

Sixty Years
-- of --
Gospel Song

-- by --

CHAS. H. GABRIEL

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Sixty Years of Gospel Song

By CHAS. H. GABRIEL

Two generations ago the masses of the people had little to sing, other than church hymn tunes, two-and-three-part songs, and home ballads, aside from the classic oratorios. Soon thereafter a new style of song appeared. It was immature, musical-ly, and embryonic in text, but it lightened the gloom that shrouded a somber custom of religious service. It let the sunshine of joy into the worship of God, and finally evolved into our present-day gospel songs, with its pulsing spirit and awaken- ing power that has carried it into every civilized country of the world.

The sacred songs of fifty years ago were fully as attractive in their day as are the more mature compositions of the present time. They were new and inspiring, and were sung with enthusiasm. In that period the "Do, re, me's" were taught, and singers read music understandingly. Recently the statement was publicly made by a man well quali- fied to know, that not thirty per cent of those who sing in church choirs today are able to read music intelligently.

Outside the cities the church choir of half a century ago was in its infancy, if indeed that period did not antedate its birth. In many sections of the United States, neither special music nor organs were allowed in religious service; the tune was carried by some robust brother or sister, sometimes pitched too high, sometimes too low, but always piously and lustily.

Although numerous Sunday-school songbooks were then on the market, all those used in Singing Schools, so prevalent in that time, contained a greater or smaller number of light anthems, glees,

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

madrigals, home and sacred songs. "Shining Shore," "Ring the Bells of Heaven," "Yield not to Temptation," and other songs used today, were originally printed in those books. Do not conclude from this statement that the people of those years were musically primitive or ignorant. Many of them were well acquainted with the best music of the masters, but their libraries were limited.

"In those old days of the lost sunshine," we sang not only those proemial songs, but mastered selections from the best of the classics. In my home we were trained so thoroughly on the "Hallelujah Chorus," for instance, that we sang it from memory. Choruses from "Creation," "Elijah," and other oratorios were included in our repertoire. I am not prepared to say that this was a general accomplishment, and yet that our surroundings should have been different from others is not probable.

As already stated, I am not speaking of the condition of music in the cities, with their superior advantages, but of the average country, village, and town to which competent teachers of music had not yet been attracted. In those districts the old-fashioned "Singing School" bore fruit. Soon the "Music Normal Institute" became popular. These were held during the summer months, and the very best talent obtainable was secured to serve as teachers.

Those institutes were succeeded by five and ten-day conventions in which both sacred and secular music was used. Through these mediums the music of the people began to advance. Monthly Sunday-school concerts became popular, and hundreds of young people, who otherwise would not have been interested, were attracted to, and held in the church through those happy occasions.

Soon after the era of church tunes and glees, before alluded to, came the early songs of Phillips and O'Kane, followed by those of Doane and Lowry, preparing the way for Bliss, Palmer, Steb-

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

bins, and other contemporaneous writers who gave to the world the famous "Gospel Hymns" which Moody and Sankey took with them across the Atlantic in 1873.

Introduced as those songs were, practically by one man, they overcame stubborn prejudice in its established form and custom of religious service, and won their way into the heart of staid old Scotland, enthralled England, ran like wildfire over our own land, and spread to every Christian nation.

Many of those first songs were crude. So great, however, has been the improvement made by subsequent writers, both in text and music, that if adjudicated impartially, judged from the standpoint of its usefulness and teaching power, its adaptability and availability to the masses of the people, the gospel song of today will be found in the front ranks of universal progress made during the last fifty years.

Very much credit for its establishment and power belongs to the late Dwight L. Moody, who was the first preacher to recognize its importance and to place it on an absolutely equal basis with the sermon at all times. The wisdom of his judgment history relates.

The criticism heaped upon the sacred song of today by the occasional carper is priggish malice, an injustice to the composer and an offence against the church at large. It has been demonstrated many times that the masses will not sing the so-called classic selections with any degree of spontaneity, but do enthuse over the gospel song, which has grown, in its sixty years of use, into a great teaching power.

