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Poetry.

CHARITY.

If we knew the cares and crosses
Crowding round our neighbor's way,
If we knew the little losses,
Sorely grievous, day by day,
Would we then as often chide him
For his lack of thrift and gain,
Leaving on his heart a shadow,
Leaving on our minds a stain?

If we knew the clouds above us
Held but gentle blessing there,
Would we turn away all trembling
In our blind and weak despair?
Would we shrink from little shadows
Flitting o'er the dewy grass,
If we knew the birds of Eden
Were in mercy flying past!

If we knew the silent story
Quivering through the heart of pain,
Would we drive it with our coldness
Back to haunts of vice again?
Life hath many a tangled crossing,
Joy hath many a break of woe;
But the cheeks tear-washed are whitest,
Kept in life are flowers of snow.

Let us reach into our bosoms
For the key to other lives,
And with love toward erring nature,
Cherish good that still survives;
So that when our disordered spirits
Soar to realms of light above,
We may say, "Dear Father, love us,
E'en as we have shown our love."

Religious.

THE AVERAGE PRAYER-MEETING.

Dr. Holland, in *Scribner's Monthly* for September, complains of "the average prayer-meeting." He finds it wanting in spontaneity, and declares it to be "a sad mockery to God and man." His description is as follows:

"In a church of, say two hundred and fifty members, there is an average attendance of fifty persons. These are made up, so far as the men are concerned, of the principal church officials—the deacons, elders, &c. The remainder are women—the best women of the church, and such of their families as they can induce to accompany them. The clergyman, overworked, and discouraged by the small number in attendance, is there to lead. He gives out his hymn, prays, reads the Scriptures, and with a few remarks, 'throws open the meeting' to the laymen for prayers or exhortation. There is a long period of silence. The deacons, who suspect that their voices have been heard too often, or that they may be in the way of others, remain silent. At last, either one of them is called on by the pastor, or some poor man, under the spur of a sense of duty, rises and utters, as well as he can, the words of a prayer. Everybody sees that he is in a struggle, and that he is so little at home that he is only anxious to get through without breaking down. The audience is, of course, sympathetic, and, instead of being led in prayer, becomes as anxious for him as he is for himself. And so, with long patches of embarrassing and painful silence, interspersed with dreary platitudes of prayer and speech, unrefreshing and lacking spontaneity to a sad degree, the meeting goes on to the end, which comes when the chapel clock shows that an hour has been spent in the service."

That there have been such prayer-meetings no one will deny; but that such a description truly represents the average prayer-meeting in any of the denominations of Christians in which prayer-meetings are found, we do not believe. The picture is overdrawn—a common fault in Dr. Holland's sketching. But granting that the facts were as given above, the remedy which is proposed is a singular one. Dr. Holland would have a liturgy prepared for social use, one "so full of the detail of common wants, and so appreciative of the aspirations of the people, as to be the best possible expression of social worship and common petitions." A social service might thus be arranged, something which would be a substitute for the prayer-meeting, but it would not, we believe meet the wants of Christian hearts. If we mistake not, what is needed is not form, but earnest, devout Christian men and women. Their words may be few and broken, their thoughts not clearly expressed, but they have an experience to relate,

an exhortation to give, a prayer to offer; and as the hour of the meeting comes to a close, how is the soul made to testify, "this is none other but the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." No, not more form, but more life, more of the indwelling Spirit of God, is wanting; and if the prayer-meeting that Dr. Holland attends is like the one he describes, while no form of words will make it better, we believe a remedy may be found in a more complete consecration of its members to Christ and His church.—*Ex.*

A TREASURE EXHUMED.

A somewhat facetious writer in the *National Baptist* over the signature "Rev. Dr. Philetus Dobbs" and of "Mr. Simon Spink, Sexton" has made some palpable hits at what he regards as assailable points in the morals and manners of professing Christians—ministers and people—exposing shams and humbugs, &c., &c. Dr. Dobbs having gone on his "vacation," "Mr. Spink" is desirous of supplying his readers, and under the above title, says:

"We are aware how deeply the public feel the privation that they suffer in the matter of the Doctor's articles. Feeling for the public loss, and willing to afford any relief in her power, Mrs. Dobbs has requested me to look over the Doctor's papers, and to send you any that seem fitted to meet the public taste. I herewith transmit an article which I discovered. You must make allowance. Of course it lacks the finishing touches of his hand; and there may be here and there expressions in which he has uttered his own private thoughts, in a sort of soliloquy, as it were, not designing them for the public eye or ear. The essay is subjoined. Yours, as ever,

SIMON SPINK, Sexton.

CONCERNING TAILS AND THE CUTTING OF THEM OFF.

I am always interested in natural science. My former article on that subject received the warmest eulogiums from many of the brightest gems in the denominational firmament. The subject of tails is one that can but interest every lover of his kind. I have reference not to natural tails; I am looking at it from a mental and moral point of view.

