A BROKEN BETROTHAL

BY LAURA JEAN LIBBEY

Author of "When Lovely Maiden Stoops to Folly," "Parted by Fate," "Parted at the Altar," Etc.

in knowing if I am twenty-five, I ... to look it, and I have in... all the beauty that was allot... the family. No wonder Iris is ...

she shook her dark head so vi... that her curl papers loosened. ... would be curls danced over her ... head in a rakish-looking, ... mass.

Colver, twenty, and a decided ... did not utter the scathing re... that sprang to her lips, for, glanc... toward the door-way, sh... a slight girlish figure in a brown ... dress standing timidly be... the servant, who had shown her in... presence in accordance with ... desire.

Culver gave a start of surprise ... Iris' eyes fell upon Theo's beau... face. Iris's pale brows lowe... ously, and, as if to atone for ... sister's incivility and want of ... Mrs. Culver stepped gra... forward, holding out her hand.

"Come," she said, kindly. "I ... glad you are come," and she ... easily from Theo's fair young ... scowling countenances of ... daughters, who were evidently ... greatly impressed with the "com... Mrs. Winfield had sent.

"I am so tired," she said; "it is ... trip from Washington to Hag... You must rest until luncheon. ... said, turning to her young... ter, "touch the bell, dear, and ... maid to show Miss Lester ... room that has been prepared for ...

Culver raised her pale blue eyes ... bright shining in them. ... Lester can touch the bell her... answered, indicating the bell... the wave of her white hand, ... going to herself: "The idea of ... to wait upon her when she ... here for the sole purpose of ... to us. Touch the bell, in...

Culver attended to it herself, and ... maid, soon appeared and con... her to her room.

"This is the new companion," sh... up as the door closed upon ... in the warm, bright com... A wonder to me that they ...

Asked Theo, scarcely know... she ought to feel angry or ... the girl's remark.

"You are so good-looking," re... with a laugh. "I haven't ... months, yet during that ... has had no less than ... companions. The good-looking ... lasted the first week out; the ... made it so uncomfortable. The young ladies of this ... matters—that's, what they ...

... it was not right to stand ... amazed, the servant to gos... this and turned away ... Sara was not to ...

"I'd give you a piece of ... she went on; confidential... you thank me for it or not ... will put you on your guard ... that is, look out for Colonel West. ... a young man that often visits ... and if he should chance to meet ... in the grounds and take the re... is that pretty young girl?" ... your walking-papers at once. ... I'm telling you to put you on ... guard."

"Thank you," replied Theo. "I shall ... what you have said, and take ... keep out of Colonel West's ... ...

... Theo was called to ... boudoir. ... her design a ball costume, ... she asked. "I thought ... a dilemma over theirs. ... presented with a new ... exactly the same shade. ... is a brunette, the other ... you assist me in decid... to arrange them both to ...

... in a rich shade of green," re... Miss Lester's dark beauty ... enhanced by an over... dress, caught up here ... with shining gems. Your ... according to my taste, ... set with simple garnitures ... and pearls."

... looked up in pleased sur... Her brows clearing. If ... companion could design ... dresses for them, she was ... been if she was pretty. ... her well out of sight, ... see her, and all would be ...

"The Colonel West to see ... ...

"I like handsome Harry ... like her," returned Iris ...

"Harry Strathmore to you?" ... "Doesn't everybody ... know that he was had ... love with that Violet Ken... that they were as good as ... before his father died?" ... don't he marry her, if he ... much of her as you would ... love?" cried Iris. "He ... he has only himself ... for, Isabel," she went ... "If there ever was an ... between them. It was brok... started for Europe. ... would have taken her with ... ... you think so?" asked ...

Isabel's question never ... for, glancing up, she saw ... companion, standing, ... and trembling, on the ... looking at her with frighten...

CHAPTER XXII.

... caught just two words of ... "Harry Strathmore," ... upon Theo's ears like an ... Was she awake or was ...

... must have been a mistake," ... My ears deceived me. ... Branches of the chest... the song of the birds and the ... of the brooklet seem to ... the name of my lost ...

