

RELIGIOUS MISCELLANY.

A NEW HYMN.

[The English correspondent of *The Presbyterian* says: "Perhaps the accompanying hymn, which has not yet appeared in print, may soothe some of your readers in days of weariness and trouble. It was a greeting sent me on the day it was written, by Rev. Henry Downton, whose hymns (especially one of the best we have for the close of the year) have won their way into most collections, and who wrote this as 'the utterance of my own feeling under the pressure of much affliction from which it has pleased God since to deliver me.'"]

"O TARRY THOU THE LORD'S LEISURE."

JAMES V.

Lord, I believe; and if thy love
Delay my voice to hear,
I know the end shall surely prove
That thou wert always near.

HAB. ii.

I watch to see what thou wilt say;
I stand upon my tower;
Thou biddest thy servants watch and pray
I wait the appointed hour.

Hast thou not waited off for me?
And, Lord, shall I repine,
If, when my hands I lift to thee,
They meet no grasp of thine?

ISA. xiv; LAM. iii.

Thyself thou hidest! 'Tis that I
May seek thy face the more;
Thou dost not grieve me willingly;
The night will soon be o'er.

2 PETER i.

Soon in my heart the Morning Star
Shall rise with radiance pure;
New every morn thy mercies are;
Thy plighted word is sure.

The needle trembles to the pole,
Though all the skies be dim;
God is my portion, saith my soul,
And I will hope in him.

July 2, 1875.

"HAVE YOU—?"

Service was over, and the congregation were dispersing from the door of the village church. Some groups passed quietly homeward, as if conscious of the solemnity of the Presence they had sought, and the holiness of the day that encircled them in its glad sunshine; others waited for a few minutes' chat with friends and neighbors under the shade of the old lime trees; and while tasteful dresses flutter in the breeze, and playful words and soft laughter fill the air, unthought of, unsuspected malignant spirits are flitting with untiring vigilance from heart to heart, eagerly catching away, in every idle word and wandering glance, some grains of the "precious seed" that had just been sown.

"Come and lunch at the castle, Mr. Vivyan," said a sweet voice as a tall, fashionable-looking young man passed from the door; "you will meet several friends. You cannot? Then join our party to the cathedral this afternoon. Some will ride, and the rest take the boat down the lake, and have the carriage to meet them at the other side. Sir Arthur says it is so naughty of us to take the horses out on Sunday, but I think Selina would die without her Church music in the evening."

"O, we all should," said two or three young voices with great animation, and the brothers and sisters began to arrange their plans with Mr. Vivyan; but, with a courteous "No" to every tempting proposition, he took a hasty leave, and was gone.

Into the deep shades of his own wooded demesne, through the tangled copse where the fern has grown to half his height, and down the broad waste of heather to where the sea dashes against the lofty cliffs, Charles Vivyan wanders on, hour after hour, as though some haunting spirit suffered him not to rest.

And what are the words that ring through his brain, and pursue him from scene to scene? They are those of the text which had that day formed the preachers message: "Verily, verily, I say unto you, except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God."

How strange that words so well known, so familiar, so oft-repeated, should suddenly have power to raise a tempest in the soul. But though the words were familiar the meaning was new, or at least unthought of. It is wonderful, too, with what novelty a thought or fact clothes itself, when from being a mere abstraction, it becomes, through some change of circumstances, or from looking at it in a new

point of view, a matter of intense personal interest, and this was now the case with the words in question.

"If the announcement is for all, then it is for me," was the oft-repeated thought. Never had he heard words so penetrating. Truly there is no touch so keen, so poignant, as that of the two-edged sword of the Spirit.

And yet it was a very quiet discourse that Vivyan had heard. There had been no bursts of eloquence to captivate the imagination; no impassioned appeals to stir the feelings. It was a scholar-like and finished composition; its theology was clear and perfectly scriptural; its arguments strong and convincing; and although there were those who sighed as they saw how little the truth preached had kindled the preacher's own soul, and who felt chilled by its cold utterance, still they rejoiced that it was preached, and prayed that their pastor's lips might yet be touched by a live coal from off the altar that he served.

