

ODE TO SPRING.

I wakened to the singing of a bird;
I heard the bird of spring.
And lo!
At his sweet note
The flowers began to grow,
Grass, leaves, and everything,
As if the green world heard
The trumpet of his tiny throat.
From end to end, and winter and despair
Fled at his melody, and passed in air.
I heard at dawn the music of a voice.
O my beloved, then I said, the spring
Can visit only once this waiting year;
The bird can bring
Only the season's song, nor his the choice
To waken smiles or the remembering tear!
But thou dost bring
Springtime to every day, and at thy call
The flowers of life unfold, though leaves of
autumn fall.
—Annie Fields, in the Century.

"IGNORANCE IS BLISS"

BY LUKE SHARP.

HE splendid steamship Adamant, of the celebrated Cross Bow Line, left New York on her February trip under favorable auspices. There had just been a storm on the ocean, so there was every chance that she would reach Liverpool before the next one was due.

Captain Rice had a little social problem to solve at the outset, but he smoothed that out with the tact which is characteristic of him. Two Washington ladies—official ladies—were on board, and the captain, old British sea dog as he was, always had trouble in the matter of precedence with Washington ladies.

So it happened that Mrs. Assistant-Attorney-to-the-Senate Brownrigg came to the steward and said that, ranking all others on board, the must sit at the right hand of the captain. Afterwards Mrs. Second-Adjutant-to-the-War-Department Digby came to the same perplexed official and said she must sit at the captain's right hand because in Washington she took precedence over everyone else on board. The bewildered steward confided his woes to the captain, and the captain said he would attend to the matter. So he put Mrs. War-Department on his right hand and then walked down the deck with Mrs. Assistant-Attorney and said to her:

"I want to ask a favor, Mrs. Brownrigg. Unfortunately I am a little deaf in the right ear, caused, I presume, by listening so much with that ear to the fog horn year in and year out. Now, I always place the lady whose conversation I wish most to enjoy at my left hand at table. Would you oblige me by taking that seat this voyage? I have heard of you, you see, Mrs. Brownrigg, although you have never crossed with me before!"

"Why, certainly, captain," replied Mrs. Brownrigg. "I feel especially complimented."

"And I assure you, madam," said the polite captain, "that I would not for the world miss a single word, that," etc.

And thus it was all amicably arranged between the two ladies. All this was nothing whatever to do with the story. It is merely an incident given to show what a born diplomat Captain Rice was and is to this day. I don't know any captain more popular with the ladies than he, and besides he is as good a sailor as crosses the ocean.

As day by day went on and the good ship plowed her way toward the east, the passengers were unanimous in saying that they never had a pleasanter voyage for that time of the year. It was so warm on deck that many steamer chairs were out, and below it was so mild that a person might think he was journeying in the tropics. Yet they had left New York in a snow storm with the thermometer away below zero.

"Such," said young Spinner, who knew everything, "such is the influence of the Gulf Stream."

Nevertheless when Captain Rice came down to lunch the fourth day out his face was haggard and his look furtive and anxious.

"Why, captain," cried Mrs. Assistant-Attorney, "you look as if you hadn't slept a wink last night."

"I slept very well, thank you, madam," replied the captain. "I always do."

"Well, I hope your room was more comfortable than mine. It seemed to me too hot for anything. Didn't you find it so, Mrs. Digby?"

"I thought it very nice," replied the lady on the captain's right, who generally found it necessary to take an opposite view from the lady at the left.

Then he went down to his own room, avoiding the passengers as much as he could, and had the steward bring him some beef tea. Even a captain cannot live on anxiety.

"Steamer off the port bow, sir," rang out the voice of the lookout at the prow. The man had sharp eyes, for a landsman could have seen nothing.

"Run and tell the captain," cried Johnson to the sailor at his elbow, but as the sailor turned the captain's head appeared up the stairway. He seized the glass and looked long at a single point in the horizon.

"It must be the Vulcan," he said at last.

"I think so, sir."

"Turn your wheel a few points to port and bear down on her."

Johnson gave the necessary order and the great ship veered around.

