



SUNDAY READING

SOMETHING ABOUT PROVERBS.
Wise Sayings Which Have Been Common for Many Centuries.

With reverence be it spoken, not only did Solomon, the wisest of men, but a greater than Solomon, condescend to use the short sayings which had become fixed in the language of Judea. Take, for example, amongst many: "Physician, heal thyself;" "One soweth and another reapeth;" "Whosoever shall compel thee to go a mile, go with him twain;" "Where-soever the carcass is, there will the eagles be gathered together."

It has been said, that the essence of proverbs is shortness, sense and salt. Nor is this a bad definition. As to the first: "Brevity is the soul of wit;" and therefore some of our best proverbs are in two words—"Extremes meet;" "Forewarned fore-armed." Popularity, however, is the prestige of proverbs—the mint-stamp which makes them current. But it is the three requisites above noted, and especially the salt, which render them acceptable to the masses, who reject what is tasteless, and love the pungent. An example of this is the fact that Howell, a writer of the seventeenth century, made a collection of popular proverbs, and added about five hundred of his own. Whilst the collected still exist, and have proved as heir-looms from generation to generation, those invented, even by such a wit, died with the inventor. Some of Howell's deserved a better fate,—for example: "Pride is a flower that grows in the devil's garden;" "Burn not thy fingers to sniff another man's candle;" "Faith is a great lady, and good works are her attendants." In proof of the popular paternity of proverbs, it has been quaintly yet truly said, that they are "sayings without an author;" or, as otherwise said, "They consist of the wit of one and the wisdom of many."

It is not a matter of surprise, in this state of mixed existence, we have proverbs of good and evil directly antagonistic the one to the other, to suit the different classes of mankind. Thus, we have the Christian proverb: "The noblest vengeance is to forgive." And we have the anti-Christian saying: "He who cannot revenge himself is weak; he who will not is vile." Again, it is said, "Common fame is seldom to blame;" and, yet more truly, it is also said, "They say so, is half a liar."

Proverbs do not, of necessity, claim to be figurative. Some of our best have no allegory. "Haste makes waste;" "Honesty is the best policy;" and a hundred more may be cited. But there is the saltiness in the proper use of figure, which renders it pleasurable to the public palate. Take this one proverb: "He may exist till he is a beggar who waits to be rich by other men's deaths," and place beside it that other figurative saying, "He who waits for dead men's shoes may go barefoot," and the people will accept the vulgar and reject the philosophical.

Rhyme is not essential, but a vast recommendation to a proverb. It gives the credit of an incantation. People like what is like, and rejoice in similarity. Thus, a vast number of our household proverbs are rhymes: "Good mind, good find;" "Little strokes fell great oaks;" "Who goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing." So, even in Latin proverbs, we have, "Qualis vita finis ita;" "Via crucis via lucis." So, too, alliteration is a fond incrustation of proverbs, "No cross no crown;" "Out of debt out of danger." Exaggeration is another recommendation of the witty saying. Mankind, in their fallen state, are hyperbolic. The Persians said that "a needle's eye is wide enough for two friends—the whole world is too narrow for two foes." So, whilst in this country we say that a lucky man is "born with a silver spoon in his mouth," the Arabs were long before us with their saying, "Fling him into the Nile, and he will come up with a fish in his mouth."

The antiquity and tradition of proverbs are wonderful. Aristotle, two thousand years ago, records proverbs of as ancient date even in his time. One would think that the saying: "One must not look a gift horse in the mouth," is indigenous to English soil. But Jerome, a Latin father of the fourth century, quotes, as an old proverb of his day, "Si quis dat mannos ne quere in dentibus annos." Again, we say, "Liars should have good memories." But the same father has it, and Quinctilian before him. The storehouse of Latin proverbs of the middle ages, of which Dr. Trenchard's appendix of some hundreds are not the original; but many of them acknowledge their debt to antiquity. Thus, "Ut dicunt multi, cito transit lancea, stulti;" or, in plain English, "A fool's bolt is soon shot." St. Paul did not shun to borrow. "Evil communications corrupt good manners," from a Greek comedy. "It is hard for thee to kick against the pricks," or goods, is at once a most expressive and instructive proverb to show the futility of man contending against God, to his own hurt, as the oxen when kicking against the instrument used to accelerate their speed.—Selected.