It was no sudden enthusiasm or excitement that Vivyan's mind had caught. The words of the text had fastened on his attention, and as he listened to the clear, calm reasoning that followed, he became more and more deeply convinced of their truth. Long did he pace up and down the sandy beach, wrapped in thought.

"How clearly," he said, "how convincingly Mr. Langdale proved the necessity of regeneration for a race so very far gone from original righteousness, if they are ever to be made meet for a world of holiness, the inheritance of the saints in light. And if it be essential for all, it follows that it must be essential for me. There is no use deceiving myself; I had rather look the truth in the face, and most certainly have I never known any such wonderful transformation of soul. They talk of baptism and education; well, no doubt, the thing varies in various cases—Mr. Langdale said so. In cases it may be very gradual, and but slowly progressive. But one thing strikes me, that whenever or however the change takes place, it must be a very real change, something that would introduce a man into a new state of things as regards the invisible world, and give him a spiritual sensibility which I am quite aware I do not possess. Every Sunday I go through the form of deploring my state as a 'miserable sinner,' and yet in point of fact don't care much about it. We call upon God as 'our Father,' and yet entertain no feeling toward him but that of awe; except in church, I fear, we are utterly indifferent to, and forgetful of, his existence; at least, I am sure, it is my own case. Now, if all that religion teaches is true, and I cannot doubt it, this apathy on the subject certainly indicates some great and radical defect in one's own mind. How amazing that the sublime fact of the Atonement, so nearly connected with my eternal destiny, should so little occupy my attention, or command my interest! My mind is quite dead to these things, in comparison with the lively interest which the things of this world excite, short-lived as I well know they must be. That was exactly what Mr. Langdale was pointing out, as an evidence of the distinction between the carnal and the spiritual mind."

"But after all," Vivyan thought as he left the water side and turned homeward through more familiar scenes, "after all," who ever experienced this wonderful transition? That's what I should like to know. If I could meet with any one who would honestly tell me that they knew what it was, who had actually felt the renewing grace of God in their heart, and really passed into a state of mind very different from that of original nature, why, then I should believe it. Of course, being in the Bible, it must be true; but still, somehow, a thing seems so shadowy, so speculative, when you learn it only from a book. I should like to see it carried out. I should like to see a practical example in real life; and as far as my observation goes, I suspect it will not be easy to find one. And then, without this great change, a man cannot see the kingdom of God. Surely, if the words are to be taken literally, that would condemn a vast portion of the community! It would be too dreadful! I cannot understand it; I must think it over."

The Rev. Edward Langdale was in his study, closely engaged in the preparation of an elaborate essay on Faith, when his servant entered with a note. It was from Vivyan, inviting him to dinner on the same day. Mr. Langdale hastily wrote a few lines of acceptance, and then, as the servant left the room, threw himself back and sighed wearily. "What an evening I shall have!" he exclaimed; "what a revulsion after a day of intense study! There will be nothing congenial, nothing to 'refresh the weary brain.' Vivyan is a noble fellow, but his mind is all run to waste. He and his friends seem to spend their lives in 'strenuous usefulness;' and I have not a chance of anything better than the ordinary bald, superficial chat of the dinner table. I do wish empty-headed people would not think it a duty to ask me to dine. The very thought of all the sound and fury, signifying nothing, makes my head ache. Why was I doomed to be cast away upon such an intellectual desert? It is almost enough to make one's own brain stagnate. But what's all this?" he added, turning over the second page of the note: "I have to apologize for offering you only my own company; but I am anxious for an opportunity of talking to you alone on a subject which greatly disturbs my mind." "Indeed, who'd have thought of Vivyan's mind being disturbed about anything beyond his horses or his dogs; and in either case I should be a miserable adviser. What can it be?" and the student indulged in a few turns up and down the room, speculating upon what Vivyan could possibly mean. "Well," he said at last, "if it is a knotty point in theology that puzzles his brain, he has applied to the right quarter, at all events. Poor fellow!" he added, as with a graver countenance he again took his place before his books and papers, "how glad I should be to see him become more serious and thoughtful."

