I WONDER WHY!

I wonder why hearts change so carelessly,
Forgetful of the vows they have set
Aglow in other hearts,
Forgetful of the trembling lips once wet
With dews of kisses.

I wonder why it comes—forgetfulness—
To steal away the loyalty and truth
That once were glorified,
Leaving, alone, a harmless shadow—ruth
For those forgotten.

I wonder why we cannot, earnestly,
Command our loves as we command our lives,
And prove it sweetly true,
That love remains to him who truly strives
To grow in constancy.

I wonder why we never know ourselves—
Can never look into ourselves and see
The hidden springs that wait
A magic touch to burst forth mightily,
And whelm our startled souls.

I wonder why our earnest vows enshrined
Within the inner temples of our love,
Grow faint with lapse of time,
Like echoes from some whispering voice above
The far offfloating clouds—
I wonder why!

—New Orleans Times-Democrat.

A FAIR PRISONER.

BY HELEN FORREST GRAVES.

"ID was this where the old witch lived?" said Grace Olmer, eagerly.

Upon the shelving sides of Mount Buckle there was a cleared space among the pines and maples, where a spring bubbled out from the rock and a ruinous one-storied cabin stood perched like the eyrie of an eagle. All around the grass was purple with wild violets and the birds were whistling in the woods.

Suddenly Grace drew back and clutched instinctively at Haleyone Marden's arm as something lean and stealthy glided out from the half-closed door and darted into the thickets beyond.

"What was that?" she gasped. "A cat?"

"No," Haleyone laughed, with a scornful shrug of the shoulders. "Any one could tell that you were from the city, Gracie Olmer. Whoever saw a cat of that color—that shape? It's a fox. And there are panthers in these woods, and one winter a bear came out into the clearing, and Hurst Dockrill shot him."

"Does no one live here now?"

Haleyone shook her head.

"It's too wild and desolate. Who would live three miles up Buckle Mountain? Aunt Betsy used to gather herbs and sell them. She lived on no[illegible] yes, [illegible] good repair—these old-fashioned log cabins will last forever if nobody pulls them down!"

She pushed open the door.

"Let's go inside," said she, "and sit down to rest."

The floor had rotted away, and tall weeds and bushes were rioting in the fireplace; an old wooden bench stood against the crumbling wall.

"Now, Grace," said Haleyone, giving her fair hair a little toss as they seated themselves, "do you know why I have brought you here?"

"To look at the old witch's hut, I suppose, and to get some violets. Oh, it is so beautiful here—if only the bear doesn't put in an appearance!"

"The bear was shot long ago. And we could have got violets down in the meadow, almost anywhere. No, Grace, I wanted to ask you if—if you really cared for Aleck Dale?"

Grace Olmer's face became scarlet, her lashes drooped.

"Haleyone," said she, "you have no right to ask me such a question as that!"

Haleyone Marden sprang to her feet and stood indignantly before her friend.

"But I have a right!" said she. "Look here, Grace! Before you came to Buckleton, Aleck was my lover. He went everywhere with me—he was going to ask me to be his wife."

"Did he ever say so in words?"

"N-no. But a man's heart speaks out in other things than words!" excitedly uttered Haleyone. "I was as sure of it as I am that the sun is shining now. And then you came—and everything is so different!"

Grace lifted her blue, dark-fringed eyes, and even in this moment of frantic jealousy, her rival could not but confess to herself how beautiful they were, and looked Haleyone full in the face.

"Am I to blame because things are different?" said she.

"Captain Dalzell likes you, Grace," coaxed Haleyone, putting her hand caressingly on the other girl's shoulder. "He is rich—he owns the handsomest house in Buckleton."

Grace sprang up, shaking off Haleyone's touch.

"And you would have me marry a man whom I could never love, simply because he is rich?" said she.

"Other girls do it. And you are very poor—you can hardly support that old bed-ridden father of yours in the home in New York. You see, I know all about your affairs, Grace Olmer!"

