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Poetry.

HONOURS.

O God, O kinsman loved, but not enough!
O man with eyes majestic after death,
Whose feet have trod along our pathways rough,
Whose lips drew human breath!

By that one likeness which is ours and thine,
By that one nature which doth hold us kin,
By that high heaven where, sinless, thou dost shine
To draw us sinners in.

By Thy last silence in the judgment-hall,
By long foreknowledge of the deadly tree,
By darkness, by the wormwood and the gall,
I pray Thee visit me.

And deign, O Watcher, with the sleepless brow,
Pathetic in its yearning—deign reply:
Is there, O is there aught that such as Thou
Wouldst take from such as I?

Are there no briars across Thy pathway thrust,
Are there no thorns that compass it about?
Nor any stones that Thou wilt deign to trust,
My hands to gather out?

O if Thou wilt, and if such bliss might be,
It were a cure for doubt, regret, delay—
Let my lost pathway go—what aethers lie—
There is a better way.

What though unmarked the happy workman toil,
And break unshaken of man, the stubborn clod?
It is enough, for sacred is the soil,
Dear is the hills of God.

Far better in its place the lowliest bird,
Should sing aright to him the lowliest song,
Than that a seraph strayed should take the word,
And sing His glory wrong.

Jean Logie.

THE WESLEYS AND THEIR HYMNS.

BY ISABELLA BIRD.

We have pleasure in presenting to our readers the following eloquent characterization of the Wesleys and their work, which we abridge from the pages of Dr. Guthrie's *Sunday Magazine*.

PART I.

The rosy flush of the religious morning of England was preceded by an hour of darkness which could be felt.

The upper classes were avowedly infidel and shamelessly profligate; the lower, stupidly ignorant and grossly irreligious.

The vitality of truth, the strength of the power of rebuke, and the presence of the Spirit, were lost out of the Church. It was in this dark hour that the men were born to whom tongues of fire were heaveforth to descend, and on whose lips the old formulae of a dead orthodoxy were to become keen and powerful, the very sword of the Spirit himself.

Little more than a century has passed since the people called Methodists were treated with scorn, contempt, and active malevolence. The perpetrators of the most hideous crimes were more secure from violence to person and property than the hymn-singing followers of the Wesleys. To name their leaders in polite society was an offence, as Cowper has gracefully expressed it—

"Leucocomes—beneath well-sounding Greek
I veil a name the poet must not speak;
And in society which was not polite, to disturb their meetings by singing vile parodies of their hymns, to weep and beat them, and to make bouffies of their meeting-houses on occasions of national rejoicing, with many other cunningly devised methods of adding insult to injury, were frolics with a peculiar relish. Even the law in many cases proved as powerless to protect them, as it was powerful to shield their assailants.

There has been no fact so great in modern church history as the rise and progress of Methodism; no fact more singular in its present position than that through the world all its societies, whether large or small, are stamped through and through with the likeness of two extraordinary men. Its gigantic and complete organization, its vast and successful missionary enterprises, its system of home extension and evangelization, its tremendous grip of masses of the uneducated, its tuneful emotional tone of religion, its wide sympathies and its intense hopefulness, are all emanations of the spirit of John and Charles Wesley. In the production of a homogeneity so permanent, the hymns of the great singer of Methodism have been the chief agent. Yet John towers above his brother by virtue of a stronger and sterner nature, gigantic administrative ability, and persistent and intense devotion. There is not a Methodist pulpit but seeks to rekindle his fire, not a Methodist preacher but prays that upon his shoulders his great master's mantle may fall, not a Methodist hymn which has not passed the ordeal of his ungentle criticism and bears the impress of his peculiarities. Truly he was the man indicated by the Divine finger as the leader of a great religious revolution, the giant who was to lift English Christianity out of the stagnant deeps into which it had fallen.

