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Poetry.

The Child-Jesus.

"The child grew in wisdom and stature, and in favour with God and man."

The Saviour mild,
A little child,
Once dwelt upon the earth below;
Now in the sunny vineyards played,
Now in the pleasant meadows strayed,
As other children go;
A happy child! For children's tears
Dry quickly in the tender years.

The world's wild war
They care not for,
Nor love the ways where it has strayed;
They think not of themselves too much,
Know how to love, and 'tis of such
Heaven's kingdom must be made:
A childlike heart! Long may it last,
When childish years are overpast!

But from within
Uproving sin
Soon mars the beauty which we see;
And soon the mother has to say,
"He will be good some other day."
How happy, then, are we,
That once a child dwelt spotless here,
Nor ever caused the mournful tear.

In tender age
No sudden rage
Flashed from his ever-loving eyes,
When in the vineyards or highway,
The peasant lads were met to play
At evening or sunrise:
Yet was he brave, nor feared to see
The forked lightning cleave a tree.

With all around
He favour found,
So kind and winning did he seem;
His every word was strictly true,
What others he would wish to do,
E'er did he to them:
Humble and meek in word and thought,
The praise of men he never sought.

His morning prayer
Rose through the air
As morning incense, pure and sweet;
The Father in the heavens was known
To him most nearly as his own.
Praises, in language meet,
Came from his heart: God's grace to ask
Was then a pleasure, not a task.

Often he bent,
With eyes intent,
O'er some great Hebrew prophet's page,
In which, with heaven-directed pen,
One of God's ancient holy men
Foretold the coming age:
Or in the summer evenings calm,
Read o'er some old prophetic psalm.

And often he
Beside the knee
Of her who taught his lips to speak,
Would utter words of meaning strange;
And as he spoke his look would change,
No longer soft and meek,
His eyes would glow, with rapture fired,
As by some holy thought inspired.

Thus childhood's day
Passed swift away,
In love and meek obedience spent;
In wisdom as in years he grew,
Relayed by God and creatures too,
Until before him sent
The great forerunner came to bring,
His witness to the coming King.

Then from above
The heavenly dove,
His high and holy mission sealed,
Then from the waters as he came,
The heavens were opened to proclaim
God in his son revealed:
And forth before the world he stood,
The Son of man—the Son of God!

CLEON.

Instructive Tale.

The Dream of Caleb Edmonds.

"Christianity, indeed!" said Mr. Edmonds, as he looked over his books, in a little back parlor behind the shop, "I am disgusted with such hypocrisy!"
There was a dark frown upon the brow of the man of business as he spoke these words, and an irritability in his manner of turning over the leaves before him, which spoke of some bad debt troubling his mind, and robbing him of his good temper.

"What is the matter?" asked a cheerful little woman by the fire, at whose side a basket of stockings told of a large family, and a consequent demand for stitchery.

"Matter!" echoed the husband, "do you not know that Welsford owes me four pounds ten and six pence?"

"Well, he will pay, I suppose?"
"Not he. The goods were purchased more than a year ago, and I have not had a penny yet!"

"What does he say when you see him?" asked Mrs. Edmonds, who evidently loved to look at the bright side.

"Say? he does not say much to me, I can tell you. I told him not to worry me with his excuses, but to bring his money; and that he need not cross my door step again until he could do that."

"I am sorry for his wife," said the little stocking mender, presently; "she appears to be a truly pious woman."

"Pious!" retorted her husband, "yes, and so is he, 'tis that disgusts me. Religion indeed! and he owes me four pounds, ten and six pence. I thought the Bible said, 'Owe no man anything.' Christianity, forsooth!"

Mr. Caleb Edmonds was a highly respectable grocer in the town of Marby—in fact, a man of substance, for business had prospered with him. He was industrious and obliging, rising early, working hard; and thus from small beginnings, he had risen to the possession of considerable wealth. But although an excellent man of business, Mr. Edmonds was a very ordinary Christian. True, he had begun the race, but he did not press toward the mark; alas for the cares of this world and the deceitfulness of riches! And, as it is characteristic of a low standard of piety to be harsh and censorious in our judgment of our fellow Christians, so Mr. Edmonds, when he heard of any defect in the character of professors around him, was always the first to exclaim, "Christianity, indeed!"