"I am not what you are pleased to call 'other girls.' As for my father, there is no disgrace in his being in a home, as long as I pay his way."

"Grace, listen." Haleyone's voice grew flexible and coaxing. "You and I both had offers to-day to go to the new shirt factory in Whitesdown. I must remain here, because my father and mother want me to remain near them. But—you will go, won't you?"

"I have no intention of going," said Grace, calmly.

"But at least promise me, Gracie—dear Gracie—that you will not dance with Aleck Dale at the party to-night!" pleaded Haleyone.

"Haleyone, you are a very strange girl," said Grace Olmer. "If you really care for this man—who has not as yet expressed a preference of any kind—the lists are as open to you as to me. No, I will pledge myself to nothing!"

Haleyone Marden was a tall girl, with an abundance of yellow hair, a rose-bright complexion, and hazel eyes, shot through and through by topaz gleams.

Although of New England birth, she possessed many of the characteristics of a tropical clime. Her grandfather had been a Portuguese ship captain, exiled from his native land through some political disturbance.

She made a quick step forward.

"And you dare take him away from me!" she exclaimed, the topaz eyes glittering strangely.

"He must take his own choice!"

"But, Grace, you are as calm as moonlight and as cold as snow. To you there are plenty of others besides this man, while to me he is all the world. You will give him up?"

"He must choose for himself," was the low reply.

Haleyone flashed one wrathful glance at her rival, and rushed out of the cabin, letting the nail-studded door bang behind her, and the next moment Grace could hear her flying footsteps crash down the tall briers and thick-growing hazle bushes on the path below.

She sprang to her feet.

"Haleyone! Haleyone!" she cried, waving her handkerchief through the narrow, slit-like window, which was nearly on a level with her eyes. "Where are you going? Wait for me, Haleyone."

For one second the other girl paused. She saw that the door had settled heavily down into the logs of the threshold, and that Grace Olmer was a captive in the old witch's cabin.

A sudden exultation throbbed through her heart—a half-formed piece of strategy.

"Why not?" she asked herself. "Does it not serve her right, the cold, passionless, flinty-hearted thing? Let her stay there until she comes to her senses! One night on Mount Buckle won't hurt her, and the coast will be free for me!"

It was not for some time that Grace Olmer realized that she was a prisoner in this wild spot—that her individual strength would not suffice to stir the heavy door that had settled so solidly down into the mouldering logs of the threshold, and that the one window was far too small to afford any egress.

In the west the sun was setting in a crimson blaze over Buckle Lake; a [illegible] wind rustled th[illegible] briers outside; a [illegible] rose up. She drew a [illegible] shuddering breath; then she tried to laugh.

"I must be patient," she thought. "Some one will surely come along, if I only wait long enough. There must be some woodcutter on the mountain—or perhaps a boy, digging sassafras roots!"

But she waited and waited, and the deep red sunset faded into purple and then into gray, and still no one came.

She thought of old Betsy Bloom, "the witch," sitting stark and dead; she remembered the stealthy rush of the red fox; and still she kept assuring herself that this was only a joke. Haleyone would surely return, or some one else would come to her aid.

And then she remembered the rustic dance on the sawmill floor that was planned for that evening, and wondered, with a rush of blinding tears to her eyes, if Alexander Dale would miss her.

* * * * * *

Haleyone Marden looked unusually beautiful that evening, in a white gown of some soft, crinkly material, with a bunch of blue iris at her belt and a carcanet of blue beads around her white throat.

The band—two fiddles and a horn, played by three energetic colored men—was wrestling with "Climbing Up De Golden Stairs," and about twenty couples were romping up and down the floor in the famous "Highland Schottische" when she came in.

"Where is Miss Olmer?" asked the master of ceremonies, a stalwart young lumberman.

Haleyone made him a low courtesy.

"Am I Miss Olmer's keeper?" said she, satirically.

"No. But she boards at the same place, doesn't she?"

"For all that, I'm not answerable for her movements!" Haleyone retorted.

"Will you dance with me, Haleyone?" called out Ross Duncan.

