

# The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

NEW SERIES.  
Vol. XVIII., No. 8.

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, February 19, 1873.

WHOLE SERIES.  
Vol. XXXVII., No. 8.

## Poetry.

### UNDER THE SNOW.

BY REV. T. HEMPSTEAD.

It is pleasant to think, just under the snow  
That stretches so bleak, and blank and cold,  
Are beauty and warmth that we cannot know,  
Green fields and leaves, and blossoms of gold.

Yes, under this frozen and dumb expanse,  
Ungladdened by bee, or bird, or flower,  
A world where the leaping fountains glance,  
And the buds expand, is waiting its hour.

It is hidden now; not a glimmer breaks  
Through the hard blue ice and the sparkling drift;  
The world shrinks back from the downy flakes  
Which out of the folds of the night-cloud sit.

But as fair and real a world it is  
As any that rolls in the upper blue;  
If you wait you will hear its melodies,  
And see the sparkle of fount and dew.

And often now, when the skies are wild,  
And hoarse and sullen the night-winds blow,  
And the lanes and hollows with drifts are piled,  
I think of the violets under the snow.

I look in the wind flower's tremulous eye,  
I hear the chirp of the ground-bird brown,  
A breath from the budding grove steals by,  
And the swallows are dipping above the town.

So there, from the outer sense concealed  
It lies, shut in by a veil of snow;  
But there, to the inward eye revealed,  
Are bouquets that blossom, and flowers that glow.

The lily shines on its bending stem,  
The crocus opens its April gold,  
And the rose utters its diadem  
Against the floor of the winter's cold.

And that other world, to my soul, I say,  
That veiled and mystic world of the dead,  
Is no further away on any day,  
Than the lilies just under the snow we tread.

## Religious.

### SONGS IN THE NIGHT.

God our maker "giveth songs in the night." So said Elthu to Job.

The Apostle Paul and his companion Silas had scarcely begun their ministry in Europe, when they were seized by order of the magistrates of Philippi, and cast into prison. Racked with pain, as they must have been, sleepless and weary, they were heard at midnight, from the depth of their prison house, praying and singing praises unto God.

In all this Paul and Silas were not singular. God gives songs in the night to His faithful people.

When Samuel Rutherford was sentenced to imprisonment in the city of Aberdeen, "for righteousness" sake, he wrote to a friend, "The Lord is with me; I care not what man can do. I burden no man, I want nothing. No king is better provided than I am, Sweet, sweet and easy is the cross of my Lord. All men I look in the face, of whatsoever rank—nobles, poor, acquaintance and strangers, are friendly to me. My Well-Beloved is kinder and more warm than ordinary, and cometh and visiteth my soul; my chains are over-gilded with gold. No pen, no words, no engine can express to you the loveliness of my only Lord Jesus. Thus, in haste, I make for my palace at Aberdeen."

When Madame Guyon was imprisoned in the castle of Vincennes, in 1695, she not only sang, but wrote songs of praise to her God. "It sometimes seemed to me," she said, "as if I were a little bird whom the Lord had placed in a cage, and that I had nothing now to do but sing. The joy of my heart gave a brightness to the objects around me. The stones of my prison looked in my eyes like rubies. I esteemed them more than all the gaudy brilliancies of a vain world. My heart was full of that joy which thou givest to them that love thee in the midst of

their greatest crosses," a sentiment which she embodied during one of her imprisonments in a touching little poem which begins thus:

"A little bird I am,  
Shut from the fields of air,  
And in my cage I sit and sing  
To Him who placed me there;  
Well pleased a prisoner to be,  
Because, my God, it pleaseth Thee."

A good man in great trouble kept repeating, "Why art thou cast down, O my soul?" His wife, at length, asked why he did not rehearse the rest of the passage, "Hope thou in God; for I shall yet praise Him" There are "songs in the night" for all if they will but look to Him.

### ALMOST A REVIVAL.

A church sometimes comes very near a revival and then misses it. The impending blessing proves like the morning cloud and the early dew, and vanishes away. Many causes may contribute to such a disastrous failure, but one of the commonest is want of a sufficient desire for the blessing. "Whatsoever things ye desire," says our Lord, in giving the conditions of prevailing prayer. Desire is as really a condition precedent as faith. Zion must travail before souls are born. And the desire must be in some measure commensurate with the value of the favor.

If a son comes to his father and says in a careless tone, "Father, please to send me to college," and without waiting for the answer, turns to his sports and shows by his whole demeanor that that he has forgotten what he asked for, the father, though it be the object nearest his heart to give his boy a liberal education, does not grant such a flippant request. And yet this is precisely the character of much of the prayer offered for a revival—a blessing of infinitely greater value, and one which God is waiting to bestow. A broad barrier of indifference is thrown across the channel which is already flooding with the water of life.

"We must," said Jeremy Taylor, "follow our petitions up to the throne of grace and stand waiting for the answer."