Over a period of twenty years I traveled through almost every state in the Union teaching and singing, and since then have kept in close touch with the song-needs and demands of the people. My observation tells me that in spite of the clamoring cynic, the gospel song will have its place in re-

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

ligious worship as long as people praise God with melody, and it will continue to grow and improve in quality, power, and usefulness.

* * *

I almost envy young people of this generation their advantages; splendid public schools, night schools, colleges, wonderful libraries, museums, art institutes, music academies, and almost unlimited opportunities for education are theirs. Then I try to comfort myself with the thought that because of their superior privileges much more will be required of them than is charged against me.

I was born in a little shanty built of boards, and plastered both inside and outside. It stood on the virgin prairie of Iowa. There was not a tree or shrub to shelter it from the terrific storms and snows of winter, or shield it from the blazing sun of summer. Our nearest neighbor was one mile away. The wagon roads were mere trails over the rolling prairies. Deer, wolves, and prairie chickens were plentiful. Few settlers had horses, ox teams being used mostly.

By the time I was five years of age, a school-house had been built three-quarters of a mile west of our home, where the boys and girls received instructions during the winter months when there was no work to do on the farms. The benches used were made of logs, split in half, with two legs at each end inserted in auger holes. They were too high for little feet to touch the floor: they did not have a support for the back, and more than once, in a sleepy moment, some young hopeful turned turtle over that hard, hard seat.

We had Sunday-school in that same building during the summer season, and to the present time I recall the pleasure I had in listening to, and joining in the singing. There were no song books, and the leader was a man of whom the slang of today would say: "He threw a cruel tune." He loved

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

to hear himself sing, and it was his duty and pleasure to teach the school its songs by rote. It was the custom of a few of the musically-inclined neighbors to assemble frequently at the different homes to sing. My father, being the leader, would catch the pitch from his tuning fork, give the "Do, mi, sol, do," and they were off.

Aside from the Bible, a few school text-books, and collections of song, I cannot recall a single volume of literature of any kind in our home, until my older brother and sisters grew up. My father was a subscriber to one weekly newspaper, which he would read and lend to some less fortunate neighbor. As the years went by and financial conditions improved, a small library of Fox's "Book of Martyrs," Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" and such books were procured.

When the trying days of the Rebellion came, they brought with them the stirring war songs of Dr. George F. Root, Henry C. Work and others. I told my mother that some day I would write a song of my own, and I shall never forget her reply: "My boy," she said, "I would rather have you write a song that will help somebody, than see you President of the United States." Although I was then but a mere lad, her words became the anchor of my ambition. Through the years that followed she alone encouraged me in music; she alone championed me when others declared I was foolishly wasting my time. To her alone could I show the crude attempts at song writing I made in the seclusion of my small bedroom, where in winter the temperature often dropped so low that the ink would freeze on my pen.

Later on, our father bought a small reed organ, the first one I ever saw, and soon I learned to play church tunes. The next year, a similar instrument was placed—under protest—in the church which had been built across the road from our home. The organ was not used for church

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

service because of the supposed influence exerted through it by his Satanic majesty.

When I was fourteen years of age, I saw and heard a piano for the first time, and if I never reach the Eternal Abode, I know I shall have had a foretaste of the enchanting music that rings through that World of Delight, from the strings of that old fashioned Emerson piano.

In 1873, I submitted to Dr. H. S. Perkins one of my songs, which he published the following year.

On the 18th day of August, 1872—my sixteenth birthday—I taught my first singing school, an experience the memory of which will never fade. During the same year, James McGranahan wrote music to two of my hymns, which were published in "Gospel Hymns." P. P. Bliss also wrote to one of my poems.

The next year I decided to leave the farm, and go out into the world for myself. I wanted to go where there was music; I wanted to know more about it; I wanted to write it. My mother, from our meager store, gave me twenty-five dollars and her blessing, and I left home. After various labors, wanderings, and experiences, I found myself in San Francisco, California. Having no trade, I secured employment as a carpenter's helper, in which capacity I assisted in building the Palace Hotel of that city.

Returning to Iowa, I gave lessons on the reed organ, taught singing schools, and worked on the farm. I learned to play the E-flat cornet and joined the village band, of which I was soon leader. My musical activities broadened, and I organized and taught other military bands in various nearby towns. For these I wrote many compositions, which were published, and used extensively.

