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Poetry.

A WINTER REVERIE.

BY WILLIAM H. RUSSELL.

Softly the Snow is falling to-night,
Decking the earth with a robe of white—
Valley, and hill, and moor;
Hiding the rooks on the mountain's crest,
Weaving for river a crystal vest
That sparkles bright as the wings of the blest,
On the banks of the thither shore.

Softly the snow is shimmering down,
A fleecy mist o'er the woodland brown;
And fretted with silver fire
Is the cone-piled hay and leafless tree,
The well-cush, the fence, the home of the bee
The bridge o'er the brook, each thing we see—
The belfry and church's spire.

The evergreen branches are bending low,
The tiniest shrub is crowned with snow;
The willow's feathery pride,
The trailing elm, the pine's tall spars
Are powdered with diamonds, strewn with
stars,
And flash when the moon peeps through
cloudy bars,
More bright than the wreath of a bride.

Softly the snow, with its moistened breath,
Kisses and clings, as noiseless as death,
Yet pure as the heavenly ray—
That flashes beyond; and I know that to-night
It is sifting down as the plumage bright
Of an angel, and spreading its mantle light
O'er a little grave far away.

The grave of a babe who was "gathered in"
Ere stamped by passion or soiled by sin;
Who scarcely was missed from heaven,
So short was its stay; who wandered afar
When the gates of gold had been left ajar,
But, recalled by the light of a flashing star,
Returned to its home at even.

And softly the snow will fall ere long,
When the wind is singing a funeral song,
And build up its crystal throne
O'er another grave—where, none can tell,
But it matters not. Who ever he fell,
Let him rest. He will sleep as sound and well,
For that grave will be—my own.

Religious.

THE MEETING FOR PRAYER.

The "prayer-meeting" should be a meeting for prayer. Being such, in it petition should prevail. Often it does not. Some long-winded brother thinks that it is a meeting for talk. So he spins his slender thread of common-places on and on, rejoicing that no time "runs to waste," possibly secretly congratulating himself that there is one man in the church who can keep the meeting moving. Some musical sister concludes it a service for song. So she sings verse on verse with exultant chorus, glad that she is blessed with a faculty for enlivening the meeting.

Both are wrong. If it is rightly named, it is a gathering for the one central, if not absorbing purpose of asking God for something. If any other exercise than actual prayer be had, it must be secondary, and that only as it subserves petition.

This view is modified, just so far as the assembling ceases to be purely for prayer, and becomes partly for conference. To what extent the two are usually intended to be combined in our ordinary prayer-meetings, I am unable to say. Usually they present the only opportunity, aside from covenant meetings, of speaking one to another. Under such circumstances, it may be well to devote part of the time to conference. It strikes me, however, as better to have half an hour of speaking followed by another of prayer, or vice versa, than to mingle the two indiscriminately throughout the hour. Singing and talking are not praying, and they never can make a prayer-meeting.

These two carefully used may help the asking. Remarks on praying, reflections on the prayer habits of eminent saints or Jesus, the relation of experience calling for intercession, &c., may not be injurious, may be profitable. But more than this, I think, will not. All talk in such meetings which does not stir prayer stays it, thus turning the current away from its appropriate channel.

The same is true of singing. Not only should the songs be brief, but their sentiment should be prayerful. Such hymns as, "Sweet hour of prayer," "Saviour, like a shepherd lead us," "Jesus who knows full well," &c., in proper proportion help. Such as "Jesus, I love thy charming name," "In the cross of Christ I glory," "I love to think of the heavenly land," &c., while excellent in some services, are not petition producers, and consequently are intruders in a purely prayer-meeting.

I write this with full faith in the presence and activity of the Holy Spirit in every assembly of saints; also with the understanding that He may will any exercise at any time. Still, I am persuaded that when he leads into the appointment of a prayer service, he will also lead into the service of prayer.