The history of every great revival proves that this earnest desire is a fixed condition of success. It is only where there is importunity, and such importunity as rises almost into irreverence when the language of the Church becomes that of the patriarch, "We will not let thee go except thou bless us," that she prevails.

And this is unquestionably the reason why poor and struggling churches are so much more frequently revived than those which are popular and wealthy—the one being satisfied with Laodicean complacency, "We are rich and increased in goods and have need of nothing," while the other cries out over the waves of financial distress, "Help, Lord, or we perish." And the church as a body must come into this posture.

Where the Gospel is preached in a mission, God may pour out His Spirit in answer to one man's prayer of faith, but where there is a church that prayer must become general and united, the members must be of one accord in one place before the pentecostal power is received from on high. A revival even in the largest church may indeed begin in answer to the prayer of a single member.

Dr. Beecher says of his first revival in East Hampton, that revival which did so much to mold his own career as a minister, that while listening, at a meeting of Synod in Newark, to Dr. Griffin's account of a recent work of grace in his own church, "The fire caught in our bosoms and we determined to go back to our dark parishes and labor for a revival." At first, he says, it was like Elijah praying without a cloud in the sky, and people as they listened to his earnest words, wondered what signs of a revival he saw. But at length a bed-ridden member sent for him and told him he had been praying for a revival, and praying for each member, beginning at one

house, and then going to the next until he had canvassed the whole town by his prayer. Twenty-four hours did not elapse from this interview before in an outstation a little cloud was seen in the sky, and soon, as the Doctor afterwards expressed it, "the flood was rolling all around."

When a single soul in a church receives the Baptism of the Holy Spirit, it is like a fire kindled in a large pile on a dark winter's night. Currents of air begin instantly to set toward it from every point of the compass, and soon the whole pile is ablaze, and its light is seen from afar.

It is a sad thing for a single individual to be almost persuaded to be a Christian, to come so near the threshold of the strait gate that one step more would carry him through, and then to turn back, and like a full freighted vessel sink in the very mouth of the harbor.

Infinitely more calamitous is it for a church to be almost but not altogether revived, to receive a few big bright mercy drops and then to remain for long years like the mountains of Gilboa where neither rain nor dew descended.

To every such church standing today before a wide and effectual door as the poor widow stood before the door of the unjust judge, there comes from the other side the voice of the Master in these few and weighty words, "Shall not God avenge his own elect who cry day and night unto him? I tell you that he will avenge them speedily."—*Evangelist.*

### HYMN-SINGING.

"Kitty, do you always mean what you say?"

"Yes, Grace, I think so; at least I try to be quite sincere. But of course words come to our lips so quickly that it is difficult to think about every one of them. But I really strive to be careful as far as I can. Why do you ask?"

"I ask because I want to know whether other people find it as hard as I do to be thoroughly truthful. I believe that to speak the truth, and only the truth, is the very hardest thing in all the world."

"I almost think it is. I am often tempted to color things a little when I am relating a fact that has happened. It seems rather dull and uninteresting, if one tells it exactly as it happened."

"Then it is better not to tell it at all, Kitty."

"Yes, I suppose it is."

"And yet I am not sure that the truth is really dull and uninteresting. It does not need any of our exaggeration. But we are apt to use words stronger than are really necessary."

"Yes, we are: only this morning I told mamma that it poured, but really it only rained rather fast. I have seen rain come down much more heavily than it did then."

"That is what I mean. It is so easy to say what is nearly but not quite true."

"And yet I think it is very bad and disgraceful to allow ourselves to be untrue."

"Yes, I feel that it is, Kitty. I wish we could be perfectly true."

"I think we may, if we pray earnestly, and watch ourselves. But, Grace, I will tell you one way in which I am afraid we are often untrue, and that is in hymn-singing."

"How can that be?"

"I will tell you what I did this morning. I sang several hymns over, because I like them so much, and the tunes are so pretty. Old Mrs. Clarke heard me sing—

"Jesus, the very thought of Thee  
With sweetness fills my breast;  
But sweeter far Thy face to see,  
And in Thy presence rest."

and Mrs. Clarke asked me if I really meant it."

"What did you say?"

"I was so surprised that I scarcely knew what to say. But she waited for an answer, so I told her that I had not

thought of it before. 'Had you not, my child?' she said very gravely. 'I hope you are not mocking Jesus by telling him that his name is sweet to you, when you care neither for him nor his name.' It made me feel quite miserable, Grace."

"I should think it would. I have never thought of it before, but of course it is a dreadful thing to sing words to Jesus which we do not mean. It is like telling lies to him, and yet I am afraid I have often done it."

"What can we do, Grace?"

"I do not know. I should not like to leave off singing hymns."

"Neither should I, because I enjoy them so much. I wish—"

"What do you wish, Kitty?"

"That we could mean the hymns as well as sing them."

"So do I, Kitty. I suppose we are not too young to love Jesus, and if we loved him we could sing all our hymns quite sincerely. I have often wished I were a Christian."

