

Frances Ridley Havergal

by Jennie Chappell

Chapter I—Outward Sunshine, Inward Clouds.

Few children could be born into more favourable conditions of life than those which surrounded the early days of the little girl who first saw the light at Astley Rectory, in Worcestershire, on December 14, 1836.

Frances Ridley Havergal was the youngest child of the Rev. William Henry Havergal, and Jane, his wife. Her sisters numbered three, and she had two brothers.

Mr. Havergal, physically, is described by one of his early parishioners as "a lithesome man—not a lithesomer in England." He could when young walk three miles in twenty-five minutes, and he "never touched the stiles—he'd go clean over them." Mentally, he was singularly gifted in musical composition, as it is scarcely necessary to tell any one who studies the names attached to the tunes in any of our church hymnals. As a pastor, the same old friend mentioned above testifies that "He do be in and out of the houses all the week, and that fetched them to church on the Sunday; and he do be as frequent to Dissenters as to t'others."

Mrs. Havergal, we are assured by one who knew her intimately during the early part of her married life, possessed great beauty, and was noticeable for "the brightness of her expression and the sparkle of her eye," which little Frances inherited. That she was also a woman of deeply Christian character, quotations from her correspondence, and the records of her patience and resignation during the long and painful illness which ended her life at a comparatively early age, abundantly testify.

The subject of our present sketch was therefore born to a goodly heritage from both her parents. Her second Christian name was given her by her godfather, the Rev. W. H. Ridley, a lineal descendant of the martyred Bishop, and with it may have come an influence towards that strong Protestantism, linked with a passionate attachment to the Church of England, for which Frances was conspicuous throughout her life. This feeling she expressed in one of her poems:—

"But what the R. doth represent
I value and revere,

A diamond clasp it seems to be,
On golden chains, enlinking me
In loyal love to England's hope,
The Church I hold so dear."

Like so many rarely gifted children, Frances was remarkably precocious, and in accordance with the custom of fifty or sixty years ago, her education was commenced as soon almost as she could speak.

Her eldest sister Miriam was her first teacher, and she describes her two-year-old pupil as an extremely pretty child, with "fair complexion, light curling hair, and bright expression." At that age the little creature could already talk fluently, and learned reading, spelling, and one of Jane Taylor's rhymes for half-an-hour every morning. In the afternoon twenty or thirty stitches of needlework and a text of Scripture were the appointed task.

The play-study of the kindergarten was at that time unknown, but probably to little Frances' quick intelligence those early studies were no hardship, while between times she frolicked in the large Rectory garden with her pet dog.

She was still but an infant when she began to sing hymns, in imitation of her father, who possessed, in addition to musical genius, a "sweet, lovely voice." At three years old she could read easy books with sufficient ease to enjoy them, and would frequently take refuge under a table to finish some absorbing tale.

On her fourth birthday, little Frances, strange to relate, was brought down after dinner to dessert crowned with a wreath of *bay-leaves*—singularly prophetic of the poetic fame that lay before her.

Her active brain being always eager for learning, the child acquired considerable knowledge of the German language by taking care to be always in the drawing-room while a professor was giving lessons to her sisters. At seven years old she wrote her first simple rhymes, naturally a reflection of the teaching she was accustomed to receive, and a forecast of the many hymns from her fluent pen which should resound throughout the churches of our land in years to come:—

"Sunday is a pleasant day,
When we to church do go;
For there we sing, and read and pray,
And hear the sermon too.

On Sunday hear the village bells;

It seems as if they said,
Go to the church where the pastor tells
How Christ for man has bled.

And if we love to pray and read
While we are in our youth,
The Lord will help us in our need,
And keep us in His truth."

It will be noticed that the remarkable correctness of the rhythm of these lines is only marred by a syllable too many in line three of verse two. This suggests that the word "father" may have originally occupied the place of "the pastor," which would have been only natural as well as true.

Frances, like her father, was "lithesome," a buoyant, fairy-like sunbeam of a child, "sometimes a little wilful and troublesome from mere excess of animal spirits, but always affectionate and grateful for any little treat." She was intensely fond of Nature—blue sky, sunshine, and the loveliness of green, waving trees having the most powerful influence over her, often quieting her restless spirit and soothing her with the peace of God when the loving exhortations of her friends had but little effect. She read all the poetry that came in her way, and was scarcely eight years old when she lighted upon Cowper's lines upon the beauty of the varied creations in God's world, ending—

"My Father made them all!"

Instantly there awakened in the child's heart an intense longing to make these words her own. Again and again they recurred to her, haunting her with the idea of an unattainable bliss, and causing her to say to herself a dozen times a day, "Oh, if God would but make me a Christian before the summer comes!" because she so longed to enjoy His beautiful works to the uttermost.

But, alas! the popular theology of that day, ignoring the fact that our Saviour taught His followers that they must be "converted" in order to "become as little children," demanded of the little ones themselves the moral convulsion known as "conversion," and this, for years, stood between the child Fanny and her Saviour's waiting love.

None guessed the spiritual hunger and darkness which often overshadowed that bright spirit, few could have imagined how the young heart was yearning for conscious union with the great Father, and was ever held back by inability to "become a Christian" according to the stereotyped experience on which her parents' creed insisted.

"My general notion," she writes, in her autobiography of these seeking years, "was that I didn't love God at all, and was very bad and wicked altogether; that if I went on praying very much, something would come to me and change me all at once, and make me like many whom I read about and a few whom I saw."

Especially the monthly administration of the Lord's Supper so intensified the child's longing to come to God, that, being forbidden to be present even as a spectator, she would listen to the service through the closed vestry door, and sob as she felt that it was not for her. But, like so many another sensitive and highly-strung child, Frances could not confide these sorrows to even those nearest and dearest ones, the loveliness of whose lives, in contrast to the severity of their theories, had been chiefly instrumental in arousing the hunger and thirst after righteousness with which her young soul was filled.

