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Poetry.

A BIRD'S NEST.

LORRENCE PEARCY.

Over my shaded doorway
Two little crown-winged birds
Have chosen to fashion their dwelling
And utter their loving words;
All day they are going and coming,
On errands frequent and fleet,
And washing over and over,
"Sweetest, sweet, sweet, O sweet!"

Their necks are cheerful and shining,
Their eyes like living gems;
And all day long they are busy
Gathering straw and stems,
Lint, and feathers, and grasses,
And half forgetting to eat,
Yet never failing to warble,
"Sweetest, sweet, sweet, O sweet!"

I scatter crumbs on the doornap,
And fling them some flossy threads;
They fearlessly gather my bounty,
And turn up their grateful heads,
And fatter, and dance and flutter,
And scrape with their tiny feet,
Telling me over and over,
"Sweetest, sweet, sweet, O sweet!"

What if the sky is clouded?
What if the rain comes down?
They are all dressed to meet it,
In water-proof suits of brown.
They never moan nor languish,
Nor waver at storm or heat,
But say, whatever the weather,
"Sweetest, sweet, sweet, O sweet!"

Always merry and busy,
Dear little brown-winged birds,
Teach me the happy magic
Hidden in those soft words,
Which always, in shine or shadow,
So lovingly you repeat,
Over, and over, and over,
"Sweetest, sweet, sweet, O sweet!"

Miscellany.

RECOLLECTIONS OF THE OLD OTTAWA CIRCUIT.

BY AN EARLY INCUMBENT.

ITS EXTENT IN 1832-33.

It lay on both sides of the noble Ottawa River. Its original "head-quarters" was at Lachute, on the Falls of that tributary of the Ottawa called the North River. We had an occasional appointment six or seven miles, more or less (I do not at this length of time remember the exact distance), towards Montreal. The same might be said of "Jerusalem," about four miles south-east from Lachute, inhabited largely by Scotch and other old-country people. Here the family of Taylor, of which Dr. Lachlin Taylor was then a boy at home, first heard the Methodists. The East Settlement was about as far from Lachute as Jerusalem, a little more to the east. Here we had a regular appointment and a good class.

Going from Lachute to the west, in a sweep from north to south, we had Thomas Gore, North Gore, and Back Chatham; sometimes we pursued that route to Mr. Kennedy's, father of the Rev. George Kennedy, to the north-east corner of Grenville. This route was so rough that my quaint and sprightly colleague, brother Black, used always to call it "the Rocky Mountains." But there were some things out there not so large, but more numerous, even, and animated than the rocks, which gave us a great deal more inconvenience. We met the inconvenience by night as well as day. I do not specify the precise localities.

Another branch of the Circuit was from the village of St. Andrews, where we had a class, to Beech Ridge, River Rouge and South Bay. To the latter place we went mostly for the sake of two families; one of them was a relic of olden times, consisting of father and mother Karkner, and an unmarried daughter. Keeping on the north side of the Ottawa River, and proceeding from St. Andrews westward, our circuit took in Chatham, "Grenville Camp," "Over the mountain," and back again to the river, and up (across the Upper Rouge in a ferry) to the Bay of Pancote in Papineau's Seigneurie; then across the Bay and River up into and across George's Lake to the "Lake Settlement;" then down the south side of the river to Longueuil, and L'Original, and St. Mary's. From the last mentioned place we swept out through West Hawkesbury, including the Red School-house and Van-klahe Hill; thence into East Hawkesbury, where we preached at a Mr. Grot's; and thence as best we could (the route depended on the conveyance done by the frost) across the River Le Grace in a ferry, on down to a very interesting Settlement at Cote St. Charles in Vaudeuil. On our way back there were families to visit below and above Point Fort until we got to father Wyman's, in the town of Hawkesbury, who kept the ferry, across to Chatham. Although nominally an Episcopalian, Mr. Wyman had more of the Methodist preacher's company than any body else. No wonder that a fascinating and talented one secured one of his daughters.

In my next I may speak of the notables of that Circuit more particularly.

THE CROOKED STICK.

"What doth the Lord require of thee?"—Mic. vi. 8.

