

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.
Vol. XVII., No. 4.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, January 24, 1872.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXVI., No. 4.

Poetry.

THE LOST SHEEP.

There were ninety and nine that safely lay
In the shelter of the fold;
And one was out on the hills away,
Far off from the gates of gold:
Away from the mountains wild and bare—
Away from the tender Shepherd's care.
"Lord, thou hast here the ninety and nine—
Are they not enough for thee?"
But the Shepherd made answer, "This of mine
Has wandered away from me:
And, although the roads be rough and steep,
I go to the desert to find my sheep."
But none of the ransomed ever knew
How deep the water crissed;
Nor how dark the night that the Lord passed
through,
Ere he found his sheep that was lost,
Out in the desert he heard its cry,
Sick, and helpless, and ready to die.
"Lord, whence are those blood-drops all the
way
That mark out the mountain's track?"
"They were shed for one who had gone astray
Ere the Shepherd could bring him back."
"Lord, whence are thy hands so rent and
torn?"
"They were pierced to-night by many a
thorn."
And all through the mountains, thunder-
riven,
And up from the rocky steep,
There rose a cry to the gates of heaven,
"Rejoice, I have found my sheep!"
And the angels echoed around the throne,
"Rejoice, for the Lord brings back his own!"
—Little Sower.

Religious.

MR. SPURGEON IN ROME.

The following letter appeared in the London *Daily Telegraph* from a correspondent in Rome. Whether it is a faithful representation of Mr. Spurgeon and what he said, on the occasion referred to, we have no means of determining. Supposing it to be so, and not tinged at all to his disadvantage, we think that what he said cannot be wholly approved. Much as we admire him and still rejoice in his work, for the vast amount of good he is doing, we believe him far from infallible, even in Rome. The parody on Emmanuel seems almost bordering on profanity, and might well shock the religious sensibilities of many of the more strait-laced people; and yet to him doubtless it was no more improper than addressing the Divine Being as a Monarch or Sovereign, as we do commonly, the same name which we apply to a temporal ruler; and yet we are not conscious of irreverence in so doing. The fact of Mr. Spurgeon preaching in Rome, is a striking "sign of the times" in which we live:—

Rome, Dec. 13.

The greatest—nay, the sole—event of importance which has occurred in Rome during the last few days is the arrival of Mr. Spurgeon, and his intended sojourn here till the 15th instant. Mr. Spurgeon in Rome! How strange do those words sound! The enemy of monks and nuns, the denouncer of idolatry and Mariolatry, the foremost among Dissenters in the greatest Dissenting country on the face of the earth, has arrived in the city of Pius IX.—the city, I should rather say, which once belonged to Pius IX.—and preached a sermon against Popery within a trumpet's call of the Vatican; for the Pope's residence is too far from the Piazza del Popolo to admit of my talking about "a stone's throw,"—as I was prompted to do—unless, indeed, the "stone" were hurled from a sling, and the "throw" were the action of a new David armed to do battle with a new Goliath. Did I choose to be allegorical, I might insinuate that the sermon was a moral stone cast at the successor of St. Peter; but I will not call

Mr. Spurgeon by anyone else's name, nor term his discourse anything but a sermon. Although Mr. Spurgeon has in a material sense of the words, "gone over to Rome," in the spirit he has been as far away as ever—nay, further than before; for, like Luther, he has seen the Papal city with his bodily eyes, and hates the religion against which he "protests" all the more bitterly for having done so. He described Rome, in one of the most eloquent sermons he ever preached, as an "idolatrous city," and he warned his hearers against idolatry in terms as startling as they were persuasive, with a look and gesture worthy of a really great actor, which he undoubtedly is.

