



STATE CAMP, MODERN WOODMEN OF AMERICA, AT HURON, S. D., FEBRUARY 13, 1901.

## Romance of a Well Known Composer

Ferdinand Lusk, a once famous composer, spent last week without friends and in poverty. This and came at Clarksville, Tenn., where he was left by a stranded opera company.

The man who has charmed thousands by his music had his last days marked by one of the most pathetic romances and saddest tragedies which ever fell to the lot of anyone, and the story of "My Rosary," his last song, which is now being sung everywhere, is told for the first time. It was written on his deathbed, and the music was inspired by a beautiful southern girl.

When Ferdinand Lusk's music was at the height of its popularity not many years ago he had all the money and friends he desired. He held the position of organist in a Vermont church at a salary of \$4,000 a year and was instructor to Modjeska's son. An opera of his was meeting with big success and his royalties from the famous "Tribby Waltz" alone brought in a small fortune. He traveled much and visited many parts of the world. He had all that wealth, health and fame could give him.

But there came a change. He did not know how to save his money, and when the years began to creep upon him the wealth, health and all began to fade away. He drifted out to San Francisco and taught for a few years, and then went to Colorado Springs. Then he became a wanderer without home or friends.

Finally he reached the depths and did not have a cent to his name. His friends deserted him and he was in great distress. The Marie Bell Opera company needed a conductor, and as a last resort, though feeble in health and gray-haired, he accepted the offer. Things didn't go well with the company. The one-night stands were bad and salaries were not paid. Finally the prima donna left the company, and when Clarksville, Tenn., was reached the organization disbanded.

Without a cent of money the composer was thrown upon his own resources, and he tried to earn a few dollars by teaching. He was given the position as organist at one of the churches, and the meager salary helped him to live. But he was lonely, in bad health and had no friend, brother or sister. His life was so desolate that even strangers noticed it and would speak a kind word to the gray-haired musician.

One bright spot to cheer his last days. She was a beautiful southern girl with the fair, soft complexion of the southern climate. She had seen but nineteen summers and was as sweet and unselfish as she was beautiful.

Rosa Whitfield was his favorite pupil and she always tried to throw a few rays of sunshine into his life. Sometimes when the composer was very sad she would pin a rosebud on his coat or send some little delicacies to his lonely studio. Often there were big bouquets of southern roses. He would place them on his piano and play out his soul in the sweet-scented fragrance. Once he received a box in a book and pinned it to a page.

But the gray hairs were growing thicker every day, the thin cheeks and his health was failing. One morning in the fall, that pretty Indian summer of the south, he went to his studio to give a lesson as usual. She was not in the room and she did not know how to look that day. But he insisted. He needed the money and she reluctantly consented. That morning she sang sweetly that sweet and there was something wonderful in his music.

She was there when he died. All he asked her was to sing to him. She sang him and she never to him. He looked at her and he felt the love he always had for her. He wanted to tell her how much he loved her. He wanted to tell her that the girl was breathing near him. He wanted to tell her that he loved her. He wanted to tell her that he loved her. He wanted to tell her that he loved her.

and he owed much to the tender words and gentle deeds.

"Your name is Rosa. It is a sweet name. You are my friend—you—you—are my Rosa." Then a sudden light came into the old man's eyes and he sprang from the couch.

"My Rosa," he exclaimed. "My Rosary!"



LATE C. B. HAVENS OF OMAHA.

"I will write a song and it shall be called that for you." The gray-haired musician faltered a minute, and then added in a pathetic voice, "and I fear it will be my last."

It was then that one of the sweetest songs ever written was born. He was enthralled with the inspiration and, though almost unable to stand alone, went to his studio. There, all night long, by the light of an oil lamp, he toiled at the piano, putting his emotions into music.

By daylight it was finished. He made a copy and carried it to her to try. A week later she sang it in a concert and it caught the public ear like a whirlwind.

But the musician never recovered. He took to his bed and gradually the eyes dimmed until they closed forever. During his illness almost every morning there was a bunch of roses beside his bed, that had been gathered by the fair southern girl, and often she would drop in for a minute to cheer him up and bring some delicacy. It was she that sat beside his bed and cooled his brow as the last light in his eyes died away.

The funeral took place at the church

which he had served as organist. It was an unusually solemn occasion. Just as the minister finished his discourse a beautiful girl stepped to the chancel and began the soft, sweet strains of a melody to the tender accompaniment of the great organ. The dead composer lay at her feet. The audience was as still as death and many eyes were filled with tears. The song was finished and the remains were taken from the church. "My Rosary" had a new meaning for those who heard the song that morning. At the head of the grave the same girlish figure placed a large bunch of roses and on the ribbon was written the opening notes

## The Origin of Two Famous Gospel Hymns

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Shortly after returning from England in 1875, I became associated with Mr. P. P. Bliss in the publication of what later became known as Gospel Hymns No. 1. A half hour after we had handed the completed compilation to our publishers I chanced to pick up a small paper-covered pamphlet of Sunday school hymns, published at Richmond, Va., in which I found the hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus." It at once struck my fancy and I sat down at the organ and played and sang it through. It so impressed me that I determined to have it appear in Gospel Hymns and accordingly requested the return from the printers of the collection we had just handed in.

The composer of the music to this hymn was my friend, C. C. Converse of Erie, Pa. I therefore withdrew from the collection one of his compositions and substituted for it the hymn I had just found and thus the last hymn that went into the book became one of the first in favor.