Is not this too common with us all? Do we not, even if we give no expression to our thoughts, doubt and hesitate much more than we should doubt and hesitate, regarding the reality of the religion of our "Ready-to-halts" and "Feeble-minds"? Do we not set up a standard of perfection for our fellows, which were too lofty, in our view, as a standard for ourselves? And are we not too ready to exclaim against the wanderings of others, even while we turn aside into forbidden-paths?

Perhaps such thoughts as these had passed through the mind of Mrs. Edmonds, as she sat over her work, for when she rose to leave her basket for some more active household duty, she bent over her husband for a moment, and said gently, "Caleb, I do not like to hear you say, 'Christianity indeed!' as you did just now. Suppose your fellow Christians were to judge of you as harshly as you of them! You often say it?" she continued hastily, "you doubted John Watson's religion yesterday, because he lent money to your rival; and Thornton's because he opposes you in business, and you shook your head about Miss Milwood's piety, because she argued with you against total abstinence! 'Judge not that ye be not judged.'"

Long after his wife left him, these words rang in Caleb's ears—"Judge not!"

At last, as he sat in the twilight, between sleeping and waking—for business was very dull, and he could spare half an hour for rest—a vision stole upon him, and he passed in imagination, rapidly through the scenes which follow.

At first he found himself in a very quiet neighborhood, and in the presence of three maiden ladies, whose names he knew very well. They had their feet upon the fender, and their knitting laid aside—were evidently discussing the affairs of their neighbors.

"Such pride!" such pride said the elder lady, whose name was Rayby, "what will come next, I wonder?"

"The most fashionable boarding-school in R—, I assure you," said another—Miss Phillip.

"Ah!" said Miss Rayby, "and I can remember the time—of course I was very young then, but still I can remember—"

when Caleb Edmonds swept out his own shop!"

"Dear me! and now he has the upstart impudence to send his girl to such a school as that!" exclaimed Miss Sophia Milwood, the spinster who had not yet spoken. "O, the pride of human nature!"

"And he a professor too!"
"Professor!" said Miss Rayby; "religion does not teach a man such absurd pride as that!"

Miss Phillip shook her head, and began to lament the increase of false professors. "Well," thought Caleb, "I believed that in spending some of my cash in the education of my children, I could not go very far wrong; but I find I am misunderstood, even here."

The next scene was the drawing-room of John Watson, of whom Mrs. Edmonds had spoken. A lady was making the tea behind a silver urn, and a gentleman—her husband—sat beside her.

"Poor Thompson," said Mrs. Watson—for it was she—"I trust he will succeed."

"He shall, if by God's blessing I can compass it."

"He is a very deserving young man," continued the lady; "the manner in which he bore the loss of all his property would win esteem, even if he had no other claim."

Mr. Watson did not reply, his mind had wandered to another branch of the subject. "That Caleb Edmonds," he said at length, "I am surprised at the ill feeling he displays."

"Towards Thornton?"
"Yes, he is evidently annoyed at the opening of another shop so near his own; where, in the principal street of a town like this, he should have expected competition. Besides, he has made a little fortune, and has nothing to fear; yet he will not treat George Thornton with ordinary civility."

"I thought he was a religious man," said Mrs. Watson.

"He pretends to be," replied her husband, "but I have not much faith in a religion which brings forth so little fruit!"

Poor Caleb! his wife's words—the Master's words—still sounded in his ears as they had never done before, meeting with a responsive echo in his heart.

Again a change, and Mr. Edmonds found himself beside a sickly-looking woman, who, leaning upon her husband's arm, walked slowly towards the house of prayer. It was impossible to look without interest upon her pale and anxious face—a face which had once been beautiful; and equally impossible to disregard the careful tenderness with which her steps were guided by the strong man at her side. Their conversation, too, was worthy of remark—they were speaking of the consolations of the gospel.

"Who knows?" exclaimed the invalid, "perhaps there may be words just suited to our case this morning. 'Words for the poor!'"

"Poor as regards this world only, Mary!"