The sermon of Sunday morning was delivered in the Presbyterian Church, outside the Porta del Popolo, the regular minister of which is Dr. Lewis; not the Established Scotch Church, inside the walls, of which the minister is Mr. Paton. The audience was very large; the interest, both of old and young, intense; the oration a perfect triumph. Of the text I say nothing—for many reasons, one of which is, that I have forgotten it. Yes! I am ashamed to confess it. I paid so much attention to the discourse that I forget, and cannot now call to mind, the words with which it began—albeit those words were sacred. But the text and the discourse had, I know, little to do with each other; the former was the apology for the latter, now the groundwork on which it was built up; and, while the one made us thoughtful, the other made us alternately sad and merry—brought tears into our eyes and laughter to our lips, and made us forget at times, though not for long, in whose house we were, and whose cause the speaker was pleading before us. Perhaps the word "laughter" may appear too shocking; let us, then, say, some of Mr. Spurgeon's remarks caused smiling—loud smiling; but do not forget the real merits of the man—his earnestness and pathos, his fine voice, and his great command over the English language. Perhaps the boldest thing Mr. Spurgeon ever said in his life was said in his running comments before the sermon, while reading a chapter of Scripture. Somehow or other, he introduced Rome and Roman affairs into his discourse, and raising his hands and eyes at the same time—the hands clasped, the eyes turned up to the ceiling—he broke out, without warning or preparation of any kind, in the following terms: "O Victor Emmanuel! O Emmanuel of Heaven, thou true Victor! Help the Italians, bless and sanctify their cause, and make them prosperous." I do not think the cry of "Fire!" "Stop thief!" uttered in the middle of the sermon would have caused much more sensation than this prayer did; some of the congregation looked frightened, some indignant, some painfully amused; a few old ladies seemed as if they would rush out of the church, but being too far from the door, kept their seats; others appeared bewildered, hardly knowing whether to laugh or to cry, and quite beside themselves. Others, again—and they formed the greater portion of the congregation, both as regards men and women—sat, as it were, spell-bound and devout-looking, wondering what would come next, and prepared apparently for any change, no matter how violent, from grave to gay, from passion to grim humour. The change came, and came adroitly—came before it was possible to laugh or to feel really angry; and tears, worked up from the depths of the heart, came to the eyes of those who a moment before cast looks of reproach and misgiving at this singular preacher. "Is this man an actor or a servant of God?" asked a pious-looking lady of her husband as they left the church together. "Can't say," answered the gentleman, putting on his hat; "perhaps a little of both." That is just what I felt, and I am convinced that many members of the congregation felt and thought in the same way by the time the sermon was over.

Like most of Mr. Spurgeon's sermons, the discourse of Sunday abounded in anecdotes, all happily chosen, all pointed and well told; some of them pathetic, others exceedingly funny. The story of the "Monk and the Convent Bell" was very effective, although a little hackneyed. Who has not read in his childhood of the good friar, praying in his cell before the Vision of Our Saviour, who, at the very moment the Vision was on the verge of speaking, was called away to give bread to the poor? If anyone has forgotten the legend, let him read Miss Christian Rossetti's poem on the subject, and he will find how, when the monk returned to his cell, fearing he had done wrong in going away, the Vision addressed him in these or similar terms: "Be not afraid, thou faithful servant; thou hast done well, and not ill. Hadst thou forgotten the poor I had forgotten thee; hadst thou carried with me I had departed." Mr. Spurgeon's story of the young preacher who broke down in his prayer caused some of the "loud smiling" to which I have already referred. It was the case of a tyro in preaching, who meant well, but could not say much, partly in consequence of shyness, partly of incapacity. "I like that young man," said Mr. Spurgeon, "and I like him because he broke down. O, what a good thing it would be if some ministers of our acquaintance would only break down when they are in the midst of a long prayer!" The shortest prayer noticed was that of a man who would make no prayer at all. It was a soldier on the morning of a battle. Before girding on his sword to fight in a righteous cause, he looked towards the table where his Bible lay, and then towards heaven. "Gracious Lord!" he exclaimed, "to-day will be a busy day, and I fear I shall have no time to say my prayers. But if I forget Thee do not Thou forget me!" Mr. Spurgeon brought his sermon to a conclusion by calling on his hearers to help him and each other in the good work that lay before them, and do all they could to convert the "idolatrous city" in which they had taken up their residence. At the end of the service there was a collection, and the famous English preacher was invited by a friend of Father Gavazzi to deliver a sermon in the Italian Protestant church in Piazza Trajana. As Mr. Spurgeon cannot speak Italian, an interpreter was engaged, and thus it happened that two preachers were to be heard preaching one sermon—a strange medley, for the Italian spoke little English, and the Englishman no Italian; and between them both the audience was confounded, and the sermon a failure.

