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Religious Miscellany.

Class Meeting.

How pleasant and sweet, when together we meet,
United in purpose and heart;
And conversed by love, from the fountain above,
Which the Spirit above can impart.

Together we plead for the grace that we need,
The grace to take up, and sustain;
And we pray and believe: new strength we receive
To endure tribulation and pain.

For each other we care, and our burden we share,
The stronger assisting the weak;
The comfort we feel to each other we tell,
And our faith is increased while we speak.

We sing, and rejoice with one heart, and one voice;
From the Ocean of Love;
Till a drop from the gain of the joys that remain
In the house of our Father above.

With hand joined in hand, united we stand;
Through leagues of darkness appear;
And by faith in the name of the crucified Lamb,
We rest, and overcome all our foes.

Thus onward we go, and true fellowship know
In the holy communion of saints;
While "our Father" above, in his mercy and love,
Rejoices, and supplies all our wants.

The brethren and joys of the world we despise,
We leave with its baubles to feed;
These we leave to the man who rejects our disdain,
To seek for more nourishing bread.

And to die will be gain, (if we faithful remain)
For each rest "there is laid up a crown";
And our fellow-servants, when they are complete,
When we all with the Saviour sit down.

In the land of the blest, where the weary can rest,
Secure from all sorrow and care;
In his presence of "joy" without any alloy,
Caught up to eternally stare.

—Christian Miscellany.

Familiar Characters.

A comparison of the Central Christian Advocate gives some pen-etchers of characters that are familiar to most persons. We present a few specimens.

Mr. Cheats talks a deal of being persecuted, and says that he is injured man. But I have heard that Mr. Cheats takes advantage of his neighbor's ignorance or necessity. When he trades, he says, "It is naught, it is naught," and afterwards when he has made an article for more than its value, he turns to his companions and says, "I have sold you a fine article for less than its value, but I have sold it for more than its value, and I have sold it for more than its value."

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Calling the Ferryman.

BY REV. JOHN TODD, D.D.

He reached the river, the father and his little daughter, late in the evening. The woods through which they had passed reached to the very brink; and as the night was cloudy, and very dark, the woods seemed to render the gloom profoundly deep. Far away on the opposite shore, he saw a twinkling light in the distance scattered houses; while farther still were the bright lamps of the great city which they were going to.

The little child was weary and sleepy, and chilled by the evening air. "Nothing but urgency would have induced the father to be out with her thus. As they came to the ferry, they found the boat over the other side, where the ferryman lived. So the father shouted and called, and the voice answered; then he would walk to and fro, and speak to his child, and try to comfort her; then he would call again and again. At length they saw a little light move, and heard the moving of the boat. Nearer and nearer the noise came across, and the travellers started to see what it was.

"Father?"
"It's very dark, and I can't see the shore where we are going!"
"No, little one; but the ferryman knows the way, and will soon be over, and then soon the moon in the city, where he will be light and a good light."

"Oh, I wish we were there, father!"
"Slowly and gently the boat swung off in the stream; and though it was dark, and the river seemed to run fast, they were carried safely over, and the child soon forgot her great fear. In a short time after they landed, she reached her home, where loving arms received her—where the room was warm with fire, and was flooded with light. On the bosom of love she rested, and her child and tears passed away.

Some months after this, the same little child had come to another river, darker, deeper, and more fearful still. It was the River of Death. When she first came near it, the air seemed cold, and darkness covered it, and all seemed like night. The same loving father stood near her, distressed that his child must cross this river, and he not to be with her. For days, and nights he had been with her mother, watching over her, and leaving her bedside only long enough to take his meals, and pray for the life of his precious child.

For hours she had been slumbering very quietly, and it seemed as if her spirit was to pass away without her waking again; but, just before the morning watch, she suddenly awoke, with the eyes bright, the reason unclouded, and every faculty alive. A sweet smile was playing on the face.

"Father, I have come again to the river-side, and am again waiting for the ferryman to come and carry me over."
"Does it seem dark and cold as it did when we crossed the river?"
"Yes, father. There are no dark, gloomy trees here. The river is not black, but covered with floating light. The boat coming toward me seems to be made of solid light; and though the ferryman looks dark, I am not afraid of him!"
"Can my child see across the river?"
"Oh, yes! but instead of the little twinkling light here and there, as before, I can see a great beautiful city, flooded with light and glory. It is full of sun and joy, no moon, no stars; but it is full of light. Ah! I hear music too, coming softly over the river; sweet as the angels could make it."
"Can you see any one on the other bank of the river?"
"Why, why, yes! I see one, the most beautiful figure I ever saw!—what a face! what a smile! And now he beckons me to come. O

We May not Live to Be Old.

