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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.
Return of Spring.

Vergure has clothed the hill and waiting valley,
In sunny glades sweet flowers are springing forth,
On forest branches birds are singing gaily,
Their glad songs peans to spring's lovely birth;
Each new-born leaf and graceful grass-blade waving,
To every breeze that sweeps the wakened earth.

Through grassy vales my idle footsteps stray,
By babbling brooks I list the tuneful sound;
Overhead the budding boughs are interlacing,
And fleck with golden light each mossy mound.
Where fair fresh vines so gracefully are trailing,
Their vernal beauty o'er the fragrant ground.

Up through the leafy shade I gaze enchanted;
The boughs uplifted by the passing breeze,
Reveal the arching sky, so pure and peaceful,
With cloud-ships sailing o'er cerulean seas;
Their chastened beauty thrills my weary spirit,
And gives the longing heart its wonted ease.

Still higher up the narrow vale I wander,
And pausing oft on Spring's delights to muse,
For here I find such beauties rare, and wonders,
Burst on my raptured sight; I cannot choose,
But linger mid their charms and praises grateful,
Breathe forth to Him, who will not praise refuse.

To Him whose kindly ear is ever open,
To list the anthems nature's voices raise;
Who tunes the varied notes of soaring song-birds,
And mingling sounds of spring to hymns of praise,
To Him I gladly yield my heart's best tribute,
For every gift that crowns my gliding days.

Most surely he who robes the earth with beauty,
And paints the blue of yonder arching dome,
And guards with such kind care the fitting sparrow,
That so, unknown to Him, harm cannot come.
Will through life's journey guide His chosen people,
And bring them safely to their heavenly home.

Ah yes! I know though life is sometimes dreary,
And summer skies not always bloom above;
Though here the sinking heart will oft grow weary,
And unbelief will doubt a Father's love;
I know these trials and these darksome hours
Are only sent His children's faith to prove.

Were all our life but one broad glare of sunshine,
Did darkling hours never intervene,
The love of earth would chain our sordid spirits,
And cloud the view of yonder blissful scene.
But earth's dull moments make Heaven's prospect dearer,
While hope doth span the gulf that lies between.

Then patience, patience, worn and weary spirit,
And wait God's time, thy Father's will is best,
Tho' darkly round thee now the clouds may lower,
'Tis better far to bow to Heaven's behest;
Each trying hour will but bring thee nearer
Thy happy home, the promised land of rest.

JUNE 5TH, 1877. H.

Religious.

The secret of true life.

BY REV. WAYLAND HOYT.

We have on the scientific or physical side of it, a very vague name for a very wonderful thing. That name is Force. By force we mean that universal energy which, everywhere around us, is pushing up and out into such various expression. We are apt to speak of dead matter. We hardly speak rightly thus. Matter is moving, acting, incessantly. Matter is seized

upon, and arranged and moulded by force; by that great structural energy which is ever thrilling through the world, and compelling matter into the differing shapes of rock, crystal, tree, flower, fruit.

Were you to visit the Egyptian pyramids you would see vast and regular piles of mighty stones;—stones so mighty, that the wonder for all time since has been, by what almost omnipotent leverage such blocks were lifted, and so exactly laid. Possibly these pyramids are the monuments of the ancient Hebrew servitude.

But nature is a pyramid builder. Here is a solution of a little common salt. Were you to examine it by a microscope, you could discover nowhere, floating through the water, any of the salt particles. No microscope is piercing enough to define them.

But let that solution stand a little while in the open air. The water which has been holding the salt disappears by evaporation. The salt remains. The inconceivably minute particles begin to arrange themselves. In strange and regular order they lay themselves down. In what order?

Almost precisely according to the architecture of the old Egyptian pyramids. As Mr. Huxley says, "We have little pyramids built by salt, terrace above terrace, from base to apex; forming thus a series of steps resembling those up which the Egyptian traveller is dragged by his guides."

Now, neither the great stone piles, nor the exquisite and microscopic piles of salt were built by chance. Any sane mind rejects at once such an explanation. In neither case did it happen so. The Eastern pyramids were reared by the toiling hands of multitudinous Egyptian slaves. The salt-atoms came together, according to the law of crystallization. And, pushing backward, amid the dim realm of causes, we do not think it unscientific to say that it is God who has given over these salt-atoms into the dominion of the force of crystallization.

There must be somehow the inward force to shape the beautiful external thing.

Now this principle is true for life. The desires, the purposes, the emotions, the actions which go to make up life do not tumble into any crystalline clearness or beautiful exactitude.

Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, gives, in one of his letters, an account of a saintly sister. For twenty years, through some disease, she was confined to a kind of crib; never once could she change her posture for all that time. "And yet," says Dr. Arnold, "I think his words are very beautiful, 'I never saw a more perfect instance of the spirit of power and love out of a sound mind. Intense love, almost to the annihilation of selfishness; a daily martyrdom for twenty years, during which she adhered to her early-formed resolution of never talking about herself; thoughtful about the very pins and ribbons of my wife's dress, about the making of a doll's cap for a child,—but of herself—save as regarded her improving in all goodness—wholly thoughtless; enjoying everything lovely, graceful, beautiful, high-minded, whether in God's works or man's, with the keenest relish; inheriting the earth to the very fullness of the promise; and preserved through the very valley of the shadow of death from all fear or impatience, or from every cloud of impaired reason which might mar the beauty of Christ's Spirit's glorious work. May God grant that I might come but within one hundred degrees of her place in glory.'"