... a guilty start. ... have you been dreaming, ... Lester?" she asked. "You ... have knocked—given us an intu... mation of your presence," and her pale face glowed with haughty displeasure.

"The door was open; I did not see that the room was occupied until I had crossed the threshold," replied Theo.

"I am glad to know that you were not an eavesdropper, Miss Lester," and she turned away without a glance at the white face of the girl she had wounded so cruelly and unnecessarily.

"Shall you take Miss Lester to the ball to-night?" asked Iris, when Theo had quitted the pink-and-gold boudoir where the sisters sat. "Of course I would be an awful risk, but we shall need her so badly to rearrange the draping on our dresses after we get there; and it is quite the fashion now—borrowed from English custom. I suppose to take one's companion with one to places of this kind, to look after one's toilet."

"I suppose I shall have to take her," returned Isabel; "and I am angry enough at being compelled to do so. If Colonel West, who is a beauty-worshipper, were to see her, there's no knowing what might happen."

Theo's heart gave a great throb of delight when she was informed that she was to accompany the Misses Culver to the grand ball. Theo had never been to a ball in all her life; she had seen no gaiety whatever, except that few months of her sojourn at Strathmore Hall, and that had been of the quietest kind, owing to the major's long illness. The refere, a ball, the first she had ever seen, was an event in the girl's life. True, she was not permitted to enter the ball-room, but she was to view the guests from the grand staircase as they passed into the supper-room.

A room had been set apart for the use of the maids who had come to assist their mistresses with their toilets. These young persons preferred gossiping with each other to observing the guests, so Theo stood alone in that vast assemblage, looking wistfully down upon the gay throng from her nook amid the roses on the staircase.

For the first time in her life something like rebellion against her fate rose in her heart. Hitherto she had never dreamed such passionate longings stirred her soul. The girl felt as though she stood outside the gates of paradise. She heard the delicious dance-music as the band played the inviting strains of "Dream Faces," dainty feet keeping time to it.

They longed and listened until it was time for the banquet, and then she took up her station behind the great statue of Venus with the group of crimson flowers.

Ah, what a picture it made!—beautiful faces, flashing jewels, the gleam of satins and silks, tall men and laughing, fair-faced women. How the light fell on them! how the warm, perfumed air stirred gently as they passed! To be one of these, to share in the light, the fragrance, the jewels, the silvery laughter, to see the handsome faces of the men brighten at her smile, to know their hands trembled at her touch—ah, that was life!

There was one girl more disconsolate than herself. The Peri who stood outside the locked gates of paradise was surely not more desolate.

In all that crowd of girl's faces there was none so fair as her own. Theo had seen Isabel Culver, gorgeous in her rose-lace, green silk and flaming jewels, pass by, leaning upon the arm of a tall, handsome, military-looking young man, and she knew that he must be Colonel West.

The was quite unsophisticated, yet even she could see that it was Isabel who was in love with, Colonel West, instead of the gallant colonel being in love with her.

So they passed—the beautiful women and brave men, the flashing of the jewels, the silvery satin dresses, and the fragrant odor of the roses they wore—passed on to the supper-room, leaving Theo alone—alone with her passionate heart on fire. Was it right, was it just that she should be so neglected so far? Her warm, sensitive, pleasure-seeking nature was aroused; her heart was still beating to the echo of that dreamy music. Why, oh, why was she shut out from all this?

She stood on the large landing that was covered with crimson velvet; below her was a sea of warm, bright light; above her the walls covered with pictures, and the cold, unsympathetic statuary in the alcoves about her.

A large mirror was in one of the panels of the wall. Theo stole softly, wistfully up to it; gazed in its depths, then a little sobbing laugh fell from her crimson lips.

"My face is as fair as any of them," she sighed. "Yet I might have been very plain or very ugly, for all the good it does me. No one cares for me. I am alone in this great, cold world."

She turned away from the gilded mirror with a sigh, turned from the reflection of the lovely fresh young face, the scarlet lips, cheeks with soft pearly bloom, dark, wondrous eyes and regal little head crowned with masses of nut-brown waving hair.

Who cared whether a poor little paid companion was pretty or not?

