

To the Editor of the Record.

MY DEAR SIR,—

The following beautiful piece has been sent me, with a view to its being inserted, if you think fit, in the *Record*. You will, I am sure, all the more readily give it a place, when I inform you that I have reason to believe that it is not a mere composition of art, but is a genuine expression of the writer's own experience.

"Quaeque ipse miserrima vidi,
"Et quorum pars magna fui"

I have taken the liberty of underlining one passage, in which the thought seems to me peculiarly fine; and I pray that the precious views of the uses of affliction, and of the duty of believers under it, which the paper as a whole exhibits, may be sanctified to such readers of your magazine as are in God's providence called to suffer bereavement.

I am, my dear Sir,

Yours truly,

GEORGE PAXTON YOUNG.

Toronto, 17th February, 1854.

THE CROWN JEWEL, OR, THE MISER.

The jewel gleamed bright in its rare setting, and the Miser exulted in his precious treasure. Little cared he that the king was collecting rare gems for his crown. "It is mine," he said, "and I will keep it bright, and it shall not tarnish. I shall not part with my precious jewel. I shall gloat over my bright gold, and exult in my sparkling gem for ever."

So said the Miser.—But hark! there is a knocking without; and the gem is clasped convulsively. Who dares to intrude upon the Miser's joy? It is one with haggard cheek and tottering limb; and the Miser cries, "who art thou, and what dost thou want?"

"My name is Sickness. I am sent with graving tools from the king, to prepare a jewel for his crown."

"How should I have a jewel fit for the Royal Diadem? Nay, friend, thou must go further on. Stop not here. Go to the next city, or the next street, or to my near neighbour: but stop not here."

"The commission has gone forth, and I see a gem sparkling in thy bosom."

"Take that one, or that one, but not this, Oh! terrible one."

"Nay; but 'tis this one I must have."

"I will give thee mine own life, but I cannot give thee this."

"Nay, but I may not spare, nor stop to ask thee leave."

And Sickness unpacked his graving tools; and the hammer knocked off the little angles, and the chisel smoothed the faces of the stone, and it shone out brighter and brighter, and the rare setting looked dimmer and more dim, as the stone emitted little flashes of brilliancy; and the Miser's eyes were suffused with tears for the beautiful gold; and he heeded not that the stone sparkled ever brighter in the fading setting; and ever and anon he cried bitterly, "spare, spare my jewel;" and he listened not to the voice of the stranger which said continually, "I am polishing the gem for the Royal crown." But every stroke of the hammer, and every scrape of the chisel, struck and grated on the Miser's heart; and truly it was more than an echo in that heart, for another of the king's messengers, whose name was Affliction, was even then at work with that jewel also.

Soon Sickness said, "I have finished. My mission is fulfilled, and the gem is ready to be taken away. The messenger is close at hand."

As he spoke, the air grew cold, and darkness spread around. The Miser wrapped closer around him his rags of wretchedness, as he felt

his idol slipping from his grasp; and he was chilled to the heart, when the messenger laid his cold hand on the jewel. But he spake out fiercely, and said, "who and what art thou, terrible stranger, and why dost thou come hither?"

"My name is Death. I am the king's messenger, and my pale horse waits without. I am come for the jewel." And the Miser started to his feet to wrestle with Death. "Nay, Death," said he, "take not my jewel from me. Take any jewel but mine."

"Thy jewel," sayest thou? "It is the king's, and he hath need of it. 'Tis now too precious for thy keeping."

"I will go with thee, Oh Death! but spare the jewel—the jewel! I cannot part with that. Thou must spare the jewel!"

"I spare not. Wouldst thou rebel against the king, and rob him of his own?" Death was stronger than the Miser, and wrenched the jewel from his grasp; and there remained nothing to him but the rifled setting. And the Miser wrapped himself up in his cloak of sorrow, while Death sped away on his pale horse with the inestimable jewel purchased at so costly a price, that the sons of the morning wondered with an exceeding great and everlasting wonder.

Little heeded the Miser that the daylight streamed in. His eyes were covered with his cloak; and he sat and moaned, till an echo in his heart (it might be from the voice of Death as he passed out) whispered, "I will come for thee too, when thou art polished; but not yet.—Thou art not yet fit to be placed beside the Royal gem thou art bereft of." And hark! there is another voice sweet and gentle, yet withal so penetrating as to reach his ear and thrill his heart, even through the many folds in which the Miser sat shrouded: "But assuredly thou shalt again place thy jewel in thy bosom: for what is His is yours; for all things are yours, whether life or death. Look up, and see! the gem sparkles in the Redeemer's crown. And yet thou shalt see it sparkle in its golden setting, when that shall have been purified from all its dross—when the most fine gold shall never be come dim any more for ever—when this mortal shall have put on immortality."

