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WHOLE SERIES.
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Poetry.

A MISSIONARY HYMN.

"OVER THE SEA."

BY MARGARET MASON.

The sails are set, the anchor weighed,
Our ship goes sailing, sailing,
Come west winds from your cloudy cares,
In breezes never failing.

'Tis break of day, and far astern
I watch the seaweed drifting,
The coming dawn from off the sea,
The shades of night are lifting.

O, rays of light! from out the east
Ye bring the voice of warning,
Come, Holy Spirit, breathe on me
Thy comfort never failing.

To lands far off, for thee, O Christ,
I go to tell the story:
Shine thee upon that sea of souls,
And flood it with thy glory.

The joys I leave are but to me,
As seaweed idly drifting,
For on that sea of human souls
I watch the shadows drifting.

Ye west winds blow, thou ship speed on,
My hopes are with thee sailing,
O, Holy Spirit, breathe on me
In comfort never failing.

So shall my heart for work so great,
Be strong in its endeavor,
Until my soul above its fears
Is lifted up for ever.

Religious.

OUR PRAYER-MEETING.

Mr. Beecher's prayer-meeting has its reporters, but nobody has ever taken notes of ours. It is quite unknown to fame, and is so small that an addition of a single regular attendant is an important circumstance. When Mrs. Hartley and her daughter came to live at the Ridge House, next door, I expected to see them at church of course, but their appearance at the first Friday evening service was a joyful surprise. My dear niece Esther, who went to please me rather than herself, suffered uncommonly that evening from the little infelicities of the meeting. She listened for strangers to the harsh tones of Brother A. as he prayed that our pastor might "feel the burden of our souls weighing him to the ground, and might preach so as to fill this room with inquiring sinners;" thus suggesting that it was the pastor's fault if it was not full now. And Esther winced at good Brother B's usual repetition of God's sacred Name, once or even twice in every sentence of his prayer. Mr. C's warm heart broke out in such fervent pleading, so triumphant and tender, that I never minded the bad grammar; and then the minister led us into the green pastures of the Bible and fed us with honey out of the rock. I went home uplifted and refreshed.

Next morning, Esther and I stepped over to the Ridge House to offer our assistance in getting settled before Sunday. We carried some cakes and a pie fresh from the oven; for, as I said to Esther, "Since Mrs. Hartley is a Friday evening Christian, we can dispense with formalities and befriends at once." I believe I said as much to Mrs. H. herself, by way of friendly apology. She seemed delighted, and said there were indeed some curtains to finish, for which the workmen were waiting while she was needed to superintend some other matter. So we were quickly seated with Miss Hartley, amid high white piles of lace and muslin, and were at home with her in a trice.

"How very kind this is," said she with brightening eyes and color. "It was hard to sew alone his morning. I am so tired with our moving."

"You must be," answered Esther. "I wondered that you could go out to meeting last evening."

"It would have seemed unnatural to stay away," said Miss H. "Besides my mother thought it would rest us, and really, it did."

IT IS NOT INTERESTING.

"You will be more than welcome at the meeting," said Esther, "but I wish for your sake it was more interesting."

"We enjoyed it last night, replied Miss Hartley. "That man who spoke so brokenly said exactly what I needed and we were happy to find that we are to have such a good minister as Mr. Shepherd."

"I was afraid you would think the brethren pretty tedious," said Esther, glancing at the young lady and noticing, as no one could help doing, her air of refinement and elegance.

"But when one is tired it is very helpful to have others lift or lead the thoughts," answered Miss Hartley.

"I suppose some unpleasing things are to be taken for granted in any gathering of all sorts of people."

"And don't they make you nervous," asked Esther, eagerly, sure of sympathy at last. "I confess that I need my aunt's wish, my regard for Mr. Shepherd's feelings and my covenant vow—all three—to keep me constant at this particular ordinance. I think I should get more good by staying at home, and I cannot see that I am called upon to be interested in what is not interesting."

"My mother used to tell me," replied Miss Hartley, smiling, "that an 'interesting' meeting was not the object; and that, if we went to meet the Lord, nobody but ourselves could spoil our meeting."

"But what do you do when some dull or ambitious or foolish speech is made? Does not such an offense to one's taste hinder religious feeling?"

"Mother taught me, in such a case," answered Miss Hartley, "with a blush, 'to be praying for the speaker.' She said that whispering in that hidden way, as if into the ear of the Saviour, would bring us consciously near Him, and make us too humble and loving for criticism. And as nothing comes very much amiss, if we feel that Christ shares it, she thinks we can say, when anything is really bad, 'Lord, if Thou can't bear this I can.'"

"Miss Hartley," said I, "I foresee that you will do us a world of good. The young people have almost forsaken our prayer-meeting, and they need some one of their own age to bring them back. We old folks cannot do it, though we know they could make the meeting interesting by coming to it."

"MAKE IT INTERESTING."

