

GOOD AND BAD LUCK.

BY

CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

"For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account at the day of judgment."

NEW-YORK:

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WORLD OF THE FUTURE
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“For every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give an account at the day of judgment.”

“I AM just going to take some nice cuttings, Miss,” said the gardener, as Mary walked through her Papa’s shrubbery.

“Give me plenty of them, John,” replied the young lady : “but stay, I will not set them to-day.”

“Why not, Miss ? the sooner the better.”

“No, no ; Friday is an unlucky day ; to-morrow or Monday, they will have a better chance for growing : so, John, don’t cut any now :” and then, as if she had said a very wise thing, Miss Mary nodded her head and walked off.

Now it happened that Mary’s father was near her when this occurred ; but some shrubs concealed him from his little girl. When she was

gone, he desired the gardener to take off all the slips, and plant them about the grounds, and on no account to let Mary have one of them.

The next morning, Mary ran to look for the gardener. "I want roses," said she, "and honey-suckles, and geraniums; also gooseberries, currant-bushes, and whatever you can find." The gardener answered he was sorry that he had not a single cutting to give her.

"Why, you told me yesterday that you had plenty for me."

"So I had, Miss; but you were not ready for them, and master bade me set them all in his garden."

Away went Mary to complain to her Papa of the disappointment. He observed, "you might have had them yesterday; but I understood that you refused them."

"I did not *refuse* them, Papa, I only put off taking them for a day."

"Why, child, your tasks were ended, your garden was ready, the weather was good, the gardener at leisure. What hindered you from taking the slips?"

Mary would rather have been excused from answering the question for she felt in her own mind, that her reason was a very silly one. However she told the truth, and said that she did not like to begin a work on Friday, because it was an unlucky day.

Her Papa smiled, and said, "how long is it since you made this discovery? If I remember rightly, you were willing enough to begin a new story book last Friday, and to cut up a new cake. What has Friday done to frighten you since it was last here."

"Nothing, Papa: but I heard Sally tell the cook that the beer was spoiled because it was brewed on Friday, and they mentioned a number of things that proved what an unlucky day it is."

"And did they explain to you, the meaning of the word luck?"

"No, Papa: I know what it means."

"Well, let me hear your account of it."

"It means, Papa—it means,"—and Mary began to look about her, quite at a loss for words to explain what she did not understand—and

who does understand the foolish expression? "Go on," said Mary's Papa. "I know what it means," said Mary, "only I can't exactly tell you."

"Then I'll tell you, my dear. It means, 'there is no God.' Who says that in his heart, Mary?"

"The fool," she replied, recollecting the psalm. "But, Papa, I am sure that *luck* does not mean any thing as wicked as that."

"Who 'causeth the grass to grow for the cattle, and herb for the service of man,' Mary?"

Mary replied that it was the Lord God.

"Most true," said her Papa, "but if luck could prevent their growing, this thing which you call luck, must be more powerful than God."

"I did not mean to say that, Papa: but may not the Lord have made some days, and some things more lucky than others?"

Her father replied, "'Six days shalt thou labour, and do all that thou hast to do.' Such is the commandment: and do you suppose that a blessing will be withheld from our work upon any one of the six, if that blessing be sought in

humble prayer? Those who commit not their way unto the Lord, oftentimes fail in their undertakings, and may justly expect to do so. The fault is their own, but they do not like to acknowledge it; and not daring openly to accuse the Most High, they are so weak and wicked as to make strange gods to themselves; and according as they are prosperous or otherwise, good luck gets the praise, or bad luck the blame. Tell me, is not this the folly which says 'there is no God?'

"Indeed, Papa," said Mary, "it looks very much like it: but I never thought about it so seriously."

"But you must learn, my dear child, to think seriously on every subject, for the Christian must walk circumspectly, watching always: continually taking heed to his ways, and remembering that it is written, 'For every idle word that men shall speak they shall give an account at the day of judgment.' It is terrible to think what sins are openly committed by people who believe themselves very correct, but who, for the want of properly keeping the door of their lips, are guilty of continual transgression. You

know that in the third commandment it is said, 'Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain; yet how often do we hear that great and terrible name made light of, by being uttered to express astonishment, alarm, or even in a jest. I say nothing of the horrid crime of cursing and swearing, for none but the most abandoned sinners can be guilty of that: I am talking of those who, from not choosing to think seriously, and to speak cautiously, are in the habit of breaking a solemn commandment, and you know how dreadful are the consequences—for, 'whosoever shall keep the whole law and yet offend in one point, he is guilty of all.' Ought not this to make us very careful, that we may be sure we understand the real meaning of all that we utter?"

Mary said, that she would endeavour to do so; her Papa went on. "It is really amazing to hear the foolish things that some people will say on the subject of luck. Not long ago, I remarked an infant, hardly ten months old, whose little face was terribly scratched in almost every part. I asked his mother how it happened, and she

told me the child did it with its nails. 'Why do you not cut them?' said I. 'Oh no. Sir,' she answered, 'I dare not do that, it is so *unlucky* to cut the nails of an infant.' "

Mary laughed, and remarked, "I hardly ever saw a person who would set a hen on any but an odd number of eggs: they all say that an even number is so unlucky."