The London *Freeman* in noticing Mr. Spurgeon's visit to the city of the seven-hills says:—
From Rome we hear that Mr. Spurgeon preached in the Scotch church in that city, on Sunday week, to a crowded congregation. He seems to have also preached in a Protestant Italian church, where his sermon was interpreted (but not very successfully) to the native congregation. The correspondent of the *Echo* states that he has since been "interviewed" by two priests in civilian costume, but, having unmasked them, he declined to enter into the controversy they proposed, except upon a public platform, where, he said, he would be glad to meet them. We shall expect to receive from Mr. Spurgeon, on his return to England, some account of his visit to the Italian capital, and we anticipate that the record of what he has seen and felt during his sojourn in that city will give a most beneficial impulse to the sympathy which is felt by the Christian churches of England with those who are labouring in Rome for the evangelising of its people, and especially with the endeavours that are being made to bring the rising generation under the influence of wholesome education.

Speaking much is a sign of vanity; for he that is lavish in words is a niggard in deed.—*Sir Walter Raleigh*.

Posthumous charities are the very essence of selfishness, when bequeathed by those who when alive would part with nothing.—*Colton*.

THE LATE MRS. JOHN VINE HALL.

The following literary gem is from the *Christian World*. Besides its beauty as a piece of composition its subject is one that will interest many of our readers who have heard of her devoted husband and his famous tract.

Perhaps we have a little a personal interest in this article, having in our boyhood attended the church at Maidstone, where Mr. John Vine Hall was then the senior deacon.

On Monday, December 4th, Mrs. John Vine Hall, widow of the author of the well-known tract, "The Sinner's Friend," died at St. Leonard's, at the advanced age of eighty-four years, after a few days' illness. On the principle that honour should be done to the mothers of distinguished men, no little praise is due to this noble, God-fearing matron. In the highest and best sense she was the mother of all her sons, every one of whom has in his own sphere attained distinction, and in some instances renown. The Rev. Newman Hall, the Rev. Arthur Hall, Captain Vine Hall, Mr. Richard Hall, publisher at Oxford, Mr. Warren Hall, and Mr. Stephen Hall—all these called her mother. Well might she have been proud of such an accumulation of honours, and possibly she was; but there was such a beautiful blending of Christian simplicity and matronly dignity in her character, that not the slightest semblance of assumption ever betrayed itself. To her belongs the double honour of having been the making of her sons, and of having done it without rendering herself prominent. Some of them are now becoming elderly men, and none of them are under forty, but they all "arise and call her blessed." The deceased lady was pre-eminently a lover of good men, and one who honoured the servants of Christ for their Master's sake. For thirty years, during her residence at Maidstone and elsewhere, she was in the habit of receiving into her house most of the ministers who came as deputations, supplies, &c. Robert Hall, J. A. James, Dr. Leifchild, and other eminent men were often there; but those of the humblest name were equally honoured with the most distinguished.

