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Religious Miscellany.

HYMN OF FAITH.

Tossing at night upon a stormy sea,
What earthly help can now avail for thee?
How the trail boat, on which thy hopes are cast,
Shivers and trembles in the rising blast!

Lift up thine eyes! Behold upon the wave,
The Lord draws nigh thy trembling life to save,
He knows thy peril, though thy lips are dumb;
Across the watery waste He bids thee come.

Cling to no frail supports that round the float;
Arise, and quickly leave thy sinking boat,
Strong in His strength, and in His courage brave.

Stead thou upright upon the slippery wave.
Think not how high the angry waters rise;
Think not that men will gaze with wondering eyes;
Think not it is thine own exalted power
Upholds thy feet upon that treacherous floor.

But fix thine eyes upon the face divine;
Take the kind hand so gladly stretched for thee;
Let not thy clear faith waver nor grow dim;
So on the waters shalt thou walk to Him.

—Old and New.

EARLY MARRIAGES.

There are hundreds of young men that should be married who are not married. To marry early is discreet and wise. And when men and women are of a marriageable age, I think it to be, in general, true that it is wholesome for them to be married. It is necessary that they should remain single because they stand in poverty; for two can live cheaper than one, if they live with discretion, if they live with cooperative zeal, if they live as they ought to live. If the young man is willing to seem poor when he is poor; if the young woman, being poor, is willing to live poorly; if they are willing to plant their lives together like two seeds, and wait for their growth, and look for their abundance by-and-by, when they have fairly earned it, then it is a good thing for them to come early into this partnership. For characters adapt themselves to each other in the early periods of life far more easily than they do afterwards. They who marry early are like vines growing together, and twining round and round each other; whereas, multitudes of those who marry late in life stand side by side like two iron columns, which, being separated at the beginning, never come any nearer to each other.

Many young men feel that they cannot marry until they support a wife; and by that they mean until they can supply a house; yes, until they can live in a house that befits them; until they can make a show; until they can live as their kind of people, the class to which they belong, live—for everybody belongs to a class, a set. When they do to do these things they will marry, but not before. And the result is that they are corrupting life in the very fountain.

And when they marry, they make a mistake if they say, "We will not undertake to help house; let us board." Then we can have all the comforts of life; we will have all the appearances provided for; and we shall be relieved from a thousand cares."

There is no school which God ever opened, or permitted to be opened, which young people can so ill afford to avoid as the school of care and responsibility and labor in the household; and a young man and a young woman, no matter from what sources they have come, and no matter how many wholesome things they can do, having married for love, and with discretion, is to be willing to begin at the bottom, and bear the burdens of household life so that they shall have its education. I tell you, there are pleasures which many young married people miss. I would not give up the first two years of my married life for all I have now. I live in a big house, with a lawn, stone front, and all the conveniences to be had; and among the choicest experiences of my life were those which I passed through in Indiana, when I hired two chambers up stairs; when all my furniture was given to me, and was second-hand at that; and when the very clothes I had on my back had been worn by Judge Birney before me. We were not able to hire a servant. We had to serve ourselves. It was a study every day how to get along with our small means—and it was a study never to be forgotten. "I would not give up the first two years of my married life for all I have now." I live in a big house, with a lawn, stone front, and all the conveniences to be had; and among the choicest experiences of my life were those which I passed through in Indiana, when I hired two chambers up stairs; when all my furniture was given to me, and was second-hand at that; and when the very clothes I had on my back had been worn by Judge Birney before me. We were not able to hire a servant. We had to serve ourselves. It was a study every day how to get along with our small means—and it was a study never to be forgotten.

God having spared your life and prospered you, you become rich and strong, do not be ashamed to go back to the spot from which you started. Do not be ashamed to say, "I began life with no property, and I have worked for all that I have." Be proud to look into the pit from which you have dug your way.—*Plymouth Pulpit.*

THINGS WORTH REMEMBERING.

