

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### "Songs in the night."

"In the night his song shall be with me."  
—Psalm xliii. 8.

Is it night with thee, my brother?  
Is there darkness on thy soul?  
Over the hopes and joys of earth  
Do the clouds of sorrow roll?  
Is thy spirit faint within thee,  
Watching for the morning light?  
Come, then, let us sing together,  
A song of faith, in the night.

Let us cheer the hour of darkness  
With a tale of sunshine past,  
Or thoughts of a glory yet to elude  
When the morning breaks at last;  
—Through our present toil and sorrow  
Let us look for joys to come,  
And sing in the exile stranger land  
Of the love and rest at home.

In weariness, pain, and weakness,  
Have thy long years passed away?  
Is thy free born spirit imprisoned now  
In its shattered house of clay?  
Come, sing of the joyful moment  
That will set the captive free;  
Of the new, and strong, and deathless frame  
Which at length thine own shall be.

Has many a hope deceived thee?  
Has many a promise failed?  
Has the enemy, with his fiery darts,  
Oft thy sinking soul assailed?  
Think of the mighty Victor  
Who has braved for thee his power,  
We may sing the conquest Christ hath won,  
In our weakest and darkest hour.

To the cold, dark place of silence,  
Are thy best beloved ones gone?  
In the ways so often together trod  
Must thou sadly walk alone?  
Listen, and catch some echoes,  
Some notes of a heavenly strain;  
We shall sing it soon in our Father's house,  
When the lost are found again.

Or is a yet deeper anguish  
Oppressing thy lonely heart?  
Is it sadder far from living love  
Than from buried love to part?  
Turn from earth's failing friendships  
To the sinner's changeless Friend,  
And sing of Him, who has loved us long,  
Who will love us "to the end."

Yes, sing in the night, my brother,  
A soft and soothing song  
Of Him, whose faithfulness and love  
Will give to thee light ere long.  
Sing on, though but low and broken  
As yet may the accents rise,  
At length they shall mingle, full and clear,  
In the anthem of the skies!

—From "Hymns from the Land of Luther."

## Selections.

[From the Baptist Magazine.]

### Marriages and Deaths.

EVERYBODY knows that the corner of every newspaper specially attractive to all ladies is that adorned with the above heading. Why is this? "Idle curiosity," say one; and intimates that the sex is somewhat redundantly supplied with that quality. But what can account for such a curiosity? Does it not emanate from instincts at once sagacious and wholesome? And is it not an evidence of the natural accuracy of such instincts in pointing out, and fixing upon those great crises of our earthly history which can never be really thought of without interest and advantage? We must be allowed to plead guilty to a good deal of sympathy with our lady friends in this matter; and we think a worse subject than this might be selected for a few lucubrations in the pages of our denominational monthly.

#### MARRIAGES.

There is nothing in our moral lot of half so much importance to us as the event which unites us for life to a fellow-creature. With it are connected either our highest earthly satisfaction and felicity, or our profoundest disappointment and grief. The general subject, however, is altogether too wide to be treated in the space at our disposal. All we can hope to do is to cast a glance over such marriages as are with greater or less frequency coming under our own observation.

And first, as to early marriages. Were Nature interrogated on the question of the desirableness or otherwise of these, there can be little

doubt with respect to the answer which the kind mother might be expected to give. She has, in fact given her answer, and is giving it every day in the fond yearnings of ten thousand young human hearts. Were Virtue questioned on the subject, her reply would emphatically corroborate that of Nature, and see but little to be pleaded on the other side. We think, too, that the verdict of Religion would be symphonious with those of Nature and Virtue; so that in the mouth of three such witnesses every word would be established to our mind. Of course, Nature, Virtue, and Religion would take counsel of Prudence, and agree to nothing without her consent. Far be it from us in such a matter to recommend abandonment to mere impulse, or to encourage the young to annul the dictates of Experience and Wisdom. But the great obstacles to early entrance on conjugal relations are generally found in the exorbitant demands of over-refinement, and the unreasonable but imperative claims of position and respectability. To these the heart's dearest affections must be sacrificed, and on this altar of cruelty not a few of the fairest and most promising have been immolated. How much better, that two young people should struggle on and do battle with hardships and difficulties together, while they are yet strong, and ardent, and hopeful, rather than wait till all difficulties have been smoothed away, and they have become too cold, calculating, and selfish to contribute what they otherwise might have done to each other's happiness. It the present writer had not a wholesome fear of stirring up a very hornet's nest of all the sage parents with marriageable daughters who read this journal, there is a great deal more that he would like to say on the subject. But as it is now universally agreed that discretion is the better part of valour, he will turn from this to a hardly less touching point, having a word or two to say on