"Hello!" cried Spinner, on deck. "Here's a steamer. I found her. She's mine."

Then there was a rush to the side of the ship. "A steamer in sight," was the cry, and all books and magazines at once lost interest. Even the placid, dignified Englishman who was so uncommunicative rose from his chair and sent his servant for his binoculars. Children were held up and told to be careful while they tried to see the dim line of smoke so far ahead.

"Talk about lane routes at sea," cried young Spinner, the knowing. "Bosh, I say. See! We're going directly for her. Thing what it might be in a fog? Lane routes! Pure luck, I call it."

"Will we signal to her, Mr. Spinner?" gently asked the young lady from Boston.

"Oh, certainly," answered young Spinner. "See, there's our signal flying from the masthead now. That shows them what line we belong to."

"Dear me, how interesting," said the young lady. "You have crossed many times, I suppose, Mr. Spinner."

"Oh, I know my way about," answered the modest Spinner.

The captain kept the glasses glued to his eyes. Suddenly he almost let them drop.

"My God! Johnson," he cried.

"What is it, sir?"

"She's flying a signal of distress, too!"

The two steamers slowly approached each other, and when nearly alongside and about a mile apart the bell of the Adamant rang to stop.

"Oh, look! look! look!" cried the enthusiastic Indianapolis girl who was going to take music in Germany.

Everyone looked aloft and saw running up to the masthead a long line of fluttering, many-colored flags. They remained in place for a few moments and then fluttered down again, only to give place to a different string. The same thing was going on on the other steamer.

"How just too interesting for anything," said Mrs. Assistant. "I am just dying to know what it all means. I have read of it so often but never saw it before. I wonder when the captain will come down. What does it all mean?" she asked the deck steward.

"They are signaling each other, madam."

"Oh, I know that. But what are they signaling?"

"I don't know, madam."

"Oh, see! see!" cried the Indianapolis girl, clapping her hands with delight. "The other steamer is turning round."

It was indeed so. The great ship was thrashing the water with her screw, and gradually the masts came in line and then her prow faced the east again.

When this had been slowly accomplished the bell on the Adamant rang full speed ahead, and then the captain came slowly down the ladder that led from the bridge.

"Oh, captain, what does it all mean?"

"Is she going back, captain? Nothing wrong, I hope."

"What ship is it, captain?"

"The ship," said the captain slowly, "is the Vulcan, of the Black Bowline Line, which left Queenstown shortly after we left New York. She has met with an accident. Ran into some wreck, it is thought, from the recent storm. Anyhow there is a hole in her, and whether she see Queenstown or not will depend a great deal on what weather we have and whether her bulkheads hold out. We will stand by her till we reach Queenstown."

"Are there many on board, do you think, captain?"

"There are thirty-seven cabin passengers and over 800 steerage passengers," answered the captain.

"Oh, the poor creatures," cried the sympathetic Mrs. Second-Adjutant.

"Think of their awful position. May be engulfed at any moment. I suppose they are all on their knees in the cabin. How thankful they must have been to see the Adamant."

On all sides there was the profoundest sympathy for the Vulcan. Checks paled at the very thought of the catastrophe that might take place at any moment within their own sight. It was a realistic object lesson on the ever present dangers of the sea. While those on deck looked with new interest at the steamship plunging along within a mile of them, the captain slipped away to his room. As he sat there, there was a tap at his door.

"Come in," shouted the captain.

The silent Englishman slowly entered.

"What's wrong, captain?" he asked.

"Oh, the Vulcan has had a hole struck in her and I signal—"

"Yes, I know all that, of course, but what's wrong with us?"

"With us?" echoed the captain blankly.

"Yes, with the Adamant? What has been amiss with the Adamant for the last two or three days? I'm not a talker, nor am I afraid any more than you are, but I want to know."

"Certainly," said the captain. "Please shut the door, Sir John."

Meanwhile there was a lively row on board the Vulcan. In the saloon Captain Flint was standing at bay with his knuckles on the table.

"Now what's the meaning of all this?" cried Adam K. Vincent, member of Congress.

