

Strength in Weakness

(By Rev. John Pollock, Belfast, Ireland.)

"How can I preach to-day?" I sighing said,
As languidly I laid my weary head
Upon the vestry mantel. All was still:
The bell had ceased. The beadle, waiting, stood,
I answered "No." And then, in dreamy mood,
I entered with him, climbed the pulpit stair,
Sat down—the people thought I bent in prayer.
Perhaps I prayed, although no words did lend
Expression to my yearning. Then I preached,
And prayed, and felt relieved when I had reached
The accustomed benediction at the end
Of my performance. Oh, how sad I felt,
And sick at heart; and in my grief I knelt
And poured my disappointment in the ear
Of the Master whom I longed to honour more.

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And then I heard a footstep coming near—
A sob—a timid knocking at the door.
"Come in." "Oh, sir, you'll pardon me for speaking
A word or two; but, oh, I could not go,
After so many years of weary seeking,
Until I had just come and let you know
How much the tender words that you have spoken
Have comforted a heart that's well-nigh broken.
God bless you for them, sir!" she said no more,
But pressed my hand, and vanished through the door.

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Again I knelt. "Oh, Father, pardon me!
And teach me more and more to trust in Thee!"
Long time I wrestled there; and as I prayed,
Methought a tender, loving Hand was laid
Upon my head; and as I walked along
Towards my home, my spirit sang this song:
"Behold, when I am weak then am I strong!"