

"THE RICH WIDOW."

SORROWFUL LOT OF WIDOWHOOD
MAY BE FULL OF CONSOLATION.

CURIOUS TITLE IS PROVED.

Rich in All That Makes Life Truly Great
and Happy—Widows Rich in Oppor-
tunities to Do Double Service in Life
—Become Father as Well as Mother—
Their Histories Rich in Inspiring Ex-
amples of Duty Well Done.

Entered according to Act of Parliament of Can-
ada, in the year 1903, by William Bailey, of To-
ronto, at the Dep't of Agriculture, Ottawa.

Chicago, Nov. 1.—The consolation
and encouragement that religion af-
fords in the sorrowful and distressing
lot of widowhood are pointed out
by the preacher in this sermon on the
text Luke vii, 12, "And she was a
widow."

The rich widow! Who ever heard
of such a title for a sermon on this
text? Better call her "the poor
widow," "the friendless widow,"
"the dying widow"—anything but
"the rich widow." This funeral pro-
cession winding its way out of the
Syrian city is one of the most path-
etic spectacles of the gospel history.
How much heartbreak is contained in
those three phrases, "A dead man,
the only son of his mother, and she
was a widow!" In Arizona is a
mountain aptly named "Starvation
peak." There the Indians many de-
cades ago drove the Spaniards and
hemmed them in and kept them until
for the want of food the little band
of living men were changed into a
band of decomposing corpses. So
this text is one of the "Starvation
peaks" among the gospel hills. It is
the place where a wife first lost her
husband, her breadwinner. And now
a wife without her husband and a
mother with only a cold body for
her son is slowly wending her way to
the cemetery. She was a wife and a
mother only of the grave. "The rich
widow?" Nonsense! Change the
title. Call it "the poor widow of
Starvation peak."

No, my brother, I want to keep
the title I have chosen. I want to
show how even a woman so desolate
as the one in the text may find con-
solation in life and in the perform-
ance of her duty and in the sympathy
of humanity, and more than all, in
the resources of divine power her life
may become rich for herself and for
others. I have seen too many ad-
jectives hitched to this heroic and
conquering nominative. I believe
thousands and tens of thousands of
mothers who have been bereft of the
companion who once stood with them
at the marriage altar have attained
true and abiding wealth. They have
been rich in all that makes life truly
happy, great and good; rich in their
opportunities to do a double service
in life. To their children they have
become father as well as mother; rich
in their inspiring examples of duties
well done; rich in the faith with
which their trials led them to test the
goodness and greatness of God; rich
in the heights and depths and lengths
and breadths of their love, and, above
all, rich in eternal as well as tempo-
ral rewards.

The widow is rich in her oppor-
tunities of maternal usefulness; rich
because all the physical, mental and
spiritual resources of her nature are
developed in the struggle which her
loneliness involves; rich because for
her children every word she speaks
and every thought she thinks and ev-
ery deed she performs shall bring
forth their maximum of results for

good or evil. For her offspring every
mountain which she has to climb be-
comes a gold mine and every thicket
into which she has to plunge a bank
of roses and every shower of tears
can return as a tossing, tumbling
fountain and every land for her can
become a harvest field of yellow
grain or of white checked, sweet
scented clover tops. Literally, by
taking away a wife's husband, God
makes it possible for a widow with
children to make more out of her
life, in a maternal sense, than in any
other way. At once, by the mere
fact of widowhood, she becomes the
father, the mother, the breadwinner,
the guide and the all in all for her
offspring.

Now, every one should want to
make the most out of his life. There-
fore, O widow, ought you not to re-
joice because God has singled you
out as one of his favorite daughters
for great and vital work? A few
years ago the United States—north,
east, south and west—united its many
voices in praising the greatest of
American jurists, John Marshall, who
year after year as chief justice of the
supreme court rendered the decisions
which made it possible for the United
States government at Washington to
be what it is to-day. Shall you, O
widow, not feel honored in the same
way as we honor John Marshall, since
God has placed you in a position
where your children and your
children's children may be molded
and started forth into Christian use-
fulness by the consecration and faith-
fulness of your life? In the glorious
opportunities which have come to
you in reference to your children you
are rich! You are magnificently and
gloriously rich. God has made you
sole guardian of your little ones.

Oh, the paternal as well as the ma-
ternal opportunities which are offered
to the consecrated Christian widow-
hood of the present century! Some
time ago a beautiful faced lady was
going through one of the great de-
partment stores in Columbus, O. She
saw there a large eyed, wistful look-
ing cash boy, who was watching her
and her son. "My child," said she,
"would you like to go home and be
my little boy? There you could have
money and playthings and horses
and carriages to make your life hap-
py, as my little boy's life is happy?"
"I do not know, mum, whether I
would like those things or not," he
answered. "Has your little boy a
papa? If I go with you will his
papa be my papa? I want a papa."
Because, mum, before my papa died I
had all those things, and now that
my papa is dead I have nothing."
"Ah, yes, there was pathos, unthink-
able pathos, in the answer of the lit-
tle cash boy. But that answer is not
true in reference to all fatherless
children. When their fathers died
they did not all lose everything. Their
mothers not only remained their
mothers, but they became their
fathers also. O woman who art a
widow, I sympathize with you in
your sorrow and your hard lot, but
let me congratulate you, too, on the
opportunity God has placed within
your reach of honorably and heroic-
ally performing a double duty. In a
paternal as well as in a maternal
sense you are accomplishing much for
the temporal and the eternal lives of
your children.