When eleven years old, Frances lost her mother. Her sorrow was overwhelming, but she has regretfully confessed that she "did not, *would* not, see God's hand" in the bitter stroke, and that it left her worse than it found her as regards her spiritual condition. Yet this hardened young sinner—as she even in after years sincerely believed herself to have been—wrote at this time in her little book of poems:

"Eye hath not seen, nor ear hath heard,
Neither can man's heart conceive,
The blessed things God hath prepared
For those who love Him and believe."

And again—

"Oh! had I the wings of a dove,
Soon, soon would I be at my rest;
I would fly to the Saviour I love,
And there would I lie on His breast."

So the years of childhood passed on. Frances seems to have privately read her Bible and prayed with more than moderate regularity, and not infrequently cried herself to sleep at night over that hopeless conviction of her own great wickedness of heart which even at twenty-two years of age she records with special thankfulness, as an evidence of having been kept from the "deadly error" of daring to think herself "as good as others."

In the spring of 1850 these spasms of secret grief seem to have resolved themselves into an almost settled melancholy. Over the spirit of the young girl just entering her teens there came a strange new sense

of the vanity of life and earth and everything but "the one thing," and when alone, she often sat and thought about it all until she wept. Lying awake in bed she spent many an hour earnestly, and as it seemed to her poor bewildered little mind, vainly, praying for that gift of "faith"—so vaguely understood—without which she had been taught to believe that salvation would be impossible.

In August of that year, Frances for the first time went to boarding-school.

The lady under whose care she was placed—a Mrs. Teed, of Belmont—was a devoutly Christian woman, who knowing that that half-year would be the *finale* of a long course of school-work, was most anxious that it should be a time of great spiritual blessing to her pupils. She constantly prayed and spoke with the girls, both collectively and individually, concerning their souls, with the result that many conversions occurred. The two who were Frances' favourite companions were among those whose hearts were specially touched.

One of these, a girl named Mary, seems to have been the first to show Frances a better way than constantly brooding over her own guilt. She reminded her of the unconditional invitation of the Lord Jesus to every little child, and sweetly begged her, if she really felt that she was still a child, to go straight to Jesus Himself, and tell Him that she desired to love Him, and could not; assuring her that He would teach her. This sound advice Frances acted upon "in darkness and trembling," but the dawn of joy was not yet.

Her other favourite school-fellow, one whom she owns she "loved with a perfectly idolatrous affection," was "Diana." This young maiden—"the sunbeam of the school"—was one who had, like Frances, been wishing and praying for forgiveness a long time. One day, towards the close of the term, a realization of the Saviour's love suddenly burst upon her, and her joy was at once visible in both face and voice.

As soon as possible Diana sought her friend Fanny, and told her all her gladness, repeating the "good news" which Mary had already spoken. "Only come to Him, and He will receive you. Even now He loves you, though you don't know it."

But Frances went home for the Christmas holidays still "in the dim twilight of miserable and even disappointed longing."

Early in the next year she summoned courage to confide her trouble to Miss Cooke, the lady who soon afterwards became her loving step-mother. The latter hopefully assured Frances of her firm belief that so

great a desire for forgiveness was certain to be very shortly fulfilled, and urged her to commit her soul trustfully to the Saviour at once.

This suggestion brought the child the first gleam of hope with regard to religion which her fourteen years had ever experienced, and for a few days she was actually happy. A frequent renewing of that giving up of her soul to Christ which had produced the joy was able to recall it, and we may fairly record that the long-delayed "conversion" had at last taken place.

After the summer vacation of that year, Frances went to a new school, but before the term was ended a severe attack of erysipelas in the head and face put a stop to all her studies for many months.

To one with so great a love for learning this was a terrible trial, but Frances was able to write to her friend, Elizabeth Clay:—"Still, I am sure it will all be right; and if I receive good things at the hand of such a Father, shall I murmur at such a drawback, which is only to teach me a lesson I must learn after all?"

Chapter II—Gleams of Light.

In November 1852, Mr. Havergal's eyesight, which had for some time been failing, became so much worse as to lead him to visit Germany to consult an eminent oculist. His newly-wedded wife and his daughter Frances accompanied him. As they decided to remain abroad some considerable time, it was arranged that the young girl should attend the "Louisenschule" in Düsseldorf, while Mr. and Mrs. Havergal travelled.

Among the one hundred and ten scholars at that school, Frances had reason to believe herself the only one who cared for religion. Different indeed from the gospel-saturated atmosphere at Belmont! But, she decided, "very bracing." She earnestly tried to bear witness for Christ and to win others, and a considerable amount of persecution followed, without any known good result among her companions.

Still she felt that these ungenial surroundings had made her "come out more boldly and decidedly on the Lord's side" than she might have done for years under other circumstances.

As regards her studies, she came off with flying colours. Her own account of the last examination is given in a letter to the young friend mentioned above. "In the Louisenschule, when a girl has not learnt everything (as you know I did not), she receives merely her testimony, but *no number*. This half-year, however, it seems that all the masters, in council assembled, were so very pleased with the *Engländerin's*

(English girl's) papers and conduct, that they agreed to break their rule for once, and honour me with *Numero I.*, a thing which they had never done before!"

The summer of 1853 found Frances at Obercassel, boarding with the Pastor Schulze-Berge and his wife, the former being for the time her tutor. With him she studied French and German Literature, the poets, and Universal History. She was exceedingly happy with this good pastor and "frau pastorin," and as a noble German family resided at Obercassel, to whose "court" the brilliant and charming young English girl was frequently invited, she had an opportunity of becoming acquainted with many members of the German aristocracy. Pastor Schulze-Berge's report of his interesting pupil, written to her sister many years afterwards, declares that "she showed from the first such application, such rare talent, such depth of comprehension, that I can only speak of her progress as extraordinary... What imprinted the stamp of nobility upon her whole being, and influenced all her opinions, was her true piety, and the deep reverence she had for her Lord and Saviour, whose example penetrated her young life through and through."

