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Poetry.

"FOLLOW ME."

The Master's voice was sweet:
"I gave my life for thee;
Bear thou this cross through pain and loss;
Arise and follow me."
I clasped it in my hands:
"Thou who didst die for me,
The day is bright, my step is light,
'Tis sweet to follow thee!"

Through the long summer day
I followed lovingly;
"I was bidden to hear his voice so near,
His glorious face to see,
Down where the lilies pale
Fringed the bright river's brim,
In pastures green his steps were seen—
'Twas sweet to follow him."

Oh, sweet to follow him!
"Lord, let us here abide"
The flowers were fair, I lingered there;
I laid his cross aside.
I saw his face no more
By that bright river's brim;
Before me lay the desert way—
'Twas hard to follow him."

Yes, hard to follow him
Into that dreary land;
I was alone; his cross had grown
Too heavy for my hand.
I heard his voice afar
Sound through the night air chill;
My weary feet refused to meet
His coming o'er the hill."

The Master's voice was sad:
"I gave my life for thee;
I bore the cross through pain and loss;
Thou hast not followed me."
"So fair the lilies banks,
So bleak the desert way;
The night was dark, I could not mark
Where thy blest footsteps lay."

"Fairer the lilies banks,
Softer the grassy lea,
The endless rest of those who best
Have learned to follow me!
Canst thou not follow me,
All weary as thou art?
Hath patient love no power to move
Thy slow and faithless heart?
Wilt thou not follow me?
These weary feet of mine
Have staid and red the pathway dread
In search for thee and thine."

O Lord, O Love Divine,
Once more I follow thee!
Let me abide so near thy side
That I thy face may see.
I clasp thy pierced hand,
O thou that diedst for me;
I'll bear thy cross through pain and loss,
So I may cling to thee."

Religious.

BAPTISTS AND THE OTHER DENOMINATIONS.

The American Congregational Union has for one of its principal objects the assisting of feeble churches in building houses of worship. The annual meeting is made a sort of *soiree*, with speeches from ministers of various denominations. At the recent anniversary the Rev. H. M. Gallaher, pastor of one of the New York Baptist churches was present and spoke in a somewhat amusing style. In doing this he offered some quite pertinent suggestions, after the fashion of a son of Erin, as follows:—

He related, as applicable to the circumstances, a story of a fellow-countryman, who, seeing a dilatory workman approaching the workshop very early one morning, remarked, "So you are first at last. You were always behind before." The situation was embarrassing. He felt like the lady who consulted the doctor because of a very great *flutration* of the heart she had experienced. But yet he liked these reunions of brethren of different churches:—"Do they not bring us together in a more kindly spirit? Do they not rub out denominational prejudices? What Baptist could be so pronounced?—no, perhaps *moist* is the better word—(laughter)—among these representatives of different denominations—Congregationalists, Presbyterians, and Methodists." Moreover

they need not adopt the pulpit tone on these occasions:—And this is another reason why I believe in such gatherings; for too many preachers are planted like Lombardy poplars, which always remind me of old bachelors standing alone, taking care of no one but themselves, keeping all their branches round them, very stiff and very shapeless. (Laughter.) But when we come together in a meeting like this we begin to resemble those beautiful New England elms, to interlace our branches, and to throw out waving greenery and form a coronal of glory. I shall be happy a hundred times by only remembering to night. These are the occasions when men tie up bundles of mirth, bottle up content, as Swift found the philosophers in Laputa doing. Nay, more than this, I believe just such gatherings as this we have to-night open to outside people—men who have mistaken opinions about religion, what religion ought to be and deserves to be—the real brightness of the world. There are some men who would not see the bright side of the moon, and there are some men who will not see the bright side of religion. Oh! that we might one day lead them altogether, simply to know the joy in believing.

Now there is another reason, continued the speaker—a higher one. Most of us come here to ask each other: "How is it, brother, out there on the 'Father of Waters'?" And anxiously we wait to hear the answer: "All's well." In the words of one of America's best comic poets, James Russell Lowell—

"We've gathered here as usual to decide,
Which is the Lord's and which is Satan's side
'Cause all the good or evil that can happen
Depends on which of them you take for
Cap'n."

Oh! if it be true that any have become degenerate and gone astray, I have only to look pitifully at such a one and say, "Oh! my brother, you are only an iceberg floating south. There is not a sunbeam that falls upon you that is not melting you. There is not a wave that leaps around you that is not lessening you." Nay, more. If I meet with any of them who have dropped out of the harness, I shall stop to say, "Brother, you are like the old countryman who didn't believe in purgatory. You will go further and fare worse." (Laughter.) We are gathered here to renew our devotion to duty—to right and truth, as we understand it. A Scotch friend once stood in my parlour to be married, and I asked him, "Brother William, will you take that woman whom you hold by the right hand to be your true and lawful wife" (and all the rest of that long question)? "Why," said he, "that's what I came here for." (Laughter.) I didn't ask him again but went on. We have come here for that purpose—to renew our devotion to what we understand to be the truth. That's what we came here for, and that is the highest thing in Nature, I think, to do our duty. Though Wordsworth, addressing duty, says in the fine line—

Stern daughter of the voice of God,
yet he goes on:

Yet thou dost wear
The Godhead's most benignant grace,
Nor know we anything so fair,
As is the smile upon thy face.

