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FRANCES WRIGHT.

BY F. M. HOLLAND.

WHATEVER else the next century may do, it is not likely to begin as badly as this one did. Our country was much the happiest on earth, but was cursed by slavery and darkened by the ignorance, superstition, and vice which reigned elsewhere. Europe suffered under the burden of continual war and universal despotism. Great Britain felt these evils less than her neighbors, but she was governed by an oligarchy of noblemen, millionaires, and bishops, whose purpose was to keep themselves rich and the people poor. Pauperism, illiteracy, and crime were terribly common; reformers were treated as public enemies; and many leading champions of liberty had abandoned her cause in despair.

Such was the world when a girl of seventeen made up her mind to separate from what she calls "the rich and haughty aristocracy" in which she had been brought up. Frances Wright was born at Dundee, on September 6, 1795, of parents with liberal views; but she became an orphan in early infancy, and was removed by her grandparents to England. There, while still in her teens she made, as she says herself, "a vow to wear ever in her heart the cause of the poor and helpless."

About this time she happened to read a history of the United States, and could scarcely believe that there really existed any country which was so free, happy, and enlightened. She looked for it in an atlas, but found nothing there for North America but British colonies. Was it all a dream of an impossible Utopia? Looking again at the atlas, she noticed that the date was earlier than the revolutionary war. After much search she found maps which proved that there really was a land of liberty and light. She came here in September, 1818, and travelled during the next eighteen months over the country lying between Niagara Falls, Lake Champlain, and the Potomac. Her impressions were generally satisfactory; but she blamed the American ladies for dressing with more regard to elegance than to health in cold and wet weather. She was especially pleased with the determination of the people to enforce the laws they had made; and among many interesting anecdotes in the

Views of America, published in 1821, is an account of the suppression of a revolt of the felons in the Philadelphia jail by the citizens in the neighborhood, who promptly mounted the walls, musket in hand. Another interesting particular is that the Democrats constantly spoke of Franklin, as one of their founders, while he was less praised by their opponents. Elections were conducted quietly. Women had more liberty than even in England, as well as much better education. Religion was already growing more liberal, especially as regarded Sabbatarianism. She was shocked at the vice and wretchedness of the free blacks in Maryland, and Virginia, but ascribed it to their inability to get high wages, where slaves could be hired cheaply. She says the Virginian planters were too easily satisfied with gilding the chain; but she consoled herself with this assurance by President Monroe: "The day is not very far distant when not a slave is to be found in America." Thus closed a book which was widely circulated in many languages, and did much to correct false accounts published by less friendly travellers.

Her ablest book, published in 1822 and entitled *A Few Days in Athens*, is a complete vindication of the life and teachings of Epicurus against slanders not yet extinct. She shows how plainly he distinguished between pleasure and vice; her style is that of a novelist; and she draws a charming portrait of herself as one of the disciples of a philosopher who has been sadly misunderstood.

When this sprightly book appeared she was at Paris, where she and her friend La Fayette were keenly interested in the unsuccessful rebellions in Spain and Italy. When these struggles for liberty had failed, she returned to our country, in 1824, and gave her main attention to studying the laws which upheld slavery, and observing the character of the negroes. For the latter purpose she bought several families of slaves, as well as a great tract of land, on which now stands the city of Memphis. She hoped to show how easily the blacks might be prepared by education for freedom. Unfortunately her health broke down so completely, and her white assistants were so false to their trust, that she was finally obliged to send the negroes to Hayti and sell the land. She had now

made up her mind that "slavery is but one form of the same evils which pervade the whole frame of human society"; that the source of all these errors is ignorance; and that the only remedy is "the spread and increase of knowledge." What was then called education took little heed of the conditions of social progress, and it was scarcely accessible to girls except in its rudiments. Both these defects were vigorously attacked by the *Free Enquirer*, which Miss Wright began to edit in 1828 in company with Robert Dale Owen. The latter had previously carried on the paper under another name in his socialistic community at New Harmony, Indiana. The little weekly was published thenceforth at New York; but he continued to be the most active editor.

