

Seattle University

ScholarWorks @ SeattleU

Manuscript Fragments, n.d., Edwin Mortimer
Standing, n.d.

Series II: Literary Productions, ca. 1919-1979;
n.d.

July 2022

Box 11, Folder 44 - "Jesus Had Been Away from Capurnem..."/ "Our Lords 'Gang'" (E.M.S.)

Edwin Mortimer Standing

Follow this and additional works at: <https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/standing-fragments-ems>

Recommended Citation

Standing, Edwin Mortimer, "Box 11, Folder 44 - "Jesus Had Been Away from Capurnem..."/ "Our Lords 'Gang'" (E.M.S.)" (2022). *Manuscript Fragments, n.d., Edwin Mortimer Standing, n.d.*. 14.
<https://scholarworks.seattleu.edu/standing-fragments-ems/14>

This Article is brought to you for free and open access by the Series II: Literary Productions, ca. 1919-1979; n.d. at ScholarWorks @ SeattleU. It has been accepted for inclusion in Manuscript Fragments, n.d., Edwin Mortimer Standing, n.d. by an authorized administrator of ScholarWorks @ SeattleU.

Jesus ~~waxxxx~~ had been away from Capurneum for several weeks when suddenly the news went round that he was back again . More than that it would seem that he had already begun his preaching .Not in the synagogue this time - for it was not the Sabbath -but it was given out that he was preaching in the house of a well to do citizen - Esdras a Vintner -who had placed a large room at his disposal .

Not far away from the house where Jesus was preaching there lived a middle aged man , called Asaer , He as was a paralytic , and somehow or other had missed "the great healing " which had taken place in Capurneum a couple of months or more ago , when crowds from all over the town had come to Jesus with their sick , blind and maimed and he had cured them all . Aser was vompletely bed-ridden ; and though his name signified "happy "he was very far from being happy , and in fact thatm morning was feeling particularly depressed .

Suddenly wihthout any warning his friend Michael rushed into his house and stood beofre Aser .

"Great news ! great news ! " Jesus is back agoon , and he is actually at this very moment addressing a meeting in the house of Esdras the wine mwerchnat in the next street ."

"You know very well that I can't walk even a yead much less into the next street "

Without making any reply to this despondent statement Michale made a few steps towards the door and waved his hand whereupon three other young men entered without any seremony .

"These are friends of mine - and therefore of yours - and we are ging to take you , here and now , to the house where Jesus is speaking and beg him to cure you ".Come on you fellows " he went on turning to the three , "each of you get hold of one of the corners of the mattress . There's not a moment to

to lose , for no one knows how long Jesus will be staying in town "

And so , before the sick man could properly realise what was happening they had hoisted him up , passed out of the house and were making their way down the street . After about two hundred yards they turned to the right into the next street , then to the left and pressed on in the same direction .

But as they approached the house of Esdras - about fifty yards away - an unexpected sight ~~was~~ presented itself. In front of Esdras house there was a crowd of some thirty to forty people standing in the street outside the door trying to get in .

"Look at that crowd in the street ", exclaimed Aser " we shall never be able to make it . It's no good you fellows wasting your time - you'd better ~~turn~~ turn round and take me home "

"Never say die ! " said Michael optimistically as he urged his three helpers to quicken their pace . By the time they had arrived opposite the entrance it became only too evident that they would never be able to make their way even as far as the door much less ~~pass~~ inside . Several of those on the outskirts of the crowd turned round to look at Michael and his group as they approached . "It 's all the fault of those blessed Scribes and Pharisees said one of these " : there 's crowds of them inside he went on : come from all over Galilee they have - "and even from Jerusalem " put in another .

"They 've bagged the best places as usual " said a third.

Not far down the street was one of the many stores in Capurneum which sold fishermen's tackle. "I want some rope please," said Michale hurriedly to the man in the shop "that kind will do" he added pointing to a ~~roll~~ roll on the floor of the store. Give me four strips each 12 cubits long, and make it snappy if you don't mind I'm in a hurry."

On enquiring how much Michael placed the money down at once to the man's astonishment - for in the East it is, as it is still, the custom to bargain over every sale large or small; he did not even wait to get his change.

By the time he got back to the house his three friends had succeeded in getting the ~~paraltic~~ paraltic and his mattress safely on to the roof. Aser ~~was~~ still with a bewildered expression on his ~~face~~ drawn and anxious face; but was none the worse for his somewhat hazardous journey up the stone stairway which had no balustrade.