Then from the window near where she stood she saw the moonlight lying clear and white on the grounds outside, casting quaint shadows on the grass and on a silvery miniature lake.

The branches of the trees seemed like giant hands waving to her to come out among them, the graceful, mystical, weird shadows had a strange attraction for her. Her heart was beating; the thrill of music had passed like the fire of fever through her veins.

"I will go out," she said; "that will cool my head and bring me to my senses."

There was no one to see her or notice what she did; and, unobserved, she passed out of the side door that led into the gardens, and sat down on a rustic bench by the miniature silver lake bordered by waving ferns.

Again she heard the sweet dance-music floating through the night air. Theo left alone—so terribly alone; it seemed wonderful to her that, within so short a distance, girls of her own age were enjoying themselves, were laughing happily, followed by admiring glances and whispered, tender words.

Suddenly voices sounded on her ears, and turning hastily around Theo saw two figures approaching the spot where she sat, and at a glance she saw that they were Isabel Culver and Colonel West.

They stopped beneath the drooping branches of a lemon-tree—so near the spot where Theo sat she could not help but hear the words that fell from their lips.

It was impossible to leave, for they stood directly in the path, cutting off her retreat; so Theo shrank back still further into the shadow of the palms, waiting until they should go.

For a moment Isabel Culver and her companion stood by the little lake, lying so still and silvery white in the moonlight, without uttering a word.

"It is a lovely night," murmured Isabel. "The soft, bright light, the perfume of the flowers, and the soft strains of music that float dreamily out to us here fill my soul with delight. Are you not touched by their beauty, colonel?" and she turned her dark eyes upon him, leaning slightly upon his strong right arm.

"Yes," he answered.

When did a man ever resist the temptation of a lovely face on a moonlight night? His hand closed over her white, jewelled one, and the next moment he was saying, huskily:

"It is just such nights as these, filled with romance and poetry, that awaken a bachelor's heart to a full realization of how lonely life is for him, after all, and a longing for a home and a sweet wife of his own."

Isabel Culver's white hand trembled in his clasp, and she leaned a little more heavily, yet coyly, against his arm. Her heart beat with a throbbing sense of triumph. She knew what was coming; the next words that would leave the lips of the handsome million-aire colonel would be, "Will you be my wife, Isabel?"

She was dying to end the suspense, but she must not say "Yes" too quickly, lest he might think her too easily won. She had always heard that men are more anxious to win those "whom they are not sure they can get."

What a triumph was in store for her! Already she could imagine herself crying out gayly, the first moment she found herself alone with her mother and sister: "Congratulate me; I have won the golden prize. On the morrow all the girls of my acquaintance will go mad with envy and jealousy when they hear that Colonel West has proposed to me."

"A bachelor's life must be lonely, indeed," she murmured, "I have often wondered if they are contented, shut out from the sweet influences of home life and home ties."

"They are very miserable, judging from my own experience," he answered, hastily, "and they often long for home ties and a loving wife."

Another moment of great suspense for Isabel, and deep silence then, clasping her hand more closely and drawing nearer to her, he asked, in a voice tremulous with emotion:

"Would you care, Isabel, to share—Will you be my—"

Suddenly he stopped short, the sentence upon his lips but half spoken. He had seen the leaves of the rubber-tree scarcely ten feet from him, flutter, and from a rustic bench that had been concealed in their shadow a young girl had started up in confusion and dismay.

For a moment her face was turned full toward Colonel West in the bright moonlight that was as white and clear as noonday—the most wondrously beautiful face that Theo's eyes had ever rested upon—a face as lovely as ever poet or painter saw in their dreams—large, dark, startled eyes, that seem a strange, mild flame to his heart, and the words that he had intended to utter to Isabel Culver died on his lips—words as cold before her like one struck dumb. A face that had flashed across his path like a meteor and changed the current of two lives.

CHAPTER XXIII.

The strange moment passed; deep, broad the leaves of the lemon tree stirred in the night wind, the scent of the of the laburnum blossoms seemed to rise up and envelop the two who stood silently by the fountain, but the spell broken, half spoken and so suddenly broken off, was never finished.

