

From this time, as you may imagine, the worker in gold prospered in all his ways. He had proved himself wise, skilful and honest; and soon grew to be a great favorite with the king.

He became very famous through all that region as a clever craftsman, but still more famous as a man of high and noble principle. The lords and ladies of the land all showed honour to the favourite of the king, who himself esteemed Eligius very highly. It would have been but natural if Eligius had grown somewhat vain and conceited of all this favour, but it was not so. He never forgot his own station or that of the king, while he neglected not his duty to God and his sovereign.

Not long afterwards, therefore, we find the king wishing to promote him to some honour, or to appoint him to some office of confidence at court. But before he entered on the duties of his office, he was required to take an oath on the reliques of the saints. The king himself was present, but Eligius, to the surprise of every one, refused to take the oath. He did not fully declare his reason for refusing, but seemed to have some scruple about the matter, which prevented his taking any oath in that form.

The king pressed him earnestly, but for some time in vain; until, at last, Eligius burst into tears. His tears said more for him than words, and the king at once relented; the goldsmith was sent home, with a few cheerful, kindly words, his sovereign assuring him at last, that from this time he should rather trust him than if he had sworn oaths of all kinds. Upon this Eligius went away to his own home, where he still worked on honestly and faithfully at his craft.

But about this time a change seems to have come over him; he grew more thoughtful and intent at his work; pondering in his heart on many things, and above all, his own state before God. He had formerly ruffled amongst the gayest at court, in showy dress, but now his clothes were of a most humble kind. He grew pale with fasting, thinking less of earth and more of heaven; but still worked on in hope, joy, and content, in the station ordained for him by God.

By industry and faithful living, he grew rich, and his wealth was to him a great blessing. He laid up treasure in heaven, gave all his substance

to the poor, was rich towards God, and, having nothing, possessed all things.

What wonder, then, that his life was serene and peaceful?

He was ever actively at work among men for the good of others, and still neglected not his own daily toil.

Let us take one look into his workshop. He used, as the old chronicle says, many vessels for the use of the kings, wrought in gold and gems; he laboured unweariably, sitting at his task, and opposite to him his household servant, who followed in the steps of his master, and afterwards led a life worthy of all respect. Sitting thus at his work, he had ready before him an open book, so that labouring in both ways he might fulfil the Divine command.

In his bed-chamber he had many a memorial of holy men, as well as many holy books, which after singing a psalm, and prayer, he used, by means of a circular frame, to bring before him in turn, and meditating thereon, like a most prudent bee, gathering diverse stores from diverse flowers, laid up in his own breast the choicest stores.

Such was the life he led, so simple, so Christian-like, so full of peace and content. While he lived, his sovereign was a good friend and patron to Eligius, and after his death the goldsmith found an equally good friend in his son. But whatever bounties he enjoyed at the hands of his sovereign, all were bestowed on his poorer brethren. Wherever was poverty or distress, there the good Eligius was to be found, until at last people used to say, "Go into such a quarter of the city, and where you see a crowd of poor people you will find him."

Many a poor slave owed his liberty to the worker in gold. Nothing, in fact, gave him a purer joy than to redeem some fifty or a hundred of these poor creatures from bondage.

All these good deeds he did in the quietest, gentlest manner (for there was no list of subscriptions or other good deed in newspapers then), but the memory of them still lingers sweetly on among us in this age of mammon, as that of her who cast but a mite into the treasury.

Far and wide among that nation spread the fame of the good Eligius; his words of wisdom and gentleness had cheered thousands, and led them, by the blessing of Christ their Saviour