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Poetry.

THE GOLDEN SHORE.

There is many a rest in the road of life,
If we would only stop to take it;
And many a tone from the better land,
If the querulous heart would make it.
To the sunny soul that is full of hope,
And whose beautiful trust ne'er falleth,
The grass is green and the flowers are bright,
Though the wintry storm prevaileth.

Better to hope, though the clouds hang low,
And keep the eyes still lifted;
For the sweet blue sky will soon peep through
When the ominous clouds are rifted.
There was never a night without a day,
Or an evening without a morning;
And the darkest hour, as the proverb goes,
Is the hour before the dawning.

There is many a gem in the path of life,
Which we pass in idle pleasure,
That is richer far than the jewelled crown,
Or the miser's hoarded treasure;
It may be the love of a little child,
Or a mother's prayer to heaven,
Or only a beggar's grateful thanks
For a cup of water given.

Better to weave in the web of life
A bright and golden filling,
And to do God's will with a ready heart,
And hands that are swift and willing,
Than to snap the minute, delicate threads
Of our curious life asunder,
And then blame heaven for the tangled ends,
And sit, and grieve, and wonder.

Religious.

THE WEEK-NIGHT RELIGIOUS MEETING.

Dr. Driver gave us a very spirited opinion on this subject. He is a man of large experience, acknowledged practical wisdom, and has achieved unusual success. When he finished, we constituted ourselves an interrogation society and plied him with questions.

"Do you think the week-night meeting should be strictly devotional, or take what is commonly termed a social character?"

"Most emphatically the latter. While these meetings are designed to be devotional, there is no inconsistency in making devotion social. It is usually supposed that devotion means only prayer and singing praise to God in the most solemn and formal manner; whereas it includes all religious exercises and duties. We may talk devotionally, laugh devotionally, give our money devotionally. David danced in his devotion.

"The week-night meetings of the church are intended to differ from the formality of the Sabbath church-service in their freedom from stiff proprieties. They are often called social meetings, but in most cases are the most unsocial imaginable.

"The people should talk together. They should not be mere silent listeners, but converse as in a parlor; relate experiences, make inquiries, give counsel. They should aim to enjoy themselves and come with that purpose in view. The apostle enjoined it upon Christians with an emphasis, to rejoice in the Lord always and surely if there is any place where this should be done, it is in the convocation of the people for social devotion."

"What do you think of the place for such a meeting?"

"It should be the best, cheeriest, most comfortable you can provide. The lecture-rooms of churches generally are abominable. Under ground, badly ventilated, chilly in summer, overheated in winter, poorly supplied with the cast-off furniture of the church, with stiff benches ranged in mathematical precision, they necessitate a similar condition of spirit. It is hard to cultivate pious thoughts amid such discomforts. The room should be made as inviting as possible. It should be regarded as the Lord's parlor, made bright with flowers and good air, made cheerful by a judicious arrangement of seats, so that the people should be near each other and near the one having charge. Propinquity is of great value. There is much in the feeling you have

when you enter the room. Your first impression is the keynote of the whole evening. A kindly nod, a cheery 'How d'ye do, a warm grasp of the hand in a sweet, attractive room, tones you up wonderfully. Make the room like a home and the people will soon learn to feel at home there. I knew a teacher of a Sabbath-school who undertook a class of rough, unruly boys. Previous teachers had retired from the class defeated. It was a forlorn hope to do anything with them. The first thing he did was to decorate the room in which the class met. He had it kept scrupulously tidy, let in the sunlight, placed a fragrant bouquet on his table, and called it his Sabbath parlor. The boys caught insensibly the spirit of the place. They came in with smiles and courteous greeting, and behaved with becoming propriety. One or two Sabbath-schools converted them from rough boys into young gentlemen. The place itself refines, elevates, and prepares for higher enjoyments. I do not think that the gorgeous descriptions of the Father's house are for nothing."

"Is it advisable to have a leader and regular order always?"