The strange silence grew irksome to Isabel Culver. Why did her English the sweet sentence they might have heard her out there among the rubber-trees and the moonlight to listen to? Why did he look away over the dusky lawn with such a strange expression on his face?

How was she to know that in a single instant his heart, the inconstant heart of man, had swerved from its course, and for a fair face that had caused his path at the very moment the words were on his lips?

Isabel Culver was not a girl to face an offer of marriage thus carelessly. Had she changed his mind, and, too, the all important words were half uttered? It needs be so.

It was a situation that called for immediate action. Isabel was equal to the emergency. There must be no hesitancy now, or the handsome millionaire would slip through her fingers.

"It is chilly out here," shuddered the colonel. "Shall we go back again into the ball-room?"

"No, it is too pleasant here," murmured Isabel. "The memory of this beautiful night will linger in my mind forever."

He laughed aloud—a way he had when he did not know exactly what answer to make.

"But I interrupted you," she breathed softly, and with an air quiet as coyness. "You were asking me if I would share—"

She stopped short with well-feigned childish confusion.

Of course, he could not help finishing the half-spoken sentence now—she knew that perfectly well.

The colonel proved a good fencer, however. He had changed his mind about asking her to marry him. Yet he must get out of it some way.

"Ah, pardon me, Miss Isabel," he said. "When the words were half uttered, a sudden conviction came to me that what I intended to ask for might not please you. It might look like monopolizing your agreeable society if I asked you if you would share the pleasure of the next waltz with me."

Something very like an hysterical scream broke from Isabel Culver's distorted lips. She knew quite as well as he did that he had turned off the proposal with skilful adroitness. Yet it had come upon her so suddenly in the very moment of her triumph that it dazed her. She could not comprehend that she had lost him. The thought was maddening.

"Are you quite sure that was the question you intended asking me?" she said, breathlessly, with white, parched lips. "What has our conversation, the loneliness of a bachelor's life and this longing for home ties, to do with the next dance?"

"Dances and bachelors' lives are identical," he said, blushing uneasily under her steady, breathless gaze. "There is nothing in the world more pleasing to me than a waltz with you, Miss Culver—pardon me for saying so. Yet the truth should never be looked upon as flattery. Your waltzing is the poetry of motion," and he bowed low and touched her hand that lay trembling on his arm, in order to hide his confusion.

In that moment Isabel knew well that she had lost him, but she knew not what had come between him and a fortune.

Without waiting for a reply to his words, the colonel drew Isabel's white, trembling hand through his arm and moved hastily forward toward the grand hall again.

"I will take her back to the ball-room, then come back and find our fair unknown whom that divine face belongs to," he told himself.

And, bitterly chagrined, Isabel Culver was obliged to permit him to lead her back to the glittering ball-room with the words unuttered that would have made her the handsome millionaire's betrothed.

The colonel was secretly delighted when a partner came up requesting the pleasure of dancing the lancers with Isabel.

"I shall take the opportunity of enjoying a cigar," the colonel whispered. "You will not forget, Miss Isabel, that our waltz comes next."

No, it was not likely that she could forget it.

A moment later Colonel West was out in the fragrant moonlit garden again. Surely the beautiful vision had not vanished so soon.

With hurried steps he walked down the laburnum-bordered path to the fountain again and there he saw the object of his search—a young girl with a face like a Cytis and a slender form seated on a rustic bench among the lemon sprays and crimson roses.

Her face was turned toward him, and he saw at a glance that it was more gloriously beautiful than he had supposed it to be; oval in contour with low brow and dark eyes, red coral lips, eyes full of veiled fire, dark and passionate; not the face of a complacent girl; not a face with a commonplace story in it. Looking at it, one felt sure to such a one there would be no ordinary fate.

Her scarf was entangled in the branches. She was trying to extricate it.

Theo uttered a little cry as the lithe stepped out of the moonlight and stopped before her, bowing politely. "Will you permit me to assist you?" he said. "I am taller than you, Miss; rather than destroy this fair lace, we must break the branch that has entangled it," and without waiting for a reply he took the scarf from her hand and continued to unwind it from among the branches where the breeze had tossed and held it captive.