"Here take these," said Michael, "handing each of the others a piece of rope and fasten it to your corner of the mattress, and Boaz you fasten one at my corner too". Whilst the strong, deft fisherman's hands fastened the ropes firmly to the four corners Michael had crawled out on hands and knees to the middle of the roof and was ~~passing~~ peering down through a small crack into the room below.

It was customary at that time in building ^{the} of many houses for the builders to leave a portion of the roof towards the centre incompletely covered; or - to be more precise - covered, but incompletely mortared. This area was covered with stone tiles which rested on criss-crossed wooden poles or laths - all of which could be removed. This was done sometimes in very hot weather in order to let in fresh air to the room below.

Michael beckoned to his friends , and as he loosened and handed lifted up the tiles gave them one by one telling them to put them down by the edge of the roof next to the low balustrade and quickly he said to the man who owned the shop and please

All this time Jesus was preaching to the fortunate one at a run. Not far down the street was one of the many small who had managed to get in. The room was packed tight with will be back again in a minute. At which Michael disappeared people save for a small open space in front of the speaker.

Pharisees "You three carry him up the steps - carefully and I Most of the audience were standing save for a group of Pharisees in their long dark robes who were sitting together in a special place reserved squatting comfortably on cushions. Everywhere Like most of the houses in Jerusalem the east Pharisees had that Jesus went now his steps were dogged by the scribes and he led the way down a small alleyway

Pharisees some of whom had come all the way from Jerusalem. They did not come to learn - but to criticise. Indeed what of prayer. As it in answer to he suddenly exclaimed to his could this strolling carpenter teach them, who were to wait to himself as he put his whole soul into a swift act

But there might be a heavenly chance replied Michael God. They were furious because Jesus had become so popular with the am-ha-arez" the common folk who have no knowledge

and I have been here for half an hour - you haven't an earthly chance to get in with that bed. These Pharisees their religious leaders, the more Jesus was looked up on door it was only too evident that they would not be able to get three friends to quicken their pace. When they arrived opposite the for His teaching - the more angry and jealous became the doctors

of the law and the Pharisees. They would have done away with the Pharisees - but they feared the effect of

never be able to get it: it is no good you fellows wasting your such an course on the people. The only course open to them

He Himself "Look, said Jesus, at that crowd in the street, we shall in the street outside the door unable to get in. would make a blunder before the people and so give them the chance of arresting him.

But it was totally different with the people. The teachings

of Jesus were quite different from anything they had ever heard before . Everything He said was so new and unexpected , so full of life , so stimulating and at the same time so comforting . Here was someone who knew what He was talking about - his words were weighted with experience in fact He spoke with authority and not as the scribes and Pharisees .

On this particular morning His theme was Prayer and the response of God to those who prayed to Him in confidence and faith . As His sentences came pouring out the crowd hung on his every ~~word~~ word . You never

knew what was coming next , but whatever came it was sure to be something that touched directly on the problems of life and was couched in terms that arrested ones attention just because they were taken from the ordinary daily life they lived themselves .

"Which of you shall have a friend and shall go to him in the middle of the night and say to him 'Friend , lend me three loaves , for a friend of mine has just come to me from a journey and I have nothing to set before him ; and he from within should answer and say 'Disturb me not , the door is now shut and I and my children are in bed : I cannot get up and give to thee '(Quite likely this very thing might have happened to one of the audience the night before) I say to you that though He will not get up and give to him because he is his friend , yet because of his persistence he will get up and give him all he needs.

"And I say to you : ask and it shall be given you, seek and you shall find ; ^{knock} knock and it shall be opened unto you . For everyone that asks receives , and he who

wgi
who seeks finds ,and to him that knocks it shall be opened.

But if one of you asks his father for a loaf will he hand him a sotne ? or for a fish ,will he for a fish hand him a ~~serpent~~ serpent? or if he ask for an egg will he hand him a scorpion ? Therefore if you - evil as you are - know how to give good gifts to your children how much more will your heavenly Father give the good spirit to those who ask him."

The speaker was in the full tide of his discourse when the first signs that something unusual was happening on the roof came appeared in the form of some particles which fell down just in front of him .These were followed immediately by a shaft of light,which came from a hole which had suddelny appeared in the roof . Faces were trned upwards and even as they watched the hole became larger ,Then a head appeared like a big blob aagainst the light , stayed a few seconds and vanished .