His colleague was busy in a field where few women had yet trod. In the summer of 1828 a revival was carried so far in Cincinnati as to destroy many a woman's reason or life. The news brought Frances Wright to the city, and there she delivered that autumn the first course of public lectures ever given by a woman in America. The court-house was crowded with gentlemen and ladies, and one of the latter has said that she had never seen anything so striking as the orator's "tall and majestic figure, the deep and almost solemn expression of her eyes, her garment of plain white muslin, which hung around her in folds that recalled the drapery of a Grecian statue." Her dark brown hair was worn in ringlets, though the fashionable style was much more artificial. She was then thirty-three, and her cheeks were still rosy; but her forehead was already furrowed with deep lines of thought. She reminded those who denied the right of a woman to speak in public that truth has no sex. Her main theme was the duty of studying the world in which we live. Her tone was always ladylike; but she ascribed the origin of all knowledge to sensation; and in subsequent lectures she admitted her inability to discover any but earthly duties and interests. She held that education was too much under clerical control, that the children ought to have "schools of industry," where useful trades could be taught, as was done at New Harmony, and finally that there should be public halls of science with libraries and museums. This part of her plan was attempted during her lifetime, at New York, though with only temporary success. In conclusion she presented a plan for having all children of two years old and upwards brought up by the State.

These lectures were delivered that winter in Baltimore and Philadelphia, then in New York, in Boston next August, and often afterwards. They attracted much attention; and printed copies may be found in large libraries. What seems most remarkable is the hatred which was called out. Her second course,

which began at Cincinnati in May, 1836, contained a lecture on "Chartered Monopolies" and another on "Southern Slavery." She said she had spent the best years of her life and half her fortune in studying the condition of the bondmen, but that their own welfare required that they should be educated before they were emancipated, and that they should be colonised in the level districts of what were then the slave states. Her attempt to deliver this lecture at Philadelphia, on July 14, caused the mayor to forbid her to speak there again on this or any other subject; but he finally gave way.

It was between the delivery of these two courses that she married a Frenchman whose acquaintance she had made at New Harmony, and whose name she wrote thus—Darusmont. Her married life is said to have been unhappy; but she complains that her biographers seldom gave the facts. Her busy life ended on December 14, 1852. Her success as lecturer, journalist and author was more brilliant than permanent, though the novelette about Epicurus is still worth reading. Her most complete failure was as a poet. Her influence in destroying intolerance and slavery, as well as in reforming education, was very great, and we can feel sure of the fulfilment of her generous wish, published in the *Free Enquirer*, on August 12, 1829: "Let death conquer my memory, and let the world preserve those principles which it is the object of my life to establish."

CHRISTENING IN CYPRUS.

BY MONCURE D. CONWAY.

THE subjoined letter was written to a friend of mine (Mrs. Seamur) in London by Mrs. Catharine Grigsby, wife of a judge residing at Papho, Cyprus, where the letter was written. It possesses a good deal of interest for those interested in the history of religious ideas and symbolism. Without going in any detail into the large subject of baptism, I will merely indicate some conclusions to which my own studies have led me. Nothing corresponding to the significance of the Christian rite of baptism existed among the ancient Jews, but in the Oriental world there was some such significance, especially in baptisms in the Ganges and in the Jumna. When John the Baptist instituted his baptism, there was enough importance in the usage of washing and cleansing proselytes to enable the populace to comprehend the process; but proselytes had never been initiated in this way into the Jewish covenant. There is some ground for supposing that John the Baptist may have got his rite from some Oriental source, if indeed he was not himself an Oriental dervish. In the "Gospel According to the Hebrews" it is said: "Behold the mother of the Lord and his brothers said to him, 'John the Bap-

tist baptiseth for remission of sins: let us go and be baptised by him.' But he said to them, 'Wherein have I sinned that I should go and be baptised by him? except perchance this very thing that I have said is ignorance.' When the people had been baptised, Jesus also came and was baptised by John. And as he went up the heavens were opened, and he saw the Holy Spirit descending and entering into him. And a voice out of the heaven, saying, 'Thou art my beloved Son, in thee I am well pleased'; and again, 'I have this day begotten thee.' And straightway a great light shone around the place."