A crowd of frightened women were standing around, many on the verge of hysterics. Children clung with pale faces to their mother's skirts, fearing they knew not what. Men were grouped with anxious faces, and the bluff old captain fronted them all.

"The meaning of all what, sir?"

"You know very well. What is the meaning of our turning round?"

"It means, sir, that the Adamant has eighty-five saloon passengers and nearly 500 intermediate and steerage passengers who are in the most deadly danger. The cotton in the hold is on fire, and they have been fighting it night and day. It may break out at any moment. It means, then, sir, that the Vulcan is going to stand by the Adamant."

A wail of anguish burst from the frightened women at the awful fate that might be in store for so many human beings so near to them, and they clung closer to their children and thanked God that no such danger threatened them and those dear to them.

"Why didn't they turned back, Captain Flint?" asked Mrs. General Weller.

"Because, madame, every moment is of value in such a case, and we are nearer Queenstown than we are New York!"

And so the two steamships, side by side, worried their way toward the east, always within sight of each other and with the rows of lights in each visible at night to the sympathetic souls on the other. The sweltering men poured water into the hold of the one and the pounding pumps poured water out of the hold of the other and thus they reached Queenstown.

On board the tender that took the passengers ashore at Queenstown from both steamers two astonished women met each other.

"Why? Mrs.—General—Weller!! You don't mean to say you were on board that unfortunate Vulcan?"

"For the lands sake, Mrs. Assistant Brownrigg. Is that really you? Will wonders never cease? Unfortunately, did you say? Mighty fortunate for you, I think. Why! weren't you just frightened to death?"

"I was, but I had no idea any one I knew was on board."

"Well, you were on board yourself. That would have been enough to have killed me."

"On board myself? Why, what do you mean? I wasn't on board the Vulcan. Did you get any sleep at all after you knew you might go down at any moment?"

"My sakes, Jane, what are you talking about? Down at any moment? It was you that might have gone down at any moment, or, worse still, have been burnt to death if the fire had got ahead of them. You don't mean to say you didn't know the Adamant was on fire most of the way across?"

"Mrs.—Gerald—Weller!! There's some horrible mistake. It was the Vulcan. Everything depended on her bulkheads, the captain said. There was a hole as big as a barn door in the Vulcan. The pumps were going night and day."

Mrs. General looked at Mrs. Assistant as the light began to dawn on both of them.

"Then it wasn't the engines, but the pumps," she said.

"And it wasn't the steam, but the fire," screamed Mrs. Assistant. "Oh, dear, how that captain lied. I thought him such a nice man, too. Oh, I shall go into hysterics, I know I shall."

"I wouldn't if I were you," said the sensible Mrs. General, who was a strong-minded woman; "besides, it is too late. We're all safe now. I thing both captains were pretty sensible men. Evidently married, both of 'em."

Which was quite true.—Detroit Free Press.

Crows in Exile.

Four crows ventured on what is known as Great Gul Island, off the northeastern extremity of Long Island, N. Y., and were immediately held in exile by the terns. There were about five thousand of the latter, and so of course the crows had no show at all. Over and over again they attempted to leave the island, but the inexorable terns pounced on them the moment they rose in the air and compelled them to return to seclusion. Finally, in some strange way the unhappy Napoleons managed to get word from their St. Helena to their friends on land, and one day a company of a hundred or more, constituting the old guard no doubt of crowdom, swooped down on the island and after a fierce battle with the terns bore the exiles home in triumph.—Chicago Post.

The newly discovered coal mines in the Argentine Republic have caused a cancellation of the contracts with England for coal for the railroads in that country.

REV. DR. TALMAGE.

The Eminent Brooklyn Divine's Sunday Sermon.

Subject: "Og, King of Bashan."

TEXT: "Only Og, king of Bashan, remained of the remnant of giants; behold his bedstead was a bedstead of iron; it is not in Rabbath of the children of Ammon? Nine cubits was the length thereof, and four cubits the breadth of it."—Deuteronomy iii., 11.

