

Some Hymns and Hymn Writers.

LILIAN LEE.

Coleridge says Luther did as much for the Reformation by his hymns as by his translation of the Bible. And truly the hymns come second in our hearts only to the sweet old chapters which have taught us that "man does not live by bread alone, but by every word that proceedeth out of the mouth of God." Can anything else, truly, be dearer than the old, old hymns, "learned by heart" at a mother's knee, and associated with every sacred history of childhood and youth? The memory of the dead passes into them, and all that is soft, and gentle, and pure and penitent, awakes in the heart at the sound of their familiar music. The first lisps of our infant tongues, they are the last faint murmur of our dying lips, and perchance, may break forth from our ransomed souls when they first drink in the glories of the New Jerusalem, the beautiful city of God. What heart does not grow tenderer, aye, and stronger, and more heroic, singing "Rock of Ages?" What language more fitly confesses our own nothingness and His almightiness?

"Nothing in my hand I bring,
Simply to Thy cross I cling.

Rock of Ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

And do not our eyes grow dim as mingled with the passionate prayer of those solemn words comes the memory of a voice that is still, of scenes of long ago, of love that has survived the grave, upon which hope has faded only to bloom again in immortelles?

Toplady, a Calvinist, born in England, in 1740, wrote the hymn, as also the familiar one, "When languor and disease invade." He died at the early age of thirty-eight—not having "all died," as old Horace hath it—"non omnis morias"—but living in hearts who gratefully cherish the author of "Rock of Ages." Gladstone has translated the hymn into Latin, and how majestic do the grand old words sound in that stately and sonorous tongue!

"Jesus, pro me perforatus,
Condor intra tum latus,
Tu per lympham profusum
Tu per sanguinem tepentem,
In peccata mi redunda
Tolle culpam sordes munda.

"Nil in manu mecum fero,
Sed me versus crucem gero;
Vestimenta nudus oro,
Opem debilis imploro.
Fontem Christi quero immundus
Nisi laves moribundus."

The "Stabat Mater" and "Dies Irae" were the most well-known of the seven great hymns of the early Church. "Dies Irae" was written by Thomas of Celano, and translated by Sir Walter Scott in his "Lay of the Last Minstrel." He is said to have repeated a stanza of this translation on his death-bed.

The "Te Deum" chanted every Sunday in the Episcopal churches is said to have been composed and sung by St. Ambrose, in the third century, when he baptized St. Augustine. "Jerusalem, my happy home" was written in the sixteenth century, author unknown, and the original hymn "O mother dear, Jerusalem" was a very long one of about thirty-four stanzas, from which the familiar version has been abbreviated. It was sung by martyrs marching to the stake to strengthen their hearts by visions of the Holy City which they were gaining through rack, and flame and torture. The hymns of the Wesleys helped wonderfully to roll on the tide of the great religious enthusiasm which swept over two continents. "All hail the power of Jesus' name," the grand old Coronation hymn, was written by Edward Perronet, a Methodist minister and bosom friend of Charles Wesley. "When all thy mercies, oh! my God," was composed by Joseph Addison, after a providential escape from a shipwreck during a storm off the coast of Genoa. And almost every one has heard of the

well-known hymn of Cowper's beginning "God moves in a mysterious way," the last he wrote for the "Olney Hymn Book," compiled by himself and John Newton, and composed after an attack of madness, in which he attempted to drown himself, and was frustrated by the driver's providentially losing his road. Poor Cowper! Not until after this life did he realize "God is his own interpreter, and he will make it plain." As Mrs. Browning has sung of him:

"O Poets! from a maniac's tongue was poured the deathless singing,
O Christians! to your cross of hope a hopeless hand is clinging—
O men! this man in brotherhood, your weary steps beguiling,
Groaned only when he taught you peace,
and died while ye were smiling."

