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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

Grasshopper of the Royal Exchange.

BY E. ELIZABETH LAY.

What are grasshoppers good for?
Child, come listen to me,
And I'll tell you about a grasshopper
That hops in history.

You have read of mighty London—
Its wonderful sights and strange—
Its Castle, Abbey, and grand St. Paul's,
Tower and Royal Exchange.

Well, on the topmost pinnacle
Of the Exchange appears
A monster grasshopper weathercock
That has hopped three hundred years.

A woman once left a baby
In a summer field to die,
With a merry grasshopper chirping near
Its noisy revelry.

A happy-hearted school-boy
Listened as he skipped by,
And, running to catch the grasshopper,
He heard the baby cry.

Oh, 'twas a royal moment
For the sorrowing stranger there;
The boy the little one carried home
To a mother's loving care.

The baby grew up to manhood,
A manhood strong and great;
He was a true and noble knight
In the service of the state.

And when the royal building
Was founded in his name,
He lifted the humble grasshopper
To its pinnacle of fame.

There through the long, long centuries,
By breeze or tempest shaken,
It tells, "God heard the voice of the lad
By human love forsaken!"

—Congregationalist.

ASSOCIATIONAL SERMON.

The Little Foxes, that spoil the vines.

BY REV. H. BOOL.

PREACHED BEFORE THE N. S. EASTERN
ASSOCIATION AT ADVOCATE HARBOR,
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"Take us the foxes, the little foxes, that
spoil the vines; for our vines have tender
grapes."—SONGS OF SOLOMON, II. 15.

This song is one of the most instructive
and pleasing portions of the Word
of God. Though brief, there is such
a fulness that the christian may find
doctrines suitable to a variety of expe-
rience.

It is the opinion of pious and learned
writers that this book is intended to
portray the love and close intercourse
which are enjoyed by Christ and his
people. The communion is so intimate
that, in some of the expressions it is
not clear whether they are to be inter-
preted as the words of Christ or the
spouse; and though my text is an in-
stance of this uncertainty, I will not
detain you with any controversy on the
matter. When hearts are knit together
by love, wishes and desires are re-
flected from one to the other; therefore
whatsoever things are true, honest, pure
and lovely, are, at the same time, the
desire both of Christ and his people.
The interests of religion are common
to both. Jesus is, at this moment, as
much concerned for the welfare of the
churches of this Association as the
most anxious of our brethren. The
determination, therefore, to suppress the
evils which trouble our churches may
be considered as his and ours. These
are graphically described in the words
of our text, "Take us the foxes, the
little foxes, that spoil our vines."

It should be our intense anxiety to
realize the presence of Jesus in our
churches; and this will be our happi-
ness, as soon as we labour earnestly,
to prepare him a place in our midst.
Wherever there are the fragrance and
beauty of christian life, there Jesus
makes his presence delightful. When
the prayer, was uttered, "Let my be-
loved come into his garden and eat his
pleasant fruit," the Saviour replied, "I
am come into my garden, my sister, my
spouse; I have gathered my myrrh
with my spice." Now if we are to part-
take of this joy in our midst, there must
be great watchfulness and diligence in
trying to be rid of everything which

interferes with the prosperity of the
churches. For this reason, my brethren,
I invite your most earnest atten-
tion to this interesting portion of the
Word of God.

I. Let us make a few remarks IN
EXPLANATION OF THE TEXT.

The figurative language of the Song
of Solomon is so luxuriant, that it is
necessary to be very careful, to bring
out the mind of the Holy Spirit, and,
at the same time, avoid a confusion of
illustration.

The churches of Jesus Christ are very
beautifully illustrated by the vines and
their tender grapes. The people of
God are spoken of, in this connection,
several places in the Holy Scriptures.
Thus the Psalmist (in the 80th Psalm)
describes the prosperity of the Jewish
church, "Thou hast brought a vine out
of Egypt, thou hast cast out the heathen
and planted it; thou preparedst room
before it, and didst cause it to take deep
root, and it filled the land. The hills
were covered with the shadow of it;
and the boughs thereof were like the
goodly cedars." Besides a description
of the prosperity of God's ancient peo-
ple, this is a beautiful illustration of the
extension of the gospel in modern
times; and it is prophetic of the future
glory of the church, when the truth
shall be received in all lands.

