

THE CORNCRIB OF EGYPT.

NO ADMITTANCE TO GOD'S BOUNTY
UNLESS CHRIST GO WITH YOU.The Famine That Was Sore in All Lands
—The Condition Imposed That Benjamin Should Go Into Egypt with His Brethren—Benjamin a Type of Christ.

BROOKLYN, Aug. 30.—The cables reports of meager harvests in Europe, and the memory of the vast crops of ripening grain which Dr. Talmage saw during his recent tour in the west, have combined to turn his thoughts back to that patriarchal time when all the world went to Egypt to buy corn and to suggest a Gospel lesson. His text is Genesis xliii, 8, "Ye shall not see my face, except your brother be with you." This summer, having crossed eighteen of the United States—north, south, east and west—I have to report the mightiest harvest that this country or any other country ever reaped. If the grain gamblers do not somehow wreck these harvests we are about to enter upon the grandest scene of prosperity that America has ever witnessed. But while this is so in our own country, on the other side of the Atlantic there are nations threatened with famine, and the most dismal cry that is ever heard will, I fear, be uttered—the cry for bread.

I pray God that the contrast between our prosperity and their want may not be as sharp as in the lands referred to by my text. There was nothing to eat. Plenty of corn in Egypt, but ghastly famine in Canaan. The cattle mourning in the stall. Men, women and children awfully with hunger. Not the falling of one crop for one summer, but the failing of all the crops for seven years. A nation dying for lack of that which is so common on your table and so little appreciated; the product of harvest field and grist mill and oven, the price of sweat and anxiety and struggle—bread! Jacob the father has the last report from the flour bin, and he finds that everything is out, and he says to his sons, "Hoy, hook up the wagons and start for Egypt and get us something to eat."

The fact was there was a great corncrib in Egypt. The people of Egypt have been largely taxed in all ages, at the present time paying between 70 and 80 per cent. of their produce to the government. No wonder in that time they had a large corncrib, and it was full. To that crib they came from the regions round about—those who were famished—some paying for corn in money; when the money was exhausted, then paying for the corn in sheep and cattle and horses and camels, and when they were exhausted, then selling their own bodies and their families into slavery.

THE SORROW OF JACOB.
The morning for starting out on the roads for brethren is arrived of Jacob gets his family up very early. But before the elder sons start they say something that makes him tremble with emotion from head to foot and burst into tears. The fact was that these elder sons had once before been in Egypt to get corn, and they had been treated somewhat roughly, the lord of the corncrib supplying them with corn, but saying at the close of the interview, "Now, you need not come back here for any more corn unless you bring something better than money—even your younger brother Benjamin."

Al! Benjamin—that very name was suggestive of all tenderness. The mother had died at the birth of that son—a spirit coming and another spirit going—and the very thought of parting with Benjamin must have been a heart break. The keeper of this corncrib, nevertheless, says to these elder sons, "There is no need of your coming here any more for corn unless you bring Benjamin, your father's darling." Now, Jacob and his family very much needed bread, but what a struggle it would be to give up this son. The orientals are very demonstrative in their grief, and I hear the outwailing of the father as these elder sons keep reiterating in his ears the announcement of the Egyptian lord, "Ye shall not see my face unless your brother be with you." "Why did you tell them you had a brother?" said the old man, complaining and chiding them. "Why, father," they said, "he asked us all about our family, and we had no idea he would make any such demand upon us as he has made." "No use of asking me," said the father, "I cannot, I will not, give up Benjamin."

The fact was that the old man had lost children; and when there has been bereavement in a household, and a child taken, it makes the other children in the household more precious. So the day for departure was adjourned and adjourned and adjourned. Still the horrors of the famine increased, and louder moaned the cattle and wider opened the earth and more palled became the cheeks until Jacob, in despair, cried out to his sons, "Take Benjamin and be off." The elder sons tried to cheer up their father. They said: "We have strong arms and a stout heart, and no harm will come to Benjamin. We'll see that he gets back again." "Farewell!" said the young men to the father, in a tone of assumed good cheer. "Farewell!" said the old man, for that word has more quavers in it when pronounced by the aged than by the young.