The reason that the service is not consistent with the appointment, I suspect, is not that the Spirit's leading is inconsistent with itself, but that our allegiance to the Spirit is imperfect. We decline doing what he would have us do. One refuses to be led into uttered prayer, explaining that he cannot pray in public. Another refuses to be led into silent prayer, forgetting that God sometimes chooses stillness. So that, were both obedient, where one would furnish open petition and the other prayerful silence, both quench the Spirit with unauthorized exhortation. The blending of the emotions of all into tender, earnest prayer, which the Spirit would wisely accomplish, is frustrated, and instead, the hour is eaten up with spiritless song and lifeless talk. Is not this the experience of many "prayer-meetings," and have I not indicated correctly the source of such experience?

Actual praying is very hard work. Petition is more difficult than other exercises, requires deeper spirituality, more of the divine life. Hence comes its neglect. As we receive the mind of the Comforter we shall be more endowed for prayer, consequently will pray more. Let the leading of the Spirit be untrammelled by our judgment and fears, and I am persuaded that our prayer-meetings will pray.—*N. Y. Ex.*

HENRY MARTYN AT CAWNPORE.

The following deeply interesting reminiscence of Henry Martyn has been furnished to a recent number of *Mission Life*, by a correspondent who has resided in India:

"When Henry Martyn, during one period of his Indian career, was located at Cawnpore, then the largest of our military stations in Northern India, and the whole of the spiritual duties of that vast cantonment lay upon him, he nevertheless resolved to extend his labors beyond the soldiers and English residents, and to be in reality a missionary as well as a chaplain. He made what to some would no doubt appear a strange selection of objects on whom to bring his missionary zeal to bear. In his compound, or garden was a *chabootra*, a slightly raised platform of masonry, such as natives always have in their gardens, for the purpose of sitting in the hot summer evenings, where they may catch every breath of air. On this he used to gather together on Sunday afternoons all the *faqueers*, or Hindu devotees, of the neighborhood. Men deformed, filthy, and sometimes depraved, whose self-inflicted deformities and voluntary filth were accepted as marks of superior holiness. These men he would address in terms of most earnest exhortation and exhortation on the holiness and purity of the gospel.

"Overlooking this garden, and within hearing distance of the *chabootra*, stood a small *kiosk*, or summer-house, in which several young Mohammedans of the city were accustomed to assemble to smoke and interchange city gossip.

"They were always jeering and scoffing at the young *Feringhee Parde* (English clergyman) and his most un-

attractive and unpromising group of listeners. Among these young Mohammedans was one who distinguished himself by the coarseness and scurrility of his remarks. Being somewhat in advance of his companions in intelligence, he aspired to take the lead in abusing and insulting the unoffending chaplain.

However, one Sunday afternoon, some remark of Martyn's appeared to produce an unusual effect on the young scoffer. His whole manner underwent a change. He seemed to be listening with interest and attention, and almost with reverence, so much so that he drew down upon himself the jeers and taunts of his licentious companions. From that day it was noticed that his customary seat in the *kiosk* was empty. He was never seen there again. What had become of him?

"He was by occupation a bookbinder; and about this time he was required to bind a book for one of the English residents. The book was written in Hindostani. As the sheets were passing through his hands he glanced at the contents, and was struck at their marked similarity in language and thought to the addresses he had heard from the chaplain. He read it carefully through before returning it to the owner. It was a copy of the Hindostani translation of the New Testament which Henry Martyn had recently completed. And the result under the Divine blessing of that, 'chance word' shall I say?—that 'arrow shot at a venture,' and the earnest perusal of that book, led to the young scoffer becoming, after long and prayerful preparation, an ordained missionary in the church of Christ; and a very faithful and able preacher of that faith he once despised."

"LOT LINGERED."