This day begotten. The Holy Spirit (*ruach*) is here feminine, and in this fragment we probably have the origin of the myth of immaculate conception and the star. There is further ground for believing that this fragment influenced Paul, for there was a book known in the second century called the *Preaching of Paul*, concerning which a tract printed among Cyprian's works says: "This counterfeit and actually interne-cine baptism has been promulgated in particular by a book forged by the same heretics in order to spread the same error: this book is entitled the *Preaching of Paul*, and in it, in opposition to all the Scriptures, you will find Christ, the only man who was altogether without fault, both making confession respecting his own sin, and that he was driven by his mother Mary almost against his own will to receive the baptism of John." Paul's idea seems to be that of a "new creation" of the child of Adam, rather than of second birth; the new creature was to breathe a new spiritual atmosphere, and consecrated food. The tone of severance ascribed to Jesus when speaking of or to his mother—"Mistress, what have I to do with thee?"—may be an indication of the development of the idea represented in the Aramaic fragment above cited, "This day have I begotten thee"; followed by the descent and *entrance* of the (feminine) Holy Spirit. It will be noted that in the rite described in the subjoined letter the child's natural mother is excluded from the room.

"You ask me to tell you about the Greek christening to which I went a short time ago. It is a truly elaborate ceremony, too much so from the poor infant's point of view, I should think. The hour at which we were invited was five o'clock in the afternoon, the temperature 85° to 90°. When we arrived we were met by the host and hostess with all due ceremony, and ushered into the drawing-room, where a large party of friends were already assembled. In the middle of the room was a small square table, upon which was placed a white pillow, and upon that was laid a large metal-bound copy of the Gospels, and a large silver-plated cross. By the table was a chair with two candlesticks on it, with native wax tapers;

these were lighted when the service commenced, and were much trouble, for being somewhat thin and attenuated (not quite so thin as one's little finger) they were constantly bowing themselves down with the heat and having to be propped up again. The proceedings commenced by the old priest reading a homily to the unconscious infant at a galloping pace, out of a dirty tattered brown prayer-book, to which nobody paid any particular attention—that being the baby's business! Before long the baby grew restless, and the godfather, who held it in his arms, "sitting up straight and tall," (it was nearly three months old) promptly seized the cross and held it for the baby to play with, who clasped it with its little fat hands and conveyed one corner of it to its mouth, sucking it with much satisfaction; and so peace reigned as far as baby was concerned. This finished, the baby was handed back to its nurse, who took it from the room. Then followed a lengthy exhortation to the godfather, and while this was going on the assembled company chattered and gossiped in undertones one to another, it being nobody's business apparently but that of the godfather to listen to the priest. A round copper, which served as a font, stood on a chair next to the one with the candles. Into this warm water was poured, and blessed by the priest; then more prayers were read, and oil was brought in and added to the water, which was again blessed. By this time the infant reappeared on the scene, wrapped in a new towel and entirely divested of clothing, and was again handed over to the godfather. Then the priest handed the cross to the godfather to kiss, and then placed it across the baby's face. More prayers were galloped through, then lighted tapers were given to each member of the assembled company to hold, which did not add to one's comfort, as the temperature was considerably raised thereby. With my fan I extinguished mine (accidentally for the purpose), hoping it would pass unnoticed, but it was promptly lighted again with the greatest politeness by the gentleman next to me. The tapers being lighted, was the signal for business. Now the priest took the infant, and, holding it up aloft for a second, naked and terrified, plunged it three times into the hot oil and water, in the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost, forcing it deep down into the water, and smearing its poor head and face, in no wise disconcerted by its piercing shrieks. This done, it was handed back to the godfather, who rolled it up in the towel and did the best he could with the wailing, greasy bundle, while more prayers were read by the priest. The next part of the programme was cutting off three locks of the baby's hair with a little bright pair of scissors, new for the occasion; each lock was severed in the name of the Trinity, and the hair thrown into the font. This baby had splendid thick