The funeral at Abney-park Cemetery on Friday last was a beautiful specimen of Christian burial. The mortal remains were conveyed from the house of the Rev. Arthur Hall, of Edmonton, where she had of late resided, followed by three mourning coaches containing the family of the departed. There was no undertakers' pomp, no plumes, no empty carriages, no mourning-cloaks or scarves, not even a pall. The edge of the coffin was decorated with ivy, and on arriving at the cemetery one of the sons of the departed placed on the centre of the coffin a white cross composed of azaleas and lilies of the valley, while another of her children placed a wreath of similar flowers on the head, and a third a corresponding wreath on the foot of the coffin. A copy of "The Sinner's Friend" was also placed on the coffin lid, opened at the chapter, "A Word to the Poor," which was contributed to her husband's tract by the deceased lady. The little chapel was filled with sympathising friends, amongst whom were the Revs. Edward White, E. G. Cecil, N. Jennings, G. M. Murphy, and H. Grainger, assistant minister of Surrey Chapel, together with the elders and many of the members of Surrey Chapel (of which Mrs. Hall was a member) and a number of the poor of the flock from Edmonton. The funeral service was conducted by the sons of the deceased, Newman and Arthur Hall, who did not ascend the pulpit, but stood on the floor at the head of the coffin. The Burial Service of the Church of England was read, and at the close of the first part of it, Mr. Arthur Hall said, "Very shortly before her death, our beloved mother, after repeating her favourite hymn, 'There is a house not made with hands,'

ejaculated, 'Come, Lord Jesus, come quickly, and take me home.' A friend said, 'But do you want to leave us?' She replied, 'I love you all still, but Jesus is more to me than all, more than all besides. And then I know my children will all follow me, for I have prayed for them, and believe in prayer.' A walking procession was then formed to the tomb, which adjoins that of the late pastor of Surrey Chapel, the Rev. James Sherman. On arriving at the grave, around which stood all her sons and daughters, with her sons-in-law and daughters-in-law and many of their children, the Burial Service was continued by Mr. Arthur Hall and concluded by Mr. Newman Hall, who, at the close of the last prayer, spoke as follows:—

"The tears we shed this day are tears of love, not anguish; of gratitude, not regret. We bless our mother's God for the best inheritance of a holy example, and a life of earnest prayer. We bless the 'God of all consolation' for memories beautiful with earthly love, and hopes radiant with heavenly glory. We bless the Lord of the harvest for gathering in this shock of corn fully ripe. We bless the Lord of the way for so peaceful a close to so long a pilgrimage. We bless Him who abolished death, and holds the keys of the unseen world, for so lovely an end to so lovely a life. An end! Not so; End of sorrow—beginning of bliss; end of the pilgrimage—entrance to home; end of death—dawn of life. Best and dearest of mothers! Thou livest still! In our memories, which will ever enshrine thee. In our hearts, which will ever embrace thee. And will not thy Spirit, though unseen, sometimes minister to us, as we travel on after thee? Thou livest still!—thou art not in this cold grave! Thou hast rejoined our sainted father, the husband who adored thee as the angel guardian of his life. Thou hast embraced the little ones whom Jesus took from the reluctant bosom to train in the nursery of heaven. Thou hast been welcomed by friends gone before who have long been waiting for thee to rejoin them; by many of the Lord's servants, whom it was so great a joy to thee to receive under thy roof; by multitudes of the Lord's poor, whom it was thy privilege and delight to succour and console; by very many rescued from sin, and led to the Saviour, through thy loving counsel and fervent prayers. Thou hast been welcomed by the glorious company of heaven, for whose congenial society thou wast made so meet; and by thy gracious Saviour whom, like the Mary of Bethany, thou didst so reverentially and ardently love. And now thou wilt be ready to welcome us, when we also are called to cross the narrow stream. Yes! we will not disappoint thee! Thou shalt embrace us again and for ever. We, thy children and children's children, standing round this open grave where their ashes repose, swear by the God of our father and mother that we will walk worthy of your prayers! we will imitate your example! we will serve your Saviour! we will join you in your home! Dear mother! we will not leave thee, nor return from following after thee; for whither thou goest we will go, and where thou dwellest we will dwell; thy people shall be our people, and thy God our God."

During the delivery of this address there were but few dry eyes in the assembly. It was evidently with great difficulty that the sons who officiated at their mother's interment were able to command themselves for so trying a service. After the benediction the Doxology was sung, and many gave a last long look into the grave, which was beautiful and fragrant with the many flowers which covered the coffin. And there they left her, on that cold, bright winter's day, slumbering with the beloved husband who had preceded her thither, until the brighter morning of the resurrection.

As the fire-fly only shines when on the wing, so it is with the human mind,—when at rest, it darkens.