

and harping symphonies," the choiring of the cherubim and seraphim, and the song of the redeemed in the presence of God. Anon the scene is darkened by the shades of endless gloom, is lurid with the glare of quenchless fire, and awful with the ceaseless wailing of the lost.

Compared with these lofty themes the sublimest tragedies of Greece or Rome and their noblest epics pale into, "faded splendour wan." What parallel can be drawn between the petty conflict around the walls of Troy, or the wanderings of Ulysses, or the building of a Latin town, and the Fall of man, the Redemption of the World, and the Judgment Day? What terror of Æschylus or Sophocles can shake the soul like the record of the drowning of the world by water, or the vision of its destruction by fire? What pathos of Euripides can melt the heart like the tender story of the Nativity, or the awful tragedy of the Cross? The ignorant populace of a petty burgh, and the boorish inhabitants of the surrounding country, in that ultimate dim thule of the West where these plays were enacted, had brought before their minds, and doubtless often deeply impressed upon their hearts, holier lessons and sublimer truths than Plato wrote or Pindar sung, or than were ever taught by sage or seer in stoa of the temples or grove of the Academy. And these were no mere poet's fancies. They were solemn realities and eternal verities to their unlettered hearers. The Judgment Day, whose terrors they beheld portrayed, they believed to be at hand—at the very door. Through the purifying flames they felt that they themselves must pass,

"Till the foul crimes done in their days of nature
Were burnt and purged away."

Though there may have been little in this homely drama to refine the manners or to cultivate the taste, there was much to elevate and strengthen the character, and to project the acts of every day upon the solemn background of eternity. To such Christian teachings as these do we owe the grave and God-fearing Anglo-Saxon manhood of the heroic past. The outcome of such sacred influences may be seen in every great work of our literature, in every noble act of our history—in our "Hamlet," "Lear," "Macbeth;" in our Milton, Bunyan, Burns; in Cromwell and