dark hair (I presume this part of the ceremony would have to be dispensed with in case of a bald baby!). This done, a little gold cross on a piece of blue ribbon was blessed by the priest and put over its head; then its new clothes were all consecrated one by one and piled on the 'bundle,' which wailed unceasingly. This finished, they walked three times round the room, chanting and burning incense. The godmother at this point in the proceedings relieved the victimised godfather of his burden and dressed the infant in the presence of the assembled company in its new clothes, oily as it was, not attempting to dry it in the least, and custom demands that these clothes should not be changed for *three* days! While the child was being dressed, the priest continued reading, the folks talked, and the victim screamed its loudest. When dressed, it was handed back to its godfather once more, and, the priest leading the way, still reading and chanting, they went into the adjoining room to hand the baby over to its mother, and this concluded the lengthy ceremony. The mother is never allowed to be present at the baptismal service, for the child is supposed to be born in sin, in which she is a participator, and by virtue of its baptism it is given to her regenerated—a new creature. Light refreshments, jam, cake, wine, etc., were then served, after which we took our leave, after being much thanked for coming! All I hope is, that the next baptism I am required to attend will take place in the *winter* time! I ought to say that the water in which the infant is baptised is taken to the church and poured upon a consecrated spot, over which the foot of mortal may never tread. A wedding and a funeral are equally elaborate ceremonies, the former painfully so—lasting for *three* days.”

THE ETERNAL RELIGION.

BY GEORGE M. MCCRIE.

FAMILIAR to most of us is the story of the mortal who yearned to explore the vastness of the universe. How he dreamed that, in the company of an angel, he was permitted to soar, for what seemed to be countless ages, through star-system after star-system of the heavens, through galaxies of suns and worlds innumerable, until the burden of infinitude weighed upon his very soul. “There is no ending,” he exclaimed, in utter weariness, “*no ending* of this universe of God!” Then the angel threw up his glorious hands to the heaven of heavens, and cried aloud, “Even so. Lo, also there is *no beginning*!”

As the march of the universe is eternal, so is its choric song—a theme without beginning or ending, a rhythm dateless and everlasting. Such is the conception which science gives us of the eternal religion of the universe.

Is it not a sublime conception? Some are accus-

tomed to boast of the antiquity and universality of their own particular system of religious faith, how its foundations were laid in the remote past, how it has had its prophets, apostles, saints, and noble army of martyrs, its traditions, sacraments and ceremonies hallowed by the use of ages. Christianity is such an ancient organisation, consecrated by centuries of tradition, by prayers and tears unnumbered, by the testimonies of its confessors, the blood of its martyrs—the oblations of the faithful. Yet, after all, it is but a part of a greater whole, an anthem only in an endless choral service, an epoch simply in the history of religion universal and eternal. Christianity, and all other so-called religions, are but phases of the one eternal faith, which embraces them all, as the greater includes the less. The phase will pass away—will some day have its ending, even as it had its commencement, but the cosmic process, of which it forms a stage, is unending, even as it had no beginning.

This is not a heated dream. It is plain, sober, matter-of-fact reality. That we cannot do more than approximately define the eternal religion, goes without saying, for to define anything exactly is to point out its limits, and of limits the religion of eternity knows nothing. We may view it, however, in one light, as the purposive march of evolution, not only the evolution of life on our little planet,—a mere sand grain in the vast,—but the evolution of worlds, and systems of worlds and suns, in a word, the story of the universe.

This view is, distinctively, the birthright of modern science. Thinkers of old may have dreamed of it, but, to them, it was little more than a dream. They could not see, as we, nowadays, are able to see,—thanks to that light of science, now enlightening every man that cometh into the world,—that the veriest mote dancing in the sunbeam, the infinitesimal atom itself, is bound with links that cannot be broken, not only to every other particle in the present universe of time, but also to everything else that has been, or will be, in a word, to the past and to the future, as well as to the present.¹ We who live and move and have our being here and now, are the direct offspring, the incarnate representatives of everything preceding us in the long procession of the past, even as we are the precursors of everything ahead of us in the dim files of the future. As we are, literally, one with the essence of the boundless universe, we are infinite and eternal as itself. No apocalyptic seer was ever vouchsafed such a transcendent vision as this. Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, anything more divine.

