

"Only what, my child?"

But Tracy did not answer, and all Captain Flamank's coaxing and entreaties were in vain. He guessed then what it was, and whispered Stella's name. The little hand held in his own was hastily withdrawn, and a tear or two dashed away from the drooping eye-lids.

O these children's tears! so rare and slow to come, and yet so large and burning! They well-nigh made the strong man weep only to see and hear them.

"Don't tell her," Tracy said; "promise me you will not, dear Captain. I never, never cry; only to-night seeing you, and hearing all about her, has made me strange and foolish; and I could not help it. She does not cry, does she?" he continued, looking up into his companion's face again very searchingly.

The Captain hesitated. He was thinking of the tear that Stella had wept for him, the tear of sorrow and compassion, of which, on Tracy's behalf, there was no need.

"Never for herself, my darling," he answered, as the child's eyes waited for a response.

"And not much for me?"

"No, not much; only once have I seen her, Tracy; and that was more with pleasure than with grief. It was when I gave her your little letter: she was smiling the very next moment, and oh so pleased!"

"I shall write again very, very, soon, and you will take the letter, won't you, Captain? I should have sent another note before this, only Dr. Argyle said no, I had better wait a few days. But he will let me very soon I am sure: he is always kind."

Captain Flamank bent, and kissed the child again: his face was very exquisite in the flush of pleasure and eagerness.

"O yes, I will take your letter, and give it straight into Stella's hands."

"And a kiss?" said Tracy.

"Yes, a kiss certainly, if you wish it. And now, for to-night, I must be going, Tracy; but I will come again whenever I can."

"You haven't told me about sister and Somerset?" Tracy said recollecting himself.

"They are both well; and Lora told me to get you the prettiest bunch of flowers that could be found in the Covent garden."

"Violets," said the child: "white and purple—sweet ones, I should like best."

"You shall have them; only violets will not cost a quarter of the money your sister gave me."

"How much was it? May you tell?" Tracy asked, smiling.

Captain Flamank took a bright half-sovereign from his waistcoat pocket, and held it up.

"How much will the violets cost?"

"Half-a-crown, perhaps; not more. I can get you some beautiful azaleas and hot-house flowers with the rest, unless there is anything else you would rather."

"Will sister mind how the rest of the money is spent? It was very kind of her to think about the flowers."

"O no, I am sure she will not mind. You think of anything you please."

"It is little Charlie," Tracy answered, somewhat dubiously; for he scarcely liked to parade his almsgiving even before his dear "Captain," as he called him. "You know the little boy in Brick Lane, whom Stella and I love and Mrs. Fleming goes to see for us?"

"O, all right, I understand. You shall have the seven-and-six-pence, Tracy, and everything that is over, and send something nice to the little boy. That will be it, won't it?"

Tracy pressed the hand lovingly again, and smiled; then Captain Flamank rose, and very tenderly deposited his little frail burden on the couch. Nurse appeared in answer to the ring; and with a few more kindly words Captain Flamank departed.

Little Tracy slept soundly that night. The loving words and messages, fresh as it seemed from Stella's lips, were like a cordial to his spirit; and the pictures, tokens of her love and thoughts, were spread open on the counterpane to greet his first waking sight in the morning.

"Papa dear, Stella is coming to lunch to-day,

and to help Miss Fridell and me in decorations afterwards."

Christmas-day fell on Sunday this year; and it was on Saturday morning that Mary made this announcement to her father; "We shall be busy in church till one o'clock; so you will receive her, if I am not home quite in time."

"Have you seen anything of Miss Gower, or the rest of the family, during the week?"

(To be continued.)

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The Lenten Litany.

BY W. B. G.

At morn when o'er the drifted snow,
The first warm breaths of spring-tide blow,
Approach the temple with the cry,
Thy Lenten litany.

The lights of Christmas-tide are dim;
The star sinks 'neath th' horizon's rim;
Yon is the path of agony
Of wild Gethsemane.

In sackcloth of the heart and soul,
As on the swift days ever roll,
Bear Christ upon the Cross in sight,
As nears thy Easter light.

Thus e'en amid the joys of Shrove
We turned to yonder olive grove;
We see the Saviour low in prayer;
And thither we repair.

Put off the pomp of chancels gay;
The Saviour walk's temptation's way;
Put on the violet of grief
Till Easter gives relief;

Till in the glory of His tomb
Far vanished is the Lenten gloom;
Till then let these ascend on high—
Thy wail and litany.

K. D. C. Pills cure chronic constipation.

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Palm Sunday.