At the age of eighteen Frances was confirmed. She had long been thinking of and preparing for this solemn time, and a detailed account of the ceremony and her own emotions was found among the sealed papers left to be opened by her sister after her death. In her manuscript book of poems, under date of that memorable day, she wrote—

"Oh! 'Thine for ever,' what a blessed thing
To be for ever His who died for me!
My Saviour, all my life Thy praise I'll sing,
Nor cease my song throughout eternity."

Notes and verses found among her papers prove that she was in the habit of renewing this vow—to her so deep and real an act of consecration—every year until her death.

Returning home, Frances not only continued her studies with unabated energy, but began to contribute poetic enigmas and charades to those little publications of the period called "Pocket-books" and "Keepsakes." Up till past the middle of the last century these annuals afforded almost the only available opening to the young aspirant for the honours of literature, and the prizes which they offered, Frances, under the pen-name of "Sabrina" or "Zoide" (for no budding poet in those modest days ever dreamed of blazoning out his own real identity), often obtained. If the reward took the form of money,

Frances, in imitation of her father's custom of devoting the proceeds of his musical compositions to God's work, sent it to the Church Missionary Society.

In the spring of 1856 came her first visit to the home of her married sister, Ellen, now Mrs. Shaw, of Celbridge Lodge, County Kildare, Ireland. Here she took all hearts by storm.

A young Irish school-girl, invited with others to spend an afternoon with the English visitor, describes the entrance of Frances into the drawing-room. "Carolling like a bird," she "flashed into the room! Flashed! Yes, I say the word advisedly—flashed in like a burst of sunshine, like a hillside breeze, and stood before us, her fair, sunny curls falling round her shoulders, her bright eyes dancing her fresh, sweet voice ringing through the room. I shall never forget that afternoon—never! I sat perfectly spellbound as she sang chant and hymn with marvellous sweetness, and then played two or three pieces of Handel, which thrilled me through and through... As we walked home down the shady avenue, one and another said—'Oh, isn't she lovely? and doesn't she sing like a born angel?' 'I love her, I do; and I'd follow her every step of the way back to England, if I could. 'Oh, she's a real Colleen Bawn!'"

Another of the class felt all the time that there must be the music of God's own love in that fair singer's heart, and that so there was joy in her face, joy in her words, joy in her ways. And the secret cry went up from that young Irish heart—"Lord, teach me, even me, to know and love Thee too."

This living yet unspoken gospel, this "good news" of a glad heart, beaming through the whole personality, is the most powerful of all preaching. But Frances Havergal believing intensely in the definite, verbal utterance of one's own confession of faith before others, and of direct appeals to them, deplored very sadly in after years that she had not spoken out more freely to those impressionable young Irish girls. On a subsequent visit a singing-class was formed, which she and they mutually enjoyed, but a few years after, as she sat by the sick-bed of the most gifted of them all, the girl confessed that in those happy summer evenings when their young leader used to walk down the avenue with them after class, she had lingered, longing and hungering for a word "about the Saviour" instead of "pleasant, general remarks about the nice hymns and tunes." Others, eventually, led the seeking soul to God, but, "Ah, Miss Frances, she said, I ought to have been *yours!*"

This was a lesson which the young lady never forgot. In after life she strove earnestly to let no opportunity slip, to allow no one who came even for a few minutes within the range of her speech, whether in the way of business or pleasure, to pass on without some plain words on the subject of salvation and the state of the soul before God.

With this decision came also the resolution never to use her beautiful voice—one of the many gifts of this richly-endowed nature—for any purpose but "singing the Gospel." "You cannot be all for Him," she writes, "as long as your voice is not for Him. Which shall it be? *All* for Him, or *partly* for Him? Answer that to Him whom you call Master and Lord."

Taking the view that everything not distinctly and obviously in the service of the Lord must be more or less on the opposite side, all secular music became taboo to her. Even "mildly sacred songs" seemed unsatisfactory, and as life advanced she adopted the rule of singing the words of Scripture almost exclusively. She even endorsed with delight the belief of one enthusiastic young friend, that a severe cold on the chest, caught the very evening that the latter, after some doubts, had consented to take part in a secular concert, was a direct sign that such a performance was displeasing to God.

Although outwardly so brimful of life and spirits, Frances Havergal appears to have never possessed really good health. After reading of the impression of joy and radiance which her looks conveyed, it is strange to find her experiencing a morbid thrill of delight at fancying, from the flushed appearance of her face in the glass one evening, that she might possibly be the victim of consumption!

The strong common-sense of the present day has routed the feeble sentimentality of "the fifties." Now, as good a Christian girl as Frances would rejoice at the prospect of a long life of useful service, but the religious literature and thought of half-a-century ago set forth the superior attractiveness of early death and a speedy entrance into the realms of bliss.

Of course the subject of our present sketch was an earnest Sunday School teacher. She kept a sort of diary of her scholars, whom she dearly loved, and as this is dated from 1846 to 1860, it would appear that she first undertook so responsible a position when between nine and ten years old! In this age of constantly advancing efficiency in all who attempt to instruct the young, such a state of affairs seems inconceivable, but other instances could be mentioned of well-brought-up children of that period, especially clergymen's daughters, beginning

to teach the small villagers in their neighbourhood at a remarkably early age. Presumably, all that was required was instruction in spelling out the Bible, and committing to memory verses of Scripture and hymns. We should have further supposed the discipline difficulty to have been unheard-of in those primitive and well-ordered days, but the young teacher herself says, "At one time I had desperately up-hill work, for mine was then the worst class in the school, and, out of fourteen, only a small minority were even hopeful." But surely, when this experience was reached, Frances herself was past childhood.

In 1860, Mr. Havergal, after fifteen years' work at St. Nicholas, Worcester, removed to the little country parish of Sharesill. This was chiefly for the benefit of his own health. One of the first improvements his coming effected was the abolition of the Sunday post. This was a question on which Frances always felt very keenly that many Christian people did not realize their responsibilities. "No manner of work," she wrote, shortly before her death, "must include postal delivery, and it is not right to ignore it."