"Man makes his own opportunities, I hears them," the handsome, dashing fellow said to himself. "This is mine, and I will make it."

There was no blush, no flutter of gratified vanity, no attempt at the least flirtation as Theo handed him the end of the scarf.

It was only natural that he should pretend to find that task of extricating the flimsy bit of lace from its entanglement more difficult than it really was.

"I thank you, sir," she said, as he handed it to her at last with another low bow and turned to go.

"Do not go just yet," exclaimed the colonel. "You were out here enjoying the calm beauty of the night. To not let me frighten you away. I would rather leave you at once than prevent you from enjoying it."

"I am not frightened," said the girl, slowly; "but I must go into the house."

"You have not been dancing this evening; I have not seen you in the ball-room." Then he looked at her dress, so plain and simple—dotted Swiss muslin—and it occurred to him this she was not in ball-attire; she could hardly be a visitor. "Pardon my curiosity, but are you visiting here?" he asked. "How is it you are not in the ball-room enjoying yourself like the rest of the young ladies in yonder?"

Theo laughed, and he, the experienced man of the world, distinguished something like a sob in it.

"I am not a visitor, I am not an invited guest at the ball; I am Mrs. Culver's companion; I am here to help her daughters with their dresses. I am Theo Lester."

The colonel was too well bred to utter the exclamation of surprise that rose to his lips. Only a companion, this beautiful, graceful girl! Was there ever a queen more graceful or more dainty? He knew in an instant why Mrs. Culver's daughters had not allowed her to enter the ball-room; she was by far too lovely; they could tell that their mother's companion would outshine them.

"You would like to dance?" he asked, twirling his moustache thoughtfully with his white fingers.

"Ah, yes, so much!" sighed Theo. "It was hard to be shut out from the brightness and music when one's whole soul longed for it."

The handsome colonel laughed. Balls, dancing attendance upon pretty girls, and all amusements in general were beginning to pall upon him; he was surfeited. The enthusiasm in her voice amused him greatly.

"What if I were able to gratify that intense longing, Miss Lester?" he said, laughingly. "I think I can manage it if you do not prove yourself too timid to consent to my plan."

Theo looked up into the smiling face in wonder. What could he mean?

"The hostess is my aunt," he explained, "therefore I am what may be termed a privileged person here. So, if you wish to dance, you shall. They are playing a waltz now. You shall be my partner. Come, Miss Lester."

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THE MOUNTAIN PALACES

Rev. Dr. Talmage Depicts the Glories of the Image Depicts the Glories of the World to Come.

The Attractiveness of Christ, Who Opens the Way for His Faithful Follower—The Christian's Guiding Star to Heaven.

Washington, July 30.—In this discourse Dr. Talmage sets forth the glories of the world to come and the attractiveness of the Christ, who opens the way; text, Psalms xlv, 8, "All thy garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces."

Among the grand adornments of the City of Paris is the Church of Notre Dame, with its great towers and elaborate rose windows and sculpturing of the last judgment, with the trumpeting angels and rising dead; its battlements of square foliage, its seating, with ribbed ceiling and statues of saints. But there was nothing in all that building when more vividly appealed to my plain republican tastes than the costly vestments which lay in oaken presses—robes that had been embroidered with gold and been worn by popes and archbishops on great occasions. There was a robe that had been worn by Pius VII. at the coronation of the first Napoleon. There was also a vestment that had been worn at the baptism of Napoleon II. As our guide opened the oaken presses and brought out these vestments of fabulous cost and lifted them up the fragrance of the pungent aromatics in which they had been preserved filled the place with a sweetness that was almost oppressive. Nothing that had been doing in gems more vividly impressed me than these things that had been done in cloth and embroidery and perfume. But today I open the drawer of this text, and I look upon the kingly robes of Christ, and as I lift them, flashing with eternal jewels, the whole house is filled with the aroma of these garments, which "smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces."

