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WHOLE SERIES.
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POETRY.

For the Christian Messenger.

Prospective.

The winds are ever blowing,
The streams are ever flowing,
And silent forces moving,
As the seasons come and go;
All, all are working changes,
And the mighty mountain ranges
Are bowing, slowly bowing,
To the rising vales below.

In the coming happy ages,
Foretold by holy sages,
When the things of earth and heaven
Shall move in grand accord,
What wrongs will then be righted,
What lands will be united,
In pure and loving homage
To the universal Lord!

But faith is sometimes shaken,
Almost deems itself mistaken,
As the intervening shadows
Oppress the longing sight,
The years seem long and dreary,
And the waiting heart grows weary,
As watchers for the morning
Grow weary of the night.

The ills which swarm around us,
The errors that confound us,
The self that dwells within us,
Impatient of control;
Old forms of superstition,
Old systems of oppression,
Rise up in towering greatness
Between us and the goal.

Yet the winds are ever blowing,
The streams are ever flowing,
And silent forces moving,
As the seasons come and go;
All, all are working changes,
And the lofty mountain ranges
Are bowing, surely bowing,
To the rising vales below.

S. S.

RELIGIOUS.

Discussion not Quarrelling.

There is a wide difference between a sharp, close discussion of a subject, and the ungenerous and unchristian manifestation of a quarrelsome spirit. Yet not a few persons confound these things, and regard every discussion as a quarrel which can only result in alienation and mischief.

For the cause of truth, such conclusions are unfortunate. Discussion, properly conducted, is healthful and salutary. By discussion, truth is evoked and progress made. The world has received some of its grandest theological facts and principles from controversies which well nigh shook great churches to pieces. To stop discussion would be to quench light, and darken the windows of the mind against the sunshine of truth. No better service could we render the Prince of Darkness than the suppression of free discussion, which, from first to last, has been a blessing to mankind. The forum is erected for free discussion. The press is designed for free discussion. The pulpit stands as the bulwark of free discussion. We hope the time will never come when candid criticism will be deemed out of place, or free discussion be forbidden.

There can be no evil in a manly, Christian controversy between different religious journals. We are seeking truth. We are asking for light. If false views are put forth in one direction, they should be met in another. But there are womanly men who take fright as soon as they see in one paper a sharp criticism of views put forth in another. "Don't be always quarrelling," they say, just as if discussion was quarrelling. No joke has any point that they can see; no logic has any force if it is not on their side. They are afraid religion will be hurt, Christ dishonored, the church damaged, by what they are pleased to call a "wrangle" over the truth. Christ's honor does not need to be taken care of by these fearlings. It is never in so much danger of being injured as when His disciples refuse to speak the truth. Religion, if it is worth anything, is made of sterner stuff than these men think, and will not take hurt by free

discussion. Luther made something for the gospel by free discussion. John Knox set Scotland on fire by free speech. Soul-liberty was received by the candid discussion of great principles. Only think of asking Roger Williams or Isaac Backus to keep still! Slavery was abolished, not by war, but by free discussion. "They may kill me, but I will be heard," said Garrison.

We feel a sort of pity, mingled with contempt, for a man who cannot argue without getting angry; who cannot engage in discussion without showing the worst side of his nature, and who has not brains enough to distinguish a candid expression of opinion on a controverted subject, and a free, fair criticism of the views of others, from quarrelling.

There are some Christians who are always afraid of religion is in danger of being hurt. If some noted minister does wrong, if a prominent professor of religion commits a crime, if two brethren who differ wax warm in debate, they bewail the injury to Christianity, the damage to the gospel of Christ. Why, the gospel is as far above the power of such things to injure it, and as far above the efforts of these trembling disciples to help it, as heaven is above the earth. The men who rushed in such hot haste to steady the ark have a long line of blood relations on the earth. They go running about with hands outstretched, trying to prevent injury to the gospel—idiots, trying with uplifted arms to prevent the sun from being extinguished by the fleecy clouds.

Let us have discussion, only let it be in a Christian spirit. The discussion of slavery brought liberty. The discussion of war brings peace. The discussion of wrongs establishes the right. Discuss, and do it without quarrelling. Be sharp, and yet be just. Criticize, but be manly about it. Bring the theories of religionists and moralists and scientists to the closest scrutiny, but do it kindly.

When we discuss doctrine or practice, we are not quarrelling, nor fighting, nor angry. We may be the best of friends, and yet discuss, and he is unwise who lifts up his hands in horror, crying, "O, don't quarrel so, brethren, for you will hurt the cause." What cause? Only the cause of error can be injured by free discussion.

There are some people who are so much afraid of a quarrel that they will allow abuses to continue, wounds to fester, wrongs increase, falsehood triumph, sin abound, rather than appear belligerent. Save us from that company. It is the company of the ark-steadiers. It is the old Sanballat crowd. Better not take their "let-alone, things-are-well-enough" counsel. —Watchman.

A Night for Remembrance.

"Of course you have been to the revival meetings?"

"Revival!"

