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Poetry.

THE CLOSE OF THE WEEK.

BY MARIANNE FARNINGHAM.

At last it is over, the busy week,
Over with all its hopes and fears;
And now in the quiet and calm we seek
Comfort and healing after our tears.

We have not done as we meant to do
With any one of the fair bright days;
Yet God has helped us the whole week through,
And we sing him our closing song of praise.

Good is the Lord, and kind and great,
How He has blessed us no tongue can tell;
But we see, now the week is growing late,
That He in His mercy did all things well.

We have had to toil as the days passed on,
And the fights were fierce, the toll severe,
And though we have not the victory won,
We are glad that the Sabbath rest is near.

The strain of sin is upon us yet,
But we come to the Fountain; oh, Christ
the Lord,
Do not the weary ones forget,
But comfort our spirits with Thy word.

Bless and forgive us; and when the light
Of Thy sacred day is upon the earth,
Fill our hearts with a calm delight,
And make us glad with a holy mirth.

So give us an earnest of better rest,
That soon shall be to thy children given,
Among the ransomed, the free, the blest,
In the many mansions at home in heaven.

Religious.

"THE SHELL OF MORALITY."

Some years ago a clergyman, in a neighboring city, had in his congregation a gentleman of rare moral worth and intellectual culture, with an urbanity of manner that was irresistible. Day after day he sat under the ministry of the word; always in his seat, polite, affable, interested, but immovable in the fastness of a morality that could not be impeached.

In the providence of God the pastor was called to the care of another church in the same city. What was his surprise to find his friend had taken a pew there. He had become so much attached to his pastor that he could not and would not leave him. Still was he a weight on that pastor's heart; friendly visits, religious conversations, the most pointed appeals glanced and rebounded; the man was always there, it made no difference what kind of weather, the same affable, gentlemanly manner, but unmoved and immovable as adamant.

When addressed personally, he was always ready to admit the necessity of Christian teaching, the beauty of a Christian life. He also admitted the depravity of the natural heart; but in his own individual case the regenerating influence of the Holy Spirit was unthought of.

At length the pastor, wearied with unavailing effort to rouse him to a sense of his true condition, turned reluctantly away. He made no more pastoral calls, no more pointed appeals. "He is joined to his idols, let him alone." This state of things continued for seven years, and the pastor felt that his friend was given over to hardness of heart, that his shell of morality would never be broken by the gospel hammer.

One Saturday, when the pastor was in his study, Mr. ——— called at the door with a request to see him. The good man's time had been broken with unavoidable calls during the week. It was Saturday, and he was not prepared for the Sabbath. He had given orders not to be disturbed. Still, Mr. ——— was there.

"If your business is not very urgent," said the pastor, "could you as well put it off till Monday? I am very busy to-day. I shall have plenty of leisure then."

"Yes," said the gentleman, "I can wait." Still, he hesitated, while there was that in his countenance which betrayed anxiety. At length the pastor, seeing the distressed, hesitating look, said, "If your business is very urgent, Mr. ———, come in."

"If I may be pardoned," replied the gentleman, "for intruding upon your time"—and throwing himself into a chair he burst into tears.

"What is the matter? What has happened?" cried the pastor. "Has misfortune overtaken you; any disaster happened to your beautiful family?"

"Nothing of that," responded the gentleman, trying to stay his tears and speaking brokenly; "I have come to see that what you have so often told me is true. I am a helpless, wretched, undone sinner. I want you should pray with me."

The pastor was nearly as much overcome as his friend and sinking on his knees, he bore on the strong arms of faith the case of his friend up to the mercy-seat.

"Never before," said the pastor, as he related the scene, "did I witness such a perfect breaking up of all the old feelings; such agony, such prostration. The walls of his old morality swept completely away; the love of God rushing in and over him like the swelling tide of a great sea."

When he left the pastor's study he was a new man. No longer trusting in his own works, but in the precious blood of Christ; rejoicing in salvation as a free gift not because of his morality, but because Christ died.

All these years he had been trying to buy salvation. He had been careful to lead a pure and spotless life. He had not committed open sin. He was constant in his observance of the Sabbath. He was always to be seen in the sanctuary. His example was good, what more did he need? He needed just what you and I need: he needed a new heart; a heart to love Christ; a heart to labor for Christ.

The blood-shedding of Jesus is the propitiation for our sins. This is the good news: "God commendeth his love towards us in that, while we were yet sinners, Christ died for us." You must have forgiveness, or perish for ever. Why not have it now? God pardons freely and at once. All the preparation that you need is to feel the want. "If we confess our sins, He is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness." "The blood of Jesus Christ, His Son, cleanseth us from all sin." All that you have to do is to accept what God, for Christ's sake, so freely gives.

SEEING THE POINT.

A boy returned from school one day with a report that his scholarship had fallen below the usual average.

"Well," said his father, "You've fallen behind this month, have you?"

