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Religious Miscellany.

Lost Sheep.

BY THE AUTHOR OF "YOUR MISSION."
How many sheep are straying,
From the Saviour's fold,
Up the lonely mountains!
They shiver with the cold;
They tread the tangled thickets,
Where poisonous vines do creep,
And over rocky ledges
Wander the poor lost sheep.
Who will go to find them?
Who for the Saviour's sake,
Will search with tireless patience
Through briar and through brake?
Lacking thirst or hunger,
Who still, from day to day
Will seek as for a treasure,
The sheep that go astray?
Who, when you seek to find them,
From pleasant haunts of ease,
Will go forth determined
To find the "lost of these?"
For still the Saviour calls them,
And looks across the wild,
And still he holds wide open
The door into his fold.
How sweet 'twould be at evening,
If you and I could say,
God Shepherd, we've been seeking
The sheep that went astray.
Heart-sore and faint with hunger,
We heard them making moan,
And lo! we came at nightfall
Bringing them safely home.
—Sunday School Times.

God's Providence.

It was said by a most estimable Christian woman, that she could bear quietly whatever came from God, knowing that it was good; but she could not bear anything arising from the evil intention of man, she could not regard in the least the malice of man.
The links that constitute the golden chain of providence with which a loving Father girdles us around, are not always seen by the human eye. The wind that rustles over the clouds, sweeping along in majesty, overturning, destroying, and leaving but a pile of ruins; the fiery scorching and rending of the burning thunder reverberating along the earth—these things are recognized as coming directly from his hand.
The wind is the breath of his nostrils, the thunder his voice, the lightning but the glance of his eye; and the God, so great in his power, sensible in his majesty, has a tender love over all of his creatures. Not a sparrow falls to the ground without his notice, and the very hairs of our head are all numbered. Not an eyelid of ours, nor an item in the round of daily life, but do in the great hand of God, and he is carrying out his individual good—each little act, it makes no difference how small and by whom it comes.
"He maketh the wrath of man to praise him." "The pestilence that walketh in darkness and the destruction that wasteth at noonday" are no more his messengers than the fall breath of the destroyer, the early machinations of the wicked and depraved. The latter are to be numbered among his punitive providences, and are no doubt for some purpose. What are "know not now we shall know hereafter."
The diamond, that most beautiful of all gems, has to be polished for years before it can be set to the greatest advantage. So God permits these lesser ills that often touch us so deeply, testing patience, Christian forbearance, charity, helping us as if we look at them rightly, to see what manner of spirit we are of; leading us to guard still more closely our thoughts, purposes, and acts, that we may be careful, in little things, to adorn the doctrine of our profession; educating us to receive all and everything that happens as coming directly from his hand, that, being led by him as a child, one step at a time, not questioning his purpose, we may rest secure and content in his love.

"No Admittance."

Such was once the significant "Notice," written in large and distinct characters, and placed upon the outside of the door of a room in one of our New England seminaries. As it was a measure quite new in the career of the occupant of the room, it excited among the many who passed the door not a little wonder. What could it mean? "Has T— really become all so unassuming as to have no time for anything besides study?" "Is he not a bit?" "Has he left town?" "Is he mad?" Such were the inquiries which were exchanged, but only to receive no answer. There were a few, however, who understood it. A revival of religion had just commenced, and the occupant of that room manifested a hostility to it which was specially bitter. On ascertaining that some of the students had resolved to converse personally with every impenitent member of the institution, and make a direct appeal to the individual heart and conscience, he declared that he would be an exception, that he would not engage in any such conversation, would not hear any such appeal, and to be secure against any intrusion, would not admit any one into his room.
The words "No Admittance" were therefore full of meaning to the little band of praying students, and they immediately resolved to test the virtue of prayer in opening the bolted door. Ferrency and unitedly they commended the case to God, entreating him not only to unlock the door, but also and especially to unlock the heart and possession of the stubborn heart within the door. And never can they forget the thrill of wonder and joy which they felt when the message, "Behold, he prayeth!" was announced to them. While they were appealing to God one of their number knocked at the bolted door, and to his great surprise, as he listened for a response, heard the most earnest cries and sobs within. The Holy Spirit had evidently gained "admittance" not only into the room, but into the fast more strongly bolted heart, and the bitter enemy of a revival was pleading for mercy.
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Religious Intelligence.

Chinese Missions.