Well, the bread party—the bread embassy—drives up in front of the corncrib of Egypt. These corncribs are filled with wheat and barley and corn in the husk, for those who have traveled in Canaan and Egypt know that there is corn there corresponding with our Indian maize. Huzzah! the journey is ended. The lord of the corncrib, who is also the prime minister, comes down to these arrived travelers, and says: "Dine with me today. How is your father? Is this Benjamin, the younger brother, whose presence I demanded?" The travelers are introduced into the palace. They are worn and debilitated of the way, and servants come in with a basin of water in one hand and a towel in the other, and kneel down before these newly arrived travelers, washing off the dust of the way. The butchers and poulterers and caterers of the prime minister prepare the repast.

The guests are seated in small groups, two or three at a table, the food on a tray; all the luxuries from imperial gardens and orchards and aquariums and aviaries are brought in here, and are filling choice and platter. Now is the time for this prime minister if he has a grudge against Benjamin to show it. Will he kill him, now that he has him in his hands? Oh, no! This lord of the corncrib is seated at his own table, and he looks over to the table of his guests, and he sends a portion to each of them, but sends a larger portion to Benjamin, or, as the Bible quality puts it, "Benjamin's mess was five times so much as any of theirs." Be quick and send word back with the swiftest camel to Canaan to old Jacob that "Benjamin is well; all is well; he is faring sumptuously; the Egyptian lord did not mean murder and death; but be meant deliverance and life when he announced to us on that day, 'Ye shall not see my face unless your brother be with you.'"

Well, my friends, this world is famine struck of sin. It does not yield a single drop of solid satisfaction. It is dying. It is hunger bitten. The fact that it does not, can not, feed a man's heart was well illustrated in the life of the English comedian. All the world honored him—did everything for him that the world could do. He was applauded in England and applauded in the United States. He roused up nations into laughter. He had no equal. And yet, although many people supposed him entirely happy, and that this world was completely satisfying his soul, he sits down and writes: "I never in my life put on a new hat that it did not rain and ruin it. I never went out in a shabby coat because it was raining and thought all who had the choice would keep indoors that the sun did not burst forth in its strength and bring out with it all the butterflies of fashion whom I knew and who knew me. I never consented to accept a part I hated, out of kindness to another, that I did not see hissed by the public and cut by the writer. I could not take a drive for a few minutes with Terry without being overtaken and having my elbow broken, though my friend got off unharmed. I could not make a covenant with Arnold, which I thought was to make my fortune without making his instead, than in an incredible space of time—I think thirteen months—I earned for him twenty thousand pounds and for myself one. I am persuaded that if I were to set up as a beggar, every one in my neighborhood would leave off eating bread." That was the lament of the world's comedian and joker. All un happy. The world did everything for Lord Byron that it could do, and yet in his last moment he asks a friend to come and sit down by him and read, as most supposes to his case, the story of "The Bleeding Heart." Torrigiano, the sculptor, executed, after months of care and carving, "Madonna and the Child." The royal family came in and admired it. Every body that looked at it was in ecstasy. But one day, after that toil and all that admiration, because he did not get as much compensation for his work as he had expected, he took a mallet and dashed the exquisite sculpture into atoms. The world is poor compensation, poor satisfaction, poor solace. Famine, famine in all the earth, not for seven years, but for six thousand. But, blessed be God, there is a great corncrib. The Lord built it. It is in another land. It is a large place. An angel once measured it, and as far as I can calculate it in our phrase, that corncrib is fifteen hundred miles long and fifteen hundred broad and fifteen hundred high, and it is full. Food for all nations. "Oh!" say the people, "we will start right away and get this supply for our soul." But stop a moment, for from the keeper of that corncrib there comes this word, saying, "You shall not see my face except your brother be with you." In other words, there is no such thing as getting from heaven pardon and comfort and eternal life unless we bring with us our Divine Brother, the Lord Jesus Christ. Coming without him we shall fall before we reach the corncrib, and our bodies shall be a portion for the jackals of the wilderness; but coming with the Divine Jesus, all the granaries of heaven will swing open before our soul and abundance shall be given us. We shall be invited to sit in the palace of the king and at the table; and while the Lord Jesus is so proportioning from his own table to other tables, he will not forget us; and then there it will be found that our Benjamin's mess is larger than all the others, for so it ought to be. "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive blessing and riches and honor and glory and power."