"Christ has a service for all His members," said James Therrall, an old carpenter in a village on Salisbury plain, to a young Christian, who complained that she was unworthy to work for the Lord. "Let not one of the members say, 'The Head has no need of me.' I used to think as you do long ago, but He taught me otherwise by a crooked stick.

"One day my son went to a sale of timber, and in the lot was a stick so twisted and bent, that I spoke sharply to him, saying, 'You have a bad bargain there, lad; that crooked stick will be of no use to any one.'

"It's all tinner," replied my son, not the least vexed by my reproof. 'I paid the same price for it as the rest. Depend upon it, no tree grows for nothing. Wait a bit; don't fret, father; let's keep a look out; there's a place somewhere for it.'

"A little time after this I had a cottage to build; a queer kind of a house it was, and pretty enough when it was finished; there was a corner to turn in it, and not a stick in the yard would fit. I thought of the crooked one, and fetched it. Many a hard day's work would have failed to prepare a joist like it. It seemed as if the tree had grown aside for this very purpose.

"Then," said I, 'there's a place for the crooked stick after all! Then there's a place for poor James Therrall. Dear Lord! show him the place into which he may fit in building thy heavenly temple.' That very day I learned that what God gives me He gives me for his glory; and, poor and unlettered as I was, there was a work for me. There is a work for you; God has something for you to do, and nobody else can do it."

This village carpenter had neither the knowledge of the schoolman nor had he taken a degree at college; yet was he a teacher of Divine Truths, and he was wise in the wisdom of the children of light. He would often refer to the time when, looking solely on his own weakness and infirmities, he overlooked his only source of strength, and thought he was too poor and ignorant to do anything for the Lord he loved! He lived to a good old age, a blessing to the souls in his neighbourhood and where, as he liked best to say, he watched for his Master. When some who loved their ease too well, or child or servant or sick one complained, "I can do nothing," he would point to the best built cottage on the plain, with its pretty bay-window and slanting roof, and tell them he had once thought the same himself, but his error had been corrected by a dumb instructor—a beam in that roof—a crooked stick which seemed fit for nothing; but it found its proper place in the building at last, and gave it a grace and strength which no other timber, however superior in other respects, could have imparted. Thus the warped tree had preached to him a sermon on true humility, and made him from that day a humble steward of the things of the kingdom.

BEAUTY.

There is nothing so beautiful in this world as beauty of character. Oh! how men long for it! I do not wonder that men have worshipped gods that they made out of men. Man is a worshipping creature, and if he cannot get anything better, he will make his own god. A god he will have, and a god he will worship. Men hunger, they long for some being they can reverence and adore. The artist does not more long for beautiful features or faces or forms, than every moral nature longs to see characters that are so well, so strongly, so harmoniously, so finely and fully developed, that they impress those who behold them with the idea of admirableness, and make them feel that it is pleasant to sit and look at them, and to be where they are.

I have known some persons that impressed me just as some pictures do. Now and then there is an elect picture. Most of the pictures in this world are in their sins; but now and then there is one that has been converted, and is elect and precious. And to sit in the room with such a picture is to have a perpetual blessing. If a man could swing the rainbow as a hammock and sleep in it, how the poet would like to do it! But now and then there is a rainbow picture in the room which is like the falling down upon me of all sweet and celestial influences. I know not what it is; and I am lifted before I am aware what lifts me. Now and then there are picture persons; but they are rare. We are obliged to take each other just as we are. We are only good in spots at any rate. Most persons are like these street organs, that have been very much used, in which only every other note sounds, and in which each of the notes that do sound has an individual liberty of its own; and so it is cranking, turning, with a hop-skip and a jump, one note being hit here and another there, with a blank between. Now and then there are harmonious natures, well chanted, well put together, even in quality, admirable in proportion, entirely self-restrained, and with force enough to throw out a continual influence. Under such circumstances we feel not only that they are beautiful, but that they are beautiful in both senses—that they are physically beautiful, and morally beautiful. For it is not possible that one should be under the dominion of a noble feeling, and not look beautiful in the face. So really is beauty the creature of the mind and the soul, that when the body is never so homely, if the soul has the power of expression, it will shine

through and fill the pores of the skin, and transform the individual. There is no person who is not radiant when he is under the inspiration of the highest feelings. There is no person, though he be hump-backed, and dwarfed, and disfigured, who, if he has the love of God, and a soul of praise, will not shine with divine outward beauty. Though his body may not be symmetric and harmoniously artistic, yet everybody will say, "He is handsome. The deformed lump is not as homely as I thought."