A few hours after and they were at the dinner table, the pale young clergyman conversing on ordinary topics with scholarly grace, and the host cheerfully doing the honors of the hospitable board. At last the dessert was on the table, the servants withdrew, and they were alone.

"Now for it," thought Mr. Langdale as he busied himself with his walnut, and every moment expected that Vivyan, with his usual straightforward frankness, would enter on the important subject. But not a word was spoken, and feeling the awkwardness of the continued silence, Mr. Langdale at last said, "You mentioned in your note that there was something you wished to talk over with me."

"I am glad you have asked me about it," Mr. Vivyan said, cordially, with a sigh of relief; "I should never have been able to introduce it myself, anxious as I feel. Yes, Mr. Langdale, the subject of your sermon last Sunday has occupied my mind ever since, and I am exceedingly anxious to discuss it further with you if you will allow me."

"I shall be most happy," Mr. Langdale replied, with a gratified air. "Was there any point that was not clear to you, or on which you differed from my view?" he added with much interest.

"What I want to know is this," said Vivyan, with abrupt vehemence, "is it a real and practical thing?"

"To what do you allude?"

"To regeneration, or the new birth, spoken of in your text, and which you so clearly demonstrated to be essential to salvation. I want to know whether this is a mere shadowy theory—a speculative interpretation, a theological dream—or is it, as I said before, a real and actual change?"

"Can you doubt it?" Mr. Langdale said, in some surprise. "There are those indeed, who speak of this figure as a bold Orientalism, a hyperbolic mode of expressing the fact that reformation of the moral life is essential; but the passage itself refutes this theory. The word in the original has the force of 'born from above,' as well as 'born again,' which implies that the soul now enters upon a celestial existence—re-creates as it were its lost sonship in the household of God. And it is obvious that no mere outward reformation ever endowed a man with new powers of spiritual discernment, or, in the words of scripture, led him to 'see the kingdom of God.' Again, the figure is repeatedly changed, but never weakened. It always expresses a complete trans-

sition from one state of spiritual existence to another and very different one. For instance, it is called a passing from 'death unto life,' John v. 24; from 'darkness to light,' Acts xxvi, 18; a 'translation from the kingdom of Satan to that of Christ,' Col. i, 13; and the figure of the resurrection is repeatedly used to illustrate the greatness of the change and its life giving powers to the soul. Eph. ii, 1; Col. iii, 1; Rom. vi, 4. I cannot myself imagine how, in the face of such a mass of Scripture evidence, any one can attempt to support an opposite theory."

"It is, then, a genuine transformation, which the soul of man actually undergoes while in this world?"

"Unquestionably," Mr. Langdale replied, feeling strangely disconcerted under Vivyan's plain matter-of-fact handling of a subject so refined and abstruse, and the deep, earnest gaze of his anxious eyes.

"And how does it take place?" Vivyan asked, with intense interest.

Mr. Langdale shrunk from such close dealing as this. Instantly his sensitive spirit felt keenly that it was experimental religion that was needed here; that without it the most exquisite theological skill was powerless to meet the cravings of an anxious soul.

"There is some diversity of opinion among the school-men," he began thoughtfully; but Vivyan hastily interrupted him.

"Never mind the school-men," he exclaimed impatiently; "books, and theories, and speculations are all humbug when a man is anxious;" then, meeting a look of grave surprise and embarrassment, he added in a low tone of deep feeling:

"Excuse me, Mr. Langdale, but my soul is stirred to its depths. Eternity is at stake, and I am groping in darkness, and can see no light. Tell me, I implore you to tell me, who has known this wondrous change? Is it a thing that really takes place? In a word, Have you—?"

The table shook with the agitation of his strong frame, and his quivering lips refused to finish the sentence. But it needed not. He was answered in the ashy paleness that overspread his listener's face—in the look of anguish with which he turned away, and buried it in his trembling hands.

