



The Sweetest and the Fairest

Let us gather the sweetest of flowers—
The violet, fragrant and blue,
The fair rose, and the stateliest lilies,
And roses of lovelest hue;
Let us twine them in wreaths and in garlands,
In cross and in anchor and crown;
And on the low graves of our comrades
We lay them in reverence down.

There Time, with the tenderest fingers
Has hidden the soft grasses away,
And the wild flowers blossom in beauty
Above every slumberer's grave.
The robin sings there his gay carols—
All voices of nature are heard,
And daily their music ureeth
From breeze and from bee and from bird.

She cares not if moss or if marble
Or naught mark the place of her rest—
On each fall the tears of the raindrops
She keeps each safely in her breast.
Her daisies unfold their white petals
Alike o'er the high and the low;
In verdure she hides them in summer,
In winter she gives them her snow.

We come with our garlands in springtime
To deck the low mounds where they lie,
Yet nature, our mother, is kinder,
For never she passes them by!
We come with our hands and our music
But once, and perchance with a tear,
But the songs and the sighing of nature
Never cease through the circling year!

Our garlands will fade and will wither,
Hers blossom anew with the spring;
Our songs must die out to silence,
Her anthems more joyously ring!
With those whose low mounds we're adorning
In a dreamless sleep must we share,
And the tender arms of our mother
Enfold us with like loving care.

Sound, music! with sweetest of strains!
Ring, bugles! with softest of notes!
And comrades, while gently their sighing
In sweetest of harmony floats—
Come forth, with your hands full of flowers,
With garland, with cross, and with crown,
And on the low graves of our brothers,
Oh, lay them in reverence down!
—Mary N. Robinson, in Good Housekeeping.

HESTER'S MEMORIAL DAY

HE'S a pretty good sort of a farmer, a considerin' she's a woman," said Squire Markley, turning to his companion.

"She took up that claim three years ago, an' she's done well."

"Looks kind o' lonesome like," said the storekeeper, as they left the little claim-shack, or cabin, behind them.



SHE SUDDENLY WAVED IT WITH ALL HER STRENGTH.

"Needs a man around; that's what's the matter. I reckon she's been disappointed some time or other—in war times, I guess, fer—there she goes now. I was just a-tellin' yeh how 'twas."

Leaving the rude stable behind the claim-shack was a rickety, old-fashioned surry, drawn by an ancient steed of unkempt appearance. The woman driving was angular and unattractive, but there was something about the outfit that brought a suspicion of tenderness to the storekeeper's eyes—a tattered flag tossing its folds in the prairie breezes as it floated behind the wagon. He had followed the old stars and stripes over too many fields not to have his heart warmed by the unexpected sight.

"She does it reg'lar," went on Markley. "Ev'ry Deckeration day she gits out th' flag, an' puttin' in her wagon goes over ter th' little prairie cemetery an' dekebrates th' graves. Ther' ain't many ter see to yit, yer know." He added, "fer th' settlement ain't very old an' only half a dozen hez died—includin' th' boss thief that was took sudden with hemp disease. Ter-day's Deckeration day."

Hester Lang drove serenely on, unconscious of the attention she had attracted. There was a Sunday peacefulness on her face and she turned often in her seat to gaze lovingly on the faded ensign behind her. It was the only bit of gay color in all the wide Kansas landscape. The uniform green of the

plain stretched away to the unbroken curve of the horizon without another gleam to relieve its uniformity.

The meadowlarks, balancing themselves on long weed stalks forgotten by the winds of winter, saw it, and with gleeful trills soared away. A big-eyed rabbit beside the path gazed at it in wonder, and then, as the banner gave a sudden, quick toss, scampered for a grass clump.

"Folks probably think I'm foolish or crazy," mused Hester, talking to the horse, for want of better company. "But I don't care. Ther' ain't nobody here ez will take hold an' remember th' boys that fell, an' so I'll do it. I ain't forgot it in twenty years, an' I don't intend ter begin now. It's all right, anyway, fer—Whoa! What's that?"

She had left the high prairie and was driving through a narrow ravine, the sides of which reached upward on either hand.