"By all means. It is essential to have a guide to direct and keep the current in one channel. I do not think it necessary to have the minister always take the lead. His presence at the head tends to impart the character of a pulpit service. It is sometimes better to have a judicious layman. But the leader should always be a man of wise adaptation, ready to seize upon a good thing and amplify it, preserving unity in all the exercises, aiding and encouraging the weak, supplementing the efforts of the timid, checking the forward, developing the inexperienced, throwing in a word here and there to keep everything sprightly. He should invite questions but be ready to answer them promptly. He should never suffer long prayers, exhortations, or hymns. The character of the meeting chiefly depends upon him."

"Is it best to confine the meeting to one subject, or let it take any course the occasion may prompt?"

"Generally it is best to predetermine a topic. Announce it the week previous. For instance, at the close of a meeting, say, 'Next week we will talk about answers to prayer,' or 'special providence,' or 'how we were led to Christ,' or 'what can we do to promote spirituality;' anything of personal, practical value. Tell them to think about it, to gather all the information they can, to watch for illustrations and come prepared to express their views. By this means your people will come together with a defined purpose. There is great advantage in having your people warm with a subject when they come. Much time is gained. You can then begin where the meeting usually ends."

"What about the singing? How do you manage that?"

"It is very important. We do not half appreciate the value of social singing. Songs should be frequent—not too long—spirited. Avoid slow, sleepy tunes. Good choruses are effective and enlivening. Simply announce the number, do not read the verses. It consumes time unnecessarily. Educate all the people to sing. Do not suffer them to drag. If a verse is not sung well or by all the people, or up to time, call for its repetition with a hint for a better effort. Sing familiar hymns and tunes, such as touch the emotion or stir to activities. It works well to have the singing after the opening impromptu, like the speaking and praying. You will seldom find it to be inappropriate. A word at the close of the hymn, impressing its thought, adds to its power."

"How long should the meeting be held?"

"That depends upon circumstances. Generally an hour is sufficient. But be sure to commence and close according to appointment. If no one is present but the leader and the sexton, begin on the minute and close as promptly at the fixed time. Stop while the interest is high. All the advantage of a spirited meeting is lost by suffering it to dribble

out in exhaustion. The people should leave, not surfeited, but hungry for more. Encourage social talk afterward. The most precious part of the week-night meeting is often the chatting and hand-shaking, the greetings and expressions of sympathy in the aisles and vestibule. I heard a minister say once as he closed his prayer-meeting: 'Now do not stop and loiter or talk in the room, but go silently and solemnly home.' And they did. They marched out as if in a funeral procession. I wondered much if they would ever come back."

"These loiterings are delightful. I have had enough encouragement in the ten minutes' chat with the people around the stove, after the formal dismissal, to set me up for a week. Close acquaintances are made there."

"Do you think all this is practicable?"

"Assuredly I do. It may not be accomplished at once. It will require time to lift the people out of their grooves and put them on a new level; but it can be done, and it is worth while to do it. Do not be discouraged at a few failures. Old habits are not readily changed or old methods destroyed. But when once the rich enjoyment of a good, free and easy, cheery, religious meeting is experienced, and the idea secured that sociability, in its truest, largest sense is compatible with high-toned devotion, then the people will wonder how they ever endured the dull, insipid, uninviting, profitless services they had droned through, from a sense of duty, for so many years."—*Ill. Ch. Weekly.*