From the day when John Wesley violated the proprieties of ecclesiastical conventionalism, by preaching on the Somersetshire hill-side, his life became one long marvel. There was not only the tacit abandonment of his intensely High Church associations and partialities, the renunciation of his cherished schemes of religious retirement, or a learned seclusion within college walls, and the adoption of a course of living of which some of the leading features were, harassing anxieties, superhuman labours, and vulgar indignities, but there was the grand

trial of the desertion of nearly all the friends who stood beside him at the outset of his career, but who, ere many years had passed, were ranged in the hostile attitude of foes. On him devolved the care of all the infant Methodist societies, and the conservancy of their purity and zeal constituted an episcopacy as burdensome as that of the Apostle Paul. On his head, for forty years, beat storms of opposition, which never fully spent their force until both brothers were gathered to their rest. Nor was the charge of schism, which was persistently brought against him, the least of his afflictions, as several of his letters, and a hymn wrung out of intense mental suffering, distinctly evidence. Throughout his career, he shrank from the reproach, both for himself and his followers, of being other than the dutiful sons of the Church.

Amidst evil report and good report the brothers continued to preach. Never since Pentecostal days had the Spirit so manifestly attended upon the world. Multitudes were awakened to a sense of sin and pardon, and from this throng of the regenerate many came forth to preach that faith by which they were saved. Wesley's authorisation of these evangelists was the great advance point in his career. Methodism rose rapidly in power. All through the land the sinners who were seeking and finding salvation entered into a bond of brotherhood, the main object of which was to perfect holiness in the fear of God. Reprobates, formalists, godless and brutal persons, were converted, and brought forth the fruits of righteousness, one and all joyfully testifying in psalms and hymns that God had delivered them from the power of darkness, and had translated them into the kingdom of His Son.

The old truths which had blessed men's souls, and which were hidden from the multitude in dusty folios and forgotten controversies, were brought out once more, instinct with the life of the Gospel of Christ. The jargon of the theological schools was abandoned. Men who had struggled through the gloaming of a lofty but obscure mysticism, into the full daylight of salvation, whose hearts burned with love, and whose lips were touched with coals of fire, carried God's truth through the land, and at the sound a spiritual brotherhood sprang up, banded together for God's glory and man's salvation, against the world, the flesh, and the devil. Called by the Holy Ghost, and baptized with the baptism of the Spirit and of fire, the cry from their lips, "Repent and be converted, that your sins may be blotted out," broke the slumber of the whole nation. It was not under the force of direct attack that the effete religious systems of the day wined and trembled. The Wesleys took the very truths which had become palsied and lifeless in the hands of other men, and gave them forth to famishing crowds as the very bread of life which they themselves had eaten. So wherever religion had sunk into formalism and apathy, it was awakened and vivified, while the chaff was burnt up with fire unquenchable.

In the forefront of this mighty religious revival the two Wesleys stand. Round them as a nucleus, revived Christianity clusters, in them the interest of the student of the past and present of Methodism culminates. That Providence which called the Methodist societies into being, and blessed the world through them, endowed them at once with a brain and a heart. John, the Brain, was rich in the power which governs men, and in the faculty of organizing, both essential qualities for the organization and harmonious operation of the discordant elements composing the Methodist societies.

A slight stammer, and a latent asceticism, were elements in John Wesley's character. Without the first he could scarcely have repressed the ignorant zeal of some of his followers, or pruned the undue luxuriance of his brother's poetry; without the last he would have faltered in his career as a leader of men. On his calm, lofty features, at once delicate and classical, in his piercing eye and compressed lips, self-control was legibly written. There was a glory on his face brightening in his later years, but it was the steady light of summer noon, not the sunshine of an April morning, glimmering through tears. There were no weak, soft places about him; no domesticity, and scarcely, indeed, such tenderness as would lead the trembling and fearful to seek his counsel or sympathy.

To warn these new societies, and to send the pulses of an intense love and life throbbing through their most remote extremities, was the work of Charles Wesley. This was the mission of the Poet, himself an evangelist scarcely second to John. Preaching awakened sinners; the hymns edified believers and built up churches. In the hymns the message of life was ever bursting forth warm and fresh. In these the truths which set the land on fire, and were as a hammer breaking the rock in pieces, are mingled with something of the yearning of Him who came to seek and save the lost. These hymns embodied the poet's own experiences, and all the phases of the Christian life, and breathe forth the truths of the Word in language which touches the hearts of all men. Through them the influence of a high order of poetry is brought to bear upon a great part of the population of this country. Watts created a people's hymnal; Wesley created a people of hymn-singers. The Wesleyan hymns are undoubtedly one of the most powerful agencies which scriptural truth has ever possessed, and are equally above sectarian praise and sectarian blame.