Tails are well in their proper places; but a tail may be out of place. For example, it is a bad thing to have on a sentence. And what do I mean by a tail to a sentence? I mean anything put on at the end that makes the whole sentence weak, insignificant, ludicrous, absurd. For example, not long ago a very eminent light in Zion was preaching on the privilege enjoyed by those who were companions of our Lord in his earthly life. In a holy rapture he exclaimed: "Oh! what would I not give to have been with him, to have heard his words, and seen his acts? I would have given ten thousand worlds; yes, my brethren, eleven thousand worlds."

Another preacher, after depicting the wrongs and woes inflicted by despotism and cruelty, said: "When I think of these things, it makes my blood boil—to some considerable extent."

An eloquent New England divine of the olden time was once preaching upon the shortness of time and the transitoriness of earthly things. "Yes, my brethren, we shall all pass away. When a few years have gone by, these seats, now occupied by this intelligent and refined audience, these seats will be tenanted by others—provided the building stands."

Then again, a tail is out of place in a prayer. How often, when a man has got through his petition, when really nothing remains to be said or done, a tail is put on about five minutes long, for no conceivable reason save the reluctance or the unwillingness of the pray-ist to say the final and irrevocable "Amen"; and so an impression of feebleness and deadness is thrown back over the entire supplication, and the whole thing is spoiled. Last impressions always count. If the last

A. McAulay believed that the prayer-book was the chosen instrument of those who wished to destroy the Protestant Reformation in England, and argued that Methodists must take the Protestant side in the coming conflict. Another minister objected to the form used in infant baptism.

So much hostility to the English prayer-book has never been developed before in the Wesleyan Conference. The impropriety of using it, as it now is, was universally conceded. The question at once arose, "What can be done?" The Rev. E. E. Jenkins admitted that there was a prayer-book party in the Wesleyan Church, and "felt that there would be great difficulty in pleasing all parties;" still he believed that the time had come "when they should have a prayer-book of their own, and not use that of another church." Mr. Arthur supported this view, and expressed the opinion that Mr. Wesley's abridgment would make an excellent basis of a new Liturgy. Finally the following resolution, offered by the Rev. W. H. Holland, was unanimously carried: "That a committee be appointed to consider the subject of revising the Liturgy and Book of Offices, especially with a view to the removal of all expressions which are susceptible of a sense contrary to the principles of our Evangelical Protestantism, and to report to the next Conference."—*N. Y. Methodist.*

Foreign Missions.

Rev. R. Sanford and wife are still at Rangoon, their residence there for the present being rendered necessary by the state of Mrs. S's health. They are occupying a house rent free, through the kindness of the American brethren; and the facilities for the study of the Karen dialects are greater there than anywhere else in Burmah.

Mrs. Churchill and Miss Eaton have opened an "English School" at Bangkok, Siam "near the palace of His Royal Highness the elder Chow Fa, at Wat Chang."

The following letter from Mr. George taken from the Baptist Missionary Magazine, will be read with great interest.

LETTER FROM MR. GEORGE.

HENTHADA, MARCH 7, 1874.

Deeply Interesting Cases.—I have just come home from a three-weeks' trip to the district that has been so blessed under the labors of Ko At during the past three years; and I wish some of those who are weak-hearted on the subject of missions could have witnessed some of the facts met with. It might have convinced them that the gospel is the "power of God unto salvation" among the Burmans.

One year ago a young-married woman told me she believed in Christ, but did not wish to be baptized till her husband came with her. After some conversation with her I was satisfied of the reality of her conversion, and urged her present obedience to the command of Jesus. She said, "No; I am praying for my husband's salvation, and we will be baptized together." As her husband met every appeal with contempt, I had very small hope for him. Ten days ago I baptized them together, and have never heard a man speak of the work of grace in his heart more clearly than that once scoffing Buddhist. Another case. Last April a young man was baptized, his father doing all he could to prevent it. I have just baptized the father, brought to Christ by the son. Another very interesting case. In a village called Para-gyu-gong (the hill of the big god), where there is not one disciple, a heathen man is building a schoolhouse, and has made arrangements with a Christian man to come and be their teacher. As there is no monastery in the village, this teacher will be their priest and schoolmaster; and all the expense will be borne by the villagers.

Native Schools.—You may remember that I wrote you I was training

some young men for teachers. Well, two of these young men have just begun schools in two villages where there are some disciples. In one case the school is entirely self-supporting; in the other, we received a grant of fifty rupees from the Burman Association to assist in building a zayat to teach in. Here are three Christian schools, all supported by natives, started in one district during the past year. I have been looking forward to this, and working for it for two years; and, if I had funds to educate teachers, I could establish more such schools. I have trained those two young men, one for two years, and one for one year; and most of the expense was from my own private funds.

This school-question in Burmah is very perplexing. The Bible is excluded from all government schools, and Buddhist books freely used. Our people desire a Christian education for their children, and naturally look to us for it. The fairest and cheapest way I know of is to provide teachers for our people, and then let the people support them. The time cannot be far distant when a high school for this purpose must be established in Burmah.