And with a quick glance around the room to satisfy herself that Mr. Dale was not there, Haleyone accepted the challenge.

"I may as well amuse myself until he comes," she thought.

Her tawny eyes sparkled, her cheeks glowed a rich carmine, and her pulses bounded joyously to the time of the music. Opportunity was all that she had needed, and surely she should triumph now!

"And of course," she added, within herself, "Grace Olmer will know that it was all a mistake. How was I to know that the door swung shut?"

Slowly the evening passed by. Dance after dance succeeded each other; the music clashed loudly; people came and went, and Haleyone reigned the undoubted queen of the rustic merry-makers, yet still the "man of men" did not dawn upon her horizon.

And to the universal query, "What has become of Aleck Dale?" nobody was ready with a rejoinder.

Out in Buckleton the people did not keep late hours, and it was not very much past midnight when Haleyone Marden's escort left her at the picturesque little garden gate, and, sauntering up the box-bordered path, she saw in the level May moonlight two figures on the porch.

"Who is that?" she called out. "Why, it is never Grace Olmer?"

"Yes, Grace Olmer!" responded a well-known voice, and Alexander Dale stepped out into the full pearly light—"Grace Olmer and your humble servant as well. I happened to be coming down Buckle Mountain late this afternoon with some squirrels I had shot, and to my surprise I encountered a captive princess in an enchanted tower—Grace Olmer in the old witch's hut—and I had the happiness of releasing her and being her escort home."

"Haleyone," said Grace, looking the golden-haired girl full in the face, "did you know that when you swung that heavy door shut that it fastened me in?"

"Oh, Gracie!"

The color came and went on Haleyone's cheek; but the tawny eyes revealed their secret and Grace knew all, though her companion spoke no word.

"But," spoke Dale, joyfully, "however it may have happened, it gave me the opportunity for which I had long hoped. Congratulate me, Haleyone—Miss Olmer has promised to be my wife."

Haleyone's smile was cold and meaningless as the moonlight around her, and her heart was colder still as she held out her hand to her successful rival and mechanically uttered the words:

"I—congratulate—you!"

For in all life's contests, where one wins another must fail.—Saturday Night.

Silver in a Buffalo's Head.

The buffalo of Ceylon carries his head in a peculiar manner—the horns thrown back and the nose projecting on a level with his forehead—thus securing him from a fatal front shot. This renders him a dangerous enemy, as he will receive any number of balls from a small gun in the throat and chest without showing the least distress. This account of a dangerous encounter with the animal is given by the author of "Rifle and Hound in Ceylon." I had fired without killing the buffalo and had not a ball left. With a stealthy step and a short grunt the bull advanced upon me, seemingly aware of my helplessness. Suddenly a bright thought flashed through my mind. Without taking my eyes off the animal, I put a double charge of powder down the right-hand barrel, and, tearing off a piece of my shirt, I took all the money from my pouch, three shillings in sixpenny pieces and two anna pieces. Quickly making them into a roll with the piece of a ra[illegible], I rammed them d[illegible]wn the barrel [illegible] before the bull sprang forward. I had no time even to replace the ramrod, and threw it in water, bringing my gun on full cock at the same instant. I now had a charge in my gun which, if reserved till he was within a few feet of the muzzle, would certainly floor him. The horns were lowered, their points were on either side of me, and the muzzle of the gun barely touched his forehead when I pulled the trigger and three shillings' worth of small change rattled into his hard head. Down he went and rolled over with the suddenly checked momentum of his charge. Away went I—and I as fast as our heels would carry us, through the water and over the plain, knowing that he was not dead, but only stunned. There was a large fallen tree about half a mile from us whose whitened branches, rising high above the ground, offered a tempting asylum. To this we directed our steps, and after a run of 100 yards we turned and looked behind us. The buffalo had regained his feet and was following us slowly. We now experienced the difference of feeling between hunting and being hunted. By degrees the bull's pace slackened and he fell. We were only too glad to be able to reduce our speed, but we had no sooner stopped to breathe than he was up again and after us. At length, however we gained the tree and beheld him stretched powerless upon the ground within 200 yards of us."

