

## THE MINISTRY OF SONG.

BY FRANCES RIDLEY HAYWARD.

In God's great field of labor,  
All work is not the same;  
He hath a service for each one  
Who loves His holy name.  
And you to whom the secrets  
Of all sweet sounds are known,  
Rise up! for He hath called you  
To a mission of your own,  
And rightly to fulfil it,  
His grace can make you strong,  
Who to your charge hath given  
The Ministry of Song.

Sing at the cottage bedside;  
They have no music there,  
And the voice of praise is silent  
After the voice of prayer.  
Sing of the gentle Saviour  
In the plainest hymns you know,  
And the pain dimmed eye will brighten  
As the soothing verses flow,  
Better than the loudest plaudits  
The murmured thanks of such,  
For the King will stoop to crown them  
With His gracious "I-much."

Sing, where the full-toned organ  
Resounds through aisle and nave,  
And the choral praise ascendeth  
In concord sweet and grave.  
Sing, where the village voices  
Fall harshly on your ear,  
And while more earnestly you pour,  
Less discord you will hear.  
The noblest and the humblest,  
Alike are "common praise,"  
And not for human praise alone,  
The psalm and hymn we raise.

Sing! that your song may gladden:  
Sing like the happy rills,  
Leaping in sparkling blessing  
Fresh from the breezy hills  
Sing! that your song may silence  
The folly and the jest,  
And the "idle word" be banished  
As an unwelcome guest.  
Sing! that your song may echo  
After the strain is past,  
A link of the love wrought cable  
That holds some vessel fast.

Sing to the tired and anxious;  
It is yours to bring a ray,  
Passing, indeed, but cheering,  
Across the rugged way.  
Sing to God's holy servants,  
Weary with toiling toil,  
Spent with faithful labor,  
On oft ungrateful soil.  
The chalice of your music  
All reverently bear,  
For with the blessed angels  
Such ministry you share.

Sing when His mighty mercies  
And marvellous love you feel,  
And the deep joy of gratitude  
Springs freshly as you kneel;  
When words, like morning starlight,  
Melt powerless—rise and sing!  
And bring your sweetest music  
To Him, your gracious King.  
Pour out your song before Him  
To whom our best is due;  
Remember, he who hears your prayer  
Will hear your praises too.

Sing on in grateful gladness!  
Rejoice in this good thing  
Which the Lord thy God hath given thee,  
The happy power to sing.  
But yield to Him, the Sovereign,  
To whom all gifts belong.  
In fullest consecration,  
Your ministry of song,  
Until His mercy grant you  
That resurrection voice,  
Whose only ministry shall be  
To praise him and rejoice.

## Our Story.

## A DROVER'S STORY.

My name is Anthony Hunt. I am a drover, and live miles and miles away, upon the Western prairie. There wasn't a house within sight when we moved there, my wife and I; and now we have not many neighbours, but those we have are good ones.

One day, about ten years ago, I went away from home to sell some fifty head of cattle—fine creatures as ever I saw. I was to buy some dry goods and groceries before I came back, and, above all, a doll for our youngest, Dolly; she never had a shop doll of her own, only the rag babies her mother had made her. Dolly could talk of nothing else, and went down to the very gate to call after me to "buy a big one." Nobody but a parent can understand how my mind was on that

toy, and how, when the cattle were sold, the first thing I hurried off to buy was Dolly's doll. I found a large one with eyes that would open and shut when you pulled a wire, and had it wrapped up in paper and tucked in under my arm, while I had parcels of calico and line, and tea and sugar put up. It might have been more prudent to stay till morning; but I felt anxious to get back, and eager to hear Dolly's prattle about the doll she was so anxiously expecting.

I was mounted on a steady-going old horse of mine and pretty well loaded. Night set in before I was a mile from town, and settled down as dark as pitch while I was in the middle of the wildest bit of road I know of. I could have felt my way through, I remembered it so well, and it was almost that when the storm that had been brewing broke, and pelted the rain in torrents, five miles, or may be six, from home, too. I rode on as fast as I could; but suddenly I heard a little cry, like a child's voice. I stopped short and listened: I heard it again. I called, and it answered me. I couldn't see anything. All was as dark as pitch, I got down and felt about in the grass; called again, and again I was answered. Then I began to wonder: I am not timid; but I was known to be a drover, and to have money about me. I thought it might be a trap to catch me, and then rob and murder me.