The story of giants is mixed with myth. William the Conqueror was said to have been of overwroughting altitude, but when in aftertime his tomb was opened his bones indicated that he had been physically of only ordinary size. Roland the Hero was said to have been of astounding stature, but when his sepulchre was examined his armor was found only large enough to fit an ordinary man. Alexander the Great had helmets and shields of enormous size made and left among the people whom he had conquered, so as to give the impression that he was a giant, although he was not more than over the usual height of a man. But that in other days and lands there were real giants is authentic. One of the guards of the Duke of Brunswick was eight and a half feet high. In a museum in London is the skeleton of Charles Byrne, eight feet four inches in stature. The Emperor Maximian was over eight feet.

Pliny tells of a giant nine feet high and two other giants nine and a half feet. So I am not incredulous when I come to my text and find that Og, a giant, was the size of his bedstead, turning the cubits of the text into feet, the bedstead of Og, the king, must have been about thirteen and a half feet long. Judging from that the giant who occupied it was probably about eleven feet in height. There was no need of Rabbinical writers trying to account for the presence of this giant, King Og, as they did, by saying that he came down from the other side of the flood, being tall enough to wade the waters beside Noah's ark, or that he rode on the top of the ark, the passengers inside the ark, all providing him with food. There was nothing supernatural about him. He was simply a monster in size.

Cyrus and Solomon slept on beds of gold, and Sardanapalus had 150 bedsteads of gold burned up with him, but this bedstead of my text was of iron—everything sacrificed for strength to hold this excessive avarice, this Alp of bone and flesh. No wonder this couch was kept as a curiosity at Rabbath, and the people went from far and near to see it, just as the people go to see the armor of the ancients. You say that a fighter this giant, King Og, must have been. No doubt of it. I suppose the size of his sword and breastplate corresponded to the size of his bedstead, and his stride across the battlefield an heroic stroke of his arm must have been appalling.

With an armed host he comes down to drive back the Israelites, who are marching on from Egypt to Canaan.

"We have no particulars of the battle, but the Israelites trembled when they saw this monster of a man moving down to crush them. Alas for the Israelites! Will their troubles never cease? What can men five and a half feet high do against this warrior of eleven feet, and what can short swords do against a sword which gleams like a flash of lightning?"

The battle of Edrei opened. Moses and his army met the giant and his army. The Lord of Hosts descended into the fight, and the gigantic strides that Og had made when advancing into the battle were more than made up for by the gigantic strides that he retreated. Huzza for triumphant Israel! Sixty fortified cities surrendered to them. A land of indescribable opulence comes into their possession, and all that is left of the giant King is the iron bedstead. "Nine cubits was the length thereof and four cubits the breadth of it."

Why did not the Bible give us the size of the giant instead of the size of the bedstead? Why did it not indicate that the giant was eleven feet high instead of telling us that his couch was thirteen and a half feet long? No doubt among other things it was to teach us that you can judge of a man by his surroundings. Show me a man's associates, show me a man's books, show me a man's home, and I will tell you what he is worth. Your telling me one word about him, I can cannot tell you a man according to the old adage, "By the company he keeps," but by the books he reads, by the pictures he admires, by the church he attends, by the places he visits. Moral giants and moral pygmies, intellectual giants and intellectual pygmies, like physical giants or physical pygmies may be judged by their surroundings.

When a man departs this life you can tell what has been his influence in a community for good by those who mourn for him and by the tears and long sobs that are the tokens of his taking off. There may be no pomp or obsequies and no pretense at epitaphology, but you can tell how high he was in consecration, and how high in usefulness by how long his shadow when he comes to rest is down. What is true of individuals is true of cities and nations. Show me the free libraries and schools of a city, and I will tell you the intelligence of its people. Show me its gallery of painting and sculpture, and I will tell you the artistic advancement of its citizens. Show me its churches, and I will tell you the moral and religious status of the place.

From the fact that Og's bedstead was thirteen and a half feet long, I conclude the giant himself was about eleven feet high, and that he was of a noble and noble environment. A man can make his own bedstead. Chantrey and Hugh Miller were born stonemasons, but the one became an immortal sculptor and the other a Christian scientist whose name will never die. Turner, the painter, in whose praise John Ruskin expended the greatest efforts of his life, was the son of a barber who advertised "a penny shave."

