

# The Christian Messenger.

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## Poetry.

### Nearer to life's winter, Wife.

Nearer to life's winter, wife,  
We are drawing nearer;  
Memories of our blessed spring  
Growing dearer, dearer.

Through the summer's heat we've toiled,  
Through the autumn weather  
We have almost passed, sweet wife,  
Hand in hand together.

Time was, our hearts as well as feet  
Were light; do you remember?  
April's locks of gold are turned  
Silver this December.

Flowers are fewer than at first,  
And the way grows dearer;  
For unto life's winter, wife,  
We are drawing nearer.

Nearer to life's end, sweet wife,  
We are drawing nearer;  
The last milestone on the way  
To our sight grows clearer.

Some whose hands we held grew faint,  
And lay down to slumber;  
Looking backward we, to-day,  
All their graves may number.

Heights we've sought we've failed to climb,  
Fruits we've failed to gather;  
But what matter, since we've still  
Jesus and each other?

### "Let's Play!"

Oh, the blessed and wise little children,  
What sensible things they say;  
When they can't have the things they  
wish for,  
They take others and cry: "Let's play!"

"Let's play" that the chairs are big  
coaches,  
And the sofa a railroad car,  
And that we are all taking journeys,  
And travelling ever so far.

"Let's play" that this broken old china  
Is a dinner-set rare and fine,  
And our tin-cups filled with water  
Are goblets of milk and wine!

"Let's play" every one of our dollies  
Is alive and can go to walk,  
And keep up long conversations  
With us if we want to talk.

"Let's play" that we live in a palace,  
And that we are the queens and kings;  
"Let's play" we are birds in a tree-top,  
And can fly about on wings.

"Let's play" that we are school-keepers  
And grown-up people come to our school;  
And then punish them all most soundly  
If they break but a single rule.

Oh, the blessed and wise little children,  
What sensible things they say;  
And we might be happy as they are,  
If we would be happy their way.

What odds 'twixt not having and having,  
When we have lived out our day!  
Let us borrow the children's watchword,  
The magical watchword, "Let's play!"  
H. H. INDEPENDENT.

## Religious.

### Revivals.

There are thousands of Christians who have yet to count their first convert to Christ; yea, who have yet to make their first honest effort to save a soul. Notoriously a few in any church, and generally those of the humbler classes, do all the work of soul saving, and the rest look on, perhaps to criticize. They are as negative in their influence as if they had been caught by Satan and paroled on condition that they do no harm to his kingdom. And this when they are wearing the uniform of Jesus.

Certainly the world is not to be converted at the present slow rate. And in the gatherings that must be expected, it may be that no service shall be without its inquiry meeting, to point to the awakened way of life, and implore immediately converting grace. Preaching will be more direct, and all church work with a simpler end; and instead of occasional efforts to pick off a soul here and there from the godless mass, the churches and ministers will be found doing nothing else, and thousands will be hand-picked where there are now tens.

Instead of fewer and smaller revivals, I am prepared to expect much wider and more numerous ones. I hope to see a succession of such revivals as have occasionally been witnessed, sweeping all through Christendom—

not drops, nor showers of converting grace, but great rains and mighty rivers of salvation, with no intervals between them, so that they shall run into each other, and flow together in one grand life-giving current the world over. It is impossible to see how otherwise this earth is to be given to its rightful Lord.—H. C. Fish.

### The Talmud.

Jews, Protestants, and Romanists all agree in receiving as canonical the books of our Old Testament. But as the Romanists would add to these the apocryphal books, so the Jews insist on adding their oral law. They say that when the written law was given to Moses, inscribed on two tablets of stone, God also gave another and verbal law explanatory of the first, which he was commanded not to commit to writing, but to deliver down by oral tradition. When Moses came down from the mount, they tell us that he first repeated this oral law to Aaron and his sons, and then to the seventy, and finally to all the people, each of whom was obliged to repeat it in his hearing, to insure its correct remembrance. Just before his death, they say, he spent a month and six days in repeating it to them again; and then, they assert, he committed it in a special manner to Joshua, through whom it was imparted to Phineas, and so on through the long line of prophets, and afterwards of teachers, down to the time of Judah the Holy, who lived in the second century, by whom it was committed to writing, lest it should be lost. This work, consisting of six books, is the famous Mishna of the Jews, which, with its Gemara, or commentaries, constitutes their celebrated Talmud, in which is comprehended all their learning and much of their religion as a people. The whole work is held by them in far higher esteem than the Bible, so much so, that they say the Bible is water, but the Talmud is wine; and they even declare that he who studies the Bible when he might read the Talmud does but waste his time; and that to sin against the latter is far worse than to sin against the former. So implicit is their confidence in this oral law, that it is almost useless to reason with a Jew out of the Old Testament; for he is ever ready with an answer from the Talmud, with the authority of which he is fully satisfied.—Tryon Edwards.