The shadows of the Lenten Fast are deepening, as we, this day, enter upon the beginning of our Lord's passion. Next Sunday will bring us to Palm Sunday; and then we hasten on to the culmination of the sufferings of our dear Lord as we view Him on the cross, when Good Friday is reached. These two closing weeks are very precious ones to those who love the Church. These are days when we need to keep within the Church's sacred portals all the time that's possible for us, because it is here that we can draw nearer to the suffering victim, the blessed Jesus, Whose life as man was brought to so cruel an end. It is a time when over-wrought feelings long for some mode of expression, to show the deep and earnest devotion that animates our hearts. One feels as though he wished to do something, to show how truly he sorrows, and how revengeful are his feelings.

But, dear children, it is not a spirit of revenge that our blessed Lord delights to see. Do not look upon the events now passing, as though the people of those days were the only transgressors. Jesus died for the sins of the whole world. Your sins caused the suffering, your hands platted the crown of thorns, your hands made the ugly wounds, just as much as did the sinful acts of the Jews eighteen hundred years ago.

We must sorrow for our sins, we must humble ourselves, we must correct our faults, if we would mitigate his sufferings. Lent comes to us as a time to help us forward in making ourselves better. The precious days are drawing rapidly to a close, and in the two weeks remaining, much may be done. May all our circle be blessed in their efforts which lead them nearer to the Saviour.

The Usefulness of Lent for Busy Men.

We all know the tremendous claims of business; one has but to look at the thrilling tide of life, which pours into our city from all sides, every morning of the year, to be aware of the power which draws that mighty army of men to the desk, the workshop and the exchange. There is a tragic interest in that great concourse of immortal beings. The mind follows them to their intense labours; it sees them bending over columns of figures, or straining every nerve to make a bargain, or watching intently the fluctuations of the market; it sees them facing with blanched lips possible disaster, or it sees them flushed with a success which is possibly quite as much a danger. What a seething crowd it is in all the busy hours of the day! Wheels are turning, engines throbbing, telephones, telegraphs, type writers, messengers, brokers, buyers, sellers, swindlers, sharpers, keen antagonists, all are at it, in one tremendous conflict, until the hour comes which calls a merciful truce; and then, a tired, jaded, excited mass of men once more ebbs from the centre to the circumference, and seeks a little food, a little cheer of home, it may be, a little pleasure, a little sleep; and then, once more, up betimes next day, and the same thing all over again.

There is of course the heroic in all this, the splendid, yes, the magnificent; but one cannot be blinded, for all that, to the fearful conditions which beset the lives of business men. For such lives as these surely the opportunities of Lent ought to be a blessing. For Lent calls them to a moment's halt, with an outlook before the soul other than the exciting scenes of trade. It asks them to rest, for a brief space, the weary, throbbing brain, the excited nerves, the agitated will; it gives them an excuse for applying to themselves the very best medicine—which is, to do nothing for a little while. Doubtless many a poor fellow would be glad to halt for a moment, but he has not courage, or he has not opportunity; and so, it may be, that day and night, from year's end to year's end, his mind and body are ever on this feverish stretch of trade and business, without that entire cessation from such dreadful cares which the forty days of Lent give happy space for, even if only forty hours out of those same forty days can be seized and used.

What a power for good one clear hour of absolute spiritual rest would be, every day in Lent, to all the great army of workers which surge to and fro in our great cities! It would restore to them somewhat of the calm dignity which ever accompanies the great. It would in some degree ensure to them that clear coolness which is the necessary factor in all true success. It might reveal to them the ennobling truth that man does not live by bread alone. It might give their souls a vision of God in His eternal peace.

Now, for this great mass of workers we would plead that some special attention be given to bring Lent to them, or them to Lent. Much may be done by short services, with hymns and brief addresses, all short, sharp, punctual at both ends, and carefully managed; the needs of men being the paramount idea through all—their sense of sin, their struggles with the flesh, the temptations of the world, the lures of Satan, the tendency to despair, the interminableness of the conflict, the sure victory, the merciful Judge, the sure reward. From such meetings men go away lifted up and refreshed. Such services might be in Old Trinity every noon in the year to advantage, certainly every Lent, at hours which would catch men at their least busy time.

But opportunities should also be afforded in the localities where these men live. True, they reach home tired, walks are long, it is not easy to get men out again once they have settled down after the toil of the day. Well, the difficulties are great, but the stake at issue is also great, and every effort should be made to reach the men. But for this we must have Lenten services which be not slipshod, weak, faltering, aimless; we must have real work, real thought, real worship. All must be well arranged, real, orderly, effective. A cold, half-lit church, a fumbling organist and choir, a service indifferently read, an address without vital point, these do not attract men. Try bright services, well-prepared addresses, and