The preaching of the Wesleys passed away, leaving its glorious fruits, but the hymns are imperishable—forming the character of the Methodist societies, shaping their creed, and

tinging their sentiments. Without the hymns, Methodism would not be the living force it is among us, capable of transforming savage, uncultivated natures into loving, holy Christians, the place of worship may be nothing but "an upper room furnished," in one of our mining districts, the preacher insignificant, the smooched, rough appearance of the men on the one side, and the women on the other; but no sooner is such a hymn as "Jesus, Lover of my soul" announced, than a burst of animated song arises, and the gleaming faces, the tearful eyes, and the trembling voices, tell that the tenderest emotions of the Divine life, and the poet's own deep meaning, are experienced by those who in times past knew no higher poetry than the coarse ballads which find so much favor among the uneducated. So in the Southern States of America, when the old bonds were loosed, and men expected that a carnival of blood would celebrate the occasion, the sweet notes of Wesley's hymns came up on the soft southern breezes, along with

"The long stern swell,
Which bade the soldier close,"
and Wesley's triumphant strains were the true *Marseillaise* of that marvellous revolution. It is certain that Wesley's tuneful prayers for patience, forgiveness, and likeness unto Christ, had so melted themselves into the African soul, as to make Christ's law of love supreme over the excitements and temptations of the hour.

The hymns of the Wesleys are the glorious liturgy of Methodism—a liturgy which not only engages the feelings of the people and gives tone and direction to the other and variable parts of the worship, but moulds the spirit, emphasizes truth, gives wings to prayer, and adds the joyous excitement of rhythm and music to the solemnity of worship, and all around is breathed the influence of Charles Wesley's saintly spirit, linking every truth of the Gospel, and all heights and depths of Christian feeling, with lofty, pure, and intense poetic expression. So Methodism has been saved from becoming a religion of preaching, and remains a religion of devotion; and so, in Isaac Taylor's words, "Charles Wesley, richly gifted as he was with grace, genius and talents, draws souls, thousands of souls, in his wake from Sunday to Sunday, and he so draws them onward from earth to heaven by the charms of his sacred verse." So, by music and poetry he is ever taming the roughness of unlettered minds, renovating worn-out spirits, bringing hearts benumbed by sordid cares and worldly prospects, into that bright atmosphere in which his own spirit dwelt, and winning everywhere a listening ear for the higher harmonies of heaven. It was for the founders of Methodism to diverge so far from the staid, nonconforming type of Watts and Doddridge, as to show that the modern hymn was capable not only of paraphrasing Bible truths, but of uttering the most joyous as well as the most agonized feelings of the heart; to combine devout spiritual thought and personal experience with profound reverence and adoration, and so to bring the spirit of the old Hebrew poetry into harmony with the brighter songs of the new covenant, as to blend in one the voices of all who are by faith the children of faithful Abraham.

THE SOCIETY OF WOMEN.—One of the great benefits a young man may derive from women's society is that he is bound to be respectful to them. The habit is of great good to your moral character, and it is a great blessing to the world. We fight for ourselves and light our pipes and say, we won't go out; we prefer ourselves and our ease; and the greatest good that comes to a man from women's society is that he has to think of somebody besides himself—somebody to whom he is bound to be constantly attentive and respectful. Certainly I don't want my dear Bob to associate with those of the other sex whom he doesn't and can't respect; that is worse than billiards, worse than tavern brandy and water; worse than smoking selfishness at home. But I vow I would rather see you turning over the leaves of Miss Fiddlecombe's music book all night than at billiards, or smoking, or brandy and water, or all three.

WHAT WILL YOU SAY, THEN?—While Hoop, a young Sandwich Islander, was in America, he spent an evening in a company where an infidel lawyer tried to puzzle him with difficult questions. At length the native said: "I am a poor heathen boy, it is not strange that my blunders in English should amuse you. But soon there will be a larger meeting than this. We shall all be there. They will ask us all one question, namely, 'Do you love the Lord Jesus Christ?' Now, sir, I think I can say 'Yes.' What will you say, sir?" When he had stopped, all present were silent. At length the lawyer said that as the evening was far gone they had better conclude it with prayer, and proposed that the native youth should pray. He did so; and as he poured out his heart to God, the lawyer could not conceal his feelings. Tears started from his eyes, and he sobbed aloud. All present wept, too; and when they separated, the words, "What will you say, sir?" followed the lawyer home, and did not leave him till he was brought to the Saviour.

