

The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

THEREFORE I WILL NOT BE NEGLIGENT TO PUT YOU ALWAYS IN REMEMBRANCE OF THESE THINGS, THOUGH YE KNOW THEM AND BE ESTABLISHED IN THE PRESENT TRUTH.—2 PETER 1, 13.

VOLUME II.]

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Original Poetry.

For the Church.

THE PENITENT'S PRAYER.

Redeemer, hear! now, when the trembling light
Of life's last sunset slowly fades away,
And the proud thought is darkening into night,
And the vain body sinking to decay,
And Earth's fair beauty as the eye grows dim,
Falls on the spirit like a vesper hymn.

From some lone convent stealing far among
"The everlasting hills," floating awhile
As faint to linger where its breath had sprung,—
High o'er the vales, amid the mighty pile
Of Nature's master-work, then gilding on,
A dream to mingle with bright visions gone.

Hear, as of old, when through the rushing blast,
A sound of we went up, and lips grew pale,
And doubting hearts their new-born glory cast
Forth on the waters, and above the gale,
"Save Lord, we perish," rose the bitter cry,
And the still'd ocean murmured in reply.

Oh! had I sought thee in the joy of youth,
E'er life was clouded, or the blighting chill
Of a proud world had marred my spirit's truth,
Or fear had whisper'd aught of earthly ill,
I had not borne the mark upon my brow,
Nor sank beneath the weight of sin as now.

Oh! canst thou pardon,—hath no word been said,
No voice gone forth from out thy shining throne,
To number me with unbelieving dead,
To say for me the day of grace has flown,
That God though merciful has laughed to scorn,
The prayers that were with life's last shadows born?

Hear! There are voices whispering in the sky,
And sounds of joy, as from some far off shore,
Come, like sweet music softly floating by,
To speak of realms where grief is known no more,
And a loud laughter like an infant's mirth,
Seems faintly rising from a fading earth.

There are glad dreamings of a childhood's home,
And happy smiles, and kind beseeching eyes,
And words of love that bid the wand'ring come,
And tones that thrill like early melodies,—
I bless thee, Saviour, that my troubles cease,—
The sign is made, at last I rest in peace.

J. C.

THE ASSUAGING OF THE WATERS.

GENESIS VIII. 3.

The woe of clouds is past,
Heaven hath discharged its store;
And o'er the horrent waste
The sun looks forth once more.
But what does he behold,
Where late man wandered free?
What tinge with hues of gold,
But a wide and trackless sea?

Unnumbered human forms
Lie floating on the deep,
Rock'd by the day of storms,
To their last, long, dreamless sleep;
Children of earth, with these
Is her watery breast strewn o'er,
And this sad sight he sees;
But sees he nothing more?

Yes, there's a stately bark,
Which has braved the angry strife,
The heaven-directed ark,
That is pregnant still with life;
When stillness reigns in air,
And death on the shoreless sea,
Oh! the embryo things are there
Of the world that is to be.

Thus, when the skies shall bear
A lightning without rain,
Which, starting from its lair,
Will dry the raging main;
The righteous shall endure,
While the blazing heavens remove;
From every harm secure,
In Christ the ark of love.

Thomas Ragg.

THE SLUMBER OF THE PULPIT.

EXTRACTED FROM AN ARTICLE UNDER THAT TITLE IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND QUARTERLY REVIEW.

It has been said of Tacitus, by persons who cannot however have caught his drift, and who must be only superficially acquainted with his writings, that by his cold way of relating enormous crimes he would in some sort appear not to have disapproved of them; and that the minds of his readers are corrupted by his not expressing that detestation and horror, which horrible and detestable proceedings should naturally excite. However untrue in its application to the Roman historian, the observation is founded on an accurate knowledge of human nature. A cold style of describing affecting things is an error in point of taste—is contrary to the justice due to the audience or reader—and is moreover to slight and disregard their sympathies, in your favour. Indeed it is the power to awaken sympathy that is at the bottom of all the marvellous workings of the masses in every age, and in every country; it is what

Shook the arsenal, and fulmin'd over Greece
To Macedon and Artaxerxes' throne.

