

No. The cross had to be, else worse had to be, if worse could be. Either Christ must die on the cross, or the world be lost, men perish. Christ must die, or we must die. Christ must die, else none of this today, and none of all that is to come of good for the world, no gospel for the world, no salvation for the world, no hope for the world, no Heaven.

What we are to remember here to-day then, is first, our sin, our need. I go to the land of Goshen in the olden times, and I find a hundred thousand lambs with throats cut, and I ask what it means. Its seems to me a horrid waste of blood, a something that need not be I see the innocent blood splashes on the doors of every home, blood-droops hanging from door-post and lintel, and I shudder to see it. But when I come to know more about it, I find that it is either the blood of the lamb outside on the door, or the blood of the first-born within. And, my hearer, it is either the cross for God's Son or Hell for us, the dreadful alternative of His blood or ours. His death or ours. Our need makes it so. If the cross is, it is because of a terrible necessity that it is. Thus as we see the broken bread today and the red wine in the cup, we are to see and remember our need, our sin, our danger.

And then we are to remember, too, how safe we are here behind the blood. Oh it would be a sad remembrance if we had only our need to remember today. There would not be much comfort in that for us. But we can remember with the Jew of old how safe we are, how saved. As the Jew sat at the passover-table, with his first-born at his side, and his happy family around him, eating the flesh of the roasted lamb, he could remember that its blood was on his door; and, although he knew that the destroying angel was passing along, and although he could hear next door perhaps the weeping and wailing because he had come in; still, he knew he would not enter where the blood was, and so there, with the blood between him and the destroyer, he was safe. He could feast. And so with us today. The blood of God's lamb slain on the cross is between us and the angel of death, and there is no getting past that blood. We are safe here behind the blood, and it grows upon us more and more as we see the memorials of it, as we eat the bread and drink the cup, as we feast. We know we are not too good. Why should the angel pass our door? Ah! it is because of the Lamb's blood. Oh the memories that come to us here! The blessed comfort and shelter, the hope and help!

But so many of us here today are not here at the feast. They need the blood of God's Lamb as much as we need it. They have homes; they have the first-born too. And the Angel of Death is to pass this way. You may hear his footstep as he passes along the street. Oh! are you and yours safe behind the blood? This is a question that presses itself home upon us, and we cannot afford to ignore it, for it is as much a practical question with us today as it was yonder in Egypt in the olden time. You tell me this is not going to save you—this being at the feast. And we know that. It is the blood that saves. But if we are behind the blood, we ought to be here at the feast, and something is wrong somewhere if we are not at the feast. If we cannot feast, we may well question whether we are behind the blood after all. This at least is true, that we need the feast as well as the blood.

O my hearer, no blood on your door and the angel of death coming! And there is a lamb for you; you need not be without the blood. But you are without it. You claim to be of Israel perhaps, and you hope that will protect you. You dwell in the land of Goshen; you live under the shadow of the church's steeple, and so you are safe. You are not an Egyptian, not a heathen, not a drunkard, not a man who is ruined by bad habits, and you are proud of what you are, and satisfied to be what you are. Ah! the question with the angel when he comes to your door and mine, will not be, "Is he a Jew who resides here, or an uncircumcised Egyptian?" but the question will be, "Where is the blood? and if there is no blood, he will enter with his drawn sword, and though there may be everything else but the blood, he will slay. O my hearer, look to it at once, for to be without the blood is to be where there is no safety. Make haste and put yourself behind the blood, put yourself where the blood is between you and the awful destroyer, for only there is safety.

But, thanks be to the grace of God, some of us are permitted to be at the feast today. We are here not because we claim to be made better than others in ourselves. We cannot put forth any such claims. Our hope today is in the blood of the Lamb of God. That is why we feast. That is why we eat and drink at the Lord's table. That is why we are not afraid of the angel.