Meanwhile the aperture grew larger and larger. Voices were heard : then another head appeared and as quicly vanished again . By this time practcially all eyes were turned upwards ; and the speaker realised that it was uselss to contine under these unusual conditions . He stopped speaking altogether and quietly waited the issue of the event . Before long the hole in the roof was about six feet long and four wide . More voices were heard - one in particlar whch seemd to ne giving orders. The for a moment four heads appeared one at each corner of the hole with faces peering down . They disappeared again and for a few moments there was a silence .

Suddenly almost all the light from the hole in the roof was blotted out as the space was taken up by a large black object. The commanding voice was heard again giving directions. "Lower now --- all together ---steady there Boaz not so fast --gently does it." All eyes were fixed upon this weird looking object which began to descend slowly from the roof.

Suddenly there was a general ^{gasp} gasp of surprise and wonderment followed by an excited buzz of ~~xxxxxxxxxxxx~~ exclamations "Gosh.'it's a man on his bed.' Why it's Aser the paraltic " and other such remarks. Four pairs of hands could be seen - one at each corner - letting out the four ropes which suspended the mattress on its aerial journey. All this time the man on the mattress - Aser - lay still stretch out on his bed. He looked around him not without trepidation first at the hole in the roof above him and as he got lower at the faces of the people below him. When his perilous journey was nearly completed the voice of Michael was heard saying "Steday biys -- steady --he's nearly there -- slowly now -- very slowly -stop now - he's there "

It was well done ; and the mattress came to rest in the open space in front of Jesus almost as softly as a feather falls to the ground.. Jesus did not appear to be in the least put out by this interruption of his address to his eager audience. Indeed there was an expression of joy on his face. For if there was one thing which pleased him more than another it was any marked manifestation of faith and trust and confidence in His good will

It was a strange and dramatic situation . There was a tense silence in which no one moved or spoke . The paralytic looked up into the eyes of Jesus and Jesus looked down into his . There was no need for the former to explain why he was there and for what he was hoping : there was a mute appeal in his expression which spoke more clearly than any words could have done .

In the hushed silence every ear was strained to catch the healing words - which many in the audience had heard before - "Rise , take up thy bed and walk "

But they did not come .

Instead Jesus , still looking at Aser , said in a clear voice that all could hear "Take courage , son , thy sins are forgiven thee" What an anti-climax ! So there was going to be no miracle after all : and after all the trouble this man's friends had taken to get him there . A distinct chill of disappointment passed like a wave over the audience . There was a general feeling that somehow or other their Galileean prophet had let them down . One wonders what the centre and focus of all this excitement - Aser the paralytic - felt himself about this unexpected turn of events . Was he similarly disappointed and disillusioned ? Probably not , for he had just looked into the eyes of Jesus and had seen there an illimitable love directed to himself personally - an expression of such tender compassion and personal interest and concern that he for the moment filled his soul with a deep happiness . Besides he had said "Take courage " my son .

But there were others in that audience in whose minds and hearts the words of Christ to the paralytic aroused a very different reaction from a disappointment that no miracle of healing had taken place . To them it was a matter of indifference

whether Aser was healed or not . Indeed other things being equal they were pleased that no miracle had taken place for they welcomed anything which would tend to lessen the admiration and respect of the people for the new self-appointed prophet . But for them being the question of the working of a miracle or not was completely overshadowed by another and far more important consideration .

As soon as the words "thy sins are forgiven thee " had been uttered all the Pharisees present reacted almost as swiftly and violently as if they had ~~xxxxxxx~~ suffered a physical blow . Immediately there was an angry buzzing of conversation amongst themselves , a reaction similar to what happens when someone drops a stone into a hornet s' nest. "Did you hear what he said ? " Incredible I couldn't believe my ears "Sheer blasphemy that's what I call it ? "No one can forgive sins save God alone ". Such were the thoughts - uttered or unexpressed - which were stirred up in the minds of the Pharisees by that short sentence Thy sins are forgiven thee "

To understand the commotion caused by those few words we have to remember that the phrase "the forgiving of sins " in the sense that Jesus had just used it ^{had} ~~was~~ a definite , ~~technical~~ technical theological significance . It meant something much more and much deeper than what happens when one person deliberately does wrong to another , and is sorry for it afterwards , and asks and receives forgiveness from the injured party . How often said the impulsive disciple Peter on one occasion "must I forgive my brother - seven times ? "And the Master replied "seventy times seven."