"Now Aunt," protested Esther, "What can young ladies do?"

"Sing and pray, Esther, and set an example! Your voice cheers everybody in the vestry, and you know how you felt the help of Miss Hartley's alto last evening. The praise of God is a chief duty, and claims your zeal and is at the same time a chief attraction to the meeting. I suppose you know that if ten or twelve of our young ladies were regularly present and heartily alive about it, there are ten or twelve young gentlemen who would feel the influence and come too. Twenty or more new attendants would attract others."

"Not a particularly religious motive," laughed Esther.

"No. But it is always a great thing to create a right public opinion and a good habit, and those who come are in the way of getting good."

"Ah, that is the point in question," said Esther, and we dropped the subject.

"Well, the days went and came, and we and our new neighbors were soon the best of friends. They were lovely, said Esther, and so said we all. One evening when Mrs. Hartley was sitting with me on our piazza, Esther came pacing up the garden walk, and sat down at our feet. She was rather a brooding and timid mind, and I understood her when she said:

"Mrs. Hartley, what makes your Ellen so very cheerful? Was she born so?"

"No," answered Mrs. Hartley, "I think she had no unusual gift of cheerfulness."

"Then how did it come?" asked Esther.

"Love and trust brought it, I think," said her mother, "love to God and to all that he has made. She gets a great deal of love in return too, and that's cheering."

"But how can she love everybody?" exclaimed Esther.

"You must love them ere to you they will seem worthy of your love," quoted Mrs. Hartley.

"I have been waiting to ask you something," pursued Esther after a pause. "Ellen tells me you think so highly and expect so much of the evening prayer-meetings that I want to know if they do not disappoint you?"

"IMMANUEL IS THERE."

"No dear, I have great hopes about them, and meanwhile I get great good from them. You know we Christians are set here for service. We are those who have daily messages out of Heaven, and daily walk and talk with the King. The closer and more thrilling this is, the more we believe in the work we have to do, and in united prayer and effort, and in the power and coming of the Holy Ghost. The greatness of our object and the greatness of the glory and the unutterable reward, dignity the humblest gathering in the name of Christ. I don't think of it as our meeting; it is Christ's. He is a real presence there."

"But is this true of your home prayers too? Is not He really present there, and could not you pray there more undisturbedly?"

"LIVING CHRISTIANS LOVE IT."

"He would not be present with me at home, I think," said Mrs. Hartley, "at the time when I ought to be serving Him where His people are met together. But I love to go, I wish to be with those who love my Saviour."

"Still, why need they meet together," persisted Esther. "I am apt to think that my Christian life is between me and God."

"Ah, my dear child, the Christian life is not for self. It cannot thrive unless it goes out of itself in love and labor. It will either grow worldly, or else doubting and gloomy. I never knew it to fail, that a willing withdrawal from the prayer-meetings is accompanied by an evident decline of faith, love, and zeal. Isn't there a root difficulty when one wishes to isolate himself from the fellowship of Christians, and take no interest in united prayer for the dying world? How many of the promises are given to united prayer! And who ever heard of any work prospering where those who have charge of it have no consultation, no united action, no sympathy? Some must meet, and if any, all who can. If it is right for me to stay away it is right for all, and then where is the meeting? The exceptions only prove the rule?"

"WORKING CHRISTIANS NEED IT."

"Yes, I said, 'the prayer-meeting is not an arbitrary custom got up by the church, though, if it were, we have pledged to it our diligent attendance, as it is one of the church's chief ordinances. It is in the nature of things that fervent, striving souls, reaching after more knowledge of Christ, and bent on doing His work, should come together for prayer and mutual help. Persecution would keep them apart. Worldliness creeping in might do it. Forgive me, Esther."

"Yes, aunt," said Esther sadly, "I see. I seem to know nothing about Ellen's love and joy, and I am not living for Christ, but am thinking of every other duty first. So why should I care to be with Christians?"

"My darling child," said I, "if you see it there is every hope. You will begin anew with a real consecration to the Lord."

"Yes indeed," added Mrs. Hartley, and don't wait till you are a 'fervent striving soul' before you do distasteful duties. 'Just as I am,' must be the way of coming anew to Christ's service; in the coming comes the strength. In the doing comes the joy of duty. Then

Christ appears in His uplifting love, and satisfies us with ennobling pleasures.—*Congregationalist.*

THE AMERICAN BIBLE UNION.

We have been favored by an advance sheet of the 23rd Annual Report of the American Bible Union presented at the Annual meeting of the Union, at New York, on Wednesday last. Many of our readers will be interested in it, we therefore make the following extracts:

Heavenism depends upon fable. Romanism is a mixture of truth and falsehood. Christianity is pure truth. Science is truth discovered by man. Christianity is truth revealed by God. Science relates merely to the sensible and the temporal. Christianity embraces also the invisible and the eternal.