I have thus indicated some reasons why the occasion should be memorial to us, why this day should be a day of precious memories. It carries us back to other days, and tells us what the Lord has done for us. It is also anticipative, as well as commemorative. It

carries us forward as well as backward. It speaks to us of what is to be as well as of what has been. We are to remember the cross; but where then is the cross, the crown gleams on before, and if the cross is ours, the crown will be ours also. Let us, then, enter fully into the grandeur of the sacred festival. It is to be a feast; the Lord wants it to be a feast, and let it be a real feast to us today. Let us feel how safe we are, how saved. Heaven may seem to be a long way off, and we may feel how weak we are, and it may be still a question with us whether we are going to succeed. But let this be our ground of hope, that the Lord who has brought us hitherto, will bring us through, and crown us with the crown at last. He will keep us, and if He keep us we shall be kept.

SUMMER VISITORS.

We—that is, Mrs. Turtle-dove and myself—had just come into possession of a small house out of town, a cottage two stories in height and about twelve feet square, with a small cabbage garden in the rear and a grape vine and a cherry tree in the front yard. We had never owned any property before, and we couldn't help feeling a little proud of this, though, like Morleena Kenwigs, we had been taught that it was 'sinful.'

'Come down and pay us a visit,' we had said to every one with whom we shook hands, as we bade farewell to the city; 'come and see our little place in strawberry time. And every one had answered: 'We shall be delighted.'

Our parlor, with its Indian matting and white curtains and spider-legged chairs, was a model of airy comfort. There were always flowers in glasses on the mantel, and there was a bird in a cage in the window. Peggy, the 'girl,' did the work, and my wife was always fresh and bright in her white muslins and knots of ribbons and flowers. She was growing plump, too, and Mrs. Turtle-dove looked well when she was plump. I was thinking of those things with satisfaction as I opened the gate of my garden one night and almost stumbled over Mrs. Turtle-dove, who, with a glass dish in her hand, was bending over the strawberry bed.

'Oh, Timon!' she exclaimed, as I saluted her, 'do help me, please. I'm trying to get enough ripe berries for tea. After bragging so I don't want Miss Mittens to go back to the city and say she didn't have any, Miss Mittens came down by the noon train, dear.'

'Did she?' said I. 'Ah, well, pleased to see her, I'm sure.'

'Yes of course, Timon,' said my wife, very slowly. 'And I hope there's milk enough. She says she's going to live on milk, now she is in the country.'

Now, we did not keep a cow, and we had almost been obliged to go on our knees to Farmer Fish to induce him to spare us his quart a day. 'He always liked to send full cans down by the train,' he said, and he and Mrs. Fish never touched milk themselves. We had even suspected the good Fish of watering this quart of ours, perhaps, being a benevolent man, he thought that it might be too rich for us. It is always right to think the very best of people, you know.

'I wish we had a cow,' said I; 'perhaps Peggy could milk her if—'

'Hullo, old fellow!' cried a voice behind me. 'Been chasing you ever since you left the train. Anyone would know you had a pretty wife at home, by the way you walked. I've taken the advantage of your charming invitation, and run down to stop awhile. How do you do, Mrs. Turtle-dove? I can see that farm life agrees with you by your cheeks.'

And we both shook hands with Mulligan. Fred Mulligan, whom I remembered with a sort of qualm, put up at the Fifth Avenue hotel as a general thing, and was one of the most particular men about "his eating."

However, at least I could make him welcome, so I ushered him into the house, spring overcoat, slender umbrella, Russian leather travelling bag and all, and, leaving him in the parlor, went out into the kitchen to open the sardine box—Peggy had a way of making chowder of the sardines in the process—and to assure Mrs. Turtle-dove that the small quantities of berries she had collected would be "plenty."

We were rather a merry party as we sat down to tea that night. Mr. Mulligan and Miss Mittens had discovered that they had met before at Saratoga, and were already very intimate, They complimented us in chorus.

'How delightful to be country people, isn't it?' said Mr. Mulligan.

Indeed it is, said Miss Mittens. 'Nature casting their most precious things at their feet, as one may say—flowers and fruit and—breezes, you know, I fairly pined for the country, and I hate hotels and strange boarding houses; so, since I actually have a sister in dear Mrs. Turtle-dove, I thought I'd throw myself on her charity for the summer.'