In my text the King steps forth. His robes rustle and blaze as he advances. His pomp and power and glory overwhelm the spectator. More brilliant is he than Queen Vashti, moving shield, the Persian princess; than Marie Antoinette on the day when Louis XVI. put upon her the necklace of 800 diamonds; than Anne Boleyn the day when Henry VIII. welcomed her to his palaces—all beauty and all pomp forgotten while we stand in the presence of this imperial glory, King of Zion, King of earth, King of heaven, King forever! His garments not worn out, nor dust-bedraggled, but radiant and jewelled and redolent. It seems as if they must have been pressed a hundred years amid the flowers of heaven. The wardrobes from which they have been taken must have been sweet with clusters of camphire, and frankincense, and all manner of precious wood. Do you not inhale the odors? Aye, aye. "They smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces."

Your first curiosity is to know why the robes of Christ are odorous with myrrh. This was a bright leafed Abyssinian plant. It was trifoliated. The Greeks, Egyptians, Romans and Jews bought and sold it at a high price. The first present that was ever given to Christ was a sprig of myrrh thrown on his infantile bed in Bethlehem, and the last gift that Christ ever had was myrrh pressed into the cup of his crucifixion. The natives would take a stone and bruise the tree, and then it would exude a gum that would saturate all the ground beneath. This gum was used for purposes of merchandise. One piece of it no larger than a chestnut would wholly a whole room with odors. It was put in closets, in chests, in drawers, in rooms, and its perfume adhered almost inextinguishably to anything that was anywhere near it. So when in my text I read that Christ's garments smell of myrrh I immediately conclude the exquisite sweetness of Jesus.

I know that to many he is only like any historical person—another John Howard, another philanthropist Oberlin, another Confucius, a grand subject for a painting, a heroic theme for a poem, a beautiful form for a statue, but to those who have heard his voice and felt his pardon and received his benediction he is music and light and warmth and thrill and eternal fragrance, sweet as a friend stealing to you when all else betray, lifting you up while others try to push you down, as so much like the morning glories that bloom only when the sun is coming up, not like "four o'clocks," that bloom only when the sun is going down, but like myrrh, perpetually aromatic, the same morning, noon and night, yesterday, to-day forever. It seems as if we cannot wear him out. We put on him all our burdens and all our sins with all our griefs and set him forward in all our battles, and yet he is ready to lift and to sympathize and to help. We have so imposed upon him that one would think in eternal affairs he would quit our soul, and yet to day he addresses us with the same tenderness, dawns upon us with the same smile, pities us with the same compassion.

There is no name like his for us. It is more imperial than Cæsar's, more musical than Beethoven's, more conquering than Charlemagne's, more eloquent than Cicero's. It throbs with all life. It weeps with all pathos. It groans with all pain. It stoops with all condescension. It breathes with all perfume. Who like Jesus to set a broken bone, to pity a homeless orphan, to nurse a sick man, to take a prodigal back without any scolding to illumine a cemetery all plowed with graves, to make a queen unto God out of the lost woman, to catch the tears of human sorrow in a lachrymatory that shall never be broken? Who has such an eye to see our need, such a lip to kiss away our sorrow, such a hand to snatch us out of the fire, such a foot to trample our enemies, such a heart to embrace all our necessities? I struggle for some metaphor with which to express him—he is not like the bursting forth of a full orchestra; that is too loud. He is not like the sea when lashed to fury by the tempest; that is too boisterous. He is not like the mountain, its brow wreathed with the lightnings; that is too solitary. Give us a softer type, a gentler comparison. We have seemed to see him with our eyes and to hear him with our ears and to touch him with our hands. Oh, that to-day he might appear to some other one of our five senses! Aye, the nostril shall discover his presence. He comes upon us like spice gales from heaven. Yes, his garments smell of lustring and all pervasive myrrh.

Would that you all knew his sweetness! How soon you would turn from all other attractions! If the philosopher leaped out of his bath in a frenzy of joy and clapped his hands and rushed through the streets because he had found the solution of a mathematical problem, how will you feel leaping from the fountain of a Saviour's mercy and pardon, washed clean and made white as snow, when the question has been solved, "How can my soul be saved?" Naked, freezing, storm-lashed soul, let Jesus this hour throw around thee the "garments that smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces."