### Get, that you may Give.

Is there any such proverb as this? There ought to be. Surely it will be one of the proverbs of the Millennium!

"Get, that you may give." It is simply the condensation of what Paul was inspired to say to the Ephesians, when he directed the convert to "labor, working with his hands the thing which is good, that he may have to give to him that needeth."

Amos Lawrence once wrote to one of his partners: "I am sick, and deprived of the sight of most of those who call; but not of the privilege of reading their papers, and giving them money. In short, I have more use for money when in the house, than when able to be abroad." And again he wrote: "The good there is in money, lies altogether in its use—like the woman's box of ointment; if it be not broken, and the contents poured out for the refreshment of Jesus Christ in his distressed members, it loses its worth. He is not rich who lays up much; but who lays out much."

And many a man who has had hundreds of thousands of dollars less to give than that princely man, has discovered that it is a joy to toil for money, not in order to hoard, but to scatter it; has even found that the common world was made for common folks, and that the dear luxury of doing something for others may be felt just as really, and just as richly, by the little pauper who, with a kind heart and a love smile, gives a cup of cold water to the thirsty wayfarer, as

by the millionaire among his money-bags.

It is a blessed thing for any man to share what he may have with others who stand upon a lower social and financial plane than he does. But it is still more blessed for him to go to work to earn money, expressly that he may have it thus to share with others. This is intensifying his benevolence, and dignifying it from what might have been a mere incident of good nature, into a principle and a passion controlling the life, which it makes lovely and illustrious.

Try it, reader!

Experiment with Paul's gracious wisdom.

Get, that you may give; and fail not to give, when you have got.—Congregationalist.

### The Theatre and its Fruits.

1. The theatre is not needed. Society would continue, virtue would flourish, homes would be pleasant, youth would grow up in happiness, and men would do their work without it.

2. It is not likely to do good in the community. Such is not its aim. It is sometimes said that it is "a popular school of morality; that the stage is a supplement to the pulpit; where virtue moves our love and affection when made visible to the eye." Still, no one would soberly pretend that such is the design of the theatre. Not for that reason is it supported. If it is claimed that it has some beneficial influence, we might retort with words like those of Baronius to Paul V.: "The ministry of Peter is twofold; to feed and to kill. For the Lord said to him, 'Feed my sheep;' and he also heard a voice from heaven, saying, 'Kill and eat!'"

3. The influence of the theatre is harmful. It hurts the actors. There are, doubtless, good persons among them. But it is not to actors that we look for wise teachers and devoted philanthropists, for men and women earnest in the real affairs of life. It hurts the spectators. Plays do not foster good principles, strengthen character, make men firm against temptation. We do not find young men becoming better the longer they are under its influence. The merchant does not think more highly of his clerk when he finds he is greatly interested in the theatre. The father is not more hopeful of his son when he finds he is giving more attention to the drama. The deep conviction of men asserts the opposite feeling and belief. Does any one mention Shakespeare and the tone and influence of his writings? It is an innocent suggestion. But every manager knows, and some by costly experience, that a theatre which should present only Shakespeare's plays, and works of a similar character, would be as popular and profitable as a temperance hotel. It has become a common jest, that it is the bad play which fills the house. Again, the effect of the theatre is not favorable to the home. The two are opposed in spirit and in tendency. In regard to the repute and influence of the theatre, read these words of Mrs. Kemble: "I devoted myself to an occupation which I never liked or honored, and about the very nature of which I have never been able to come to any decided opinion."

Mr. Macready mourns in his autobiography that he could not rank with men of other professions; that his calling was not well esteemed; and it is said that he refused to have his son follow in his steps.

4. The alliances and associations of the theatre are not favorable to good morals, sound character, or high usefulness.

5. It is the general influence of the theatre which is to be regarded, and not the effect of a given play upon a given man, or the effect of an occasional attendance. What is the large drift and influence of the institution? We ought to be able to rise above the "private interpretation" and the personal preference, and say whether the theatre as a whole, year after year, is

favorable to the interests of the community. There were slaves at the South whose life was pleasanter than it is now. But slavery was bad, and it was abolished, and we all were glad. This man may be none the worse for visiting the theatre now and then. But does the theatre, as a public institution, do good or harm? If both, which is in excess of the other? It does not seem presumptuous to say that, if the matter could be decided after this manner, the decision would be that the community would be better off if the theatre were further off.

6. It is often said, "Reform the theatre. It has its place and use; purify it and employ it." This is not impossible in theory. It would be found impossible in fact. If the theatre were reformed it would not pay; it is the unreformed drama which is demanded by the throng. Again, those who alone could make the reform are the persons who need themselves to be reformed. If nothing else were to be said, other men have more promising uses for their time. If men are so much overworked already that they need the theatre, it would be unkind to throw this additional task upon them. And if the theatre were reformed it would not stay reformed.—Christian Banner.

