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## Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

The author of the following exquisitely sublime and beautiful poem, is the son of the late Governor Chandler, of New Brunswick. In connection with C. P. Mulvany, Esq., of Toronto, Dr. C. has just given to the public a small volume of poems, some of which are Latin translations by Mr. M., of some of our sweetest popular hymns; a volume of native poetry, which may safely be commended and read. The reader may judge of the merits of the book by this specimen. S. T. R.

### "The Nativity."

BY DR. A. H. CHANDLER.

O'er the winter wild  
Clouds of gold  
Clustered 'neath the shadows of the West;  
Lo! a lovely star,  
From afar  
Lonely twinkled on the azure breast  
Of evening, for the day had gone to rest.

Glorious as a sun,  
One by one  
Other orbs then glinted beams of light:  
Sparkling as the stones  
Upon the thrones  
Of angels, whose fair wings of snowy white  
Clave the blue ether all that hallowed night.

Swift as meteors fly  
Athwart the sky  
Angel and Seraph on like errand bent:  
Through the frosty air  
Flashing fair,  
See downy plumes with iris hues besprent.

In the realms of air,  
Everywhere,  
The blue-eyed cherubs hover to and fro:  
Softly they alight  
As flakes white  
In winter-tide, what time the East winds  
Blow,  
And sport and circle o'er the waste of snow.

Upon the ethereal plain  
Look! amain,  
The humble host, in radiant order, prone  
Far as eye can gaze  
Through the haze  
Of distant Heaven, round the Jasper throne  
Wheeling aloft the Dove Almighty shone.

Lo! descending flee  
Suddenly—  
By Satan led, who as a bolt is hurled,—  
Thick as locust flights—  
The doomed spies!  
Hell for an instant shadowed the fair world,  
While all her Powers were down to Tartarus  
hurled.

Tost in tempest-rack  
Frowning black—  
A million shades then veiled the hallowed  
sight,  
Covering land and sea  
Momentarily—  
Earth, air, sky, thundered, flashing tongues  
of light—  
The powers accurs'd, meet, rush, in wretched  
plight.

Saw ye from the North,  
Issue forth  
In rolling waves the pulsing prism light?  
Behold the Aurora beams  
In swift gleams  
Illumine the skirts from pole to pole of Night,  
Whose lamps undimmed flash through the  
glory bright;

And the meteors fair  
In mid-air,  
Swiftly darting as the lightning flies—  
Circling left and right  
Startlings bright,  
Those joyous happy children of the skies,  
That dance and play to Angel melodies.

Heard ye the bleatings low  
On the snow?  
Saw ye the flocks about their keepers pressed?  
Hushed—nor sound nor sigh—  
Earth and sky,  
From North to South, from East to farthest  
West,  
Were, until harped the Harpers of the Blest.

And the crown sublime,  
In full prime  
O'er-arching all—God's bow across the sky;  
List! ten thousand quires  
Strike their lyres,  
And anthems loud ascend from earth and sky,  
Where star to star repeats the melody.

As a sphere of light  
Glancing bright,  
Th' Archangel descried ye from above?  
Hail! hail! "All is well,"  
Gabriel  
Sang, in a voice thrilled with celestial love,  
Beneath the glory of that radiant Dove.

\*We must excuse the slight anachronism, by "poetic licence," of about seventeen centuries. Alas! for poor blind Milton! he had never seen nor heard of the beautiful "Aurora Borealis," or surely, he would have worked it into his sublime hymn on the "Nativity."

Hark! their harps they tune,  
As the moon  
Treads majestic up the Eastern hills:  
Like a noble Queen.  
Fair sheen,  
She trips the skies: awhile, in joyous trills,  
That voice angelic yet the night air fills.

What glad tidings brings  
He, and sings  
To the shepherds on the plains below?  
Whose entranced ears  
Blent with fears  
The holy news received, as on the snow  
They knelt, encircled in a heavenly glow.