METHODIST SOCIAL REFORM.—The New York East Conference at its late session passed a resolution, requiring each clergyman under its jurisdiction to preach at least one sermon a year, embodying the following principles: That Methodists must not only refrain from whiskey, brandy, rum, gin, curacoa and absinthe—not only from potter, ale, and lager-beer—not only from mixed drinks and all sorts of bar-room concoctions, but they must abjure the use of cider and domestic wines as beverages. They must abandon the patronage of those physicians who prescribe alcoholic mixtures freely. They must labour for prohibitory legal enactments against the liquor traffic. They must consult their consciences as to the expediency and even the rightfulness of using intoxicating wine for sacramental purposes. They must, by precept and example, discountenance the use of the powerful narcotic, tobacco.

THE NEW SONG.

Beyond the hills where suns go down
And brightly beckon as they go,
I see the land of far renown,
The land which I so soon shall know.

Above the dissonance of Time,
And discord of its angry words,
I hear the everlasting chime,
The music of unjarring chords.

I bid it welcome; and my haste
To join it cannot brook delay:
O song of morning, come at last,
And ye who sing it come away!

O song of light, and dawn, and bliss,
Sound over earth, and fill these skies,
Nor ever, ever cease
Thy soul-entrancing melodies.

Glad sing of this disburdened earth,
Which holy voices then shall sing;
Praise for Creation's second birth,
And glory to Creation's King.

Our Home Work.

REVIEW OF THE DISTRICTS.

GODERICH DISTRICT.

"Examine yourselves" is one of the great and godly mottoes that come to us from apostolic authority. It means, "Bore, or pierce yourselves, through;" "Look through yourselves." This is not only an important christian duty, but a necessary connexion one. Searching self-scrutiny has been from the first a striking characteristic of Methodism; and our annual examinations and reviews, when faithfully conducted, are a most salutary element in our connexional progress.

It is not pleasant to scrutinize one's self, or one's favourite system, or the work done by others, and find defects and weaknesses where one fondly hoped to find perfection and strength. Your caution may be perfect, your calculations may be correct, and your courtesy may abound, and yet the peevish and self-confident will call it "crocking." But most will admit that it is better to see our weak points, if there be any, and mark the approaches of danger, if danger threatens, than to rest in fancied security and fondly dream of progress that does not really exist.

Better that the sentinel should sound the clarion note and startle the encamped army in time to save the citadel, than to wait until the enemy should rouse them to a hopeless surrender. Better for our churches to see their weakness, and notice their defects, and to think soberly of themselves, than to have their enemies gloating over them when they tried in vain to put on their strength. But if it be not wise to shut our eyes to our defects and shortcomings, it is no less foolish for us as a denomination to forget our power and yield to discouragement in the face of the foe. We have connexional strength. A knowledge of our real power, as a denomination, would blanch the cheek of the foe, and inspire courage in the heart of the most timid, as hand in hand we move to future conflict and certain victory in the name of the Lord of Hosts.

In examining the financial and religious state of our District, I see marked evidence of strength; proofs meet us on every hand that our people are strong to do for God, and in some cases, willing to bear burdens for him.

There are tokens of weakness, I admit. Evidences that in the church there are vast energies lying dormant. Latent power not yet consecrated to God and his cause. On one hand much cause for thanksgiving and praise; on the other hand cause for deep humiliation and earnest enquiry.

In the District Returns for 1857 the section of country now known as the Goderich District was all a Mission Field connected with Guelph District. There was, for some years after, but one self-sustaining circuit included in all this region. In 1858 we find the first report of the Goderich District, with its one Circuit and eleven Missions. We transferred during the ten years the St. Mary's, the Devonshire, and the Elma Circuits; and we now have four self-supporting Circuits, and eleven Missions, or three more charges than we had ten years ago, after nursing into strength and setting off three fields of labour. Three or four of our Missions will soon be independent Circuits.

In 1858, there were on the Goderich District, twenty-two churches, now we have fifty-six churches—many of them built in true Gothic style, on commanding sites, of durable material, neatly finished, well furnished, with little debt, some of them free from debt, and none of them embarrassed. Those fifty-six churches will furnish kneelings to fifteen thousand persons; and we rejoice to hear that most of them are usually well filled, and some of them crowded.

