

THE HOUR OF PRAYER.

How quietly the still hour of twilight steals on. The sun's last golden ray, which lingered so long upon the eastern mountain, as "if parting were sweet sorrow," has disappeared.—The last rosy tint is fading from the evening cloud. A deeper shadow settles over the valley. One by one "night's unwearied watchers" shine out in their "far off depths." The bird folds its weary wing within its little nest. The murmur of the bee is still. "The busy hum of man" is hushed. For a brief space the restless world reposes. It is the hour of prayer and meditation—the Sabbath of the day.

"All is so still, so soft in earth and air,
You scarce would start to meet a spirit there;
Secure, that naught of evil could delight
To walk in such a scene on such a night."

It breathes its own blessed quiet over the Christian's spirit, and disposes him to deep and earnest communings with himself, and with his Father. The world looses its hold upon his heart; wealth, pleasures, honours, earth's vain array, seem now but what they are—illusions, fleeting shadows. Cares and vexations, which, perhaps, too much occupied his mind, and ruffled his temper during the day, now sink into their real insignificance.—He lifts his eyes to the magnificent firmament above him, and feels he is but a speck, an atom, in the vast creation; he thinks of his immortal spirit, and the priceless ransom paid for it, and knows it outweighs the worth of worlds.

Then serious, but pleasant thoughts possess his mind; the rapid flight of time—how soon its last hour shall have struck for him; and his ransomed spirit, breathing its last prayer, and dropping its frail tabernacle, shall rise to its blissful home in heaven. Oh, what light breaks upon the tomb! what an effulgence of glory beams beyond it! His is indeed the common lot, "ashes to ashes, dust to dust," and the clods of the valley are piled upon his once living, breathing form. But what then! It is only the senseless clay which moulders there, death cannot touch the immortal spirit; that is not shrouded in the grave.

But the twilight fades, darkness gathers, a deeper silence pervades all nature. It is to him the "still small voice" of his Father, and he "wraps his face in his mantle," and bows down in prayer.

There is a power in the voiceless eloquence of the hour even for the worldling. Its gentle influence, like a messenger from Heaven,

breathes on his unquiet spirit, and the warring elements within are hushed. Unwonted thoughts press upon his mind. The bubbles he has just been so eagerly pursuing, seem now *but bubbles*. He throws back a hasty glance to wasted weeks, months, years, that are gone like a vision of the night never to be recalled. Life, life, oh what a very vapour 'tis; a quickly passing dream; toil and care, jealousy and strife, hopes and fears, a weary struggle for some unsubstantial good, have made up almost its sum. Ah, how seldom are its early promises fulfilled; and even if they were, even if the world spread all its gifts before men, yet they are transient as the summer cloud, and melt away like the morning dew. Yes, the Christian has chosen "the better part;" his hope shall not fade away. Well, well, when I have reached that envied elevation, when I have gathered a little more wealth, when I have brought a few more worldly schemes to a successful termination, then my affections shall loose their hold upon the world; I will think of serious things; I will be a Christian.

Ah, how many have such promises, and such reasonings, beguiled of heaven!

THE AMARANTH.

TO OUR READERS.

THE present number terminates the SECOND year of the existence of THE AMARANTH. The precarious period of its infancy is now passed, and the vigour of its endurance and stability of its constitution, have been fairly proved.—Thanks to our generous contributors for their kindly aid in thus cherishing and imparting energy and life to our youthful periodical.

The pages of the Amaranth have furnished honourable testimony of the Literary acquisitions of our numerous correspondents; their efforts have met with the most gratifying commendation from a variety of sources, where the taste of the critic has been highly cultivated, and at the same time his judgment has been left entirely unbiased by any partial estimation which he might entertain for the various original articles which have ornamented our pages, from a personal acquaintance with the writers—as from Eastern and Western Canada, and from Nova-Scotia, have emanated the most gratifying approvals; and in either of these Provinces, most of our valued contributors are personally unknown. We need not inform our esteemed correspondents of how much pleasure we have derived in perusing these