"And do you not perceive, my dear, how dreadfully God is dishonoured in this instance? How impressive are the words of Jehovah, 'See now that I even I, am He, and there is no God with me: I kill, and I make alive.' Deut. xxxii. 39. He, without whom, a sparrow falleth not to the ground, can alone cause the egg to produce a living bird: yet with daring impiety do His creatures presume, that by adding or taking away one egg from the nest, they can give the breath of life, or withhold it. These may appear trifling things, Mary, but nothing in which the glory of God is concerned, can be trivial."

"It is strange," said Mary, "that so many well educated and sensible people should believe

in luck as much as the most ignorant of the poor."

"I cannot allow that any person has been well taught," replied her Papa, "in whose education the Bible has been neglected: and as to their good sense, what greater proof of folly can they give than that of not liking to retain God in their knowledge? Satan is always on the watch to take advantage of such wilful ignorance. He is the father of all lies, and, amongst other things, of the false religions that prevail among heathen nations. It is from them that we have borrowed the disgraceful belief in luck. They know not the Almighty Creator of heaven and earth, and were taught by Satan to dishonour Him, by seeking direction in their enterprises from the flight of birds, the position of the stars and the counsel of men as foolish and ignorant as themselves. They also had their lucky and unlucky days, and numbers, and names, and customs. Does it become us, to whom the Lord has given the light of His glorious Gospel, to walk on in such gross darkness, following the superstitions of heathen land?"

"I see now, Papa, how wicked I have been," said Mary. "I thought if I set my slips on Friday they would not take root, but wither and die. You have convinced me that this was indeed as much as saying in my heart, 'there is no God.' I will pray to be kept from such presumptuous sin in future; and I will repeat to others the good advice which you have given to me."

"My advice," said her Papa, "is, that you should constantly pray to be led by the Spirit of God into all truth, and search the Scriptures daily to discover the will of God. Jesus Christ was manifested to destroy the works of the devil, and that in Him His people might conquer, yea might become more than conquerors, in the great battle against that powerful enemy.

"In this life, the victory is not so complete as to place us out of the reach of temptation; and we must watch most carefully lest in any thing we be led to dishonour God, and to grieve the Holy Spirit. Luck and chance, and good or bad fortune, are, in themselves, idle words; but when we consider that by acknowledging such things, we deny the providence of God, it

becomes exceedingly sinful to make use of them. Those who are ignorant of God, often use the expression, 'bad luck' in the way of an imprecation. A circumstance of this kind is recorded in the book of Numbers, the 23d and 24th chapters. We read of the king of Moab sending for Balaam, whose word he supposed to have great power, in order that Balaam might curse Israel that they might fail, or have what is called 'bad luck' in their undertaking; but what says Balaam himself? 'Surely there is no enchantment against Jacob, neither is there any divination against Israel.' Num. xxiii. 23.

"The believer who in the morning with humble prayer commends himself and all his concerns into the hands of the Lord, need not fear for the events of the day; 'all things shall work together for good to them that love God.' 'Be careful for nothing; but in every thing by prayer and supplication, with thanksgiving, let your requests be made known unto God.' In the planting of a few flowers for your amusement, you may most delightfully, and profitably meditate on the wonderful power that causes the root to

strike beneath, and the leaf to expand above,— which clothes with so much beauty, the earth whereon we walk. The disappointment of your hope, even in watching the growth of a slip, may become a valuable lesson, preparing you to meet with patient submission the greater trials of life : and we may well be thankful if one flower bloom in a path which, if we were dealt with according to our sins and ingratitude, would be covered with thorns and briars, and noxious weeds. Oh let God be in all your thoughts, for every one of them is known to Him ; and remember those comfortable words, ‘Thou shalt keep him in perfect peace, whose mind is stayed upon thee, because he trusted in thee.’”

Mary thanked her Papa again, and confessed, that the lesson which she had gained, was worth far more than all the slips that she lost. From that day, whenever she heard any person talk of good or bad luck, she would remind them, that God’s kingdom ruleth over all, and add, “In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths.”

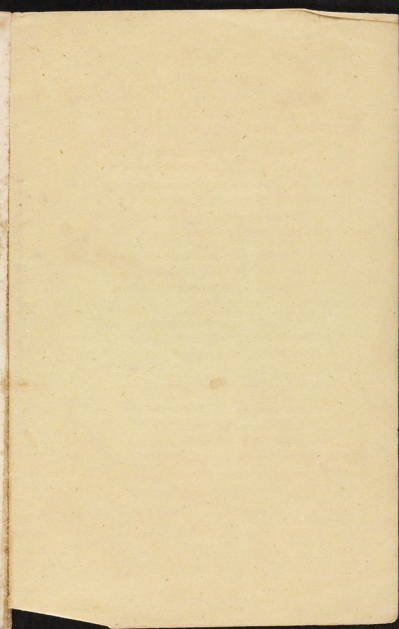
I need not fear an evil day,
While to my Heavenly King I pray ;
For all my wants will be supplied
By Him who is my shield and guide.

I cannot in my Bible find,
One word of *fortune* being kind ;
But this I know, that Jesus came
To save me from eternal flame.

I know that unto Him is given,
Almighty power in earth and heaven ;
I own no other God than He
Who shew'd such wond'rous love for me.

Let but His blessing crown my store,
I need not look to *chance* for more
Or let Him take my wealth away,
I yet will trust Him though he slay.

I ask but to be made his own,
I tremble at his wrath alone ;
If I have grace His will to do,
I must be safe and happy too.



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