When Jesus said to the paralytic "Thy sins are forgiven thee" his words implied something very different from that sort of forgiving. He meant that the man's sins were wiped out of existence altogether - annihilated, as in the sentence "Though your sins be as scarlet they shall be white as snow". That kind of forgiveness which restores the soul to its pristine innocence and takes away even the sense of guilt only God can confer bestow. Jesus was well aware that the Scribes and Pharisees would understand the full significance of his statement - just as he was equally aware that its profounder theological meaning would be lost on the ordinary folk in the room, the farmers, vine growers, burchers, fishermen and the like.

So when the ~~thexxxxxxxx~~ shocked Pharisees and Scribes murmured amongst themselves that only God can forgive sins they were absolutely right. The only logical justification for Jesus using those words would be that He himself was God: the only other alternatives would be that He was either a madman or an impostor. That he was mad they did not believe: no madman could hold the crowd and speak as He did. Ergo He was an impostor. During the last century before Christ there had been not a few such - individuals who had set themselves up as the long-promised Messiah and claimed to have extraordinary powers. Anyone could claim to forgive sins, and who was to know that they were or not. It reminds one of that pompous Welshman in Shakespeares Henry V who says proudly "I can call spirits from the vasty deep", and the other man replied "Why so can I, or so can any man - but will they come when you do call them?"

Jesus knew of ~~thexxk~~ these secret thoughts which the Pharisees harbored against Him and said to them openly "Why do you reason thus in your hearts? Why do you cherish these

wicked thoughts ? Tell me which command is more lightly given -- to say to the man sick of the palsy "Thy sins are forgiven thee " or "Rise up and walk " and How to convince you that the Son of Man HAS the power to forgive sins - while he is on earth - --- here he said to the man with the palsy Rise up , take thy bed , and go home ".

"And he rose up at once - in full sight of them all -took his bedding and went home , giving praise to God "

A gasp of astonishment and delight went through the crowd . They were delighted that ~~xxx~~"their " Jesus had not let them down , and that the man had been cured after all . But it was more than just a joyful astonishment , the Gospel writer tells us they were filled with awe - and praised God for giving such powers to men ". Were the Pharisees "convinced "?Not a whit.' Not even such a stupendous miracle could have any effect on their closed minds . Jesus knew this , and knew it from the first , but he had given them their chance to draw the correct conclusion - though they did not take it .

No one - except Aser himself - had followed these proceedings with more tense interest than Michale and his three friends who were still warching from the hole in the roof . They hurried quickly down the outside stone steps and round the corner into the streets to meet their friend . for who the crowd by pressing backwards made a lane for him to pass with his rolled up mattress. Many of them congratulated him as he made his way through the throng to the door leading to the street .

Jubilantly his four friends greeted him . "I can't possibly thank you fellows enough for what you have done for me ," said Aser , "I can only praye that God will reward you as you

deserve ".As they escorted him home Aser remarked to his benefactors "My wife wo n't believe it , I 'm sure ." But she did , and great was the rejoicing in the Aser household . After he had been home for about a quarter of an hour Aser said : "Excuse me , dear friends but I must go at once to the Synagogue to give thanks to God for my cure - but shortly we shall have a celebration . Then after a hurried consultation with his wife he went on "I invite you all to come and have dinner with me tomorrow evening " .

On leaving Aser's house Michael went straight back to the house where the miracle had taken place and asked the servant who came to the door if he could speak with his master. On being brought in before Esdras Michael at once said "Sir , I have come to apologise for taking such liberties with your roof ; I have come to put everything in order again " .

"No need to apologise at all , I assure you ," replied Esdras with a smile . " and I must say I admire your ingenuity and persistency on behalf of your friend . It was indeed a wonderful occasion - quite historic in fact . As for the roof , do not give it another thought : I have already given orders to some of my men to fix it . I am delighted at Aser's good fortune : he is a good man and a good father ."

Michael rose to go and as he was about to make his salaams Esdras said "I wonder if I might ask a little favour of you - rather a foolish thing perhaps ...

"Certainly " , cut in Michael if it is my power to do so "

Well I was wondering if you would let me have one of the bits of rope that were fastened to the mattress -- just as a memento of the occasion . "Of course of course , said Michael most willingly - take the memento if you like .

"Many thanks , but one would be enough - just something

14

to be able to show to my friends and hand on to my children , as a memento of this wonderful day "

By this time the Scribes and Pharisees who had been present had met together in the house of Ananias to discuss amongst themselves the morning's events and to consider whether there was sufficient evidence for them to accuse ~~Jesus~~ the Nazarene Pseudo - prophet for blasphemy before the Sanhedrin - the highest Jewish court of law . There was no sign that any one of them had changed his mind on this point as a result of the miracle .