A rattling of wheels caught her ear. Nearer and nearer came the sound and then over the crest of a little knoll in advance came two horses' heads, and behind, creaking and swaying as the animals dashed madly down the declivity, a white canvas-covered "prairie schooner," that familiar ship of the plains so often freighted heavily with hope or disappointment.

Frightened, yet with her wits about her, Hester reined her horse to one side and gathering her skirts leaped to the ground. A white face showing inside the approaching wagon determined her to stop the runaway at any cost.

Snatching the flag by its staff from her buggy, she suddenly waved it with all her strength directly in the path of the horses, now so nearly upon her.

With a bound they leaped backward and then aside, bewildered by the strange sight. Then a crash! and then the heavy wagon was lying on its side among the dead sunflower stalks and tumble weeds, with the furious horses, broken loose from their fastenings, had left the ravine and were tearing away across the level prairie.

"What have I done?" moaned Hester, her nervous strength vanishing as she saw the chaos at her feet.

A groan from the heap of wheels, boards and canvas at the foot of the little bluff aroused her.

Going to the heap of debris she tore away the cloth from the top of the wagon. A man's form lay beneath it, pinned down by a heavy cross-board which had been a part of the wagon box. A brass button on his coat told that he was not a stranger to the flag she set to work to drag him from his position.

At last she succeeded and had laid the now fainting form on a patch of grass dimpled with violets that lurked in the recesses of the ravine. She turned the form over and wiped the dirt and blood from the clean-shaven face.

With a cry she started back and sank for a moment helpless beside her charge. Then with an effort she pulled her strength together and went on with her task.

Reverently she wrapped the stars and stripes around the stranger, and somehow managed to lift him into the old surry. Then with one arm steadying the unconscious man she turned the horse homeward.

Stretched out on the scrupulously clean bed in the plain yet comfortable cabin he was not bad looking. A frank, boyish expression was on the stiff face, and yet gray hairs told of a man's years. Sickness had evidently made

ly to come to his senses any time now, an' then it will depend on how he stands it. If he's wanderin' when he gets conscious, there's danger. If not, there's hope."

"I'll send the parson down durin' the evening," he called, as he started out for home, "an' mebbe I'll be here myself."

Hester went quietly to work at her evening tasks, taking now and then an anxious look toward the bed. The old horse was fed and the stable door closed against the damp spring air.

"I didn't dekebrate th' graves after all, did I?" exclaimed the owner of the claim, talking to herself, "an' th' flowers is all in th' wagon. I'll take 'em in fer 'em ter look at—it'll be jest as well."

A tender expression came into her face at the words.

Loaded with the wild blossoms—the wind-flowers, violets and early red roses which she had gathered during the past week—she reentered the cabin and placed the rude bouquets beside the soldier's couch.

Something in the fragrance of the blossoms, or in the approach of Hester, reached the drowsy senses of the sleeper, and as she leaned over the bed his eyes suddenly opened and their blue depths looked steadfastly into the brown ones of the hostess.

"Hester!" The words sprang instinctively from the pale lips.

"Jim!" she replied, with a dry, hard sob that seemed to come from her inmost heart.

"I've looked for you so long," whispered the man, "I thought I'd never find you."

"And I thought you'd never come."

"You knew me when I did meet you?"

"Yes, Jim, I'd know you always. But me! I'm so changed. How could you know me?"

"Yes, you're changed and so am I, but those eyes could belong to no one else."

Then flowed on the stream of talk as she sat beside him with one of his white hands clasped in both her wrinkled brown ones. He told of confinement in southern prisons; of long delays before he could work his way home; of finding her gone to the west; of a search that was unsuccessful and a heart-sickness that resulted in a start for home; of the runaway while en route. She told of troubles in her family; of being thrown on the world alone; of mourning him as lost; and her life on the plains.

It had grown quite dark, but they took no heed of it.

Suddenly footsteps were heard outside and a hearty knock shook the cabin door.

"It's the minister," whispered Hester nervously, "he's come to see you. We won't need him now—shall I tell him ter go home?"

Jim clung to her wrist. "Yes, we do need him," he pleaded, "you know what for. Have him stay and we'll settle it for sure."

She hesitated a moment and then throwing open the door invited the minister and his companion, the doctor, to enter.