A Railroad Through the Sea.

An interesting experiment is about to be carried out at Brighton in the shape of the construction of a marine railway for the purpose of connecting Brighton with the little village of Rottingdean, some three or four miles to the eastward. The rails will be laid on the solid rock with concrete, and at high water will be covered by the sea, which, however, will not affect the carriages, the latter being supported on a framework that keeps them high and dry. At this part of the coast the cliffs are high, and the beach is practically inaccessible, so that no boating traffic will be interfered with. The cars will be moved by electricity, like those now in use along the eastern foreshore of Brighton.—London Daily News.

Curiosities About Women's Shoes.

Prior to 1825 all shoes made for women's wear were without heels, and after that date all heels of that class were of the concave pattern up to 1857. From the earliest dates in shoemaking down to 1840 women's shoes were all "straits"—that is to say, they were made so as to be worn on either foot without inconvenience. The first set of "rights and lefts" lasts were made in Philadelphia and bought by Daniel Silsbee, a manufaturer, whose works were located in what is or was known as "Woodend," Lynn, Mass.—St. Louis Republic.

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

THE BROOKLYN DIVINE'S SUNDAY SERMON.

Subject: "Sustaining Power of Religion."

TEXT: "*Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold.*"—Psalms lxviii., 13.

I suppose you know what the Israelites did down in Egyptian slavery. They made bricks. Amid the utensils of the brickkiln there were also other utensils of cookery—the kettles, the pots, the pans, with which they prepared their daily food, and when these poor slaves, tired of the day's work, lay down to rest they lay down among the implements of cookery and the implements of hard work. When they arose in the morning, they found their garments covered with the clay, and the smoke, and the dust, and besmirched and begrimed with the utensils of cookery.

But after a while the Lord broke up that slavery, and He took these poor slaves into a land where they had better garb, bright and clean and beautiful apparel. No more bricks for them to make. Let Pharaoh make his own bricks. When David, in my text, comes to describe the transition of these poor Israelites from their bondage amid the brickkilns into the glorious emancipation for which God had prepared them, he says, "Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold."

Miss Whately, the author of a celebrated book, "Life in Egypt," said she sometimes saw people in the East cooking their food on the tops of houses, and that she had often seen just before sundown pigeons and doves, which had during the heat of the day been hiding among the kettles and the pans with which the food was prepared, picking up the crumbs that they might find. Just about the hour of sunset they would spread their wings and fly heavenward, entirely unsoiled by the region in which they had moved, for the pigeon is a very cleanly bird.

And as the pigeons flew away the setting sun would throw silver on their wings and gold on their breasts. So you see it is not a farfetched simile or an unnatural comparison when David, in my text, says to these emancipated Israelites, and says to all those who are brought out of any kind of trouble into any kind of spiritual joy, "Though ye have lain among the pots, yet shall ye be as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold."

Sin is the hardest of all taskmasters. Worse than Pharaoh, it keeps us drudging in a most degrading service, but after awhile Christ comes, and He says, "Let My people go," and we pass out from among the brickkilns of sin into the glorious liberty of the gospel. We put on the clean robes of a Christian profession, and when at last we soar away to the warm nest which God has provided for us in heaven we shall go fairer than a dove, its wings covered with silver and its feathers with yellow gold.

I am going to preach something which some of you do not believe, and that is that the grandest possible adornment is the religion of Jesus Christ. There are a great many people who suppose that religion is a very different thing from what it really is. The reason men condemn the Bible is because they do not understand the Bible. They have not properly examined it. Dr. Johnson said that Hume told a minister in the bishopric of Durham that he had never particularly examined the New Testament, yet all his life warring against it. Halley, the astronomer, announced his skepticism to Sir Isaac Newton, and Sir Isaac Newton said: "Now, sir, I have examined the subject and you have not. And I am ashamed that you, professing to be a philosopher, a thi[illegible]

And so me[illegible]ject the [illegible]gion of Jesus Christ because they really have never investigated it. They think it something undesirable, something that will not work, something Pecksniffian, something hypocritical, something repulsive, when it is so bright and so beautiful you might compare it to a chaffinch, you might compare it to a robin red breast, you might compare it to a dove—its wings covered with silver and its feathers with yellow gold.

