

An Interlude.

In the silence and shadow of leaves,
Bow down thy head and rest;
Drink of the dream that the tree-top weaves
Over the earth's warm breast;
The tender and balmful grass,
The brooding motherhood,
And let but a few short moments pass
In learning that life is good.

Somewhere, with tumult rife,
Is a world of sorrow and shame.
And men are made by strife,
As the metal is fused by the flame;
To-morrow thy feet may turn
From the cool and calm of the wood,
But forget to-day there are paths that burn,
And remember that life is good!

Ay! though it wounds and grieves!
There is strength in the lees of pain.
O heart, be still in the shelter of leaves,
And find thyself again!
Find thyself and be glad
Of the earth's true motherhood,
For the lesson of living is great and sad,
But the gift of life is good!

Our Strong Points.

It may seem like a contradiction to say that a man's strong point often proves to be his weakest. It is a fact, nevertheless. We have only to study the characters of men as set forth in biography to satisfy ourselves of the truth of this.

What was the strong point in the character of Moses? Meekness. And yet we find him once or twice giving way to a fiery outburst of temper. What was the prominent feature in Job's character? Patience. Yet he once appeared to lose all patience with his friends. For what was Solomon noted? For wisdom. Yet he made some woefully foolish blunders. For what was Elijah distinguished? For courage. He was brave enough to defy the wicked king of Israel, his courtiers and the priest of Baal, and yet on one occasion we find him under a juniper tree on the verge of despair. For what was Peter specially characterized? Boldness. Still he once lamentably played the coward.

Now what do these examples teach us? The first lesson that they suggest is that we dare not trust in our own strength. "He that trusts in his own heart is a fool." "Let him that thinketh he standeth take heed lest he fall."

Again, when we know our weakness we should try to guard against it, and to pray for strength to overcome it. We are apt to leave our strong points unguarded, and so the enemy often gains a victory over us. When the Turks were besieging Constantinople, they poured shot and shell into some of the very strongest parts of the city wall, because they expected the Greeks would be centered around the weakest parts. This is just what our great adversary sometimes does with us, and thus he gains the mastery over us.

The Secret of Being Beautiful.

Beauty is not found by what we put on, but by what we put in. We are told of Moses that "his face shone and he knew it not;" and that was because Moses had been on the mountain top with God. The charm of his face was the soul breaking through, when it had been glorified by communion with the Highest.

It is a fact that the very form of the features gradually changes so that they adapt themselves to the character of the spirit within. This is the thought of Dante when he describes Beatrice in Paradise, and says:

"She smiled so joyously
That God seemed in her countenance to rejoice."

But we do not need Dante to discover this fact for us. We all have noticed the soul at times breaking out, and making revelation of itself. Anger shows. When it becomes dark within, the curtains of the eyes are pulled down, and on the face there is night. You do not need to listen for any words. The soul shows itself. And when the spirit abounds with joy, the face gleams. The man may be dumb, but by the glow within the soul stands revealed. Every true sculptor seeks not to carve a body merely, but a speechless soul. Now the impressive thought connected with this

fact is, that it is not only true momentarily, but true abidingly; that the paramount desire, the prevailing mood which we are cultivating within us from day to day, is gradually but surely stamping itself upon the face. We are every one of us growing from within, out. In the long run there are no secret sins. In the long run: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, there is nothing hidden but that shall be revealed."

I have sometimes visited the penitentiaries for the purpose of preaching to the prisoners; and I have noticed how very few wicked souls wore happy faces; and that as the years went by, and the average age of the prisoners increased, there were none. The time was once when many of them were buoyant and full of glee; but they were comparatively innocent then. To-day all that is changed; and the body has not only grown to fit the soul, but has taken its very shadows from it. The face looks deformed; but that is because the soul became deformed first. This is the reason that the prisoner is compelled in the courts of law to turn and face the jury. It is because the soul is on trial, and they look at the body to find out what the soul is.

Thus as the years go by, in the formation of a man's very expression, "God requireth that which is past." It becomes a very index of that unconscious element in his character; and that something which we can never exactly define, which either attracts men to him, or repels them from him. The writings in our face are tell-tales of past associations. He whose whole personality unconsciously shines, will be he who "with open face, beholding, as in a glass, the glory of the Lord, has been changed into the same image, from glory to glory, even as by the Spirit of the Lord." He has become like that upon which he has looked. He has been changed by beholding. His character, like the sensitized plate of the photographer, has taken upon itself the likeness of the sun, by lying in the sun. It was a deep and true thought in the old painters, to make St. John, "The disciple whom Christ loved," look like Jesus.