As published in the small Richmond hymnal, the authorship of the words was attributed to the great Scotch preacher and hymn writer, Dr. Horatus Bonar, author of "I Heard the Voice of Jesus Say," "I Was a Wandering Sheep" and other famous hymns. Believing Dr. Bonar to be the author, we also assigned the words to him. Some years afterward Dr. Bonar informed us that he was not the author of the hymn and that he did not know who wrote it. This disavowal naturally occasioned investigation on our part. Six or eight years after the hymn first appeared in our collection the author was found to have been John Schriever, who lived and died near Port Hope, Canada, on the north shore of Lake Ontario.

When we consider this humble man, living in such a remote place and following the occupation of a dairyman, we can scarcely refrain from recalling the fact that the Savior himself was a carpenter and that the disciples were fishermen. Surely God can accomplish wonders through most humble agencies. Mr. Schriever was a native of Dublin, Ireland, and belonged to that devoted band of Christians and earnest bible students, the Plymouth Brethren. He died some years since at the age of 65. From correspondence with his neighbors and friends we learned that the author of this splendid hymn was a most devoted and earnest Christian. Could he but fully realize the world of consolation his beautiful hymn has brought to thousands, even millions, of his fellow mortals, great, indeed, would be his satisfaction.

It was in the year 1874 that the poem, "The Ninety and Nine," was discovered, set to music, and sent out upon its worldwide mission. Its discovery seemed as if by chance, but I cannot regard it otherwise than providential. Mr. Moody had just been conducting a series of meetings in Glasgow, and I had been assisting him in his work as director of the singing. We were at the railway station at Glasgow about to take the train for Edinburgh, whither we were going, upon an urgent invitation of ministers to hold three days of meetings, before going into the Highlands, we having held a three months' series in Edinburgh just previous to our four months' campaign in Glasgow. As we were about to board the train, I bought a weekly newspaper for a penny. Being much fatigued by our incessant labors at Glasgow and intending to begin work immediately upon our arrival at Edinburgh we did not travel second or third-class, as was our custom, but sought the seclusion and rest which a first-class railway carriage in Great Britain affords. In the hope of finding news from America, I began perusing my lately purchased newspaper. This hope, however, was doomed to disappointment, as the only thing in its columns to remind an American of home and native land was a sermon by Henry Ward Beecher. As I had been preached to constantly for the preceding eight months I did not feel the need of another sermon, and I threw

the paper down, but shortly before arriving in Edinburgh I picked it up again with a view of reading the advertisements and while thus engaged my eyes fell upon a little piece of poetry in a corner of the paper. I carefully read it over, and at once made up my mind that this would make a great hymn for evangelistic work—if it had a tune. So impressed was I that I called Mr. Moody's attention to it, and he asked me to read it to him. This I proceeded to do with all the vim and energy at my command. After I had finished, I looked at my friend Moody to see what the effect had been, only to discover that he had not heard a word, so absorbed was he in a letter which he had received from Chicago. My chagrin can be better imagined than described. Notwithstanding this experience, I cut out the poem and placed it in my musical scrap book.

At the noon meeting on the second day, held at the Free Assembly hall, the subject presented by Mr. Moody and other speakers was that of the "Good Shepherd." When Mr. Moody had finished speaking he called upon Dr. Bonar to say a few words. He spoke only a few minutes, but with great power, thrilling the immense audience by his fervid eloquence. Mr. Moody turned to me with the question, "Have you a solo appropriate for this subject with which to close the service?" I had nothing suitable in mind and was greatly troubled to know what to do. The twenty-third psalm occurred to me, but this had been sung several times in the meeting. I knew that every Scotchman in the audience would join me if I sang that, so I could not possibly render this favorite psalm as a solo. At this moment I seemed to hear a voice saying: "Sing the hymn you found on the train," but I thought this impossible, as no music had ever been written for that hymn. Again the impression came strongly upon me that I must sing the beautiful and appropriate words I had found the day before, and, placing the little newspaper slip on the organ in front of me, I lifted up my heart in prayer, asking God to help me to so sing that the people might hear and understand. Laying my hands upon the organ I struck the key of A flat, and began to sing.

Note by note the tune was given, which has not been changed from that day to this. As the singing ceased a great sigh seemed to go up from the meeting and I knew that the song had reached the hearts of my Scotch audience. Mr. Moody was greatly moved, and, leaving the pulpit, came down to where I was seated. Leaning over the organ he looked at the little newspaper slip from which the song had been sung and with tears in his eyes said: "Sankey, where did you get that hymn? I never heard the like of it in my life." I was also moved to tears and arose and replied: "Mr. Moody, that's the hymn I read to you yesterday on the train, which you did not hear." Then Mr. Moody raised his hand and pronounced the benediction, and the meeting closed. Thus "The Ninety and Nine" was born.

A short time afterward I received at Dundee a letter from a woman, who had been present at the meeting, thanking me for having sung her deceased sister's words. From the correspondence following I learned that the author of the poem was Elizabeth C. Clephane, one of three sisters, all members of a refined Christian family, and a resident of Melrose, Scotland.

IRA D. SANKEY.

### Warned

Indianapolis Press: "I don't think I shall let my boy go clear through school," said the middle-aged man. "Why not?" asked the other man. "You know very well you can afford to give him the best education." "That's just what I don't want to do. I'm afraid he will be going through the experience I did when I lost two or three of my early jobs by undertaking to correct the grammar of the men I worked for."