"Yes, sir."

"How did that happen?"

"Don't know, sir."

The father knew, if the son did not. He had observed a number of dime novels scattered about the house; but had not thought it worth while to say anything until a fitting opportunity should offer itself. A basket of apples stood upon the floor. And he said:

"Empty out those apples, and take the basket and bring it to me half full of chips."

Suspecting nothing, the son obeyed.

"And now," he continued, "put those apples back into the basket."

When half the apples were replaced, the son said:

"Father, they roll off. I can't put in any more."

"Put them in, I tell you."

"But, father I can't put them in."

"Put them in! No, of course you can't put them in. Do you expect to fill a basket half full of chips and then fill it with apples? You said you didn't know why you fell behind at school; and I will tell you. Your mind is like that basket. It will not hold more than so much. And here you've been the past month, filling it up with CHIP DIET—dime novels!"

The boy turned on his heel, whistled, and said, "Whew! I see the point."

Not a dime novel has been seen in the house from that day to this.

Other and older persons might well see the same point. A mind filled with

fiction hates and rejects truth. A person reading history, art, science, or travels, may grow wiser every day; but a man might read fiction a hundred years, and know no more when he finished than when he began.

There is real sin, and sorrow, and suffering enough in the world for us to pity and relieve, without wasting our tears over the troubles of some fictitious "Matilda Jane";—and there is work, and enterprise, and adventure enough in real life to engage our powers without resorting to cheap novels for inspiration and excitement. But unfortunately the girls who will shed as many tears over some heroine's fictitious sorrows as their mothers would while peeling a pan full of onions, are the very persons who would turn up their noses at a suffering beggar, and leave a sick person to starve unvisited in a garret. And the boys who wax heroic over the great doings of some count, hero, or cut-throat, are too lazy to earn an honest living, and are willing to have their mothers wait on them and black their boots while they lie in bed after sunrise, or smoke cigars, and swear, to prove that they are men!

Don't fill your apple-basket with chip diet.—*The Christian.*

HOW TO CLEAR THE MISTS.

Sometimes there will come to the mind of even the Christian a feeling or question whether all about him is not a delusion—whether even the great truths of Christianity are not phantoms after all.

Such a vaporish mood can come only from the tempter of souls, who cares not how frivolous the ground of disturbance, so he can only unsettle our faith and hinder our usefulness.

If you feel such a mood upon you, remember to give no utterance to it except in prayer.

Do not humor your adversary by going to another with your shadowy difficulties.

Do not poison the mind of some weak believer by conversing over it with him.

If you sincerely desire to come into the true light, go to your Bible and turn its leaves, reading with a sincere wish to be led aright. While you are seeking, some point will strike home conviction to your soul, and the mist be dispelled. The Spirit always goes with the Word, and no one ever sought the light sincerely who was not guided into it. There are no troubles nor difficulties so great but here you may find just the help you need. Without its light, the path of life will be dark and shadowy indeed, but the passage from it one of unutterable gloom.

An eminent man lay on his death-bed, when one spoke to him of the Saviour.

"As to the Bible," he replied, "it may be true; I do not know."

When asked what were his prospects, he said, in a whisper: "Dark, very dark."

So must the future ever seem to those who have not clung to the words of Jesus, who have not fed their souls upon them while in life and health. All human knowledge without this is worthless at the last.

"DAT IS MY DAILY OCCUPATION."

On my passage up the Mississippi River from Davenport, I observed a neatly dressed old colored man, whose saintly appearance induced me to accost him with the question, "You are journeying, my friend, to that good land of everlasting rest, are you not?"

His dull eye kindled as, looking up, he replied with emphasis, "Dat is my daily occupation."

Satisfied with that comprehensive answer, we conversed together of the kingdom, when again I asked, "How did I know you were a Christian? Though a perfect stranger to me, I felt sure you were a disciple of Jesus. How do you think I knew it?"

"You know'd it by de mark," he replied. "De Scriptur tells of de

saints having a mark in dar foreheads. You know'd it by de mark. And now I tuk you for a young preacher of de gospel, and I want to know why, having the gospel message, you did not preach to us on dis boat?"

Somewhat startled by the suggestion, I replied, "Some of the officers knew I was a minister, and they did not invite or suggest that it would be agreeable, and I did not wish to appear officious or obtrude my message."

"Ah," said he, "de old Apostle Paul didn't wait for no invitation. Most everybody likes to hear de gospel. 'Twould be no 'trusion (obtrusion), and you might a done much good."

I stood reproved. Never again in this world shall I have the opportunity to address that large company of souls—and I had the words whereby some of them might have been saved. It is no excuse that most other ministers pass *incognito* up and down these rivers. I believe God prompted his humble old disciple to teach me a lesson, which I trust will result in my clearing my skirts from the blood of all men hereafter.

THE CHRISTIAN'S BALANCE SHEET.

