

Review.

THE STONE-MASON OF SAINT POINT. A Village Tale. By A. DE LAMARTINE. Toronto: T. Maclear.

This little volume will well repay a careful perusal. Through the medium of a story, told with exquisite taste, and replete with eloquence of the highest order, the writer presents us with some striking illustrations of the character of God as developed in His works and providence. We could have wished indeed that Lamartine had proceeded a little further, and exhibited more broadly and decidedly than he has done the Gospel scheme of salvation, but so far as it goes, the production is of considerable value. The following extract conveys a fair idea of the style of this original and thoughtful narration:

"COST OF MAN'S CREATION."

It cost him a thought—a thought of God! Have we ever thought of that? As to me, I often reflect upon it, and I become as proud as a God in my humility, as great as the world in my littleness! A thought of God! But that is worth as much to me as if he had given me the whole universe. For indeed, though I am but a small thing, yet in order to create me, it must be that he thought of me—of me who did not yet exist, that he saw me from afar, that he gave me life beforehand, that he reserved my little space for me, my little moment, my little weight, my little work, my birth, my death, and—I feel it—my immortality. What! is that nothing? Nothing to have filled one thought of God, and to have filled it so that He should have deigned to create you? Ah! I repeat it; when I think of this, nothing but this, when I think of it, it builds up the love of God within me."

SCENES IN OUR PARISH.

NO. IX.
THE EVENING SCHOOL.

Shall we go to-night to the adult school? It is Thursday evening—the last Thursday in the year. We will not mind the state of the roads, though bad as they generally are at this season, they are now worse than usual, owing to strange alterations diggings down, and heapings up—and still more of the snow, and thaw, and frost of the last twenty-four hours. We will not regard it—hazy and misty as it is, it is yet moonlight, and we have but a little way to go. The school is near, and that is as it should be: the lambs of the flock should be folded near to their shepherd's dwelling. The room, for we use the children's school-room on these occasions, is prettily shaped, long and not too low. It looks well now, as the dark shadows dance on the wall and floor, thrown by the bright fire from the heavy boughs of ivy and holly, with which the boys dressed the room before their Christmas examination.

The gate is so broad, and the fire is piled so high, that the blaze deadens the light of the half dozen slender candles that are ranged along the desk. Those candlesticks, by the way, are worth your seeing.

Hand us one of them, William; they are your making, I know, and do credit to your ingenuity. The fact was, you see, that when first our evening school was established, and for some time after, day-light continued until eight o'clock, and when the first autumn evening closed in suddenly, we were not prepared for it. Candles were to be bought at the shop below, but candlesticks we had none. "I can make some in a minute, sir," said our little pale friend yonder; so away he ran down to his father's workshop, chose in a minute four or five square bits of board, and stuck into the middle of each three large nails, between which we insert the slim candle. I was much amused when I saw them first; they struck me as being so entirely characteristic—displaying at once poverty and ready wit. But I think we have stayed here too long, the women in the girl's room are waiting for us. William has gone on before: he has lit our candles, and there he is ready with his bow and smile to do any service for either of us. I cannot help seeing that, with all the pains I take, I often fail to impress on the minds of my elegant neighbors the possibility that here in our forest may be found specimens of the best natural good breeding.

I wish I could introduce them to this little friend of mine: who, lame as he is, for he has always been a delicate boy, and is troubled with rheumatism, poor fellow! yet waits upon each of us with candle, snuffers, stools, and books, almost without our asking him. I wish they could see his constant readiness, and hear his gentle pleasant voice. I think they must agree with me, that he is fully possessed of that which, when we receive it from those we choose to consider equals, we call "politeness;" but which we claim as a right, and only allow to be "civility," however gracefully it may be offered, by those we deem inferiors.

But he returns to his companions, and we must set seriously to business. There is little to amuse during the next hour, for to confess the truth, in general our clever, (or to call them by their own apter term,) our 'cute pupils are often inattentive and our attentive as often stupid. We have no very regular plan, being, I believe, what a friend of ours calls "extempore teachers." Every one, except indeed she who is so happy as to hear the readers of the Testament, sits down with four or five pupils, and hears them stutter and stumble for a full hour over letters, or words, or sentences of

one syllable. The description that a poor old woman here once gave us of her great-grandchild's improvement, often recurs to my mind as I listen to them. "She'll get the book," said she, "and she do *plunder*"—blunder perhaps she meant—"you would bless yourself to hear how she do plunder." In truth so wearying is this hour, that I would on no account have brought you here as a visitor, but for the sake of introducing you to some interesting characters; and when the men come in, as they do with their good teacher at the end of the evening, to listen to his earnest and simple exposition, and to join, in prayer, we will go a little apart, and I will give you a sketch of the history of some of them.