I once furnished sixty-eight pages of words and music for a song collection of which over 100,000 copies were sold, and I received three dozen copies

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

of the book for my services. However, I was delighted to have the songs printed, and the shrewd publisher saved money; so we were both made happy. The largest price I remember having received for a song in that period was \$2.50.

There came a time when, discouraged and disheartened, I gave up all aspirations of a career in music. My ambition failed me, and for a number of years I traveled about the country, holding music schools or conventions. To this experience I ascribe any degree of success I may have since attained, as it brought me into direct contact with the masses of uneducated singers and told me what they could and what they could not sing, what they liked and did not like. It taught me also that community singers are a great deal like children, in that they will sing spontaneously the song that appeals to them, but will not become interested in that which does not please them.

As I firmly believe in the hand of a guiding Providence, so I am sure that the prayers of a good mother shape the destiny of her child. For as I review the way I traveled, and see how that path gradually led me back to the point where votary forsook me, I can yet feel the supremacy of a control over my own will that forced me to take the position of chorister of one of the largest churches in San Francisco. It was here, at the urge of our Sunday-school Superintendent, that I wrote "Send the Light" for the occasion of his "golden offering" on Missionary day. A Field Secretary of missions attended the service, and carried the song east, where, through the singing of Chaplain McCabe it immediately became popular. Ambition again awoke within me, and marked the beginning of my second entry into song writing, a work I have followed exclusively from that day to this. "Calling the Prodigal" was one of the many songs I subsequently wrote for which I received the munificent sum of five dollars each.

For the King's Daughters of our church I wrote

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

the operetta "The Merry Milkmaids," and for our little folks, the two cantatas: "A Day in the Woods," and "A Dream of Fairy Land," without thought of having them printed. Report of their success came to the notice of an eastern music publisher, who placed them upon the market. Later the three were reprinted in England.

In September, 1892, I reached Chicago, possessed of a wife, a six-month-old son, a coat that buttoned up to the throat, a plug hat, a cane, and sixteen dollars in cash. At that time a book of songs for the Epworth League was being prepared by its Secretary, Dr. J. F. Berry, who engaged me to assist him. Fortunately for the chattels above mentioned, my source of income was not delayed. For his encouragement and substantial assistance at that time, Bishop J. F. Berry will ever hold a warm place in my heart, although I never borrowed one dollar from him.

A very large proportion of my earlier most popular songs, among them, "Let the Sunshine in," "Glory in My Soul," "The Way of the Cross Leads Home," "He Lifted Me," "He is so Precious to Me," and others were rejected by from one to five different book makers. I had faith in them, however, and printed them at my own expense. As a fact beyond my ability to understand, I never edited a book of songs that reimbursed me in royalties to the amount of money it cost me to gather the copy for the printer. On the other hand, every one I did compile produced from one to five songs that proved successful. "Higher Ground" was one of the first I wrote after reaching Chicago. For it I received \$5.00.

It was my inviolable rule to write something every day, and my work, covering as it did so wide a field, made the task comparatively easy. Still the proverbial midnight oil burned very frequently into the small hours, for my work was always done at home, and at night time when all the

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

world about me slept. Since the time I re-entered the field of song writing in 1890, I have compiled, or assisted to compile:

- 35 books of gospel songs.
- 8 books of Sunday-school songs.
- 7 books for male voices.
- 6 books for female voices.
- 10 books of children's songs.
- 19 books of choir anthems.
- 23 choir cantatas.
- 41 Santa Claus cantatas.
- 10 Juvenile cantatas.
- 4 Operattas.
- 2 Reed organ instruction books.
- 2 Piano instruction books.
- 2 Piano duet books.

Besides, there are several hundreds of pieces of sheet music and octavos, vocal and instrumental, secular and sacred, scores of special-day exercises for Easter, Children's Day, Christmas, and other occasions, not to mention compositions of a miscellaneous nature. I do not say this to boast, but to answer thus publicly a question so frequently asked; also to prove that all is not ease and sunshine in the life of a writer of sacred song.