The petty religious faiths of the past—for petty they are compared with that grander system which enshrines

¹We see the applicability of the term *Religion* to this all inclusive bond, if the word be derived, as it presumably is, from the verb *religare*—to bind together.

them—have mostly their dark side. They have their ideas of retribution as well as of recompense, of punishment, as well as of pardon and peace; of hell, as well as of heaven; of lost, as well as of ransomed souls. These dreams pass away. Fitted, it may be for the times which gave birth to them, they are current realities no longer. For cosmic evolution cannot suffer the veriest atom to perish, or to become “a castaway.” Everything is wanted, nothing can be spared, in order that the account of the eternal jewels may be made up. None of us can barter his immortal birthright if he would. None of us can “fall away” from that scheme of literal redemption, which summons our very ashes from the grave, in that continuous resurrection of the material which goes on every moment. “I believe in the resurrection of the flesh, and the life everlasting” is a part of the scientific, as well as of the Christian, symbol.

And our thoughts—what of them? Are they also deathless, like the component parts of our organism, like our deeds done in the body? Yea, verily! The old idea of a book, wherein all human deeds, words, and thoughts were inscribed, waiting the last assize, has a foreshadowing of the truth in it. The dynamic of thought may indeed be incalculable by the most delicate instruments. Scales may not weigh it, but the most fleeting thought, no less than the spoken word, is imperishable, leaves its indelible trace within what Shakespeare, with prophetic insight, calls “the book and volume of the brain,” and hence also in that greater book of life—chronicles these which the tears of no recording angel may blot or erase; seeing that in the eternal religion there is “no remission.” Our deeds, words, and thoughts live for ever and ever. Mortality, truly, is thus swallowed up of life.

It is a deeply impressive reflexion that, even now, we stand at what is manifestly a turning-point, a transition stage, in the history of the eternal religion. Eternity stretches behind and before us. To this crucial stage, everything in and of the past has insensibly, yet unmistakably, led. By this stage, everything in the future will be, more or less, influenced. For the moment, we are protagonists on the arena of being. That old motto of the Bruce was a proud one—“*Fuimus*”—we have been! Ours is a still nobler one, for we both have been and shall be evermore. Our feeblest efforts help to shape the future; even as they, in turn, have been moulded by the past.

Unalterably, irrevocably, we are helping *now* to build the universe temple, that imperishable fabric which rises, day by day, though without sound of axe or hammer. Perhaps we are wont to plume ourselves unduly on the perfection of our own share of the endless task. Every new and enlightened view which we now hold is an unquestionable advance on what

obtained before, for it contains its predecessor, and something more, added by experience, by sober judgment, in conformity with the eternal principle of growth. But, just in the same way, will the view of the future which we are now helping to fashion be better every way and nobler than the creed of to-day.

Thus, for us, there remains the now-time alone, the working day, wherein it behooves us to labor diligently as fellow workers for eternity. The far-off summers that we shall not see will doubtless behold, literally, new heavens and a new earth, wherein righteousness will dwell. It is not optimism, this view, even as it is not pessimism. Let us rather call it *Meliorism*—the conviction that the unceasing, unceasing march of evolution leads ever onward and upward, as the shining light which shineth more and more “unto the perfect day.” Ever onward it stretches, this prospect, and yet the goal is never reached, for perfection would involve a limit, and of limits there are none.

Some latter-day philosophers flout this assurance of ours, pointing, with warning finger, to the possible disappearance of life from this planet, in consequence of the dwindling of the sun's light and heat. A few million years more or less, they tell us, will see the end of man's existence here, with all his hopes and dreams. Eternal snows will lap the last expiring effort of animal life on this globe, and solemn silence mock the busy turmoil of the past. The very delusion of delusions is this short-sighted view! For would the universe cease because life chanced to expire on the surface of one of its atoms? Assuredly not. Such an idea is really based upon that old and narrow belief that this earth was the sole theatre of man's being, and that the myriad orbs that roll in space were merely specks of tinsel fixed to light its midnight darkness. Science has changed all that. The unnumbered worlds of space are doubtless tenanted by intelligences, different it may be from our own, but akin to them nevertheless, perhaps our superiors in knowledge and acquirements. But even if every vestige of human life were to be deleted from the universal plan, the potentialities of life would yet remain, and after countless ages, it may be, a new race of beings would spring into existence, just as, far back in the history of the universe, they once did before. For nothing is ever lost, but everything, through continual metamorphosis, evermore perdures.

