

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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POETRY.

Life's Mystery.

Why rest these sable hues of pain
Around our brightest hours?
Why to the sun succeeds the rain?
Why thorns in fairest flowers?

A single cloud our sun obscures,
And midnight darkness brings;
'Tis Love Eternal thus secures
Protection 'neath His wings.

A single harsh, discordant tone
Thrills through our life's sweet song;
God hears that hymn—more perfect
grown—
Echoed by Heaven's glad throng.

As o'er the sky's transfused rim
The rising sunbeams flow,
Life's clouds and discords left to Him,
With holy light shall glow.

He hangs these sable hues of pain
Around our brightest hours;
For else He oft would fail to gain
The tribute of our powers.

RELIGIOUS.

Preparing the Way of the Lord.

A DREAM.

I dreamed I was on a journey, and a large Rock filled up the way. It was the King's Highway. The name of that Rock was Depravity. While I was looking at it and considering how it could be removed, so that the chariot of the King could pass, I observed three men on it, and I will describe what they were doing. One was sitting on one side, rubbing the rock with sand-paper and wash-leather. I asked him if he expected to remove that great rock by such a process. "Remove it," he replied, "no, I am not trying to remove it; it only needs polishing. It is rather rough, it is true, but culture will smooth it."—and he went on with his work. I noticed his clothing was transcendental in style, and the gloves he wore were Emersonian.

On the other side of the rock was a man in the habit of a priest, and he was on his knees sprinkling holy water on it, and making crosses with his finger dipped in oil. A cross of gold lay by him, a censer and a candle, and he was exercising himself with them all upon the rock, saying prayers in Latin with constant genuflections.

Near him was a man wearing a surplice, with a prayer-book in his hands from which he was reading, while he sprinkled the rock with water. In the performance of his service I caught the word "regenerate."

But soon there came another man. He was very unlike the others in dress and appearance. His clothing was plain and coarse. His feet and garments were dusty. He looked way-worn, but his countenance had an expression of firmness and heavenly peace. He held in his hand a leathern bag, and he went to the foot of the rock and took from it a drill and a hammer, and soon with earnest strokes, was making flint and fire fly. This very much disturbed the others. He of the transcendental garb cried out that he annoyed him. His language was very elegant and classical, and much of it I could not understand.

He of the cross, with a rough brogue, bade him to stop his noise entirely, and asked him who he was and what he was doing. And with a like impatience, but with more manners, he of the prayer-book did the same.

"I am a minister of the gospel," he replied, and click, click! went his hammer, and more and more the sparks flew. "A minister of the gospel?" said he of the cross, as he dipped his finger in holy water. "In apostolic succession?" said he of the prayer-book. "Yes, Baptist, John by name," he answered, and wiping the profuse sweat from his bronzed brow, redoubled the strokes upon his drill. "O, holy mother!" said he of the cross, "stop your noise, you old camel-haired heretic, I cannot say my prayers." Click, click, went the hammer. "Ora pro nobis," shouted the priest. "Good

Lord, deliver us from this uncanonical impertinence!" said the other. He of the transcendental garb looked on in silence, with the philosophic smile of contempt on his fine face. But click! click! still went the hammer, and so did the gabbling of prayers, the raising of the cross, and the swinging of the censer with increasing earnestness.

At length the noise of the hammer ceased, and the occupants on the top of the rock looked over to discover the cause. "I think he is gone," said one. "I hope so," said the other; "his uncouth appearance is very annoying." "I smell something," said he of the cross. "So do I," said the other; "is it not your censer?" "O, no," he replied, "it smells like powder;"—and stooping over the edge of the rock, he cried out, "What are you doing now, you heretic? "I am going, by God's power, to blow up this rock; and unless you wish to travel by the lightning express, you'd better run." Leaving everything, they ran as for their lives. I looked upon the strong, plain-garbed man a little distance from the rock. He was upon his knees, with hands reverently uplifted, and his rugged face was rapt and beautiful with the earnestness of prayer. He prayed as if bowing at God's feet, and the tones of his voice were sweet and clear as a golden trumpet—"Not by might, nor by power, but by thy Spirit, Lord." And even as he prayed, fire from heaven descended, and the Rock was shattered into fragments!

Soon those who fled came back, and began to gather up their scattered implements of worship. He of the cross was in a great rage. He cried out, as he violently crossed himself, "Anathema, you old thunder-Baptist, I wish Herod had your head!" "See what you have done—a piece of that rock has gone through our stained-glass window of the twelve apostles, and smashed the image of the blessed Virgin Mary, mother of God!" "To purgatory with you!" "And see," said he of the prayer-book, "you have broken our baptismal font, and torn the Bishop's velvet chair to pieces!"

But he answered them not a word. He girded his lions, and with a face radiant with joy, went up the mountains crying, "Prepare ye the way of the Lord: make straight in the desert a highway for our God!" "Every valley shall be exalted, and every mountain and hill shall be made low—and the glory of the Lord shall be revealed, and all flesh shall see it together; for the mouth of the Lord hath spoken it!" And his feet were beautiful as he went!
S. W. F.
—*Examiner and Chronicle, New York, March 2, 1876.*

A Happy Church.