Endeavor after a calm, recollected spirit; a heart-felt union with a holy God. Sweeten your life with the love of the Christian's all! Love is his nature imparted; it is the fulfilling of the law, the perfect law of liberty.—*H. A. Rogers.*

God is my heavenly Father; He cares for me; there is no evil in Him. He is full of pity and compassion. He has given his Son; He is willing freely to give us all things. I come to Him with the confidence of a little child, and He blesses me; He gives me his Holy Spirit. O late, I have had such revelations of the love of God in my soul, such a baptism of the Holy Ghost, as I never had before, and such as I had no conception of. We want more faith; power, implicitly to rely on what God has said, to take God at his word.—*John Smith.*

The heart is a retiring place, always at hand and ready to receive you.—*St. Ambrose.*

It is strange that there should be found a person believing the whole gospel system, and yet living in sin! "Salvation from sin" is the long-continued sound, as it is the spirit and design of the Gospel. Our Christian name, our baptismal covenant, our profession of faith in Christ, and avowed belief in his word, all come up to this. Can it be said we have any louder calls than they? Our self-interests, as it respects the happiness of a godly life, and the glories of eternal blessedness; the pains and wretchedness of a life of sin, leading to the worm that never dies, and the fire that is not quenched, second most powerfully the above calls. Reader, lay these things to heart, and answer the question to God, "How shall I escape if I neglect so great salvation?" And then, as thy conscience shall answer, let thy mind and thy hand begin to act.—*Adam Clarke.*

We never render to God His right till we abandon by a perfect resignation, all our concerns, spiritual as well as temporal, into his hand, and learn to be still before him, in the position of a little child, hanging next moment by faith on his mercy.—*Mrs. Fletcher.*

Learn to be working Christians. "Be ye doers of the Word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own souls." Are there none of you who know what it is to be selfish in your Christianity? You have seen a selfish child go into a secret place to enjoy some delicious morsel undisturbed by his companions? So it is with some Christians. They feed upon Christ and forgiveness; but it is alone and all for themselves. Are there not some of you who can enjoy being a Christian, while your dearest friend is not; and yet you will not speak to him? See here you have work to do. When Christ found you, he said, "Go work in my vineyard." What were you hired for if it was not to spread salvation? What blessed for? Oh my Christian friends! how little you live as if you were the servants of Christ! How much idle time, and idle talk you have! This is not like a good servant. How many things you have to do for yourself! How few for Christ and his people! This is not like a servant.—*McCoy.*

I am determined to live and preach in the Spirit more than ever. Edward Brooks has spent some time in this neighborhood recently. But for pressure of tickets I would have been with him. He has learned that secret which many good men, great men, and most exquisite preachers seem not to know. He honors the Spirit; dwells in the Spirit; hence, the Spirit honors him, uses him, and blesses the people through him.—*Rev. T. Collins.*

Faith is the certain image of eternity. All things are present to it—things past and things to come. Faith converses with angels and antedates the hymns of glory. Every man that hath grace is as certain there are glories for him if he perseveres in duty, as it he had heard and sung the blessed thanksgiving song—the blessed sentence of doomsday.—*Jeremy Taylor.*

HAVE YOU DONE ANYTHING FOR CHRIST?

A lady was teaching a class of ten bright boys in the Sabbath-school. They were attentive and thoughtful, but none were Christians. The lesson was, "Showing our love for Christ." At its close the teacher asked her scholars, one by one, if they had done one single thing for Christ during the week. As she questioned each, some answered, sadly, "No," and others shook their heads in silence. "Not one deed for Christ!" said the teacher, and she looked sadly at the solemn, earnest faces.

A thoughtful boy of thirteen at her side, sat while in silence. Perhaps he was thinking, "I wonder whether any one really loves Christ, if any one tries to please him?" Suddenly he turned his expressive eyes upon his teacher, and said, respectfully but earnestly, "Have you done anything for Christ?" "The question was unexpected. Emotion crimsoned her cheek, and brought tears to her eyes. At length she controlled herself, and said, in broken accents,—"I hope so John, but I know I have not done what I ought, or might have done for him."

That question followed the teacher home. Her chest quivered, her bed, the saw that inquiring, "Have you done anything for Jesus?" It seemed as if Christ had asked her, "What have you done for me?"

Each day a voice repeated the question, and each Sabbath, as she came before her class, an echo came, "What have you done this week for Christ?"

Earnestly, prayerfully, did she strive to heed the warning. More closely did she cling to the Saviour, and more faithfully labor to show those dear ones the way. Her prayerful labors

were blessed; and now teacher and pupils rejoice together in a Saviour's love. Teacher, what have you done for Christ, to-day?"

PILLOW-PRAYERS.