Dr. Watts' Hymns are dear and familiar to every heart. Who does not know "When I survey the wondrous Cross," "When I can read my title clear," "Am I a soldier of the Cross," etc. It is said that his "Not all the blood of beasts
On Jewish altars slain," converted a Jewess.

The familiar doxology, "Praise God from whom all blessings flow," was written by Thomas Ken, chaplain to Charles II., which "merry monarch" he frequently and fearlessly reprovved for his vices. Macaulay says of him "that his moral character sustains a comparison with any in ecclesiastical history, and seems to approach, as near as any human infirmity permits, to the ideal of Christian perfection."

"I love Thy kingdom, Lord," claims Dr. Timothy Dwight, President of Yale College, for its author. That familiar hymn so associated with the tenderest experiences of religious life, "Just as I am," was written by Charlotte Elliot, the daughter of an English minister. Her life was full of tribulation and long and wearisome sickness. Her physician brought the hymn to her, one day, printed on leaflets, with the remark, "I know this will please you"—ignorant of the fact that it was her own production.

"We speak of the realms of the blest," a favorite hymn in the Christian Hymnbook, was written by a young English lady just a few weeks before her death, at the early age of twenty-four. She was the wife of Thos. Mills, Esq., M. P.

"The familiar missionary hymn, "From Greenland's icy mountains," was written by Bishop Heber, one afternoon, at an hour's notice. His father-in-law, Dr. Shipley, told him, one Saturday afternoon (knowing his facility for composing) that he intended preaching a missionary sermon the next day, and wanted a hymn for the occasion. He went out for a short while, and returned with the grand old words which bring home the Macedonian cry with irresistible force to every Christian heart.

"Nearer, my God, to Thee, in itself both prayer and sermon, as well as the sweetest and dearest of hymns to myriads of hearts aspiring heavenward and Godward, was written as a memorial of answered prayer by Mrs. Sarah Flower Adams. In her last hours, with almost her last breath, she burst into unconscious song.

"My faith looks up to Thee," was written by Dr. Ray Palmer, in 1830. "How firm a Foundation," by Thomas Keith, in 1787. "Jesus, Lover of my Soul," by Wesley.

The history and mission of that sweet hymn of Phoebe Cary's, "A sweetly solemn thought," has been too frequently told to need repetition.

We find hymns and spiritual songs in the writings of almost all the poets from Pope to Tennyson, and Mrs. Browning; even from those from whom we should least expect any religious expression of feeling whatever. And hence we draw one of the many lessons a larger experience of human hearts and human lives teaches us, that religion, that "devotion to something afar," is almost sure to exist in every fine nature, though it may not always, alas! come to the bright and

shining light of an open Christian life and profession. Worship, that natural instinct of the soul, cropping out in idolatry where there is no revelation, bursts forth into sacred song even from the lips of those whose lives know no sacred law. Even Tom Moore, though sensuous and bacchanalian, has turned from his Anacreontic lays to write that tenderest of consolatory hymns sung for comforting at the bier and funeral, and indeed, as balm for all disconsolate hearts, "where'er they languish." And so the hymn, "As down in the sunless retreats of the ocean," was written by the same man who composed "When the wine-cup is beaming before us," Pope's "Universal Prayer," Coleridge's "Ancient Mariner," Burns' "Cotter's Saturday Night," and his exquisite little poem:

"O, gently scan your brother-man,
Still gentler sister-woman;
Tho' they may gang and kennin wrang,
To step aside is human,"

are all founded upon an inspiration which could have sprung only from the lovely spirit of the New Testament scriptures: love towards God and towards man. The first named of these has been called deistical, but surely the spirit of Christ is there:

"Teach me to feel another's woe,
To hide the faults I see;
The mercy I to other show,
That mercy show to me."