IN THE ANGLICAN CALENDAR.

St. Lucy, the Virgin and Martyr—Beginning of the Greater Antiphons.

To-morrow will be the third Sunday in Advent, with violet as the color in the Western and red in the Sarum use; two altar lights; and the same for each of the week days, except when Tuesday is observed as the feast of St. Lucy, when the color

is red in both uses, she having suffered martyrdom.

St. Lucy, or Lucia, of Syracuse, in Sicily, whose festival comes on Tuesday, was one of those fair young maidens of old who chose to die for the sake of the faith when it was in her power to make a choice between wealth, ease, and all the pleasures of this world, and the hardships to be borne as a bearer of the cross of Christ. She was born of rich parents in the latter part of the third century. Her father died when she was very young, leaving her in the care of her mother, Eutychia, who appears to have been of the kind, not rare in these days, who considered that it did not make much difference what a person believed, so long as they did not do anything very bad. Lucy had, however, been trained as a Christian, and her piety increased as she grew to be a beautiful maiden. Her beauty and her wealth could not fail to bring suitors; and according to the custom of the times, her mother and other relations betrothed her to a rich young nobleman who was a pagan.

Lucy had no desire for matrimony, but that her husband should be a pagan was most abhorrent to her. It happened that her mother was suffering from a disease which none of the doctors could cure, and she was persuaded by Lucy to visit the tomb of St. Agatha, at Catania, and implore the intercession of that virgin saint. They made the journey, visited the church and knelt at the tomb. While there, Lucy had a vision of St. Agatha, who appeared amid a troop of angels and said:—

"Lucy, my dear sister, virgin consecrated to God, well art thou called Lucia, who art a light to the faithful. What dost thou ask of me what thou canst obtain at once thyself for thy mother? Know that thy faith has won back health for her, and that as Jesus Christ has rendered Catania famous for my sake, Syracuse also shall be made glorious through thee."

At these words, Lucy awoke, turned to her mother and told her she was healed, as she proved to be. Then Lucy begged her mother never to speak to her of marriage, but to leave her to devote herself wholly to God. The mother consented and Lucy further persuaded her to join with her in giving up their wealth and devoting it to the Lord.

The healed and happy mother returned with her child to Syracuse where "by degrees they sold their jewels and their costly furniture and their estates, and spent the price in ransoming captives, delivering prisoners and succoring all who had need."

The persecutions under Diocletian were being actively carried on, and the young man to whom Lucy had been betrothed made a complaint to the prefect that she had been misled by the christian superstitions and was wasting the substance that of right should come to him. She was summoned before the tribunal and ordered to sacrifice to the gods of the pagans. She refused and no threats had power to terrify her.

Then the enraged prefect ordered the officers to take her away. They tried to do so, but God manifested his power by making her immovable. They brought oxen and ropes, but no human force had power to move that weak bodied girl. Then they kindled a great fire around her, but as the three Hebrew children walked unharmed in the furnace, so did she, amid the flames, suffer no harm, but talked cheerfully predicting the end of the persecutions within twenty years. Her life was ended by the stroke of a sword or dagger. Within twenty years, Constantine the Great became Emperor, and the persecution of christians came to an end.

The Wednesday, Friday and Saturday following St. Lucy's day are Ember days, and therefore days of fasting and of prayer for all about to receive Holy Orders, as well as "that for the honor of the Apostolic Ministry." Unfit persons may not be admitted.

On the last eight days of Advent beginning with Dec. 16, next Friday, what are called the seven greater antiphons are sung at evening before and after the Magnificat as a preparation for Christmas. The first of these, *O Sapientia*, is described as "the first trope of the great birth hymn with which the church goes forth to meet her Lord." In English it reads:

O Wisdom, which didst come forth from the mouth of the Most High, reaching from end to end, strongly and sweetly ordering all things, come that thou mayest teach us the way of understanding.

The antiphon for Saturday is *O Adonai*, and is translated:

O Lord and leader of the house of Israel, who didst appear unto Moses in a flame of fire in the bush, and gavest thy law in Sinai, come that Thou mayest redeem us with Thine outstretched arm.

