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Poetry.

Not Far.

Not far, not far from the kingdom,
Yet in the shadow of sin,
How many are coming and going,
How few are entering in.

Not far from the golden gateway,
Where voices whisper and wait;
Fearing to enter in boldly,
So linger still at the gate;

Catching the strains of the music
Floating so sweetly along,
Knowing the song they are singing,
Yet joining not in the song.

Seeing the warmth and the beauty,
The infinite love and the light;
Yet weary, and lonely, and waiting,
Out in the desolate night!

Out in the dark and the danger,
Out in the night and the cold;
Though he is longing to lead them
Tenderly into the fold.

Not far, not far from the kingdom,
'Tis only a little space;
But it may be at last, and forever,
Out of the resting place.

English Congregationalist.

Religious.

Marriage of Mr. Spurgeon's son.

An interesting event in Mr. Spurgeon's family, occurred on the 11th inst., in the marriage of his son—Rev. Charles Spurgeon to Miss Sarah Anne Jacob. It was a very quiet affair, having been kept secret, except to a few, consequently there were but a few present besides the parents of the bride and bridegroom. The latter walked from the residence of the bride's father which is almost opposite the church, accompanied by Mr. Jacob, the brother of the bride, and was quickly followed by the bride, who was led by her father, Mrs. Jacob, and another friend. The bride was very simply attired in a costume of fawn-coloured merino, and wore a brown straw hat very neatly trimmed. Rev. C. H. Spurgeon drove from his residence at Beulah-hill, and having offered a short prayer, in the course of some remarks, observed that the sooner the ceremony was performed the better, though it was customary to have some service, and to ask the prayers of those present that the blessing of God might rest upon those who were to be joined in matrimony. He should content himself by asking them to stand up and repeat the words required by law, to make the ceremony complete. The bridegroom then very distinctly pronounced the following words after his father:—"I call upon these persons here present to witness that I, Charles Spurgeon, do take thee, Sarah Anne Jacob, to be my wedded wife." The same having been repeated by the bride, the ring was duly placed on the finger, "To be worn through life, as a token of my affection." Mr. Spurgeon then added—"As this ring is round, so may your love be endless; as it is made of pure gold, so may your love be pure; I solemnly pronounce these young people to be man and wife; what God has joined let no man put a-under." He went on to say that he earnestly prayed that the richest blessing of God might rest upon the young couple before him. It was exceedingly necessary that a minister should have a wife, especially a young minister. The duties a minister's wife had to fulfil were very important ones, for she was indeed expected to be a combination of all impossible virtues, in fact, to be everything, and in all things to be altogether a wonder. He knew a minister's wife who had greatly strengthened her husband in the Lord. He trusted their sorrow would be diminished by being divided, and their joys increased by being shared, and that they might enjoy a happy union until they came to that land where there is "neither marriage nor giving in marriage." The service concluded with the benediction, after

which the party adjourned to the vestry to sign the register, and departed as quickly and unostentatiously as they arrived.

For the further information of those interested in such matters, we may add that the age of the bridegroom is twenty-four, and the bride twenty. Later in the day the happy couple left New-wood, en route for the Continent, to spend the honeymoon.

The Lord the Christian's portion.

REV. G. M. W. CAREY, M. A.

The Prophet Jeremiah, in the Book of Lamentations, makes many affecting allusions to the dungeon in which he was confined, and its darkness, his sufferings as though arrows had entered into his reins, and his teeth had been broken with gravel stones, and the bitterness of his soul as though he had been drunken with wormwood and gall, and God had become to him as a lion and a bear to pull him in pieces and make him desolate. Then, having gone through all the sad variations of misery, he breaks out and exclaims, "It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed; because His compassions fail not. They are new every morning; great is Thy faithfulness. The Lord is my portion, saith my soul." Thus the breaking down and the building up, the wormwood of bitterness and the wine of blessing, the misery and the mercy, are set off in sharp and telling contrast. The expression in its context is like a bright star shining out of the rifts of a dark cloud; it is like sunshine after rain; like spring after a dreary winter; like a strain of sweetest music from the gloom of a prison. But Holy Scripture and Christian experience are full of such contrasts as joy in sorrow, strength in weakness, light in darkness, songs in the night, life and immortality in death. "Troubled on every side, yet not distressed; perplexed, but not in despair; persecuted, but not forsaken; cast down, but not destroyed." Consider, then, the poor persecuted prophet's portion, which was far more to him than the palm trees and the wells of Elisha, the water from Horeb, and the manna from heaven were to his fathers.