Up, then, thou sorrowful one! and bury thy dead out of thy sight; and look no longer downwards to the grave, but upwards to the living.—He is not here, whom thou seekest: he is risen to his Father, and thy Father. His Father's image shone clear and bright in his purified soul; and heaven alone was fit for his dwelling place.

And the Miser found that with Death which had broken, came Consolation too, to bind up and staunch the bleeding at his heart, and to say, "peace, be still," to his rebellious thoughts; and he whispered feebly from beneath his cloak, "it is well; even so, Father, for so it seemed good in thy sight. Thy will be done.—Thou gavest, and thou hast taken away: blessed be thy holy name." He knew his treasure was safe, where neither moth nor rust can corrupt, and where thieves cannot break through to steal.

He was a Miser no longer, but a cheerful giver; and he stretched out his hands that he might be led as a little child.

SELECTIONS FOR THE YOUNG.

CHANGES IN CHINA.—A GREAT FIRE FROM A LITTLE SPARK.

Not very many years ago a boy was working in his father's little shop, as a carpenter, in Newcastle. One might have thought, to see him, he would have remained a carpenter all his days, and known about little else than the making of a window, flooring a room, or fitting up a cupboard—just as most boys would have done, had they been in his place. He had not been long at school—

but he was diligent when there,—and now, when obliged to work hard with hammer and plane, there was little time for self-improvement. But by knowing the Saviour, he learned to "redeem the time;" and spare moments, wasted by others in idleness and fun, were spent by him in learning Latin and Greek, sitting on a log of wood, among the shavings and sawdust of his father's workshop.

Years passed away. Many school boys had grown up to be men; some, idle when scholars, were getting slowly on, and dunce were found to be dunces still. Some had gone to sea, because too wild and careless to live on land, and had found out, when too late, that wise men still think there is nothing like a rod for the back of a fool. But our young carpenter is far away, living in a strange-looking little room, in a town on the borders of China. He is not a carpenter now, but a man of extensive learning—a missionary of the cross, sent out there by a Society in London. It was no easy task he had undertaken; for he was the only Protestant missionary in all that immense empire; he was not able to preach to the people in their own tongue, and even if he had, the Government would not have allowed him. They would not permit him to go further in the country, and it was only by stealth he could live where he was. But, from a boy, he had learned to overcome difficulties; and he was not to be baffled now. For a long time he had often to hide himself all the day, and only venture out at night. At length by great perseverance, he mastered the strange, difficult, Chinese language, translated the whole Bible into it; and wrote a large dictionary for the use of other missionaries who might come after him.

At last the Bible being translated into Chinese chapters of it were printed off and given to the people. But they would not believe it. Some tore them up, threw them away; others burnt them in the fire; and some even mocked the missionaries as fanatics and fools. But God had not forgotten them; for, after a time, the clouds began to break, and streaks of daylight to appear. A man, called Leang Afa, was employed in printing the Scriptures; and although a wicked idolater at first, he was eventually brought to a knowledge of the Saviour. He became a new man, changed by the spirit of God; and so precious was the Saviour to him, so happy did he feel as one of the Lord's freemen, that he longed to make known the blessed Gospel to his Heathen countrymen. He soon became a good missionary himself, wrote tracts and printed them, and then went from place to place, scattering "the good seed of the Word." But some police-men, hearing what he was doing, seized all his printing-blocks and tracts, and threw poor Afa into prison. The missionaries tried to get him out, and although they paid a fine for his freedom, his cruel persecutors would not let him go until he received thirty strokes on the back with a bamboo-cane, covering it with wounds and blood. But all this did not discourage him; God blessed his labours, first in the conversion of his wife, and then of some of his friends. In 1834 Afa and three of his friends went to the examination of a Chinese school at a place called Canton. They stood before the door of the Hall and gave a tract to every one who would take it. They gave away ten thousand. But, poor men, they soon had to suffer for this. One of them was killed, another was cruelly beaten, and Afa was glad to make his escape. Their work was not in vain,—no one can tell even yet how much good was done; a spark was let fall that day which God was afterwards to blow up into a great flame. Many of the tracts were, no doubt, soon destroyed, but not all. One student took his home. He read it carefully, and it left a deep impression on his mind. He wished to know more about God and about Jesus. Long afterwards he met with a missionary, who gave him further instruction. He went home, and, like Afa, began to teach his friends. They, too, believed, and gave up their idols.