How the word brought back to me an incident of my girlhood, of most thrilling import to those immediately concerned, of over-flowing influence in my own soul-life!

I will write it out. I think just now is the time when its solemn lesson might be heeded.

It was some twenty years ago, when I, a girl of fourteen, found myself, on a glorious moonlight night bowling rapidly along a level Virginia country road, in the carriage of my cousins, Fred and Blanche Marshall, whose guest I was. Our destination was "Garrison's Chapel," an old meeting-house up in the woods, where a "big meeting" was being held, which Mrs. Blanche had expressed a wish to attend.

"Do let us go, Fred," she had said at dinner; "it's a splendid night for a drive, and anything for a little excitement in this fearfully dull plantation life! It'll be a new sensation—I never went to a revival in my life—did you?"

"Never, and haven't the least desire to for myself," he answered indolently. "No objection to you amusing yourself, however, my dear, if you think you

can find such performances amusing. You must excuse me though—I never could sit it out; I should get mad and show it. I'll take you there and see you seated; then I'll keep on over to Rawson's and have a game of whist till I think you've got enough, and come back for you. That's the best I can do." And it was settled, though his wife said he was "an ungallant creature, and wouldn't have left her so before they were married;" but when we had really arrived, and were seated in a pew quite near the pulpit, she found so much to interest her, that she forgot her little pique at his desertion.

It had looked a strange enough scene when we entered: the long low building standing at the edge of a great pine wood, whose somber blackness was weirdly lit by the red flame of two flaming torches at the door; the confused crowd of vehicles, horses, and men, grouped about under the trees; beyond, the white moonlight road, and far up over all, the deep blue sky, unspeakably solemn with its myriads of watching stars.

My cousin was strangely impressed. "Isn't it picturesque?" she said. "Something weird and thrilling about it all. I know I shall have a new sensation to-night!"

But when we were fairly seated in the midst of the thronged building, it seemed stranger still to us who had never been to any place of worship before except the old cruciform church, built before the Revolution, of bricks brought over from England, where the dear old white-haired rector, who always seemed to me as if he too must have been built before the Revolution, of materials brought over from England! I was wont to drone out to his drowsy congregation the beautiful old prayers which we all knew by heart, and so could go comfortably to sleep on.

The last notes of a hymn, indescribably piercing and solemn had just died away, and the minister was standing, with outstretched arms, calling upon us to join him in prayer.

I shall never forget that prayer, never; for I had never heard any one pray before, never seen any one fairly wrestle with God, and refuse to let him go, without giving a blessing. I felt my heart thrill with the passion, the intensity, the reality of his pleadings; it seemed as if the Almighty were really present, as if this man were prostrate at his feet, clasping his garments, beseeching with strong crying and tears, for a blessing upon the people, as one beseeches a reprove from death for one's best beloved. The effect of his passionate earnestness was magnetic. A thrill of sympathetic fire ran through the hearts of his fellow-workers; low-breathed amens, fragments of prayer, stifled sobs, broke here and there from some surcharged breast; and one could feel that a great wave of awful emotion was surging amid that awakened throng.

I glanced furtively up at my Cousin Blanche; I felt that my face betrayed my feeling. But I need not have minded; her own clear-cut and high-bred features were quivering, her dark eyes dilating as they gazed spell-bound upon the man who was pleading with God, for her soul in especial, as it seemed to her, and her long slender fingers, were gripping each other all unconsciously in the intensity of her emotion.

She was "having a new sensation." I slipped my hand into hers, and her fingers closed upon it.

"Oh Grace!" she whispered, "isn't it awful how much in earnest he is? Why if he thinks he ought to beg so for us, it must be that we ought to plead for ourselves too. Gracie, I don't believe I ever really prayed in my life; did you?"

The prayer was ended just then, and as the minister rose, some one away back in the crowd broke out in the old hymn—

There is a fountain filled with blood.

Oh, what a wild, plaintive thrilling strain it was. It seemed to pierce my cousin's heart through and through.

Her beautiful face suffused, she quivered all over.

"Oh Gracie," she whispered, "my mother used to sing that when I was a little child. I remember it so well, nights when she used to put me to bed, and hear me say my prayers. I have never heard it since. Dear, dear mother! If she knew—I wonder if I shall ever go where she is!"

"You would not like to think you would never see such a mother again. Jesus says, 'I am the way.' It was as if the voice dropped from the clouds.

We both started and looked up. A young woman was standing in the pew in front of us, leaning towards us. She was plain and slender and plain-looking, but there was a light in her face I had never seen before.

"I am the Way, and the Truth, and the Life," she went on; "no man cometh unto the Father but by me."

Blanche looked up at her with shining, eager eyes. "Oh, I wish I could go!" she said.

"Jesus says, 'Whatsoever ye shall ask in my name, that shall ye have.'"

"But I don't know how to ask—I cannot ask!"

"Let us kneel together and I will ask with you."

My cousin knelt at once like a child; the young sister knelt beside her. Again went up a fervent pleading, for a soul just waked from its sleep. Such low, clear, intense tones, such passionate, pitiful words! "Thou who art the Shepherd of our souls, save, oh save, this lost, this wandering, helpless lamb!"