We do not mean those who sleepily offered after one has got into bed, because too lazy to kneel before. We refer to the communion with God permitted those who cannot sleep; who, from illness, or care, or some constitutional infirmity, are compelled to drag through the weary hours of wakefulness. To such these prayer are an unexpressed comfort. God is then especially near. The deep silence of the night, the all-enveloping darkness, which, as a curtain, he has drawn over the sleeping world, the helplessness and dependence in all his aid, give the most impressive realization of his being and presence. It is good at such times, if you can, to recite to yourself passages from the Scriptures. With what force and sweetness do they come to you, and what fulness of comfort have they for the tired and sorrowing! So with familiar hymns, which, indeed, are utterances in other forms of the precious truths of his Word. Many of these are doubly dear from the associations they bring with them, the fragrance of remembered hours of communion with friends, or special experiences of your own soul, or the histories of others who made these the vehicles of their devotion.

But beyond all these is the sweetness of prayer itself. You can then talk with your father with the utmost freedom, and even familiarity. Theirs is great relief, often, in simply telling him our trials. It brings us the sense of his sympathy, it takes away the loneliness which one feels in sorrows which could be told in no earthly ear.

So the restless pillow may be soothed by prayer. The weary hours will quickly pass. And He who seeth in secret will answer your prayers. We remember a young man, in giving the history of his conversion when about to make a profession of religion, stating that his first serious impressions were caused by hearing his father and mother, who slept in an adjoining room, praying for their children during the night.—*Congregationalist.*

FOR LAYMEN ONLY.

This article is not intended for clergymen; it is for laymen only.

We have more than once, in these columns, urged on our clerical readers the importance of pastoral visitation. There is a low conception of the power of the minister is not to be personal; it will not depend on the acquaintance of the pastor with his people, and their confidence in him. He must know their wants to be able to minister to them. He must understand the specific disorders in his congregation, or he cannot prescribe.

But we protest against the common injustice which expects of him a kind of parochial omniscience, and complains of him because he does possess it.

If a merchant gets into a difficulty and needs legal counsel, he does not wait for the lawyer to find out by chance or by intuition; he calls on his lawyer for the aid he wants. If any member of the household is sick, the father does not wait for the physician to learn by a round of regular and formal visits from his physician when he wants him. But the clergyman is expected to detect by spiritual intuition the wants of his people, or go from house to house, conducting everywhere an inquisitorial examination, and by his cross-questioning ascertaining where counsel, where comfort, where admonition is wanted. He is expected to exercise the functions of a spiritual board of health. If his intuitions mislead him, if his formal and regular visitations carry him where he is not needed, and leave him in ignorance of the wants of families where he is needed, he is subjected to a cross-fire of criticism from both quarters—alike from the visited and the unvisited of the flock.

The analogy between the clergyman and the physician is not perfect. The sick man generally knows when he needs a physician, but the physical does not always know when he needs Christian counsel. Part of the duty, a very important part of the duty of the minister, is to disclose to the soul its own need. We do not, therefore, counsel the layman not to wait till he is called on; but we do most emphatically protest that the latter has no right to shut himself up in a cell and leave his minister to guess him the best way he can.

Grumbling parishioners, we wish we could buttonhole you for five minutes. You complain your minister has not visited you for six months. When have you visited him? You complain that he rarely speaks to you. How often do you speak to him? You complain that you do not know him. What have you done to make his acquaintance? You complain that he has never had any personal religious conversation with you. Have you ever offered him a chance? You complain that he does not touch your heart in his preaching. Have you ever opened your heart to him?

It will be time enough for you to complain of your minister for not visiting when he does not come when he is called; for not conversing when he does not answer your request for counsel or comfort; for not knowing you when he rejects your advances toward a spiritual acquaintance and communion; for not teaching your heart-wants by his instructions when you have told him what they are.

Do you say that is hard to take the initiative and carry your troubles to the minister. My dear grumbler, did you ever consider whether it could be easy for him to take the initiative and cross-examine you for them? If you think it is easy, try yourself an afternoon of pastoral calling. "Put yourself in his place," and see how you find it.—*Christian Weekly.*

DR. GUTHRIE'S EARLY MINISTRY.

Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, said, "There are moments that are worth more than years. We cannot help it; there is no proportion between a stray thought of five minutes may contain the most important of his life. The most important moments, disproportionate to all other moments, who can tell when it will be upon us?"

We are seldom conscious of the vital importance of these critical moments, which make or unmake us. Yet all human biographers and all national historians are full of them. A striking instance occurs to us in the life of the late Rev. Dr. Guthrie. For more than three years after his theological studies were finished he was unable to obtain a call to any Church. Discouraged, he went to the continent and studied medicine for a time. Then he came home and entered his father's banking-house. His biographer says that at this time "he had not the knack of making friends either in or out of the pulpit."

