

namely, the repetition of the Lord's Prayer, and singing Newman's "Lead, kindly light." Multitudes of every creed, and multitudes without creed, joined with great heartiness in singing this song-prayer for light and direction.

Some time ago, when The Sunday at Home requested its readers to name the best hymns now in use among the churches, Toplady's "Rock of Ages" was with practical unanimity accorded the first place. Out of 3,500 votes, 3,215 gave the palm to this now world-famous hymn. It is generally conceded that the hymn was composed and published in a spirit of bitter opposition to the Arminianism of the Wesleys. The Rev. Augustus Montague Toplady, Calvinistic rector of a Devonshire parish, was the son of a soldier, and the martial spirit dominated the spirit of the divine. He was the most brilliant as well as the most bitter opponent of the Wesleyan doctrine of sanctification. Many controversial pamphlets were published by this militant preacher during those troublous times. But those witty philippics which afforded their author so much self-gratulation at the time, are now forgotten or unknown. To-day the world knows Toplady only as the author of "Rock of Ages," and this one hymn has made his name immortal.

In all stations in life, and by all classes of people, the prayer of this hymn has been breathed into the ear of One who is our "refuge and strength." Over and over again were its words repeated by the illustrious consort of our gracious Queen, as he was going down into the shadowy vale. "For," said he, "if in this hour I only had my worldly honours and dignities to depend upon I should be poor indeed."

On the 11th of January, 1866,

the steamer London foundered in the Bay of Biscay. The last sound that fell upon the ears of those who made their escape from that doomed vessel, was the voice of the imprisoned passengers singing, while sinking

"Rock of ages, cleft for me,
Let me hide myself in Thee."

A few years ago a crowded steamer was entering New York harbour. Eager eyes were peering through the darkness to catch the forms of loved ones on the shore. Suddenly a sheet of flame issued from the hold, near the prow, and sweeping aft, forced many of the passengers into the sea. On that ill-fated vessel was a noted singer and his wife. While he was in the act of fastening upon her a life-preserver, a man crazed with fear snatched it from his hand and leaped overboard. The famous singer was also an excellent swimmer, and assuring his wife that he could bear her safely to land, together they dropped into the waters, and soon were battling with the waves. A little while sufficed to exhaust the wife's strength, and she said to her husband, "I can hold on no longer." In that moment of supreme agony, he said, "Let us sing," and began: "Rock of Ages." His wife joined him, and gathered strength as she sang. All around them, scores of fellow-passengers were struggling in the waters, while the flames of the burning craft cast their mocking glare upon that midnight scene. Voice after voice, caught up the hope-inspiring strain, until a great multitude were singing, "Simply to thy cross I cling." Some of them, with these words of trust upon their lips, went down in the waters of death. Others were rescued to tell how, in those terrible moments, strength and