I see men that groan because they are neurotic. There are men whose temper has been neurotic all their life; and nobody groaned but those who lived with them. I see men who are retiring from business, on account of nervous depression, over work and over anxiety; and they nurse themselves, and care for themselves, and every morning look at their tongue, and every day they feel of their pulse; and the road between them and the doctor's house is beaten hard. And yet they could be a great deal worse inside. If they could see their soul's portrait, they would see that they are sick enough there. But they never went to a doctor on account of their soul; they did not care much about that. They could not bear to see the pains of the body, but it did trouble them to see the pains of the soul. They could not bear to have outward things—harmonious, and less than full and powerful and symmetric. They loved to clothe what-ever they had with the garments of beauty. And when they come to the higher form of beauty, why is not the analogy carried on? Why do not men want to be beautiful in their higher nature? Why do they not desire the best and noblest things? Oh! the conflict of life—the damaging conflict of life! How many there have been that started out brave, pure, true and noble, but that, by the time they were forty-five years old, shook their heads and said: "These things are very pretty to talk about; but there is not much reality in them. Life does not permit their realization."

Now, I believe it is possible for men to be in this world, harmonious, brave, noble and beautiful. It costs some trouble; but it is worth all it costs, a thousand times over. And we are called to it. I do not believe one word in cynicism. The cynic is my abhorrence. When men tell me that this life is to be poor in order that the other may be rich, I deny it. It is not so. If we are only willing to be rich and beautiful in the right place, in the right way, and in the right elements, then this life calls for riches and beauty. This is the meaning of the Master, when he says, "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in Heaven."—H. W. Beecher.

LIFE A JOURNEY.

Life has been compared to a journey. The living have started onward; when death will arrest them they know not; but that it will arrest them ere long, they are certain. "Of ten thousand human beings," says Burgess, "who have thus set forth together, after ten years, one-third at least, have disappeared. At the middle point or common measure of life, but half are still upon the road. Faster and faster, as the ranks grow thinner, they that remain till now become weary, and lie down and rise no more. At three-score and ten a band of some four hundred yet struggle on. At ninety these have been reduced to a handful of thirty trembling patriarchs. Year after year they fall in diminishing numbers. One lingers, perhaps, a lonely marvel, till the century is over. We look again, and the work of death is finished." "How important that we realize this, and 'so number our days as to apply our hearts unto wisdom!'"

The value of time varies with individuals, and in the hour-glass which marks the flight of time to every eye it is less than lost and so the idler, but more than gold to the studious man. Make the most of fleeting time. By every step in life's journey move upwards; that each to-morrow find us further than to-day.

A MURDEROUS SEA FLOWER.

An old moral is strikingly illustrated by this bit of natural history: One of the exquisite wonders of the sea is called the opolet, and is about as large as the German aster, looking, indeed, very much like one. Imagine a very large double aster with ever so many long petals of a light green, glossy as satin, and each one tipped with rose color. These lovely petals do not lie quietly in their places, like those of the aster in your garden, but wave about in the water, while the opolet generally clings to a rock. How innocent and lovely it looks on in its rocky bed! Who would suspect that it would eat anything grosser than dew or sunlight? But those beautiful waving arms, as you call them, have besides looking pretty. They have to provide for a large open mouth which is hidden deep amongst them—so well hidden that one can scarcely find it. Well do they perform their duty, for the instant a foolish little fishlet touches one of the rose tips, he is struck with poison as fatal to him as lightning. He immediately becomes numb, and in a moment struggling; and then the other beautiful arms wrap themselves around him, and he is drawn into the huge greedy mouth, and is seen no more. Then the lovely arms unclose and wave again in the water, looking as innocent and harmless as though they had never touched a fish.

NATURE'S SPRING SONG.

The following resonant and melodious prose is from Arthur Mattison in the *Musical Bulletin*.

