

## Pastor and People.

OF THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

### FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL'S CONSECRATION HYMN.

BY THE REV. D. MORRISON, M.A., OWEN SOUND

Astley, Worcestershire, England, is a quiet village on the banks of the Severn, sheltered by the Malvern Hills. Here is an Episcopal Church, founded as early as 1160, dedicated to St. Peter—low-roofed and ivy-grown. Here Wm. Henry Havergal, poet and musician, as well as priest, faithfully ministered to a rustic congregation for over twenty years, and in the adjacent rectory, sequestered amid vines and flowers and overshadowing trees, he wrote sermons, hymns and music, and reared six active children, the youngest of whom was Frances Ridley Havergal, born December 14, 1836.

Though generally sweet-tempered, she was by no means the model child of the goody-goody story books. On the contrary, according to her own statement, there was a good deal of perversity in her own way, and a certain stormy petrelism which enabled her to skim any wave of trouble. She was remarkable for her buoyancy and brightness; alike distinguished for tree-climbing and wall-scaling as in picking up German by overhearing the lessons given to her brothers and sisters. Hear how one speaks of her who for the first time saw her: "In a few moments Frances, carolling like a bird, flashed into the room like a burst of sunshine, and stood before us, her fair sunny curls falling around her shoulders. . . . I sat spell-bound as this fair child sang hymn and chant with marvellous sweetness and power, and then played two or three pieces of Handel, and rolled out the music—the music of God's own love from the heart.

It would be a mistake to suppose that this "stormy petrelism" of which she speaks, and the horror she had of being talked to, arose from indifference to religion, for hers was a deeply religious nature, and hers a sensibility that trembled in the presence of natural beauty, and filled her with a strange, sweet joy. It was this very sensitiveness that made her averse to anything like ghostly counsel or formal address—address meant to convert her. It was her good fortune to be sent to a school in Belmont, England, where she got a great lift in the divine life, and by means altogether different from being "talked to."

The school was under the care of a Mrs. Teed—a lady who seems to have had all the earnestness of St. Paul, combined with all the wisdom of Dr. Arnold of Rugby. Here there was a great work for God always going on, and here some of the loveliest forms of youthful piety in England were to be found. No formal approach, it would seem, was ever made to Frances. No one, in set speech, ever came to speak to her about her soul; but the sacredness of the place and the beauty—the beauty of holiness—that she beheld from day to day in more than one loved companion—spoke to her inmost soul as nothing else could. There was one young girl, Diana by name, to whom Frances was much attached. The natural character of this young girl was lovely, but not in the ordinary sense religious; but coming under the spell of that sacred influence which pervaded the school she became dissatisfied with her spiritual condition, and longed and longed for the blessedness in which some of her companions rejoiced; and this too was precisely the condition of Frances at this time, although she was silent on the subject. This young companion had hardly been seen for days; but one evening at tea Frances noticed that something had happened—that her face was radiant, and her manner strange. "After tea," Frances says, "she came round the table, and sat down beside me, and, throwing her arms around my neck, said: 'Oh, Fanny, dearest Fanny, the blessing has come to me at last, and I am so happy! Forgiven all! He is such a Saviour.'" Gradually the full light dawned on Frances also. A conversation with Miss Cook—afterward her mother-in-law—had much to do with this. The difficulty with Frances was in not being able to trust Christ fully. "But," said Miss Cook, "supposing Christ should come in the clouds to-night, could you not trust Him?" This was the climax. The vessel that had been filling—filling for years, now overflowed, and her joy was full.