I have witnessed the growth and expansion of our gospel song from its rather crude beginning up to its splendid proportions of today. I have known personally many—if not quite all—the writers of gospel hymns and songs who labored during the last fifty years, and have seen them one by one lay down their pens until but a very few remain. Of the Moody and Sankey regime but one man remains, George C. Stebbins. I have seen a few recruits rise up to take the places of the fallen, but the ranks today are pitifully near depletion. All those who are successfully writing, or have written, are well down the hill of life, some almost to the river's brink.

There will be a tomorrow, and that tomorrow will need songs. Some one must write them, why

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

not you? The song of tomorrow may be different from ours, but it will be one of strength and appeal. It will carry a definite message, and be constructed in a musically and scholarly manner. Music of the people will improve at a more rapid pace in the future than it did in the past.

It has been said: "God will raise up men and women to do his work today, tomorrow and as long as the world stands." That is true, in the main, but a condition is attached: God will, with the co-operation of his people, provide for his praise and service, but he will not "compel them to come in" that his will may be done.

You today, have every advantage that could be made possible by wealth and opportunity, and upon you must fall the responsibility for the musical service of the church and community of tomorrow.

* * * * *

I am often asked—"how is a gospel song written?"—a question very difficult to answer. It requires both inspiration and perspiration. The diamond is found in the rough, and requires a skillful lapidary to expose its beauty. He must understand his business—so must the writer. No one can deny inspiration—that it comes from the Divine One. Therefore the writer gets an inspiration or thought and, like the lapidary, must work it out. He must LIVE his song; Gospel songs—unlike secular ballads—must come from the heart, and with but one thought of reward or success. A secular song can be written for money only, but the writer who enters the sacred song field with the one thought of financial gain, will fail utterly.

Were I prepared to explain the phenomenal coloring of a rose and the source of its fragrance, or exemplify the potency of the nightingale to sing so incomparably without having had training, then

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

I could tell you how a gospel song is conceived and written. Had the great music masters of the past been able to disseminate such knowledge, what a concert hall of music this old world would have been long ago!

The ability for evolving that which human ear has never heard is inherent, perhaps, yet there are those endowed with ample talent for its transcription who, because of exigencies to be overcome, or unappraisal, indolently fail to force the opportunity for its development. Others are not willing to pay the price required to amplify their talent for such usefulness.

The great Instructor taught the insects its tuneless chirr and the bird its minstrelsy, and today they continue to give forth the same genetic notes of their respective ancestors; yet, when he made man in his own image, God endowed him with a talent through which he may sing a "new" song in praise of his Creator.

The potency of a hymn that has a message, that inspires the composer, I can only describe by analogy.

You have looked into the heart of some rare flower and become fascinated by its pistil wonders, its stamen mysteries, its marvelously colored petals and shaded corolla. You have stood enthralled by the divine nature of its creation, while its fragrance formed a calyx of enchantment between you and the world about you. So it is with a perfect hymn.

The fields and woods are radiant with flowers, but the garden of gospel hymns is almost overgrown with weeds. Many botanical weeds are interesting and beautifully formed, but the gospel-hymn weed is without one redeeming characteristic.

Poetry is the natural language of worship, and the only fit speech for music. It is easy to dabble in, but difficult in which to reach excellence.

Commercialism has entered into the writing and

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

publishing of sacred music to a degree that is discouraging. Must the church, because of this, be obliged to go back into the past for its music, when the entire world of art, craft, science, and mechanics is advancing with such wonderful strides?

* * * * *

The first Gospel song was heard almost two thousand years ago, sung by "a multitude of the heavenly host" hovering over the midnight plains of Bethlehem, announcing the birth of Him who came to take away the sins of the world. I have often wondered what the nature of that music was. No one living knows. It was not repeated. It never will be heard again on earth. But some time we shall hear it and understand its harmonies.

The Gospel Chorus is of modern origin, and made its entree since the days of Moody and Sankey. It differs from the Gospel song in that it is more or less elaborately constructed, and is intended for the use of choirs, conventions and other choral societies; and when so used it is inspirational to an audience, while its awakening power has been felt by many thousands of singers and listeners.

