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Poetry.

The following from an occasional contributor in England, came by the last mail, but too late to appear in our issue before Christmas as it was intended.

For the Christian Messenger.

THE LIVING SAVIOUR.

Ever living is the story,
Of the Saviour's birth;
Tho' the years be long and hoary,
Since he came on earth.

Just as tender, just as loving,
Just as true as then;
Just as faithful and forgiving,
To poor sinning men.

Full of love for little children,
As in early days;
When they flocked his words to hearken,
When they sang his praise.

Now he bids us still rejoicing,
All his life to show;
As he showed his Father's to us,
In his life below.

Kind and gentle to each other,
Earnest, true in life;
Loving all as friend or brother,
Hating only strife.

Thus may Christmas be unto us
As the morning sun;
Needing nothing more to tell us
Man and God are one.

B. McL. P.

Christmas 1872.

Religious.

CHRISTIAN LOVE—WHAT IS IT?

We suppose the difficulty which is described below is not an uncommon one:

"I am troubled to get hold of that mutual love of Christians which is described as their peculiar mark. I am a member of the church, and am trying to live a religious life. But I do not find that I love my fellow-members as such, or religious people generally, much better than I do other folks. And I don't know how to bring myself to do it. Yet it is not the peculiarity of Christians to love one another?"

Love exists in a thousand special forms, all of them good. The mutual love of Christ's true followers is one of the highest forms. But it is not, in itself, the thing to be chiefly sought. That disposition which is most Christ-like appears, not so much in affection for the good, the devout, the morally attractive—as for the needy, the imperfect, and the repulsive. Whoever takes into his heart these lowest, must needs hold there all besides; and he it is that has entered most deeply into the spirit of Christ.

Love is fed from a thousand springs, some higher, some lower, but all divinely established. There is the tie of blood, which links parent and child, brother and sister. Then there is the bond of sympathy in tastes. People who have a like enjoyment of nature, or of books, who are fond of the same people, or work for the same end, are attracted to one another. Between those who suffer in a common cause or for one another—as soldiers who have fought shoulder to shoulder under the same flag, who have shared the enemy's prison, and the long hardships and peril of the escape,—the tie becomes very strong. Again, there is a beauty and attractiveness of character which wins love as its natural tribute. This moral beauty is in a sense the proper food of love, fitting to it as the light fits to the sense of sight. Persons who are true, and brave, and pure, and sweet-tempered, and unselfish,—we love these when we know them, just as we draw our breath, because we cannot help it.

See, then, how many and how strong forces draw together those who really live in Christ. The grand aim and hope and passion of life is common to them. What warfare so knits comradeship as the pure search for truth, the service of Faith, Hope, and Charity, the crusade of love against all

evil? And in those who live for these things, there grows a moral beauty, and in the same degree a sensitiveness to the like quality in others, which are the very conditions of the noblest mutual affection.

Now, such a relation is not to be created by any isolated line of endeavor. The mutual love of Christians, so far as it has a distinctive quality of its own, will arise naturally and freely among those who are truly Christians, and are known to each other as such; and the degree of its ardor will correspond to the depth of their Christian character and the familiarity of their acquaintance. The main endeavor of life needs to be given in a different direction.

The one thing in which Christ went most against the best sentiment that had preceded him, was just this: He sought the society and the friendship of the bad rather than of the good.

The great philosophers of antiquity—and some of them were noble men—gathered about them those who shared their love of truth. The Jewish doctors of the law sat together in congenial discourse over the teachings of Moses and the prophets. The moral and orthodox Pharisees treasured their morality and their orthodoxy safe from contamination in their own select circles. And here came a man whose words sometimes baffled the keenest intellects, who got to the heart of the Mosaic and prophetic teachings, a man of the loftiest character and the most spiritual aspirations. And this man turned aside from the scholars, the priests, the supporters of religion, to go among the outcast and the vile! He went among them, not only to preach and to admonish—which would have seemed in some sort explicable—but to gather them about him in intimate social relations, to recline at table with them, to get just as close to them in their dull, dirty, miserable lives as they would let him. It was not enough for him to heal their diseases; as he did so, he must lay his hands on them. It was not enough for him to do them good; he unmistakably and really loved them. He sought their love. He wooed them with a gentleness, a persistence, an all-sacrificing tenderness and devotion, such as no man ever gave to woman. He did it, not once only, taking afterward rest and reward, but to the very end. He put his whole heart and his whole life into that—the love of the unlovely.

And he declared that as the object of his coming and the principle of his work. "The Son of Man is come to seek and to save that which was lost." He turned from the intelligent and the moral to the degraded, just as a mother's heart turns from her well child to pour itself out on the sick one, because it needs her. The one class who drew from him the fire of wrath were those who used their superiority to crush the weak. He put himself as the representative and expression of the quality in the Divine heart—God's yearning tenderness over his lost children. What a picture he drew, to stand while the world lasts, as the expression of what God's nature is! The prodigal, who had forsaken his home, and rioted with harlots, and gone down into the lowest depths, and who comes back just because he is so wretched he cannot stay away; and the father who meets him, not with measured terms of forgiveness and probation, but falls on his neck, and kisses him, and weeps over him!