Certainly such a life was true and beautiful. But the radiance of such a life never cheered this world by chance. A sunny patience, a bright-hearted self-forgetfulness, a sweet and winning interest in the little things of family intercourse, the divine lustre of a Christian peace, are not fortuitous weeds carelessly flowering out of the life-garden.

It is the internal which makes the external. It is the force required in the atoms which shapes the pyramid.

It is the beautiful soul within which forms the crystal of the beautiful life without.

There are exquisite shells within the sea—the shell of the nautilus, many-chambered, softly carved, pearl-adorned, glowing with imprisoned rainbows. There are ugly shells within the sea—rude, dirt-colored, unsightly clam shells. But the shells are as the fishes are within. To them is given the power of extracting out of the same sea the beauty and the grace, or the dulness and the rudeness.

So life will ever be what we make it—nautilus shell or clam shell. If we would have our life true and beautiful, then we must be true and beautiful. There is no other secret.

How can we be thus? There is a Scripture which answers the question. "Behold I stand at the door and knock. If any man will hear my voice and open the door, I will come in to him and sup with him, and he with me." If we want our hearts the residence of Christ, we must become Christly. But we must make them His residence. We cannot happen into Christlikeness.

Scenes in a Burman Town.

BY MRS. S. R. HOPKINSON.

A minute's walk from our compound brings us to the town. The streets are narrow and poor, and at every step lean, wretched looking dogs come out to bark at us. The houses are built in a grove. Mango, jack, and other trees form a perfect shade. If a tree stands where a Burman wants to build his house he builds around it, so it is not unusual to see a house with a tall tree coming through the roof. Most of the houses are small and substantial. They are built of bamboo, that is, with bamboo frame, inclosed with bamboo matting and a thatch roof. The floor of split bamboo is raised some six feet from the ground. The veranda floor is half as high, and one roof covers both. The veranda is the living room, and being open to the street, we can see much of the home life of the people. Few men are to be seen at this hour, most of them being absent at work, or at the bazar. Some of the women, too, have gone to buy food for the morning meal, and will soon return bringing on their heads large baskets or trays containing various articles of food. Little naked or half-clad children are playing in the street, and seem as merry and childlike as those that are better cared for. Babies swing in cradles suspended by ropes from the veranda roof. Women stand about in groups smoking the ever-present cigar, and talking in loud, unpleasant tones. The majority of them are careless and untidy in dress; but there are exceptions to this want of neatness. In this house at our left, a tidy, pleasant looking woman is busy weaving a cotton plaid of bright colors. The loom is very like the ones our grandmothers used. In the next house all are at work making umbrellas. A little further on stands a long, low building, where red clay pottery is made. We buy our water jars and bottles here. At the corner is a colossal image of Gaudama, sitting in the cross-legged position, with hands folded. This is the position in which the sacred books tell us he sat under the banyan tree when he attained the Buddhiship, and is the favorite way of representing him. Figures of disciples stand on either side.

We go on some distance past these frail and filthy dwellings, and come to a neat wooden building, standing back from the street, in tasteful, well kept grounds. It differs from common houses in having three roofs raised one above another, and each smaller than the last. This is a priest's house, and those men dressed in long yellow robes are priests. They are the monks of the Buddhist religion, and in many respects the rules of their order are very similar to those of the monastic orders of the Roman Catholic church. They can hold no property as individuals, they are under vows of celibacy,

live in companies in monasteries, called here kyoungs, always go barefooted, with shaven heads, and wearing the yellow robe peculiar to their order. They are mendicants, going out every morning to receive from the people gifts of food sufficient for the day. They spend much time in copying the sacred books on palm leaves. This work they believe will bring them great merit in the next state of existence. They also teach boys reading, writing, and the elements of arithmetic. Each kyoung has a school, and the loud, confused sound of many voices that we hear now is made by a number of boys studying on the veranda. The boys who are learning the alphabet have small black-boards on which their lesson is written. The more advanced use palm leaf books. Each leaf is about eighteen inches long and two wide, or perhaps I should say two inches long and eighteen wide, the lines running lengthwise of the leaf. Their only reading books are the sacred writings, and hence all have some instruction in the tenets of Buddhism. Girls are not admitted to these schools, and but few ever learn to read. But it is rare to find a man who cannot read and write.

The heat of the sun warns us that we must hasten home. As we return we see preparations for the morning meal at some of the houses. No tables or chairs are used. Among the higher classes little tables, some ten inches high, are used to place the food on, but the common people eat from the floor. The rice, white and fragrant, in a large, red lacquered dish, is set on the veranda floor, with four or five bowls of curries and sauces around it. The family sit on the floor and eat with the fingers. Dogs, cats, parrots and crows all stand near waiting for the crumbs which the housewife will sweep down through the open floor.