But how is it if a young man becomes a Christian? All through the cinerooms where he associates, all through the business circles where he is known, there is commiseration. They say, "What a pity that a young man who had such bright prospects should so have been despoiled by those Christians, giving up all his worldly prospects for something which is of no particular present worth!" Here is a young woman who becomes a Christian—her voice, her face, her manners the charm of the drawing room.

Now all through the fashionable circles the whisper goes, "What a pity that such a bright light should have been extinguished, that such a graceful gait should be crippled, that such worldly prospects should be obliterated!" Ah, my friends, it can be shown that religion's ways are ways of pleasantness and that all her paths are peace; that religion, instead of being dark and doleful and lachrymose and repulsive, is bright and beautiful, fairer than a dove, its wings covered with silver and its feathers with yellow gold.

See, in the first place, what religion will do for a man's heart. I care not how cheerful a man may naturally be before conversion, conversion brings him up to a higher standard of cheerfulness. I do not say he will laugh any louder. I do not say but he may stand back from some forms of hilarity in which he once indulged, but there comes into his soul an immense satisfaction. A young man not a Christian depends upon worldly successes to keep his spirits up. Now he is prospered, now he has a large salary, now he has a beautiful wardrobe, now he has pleasant friends, now he has more money than he knows how to spend. Everything goes bright and well with him.

But trouble comes. There are many young men in the house this morning who can testify out of their own experience that sometimes to young men trouble comes—his friends are gone, his salary is gone, his health is gone. He goes down, down. He becomes sour, cross, queer, misanthropic, blames the world, blames society, blames the church, blames everything, rushes perhaps to the intoxicating cup to drown his trouble, but instead of drowning his trouble he drowns his body and drowns his soul.

But here is a Christian young man. Trouble comes to him. Does he give up? No! He throws himself back on the resources of heaven. He says: "God is my Father. Out of all these disasters I shall pluck advantage for my soul. All the promises are mine, Christ is mine, Christian companionship is mine, heaven is mine. What though my apparel be worn out? Christ gives me a robe of righteousness. What though my money be gone? I have a title deed to the whole universe in the promise, 'All are yours.' What though my worldly friends fall away? Ministering angels are my body-guard. What though my fare be poor and my bread be scant? I sit at the King's banquet!"

Oh, what a poor, shallow stream is worldly enjoyment compared with the deep, broad, overflowing river of God's peace, rolling midway in the Christian heart! Sometimes you have gone out on the iron bound beach of the sea when there has been a storm on the ocean, and you have seen the waves dash into white foam at your feet. They did not do you any harm. While there you thought of the chapter written by the psalmist, and perhaps you recited it to yourself while the storm was making commentary upon the passage: "God is our refuge and strength, a very present help in time of trouble. Therefore will I not fear, though the earth be removed, and though the mountains be carried into the midst of the sea, though the waters thereof roar and be troubled, though the mountains shake with the swelling thereof."

Oh, how independent the religion of Christ m[illegible]es a man of worldly success and worldly circumstances! Nelson, the night before his last battle, said, "To-morrow I shall win either a peerage or a grave in Westminster Abbey." And it does not make much difference to the Christian whether he rises or falls in worldly matters. He has everlasting re[illegible] anyway. Other plumage may be torn in the blast, but that soul adorned with Christian grace is fairer than the dove—its wings covered with silver and its feathers with gold.

You and I have found out that people who pretend to be happy are not always happy. Look at that young man caricaturing the Christian religion, scoffing at everything good, going into roistering drunkenness, dashing the champagne bottle to the floor, rolling the glasses from the barroom counter, laughing, shouting, stamping the floor. Is he happy? I will go to his midnight pillow. I will see him turn the gas off. I will ask myself if the pillow on which he sleeps is as soft as the pillow on which that pure young man sleeps.

