'do you remember when you began to rob God by stealing the corn out of his cornfield?'

The old man's jaw dropped as if he was struck by death, and his pipe was shivered into atoms on the stone step before him. He recovered himself, partially, however, and, turning upon the minister savagely said:

'I'd like to know what that has to do with it?'

'It has all to do with it, my brother,' said the minister.

And he essayed to reach the hardened conscience of the man by words of kindly warning and entreaty, but Ensor, angry at the

loss of his pipe, angry at the minister, angry at God, rose up and shuffled off. The minister learned that subsequent to his own departure for a distant part of the state, as before mentioned, Ensor had turned his own son's family out of doors because that son was not able to pay him a debt he owed him.

Let the reader take the lesson home to his heart. We are only his stewards. Let us not rob God.—Elizabeth Larkin, in 'Right Words.'

### The Evil of Taking Offense.

To give offense is a great fault, but to take offense is a greater fault. It implies a greater amount of wrongness in ourselves, and it does a great amount of mischief to others. I do not remember to have read of any saint who ever took offense. The habit of taking offense implies a quiet pride which is altogether unconscious how proud it is. The habit of taking offense implies a fund of uncharitableness deep down in us, which grace and interior mortification have not reached. Contemporaneously with the offense we have taken there has been some wounded feeling or other in an excited state within us. When we are in good humor we do not take offense.

It is often allowable to judge our neighbors. Surely we know it to be the rarest thing possible. Yet we can not take offense without, first, forming a judgment; secondly, forming an unfavorable judgment; thirdly, deliberately entertaining it as a motive power; and, fourthly, doing all this, for the most part, in the subject matter of piety, which in nine cases out of ten our obvious ignorance withdraws from our jurisdiction.

A thoughtless or a shallow man is more likely to take offense than any other. He can conceive of nothing but what he sees upon the surface. He has but little self-knowledge, and hardly suspects the variety of complication of his own motives. Much less then, is he likely to divine in a discerning way the hidden temptations, which may lie, and always do lie, behind the actions of others.

Readiness to take offense is a great hindrance to the attainment of perfection. It hinders us in the acquisition of self-knowledge. No one is so blind to his own faults as the man who has the habit of detecting the faults of others. A man who is apt to take offense is never a blithe nor a genial man. He is not made for happiness; and was ever a melancholy man made into a saint? A downcast man is raw material which can only be manufactured into a very ordinary Christian.

If it is not quite the same thing with censoriousness, who shall draw the line between them? Furthermore, it destroys our influence with others. We irritate where we ought to enliven. To be suspected of want of sympathy is to be disabled as an apostle. He who is critical will necessarily be unpersuasive.

In what does perfection consist? In a childlike, shortsighted charity which believes all things; in a grand, supernatural conviction that every one is better than ourselves; in estimating far too low the amount of evil in the world; in looking far too exclusively on what is good; in the ingenuity of kind constructions; in our inattention, hardly intelligible, to the faults of others; in a graceful perversity of incredulosity about scandal or offenses. This is the temper and genius of saints and saintlike men. It is a radiant, energetic faith that man's slowness and coldness will not interfere with the success of God's glory. No shadow of moroseness ever falls over the bright mind of a saint. Now, is not all this the very opposite of the temper and spirit of a man who is apt to take offense? The difference is so plain that it is needless to comment on it. He is happy who on his dying bed can say, 'No one has ever given me offense in my life.' He has either not seen his neighbors' faults, or, when he saw them, the sight had to reach him through so much sunshine of his own that they did not strike him so much as faults to blame, but rather as reasons for a deeper and a tenderer love.—Frederic William Faber.

The readers of the NORTHERN MESSENGER will confer a great favor on the publishers by always mentioning the NORTHERN MESSENGER when replying to any advertiser who uses its columns—and the advertiser will also appreciate it.

### Home.

There lies a little city in the hills;  
White are its roofs, dim is each dwelling's door,  
And peace with perfect rest its bosom fills.

There the pure mist, the pity of the sea,  
Comes as a white, soft hand, and reaches o'er  
And touches its still face most tenderly.

Unstirred and calm, amid our shifting years,  
Lo! there it lies, far from the clash and roar,  
With quiet distance blurred, as if through tears.

O heart, that prayest so for God to send  
Some loving messenger to go before  
And lead the way to where thy longings end,

Be sure, be very sure, that soon will come  
His kindest angel, and through that still door  
Into the infinite love will lead thee home.  
—Edward Rowland Sill.

### The Victorian India Orphan Society.

The Treasurer of the Victoria India Orphan Society desires to acknowledge with thanks the receipt of one dollar from two little girls, Maude and Brownie Henton, who enclosed with their gift no address. As contributions for this work will not be acknowledged through the 'Messenger,' it will be absolutely necessary for contributors to give the treasurer their address, if they wish to have their contributions acknowledged. All gifts must be sent to Mrs. A. S. Crichton, 142 Langside St., Winnipeg.

### Canadians Abroad.

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To friends throughout Canada (excepting Montreal and suburbs) also throughout Great Britain and Ireland, the United States and the many other countries mentioned on page 15 as not requiring extra postage, the 'Canadian Pictorial' may be sent for only fifty cents, provided three or more such subscriptions are remitted at one time. So often in the Christmas preparation for those at home, gifts for the distant friends are not mailed till too late. Now is the time to arrange for what is really a series of gifts, in one of the most delightful forms, a form that makes it possible to share the pleasure with others. Send in your Christmas subscriptions now. They will have the most careful attention.

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