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Poetry.

Light in Darkness.

Hope had made life's future joyful,
Light was shed on all the way,
Flowers bloomed and streamlets sparkled,
Blithely sang the birds so gay.
But one day the sun was clouded,
Flowers lost their fragrant breath,
Birds were still and hope was blighted
By the chill swift hand of death.

When the glorious sun has vanished,
Then peep out the stars so bright,
So God gives his children comfort,
And in darkness sends them light.

Edith. J. E. M.

Religious.

The Hornet's Mission.

BY REV. T. DEWITT TALMAGE.

"And the Lord will send the hornet."
Deuteronomy vii. 20.

It seems as if the insect world were determined to extirpate the human race. It is bombarding the grain fields and the orchards and the vineyards. The Colorado beetle, the Nebraska grasshopper, the Jersey locust, the universal potato-bug seem to carry on the work which was begun ages ago when the insects buzzed and droned out of Noah's Ark as the door was opened.

In my text the hornet flies out on its mission. It is a species of wasp, swift in its motion and violent in its sting. Its touch is torture to man or beast. We have all seen the cattle run bellowing under the cut of its lancet. In boyhood we used to stand cautiously looking at the globular nest hung from the tree branch, and while we were looking at the wonderful pasteboard covering we were stung with something that sent us shrieking away. The hornet goes in swarms. It has captains over hundreds, and twenty of them alighting on one man will produce certain death. The Persians attempted to conquer a christian city, but the elephants and the beasts on which the Persians rode were assailed by the hornet, so that the whole army was broken up, and the besieged city was rescued. This burning and noxious insect stung out the Hittites and the Canaanites from their country. What gleaming sword and chariot of war could not accomplish was done by the puncture of an insect. The Lord sent the hornet.

My friends, when we are assailed by great Behemoths of trouble we become chivalric, and we assault them; we get on the high-mettled steed of our courage, and we make a cavalry charge at them, and if God be with us, we come out stronger and better than when we went in. But alas! for these insectile annoyances of life—these foes too small to shoot—these things without any avoirdupois weight—the gnats, and the midges, and the flies, and the wasps, and the hornets. In other words, it is the small, stinging annoyances of our life which drive us out and use us up. In the best conditioned life, for some grand and glorious purpose God has sent the hornet.

I remark in the first place that these small stinging annoyances may come in the shape of a sensitive organization. People who are prostrated under typhoid fevers or with broken bones get plenty of sympathy; but who pities anybody that is nervous? The doctors say, and the family say, and everybody says, "Oh! she's only a little nervous; that's all." The sound of a heavy foot, the harsh clearing of a throat, a discord in music, an inharmony between the shawl and the gloves on the same person, a curt answer, a passing slight, the wind from the east, any one of ten thousand annoyances, opens the door for the hornet. The fact is that the majority of the people in this country are overworked, and their nerves are the first to give out. A great multitude are under the strain of Leyden, who, when he was told by his physician that if he

did not stop working while he was in such poor physical health he would die, responded: "Doctor, whether I live or die the wheel must keep going around, and though I may be disappointed in it, if before I die I don't surpass Sir William Jones in profound Oriental literature may no tear of grief for me ever profane a borderer." These sensitive persons of whom I speak have a bleeding sensitiveness. The flies love to light on anything raw, and these people are like the Canaanites, spoken of in the text, or in the context—they have a very thin covering and are vulnerable at all points. "And the Lord sent the hornet."

Again, these small insect annoyances may come to us in the shape of friends and acquaintances who are always saying disagreeable things. There are some people you cannot be with for half an hour but you feel cheered and comforted. Then there are other people you cannot be with for five minutes before you feel miserable. They do not mean to disturb you, but they sting you to the bone. They gather up all the yarn which the gossip spins, and peddle it. They gather up all the adverse criticisms about your person, about your business, about your home, about your church, and they make your ear the funnel into which they pour it. They laugh heartily when they tell you, as though it were a good joke, and you laugh too—outside. These people are brought to your attention in the Bible, in the Book of Ruth; Naomi went forth beautiful and with the finest of worldly prospects and into another land, but after a while she came back widowed, and sick and poor. What did her friends do when she came to the city? They all went out, and instead of giving her common sense consolation, what did they do? Read the Book of Ruth and find out. They threw up their hands and said: "Is this Naomi?" as much as to say, "How awful bad you look!" When I entered the ministry I looked very pale for years, and every year, for four or five years, a hundred times a year. I was asked if I had not consumption! And passing through the room, I would sometimes hear people sigh and say: "A-ah not long for this world!" I resolved in those times that I never, in any conversation, would say anything depressing, and by the help of God I have kept the resolution. These people of whom I speak rear and bind in a great harvest field of discouragement. Some days you greet them with a hilarious "good morning," and they come buzzing at you with some depressing information. "The Lord sent the hornet." It is astonishing how some people prefer to write and to say disagreeable things. That was the case when four or five years ago Henry M. Stanley returned after his magnificent exploit of finding Dr. David Livingstone, and when Mr. Stanley stood before the savans of Europe, and many of the small critics of the day, under pretence of getting geographical information, put to him most insolent questions, he folded his arms and refused to answer. At the very time when you would suppose all decent men would have applauded the heroism of the man, there were those to hiss. "The Lord sent the hornet."