While speaking lately with some gentleman connected with a very flourishing church of which they are members, one of them said: "And there is not a grumbler in it!" Everything seemed to suit everybody—pastor, elders, deacons, communicants, Sunday school, prayer-meeting, the new and handsome church building, just ready to be dedicated—were all right. Brotherly love reigned over the entire communion; liberality abounded, and there was the peace of Christian contentment. Happy minister! He could appreciate his seven years of labor in that "field which the Lord hath blessed," for he came to it from another people who were otherwise. Happy church! "without a grumbler in it!"

Grumblers have their uses, like thorns, and goads, and flies, and mosquitoes. They may be even "means of grace" to some ministers who have grace enough to bear with them. But they are so wrapped up in their own discontent and so unhappy, whether they keep it in or let it out, that they have the gift of keeping other people all the time in the same hot water with themselves. We suppose that they must be endured, because they are, as a class, past cure; but they are a hard set to get along with in any church, and if the Lord does not have more

patience with them than those whose patience they try so sorely, they will have their reward after their own ways. But happy is the pastor and happy the church which have no grumblers to trouble them. How many such are there "among the thousands of Israel?"—*Christian Intelligencer.*

Half-Baked Christians.

"Ephraim is a cake not turned."
HOSEA vii. 8.

The cake here referred to is a cake baked on the coals. Compare 1 Kings xix. 6. It is not turned, and therefore baked on one side and raw on the other. This is a striking type of the religion of thousands of professing Christians of the present day, who need turning over and baking on both sides. This figure applies, first, to persons whose conscience is like a cake not turned. On some points they are very scrupulous, while on others they are very unscrupulous. The evil is generally aggravated when their conscientiousness runs on matters comparatively small, and leaves out of sight the weightier matters of the law; or when it relates mainly to the sins of other people, and very little to their own personal sins. Surely such inconsistent consciences need turning over to be baked on the other side.

And second, the figure applies to those persons whose zeal is a cake not turned. To-day they are burning with much smoke and noise, like thorns under a pot; to-morrow they are extinct—fire, smoke and ashes all gone; like a blazing comet that comes dashing in from the depths of space, passing the unassuming stars, and displaying a prodigious length of tail, as though he would put them all to shame by his superior brilliancy. So these Christians now and then blaze forth with a transcendent glow of zeal, and are ready at such times to rebuke their brethren of even more piety for their tardiness and languor. But very soon they are off again to the regions of coldness and death. The religion of such people is a half-baked affair. They need turning over and having a good baking on the other side.

Third, the figure applies to those who carry their religion only to certain places. They take it to the preaching service, to the prayer-meeting, to the class-meeting and to the communion table, but they are not careful to maintain a godly example before the world, before their families, in the store, in the field, in their business transactions with men, or wherever God has appointed their daily station. Such persons are baked only on one side, and are very raw on the other. They need turning over until they are baked clear through and through, to make them honest, consistent Christians everywhere. Those who are well baked on both sides are right in heart and in life, consistent in profession and practice, bringing a glory to God, and good will to men.—*S. Cates, in Golden Censer.*

THE REV. NEWMAN HALL, always energetic, not content with erecting a church which will cost about £70,000, is building also a lecture-hall, which, including the ground, will cost £9000. Of this amount all but £1000 has been raised. It is proposed to devote this hall mainly to temperance purposes.

THE ZENANAS OF BENGAL.—There are more than 100,000,000 of Hindoo women who sit in darkness and the shadow of death. What makes this fact more painful and apparently hopeless is the other fact that the only avenue by which light enters Hindoo homes is by means of the female missionary or teacher. At present the number of these is but as a drop in the ocean compared to the field before them.

They whose guilt within their bosoms lies, imagine every eye beholds their blame.

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

For the Christian Messenger.

To the Baptist Churches of Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Prince Edward Island.

Dear Brethren,—

Nearly two years ago I went forth under your auspices, as a missionary to the heathen, but, by the over-ruling of Providence, that life-purpose has been defeated. You are already aware of the circumstances which compelled me to leave our chosen field. When all hope of health or ability to labor in India was cut off, I turned my face homeward. After a somewhat tedious and trying voyage, I have been spared, through the great mercy of God, to return to my native land; and I am thankful to be able to write that my health is gradually improving.

But though obliged to leave the place of actual, personal effort for the salvation of the heathen, I do not consider myself as no longer having any special connection with the Foreign Mission cause; but, on the contrary, wherever my lot may be cast in these lands, and whatever form of Christian work my hand shall find to do, my desire is ever to count myself as especially identified with God's cause among the heathen. I gave myself to that cause, in what I felt to be a lifelong consecration, and I have not withdrawn the offering.