"It didn't take more'n ten minutes fer th' preacher ter catch onto th' fine points in th' case an' splice th' two wanderers as tight ez th' law could hold 'em," said the doctor the next day at the settlement store. "Th' feller's gittin' along elegant an' they're ez happy ez kittens. She didn't do her usual thing by th' dead soldiers, but she made a live one mighty comfortable an' that'll do fer one Memorial day."—C. M. Harger, in Detroit Free Press.

CASTING OUT DEVILS.

Dr. Talmage Discourses on the Duty of Christians.

They Should Speak Out Boldly For Christ—The Dumb Devils of Apathy and Indifference Should Be Cast Out—Present Work Needed.

In a recent sermon at Brooklyn Rev. T. De Witt Talmage illustrated in potent and convincing language the duty incumbent upon Christians of embracing every opportunity that offers in this life to do good and to advance the cause of the kingdom of Christ by a bold acknowledgment of their principles before men. The text selected was Mark ix. 25: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him." The preacher said:

Here was a case of great domestic anguish. The son of the household was possessed of an evil spirit which, among other things, paralyzed his tongue and made him speechless. When the influence was on the patient he could not say a word—articulation was impossible. The spirit that captured this member of the household was a dumb spirit—so called by Christ—a spirit abroad to-day and as lively and potent as in New Testament times. Yet in all the realms of sermology I cannot find a discourse concerning this dumb devil which Christ charged upon in my text, saying: "Come out of him."

There has been much destructive superstition abroad in the world concerning possession by evil spirits. Under the form of belief in witchcraft, this delusion swept the continents. Persons were supposed to be possessed with some evil spirit, which made them able to destroy others. In the sixteenth century, in Geneva, 1,500 persons were burned to death as witches. Under one judge, in Lorraine, 900 persons were burned to death as witches. In one neighborhood of France 1,000 persons were burned. In two centuries 200,000 persons were slain as witches. So mighty was the delusion that it included among its victims some of the greatest intellects of all time, such as Chief Justice Matthew Hale and Sir Edward Coke and such renowned ministers of religion as Cotton Mather, one of whose books, Benjamin Franklin said shaped his life—and Richard Baxter, and Archbishop Cranmer, and Martin Luther; and, among writers and philosophers, Lord Bacon. That belief which has become the laughing stock of all sensible people, counted its disciples among the wisest and best people of Sweden, Germany, England, France, Spain and New England. But, while we reject witchcraft, any man who believes the Bible must believe that there are diabolical agencies abroad in the world. While there are ministering spirits to bless there are infernal spirits to hinder, to poison and to destroy. Christ was speaking to a spiritual existence, when, standing before the afflicted one of the text, he said: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit come out of him."

Against this dumb devil of the text I put you on your guard. Do not think this agent of evil has put his blight on those who, by omission of the vocal organs, have had the golden gates of speech bolted and barred. Among those who have never spoken a word are the most gracious and lovely and talented souls that were ever incarnated. The chaplains for the asylums for the dumb can tell you enchanting stories of those who never called the name of father or mother or child, and many of the most devoted and prayerful souls will never in this world speak the name of God or Christ. Many a deaf mute have I seen with the angel of intelligence seated at the window of the eye, who never came forth from the door of the mouth. What a miracle of loveliness and knowledge was Laura Bridgman, of New Hampshire, not only without faculty of speech but without hearing and without sight, all these faculties removed by sickness when two years of age, yet becoming a wonder at needlework, at the piano, at the sewing machine, and an intelligent student of the Scriptures, and confounding philosophers, who came from all parts of the world to study the phenomenon. Thanks to Christianity for what it has done for the amelioration of the condition of the deaf and dumb. Back in the ages they were put to death as having no right, with such paucity of equipment, to live, and for centuries they were classed among the idiotic and unsafe. But we are not this morning speaking of congenital mutes. We mean those who are born with all the faculties of vocalization, and yet have been struck by the evil one mentioned in the text—the dumb devil to whom Christ called when he said: "Thou dumb and deaf spirit, I charge thee come out of him."