But there were others who had been present upon whom the whole proceeding had made the most profound impression . As the three disciples - Peter , James and John , ^{with their Master} made their way back to Peter's house , where they were staying , the youngest of them - John - was strangely silent. He was still brooding

deeply over the events of the morning . Miracles he had seen Jesus work before - miracles in plenty - and it was not this new miracle in itself - as a miracle - which had made such a profound impression on him , ~~but~~ so much as some of the attending circumstances . There was one phrase especially which had stuck in his mind . Jesus had said to the Pharisees "but to convince you that the Son of Man - while He is on earth - has power to ~~also~~ forgive sins " That was a strange thing to say while he is on earth--- what did he mean by it . It suggested a temporary state of things -- as one might say "while I was in Jericho I stayed with my uncle ~~James~~ Manasseh . The phrase carried with it mysterious and suggestive overtones ; almost as though Jesus their beloved friend and Master did not really belong to this earth at all , but was here - as you might say - on a temporary visit only .

Then there was that other matter - the claim to have the power

15

to to forgive sins . This was something new too . As the young John meditated upon these new glimpses into the mysterious depths of his Master's personality there came suddenly to his mind something which had happened over six months ago when he had seen Jesus for the first time . It was down by the river Jordan near the place where John himself had been bap**t**ised the day before by the famous new prophet John the Baptist - to whom people from all over Palestine were flocking in their hundreds and thousands .

While a little group were standing listening to John the Baptist a man had passed by .As he did so t**o** John - The Forerunner - had interrupted his discourse and pointing with his finger had said "Behold the Lamb of God who taketh away the Sins of the World "That was John's first introduction to Jesus .It was a strange remark to say about anyone and John had ~~wondered~~ wondered about it ~~xxxx~~ not only at the time but many times since after he had become one of Jesus' disciples . But now it came back to his mind with an added force ^{for} as it seemed to link itself up with this new claim to a special power ,a claim implied in the words Take courage , my son , thy sins are forgiven thee

with the Apostles who, after Pentecost, were preaching the Resurrection of Our Lord.

The Pharisees, Herodians, and Sadducees hated each other, but on various occasions they joined forces in a common cause - to bring about the death of Christ. It is interesting to note that Our Lord did not first attack any of these gangs. It was they who first attacked Him. On the threshold of His public life the Scribes and Pharisees attacked Him in Jerusalem; and they later followed Him from Jerusalem to dog His footsteps wherever He went in Galilee. It was, however, the Sadducean party that was eventually responsible for His death.

OUR LORD'S "GANG"

Our Lord, himself, was a carpenter by trade; Peter, Andrew, James and John were fishermen; Matthew was a publican. Nathaniel was described as a simple Israelite in whom there was no guile.

Our Lord and His Apostles belonged to that class who were called "the people of the Lord," a title first attributed to country-dwellers who were ignorant of the law and careless in its observance. The title was later extended to the masses, and became synonymous with "the publicans and sinners," - the people whom our Lord befriended, and the poor and little ones whom he declared fit subjects for His kingdom. These latter were, in a more or less undefined way, a part of His gang, and very often He defended them from the attacks of the Pharisees.

THE ADOLESCENT STAGE

In the third or adolescent stage the youth has come to wider horizons. He thinks now of God as the Creator and Director of the Universe, and the God of History, the God who Governs and directs the destiny of nations, and the rise and fall of empires. He sees in Our Lord's life the fulfillment of the long history of the Chosen people. He thinks of God as a God of understanding, kind and sympathetic who keeps His promises, - a God who asks for heroic sanctity, and promises a great reward for heroism in serving Him.

The Life of Christ for the Juniors

There is a stage between the infants and the adolescents (eight to twelve years) which has very clearly marked characteristics. During this epoch children go through a Sensitive Period, which Montessori describes as the Period of the Gangs, what psychologists usually describe as the Period of the Herd Instinct. Here are some of the special features of this stage to which Montessori drew attention in one of her lectures: -

- (1) We find organized gangs with leaders.
- (2) The most important person is always the leader of the winning gang.
- (3) The gangs tend to be unstable; in one day the child may belong successively to several gangs.
- (4) They love a fight.
- (5) They will not stand for bullying and they tend to stick up for the down-and-out.
- (6) They often have secret codes.