

## HOW TO MAKE FRIENDS WITH MAMMON.

It was four o'clock in the afternoon of a dull winter day that Mr. H. sat in his counting room. The sun had nearly gone down, and, in fact, it was already twilight beneath the shadows of the tall, dusky stores, and the close, crooked streets of that quarter of Boston. Hardly light enough struggled through the dusky panes of the counting house for him to read the entries in a much-thumbed memorandum book, which he held in his hand.

A small, thin boy, with a pale face and anxious expression, significant of delicacy of constitution, and a too early acquaintance with want and sorrow, was standing by him, earnestly watching his motions.

"Ah, yes, my boy," said Mr. H., as he at last shut up the memorandum book. "Yes, I've got the place now; I'm apt to be forgetful about these things; come, now, let's go. How is it? Haven't you brought the basket?"

"No, sir," said the boy, timidly. "The grocer said he'd let mother have a quarter for it, and she thought she'd sell it."

"That's bad," said Mr. H., as he went on, tying his throat with a long comforter of some yards in extent; and as he continued this operation he abstractedly repeated, "That's bad, that's bad," till the poor little boy looked quite dismayed, and began to think that somehow his mother

had been dreadfully out of the way.

"She didn't want to send for help so long as she had any thing she could sell," said the little boy in a deprecating tone.

"O, yes, quite right," said Mr. H., taking from a pigeon hole in the desk a large pocket book, and beginning to turn it over; and, as before, abstractedly repeating, "Quite right, quite right?" till the little boy became reassured, and began to think, although he didn't know why, that his mother had done something quite meritorious.

"Well," said Mr. H., after he had taken several bills from the pocket book and transferred them to a wallet which he put into his pocket, "now we're ready, my boy." But first he stopped to lock up his desk, and then he said, abstractedly to himself, "I wonder if I hadn't better take a few tracts."

Now, it is to be confessed that this Mr. H., whom we have introduced to our reader, was, in his way, quite an oddity. He had a number of singular little penchants and peculiarities quite his own, such as a passion for poking about among dark alleys, at all sorts of seasonable and unseasonable hours; fishing out troops of dirty, neglected children, and fussing about generally in the community till he could get them into schools or otherwise provided for. He always had in his pocket book a note of some dozen poor widows who wanted tea, sugar, candles, or other things such as poor widows always will be wanting. And then he had a

most extraordinary talent for finding out all the sick strangers that lay in out-of-the-way upper rooms in hotels, who, every body knows, have no business to get sick in such places, unless they have money enough to pay their expenses, which they never do.

Besides this, all Mr. H.'s kinsmen and cousins, to the third, fourth, and fortieth remove, were always writing him letters, which, among other pleasing items, generally contained the intelligence that a few hundred dollars were just then exceedingly necessary to save them from utter ruin, and they knew of nobody else to whom to look for it.

And then Mr. H. was up to his throat in subscriptions to every charitable society that ever was made or imagined; had a hand in building all the churches within a hundred miles; occasionally gave four or five thousand dollars to a college; offered to be one of six to raise ten thousand dollars for some benevolent purpose, and when four of the six backed out, quietly paid the balance himself, and said no more about it. Another of his innocent fancies was to keep always about him any quantity of tracts and good books, little and big, for children and grown-up people, which he generally diffused in a kind of gentle shower about him wherever he moved.

So great was his monomania for benevolence that it could not at all confine itself to the streets of Boston, the circle of his relatives, or even the United States of America. Mr. H. was fully posted up in the affairs of India, Burmah, China, and all those odd, out-of-the-way

places, which no sensible man ever thinks of with any interest, unless he can make some money there; and money, it is to be confessed, Mr. H. didn't make there, though he spent an abundance. For getting up printing presses in Ceylon for Chinese type, for boxes of clothing and what not to be sent to the Sandwich Islands, for school books for the Greeks, and all other nonsense of that sort, Mr. H. was without a parallel. No wonder his rich brother merchants sometimes thought him something of a bore, since, his heart being full of all these matters, he was rather apt to talk about them, and sometimes to endeavor to draw them into fellowship, to an extent that was not to be thought of.

So it came to pass often, that though Mr. H. was a thriving business man, with some ten thousand a year, he often wore a pretty threadbare coat, the seams whereof would be trimmed with lines of white; and he would sometimes need several pretty plain hints on the subject of a new hat before he would think he could afford one. Now, it is to be confessed the world is not always grateful to those who thus devote themselves to its interests; and Mr. H. had as much occasion to know this as any other man. People got so used to his giving, that his bounty became as common and as necessary as that of a higher Benefactor, "who maketh his sun to rise upon the evil and the good, and sendeth rain upon the just and the unjust;" and so it came to pass that people took them, as they do the sunshine and the rain, quite as matters of course, not thinking much about them when they came, but particularly apt to scold when they did not come.