NO ADMITTANCE WITHOUT CHRIST.
I want to make three points. Every frank and common sense man will acknowledge himself to be a sinner. What are you going to do with your sins? Have them pardoned, you say. How? Through the mercy of God. What do you mean by the mercy of God? Is it the letting down of a bar for the admission of all, without respect to character? Be not deceived. I see a soul coming up to the gate of mercy and knocking at the corncrib of heavenly supply, and a voice from within says, "Are you alone?" The sinner replies, "All alone." The voice from within says, "You shall not see my pardoning face unless your Divine Brother, the Lord Jesus, be with you." Oh, that is the point at which so many are discomfited. There is no mercy from God except through Jesus Christ. Coming with him we are accepted. Coming without him, we are rejected. Peter put it right in his great sermon before the high priests when he thundered forth: "Neither is there salvation in any other. There is no other name given under heaven among men whereby we may be saved." O anxious sinner! O dying sinner! O lost sinner! all you have got to do is to have this divine Benjamin along with you. Side by side, coming to the gate, all the storehouses of heaven will swing open before your anxious soul. Am I right in calling Jesus Benjamin? Oh, yes! Rachel lived only long enough to give a name to that child, and with a dying kiss she called him Benoni. Afterward Jacob changed his name, and he called him Benjamin. The meaning of the name she gave was "Son of my Pain." The meaning of the name the father gave was "Son of My Right Hand." And was not Christ the Son of Pain? All the sorrows of Rachel in that hour, when she gave her child over into the hands of strangers was nothing compared with the struggle of God when he gave up his only Son. The omnipotent God in a birth throes! And was not Christ appropriately called "Son of the Right Hand"? Did not Stephen look into heaven and see him standing at the right hand of God? And does not Paul speak of him as standing at the right hand of God making intercession for us? O Benjamin—Jesus! Son of pain! Son of victory! The deepest emotions of our souls ought to be stirred at the sound of that nomenclature. In your prayers plead his tears, his sufferings, his sorrows and his death. If you refuse to do it all the corn cribs and the palaces of heaven will be bolted and barred against your soul, and a voice from the throne shall stun you with the announcement, "You shall not see my face except your brother be with you."

THE WORLD'S SYMPATHY IS WEAR.
My text also suggests the reason why so many people do not get any real comfort. You meet ten people; nine of them are in need of some kind of condolence. There is something in their health, or in their estate, or in their domestic condition that demands sympathy. And yet the most of the world's sympathy amounts to absolutely nothing. People go to the wrong crib or they go in the wrong way. When the plague was in Rome a great many years ago, there were eighty men who chanted themselves to death with the litanies of Gregory the Great—literally chanted themselves to death, and yet it did not stop the plague. And all the time of this world cannot halt the plague of the human heart.

I come to some one whose ailments are chronic, and I say, "In heaven you will never be sick." That does not give you much comfort. What you want is a soothing power for your present distress. Lost children, have you? I come to you and tell you that in ten years perhaps you will meet those loved ones before the throne of God. But there is but little condolence in that. One day is a year without them, ten years is a small eternity. What you want is sympathy now—present help. I come to those of you who have lost dear friends, and say: "Try to forget them. Do not keep the departed always in your mind." How can you forget them when every figure in the carpet and every look and every picture and every room calls out their name?

Suppose I come to you and say by way of condolence, "God is wise." "Oh," you say, "that gives me no help." Suppose I come to you and say, "God, from all eternity, has arranged this trouble." "Ah!" you say, "that does me no good." Then I say, "With the swift feet of prayer go direct to the corncrib for a heavenly supply." You go. You say, "Lord, help me, Lord, comfort me." But no help yet. No comfort yet. It is all dark. What is the matter? I have found. You ought to go to God and say: "Here, O Lord, are the wounds of my soul, and I bring with me the wounded Jesus. Let his wounds pay for my wounds, his bereavements for my bereavements, his loneliness for my loneliness, his heartbreak for my heartbreak. O God for the sake of the Lord Jesus Christ—the God, the man, the Benjamin, the brother—deliver my agonized soul. O Jesus of the weary foot, ease my fatigue. O Jesus of the aching head, heal my aching head. O Jesus of the Bethany sisters, roll away the stone from the door of our grave." That is the kind of prayer that brings help, and yet how many of you are getting no help at all, for the reason that there is in your soul, perhaps, a secret trouble. You may never have mentioned it to a single human ear, or you may have mentioned it to some one who is now gone away, and that great sorrow is still in your soul. After Washington Irving was dead they found a little box that contained a braid of hair and a miniature and the name of Matilda Hoffman, and a memorandum of her death and a remark something like this: "The world after that was a blank to me. I went into the country, but found no peace in solitude. I tried to go into society, but I found no peace in society. There has been a horror hanging over me by night and by day, and I am afraid to be alone."