And those most ancient heavens through thee
are fresh and strong.

We have met to renew our devotion to duty. I am a Baptist, and I suppose I was invited because the Baptists are regarded as a sort of poor relations to the great Congregational family [great laughter]—relatives who partake of the Congregational quality, but in a narrow, restricted, close communion sort of manner; and so they think they are a good deal better. Do you remember the collar in 'Ivanhoe' around the serf's neck, which bore the inscription, 'Gurth, the born thrall of Cedric'? They think we wear such a collar, and ought, therefore, to sit below the salt. That is why Bro. Palmer put me down in that seat to-night (pointing to his chair on the step of the pulpit). [Great laughter.] Presbyterians may come up here (indicating Dr. Hall's position). [Laugh-

ter]. Congregationalists have a high seat [renewed laughter], even the Methodists; but the poor cold-water man takes that seat to-night [prolonged laughter]. What shall I say to that? Let me give the answer of the Highland henchman: 'Dinna fash yersel' about that, man. Wherever Mc-Gregor sits is the head of the table.' [Applause and laughter.] For, after all, what are Baptists but Congregationalists, only a little more so? As the Irishman said in reply to the question, 'Is one man as good as another in this country?' 'Yes, and better too.' [Laughter.]

"Now I deplore as much as anybody, perhaps, the division among Christians; and yet sometimes, when I sit down and think of it, I can find an excuse and a use for that. I hold, with Shakespeare, 'when the brain is out the man is dead.' When the life is out of a church, the Lord will kill it; its branches bear no fruit. Let it wither. Cut it down. Why cumbereth it the ground?"

"So I can see a reason why we should be Presbyterians, Congregationalists, Methodists and Baptists. I think when it gives us rivalry it gives us more power—makes us cling more to the faith once delivered to the saints. I can see sometimes, in following his special faith given to each denomination, it gives every theologian his special point to defend, for upon it the vital existence of his church depends. Look at it. There are the Episcopalians—oh! the sobriety, the decency, the calmness of their worship—fanaticism, ignorance and vulgarity totally excluded. I don't wonder at its power over some minds. There are our Presbyterian friends, who have defended so nobly the grand doctrines of the sovereignty of God and of election; a doctrine that is like good food excellent if you don't take too much of it. [Laughter.] Here are the Methodists, who prefer defending the complement of that; and the Congregationalists defending, as they ought to defend the entire independence of church government. But we can worship as one and sing the same faith. I can say to my friend, Ray Palmer, that the first time I looked at that splendid hymn of his, 'My faith looks up to Thee,' I thought it took the English attorney-general (Sir Roundell Palmer, now Lord Selborne) to write it. But no, it was our own attorney-general; let me thank him for that. [Applause.] Nay, I might even say I believe that even in the denominations which are not evangelical there is an influence to make me see to it that I defend my own faith. There is not a Unitarian I speak to but makes me respect my intuitions more and praise God for the goodness of His Word; there is not a Universalist who does not make me feel God within me, and the kingdom of Satan also. [Laughter.] And if I was to touch that other, that old hierarchy that sits at Rome, they have among them people with such personal devotion, such splendid faith, that I might sit at the feet of almost every Irish domestic and ask myself when have you given so much, and when have you been so devoted. And there is a lesson of tolerance.

"But I forgot. What is the use of the Baptists? [Laughter.] Do you know I give them a little touch sometimes—a taste of correction from my own pulpit (that is the place to do it, never elsewhere)? And the reason is because I love them so much. I am like the man who said to O'Connell: 'Counselor, I wish I saw you knocked down in my parish. Wouldn't I bring a faction to your rescue?' [Laughter.] That was his way of expressing his love. I would like to see any one interfere with the Baptists. Wouldn't I speak for them? I never speak unkindly of the Episcopal church, because I was born in its communion—it is my spiritual mother. But I do speak sharply to the Baptists sometimes. That church is my spiritual wife, and you know a man may touch up his wife sometimes; but never his mother. [Laughter and applause.] What are

we here for? Are we here to defend our post by the waters? No! no! that defends itself. [Applause.] We are here for a far higher thing—that the stones in the mysterious temple shall be living stones. The magic of ordinances shall perish with the belief in witchcraft. Let the name of Baptist perish, if but the thing will live. That is the real and true idea—to make a

man a man and let him be. If this were so, religion need not fear the tallest earthquake they can get up here. When of old the prophet died the fire within him outlasted and survived. Brethren, I don't know that I shall see in my time the gathering together of the tribes; but I do think that if we must be separate, still we can work together under the same kindly, loving hand and toward the same end, until we shall be brought together, a girl might gather the scattered pearls of her necklace, one by one, and say: 'This pearl is Congregationalist; this, Methodist; this, Presbyterian; this, Baptist—all linked at last.' I don't know that we can do it, but this we can do: we can go home and try ourselves to be more like Christ and make His influence ours. That is the real way; not by argument or discussion, but by the love that is in him. During the war—and I know something about it—I stood and looked at a dying soldier—not wounded, but perishing of pneumonia. I asked him if I could do anything for him. He said: 'I want you to read to me.' I did so, and asked him what next. 'Will you pray for me?' I prayed. Looking again, I saw his lips move, and had to get very close to hear his answer. 'Can I do anything else for you?' 'Yes, sir. Can you sing?' So I sang for him.