It is what constituted the superiority of the mighty orator of Athens over a compromiser like Marcus Tully. The one, an object of awful respect after

That dishonest victory
At Chaeronea, fatal to liberty,

is chosen to make the funeral oration over the bones of those who fell in consequence of his policy; the other, with ill-disguised contempt, is saluted with the title of Imperator at the Issus. It was in concentrated passion that the Greek excelled the Roman. The "Father of his country" was always playing false to, acting a part, and sometimes a very mean one; he showed a truckling spirit which,

Non homines, non Di, non concessere columnas.

It is not hard to recognize a similar distinction between the temperaments and writings and their results of the two other lights of their own age, who were however contemporaries, and flourished (comparatively speaking) the other day. What a machine did the energetic mind of Luther set in motion! a machine, so to speak, before our eyes even unto this hour, and whose ultimate consequences are not even latent in the womb of Time. The truths which had been outraged, he re-proclaimed in the spirit of outraged truth, at the behest of his conscience, and in the service of the God who cannot lie. He did his duty, come good, come evil! and made no question on which side the preponderance would be: "Talk not to me," he exclaimed, "of scandal and offence. Need breaks through stone walls, and rocks not of scandal: it is my duty to spare weak consciences as far as it may be done without the hazard of my soul. Where not, I must take counsel for my soul, though half of the whole world should be scandalized thereby." Such was the tone, by the adoption of which the German "Son of Thunder" moulded not only his own but future ages. And what a contrast does he present in this respect to his immediate pioneer and contemporary, Erasmus, who might be styled the morning-star of the Reformation, was an infinitely more elegant scholar than the heroic Luther, and a man of as consummate genius; but however regarded in his own time by the polite and lettered world, he is at this day only known by his writings to a few, since he left neither impress on his age nor consecration to posterity. To what cause shall we attribute this? To his not daring to follow out his ideas—to his stopping short, to his temporizing, to his partaking more of the characteristics of Atticus than of Cato,—to his NOT BEING ENOUGH IN EARNEST.

To come down even to the days of our Fathers: and here, deprecating all unfair constructions—repudiating every motive save what honour, honesty and religion supply, we must speak plainly out; herein let aught that may savour of offence be imputed to our love. What was it then, we ask, that touched with the living coal from God's altar the mouth of Wesley? What was it that denuded in those days the churches and chapels of the Establishment, whilst the plains and the sides of the hills were thronged row above row with gasping tens of thousands, men, women, and children? What was it that made the eloquence of that Methodist irresistible over the multitude? What was it that flashed like lightning on the close and stagnant consciences of his auditors? What was it that insinuated itself into their hearts, until the most obdurate were moved to tears and penitence? What was it that heaped coals of fire, as it were, upon their heads, until the ore of the most stubborn did melt? Nothing, but single-hearted zeal, a straight-forward purpose, and an earnestness which were followed by the most beneficial effects.

It was the deep conviction of the awful responsibility attached to the christian ministry, coupled with an unweariable energy, a never-relaxing charity, and that yearning desire for the conversion of the meanest creature whom Christ perished to save, which amounted to faith in his success; it was all this, that filled the mouth of John Wesley with the *verba ardentia*, that ran electrically from soul to soul, till the whole congregation of sinful human beings lit up into one blaze of devotion.

Wesley was truly energetic. He was zealous, and went to work like a giant rejoicing in his strength. He felt that his vocation was of the Holy Ghost; and looking to what he indeed accomplished—to the wonderful conversions that, by his fervid appeals to the heart, he every-where wrought, we must admit, that the good which he effected was considerable. He went forth to meet the enemy at the gate, or rather, like the Carthaginian, he carried the war into his territory. He made no league with sin and infidelity. He spake as from a throne, and stood up against Satan; and standing on the confines of "two worlds," he shook the "one" with the thunders of the other.