In that strangely lingering man I see a type of every unconverted reader who holds this sheet in his hand. The duty of the moment for you is to escape to Jesus as the one "mountain of refuge." It must be prompt; for the Bible has no "to-morrow" in its offers of eternal life. Every promise of acceptance to the sinner bears the date of "to-day."

Your escape to Jesus must not only be prompt, it must be decisive. "Look not behind thee!" The angels knew well that the fascinations of gay and guilty Sodom would lay a strong grasp on Lot's household. Therefore, there must be no backward longings or backward lookings. So must it be with you. If you would escape hell, *look not behind*. Old indulgence and old habits will soon magnetize your heart as with a spell. If they do not stop you entirely, they will divide the mind; and a divided mind never wins a battle. Half a heart never carried a man to Jesus. You have got to give the Saviour all or none. "Ye shall seek for me and find me, when ye search for me with all the heart."

You claim that you are really on the road to Jesus, and are desirous to be saved. Lot's wife was on the road to safety, and yet she perished. She was warned of her danger; yet she was lost. She wanted to be saved; but she "looked behind her," and was turned into a monument of righteous retribution on the spot. Her fate is the more sorrowful and sickening because she perished in full view of Zoar, the mount of safety, and while on the direct road to it. Every congregation has in it more or less persons who have been awakened in past revivals. Their fears were excited. Their consciences troubled them. They attended inquiry meetings. They shed tears, and perhaps "rose for prayer" amid the wonder and joy of an assembly of God's people. Yet they were never converted. For "convert" means to turn into an opposite path, and they never turned away from their sins to their Saviour. Friend, here is your danger. You have not cut loose from sin, or cut loose from pride and self-reliance, or cut loose from what you once loved

most, and fastened your soul's grip on Jesus Christ. If you were to die this very night, probably your pastor would write beside your name, "Awakened, but not converted."

One more urgent direction was given to Lot and his family by the messenger of God: "Stay not in all the plain!" Never was a vale more verdant than the vale of Jordan beside the walls of Sodom. The fields were purpled with flowers, and perfumed with spices. But Lot was not to tarry long enough to pluck an ear of barley, or a purple cluster from the vines. The whole plain was under the coming curse of God. "Stay not in all the plain!"

I have seen a man shed tears under a plain sermon, and stop and tell his pastor afterwards how anxious he was to be a Christian. But nothing came of it. He lingered in the plain. I have stood by the bedside of a sick man, who fervently promised that if God would restore him, he would give to him the added days. He got well—but only to linger in the plain! Poor A—! How often he has promised me that he would give attention to his soul. But he is secretly bound by an evil habit which he will not renounce. He wants to get to heaven, but he will not "pluck out the right eye" of a favorite sin. Often awakened, he is not yet saved!

Still lingering in the plain, is many a one who reads this article. Let me lay hold upon you as the messenger did upon the household of Lot, and shout into your ears, "Escape for thy life! look not behind thee; neither stay thou in all the plain;" escape to Calvary lest thou be consumed! Quit the first sin that comes to hand! Do the first duty that comes to hand! You are only safe when you reach Christ.—*Z. L. Cuyler.*

THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL.

In the effort to get rid of the doctrine of future punishment, men have tried to destroy their own immortality and to persuade themselves that the soul is but another term for life, and that it belongs essentially to the body, so that when the latter ceases to be animated by the former, the person ceases to be, and becomes as if he had not been. This is, we believe, an old and crafty device of Satan, like that of the fool mentioned by the Psalmist, when he said in his heart, "No God!" We do not charge all who deny the immortality of the soul with doing so from this motive, nor do we affirm that they are in this matter personally under Satanic agency. Many do it thinking that by such means they get rid of some difficulties which present themselves in connection with the doctrine of retribution. We do think, however, that all error comes from the same source, and in propagating it we act in hostility to Christ and his gospel.