'Just as I felt,' said Mulligan. 'Said I: 'There is Turtle-dove ready to welcome me with open arms. Why not go to him?'

'I'm glad to be rural while I am here

aid Miss Mittens. 'I don't mean to drink tea or coffee. I mean to live on milk and fruit here.'

'And I' said Mulligan; 'no champagne for me when I can have milk.'

I felt very glad indeed to hear that he did not want champagne.

'But, oh, my dear,' sobbed Mrs. Turtle-dove a little while after the meal was over, catching me in a quiet corner, 'to think of our first strawberries, and you not to have even one tinfy-tinfy one. The one I tried to swallow choked me when I thought of that. And don't you think Mr. Fish would sell us more milk while they stay?'

I declared that I did not mind about the berries; that I would make Fish sell us milk at any price. By the way, he did give in at last, and we gave him two shillings a quart. There was no competition in the neighborhood.

'And I'll bring berries down from town to-morrow,' I said. 'They are plentier there than they are in the country.'

'Miss Mittens has the square room and Mr. Mulligan will have a hall bedroom,' said my wife. 'He looks altogether too grand for it but I can't help it.'

Then we went back to entertain our guests, and we were really getting on finely—what with the piano and duets—when there came the sound of bumping and scraping at the carriage steps. A voice cried:

'Hullo, Turtle-dove! Folks for you!'

And out we rushed to find the garden full of the Rev. Mr. Calliope and his family—Mrs. Calliope, Miss Calliope and Master Calliope.

Mr. Calliope was our pastor, and we had given him a remarkable hearty invitation.

'As my congregation insisted on giving me a vacation,' said Mr. Calliope, 'we are come.'

I saw they were, and I was wondering where they were to sleep that night, when Mrs. Calliope, who had been kissing my wife, remarked:

'But then my friend who came up with us—the very entertaining gentleman, who—'Here he is!' shouted Mr. Smith from his wagon. 'And if he thinks I'm going to ride him and his porknanker from that there depot behind this here hoss, that has been plowing all day for less than 50 cents he thinks I'm greener than I be!'

'I make no objection—no objection,' said a thin voice, 'only I am unable just at this moment to—I think I must have it in my watch pocket—I—Can you lend me half a dollar, Mr. Turtle-dove?'

I could—I did—and I took the long, fishy sort of hand that was offered to me the next moment, and welcomed Mr. Bangs, the amateur spiritual medium, to my hearth and home.

'I was impressed to come,' he whispered to me. 'Something seemed to roll away, and I saw you among green fields and pleasant pastures and was drawn toward you by a subtle influence. I did not even wait for baggage. You understand?'

I had heard that day from a fellow-boarder of Mr. Bangs that his landlady had delicately mentioned to him that until he could pay his little bill she should 'prefer his room to his company, and would retain his trunk,' and quite understood.

We got into the little parlor somehow, and we all sat down.

'And I'm sure you must be hungry,' said I. 'We've supped, of course—it was 10 o'clock—but you'll have a bite.'

'Don't put yourself to any trouble,' said Mr. Calliope. 'My dear friends, I beg you won't put yourself to any trouble on our account. We are tired of city food. We want the fruits of the earth—the simple fruits of the earth—no more. Give us some milk, a simple biscuit and your delightful fresh butter and a bowl of strawberries, and we ask no more.'

Here Mrs. Turtle-dove gave an involuntary shriek. She had presence of mind enough to say she had seen a spider.

Poor Mr. Bangs only groaned softly to himself, but he looked as though the spirits who had been in the habit of drawing mysterious apples and oranges from his sleeves had not been able to find any there that day, or had carried them off afterward.