We make no apology for this mention of Wesley. We introduce him as having had a godly zeal for the cause which he embraced; and be it remembered that he once lived within the penetralia of the temple. Would to God that the Priests and deacons of the Church would catch somewhat of his zeal! We do not say that we wish the Clergy of the Establishment to assume the power of ordaining ministers—to promote a division in the Church—to excommunicate the sinners of the world. Not for an instant, such a dreadful construction be put upon our words. We would guard against the most trifling approach to such a catastrophe. Methodism was not originally devised by its founder as a separation from the Church. It was intended as an auxiliary; but Wesley set a power in motion which he could neither stop nor control. Principle was sacrificed to an imaginary urgent expediency. "In spite of solemn protestations from the Church Methodists, farther and farther departures were sanctioned; bitter invectives were connived at; till at length, by the daring assumption of the power of ordaining ministers, though not without much tampering with conscience, a separate system was, in the year 1784, established."

We believe that to the end of his days John Wesley truly loved the Church of England; and although our clerical biography presents a galaxy of divines, who utterly eclipse the ecclesiastics of every other nation, many of whom too were more highly gifted than ever Wesley could boast of being, still and for that very cause, would we point attention to that good and extraordinary man, who produced such wonderful effects, simply by the working of zeal chastened by nought, save perhaps love. And we rather make him our exemplar, because of another trait in his character to which we ascribe his success; we mean his free and cordial intercourse with the common people. It was this that taught him how to strike from the most stony heart the sparks that set the whole soul in a glow. It was the secret of that sympathy which he knew so well to inspire. It is the keeping so much aloof from communion with the lower

orders, that throws such a damp upon the ministration of the Clergy of the Church of England.

That society in this country is badly and even awfully constructed, is generally felt. It is made up of a vast number of cliques, and each exclusive circle cares nothing whatever for any other. There is an interfusion of ranks undoubtedly, so far as alliance is concerned, but no interfusion of interests. The freemasonry of a particular set is more operative than ties of blood. A man marries, or by his exertions raises himself in the grade of society, and forthwith he shakes off his old friends and connexions. Thus is the community partitioned and subdivided into certain distinct fractions, which, like marbles in a bag, touch without mingling; instead of being separated and split like so many globules of quicksilver, which however they may seem to fly off, will invariably upon contact re-integrate themselves.

It is bad enough that there should be such discordant interstices in society. But the evil assumes a much darker shade when we recollect, that the ministers of the Church of England (of course with many exceptions) have taken their fixed station amongst (if we may be allowed the vulgar epithet) the genteel classes; and left the commonalty, that is to say, the millions, to be made the prey of the Political Economists on the one side, and the dissenting interest on the other.

"What the locust leaves is devoured by the palmer worm."

We would earnestly exhort the Clergy of the Establishment to cast off this opprobrium on their sacred profession, to recollect that inwrapped in the divine panoply, if they were found seated beneath the lowliest roof in the metropolis or elsewhere, there can be no pollution inferred; no de-filement in their contact with its vilest inmate. It is ordained in the eternal constitution of things, that an educated clergyman is, *ex officio*, a gentleman; and no possible contamination that does not reach the inward man, can ever for a single instant invalidate his title to be so considered. Nay, the more urgent he is in propagating the gospel, and administering to the spiritual wants of the poor, the more decided are his claims to the respect and reverence which, from his station, belong to him. It was imputed by the Pharisees to our Saviour as a crime, that he ate with publicans and sinners, but he rejoined, that such was his mission, "I am not come to call the righteous but sinners to repentance." Matt. ix. 10, 13.

Assuredly the clergy should cultivate the affections, and insinuate themselves into the confidence of the common people, much more than they seem at present to think worth their while. "They should," to use the language of Baxter, "by familiar conversation with them get their love, and also find out their ignorance, error, and sin, their objections and doubts, to know what they need, and deal with them privately and personally, as well as publicly for their instruction."