About this time she was at last able to say that she had "lost that weary bondage of doubt, and almost despair, which chained me for so many years. I have the same sins and temptations as before, and I do not strive against them more than before, and it is often just as hard work. But, whereas I could not see why I *should* be saved, I now cannot see why I should not be saved if Christ died for all... His death is really my confidence, and I have tasted the sweetness of one new thing—*praise!*"

Yet, before long, we find her "borne back into all the old difficulties of the way, with many sin-made aggravations." "I think," she adds, in her autobiographical record of all her inner life, "the great root of all my trouble and alienation is that I do not now make an unreserved surrender of myself to God, and until this is done I shall know no peace. I am sure of it. I have so much to regret; a greater dread of the opinion of worldly friends, a loving of the world, and proportionate cooling in heavenly desire and love."

She had been singing in the Philharmonic Concerts, and feared that the pleasure which public applause gave her was hindering her spiritual progress. Therefore, when ill-health interrupted these performances, she accepted it as a sign from God. "No one," she declares, "professing to be a Christian at all, could possibly have had a more cloudy, fearing, doubting, sinning, and wandering heart-history than mine has been through many years."

The comment of her sister and biographer, Maria V. G. Havergal, upon these confessions is: "Deep borings, even down into darksome depths, often precede the supply of unfailing springs of refreshing water. Thus my dear sister knew much of doubt and gloom, so that she might be able to comfort others and reveal to them God's deep teachings in the darkness."

It was Frances' custom to pray in private three times a day. She kept a paper in her Bible, with the subject of each prayer-hour carefully arranged. Those of the earlier devotions were mainly for spiritual gifts and graces; those of the evening for pardon, for a vision of her own sinfulness, and against the special weakness of drowsiness in the morning, to which her delicate health and need of rest rendered her liable. Had she been granted wisdom to substitute for the latter petition a prayer against her tendency to over-work, a valuable life might have been prolonged. As it was, her feverish energy impelled her to drive a fragile body to its utmost limit of endurance, distressing a kind old servant, and doubtless many another who loved her, by getting to her Latin books long before breakfast, and using up every odd minute in some kind of work or study.

Frequent breaks-down in health and the enforced idleness of being "laid up" were the natural result. It was a poor economy of life, at best.

Chapter III. With Voice and Pen.

Having dwelt at length upon the inner, spiritual development of Frances Havergal from childhood to maturity, we will now turn our attention to her intellectual career.

Her first accepted contribution to a real magazine appears to have been her well-known hymn "I gave my life for Thee." It was suggested to her during a visit to Germany in 1858, through casually sitting down to rest opposite that picture of the Crucifixion which usually bears this motto. The verses flashed upon her like an inspiration, and she at once noted them down on a scrap of paper. But she was not pleased with the result, and tossed it into the fire. As, however, the paper fell out unharmed, she decided to keep it. Some time after she showed them to her father, who was so favourably impressed that he wrote the tune "Baca" specially to go with them.

These verses subsequently appeared in *Good Words*, and occasioned a request from the editor for further poetical contributions from the same pen.

The first cheque the young authoress received she characteristically

devoted entirely to sacred uses. The bulk of the money she gave to her dear father (he accepted the love, but not the cheque), hoping to further some one or other of the religious objects he had always at heart, and the remainder she divided between similar works.

The delight of this first achievement was, however, but the forerunner of a keen disappointment. Not from any failure of literary success, but because the over-taxed mind was too much for the frail body. The doctors' fiat was, "She must choose between writing and living. She can't do both."

Thus for nine years the pen was laid aside. When, after this interval of waiting, Frances published her first book, *The Ministry of Song*, she regarded the delay not as the result of any error in self-management, but as the direct interposition of the Divine Will, "because He knows best what will really ripen and further His work in us."

The precise date when Frances first discovered her wonderful gift for musical composition does not appear, but it was evidently somewhere between '60 and '65.

Towards the close of the latter year she revisited her friends in Germany, and took the opportunity of obtaining the opinion of the German musician, Hiller, on the merits of her work. This was at the earnest desire of her former tutor, Pastor Schulze-Berge, but sorely against her own inclination, because, she modestly confesses, "I expected nothing but utter quenching from such a man."

Her father and step-mother were at that time staying at Bonn, and the latter accompanied Frances to an appointed interview with the great composer.

He received them kindly, and then in silence proceeded to examine the volume of melodies which the young lady had submitted for his verdict.

When about three-quarters through, he suddenly asked, "What instruction have you had?"

"I told him," Frances relates, "of Hatherley's having corrected my first six songs, and my having a musical father, to whom I occasionally referred difficult points, and with whom I had musical talk in general. 'I do not care anything about that,' said he. 'I mean, what regular musical course have you gone through, and under what professor?' I told him I had done nothing of the sort. He looked very hard at me, as if to see if I was telling the truth, and then turned back to my music,

saying, 'In that case I find this very remarkable!'"

The professor subsequently told Frances that although he saw no sign of great creative power in her melodies, he was astonished at her harmonies. "It is something singular," he said, "to find such grasp of the subject, such power of harmonization, except where there has been long and thorough study and instruction; here I can give almost unlimited praise."

On being asked whether there was promise enough in her efforts to make it advisable for her to devote herself to music as a life-work, he replied that he could sincerely and unhesitatingly say that there was.

Hiller recommended to Frances a book of exercises, which she conscientiously determined to go through before attempting any more composition. Of course she had, in an amateur way, studied harmony years before—chiefly by reading as much of a treatise on the subject as she could grasp last thing every night before going to bed, and working out the exercises in her head before falling asleep— but the amazement and almost scepticism of the great man on hearing that she had been through no regular "academical course," was an immense compliment.