The Calliope were probably disappointed as to the fruits of the earth; but they had an appetite for sardines, bread and butter, tea and canned pears. And Mr. Bangs seemed to enjoy himself mightily. We put the Rev. Mr. Calliope and his wife into our own room. Miss Calliope shared Miss Mittens' apartment, and we induced Peggy to take a bolster on a lounge in the kitchen, while Mrs. Bangs reposed in her accustomed bed. As for young Calliope, we took liberties with him on account of his youth, and put him on the parlor sofa. And we—oh! well, it didn't matter for us. We went up into the loft—it was four feet high—and slept on the rag bag.

I was off early next day. I made the arrangements alluded to with the amiable and generous Mr. Fish for two gallons of milk a day. I contracted with the butcher for beef, and I brought strawberries and vegetables home in a basket. My city guests supposed that all those

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strawberries grew in the garden, and that we kept a herd of cows. Berries twenty-five cents a basket in the market, and they were not hulled. But the marketman always threw a basket in on every two dozen. He always did, he said, when one bought for a hotel.

At home, you know, said Calliope, with the candor of youth, in the city you know, you can't have more'n a preserve dish of strawberries at a meal. They are so beastly dear; but here, where you get 'em or nothing, you can eat a bowl-ful.

Did I tell you that Peggy was gone? So went the second morning. And I'd like to know what you'd be making by hiring me for ten dollars and giving me a dozen to work for? I had said; and thim doing nothing but eat all the day long, and me turned ed' me honest bed to slape on spikes after puttin' in me hard day, and dishes to wash, till I do be goin' crazy.

I could not defend myself. I could only promise her a silk dress if she would stay her month out.

I'd have nobody left to put it on, if I worked myself to death, said Peggy. I'd rather have me flesh in me calico; and so she departed.

After that Mrs. Turtle-dove lived in the kitchen. No one seemed to know None of the ladies ever made their beds, or filed their water pitchers, or offered any assistance.

I sat up all night to pare potatoes and turnips, lay the fire, and do all I could, and I became a beast of burden as to baskets; but my business must be attended to. Poor little Mrs. Turtle-dove grew thinner every day, whereas our guests plumped up beautifully. Still we were gaining the reputation of being very hospital, and that was something. Our friends thought so much of us—that was more. But, alas! we soon found that they were not as well pleased with each other. It began by Mrs. Calliope wondering at the goings on of that Miss Mittens with Mr. Mulligan. Next Miss Mittens was astonished that Miss Calliope should fancy Mr. Mulligan could desire to be followed about by a chit like her. Then Mr. Calliope had an argument with Mr. Mulligan on religious subjects, and gravely inquired whether I did not think it wrong to have a free-thinker in my house. Then the argument waxed louder as Miss Mittens, who was High Church, contended with Mrs. Calliope, who was Methodist.

Then young Calliope kissed Miss Mittens in the front garden, and Mr. Mulligan had words with him about it; and at last the unlucky Bangs' familiar spirit hunted him up and began to run on the walls, tip the dining-table, made him go off in a series of starts and jerks in inopportune times, and at last forced him to write a "communication" in which the spirit of Voltaire called Mr. Calliope a "misguided wanderer from truth."

That day, as I came home with the strawberries, I met Smith's wagon going down to the depot. It was full of Calliopes.

Adieu, my friends, said Mr. Calliope. We are going. We grieve to part, but we must go. Table tipping and such abominations are too much for us.

And that forward hussy! said Mrs. Calliope. Ah!

And that fellow with the mustaches! said young Calliope. I say, Mr. Turtle-dove, why don't you kick him out?

Miss Calliope only tossed her head.

A little further on I met a light wagon; in it sat Mr. Mulligan and Miss Mittens.

Good-by, old fellow, cried Mulligan. I say you've got in with a nice lot. It's only respect for your wife that has kept me from brouncing them—some of 'em.

Miss Mittens was in tears.

Further on still I met Bangs on foot, who, as I learned on getting home, had left because Mrs. Turtle-dove had protested against the heavy rappings on the kitchen ceiling.

I have been impressed to leave you my friend, he said, solemnly. Farewell. Verily, scoffers shall have their reward. So our few friends were gone. They didn't go in peace, and that we regretted; but still they were gone, and life has its consolation.

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AUGUST 14.

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