

UNDER THE EVENING LAMP.

SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

"God my maker, who giveth songs in the night."—Job. xxxv. 10.

Songs in the night! O Thou, who ever livest,
Thy love unfailling gladdens all the day.
And nightly to Thine own Thou ever givest
The peace which passeth knowledge when they pray.

Songs in the night! when evening shadows lengthen,
We hear Thee still in voices of the night,
Thy stars shine out our faltering faith to strengthen,
And at the eventide there shall be light.

Songs in the night! how sweet their murmur falleth
On storm-tossed souls that look to Thee for rest;
Their pleading is the voice of Him who calleth
The weary heart to lean upon His breast.

Songs in the night! I hear their echo ringing
Along the path by ancient martyrs trod;
Voices of earth with angel hosts are singing
Of all the loving kindness of our God.

Songs in the night! more sweet their music soundeth,
As wane the watches of the silent night:
The morning breaks, God's mighty love aboundeth,
For ever in His light shall we see light. *The Evangelist.*

PROBLEM OF THE NEGLECTED RICH.

We hear much about the neglected poor—and the poor are neglected. Thousands, no doubt starve every year because they are too proud or too reserved to make their wants known, and no one takes the trouble to find them out. But from the moral and Christian point of view the poor are better off than the rich, for churches never entered might as well have no existence. In every city there is a large class which is utterly beyond the reach of Christian influences. It is composed of habitués of clubs, hotels and boarding houses; they are largely men, and most of them unmarried. They are the young men who have been spoiled by the possession of wealth without the consciousness of responsibility. Some are engaged in business, and others are "men about town." They throng the "bachelor apartments," and are prominent at the first night at the theatres. They are well known as yachtsmen, horsemen, and sportsmen generally. They affect agnosticism, and have a wearied and nonchalant way of treating religious questions. They have no moral ideas that trouble them. Many of them ignore their political obligations as well as their religious duties. They are probably the class that an eminent American jurist of long experience and clear discernment had in mind when he said, "The average American man is a pagan." Utter selfishness describes their motives. This is what is known as "the Prince of Wales set" in London society. "The Four Hundred" in New York, and other American cities are quite as irresponsible and *blase*. What is being done for the moral and spiritual improvement of such people? Almost nothing. They seldom attend church, and never from preference. They read little except the papers and an occasional novel, although a moiety of them are well educated and thoughtful. In winter their Sundays are spent in driving, at club houses or in bed, and in summer at the seashore.

It is easy to go to the poor and speak to them of their sins; but it is not easy for ministers or any others to be equally faithful to those who consider themselves on a higher social plane. If such are reached at all, it must be by personal influence. They will not go to the churches. Few ministers have the *entree* of the clubs and the palaces where such men congregate; and still fewer are qualified to speak the truth that such people ought to hear. But what is that? A message which shall make them ashamed of their vices; show them that they are guilty of a misuse of that which is given to them in trust; that no man is rich enough to ignore God and the moral order for any long time; that there is a day of judgment for the lofty as well as for the lowly; and that there is a Saviour for all and whom all need. But now we face our problem. How may this class of men be persuaded to listen? How may entrance to their resorts be gained? Whom will they heed? These are questions not easy to answer. The first thing is to get some adequate idea of the factors in the problem, and a realization that a rich sinner is in as serious peril as a poor one. A knowledge of the facts must be attended by a willingness to deal justly with all men, for the differences which divide are superficial and false. The judge in the now famous case of Lord Nevill, a London man about town and a nobleman with a long string of titles, in inflicting sentence said, in response to the appeal for mercy, that

if the defendant had been an artisan with seven children dependant upon him no such appeal would have been made. "The defendant's social position, the judge said, instead of constituting a valid ground of clemency, only increased the enormity of his crime, and therefore called for a severer sentence—which was accordingly pronounced. That was a salutary lesson. The rich are of the same clay as the rest of the world. They have wealth by the accident of birth or exceptional opportunities in business. They are entitled to no special consideration, and the sooner they can be made to realize that, the easier it will be to reach them in other ways. Most of them are common sinners, often uncommonly depraved.

After these facts are recognized it remains to be said that most of the nonsensical talk about the easy and luxurious life of those who preach to the rich should be stopped, for their task, if faithfully performed, is the most difficult of all. They should be encouraged to fidelity rather than denounced in a wholesale fashion as toadying to those whom they are honestly, and often at great cost of effort, trying to lead to better things. Those gifted to preach the Gospel to the wealthy with plainness and directness surely have a Divine call. This work can often be done by laymen better than by ministers. At a banquet of the Bar Association of Boston not long ago the presiding officer indulged in some cheap flings at the doctrine of Providence. He was followed by a judge of the State of Massachusetts, who spoke in the same strain. He, in turn, was followed by one of the most distinguished justices of the supreme Court of the United States, who very quietly, very modestly, but very firmly, confessed his faith in the constant and beneficent Providence of God. Said my informant, "The audience was hushed in an instant; and you could have heard a pin drop." The silence was the involuntary but none the less genuine tribute of the common human heart to the vitality of that truth. If such men would always show their colors in public gatherings and at banquets, they would influence many whose ears are closed against the professionalism of the pulpit. Such witness-bearing is never entirely without a good effect.

One other way of reaching this class is by parlor and club conferences. The late Professor Henry Drummond did some of his most efficient work in the parlors and clubs of London, and Mrs. Ballington Booth has had great success in the same kind of service. Many will accept invitations to such conferences who would never darken the doors of a church. But it must be allowed that these are chiefly women, and of a class predisposed toward religion. One other consideration is worthy of mention. These men are still men; they have hours of dissatisfaction; their souls are hungry, however much their bodies may be pampered; and above all other things, they appreciate and value reality—perhaps because their own lives are so artificial. Those who can get near to them should deal faithfully with them, and not shrink because they are reserved; and then in love, but with perfect distinctness and bravery, without any softening of unpalatable truths, the essential message of Christianity should be presented. Genuineness and reality always make themselves felt. The pastor who never flinches from his duty because of any favoritism; who speaks out as Mr. Beecher sometimes preached in Plymouth Church, as Canon Farrer used to preach in Westminster Abbey, will be reported, and the most hardened in the community will learn that a real man—a man with a message—a prophet of God who can be neither bought nor bluffed, is near at hand, and in many ways they will find out what his message is. The churches are not the only places where the heedless are reached with the Gospel. If there is one prophet like Nathan in a city, all the guilty Davids will soon know what he is saying, even if they never hear his voice.

"The neglected rich" cannot be reached by mere machinery; "revivals" and "special services" are useless. Mr. Moody, in his great campaign in England and Scotland, touched only the outer edge of the highest and lowest classes. If impressed at all, it will probably be in one of two ways—either by their friends who are Christians, or by the influence, direct or indirect, of a real spiritual prophet who is not afraid to tell them that they are sinners, to denounce their miserable vices, and who, in a reasonable and manly fashion, presents the Gospel not as a means of escape in some far off future, but as the only way in which any can complete their manhood and be made fit to live here and now. More than this must be left to time and the Spirit of God.

—DR. AMORY J. BRADFORD.