Bible-text anthems, secular choruses and like compositions had long been in common use among choruses and teachers when Dr. H. R. Palmer published "Master, the Tempest is Raging," which had little circulation outside of the author's own class-work, and at his death fell into oblivion until later song directors reclaimed it.

About thirty years ago an Eastern publisher was preparing—with my assistance—a book of Gospel songs. I had in my portfolio a song originally written as a unison, or soli, for a children's cantata, but its easy grade and lilting melody suggested the idea of giving it a harmonized—or four-part—chorus with sacred words for church choir and other sacred chorus use. This I did;

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

and after much argument and persuasion the song now known as "To the Harvest Field Away" was admitted to the book exactly as it is sung today.

At that time the evangelistic chorus—as we know it—was not in existence, which was the argument used by the above-mentioned publisher. But that the public is ever-eager for something new was proven conclusively, as the embryo chorus made a decided "hit." Song-leaders became enthusiastic over the new feature, and gathered small choirs about them that they might use the modest little composition. The spontaneity with which the public received the singing of choirs prompted the late Charles M. Alexander to organize—for his use in a mission in Australia—the first large evangelistic chorus ever used in a religious revival. Since then such choruses have become almost indispensable in drawing congregations to these meetings.

These choruses, of course, must be supplied with special music suited to their use and demands. Some have said that the nature of this music sometimes has been carried from the sublime to the ridiculous in furnishing "stunts" for the song-leader who was anxious to advertise. Concerning this accusation, I am not interested.

"To the Harvest Fields Away" was followed by others more pretentious, perhaps, until the "Awakening Chorus" appeared—a chorus that is found in practically every Gospel songbook published today.

It was composed for and first published in a Children's Day service, from which it was reissued in a revised form. Recently, while in a Southern city making the rounds of several Sunday-schools, I was surprised to hear it admirably sung by a small school, assisted by the local choir of adult voices.

Numerous others were published thereafter before "All Hail, Immanuel," appeared in 1910, which immediately became popular. When I first heard it sung by a choir of over one thousand

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SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

mixed voices it so thrilled me with the marvel of its power and spontaneous appeal that I rejoiced in the realization of the fact that I had been permitted to write it.

The writer of the text of "All Hail, Immanuel," was undecided in his religious convictions, and declared that he wrote the hymn to prove to himself his ability to write upon a theme not wholly acceptable to him.

Who can gainsay that the Supreme Master of the Universe did not coach the mind of the poet, and guide his pen—for he was afterward soundly converted and wrote a number of other worthy hymns. Hearing his own words, "All Hail to Thee, Immanuel," etc., being the source of his final decision.

Near twenty years ago he passed on to be with the King upon whose name he had learned to believe.

* * * * *

Another question frequently propounded pertains to the history, or origin of certain songs.

More than once I have been in an audience where some one of my songs have been, or are being sung, and heard the voluble song director relate a marvelous tale or incident that gave birth to that particular song—all of which was news to me, if not ludicrous and ridiculous.

Very few songs are born out of any particular experience through which the author passed. Such cases do exist, however. Yet the stories frequently told are pure fancy, started by one and augmented by another until they become almost a reality to many who hear them for the first time. Many and interesting are the anecdotes attached to a song through its use, which, no doubt, has become precedence instead of sequence, in their telling.

One of my songs was the direct outcome of experience. When our son arrived at Camp Mills

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

on his way over seas, I went to New York to see him. Arriving at the Camp I learned that he with his Company—the 117th Field Artillery—was quarantined. Through the kindness of an Officer I secured for the boy a brief absence. Having always lived more the life of chums than that of father and son, those few hours held a world of meaning. He was not going on a pleasure trip, neither on commercial business, but to WAR, with the chances of coming back quite indefinite.

As we parted he took my hand and said: "Well, Dad, take care of the folks until I return. I expect to come back to you—but—if I don't, I'll meet you where the gate never swings outward." He passed the guard, entered Camp, and I watched him as he waved repeated good-byes until he disappeared behind the tents.