Ah, no! When he opens his eyes in the morning, will the world be as bright to him as to that young man who retired at night saying his prayers, invoking God's blessing upon his own soul and the souls of his comrades and father and mother and brothers and sisters far away? No, no! His laugh will ring out from the saloon so that you hear it as you pass by, but it is hollow laughter. In it is the snapping of heartstrings and the rattle of prison gates. Happy—that young man happy?

Let him fill high the bowl; he cannot drown an upbraiding conscience. Let the balls roll through the bowling alley; the deep rumble and the sharp crack cannot overpower the voices of condemnation. Let him whirl in the dance of sin and temptation and death; all the brilliancy of the scene cannot make him forget the last look of his mother when he left home, when she said to him: "Now, my son, you will do right; I am sure you will do right. You will, won't you?" That young man happy? Why, across every night there flit shadows of eternal darkness; there are adders coiled up in every cup; there are vultures of despair striking their iron beaks into his heart; there are skeleton fingers of grief pinching at the throat.

I come in amid the clicking of the glasses and under the flashing of the chandeliers, and I cry: "Woe! Woe! The way of the ungodly shall perish. There is no peace, saith my God, to the wicked. The way of transgressor is hard." Oh, my friends, there is more joy in one drop of Christian satisfaction than in whole rivers of sinful delight. Other wings may be drenched of the storm and splashed of the tempest, but the dove that comes in through the window of this heavenly ark has wings like the dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold.

Again, I remark, religion is an adornment in the style of usefulness into which it inducts a man. Here are two young men. The one has fine culture, exquisite wardrobe, plenty of friends, great worldly success, but he lives for himself. His chief care is for his own comfort. He lives uselessly. He dies unregretted. Here is another young man. His apparel may not be so good; his education may not be so thorough. He lives for others. His happiness is to make others happy. He is as self denying as that dying soldier falling in the ranks, when he said: "Colonel, there is no need of those boys tiring themselves by carrying me to the hospital. Let me die just where I am." So this young man of whom I speak loves God, wants all the world to love him, is not ashamed to carry a bundle of clothes up that dark alley to the poor. Which of those young men do you admire the better? The one a sham, the other a prince imperial.

Oh, do you know of anything, my hearer, that is more beautiful than to see a young man start out for Christ? Here is some one falling; he lifts him up. Here is a vagabond boy; he introduces him to a mission school. Here is a family freezing to death; he carries them a scuttle of coal. There are 800,000,000 perishing in midnight heathen darkness. By a[illegible] possible means he tries to send them [illegible] He may be laughed at and [illegible] b[illegible] and to b[illegible] where saying: "I a[illegible] not ashamed of the gospel of Christ. It is the power of God and the wisdom of God unto salvation."

Such a young man can go through everything. There is no force on earth or in hell that can resist him. I show you three spectacles:

Spectacle the First—Napoleon passed by with the host that went down with him to Egypt and up with him through Russia and crossed the continent on the bleeding heart of which he set his iron heel, and across the quivering flesh of which he went grinding the wheels of his gun carriages—in his dying moment asking his attendants to put on his military boots for him.

Spectacle the Second—Voltaire, bright and learned and witty and eloquent, with tongue and voice and strategem infernal, warring against God and poisoning whole kingdoms with his infidelity, yet applauded by the clapping hands of thrones and empires and continents—his last words, in delirium supposing Christ standing by the bedside—his last words, "Crush that wretch!"

Spectacle the Third—Paul—Paul, insignificant in person, thrust out from all refined association, scourged, spat on, hounded like a wild beast from city to city, yet trying to make the world good and heaven full; announcing resurrection to those who mourned at the barred gates of the dead; speaking consolations which light up the eyes of widowhood and orphanage and want with glow of certain and eternal release; undaunted before those who could take his life, his cheek flushed with transport and his eye on heaven; with one hand shaking defiance at all the foes of earth and all the principalities of hell, and with the other hand beckoning messenger angels to come and bear him away as he says: "I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought the good fight; I have finished my course; I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, will give me."

