

October 12<sup>th</sup>

## **Blessed be the Lord my strength**

which teacheth my hands to war,  
and my fingers to fight: Psalm 144:1

Today's lessons are all about battles and war time! David wrote this Psalm. He had to fight against many of God's enemies. Some people think that he wrote it after killing Goliath and perhaps he did. But the Psalm has been put in the Bible to help everyone who believes God's Word, for they are all soldiers. Everyone who trusts in Jesus has to fight against sin in his own heart and life. The Psalm helps us understand that we can only do this with God's help.

### A painting to look at and some map work<sup>1</sup>

Two of the events for today involve **Belgium**. Find it in your atlas and also look up the other places highlighted in **green**.

On **October 12<sup>th</sup>** 1839, the painter B. R. Haydon, had breakfast with the Duke of Wellington (1769-1852) at the Duke's home, Walmer Castle. He wrote in his diary:

At 10 we breakfasted – the Duke, Sir Astley Cooper, Mr. Booth and myself. He put me on his right. “Which will ye have, black tea, or green?” “Black, Your Grace”. “Bring black”. Black was brought, and I ate a hearty breakfast. In the midst, six dear, healthy, noisy children were brought to the windows. “Let them in,” said the Duke, and in they came and rushed over to him saying, “How d'ye do, Duke? How d'ye do, Duke?” One boy, young Gray, roared, “I want some tea, Duke.” “You shall have it if you promise not to slop it over me as you did yesterday”. Toast and tea were then in demand. Three got on one side and three on the other, and he hugged 'em all. Tea was poured out, and I saw little Gray try to slop it over the Duke's frock coat. They all rushed out on the leads, by the cannon, and after breakfast I saw the Duke romping with the whole of them, and one of them gave His Grace a[n enormous] thump.”



The Duke of Wellington posed twice for Benjamin Robert Haydon to paint his portrait in 1839. He disliked posing for portraits immensely and was not even keen to lend the painter his sword and helmet which are in the foreground of the painting. (See next page.) Haydon made very good use of these painting sessions. Besides the original, which you can see reproduced on the next page, he painted no less than twenty-five other variations of the picture!

It was in 1815 that Napoleon, who had been banished to the **Island of Elba** after the Napoleonic Wars (1803–1815), made his escape. At **Vienna** the other nations had been holding a conference to decide how to resettle the map of Europe after the wars. At the conference great differences of opinion began to appear between the delegates. Napoleon had followed all this from Elba. He decided that the veteran French soldiers who were returning from prisoner of war camps would certainly fight for him if he decided to escape. He thought too, that since the allies were not agreeing very well at Vienna, he might, after all, be able to fight them one at a time. He escaped,

<sup>1</sup> Adapted from Owen, Evan, *What Happened Today* Volume 3, available on the *Mothers' Companion* Flashdrive. <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com> and *The Story of God's Dealings with our Nation* Volume 1 which is available here: <https://www.creationresearchstore.com/s/search?q=The%20Story%20of%20Gods%20Dealings%20with%20our%20Nation>.

landed in France and the French king Louis XVIII at once fled from Paris. Napoleon's old soldiers flocked to join him. It does not seem to have troubled them that he had been prepared to leave his men to die in Egypt or Russia. His personality was such that they would follow him anywhere. However, the allies did not break their alliance. Instead they stood firm. An army of troops from the allied nations, commanded by Wellington, met Napoleon's army at Waterloo in Belgium where they thoroughly defeated him. This time Napoleon was banished to St. Helena 1,200 miles off the African coast where he could not so easily escape. Here he remained until his death in 1821.

The portrait is an unusual one as you will see. Wellington was a great military hero, responsible for the defeat of the tyrant Napoleon who had been determined to subdue England to his power. Yet Haydon did not paint Wellington in military uniform or on his horse as was usual for portraits of military figures. Instead, Wellington is dressed in his ordinary clothes exactly as you see him in the little homely picture of him with his grandchildren on the first page above. Rather than looking triumphantly out at the picture's viewers, Wellington has almost turned his back on them as he gazes sadly at the sun rising over the battlefield of Waterloo. Many English people went to look at "the field of Waterloo" where so many of their countrymen had died. Haydon has painted Wellington as though he too is contemplating the dead soldiers. He has taken off his hat just as he would have done if a funeral procession were passing. Besides the sword and the helmet already mentioned I think I can see two other things at the Duke's feet in the picture. What are they?<sup>2</sup> Why do you think the painter has put them there?<sup>3</sup>

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2 I think I can make out a cannon ball and a dead bird, possibly some kind of hawk.

3 The ball is an unglamorous reminder of the battle in contrast with the more ceremonial helmet and sword. The dead bird may be a reminder of the fragility of human life.



## Something to sing<sup>4</sup>

Ralph Vaughan Williams (1872-1958) was born on **October 12<sup>th</sup>**. He was an English composer whose music was influenced by English folk-song.<sup>5</sup> When he was a young man this was undergoing something of a discovery or rediscovery. English folk-song was being noted down and collected by Cecil Sharp, Maud Karpeles, Sabine Baring Gould and others who listened to singers in country villages and wrote down what they sang. Collections of folk song were being published so that songs which had been known, for instance, only in a very localised area could be enjoyed by everyone. Sadly though, they were rather snobbish about their collecting. They were only interested in songs about rural or old fashioned occupations. As a result they discarded or ignored many songs sung by miners, railway or factory workers and the like, considering them not real folk songs if they had trains, coal mines or factories in them. Many very interesting songs have probably been lost as a result. Anything that smacked of Evangelical Christianity was also discarded with a sneer!