Is there not, here, a suggestion of the verse, "For charity shall cover a multitude of sins," and the fifth petition of the model prayer? And Mrs. Browning's poems might be called "hymns out of church," the "heart's sweet scripture," filled with offerings of loftiest devotion, for the Lord whom she served. Listen to this sonnet-hymn, and let us sing it in our prayers, when they silently ascend from the heart in our hours of weariness and faintness:

"Speak low to me, my Savior, low and sweet,
From out the hallelujahs—sweet and low,
Lest I should fear, and fall, and miss
Thee so,

Who art not missed by any that entreat—
Speak to me as to Mary at Thy feet.
And if no precious gems my hands bestow,
Let my tears fall like amber while I go
In search of Thy divinest voice, complete
In humanest affection."

And again, what sound Christian philosophy and faith, the experience and the hope worked by Tribulation, does she evince when she writes:

"I think we are too ready with complaint

In this fair world of God's. Had we no hope,
Indeed, beyond the zenith and the slope
Of yon grey bank of sky, we might be faint
To muse upon eternity's constraint
Round our aspirant souls. But since the scope
Must widen early, is it well to droop
For a few days, consumed in loss and taint?

O, pusillanimous Heart, be comforted!"

And again:

"O, brothers, let us leave the shame and sin
Of taking vainly, in a plaintive mood,
The holy name of Grief! holy, herein,
That by the grief of One, came all our good."

Being dead, she yet speaketh—and may we not be of those who, "having ears, hear not, neither understand," but may we use the divine voice of poetry as an inspiration to holy living and peaceful dying. There are serene heights, even in this life, where we may find, not only "repose," but peace; mounts of transfiguration, whereon visions of him whom our souls love shall be revealed unto us. By climbing oft, we shall attain. Who shall faint or grow weary, looking upward?—Standard.

—The skeptical world is fond of affirming the decay and predicting the overthrow of Christianity. Meanwhile the current of actual events sets strongly the other way. For example, the permanent Methodist Church Extension Fund now amounts to \$342,000, with enough pledged to make it \$500,000. The *Christian Advocate* says this means at least two churches every week forever.

Unexpected Things.

An essay read before the Social and Literary Society of the Christian Church, Salem, Oregon.

Could we always calculate with certainty upon just what the future held in store for us, then we would never have to repent a mistake made; we could avoid all that is unpleasant, and even the weakest of us could accomplish wonders of goodness, for there are but few who deliberately lead aimless, purposeless lives; all have some standard of excellence, even if completely failing to attain it. Most persons try once but it is not every one who would, figuratively speaking, "walk through floods and flames" to accomplish their object, for we often find even though we have a "castiron" determination, "There's many a slip twixt the cup and the lip," while the "Best laid plans of mice and men, aft gang alee."

Triumph does not always await the resolute and daring, for sometimes great results are achieved by the weak and fearing. While the most important events, either for good or evil which have occurred in our individual histories or the history of our nation, can be charged to the unexpected things, which changed the current of thought and motive. This truth is forced home to us after each political campaign, for nine times out of ten the politician who wireworks, plots and plans most finds, when defeated, to his cost, he has not made due allowance for the simple unexpected.

Many persons at the beginning of the new year form good resolves, and knowing wherein they have failed before, they feel "forewarned and forearmed," but unexpected things sweep over the heart, carrying away good resolutions like the flood which sweeps all before its force and fury.

In a late periodical were these lines, "An unanswered letter, an appointment broken, a train missed, may for all we know change the color of our whole existence." How true it is that these little unexpected hindrances may make our *mar* our lives. Many an unexpected delay has caused a lifetime of happiness or misery. Many an unexpected letter has changed a day of gloom into a day of rejoicing, or has brought into a happy life a never-ending sorrow. An unexpected arrival either brings pleasure or disappointment.

An act of kindness, by one we least expected it of, will give more real pleasure than the looked for kindness of our best friends. A rebuff where we expected sympathy, hurts worse than the malice of our enemies. And ah! what destiny for weal or woe oft hangs upon an unexpected answer? We may strive for years with patient study to understand some important truth, and often the unexpected events of one short hour will reveal it, and overthrow the settled convictions of a lifetime. The unexpected oftenest happens, and either falls with crushing weight, or lifts from us heavy burdens, and proclaims to the world our real character.