Marriages of Affection. "Marriages of affection!" exclaims some innocent; "are not all marriages, then, marriages of affection?" Alas, poor innocent! They ought to be so indeed. At the very least, marriages without affection are very wicked and very harmful things. Two human hearts to throb together, perhaps for a long lifetime, and all their throbbings, instead of a sweet music, to constitute a hideous dissonance and an incessant jar! Could such matches have been in heaven? Let not the loving skies be blasphemed even by the thought. We think we know where they were made, and must be allowed to deem them worthy of the place. To be sure, very happy marriages have been ventured upon where the affection has been far below the boiling-point; and the question as to the minimum between that point and zero which would justify so momentous a step may be very difficult to decide. And how, there should be some to forge the sacred tie, to light the household fires, and to hide the multitude of sins which otherwise are sure to be revealed to wedded eyes. The more the better, we should think; and certainly this earth presents no spectacle more refreshing or more beautiful than that of a young man and woman, moved by ardent, disinterested regard for each other, thus blending their destinies together for life. It is the likeliest thing to Paradise brought back that we ever witness in this sin-stricken and woebegged world.

A less pleasant sight awaits us now. The most comprehensive charity cannot deny that there are such things as marriages of interest, the motives to which are purely of a selfish character. Mammon is the most formidable rival that Cupid has ever had. Few are the breasts impregnable to his golden shafts. Even the blind divinity himself is sometimes obliged to borrow his rival's arms and finds his arrows fly all the higher and pierce all the deeper when furnished with a golden tip. And some little mixture here may be allowed in a world where all is mixed. When, however, interest and convenience are the only points taken into account, where the motives are merely worldly and mercenary, and the heart with all its emotions and yearning utterly ignorant, it appears to us that no energy of reprobation could be too vehement in scouting such transactions from the sacred haunts of love, and that no retribution can be too severe for those who thus profanely dare to desecrate a bond ancient as man's primal innocence, and pure as the atmosphere of Eden itself.

A word on second marriages may not be out of place. Some persons are very hard on these. We think that severity both inconsiderate, unkind and unjust. If it was not good for the man to be alone before he enjoyed the comforts of wedlock, it certainly cannot be good for him afterwards. And, no doubt, the same may be said with equal truth of the other sex. But can a man or a woman love the second time? No, if the first gush of romantic attachment be referred to. Yes, if a real, wise, and lasting affection be intended. There are numberless examples of it; and not a few in which those who loved best the objects of their earliest choice also love best the object of their second. Experience seldom corresponds to theory on these subjects; and we venture to believe that experience, so far from counselling loneliness to either widow or widower,

would recommend that the greatest earthly loss which either man or woman could sustain should be as far as possible repaired in due time by a selection prompted by affection and sanctioned by wisdom and prudence.

Another question remains to be glanced at, that of mixed marriages. These are of two kinds; those in which the parties to them are converted and unconverted, and those in which they belong to different religious communions. The former are by implication absolutely prohibited in the New Testament. "Only in the Lord" is the universal law here. We are unaware how often that law is broken, but it is never broken with impunity; while in many cases the breach of it involves life-long penalties most painful to contemplate. The maintenance of personal piety is no easy task under the most favorable circumstances; but if we take an enemy to that piety into our bosom and our heart, what are we to expect as the result? Every one's observation will tell him what to expect, and well for him if he allow such observation to influence him as it should. As to the other class of mixed marriages, but little need be said. In themselves few will deem them desirable. They generally lead to discord, or compromise, or, as is most common, both. If the convictions of both parties be equally deep, and their minds equally strong, each will go his and her own way, which will be at least a tacit and practical protest against each other. If the one be inferior to the other in intellect and principle, then the stronger will draw the weaker in his or her train; the conscience of the latter being discounted altogether. There is no supreme law to appeal to here, but most persons will be of opinion, that all things being equal, the Christian will act wisely who refuses to marry far out of the pale of his own belief.

A passing reference may not be thought out of place to that large number of persons whose names never figure amongst the "marriages" in the issue of the daily or weekly press. The people who never marry at all, belong to two classes—those who can not, and those who will not, though they can. It is no reproach to the ladies that many of them are necessarily doomed to a life of celibacy. So greatly are their numbers in excess of those of the opposite sex at a marriageable age, that some of them actually must go without husbands. Many of them also, with whom this is not a necessity, choose to go without them; and perhaps a larger number of men (mistaken, miserable things as they are!) choose to go without wives. With the grounds of the choice on either side we have at present nothing to do. We merely indicate the fact, and regard it as one amongst the literally innumerable effects and evidences of the Fall! The only un-fallen pair the world ever saw, married; ergo, had all their descendants remained unfallen they would, if possible, have married too. Hence those who approximate nearest to man's pristine uprightness are ever the most sure to go in search of participation in wedded bliss.