Cardinal Lavigerie, who died recently, was one of the most notable characters of modern times. As a young student he attracted the attention of the Archbishop of Paris by his ability in classical and theological studies. Later he occupied a confidential position at the Vatican, was consecrated Bishop of Nancy, and soon after became interested in Eastern missionary work. The enormities of the slave trade here came under his notice, and thenceforth he devoted himself to its suppression with a devotion which approached fanaticism in its earnestness. Through his efforts the civilized world was aroused to the atrocities of the traffic in human beings, and measures were taken by the European powers which resulted in its suppression in recent years.

NEWS AND NOTABILLIA.

A Hebrew National Society has been established in London, whose object is to form a library that may prevent foreign Jews from going to socialist or missionary reading rooms.

The Czar has nominated the Czarevitch to be President of the Russian State Council. It is thought that under his presidency the oppression of Jews and Catholics will eventually be relaxed.

The early Christians, to manifest their dislike of pagan vanity, in the effeminate of long and curling hair and carefully cultivated beards, shaved their faces and kept their hair cropped close. In the time of Tertullian this was the mark of the Christian.

The Rev. Mary P. Whitney of North Cambridge, Mass., has accepted a call to the pastorate of the Second Unitarian Church of West Somerville, Mass. Her husband occupies the pulpit of the First Unitarian Church of Athol. It seems to run in the family.

It is said the great art of keeping one's hands white and soft is never to use a rough towel on them, but to handle them as gently as if they were glass. But, after all, the finest, whitest and softest hand is the hand that lifts up the fallen, soothes the brow of the fevered, and gives the cup of cold water to the poor.

A German boy, who was found about seven years ago, friendless, in want, on the steps of a house in New York, and was asked "if he was not afraid to be alone in this great city," looked up with the simple but beautiful faith of a child, and said, "No, sir; my father and mother are dead, but God still lives."

There is a mystery of iniquity as well as a mystery of Godliness; oftentimes in affliction there is something discovered to us which, for all our search of ourselves, we could not have found out nor have believed to be in us. Like a pool troubled, so are our hearts in affliction; there comes up mud which we would not have thought to be there.—Alexander Wedderburn (1682).

An Englishman who recently had an audience with the Pope describes the Holy Father's face as quite colorless and wrinkled, his eyes dark gray blue, gentle yet penetrating in expression, his hair snowy white, his nose aquiline, his mouth unusually wide. His thin and slightly stooped figure gave an impression of fragility and weakness which was confirmed by his gait. A member of the Guard carried an ivory cane so that the Pope might use it to support himself if necessary.

In Cochiti, a town on the coast of Travancore, a State in India, there is a small body of Jews who are called White Jews because their skin is fair and their hair light. They were once very numerous along this coast; but in Cochiti, where they have a quarter all to themselves, there are now only some 200 of them. They have dwelt there for hundreds of years as a distinct race, and claim to be descendants of the Jews who fled from Jerusalem after its destruction by the Romans. (A. D. 70.)

There are three Epistles which may be especially representative, each of one great line of Christian truth. The Epistle to the Romans brings out with heart searching closeness the personal relation of the soul to God as its Judge and its Saviour; the Epistle to the Hebrews is the key to the Old Testament, and the golden link which binds sacrifice and priesthood round the throne of our exalted Master; and the Epistle to the Ephesians brings out, not the individual relation of each soul to Christ, but the union of all in Him, to God and to one another.

That is a very suggestive injunction of the apostle which says: "Be kind." How few really kind people you meet. Many people are cross and revengeful, others are bitter and resentful, and still others are so occupied with their own personal affairs that they make no effort to be kind. And yet there is no surer way of securing happiness than by being truly kind to others. Kindness makes easy access to hearts that cannot be reached in any other way. He who would make the world better, who would make its cares less and burdens lighter, who would lead souls to Christ the Saviour, must be kind.

Said Renan, when on his death-bed, to his wife: "Be calm and resigned.... We perish, we disappear, but heaven and earth remain, and the march of time goes on forever." "That the march of time goes on forever," does not seem very consolatory, not any more than that it kept marching for millions of years before we were. Compare with this stoic's last words the triumphant strain of the dying Paul: "I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith: henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord the righteous judge, will give unto me."

The heir of the King and Queen of Italy, whose full title is Victor Emmanuel Ferdinand and Marie Janvier Prince of Naples, attained his twenty-third year on Friday, having been born in 1869 at Naples, in memory of which he was given the name of the patron saint of the town, St. Januarius as we style him. He is a young man of a studious temperament, and would probably be happier as the son of a private gentleman than as the heir of a military kingdom. It is generally supposed on the Continent that he would marry the pretty Princess Clementine of Belgium if it were possible to come to some arrangement to obtain the consent of the Pope.