With regard to the field in which our mission is now located, I firmly believe that the Heavenly Master, after disciplining us for a time, and severely trying our faith, that we might lean more fully on Him, and giving us a varied experience of Eastern life, thus educating and preparing us for work, at last led us to the place that He Himself had chosen for us. And I have reason to believe that from the day we set foot in the Telugu country, not even the shadow of a doubt as to it being the right place ever crossed the mind of any of your missionaries.

You have a fine field in which to promote the Kingdom of Christ among the heathen. It is not likely that any better location could be found in India. It is the most northerly part of the Telugu country, embracing the Vizagapatam and Ganjam Districts. It lies along the sea coast, and is beautifully diversified with hills and vallies.

The population is very great. Within a radius of 70 or 80 miles from Bimlipatam, which is now, and will probably continue to be our principal station, there are millions of people. And these myriads are willing to listen to the gospel, and where it is faithfully and patiently preached, it will be made the power of God unto their salvation.

There are most excellent roads, broad, smooth, and solid, running through the country in different directions, so that almost all parts of it can be reached without difficulty. These roads are built by the British Government, and are very fine specimens of public work.

Bimlipatam, where Brethren Churchill and Sandford and their families are living, is a town, beautifully situated on the sea coast, and very healthy. It contains a population of between 8,000 and 9,000, and the country around is dotted all over with towns and villages. It is the most pleasantly situated and picturesque place that I saw in India.

And brethren, you have a noble band of missionaries in that land, devoted, judicious and persevering. I know what they are; I have lived with them, and travelled with them, planned with them and prayed with them, and I know that if a missionary society ever had reason to love its missionaries and have confidence in them and sustain them, you have reason to do so by those who are now in India.

And now our mission is established among the Telugus, and has already begun to bear blessed fruit. Your missionaries have not yet been a year in the country, and yet so soon, even while acquiring the language, their hands are full of work, and they are

beginning to gather in the harvest. This is remarkable—it is far greater success than we could have expected.

Be encouraged brethren. Some of you may remember that at Vizianagram (16 miles from Bimlipatam) we met with Dr. and Mrs. Parker, two devoted Christians and faithful laborers; and that through their work of faith and labor of love, a number of persons had been brought to the Saviour, whom we baptized, and formed into a church. Dr. Parker is Surgeon-Major in the 12th Regt. Native Infantry, and several of those who became members of the little church are also connected with the army. This regiment has now been removed to Cuttack, a large military station 300 or 400 miles North, towards Calcutta. The prospect of losing these faithful workers and new members was at first discouraging; but the 41st Regt. N. I. which has been stationed at Cuttack, comes to Vizianagram to take the place of the 12th., and in this 41st Regt. there is a Baptist church of fifty or sixty members; and a mess-writer in the regiment, named Anthrovady, a Telugu, whose name is widely known as that of a faithful servant of Christ, is its pastor. He was baptized in Rangoon years ago, by Mr. Rose I think, when the regiment was stationed there; and while pursuing his secular calling, has labored as a Christian minister, and has been the means of gathering many into the fold of Christ. If I mistake not it was he who baptized Thomas Gabriel the founder of the Cocanada mission, and Josiah, Bro. McLaurin's chief native assistant. The fact that this man, and the church to which he ministers, are coming to Vizianagram is very encouraging. They will doubtless be a great help to the company of disciples gathered there.

Although two of your missionaries have been compelled to return home, there is no real cause for discouragement; and though others should be obliged to follow before long, yet these trials would only be what every missionary undertaking has had to meet with. It would have been a remarkable, if not an unprecedented thing if all those whom you sent out had been able to continue there, with health and strength to labor. So brethren, do not think that some strange misfortune has befallen our mission. The Judsons and their associates sailed from America in Feb. 1812. Before that year closed, Mrs. Newell, one of the party, was in her grave in the Isle of France, and in March of the next year, only thirteen months from their leaving home, Luther Rice, another of that noble band sailed for America, in broken health. In January, 1815, Mrs. Judson was obliged to leave the mission and go to Madras for a time on account of ill health, and subsequently had to visit Bengal on the same account, and then to return to America to save her life. On the 19th of Sept. 1815, Rev. Messrs. Colman and Wheelock, and their wives arrived at Rangoon, and joined Dr. Judson in the Burman mission, and were welcomed by him as a most valuable acquisition to the work. Mr. Wheelock's health began to fail almost immediately. As his disease advanced it produced derangement of mind. In Aug. 1819, he sailed from Rangoon for Bengal, and on the passage, threw himself into the sea and was drowned. In July, 1822, Mr. Colman died at Chittagong, just as he was beginning to be able to labor. These are some of the trials through which that mission had to pass in its early stages—but, nevertheless, it lived and grew, and God blessed it marvelously—and look at Burmah to-day with its 370 Baptist churches, and 20,000 church members.

It has always been so: this glorious Christ-like work has been attended with sacrifices from the first. But O it is worth all the costly sacrifice of Christian lives that have ever been laid down in its behalf.

Be not discouraged brethren. Others may have to return home, and others may rest from their labors and fall asleep in Christ in far distant India; but while we alternately rejoice over