Which of the three spectacles do you most admire? When the wind of death struck the conqueror and the infidel, they were tossed like sea gulls in a tempest, drenched of the wave and torn of the hurricane, their dismal voices heard through the everlasting storm, but when the wave and the wind of death struck Paul, like an albatross, he made a throne of the tempest and one day floated away into the calm, clear summer of heaven, brighter than the dove, its wings covered with silver, and its feathers with yellow gold. Oh, are you not in love with such a religion—a religion that can do so much for a man while he lives and so much for a man when he comes to die?

I suppose you may have noticed the contrast between the departure of a Christian and the departure of an infidel. Diodorus, dying in chagrin because he could not compose a joke equal to the jokes uttered at the other end of the table; Zeuxis, dying in a fit of laughter at the sketch of an aged woman—a sketch made by his own hand; Mazarin, dying playing cards, his friend holding his hands because he was unable to hold them himself.

All that on one side, compared with the departure of the Scotch Minister, who said to his friends: "I have no interest as to whether I live or die. If I die I shall be with the Lord, and if I live the Lord will be with me." Or the last words of Washington, "It is well." Or the last word of McIntosh, the learned and the great, "Happy!" Or the last words of Hannah More, the Christian poetess, "Joy!" Or those thousands of Christians who have gone saying: "Lord Jesus, receive my spirit! Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly!" "O death, where is thy sting? O grave, where is thy victory?"

Behold the contrast. Behold the charm of the one, behold the darkness of the other. Now, I know it is very popular in this day for young men to think there is something more charming in skepticism than in religion. They are ashamed of the old-fashioned religion of the cross, and they pride themselves on their free thinking on all these subjects. My young friends, I want to tell you what I know from observation—that while skepticism is a beautiful land at the start, it is a great Sahara desert at the last.

Years ago a minister's son went off from home to college. At college he formed the acquaintance of a young man whom I shall call Ellison. Ellison was an infidel. Ellison scoffed at religion, and the minister's son soon learned from him the infidelity, and when he went home on his vacation broke his father's heart by his denunciations of Christianity. Time passed on, and vacation came, and the minister's son went off to spend the vacation and was on a journey and came to a hotel. The hotel keeper said: "I am sorry that to-night I shall have to put you in a room adjoining one where there is a very sick and dying man. I can give you no other accommodation." "Oh," said the young college student and minister's son, "that will make no difference to me, except the matter of sympathy with anybody that is suffering."

The young man retired to his room, but could not sleep. All night long he heard the groaning of the sick man or the step of the watchers, and his soul trembled. He thought to himself: "Now, there is only a thin wall between me and a departing spirit. How if Ellison should know how I feel? How if Ellison should know how my heart flutters? What if Ellison knew my skepticism gave way?" He slept not.

In the morning, coming down, he said to the hotel keeper, "How is the sick man?" "Oh," said the hotel keeper, "he is dead, poor fellow. The doctors told us he could not last through the night." "Well," said the young man, "what was the sick one's name—where is he from?" "Well," said the hotel keeper, "he is from Providence College." "Providence College! What is his name?" "Ellison." "Ellison!" Oh, how the young man was stunned! It was his old college mate—dead without any hope.

It was many hours before the young man could leave that hotel. He got on his horse and started homeward, and all the way he heard something saying to him: "Dead! Lost! Dead! Lost!" He came to no satisfaction until he entered the Christian life, until he entered the Christian ministry, until he became one of the most eminent missionaries of the cross, the greatest Baptist missionary the world has ever seen since the days of Paul—no superior to Adoniram Judson. Mighty on earth, mighty in heaven—Adoniram Judson. Which do you like the best, Judson's skepticism or Judson's Christian life, Judson's suffering for Christ's sake, Judson's almost martyrdom? Oh, young man, take your choice between these two kinds of lives. Your own heart tells you this morning the Christian life is more admirable, more peaceful, more comfortable and more beautiful.