After one of his trial discourses one of his critics called it a "bulletin blockhead!" The word "bulletin" being probably a coarse synonym for "bellowing," for he always gave full play to his great voice in preaching. Something, whatever it was, kept him from reaching the popular heart. At last Lord Palmerston presented him the living at Arbroath. Things went smoothly enough among his parishioners, but he made little impression either by thundering the laws or piping peace. So it went on until one day he observed that an anecdote which he ventured to tell in a ray of white woke up his sleepy hearers, and kept them awake to the close of his sermon. From that moment he changed his style of preaching, giving full play to his wonderful genius for splendid illustration. After ten years in the country he removed to Edinburgh, where he was unable to obtain a call to any Church. Discouraged, he went to the continent and studied medicine for a time. Then he came home and entered his father's banking-house. His biographer says that at this time "he had not the knack of making friends either in or out of the pulpit."

THE LUDICROUS AT WEDDINGS.

BY REV. D. W. HAMMOND.

The act of being married is one in which the actors do not have the benefit of experience, as they do in most other matters, for as soon as they learn how to be married they quit. In fact, we once married a couple neither of whom had ever seen any one married. Hence it was not strange or inappropriate when once, when we were waiting for a happy couple to enter the parlor to be made one, the bridegroom called us aside and said, "Elder, I don't know how to act, for the fact is, I was never married in my life. If you can give me any information on the subject that will help me when I get on the floor, I shall thank you to do so." In fact, almost every one, refined people as well as rustics, act bewildered and abashed when they are the act of publicly vowing to love and cherish each other forever, and there is almost invariably something so ludicrous occurs at weddings that it would turn the perpetual laugh upon the actors, were it not for the fact that nearly all married persons remember something so laughable in their own experience that they are inclined to be too charitable to be merry over the awkwardness of others.

On one occasion a couple were being married, and the bridegroom, who was an overgrown youth of about twenty years, very bashful and diffident, was frightened by the ceremony almost into fits. We proposed a few questions to be answered jointly by the parties, to which the lady promptly responded, but the gentleman remained silent. We repeated the question with the same result. "Will you answer,

DO THE DEPARTED DEAD EVER RETURN?

This is a question often asked; and it is the belief of some, who strive to draw conclusions from it, that in the visions of the night they are permitted to revisit friends to their departed loved ones. It would seem a pity to break the illusion, for such it must be, if there is any truth in the following considerations; for truth should pre-empt, though its opposite be ever so pleasing. For a departed spirit to return and be seen, it would be necessary for it to resume its body, which long since has gone into corrupt decay. No spirit, being immaterial, is necessarily invisible, and to say that they are seen is to say that there are more restructions than one, which would be in direct contradiction to the word of God. The case of Abraham and the rich man exhibits the whole subject in an unmistakable light. As to communications with the living, even on the most important matters, be shown that the soul without it could make no excursion from heaven. How extremely ridiculous, then, are the recitals, which we often hear, of apparitions appearing to discover hidden treasures, or titles, or murders, etc., as if the concerns of eternity were of less importance than the time being. To argue from analogy that because angels go forth as ministering spirits human souls do the same, is illusory, for the promise is the righteous who go no more out forever; to leave them shall go no more out forever; and as to the wicked, they are to be reserved in chains of darkness until the judgment of the great day. St. Paul, when he departed, expected to be forever with the Lord. We have no account of his coming back on any commissions, and surely if an effective agent were required, none could be more so than he. If we need outside comfort or council the Holy Spirit is the appointed agent, hence we should not build "upon the baseless fabric" which dies at the opening day. Sober truth is far preferable to the vagaries of the imagination, however much the visionary may revel in their deliriums. Are the sentiments here presented wrong? Your correspondent begs to be set right.—*Christian Guardian.*

GENERAL MISCELLANY.

FROM THE HIGHLANDS.

BY J. H. RUBY.