And now at this time, when that man sits down on the western coast of Africa, sick and worn out with perhaps the grandest achievement of the age in the way of geographical discovery, there are small critics all over the world to buzz and buzz, and caricature and deride him, and after a while he will get the London papers, and as he opens them out will fly the hornet. When I see that there are so many people in the world who like to say disagreeable things, and write disagreeable things, I come almost in my weaker moments to believe what a man said to me in Philadelphia one Monday morning. I went to get the horse at the livery stable, and the hostler, a plain man, said to me: "Mr. Talmage, I saw that you preached to the young men yesterday." I said "Yes." He said: "No use, no use; man's a failure."

The small insect annoyances of life

sometimes come in the shape of local physical trouble, which does not amount to a positive prostration, but which bothers you when you want to feel the best. Perhaps it is a sick headache which has been the plague of your life, and you appoint some occasion of mirth, or sociality, and when the clock strikes the hour you cannot make your appearance. Perhaps the trouble is between the ear and the forehead, in the shape of a neuralgic twinge. Nobody can see it or sympathize with it; but just at the time when you want your intellect clearest, and your disposition brightest, you feel a sharp, keen, disconcerting thrust. "The Lord sent the hornet."

Perhaps these small insect annoyances will come in the shape of a domestic irritation. The parlor and the kitchen do not always harmonize. To get good service and to keep it is one of the great questions of the country. Some time it may be the arrogance and inconsiderateness of employers, but whatever be the fact, we all admit there are these insect annoyances winging their way out from the culinary department. If the grace of God be not in the heart of the housekeeper she cannot maintain her equilibrium. The men come home at night and hear the story of these annoyances, and say: "O these home troubles are very little things." They are small, small as wasps, but they sting—Martha's nerves were all unstrung when she rushed in asking Christ to scold Mary, and there are tens of thousands of women who are dying, stung to death by these pestiferous domestic annoyances. "The Lord sent the hornet."

These small insect disturbances may also come in the shape of business irritations. There are men here who went through 1857 and the 24th of September, 1869, without losing their balance, who are every day unhorsed by little annoyances—a clerk's ill-manners, or a blot of ink on a bill of lading, or the extravagance of a partner who overdraws his accounts, or the underselling by a business rival, or the whispering of store confidences in the street, or the making of some little bad debt which was against your judgement, just to please somebody else. It is not the panics that kill merchants. Panics come only once in ten or twenty years. It is the constant din of these every-day annoyances which is sending so many of our best merchants into nervous dyspepsia and paralysis and the grave. When our national commerce fell flat on its face, these men stood up and felt almost the swarm of these pestiferous annoyances. "The Lord sent the hornet."

I have noticed in the history of some of my congregation that their annoyances are multiplying that they have a hundred where they used to have ten. The naturalist tells us that a wasp sometimes has a family of twenty thousand wasps, and it does seem as if every annoyance of your life brooded a million. By the help of God to-day, I want to set in a counter current. The hornets is of no use? Oh yes! The naturalists tell us they are very important in the world's economy; they kill spiders and they clear the atmosphere; and I really believe God sends the annoyances of our life upon us to kill the spiders of the soul and to clear the atmosphere in the skies. These annoyances are sent on us, I think to wake us up from our lethargy. There is nothing that that makes a man so lively as a nest of "yellow jackets," and I think these annoyances are intended to persuade us of the fact that this is not a world for us to stop in. If we had a bed of everything that was attractive and soft and easy, what would we want of heaven? We think that the hollow tree sends the hornet. You think the devil sends the hornet. I want to correct your theology. "The Lord sent the hornet."

Then I think these annoyances come on us to culture our patience. In the gymnasium you find upright parallel bars—upright bars, with holes over each other for pegs to be put in. Then the gymnast takes a peg in each hand

and he begins to climb, one inch at a time, beginning, or two inches, and getting his strength cultured, reaches after a while the ceiling. And it seems to me that these annoyances in life are a moral gymnasium, each worriment a peg with which we are to climb higher and higher in Christian attainment. We all love to see patience, but it cannot be cultured in fair weather. It is a child of the storm. If you had everything desirable and there was nothing more to get, what would you want with patience? The only time to culture it is when you are lied about, and cheated, and sick, and half dead. "O," you say, "if I only had the circumstances of some well-to-do men I would be patient too." You might as well say, "If it were not for this water I would swim; or, 'I could shoot this gun if it were not for the caps.'" When you are chind deep in annoyances is the time for you to swim out towards the great headlands of Christian attainment, and when your life is loaded to the muzzle with repulsive annoyances—that is the time to draw the bead. Nothing but the furnace will ever burn out of us the dinker and the slag. I have formed this theory in regard to small annoyances and vexations: It takes just as much trouble to fit us for usefulness as for heaven. The only question is whether we shall take it in the bulk or pulverised and granulated. Here is one man who takes it in the bulk. His back is broken, or his eyesight put out, or some other awful calamity befalls him; while the vast majority of people take this thing piece-meal. Which way would you rather have it? Of course in piece meal. Better have five aching teeth than one broken jaw. Better twenty squalls than one cyclone. There may be difference of opinion as to allopathy and the homoeopathic doses—small pellets of annoyance rather than some knock-down doses of calamity. Instead of the thunderbolt give us the hornet.