There has been apotheosis of silence. Some one has said silence is golden and sometimes the greatest triumph is to keep your mouth shut. But sometimes silence is a crime and the direct result of the baleful influence of the dumb devil of our text. There is hardly a man or woman in this house to-day who has not been present on some occasion when the Christian religion became a target for raillery. Some one got the laugh on the Bible and caricatured the profession of religion as hypocrisy, or made a pun out of something that Christ said. The laugh started and you joined in, and not one word of protest did you utter. What kept you silent? Modesty? No. Incapacity to answer? No. Lack of opportunity? No. It was a blow on both your lips by the wing of the dumb devil. If some one should malign your father, or mother, or wife, or husband, or child, you would flush up quick, and either with an indignant word, or doubled fist, make response. And yet here is our Christian religion, which has done so much for you and so much for the world that it will take all eternity to celebrate it, and yet when it was attacked, you did not so much as say: "I differ. I object. I am sorry to hear you say that. There is another side to this." You Christian people

ought in such times as these to go armed, not with earthly weapons, but with the sword of the Spirit. You ought to have four or five questions with which you could confound any man who attacks Christianity.

O friends, better load up with a few interrogation points. You cannot afford to be silent when God and the Bible and the things of eternity are assailed. Your silence gives consent to the bombardment of your father's house. You allow a slur to be cast on your mother's dying pillow. In behalf of Christ, who for you went through the agonies of assassination on the rocky bluff back of Jerusalem, you dared not face a sickly joke. Better load up with a few questions so that next time you will be ready. Say to the scoffer, "My dear sir, will you tell me what makes the difference between the condition of woman in China and the United States? What do you think of the sermon on the mount? How do you like the golden rule laid down in the Scriptures? Are you in favor of the ten commandments? In your large and extensive reading have you come across a lovelier character than Jesus Christ? Will you please to name the triumphant deathbeds of infidels and atheists? How do you account for the fact that among the out and out believers in Christianity were such persons as Benjamin Franklin, John Ruskin, Thomas Carlyle, Brinton Macaulay, William Penn, Walter Scott, Charles Kinsey, Horace Bushnell, James A. Garfield, Robert E. Lee, Stonewall Jackson, Admiral Foote, Admiral Farragut, Ulysses S. Grant, John Milton, William Shakespeare, Chief Justice Marshall, John Adams, Daniel Webster, George Washington? How do you account for their fondness for the Christian religion? Among the innumerable colleges and universities of the earth, will you name me three, started by infidels and supported by infidels? Down in your heart are you really happy in the position you occupy antagonistic to the Christian religion? When do you have the most rapturous views of the next world? Go at him with a few such questions and he will get so red in the face as to suggest apoplexy, and he will look at his watch and say he has an engagement and must go.

But then there are occasions when this particular spirit that Christ exorcised when he said: "I charge thee to come out of him," takes people by the wholesale. In the most responsive religious audience have you noticed how many people never sing at all? They have a book and they have a voice and they know how to read. They know many tunes, and yet are silent while the great raptures of music pass by. Among those who sing not one out of a hundred sings loud enough to hear his own voice. They hum it. They give a sort of religious grunt. They make the lips go but it is inaudible. With a voice strong enough to stop a street car one block away, all they can afford in the praise of God is about half a whisper.