Dr. Prideaux, one of the greatest scholars of all time, earned his way through college by scouring pots and pans. The late Judge Francis Pickens went away up from a charcoal burner to the bench of the supreme court of the United States. Yes, a man can decide the size of his own bedstead.

Notice furthermore that even giants must rest. Such enormous physical endowment on the part of King Og, might suggest the capacity to stridle across all fatigue and out-slugger. No. He required an iron bedstead. Giants must rest. Not appreciating that fact how many of the giants yearly break down. Giants in business, giants in art, giants in eloquence, giants in half their days. They try to escape the consequences of overwork by a voyage across the sea or a sail in a summer yacht, or call on physicians for relief from insomnia or restoration of unstrung nerves or the cure of apoplexies, when all they need is what this giant of my text resorted to—an iron bedstead.

Let no one think because he has great strength of body or mind that he can afford to trifle with his usual gifts. The commercial world, the literary world, the artistic world, the political world, the religious world, are all the time awake with the crash of falling giants. King Og no doubt had a

throne, but the Bible never mentions his throne. King Og no doubt had crown, but the Bible never mentions his crown. King Og no doubt had a scepter, but the Bible does not mention his scepter. Yet one of the largest verses of the Bible is taken up in describing his bedstead. So God all up and down the Bible honors sleep. Adam, with his head on a pillow of Edenic roses, has his summer sleep by a divine gift of beautiful companionship. Jacob, with his head on a pillow of rock, has his sleep glorified with a ladder filled with descending and ascending angels. Christ, with a pillow made out of the folded up coat of a fisherman hours slumber in the back part of the storeroom.

In Bible times, when people arose at the time the bird puts his head under his wing. One of our national sins is robbery of sleep. Walter Scott was so urgent about this duty of slumber that, when arriving at a hotel where there was no room to sleep in except that in which there was a corpse, inquired if the deceased had died of a contagious disease, and, when assured he had not, took the other bed in the room and fell into profoundest slumber. Those of small endurance must certainly require rest if even the giant needs an iron bedstead.

Notice, furthermore, that God's people on the way to Canaan need not be surprised if they confront some sort of a giant. Had not the Israelites had trouble enough already? Not Red sea not enough. Water famine not enough. Long marches not enough. Opposition by enemies of ordinary stature not enough. They must need Og, the giant of the iron bedstead. "Nine cubits was the length thereof and four cubits the breadth of it." Why not let Israelites go smoothly into Canaan without this gigantic opposition? Oh, they needed to have their courage and faith further tested and developed. And blessed the man who, in our time, in his march toward the Promised Land, does not meet more than one giant. Do not conclude that Og is not on the way to Canaan because of this obstacle.

As well might the Israelites conclude they were not on the way to the Promised Land because they met Og, the giant. Standing in your way is some evil propensity, some social persecution, some business mistake, some physical distress. Not one of you but meets a giant who would like to heave you in twain. Higher than eleven feet this Og darkens the sky and the rattle of his buckler stuns the ear. But you are going to get the victory, as did the Israelites. The name of the God of Moses and David and Joshua and Paul, charge on him, and you will leave his carcass in the wilderness. You want a battle about!

Talk that with which David, the five-footed, assailed Goliath, or that with which when that giant cried, with stinging contempt both in manner and intonation, "Come to me and I will give thy flesh unto the fowls of the air and to the beasts of the field," and David looked up at the monster bravado and defiantly replied, "Thou comest to me with a sword, and with a spear, and with a shield; but I come to thee in the name of the Lord of Hosts, the God of the armies of Israel, whom thou hast defied."

This day will the Lord deliver thee into mine hand, and I will smite thee, and take away thy head from thee, and I will give the carcasses of the host of the Philistines this day unto the fowls of the air and to the wild beasts of the earth, that all the earth may know that there is a God in Israel."

Then David, with probably three swigs of the sling about his head, got it into sufficient momentum and let fly till the cranium of the giant broke in and he fell and David leaped on his carcass, one foot on his chest and the other on his heel, and that was the last of the Philistines. But be sure you get the right battle shout and that you enter it with the right spirit, or Og will roll over you as easily as at night he rolled into his iron bedstead.

