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## Entre Nous.

'Swords drawn, up to the gates of heaven.'

Many will feel sad when they know that Amy Wilson Carmichael of the Dohnavur Fellowship is now an invalid. She has been ill since the autumn of 1931 as the result of an accident. But out of the illness has come *Rose from Brier* (S.P.C.K. ; 3s. 6d. net)—a bundle of letters from the ill to the ill. It has a delicate spiritual quality all its own, and the charm of the book is enhanced by four lovely photogravures of flowers—the work of Dr. Defner of Innsbruck.

There was one morning, she tells us, when a book packet arrived. Had it something that would carry her mind off the pain? 'No—that fat parcel was full of tracts for the sick. I tried those tracts, but somehow they took me nowhere. This sounds most unmissionary; unhappily, it is true. It was not till some time later, and after several similar experiences, that it struck me perhaps the reason was because they were obviously written by the well to the ill, to do them good; and so they could only flutter past like ineffective butterflies.

The toad beneath the harrow knows  
Exactly where each tooth-point goes;  
The butterfly upon the road  
Preaches contentment to that toad.'

Letters, too, from those who were well held phrases that did not help, and she tells 'how the stock phrase about "enforced rest" rankled on a day "when half of my kneaded matter was held fast in burning iron, and the other half lay in a lassitude that was very far from rest."' Thinking of the phrase of being 'laid aside' she brushes it away. 'It was the sort of thing one might say to a cracked china cup: "Poor dear, you are laid aside." But then the Lord's servant is not a china cup. He (she) is a soldier.' She finds comfort and joy in the phrase, 'I know that for us it is to be swords drawn, up to the gates of heaven.' 'Is it not joy, pure joy, that there is no question of the shelf? No soldier on service is ever "laid aside"; he is only given another commission, sometimes just to suffer (we are not told yet the use of that), sometimes, when pain and weakness lessen a little, to fight among the unseen forces of the field. Never, never is he shelved as of no further use to his Beloved Captain. Only, as I have been learning through these months, the soldier must let his Captain say where, and for what, He needs him

most, and he must not cloud his mind with questions. A wise master never wastes his servant's time, nor a commander his soldier's—there is great comfort in remembering that.'

'So let us settle it once for all and find heart's ease in doing so. There is no discharge in our warfare—no, not for a single day. We are never *hors de combat*. We may be called to serve on the visible field, going continually into the invisible both to renew our strength and to fight the kind of battle that can only be fought there. Or we may be called off the visible altogether for awhile, and drawn deep into the invisible. That dreary word "laid aside" is never for us; we are soldiers of the King of kings. Soldiers are not shelved.'

For us swords drawn, up to the gates of heaven,  
Oh may no coward spirit seek to leaven  
The warrior code, the calling that is ours;  
Forbid that we should sheathe our sword in flowers.

Swords drawn,  
Swords drawn,  
Up to the gates of heaven—  
For us swords drawn  
Up to the gates of heaven.

Captain beloved, battle wounds were Thine,  
Let me not wonder if some hurt be mine;  
Rather, O Lord, let my deep wonder be  
That I may share a battle-wound with Thee,

Oh golden joy that Thou, Lord, givest them  
Who follow Thee to far Jerusalem;  
O joy immortal, when the trumpets sound,  
And all the world is hushed to see Thee crowned.'

### Christmas Day: Hazarmaveth.

'There is something that the name Hazarmaveth of Genesis 10<sup>26</sup> now brings to mind.

'I never thought that a pot of manna was stored away in that word till I read of Hadramaut (as the word is now) in Southern Arabia. . . . Photographs show a blistered land, naked to the sun, covered for miles with sand, broken stones, or bare rock, almost waterless, almost treeless. But . . . incense trees grew along the barren plateaux and in the dry river-beds. Merchants came from as far as Persia to find this precious gum. The frankincense and myrrh the wise men offered to

our Saviour may have grown in that burning land, and that which gave fragrance to the ointment Mary poured upon His hair and His feet, and the spices that the women laid among the linen for His burying. But the chief thought with me to-day is that this substance, universal symbol of prayer, worship and adoration, was found in such a place.

'Sooner or later we find ourselves in some Hazarmaveth of His appointment. We may miss the incense trees or we may find them. . . .

'One of the hottest of Hazarmaveths for all who are ill must be, I think, Christmas Day.'<sup>1</sup>

#### The Message of History for Difficult Days.

There is an interesting page which appears weekly in *The Christian World*—'What Writers and Thinkers are saying.' In the issue of October 26th there is a paragraph from Professor Moffatt that remains in the memory. When you are discouraged, disheartened by the appearance of things at present, look at history, he says. You will find that it is when the Church thinks itself safe that it is in most danger. 'It is a cordial for drooping spirits to look back now and then upon the long story of their religion, and to see or to be shown that the Christian faith has survived crises at least as serious as that of the present day. What takes the heart out of many people is no more than their lack of imagination. They allow things present to preoccupy their attention, instead of seeing them in their right focus and proportions. The vision of history which imagination reveals is an insight into the things which cannot be shaken.'

In the following number of *The Christian World*, Dr. Fosdick in his leader on 'Christianity at Home in Chaos' also bids us look at history. And we will find that it is not in prosperous times but in chaotic days like these that Christianity makes advances.

'So in the familiar story, Brer Rabbit persuades his enemy, Brer Fox, to throw him into a briar-patch on the supposition that that would be the worst thing which could befall him, but now, thrown into it, Brer Rabbit runs happily away, saying, "Bred en bawn in a briar-patch, Brer Fox—bred en bawn in a briar-patch!"'

'So Christianity was born and bred in a briar-patch like this, for it started with a Cross; and it is in difficult days that again and again Christians have caught new visions of the things which cannot be shaken. They have caught a new vision of

the value and indispensableness of Christ's moral principles. 'This is not a bad time for Christian morals. Christian morals were born and bred in a briar-patch like this. This is a bad time for anything except Christian morals, bad for selfishness and cynicism, bad for lapses of integrity and poor citizenship.'

And it is in difficult times like these that 'Christians have caught a fresh vision of the meaning and indispensableness of their faith in God and the eternal values of personality.' When we are in favouring circumstances we can get on without thinking deeply about the human problem and often without conscious need of God. It is from hours of tragedy that the creative faiths of the human race have come—'Religion is the hope that grows out of despair.'

'How many of you would say what I say, that there have been hours when I thought I saw into the profound depths of a triumphant Christian faith, and they were not hours in a lecture-room of a theological seminary, but when I went down into the valley to keep a rendezvous with tragedy, and when against the "Everlasting Nay" I saw the "Everlasting Yea" victoriously rise up?'

#### Peace.

For those this Christmas who want a devotional book, the well-known name of G. H. Morrison on the cover of *The World-Wide Gospel* (Hodder & Stoughton; 6s. net) will mean the end of their search. For this is a further—it may be a final—selection from the sermons of Morrison of Welling-ton. A quotation from it on Thankfulness will be found in 'The Christian Year.' Here is his first illustration in the Christmas sermon on 'The Things that make for Peace':

'There is a substance known as ambergis which is found floating in the ocean. Absolutely odourless itself, its use is to enrich the scent of odours. And peace has a quality like ambergis; it heightens and enriches every blessing. What is a congregation without peace; what without peace a home? It may have money, art, refinement, luxury, but if peace is wanting everything is wanting. . . . It was of peace the angels sang when Christ was born in Bethlehem.'

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<sup>1</sup> Amy Carmichael, *Rose from Brier*, 80.