If you wish to know my exact locality in the Highlands, look on your maps, along the west side of Loch Lomond, about one third of its length from the head—there you will find me writing to my old friend The North-east, and wishing the weather would clear, so that I could see the top of Ben Lomond. I wonder what kind of weather you are suffering in Chicago. I am dressed in a substantial suit of Scotch tweed, almost warm enough for our winter; and an half wishing for a fire. I am sure that will make some of you who are almost panting for a cool breeze wish you were in Scotland. I am not doing anything in the orthodox modern-torture manner at all. I have forgotten there is such a thing as a railway or a steamboat, and I even ignore stage-coaches; the only aid I have in my journey is my pilgrim's staff. I supposed this would create little surprise in us, as I thought, the land of pedestrians, but I find people are as little given to "shanking it" here as in America. They fairly hold up their hands in amazement when I tell them I have walked twenty miles to-day. I walked but eight miles yesterday, but that through an almost unceasing rain shower. In our country it would have meant walking in the mud, too, but thanks to Macadam, or some one else who invented

steed roads, it is not so here; the roads are all made as well as laid. To-day I am waiting for the rain to cease. I hardly know whether I or the rain will hold out the longer.

I have passed through some very striking Highland scenery on my way to this place. My route was from Dunoon, on the Frith of Clyde, up Loch Eck to Strachan and Inverary, on Loch Fyne; up Glenkinness to Loch Long; and down Glenore to Loch Long; and the dividing ridge of Loch Lomond. The finest scenery was along Loch Eck and down Glenore. The hills are not so high as those bordering some other glens, but to one who has lived his whole life in Iowa and Illinois, and had never seen a mountain, they seemed grand. In many places the sides are so steep that the soil has been washed away as fast as formed, and the rocks stand up as bare and bleak as they did in the beginning. Where the sides are less steep the rocks are covered with soil and afford a scanty pasturage for sheep.

All these Western Highlands are devoted to grazing. Here and there a spot of level ground is tilled, but it is the rare exception. The land is rented in large farms and stocked mostly with sheep, and a few cows. As a consequence the population has decreased greatly within the memory of not very old men. The little town of Strachan, where I spent Sabbath, has not, I should judge, more than one third of the population it had forty years ago. Then the land was divided into small farms, every available spot was tilled; where they could not plow they used the spade; and all their clothes were spun and woven in their own homes. Now the only men who can find work are the few shepherds who have charge of the sheep; the others have been compelled to go to the cities and the Lowlands and America in quest of work. Some of the old men are inclined to talk of those old times as the good times, but of course the people have many more of the comforts of life now than then. One young man told me that his grandfather was eighteen years old before he had a shoe to his feet or a bonnet to his head. It is better that the people should wear away; it is not worth while to maintain such a fight with nature for a bare subsistence here, when she has other places where she lavishes her gifts on all.

The country is excellently adapted to its present use, wool growing. The winters are comparatively mild and sheep require no shelter, or prepared feed. They live on the hills winter and summer, and it would seem that all the owner has to do is to get them up once a year and shear them. I stayed all night with one of the shepherds right before last. He told me he had the care of a thousand sheep.

Wages here are much lower than with us, and indeed much lower than in the Lowlands. A man without a family receives twenty pounds a year and his board; a man with a family, a cottage, the right to pasture two cows, fourteen pounds of oatmeal a week, and twenty pounds a year. Those were the figures given by one of the shepherds, and I think they represent pretty fairly the wages of shepherds in this part, but they may be paid in a good many different ways. For instance, some get the right to keep a certain number of sheep of their own, a plan as old as Jacob's time.

Wages here are higher than they were a few years ago, but I think the condition of the people is not so much improved as the rise of wages would indicate. There has been a corresponding rise in the price of food. No doubt you think best dear in Chicago when you go to settle with your butcher, but he does not charge you thirty cents a pound as he would here. At such prices of course meat is almost an impossibility to the working classes.

I had a good opportunity to observe the fare of laboring men where I boarded in Glasgow. An ordinary breakfast for the better class of laborers was bread and butter, a cup of tea, and a couple of eggs. Dinner, breakfast, perhaps, and a cup of tea, with usually some little desert. Super very much like breakfast. The commoner laborers took still plainer fare. That would seem monotonous to most Americans. I fear, but it is better than working down at their homes often. Here it is still plainer. Oatmeal is the staple of the laboring man's diet, and he has a cup of tea, and a couple of eggs. Dinner, breakfast, perhaps, and a cup of tea, with usually some little desert. Super very much like breakfast. The commoner laborers took still plainer fare. That would seem monotonous to most Americans. I fear, but it is better than working down at their homes often. Here it is still plainer. Oatmeal is the staple of the laboring man's diet, and he has a cup of tea, and a couple of eggs. 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