#### DEATHS.

It is not the writer's fault that the subject must close with this. It is where everything earthly closes. We are all born and married for the grave. The journey which divides our first cry from our last groan is but a brief one, though the sound of marriage bells and marriage welcomes greet us on the way. Pity that this should be an unwelcome theme, since death, too, is both a birth and a marriage all in one. And how much more important is it to die well than to marry well, securing for ourselves a good settlement beyond the skies. The final crisis should be the crowning circumstance of life, conveying us at once to a kingdom and a throne. "The righteous hath hope in his death;" and such hope as lifts him up above its terrors, making him feel that for him to die is everlasting gain. Nor can it be out of place here to remind the reader of another birth, the absolute necessity of which has been insisted upon by the great Authority himself; and of another marriage, which the soul should contract with One who is the chiefest among ten thousand and altogether lovely; and of another death, namely, death to sin and the world, which every one of us must undergo if we would triumph in the last encounter with the great terror, and not be vanquished and triumphed over for ever. May each reader then realize the blessedness of being born again of the Holy Spirit, being espoused to Emanuel, and of knowing that he is dead and that his life is hid with Christ in God.

### The people at the Source of the Nile.

CAPTAIN SPEKE delivered a lecture on the 24th of June, on his discoveries in Africa, before a special meeting of the Royal Institution. In the course of his lecture he gave some interesting particulars respecting the character and customs of the people among whom he had travelled.

On the most fertile part of the shores of Lake Nyanza is the kingdom of Uganda, which is

the most interesting of all the nations of equatorial Africa, being better cultivated and better governed than any other. The customs of Uganda are many of them most irregular. The princes having large harems of women, their progeny is, of course, most numerous. When a King dies all his sons are burned except his successor and two others, who are kept in the case of accident until the coronation, after which one is pensioned off and the other banished to Ungora. Untidiness in dress is a capital crime, except the offender possesses sufficient riches to pay an enormous fine. Ingratitude or even neglect to thank a person for a benefit conferred, is punishable. The court customs are also curious. No one is allowed to stand before the king, and to touch him or look at one of his women is death. They believe implicitly in magic and the evil eye, and the kings are always attended by a certain number of women crowned with dead lizards, and bearing bowls of plantain wine in their hands. The king of Karagwe is the most civilized of all these native chiefs; before entering Uganda Capt. Speke spent many days with him. In manners, civility and enlightenment, he might be compared with many Europeans. He owes much of this to the influence of an Indian merchant named Moussa Mzouri, who helped him by his advice to conquer his brother, with whom he was at war. Captain Speke was much entertained with many of his questions as to what became of the old suns and why the moon made faces at the earth. He also wanted to know whether England, of which he heard from the ivory traders, could blow up the whole of Africa with gunpowder. The moment the king heard that he was desirous of going north he sent messengers to the king of Uganda to prepare the way for him. The king was most anxious to afford him every possible information about the country. While at the palace the king took him yatching on Murchison creek for several days, and he frequently went shooting with the princes of the court, who, when he had shot anything, would rush up to and shake him heartily by the hand—a custom little known in that part of Africa. Before leaving they heard from the King Kamrasi that a body of white men had been seen to the north, who had killed numbers of the natives with a wonderful gun. This made Captain Speke most anxious to push on, as he supposed the party of white men to be that of Mr. Petherick, who had appointed to meet him. He then started for Uganda, with a numerous retinue. Before leaving King Rumanika's palace at Karagwe he had noticed on several occasions three or four lofty mountain-peaks, more than 10,000 feet high. The King of Uganda sent an armed body of men to meet him, who conducted him through the kingdom. Everywhere they went the people left their huts, leaving their provisions behind them.

The fertility of this part is very great, and the scenery on the shores of the lake most beautiful. On arriving at the King of Uganda's capital Captain Speke found it necessary to wrap up all his presents in chintz before sending them to the King, as nothing bare or naked could be looked at by his Majesty. He found the palace to consist of hundreds of conical tents, spread over the spur of a hill. Thousands of courtiers and attendants were to be seen engaged in every conceivable occupation, from playing on musical instruments to feeding the royal chickens. On sending word to the King that he wished for an interview, that monarch sent back a sharp message that he was to sit on the ground and wait till he was at liberty. Captain Speke, however, sent back word that he was a prince, and not accustomed either to sit on the ground or to wait. A courtier followed him, proposing all kinds of evils from his presumption. Captain Speke, however, terrified the whole court, king and all, into submission by merely opening his umbrella, which they took to be a deadly weapon, killing by magic. A chair was consequently allowed to Captain Spake, who was received by the king surrounded by his court; and having by his side the women crowned with dead lizards to ward off the effects of the evil eye. The king stared at him for about an hour, at the end of which time his Majesty said, "Have you seen me?" and retired to another tent, where the same process of staring was followed by a similar inquiry. He went into a third tent, and Captain Speke followed. This time, however, the monarch deigned to examine Captain Speke's Whitworth rifle. Captain Speke told him that it was the custom of the inhabitants of the country of which he was a prince to make presents of everything that they possessed to any king into whose country they entered. He accordingly left him several rifles and watches and a quantity of gunpowder. He endeavored to engage his Majesty in conversation about Petherick's party, and the possibility of opening trade through the north. It was a long time, however, before he gained his confidence. On leaving, the king presented him with numerous very valuable presents.

Pride and unbelief will put you on seeing somewhat in yourself first: but faith will have to do with none but Christ.