

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

{ NEW SERIES. }
{ Vol. XXV., No. 3. }

Halifax, Nova Scotia, Wednesday, January 21, 1880.

{ WHOLE SERIES. }
{ Vol. XLIV., No. 3. }

Poetry.

Cumbered about Much Serving.

CHRIST never asks of us such busy labor
As leaves no time for resting at his feet;
The waiting attitude of expectation
He oft-times counts a service most complete.
We sometimes wonder why our Lord doth
place us
Within a sphere so narrow, so obscure,
That nothing we call *work* can find an entrance;
There's only room to suffer—to endure!
Well, God loves patience! Souls that dwell
in stillness,
Doing the little things, or resting quiet,
May just as perfectly fulfil their mission,
Be just as useful in the Father's sight,
As they who grapple with some giant evil,
Clearing a path that every eye may see!
Our Saviour cares for cheerful acquiescence,
Rather than for a busy ministry.
And yet he does love service, where 'tis
given
By grateful love that clothes itself in deed;
But work that's done beneath the scourge of
duty,
Be sure to such he gives but little heed.
Then seek to please him, whatso'er he bids
thee;
Whether to do, to suffer, to lie still!
'Twill matter little by what path he led us,
If in it all we sought to do his will!

Religious.

Led in Green Pastures.

BY ANNA SHIPTON.

Sickness is an angel-messenger
whom we have often entertained un-
aware. To some he brings a prepara-
tion for service and deeper communion,
and he calls others away from the busy
field-work to commune with the Lord
of the harvest himself.
The lamb may follow the shepherd,
and yet not comprehend the love and
wisdom that guide. It rises at his word,
and expects to find a journey of green
pastures and still waters. Not so! the
shepherd knows the way best; he may,
perhaps, lead down a valley it had never
seen before, or drive it to find food amid
bitter herbs.
I remember watching a shepherd
driving his flock from the Piedmont
mountains to the plains of Italy, along
a road white with pulverized limestone
and glaring beneath the beams of a
southern sun blazing in its meridian
force. He was a tall and stately man,
in the costume of the country; his large
hat shaded a face grave and intelligent;
his purple jacket, slung around his neck,
formed a cradle for a new-born lamb,
while two others but little older were
fastened in his rough plaid between his
shoulders. In one hand he held the
shepherd's rod, a long light reed, by
which he guided the flock, gently touch-
ing them when they wandered or were
heedless of his call. He carefully led
them on, occasionally pausing and lean-
ing on his staff until some straggler
joined her companions, or while care-
fully adjusting the helpless creatures
he carried in his bosom.
The hungry sheep strove to crop the
withered weeds and dusty herbage on
the borders of the road; but the shep-
herd would neither let them eat nor
rest. He urged them forward, and
bleating and discontented, they were
obliged to leave their self-chosen food
and obey his voice and follow him.
The road here branched off in another
direction. The poor sheep saw nothing
before them but the dusty path and the
withered weeds, but the shepherd
looked beyond.
Sloping down from the direct road
was a green nook, overhung by an
acacia hedge, protected from the heat
by a high bank above it, and water
from an unfailing spring ran into a
pool beneath. Bleating with delight,
the weary sheep seemed to find life and
vigour at once, and entering on their
pleasant pasture, forgot the troubles of
the way. The shepherd watched their
enjoyment with evident satisfaction. As
he walked amongst them, examining
them individually, he counted them

over. Not one of them was missing.
He had something better for them than
they would have chosen for themselves.
Yet how they had murmured all the
way!
It was a picture and parable of Ori-
ental life and beauty, which left an
indelible impression on my memory.
The following evening, before the sun
had set, we drove up a steep hill about
a mile from the place where I had left
the shepherd. We waited on the sum-
mit to rest the horse. I looked down
upon the plain and saw some of the
beautiful gardens of the villas below.
One was closed on account of the death
of a proprietor, and all was wild luxu-
riance. It had a large and fruitful
orange-grove, with refreshing verdure
beneath, and in the centre was a foun-
tain sending forth its sparkling waters,
which fell into the marble basins and
troughs below.
The sunset gleaned on the golden
fruit, and tinted the green shadows of
the glossy leaves of the orange; but it
was neither the gorgeous sunset nor the
orange-grove that filled my heart.
Here rested the flock, no more weary
or dusty. The lambs lay by their
mothers' side and here the shepherd
himself reposed beneath the trees. My
thoughts were on our Shepherd King,
who maketh his flock to lie down at
noon; and then on the day when the
tabernacle of God shall be with men,
and he will dwell with them. Then
we shall know even as we are known,
and adore the wisdom of him who has
fed his flock "according to the integrity
of his heart, and guided by the skillful-
ness of his hands." (Ps. lxxviii. 72.)