If you have a bank you would a great deal rather that fifty men would come in with checks less than a hundred dollars than to have two depositors come in the same day each wanting his ten thousand dollars. In this last case, you cough and look down to the floor and you look up into the ceiling before you look into the safe. Now, my friends, would you not rather have these small drafts of annoyance on your bank of faith than some all staggering demand upon your endurance? I want to make my people strong in the fact that they will not surrender to small annoyances. In the village of Hamella, tradition says, there was an invasion of rats, and these small creatures almost devoured the town and threatened the lives of the population, and the story is that a piper come out one day and played a very sweet tune, and all the vermin followed him to the banks of the Weser, and then he blew a blast and they dropped in and disappeared forever. Of course this is a fable, but I wish I could, on the sweet flute of the gospel, draw forth all the nibbling and burrowing annoyances of your life and play them down into the depths forever. How many touches did Mr. Church give to his picture of "Cotopaxi" or his "Heart of the Andes"? I suppose about fifty thousand touches. I hear the canvas saying, "Why do you keep me trembling with that pencil so long? Why don't you put it on in one dash?" "No," says Mr. Church; "I know how to make a painting; it will take fifty thousand of these touches." And I want you, my friends, to understand that it is these ten thousand annoyances which, under God, are making up the picture of your life, to be hung at last in the galleries of heaven, fit for angels to look at. God knows how to make a picture.

If I had my way with you I would give you all possible worldly prosperity. I would give you a garden, each one a garden—a river running through it, geranium and cactus on the sides, and the grass and flowers as beautiful as though the rainbows had fallen. Then I would build you a house, a splendid mansion, and the bed should be covered

with upholstery dipped in the setting sun. I would have every hall in your house set with statues and statuettes, and then I would have the four quarters of the globe pour in all their luxuries on your table, and you should have forks of silver and knives of gold, inlaid with diamond and amethyst. Then you should each one of you have a roan span and a silver grey span, and your pick of the equipages of the world. Then I would have you live a hundred and fifty years, and you should not have a pain or ache until the last breath. "Not each one of us?" you say. Yes, each one of you. "Not to your enemies?" Yes; the only difference I would make with them would be that I would put a little extra gilt on their wall and a little extra embroidery on their slipper. But you say, "Why does not God give us all these things?" Ah! I bethink myself. He is wiser. It would make fools and sluggards of us if we had our way. No man puts his best picture in the portico or vestibule of his house. God means this world to be only the vestibule of heaven, and that is the great gallery of the universe towards which we are aspiring. We must not have it too good in this world, or we would want no heaven. You are surprised that aged people are so willing to go out of this world. I will tell you the reason. It is not only because of the bright prospects in heaven, but it is because they feel that seventy years of nettlesomeness is enough. They would lie down in the soft meadows of this world forever, but "God sent the hornet."

My friends, I shall not have preached this morning in vain if I have shown you that the annoyances of life, may be subservient to your present and your eternal advantages. Polycarp was condemned to be burned at the stake. The stake was planted. He fastened to it, the wood was planted around about the stake, it was kindled, but, by some strange current of the atmosphere, history tells us, the flames bent outward like the sails of a ship under a strong breeze, and then far above they came together, making a canopy; so that instead of being destroyed by the flames there he stood in a flamboyant bower planted by his persecutors. They had to take his life in another way, and by the point of the poniard. And I have to tell you this morning that God can make all the flames of your trial a wall of defence and a canopy for the soul. God is just as willing to fulfill to you as he was to Polycarp the promise, "When thou passest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned." In heaven you will acknowledge the fact that you never had one annoyance too many, and through all eternity you will be grateful that in this world the Lord did send the hornet. "Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning." "All things work together for good to those who love God." The Lord sent the sunshine. "The Lord sent the hornet."

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Baptists in London.

The London Baptist Association devote one thousand pounds each year towards building a new house of worship in some part of the city or suburbs. This year they are commencing one at Leytonstone, in the eastern suburbs. The London Freeman gives some account of laying the corner stone a week or two since, by the President of the Association, the Rev. A. G. Brown, in the presence of a vast concourse of persons, many of whom had come from all parts of the metropolis, a special train conveying upwards of a thousand from Stepney. The estimated cost of the chapel and temporary school is over £3,500, while the freehold site has been generously presented by Mr. Loseley, of Notting-hill. The size of the building will be 80ft. by 53ft., and the height 52ft. The material is to be of red brick, facings with stone dressings, and the style Gothic. It will be surmounted by a turret in the centre, and will have two transepts and a nave, with three entrances. The windows will also be