If we would drink of the cup Christ drank of, and be baptized with his baptism, we must enter into this spirit. Do men seem to us so low, so merely animal, that they are not worth laboring for? In every one of them there burns the spark of a divine life—there lives a germ that may grow into the image and likeness of God. They share the nature our Lord took on him, and bear the name he chose to bear, the Son of Man. If we are Christ's children, there is no man on this earth who is not our brother. His family is the whole human race. It is easy for us to love the noble, the generous, the sym-

pathetic; it is easy to give love to those who are swift to return it. The lesson our Master sets us, is, to love the evil and unthankful, as God loves them and sends his sun to shine upon them; to take into our lives the children of misery and despair, as our Savior took them into his life, and for them laid down his life.—*Christian Union.*

THE KOBINOOR RECUT.

The Kohinoor, as it originally came into the hands of the queen of England, was far from being "the mountain of light" its name signifies. It was cut, as Indian diamonds usually are, upon the sides, the top being flat, and many inferior diamonds far exceeded it in brilliancy.

It was sent to Holland, and there recut in the style of a brilliant, a principal face surrounded by many facets, reflecting the prismatic colors from every side, and is now a marvel of beauty.

An experienced workman often spends two years of continuous labor upon one stone; such delicate and patient work is necessary to preserve the stone and exhibit its beauty. Even the diamond-dust is preserved with care, to be used in its final polishing.

How like the Indian diamond are God's children untouched by adversity! Precious jewels, but reflecting little of heaven's light. Then the Great Workman takes them in hand, and patiently and carefully cuts upon the hard surface. Worldliness yields at his touch, hidden lights flash out, each cut reveals a new beauty. But the sorrowful heart cries out, Why this long-continued pressure, why blow upon blow for me, while others sit serene, untroubled?

Ah, sorrowful heart, take comfort, thou art one of the Lord's chosen, precious stones.

The more thou art cut and fashioned and polished, the more wilt thou shine in his crown when he maketh up his jewels. Thine is the rare and precious portion of his favored ones: chosen in the furnace of affliction, wrought upon by the Spirit, freed from the impurities of the flesh, polished by the diamond-dust of care and sorrow and disappointment, until the soul is lifted heavenward, and heaven's own light is reflected in its face. And they shall be mine, saith the Lord of hosts, in that day when I make up my jewels.—*Am. Messenger.*

COMFORTERS.

Every congregation has or ought to have a "grandmother." Ours had one—good, noble, determined, care-chastened Grandmother K. She had a heart big enough to mother the whole church; and she came near doing it when we were in trouble. Talk about your "right-hand man" among the people. She was worth half a dozen of the best of them, because she had the art and discipline of comfort. God had worked at that woman for nearly seventy years to fit her for this work; and she had received her diploma—she had graduated as a comforter. She had entered into God's joy; for he is glad to be supremely known as The Comforter.

As torrents in summer,
Half dried in their channels,
Suddenly rise, though the
Sky is still cloudless,
For rain has been falling
For off at their fountains,
So hearts that are fainting
Grow full to overflowing;
And they that behold it
Marvel, and know not
That God at their fountains
Far off has been raining.

There is medicine in the bright faces and the joyous, bracing, tender tones of some people. Some are born scientists, some are born horticulturalists, and some are born comforters. They have it in their finger-tips; it is the oil on their tongues. They know just how to get into the natures and wants of others. They do not meddle with your affairs, nor indulge curiosity;

they deal with you, not yours. The sun never can shine cold; these people can never talk or act cold. They keep comfort always hot in the cauldron of their great natures. You cannot hide it from them that you have a care; while, with a sweet wisdom, they send balsam in where the wound is. And there are others who, whatever other gifts, have none at all of comfort. Good Parson L. always comes into your sick-room with: "Well, brother, they say you are sick. Oh! eh! ah! hum! well! eh! I'm sorry to hear." But isn't it wonderful, while he is stumbling over his sympathy, how sister H. has slapped his pillow into comfort, "slicked" the room into a look of comfort, fixed you into a position of comfort, quiet, quick, decisive, a zephyr before and after her, and then, "There, don't you feel more comfortable now?" Of course! If I had the naming of you, it should be Comfort Israel. Think of the train that followed Jesus—sick, blind, deaf, dumb, lame—all that needed a comforter.

The full character is a great character. It takes in wide sympathies, it cultivates a capacity to feel with others, to understand the poverty of the poor, the riches of the rich, the burden of the restricted, the pain of the lowly, so that out of a great treasure-house we can minister to others as they need.