Your second curiosity is to know why the robes of Jesus are odorous with aloes. There is some difference of opinion about where these aloes grow, what is the color of the flower, what is the particular appearance of the herb. Suffice it for you and me to know that aloes mean bitterness the world over, and when Christ comes with garments bearing that particular odor they suggest to me the bitterness of a Saviour's sufferings. Were there ever such nights as Jesus lived through—nights on the mountains, nights on the sea, nights in the desert? Who ever had such a hard reception as Jesus had? A hostelry the first, an unjust trial in over-tender and terminer another, a foul mouthed, yelling mob the last. Was there a space on his back as wide as your two fingers where he was not whipped? Was there a space on his brow an inch square where he was not cut of the thorns? When the spike struck at the instep, did it not go clear through to the hollow of the foot? Oh, long, deep, bitter pilgrimage! Aloes, aloes!

John leaned his head on Christ, but who did Christ lean on? Five thousand men fed by the Saviour. Who fed Jesus? The sympathy of a Saviour's heart going out to the leper and the adulteress; but who soothed Christ? He had a life place neither to be born nor to die. A poor babe! A poor lad! A poor young man! Not so much as a taper to cheer his dying hours. Even the candle of the sun snuffed out. Was it not all aloes? Our sins, sorrows, bereavements, losses and all the agonies of earth and hell picked up as in one cluster and squeezed into one cup and that pressed to his lips until the acrid, nauseating, bitter draft was swallowed with a distorted countenance and a shudder from head to foot and a gurgling strangulation. Aloes! Aloes! Nothing but aloes! All this in a spirit of stubbornness, because he did not like Cæsar? No, no! All this because he wanted to pluck me and you from hell. Because he wanted to raise me and you to heaven. Because we were lost, and he wanted us found. Because we were blind, and he wanted us to see. Because we were serfs, and he wanted us manumitted. O ye in whose cup of life the saccharine has predominated; O ye who have had bright and sparkling beverages, how do you feel toward him who in your stead went to purchase your disinheritance took the aloes, the unsavory aloes, the bitter aloes?

Your third curiosity is to know why these garments of Christ are odorous with cassia. This was a plant which grew in India and the adjoining islands. You do not care to hear what kind of a flower it had or what kind of a stalk. It is enough for me to tell you that it was used medicinally. In that land and in that age, where they knew but little about pharmacy, cassia was used to arrest many forms of disease. So, when in my text we find Christ coming with garments that smell of cassia it suggests to me the healing and curative power of the Son of God. "Oh," you say, "now you have a superfluous fear! We are not sick. Why do we want cassia? We are athletic. Our respiration is perfect. Our limbs are lithe, and on bright, cool days we feel we could bound like a roe." I beg to differ, my brother, from you. None of you can be better in physical health than I am, but I must say we are all sick. I have taken the diagnosis of your case and have examined all the best authorities on the subject, and I have to tell you that you are "full of wounds and bruises and putrefying sores, which have not been bound up or mollified with ointment." The marasmus of sin is on us, the palsy, the dropsy, the leprosy. The man that is expiring to night in the next street—the allopathic and homeopathic doctors have given him up and his friends now standing around to take his last words—is no more certainly dying as to his body than you and I are dying unless we have taken the medicine from God's apothecary. All the leaves of this Bible are only so many prescriptions from the Divine Physician, written not in Latin, like the prescriptions of earthly physicians, but written in plain English so that a "man, though a fool, need not err therein." Thank God that the Saviour's garments smell of cassia!

Suppose a man were sick, and there was a phial on his mantelpiece with medicine he knew would cure him, and he refused to take it, what would you say of him? He is a suicide. And what do you say of that man who, sick in sin, has the healing medicine of God's grace offered him and refuses to take it? If he dies, he is a suicide. People talk as though God took a man and led him out to darkness and death, as though he brought him up to the cliffs and then pushed him off. Oh, no! When a man is lost, it is not because God pushes him off; it is because he jumps off. In olden times a suicide was buried at the crossroads, and the people were accustomed to throw stones upon his grave. So it seems to me there may be at this time a man who is destroying his soul, and as though the angels of God were here to bury him at the point where the roads of life and death cross each other, throwing upon the grave the broken law and a great pile of misimproved privileges, so that those going by may look at the fearful mound and learn what a suicide it is when an immortal soul for which Jesus died puts itself out of the way.