God Himself is the Portion.—The everlasting God, the Creator of the heavens and the earth, is the heritage of the Christian. By regeneration, faith in the Lord Jesus Christ, adoption into God's family, the believer becomes a child and heir of God, and of His vast universe. The man who can sincerely say, "The Lord is my portion; God in His Being and perfections is mine and I am His," is infinitely richer than though He owned the combined wealth of all the crowned heads of Europe, if even to this should be added the whole world, and, in addition to this, the suns, and stars, and systems which fill the immensity of space. For mind is before and is the origin of matter. Spirit is the source of all material forms. God is the self-existent and uncreated Mind. God is a Spirit and the Father of Spirits; God is the Creator, and the Creator is more than the Creation and all the riches that it contains. And God is not exhausted by His creating the worlds. If He pleases He can create new and more glorious ones. He has promised to make all things new—a new heaven and a new earth; to make Jerusalem a rejoicing and her people a joy. To have God for a portion is to possess all the ages, time, and eternity—the past with its amazing records, the present with all its activities and its prophecies rushing into history, the future with all its revelations. This portion contains all that is instructive in intellect, wonderful in working, excellent in counsel, grand in genius, glorious in goodness—all that is powerful and permanent, all that is sweet and satisfying, all that is beneficial and blessed, all that is delightful and Divine, all that God is in Himself, and all that He has revealed Himself to be.

It is a pure portion.—Everything earthly is mixed and more or less im-

pure, and necessarily so, owing to the limitations and imperfections of sub-lunary possessions and enjoyments, and so arranged as to give discipline and furnish a motive and stimulus to seek for more enduring wealth and happiness. Good and evil, beauty and deformity, pleasure and pain, truth and falsehood, sweetness and bitterness, blessing and cursing, run all through life, overshadowing every home, haunting every footstep, lingering around every fire-side, and interjecting sighs of sorrow amid songs of gladness. The hand that plucks a rose is often pierced with a thorn, and in close proximity to the honey we find the sting. Still the mind has the idea of, and the heart the longing for, the unmixed and the sincere, the real and the lasting. The true, the beautiful, and the good has been the dream and the song of poets, the far-off harmony of the musician, the discourse of the philosopher, and the intense desire, often poorly expressed, on the part of the ignorant and obscure. Where is that Eden into which no serpent has entered or can enter; that Paradise where perfect love casteth out fear and torment, where bliss is unalloyed and rest eternal, and every relation perpetual? It is found in God alone, and he that has God for his portion has the very fountain of life and light and blessedness, and may enjoy a heaven of supreme delight, one moment of which outweighs all the boasted felicities of earth. God is pure Spirit. "God is Light, and in Him is no darkness at all." He is unmixed goodness. God is Love. Blessed for ever is the man who can say, "The Lord is my portion."

It is an increasing portion.—Not that God is capable of being absolutely increased or diminished, but the capacity of His people is susceptible of growth and enlargement. At first we apprehend, then we try to comprehend. We seize the general idea of a million, a mountain, a continent, an ocean; and afterwards we try to understand how much is contained in the idea. So, in our thinking of God, we apprehend Him, and though we can never in this state complete our task, yet we are always trying to comprehend and understand the problems which His government and providences present to our finite minds. The more we know the more remains to be known. The larger the circle of our light and knowledge, the larger the circle of darkness and mystery lying beyond. So while God can come in by the lowly doors and the narrow avenues leading to a child's heart, the heaven of heavens cannot contain Him, whose judgments are unsearchable, and His ways past finding out. As Christians' knowledge widens and experience deepens, God becomes greater and more glorious, until the soul is lost amid the infinitude of His perfections. Thus to the Christian his portion is always increasing. God says, "I am that I am," as though He should sign the name Jehovah to a blank cheque, and say to His people, "Ask and ye shall receive; seek and ye shall find. Ask more—come oftener to the Mercy-seat and stay longer, for I am able to do exceeding abundantly above all that you can ask or think. I shall supply all your need according to the glorious riches of My grace."

As in a recent hymn,

More and more, more and more,
And yet there's more to follow;
Oh, His matchless, boundless love,
And yet there's more to follow.

This blessed portion increases as the waters Ezekiel saw in His vision, as in our Lord's parable of the mustard-seed, and the leaven in the measure of meal. "O Lord of Hosts, blessed is the man that trusteth in Thee. O my soul, hope thou in God. Take Him for thy portion, and the spring of all thy joys"

It is a secure portion.—Wealth often takes wings and flies away, and how often it changes owners. Health fails, and the roses of beauty fade from the countenance. Pleasures are like flowers which bloom and die—like the snowflake in the river, a moment white, and for ever gone—like the rainbow, vanishing while we gaze and admire.

Friends die and depart to the silent land and join the great majority, and who is there that has not "sighed for the touch of a vanished hand, and the sound of a voice that is still." All that pertains to earthly life is transitory. Here there is no bidding city. But though the heavens and earth wax old as a garment and pass away, yet God is the same and His years shall not fail. He is without beginning of days or end of time, without variableness or shadow of turning. "O Thou that changest not, abide with me."