Inexpressibly shocked, and deeply reproaching himself for his inconsiderate abruptness, Vivyan rose from the table, and stood leaning against the open window. Lost in thought, he knew not how the time passed, till he felt a hand laid upon his arm, and heard a voice whisper, "My brother, let us pray." Vivyan turned quickly. His young pastor stood before him, with so touching an expression in the bowed head—in the pale and thoughtful face—that, strong man as he was, he felt the tears rush to his eyes. He saw it all in a moment. They were to seek together for the grace that both equally needed, to implore the outpouring of the Holy Spirit which alone can change the heart, and which is promised to all who ask it in sincerity. He grasped Mr. Langdale's hands, and said with a choked utterance, "Let us go to the library; we shall be undisturbed there."

They have now entered in and "shut the door," and now none may know what passes between their souls and God. Let us wait until "He who seeth in secret shall reward them openly."

Sabbath after Sabbath passed; and, to the surprise of the congregation, the pulpit was constantly occupied by strangers. It was not that the rector was ill, for he was always present, and took part in the service; and many, as they joined in the fervent petitions of their beautiful liturgy, felt that it came home to their hearts as it had never done before. A little child, as she returned home, said, "Does it not seem like real praying when Mr. Langdale reads now?" and the mother's heart echoed the thought, for she had felt that day that such prayers must be drawing down blessings from above.

At length the day came when the pastor again occupied his accustomed place. But O, how changed was his preaching! It was not less learned, less studied, less finished, than before. No, Edward Langdale was not one who would ever offer to the Lord that which costs him nothing; but now his words glowed with life, and were full of unction and power. His mind was a sub-

reservoir of knowledge; but the fount, though full to the brim, had been valueless, as regarded the strengthening and refreshing of the soul, till a word unheard was spoken, which turned its chill waters to the "best wine." The altar had been heaped with wood for the offering; it needed but a Divine touch to kindle it to a glorious flame. Now with what a realizing sense of the Divine presence, with what intense feeling, with what deep fervor, did he speak of Him whom his soul loved; how earnestly did he invite his hearers to come unto Him who is the Way, the Truth, and the Life! And like those who, of old, had been thrilled with the sound of his Master's voice, his listeners "marveled at the gracious words that proceeded out of his mouth."

They felt the deep reality of the truths he proclaimed; they "took knowledge of him, that he had been with Jesus." And when, at the close, he spoke with deep humility and adoring gratitude, of the change which his own soul had known; how, in past time, he had "uttered that he understood not—things too wonderful for him, which he knew not;" how, unwittingly, he had served the altar of God with a sacrilegious hand, and, in the ignorance of unbelief, had spoken of his Holy Oracles with unclean lips, but now, through redeeming mercy, through sanctifying grace, was enabled to declare unto them those things which he had seen and heard—that in time past he had, indeed, told them of One whom he had heard of by the hearing of the ear, but could now tell them of One whom his eyes beheld, and that now he earnestly invited them to come with him to the precious Saviour he had found, and whom he knew as the "chiefest among ten thousand, and altogether lovely,"—then, indeed, were his listeners moved to the soul. Strong men bowed their heads and wept, and many a stout heart trembled, as though its chords had been swept by a seraph's hand.

And Vivyan knelt at his Lord's table—received, for the first time, the memorials of his dying love—and, with a thankful heart, offered himself, soul and body, "a reasonable, holy, and lively sacrifice" to his Redeemer's service. It was a day much to be remembered; and many, as they left the church, felt that God was, indeed, "a God at hand, and not a God afar off;" and that his word was not a hidden or distant one, but was "very nigh unto them, in their mouth, and in their heart," that they might "hear, and do it."

Reader, do the facts of our story seem strange to you? Do you ask, with Nicodemus "How can these things be?" Then, with him, come to Jesus. Come, though it should be "by night," and soon you will find that he is the "Light of the world." Soon will you sing with joy and gratitude,

"'Twas midnight in my soul, till He,
Bright Morning Star, bade darkness flee."
—From Tract No. 14 Packet Series Published by Nelson & Phillips, New York.