The lark gave the signal! Up from the fresh, bright tufts of sweet smelling grass, through the bright spring air it bristled, cheerily flew—joy in its heart, lightness in its wings, melody streaming from its throat—and darted forth amid the feathered songsters of the grove, blithely sounding the happy key note of the spring morn. From a thousand forest trees came the melodious responses; the matin air was gaily filled with the pretty prelude; and the morning breezes caught the tune, and murmured it softly and caressingly to the countless leaves quivering on the grand old branches of the stately tree; and the leaves prolonged the full rich strain, and swelled with their soft wild harmonies the beautiful spring song—the rejoicing Pean of the new birth of the verdant and floral year. The cattle on a thousand hills, in mellow concord, full contentment lowed; and the fair face of happy Nature basked in God's benignant smile. The morning hymn of the birds, the breezes, and the myriad leaves of the wood, joined their accordant sounds, and the psalm of Nature spread, and rolled, and widened, until it reached the serene and lofty abiding places of the spirits of the mountain tops, whose broad and mighty wings were soon harmoniously freighted with the pleasant strains, and whose majestic voices, in glorious tones, enrich the choral songs with chords sublime, with heavenly tranquil themes of peace and grandeur! And! from this mountain bed the bounteous rushing river heareth the joy-abounding tumult, thrills with the weird and many-voiced songs, uplifts his white and foamy crest with pride, to bear his potent part in that fair song, and on his broad and rapid breast, o'er crag and rock, through vale and mead, past woud and hamlet, field and town, bears the triumphant song to Ocean's well-peopled cars. And then from the depths of the vast, murmuring sea, all grandly sounds the solemn ponderous bass to make the song complete. The waves of the thunderous anthem swell, and the high cherubim themselves seem to touch their golden harps and add celestial tones unto the earth's first song of spring.

WEDDING CEREMONIES OF THE ROOK.

The following curious details have been communicated to the *Zoological Review* by Mr. Vian:

"One day in March, I was walking in a little valley near Meulan, planted partly with old poplars, upon which companies of rooks had been nesting several years. They did not seem to be asking as yet, upon their nests. Upon one of the poplars, seven of these birds were assembled round an old nest, and made the air resound with their cawings. From time to time one rook came up alone and sat on the nest, another came in a few seconds after, both birds let themselves fall four or five yards below the nest and flew off together toward the rising grounds.

The candidates were not always accepted, and I have seen as many as three, before the female, go away alone as they had come. This scene was repeated twenty times during an hour without the nest having ever more than two birds seated on it at once. I thought at one time that the ceremony was terminated; after the first quarter of an hour, the whole flock had disappeared. But a few minutes afterward seven other rooks alit round the nest, and the scene recommenced, it was still going on when I left. Some hours later, seeing on the high grounds, which overlooked this valley, a considerable number of rooks, I questioned a peasant. He answered me: "It is the great day of the rooks; to-day all the rooks assemble here, it is like this every year, at the same epoch." It seems that I had assisted at the nuptial ceremonies of the young rooks of last year's broods. Nothing was wanted; I saw seven witness the presentation of the future spouses, the choice of a husband, the wedding, the travelling excursion of the bride and bride-groom."

IMAGINATION.

Dr. Fayer, an English physician in India, communicates to the *Indian Medical Gazette* an extraordinary case of the effect of imagination on the physical system. He says: "Some time ago, on visiting the hospital one morning, I was told that a man had been admitted during the night suffering from a snake bite, and that he was very low. I found him in a state of great prostration, he was hardly able to speak, and seemed to be in a state of great depression. He and his friends said that during the night, in going into his hut, a snake bit him on the foot; that he was much alarmed, and rapidly passed into a state of insensibility, when they brought him to the hospital. They and he considered that he was dying, and evidently regarded his condition as hopeless. On being asked for a description of the snake, they said that they had caught it, and brought it with them in a bottle. The bottle was produced, and the snake turned out to be a small, innocent lycodon. It was alive, though somewhat injured by the treatment it had received. On explaining to the man that it was harmless, and with some difficulty in making him believe it, the symptoms of poisoning rapidly disappeared, and he left the hospital as well as ever he was in his life, in a few hours."

THE MURDER OF THOMAS SCOTT.