Pastures in the wilderness
My Shepherd keeps for me;
And rivulets among the rocks
My blind eyes cannot see.
Weary and faint I travel on
The road to home and rest;
So let me cast my care on him—
My Father knoweth best.
Yea heavenly Shepherd all my care
I fain to thee would bring;
For in the wilderness I walk,
Thou seest the secret spring.
The quiet halting place in view
The little verdant spot,
Where thou wilt whisper to my heart,
"Thou hast not been forgot."

The Wedding Fee.

How dark and stormy it was on that
March evening! The doors and win-
dows kept up a perpetual rattle; violent
gusts of wind and dashes of rain now
and then beat against the house, as if
bound to seek shelter therein.
Little Bobby was sound asleep in his
crib, and the minister and his wife were
spending the evening together in the
cosy sitting room.
The hour for retiring had come, and
while Mr. Watson was making the fire
safe for the night, and Mrs. Watson
was bustling about picking up and ad-
justing the numberless concerns which
nobody but a careful housewife can
ever see or think of, there came a vi-
olent ring of the bell.
"Mercy!" exclaimed Mrs. Watson,
"somebody must be dying or dead—
What a dreadful night for you to go
out in!"
Mr. Watson opened the door and
peered into the darkness. Not a human
being could he see or hear. A few sec-
onds passed when a loud, gruff voice
was heard asking:
"Can you splice us to-night?"
For an instant the minister was con-
fused, not being accustomed to the use
of that nautical term in relation to his
profession. A second thought, however,
made clear to him the possibility that
splicing might be within the limits of
his particular province, and so, raising
his voice above the storm, he replied:
"If you mean to ask me, sir, to marry
you, I shall be most happy to per-
form the ceremony. Is the lady with
you?"
"Ha! ha! that's a good one! Sara
Ann, you mean? Don't suppose I'd
come to get the knot tied without her,
do ye?" "No, sir, she's right here in the
cart."

Mr. Watson need not have stepped
back to inform his wife of the great
event which was to take place, for she
had heard all the conversation, and was
using her utmost endeavour to expel
the laugh from her countenance before
the happy pair appeared.
It must be confessed that the sight
of the couple was not conducive to
gravity. They had passed a good
while since the bloom of youth, and
made no special efforts to conceal the
fact. Both had evidently come di-
rectly from their work, which, in-
deed, the gentleman proceeded to inti-
mate.
"Fact is, parson, 'tis rather a bad
night outside; and I says to Sary,
'What's the use; let's not fix up a bit,
but just go as we are.' The knot'll hold
just as well as if we had our best bib and
tucker." And besides, parson, we want
to take the old folks by surprise, and
they'd be sure to 'spect something if
we'd gone to work and put on all the
riggins." Mrs. Watson was glad of
this opportunity to smile, and she im-
proved it. What would she not have
given for the privilege of a good hearty
laugh.
The brief ceremony concluded, Mr.
and Mrs. Watson extended their con-
gratulations.
"Thar," broke in the newly married
man, "is the ticket; guess you'll find it
O. K. Now Sary let's be goin'. Plague-
ye tough ride before us. Good-by,
parson. Good-by, ma'am. Much
obliged for the job. Hope to do as
much for you some time."
The "cart" rattled away, and Mrs.
Watson, into whose hands her husband
delivered the certificate, made haste
to open it, thinking that, after all, it
wasn't best to judge people by the out-
side, and that the strange man might
have done something by way of a fee.
There it was! A bill! Yes, and up-
on it the magnificent figure of one
dollar!
"Well, I declare!" shouted Mrs.
Watson, "isn't this too mean for any-
thing! Shame on that man; he don't
deserve to be married."
"Now, my dear," said the minister,
"you should not be too hard, for I think
you had at least a dollar's worth of en-
joyment out of the occasion."
"Yes, sir; and I noticed somebody
else who seemed scarcely able to keep
from laughter."
Next day little Rob's shoes were
bought with the wedding fee, the min-
ister's clothes were cleaned and brushed
for the hundredth time, and the good
lady by dint of extraordinary manage-
ment made the old dress answer an
excellent purpose.
The spring passed away, and the
summer in all its beautiful bloom and
abundant fruitfulness came on. The
wedding on the stormy night had almost
passed from the minds of the minister
and his wife; albeit, now and then she
would break out with a laugh, and
ask her husband if he didn't think it
was nearly time for him to splice an-
other couple. One day, as the happy
little family were eating their dinner,
and just as the parents were feeling un-
commonly proud of some smart thing
little Robby had said, there came just
another such ringing of the bell as that
heard on the stormy night.
"Well, there," said Mrs. Watson,
"one would think for all the world
that the splice man had come again."
Before the minister could reach the
door it was opened, and astonishing to
relate there stood the identical hero of
the wedding occasion.
"Arternoon, parson, and ma'am;
hain't forget me, have ye? Never did
anything better in that line, bet your
life. Didn't know then how it would
turn it out. Getting married is kinder
risky, anyhow. But you won't find a
happier pair this side o' Canaan, that's
sure. And so I thought it was 'bout
time I brought along the rest of the
fee. Where'll you have these things,
parson?"
The minister went to the door, and
there was the "cart" literally loaded
with vegetables of every description.
Such a store was never before brought
into that house!