It is an eternal portion.—Man is a citizen of both the worlds. By virtue of his relationship to his Creator, he belongs more to eternity than to time. He has the aspiration towards and the longing for eternity. He is made for life and joy, and as the law of supply and demand is violated in Nature (light is for the eye, sound for the ear), so immortality is for man, and the capacity for it in his very constitution, and forms the crowning excellency of his existence. Now, this being the case, we need, we demand, the enduring and unchanging, the pure and permanent, and we have it in God. The Christian is an heir of God and joint heir with the Lord Jesus Christ to "an inheritance incorruptible, undefiled, and fading not away, reserved for them who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation." The saints of the Most High shall possess the Kingdom, and it shall endure forever:—

Thou hast no time, fair city;
Thou has no night, bright day;
Sweet fountain of refreshment—
For pilgrims far away.
Thine ageless walls are bounded
With amethyst unpriced;
The saints build up the fabric,
And the corner-stone is Christ.

The Story of Stories.

Rev. Dr. Chamberlain, a missionary in Persia, has recently communicated the following remarkable incident from his own experience:

"I wish I could take you to a scene in the kingdom of Hyderabad fourteen years ago. There, in a city, a walled town of 18,800 inhabitants, the people had arisen in a mob to drive us out, because we tried to speak of another God than theirs. We had gone to the market-place, and I had endeavored to preach to them of Christ and his salvation; but they would not hear. They ordered us to leave the city at once; but I had declined to leave until I had delivered to them my message. The throng was filling the streets. They told me if I tried to utter another word I should be killed! There was no rescue; they would have the city gates closed, and there should never any news go forth of what was done. I must leave at once, or never leave that city alive! I had seen them tear up the paving-stones, and fill their arms with them, to be ready; and one was saying to another you throw the first stone, and I will throw the next.

"In a way I need not stop now to detail, I succeeded in getting permission to tell them a story before they stoned me and then they might stone me if they wished. They were standing around me ready to throw the stones, while I told them the story of all stories—the love of the Divine Father that had made us of one blood; who so loved the world that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish but have everlasting life." I told them that story of the life in the manger at Bethlehem; of that wonderful childhood; of that marvelous life; of those miraculous deeds; of the gracious words that he spoke. I told them the story of the Cross, and pictured, in the graphic words that the Master gave me that day, the story of our Saviour nailed to the cross, for them, for me, for all the world, when he cried in agony, "My God my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"

"When I told them that, I saw the men go and throw their stones into the gutter, and come back; and down the cheeks of the very men that had been clamoring the loudest for my blood,

saw the tears running, and dropping upon the pavement that they had torn up. And when I told them how he had been laid in the grave, and how after three days he had come forth triumphant, and had ascended again to heaven and that there he ever lives to make intercession for them, for us, and for all the world; and that through his merit every one of them there might receive remission of sin and eternal life, I told them I had finished my story, and they might stone me now.

"But, no! they did not want to stone me now; they had not known what a wonderful story I had come there to tell them. They came forward and bought Scriptures, and Gospels, and tracts, and paid the money for them; for they wanted to know more of the wonderful Saviour."—*Watchword.*

A valuable horse had been lost, and no one could find him. A half-witted fellow finally brought him back, and to the question, "How did you find him when no one else could?" replied: "Wall, I just 'quired where the horse was seen last, and I went thar, and sat on a rock; and I just axed myself if I was a horse, whar would I go, and what would I do? And then I went and found him." It strikes us that the preacher might learn a valuable lesson from this half-witted boy. If the pastors would put themselves in the place of the average hearer in their congregations, and ask themselves how he looks at the Bible and religious truth, and fashion their discourses accordingly, there would be fewer "great sermons" preached, perhaps, but more saints would be edified and more sinners converted than now.

Mr. Hammond says a minister once told him that nine out of ten of the conversions he had known had been the result of personal appeal. Sermons are most valuable, but for direct results nothing could equal the few words of inquiry and encouragement in spiritual matters between man and man, face to face. A word in season, how good it is.

I know not how it comes pass, but notorious it is, that men of depraved principle and practice are much more active and solicitous to make proselytes, and to corrupt others, than pious and wise men are to redeem and convert; as if the devil's talent were more operative and productive than that which God entrusts in the hands of his children, which seems to be wrapped up in a napkin without being employed.—*Clarendon.*

PART OF THE CONCERN.—A clergyman on his way to missionary meeting overtook a boy, and asked him about the road, and where he was going.

"Oh!" he said, "I'm going to the meeting to hear about the missionaries."

"Missionaries!" said the minister "What do you know about missionaries?"

"Why" said the boy, "I'm part of the concern. I've got a missionary-box and I always go to the missionary-meeting where I belong."

Every child should feel that he is "part of the concern" and that his work is just as important as that of any one else. Linch-pins are little things; but if they drop out, the wagon, is very likely to come to a standstill. Every pin and screw should be in working-order, and every child should be able to say, "I always go to the missionary meeting. Why, I'm part of the concern."

AN IMPOSSIBLE CHOICE.—A teacher had been relating to his class the story of the rich man and Lazarus; when he asked: Now, which would you rather be, boys, the rich man or Lazarus?"

One boy replied: "I would be the rich man while I live, and Lazarus when I die."

And is that not what multitudes are trying to do? All want to die the death of the righteous, after having lived that of the Divers.