"I infer," says the Bishop of Winchester, "from our Lord's example, the duty which St. Paul urged when he exhorted the Roman Christians to 'conspend to men of low estate.'" "I venerate the name of Dr. Franck, of Halle in Saxony," writes Mr. Vonn, "who, when a professor of great note in that university, felt his bowels yearn over the children of the poor, and became their teacher, though derided by the University for his heavenly compassion! So differently did his God regard the good work, that, from a small beginning, it was soon enlarged to be amongst the first charitable foundations, embalming his name for ages to come." Doddridge's ministerial injunctions are as sound as practical on this head. "You must not shun the cottages of the poor, or the chambers of the languishing; nor must you ever be so intent on the more pleasing sounds, as to turn away from the sighs and groans of the distressed. You must often be visiting your brethren, that you may see how they do;—and their personal or domestic afflictions, most tenderly weighed, in their various circumstances, that your heart may feel its part, and so prompt you to do all you can, if possible to remove them; or if that be impracticable, as it often will be, at least to alleviate them; and sometimes the sight and conversation of a christian friend does so much to alleviate them, that one would imagine so cheap a charity should not be denied. Let not our Master any in reference to any of his servants, 'I was sick, and ye visited me not; I was in prison, and ye did not come unto me.'"

But the practice of Felix Neff is yet more exemplary than the precept of Dr. Doddridge. The heart of the Apostle was thoroughly devoted to the spiritual advancement of his mountain flock. "It was his high and lofty ambition to elevate their thoughts and hopes to the noblest objects to which immortal beings can aspire, and to raise the standard, until they should reach to the fulness of the stature of Christ; and yet he so condescended to things of low estate, as to become a teacher of A, B, C, not only to ignorant infancy, but to the dull, and unpliant capacities of adults. Beginning with the most tiresome rudiments, he proceeded upwards, leading on his scholars methodically, kindly and patiently, until he had made them proficient in reading, writing, and arithmetic, and could lead them into the pleasanter paths of music, geography, history, and astronomy. None but such men as Oberlin and Neff, none but those who, like them, have been under the strong influence of christian motives, have ever done violence to their natural tastes and inclinations, and have left the more agreeable, and equally legitimate duties of their profession, to assume the functions of the humble pedagogue, and of the village dame, and to teach the lowest rudiments to the lowest poor; not before the admiring eyes of the world, but in seclusion, and amidst all the disheartening circumstances of dirt and stench, of chilling cold, or suffocating heat.

It was this that led Neff to the dismal solitudes of Dammouse, and shut him up with his twenty-five pupils, and urged him to abandon for a time those pursuits which were most congenial to his mind and habits, in order that he might lay a foundation of knowledge and happiness, and constitute something to the stock of general prosperity in a dis-

trict, which was separated from the more habitable parts of the world by rocks and mountains, cold and sterility."

It is impossible to overrate the good which might thus be effected as well in a small country parish, as in a sphere of greater excitement. Not merely the positive quantum, the ostensible good, but that, which is implied by prevention of evil. As it is, the clergy of the Establishment let the dissenters of every denomination steal from their fold some of the choicest of their flock. This supineness and apparent indifference is worse than criminal; it is a betrayal of the sacred trust which God himself has committed to their keeping. "Who indeed," says the Bishop of Winchester, "can estimate the guilt of a lukewarm ministry? Indifference is fatal to souls. 'He that is not with me, is against me; and he that gathereth not with me scattereth.' If the supine shepherd suffer the flock of God to be led astray by others, he must not hold himself guiltless because another and not himself is the leader. He virtually disperses if he does not gather into the fold of Christ. In fact a seal for God's house seems to belong properly to the character of a minister. Even if it be so ardent as to 'eat him up,' he will but the more resemble Christ, as that a spirit of his own blood guide him. Meekness becomes him also; but he must not let his meekness extinguish his zeal, when the occasion should call it forth. It was said more than fifty years ago, of a servant of God yet living, Oh! to flame, as he does with zeal, and yet to be beautiful with meekness." Again, "Is the pastor tempted, in his retired and thinly peopled parish, to spare his labour, and put forth less of his strength than he might be willing to extend in a sphere of greater excitement, and more obvious to the inspection of men? Let him ask himself, whether the oversight even of a single soul be not more than he will desire to answer for at the day of account? Let him guard with jealousy against permitting the absence of an unholiness and worldly stimulus to influence the character of his ministry."

