

LENTEN REFLECTIONS

Special resources for the summer to come,—this is nature's motto every year. Winter by winter trees and every form of vegetation fill trunk and branch with sap, so that foliage may be bright and abundant; so that blossoms shall be rich in perfume and beget fruit in perfection. Up in the mountains snow is secreted in every nook and crevice. Then when the spring-time sun shines out in its strength, there are fountains high above the plains to gladden every valley with refreshing stream; our cities have their unending supply of water for lawn and household needs; autumn fields stand so thick with corn that they laugh and sing.

Why should not man have a replenishing time like this for his true usefulness on earth? He needs it, as we all must know. The Church as a good Spiritual Mother provides for this necessity of the spirit. She bids us come apart each Lententide from worldly distractions, as much as possible, and get near the Good Master. Like vegetation in winter we all should store up vigor of soul, that our living be nobler and more useful to the world.

The world's great painters and sculptors, so it is said of them, attain no success, unless from time to time they get away from their studios, look at their artistic ideals from a distance and thus have the calmness, the corrected vision of life, and the renewed vigor their work demands.

It is just the same with us all in the characters we are carving out for ourselves in the workshop of human life. Would we not amend many an error of thought and action; would we not bring out many a trait in us a little more strongly and gracefully, if only we would draw nigh each Lententide to the Great Exemplar, and get more of His grace and spiritual beauty in our souls? Then how differently many things would look to us! How better would be our heart's ideal! And how grander would be the fabric we should all strive to create of ourselves!

"I was afraid and went away and hid thy talent in the earth."—Matt. 25:25. Our Lord's story of the talents is still pertinent. How easily we deceive ourselves in thinking what great things we would do if we possessed the larger abilities of our more favored friends. "If I had his money . . . if I had his knowledge and experience . . . if I had the opportunity he has" . . . Let each one fill out the long list of things that would be accomplished if he possessed the talents of some one else. Our influence may be small, our opportunity limited, our resources not great, but are we using the talents we DO possess? People say they would teach in the Church School if they knew enough. One wonders. Others suggest how generous they would be if they possessed the larger wealth of some of their friends. One wonders again. Who of us can be sure what he would do or be if he were some one else?

The world is suffering today from the cowardice of one-talented people who are afraid to use such gifts as they do possess. Not possessing brilliance, they depreciate what plain, faithful mediocrity can do. Let us unearth our buried talents during these six weeks and let our "light shine before men."

What a wider appreciation of life we always get from the work we do! It is when the mechanic is busy with his tools that he sees how his work can be done in better ways. This is the secret of nearly all the useful inventions of the ages. Activity opens up a whole vista of thought before one. Through his experiments in his laboratory Edison saw visions of how the weird power of electricity could be put to practical devices and work soon made the vision a reality.

Precisely the same is it in the realm of religious advancement. When we are doing good works, we see other deeds of beneficence still before us. When we stop to appreciate what service others are rendering to the world, we have an enlarged vision of what good deeds really are, and we are spurred on to nobler effort ourselves.

A Lent spent in striving for a broadened charity and a broadened view of life cannot fail to be a blessing to our own souls; nor can it fail to be a season which the world will hail with delight.

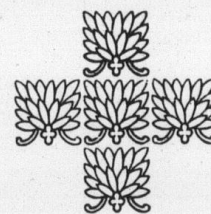
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