Some speak of the existence of sin and suffering as tending to make them despair of a coming “better day.” Doubtless these evils are to be faced, not discounted, as if they were trifles. Owing to sin and suffering this fair world has, for many of us, its Gethsemane, even its Golgotha. “The heart knoweth his own bitterness,” and there are woes and pangs, mental and bodily, which are inmedicable, save by the healing sleep of the grave. Suffering, however, in our

midst is mainly due to error, to ignorance, to mistaken ideals. These will right themselves in time; the suffering from disease, again, is being slowly, but surely, lessened. Ultimately, as we believe, death will only result from accident, or old age; all forms of disease being eliminated. Sin is a different matter, but it is not incurable. It will not be remedied by penal laws, or by threats of everlasting burnings. In the Christian faith sin is described as "any want of conformity unto, or transgression of the law of God." Sin, in the universal religion, is a similar want of conformity unto, or transgression of, the great evolutionary law, which makes for righteousness, including defects of will, sloth, perversity, anything which hinders, or attempts to hinder the onward march sublime. This, too, will eliminate itself in time, naturally and completely.

Our manifest and bounden duty, then, is to be workers, rather than preachers, of righteousness—to be doers not hearers only of the veritable Word of Life. Building as we are for eternity, a great responsibility lies upon us. The builders of the glorious cathedrals of old were careful to finish their work, not with eye-service, but in singleness of heart. Even the hidden recesses of their edifices were carved and enriched with the same art as those which were most conspicuous, for they said to themselves: "God's eyes see everywhere." Let us see to it that, in our building of the fane which is to be imperishable, we use the same jealous care!

FABLES FROM THE NEW ÆSOP.

BY HUDOR GENONE.

The Wise Widower.

A CERTAIN widower had a small family of young children, to whose education and improvement in health and learning and goodness he devoted all his energies. How it would have fared with his methods had he not been a widower none can tell. Some wives, with the best of motives at their command, thwart the efforts of the noblest men.

A visitor came to the house one day, and to entertain him the host prepared a drive into the country.

"You will not object to the children?" he inquired. "On the contrary, I should be glad of their company," replied the guest, "and I confess to being much pleased at your thoughtfulness for them,—poor motherless things."

Soon the horses and carriage were at the door, and the two men took their seats, as also three of the four children. But the fourth was tardy.

"Drive on," said the father, and although his friend remonstrated and desired him to wait for the delinquent child, he would not.

While they were in the country they all descended

and strolled about in the shadow of the woods and among the fields. While thus enjoying themselves one of the boys came running to the father. He had a bright-colored berry in his hand. "May I eat this, father?" said the lad, and when his father (after looking at the berry carefully) answered "Yes," he ate it; but in a few moments was taken violently ill.

When the friend anxiously inquired the cause of this sudden malady, the father replied coolly, "Oh! it is nothing; he will soon recover."

Again, for amusement, they built a fire of fagots and roasted some nuts they had gathered. These, when thoroughly roasted, were spread out to cool, and while still very hot, the youngest child came up and was about to take one in his hand.

"Do not let the child touch the hot nuts," said the guest; "he will burn himself."

"And why should he not burn himself?" asked the father, unconcerned.

So the child took a nut in his hand, but dropped it with a great outcry of pain.

The father said nothing till the child came to him for help, when he wetted the little fingers with glycerine and wrapped a rag about them, saying that the hurt would soon heal, which proved to be the case.

On the way home the two friends fell to conversing upon education and kindred themes.

"My method," said the father, "is that of nature. My eldest child was not prepared to go with us on our drive, so she was left at home. Nature, I have observed, never waits."

"But was it not cruel to let another child suffer because of eating the berry?" asked the friend; "and even as much so to permit the youngest to burn himself?"

