

in mud and under a pelting rain, find room? When the gates are opened by the police the rush is as impetuous as the storming of a Bastile, or the taking of a Malakoff. A subdued hum of conversation fills the building. On my right are two well dressed young men discussing the politics of the day. On my left sits an old man with sweat-bedewed bald head and spectacles on nose, intently reading the "Times." Behind me are two ladies, apparently mother and daughter, in earnest criticism about the relative merits of the performance of Madame Grisi, Piccolomini and Mons. Julien, at the grand concert held in the Crystal Palace at Sydenham, where had been recently sung the sublime oratorios of Handel by 3000 performers. My heart beats "fast and furious" when memory, ever dear, recalls the "I know that my Redeemer liveth" of the Messiah, the war notes of "Judas Maccabeus," or the soul-stirring variations of the "Creation." The dual behind me were evidently artists in the musical sphere. The murmurs of debate and conversation filled the house with discordant notes. The whole audience seemed to be straining propriety, in order that it might cheat "father time." It shocked a stranger to observe the utter want of reverence in a professedly devout congregation on a Sabbath morning. My reflections were suddenly cut short by the mellow, deep, bass voice of *some one* filling to completeness the large hall with the words of the hymn beginning—

"Stay, thou insulted Spirit, stay!"

The slow, distinct pronunciation—clear as a silver bell—struck my ear like a pleasant melody. At first, so completely did the sound fill the house, I was not able to trace the direction from whence it came. Intuitively I turned my face to the platform, and there on the verge of it—in the midst of a sea of faces—stood Spurgeon. He seemed to spring from the midst of the crowd as if by magic. Did you happen to meet him in the country dressed in *Hodden* grey, you would suppose him to be a well-to-do farmer. He is square-built and muscular. Had he been a sparring, sturdy pugilist of the "fancy," instead of being a soldier of the church militant, woe betide the poor wight who might happen to get his head in "chancery" (under his arm). His features are round, and his forehead medium height and full; but, overshadowing the eyes greatly, detracting very much from their prominence. The eyes have that undefinable twinkle of *funniness* about them which is a sure indication of the possessor having a fund of humour, and a keen sense of the ludicrous. The teeth are very large, white, regular and prominent: even when the lips are shut they cannot be concealed. The head is set down closely upon the shoulders, as if the isthmus of a neck had been contracted by paralysis. His dress is plain and fits him badly. At first sight he is far from being prepossessing; but when he smiles or speaks the antipathy vanishes. When he speaks the words have no serrated edges or burr about them; they come forth "fat, full, round and free." It has been said that the secret of his success lies in three things: 1st, voice; 2nd, the sublime; 3rd, the ridiculous. It is not the whole truth, for many preachers in London command these three marks and yet are not popular. Spurgeon possesses, besides these, also, pungency of expression, cutting irony and burning satire, and that, too, in very few words, but they sear like a red hot iron. He was asked to preach against the homœopathic bonnets then in fashion; but, said he, "the savage who told me to do so thought I could change the fashions: but, my dears, I see no bonnets to preach against." They were then worn on the shoulders. No man could copy him in the grotesque without being himself the butt of ridicule; and the solemnity with which he utters the most ridiculous things