

to let down the mainsail for?" I said: "We have been praying for a breeze, and it is coming directly, and the sooner we are ready for it the better." With an oath he said he would rather see a breeze than hear of one. As he was speaking, I instinctively looked up, and noticed that one of the sails was quivering with the coming breeze. Said I: "Don't you see that the corners of the royals are already shaking? My dear fellow, there is a good breeze coming, and we had better be ready for it." Of course, the mate went to work, and soon the sailors were tramping over the deck. Before the sails were set, the wind was down upon us. The captain came up to see what was the matter. He saw that our prayers had been answered; and we didn't forget to praise God for so signal a deliverance from the perils to which we were exposed. We have been penniless in the interior of China; but we simply turn to this book, and draw a check, and it is always honored.—*Rev. Hudson Taylor.*

### HORATIUS BONAR.

The poetry of Horatius Bonar is usually thought of as being simply religious. There is a religious tone to it all, and yet some of his pieces show that he is observant of nature, and skilled in depicting natural scenes. In this he resembles Keble more than Watts and Wesley, who rarely take cognizance of the natural world. The following poem, called "The Stranger Sea-Bird," will illustrate both qualities in his verse:

"Far from his breezy home of cliff and billow,  
Yon sea-bird folds his wing;  
Upon the tremulous bough of this stream-shading willow,  
He stays his wandering.

"Fanned by fresh leaves, and soothed by blossoms  
closing,  
His lullaby the stream,  
A stranger, in bewildered loneliness reposing,  
He dreams his ocean-dream.

"His dream of ocean-haunts, and ocean-brightness,  
The rock, the wave, the foam:  
The blue above, beneath, the sea-cloud's trail of whiteness,  
His forgotten home.

"And he would fly, but cannot, for the shadows  
Of night have barred his way;  
How could he search a path across these woods and meadows  
To his far sea home's spray?

"Dark miles of thicket, swamp, and moorland dreary,  
Forlorn his hopeless flight:  
With plumage soiled, eye dim, heart faint, and wing all weary,  
He waits for sun and light.

"And I, in this far land, a timid stranger,  
Resting by Time's lone stream,  
Lie dreaming hour by hour, beset with night and danger,  
The Church's Father dream

"The dream of home possessed, and all home's gladness  
Beyond these unknown hills;  
O! solace, after earth's sore days of stranger-sadness,  
Beside the eternal rills.

"Life's exile past, all told its broken story;  
Night, death, and evil gone;  
This more than Egypt-shame exchanged for Canaan-glory,  
And the bright city won!

"Come then. O Christ! earth's Monarch and Redeemer,  
Thy glorious Eden bring,  
Where I, even I, at last, no more a trembling dreamer,  
Shall fold my heavy wing."

—*Ill. Christian Weekly.*

### THE DARK CLOSET.

Rev. Asa Bullard, in his autobiography, recently published by the Cong. S. S. & P. Society, relates the following, which will awaken a hearty response in the minds of all who are accustomed to go to the same place, month after month, for their secret devotions:

After I became interested in religion, in seeking a place for retirement for my secret devotions, I thought of a large closet out of the spare chamber. That closet was the place where my mother kept her blankets, comforters, and various kinds of bed-clothes. It was large, and without a window. When the door was shut it was total darkness; no eye but that of Him who "seeth in secret" could behold any one who there sought retirement from the world.

In that closet I erected my altar for secret prayer. It was my Bethel; and none but God can ever know the Bethel seasons I there enjoyed in communing with the Saviour in that time of my first love, and until I left my home to prepare for the work of the gospel ministry.

In one of my visits to my dear old home, years after I had left it, as I was "company," I occupied at night the spare chamber. In the morning I had a desire to visit the dark closet, and see how it would seem to shut the door, and pray to my Father which is in secret, as I was wont to do in my young days. I opened the door, and what a scene greeted my eyes! There in the centre of the closet stood a chair, and before the chair there was a cushion in which there were deep prints, where someone, evidently, was accustomed to kneel in secret worship. And who could it be? Who but my own blessed mother, who had prayed all her ten children into the kingdom? What a hallowed spot did it seem to me! A thrill of sacred awe came over me, and a voice almost seemed to say, as it did to Moses at the burning bush, "Put off thy shoes from off thy feet, for the place whereon thou standest is holy ground."

As you grow ready for it, somewhere or other you will find what is ready for you in a book.—*George MacDonald.*