FALSE AND FOOLISH PROMISES.
How many unuttered promises! No human ear has ever heard the sorrow. Oh, troubled soul, I want to tell you that there is one salve that can cure the wounds of the heart, and that is the salve made out of the tears of a sympathetic Jesus. And yet some of you will not take this salve; and you try chloral, and you try morphine, and you try strong drink, and you try change of scene, and you try new business associations, and for a while everything rather than take the Divine companionship and sympathy suggested by the words of my text when it says, "You shall not see my face again unless your brother be with you." Oh, that you might understand something of the height and depth and length and breadth and immensity and infinity of God's eternal consolations.

I go further, and find in my subject a hint as to the way heaven opens to the departing spirit. We are told that heaven is a palace of gates, and some people infer from that fact that all the people will go in without reference to their past life; but what is the use of having a gate that is not sometimes to be shut? The swinging of a gate implies that our entrance into heaven is conditional. It is not a monetary condition. If we come to the door of an exquisite concert we are not surprised that we must pay a fee for the knowledge of earth; that is expensive; but all the oratorios of heaven cost nothing. Heaven pays nothing for its music. It is all free. There is nothing to be paid at that door for entrance; but the condition of getting into heaven is our bringing our divine Benjamin along with us. Do you notice how often dying people call upon Jesus? It is the usual prayer offered—the prayer offered more than all the other prayers put together, "Lord Jesus receive my spirit." One of our congregation, when asked in the closing moments of his life, "Do you know us?" said: "Oh, yes, I know you. Goodbye. Lord Jesus, receive my spirit;" and he was gone. Oh, yes, in the closing moments of our life we must have a Christ to call upon. If Jacob's sons had gone toward Egypt, and had not taken Benjamin along with them, and to the question they should have been obliged to answer: "Sir, we didn't bring him, as father could not let him go; we didn't want to be bothered with him," a voice from within would have said: "Go away from us. You shall not see my face because your brother is not with you."

And if we come up toward the door of heaven at last, though we come from all luxuries and brilliancy of surroundings, and knock for admittance and it is found that Christ is not with us, the police of heaven will beat us back from the bread-house, saying: "Depart, I never knew you." If Jacob's sons, coming toward Egypt, had lost everything on the way, if they had expended their last shakel, if they had come up utterly exhausted to the corncrib, of Egypt, and it had been found that Benjamin was with them, all the storehouses would have swung open before them.

And so, though by fatal casualty we may be ushered into the eternal world; though we may be weak and exhausted by protracted sickness—if, in that last moment, we can only just stagger and faint and fall into the gate of heaven—it seems that all the corncribs of heaven will open for our need and all the palaces will open for our reception; and the Lord of that place, seated at his table, and all the angels of God seated at their table, and the martyrs seated at their table, and all our glorified kindred seated at our table, the king shall pass a portion from his table to ours, and then, while we think of the fact that it was Jesus who started us on the road, and Jesus who kept us on the way, and Jesus who at last gained admittance for our soul, we shall be gladdened if he has seen of the travel of his soul and been satisfied, and not be at all jealous if it be found that our divine Benjamin's mess is five times larger than all the rest. Hail! anointed of the Lord, thou art worthy.

My friends, you see it is either Christ or famine. If there were two banquets spread, and to one of them only you might go, you might stand and think for a good while as to which invitation you had better accept; but here it is festivity or starvation. If it were a choice between oratorio, you might say, "I prefer the 'Creation,'" or "I prefer the 'Messiah.'" But here it is a choice between harmony and everlasting discord. Oh, will you live or die? Will you start for the Egyptian corncrib, or will you perish amid the empty barns of the Canaanitish famine? Ye shall not see my face except your brother be with you."

SWINDLE THEIR COUNTRYMEN.

Some Especially Disgraceful American Specimens in London.
(Special Correspondence.)