But Mr. H. never cared for that. He did not give for gratitude; he did not give for thanks, nor to have his name published in the papers as one of six who had given fifty thousand to do so and so; but he gave because it was in him to give, and we all know that it is an old rule in medicine, as well as morals, that what is in a man must be brought out. Then, again, he had heard it reported that there had been One of distinguished authority who had expressed the opinion that it was "more blessed to give than to receive," and he very much believed it--believed it because the One who said it must have known, since for man's sake he once gave away ALL.

And so, when some thriftless, distant relation, whose debts he had paid a dozen times over, gave him an overhauling on the subject of liberality, and seemed inclined to take him by the throat for further charity, he calmed himself down by a chapter or two from the New Testament and half a dozen hymns, and then sent him a good, brotherly letter of admonition and counsel, with a bank note to enforce it; and when some querulous old woman, who had had a tenement of him rent free for three or four years, sent him word that if he didn't send and mend the water pipes she would move right out, he sent and mended them. People said that he was foolish, and that it didn't do any good to do for ungrateful people; but Mr. H. knew that it did him good. He loved to do it, and he thought also on some words that ran to this effect: "Do good and lend, hoping for nothing again." He literally hoped for nothing again in the way of reward, either in this world or in heaven, beyond the present pleasure of the deed; for he had abundant occasion to

see how favors are forgotten in this world; and as for another, he had in his own soul a standard of benevolence so high, so pure, so ethereal, that but One of mortal birth ever reached it. He felt that, do what he might, he fell ever so far below the life of that spotless One--that his crown in heaven must come to him at last, not as a reward, but as a free, eternal gift.

But all this while our friend and his little companion have been pattering along the wet streets, in the rain and sleet of a bitter cold evening, till they stopped before a grocery. Here a large cross-handled basket was first bought, and then filled with sundry packages of tea, sugar, candles, soap, starch, and various other matters; a barrel of flour was ordered to be sent after him on a dray. Mr. H. next stopped at a dry goods store and bought a pair of blankets, with which he loaded down the boy, who was happy enough to be so loaded; and then, turning gradually from the more frequented streets, the two were soon lost to view in one of the dimmest alleys of the city.

The cheerful fire was blazing in his parlor, as, returned from his long, wet walk, he was sitting by it with his feet comfortably incased in slippers. The astral was burning brightly on the centre table, and a group of children were around it, studying their lessons.

"Papa," said a little boy, "what does this verse mean? It's in my Sunday school lesson. 'Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness, that when ye fail, they may receive you into

everlasting habitations."

"You ought to have asked your teacher, my son."

"But he said he didn't know exactly what it meant. He wanted me to look this week and see if I could find out."

Mr. H.'s standing resource in all exegetical difficulties was Dr. Scott's Family Bible. Therefore he now got up, and putting on his spectacles, walked to the glass bookcase, and took down a volume of that worthy commentator, and opening it, read aloud the whole exposition of the passage, together with the practical reflections upon it; and by the time he had done, he found his young auditor fast asleep in his chair.

"Mother," said he, "this child plays too hard. He can't keep his eyes open evenings. It's time he was in bed."

"I wasn't asleep, pa," said Master Henry, starting up with that air of injured innocence with which gentlemen of his age generally treat an imputation of this kind.

"Then can you tell me now what the passage means that I have been reading to you?"

"There's so much of it," said Henry, hopelessly, "I wish you'd just tell me in short order, father."

"O, read it for yourself," said Mr. H., as he pushed the book towards the boy, for it was to be confessed that he perceived at this moment that he had not himself received any particularly luminous impression, though of course he thought it was owing to his own want of comprehension.

Mr. H. leaned back in his rocking chair, and on his own private account began to speculate a little as to what he really should think the verse might mean, supposing he were at all competent to decide upon it. "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness," says he: "that's money, very clearly. How am I to make friends with it or of it? Receive me into everlasting habitations: that's a singular kind of expression. I wonder what it means. Dr. Scott makes some very good remarks about it--but somehow I'm not exactly clear." It must be remarked that this was not an uncommon result of Mr. H.'s critical investigations in this quarter.