And, while hovering there  
Myriads were,  
They still with wonder shook: increasing  
more  
And more, till Cherubim  
And Seraphim  
The tale retold, from whose sweet lips did  
pour  
Mercy and love, abiding evermore.

Through the vallies fair  
Everywhere,  
Those twin-words flowed as streamlets down  
a vale!  
Far across the main  
Rang again  
The echoes unto other lands, where hail  
A thousand hearts, to-day, the joyous tale.

"Unto you is born!"  
Lo! is born!  
To you, and all the world, a Saviour given,  
Star of Bethlehem's morn;  
Whose light, when all the clouds are riven,  
Shall guide you safely through the gates of  
heaven.

"Glory to God," they sang,  
Notes that rang  
From heaven's centre to the depths of hell!  
"In the highest," fair,  
Everywhere!  
Peace, "Peace on earth," for evermore to  
dwell,  
And "God will toward men!" hail! all is  
well!

Look! a wondrous sight!  
With delight,  
And fearless awe the herdsmen are glate!  
To eyes upturned appear  
In the clear  
Dawn, legions winging through the golden  
gate  
Of eastern heaven, in majestic state.

O'er the wintry waste  
The shepherd's haste  
With Gabriel, who fresh tidings glad con-  
veyed!  
The star of Bethlehem  
Luring them  
Whose beams on Him, in lonely manger,  
played—  
The Saviour babe, in swaddling bands ar-  
rayed.

O'er the wintry wild,  
To the child  
Where led the "wise men" by that glowing  
sign,  
Bringing as was meet,  
Offerings sweet  
To Him late born beside the stalls of kine—  
Of David's House foretold, the Royal Babe  
Divine.

Hail! tender form of one  
The Triune Son,  
The Saviour mild, upon His mother's breast:  
Daylight eclipsed was dim,  
While over Him  
Stood that bright star—that Angel's glowing  
crest,  
Blent with the halo round the Virgin blest.

Oh, love most Infinite!  
Rapturous sight!  
The lowliness and glory of the scene.  
Oh mercy, past compare!  
All may share—  
The living, dying, and all that have been;  
Upon whose breast sin-wearied all may lean.

## Religious.

### A Missionary Hero.

Africa is now securing a large share of attention as a most important field of missionary operations. The English Baptist Missionary Society have long had a mission in Western Africa. One of the most devoted of its missionaries,

ALFRED SAKER,  
died in March last. The Rev. Dr. Underhill gave an address on the occasion of his burial, which is published in the *Missionary Herald*, from which we take the following:—

"It is now some thirty-seven years ago that Mr. Alfred Saker offered himself to the Committee of the Society to go out to Western Africa as a missionary of the cross. He went in the position of assistant-missionary, combining with that the duties of engineer. It was hoped at the time, that the Society would be able to place on the coast a small steamer, of which he would be the chief officer; but the plan failed, and Alfred Saker then gave himself entire-

ly to the great purpose to which he had consecrated his life. He soon became subject to the diseases of the climate, though from the very first, he may be said to have conquered by an indomitable will, sustained by the devotedness with which he had consecrated his life to the service of Christ. He never allowed his personal sufferings to interfere with his service to his Lord; so that, I may say, disease was his servant rather than his master. "He lives and does much," said Dr. Prince, in 1848, "but at great expense to his poor frame."

Shortly after his arrival at Fernando Po, he visited the tribes of the Cameroons, and selected the spot which was afterwards to become the site of the mission-house. On the high bank of the Cameroons River, he took a small cottage of one room, which he purchased of King Aqua, and, with his beloved wife by his side, he laboured with skillful hands to prepare it for his work. And now we see him with his own hands laying a floor, adding to the house room after room, and adapting every portion of the rude structure to its subsequent use. From time to time we find him visiting Fernando Po to assist the feeble band labouring there, and devoting himself with zeal to the welfare of the degraded people of that island.