* Memoir of Felix Neff by the Rev. W. S. Gilly—pp. 279, 280, 313.

SCRIPTURAL ILLUSTRATIONS.

No. XIV.

PUBLICANS, OR TAX-GATHERERS.

LUKE XVIII. 11.—"Or even as this Publican."

At Baj-gah, in the way to Persepolis is a station *rahbars*, or toll-gatherers, appointed to levy a toll upon *kafilahs*, or caravans of merchants; and who, in general, exercise their office with so much brutality and extortion, as to be execrated by all travellers. The police of the highways is confided to them; and whenever any goods are stolen, they are meant to be the instruments of restitution, but, when they are put to the test, are found to be inefficient: none but a man in power can hope to recover what he has once lost. They afford but little protection to the road, their stations being placed at too wide intervals to be able to communicate quickly; but they generally are perfectly acquainted with the state of the country, and are probably leagued with the thieves themselves, and can thus, if they choose, discover their haunts. Their insolence to travellers is unparalleled; and no man has ever gone through the country, either alone or with a caravan, who has not vented his indignation upon this vile police.

The collections of the toll are farmed, consequently extortion ensues; and as most of the *rahbars* receive no other emolument than what they can exact over and above the proscribed dues from the traveller, their insolence is accounted for; and a cause sufficiently powerful is given for their insolence on the one hand, and the detestation in which they are held on the other.

Baj-gah means "the place of tribute;" it may also be rendered, *the receipt of custom*; and perhaps it was from a place like this that our Saviour called Matthew to him; because Matthew appears, from the 3d verse of the 10th chapter, to have been a publican; and publicans, who, in the 11th verse of the 9th chapter, are classed with sinners, appear to have been held in the same odium as the *rahbars* of Persia.

It also explains why Matthew, who was seated at the receipt of custom, is afterwards called a publican; and shows that in the choice of his disciples our Saviour systematically chose them not only from among the poorest and humblest class of men, but also from those, who, from their particular situation in life, were hated by all ranks. Matthew, as a toll-gatherer, must, like the *rahbars*, have been a man known to all ranks of people, and detested on account of their profession. When he was seen having power against unclean spirits, with power to heal all manner of sickness and disease, and following "one like our Saviour, his life, when compared with what he formerly was, must have been a constant miracle.

The parable of the Pharisee and the Publican, (Luke xviii. 10—13.) will be more clearly understood by what has been above mentioned. Our Saviour, in bringing these two characters together, appears to have chosen them as making the strongest contrast between what, in the public estimation, were the extremes of excellency and villainy. According to Josephus, the seat of the Pharisees was the most powerful among the Jews; and from what has been said of the *rahbars*, it may perhaps be explained why the Pharisee, in praying to God, should make "extortioners" and "the unjust" almost synonymous terms with publicans; because we have seen, that from the peculiar office of the *rahbar* he is almost an extortioner by profession.—*Morier's second Journey*.

THE SINEW WHICH SHRANK.

GENESIS, xxxii. 32.—"Therefore the children of Israel eat not of the sinew which shrank, which is upon the hollow of the thigh, unto this day."

We found the Choctaw before the door, watching the gambles of fifty or sixty of his horses, who were frolicking before him; and of more than two hundred very fine cattle,