There is a point in human experience which may be called the point of illumination—a point which comparatively few Christians reach, and which thousands will not reach till their eyes shall see the King in His beauty, and the shadows flee away; and there is no point in human experience around which such mystery hangs as this point of illumination—no point where the divine sovereignty is more conspicuous. Martin Luther reached this point on the stairs of Pilate while doing penance, by the timely recollection of the great truth, "the just shall live by faith." But supposing you, anxious as he was, should go to Pilate's staircase and climb the steps, and call to remembrance the same truth, would the desired illumination come? or supposing I, anxious and ill at ease respecting my spiritual state, should turn to the pas-

sage, "God so loved the world," etc., would I be sure to find the same blessed result that the Greenland missionary's native assistant found when he met with this passage for the first time? Or supposing, again, any other girl in Miss Teed's establishment, equally anxious as Frances, had been talked to by Miss Cook, and the same terms, the same words used, would the same result have certainly come? "The wind indeed bloweth where it listeth." Two things, however, are sufficiently plain: an anxious state on the part of the seeker, and suitable truth presented on the part of the minister. Give these two conditions, and, sooner or later, the divine afflatus will come—the holy light in which we can see all things clearly. Those are Christians that have reached this high condition; but let us not fall into the Plymouth error of concluding all in unbelief, except those that have reached this high condition. Such, indeed, are Christians fitted to shine like lights amid storm and trial, as if it were God's design to give us here and there specimens of His higher workmanship. It seems strange that our teachers should have said so little on this point of illumination.

Frances now entered into liberty—the glorious liberty of the children of God. She was strong, for "the joy of the Lord was her strength." Who does not know that under strong feeling one will do ten times more than in dull, prosaic moods? It is astonishing the amount of work that Frances accomplished in the few years that followed (she died in 1870) writing juvenile books, now prized all over England, making contributions to the magazines, such as *Good Words*, in which she first appeared as a poet in 1860, taking long journeys and instituting temperance and other societies for the rescue of the falling or fallen. It was in view of such work—work in which she greatly delighted—that she wrote her consecration hymn, which has now become so popular. Still the origin of the hymn was more special in its character. Here is what she says: "Perhaps you would be interested to know the origin of my consecration hymn, 'Take my life,' etc. I had gone for a little visit of five days to a neighbourhood, and in one of the houses there were ten persons, some converted, and long prayed for; some converted, but not rejoicing. There came into my heart this prayer: 'Lord, give me all in the house,' and He did so.

"The last night of my visit I was too happy to sleep. I passed the most of it in praise, and in the renewal of my own consecration, and these little couplets formed themselves and chimed in my heart, one after another, till they were finished"

Take my life, and let it be  
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee;  
Take my moments and my days,  
Let them flow in endless praise;  
Take my hands, and let them move  
At the impulse of Thy love;  
Take my feet, and let them be  
Swift and beautiful for Thee;  
Take my voice, and let me sing,  
Always, only, for my King;  
Take my lips, and let them be  
Filled with messages from Thee;  
Take my silver and my gold—  
Not a mite would I withhold;  
Take my heart, it is Thine own,  
It shall be Thy royal throne;  
Take my love, my Lord, I pour  
At Thy feet its precious store;  
Take myself, and I will be  
Ever, only, all for Thee!

To this also I append a Latin translation of the same measure as the English verse:

Sume vitam, Domine,  
Consecratam nunc pro Te:  
Sume horas et dies,  
Laudes fluent perennes;  
Sume, moveant, manus,  
Sub afflatu spiritus;  
Sume pedes atque sint  
Tibi, nunquam aberrant!  
Sume, Domine, vocem  
Semper solum celebrem,  
Sume, labra, nunciis  
Plena lassis animis;  
Sume argentum, aurum;  
Nil, o nil detineam;  
Sume cor, est unicum  
Tuum juvat et thronum,  
Sume mihi amores  
Fluant tuos ad pedes  
Sume ipsam me, ero  
Semper solum omnino!

In such a life as that of Frances R. Havergal we have a specimen of God's higher workmanship in the realm of grace. It would seem as if He would have us to understand not only that we too should reach a higher level in the divine life, but to understand what the Church is destined to be, even here below, under the light of a fuller knowledge and the experience of a richer grace. All down through the ages the world has had such spectacles, and the world and the Church sitting in the dust need such spectacles—such lofty ideals of faith and duty. The Church indeed has never been without them, and never will till she go forth, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with banners.