Jesus said to his disciples, (John
xv.), "I am the vine, ye are the
branches." The vine is noted for its
rapid growth and great fruitfulness,
teaching us that christians should be
distinguished in seeking the glory of
God and the welfare of all by whom
they are surrounded. We cannot be
thus fruitful unless we abide in Christ,
as the branch is in the vine. Being in
Christ and he in us, the discipline of
the Heavenly Father, the providences
of God, both pleasing and painful, will
work together for our good and the
glory of the great husbandman. "Here-
in is my Father glorified, that ye bear
much fruit, so shall ye be my disciples."

For purposes beyond our compre-
hension, God permits the interests of
churches to be influenced by the evils of
the world. After the glowing descrip-
tion of the prosperity of Israel, to which
we have already referred, we may be
surprised to read, of this vine, that "the
beast out of the wood doth waste it, and
the wild beast out of the field doth de-
vour it." It seems that professing
churches are exposed to the tendency
of sin, much as our gardens and or-
chards are subject to the ravages of
the numerous living creatures by which
they are infested. We are, therefore,
stirred up to watchfulness, while we are
comforted by the assurance that God
will take care of his own. He has
said concerning the spiritual vineyard,
"I the Lord do keep it; I will water it
every moment: lest any hurt it; I will
keep it night and day." To show how
God discriminates between his true
people and the mere professor, Jesus
said: "Every branch in me that beareth
not fruit he taketh away; and every
branch that beareth fruit, he purgeth
it, that it may bring forth more fruit." The Lord keeps his vine-
yard, prunes and guards the vines, by
the public ministry of the word, by the
labours of diligent pastors, by mutual
watchfulness among the members, and
by the exercise of wholesome discipline.

In relation to this, two thoughts are
brought to notice in our text; first, the
delicate nature of christian graces;
and secondly, the subtle and destructive
character of the evils by which they are
often attacked.

(1). We ought to cultivate in our
midst what may be called a robust
Christianity. I have little sympathy
for those who seem to have their hearts
pinned to their coat-sleeves, and stand
aside from christian labour through fear
of having their feelings hurt. It is most
essential that we should be able to bear
with the frailties of those with whom
we are associated in the service of God.
But still, after all this, the most coura-
geous are often hurt by the touch of
evil. They find it much harder to la-
bour when they are met with unkind
words, and are treated with coldness
and indifference. Then there is a large

number, especially amongst those lately
converted, whose feelings recoil at
the least touch of unkindness. They
are the sensitive plants of the Lord's
garden. The early buddings of divine
grace in the heart are not to be dealt
with rudely. Besides this, our faith,
love, zeal, benevolence, even our har-
mony with each other, and our commu-
nion with God, are as the tender grapes
of the vine. They may be soon spoiled
and our usefulness hindered. This is
given as a reason why we should watch
against the subtle evils of our hearts.

(2). Take us the foxes. There is
some difference of opinion on the ani-
mals spoken of in the text. The Sy-
rian fox, however, is said to be much the
same, in his habits, as the creature so
well known, and so generally prover-
bial, for subtlety, cunning, and mis-
chief; and he is known to be very de-
structive in the vineyards, unless closely
watched. Other animals may have
been associated with the fox in spoiling
the vines. We cannot conceive a more
striking illustration than this of the evil
propensities and corruptions of human
nature; these manifest themselves in a
thousand different ways in our churches;
they are the little foxes that spoil the
vines.

The text immediately succeeds a
beautiful illustration of a religious re-
vival. The cold, dark winter is past, and
there is brightness all around. The old
songsters unite in harmony with the
young. "The time of the singing of
birds is come, and the voice of the tur-
tle is heard in the land." There is
the promise of usefulness connected
with the influence of an exemplary life.