"Yes—save me, Lord." I heard Blanche cry under her breath, and the cry thrilled through me. I looked around; everywhere, the people of the church were going about, talking and praying, with any who would listen; the deep tones of the minister, sounded now here, now there, uttering words of warning or of help; the negroes in the gallery were shouting "Glory to God;" snatches of prayer, stifled sobs, bursts of solemn song, filled the house with a passion of mingled sound. Still, just at my side, went on the low, clear, fervent voice, and Blanche's childlike pleadings under her breath.

I felt strangely excited, as though something were about to happen; and presently it came. There was a noise as of some commotion at the door; some one was forcing his way up the crowded aisle; a man's step, a man's voice, sounded harshly, in a different key from the murmur of mingled emotion around. I felt before I saw him that it was my Cousin Fred, and that he was beside himself with anger.

Another moment, and he had reached the pew where she sat, and forced himself to the side of his kneeling wife. He stooped down and grasped her arm.

"Get up, Blanche. Get up this instant," he said in a voice full of suppressed passion. "I could not believe it when they told me at the door, that my wife could really disgrace herself so. You—an Upshur!"

But Blanche did not rise. She turned upon him her eloquent face, full of a feeling too high and too deep for his control. "No, Fred, do not take me away," she begged. "God is here—I never found him before; don't take me away till he grants me his blessing."

Her husband's face grew pale with fury. He muttered an execration between his teeth, which sent a quiver through us all.

"Get up, I say, and come with me this instant," he said, in a terrible undertone, "or I will force you publicly, as you have disgraced me publicly." "Oh help me, speak to him," whispered Blanche, turning her pleading eyes upon her who had been praying with her. She fixed her quiet piercing glance upon the angry face.

"Do you know what you are doing?" she asked in her clear thrilling tones. "Do you dare take the risk of coming between a wife and her husband, madam? Blanche, once more I command you, rise at once, and come with

me." A strange look crossed the pale, passion-full face of his wife. She looked up to Heaven with appealing eyes.

"Oh God," she said; "thou knowest he is my husband, I must obey him. Thou wilt not lay it to my charge that I seem to turn my back upon thee this night."

She put her hand in her husband's and rose to her feet.

"I will go with you, Fred," she said, "but I have found something here to-night, that you can never take away from me."

She turned and clasped the sister's hand. "God bless you," she said; "pray that he give me a blessing." And then we went away, pushing through the curious crowd who only half understood what was going on, and reaching at last the seclusion of our own carriage.

What a drive it was. In vain was the beauty of silver-shining moonlight, the picturesque gloom of sombre pines; no one noticed them. My cousin leaned back in her corner with pale rapt face and closed eyes; her husband gazed at her in silent wrath. Not a word was spoken, and I was glad to get home, and to bed. I was but a child, and all this was too much for me.

It was long before I slept, and when slumber came at last, it brought troubled dreams. I was roused from one of these by a strange confused sound of voices and footsteps, in a neighboring room. Fearing that some one was ill, I rose at once and put on my wrapper and my slippers, and went out into the hall. At the same moment my Cousin Fred came out of his room, with his hat, and coat on. His face looked frightful in the ghastly light of dawn.

"Go to her," he said in a strange hoarse voice. "She is dying, and I have killed her."

I gazed at him in horror, and sprang past him into my cousin's room. There she lay, true enough, the fair, beautiful creature, like a broken lily, upon her bed. Her hand was pressed close to her side; her breath came in great gasps.

"Oh what is it, Blanche, dear Blanche?" I cried. A light broke over her face, as she saw me, and she made a strong effort to speak.

"Tell her, Gracie," she said, "the one with a sweet face, you know, who prayed for me, that all is well. Thanks to her help, I shall be with Christ to-day instead, instead." A spasm stopped her breath for an instant. "Oh, Gracie, Christ died that we might live. You will love him for that, won't you?—And tell Fred—dear old Fred, he has rushed off for the doctor—but it's no use—I knew it six months ago—heart disease—I didn't want him to know—tell him not to fret—because he scolded me—and took me away. Jesus came with me—he's holding me up now—I am going with him. Gracie, tell Fred to come too, bye and bye."

That was all. It was over. Shall I ever forget it? And yet not all either. I gave Fred her message. There was a year when we thought he would go mad. To-day he is a missionary among the wilds of Africa.—National Baptist.

What I am to be hereafter I must be becoming now. For, day by day, I am growing fixedly into the attitude which I bear my sorrows in, and from under them my look heavenward, whatever it is, is becoming eternal with me.—Mountford.

"People talk about the ten commandments as if they were ten laws. They are one law—the law of God. The minute you have broken one of them you have broken the law of God. Supposing I am hanging by a chain from the wall; if a single link in the chain breaks I fall."—Moody.

What is mind? No matter. What is matter? Never mind. But what is mind? Oh, it's immaterial.

Kind words, softly spoken, steal over the senses like snatches of song from heavenly shores.