"No," replied the father, "it was far from cruel, but the greatest kindness. I knew the berry was the nux vomica and not deadly, and the hot nut was a salutary experience. In the latter case the child prayed for relief, and I provided it.

"So it is ever with nature. She leaves bright-colored berries and hot nuts, and, let me tell you, also leaves antidotes and reliefs. Nature not only tempts our foolishness and rashness, but answers our reasonable prayers."

The Big Beast and the Little Worm.

A TRAVELLER in a strange country, finding himself alone and belated, was plodding on towards the lights of a distant settlement, when suddenly he heard a great howling, and in a moment perceived in the gloom of the coppice two great, glistening eyes, and, advancing stealthily toward him, a big beast.

By a species of instinct the traveller knew at once that this was the ravenous monster of which he had

heard tales told as like to be encountered in his journey.

It was the beast Incapacity. What to do at first he knew not, but, half palsied with fright, he sought a tree, up which he climbed and clung to the branches, whilst the beast watched below.

All night by moonshine, all day by sun-glow, still the beast kept watch. Fortunately he had provender and a flask of wine, and the second night, having managed to get some sleep, next day found him refreshed. To solace himself, our traveller pulled out a book he had by him,—a little book on science which a learned bonze had given him not long before.

This he read and read, and grew so entertained that half the day slipped by, and then, chancing to look down, he was amazed to notice that the big beast had grown small and puny, and his tusks had disappeared and his sharp claws.

Then for the first time he noticed that the title of his little book was *Knowledge, the Destroyer of the Beast Incapacity*.

Courage regained and not now one whit affrighted he leaped down out of the tree, ready to grapple with the beast, which, however, not waiting for him, slunk off into the forest, and left the traveller to pursue his way unmolested.

Not long after in his journeyings he met his friend, the bonze, and thanked him fervently for the book, explaining what great service it had done him.

“There is a worse beast than that,” said the bonze, “and him you’ll meet sooner or later. Safety from him you’ll not get from a book, nor will you know him by name, nor even see him, so tiny is he; a very worm for size, but more than a beast for strength.”

“And what,” said the traveller, “shall I do to master him? Have you no other book to give me?”

“No,” replied the bonze, “in his case books are of no avail. For mastery of that kind of monster all you can do is to pray.”

Now the traveller had begun his journey with gods of his own country, but the more he journeyed the more kinds of gods he found, and all equally false and futile. So he had given over praying, and,—although he had found the bonze trustworthy once,—now concluded he was a bigot, and went his way.

A year after he returned to that locality, and the good bonze entertained him. Our traveller had much to relate of the perils he had encountered. He was afraid, he said, of this district infested by robbers, but he plucked up a spirit, armed himself, and got through safely. And of that mountain pass he spoke as unwilling to venture over, because of the avalanches, but finally he concluded that caution and care might avail, and so it did, and he passed through unscathed. In a certain city noted for its beautiful and giddy wo-

men he doubted if his virtue could withstand such allurements, but he bethought him that his mission was to journey not for dallying or sloth or luxury, but for the discoveries to be made. So he passed through that city untempted.

“And never once,” said he, gayly, “did I encounter that little worm of which you warned me; so I had no need of prayers, which, indeed, to be candid with you, I do not believe in.”

“Ah, indeed!” replied the bonze, “no little worm. I doubt not you met him a score of times, but I can name three out of your own mouth; there was your fear of robbers, and again of avalanches, and then of the sirens in the city. As for prayers, for one you prayed to the god of courage, for another to the god of prudence, and for the last to the god of chastity. And now, I beseech you, pray to the greatest of all the gods, him of duty, and give him due meed of gratitude for all your escapes and conquests, especially your escape from your own self and your conquest over self.”

“Then it seems,” stammered the traveller, “that I ought to be grateful, not to any god, but to—myself.”

“Just be grateful,” replied the bonze, “for to feel gratitude is to be grateful to God.”

Casting the Golden Ball.

A SAGE happened to be present at some games. A score of youths standing in line, the first threw a ball to his next neighbor, and he to his, and so till the last one in the line had caught the ball. The young men were expert at this amusement, and caught with ease and cast with celerity and accuracy.

