

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

"GOD'S ACRE."

For the Christian Messenger.

"I like that ancient Saxon phrase, which calls the burial-ground 'God's acre!'"

God's acre lies on the green hill-side,
We will enter in for its gate is wide;
Beside this sleeping place we'll stand
For she hath passed to the better land!

They lower her form while the tall trees sigh
"Tis hard, oh so hard for the young to die,"
But angel voices our murmurings still,
And we list as they say " 'twas His holy will!"

Bright little child with the thoughtful brow,
No trace of endurance is on it now;
The suffering's over—the dark river crossed
Taken thou art—Thank God I not lost.

Learning thy lesson each day by day,
Thy motto—"God's glory at work or play,"
No wonder thine soul shone thro' those eyes,
To her God she lived—in her Saviour dies!

Lower her gently—O child so dear!
Our Elder Brother shed a pitying tear,
And sisters must weep, while they humbly pray
Teach us "thy will not our own" to say

Years have come, have gone, since our darling died,
And we laid her to rest on that green hill-side,
Still mourn we our loss, though hushed our weeping,
For she is not dead—she is only sleeping!"

O death is nought if in Christ we die,—
It little rocks where our ashes lie.
Aid us "Our Father" on land or sea,
A life to live of faith in Thee!

Halifax, Jan., 1864.

Religious.

ONE WAY OF DOING GOOD.

AN INVITATION.

Many Christians never think of asking friends to accompany them to public worship or to meetings of prayer, and they thus lay aside a most important means of doing good. We can trace back our first religious impressions to an evening meeting, to which we went very reluctantly, at the invitation of a Christian relative. That urgent request led to conversion. The following incident from the *American Messenger* may stimulate some of our readers to avail themselves of this method of doing good:

One of the leaders of fashionable society in Philadelphia was Mr. D—, a very gay and gifted man. His fine personal appearance, rare social qualities, and great cultivation, made him such a general favorite, that no dinner-party seemed complete without his presence.

One evening while dining at the house of a friend, the Holy Spirit put it into the heart of a young married lady who was present to invite him to accompany the family to hear a sermon by Rev. Mr. K—, who was at that time preaching nightly to crowded houses.

It was not until after she had lifted up her heart in prayer that she could find courage to do what had been suggested to her; for in addition to his being much older than herself, it was well known that he never attended church, and his general bearing was such that no one felt at liberty to introduce the subject of religion when he was present.

On receiving his invitation, he said in his characteristic way that the ladies were all so crazy after Dr. K—, that he should be obliged to give up his seat to some of them if he went.

Mrs. M— at once proposed to take the head of the slip herself, and declared that no one should dislodge him, if he would only go. He declined, however, but said he should be happy to accompany them as far as the church door. He did so, and when about to take his leave, Mrs. M— besought him most earnestly to go in with them.

Upon the spur of the moment he yielded, and as had been proposed took the second

seat in the slip. He was in a very gay mood, and at once began to joke with acquaintances sitting near him. He became quiet, however, soon after the sermon began, and listened attentively until its close.

On leaving the church, Mrs. M— expressed regret on his account that the service had been so long. But he replied that he was interested.

Mrs. M— was surprised, on looking into the gallery the next evening, to see Mr. D— sitting on one of the back seats, evidently wishing to attract as little attention as possible. On the third night she discovered him again, and at the close of the services saw him speak to the doctor as he was coming out of church.

He at once became as devoted to the cause of Christ as he had previously been to the gayeties of the world; and during the eight or nine years in which he was permitted to labor, served his Master so faithfully, that in addition to his almost daily visitation among the poor, conversed on the subject of personal religion with nearly all of his former associates.

One Sabbath, after an absence of a few years from the city, Mrs. M— took her seat again at the Lord's table in the old church. Presently Mr. D— entered the slip, and sitting beside her, whispered that he was glad to commune with her once more.

Not long after, when about to go forth on an errand of mercy, he stopped at the door and remarked that he believed he should not go, for he was not feeling quite well. His labors of love were over; the Lord had called him; and in five minutes he died.

What a source of constant joy it must be that lady to think that God honored so simple an act as an invitation to church, in the conversion of one, and eternity may show many souls.