During the cotton famine in Lancashire, England, when the suffering was something terrific, as the first wagon load of cotton rolled in, the starving people unhooked the horses and drew the load themselves, singing, until all Lancashire joined in with triumphant voices, their cheeks sopping with tears: "Praise God from whom all blessings flow." When Com. Perry, with his war ship, the Mississippi, lay off the coast of Japan, he bombarded the shores with "Old Hundred" played by the marine band. Glorious "Old Hundred," composed by William Franc, of Germany. In a war prison, at ten o'clock at night, the poor fellows far from home and wounded and sick and dying, one prisoner started the "Old Hundred Doxology" and then a score of voices joined, then all the prisoners on all the floors took up the acclaim until the building, from foundation to topstone, fairly quaked with the melodious ascription. A British man of war, living off a foreign coast, heard a voice singing that doxology and immediately guessed, and guessed aright, that there was an Englishman in captivity to the Mohammedans; and in the small boats the sailors rowed to shore and burst into a guard-house and set the captive free. I don't know what tune the trumpets of resurrection shall play, but it may be the doxology which is now sounding across Christendom. How much more hearty we would be in our songs, and how easy we could drive back the dumb devil from all our worshipping assemblages, if we could realize that nearly all our hymns have a stirring history. That glorious hymn, "Stand Up for Jesus," was suggested by the last words of Dudley Tyng, who was dying from having his right arm torn off by a threshing machine. That hymn, "What a Friend We Have in Jesus," heard through a telephone converted an obdurate soul. "We Shall Gather at the River" was a hymn first sung at our Brooklyn Prospect park, at the children's May anniversary, and then started to encircle the world. "Where is My Wondering Boy To-night?" is a song that has saved hundreds of dissipated young men. Tom, the drummer boy in the army, was found crying, and an officer asked him what was the matter! "Oh," he said, "I had a dream last night. My sister died ten years ago, and my mother never was herself again, and she died soon after. Last night I dreamed I was killed in battle, and that mother and sister came down to meet me." After the next battle was over, someone, crossing the field, heard a voice that he recognized as the voice of Tom, the drummer boy, singing "Jesus, lover of my soul." But at the end of the first verse the voice became very feeble, and at the end of the second verse it stopped, and they went up and found Tom, the drummer boy, leaning against a stump, and dead.

That hymn "O for a thousand tongues to sing," was suggested to Charles Wesley by Peter Bohler, who after his conversion said, "I had better keep silent about it." "No," said Wesley, "if you had ten thousand tongues you had better use them for Christ." And then th' angel of hymnology penned the word:

O for a thousand tongues to sing
My dear Redeemer's praise,
The glories of thy God and King,
The triumphs of his grace.

Jesus, the name that calms our fears,
That bids our sorrows cease;
'Tis music in the sinner's ears,
'Tis life and health and peace.

Do not, however, let us lose ourselves in generalities. Not one of us but has had our lives sometimes touched by the evil spirit of the text—this awful dumb devil. We had just one opportunity of saying a Christian word that might have led a man or woman into a Christian life. The opportunity was fairly put before us. The word of invitation or consolation or warning came to the inside gate of the mouth, but there it halted. Some hindering power locked the jaws together so that they did not open. The tongue lay flat and still in the bottom of the mouth as though struck with paralysis. We were mute. Though God had given us the physiological apparatus for speech, and our lungs were filled with air which, by the command of our will, could have made the laryngeal muscles move and the vocal organs vibrate, we were wickedly and fatally silent. For all time and eternity we missed our chance. Or it was a prayer meeting, and the service was thrown open for prayer and remarks and there was a dead halt—everything silent as a graveyard at midnight. Indeed it was a graveyard and midnight. An embarrassing pause took place that put a wet blanket on all the meeting. Men, bold enough on business exchange or in worldly circles, shut their eyes as though they were praying in silence, but they were not praying at all. They were busy hoping somebody else would do his duty. The women flushed under the awful pause and made their fans more rapidly flutter. Some brother, with no cold, coughed, by that sound trying to fill up the time, and the meeting was slain. But what killed it?—the dumb devil.

But do not let the world deride the church because of all this, for the dumb devil is just as conspicuous in the world. The two great political parties will soon assemble to build platforms for the presidential candidates to stand on. A committee of each party will be appointed to make the platform. After proper deliberation the committee will come in with an ringing report: "Whereas," and "Whereas," and "Whereas." Pronouncements all shaped with the idea of getting the most votes. All expression in regard to the great moral evils of the country ignored. No expression about the liquor traffic, for that would lose the rum vote. No expression in regard to the universal attempt at the demolition of the Lord's day. No recognition in the history of this nation for that would lose the vote of atheists. But "Whereas," and "Whereas," and "Whereas." Nine cheers will be given for the platform. The dumb devil of the text will put one wing over the republican platform and the other wing over the democratic platform. There is nothing involved in the next election except offices. The great conventions will be opened with prayer by their chaplains. If they avoid platitudes and tell the honest truth, their prayers they will say: "O, Lord, we want to be postmasters and consuls and foreign ministers and United States district attorneys. For that we are here, and for that we will strive till the election next November. Give us office, or we die. Forever and ever, amen." The world, to say the least, is no better than the church on this subject of silence at the wrong time. In other words, is it not time for Christianity to become pronounced and aggressive as never before? Take sides for God and sobriety and righteousness. "If the Lord be God, follow Him; if Baal, then follow him." Have you opportunity of rebuking a sin? Rebuke it. Have you a chance to cheer a disheartened soul? Cheer it. Have you a useful word to speak? Speak it.