It is amazing how many kindnesses
there are in this world if only one
stops to catalogue them. You can see
those kindnesses manifested every-
where. In a few years ago a man was
caught in a crowd that surged into
the cars of the Brooklyn bridge. He
was jammed this way and that. His
hat was battered and crushed. The
more he vehemently denounced the
people as savages the more he was
hustled and pushed along. When he
was at last seated and was still com-
plaining a gentleman next to him

turned and said: "my friend, I am
afraid that you have got into the con-
dition of only looking upon the bad
side of human nature. Now, I have
schooled myself to look upon the
good side, and to help me in my task
of looking upon the bright side every
day I carry a note-book and jot down
every good thing I see people do to
other people. For instance, to-day
on my way to the bridge my hat
blew off. I chased it, but before I
could get it this other man whom I
had never seen before ran after that
hat. One of them caught it and
brought it back to me. Now, that
action was certainly unselfish on his
part, and yet you can see the same
unselfish act performed on any windy
day."

As I was crossing City Hall
park," he continued, "a woman in
front of me lost her glove. Two
newsboys saw it and ran to get it
for her. That certainly was unself-
ish. These are but little things, but
everywhere you will see men and
women doing just such kind things
to their neighbors. When this car
stops, you will see four or five gen-
tlemen take their papers and give
them to the newsboys for them to
sell them over again. All these facts
certainly show that the human race
is not a collection of savages."

The sermon which the Christian
gentleman preached in the cable car
of the Brooklyn bridge is certainly
true. Everywhere you can see kind-
nesses manifested toward those
who are in distress, if those people
in distress are worthy of human kind-
ness. And so, widow, though you
may have had your bumps and knocks
as that indignant passenger had who
was trying to get into the train,
though you may have injustices prac-
ticed upon you—for thieves and mur-
derers from time immemorial have
always felt that widows and orphans
were their legitimate prey—you have
also had many kindnesses shown you
and yours. Every true and faithful
widow always gathers around her
true and faithful friends.

The consecrated widow is rich in
the heights and depths and intensi-
ties of the love she bears toward
those who are dependent upon her.
It is one of the inevitable laws of
this world that we generally value
an article just in proportion to what
it is worth to us. If it costs nothing,
we care for it but little. If it
costs much, we value it much. I en-
ter your home. You show me the
results of your travels. You say:
"This is a rug I bought in Damas-
cus. Here is a beautiful piece of iv-
ory I found in India. Here is a
boomerang of Australia. Yonder is a
trinket I picked up in Pompeii. But
this picture is my treasure. It was
painted by a Spanish master and was
placed upon the walls of a Mexican
cathedral. One night that picture
was cut out of its frame and car-
ried away. The picture must be
worth at least \$20,000. I, myself,
paid \$10,000 for it. Yes, I value
that picture above all my other pos-
sessions. It cost me so much money."

But though the value of some ar-
ticles may be judged by the criterion
of silver and gold others are more
valued by the higher standard
of flesh and blood. If in order to
save your country you had to sacri-
fice upon the field of battle an arm
or a leg or an eye, would you not
on account of that sacrifice love your
country more than if, like John
Jacob Astor, you merely made to it
the gift of an artillery battery, or,
like old Cornelius Vanderbilt, if
you saved your child, who had been
gripped with the poisonous bite
of a dangerous serpent, you had
placed your mouth against the bleed-
ing lips of the wound and sucked
that poison into your own system,
would you not love that child more
for whom you were willing to give
peril your life than if you had given
him a mere offering of silver and
gold? Yes, yes! Of course you
would. The law is universal. The
greater the sacrifice we make for our
loved ones the greater becomes our
love for them.

This premise is granted. Where,
then, can you find richer, deeper,
truer sacrifices and therefore richer
love than that exhibited by a wid-
ow mother toward her helpless
children? Tenderly as you and I
love our children, does our love
glow with such fervent heat as does
that of the widowed mother who has
toiled and contrived and denied her-
self for their welfare? In order to
raise them she has to pay for their
education and food with the price of
blood. Does not that young girl's
graduation day address mean more
to her mother, who perhaps had to
scrub for it as well as sew together
the white dress in which it was de-
livered? So, O widow, by your
very sacrifices I see with what inten-
sity you love your children because
of the self-denial and the toil you
have given them. By the very sacri-
fices which you have made for their
physical, intellectual and spiritual
development I congratulate you upon
the heights and depths and intensi-
ties of your maternal affections. It
is one joy to plant a garden within
a stone wall inclosure for your own
eyes to see. It is a greater and
holier happiness to plant a flower
garden that others may enjoy also.