"Oh, don't trouble yourselves 'bout
thankin' for this," said the man.
"Nothing but a fair trade you know.
But if you must thank somebody, thank
Sara Ann. The garden sass is from
her. She kinder thought 'twould relish
this hot weather. Very hot and dry,
pastor, this season. Been 'specting the
crops wouldn't mount to nothing, but
they is gettin' on first rate. The
Lord generally brings things round
'bout right, I notice. Don't go much
on churches and plagueye little on some
of the members but you don't catch me
going back on the Lord. Was telling
Sary only last week that we must go
over and hear you preach some pleasant
Sunday. S'pose you give 'em the f'ral
Bible religion, don't you? That's what
all say they do, anyhow."
The minister and his wife had but
little opportunity to utter a word, their
friend was so talkative; but they would
insist upon expressing their warmest
thanks to him and "Sara Ann" for the
truly generous donation.
After the store had been deposited in
the house, the man took the minister by
the hand, leaving in it a bill, saying:
"That's my part of the fee; thank
Sara Ann for the sass." And then
jumping into his wagon he drove away.
The minister unfolded the bill, and
lo! its worth was twenty dollars! Mrs.
Watson clasped her hands and fairly
shouted for joy. The needed dress
and pants were bought, and to this day
there is no story which the minister
and his wife love so well to tell as that
of "The Wedding Fee."—*Baptist Weekly.*

Receiving and Rejecting.

A SERMON BY REV. GEORGE C.
LORIMER.

And He went on his way rejoicing.—
Acts, viii 39.
And He went away sorrowful.—Matt.
xix. 22.
"The kingdom of heaven suffers vio-
lence, and the violent take it by force;"
but the worldly man is not in his turn
taken violently by the kingdom of
heaven. He is to decide for himself
whether it shall be received or rejected.
As there is in Jehovah that which is
inscrutable, so is there in His intelli-
gent creatures that which is inviolable.
He who guards the sanctities of his
own mysterious being respects the su-
preme sovereignty of the human will.
As He called it into existence, and im-
parted to it authority and power He
will no more supersede its functions
than he will disregard the laws He has
established for the regulation of the sea-
sons, the movement of the tides, or the
courses of the planets. Consequently,
throughout the Scriptures, the king-
dom of volition is acknowledged. Up-
on its decisions the issues of time and
eternity are alike represented as de-
pending. God is revealed as clearing
Himself of all responsibility for the ul-
timate condition of the race, by provid-
ing through Christ an adequate redemp-
tion, and by continued disavowals of
pleasure in its undoing. He repeatedly
declares that man is his own destroyer;
inquires remonstratingly, "Why will
ye die?" utters the assurance that "He
would have all men to be saved;" and
solemnly affirms that "He has no plea-
sure in the death of him that dieth,"
but "would rather that he should turn
and live."
The narratives with which our double
text is connected afford a very clear
view of the real causes that decide the
mind in receiving or rejecting the gos-
pel; and as we learn with greater facili-
ty from example than precept, from
the concrete than the abstract, we be-
speak your attention this evening to
their exposition.
They introduce two men, who,
though they differ in some particulars,
nevertheless present a marked resem-
blance in others. The one was an
Ethiopian, a man of authority under
Candace, the queen; the other was a
Jew, a ruler, a person of importance in
the sanhedrim. They were widely
separated by nationality, religion, and
culture. One was a member of that