Mr. Mair, who was a prisoner with Scott, murdered by the miscreant Riel and his fellow traitors at Fort Garry, says:—"Scott was murdered in cold blood. He was placed in a kneeling position and shot, three balls entering his body, and he fell to the ground, but not dead. Seeing that he still lived, one Pariseau, a relative of the murderer of Sutherland, ran up and fired a revolver into his ear. The ball glanced between the scalp and the skull. He was then transferred to his coffin, where he lay for over an hour, still quivering and alive."

IN MEMORIAM.

He fell not in breach, nor in battle field,
In the rally, the route or the raid;
They bore him not back on his battered shield,
By the meteor flag overspread.

They doomed him to death, that rebel band,
Defiance in speech and eye—
A loyal son of the dear old land,
For the brave old flag to die.

By traitors beset, not a comrade nigh,
He knelt on the snow-clad ground;
And they murdered him there for his loyalty,
As they'd slaughter a many a bound.

A voice has gone out from that blood-stain'd pile,
A shout like the eagle's scream;
"Shall Britons be butchered on British soil,
For their fealty to Britain's Queen?"

Let our bugles respond with a thrilling knell,
That will startle the wolves in their lair;
The muster—the march—and the passing bell,
That will tell the avenger is there.

—Editor *Guelph Herald*.

THE HINDOO PREACHER.

The distinguished Indian gentleman, Keshub Chunder Sen, a young man from Bengal, who is the leader of an Indian sect which has renounced the leading errors of heathenism, and aimed at social reforms among his countrymen, has had a reception and endorsement by leading ecclesiastics and others in this country, which, on reflection, they must regret. The meeting with Sen in the Willis Rooms could hardly be otherwise regarded than as inaugurating a species of hero-worship. The assumption of this man—who is a Deist, not a Christian—speaking of the Deity in the same strain as the poetical native writers of India, has seriously injured his prestige. Claiming credit for the abstract notions he holds, represented by the organization to which he is attached, as tending to bring about the regeneration of India, he allowed nothing to the preaching of the Gospel. The world has seen enough of these social reformers. Their minds being partially imbued, no doubt, with the influences generated by Christianity, they claim a virtue for their partial conceptions which only exists in their imaginations. But Keshub Chunder Sen has done more. He has claimed, without possessing any credentials but those of his own sect, to speak in behalf of the millions of India—their self-elected representative—to procure the English people for their rule! These are scathing words for national pride. The history of British government in India is the history of official rapaciousness and cruelty, culminating in the Sepoy rebellion, which was extinguished in seas of blood. The Unitarians have got hold of Sen, but it would be more than a charity to say that he belongs to them.

PROFESSIONAL REVIVALISTS.

The efforts of professional revivalists contribute directly to superficial and mistaken Christian experiences, and to hasty admissions into the churches. Their success is measured by the number of their converts, and this must be made in some way as large as possible. A feverish excitement is produced, whether noisy or not; most of the converts, in many cases, are young, and need patient and careful guidance; there is given little or no religious teaching worthy of the name; the candidate testifies that he "felt bad," and then "felt better," and is hurriedly voted into the church. Who that has seen and felt these things, and has any jealousy for his Master's name and cause, has not been pained again and again by these utterly meaningless recitals of so-called religious experience? Many of these persons must be excluded from the church, or remain in it as dead-weights and sources of coldness and corruption. To these hasty admissions, to the cumbering of the church roll with names that are only ciphers or worse, must be attributed much of the inefficiency of our churches.—*National Baptist*.

INFALLIBILITY.

Archbishop Purcell, who leads the protest presented to the Pope against the dogma of infallibility, thus expressed himself thirty years ago on the doctrine, in his famous debate with Alexander Campbell: "Appeals were lodged before the Bishop of Rome, though he was not believed to be infallible. Neither is he now. No enlightened Catholic holds the Pope's infallibility to be an article of faith. I do not, and none of my brethren, that I know of, do. The Catholic believes the Pope, as a man, to be as liable to error as almost any man in the universe. Man is man, and no man is infallible, either in doctrine or morals. Many of the popes have sinned, and some of them have been bad men. I presume my worthy antagonist will take his brush in hand and roll up his sleeves, and lay it on them hard and heavy; so will I; and whenever he uses a strong epithet against them I will use a stronger."