The oak lives a thousand years. The yew reaches a much greater age; a churchyard among our Scottish mountains boasting one, especially mentioned by Humboldt, under whose green canopy we have sat, which flourished in the days of Solomon, and stood white with snow on his brow, a mighty tree that Christmas eve on frosty air was born. In contrast with the grassy slopes that grow from the soil, yielding slowly to their decay, and their leaves, fragile and easily crushed, these are often slipped in the soil; they are easily crushed by their life does not extend beyond a few months; the cold of autumn is their death, and the snows of winter is their shroud. For these reasons a leaf has been a favorite emblem with poets, both sacred and profane, and the sign of the feebleness of his mortality. So, when stripped of all its property, his children, ren suddenly, whelmed into a common grave, these dead griefs and his wife a living one, his friends the "miserable comforters" whose unskillful hands widened the wounds they sought to close, he spake Job: turning to God he plaintively expostulates with Him, crying, "Will thou break a leaf driven to and fro?"

Thus also spake the prophet who saw a picture of man, his sin and sorrow, where the wind at the close of autumn, tearing through the lined woods, swept off their leaves in showers, and scattered them swirling and eddying along the ground—"We all," he exclaimed, "do fade as a leaf, and all our iniquities like the wind have carried us away."

We fade as a leaf! In one sense live out all their days, but not many men—few men, the half of them. Of all our race—few men die in infancy and die from a mother's bosom to lie in the cold arms of death. Another large proportion drop into the grave ere the summer of life is past. The woods retain their foliage till days grow short, and fruits grow mellow, and fields ripe to the reaper's sickle, but how small the number of men who survive, in grey hairs and stooping form, slow step and shuffling gait, to wear the marks of age ere they follow their companions to the tomb? Ask that hoary old man where the boys are who sat by him at the desk in school; where the youths, flushed with health and full of hope, with whom he started in the race of life; where the guests of his board, his competitors or his partners in business? In the grave! mouldering in the grave: save one and another who, amid new faces, now find themselves to be strangers on this earth; and remain the last vestiges of their generation, clinging to life just as I have seen a few brown leaves hanging on the tree, and whirling in the winter wind when skies were dark with storms, and fields were white with snow.

To the eye of faith this survey, these bills of mortality, present nothing melancholy. Any early death to those who are in Christ, is but another expression of God's love, and the place of being long becalmed, or tossed about by storms, and perhaps driven out once and again to see when their ship was in sight of land, whose voyagers to make a short passage, count themselves happy, fortunate, are not they rather to be envied than pitied who, by an early death, escape much of the sin and sorrows of this world? Like birds of passage, they just light on life just as I have seen a few brown leaves hanging on the tree, and whirling in the winter wind when skies were dark with storms, and fields were white with snow.

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Spiritual Growth, or the Oak on the Hillside.

Now, it seems to pass that, as we came forth from the Gymnasium, Truthful told me that he had walked to our room he would preach to me the sermon on the Growth of the Oak on the Hillside, as setting forth the mode in which infinite love doth develop and perfect a complete gospel manhood.

It is not in the forest, began the Guide, that thou shalt find the strongest tree. True, there are tall and beautiful ones in the thick greenwood. But they have no depth of root, and were they only exposed to the scorching gale, they would not stand their mighty arm a moment. I, I have seen the storm, wrapped in his black mantle, as he hath strode through the forest, and the trees did fall before him at grass doth bow before the mower's scythe. But come with me to the hillside, and learn the history of the mighty oak standing there in solitary majesty. For a century hath it stood, and as a brave old man kept his rocky tower. Storm after storm, hath passed along this ridge, and spent its fury upon the oak. Still it is standing, and never so strong as to-day. What hath been its nourishment, and the cause of its growth? Gentle winds, soft as the breath of a child, and silently falling drops of dew, have tenderly ministered to the oak. And stout as is the old tree, it doth not need of all this kind care, as much as the blossom which I saw in my garden. But this careful tending can never give to the oak the strength of which its limbs and roots may boast. Nay, the long, driving, beating storm of the winter hath cultivated this dweller upon the hill. The pouring rain and the roasting tempests have provoked the oak into the most vigorous of its life. The beating of the wind, and to-day, the giant of the hill, he holding in the west the coming storm, doth rejoice in the sight. He spreads his green arms wide, and awaits the combat with a few words of his strength. And now the tempest and the tree are locked together in the awful conflict. But soon the oak, triumphant, casts his dark mantle to the east, and as the sun breaks forth upon the scene of battle, the great drop of the conquered cloud sparkle on the green brow of the oak, like diamonds on the crown of a king.

Not is this all; in that dreadful struggle with the storm, the tree increased the strength of his branches, and sent his great roots farther down among the hidden rocks of the hill. That was the mighty nursing needed to impart strength equal to a victory in a more dreadful battle.

So it is with man. The strongest of our race doth not need of all this kind care, as much as the blossom which I saw in my garden. But this careful tending can never give to the oak the strength of which its limbs and roots may boast. Nay, the long, driving, beating storm of the winter hath cultivated this dweller upon the hill. The pouring rain and the roasting tempests have provoked the oak into the most