"For I reckon that the sufferings of the present time are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us."—Rom. 8: 18.

Dr. "The Sufferings of the Present Time."

In labors more abundant.

In stripes above measure.

In prisons more frequent.

In deaths oft.

Five times received forty stripes save one.

Thrice was I beaten with rods.

Once was I stoned.

Thrice I suffered shipwreck.

A night and a day have I been in the deep.

In journeys often.

In perils of robbers.

In perils of my own countrymen.

In perils by the heathen.

In perils in the city.

In perils in the wilderness.

In perils in the sea.

In perils among false brethren.

In weakness and painfulness.

In watching often.

In hunger and thirst.

In fastings often.

In cold and nakedness.

Besides those things which are without, that which cometh upon me daily, the care of all the churches.

Total, Light afflictions, but for a moment.

Cr. "The Glory to be Revealed."

For we know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, an house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither hath it entered into the heart of man, the things that God hath prepared for them that love him.

That he might make known the riches of his glory on the vessels of mercy, which he hath before prepared unto glory.

Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day; and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing.

When Christ who is our life shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory.

And so shall we be ever with the Lord.

Total, an eternal weight of glory.

The Apostle Paul, having carefully examined the foregoing account, deliberately makes the following declaration: "I am persuaded that neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

AFRAID OF GOD.

Some years ago, a band of missionaries in the Fiji Islands found their home surrounded by a troop of savages armed for battle. Being both unable and unwilling to fight they shut their door, and began to pray.

Presently the howling of the savages ceased. Then one of the missionaries went out, and found only one savage there. Said the missionary, "Where are your chiefs?"

"They are gone. They heard you praying to your God; and they know your God is a strong God; and they are gone."

The savages were right at last. God is a strong God; strong to help those who love him; strong to punish his enemies. This strong God is the friend of loving little children. What good news is this for the weak and helpless!—*S. S. Advocate.*

THE PRAYER-MEETING.

The first article in the *Baptist Quarterly* (October) on "The Apostolic System of Church Finance" places great stress on the term "fellowship;" and in drawing forth its import as an essential feature in the Christian Church gives great prominence to the Prayer meeting as another institution no less necessary to the Divine pattern. The writer says:—

"We understand that the four nouns in Acts ii. 42 represent four apostolic institutions, which are to be perpetual in all Christian churches. First in the list stands the Teaching. Apostolic teaching is indispensable to the perpetuation of the Christian church. It lies at the foundation of all intelligent worship. It is not accidental, but essential. It is one of the main pillars of the Christian system. It was designed to be perpetual, because the office of Christian teacher was instituted by divine authority, and abides permanently in the church. The apostolic teaching, therefore, holds the rank of an abiding institution in all Christian churches. Churches in which it is wanting forfeit all claim to be called Christian; for 'teaching' is named in the great commission as an implied condition to the promise, 'Lo, I am with you always.' In modern Christianity, the exponent of the primeval apostolic institution is the Pulpit. It abides and is recognized as an institution.

"The breaking of the loaf" undoubtedly stands for the Lord's supper. This is universally recognized as a Christian institution. Scripturally and historically it belongs in the church, and holds in modern Christianity its primeval rank.

The interpretation which is usually given to the last noun in the series, viz., "prayers," seems vague and unsatisfactory. It takes no account of the article which is elaborately repeated before each noun of the series.

Dean Alford, in his revised English Testament, attempts to remedy this defect in the common version by repeating the pronoun "their" before each of the substantives except the first. His attempt to express the article is commendable, because its repetition shows it to be emphatic. His translation however is defective, because we might understand from it that the converts "continued steadfast in their prayers," i. e., to repeat the apostles' prayers; but the use of a liturgy belongs to a later date of the church's history. There may be no English word which exactly corresponds to the Greek one here employed. This word is frequently used in the Septuagint and in the New Testament to denote both individual prayer and also a collective petition in which several worshippers unite. From the latter usage it came at length to denote the place where several devout persons assembled for prayer. At all events, the idea of place became prominent in its meaning. In Acts xvi. 16, "the verb implies," says Dean Alford, that Paul and Silas "habitually resorted to this place of prayer." Our idea may be briefly expressed by the following translation of the passage: "It came to pass, as we were proceeding to the prayer-meeting, a certain bond-maid who had a spirit of divination met us." The best manuscripts and editors here insert the article. There was an assembling of several persons at the same time and place for the purpose of prayer. Such an assembly is in modern phrase a prayer-meeting. The article is used to designate it as a definite and well-known institution. In Acts xvi. 13, there is undeniably an allusion to place. But the translation "where wast'wont to be a place of prayer" is inadequate. If this had been the entire meaning, we should have had the imperfect of the verb. Let us look at the facts. One Sabbath day Paul and Silas went forth out of the gate of Philippi, beside a river. There certain women had assembled manifestly for prayer; for this was the custom. With them Paul and Silas sat down. To those thus assembled