FREE ITALY.—The visitor to Rome finds hardly a spot more crowded with suggestions of the past than the summit of the Capitoline Hill. Mediaeval palaces surround it, whose galleries are rich in antique statuary—portrait busts of all the emperors, beginning with the noble head of Julius Caesar; the Dying Gladiator, the Antinous, gods and goddesses and fauns and satyrs; the historical and mythical life of that wonderful past reproduced in life-like vividness and beauty. In the centre of the square stands a grand equestrian statue of Marcus Aurelius, the greatest man of Imperial Rome. From one side you look down the Tarpeian Rock, hardly so much stirred by the thought of the ancient traitor's doom as of the catastrophe of Hawthorne's romance. At the foot of these steps, Rienzi fell. Here stood the temple of Capitoline Jove; here Rome's proudest day—the triumph—had its crowning hour. The whole place is haunted by such memories. And here,—writes a narrator in *Harper's Monthly*,—on this spot was celebrated the first anniversary of the Roman free school! The new life cradling itself in the very tomb of the old! In what land but Italy could there be such a scene of contrast? She has had a glory of the past that made her to men's imaginations the sovereign of all lands. But now she seems starting in a life whose inspirations are nobler than the old ones. She has had freedom and power; she has lost freedom through her vices, and used her power to oppress the world. To her new liberty she is bringing the mighty support of education; may she find the greater aid and consecration of a pure religion!

SPEECH OF REV. ARTHUR MURSELL.

The following speech was made at the recent anniversary of the Sunday School Union held in Exeter Hall, London. The Earl of Shaftesbury occupied the chair:—

Rev. Arthur Mursell in moving the third resolution, said:—My resolution hints at work achieved by the Sunday School Union—abroad as well as at home. I greatly rejoice at the wideness of the arena over which its labours are extended. For there are countries, and these not far off from our own,

where the first great need is a Sabbath, rather than a Sabbath school. (Cheers.) The restful villages of Naples have been startled and dismayed by the molten hail from the angry Vesuvius, and homes have been broken up, and families dispersed by the pumice and the lava; and the spring shoots of the young vines among the vineyards have had their promise of the vintage blighted, beneath the black crust of ashes from the fierce volcano; scarcely less mad and perilous is that ever-flaming crater of excitement, which flushes its fever on the sacred rest of the Lord's-day, breaking up the home-circle into unholy orgie, and turning the day of rest into a day of riot. If the Sunday-school Union can do anything to carry the influence of a Christian British Sabbath into such cities as Paris, and other continental capitals, and shed quietness and calm over their unhalloved pleasures, it will be the evangel of a better time and of a brighter hope for the bringing of the glad tidings and the publishing of the peace. (Cheers.) It is pleasing, therefore, to hear that the Sunday-school Union finds a field for its sacred mission abroad as well as at home, and that it is prospering in that mission. For there is no agency so calculated to bring about the fraternity of nations and the concord of mankind, as that which sows into the warm hearts of a rising race—the seed of the Gospel of goodwill. I join, therefore, Mr. Chairman, in the first sentiment of my resolution, which rejoices in the extension of the efforts of the Union at home and abroad, because I believe that in the plying of those efforts it is doing the work of those "rosy fingers" which shall "ope the gates of day" upon the haunts of night. The footprints of this agency are like the footprints of the morning; they press themselves among the early dew-drops, and hover among the opening flowers; and with a hopeful, prayerful glance, fixed on the silvery East, its toilers work and wait (nor shall they work and wait in vain) for the brighter rising of the day-star—to bring morning to the world. My resolution also speaks of "fervent prayer and earnest labour." Of course it does! Hackneyed expressions these! Thank God they are hackneyed. Long may it be ere the Sunday-school Union holds an anniversary in which it shall fail to embody in its resolutions something about fervent prayer and earnest labor. When it becomes ashamed and afraid to speak of these it will be time to quit the field. The prayer with the labour, the labour with the prayer. (Cheers.) The prayer alone is vain, for faith without works is dead. To go to God—and ask for blessing without any effort for the blessing to fall upon—is like going without a vessel to the spring; or asking for a harvest without breaking the clod or sowing the acre; and to work in such a cause as this without prayer is like trying to rive the rock without gunpowder, or drive the train without steam. The teacher who goes to his work without prayer, goes naked and unarmed into the battle. We cannot go straight from the world to earnest work like this. We want the Spirit's baptism to lift us into the orbit of affection and consecration, which the effort challenges. The world snips off the Samson locks of might, through which alone great work is done; and ere we sally forth to noble toil, we must lift up our head from the Delilah lap, and escape from the syren scissoring which are busy at our hair, and cry to the Might, through which alone the strength can come again. "Lay Thou Thy hand upon my bald and naked pate, that I may be strong in Thy strength when the Philistines are upon me." (Loud cheering.) And my resolution speaks of the teacher and the scholar. There are probably not many scholars here. But there are many who associate much fragrance with the memory of days when they were scholars. I can well believe that there are some who look back from the sultry August and September of their lives, and some who revert even from its frosty winter to the days when