Needless to say, this gifted musician-poetess was an exquisite pianist. Her sister says: "Often she sang for me her recitative and air to the words in Isaiah xii... The third verse, 'Therefore with joy,' etc., was real water-music; the notes seemed sparkles of water dropping gladly, and the illusion was so perfect that one's soul seemed refreshingly sprayed with joy."

We may here mention that this elder sister, Maria, had often anticipated she might have Frances to play and sing to her when she was dying, little thinking the younger one would be called first. Yet, during the long and painful months that Maria lay sick unto death, the memory of those lovely melodies again and again returned to her with such extraordinary vividness that it was sometimes difficult for her to realize that she was not listening to them with her outward ears. It seems scarcely fanciful to imagine that the blessed spirit of the departed was allowed thus to communicate with the mind of the dear one left behind, and soothe her sufferings in the very way that they had been wont to promise one another should be. Many an hour of pain was beguiled to Maria Havergal by these wonderful mental reproductions of her sister's music.

Frances' touch, we are told, was instinct with soul, as was also her singing. A pupil of Beethoven once pronounced her rendering of the

Moonlight Sonata "perfect"; and her memory was such that she would play through Handel and much of Beethoven and Mendelssohn without any notes.

The Rev. W. H. Havergal died on Easter Tuesday morning, 1870, aged seventy-seven. It was quite unexpectedly, from apoplexy.

"...There was no last word of love,
So suddenly on us the sorrow fell;
His bright translation to the home above
Was clouded with no shadow of farewell;
His last Lent evening closed with praise and prayer,
And then began the songs of endless Easter there."

It was soon after her father's death that Frances began preparing *Havergal's Psalmody* for the press. This book was afterwards largely used in connection with the Rev. C. B. Snapp's Hymnal, *Songs of Grace and Glory*, to which compilation Frances herself contributed several original compositions.

In nothing did she miss the comradeship and counsel of her dearly-loved father more than in his advice about her music. One morning, shortly after her bereavement, she was puzzling over some difficult point which he could at once have made clear to her, when there flashed into her mind the words, "Thou art the Helper of the fatherless." This was instant comfort to her, and she formed the habit of seeking Divine help in both her musical and poetic composition, accepting the thoughts and ideas that came to her as sent direct from God.

"Writing is *praying* with me," she told a friend; "for I never seem to write even a verse by myself, and feel like a little child writing. You know a child would look up at every sentence, and say, 'And what shall I say next?' That is just what I do; I ask that at every line He would give me, not merely thoughts and power, but also every word, even the very *rhymes*. Very often I have a most distinct and happy consciousness of direct answers."

Of course it was a deep joy to this consecrated young genius to hear of her poems or music being used and blessed by God, and she fully realized the high privilege that was hers.

"*Literal* 'singing for Jesus,'" she wrote, is to me, somehow, the most personal and direct commission I hold from my beloved Master; and my opportunities for it are often most curious, and have been greatly blessed; every line in my little poem 'Singing for Jesus' is from

personal experience."

In this connection it may not be out of place to relate one instance of the kind of work for her Master which she was able so often to accomplish, and also of a strangely granted prayer.

Frances Havergal, than whom a more loyal soul never lived, was accustomed to pray especially for our dear Queen Victoria's youngest child, and one day, when revising the proofs of her elegantly got-up volume *Life Mosaic*, with its exquisite coloured illustrations of Alpine flowers and scenery by the Baroness Helga von Cramm, she exclaimed, "Oh, I should so like to send one to the Princess Beatrice!"

There seemed, however, to be no means of approach to her Royal Highness, and Frances made the matter a subject of special petition.

During a subsequent visit to London, she was present at an amateur musical evening, where she was much interested by the beautiful singing of an Italian lady.

Presently Frances herself was invited to sing, and after rendering one of Handel's compositions, was persuaded to give the company a song of her own.

She chose, "Whom, having not seen, ye love." "She always sang so rejoicingly," says her sister, "the words "Though now ye see Him not, yet believing, ye rejoice, up the scale of joy, and then the deep adoring thrill, "With joy unspeakable and full of glory.""

As she left the piano, the Italian lady, her eyes full of tears, whispered, "Miss Havergal, I envy you! Your words and face tell me you have something I have not. A pleasant correspondence followed this interview, and when it transpired that the lady was well acquainted with the Princess Beatrice, Frances ventured to make her the intermediary of her longed-for offering to her Royal Highness. The book was graciously accepted, and in return the Princess sent the poetess her photograph, with her autograph written beneath it, and a pleasant assurance that she admired the poetry.

Long after, the surviving sister was gratified to see an extract from Frances' lines on "September," enwreathed by the same Princess in heather and autumnal leaves, in her artistic Birthday Book.

Frances' intense sense of what we may almost call "verbal inspiration" as regarded her compositions, enabled her to take all experiences connected with them in a spirit of complete submission, believing everything, good or bad, to be equally an ordering of the Divine Will.

Thus, when a fire occurring at her publisher's totally destroyed the results of six months' labour, of which she had no copy or even a memorandum to assist her memory, she took it that she had been too anxious to get the book done (it was an Appendix to *Songs of Grace and Glory*), that she might hasten on to other work of her "own choosing and planning." Therefore she thanked God for mercifully giving her another opportunity of doing these hymns more patiently and more *for Him*.

In the same spirit she regarded as an especial mark of Divine favour a relapse after the serious attack of typhoid fever which had almost proved fatal in '74 and '75. Lamenting that in the earlier part of her illness she had not "glorified Him in the fires," because "after I had lost all my strength, I could not bear the pain without moaning and crying out, and showing eagerness for remedies," she felt that a recurrence of illness was a proof of God's pardon and a gracious opportunity of learning the "turned lesson" over again.

In the limited space at our disposal, it would be impossible to give extracts from the melodious poems which have made the name of Frances Havergal so widely known and dearly loved both in this country and across the seas. We must content ourselves with mentioning a few of her works.