Well, thoughts will wander; and as he lay with his head on the back of his rocking chair, and his eyes fixed on the flickering blaze of the coal, visions of his wet tramp in the city, and of the lonely garret he had been visiting, and of the poor woman with the pale, discouraged face, to whom he had carried warmth and comfort, all blended themselves together. He felt, too, a little indefinite creeping chill, and some uneasy sensations in his head like a commencing cold, for he was not a strong man, and it is probable his long, wet walk was likely to cause



him some inconvenience in this way. At last he was fast asleep, nodding in his chair.

He dreamed that he was very sick in bed, that the doctor came and went, and that he grew sicker and sicker. He was going to die. He saw his wife sitting weeping by his pillow--his children standing by with pale and frightened faces; all things in his room began to swim, and waver, and fade, and voices that called his name, and sobs and lamentations that rose around him, seemed far off and distant in his ear. "O eternity, eternity! I am going--I am going," he thought; and in that hour, strange to tell, not one of all his good deeds seemed good enough to lean on--all bore some taint or tinge, to his purified eye, of mortal selfishness, and seemed unholy before the ALL PURE. "I am going," he thought; "there is no time to stay, no time to alter, to balance accounts; and I know not what I am, but I know, O Jesus, what THOU art. I have trusted in thee, and shall never be confounded;" and with that last breath of prayer earth was past.

A soft and solemn breathing, as of music, awakened him. As an infant child not yet fully awake hears the holy warblings of his mother's hymn, and smiles half conscious, so the heaven-born became aware of sweet voices and loving faces around him ere yet he fully woke to the new immortal LIFE.

"Ah, he has come at last. How long we have waited for him! Here he is among us. Now forever welcome! welcome!" said the voices.

Who shall speak the joy of that latest birth, the birth from death to life! the sweet, calm, inbreathing consciousness of purity and rest, the certainty that all sin, all weakness and error, are at last gone forever; the deep, immortal rapture of repose--felt to be but begun--never to end!

So the eyes of the heaven-born opened on the new heaven and the new earth, and wondered at the crowd of loving faces that thronged about him. Fair, godlike forms of beauty, such as earth never knew, pressed round him with blessings, thanks, and welcome.

The man spoke not, but he wondered in his heart who they were, and whence it came that they knew him; and as soon as the inquiry formed itself in his soul, it was read at once by his heavenly friends. "I," said one bright spirit, "was a poor boy whom you found in the streets: you sought me out, you sent me to school, you watched over me, and led me to the house of God; and now here I am." "And we," said other voices, "are other neglected children whom you redeemed; we also thank you." "And I," said another, "was a lost, helpless girl: sold to sin and shame, nobody thought I could be saved; every body passed me by till you came. You built a home, a refuge for such poor wretches as I, and there I and many like me heard of Jesus; and here we are." "And I," said another, "was once a clerk in your store. I came to the city innocent, but I was betrayed by the tempter. I forgot my mother, and my mother's God. I went to the gaming table and the theatre, and at last I robbed

your drawer. You might have justly cast me off; but you bore with me, you watched over me, you saved me. I am here through you this day." "And I," said another, "was a poor slave girl--doomed to be sold on the auction block to a life of infamy, and the ruin of soul and body. Had you not been willing to give so largely for my ransom, no one had thought to buy me. You stimulated others to give, and I was redeemed. I lived a Christian mother to bring my children up for Christ--they are all here with me to bless you this day, and their children on earth, and their children's children are growing up to bless you." "And I," said another, "was an unbeliever. In the pride of my intellect, I thought I could demonstrate the absurdity of Christianity. I thought I could answer the argument from miracles and prophecy; but your patient, self-denying life was an argument I never could answer. When I saw you spending all your time and all your money in efforts for your fellow-men, undiscouraged by ingratitude, and careless of praise, then I thought, 'There is something divine in that man's life,' and that thought brought me here."

The man looked around on the gathering congregation, and he saw that there was no one whom he had drawn heavenward that had not also drawn thither myriads of others. In his lifetime he had been scattering seeds of good around from hour to hour, almost unconsciously; and now he saw every seed springing up into a widening forest of immortal beauty and glory. It seemed to him that there was to be no end of the numbers that flocked to claim him as their long-expected soul friend. His heart was full, and his face became as that of an angel as he looked up to One who

seemed nearer than all, and said, "This is thy love for me, unworthy, O Jesus. Of thee, and to thee, and through thee are all things. Amen."

Amen! as with chorus of many waters and mighty thunderings the sound swept onward, and died far off in chiming echoes among the distant stars, and the man awoke.