"The fig tree putteth forth her green
figs and the vines with the tender grapes
give a good smell." It has often been
our joy to witness scenes such as these
in our churches. But, in some cases,
the joy is soon changed for sorrow.
What we have regarded as the buddings
of an useful life, have not leaved out
into the verdure we hoped for; the
blossom disappointed us, and the tender
grapes were spoiled. When we have
inquired into the cause of this no hein-
ous sin has been found, such as the
Apostle said was not to be once named
among the Ephesians as becometh
saints. No startling transgression has
been heard of, calling for the speedy
execution of the discipline of the church.
Yet great mischief had been done. The
interests of religion languished, and
discontent, discouragement, and indiffer-
ence were felt all around. The real
cause of this lies concealed in our
hearts. David realized this fact when
he said, "Who can understand his er-
rors?" Cleanse thou me from secret
faults." Pride, envy, selfishness, and
a host of such evils, lurk in the recesses
of the mind, like the little foxes which
lie concealed in their holes, hard by the
vines they spoil. Not a creature is
seen when the husbandman enters the
vineyard in the morning; yet, in the
destruction of the vines, it is clear that
the place has been overrun by these
mischievous animals. They fear the
light, and retreat to their hiding-places
to await the opportunity of another
attack.

II. Let us consider, further, the CHA-
RACTER OF THE EVILS ILLUSTRATED IN THE
TEXT, AND THE MANNER IN WHICH THEY
TROUBLE OUR CHURCHES.

It may help us to bear with one an-
other, if we consider that the sins which
do so easily beset us are under the control
of a very crafty and powerful adversary.
The ease by which Samson caught
three hundred foxes and destroyed the
Philistines' corn has been a great puzzle
to commentators. Our great adversary
works destruction around us with far
greater facility. Take, for instance, the
power of unkind words, to which refer-
ence is made in the third chapter of
James. We are told that beasts, birds,
and serpents, can be tamed more readi-
ly than the tongue that speaketh evil.
It is a little member, but it boasteth
great things—a little fire, but it kindleth
a great matter—an unruly evil, full of
deadly poison. All this is said to be
from hell. It is the devil who is the
tempter to the habit of evil-speaking.
The craftiness of the old serpent

marks these evils. In numerous in-
stances, churches have been torn asun-
der, useful ministers have been driven
from the people they have loved and
labored for, and the cause has langu-
ished for many years. For this state
of affairs no one has given a definite
reason, none have prescribed a remedy.
In many cases this condition of a chris-
tian church is tolerated, year after year,
as if it were a matter of course. He
that searches the hearts and trieth the
reins of the children of men, by his
word, unearths the cause, and points to
the remedy.

The deceit of the father of lies char-
acterizes these evils. As the fox is
known to assume the appearance of a
less dangerous animal, so Satan changes
himself into an angel of light. Pride
assumes to be self-respect; selfishness
puts on the garb of frugality; and neg-
ligence in religion is palmed off as dil-
igence in domestic or business matters.
The heart is deceitful above all things
and desperately wicked, who can know
it? We do not sufficiently know our-
selves. We are not aware how many
sins lie concealed in our hearts; and
when the evil appears we often indulge
it as though it were virtue. O, there
is nothing so damaging to our spiritual
interests as the insidious and deceitful
work of the evil one in our hearts.
The graces of Christianity may be in
lively exercise to-day, and the presence
of Jesus enjoyed; but to-morrow our
spirits may droop, faith, hope, love, and
joy, may give place to unbelief, to sor-
row, and gloom. There is a cause for
this, comparatively unknown to us. Let
us take the case to God, with the prayer
of David upon our lips: "Search me,
O God, and know my heart; try me,
and know my thoughts; and see if
there be any wicked way in me, and
lead me in the way everlasting."

We must not ignore these sins
because they are called little. Their
name is legion, for they are many.
A few only may be mentioned, such as
worldliness, selfishness, envy, anger,
pride, thoughtlessness, impatience, in-
difference; to these may be added
superstitious thoughts, and the numer-
ous errors which often swarm in pro-
fessing churches. The greatest damage
done in the vegetable kingdom is wrought
by small creatures in large numbers.
The locusts are but insects, but when
they darken the air in their flight, they
strike terror into a whole community;
and where they alight, they leave nothing
but the bare ground and the naked
twigs of the trees. The army worms
are insignificant creatures, but when
they invade a field in large numbers the
crop is damaged. One small worm
will kill a tree as effectually as a flash
of lightning. Apart from the special
interposition of divine mercy, there is
complete analogy between the vegetable
and the religious worlds. God warns
us, in mercy, that he may save his own
people. I would utter this warning in
your hearing to-day, and may the
quaintness of the illustration fasten the
truth to your minds.