prescribed race whose woes from the
beginning of history to the present
have been heart-rending, appalling,
while the other was born of that favor-
ed nation whose origin and progress
were ordered and promoted by the sov-
ereign goodness of heaven. The taw-
ny-browed official was a heathen, whose
forefathers had been left to the guid-
ance of nature's unseen light; but the
white-skinned ruler was a Hebrew,
whose precious privilege it was to in-
herit from his ancestors a written reve-
lation of God's will. It is reasonable
to suppose that the former had never
enjoyed advantages of careful training
in religious truths and duties, while
the latter had received thorough instruc-
tion in the law and the prophets, and
had been so reared that his character
was blameless. These distinctions,
however, were comparatively superfluous,
but lack of them were similarities
radical and profound. They were both
men, and, partaking of the nature com-
mon to humanity, were conscious of
personal responsibility for their standing
before God. Neither savageness nor
civilization can entirely eradicate this
feeling; and, as it seems to be wrought
in our spiritual constitution, we may
as well, without further debate, recognize
its position in religious development.
Both the enuch and the ruler, also,
discerned a vital connection between
time and eternity. The former was
evidently unwilling to neglect the con-
cerns of the future existence while liv-
ing in the present, and the latter
went directly to Jesus with the question,
"What good thing shall I do that I
may inherit eternal life?" They alike
saw that what is called the "here"
decides the "hereafter." It has been
said that this world is but the shadow
of the other, and if this statement is
correct, then it follows that the sub-
stance must be an enlargement and in-
tensification of what is familiar now to
thought and experience.

The Ethiopian and the Jew closely
resembled in another particular; they
were in common dissatisfied with their
condition. That this should have been the
case with a heathen is not remarkable.
The stocks and stones he worshipped,
or the voiceless sun and stars to which
he in vain appealed for guidance, must
have kindled the desire for something
more elevating and assuring. These
objects could not fill the aching void of
the soul, nor impart that peace which
its consciousness of guilt demanded. We
cannot, therefore, be surprised at the
spiritual restlessness of the heathen,
but what shall we say to that of the
Jew? He not only had received a di-
vine revelation, but had lived so rigidly
in accord with its requirements, that
the strictest judge of morals loved him
for his blamelessness. Why, then, should
he have felt any concern? That he
did so is clear; for he inquired in sol-
emn earnestness of Jesus, "What lack
I yet?" He knew that he was defi-
cient, that his service or character was
not complete, and that he was not per-
fect before God.

There is still another point of agree-
ment to be emphasized. The enuch
and the ruler alike sought help and
guidance in the time of perplexity.
We may picture to ourselves the Afri-
can official, wearied with the senseless
religion of his country, obtaining from
his royal ministers permission to visit
Jerusalem, where, as he had heard,
the true faith was taught, and where he
hoped he might learn the character of
the supreme God and be introduced into
His worship. With this end in view
he leaves the land, now known as
Abyssinia, braves the desert, endures
fatigue, and encounters perils. His
friends may have smiled at his earnest-
ness, and his enemies may have doubted
his sanity; but disregarding the re-
monstrances of the one and the re-
proaches of the other he intrepidly
pursued his thoughtful journey. So
we can readily imagine the ruler, im-
pelled by a similar spirit approaching
the Great Teacher, and propounding
the most awful question that can fall
from human lips. And as they sought
light, so should we. No pains should
be spared, no effort be left untried, and