I am not superstitious—not very—but how could a real child be out on the prairie in such a night, at such an hour? It might be more than human. The bit of a coward that hides itself in most men showed itself in me then, and I was half inclined to run away; but once more I heard that piteous cry, and said I: "If any man's child is hereabouts, Anthony Hunt is not the man to let it lie here to die."

I searched again. At last I bethought me of a hollow under the hill, and groped that way. Sure enough I found a little dripping thing that moaned and sobbed as I took it in my arms. I called my horse, and the beast came to me, and I mounted, and tucked the little soaked thing under my coat as well as I could, promising to take it home to mammy. It seemed tired to death, and pretty soon cried itself to sleep against my bosom.

It had slept there over an hour when I saw my own windows. There were lights in them, and I supposed my wife had lit them for my sake; but when I got into the doorway, I saw something was the matter, and stood still with dead fear of heart five minutes before I could lift the latch. At last I did it, and saw the room full of neighbors, and my wife amid them weeping. When she saw me she hid her face.

"Oh, don't tell him," she said, "It will kill him."

"What is it, neighbours?" I cried.  
And one said, "Nothing now, I hope. What's that in your arms?"

"A poor lost child," said I. I found it on the road. Take it, will you? I've turned faint." And I lifted the sleeping thing, and saw the face of my own child, my little Dolly.

It was my darling, and no other, I had picked up upon the drenched road.

My little child had wandered out to meet "daddy" and doll, while her mother was at work, and they were lamenting her as one dead. I thanked God on my knees before them all. It is not much of a story, neighbours, but I think of it often in the nights, and wonder how I could bear to live now if I had not stopped when I heard the cry for help upon the road—the little baby-cry hardly louder than a squirrel's chirp.—*Christian Woman.*

## GRUMBLE, GRUMBLE.

A few days ago a young man died under peculiarly distressing circumstances. His death was so sudden, and it might have been so easily avoided by a little thoughtfulness, and he was so young, and so strong, and so well! But

the most distressing thing about it, to his mother, was his evident lack of readiness for death. Why he died—that is, the cause of his death—the doctor seemed not to know; but why he was not ready to die, some who knew him and his family well, have suggested a most significant reason. He died an ungodly man, if these people reason about it correctly, because of his parents' habit of grumbling.

They were church members, but many years ago had changed their residence from the country to the city, and their position in the church from one of influence in a small society to one of comparative obscurity in a large one. The new status never pleased them; they were proud and disappointed; they did not enjoy their back seats. Then they began to grumble. They grumbled at the minister, he did not do pastoral work enough to please them; they had been accustomed to see the pastor every day or two, in the old home, this man seemed indifferent to them; neither did his preaching suit them; and he had altogether too big a salary, and, they fancied, seemed to preach for the money. They grumbled at the aristocrats in the church, people who had no business to be so "stuck up," the church itself was becoming "too expensive a luxury for poor folks." They grumbled at the hypocrites; people who joined the church who were no better than they should be; they did not know but there were as good people out of the church as in; the church was afraid to discipline its black sheep, and such a state of things was a disgrace. They grumbled at the quartette choir, and all the city and new-fangled notions; at the stupid prayer-meetings, and the "clap-trap Sunday school." And every Sabbath at dinner table, after the morning sermon, the children heard this same grumble, grumble, grumble, till it was little wonder, if, after a while, this sort of indorsement of the church and the minister by the parents, began to bear fruit in an indifference and presently even a hostility to the whole thing represented by the church, which gradually made an irreligious, Sabbath-breaking, low-lived family out of one which, fifteen years before, had been conspicuously a Christian household.