The Ministry of Song was, as we have already indicated, her first volume of poetry, and was published in 1869. This was followed by companion volumes, *Under the Surface* and *Under His Shadow*, in all of which the heart-experiences of the writer as well as her spiritual revelations and inspirations are set forth, as one reviewer expressed it, "with truth, delicacy, and sweetness." "Each poem," said a well-known religious weekly, speaking of *Under the Surface*, "is a life-song and a heart-story," and every one breathes that profound devotion to a personal Saviour which was the joy of the writer's radiant life. The power for good of these books can be hardly over-estimated, for they have reached a circulation of hundreds of thousands, and no one can read them without being spiritually uplifted.

But, perhaps, in the devotional world, Miss Havergal's prose works have had even greater popularity than her poems. *Kept for the Master's Use*, a little book, which it is hardly necessary to remind our readers has for its text the twelve couplets of F. R. H.'s own universally sung Consecration hymn, is a Christian classic, endorsed in its noble aspirations by the most devout souls in every denomination. *My King, or Daily Thoughts for the King's Children*, is scarcely less widely appreciated; this, and three companion volumes of the same series

—*Royal Commandments, Royal Bounty, and Loyal Responses*—show most wonderful typical meanings in innumerable little-noticed passages of the Old Testament, particularly in the history of King David. Miss Havergal displays striking insight—sometimes one is almost tempted to call it ingenuity—in discovering hidden allusions to the relation of Christ's servants to their Lord. *The Royal Invitation* and *Starlight through the Shadows* are also somewhat on these her favourite lines.

A tender lover of children, Miss Havergal could not be content to leave them without a share in the Divine feast. *Little Pillows, being Good Night Thoughts for the Little Ones*, has had great vogue; *Morning Bells, being Waking Thoughts for the Little Ones*, scarcely less so, and *Morning Stars, or Names of Christ for His Little Ones*, follows them closely. *Bruey*, the story of "a Little Worker for Christ," has been much liked, and *The Four Happy Days* is a pretty story in which under the name of "Annie" the authoress tells the experiences of her own child-life, especially those relating to the death of her mother.

Of the hymns, sacred songs, innumerable articles for magazines, the booklets and the papers on all kinds of religious topics which flowed from Miss Havergal's untiring pen, we can only speak in passing. Her private correspondence was also voluminous, and it is in letters to individuals that her sweetness of manner, intense earnestness, and bright, practical piety are oftentimes seen at their best.

Chapter IV. 'Only for Thee!'

Frances Havergal's life was not only richly dowered with natural gifts, but her circumstances were in every way of the most happy and favoured. She was an illustration of the truth that from those to whom much is given much will be required; nor did she disappoint Him who had so lavished blessings upon her that she might as abundantly impart to others.

In addition to the privilege of being surrounded by relatives and friends of a high degree of Christian excellence, and persons of all classes who regarded her wherever she went with loving admiration, she possessed the advantage of complete freedom from all the sordid and depressing cares of lower middle-class life, and the opportunity of frequent travel in delightful company.

In girlhood, as we have seen, she enjoyed a long stay in Germany, visiting several interesting spots. This was followed by visits to her sister's home in Ireland. But a greater event was Frances' first sight of Switzerland, whither she journeyed, in May 1869, with her brother-in-

law, Mr. Crane, his wife and eldest daughter. As usual, she carefully wrote in her diary of every scene she looked upon, and all the emotions to which it gave rise. Some of her descriptions are gems of word-painting.

Thus she describes the Rhine Falls:—"It was fascinating to look down on the wild rapids, sheets of glass-like transparency, flowing swiftly over rock tables; then a sudden precipice below water, which might go down to any depth, only that you are not looking down into darkness, but into emerald and snow mingled and transfused marvellously.... You look up, and see masses of bright water hurled everlastingly, irresistibly down, down, down, with a sort of exuberance of the joy of utter strength; you look across, and see shattered diamonds by millions leaping and glittering in the sunshine; you look down, and it is a tremendous wrestling and overcoming of flood upon flood, all the more weirdly grand that it is half hidden in the clouds of spray."

During this tour Frances enjoyed the realization of her childhood's dream and longing, and beheld snow mountains for the first time. She was deeply impressed. "I never saw anything material and earthly," she writes, "which so suggested the ethereal and heavenly ... and one could better fancy them to be the visible foundations of the invisible celestial city, bearing some wonderful relation to its transparent gold and crystal sea, than only snow and granite."

From Switzerland she soon after travelled back to the Highlands of Scotland, the scenery of which pleased her greatly.

In 1871 Frances again visited Switzerland with her friend Elizabeth Clay. They had a most delightful tour of several weeks' duration, and our poetess rapturously pictures an Alpine dawn and sunrise "When we came out we saw the 'daffodil sky' which Tyndall describes—in the east a calm glory of expectant light as if something positively celestial must come next, instead of merely the usual sun. In the south-west the grand mountains stood, white and perfectly clear, as if they might be waiting for the resurrection, with the moon shining pale and radiant over them, the deep Rhone valley dark and grave-like in contrast below. As we got higher, the first rose-flush struck the Mischabel and Weissshom, and Monte Leon came to life too; it was *real* rose-fire, delicate yet intense. The Weissshom was in its full glory, looking more perfectly lovely than any earthly thing I ever saw. When the tip of the Matterhorn caught the red light on its evil-looking rocky peak, it was just like a volcano, and looked rather awful than lovely, giving one the idea of an evil angel, impotently wrathful, shrinking away from the serene glory and utter purity of a holy angel, which that Weissshom at

dawn might represent, if anything earthly could."

1872 finds our mountain-clamberer on the top of Snowdon. Wales, she declared, no more suffers in comparison with Switzerland "than a forget-me-not beside a rose." Her favourite mountain verse was, "Unto Thee, O Lord, do we give thanks, for that Thy name is near Thy wondrous works declare."