When I consider the destructive na-
ture of the sins that have been men-
tioned, rather than be discouraged with
our condition, I am disposed to express
congratulation that we exist at all.
Truly "it is of the Lord's mercy that
we are not consumed."

It would be instructive to show how
these evils affect the life of our churches.
Let us notice two or three instances.

Inconsistency is thought to be a very
little fault, but it is really very de-
structive. Picture to yourselves a man
manifesting great love to Christ and
much zeal in his cause. At first, imper-
ceptibly, he yields to the temptation
to become irregular. He is not so con-
stant as usual in secret prayer; and,
in proportion as he leaves off talking
with God, he will neglect to talk with
his fellow men on divine things. Next
he will be inconstant at the prayer-
meeting; and when it comes to this, in-
terest is lost in the affairs of the cause
of Christ generally, and he will soon
give up attending the Sabbath School.
The evil will progress, until a habit is
contracted of coming late to the public
service; and the conviction of the

wrong he is doing will hinder his en-
joyment of what remains of public
worship. Now he is under a strong
temptation to absent himself from the
worship of God altogether; but, before
he quite leaves, let us inquire, Where is
the love and zeal he once manifested,
and the rich consolations of the gospel
of which he previously spoke? Alas!
the tender grapes are injured, the vine
languishes.

As another instance, let us take pride.
This is a very subtle, deceptive evil. It
is like blight on our best services, and is
often partly concealed in what we sup-
pose to be humility. If we get the
idea into our hearts that we are above
all others in any particular virtue, that
we ought to be highly favored by both
God and man, that we are the only
oracles to be consulted, and that in the
knowledge of God's Word and pro-
gress in the divine life we are nearest
perfection,—If our thoughts revolve on
these matters only we shall find that
our love to God and man, that our hope
and joy, our zeal and courage, our pa-
tience and perseverance, will droop and
wither, and we shall be brought down
like the fairest plant when its bark and
branches are torn by the beasts of the
forest.

In like manner error and superstition,
whether in the pulpit or the pew, may
be shown to be baneful in their influence
on our religious interests.

III. In closing, permit me earnestly
to commend the ADMONITION OF THE
TEXT. These are the words of Christ
and the church—of both in sweet com-
munion. May they be ours! I would
express my love for the brethren, and
my intense anxiety for the welfare of
the churches by making this admonition
mine. Do you, beloved, the delegates
of the churches of this Association,
make the admonition yours. May we
each go back to our churches, and, in
fellowship with all the members, say
tenderly, kindly, and firmly, "Let us
banish forever everything calculated to
mar the harmony of the body of Christ,
or to hinder the growth and fruitful-
ness of any of God's people."

If we are watchful and diligent in
this duty God will be with us, and will
help us by the Holy Spirit and by the
word. There are many precious prom-
ises given in the Scriptures on this
subject. "The Lord will comfort Zion,
he will comfort her waste places, he will
make her wilderness like Eden, and her
desert like the garden of the Lord;
joy and gladness shall be found therein
thanksgiving and the voice of melody."

Let us endeavor to put on more of
the manliness and fortitude of good
soldiers of Jesus Christ. There is
nothing which looks so ridiculously
small as the pettishness, so easily af-
fronted, so vexatious and suspicious.
The purposes of church life are so great,
and the consummation so glorious, that
we should live above the insignifi-
cance of much that troubles us.

To the churches Christ reveals the
wonders of his dying love. It should
be our object to assist each other to
comprehend with all saints, and to know
the love of Christ which passeth knowl-
edge. Here we are banded together
to make the truth known in the world,
and to contend against all that is wrong.
In our churches, plants of God's own
right hand planting are to be matured
until they are transplanted to flourish
in the heavenly paradise.

Wherefore, my beloved brethren,
"put off all these, anger, wrath,
malice," and "put on as the elect of
God, holy and beloved, bowels of mercies,
kindness, humbleness of mind,
meekness, long suffering, forbearing one
another, and forgiving one another;
if any man have a quarrel against any,
even as Christ forgave you so also do ye."

The earth is fringed and carpeted not
with forest, but with grasses. Only see
that you have enough of little virtues
and common fidelities, and you need not
mourn because you are neither a re-
nowned hero nor a saint.

He that would be angry and sin not,
must not be angry with anything but sin.