Her eyes brightened as she looked up cheerfully, "Yes, yes, rich in treasure far more costly than earth's gold. God help us to look up, and to trust him for the meat that perisheth."

They walked on for a while, and then the wife said, mournfully, "I sometimes fear that it is pride which makes me shrink from meeting Mr. Edmonds, I do shrink from it. O, if we could only pay him!"

"We shall be able to do so soon, I hope," said Welsford; "it has been a hard struggle, Mary, starvation almost, but I think it is nearly over."

"Ah, it was all for me! I am sure Mr. Edmonds would be patient, if he knew how much you spent in medicines for me, and how little work you have."

"He is patient after a fashion; and we have reason to be thankful for that; still he has said some crushing things to me—harsh things which he may live to repent—things which have made me doubt his Christianity."

"Nay," said Mrs. Welsford, gently, "I would not judge him; how many inconsistent things we do."

"You are right. I may not lift up my

voice; alas, but little likeness to my Lord is found in me!"

Again the echoing voice thrilling through the soul of the listener—again he heard the words "Judge not!"—and as he dwelt upon them the vision slowly faded, and he, Bunyan-like, awoke, and beheld it was a dream! But the lesson of the dream was not quite lost upon him, for he awoke to a deeper spirit of Christian charity, a nobler self-denial, a holier humility, a nearer likeness to Jesus. He had been taught in that brief twilight musing, one of the grand old lessons of the Book of God.

The fireside morning worship was just ended, and Charles Welsford was about to go forth to his daily toil, when a gentle knock at the door spoke of a visitor; how great was the surprise of all when Caleb Edmonds entered!

"You are come, sir—"

"I am come," said the grocer, interrupting him, "to express my hope that you are not under any concern about the little amount you owe me. Take your time, my good sir, take your time."

The poor man's eyes were filled with tears, as, grasping the outstretched hand, he tried to speak his thanks. "My wife," said Mr. Edmonds, turning towards Mrs. Welsford, "put something in my hands, just as I left, for you, ma'am." And forth from his pockets came tea, sugar, biscuits, from the good wife's ample store, till Mary's eyes, too, filled with grateful tears.

"And now," said the visitor kindly, "don't forsake the shop; get your little parcels there, and pay just when it suits you. By the way, if a sovereign would be any service to you, I have one which will burn a hole in my pocket—as the saying goes—unless I give it to somebody." And before they could reply, he had laid the coin upon the table and was gone.

"Mary," said Mr. Welsford, "let us thank God for this."

They knelt, and as he breathed forth his hearty gratitude, his wife wept tears of joy, and even the little ones murmured the "Amen."

But Mr. Edmonds did not stop at this; it was to him Charles Welsford owed a situation which soon after placed him far above the reach of want; it was to him he owed a host of kindly deeds, which came like sunshine to his inmost soul.

We hasten on. Not alone in this regard was Caleb Edmonds changed, for two days after his strange dream, he walked into his rival's shop, shook hands, invited him to drink tea at his house, spoke pleasantly about their "opposition," and even hinted at his own retirement at some future day, when his new friend would have "a better chance!"

And from that time, the charity which "suffereth long and is kind, is not easily provoked, thinketh no evil, beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things," held an almost undisputed sway over the heart of Caleb Edmonds; and ever was the maxim of the Bible borne in mind; "Judge not that ye be not judged."

Ancient and Modern Sceptics.

Pilate is the inventor of the oft-repeated artifice of infidels—that of regarding both the Old and the New Testament only as oriental literature. They are anxious to excuse their estrangement from Christianity on the ground which Pilate takes of not being a Jew. It is a current saying with such people, "Every nation has its own sphere of religious ideas; and hence, what responds to the peculiarity of one nation, is not on that account, for all." The prophets—nay, even the Lord, himself, and his apostles, are treated just like the sages of Grecian antiquity, or the Saphis, of Persia, and the Brahmins, of India.

There, as here, men investigate, under the pretence of retaining what is good. But the idea of belonging to any particular religion like that of Palestine, as if it were the universal religion, they reject. What blindness! Is the sun a particular light, and of no use to the north, because it rises in the east?

KRUMMACHER.