In 1873 Frances was back again in her beloved Switzerland, this time with her friends Mr. and Mrs. Snepp, and their daughter Emily. It was during this visit that her high spirits and delight in physical activity nearly led to sad disaster. She had a perfect passion for "glissading" down icy slopes, and excitement on one occasion getting the better of discretion, she and her guide were all but precipitated into a fathomless abyss. It was Mr. Snepp's presence of mind that saved their lives.

In 1874 Switzerland was again revisited, in company of her niece and other friends. A word-picture of "Sunset on the Faulhorn" was the gem of her "circular letters" home during this tour, but it is too long to be quoted here.

1875 was the year of Miss Havergal's serious illness, and subsequent relapse, already alluded to, and she did not leave England, but appears to have had a pleasant autumnal sojourn at picturesque Whitby. The following summer, however, found her escorting her sister Miriam to the beauties of the Alps.

It was during this sojourn that, at Champéry, Frances became acquainted with the Baroness Helga von Cramm, a gifted artist, in collaboration with whom she soon after published an exquisite series of cards, bearing Alpine views and verses. This seems to have been the last glimpse of Switzerland.

In 1878, Somersetshire, Devonshire, and Wales were all visited. It was from the lovely "Welsh nest," at Caswell Bay, Swansea, that in June of the following year her soul winged its way to the glories of the Heavenly Land.

During all these journeys, wherever she went and whenever she stopped, this zealous evangelist seized every opportunity of speaking of the Saviour to all around her. The sunny beauty of her countenance, so often remarked, the unaffected joyousness of her manner, and her merry laugh, were ever the greatest possible recommendations of the religion she preached.

She was always ready to give, not only the little books and papers she

invariably carried with her for the purpose, but her own time and energy—herself, in fact—to any whom she felt she might by any means help.

At Ormont Dessus, during one of her Swiss tours, she willingly gave up best part of a morning which she had intended to employ in writing a poem, to talk to a labouring man and his sons who crossed her path. This opportunity was a direct answer to her prayer to be made "just as willing to do any little bit of work for Him... simple and unseen, as this other piece of work which might win something of man's praise."

Soon after her return from this holiday, Frances, though actually in the first stages of typhoid fever, put herself to considerable inconvenience to see, during a railway journey, a young stranger whom her sister had written her was needing help. "It will be well worth any fatigue," she said, "if I can comfort her."

When visiting at the houses of relatives or friends it was the same thing. The servants of the family and the cottagers around alike adored the sweet-voiced, sunshiny lady who spoke to them so winningly about higher things. "Bible-readings in the servants' hall, kind talks alone, and helpful prayers, are all remembered."

F. R. H.'s own account of how she came to write her most popular hymn—

"Take my life and let it be
Consecrated, Lord, to Thee,"

is a fair instance of the way in which she worked for her Master when enjoying the hospitality of friends.

"I went for a little visit of five days. There were ten persons in the house, some unconverted and long prayed for, some converted but not rejoicing Christians. He gave me the prayer, 'Lord, give me all in this house!' And He just *did!* Before I left the house every one had got a blessing. The last night of my visit I was too happy to sleep, and passed most of the night in praise, and renewal of my own consecration, and these little couplets formed themselves and chimed in my heart one after another, till they finished with, 'Ever, only, ALL for Thee!'"

Again: "I was at a large regular London party lately, and I was so happy. He seemed to give me 'the secret of His presence,' and of course I sang 'for Jesus,' and did not I have dead silence? Afterwards I had two really important conversations with strangers; one seemed

extremely surprised at finding himself *quite easily* drifted from the badinage with which he started into a right-down personal talk about *his* personal danger and *his* only hope of safety; he took it very well, and thanked me."

In her correspondence, Miss Havergal of course found abundant opportunities for introducing the one paramount topic of interest; both in communicating to other Christians the helpful revelations and rich Biblical "finds" which were sent to her by her Master, and in urging the blessedness of the consecrated life upon those who had not yet tasted its joys. To her own large circle of nephews and nieces she was indeed a guiding, guardian angel.

To one little child she writes:—

"Dearest 'little thing,'

"*Let* the Lord lead you, *let* Him have you altogether. And, dear pet, blessing hardly ever comes alone; if He has the joy of winning you altogether for Himself, He won't stop there; He will do more, He is doing so here. ... I feel most deeply for you. Keep very close to Jesus, my darling, and ask Him never to let you take back what you have now given Him. Be His entirely, without any reserve, and He will be yours entirely."...

Of course, so widely-popular a writer received shoals of letters, from shoals of persons, on all possible subjects, both relevant and irrelevant, especially from would-be authors, who calmly asked to have their MSS. carefully read and criticized, without the least regard to the time and labour that must be expended upon them.

The following is a specimen of the multifarious requests that reached her, *by one post*:—

"Request for contribution to *Irish Church Advocate*. Hymns for special New Year Services wanted. To write cards suitable for mourners. For set of six more 'Marching Orders.' Request for poems to illustrate six pictures. For prayer, sympathy and counsel (two sheets crossed). Two sheets from a septuagenarian, requiring thought. Request to write a book suitable for Unitarians. Sundry inquiries and apologies from one who had been printing her verses with another author's name. Request to reprint an article, with four explanatory enclosures. Also to revise a proof, and add my opinion. To revise many sheets of musical manuscripts. Three requests to supply cards for Bazaars. Advice wanted how to get articles inserted in magazines. To recommend pupils. To promote a new magazine. To give opinion on an oratorio. Some long poems in manuscript to revise and advise thereon. Besides

packets of leaflets and cards wanted."

To partially meet such overwhelming pressure, a circular was printed, giving numbered answers to the most constantly recurring queries, which could be marked according to the correspondent's particular question or questions. But even with the relief this afforded, many hours a day were unavoidably occupied in replying to individuals whose special needs could not be brought under any general heading. Of course, appeals for spiritual advice were always answered personally and at full length. The amount of Bible-noting and marking, and also of diary-writing which Miss Havergal's marvellously active pen also accomplished is simply astonishing. At the beginning of the last year of her life a friend sent her a little *Journal of Mercies*, in which she took great delight in entering whichever "mercy" seemed uppermost in her mind for each day, "not one in a thousand, though!" she characteristically comments.