Even if you are not a Christian yourself, will you not put forth a little effort to lead some friend into the way of everlasting bliss, though you may not enjoy it with them? But if you are a child of God, and accustomed to seek the daily guidance of the Holy Spirit, be persuaded by this example to follow out as far as possible every suggestion of your heart for the salvation of your fellow-men, and you, too, may be able to gather many stars for your crown.—*W. & R.*

TALKING WHEN ALONE.

Mrs. Fondersmith was out improving a piece of a June day in making calls, when suddenly a thunder-shower came up. She stabled into the first cottage she saw, where a poor woman sat sewing: evidently a poor woman with that mild type of countenance which would make you think her name was certainly Mary, or ought to be. She arose and courteously offered a chair, which the lady accepted with the air of one bestowing a favor.

"Do you think we shall have a wild storm?" said Mrs. Fondersmith, looking down upon her hostess like one upon a mountain dropping a word to somebody in a valley.

Mrs. Dale replied, "Yes, ma'am, it looks like it," and might have added to herself, sarcastically, "Does this butterfly descend to me? Unexampled glory of littleness!" But Mrs. Dale was never sarcastic.

The storm grew severe; the house rocked in the wind like a cradle, and Mrs. Fondersmith, sitting in the middle of the room, began to fidget.

"To think of a house without blinds!" murmured she.

"But it's nice to look out doors, you know," said Mrs. Dale. "It's so grand to see the lightning zigzag across the sky. It makes you think, somehow, of a gold ladder let down from heaven to earth, only it's gone again in a twinkling."

"You're not so frightened as I am, or you couldn't be so sentimental," returned Mrs. Fondersmith, with chattering teeth.

"No ma'am, I ain't at all afraid of lightning, if that's what you mean. The Lord won't call me home till he gets ready, and when he sends for me, it won't be a moment sooner than I want to go."

These words struck Mrs. Fondersmith as very remarkable, especially as they were uttered in a jubilant tone of voice. "You must be a happy woman!" said she, wonderingly.

Mrs. Dale shook her head. "Oh, not very," said she. "I used to be happy when I had a husband and four children. I tell you, them was times when I used to take comfort. I shouldn't dare to live 'em over again! But for four years I've lost a child every year, and six months ago my dear good husband was killed, while he was at work on the railroad. Now I'm all alone, as you may say, and I don't know as you can call me so dreadful happy!"

"No, indeed!" exclaimed Mrs. Fondersmith, taking a step or two down her mountain of self-importance, "you have really been afflicted, my poor woman!"

"Yes, ma'am, but it's been good for me! Why, it's the best thing in the world, and so I've told the Lord a great many times. Sometimes I wake up in the morning, dreaming like, and thinks I, what shall I get for breakfast? And then it comes all over me that there ain't nobody in the house but me, and it seems so still that it a'most stuns me! Oh, I tell you, it's awful for awhile, and I lay there and breathe the kind o' say, and wish my breath would stop, if it ain't wicked. But soon after I got wide awake, and go talking to the Lord, and says I, 'O Lord, it's all right, isn't it?' and he answers and says, 'All right.' Then I asks, 'They're safe in heaven, aren't they?' and he says, 'Safe for ever and ever.' So I feel as pleased as a child, and thinks I to myself, 'What ails you, and what are you crying about?' and then I get up and go to work and seems as if there was comfort enough folded up in my heart to stretch over a whole life-time. You see I used to think I trusted the Lord before, but now he's all in all, for I haven't anybody else. I can't tell exactly how to put it into words. I'm not happy, not in the way I used to be, and I get so-hungry for the sight of them that's gone! But when I get to crying the the Lord hushes me, just as my mother used to, and says he, so kind and loving, 'Oh, just wait awhile!' Then says I, 'Yes, Lord, I will;' and how often I've told him that he's been more comfort to me than my husband, and all my children, and if I was to choose, I don't know as I should dare to be happy again, for fear I shouldn't be blessed!"

"What singular fanaticism!" said Mrs. Fondersmith in astonishment. "I mean, what a strange state of mind! I wish I could get into just such a way of thinking, though," sighed she, as she slowly paddled her way home through the mud.

DISCOVERIES IN POMPEII.

M. Marc Mounier, in an article in a French journal, gives the following graphic account of the discovery of human bodies in Pompeii by M. Fiorelli.