His words left a picture in my mind that has not faded, nor will it ever, for HIS faith taught me more than all the sermons I had ever heard. The gate that swings out is unhandy and unnatural, while the one that swings IN is inviting and easily entered; and I have watched, in fancy, as one will, the phantoms in the trees, and have seen an unending throng of souls going in through those gates of pearl, but never one coming out.

It was this picture, painted with the brush of sacrifice, that gave me "Where the Gates Swing Outward Never."

More often while walking the noisy street than in the quiet work-room, themes for songs suggest themselves; in fact many of my most successful songs and hymns were caught out of the din and roar of a railroad train and the bustle of travel.

All this, however, applies only to the writing of hymns, as music is always composed to interpret the theme of the text.

A Salvation Army card hanging in a street car upon which I was riding called into being one of

the most—if not the most—useful anthem I have written.

"O That Will Be Glory"—(better known as "The Glory Song" through its association with Torrey and Alexander on their triumphal Christian tour of the world about 1903-5) was prompted by the slogan of a good old soul we called "Old Glory Face." The one safety valve of his pent-up enthusiasm in praise of his Lord was the single exclamation—"Glory!" and it was good to hear him shout it—not in a harsh, raucous tone of voice, yet distinctly and with a charm of earnestness that carried a conviction of holy reverence to all who heard. To hear him pray was to see the gates of heaven open, and to be drawn nearer to the God he served. His prayer invariably ended with—"and that will be glory for me."

"Old Glory Face" is in heaven now, but he lived to sing the "Glory Song," and to know that out of his life before men came the inspiration that gave the song to the world.

The song has been translated into more than a score of languages and dialects, and it is said that more than one hundred millions of copies (all editions) have been printed.

When it first appeared the voluble critic began his diatribes, but as the song rose higher and higher in the esteem of the Christian world their carping ceased.

Not a word or note of the song has been changed from the original copy—which is very unusual.

It has been said that no other song ever attained world-wide popularity in the same length of time—less than five years—and yet in three years "Brighten the Corner" was sung in every Christian land of the earth.

Replying to the frequent question, "Why don't you use a better class of song?" a well-known song evangelist once replied: "When you show me something that will more deeply touch the human

heart and stir the emotions of the people than the simple gospel song, I will gladly use it."

Simplicity is the power behind the gospel song, as it is the urge of the Gospel itself.

"Brighten the Corner Where You Are" was composed and published in 1913, and in less than three years was being sung all over the Christian world.

A friend, while touring the world, was surprised to hear it sung by the inmates of a children's leper home in Siam, and also in many other distant lands, both Pagan and Christian. It has been translated and printed in the languages of Japan, Siam, China and many other tongues.

The hymn was written by Mrs. Ina Dudley Ogdon, selected and set to music by myself to meet a popular demand for songs along the line of the old "sunshine" favorites—"Sunshine in the Soul," "Scatter Sunshine," and others of a similar nature. Also to attract—by pleasing melody—the attention of the prevailing coloratura musical age to sound doctrine and helpful sentiment.

The song was first printed in a small booklet and distributed gratuitously. From this it found its way into countless collections of gospel songs and church hymnals.

From the Christian Endeavor World I quote the following:

"I like to think of Paul as carrying out the spirit of the song, 'Brighten the Corner Where You Are,' two thousand years before the birth of Ina Duley Ogdon and Charles H. Gabriel, who wrote and composed it. Twice on board the ship, as we followed the trail of the 'good-cheer man' we heard him virtually saying,

"Do not wait until some deed of greatness you can do,' etc.

"I like to think of him laying his hand on the father of Publius, saying to himself,

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

"Just above are clouded skies that you may help to clear,' etc.

"And I like to think of him going about doing good among the poor people of Malta, while his heart was longing for Rome, as he sang.

"Here for all your talents you may surely find a need,' etc.

"There is nothing we should covet more than this Christ-given ability to 'Brighten the corner where you are.'"

Critics have said that the text of the song did not even carry gospel sentiment. To refute this evident misstatement the following analysis of the hymn, by stanzas, was sent to me.

FIRST STANZA

"Do not wait until some deed of greatness you may do, 1st Tim. 4:14; 1 Sam. 21:8.