The mother changed least. She made no particular effort to silence the grumbling: did her full share of it; was very ready to make a pretext of illness to discontinue church-going altogether; by her incessant complainings made it decidedly uncomfortable for the ladies of the church who called upon her, and for the pastors who came, one after another, and sought her out as a church-member, and tried to arouse her to her duty; but she was first to be conscious of a wrong of dirt among those she loved; she could not long be blind to the change for the worse which was transpiring in her sons. She mourned the company they kept—the company they had often heard her say was as good as the people in the church, many of them; she was wounded by their coarse abuse of religious people; she began to be sensible of a dull agony of spirit on account of their habits; she was bewildered, and her own faith was sometimes almost lost, as she heard them boldly avow the grossest infidelity—those boys of hers who, in their country home years ago, had so delighted in the Sabbath school, one of whom she had consecrated at his birth to the Christian ministry; but the finishing touch to her misery came when that same son, having outstripped all the others in boldness of infidelity and badness of life, was one day, without a moment's warning, summoned to yield his soul into the hand of his Maker. And now she sits in her darkened room, scarcely sure of her reason at times, going over again the years of the downward grade of her family's career, and whether or not some echo of the reasons people

are giving for her sad experience has reached her ears, her own words are not empty of bitter self-reproach for this sin of hers—shall we say—too late?

A somewhat famous feat of folly is to sit upon a limb of a tree and saw one's self off with it. Few men with wit enough to ply a saw would do so senseless a thing, and yet now and then one such is found. The operation is a typical one, suggestive of many a piece of foolishness of which persons who little suspect it at the time, are proven guilty by the revelation which time so clearly brings. It would be a cruel, although a true, theory to say to that stricken mother sitting in her darkened chamber and darker grief: "You are suffering the results of your own folly." But by some means the warning *must* be brought to the attention of numberless other parents who are even now vigorously sawing away at God's tree of life, with the fall of which their own and their family's happiness will crash down to the earth. The church is valuable at many points; nobody in his senses disputes that; we have no end of commonplace preachers, cold, or callous, or hypocritical members, in it; the person who thrusts his self-consciousness out in the form of *antenne* which send a shock to his brain or his heart every time he is bored by a sermon, or slighted by a brother or sister, or offended by want of ideal Christian life anywhere, will be shocked a great many times. But, in the first place, a Christian has no right to any such sensitiveness; he is put in the church to work and stand the hard knocks; he is himself unsanctified, perhaps, like many another, and every other man has as good a right as he has—that is, none at all—to take up a position outside the church, and criticise and harass it. And, in the second place, granting what is declared wrong in the church, where is anything better? God has a stupendous work to be done by His children through *some* agency. What promises to take the place of the church? Every fling at the church by one bound by sacred vows to be loyal to it, every substitution of criticism for sympathy, every thoughtless disparagement of it before the people who love it little enough already without our yet further helping them to arguments against it; all this is deplorable, almost shameful, in a Christian; but worse than this, if possible, in itself and in its effects, is that too common inconsiderate grumbling before our children and the young, who are being educated thus by us for that future indifference to the church and religion which can only issue, in the last result, which may wait long, but will come—in gracelessness and immorality and immeasurable disaster.

THE DAWN APPEARETH.—At a recent missionary anniversary it was said: "In my travels around the world I saw not one single new heathen temple. All the pagan worship I saw was in old, dilapidated temples."

VALUE OF SUNFLOWERS.—It has been found that sunflowers purify the air wonderfully, and tend to prevent chills and other form of disease from malaria by neutralizing the bad effects of poisonous exhalations. It is asserted on excellent authority that not only near Rochefort, France, but in certain marshy districts in Holland, intermittent fever, formerly prevalent has wholly disappeared in consequence of the extensive planting of sunflowers. Is it not possible that other strong hardy plants that are rapid growers might produce a beneficial result, as they imbibe for their nourishment noxious gases and throw off for our use pure oxygen? Pine trees or woods are very healthful because the coniferæ emit a peculiarly purifying substance called ozone. How carefully does the wise and good Creator provide for the wants of all his creatures.—*Household.*