We may gain wisdom by experience, yet each day finds us coping with unexpected things. There is no human mind so deep that it can comprehend and compute the sorrow and joy that the unexpected brings.

The young man who calls upon his lady love with the intention of an avowal of his affections, confidently expecting a favorable answer, and finds her swinging on the gate in the moonlight, talking soft nonsense to another, and contemplates suicide on account of it, evidently has not made due allowance for the unexpected.

The woman who has just finished a large washing, and barely has time to set a scrap dinner, and has not found the time to tidy herself, her house, or her children, is scarcely equal to meeting her husband with a smile, as he walks in with unexpected company, while he, poor man, forgetting it was Monday, scarcely expects to find

things in such a muss, but one thing he expects, deserves, and receives, is a certain lecture of unusual length when he returns in the evening.

The young woman whose sole ambition is good looks, fine array, and merely showy accomplishments, who sits with folded hands, waiting for these to bring a wealthy lover to her feet, finds as the years speed by, that men of wealth and sense—and they must have pretty good sense to accumulate wealth—or if accumulated for them by other heads and hands, they must have sense to keep it—such men seek for more than a fleeting show when seeking a wife. The exquisite dandy who struts about town, turning neither hand nor brain to useful account because "dad's" rich, and moves with the select, will realize contrary to his expectations, fools are ignored, while it takes industry, honor, and honesty to win after all. The real, tangible, seldom reaches the standard of the ideal, for the unexpected intervenes and changes not only our purposes but our desires. Love comes in an unlooked for moment, and the loved and accepted, rarely resembles the ideal, yet we may not realize this for when we love the ideal changes. Often the unexpected betters our condition, but we fail to appreciate and grasp the good, because it is unheralded.

In the calm heat of a summer day a sudden tempest arises, seeming to quench the brightness of the sunshine, and while we hear the dismal howling of the wind, and nature's face is clouded and tearful, we almost despair of ever again beholding sunbeams. But suddenly the sun bursts forth, and we, who at best—with all of science and philosophy to yield us knowledge, are but creatures of impulse, forget the storm and bask in the sunlight.

The fragrant apple blossoms, in front of Fanny's window, whisper to each other, as they are gently fanned by the airy zephyr, we will be rosy cheeked apples some day, but Fanny leans her pretty head out of the window and her white hand ruthlessly breaks them off, as she says, "How lovely and sweet they are, I need these to wear to-night." But the poor little blossoms are reconciled to this unexpected turn of affairs, when placed in Fanny's glossy curls.

The tree with its thick evergreen foliage, and wide-spreading branches, says, "See! behold me! in my strength and beauty, note the benefit I am, I shade from the scorching sun, and shelter from the driving storm;" but the woodman noting its fine proportions, hews it down, and chops, planes, saws, and polishes it, and men beholding, say the tree is destroyed, all this but destines it for the grand furniture of a parlor in the king's palace.

Oh! could we but accept the unexpected, believing it best, even though we do not understand the mysteries of God's why and wherefore. For he alone can and does take into consideration the influence of unexpected things. Ah! the unexpected things they are what change our lives, thwart our plans, and mould us after all.

HILDEGARDE.

—From the drift of newspaper sentiment, it would appear that the only hope of this country rests in the name of one of half a dozen men, the record of none of whom is above reproach. The plain truth is, we can number men by the thousand who are able to administer the affairs of this country honestly and well, and that is more than can be said of some of the more prominent candidates. Plain rectitude and moral firmness are the brilliancy and dash and astuteness that are the chief claims of some, are the great reasons why they should receive a call to privacy.—*Ex.*

A dose of Yankee Cough Syrup taken at bed-time will insure you a good night's rest from coughing.