### Fragments from a Minister's table.

BY REV. D. OLIVER EDWARDS, SOUTH STOCKTON.

He who refuses to light his lamp in time must for ever sit in darkness.

God is not in eternity, but eternity in God.

Heaven is in the cross, but the cross is not in heaven.

Humility is doing God's will without asking questions.

To hide a sin is to nurse a serpent. A single thread of love has drawn more than cords of hatred.

A man is not in his place before he comes to himself.

Pharaoh complained more of the hard blows he was having, than of the hard heart within him.

Piety is a silver chain, that binds heaven and earth together.

The graveyards of the just may properly be termed "Resurrection Fields."

Every good deed is a grain of seed for eternal life.

Beauty is the robe of holiness—the more holiness, the more beauty.

DON'T DESPOND.—The most perilous hour of a person's life is when he is tempted to despond. The man who loses his courage loses all; there is no more hope of him than of a dead man; but it matters not how poor he may be, how much pushed by circumstances, how much deserted by friends, how much lost to the world; if he only keep his courage, holds up his head, works on with his hands, and in his unconquerable will determines to be and to do what becomes a man, all will be well. It is nothing outside of him that kills; but what is within—that makes or unmakes.

When any one shall say to you, "I do not feel that I have come to Christ," turn their thoughts away from such introspection, and turn them again at once to Christ; do not go into the science of optics, but give the light, which will enforce a consciousness of spiritual seeing.

RIGHTEOUS VENGEANCE.—Some one having urged Tasso to avenge himself upon a man who had done him many injuries, he said, "I wish to take from him neither his property nor his life, nor his honor, but only his ill-will towards me."

Virtue is not left to stand alone. He who practices it will have neighbors.

Every dog is a lion at home.

## FOREIGN MISSIONS.

Letter from Mrs. Armstrong to Rev. Dr. Cramp.

KIMEDY, March 1st, 1877.

My dear Dr. Cramp,—

I wish to inform the friends at home of the events that followed the attempt to establish a school in Kimedy, if you will kindly be the medium for this communication.

I think our mission-helpers should know the discouragements as well as the prosperity that we meet with on our way. They ought to be able to bear them as well as we, on whom they first fall.

We began our school on the 14th Nov. with sixteen pariah children, and in two or three days had over thirty names on the roll. These children were gathered from the lowest caste, among whom reading is as little thought of as chairs and tables. But I visited them, that is, I sat under a tree, or on a big stone somewhere near their houses and sent some child to call the people, who would come flocking round, curious to hear what I wanted. They promised to send any children that were big enough to go and too small to do any work. Of course if they could help in any way school was out of the question. "Can't you send some of your little girls?" I asked. "It is not our custom." "We do not want our girls to read," were the replies. "How old is that little girl?" pointing to one of them. "Eight years, but she is married," said her mother. So I was obliged to be content with such as I could get, with the fact plainly stated that as soon as any work could be found for them, even those would be taken away. And so it proved; harvest time came on, and one by one they were called away, till six or seven, sometimes two or three, were all that the day brought.

In addition to this, fever and ague attacked us all and gradually reduced our strength, till Christmas and New Year found Mr. A. and me completely prostrated, while our little girl had scarce stood on her feet for a month. Nau-nau suffered very severely, and not one of our household escaped.

Thus the time for the Conference at Bimlipatam found us, and, hoping the change might do us good, we put our beds on the straw in the native covered carts, lay down on them and started on our way, the few scholars that were left being dismissed until our return.

We travelled slowly, resting by the way, enjoyed our meeting with the missionaries at Bimlipatam exceedingly, and returned with renewed strength, reaching home on the 10th February.

The pupils who had remained faithful to our school were all Oriya children, speaking Telugu, but anxious to learn to read in their own language. As many of them came more than a mile, twice a day, to school, and as the Oriya man of whom I have before written, brother of one of our native preachers, lived in their vicinity, and was willing to give his verandah, free of rent, for school purposes, it seemed wise to call them together there, and place them under his care. He is qualified to teach them, reads the Bible in Oriya to them every day, and talks to them of Bible truths. As they are all Oriyas I cannot do much for them, but visit them weekly and encourage them as I see opportunity. They number twelve; we had them all here yesterday evening, and I played and sang for them after hearing their lessons. An English gentleman had sent us some tomatoes from his garden; I gave the children some, and they thought them very pretty, but were delighted when they were told they were good to eat.

We could not be content, however, without a Telugu school. Mr. A. and I had visited some native schools in town, and were particularly interested in one of them. The teacher did not seem to be afraid of religion as most of them are. He allowed his school to