Amongst the men you will observe our old friend Isaac sitting at the top of the form leaning over his Testament in deep attention to the passage which is to be the subject of explanation. He holds it close to the low candle, and nods his head as the verse is finished with a smile of joy that tells how he also has arrived safely over all difficulties at its conclusion. Indeed Isaac is much improved since the time, I believe, when he thought book-makers very unwise to trouble themselves and their readers with prosody; for he said to his kind master who had been a long while trying to make him acquainted with the various intents and purposes of commas, colons, and full stops; and who having repeated his patient instructions over and over again, at last said, "Now do you think you understand me?" "Yes, sir, but the worst of it is, whenever I come to a long word I must make a full stop whether I would or no." We used to think Isaac very simple, but I believe we were mistaken. At any rate, "Godliness is profitable for all things," and amongst the rest for improving the intellectual faculties. We used to think Isaac had a vacant look; but now, though there is a placid and calm expression of content, there is also a shade of thought on his brow—and truly poor Isaac has enough to think of. His wages in the most prosperous times never amount to more than ten shillings a week. This week he has earned only four, and probably next week may earn none, and he knows that though of his six children not one is able to help him, and the two youngest are, as his wife told me yesterday, the one not two years old and the other a little better than ten months, yet his diligent and active helpmate must soon have her earnings lessened by attendance on a yet younger baby. But I never hear a word of complaint from either Isaac or Nancy; there she sits, a picture of well managing poverty, close to her great market basket, heavily filled with her richer neighbors' commissions, which she has brought safely thus far from town: and tired as she was she made more haste than usual, that she might be in time for her Thursday evening lesson. She takes great pains, and as Isaac teaches her at home she improves, and is well satisfied with her improvement: for she told me when she could with difficulty put three letters together that her husband said she could "read quite pretty." Well, only one sort of learning is needful. Not many wise, according to this proud world's estimation, are called happy; and thankful shall we be if these ignorant ones, and their teachers are made wise unto salvation.

And there sits poor Dinah, with her thin flushed cheek, hollow cough and sparkling eye. She has sinned, and it is not for us to desire, that sin, even repented sin, be made to appear interesting. She has been a wanderer, so I will say no more about her, or only this; there is now so much regularity in her behaviour, so much humility in her deportment, that her silence leaves us in hope, for she tells us very little, that he whose gracious voice once said, "Neither do I condemn thee?" has breathed the whisper of peace to her troubled conscience, and has impressed her heart with the sanctifying command, "Go, and sin no more."

The two poor girls who sit next are sisters, and seem much attached to each other. Poor Anna and Elizabeth! we saw them in deep distress this time twelvemonth. It was a stormy day in January when little Marian was sent to ask for something for her mother.

The child's passionate grief alarmed us, and as soon as we had sent her away, we determined to follow. It is not an unpleasant walk generally, but there has been snow and rain, and the stream had overflowed the bank, and ran in many small channels over the frozen footpath. The hedges, and for this barren part of the world they are high and varied, were then quite bare of leaves, and so were the few shapely trees that grew thereabouts.

We overtook little Marian, for her burst of feeling had spent itself; and she, pleased at the interest she excited by her account of her mother's illness—alas! it was not an exaggerated one—had stopped at many a door on her way to tell her melancholy tale.

