

Thirty Days Hath—

The most widely known and oftenest quoted verse in the English language is—

Thirty days hath September,
April, June and November;
February hath XXVIII. alone,
And all the rest have XXXI.

It is the one thing learned at school that nobody forgets, the one aid to memory that really helps remembrance. Yet probably not one person in a hundred thousand who habitually use it in everyday life recollects or has even known the name of its author.

Richard Grafton, who wrote this immortal verse, was one of the earliest and most distinguished of English publishers. He embarked in the business only about sixty years later than Caxton, 'the father of English printing,' and between 1539 and 1553 brought out 'The Great Bible' (Matthew's), Coverdale's Translation of the New Testament, 'Acts of Parliament,' and other books.

Why People Called Her 'So Nice.'

Always shielding others at her own expense. Making a sacrifice cheerfully whenever one is made.

Avoiding discussions in the presence of a third party.

Apologizing without reservation when an apology is needed.

Conforming her tastes, when visiting, to those of her hostess.

Always repressing criticism when there is anything to praise.

Inquiring after the friends and families of those whom she meets.

Expressing an interest in that which she sees is interesting to others.

Avoiding jokes of a personal nature likely to wound another's feelings.

Showing 'small courtesies' to humble people without an air of patronage.

Looking at people and speaking pleasantly, although she may feel disturbed.

Taking no notice of accidents which happen to others, unless she can give aid.

Never refusing a gift when it evidently comes from the heart and is bestowed with pleasure.

Making no unnecessary allusion to any subject which is known to be disagreeable to another.

Dressing suitably, with consideration for the feelings and the wardrobes of those about her.

Writing letters to those who have benefited her in any way, or to whom she may give help or cheer.

Showing herself happy when she is enjoying herself, remembering it is a pleasure to others to make her happy.—'Great Thoughts.'

The Duke's Modesty.

Dr. James Stalker tells a good story of Sir John Steell, the famous sculptor. When he had the Duke of Wellington sitting for a statue, he wanted to get him to look war-like. All his efforts were in vain, however, for Wellington seemed, judging by his face, never to have heard of Waterloo or Talavera. At last Sir John lost patience somewhat, and this scene followed:

'As I am going to make the statue of your Grace, can you not tell me what you were doing before, say—the Battle of Salamanca? Were you not galloping about the fields cheering on your men to deeds of valour by word and action?'

'Bah!' said the duke, in evident scorn. 'If you really want to model me as I was on the morning of Salamanca, then do me crawling along a ditch on my stomach, with a telescope in my hand.'

The Choir That Helped.

(John Mervin Hull, in the New York 'Observer'.)

At length the arrangements were completed, and I had formally agreed to accept the call to the Rockingham Church. The committee met me in my little study at Ortonville, and as they arose to go the chairman said:

'There is one feature of our service, Mr. Rathbun, which I think you will appreciate, and that is the music. In fact I may confess that we took pains to find out about your interest in music before we extended the call. Rockingham is not a large city, but the people of our church take great pride in having the best music for our services. They are willing to make some sacrifices in order to pay for it, and what is more, they know when they get it. And although our quartette are all Rockingham singers, except Miss Seymour, the soprano, who comes out from Boylston, yet I am confident that there is no better choir in the largest churches in Boylston.'

One Saturday evening a few weeks later, as I was getting ready for my first services in Rockingham, I recalled what Mr. Ward had said about the choir, and the memory produced anxiety rather than elation in my mind. My former pastorates had been in country villages, and I was entirely without experience, as a pastor, of salaried choirs of professional singers. I had read, however, a good many articles and stories about the trouble caused by such choirs, and I knew that my classmate, Ariel Shirland, had to leave the church at Nettleton on account of a quarrel in the choir, in which members of the congregation took sides. Moreover, I had preached a few times in some of the large churches in Boylston. On one occasion the tenor and bass went out during the sermon, and when they returned the incense of stale tobacco and much beer was offered before the Lord; and another time it was whispered around with much interest that the soprano had made a great hit the night before on the vaudeville stage.