I have taken an extract from one of his early letters—an almost prophetic description of what would be the entire character and outcome of his life. He says, writing in June, 1846: "From my return from Clarence, in February, till now (excepting one month,) I have made the study of the language my special work, and although I cannot say much as to the advance I have made, yet I hope it is something; and I hope more, that I shall live to translate the whole Bible into the Duella tongue. With Divine assistance, I have a settled purpose so to do, and I hope not to relinquish my work till it is done. Yesterday I was sickly; the day before translating; to-day, from 5 a. m., till 7 p. m., transcribing my lessons and arranging grammar, and from 7 till 12 writing letters (7 to 12 is extra, as my bedtime is 9). I have corrected my first class-book, nearly completed the second, and shall, if spared, soon begin my oral instructions in the Duella."

This was the language used by our brother in 1856, and for 34 years he labored at the Divinely imposed task, and by God's blessing we can say today, with gratitude to God, that he fulfilled it.

We now find him pressing on his investigations into language of the tribes among whom he dwelt, and endeavouring in every way to root up their evil customs. This was especially the case with regard to the cruel and sanguinary customs that accompanied King Aqua's death, and others practised on many occasions in the daily life of the people. It was at a time subsequent that his influence, having become so great, at the chief's death, I was told, when there, a few years ago, he might have become himself their king.

In the early period, however, of his missionary career he passed through great difficulties and trials. His life was often in peril. The wild people broke into his cottage, and threatened him with death. He himself once told me, and it was confirmed to me by the man that did it, now a sincere Christian, that on one occasion poison was used to destroy him. Yet, in the midst of all, he continued to toil and strive night and day, seldom, perhaps, devoting less than 16 hours a day to manual work—evangelistic labours—and the studies requisite to acquire a mastery of the language; even when driven to his bed, carrying with him the books he required, and never allowing sickness or infirmity to hinder his great work.

Within two years of the commencement of his labours, he had prepared a first lesson book for the school he had formed, and had begun to translate a portion of the Word of God.

Then again we see him assisting his brethren in Fernando Po, so that

it was not till the year 1851 he can be said to have established himself permanently at Cameroons. It was in 1849 he went over to Bethel Station to baptize the first convert. At the same time a church was formed, and the foundation of that spiritual building was laid, which we hope is to ever stand to the honor of our God and Saviour.

In 1851, the mission was reduced by death to such a degree that not a single fellow-labourer remained of those who went out with him (except one or two coloured brethren). All his European colleagues were gone. He was left alone. Hitherto, he had been in some sort in a subordinate position; now, from necessity, he was obliged to take the lead, and to occupy the place of captain of the Lord's host. This he did not hesitate to do. Great was his confidence in the help of his Lord and Master. He had at first to occupy the station at Clarence, and more or less to dwell there till the arrival of Mr. Wheeler released him, and allowed him to return to Cameroons, after a visit to England, to take up his permanent abode.

Scarcely, however, had he done so, when the Spaniards came and interrupted the work at Fernando Po. Though every effort was made to avert the necessity, the missionaries were obliged to forsake the island, and seek another place for their labour of love. Mr. Saker was the pioneer of the movement. No sooner did he understand the need, than he made it his business to seek a new home for the poor converts of Fernando Po, where they might serve God with freedom of conscience. This he found in Amboises Bay, within easy distance of the Cameroons River, where he himself lived.

After surveying the whole region, he saw that this was the place to found a colony, where the work of God could be carried on, and the knowledge of His grace be proclaimed.

With little difficulty he purchased a stretch of land on the coast from the Bimbia chief, King William, and began to prepare houses and dwellings for the exiles. We can see how his training in the dockyard of Devonport fitted him for this work. With his own hands he showed them how to clear the ground and erect suitable dwellings. The accomplishment of this great work was due to the energy of our brother, and the colony of Victoria owes to his untiring care for many years its successful existence.