"You should have made more haste, Marian," we said, "there is no time to be lost." No, there was no time, not even for the few minutes that the thoughtless child had loitered. There are sad varieties in grief. We saw it in the sudden paleness that chilled the poor child's cheek, as the sound of wailing reached us from the low door, and a younger one burst it open with the wild cry, "Marian, mother's dead!" O! I hear that shriek still. We saw it in the elder girl's agony of tears,

and heard it in the poor father's low and often repeated prayer for help and comfort as he sat on the low stool by the fire, his face covered with his hands, his head never lifted as we entered, and his body bent forward and slowly swayed to and fro. We heard it in the low and agitated tone in which the nurse strove to give comfort, and in the vexed and complaining cry with which the frightened children repelled her; and most melancholy of all in the wail of the new-born infant—the unwelcome one: a twin child, whose brother had forsaken it at the portal of life, and had entered into eternity alone. O poor Amy! her's was a sad funeral.—We stood to watch it as it wound its dark way down the churchyard. The snow lay heavily on the tomb-stones, and the poor little children cried the more bitterly as they stumbled over the hidden graves, and felt through their scanty clothing the chillness of that gloomy winter evening. There was the poor father, and his eldest son, come home from his work in Wales on that melancholy occasion. Then came Elizabeth and Anna. Poor things! they showed feelings of strong affection then, that the rough usage of the world knows how to deaden. Both of them fainted that evening, and Anna's first question on her recovery was, "Poor father! how are you now?" Then there were the four younger girls, two and two—sorry, but more terrified than sorry. The pretty flaxen headed boy that his mother had loved so dearly, was too delicate for the long rough walk, so he was left at home, and so was the new-born baby; but one more was there—the other infant, laid to rest in its dead mother's arms. Ah poor Amy! it was indeed a sad funeral. They were very poor before but Amy was a diligent and frugal manager, and her authority kept the children in place. Now I fear, poor as they were, they are yet poorer:—there is less regularity—less cleanliness—less subordination,—the loss of a mother, especially such a mother as Amy, is a sad thing. We are glad to be of what use we can to those two poor girls, for their mother's sake and one at least of them well repays the interest we take in her.

And yonder is a genius. That pale, spare, mild looking man, whose appearance bespeaks such deep poverty; he is a singular compound of ability and want of useful sense in the every day affairs of life. I am glad he is here this evening; he does not often appear amongst us, but his absence would have prevented my describing to you one of the most remarkable households with which I was ever acquainted. Jacques—the melancholy Jacques, let us call him—can do everything; but some how or other he gains by nothing.

He is a common mason, and though he was never regularly initiated into the further mysteries of his trade, yet he never hesitates to undertake any part of a building from

"Turret to foundation stone."

He can talk about the orders of architecture and plan rooms and design fancy doors and windows. He makes curious grottoes of moss and shells, and arranges in them waxen figures, and birds neatly stuffed by himself. I have seen a bass viol, of which he has constructed every part, screws and all, himself; and at that very time he was so poor that he could only afford to purchase one string at a time; and I have heard him play on it music of his own composing. He can play on the flute too, and thinks he sings very well.

His wife, as warm hearted a creature as ever lived, is in some respects an help meet for her husband. She sees and admires his talents, but cannot direct him how to turn them to any account.

She can sing to his music, and stand at the door of their cottage, on the top of the hill admiring the beautiful scenery which spreads before them, but of making it clean and comfortable within, she has no idea. She will travel uncomplainingly at his side through storm and mud for miles, to hear an eloquent preacher—for they are both great judges of fine preaching: but she cares not, and he has by this time learnt not to care for the comfort of a neatly ordered supper on their return home. There was bad management in that family in the first instance, and we need not refer to Butler's "Analogy" to know what evil effects proceed from bad causes.

Their unruly boys grew up rude and ragged to tease the untidy girl; you may see them sometimes driving her down the steep garden, and she being light of foot, will climb a tree or scale a wall to be out of their way. O they are a wild set!—in the mean time, probably, you would find the poor mother quite lifted above all terrestrial concerns, practising her husband's last new tune; and she would be as pleased to see you, and welcome you as kindly in the midst of her littered kitchen, as if her room were as orderly and as respectable as it once might have been; and she would seem more sorry that the window is shattered, because possibly it may inconvenience you, during the few minutes of your stay, than because the wind and rain often beat in; and neither she nor her husband, who live there always, are by any means strong enough to bear such hardships. But I should be ungrateful indeed if I stopped here, or failed to acknowledge the unvarying and earnest affection expressed toward us by these poor people. The readiness with which their services have been tendered to us—the interest they have taken in our concerns—their pleasure in our happiness; and

their sympathy in our sorrow. There are others beside Lizzy, indeed, who send us their earliest ripe strawberries; more who welcome us to the warmest seat by the hearth in winter, and to a rest in the shade in summer, and press us with an earnestness not always to be refused to partake of their scanty fare. Many congratulate us when we prosper—none more sincerely than Lizzy; many prayers were offered for us when we were in trouble but not one more fervent than hers: and if we went away, there is not one would regret us more.