When Christ trod this planet with foot of flesh, the people rushed after him—people who were sick and those who, being so sick they could not walk, were brought by their friends. Here I see a mother holding up her little child, crying: "Cure this croup, Lord Jesus! Cure this scarlet fever!" And others: "Cure this ophthalmia." Cure case and rent to this spinal distress! Straighten this club foot!" Christ made every house where he stopped a dispensary. I do not believe that in the 19 centuries which have gone by since, his heart has got hard. I feel that we can come now with all our wounds of soul and get his benediction. O Jesus, here we are! We want healing. We want sight. We want health. We want life. "The whole need not a physician, but they that are sick." Blessed be God that Jesus Christ comes through this assemblage now, his "garments smelling of myrrh"—that means fragrance—"and aloes"—they mean bitter, sacrificial memories—"and cassia"—that means medicine and cure.

According to my text, he comes "out of the ivory palaces." You know, or, if you do not know, I will tell you how that some of the palaces of olden times were adorned with ivory. Ahab and Solomon had their homes furnished with it. The tusks of African and Asiatic elephants were twisted into all manners of shapes, and there were stairs of ivory and chairs of ivory and tables of ivory and floors of ivory and pillars of ivory and windows of ivory and fountains that poured into basins of ivory and rooms that had ceilings of ivory. Oh, white and ever-lastering beauty! Dress tree branches overlaying the white curbs. Tapestry trailing the snowy floors. Brackets of light flashing on the lustrous surroundings. Silvery music rippling on the beach of the ear. The mere thought of it almost runs my brain, and you say: "Oh, if I could only have walked over such floors! If I could have thrown myself in such a chair! If I could have heard the dripping dash of these fountains!" You shall have something better than that if you only let Christ introduce you. From this place he comes, and to that place he proposes to transport you, for his "garments smell of myrrh and aloes and cassia out of the ivory palaces." What a place heaven must be! The Tuileries of the French, the Windsor Castle of the English, the Spanish Alhambra, the Russian Kremlin, are mere dungeons compared with it. Not so many cedars on either side the Rhine as on both sides of the river of God—the ivory palaces! One for the angels insufferably bright, winged, fire-eyed, tempest-charioted; one for the martyrs, with blood red robes from under the altar; one for the King, the steps of his palace the crown of the church militant; one for the singers, who lead the one hundred and forty and four thousand; one for you, ransomed from sin; one for me, plucked from the burning. Oh, the ivory palaces!

To-day it seems to me as if I go to the windows of those palaces were illuminated for some great victory, and I look and see climbing the stairs of ivory and walking on the floors of ivory and looking from the windows of ivory some whom we knew and loved on earth. Yes, I know them. There are father and mother, not 82 years and 70 years as when they left us, but blithe and young as when on their wedding day. And there are brothers and sisters, merrier than when we used to romp together. The cancer cured. The crystal break over. Oh, how fair they are in the ivory palaces! And your dear little children that went from you—Christ did not let one of them drop as he lifted them. He did not let one of them fall from you. No! They lived well enough to take your little child and press it against his soft cheek. I might have kissed it a little while; but when you, the mother, came along it, you would struggle to go with you. And so, you stood holding your dying child when Jesus passed by, and the child, hardly a year old, turned into the dust and the grave! And the Saviour said, "Let the little children come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." And you gave up your child in the room and the little child went with Christ out. Jesus put it into his bosom and the grave! And he carried all that the water came up to you as you drove out to the cemetery, it made no difference to them, from the home here to the home there, right into the ivory palaces. All is well with them. All is well.

Bad weight that you lift! Christian out. Jesus lifts up soft with velvet and says: "Put her down gently." Put that head which rests on this pillow of sin upon that the pillow of Christ's shoulder. Ring the bells. Ring! Ring! Ring!