The consecrated widow is rich be-
cause she has been able by personal
experience to prove the certainty and
faithfulness of God's promises. A
lifeboat is sometimes used as a plea-
sure craft along the shores of Mas-
sachusetts and Long Island. You can
see the fishermen take and rig in it
a small sail and go spinning over the
waters, while they laugh and joke as
they draw in the bluish or "the
shed." So people sometimes use the
gospel lifeboat, merely for a pleasure
craft. When the sky is clear and the
sea smooth they set sail for a frolic.
But, oh, my friends, the lifeboat is a
far different craft when on a stormy
night the life saving men launch it
into the surf to fight their way out
to the ship surrounded in the offing
where it is being shattered to pieces
by the ceaseless bombardments of the
mighty sea. And the promises of

God, out of which the gospel life-
boat is made, mean far more to a
widowed mother sailing the seas of
life alone than they do to the young
daughter who has always been shield-
ed from every storm. And yet, mo-
ther, I would ask you a pertinent
question, which I know you will
answer well. Though you may have
buried your husband many years
ago, was there ever a time when if
you trusted in God his love and pro-
tection and care failed you? Was
there ever a time when Christ was
not willing to stand by the cradle of
your living child, as in olden times
he once stood by the bier of one who
was the only son of his mother, and
she was a widow.

Oh, the blessed enjoyment of hav-
ing had the opportunity of fully test-
ing the love and care and the gentle-
ness of a protecting God! Many
years ago at a large infidel meeting
in England, at which Charles Brad-
laugh, the noted English agnostic,
was speaking, an old, gray haired
woman arose. As she looked about
her she slowly said to the speaker:
"Sir, it is very easy for you to at-
tack the Best Friend I ever had. You
do not know him as I know him. I
once knew him merely as an acquaint-
ance, but after my husband died he
was more to me than an acquaintance
—he was a friend, a blood friend. Sir,
that friend helped me to feed and
clothe my babies. That friend gave
me physical strength to go on when
I thought I must die. That friend,
sir, is my dear Saviour. That is
what my Christ has done for me.
Now, sir, what has your infidelity
been able to do for you?" O mother,
blessed opportunity for you to test
the greatness and goodness of God!
Do not tell me you are poor. You
are rich; rich hemispherically and
celestially rich; rich as God is rich.

But though in a divine sense the
consecrated widow is rich, yet she
shall be far richer in the next world.
Woman, when have you loved of all
human beings the best on earth?
"Well," you say, "that is a hard
question to answer. I loved my
mother and father in one way and
my children in another way and my
sisters and brothers in another
way. But, taking it all in all, I
think I loved my husband best, truly
best. We were one in thought, one
in life and one in everything. My
one ambition in life was to please
him." Yes, I think your answer is
correct. The relations between a hus-
band and a wife are so close that
you were one, and your one desire
was to live for him and to please
him. Now, my sister bereft of her
husband, when you reach heaven and
meet the long separated father of
your babies, do you not feel he will
be pleased to know how you have
worked and slaved for his flesh and
blood? When you reach heaven, will
you not be rich in the knowledge
that he appreciates all you have done
for your children and his? You have
done your task well. It has been a
hard journey to travel alone, but at
the end of the journey you will be
rich in his blessing as well as that
of your Saviour, the dear Christ.

Most of us know what the rapture
of an earthly reunion means, but
such a welcome will pale into insigni-
ficance before the heavenly embrace
of a risen father and a long separa-
ted wife. After the famous battle of
Five Forks General George E. Pick-
ett of Gettysburg fame was reported
to have been killed. Day after day his
wife sat with her baby in her arms
in the silence of despair. But one
day there rode up the lane of the
Virginia home a familiar figure. He
cried to his horse: "Whoa, Lucy!
Whoa!" With that the mother, with
a wild cry of joy, arose, and said:
"George! George! Is that you?"
"I do not know how to describe it,"
wrote Mrs. Pickett, "the peace, the
bliss of that moment! It was too
deep and too sacred to be translated
into words." And so, my widowed
friend, when in the heavenly reunion
you shall greet your dear one, carry-
ing with you your children and his,
the sacredness of that moment will
be too deep and holy to be translat-
ed into words.

Thus, widows of Nain and widows
of Europe and America and widows
wherever you may be, I call you
rich. Go ahead bravely and truly,
fighting the battles that are before
you. Christ shall be your protector
in this world. Your rewards for
duties well done await you in the
next. The truest way for you to be
true to your dear husband is for you
to be true to the noble tasks God
has given to you to do here. Re-
member that Christ knows all about
a widow's troubles. He sympathized
with the sorrowing widow of Nain.
In his great heart there is sympathy
for all who struggle and suffer, and
the divine help and consolation are
never more generously bestowed than
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