But the old man on the second form is quite a contrast in appearance to my man of genius. Is not old Jacob a very respectable looking personage? His neatly brushed coat is a little old fashioned as to the cut to be sure, but whole and bright; and his dark green and brown striped waistcoat, looking so warm and comfortable, is open to show another of a lighter color quite as good underneath, and to allow a glance at his large heart-shaped steel brooch, pinned on the clean neckcloth to the clean shirt. He has a sensible pleasant look; and with so many advantages of outward appearance, it would indeed be wonderful if old Jacob was not looked on as a person of some consequence—especially as he wears that crown of glory, "the hoary head found in the way of righteousness," for which even the levellers of this restless day must feel some natural respect. And he is a very good old man, worthy of regard, and really humble I doubt not, yet I think he feels his importance. Did you observe the patronizing nod with which he greeted the lady teachers as he came in, and do you hear now, whilst every one else is listening in silent attention, his audible remarks—"True, very true!"—and his triumphant tone of exultation in whatever strikes him as particularly sound reasoning, or ready speaking, in his young pastor's exposition Sound doctrine, happily, he rejoices to own it all.

But the little company are rising to depart, and you and I will depart too. If the glance we have had to night at the circumstances and characters of some of our pupils should have increased the desire we felt to benefit them, it will be well—we shall not then have to regret that for once, when others were listening, you and I were only looking on.

ILLUSTRATIONS OF PROPHECY.

THYATIRA.

Thyatira, a city of Lydia, and one of the seven churches of Asia, lies between Pergamos and Sardis, at the base of a beautiful mountain, in an extensive plain through which flows the river Lycus, now called Goerduk. It was founded by a Macedonian colony, and anciently called Pelopia. It does not occupy an important place in history, but is cursorily alluded to in the account of the Roman wars, as the place where Antiochus collected his forces to meet the formidable invaders of Asia; he was defeated at Magnesia, when Thyatira, with the surrounding country, fell under the power of the Romans. Thyatira was the birth place of Lydia, a seller of purple, whom the Apostle Paul, during his travels in Greece, met at Philippi, and converted to Christianity, and who hospitably entertained Paul and Silas after their release from prison. Among the ruins of the ancient city there has been discovered an inscription in honor of one Antonius Claudius Alphenus, erected by the corporation of dyers. Hence it would appear that the occupation of Lydia was one which was extensively practised at Thyatira, and it is not improbable that at the time she met the Apostle, she was travelling to seek a market for her merchandise. Purple or scarlet from the East was highly prized both by the Greeks and Romans. The latter employed it as the distinctive dress of their kings; and subsequently, under the Republic, it was worn by the consuls and other superior magistrates: the emperors also adopted it as the symbol of sovereignty. Tyrian purple was that which was most highly valued; but there can be little doubt that a great deal that was sold under that name, was either bartered or purchased by the Tyrians, and resold as the manufacture of their own country.—Thyatira, under its modern name of Akhissar, or "the white castle," still maintains its reputation for this manufacture, large quantities of scarlet cloth being sent weekly to Smyrna.

The church of Thyatira was highly commended by St John for its Christian virtues,¹ but was nevertheless threatened with a terrible punishment unless its members withdrew from the teaching,

¹ Acts xvi. 14, 15, 40. And a certain woman named Lydia, a seller of purple, of the city of Thyatira, which worshipped God, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul. And when she was baptized, and her household, she besought us, saying, If ye have judged me to be faithful to the Lord, come into my house, and abide there. And she constrained us. . . . And they went out of the prison, and entered into the house of Lydia; and when they had seen the brethren, they comforted them and departed.

² Rev. And unto the angel of the Church in Thyatira write; These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet are like fine brass; I know thy works, and charity, and service, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; the last to be more than the first. Notwithstanding I have a few things against thee, because thou sufferest that woman Jezebel, which calleth herself a prophetess, to teach and to seduce my servants to commit fornication, and to eat things sacrificed unto idols.