"So have I, but I do not know the way to become one."

The two girls forgot Christ's own words, "I am the Way, the Truth and the Life."

The next day was Sunday. They both thought of what they had said when the hymns were given out.

The first was—

"Sweet is the work, my God, my King,  
To praise Thy name, give thanks and sing,  
To show Thy love by morning light,  
And talk of all Thy truth at night."

Kitty felt as if she dare not sing it.

"It is not true, and of course He knows it," she said to herself, "so I had better be silent."

During the prayer Kitty knelt with the rest. But she did not pray. She was thinking of all sorts of things. She generally did on Sundays. The place was quiet, and there seemed nothing to do but think. But on this Sunday morning her thoughts were chiefly occupied with the subject of hymn-singing.

Suddenly, however, another thought came into her mind.

"It must be as bad to kneel down and pretend to pray without really doing so."

Then Kitty felt quite unhappy.

"I did not think I was nearly as bad as I find I am," she thought. "I wish I loved God, and liked to pray, then I should not let my thoughts wander about so, while other people are worshipping him."

And then Kitty did the best thing she could do, for she silently told God all about it.

"O Lord, I want to love Thee; but I am afraid I do not. I want to mean the hymns I sing, and to like to pray to thee. Please make me. Let me be changed into a better girl, and be a real Christian. Please forgive me, and bless me, and make me what I want to be, for Jesus Christ's sake. Amen."

It was very strange, but Kitty felt quite certain that her prayer was heard and answered, and it made her wonderfully happy, so happy that she could not help thanking God for the joy which he had given her.

When the minister finished his prayer the congregation sang the hymn—

"Just as I am, without one plea,  
But that Thy blood was shed for me,  
And that Thou bid'st me come to Thee,  
O Lamb of God, I come!"

Kitty sang it with her whole heart, for she meant every word of it. And it was the same when the last was sung—

"How sweet the name of Jesus sounds."

You may be sure that as soon as possible she told her friend Grace about it.

"O Kitty!" said she, "I wish it were the same with me."

"It will be, Grace," said Kitty. "Ask God for it, and I will ask him too. You cannot think what a difference it makes when you sing the hymns to Him, instead of merely singing them because the tunes and words are pretty."

But Grace soon knew for herself the joy of being a Christian, for she, too, came to Jesus, and you know he has promised to cast out none who come to him.

It is not all girls who are such great hymn-singers as truth-loving Kitty and Grace. But I think it would be well for my little readers generally to ask themselves whether they mean the hymns they sing.—*Christian World.*

### PRAYING TO THE SAINTS—A CONVERSATION.

Translated from the German by S. F. SMITH, D. D.

*Catholic.* Why do not you Protestants pray to the saints?

*Protestants.* Because we believe it to be better to apply directly to Him who can hear our prayers.

*Catholic.* But do you not know that when a subject wishes to obtain anything from his sovereign, he is obliged to seek the intervention of another, that he may the more easily gain access to the king?

*Protestant.* Very true; but if the king's son were to stand at the palace door, calling out to those who were desirous of approaching his father—"Come unto me, all ye that are weary and are heavy laden and I will give you rest," would you insult him by applying to the king's servants?

*Catholic.* In that case it would be better to apply to the king's son.

*Protestant.* Well, these words which I have put into the mouth of an earthly king's son, are the words of the Son of God to all sinners who feel that they need to go to the Father. You will find them in Matt. 11: 28.

HERE is an anecdote told by one minister about another: A certain presiding elder, who was noted for being seldom up to time, seldom very animated, and seldom very brief, once kept a congregation waiting a long time for his appearance, and when at last he did come, he preached them a very prosy sermon of unusual length, on the text, "Feed my lambs." He had not yet finished when that original old minister known as "Camp-meeting John," rose from a seat in the congregation, and said: "Brother, I have had some experience in raising lambs myself, and I have found that the following rules are absolutely essential to successful lamb-raising: First, give them their food in season; second, give them a little at a time; and third, give it to them warm."

It is a great mistake to suppose that a woman with no heart will be an easy creditor in the exchange of affection. There is not on earth a more merciless exactor of love from others than a thoroughly selfish woman; and the more unlovely she grows the more jealously and scrupulously she exacts love to the uttermost farthing.—*Mrs. Stowe.*

### TRIAL.

You can't stand it! Why not? Others have had a much harder time than you. You have not been used well! Very likely. A great many have not been used well; but that is no reason why they should kill themselves. You don't mean to kill yourself, but go where they will use you better! Is that the best way? Now, is it not better to think more of how you use others, and less of how they use you? Think of it a while. Was Jesus always used well? Were the apostles always used well? What then! Did they run from the cause? Let me tell you what to do. "Take unto you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand." Why, bless you, trial is for your good. Stop the paper! Better take two. That is the way to come out ahead of the "what do you call it" that is in you. Endurance is a part of the Christian life, vastly harder work than building fair walls of outer decorum. Some