Vaughan Williams himself collected folk songs and included in today's Optional Resources files is one he noted down in Norfolk. The words and music are printed for you and there is also a sound file of the tune played slowly on a violin to help you learn it. You should sing it at quite an energetic pace once you have learned the tune.

There are separate sound files for each line to help you learn the tune. Begin by learning to sing the last line (line 8), "On board a Ninety-Eight." Next learn lines 3 and 4 which begin with the same notes as "On board a Ninety-Eight." Lines 5 and 6 have almost the same music as lines 3 and 4, only one note is different. Now fill in the gaps. You will find you already know the tune for the second line as it is the same as the tune for "On board a Ninety-Eight" – the last line. Line 1 returns in a varied or decorated form as line 7. If you can print out the music use different colour highlighter pens to mark the lines and part lines. First mark the last line in (say) yellow. Then colour the second line yellow too as the tune is the same. Colour the first four notes (three words) of lines 3 and 4 in yellow as they start in the same way. Now choose a different colour for the rest of lines 3 and 4 and colour them the same but leave out the one note that is different. A third colour can be used to indicate the notes that are the same in lines 1 and 7. When you have done this you will have made a little *analysis* of the music which will show you the patterns of "same" and "different" that make the tune pleasant to our ears.

If you have a group of mixed ages you might like to try this song rather like a sea shanty (although it is not a shanty) by having a few (older perhaps) singers singing all the words and everyone joining in on the last line.

What is the song all about? A Ninety-Eight is a ship with ninety-eight guns. In the days of Nelson it was not possible to get enough men to join the navy to become sailors. So the navy was allowed to send out parties of men with an officer to just capture men and take them away to serve as sailors! These parties of men were called "press-gangs" and they generally operated in coastal areas where there would be men they could catch who were used to the sea and so would be useful right away. "Tar" in the fourth verse is a slang word for a sailor; "pate" means "head" and "They only lost a wing off Jack" is a way of saying that the singer lost an arm in the battle. "Greenwich College" refers to the naval hospital and I think "blue clothes and three cocked hat" in verse five refers to his naval pensioner's uniform. "Got Boatswain's [pronounced *bosun's*] mate" means "Got promotion to be Boatswain's mate". The Boatswain is the most senior sailor on deck.

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4 Adapted from the music course on Volume 9 of *The Mothers' Companion* flashdrive available from <https://motherscompanion.weebly.com>

5 A folk song is a song sung made up and sung by ordinary people and it is not usually written down.

## Something to listen to

When you have learned this song, find a recording of Vaughan Williams's *Norfolk Rhapsody Number 1*.<sup>6</sup> After a slow and misty beginning you will find the composer uses the song as an important part of the music.

Although he claimed to be an agnostic<sup>7</sup> or atheist,<sup>8</sup> Vaughan Williams spent a great deal of his musical life editing the music for hymn books. He wrote a number of very well known hymn tunes such as “*Sine Nomine*” (“For All The Saints”<sup>9</sup>) and “Monks Gate” (“He Who Would Valiant Be”<sup>10</sup>) himself. He rejected Christianity but because he loved all the traditional things – especially traditional country things – that made English life what it was, he loved the traditions that have grown up around Christianity and was especially fond of hymns.

We still meet this attitude today. There are many people who would like to have the pleasant society which results from Christian influence without having to acknowledge God as their creator to whom they are responsible and against whom we have all sinned. Without the foundations of belief in the Bible, however, these things have no meaning and cannot endure.

## Someone to remember – a brave nurse



First World War heroine Edith Cavell (1865-1915) died on **12<sup>th</sup> October**.

Miss Cavell was a nurse and an expert in nurse training. Working in Belgium during the First World War she saved the lives of soldiers from both sides of the conflict. She also helped about 200 Allied soldiers escape from Belgium for which she was arrested by the Germans who were occupying Belgium at the time. Despite efforts to save her by American and Spanish diplomats she was condemned to death and shot by a German firing squad. She is well known for her words just before her execution, “Patriotism is not enough. I must have no hatred or bitterness towards anyone,” which are engraved on her monument not far from Trafalgar Square in London.

Tiny children could learn that today we specially remember a very brave nurse who helped many wounded soldiers get better and who helped captured soldiers escape to their homes. Some dressing up in (old fashioned) nurses' outfits if you have them or can improvise them would be fun with perhaps a dolls' hospital. I'm sure Miss Cavall would have approved of little girls learning about nursing in this way! A white apron could be cut out of an old T shirt and an old fashioned nurse's hat with a red cross at the front could be made of cardboard and elastic. A red cape, if you could improvise one, would complete the outfit with a historic flavour. A thermometer and a nurse's watch could be made of cardboard. The watch should be pinned on to the apron upside down so that the nurse can see it just by tipping it upwards.

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6 If you do not have/can't borrow a CD of this you can find it here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5DeT3DkyXc8>

7 Someone who claims they do not know whether there is a God. In practice this is atheism – see note 8.

8 Someone who claims not to believe that there is a God.

9 361 in 1977 edition of *Christian Hymns*.

10 This was written for a “recasting” of John Bunyan’s “Who Would True Valour See” from Pilgrim’s Progress by the hymn book editor Percy Dearmer. It is to be found in the 1977 edition of *Christian Hymns* where it is set to Bunyan’s original words (745) and in many other hymn books.