

Curfew Must Not Ring To-night.

ENGLAND'S sun was slowly setting o'er the hills so far away,
Filled the land with misty beauty, at the close of one sad day;
And the last rays kissed the forehead of a man and maiden fair—
He with steps so slow and weary; she with sunny floating hair;
He with bowed head, sad and thoughtful; she with lips so cold and white,
Struggled to keep back the murmur, "Curfew must not ring to-night."

"Sexton," Bessie's white lips faltered, pointing to the prison old,
With its walls so tall and gloomy, walls so dark and damp and cold,
"I've a lover in that prison, doomed this very night to die,
At the ringing of the curfew, and no earthly help is nigh.
Cromwell will not come till sunset," and her face grew strangely white,
As she spoke in husky whispers, "Curfew must not ring to-night!"

"Bessie," calmly spoke the sexton (every word pierced her young heart like a thousand gleaming arrows—like a deadly poisoned dart),
"Long, long years I've rung the curfew from that gloomy shadowed tower—
Every evening, just at sunset, it has told the twilight hour;
I have done my duty ever, tried to do it just and right;
Now I am old I will not miss it. Girl, the curfew rings to-night!"

Wild her eye and pale her features, stern and white her thoughtful brow,
And, within her heart's deep centre, Bessie made a solemn vow;
She had listened while the Judges read, without a tear or sigh,
At the ringing of the curfew Basil Underwood must die.
And her breath came fast and faster, and her eyes grew large and bright,
One low murmur, scarcely spoken, "Curfew must not ring to-night."

She with light step bounded forward, sprang within the old church door,
Left the old man coming slowly paths he'd trod so oft before;
Not one moment paused the maiden, but, with cheek and brow aglow,
Staggered up the gloomy tower, where the bell swung to and fro;
Then she climbed the slimy ladder, dark, without one ray of light,
Upward still, her pale lips saying, "Curfew shall not ring to-night!"

She has reached the topmost ladder; o'er her hangs the great dark bell;
And the awful gloom beneath her like the pathway down to hell.
See! the ponderous tongue is swinging; 'tis the hour of curfew now;
And the night has chilled her bosom, stopped her breath and paled her brow.
Shall she let it ring? No, never! Her eyes flash with sudden light,
As she springs and grasps it firmly: "Curfew shall not ring to-night!"

Out she swung—far out, the city seemed a tiny speck below—
There 'twixt heaven and earth suspended, as the bell swung to and fro;
And the half-deaf sexton, ringing (years he had not heard the bell),
And he thought the twilight curfew rang young Basil's funeral knell;
Still the maiden, clinging firmly, cheek and brow so pale and white,
Stilled her frightened heart's wild beating: "Curfew shall not ring to-night!"

It was o'er, the bell ceased swaying, and the maiden stepped once more

Firmly on the damp old ladder, where, for hundred years before,
Human foot had not been planted; and what she this night had done
Should be told long ages after. As the rays of setting sun
Light the sky with mellow beauty, aged sires, with heads of white,
Tell the children why the curfew did not ring that one sad night.

O'er the distant hills came Cromwell: Bessie saw him and her brow,
Lately white with sickening horror, glows with sudden beauty now;
At his feet she told her story, showed her hands all bruised and torn,
And her sweet young face, so haggard, with a look so sad and worn,
Touched his heart with sudden pity, lit his eyes with misty light:
"Go, your lover lives," cried Cromwell; "Curfew shall not ring to-night!"

ROSA H. THORPE.

"THE SORROW OF CHINA."

THE RECENT FLOOD ONE OF THE MOST APPALLING IN HISTORY.

LATE details of the Chinese floods make the story one of the most terrible in history. What was a beautiful, populous district of ten thousand square miles is now a rolling sea. At least three million people are homeless and absolutely destitute of the barest necessities of life. It is thought that the loss of life will reach 750,000. Everything in the way of figures is as yet, however, pure speculation, with the chances of a total mortality far greater than the present estimate. Court and business circles in Peking, Canton, and other cities are doing all in human power to cope with the disaster.