The Rev. Dr. Mullens, for two and twenty years a devoted missionary in India, in connection with the London Missionary Society, was requested by that body to visit before his return home and make himself acquainted with its stations there. He complied with their request, and has since given the result of his observations in a pamphlet.
China is scarcely less remarkable for its beauty than for its greatness. The tropical parts of the China Sea are in color a brilliant sapphire, its coast is a series of bays and quiet anchorages, its seaboard for eight hundred miles is a line of charming hills, which pour into the ocean numerous winding rivers, or great waterways, that are in fact a series of valleys, all rich in produce; while round the west and the south vast mountains enclose the empire, whose footholds are filled with glaciers which no foot has trodden, and whose summits are covered with perpetual snow; and yet, notwithstanding all this life and loveliness, China according to Dr. Mullens, "presents to the spiritual observer the sad spectacle of a dying empire. The government does nothing for its subjects. The people, taught from their infancy to respect parental authority, govern themselves. The officials exist, and plunder the rich, order by population around them; but with rebels and robbers they can do nothing. All the principles, too, which have upheld the people for centuries, are in a state of decay. Confucianism has made them intensely conservative, intensely self-sufficient. But it is wearing away, and in the presence of the active thought and active life of the great world, the active life is vain, and the old institutions of hygiene fail. Materially active and enterprising, the Chinese give their whole souls to the pursuit of this world; they think only of buying, selling, and getting gain. Real truth, the fear of God, the love of their fellow, the happiness of a future life, rarely enter their minds.
There both British and American missions have long been established, and yet the work of evangelization has made but little progress. For thousands of years the Chinese mind has been all but stationary. If anything, it has rather receded than advanced, and therefore it is not expected that it can be easily roused from its long-continued lethargy and stupor. Much has been gained by the fact that the Celestial Empire is open not only to our commerce, but to our Christianity, and that the missionary of the Cross can plant his foot on any spot, and make known to the people the overtures of redeeming grace. It appears that "altitudes" of the first importance are open on the mainland of China to the residence and settlement of foreign missionaries, including the twelve treaty ports, the city of Peking, and the island of Hong Kong; that Canton, with its more than half a million of souls, is not only a noble city, but offers a fine sphere for Christian effort; that Amoy, with its surrounding villages, has twenty missionary stations, with churches and preachers; that Peking, the capital of the empire, is a sphere of missionary labor of the first importance, and that only second to Peking is the city of Hankow, which is full of young and vigorous life, and is destined to become one of those centres from which the light of the gospel will be poured into the surrounding and more distant districts of the land; that there are thirteen centres of missionary labor now established, with one hundred and five missionaries, English, German, and American; that preaching in the vernacular is the great instrument in the hand of the evangelist in China, rather than the opening of schools or the founding of colleges, as presenting a contrast to the system pursued by the Roman Catholic priests; and that the moral and religious education offered by the missionaries is but little in demand, still schools have been established in various places and a good beginning has been made in the department of female education; that not a few of the missionaries have made valuable contributions to the Christian literature of China; that the printing-press is maintained at some of the stations in a thoroughly efficient condition; that the medical missionaries have largely succeeded in their efforts; that their hospitals, and their medicines have often proved the harbinger of the Gospel. A scheme of labor corresponding to the magnitude of the field to be occupied, must yet be devised and prosecuted with untiring zeal and energy. Still, these existing agencies must be aided and improved. But men are wanted. There may be no lack of money, but there is a lack of agents for the missionary life. The Church must give up her first and best-educated youth to this life; and when she has once learned to hold her own interest as subordinate to the salvation of the world, the purposes of God on behalf of our race shall soon be accomplished, and all creation, which is now groaning and traveling together in pain, be delivered into the glorious liberty of the children of God.

The Mistake—What Keeps You Back.

'Brother Nettleton,' said a New England pastor, who that once eminent revivalist was visiting, 'I wish you would talk to some of the young converts a little.'
'What is the special difficulty?' asked Mr. N. 'They are tardy in making a profession of their faith,' was the reply. 'There is young Hobart, who trusts that he has experienced a saving change nearly a year ago; yet he shrinks from confessing Christ before men. He is some in this evening for a little practice in singing; I wish you would speak with him.'
'Give me an opportunity to see him alone,' said Mr. Nettleton. The pastor did so. Introducing the subject with his usual tact, he soon drew from the young man his reasons for declining to take upon himself the vows of Christian discipleship. 'It seems, sir, he is challenging the world to look at me, miserable sinner that I am, as a representative of Christ—like signing myself up as something especially good—proclaiming my own righteousness in short. I cannot bear the thought of even seeming to say to others: 'Stand by; I am holier than you.' When I realize so painfully how imperfect I am.'
'I understand you, friend Hobart, and believe you are sincere in this expression of humility. But it seems to me that you have made a mistake with regard to this matter. It is not your self, but Christ, that you are asked to profess before men; and that you are to profess Him to be the chiefest among ten thousand, the altogether lovely—a great God and a Saviour.'
'Yes, sir, he is that to me; I love him, and feel that I can never love him too much.'
'Well, that is what you are to confess to the world—that Jesus is infinitely good and precious, while you are vile and sinful, and has laid under everlasting obligations to love and serve Him, and that, with the help of His promised grace, you will try to fulfill those obligations. You are willing, I trust, that your fellow-men should know this.'
'Yes, sir, I am; and if I had looked at the subject in that light I should not have hesitated so long. But I was afraid of setting up as a saint,' said the world says. I see now that it is Christ, and not myself, I am to hold up; and that to make a profession of religion is to tell what a glorious Saviour He is, to pardon and make a child of a sinner like me. I do love Him, and the world shall hear it.'
Are any of our readers making the same mistake which Mr. Nettleton so happily corrected in the above sketch?