It often happens that the pen and the needle are not equally favoured by the same hand. One is therefore rather surprised to find that Frances Havergal was an accomplished needlewoman. Her work, we are told, "was exquisite, from the often despised darning to the most delicate lace-work and embroidery." She actually confessed "I do like getting a whole pile of socks to mend when I visit busy mothers; and at missionary working parties it amused me to see my plain-sewing handed round. But as we once heard a gifted lady remark—"If a woman has brains, she ought to be able to do everything better than one who has not!" And records of the varied accomplishments of feminine geniuses seem to bear this out.

The mention of embroidery and lace-work suggests the inquiry as to how much of outward adornment this apostle of entire consecration deemed allowable to a Christian.

Speaking on her couplet "Take my silver and my gold," she said: "As He has entrusted to me a body for my special charge, I am bound to clothe that body with His silver and gold so that it shall neither suffer from cold nor bring discredit upon His cause! ... If the King's daughter is to be 'all glorious within,' she must not be outwardly a fright! I must dress both as a lady and a Christian. The question of cost I see very strongly, and do not consider myself at liberty to spend on dress that which might be spared for God's work." (This latter remark would certainly apply as well to *time* as to *money*!) She adds: "By dressing unremarkably, yet with a generally pleasing effect, no attention is distracted. ... But I shall always ask for guidance in all things."

Her jewellery Miss Havergal had long ago given up to be sold for the benefit of a missionary society, with the exception of one or two brooches for actual use, and sundry small memorials of departed friends, which she "redeemed" for their value in cash. But the fact that she brought as a gift for a friend when returning from one of her Swiss tours a locket of "crystal and amethyst," with the remark that "The very words 'crystal and amethyst' are like a far gleam from the heavenly city," shows that she did not consider the wearing of precious stones to be an inherently sinful thing.

Temperance work ever claimed the warmest advocacy of F. R. H.'s tongue and pen. She appears to have realized increasingly the imperative need of total abstinence among Christian workers, for while, when visiting Switzerland in 1871, she records the mutual drinking in "red wine" of a toast with some friendly Italians who lunched one day at the same spot as she and her companion, her chapter on "Take my lips" in *Kept for the Master's Use*, which was completed not long before her death, concludes with these words:—"I only say here, you who have said, 'Take my lips,' stop and repeat that prayer next time you put that to your lips which is binding men and women hand and foot, and delivering them over, helpless, to Satan! Let those words pass once more from your heart *out* through your lips, and I do not think you will feel comfortable in letting the means of such infernal work pass *in* through them."

It was Temperance work, indeed, that was uppermost in Miss Havergal's mind during the very last weeks of her life, and it was her enthusiasm in this particular cause which prompted the indiscretion as regards health that directly brought on her fatal illness.

It was at Caswell Bay, on May 21, 1879, that Frances Havergal fulfilled an engagement to meet some men and boys on the village bank, to speak to them on the subject of taking the pledge.

Ever since her serious illness in '74 and '75, her health, never robust, had been more delicate than ever, and what were termed "feverish attacks," and supposed to arise mainly from debility, were of frequent occurrence. The greatest care should have been taken that she was never exposed to the risk of catching cold. But on this particular occasion a most unfortunate spot was chosen for the meeting it was a day of rain and mist, and after standing a long time in the damp, Miss Havergal returned "wet and chilly."

Next day she felt poorly, but not bad enough to remain indoors; the day after, however, as the sense of chill increased, she was seen by a

doctor. On May 24 she was confined to her bed, yet no one suspected that this attack of indisposition was to prove any more serious than many of apparently the same sort which had preceded it. On the 26th she used her pen for the last time, to correct a proof of *Morning Stars*. Still she was not suffering, and even her doctor did not anticipate danger. Not until the eighth day subsequent to the fatal chill did distressing symptoms make their appearance. Then "fever and internal inflammation came rapidly on, and all the symptoms and agony of peritonitis."

From that time forward there was little relief from pain, and "all remedies failed." Her brother and sisters were sent for, and quickly came. They sang to her and prayed with her as she could bear it during the succeeding days, and she thanked them, and all about her, most sweetly for their kindness. But her constant thought was of rapturous joy that the meeting with her King, for which all her life she had been longing, was actually at last drawing near.

"Beautiful! Too good to be true!" she said, when one of her doctors told her that probably she would go that very day; and she was heard to murmur, "So beautiful to go!" again and again during the last hours.

At length, early on Whit Tuesday, June 3, release came. A few minutes before the end, she was able to sing, clearly though faintly, "a verse of the hymn, 'Jesus, I will trust Thee!' to her own tune 'Hermas.'" And then, to quote Miss Maria Havergal's description of the closing scene:—"For ten minutes we watched that almost visible meeting with her King, and her countenance was so glad, as if she were already talking to Him. Then she tried to sing, but after one sweet, high note, 'He-', her voice failed, and as her brother commended her soul into her Redeemer's hand, she passed away. Our precious sister was gone—satisfied—glorified—within the palace of her King!"

The remains of the "sweet singer" were carried to Astley, to be buried beside those of her beloved father. A golden star, of Banksia roses, and a poet's wreath of laurel and bay were conspicuous among the many floral tributes laid upon her grave. It had been a dark and stormy day, but just as the burial service was ending the hearts of the many mourners were comforted by a gleam of June sunshine, and the birds burst into melody all around.

Upon the north side of the family tomb, under the branches of a fir-tree planted by her father, is the inscription:—

FRANCES RIDLEY HAVERGAL, Youngest Daughter of the Rev. W. H. Havergal and Jane his wife.

Born at Astley Rectory, 14th December 1836.

Died at Caswell Bay, Swansea, 3rd June 1879. Aged 42.

By her writings in prose and verse, she, "being dead, yet speaketh."

*"The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin"—1
John i. 7.*

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