Do not wait to shed your light afar; Matt. 5:15.
To the many duties ever near you now be true,
Luke 17:10.

SECOND STANZA

"Just above are clouded skies that you may help to clear, Daniel 12:3.

Let not narrow self your way debar; 2 Cor. 5:15.
Tho' into one heart alone may fall your song of cheer, Col. 5:16.

Brighten the corner where you are, Phil. 2:15.

THIRD STANZA

"Here for all your talent you may surely find a need; Matt. 7:7.

Here reflect the Bright and Morning Star; John 6:35.

Even from your humble hand the bread of life may feed, John 6:35.

Brighten the corner where you are, Matt. 13:43.

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

CHORUS

"Brighten the corner where you are! 2 Cor. 4:6.
Brighten the corner where you are! Isa. 62:1.
Someone far from harbor you may guide across the bar, Luke 1:79.

Brighten the corner where you are," Acts 25:18.

It will be noticed that six quotations for brightening the corner are given, yet many others might be cited.

Much pleasantry has featured the history of the song. A facetious Christian Endeavor official jocularly asked, "Why did you not make the third line of the chorus read—'Someone very thirsty you may lead up to the bar?'" A news boy was heard to call to another and say, "Hi! Jimmie! C'mon an' lit's go'n' hear 'em sing, 'Fight in de corner where you're at!'" A little tot sang it, "Wight in a co'neh, dare you ah!"

The song was sung in the trenches "over there." A staff correspondent of the Chicago Tribune wrote that "Fully forty per cent of the boys can sing or whistle its melody."

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For more than thirty years I was intimately associated with the late E. O. Excell, and a bond of friendship was forged between us that even death has not been able to break, for the roadway toward the setting sun is just a little rougher and less interesting to me because of his absence. I knew him as he was, and as few others knew him.

Mr. Excell possessed a remarkable voice of quality, range and power, and as a conductor of sacred music he had no superior. Together we sang the gospel throughout all parts of our country, and in Canada.

He was heard for the last time in the Chapel of Wesley Hospital, Chicago, Sunday afternoon,

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

January 16th, 1921. Sitting in a wheel chair he sang "It is Jesus" with wonderful effect. At that time we sang together for the last time the song we had made popular: "Beautiful Isle of Somewhere." No longer to him is that a "Somewhere"; he has discovered its shore and lives in its sunlight.

Many of the gospel songs that have become popular we started on their mission by singing them as duets. "Scatter Sunshine," "His Love Can Never Fail," "A Sinner Made Whole," "Let the Sunshine In," "The Way of the Cross Leads Home," and others.

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My sixty years of gospel song have been eventful and tolerant, interesting and tedious, hopeful and discouraging. Failure more often than success marks the path I have traveled. Had I those years to live over, I might improve on their outcome, but that cannot be; and while I have regrets, I must be satisfied with the conviction that I did the best I knew under existing circumstances and in the light revealed to me. My prayer is that taps will sound for me when the time comes in which I cannot follow and do the work I have so loved and enjoyed during those busy years.

And now, since the years have led me up the eastern slope and over the mountain top of life, and I am hurrying down toward the silent sea that lies shimmering before me, I begin to realize that my work has not been as much a failure as I had concluded, for seldom do I appear on the platform that I do not meet someone I have met or known in the years gone by; and, to feel a substantial slap on the shoulder and to hear a voice as from out the past say: "Hello! old man—glad to see you once more," is like a benediction, while to clasp the hand of a friend and feel that pressure which proves itself genuine is worth more than all the gold that was ever mined.

SIXTY YEARS OF GOSPEL SONG

There are friends and friends; mine are all true, for I have never had anything but friendship to give in return. One of these days—it may be soon—my work will be done, and, standing on the shore of the great sea as the shadows fall, I shall discover the pale Boatman coming for me. As he draws his boat up to shore and beckons me, I shall say good-bye to those I have loved and those who have been friends to me, knowing that while I must leave them for a while, yet, in the great judgment morning when the countless millions of those "who die in the Lord" shall arise and come surging and thronging from every corner of the earth to stand before Him who was, and is, and shall forevermore be, I know that my friends will be among that number, and that I shall know them again.