One day in a little street, under a heap of stones and rubbish, a vacant space was discovered, at the bottom of which appeared something looking like bones. M. Fiorelli was summoned in haste, and he conceived a luminous idea. He poured in some liquid plaster, and the same operation was performed at other points where bones had been likewise discovered; and as soon as the plaster was hardened, the mould was lifted with the greatest precautions, and, on the hardened ashes and lava being removed, four corpses appeared. They are now at the museum, and no more striking sight is it possible to behold. They are not statues, but human bodies moulded by Vesuvius, and preserved from decay by that envelope of lava which reproduces the clothes, the flesh, nay, almost even the appearance of life. The bones protrude here and there where the molten liquid did not completely cover the limbs. Nowhere does anything like this exist. The Egyptian mummies are naked, black, hideous. They appear to have nothing in common with humanity; they are dressed out by the Egyptian undertaker for their eternal repose—the exhumed Pompeians are human beings in the act of dying. One of the bodies is that of

a woman, near whom were found ninety-one silver coins, two silver vases, some keys, and a few jewels. She was flying, carrying her most valuable commodities with her, when she fell in the little narrow street. Her head-dress, the tissue of her clothes, and two silver rings on her finger, can be easily detected. One of the hands is broken, and the cellular structure of the bones exposed to view; the left arm is raised and writhing, the delicate hand convulsively shut; the nails appear to have entered the flesh. The whole body appears swollen and contracted; the legs alone—the rounded and delicate outline of which has not suffered—are stretched out. You can feel that she struggled long in fearful pain. Her attitude is that of agony; not death. Behind her a woman and a young girl had fallen. The former, the mother, possibly, was of humble extraction, to judge from the size of her ears. On her finger is a single iron ring. Her left leg, raised and bent, denotes that she also struggled and suffered. Near her reclines the young girl—almost a child. The tissue of her dress is seen with wondrous distinctness—the sleeves coming down to the wrist, and the embroidery on her shoes. She had, through fear probably, lifted her dress over her head. She fell with her face to the ground. One of her hands is half open, as though she had used it to keep her veil over her face. The bones of her fingers protrude through the lava. She appears to have died easily. The fourth body is that of a man—a Colossus. He is stretched on his back, as though he meant to meet his fate bravely; his arms and legs show no sign of struggling; his clothes are very distinctly marked; the *bracco* (trousers) close fitting; laced sandals, the soles studded with thick nails; on one finger an iron ring; a few teeth are broken; his eyes and hair are obliterated, but his thick moustache is clearly apparent, and it is impossible not to be struck with the martial and resolute appearance of his features. After the woman convulsively clinging to life, we see here the man calmly meeting his fate in the midst of the great convulsion—*impavidum periret ruina*. Nothing yet discovered at Pompeii offers us any thing to be compared with this palpitating drama. It is violent death with its supreme tortures, its convulsions and agonies, brought clearly before us, and, as it were taken in the act, after the lapse of eighteen centuries.

THE CROOKED STICK.

"CHRIST has a service for all his members," said James Therrall, an old carpenter in a village on Salisbury Plain, to a young Christian who complained that she was unworthy to work for the Lord. "Let not one of the members say, 'The Head has no need of me.' I used to think as you do long ago, but he taught me otherwise by a crooked stick."

"One day my son went to a sale of timber, and in the lot was a stick (or piece) so twisted and bent, that I spoke sharply to him saying: 'You have a bad bargain there, lad. That crooked stick will be of no use to any one.'"

"It's all timber," replied my son—not the least vexed by my reproof. "I paid the same price for it as the rest. Depend upon it, no tree grows for nothing. Wait a bit; don't fret, father; let us keep a look out; there's a place somewhere for it."

"A little time after this, I had a cottage to build, a queer bit of a house it was, and pretty enough when it was finished. There was a corner to turn in it, and not a stick in the yard would fit. I thought of the crooked one and fetched it. Many a hard day's work would have failed to prepare a joist like it. It seemed as if the tree had grown expressly for the purpose. 'Then,' said I, 'there's a place for the crooked stick after all! Then there's a place for poor James Therrall. Dear Lord, show him the place into which he may fit in building thy heavenly temple.' That very day I learned that what God gives me, he gives me for his glory, and poor and unlettered as I was, there was a work for me. There is a work for you. God has something for you to do, and nobody else can do it."