Mistakes in science may produce fearful disaster: an explosion; a conflagration; a collision of ships; a crash of cars; and the destruction of many human bodies.

But errors mingled with Christianity many trail their direful effects for centuries through all the social relations of a community, and the secret avenues of each human heart; and may consign generation after generation to the final ruin of those who know not God, and obey not our Lord Jesus Christ.

The foundation of Christianity is the Word of God. The whole superstructure must be reared on this, and on this alone.

Christianity can be permanently maintained in any community only by a version of the sacred Scriptures for the common people; and its exemplification in the conduct of the people will always be materially affected by the purity and faithfulness of that version. Religion will be in a great degree graduated by it. Hence the anxiety of true reformers to render the word of God faithfully to those for whom they labor.

God himself provided the inspired Scriptures for the early Christians. To rescue Europe from superstition and semi-barbarism, Wycliffe, Tyndale, Erasmus, Luther, and other worthies, had recourse to the pure word. In all evangelical missions, in modern times, it is found and realized, that a faithful version is indispensable to sustain and prolong the usefulness of the missionary, and to elevate the body of the people.

The progress of practical religion in the world has been marked by the history of versions of Scripture.

The introduction of the Gospel was closely followed by the writings of the Evangelists and Apostles. As the Gospel extended its way from nation to nation, it gave occasion for the early versions, many of which have become extinct. The Reformation produced the modern versions of Europe, by which it was sustained and perpetuated. The era of modern missions gave rise to the numerous translations and versions made in the last half century for the heathen.

The religious fervor of the Reformation gradually subsided. A new aspect of the question presented itself. Carey and Yates and Judson, in translating the New Testament, strictly followed out the Protestant doctrine. In accordance with the inspired Greek, they rendered "baptizo" and its cognates by corresponding terms in Bengali and Burmese. The British and Foreign Bible Society and the American Bible Society, when they were made acquainted with this fact, reversed the Protestant doctrine, and declared the COMMON ENGLISH VERSION the proper standard in such cases and refused to patronize any version which did not conform to it.

The American Bible Union was founded upon the original Protestant principle. Its model, and its only model, is the inspired original. Its object is to bring every version circulated under the whole heaven, as nearly as possible, into perfect accord with

that model, so as to express to each nation just what God expressed in the Hebrew and the Greek to those to whom they were originally addressed.

Our Spanish Testament has undergone three distinct and general revisions, with an interval of several years between the last two. The consequent improvement has been very marked.

Our Italian Testament has not passed through the same number of revisions. It was made originally in Malta and Italy, and was subsequently subjected to a prolonged revision in this country. Very many copies have been circulated, and it has undergone considerable examination by Italians, and scholars in other languages. It seems proper and desirable that it should now be subjected to a thorough revision. The remarkable opening for its circulation in Italy renders such a step the more obligatory at the present time.

For this object, the officers have held consultation with Rev. W. C. Van Meter, who is now a missionary in the city of Rome, and have placed in his hands one hundred and eighty volumes in paper covers, to be distributed by him among native Italian scholars, accompanied with the request that they will compare the translation with the original and give us their view on two points:

1. Its faithfulness as a translation.
2. Its idiomatic character in Italian.

We have also requested that they may note any errors or defects that they may discover in it, and propose needed improvements.

Rev. Dr. Lord writes to us from Ningpo that he has completed both of the versions which he has been engaged in preparing for the Bible Union; the one in the Chinese character, and the other in the Ningpo colloquial; and that he has begun a careful revision of each, before putting them to press.

Our Spanish Testament is still in great demand, both in America and Europe. The two thousand copies appropriated by us to John W. Butler, were distributed by him, personally, in the villages and towns surrounding the city of Mexico.

We have since appropriated for the use of Bro. Butler one thousand more copies.

Religious persecution has evidently recommenced in Mexico, as we judge from a letter addressed to us by three persons who have been made to feel the vengeful character of the Romish priesthood.

The leading missionary, "Mr. L.," located at Barcelona, writes:

"I am glad that you mention the Nuevo Pacto. I get continual profit from the clear and beautiful translation not having time to study the Greek as I would desire. From the little I have myself gleaned and obtained from other sources, I question if any new English translation will so fully express so many deeply important doctrinal parts of the Written word. If the translators had been born in Eastern lands, and known all the customs, proverbs, and idiomatic expressions, they could not express more clearly many things which have been hidden from sight of many European translators."

"As long as the people stretch out hands, we hope to have something to put into them of The Word of Life. I think, however, that now it would be time to send out large quantities, either from England or Spain to Cuba. There is no difficulty here, and we should be especially thankful for the Testament in the new, best translation."

There have been circulated within the last twelve months, in Spain, Mexico, and South America, more than six thousand copies of Our Spanish Scriptures. Of these, nearly five thousand of the complete Testament have been distributed in Spain and Cuba. This will make nearly ten thousand copies in these lately benighted countries within the last three years. The whole number of bound copies of