Contributions of Native Christians.—There seems to be an impression that Burman Christians do not contribute as freely as the Karens for religious purposes. There are in Henthada about thirty disciples, old and young; and last year they gave for religious purposes an average of seven rupees apiece; and that, no doubt, will be surpassed by some of the richer churches. Give the Karens all the credit they deserve, but don't wrong the Burmans.

I baptized twelve during my recent trip, and found many who were evidently deeply concerned about the salvation of their souls. To-day some two or three will apply for baptism. These all live in towns.

The pastor has just been in, telling me of several who are investigating the claims of the gospel. The leaven is at work, not only here, but at a hundred centres; and Buddhism and Brahminism, with their seductive baits and delusions, must yield to the gospel of our Lord Jesus Christ.

Mr. and Mrs. George have recently visited Rangoon, in search of health.

PUBLIC MATTERS IN SIAM.

The following particulars respecting the present condition of Siam are obtained from a late number of the *Friend of India*:

Many of the Siamese Princes are able to maintain a conversation in English with considerable ease. "It is a rare thing," says a local paper, "to visit the house of any of them without noticing a well-read English newspaper or journal of some kind."

Two newly caught white elephants have been brought into Bangkok. It is possible that His Majesty of Mandalay will not survive receipt of this intelligence, as the Princes of Burma and Siam have from time immemorial been at loggerheads about the number of these sacred animals in their respective stables. The new arrivals were found some months ago in the jungle of Sisaket, a Siamese province lying beyond Korat on the river Moon, a tributary of the great Mekong, distant, as the crow flies, about 200 miles from Bangkok. The taller of the pair, although not a white elephant of the first class, is certainly remarkably pale. They were met by the King some distance from the capital and escorted in great state to a pavilion on the review ground in front of the palace. There His Majesty has visited them daily, while the people crowd round them from morning till night.

The first copy of a Siamese newspaper, edited by Siamese, has lately appeared.

King Chulalongkorn has appointed a Legislative Council to assist him in the Government of Siam. It comprises twelve members taken from the chief

word is dull or feeble, it matters little how much of excellence has gone before.

How badly a tail seems on a sermon! The subject has been introduced, discussed, and dismissed; the time is up; but so, alas, is the speaker. On he goes with "another thought," "one word more," etc., each of which is an additional joint, and while the preacher is thus creating a tail, Satan wags his with delight, knowing that all the good is being rapidly and surely undone.

I have known many a prayer meeting spoiled by the appendage of a tail. The interest has culminated; the time for closing has come. If the minister will now give the benediction, all will be well; the people will carry home just the right impression, a feeling that the hour has been all too short, a longing for the next meeting. But in an unguarded moment the pastor, forsaken of the Lord and of common sense, utters those fatal words, "The time has arrived to close; but if any one has a word to add, we will wait a few moments." Alas! alas! up rises some old stager, who has nothing to say, and who might have said it half an hour ago. He claps on a tail, with his dreary remarks; perhaps somebody else catches the infectious dulness and adds another joint or two. The young people get uneasy; the mothers who arranged to be at home by a given hour, look uneasily at the clock and do so long for the end. When at last the end comes, every one goes away vexed, half resolved not to come next week. The tail has spoiled all.

Not seldom a revival is not indeed spoiled, nothing can spoil a true revival, but the result is less beneficial than might be, because of the disposition of good people to put on a tail. The wave has passed; special work has ceased; the people are really wearied out; the ordinary meetings in the vestry will satisfy all the real demands of the hour, and are, in fact, all that can be well sustained. But the minister, or the deacons, or some enthusiastic body or other, wants the special meetings kept up and in the body of the house. The audiences are small, the handful of people scattered all over the house have no sympathy, no social feeling; all grows tamer and duller each evening; the interest dwindles and tapers down, and the work closes with an impression of power. It is a clear case of tail.

If I were a professor in one of our theological schools (and I have sometimes wondered that I am not. Can it be that they are jealous, and fear my ever-weakening influence?) I should make it a point to impress on the tender minds of the young and budding divines this one golden precept, "CUR OFF THE TAILS."

THE WESLEYANS AND THE ENGLISH PRAYER-BOOK.

The change of the attitude of the Wesleyans toward the Church of England was shown very plainly on the last day of the session of their Conference. It is the practice in some of the London chapels to use the prayer-book on Sundays; a memorial was presented from the Islington circuit asking that the Church of England Liturgy "be so condensed as to avoid repetition and shorten the service." The committee recommended that the prayer of the memorialists be granted. On this recommendation the discussion was fairly opened.

The Rev. John Hargreaves objected altogether to the use of the Liturgy of the Established Church in Wesleyan chapels. He instanced especially the form of absolution, and insisted that Methodists could not oppose sacerdotalism if they adopted as their own such words. Mr. Arthur condemned the term "priest" as the designation of a minister. The Rev. John Bond thought that if the prayer-book were used at all it ought to be revised, and the objectionable phrases weeded out. The Rev. John Clulow opposed the use of any given form of prayer. The Rev.