Brethren, I have made up my mind that we will have to fight all the way up to the Promised Land. I think that after awhile I would get into a time where it would be smooth and easy, but the time does not come and it will never come in this world. By the time King Og is used up so that he cannot get into his iron bedstead, some other giant of opposition looms up to dispute our ways. Let us stop looking for an easy time and make it a thirty years' war, or a sixty years' war, or a hundred years' war, if we live so long.

Must be carried to the skies
On flowery beds of ease,
While others fought to win the prize
And sailed through bloody seas?

Do you know the name of the biggest giant that you can possibly meet—and you will meet him? He is not eleven feet high, but one hundred feet high. His bedstead is as long as the continent. His name is Doubt. His common food is infidel books and skeptical lectures and ministers who do not know whether the Bible is inspired at all, or inspired in spots, and Christians who are more infidel than Christian. You will never reach the Promised Land unless you slay that giant. Kill Doubt or Doubt will kill you. How to overcome this giant? Pray for faith, go with people who have faith, read everything that encourages faith, and as you would ship fever and smallpox the people who lack faith.

In this battle against King Og use not for weapons the crutch of a limping Christian or the sharp pen of a controversialist, but the sword of truth, which is the word of God. The word "If" is made up of the same number of letters as the word "Og," and it is just as big a giant. If the Bible be true, if the soul be immortal, if Christ be God, if our belief and behavior here decide our hereafter destiny, if, if, if. I have that word "If." Noah Webster says it is a conjunction; "I say it is an armed giant. Satan breathed upon it a curse when he said to Christ, 'If Thou be the Son of God.'"

What a dastardly and infamous "If," Against that giant "If," hurl Job's "I know" and Paul's "I know." "I know in whom I have believed." Down with the "If" and up with "I know."

Oh, that giant Doubt is such a cruel giant! It attacks many in the last hour. It would not let my mother alone even in her dying moments. After a life of holiness and consecration such as I never heard of in any one else, she said to my father, "Father, what if after all our prayers and struggles should go for nothing." Why could she not, after all the trials and sorrows and bereavements of a long life and the infirmities of old age, be allowed to go without such a cruel stroke from Doubt, the giant? Do you wonder I have a grudge against the old monster? If I could I would give him a bigger bounce than Satan got when hurled out of heaven, the first thing he struck was the bottom of perdition.

With Og's downfall all the sixty cities surrendered. Nothing was left of the giant except his iron bedstead, which was kept in a museum at Rabbath to show how tall and stout he once was. So shall the last giant of opposition in the church's march succumb. Not sixty cities captured, but all the cities. Not only on one side of Jordan, but on both sides of all the rivers. The day is coming. Hear it, all ye who are doing something for the conquest of the world for God and the truth, the time will come when, as there was nothing left of Og, the giant, but the iron bedstead kept at Rabbath as a curiosity, there will be nothing left of the giants of iniquity except something for the relic hunters to examine.

Which of the giants will be the last slain I know not, but there will be a museum somewhere to hold the relics of what they once were. A rusted sword will be hung up—the only relic of the giant of War. A denudation—the only relic of the giant of Inebriation. A roulette ball—the only relic of the giant of Hazard. A pictured certificate of watered stocks—the only relic of the giant of Stock Gambling. A broken knife—the only relic of the giant of Assassination. A yellow copy of Tom Paine—the only relic of the giant of Unbelief. And that museum will do for the later ages of the world what the iron bedstead at Rabbath did for the earlier ages. Do you not see it makes all the difference in the world whether we are fighting on toward a miserable defeat or toward a final victory?

All the Bible promises prophesy the latter, and so I cheer you who are the troops of God, and I cheer many things are dark now, like Alexander I review the army by torchlight, and I give you the watchword which Martin Luther proclaimed, "The Lord of Hosts!" "The Lord of Hosts!" and I cry out exultingly with Oliver Cromwell at the battle of Dunbar, "Let God arise; let His enemies be scattered!" Make all the difference in the world whether we are fighting on toward a miserable defeat or toward a final victory?

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