The special correspondent of *The Standard* at Shanghai sends a graphic picture of the tremendous loss of life in China from the overflow of the Hoang-Ho river, and of the tremendous famine now threatened. About one-sixth of the entire area of the "Garden of China," as Ho-Nan is styled, is now converted into a vast lake with here and there a pagoda top or the gable of some higher wall rising over the ever increasing waters to mark the site of what were a short time ago prosperous cities of many thousand inhabitants. The rest of the country is overrun with wretched refugees, who were fortunate enough to escape with their lives, though with naught else. In hundreds of instances men who, three months ago were men of wealth, to-day sit gazing on the inland-sea stunned and hungry, stupid and dejected, without a rag to wear or a morsel of food to eat. The inundations commenced at a little distance from Karfung-Fu, one of the largest cities of the province, and in one instant some four miles of solid embankment of stone, brick, sand and clay were swept away with innumerable moles and fascines. In the district of Ching-Chow and Chen-Chow no less than three thousand large villages are stated to have been engulfed in a very few moments and scarcely any of their ill-fated people

had time to save themselves, as the breach occurred in the night-time. An extent of country much larger than the whole principality of Wales and much more thickly populated, is now a raging sea, and all the inhabitants are either drowned or have fled. The people so terribly visited cannot number far short of the whole population of Ireland, as the Province includes about twenty-five million inhabitants within an area of 65,000 square miles, and the waters of the river now cover between eight and ten thousand square miles. The accounts published in native and foreign papers and in the *Pekin Gazette* reveals most horrible sufferings undergone by the survivors, who are perishing of famine. In hundreds of instances when the waters rushed into the cities, sweeping walls, houses, and everything down before them, the people refused to stir, and met their deaths with that wonderful indifference which characterises the Chinese. According to the best authorities the loss of life will be numbered by hundreds of thousands, while there are millions of starving people who are now depending for subsistence upon the charity of others. The Emperor has already contributed 100,000 taels, besides ordering two million taels out of the Imperial treasury toward the relief of the sufferers.

HEARD AND ANSWERED.

ANNIE was a plain woman, almost ugly, not clever nor cultured, nor rich in worldly goods; but hosts of friends gathered about her as she passed into old age, and all hurt and ailing and sorrowful folk who knew her came to her for comfort and cheer.

She never failed them. She had always a courageous, tender word for each person. Poverty came to her at last, and a painful and incurable disease. She went through sickness and privation, to meet death, with the same high heart and happy temper that she had in her younger and comparatively more prosperous days. The laugh was always ready, and the jest never failed.

"How do you keep up your courage?" a friend asked her, on one occasion.
"I am old enough to know in whom I have believed," she answered, gravely.
"When I was young, and danger or trouble came, I prayed to him for help, and it came; but then, when another danger came, I would forget that he had answered me before, and doubt and fear even while I prayed; but now I am old, I have a record in my memory of these past struggles. I know that he has never yet failed me, and he never will."

All young people beginning the Christian life are apt, in the stress of a great sorrow or temptation, to doubt if their Master really hears and will answer them.

"Did ever trouble yet befall,
And he refuse to hear thy call?"

asks Wesley. And David, again and again, after his many griefs and crimes, repeats, "When I cried unto thee, thou answeredst me."

But the boy or girl, in the sharp, sore pain of youth, scarcely listens to this far-off testimony. It is only when God has answered their own prayers that they, too, begin to know and trust him in whom they have believed.

It is the custom in certain churches in Europe to hang about the altar the torn and blood-stained flags won in battles, in which the worshippers, by God's help, as they believe, have been victorious.

So the Christian should keep in his heart, always present, some record of the struggles with pain or sin in which he has trusted in God for help and has been heard and answered

His Mother's Songs.

BENEATH the hot midsummer sun,
The men had marched all day;
And now beside a rippling stream,
Upon the grass, they lay.

Tiring of games and idle jests,
As swept the hours along,
They called to one who mused apart,
"Come, friend, give us a song."

"I fear it 'not please," he said;
"The only songs I know
Are those my mother used to sing
For me long years ago."

"Sing one of those," a rough voice cried;
"There's none but true men here;
To every mother's son of us
A mother's songs are dear."

Then sweetly rose the singer's voice
Amid unwonted calm—
"Am I a soldier of the Cross,
A follower of the Lamb?"

"And shall I fear to own his cause"—
The very stream was stilled,
And hearts that never throbbled with fear
With tender thoughts were filled.

Ended the song; the singer said,
As to his feet he rose,
"Thanks to you all; my friends, good night!
God grant us sweet repose!"

"Sing us one more," the Captain begged;
The soldier bent his head;
Then glancing round, with smiling lips,
"You'll join with me," he said.

"We'll sing the old familiar air,
Sweet as the bugle call,
'All hail the power of Jesus' name!
Let angels prostrate fall!"

Ah, wondrous was the old tune's spell,
As on the singer sang;
Man after man fell into line,
And loud the voices rang.

The songs are done, the camp is still,
Naught but the stream is heard;
But ah, the depths of every soul
By those old hymns are stirred.

And up from many a bearded lip,
In whispers soft and low,
Rises the prayer the mother taught
The boy long years ago.

—Selected.

We believe in cutting that liquor dog's tail off right behind the ears.—
Horace Greeley, in 1867.