To note the progress made in this department of our work, it must be remembered that some of the twenty-two churches reported ten years ago were transferred with the three charges already spoken of; that others were sold or pulled down to make room for larger and costlier edifices; so that to the thirty-four new sites upon which new churches were erected, we must add a number equal to those that have been disposed of. I am quite safe in saying that forty new churches have been erected on this District during the last decade, and others have been enlarged and improved.

I regret that I cannot give the estimated value of those churches. I have no authentic sources to draw from on their value or the lands attached to them.

In addition to those churches there are fifty-four other places where public worship is regularly held. Those halls and school-houses are, in many cases, crowded with earnest worshippers, always anxious to hear the messengers of peace. A few years more of prosperity and progress, and beautiful churches will ornament and bless these localities. We have now precisely as many churches as was formerly on the Guelph District before our separation from it.

In regard to other evidences of our material prosperity, I regret that I cannot give the number and the value of our parsonages and burying-grounds. I think that our District records and duplicates should contain a permanent record of those important facts, as they would form materials for the future historian. From personal knowledge I can say that we have some as fine parsonages on this District as are to be found anywhere in the Dominion. Houses, large and roomy, well built, in good localities, with beautiful surroundings.

In our connexional finances we have made some progress; but in my humble opinion, our progress here is not, in any sense, proportionate to our increased church accommodation, or to our increased wealth. Ten years ago the District returns were, for

Church Relief Fund	\$50	Last year	\$88
Contingent Fund	86	"	155
Educational Fund	35	"	70
Superannuated Fund	148	"	327
Missionary Fund	1429	"	2201

During those years we have received \$25,000 from the Missionary Fund, and I think we ought to refund to the connexion in much larger proportion than we are doing. I hope no one will be offended at me for giving my opinion.

Our adherents, ten years ago, were reported as 5,086, last year we estimated them at 9,095. This estimate is far too low. There are more than 10,000 persons in this District that look to us for religious instruction and ordinances.

Our Sabbath-schools then numbered twenty-one, now we report thirty-eight—by far too small a proportion to our churches. This shows the melancholy fact, that we have seventy-two congregations in the dist, in which we have no nursery for our youth. It is high time for us to awake out of sleep on this matter. Are there no devoted men or women in those churches who would consent to teach our children the Wesleyan Catechism?

It was put on record ten years ago that we had nine persons attending Bible-class on the District. I made enquiry and found the nine persons composed the little class of the Rev. James Evans, whose name here is as aromatic ointment poured forth; all honour to the little class and their teacher. Last year we reported 390 Bible-class students—of that number 119 were in Goderich, leaving 271 on other parts of the District. On this point, more again.

Our Sabbath-school libraries then contained 2651 volumes, now we report 5703. It is a painful fact that two-thirds of those books come from other than Methodist publishing houses; and many of them in doctrines and sentiments directly opposed to Methodism. A layman, who is an active worker in this department, wrote to me last week, saying, "Our Sunday schools are supplied with papers and books published by other churches, tending to undermine our doctrines and inculcating principles the opposite to those taught in our pulpits. (Works of fine titles and fine appearances are chosen and circulated among our youth, teaching dogmas, for which, if a minister taught them, he would be expelled.) Can we afford to let other churches furnish papers and books for our children and thus effectually wear them from us? Can we afford to permit our children to learn the Catechisms of other churches and neglect our own, as is actually the case in some places.

The year after our separation and appointment as a District, our membership numbered 1669. It will be interesting and profitable to notice our progress and reverses numerically to the present time.

PERTH DISTRICT MEETING.

Our Chairman, the Rev. F. Coleman, was at his post in good health and spirits, and all the ministers of the District—no absentees, and not an invalid. Surely we had good reason for thanksgiving. The business went through with good speed—only one undesirable delay and that chiefly from friction between a super, and his colleague, such as will sometimes occur. So many of our young men are made Superintendents that it is not strange if the rules of reasonable subordination to the greater of equals be never learned or soon forgotten.

The candidates had their certificates—but the Financial Secretary had \$20.75 expenses to pay, and no funds.

Two young men were recommended. Both preached before the members of District Meeting and passed very satisfactory examinations.

A third man offers himself for the work—married, but young, and an energetic, effective local preacher—undertaking a single man's position during probation, from an irresistible conviction of duty to preach; recommended by an influential quarterly meeting, and the good opinion of several