Here we are at home again, at our own pleasant compound, just as the bell calls the pupils to leave their morning work and go to breakfast. How striking the contrast between the neat teak dormitories of our school and the rickety dwellings we have just left behind us. We hope and pray that the time may come when there will be neat, comfortable, Christian homes all over this lovely summer land.

Evangelical Doctrines in Germany.

Nothing can well be more surprising and cheering than the change that has come over German theology and the German pulpit since 1817. In almost every part of the empire are now to be found men who proclaim Jesus Christ as the divine Saviour, and the Bible as the all sufficient rule of faith, while in the department of theology nothing can well surpass the power with which the richness and beauty of Evangelical Christianity are unfolded in the prelections of many of the most distinguished professors at the Universities. Biblical criticism has become in the hands of German divines of recent years a real science, which is daily leading to a more rational interpretation of Scripture than was common among our forefathers.—The study of ecclesiastical history has been pursued with unwearied diligence, and with most valuable results. In "Apologetics," many able replies have been written to the destructive labors of Strauss, Baur, Feuerbach, and others. And thus during the last fifty years Germany has presented the spectacle of unexampled theological activity and fertility. The time is not far distant when some worthy men amongst us decried every theological work issuing from the German press as subsversive of the fundamental beliefs of the Christian world, but now almost every minister throughout the land gladly confesses his indebtedness to the writings of German theologians. Olshausen Tholuck, Delitzsch, Meyer, Lange, Neander, Stier, Kurtz, and a host of others have become our teachers, while almost every page of the writings of our own English theologians shows how largely they have availed

themselves of the results of German research and criticism.

"Other indications of a revived spiritual life among the German people are to be found in the numerous missionary and other societies that have sprung into existence of late years. In the department of foreign missions Germany (inclusive of Basel) holds no mean place. Nearly one-fourth of all the missionary agents in heathen lands are sustained by German and Swiss societies. On the other hand, only one-tenth of the whole sum raised for foreign missions comes from Germany and Switzerland, or perhaps it would be fairer to say that the German societies are carried on in a less expensive fashion, so that while they can maintain 500 missionaries and their stations at a cost of £107,000 (£214 each), in this and other countries 1,500 missionaries cost £963,000 (£642 each).

"But it is in the department of Home, or, as they term them, Inner Missions, that German Christians display the largest amount of activity. Due, in the first instance, to the suggestion of Dr. Wichern, these missions have been carried on since 1848 with great energy, and have gradually covered the whole of Protestant Germany with a network of useful institutions. Almost every conceivable kind of evangelical and benevolent work is performed, but nearly all the operations may be grouped under one or other of the following heads:—

"(1) Societies of saving love (*Ver-eine der rettenden Liebe*), including reformatories and societies for the help of discharged prisoners (there are nearly 80 of these); Magdalen asylums.

"(2) Societies of guarding love (*Ver-eine der bewahrenden Liebe*), including infant schools and creches, Christian inns (127 in 1876) *Herberge zur Heimath*, servants' training institutes, young men's associations.

"(3) Societies of winning love (*Ver-eine der gewinnenden Liebe*), asylums for idiots (32), epileptics, the blind (17), the deaf and dumb (69).

"(4) Establishments for the training of workers—such as deacons' institutes (15, with about 1,600 brethren under training), and deaconesses' institutes (55 in 1874, with 2,700 sisters.)

"In immediate connection with these departments are the organizations for the establishment of Sunday schools, for the sanctification of the Lord's day, town missions, and many other kindred operations."—*London Congregationalist*.

Bobby's Sermon on Shoes.

Here is a story of Bobby Robb. One morning he climbed up into his grandmother's armchair, and preached this little sermon to the children in the nursery: "Beloved hearers and child'r'n, I'm a-goin' to preach to you about shoes. It is what my aunt told me once, and it is true. Every mornin', beloved hearers and child'r'n, there's two pair of shoes a-standin' by every boy's and girl's bed—not by the cradles, coz babies don't know enough. Well, one pair of these shoes is nice, and makes you good-natured and pleasant; and the other pair is all wrong, and makes you just as cross as tigers. If you put on the good pair, you'll walk through the day just as good and cheerful as a birdy-bird, and everybody'll like to hear you comin'; and your sleep'll be just like the music of a hand-organ, with little men and women all dancin' around and around; and everywhere you go, things will seem all right and nice, and you won't mind having your face washed, nor your hair curled, if they don't pull too awful. But if you put on the other pair you won't have any comfort, and nobody won't want you, my hearers and child'r'n—O, Mary Ann! mamma said you mustn't jump your witchbox while any of us was a-preachin'—now, my hearers, 'emem-be these two kind o' shoes is by everybody's bed every mornin'. You can't see 'em, but they're there, and all you've got to do is to say, 'I'll put my feet in the good-natured shoes and wear 'em all day,' and not forget it, and you'll do nicely. But just as sure as you don't,