## THE GOSPEL AFLOAT.

Outward bound!—a well known and well used phrase, with more in it than is popularly supposed. It is like other common phrases, elastic and expansive. You can throw depths of meaning into it. To the observer ashore, watching the ship weighing anchor, and steaming down the river, it means but little. To the passenger on board, who has said his final "good-bye" to his friends on the "tender," and who is parting with all that is near and dear to him for months, "Outward bound" is truly meaningful.

In truth I felt it so, as standing on the deck of an outward-bound Cunarder, I waived adieu in answer to the signals of friends, until distance, mist and rising tears hid them from my view. It is no crime to be soft-hearted; and I do not hesitate to confess that at that moment I was somewhat broken down. After a little sad back-glancing, and anxious fore-looking upon the possible contingencies of a two or three months' voyage, I committed myself and all dear to me to Him who is faithful to keep that which is committed to Him.

To make my narrative complete, and place my readers on an easy and familiar footing with me, I must say something of the cause of an absence so protracted. I had had a weary winter's work. Cheerless November and the cold Christmas time were made beautiful and radiant by a spiritual harvest. For years I had been sowing, and ever and anon reaping partial harvests; but now a glorious harvest ingathering was given to us. For months I was incessantly busy with exhausting work. Preaching exhausts; but personal dealing with anxious souls, if one is at all sympathetic, is more exhausting still. My heart was glad, but my brain was weary. I needed rest. The possibility of "doing" the Mediterranean opened up to me; possibility ripened into probability, and probability into fact—I am off, "outward bound."

I am constrained to say, parenthetically, that if congregations were a little more thoughtful and considerate to their hard-working ministers, and if, when energies are failing and brain exhausted, they would provide means and time for rest, we should hear less of breakdowns and more of close attachments and longer pastorates. After the lapse of years as I look back upon the scenes and circumstances immediately preceding my holiday, of which this story purports to be some record, I am constrained to give God thanks for the sympathy and kindness of a people who shall ever live near to my heart.

I had not been twenty-four hours on board the *s.s. Morocco* before I found that I must once for all hoist my true colours and nail them to the mast. I had not come to work, but to rest, but at the same time, a servant of Christ could never dream of months' intercourse with passengers, officers and crew, apart from the demand of loyalty to that cause which is dear to him. Our little world consisted of seventy souls all told, and on these I felt the necessity of bringing the Gospel of Jesus Christ to bear. A lover of the sea from my boyhood, I had deep sympathy with the sailor class—a class of men so peculiarly shut out from all religious privileges, and yet so susceptible to religious impression.

The present narrative will seek to tell in a homely way the history of a humble, quiet and unobtrusive work.

The first evening at sea found two of us in my state room inaugurating family prayer. I had discovered among the passengers a Scotchman from Glasgow—my ain town, and him I invited to join with me to honour the old hallowed institution of "family prayer." Together we poured out our hearts to that God to whom all are bound by the golden chain of prayer. Our hearts were tender at leaving home, and our prayers were earnest on behalf of the dear ones there. By and by others expressed a desire to join us, and of course were heartily welcome. Each evening added to our numbers; until in a state-room of about six feet square, we had an attendance of eight or nine. Considering that our course was southerly, and the heat, therefore, becoming more intense, our circumstances were not the most favourable. We did, indeed, experience melting moments. Compelled by these circumstances to seek more commodious quarters, I consulted the Captain. With much good will he entered into our scheme, and offered us the saloon as the place for evening prayer, and promised personal attendance.

Every evening, except when in port, and in all weathers, a goodly company assembled round one of the saloon tables, each furnished with a Bible. In good old Scotch fashion we read "verse about." Occasionally a conversation on the passage ensued, giving exceptional opportunity for speaking a word for Christ. Never shall the memory of this sweet hour pass away. With the noise of many waters around us, far from home and friends, fellowship with God was passing sweet.

From small beginnings great issues come. This was the commencement of a work for God on board ship, which, slowly and naturally developing, grew into proportions which my story may indicate, but cannot fully represent.—Rev. W. Scott, in *Canadian Independent*.