While I doubtfully thought on these things, the door of the study opened and my wife announced:

'Wilmet, here is Mr. Lenox, the leader of the choir, to see you about the hymns for tomorrow.'

I was somewhat surprised, but Stella's information was correct, and in addition to the hymns, Mr. Lenox asked me to write my text on the slip. As he looked at the numbers he smiled, and the smile of Evan Lenox was a beautiful thing to see.

'You have selected some of the "good old hymns,"' he said.

'Yes,' I said, 'I like to have all the people join in singing the hymns.'

'Do you prefer congregational singing instead of a choir, Mr. Rathbun?'

'Oh, no,' I replied quickly. 'I think we need both. I have a notion that the Lord arranged the music service of the ancient temple in a most excellent way, when he provided parts for musical instruments, for trained choirs, and for the whole congregation. But,' I continued, 'I think the choir can help the congregational singing a great deal if they are willing to do so.'

Mr. Lenox did not then give me his views on the subject, and after the service the next morning I did not need to ask him for them.

On Sunday morning I came to the church before the bell ceased tolling, and went into the pulpit just as Varina Webb seated herself at the organ. This brought us almost face to face, as the organ and choir were at the right of the pulpit, a step or two lower. When Varina saw me turn my chair toward the organ as if I intended to listen to the voluntary, her face flushed with pleasure, as if it was an unexpected attention. When the first soft notes of the organ whispered their melody, I knew that, as Mr. Ward had said, the church in Rockingham had made some sacrifices in order to get that organ. And what was this music that the organist drew from it? It was green pastures and still waters among the cedar hills of God, and it filled my soul with peace.

When the choir stood up to sing the anthem, I could not help noticing a slight rustling in the large congregation. Those not directly in front of the choir were turning a little so that they could look directly at the singers, and upon the faces of all the people there was a look of restful expectation. The piece was an exquisite setting of the hymn,

'Lord, I hear of showers of blessing,'

and it opened with a bass solo. The other members of the choir were young, but Laban Marlow was nearly seventy. His abundant hair and beard were white as snow, but his face was ruddy and his voice deep and mellow. It was a long, pure life that vibrated in his marvellous tones and made them blend with the younger voices when the other parts brought in the harmony. Every word was distinct, and when the music ceased, the light of hope had brightened some sorrowful faces, and many hearts began to feel the rest for which the Sabbath was made.

When I gave out the psalm the choir read the responses with the rest of the congregation, and then came the first hymn. It was:

'Now to the Lord a noble song,'

set to 'Duke Street.' It was not sung by the choir to the dismal accompaniment of a few feeble wails from the congregation. In reality the choir led the singing and set the tempo, but otherwise they were only a wave in that sea of tone that rose and fell with the ancient tune and brought us to the gates of praise.

And still there were other surprises awaiting me before I began my sermon. At the close of the prayer, instead of the usual response, Evan Lenox, and the alto, Naomi Hebron, sang as a duet a piece that was on the theme of the text which I had given to Mr. Lenox, and which seemed like a preparation for the sermon. But what the choir did after the second hymn nearly took my breath away. They went out into the body of the house and took some of the front seats and looked up at me as if they intended to listen to the sermon.

After that introductory service it seemed to me as if I couldn't help preaching if I tried. My heart was tuned to heavenly things; my theme glowed with heavenly light. It was the beginning of a distinct advance in the quality of my work as a preacher. I found also that by the help of the choir we could use a little more complicated music for the congregation sometimes. We learned to sing 'Nicaea,' 'Jerusalem the Golden' and others with good effect, and one morning when we had almost made the windows shake with Luther's mighty hymn in slow, sonorous unison, old Captain Olmutz, who had been a German officer in the Franco-Prussian war, marched down the aisle