What is the unconscious influence of our lives upon men, as we meet them casually from day to day? When we have passed them on the street with the conventional "Good morning," is the world less bright, or brighter? Is it easier for them to be true, or harder? That depends upon the thoughts we have been thinking, the company we have been keeping in the years gone by. St. Paul was as weak as any of us when he attempted to stand alone; but the reason St. Paul moved the world, was because he lived; yet not he, but Christ lived in him. If there is little light coming from us, it is because there is little light coming in, for the impress we make upon men's lives is not always according to how we speak, but it is always, in the long run, according to how we shine. There is no beauty in all this world so beautiful as, "the beauty of holiness." "Let your light so shine!"

St. Luke the Evangelist.

St. Luke, the beloved physician, the evangelist and historian of the Apostolic Church, A.D. 63. What his personal history was, apart from the slight notices in St. Paul's Epistles and the inferences to be drawn from his own writings, is wholly unknown. Tradition says that he was a native of Antioch. He was not one of the Apostles, and was probably not converted till after the Ascension. He was the companion and beloved friend of St. Paul, after whose death he preached the Gospel in Greece and Egypt. He is said to have had a taste and genius for painting, and to have left behind him pictures of our Saviour and the Virgin Mary. Some very curious anecdotes are found in the writings of Metaphrastes and other Greeks in support of this opinion; and there are many ancient pictures of the Blessed Virgin still extant which are ascribed to the period of St. Luke—one in particular, which was placed by Pope Paul V. in the Borghesian Chapel via St. Mary Major. Another picture of her was sent to the Empress Pulcheria, who placed it in the Church of Our Lady at Constantinople. And an inscription was found under an old picture of the Virgin in the vault of the Church of St. Mary, in via Latina, which run thus: *Una de VII. a Luca*

depictus. He is considered the patron saint of fine arts, and is supposed to have written his Gospel much later than St. Matthew and St. Mark wrote theirs.

The Ministry.

The relation between Pastor and people is one of mutual dependence. The people look to the Pastor for instruction, for counsel, for sacraments. He is an ambassador, a minister, a steward. The Pastor looks to the people for his just support, for sympathy and love. If, for any reason, they withhold his just dues, he must suffer. If he contract debts which he cannot pay, he has brought dishonour on himself and people, and reproach to the Church of Christ. They have no right to take it for granted, that because he got on some way last week, he will get on some other way next week. Do not, I pray you, treat the messenger of Christ as you would not your hired servant. Whatever you do, do it cheerfully, do it lovingly, do it promptly. Show me a parish which is as it ought to be, as the Lord's dear family, and I will show you a people who are faithful to their Pastor, and a Pastor who is bound by the closest ties to the people.

The Heavenly Teacher.

What is the world? A school-room, in which the heavenly Father is teaching all his children, through laughter and through tears, through toils and through holidays, through inspirations given by himself and inspirations that are got from a hundred helpful hands and hearts around about.

And death is but the calling home, when school life is over, and real life begins. Why is it that to some of you life is only a summer's holiday, and to others of you life is only an hour of drudgery and toil, and to others life is a magnificent march through God's school-room to God's eternal habitation? Not that some are wiser than others, have studied life more thoroughly, are more rational, but that somehow in some there is a power of reverence, a power of conscience, a power of faith, a power of love and hope, that sees behind the Creator what the Creator hides from the others' eyes, and reads in the hieroglyphics of life what to others are meaningless symbols on a dead, dead stone.

Fashion in Old Jerusalem.

As far back as seven centuries before the Christian era there were very gaily dressed women in Jerusalem. The prophet Ezekiel tells of them. They had garments of silk adorned with brodered work; their bodies were swathed in fine linen; they had shoes of badger skin; they wore ornaments of gold and silver, rings in their ears, bracelets on the wrist, a chain around the neck, a jewel over the brow and a crown upon the head.

The prophet speaks of the earrings which were worn by the women of Jerusalem; but these ornaments were worn by Jewesses ages before the time of Ezekiel, even in the days of Moses, and earlier yet. There were earrings among the other gifts in the oblation given to Moses, as described in the Book of Numbers. The first biblical reference to them is in the part of Genesis which tells how Rebekah obtained as a gift a "golden earring of half a shekel weight" from Abraham's servant, who "put it upon her face." At a later period the patriarch Jacob procured all the earrings which belonged to his household and hid them under an oak tree. Subsequently to that time earrings are frequently spoken of in the Bible. Even Job, the patient man of Uz, must have owned a lot of them in the latter part of his life, for when all his brethren and all his sisters and all his acquaintances came to comfort him under his afflictions, "every one of them gave him an earring of gold."

In the very early periods of Jewish history women seem to have been as fond of dress and decorations as they are in modern times. When the daughters of Jerusalem were appalled and bejeweled in the way described by Ezekiel their garments and ornaments must have been nearly as expensive as those of the grand dames who now shine in society. The wearing of "divers colors," however, does not seem to have been a mark of honour.