they were Sunday scholars, as though they recalled the fresh green shoots of April, or the wreathing blooms of May. Yes. They were *May meetings* when you met the teacher in the class, and strolled beside the Galilean hedge-rows in imagination, and gathered garlands painted by the Master's presence, sunned by the Saviour's smile, and scented with the great Teacher's breath, and they are garlands which (thank God!) have never withered. They bind their cool leaves round the head of the jaded man of business still, and their sweet flowers twine amongst the furrows of the old man's forehead yet, like a new youth, like boyhood basking on the brow of age. And why are they so fresh? Why is their bloom so vernal? How is it that the dust and blight have never seared the leaf, and the blast has never stripped the blossom? Oh, it is because the plant was tended early; and was grafted into the young soil while it was warm, because the seed was sown in sowing time, and the sunlight of kind, Christian care laughed forth the brightness of the spring time from the Sunday-school. (Cheers.) I was asked at a church meeting the other day, when a little girl of twelve years old was proposed for union with the church, if we had any stated rule respecting age at which to limit the admission of the young. I said we had one rule—the only rule we dared to take—and that was a rule prescribed by a higher authority than Convocation—"Suffer the little children to come unto Me, and forbid them not." Oh, my lord. I love the vagueness of that invitation—"the little children,"—no statistics about this class and that class, and of this age and that age, but just the *little children*. It is the vagueness of pure love, which wrenches asunder all red-tape of law. (Loud cheers.) Why, I had heard that child declare that she felt her heart sinful, and that only Christ could make it clean, and give it peace—that when she prayed to him he seemed to smile and whisper, and to make her happy, and bid her not be afraid. And could I tell her that she was too young to confess him? No. If she had been but five years instead of twelve, I could not have refused her. The green, bright fibre of her faith seemed to be growing there before me, as I looked into her earnest eyes, and mocking the feebleness of my own, as it twined around the Cross. Had I hesitated I should have fancied I could see the little feet stamp firm upon the rock of her salvation, to show the granite of her foothold, and spurn my Pharisaic doubts as the cry rebuked me, "Who is he that condemneth? It is Christ that died." (Applause.) I could only thank God for the lamb which He had cherished, pray that the cleft of the Rock might screen it from every coming storm, and only ask the Lord to give to me, in the pride and coldness of my manhood, more of the spirit of that little child. (Cheers.) I don't believe there's any time too early for a child to be a Christian; and I think it none the less a Christian because it does not know much of doctrines and of dogmas. If it *knows* little, it *feels* much. And I have always been of opinion that the throne of God is circled in a closer ring by the seraphim that love, than even by the cherubim that know, and I don't believe the child is any less a Christian because childhood is the time of skipping-ropes and hoops, and tops and cricket-balls. And the teacher or the preacher, the bishop or the priest, the cardinal or the pope, who would inculcate a religion which frowns upon a child's play, or chains down a child's buoyancy—which would dismantle the gymnasium or shut up the cricket-ground—let him be "Anathema, maranatha." (Loud cheers.) Brethren and Sisters,—Your work has a motive, a method, a machinery, and a reward. Its motive is to glorify God, to elevate childhood, and to help parents. When the patient arm that rocks the cradle begins to ache, after rocking it for two years, and perhaps after leading the tottering little footsteps for two years more, the Sunday-school teacher steps