"There is a land of pure delight,
Where saints immortal reign,"
and then stopped. He was looking upward, and asked me to continue. Then I sang,

"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,"
and then stopped. He was looking upward, and asked me to continue. Then I sang,
"There is a fountain filled with blood,
Drawn from Immanuel's veins,"
and then stopped. He was looking upward, and asked me to continue. Then I sang,

"Ring out a slowly dying cause
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws."
"Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kinder hand;
Ring in the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be."
Good night." [Prolonged applause.]

MIDSUMMER MORNING.

TO YOUNG MEN AND MAIDENS.

For many years Rev. Dr. Brock was accustomed to preach on the 21st of June, Mid-summer's Day, at seven o'clock in the morning, a sermon "to Young Men and Maidens." His successor, Rev. T. W. Handford, has taken up the practice. Our London contemporary gives a verbatim copy of the sermon, and says, "the congregation did not overflow into the street as on several former occasions, but the chapel itself was quite full, not only the pews but the aisles as well. The popularity of this service is therefore well sustained. Our readers will be glad to peruse this excellent discourse:—

"For what is your life?"—James iv. 14.

The writer of this epistle is often spoken of as a great teacher of practical Christian truth; but James could be poetical as well as practical. The wide realms of poetry could hardly furnish a more appropriate and expressive

figure of the brevity of human life than this contained in the verse of my text, "What is your life?" A thin, transparent, filmy cloud, floating for a brief moment in the ambient air, and then—gone for ever! So delicate, you could not touch it, so frail that the faintest breath blows it away! And such is life! The Word of God abounds in beautiful descriptions of the brevity of life. In language not unlike the words before us, Job says, "Remember that my life is wind; as the cloud consumed and vanished away, so he that goeth down to the grave shall come up no more." And again, "My days are swifter than a weaver's shuttle." "Man that is born of a woman is of few days and full of trouble; he cometh forth like a flower, and is cut down; he fleeth also as a shadow, and continueth not." The great leader of Israel's host said our life is but a "sigh," an "exclamation," "We spend our years as a tale that is told."

And the facts of which these figures speak with so much beauty are facts of every age—facts, perchance, too little heeded, but facts that come unbidden to our notice day by day our gentle mother earth opens her kindly graves to welcome back the dust that but yesterday throbbed with life.

The air is full of farewells to the dying,
And mournings for the dead;
And many Rachels, for their children crying,
Will not be comforted.

But the question under discussion in the paragraph of which the text is a part is not so much the brevity of life, as the fact that men were willfully and wickedly ignoring this solemn truth; and, as James says, were "boasting of to-morrow," as though Time had lost his scythe, and there were no more graves to be dug. "Go to, now, ye that say To-day or to-morrow we will go into a city and continue there a year, and buy and sell and get gain; Ye ought to say, if the Lord will we shall do live, and do this or that."

So you observe that James is dealing not with the brevity of life alone, but with men who were forming their plans for the future, regardless of the uncertain tenure of this mortal state; but, worse than that—they were leaving God altogether out of the reckoning! God in whom alone they lived and moved and had their being. They would go to this city or to that and gather its treasures, and then the next year they would journey further and gather richer spoils, and so they would continue from day to day and year to year. Was their enterprise to be condemned? Was their energy and perseverance to be blamed? By no means. Diligence in business is a Christian virtue. This was the point of condemnation, that in the eagerness of the pursuit they forgot all beside; forgot that the race might any moment end; and, worst of all, forgot they were absolutely dependent on God, not for days and years alone, but for every breath of life. And so James speaks this faithful word, a word well suited for us all, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow." Take God into the account. Live in the solemn but happy sense that every step you tread is by the mercy and unchanging goodness of your Father in heaven. At the head of all your plans, and in the front of all your purposes, and on the topmost height of all your ambition, write God's name large; in letters bold and clear and unmistakable! "In all thy ways acknowledge Him, and He shall direct thy paths."

Thus much by way of exposition. I greet you lovingly in the Divine name, young men and maidens. In the first hours of this summer Sabbath I look into your happy faces, radiant with the beauty of the morning, and could almost envy the lot of most of you, standing as you do at the gateway of life, with its strange and varied paths yet to tread. I am sure you will agree with me that the text I have chosen is appropriate for such an hour and for such an audience. "What is life?" "What is your life?" The question is brief, but could any ques-