The *Christian Standard* has had a series of articles on "The Human Spirit,—its destiny." The following is one of these which treats directly on the Immortality of the Soul, and will doubtless be read with profit:

I purpose, in this number, to show that the human spirit survives the stroke of death and continues to exist in consciousness. On this point the Scriptures speak so repeatedly that the only difficulty is to determine which passages not to adduce.

Death is sometimes spoken of as sleep, because the body lies motionless in death as when asleep. Inactivity as to righteousness is also called sleep; in this sense Paul uses it in 1. Thess. v. 6, but in verse 10 he can only mean death by it: "Christ died for us that, whether we wake or sleep, we should live together with him." Here it is affirmed that because of Christ's death, even when the body is dead, the spirit

exists in happiness—"lives;" for this is the force of the word. This appears from 1. Thess. v. 8, where Paul says, "For now we [Paul, Silvanus and Timothy] live, if ye stand fast in the Lord;" that is, now we are happy, if you stand fast in the Lord. The word can here have no other sense; hence in chap. v. 10 the righteous are declared to be happy while the body is dead. But there can be no enjoyment without consciousness; hence my proposition is sustained, but sustained only as to the righteous. It remains that I prove the conscious existence, also, of the wicked dead.

"Now that the dead are raised, even Moses showed at the bush, when he called the Lord the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob. For he is not a God of the dead, but of the living; for all live unto him" (Luke xx. 37, 38). Jesus is here speaking to the Sadducees, who denied the possibility of a resurrection. Their reasoning was something like this: Man has no spirit, hence when he dies all consciousness is lost. Were even the same particles gathered together again and re-animated, the sense of conscious identity would be wanting; it would hence, at best, be a re-creation, not a resurrection. To this the Saviour replies that identity is not lost, inasmuch as man has a spirit that continues to exist, and so consciousness is preserved. That the spirit continues to exist, he proves by the writings of Moses, which the Sadducees admitted to be inspired. Moses calls the Lord "the God of Abraham, and the God of Isaac, and the God of Jacob." Abraham had been dead over four hundred years, and his grandson, Jacob, nearly two hundred. If they did not then exist, then God is the God of nonentities—the God of nothing. This is absurd. "He is not a God of the dead, but of the living"—Abraham, Isaac and Jacob live; and more than this, "all live unto Him." Here is an end of all debate: when the Lord speaks let all the earth keep silence. It is only necessary to add that, inasmuch as only conscious existence enters into the Saviour's argument, this is all that he here means to express by "live." This appears farther from the fact that he here speaks also of the wicked—"all live unto Him;" the wicked, we know, are not happy.

Though this part of the subject might now be dismissed, I will proceed to examine a few other passages. Sometimes the word soul is used by metonymy for spirit. This is the case in Matt. x. 28, "Fear not them which kill the body, but are not able to kill the soul: but rather fear him which is able to destroy both soul and body in hell." Language could not make it clearer that no man is able to put another out of conscious existence. When the body is killed the soul still exists. Though it does not properly belong to this part of my discussion to consider the last member of the above sentence, I will say, in passing, that "destroy" does not imply here rendering of its subjects unconscious, for the parallel passage in Luke xii. 4, reads, "after he hath killed hath power to cast into hell." Besides, the same Greek word, *apollumi*, is, in many places, translated by lose; as in Luke xv. 4, 6, 8, 9, 24, 32.

1 Peter iv. 6 furnishes a passage similar to Matt. x. 28. I translate it thus: "Indeed, for this purpose also was the Gospel preached to the dead, that though in the flesh they might be executed by men, they might yet live by God in the spirit." Here, again, have we the fact brought out that the spirit survives the stroke of death, with the additional thought that, as a compensation for the sufferings endured when persecuted to death, they should be happy through God in the spirit, hence not only without the body but before the resurrection also.

In the seventh of Hebrews Paul exhorts the brethren to steadfastness, points out the dreadful consequences of selling one's birthright to heaven, and institutes a contrast between the law and the Gospel, showing that the converts from Judaism have gained by