Speaking at a church of England Temperance society meeting on Saturday night, the bishop of London said:—It is a very long time since I preached a written sermon in the pulpit, but when I did preach written sermons, which I did for a considerable number of years, I always used to find that if I had preached the same sermon in different places, say five times, I had had enough of it or not. (laughter). I became thoroughly tired of the whole thing, and was obliged to turn my mind to something altogether different, and I have always advised preachers, after having preached a discourse a certain number of times, without laying down how long they might have been in doing it, to burn such sermons. (laughter). I am convinced myself that the best way always is to write your sermon three times over and then to burn it and preach what you remember of it.

How the Scriptures Were Preserved.

The books of the law were the first books of the Bible to be collected by the priests and leaders of the Israelites; after the law came the written history of the people, in the fifth century, B. C., the collection of the prophets by Nehemiah; and from this time onward the collection of hagiographa, the Psalms, Proverbs, Job, Canticles. All of these had been preserved by the priests, copied and recopied as occasion required, and circulated in manuscript, as of course writings were circulated in those days. The dispersion of the Hebrews and their acquisition of other languages and loss of the Hebrew language, necessitated the translation of the Scriptures into other than the Hebrew, and previous to the second century B. C., what we know as the Septuagint translation, the LXX, was completed in Greek, designed especially for the Hebrews living in Alexandria and other parts of Egypt. The Septuagint comes from a tradition that seventy scholars—seventy two actually—made the translation. Translations and recensions into the Aramaic were also made, and these translations were copied from time to time, so that the oldest manuscript of the Old Testament now extant is only about 1,400 years old.

How Heine Died.

One of Heine's friends who visited him in his last illness (1856), described him as being a prey to unspeakable bodily suffering, torturing, constant, hopeless. He had been one of the most bitter skeptics of his day, but now he had found peace, and joy and hope.

"My friend," he said in calm tones, "believe me, it is Henri Heine who tells you so, that after having reflected on it for years, after having reconsidered and maturely weighed what has been written on this subject by men of all sorts, I have reached the conclusion that there is a God who judges our conduct, that the soul is immortal, and that after this life there is another, when the good will be rewarded and the wicked punished. This is what Henri Heine says, who has so often denied the Holy Ghost. If ever you have denied these grand truths fling from you these doubts and learn from my example that nothing but simple faith in God's mercy can sustain at such a time as this. As for me, I frankly declare that it is a cursed falsehood that has long made me blind."

CURED

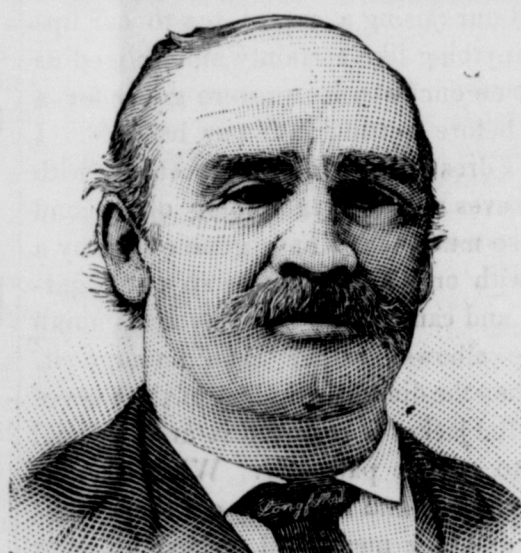
"About seven or eight months ago I was attacked by a cough, and at once began to take a medicine much advertised as an expectorant, and continued using it until I had taken about six bottles. Instead of giving me relief, it only made me worse. I tried several other remedies, but all in vain, and I don't think I had three whole nights' rest during my illness. I began to think that

Consumption

had laid hold of me, and my hopes of recovery were all gone. I was a mere skeleton, but a friend of mine, who had been some time away, called to see me. He recommended me to try Ayer's Cherry Pectoral, and kindly sending me a bottle, I took it, but with little hopes of recovery. I am thankful, however, to say that it cured me, and I am to-day enjoying the best of health."—J. Whitcomb Payne, Monrovia, Liberia.

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