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SERMONIC.

THE DESPAIRING CRY OF JESUS ON THE CROSS.

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*My God! my God! why hast thou forsaken
me?*—Matt. xxvii: 26.

THE New Testament contains many momentous questions. The text, Christ's Syro-Chaldaic quotation from the twenty-second Psalm, transcends all others in sadness and sublimity. Divinely appropriated as prophetic to Himself, it introduces the student of His last utterances to a field of theological inquiry both instructive and interesting. With the channel connecting His mighty human soul with His Father's supporting sympathy, temporarily obstructed; with midnight on His great mind, as nature's supernatural gloom gives its recognition of His agony, He asks, as life ebbs away, this desponding inquiry, given by the Evangelist in the Hebrew rather than in the Greek, as explanatory of the mistake of those supposing that, amidst the delirium of His death-pains, He called for Elias. Let us take a glance at

I. THE SURROUNDINGS OF THE SUFFERER UTTERING THIS WAIL OF DISTRESS.

[Many of the full sermons and condensations published in this MONTHLY are printed from the authors' manuscripts; others are specially reported for this publication. Great care is taken to make the reports correct. These condensations are carefully made under our editorial supervision. All the sermons of the "International Sunday-School Service" are written expressly for THE HOMILETIC MONTHLY.—ED.]

Among the Romans of Christ's age, crucifixion was the most reproachful mode of inflicting capital punishment. History, profane and sacred, emphasizes the fact that the conquered Jewish nation, clamoring through its representative men for the execution of the Prophet of Nazareth, possessed no longer the legal authority to decree or carry out the death penalty. The civil and ecclesiastical dignitaries of Judaism yearned to associate indelible disgrace with the name and cause of Christ. To gratify their malignant desire, and to popularize his own administration, Pilate signed the warrant that decreed the death penalty of the condemned slave upon the Lord of glory.

The custom of the conquering Romans required the doomed criminal to personally bear the upright timber to which he was to be fastened, to the locality of his execution. Jesus and the two thieves undertook this task. He was physically unequal to the emergency. The military executioners promptly impressed into service one whom tradition has presented as a *colored* man, and on him was laid the eminent honor of carrying the wood on which the God-man was to die