NEW YORK, Aug. 27.—London is becoming the chosen field for a peculiarly annoying and, I regret to say, successful variety of American swindlers who make their headquarters in the English metropolis for the sole purpose of preying upon their fellow countrymen. That their methods are so ridiculously crude and simple that they would never go down except under the peculiar conditions which favor them in London does not add to the comfort of the victims.

It may be taken as a fair statement of fact to assert that fully nine-tenths of the half million of American tourists who visit London annually are oppressed by a feeling of loneliness and that they are naturally drawn toward those of their fellow countrymen they may chance to meet. This feeling simplifies the matter of making the acquaintance of the victim.

A stranger greets you in the smoking room of a London hotel, remarking: "You are from St. Paul? I'm a Chicago man," and the introduction is sufficient. You chat about America, you discover mutual friends, and if the swindler has any ability in his chosen line it is but a short time before he has inspired you with confidence and borrowed such a sum as he thinks it safe to ask you for. This sounds like such a bald scheme of swindling that many people may be disposed to doubt it. Yet it is successfully practiced every day in the year by the well dressed confidence men who "work" the London hotels.

It is taking advantage of the generous impulses of a fellow countryman, impulses which are aroused by that faint shadow of homesickness which is experienced by most travelers, and by that trait of human nature which prompts a man to be more liberal when he is away from home, on pleasure bent, than when he is in the regular routine of business life.

From this point the swindlers work up and down in point of ingenuity and social pretensions. There are the high toned operators who dress well, belong to a club or two—those of the proprietary variety to which it is easy to gain admission—and who play for high stakes, and there are those of the shabbier type who are little more than beggars.

There is a fellow still working American travelers in London who to my certain knowledge has lived for two years on a steamer ticket from Liverpool to New York. He is a glib talker, and evidently has some little education. He secures the names and addresses of new arrivals from the registers of the various "exchanges" and the published lists. He calls, tells his tale of poverty; in some cases he has been robbed, in others he has lost his money at Monte Carlo, in others he has been unsuccessful in some business venture, he is skillful in making his story suit his audience, he shows his steamer ticket and explains that he has not enough money to reach Liverpool, but the fellow is industrious, and I understand that he makes a good living out of it.

Though the English law deals very severely with the crime of obtaining money under false pretenses, the visiting American does not know just how to invoke that law and he dreads being detained by court proceedings. Furthermore, he is jealous of his reputation for Yankee shrewdness, and the swindler is comparatively safe.

I suppose that it will never be known how many thousand dollars are given by American tourists in London for the purpose of buying steamer tickets to America.

These swindlers are greatly aided by the fact that no American benevolent society of any kind exists in London. Notwithstanding our large and wealthy American colony there, no organized effort has been made to aid really deserving Americans who, through one misfortune or another, are stranded in the big city without funds. Every other civilized nation has some provision of this kind. Cases are investigated by competent agents, and such assistance as is necessary is extended to worthy applicants. The Greeks, the Turks, the Arabs, the Spaniards, Italians, Germans and Portuguese take care of their own poor systematically and intelligently, while the Americans, in the absence of such organized charity, allow the really deserving to suffer and the swindlers to reap a rich harvest.

There is little of sensation or novelty in a plain recital of facts like the preceding. The simple methods of these Anglo-American swindlers do not admit of varied or entertaining description, but this letter will have served its purpose if it puts intending travelers on their guard. If your heart is really touched by the tale of woe and your hand instinctively seeks your pocketbook, curb your generous impulse and at least make inquiries at the American consulate. Mr. Moffat, the vice consul, keeps a black list of the more notorious of the swindlers, and if the applicant is really deserving he can have no possible objection to your making such inquiries. I have advised many friends to pursue this course and after listening to the appeal to say, "Well, I'll speak to the consul, call tomorrow." Out of over a dozen cases only one made the second call.

The plague has grown to such proportions that in many of the hotels and exchanges patrons are warned against making the acquaintance of strangers, but the warnings are about as useless as the signs, "Beware of pickpockets," which we have posted in our railway stations. Americans are naturally generous and free with their money; they make acquaintances readily and, as a rule, they have a sublime faith in their own ability to take care of themselves. The majority visit London for pleasure, they are well provided with money, and the story of the fellow countryman who is hard up appeals to them with peculiar force. As a consequence the swindler flourishes like a green bay tree and does more than his share toward destroying the faith of good men in human nature.

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