PUTTING IT MILDLY.

A correspondent of the *Herald and Presbytery*, writing from Minnesota tells the following:—"I have picked up a little story which I think too good a reproof for disturbers of the peace in churches to be lost. A presiding elder of United Brethren Church was preaching in the same neighbourhood, and was much annoyed by persons talking and laughing. He paused, looked at the disturbers, and said: 'I am always afraid to reprove those who misbehave in Church. In the early part of my ministry I made a great mistake. As I was preaching, a young man who sat just before me was laughing, talking, and making uncouth grimaces. I paused and administered a severe rebuke. After the close of the service, one of the official members came and said to me: 'Brother—, you made a great mistake. That young man whom you reprov'd is an idiot.' Since then I have always been afraid to reprove those who misbehave in church, lest I should repeat that mistake and reprove another idiot. During the rest of that service, at least, there was good order."

In reply to a young writer who wished to know "which magazine will give me the highest position quickest?" a contemporary advises "a powder magazine, if you contribute a fiery article."

New Subscribers will receive the *Wesleyan* from 1st October till 1st January 1877, fifteen months, at \$2, postage paid.

THE FAMILY

GROWING OLD

Softly, O softly the years
Touch thee lightly with
Sorrow and death they did
Yet they have left thee
wearer:
Growing old gracefully
Gracefully fair.

Far from the storms that
Nearer each day to the
light:
Far from the waves that
Under full sail and the
Growing old cheer
Cheerful and bright

Past all the winds that
chilling:
Past all the islands that
rest:
Past all the currents that
unwilling.
Far from the port and the
blest:
Growing old peacefully
Peaceful and blest.

Never a feeling of envy or
When the bright faces of
seen:
Never a year from their
thou borrow:
Thou dost remember wh
tween:
Growing old willingly
Gladly, I ween.

Rich in experience that
covet:
Rich in a faith that bath
thy years:
Rich in the love that grew
above it:
Soothing thy sorrows and
fears:
Growing old wearily
Loving and dear.

Hearts at the sound of thy
lightened,
Ready and willing thy hand
Many a face at thy kind words
ened:
"It is more blessed to
receive":
Growing old happily
Blest, we believe.

Eyes that grow dim to the
glory,
See but the brighter the heav
Ears that are dull to the wor
story
Drink in the songs that fro
flow:
All their sweet recomb
Youth cannot know.

Fourscore! But softly the y
swept by thee,
Touching thee lightly with
Sorrow and death they did
night thee,
Yet they have left thee but
wearer:
Growing old gracefully
Graceful and fair.
—New York: O

SUNDAY AT ELDER JO

BY AN OLD POBY.

I went over to Mason last
see about selling my wheat, an
Jones, who is in the commission
asked me to spend the Sabbath
him and hear their new preach
he be remembered what the Bi
about entertaining strangers a
be he wanted to make sure of
my wheat. But, thinking it w
a great privilege to visit at the
so good a man, and that I ou
something about the best way
ing the Sabbath pleasant and
at home, I gladly accepted his
tion.

Now, Mason is a railroad town
Great Western and trains are
through it all the time, day and
and Sundays too. It is what
down here a very smart town,
course it must have a smart p
I will perhaps tell you about
mon I heard there some othe
But now I want to write about
bath at Elder Jones'.

We sat talking pretty late S
night, for the elder seemed to
tell me a great deal about the
Europe—how much better they
usual,—and to prove that it was
sell the wheat at the present low
than to hold it; that the pri
more likely to go down than up
ing that I looked a little sleep
"We don't go to bed very early
nights, for Sunday is a day of
we breakfast late. You needn't
deacon, until you hear the risi
We have it rung half an hour
breakfast."

I went to bed, and slept
When I woke up in the morn
sun was more than an hour
Thinks I, that rising bell mus
rung. So I got up, dressed mys
went down stairs. But the host