Be out and out, up and down for righteousness. If your ship is afloat on the Pacific ocean of God's mercy, hang out your colors from mast-head. Show your passport if you have one. Do not smuggle your soul into the harbor of Heaven. Speak out for God! This morning close up the chapter of lost opportunities, and pitch it into the East river, and open a new chapter. Before you get to the door on your way out this morning shake hands with some one, and ask him to join you on the road to Heaven. Do not drive up to Heaven in a two-wheeled "sulky" with room only for one, and that yourself, but get the biggest gospel wagon you can find, and pile it full of friends and neighbors, and shout till they hear you all up and down the skies: "Come with us and we will do you good, for the Lord hath promised good concerning Israel." The opportunity for good which you may consider insignificant may be tremendous for results, as when on the sea Capt. Haldane swore at the ship's crew with an oath that washed them all in perdition and a Scotch sailor touched his cap and said: "Captain, God hears prayer and we would be badly off if your wish were answered." Capt. Haldane was convicted by the sailor's remark and converted and became the means of the salvation of his brother Robert, who had been an infidel, and then Robert became a minister of the gospel, and under his ministry the godless Felix Neff became the world-renowned missionary of the cross, and the worldly Merle D'Abigne became the author of "The History of the Reformation," and will be the glory of the church for all ages. Perhaps you may do as much as the Scotch sailor who just tipped his cap, and used one broken sentence by which the earth and the heavens are still resounding with potent influences. Do something for God and do it right away, or you will never do it at all.

A strange order.
Gentleman—I wish to get a pair of boots.
Clerk—Boots?
Gentleman—Yes; boots.
Clerk—Oh! Hunting-boots, I presume?
Gentleman—No; boots.
Clerk—Fisherman's boots?
Gentleman—No.
Clerk—Lumberman's boots?
Gentleman—No! I want gentleman's boots!
Clerk—Ah, I see! You mean shoel-Puck.

THE LAZZARONI.

A Class That Tells Not, Neither Does It Speak.

A century ago there were thirty thousand "lazzaroni" in Naples. Neither disease nor want has diminished their number. Their children die at a fearful rate, but there are many hospitals for the survivors, and neither board nor lodging costs them much, when, at a mature age, they are turned loose into the world to become "lazzaroni" in their turn, like their unknown fathers and mothers. What is a "lazzarone"? It may be asked. According to Colletta it is a being who lives how he can without working. If he puts hand to honest labor he is no longer a "lazzarone." It may be doubted whether the "lazzarone" will ever become extinct. The "resurrection" scheme will not oust him nor make him change his habits. He is more than half what his climate makes him.

A Neapolitan has said that love is the only occupation of the unemployed. If this be really so, imagine the condition of Naples! As far as observation goes, the "lazzaroni," as a class, seem to consider the effort of extraneous courtship somewhat too strong for them. They will throw sparks in plenty into the inflammable hearts of their fair acquaintance, but it will be rather from the sheer love of deviltry begotten of idleness than because they are in the toils of a consuming affection. "Friendship! nothing more!" whispers a handsome brown giant into the ear of a maid as brown as himself, whom for half an hour he has been plying with what seem to be insidious advances, and whose dark eyes have begun to gleam with passion. If the girl be a good girl, she answers: "Certainly, nothing more," and the chaff continues. Otherwise, a frown and a pout of the full lips tell the man that he may, if he dare run the risk, go a step further. Truth to say, woman is the prime cause of very many of the deaths by the knife. Although human nature is in few cities more human and less divine than in Naples, the verdict which acquits the man who avenges with the dagger the wrong done to his wife or sister, or gives him but a trifling sentence, is held to be very just.—National Review.

—James A. Spurgeon, who is to carry on the ministerial duties of the London tabernacle, is a younger brother of the late famous preacher and has for some time been assistant pastor of the great church. He also has a church at Crofton, but for many years past most of his time has been devoted to superintending the agencies at work in connection with the tabernacle.