The Parent's Promise.

What parent has not read with intense interest the 13th verse of the 22d chapter of Proverbs, "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it?" And we hope, by faithful training, to secure for our children a virtuous character and life, and a blessed immortality? Let us study this Divine promise, that our faith in it may be quickened. It is a law of nature that early impressions are indelible. What you teach the child the man can never forget. The lessons of the nursery are fresh and vivid when the transactions of yesterday cannot be recalled. So also with our habits—those formed in childhood are the strongest and most abiding. The spirit of immortality, when first, like other seeds, can be easily be sown. But soon the growth is firm and hard, and the shape and form are fixed. It is true that young men have often gone from Christian homes into the wildest excesses, have become more reckless and vicious than the children of worldly parents, and men have cried out, "Early religious training is like the bending of a bow—the moment restraint is removed, it flies back." "Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old, he will not depart from it." But let sickness come, or Providence arrest the prodigal, and memories of the past will rise up, and make a direct appeal to the individual heart and conscience, he declared that he would be an exception, that he would not engage in any such conversation, would not hear any such appeal, and to be secure against any intrusion, would not admit any one into his room.
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General Miscellany.

Liking and Disliking.

Ye who know the reason tell me,
How is it that instinct tells—
Prompts the heart to like—or not like—
At its own capricious will?
Tell me by what hidden magic
Our impressions first are led
Into liking—or disliking—
Or before a word be said?
Why should smiles sometimes repel us?
'Tis right you turn our feelings cold?
What is that which comes to tell us—
All that glitters is not gold?
O, no feature, power or striking,
But a power we cannot shun,
Prompts our liking or disliking,
Ere acquaintance hath begun?
Is it instinct—or some spirit
Which protects us, and controls
Every impulse we inherit
By some sympathy of souls?
Is it instinct? Is it nature?
Or some freak or fault of chance,
Which our liking or disliking,
Limits to a single glance?
Like a prescient of danger,
Through the sky no shadow flings;
Or that inner sense, still stronger,
Of unseen, unuttered things!
Is it—O, no one can tell me—
No one show sufficient cause
Why our likings—and dislikings—
Have their own instinctive laws?
Charles Swain.

Social Snails.

The snail is not eminently a gregarious animal. We never see it in company with its fellows. True, though, that there is a common bond of nature's own, lying between individuals of the class, yet they do not congregate and delight in social society as the bee or the sheep. In social life there are many snails. The tribes of social snails is perhaps as numerous as the intellectual, and contain as many classes.
There are those who take no part in the State—who neglect all discussion of the great questions of the day, and brand as "politicians" all who attempt thus to fulfill their duty. They touch not the unclean thing. They stand aloof from all congregations of a political character, thinking perhaps, thus to influence public opinion, and overcome the will that is in it. They forget that the public sentiment is always the aggregate of individual opinions, and seem to be unaware that the predominant elements make every character to the social. Such snails are spoken of by De Tocqueville as existing previous to the time of the French Revolution. In his "Old Regime and Revolution" he describes them as being endowed with many private virtues, such as family affection, regular habits, respect for religion, and like-warm, but assiduous devotional habits; and as tolerating honesty and justifying hermitism; and as being "respectable men but cowardly citizens." This character, he says, is produced by a passionate love of ease. And this love of ease is still a potent motive to non-action in political snaildom. Such persons forget, if they ever knew, that there are established principles of political ethics and hermeneutics as obligatory as those of moral ethics—indeed, forming a subordinate of practical ethics in the science of morals. Every man has a duty to perform in the State. Each individual is a component part of the organization. If we retire from participation in its operations, because we do not find it worthy or disordered, we are not doing our duty to the several members of the State. And to do so, if a member is diseased in the body politic, if by a member is diseased in the body politic, it is to cure it not to top of whole members, but to apply the knife to the diseased part, or some elements of health into the system. We cannot from mere love of ease, or some fanciful reason, curl ourselves up in a shell, and relapse into nullities in the State without proving faithless to the obligations imposed upon us. We are responsible for what we omit to do to the several members of the State. And to do so, if a member is diseased in the body politic, it is to cure it not to top of whole members, but to apply the knife to the diseased part, or some elements of health into the system. We cannot from mere love of ease, or some fanciful reason, curl ourselves up in a shell, and relapse into nullities in the State without proving faithless to the obligations imposed upon us. We are responsible for what we omit to do to the several members of the State. And to do so, if a member is diseased in the body politic, it is to cure it not to top of whole members, but to apply the knife to the diseased part, or some elements of health into the system. 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