Oh, if religion does so much for a man on earth, what will it do for him in heaven? That is the thought that comes to me now. If a soldier can afford to shout "Huzza!" when he goes into battle, how much more jubilantly he can afford to shout "Huzza!" when he has gained the victory. If religion is so good a thing to have here, how bright a thing it will be in heaven! I want to see that young man when the glories of heaven have robed and crowned him. I want to hear him sing when all huskiness of earthly colds is gone and he rises up with the great doxology.

I want to know what standard he will carry when marching under arches of pearl in the army of banners. I want to know what company he will keep in the land where they are all kings and queens forever and ever. If I have induced one of you this morning to begin a better life, then I want to know it. I may not in this world clasp hands with you in friendship. I may not hear from your own lips the story of temptation and sorrow, but I will clasp hands with you when the sea is passed and the gates are entered.

That I might woo you to a better life, and that I might show you the glories with which God clothes His dear children in heaven, I wish I could this morning swing back one of the twelve gates that there might dash upon your ear one shout of the triumph; that there might flame upon your eyes one blaze of the splendor. Oh, when I speak of that [illegible] you voluntarily think of s[illegible] [illegible] You wan[illegible] are do[illegible] this morning. I will tell you wh[illegible] they are doing. Singing! You want to know what they wear. I will tell you what they wear. Coronets of triumph! You wonder why oft they look to the gate of the temple and watch and wait. I will tell you why they watch and wait and look to the gate of the temple. For your coming! I shout upward the news to-day, for I am sure some of you will repent and start for heaven: "Oh, ye bright ones before the throne, your earthly friends are coming! Angels polsing midair, cry up the name! Gatekeeper of heaven, send forward the tidings! Watchman on the battlements celestial, throw the signal!"

"Oh," you say, "religion I am going to have. It is only a question of time."

My brother, I am afraid that you may lose heaven the way Louis Philippe lost his empire. The Parisian mob came around the Tuileries, the national guard stood in defense of the palace, and the commander said to Louis Philippe: "Shall I fire now? Shall I order the troops to fire? With one volley we can clear the place." "No," said Louis Philippe, "not yet." A few minutes passed on, and then Louis Philippe, seeing the case was hopeless, said to the general, "Now is the time to fire." "No," said the general, "it is too late now. Don't you see that the soldiers are exchanging arms with the citizens? It is too late."

Down went the throne of Louis Philippe. Away from the earth went the house of Orleans, and all because the king said, "Not yet, not yet!" May God forbid that any of you should adjourn this great subject of religion and should postpone assailing your spiritual foes until it is too late, too late—you losing a throne in heaven the way that Louis Philippe lost a throne on earth.

When the Judge descends in might,
Clothed in majesty and light;
When the earth shall quake with fear,
Where, oh, where will you appear?

A Mastodon's Tusks.

A prospector who came down on the steamship City of Topeka Thursday night from the gold fields of Alaska brought a number of curious relics from that far-away region. The most interesting of the collection is a set of ivory tusks of an enormous size, the remains of a mastodon. A great tooth was also found with the tusks, which were discovered in a deep canyon several hundred miles back in the mountains from Juneau. The size of the tusks in question is something phenomenal. They form almost a semicircle, the circumference being ten feet by actual measurement, tapering down to a point from a thickness of about six inches, where the tusks project from the head. The elements of ages have apparently had but little effect on these mastodonic ornaments, for the surface is almost smooth and nearly as hard as rock, and the combined weight of the two tusks exceeds 350 pounds. The tooth found is of irregular shape, probably fourteen inches long, six inches through, and weighs ten or fifteen pounds.—Seattle (Wash.) Telegraph.

It is claimed for Hachalish Bailey, of Somers, N. Y., that about 1815 he brought into the United States the first elephant, called "Old Bet," which, with other animals soon afterward imported, formed the first traveling menagerie in this country. Van Amberg, the noted lion tamer, was subsequently associated with the company.