Meanwhile he did not neglect Cameroons. He preached the Gospel, he enlarged the Church, he established schools, he taught his converts to build houses and to make bricks. He has left behind him many artisans, bricklayers, and others, whom he trained, able to build houses and other structures.

This was led to a remarkable change in the character of the town, in which have sprung up many houses of a better class than the rude shanties of former days.

Another characteristic of his labours may be mentioned. When he first settled on the Cameroons River he found hardly any food to eat. The food of the people was inadequate in quantity, so that for two-thirds of the year they were dependent on the wild fruits of the forest. Mr. Saker induced them to labour with some degree of regularity, introduced various plants, such as breadfruit, mangoes, oranges, and other fruits useful for daily sustenance, and thereby enabled them also to supply the ships frequenting the river with vegetables in exchange for European productions. I mention this to show how broad were the sympathies of our brother, how wide the horizon in which he lived for the good of the people among whom he dwelt, and none will more deeply mourn his departure than the people of King Aqua's town.

I now come to the latter part of his life, in which he was often weighed down with sickness and sorrow. His plans were not always approved by his brethren—he had often to bear bitter

opposition and unjust reproach. I refer to those things, because they constituted part of that great burden which he had to bear. Yet, with a courageous heart, he bore up against them. It was none the less a time of arduous labour. A printing press had to be prepared; he had to teach unready fingers to put the type together, and to show them how to print when the type was set up. With his own hands he often toiled at the press, and, let it be said to the honour of his daughter Emily, now carrying on her father's work, that she often helped him at his task.

So, day by day, we see that sacred volume growing under his hands, which should enlighten the darkness of Africa, and lead its people to drink at the fountains of living waters.

I will only just mention his numerous journeys into the regions around, partly to preach the Gospel and partly to acquire the information necessary for his work. He soon found that the language of the tribes among whom he lived was very poor in words to express Divine truth, and he has told me how puzzled he often was to discover suitable idioms to convey the meaning of the Holy Writ. In these journeys he not seldom came on the very words which he required and which best expressed the meaning of the Divine Word. Thus he was able to accomplish a translation of the Scriptures freer from European idioms, or words transferred, than any African version I know—a version purely native in its style and phraseology. It is a triumph of application and of fervent zeal.

At length his health was so reduced that, about three years ago, he was compelled to return home, never again to resume the work he loved. I need not tell you of his modest, yet noble, demeanor amongst us. I need not speak of his unostentatious address, or of the simplicity with which he told us how God had wrought by him. All this is fresh in our memory. I express the conviction of my own mind when I speak of him as one of the most heroic missionaries I ever knew, and one of most devoted servants of the Lord our Master. I wish not to exalt him above others, but only to glorify the grace of God in him. What he was God made him; and, in giving him to us, God gave us a noble specimen of His workmanship.

"Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord; yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours: and their works do follow them."

I cannot close without expressing how deeply I sympathise with the honoured wife of our brother. She has been his companion throughout the thirty-seven long years of his African pilgrimage, his strength in distress, his nurse in sickness, his help in trouble. She seconded him in all his labours; she taught the young, clothed the naked, instructed the women in the duties of motherhood; and I do not say too much in her presence when I say that she has been the worthy wife of Alfred Saker, and has done worthily the duty that came to her to do.

And we think to-day, too, of the absent children of our dear brother with sympathy and regard. One, the excellent wife of our West African missionary, Mr. Thompson, and the other, Emily, just gone out to the coast, anxious to renew her exertions among the people where she was born, and whom she loved so well, and to carry forward the work of her father and mother. May God bless their labours; may all the consolations of God, and the comfort of His Spirit be their portion.

One hundred and forty-eight million copies of the Bible, translated into two hundred and twenty-six different languages and dialects, and distributed in different parts of the world, constitute one of the achievements of foreign missions in the last hundred years.

There is nothing lower than hypocrisy. To profess friendship and ac-enemy is a sure proof of total depravity.