We may talk independently and grandly; but there is not one of us but at some time sits at a corner of life, bat in hand, heart burdened, saying: "For Christ's sake, give me of your fellowship. Drop in the pence of kindly words, for I am very poor—my soul starves." Ah! not cold, formal comfort now; but just a word glowing full of tender sympathy. Show that you have faith in me; show me that you love me as Jesus loves you—because we need it.—*Independent.*

THE LUXURY OF DOING GOOD.

For many a weary month poor Mrs. W.—sat alone in her humble room. Unable to walk or help herself much she seldom enjoyed the balmy air, or a sight of the glorious arch of blue, or what she missed still more, the sound of the gospel in the house of God.

A good Samaritan happening to call, asked her if she would like to take a ride in the Park some day.

Almost overwhelmed at the thought, she scarcely knew what to say.

In a few days the friend came again, saying she would now accompany her, if she could get ready.

Feeble and trembling as she was, it took almost two hours to prepare for this to her great event. The folds and wrappings of an antiquated and shabby wardrobe were at length adjusted; the conductor of the street-car kindly helped her to enter, and in the course of half an hour to alight at the Eighth Avenue entrance of Central Park.

Soon one of the generous and capacious stages was found. An unwonted expression of tenderness passed over the faces of policemen and drivers, as their eyes fell upon the aged form, and they kindly gave the needed assistance.

But, oh! the joy, the ecstasy, that lighted those aged eyes, as she to her magnificent expanse of lawn, and lake and sky broke upon her delighted sight.

"And such a night's rest I have not had for months," she said the next day.

We envy the one who thus created an oasis in the desert life of this aged victim of poverty and pain, yet one who is the daughter of a King, he who will one day proclaim to the assembled universe this trifling act of kindness shown to one of his chosen ones. Ye whose many hours are spent in seeking to devise means of enjoyment, whose appetites are cloyed with the good things of earth, whose eyes are wearied with seeing, whose ears with hearing, try this new expedient of pleasure, and learn the luxury of doing good.

So shall some aged heart, attic or basement, whisper your name in prayer and call down blessings upon your head.

What other expenditure of thirty-five cents could bring such a return as this?

The poor have æsthetic tastes. It seems almost a pity, since they have so little means of gratifying them, but God who knows best, has so created them.

We must not think we have done all when we have provided them with food and clothing—scantily enough sometimes.

We can not tell how much good this tribute to the higher nature may do, and we have the sure word of promise that the smallest act of kindness shall not lose its reward.

God says, Blessed is he that considers the poor. The poorest need not lose this blessing. Happier he who has it in his power to minister to them.—*Christian at Work.*

CHURCH DEADHEADS.

Dr. Robinson, President of Brown University, has an idea the church is burdened with such characters. In his sermon, at the installation of Rev. Mr. Pentecost, Boston, he said: "If any man hangs to the Christian church as a dead head, and once a month or once in six months goes to the Lord's Supper, and then wonders if he is a Christian, I would say no, a thousand times no. To be a Christian is day by day, hour by hour, with one elevating thought, that the one inspiring, informing, all controlling, all subduing idea is to make Christ known to men." This certainly is the one great, legitimate work of every Christian, to hold up a present Christ to his fellow men. This is to be done not in word only, but in deed. Words and professions are cheap, cost little and amount to less if not sustained by the life. Our Saviour was distinguished by self-denial, crossbearing and constancy. Here are tests which will show far better the character of our religion than mere pretensions. If we have not the same spirit we are not Christians. Here is the test, it has a meaning; and it will be well to appeal to it often—to measure our religion by it and see whether we are really Christians or only dead-heads. There are many who solemnly promise God they will walk with his people, observe his ordinances and maintain a consistent Christian life, and then go away, neglect the church and break their covenant with each other, and their vows to God; and not unfrequently show an unkind resentful spirit, perfectly contrary to the spirit of Christ, and yet claim to be truthful, Christian people before the world.

The Scriptural test is: "now if any man have not the spirit of Christ he is none of his." None of his; then not a Christian. Are any startled with the thought, we are none of his? It is a startling thought, and the great wonder is how persons can do as they do and be so easy about it, that they can under the most impressive circumstances, before men and angels, pledge their fidelity to God; to the church, and to the world, and then go away, throw off responsibility and deliberately violate these pledges. To treat men so, would be charged as falsehood and perjury, and yet how many there are who seem to be wholly indifferent to the vows of God they have taken upon themselves, or to the fact that as Christians they are expected to show any other than a selfish carnal spirit.

SLANDER.

Ever bear in mind that the tongue is an influential, unruly member, and carefully bridle it. O, how much trouble and damage has the tongue of the slanderer caused! Anybody can soil the reputation of an individual, however pure and chaste, by uttering a suspicion that his enemies will believe and his friends never hear of. A puff of idle wind can take away a million of the seeds of a thistle, and do a work of mischief that the husbandman must labor long to undo, the floating party