“How would it be, I wonder,” said the sage to one of his disciples, who was with him, “if the ball, instead of being made of leather, were of gold? I will try them,” he said, “and thus make an experiment in humanity.”

So he gave to the first player a golden ball, and to all the players he said: “Try and catch the golden ball, and if you all catch it, you may share it equally, but if one shall fail to do so, he shall pay to me a fine equal in value to the ball.”

They all agreed, for they said among themselves, “Surely this must be a simple fellow and a spendthrift, for as we found no difficulty in catching the leathern ball neither shall we the golden.”

But, one by one, each dropped the golden ball, for—whether they were overanxious, or greedy, or the ball being of gold slipped easily out of their hands, I know not, but they could neither cast it safely, nor hold it certainly.

At the end of the game the sage held coins to the

value of twenty golden balls, and the ball itself was restored to him.

Then he called the youths about him and said: "Young men, learn a lesson from this game; that it is easy to play at life if you concern yourselves with common things to which you are used, but with nobler things much thought and careful practice is needful, lest the treasure slip that might else have been readily held. And also learn that ye who cast the ball are like men who cast their lives. That which was tossed to them by their forefathers they take and hold, or miss, fortune, character, all merit; and when in their turn they are required to throw, the cast is feeble and ineffectual, and their children, to whom a goodly inheritance should have gone, are left beggars.

"This is what the gods would have us understand as the meaning of Elysium and Tartarus,—success or failure, happiness or misery, hope or despair, good or evil."

Two Sorts of Murder.

Argone was passing by the house of a young man who had recently married and overheard him uttering an unkind word to her whose sincere love he had won. Argone reproved the young man, who, excusing himself, said it was but once.

A kid happening to be tethered hard by, Argone drew his long knife and plunged it into the kid's heart.

"Alas!" cried the young man, "you have killed my wife's pet kid. How cruel."

"It is but once," said Argone, and while the young man looked at him in amazement, he continued, "why do you appear so confounded, for which is the worse, to slay a pet kid with a long knife, or a loving wife with an unkind word? Which is the more cruel, to kill an animal or to kill love?"

Another time Argone passed by the young man's house and his wife was singing merrily. "I perceive," said he, "that you must be a happy woman." "Why not," replied the young matron, "for my husband loves me and never is angry with me unjustly. Why should I not be happy?"

Fittest, Not Best.

Macron was blessed with a large family, both boys and girls; the maids were all virtuous, and of the lads all were bold and lusty but one, who was a coward and puny.

In due course the daughters were married, but one after another died in child-bed. Macron's sons, too, one by one, came to an untimely end. One, so kind of heart that all distress moved him greatly, when a neighbor fell ill of a malignant fever, went and nursed him, but was taken by the infection and died. Another, when the king wanted soldiers, took pike and buckler and went out to battle for his country and was slain.

A third, in time of famine, to provide food for the household, foraged the forest and fetched daily of game a larder full, till at last, encountering a wild boar, was pierced by its tusk and died.

But all this time the weakling and coward stopped at home and throve and grew fat. Not being a woman he could not die in child-bed. Not being kindly disposed towards his neighbors when the fever ravaged the land he kept his carcass at a safe distance from infection. Having no stomach for war, no king's soldier was he, and while his brother hunted that he might eat he was quite content to let him. So he survived, and his sisters and brothers, one by one, in the way of duty, died.

"I cannot help thinking," said the wise man, "that the rest, although what men call dead, were more truly alive than he, and that mere survival can hardly be called life."

Two Brothers.

They were born twins; but as soon as they could walk and talk they went divers ways; one played and romped as a child; as a youth he frequented the inns and disported with all the maids till he found the one of the world for him and her he married, and she bore him children. He worked seldom, only enough to provide a bare subsistence, and he and she and their children loved one another and passed their lives in gay living.

The other brother despised play, and instead of disporting at the inns or merry-making, kept by himself, toiled by day, and burned oil by night to get learning. He was frugal and saved his pence, and having no liking for women did not marry. When he was old he had gotten a great fortune, and when his time came to die knew not how to dispose of it. Two brothers, neither over wise.

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