

Christian Mirror

AND GENERAL MISSIONARY REGISTER.

"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL xii. 4.

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POETRY.

(From the Christian Guardian.)

RETIREMENT.

How sweet to visit the lonely retreat,
Where mind in communion with Jesus may meet;
And drink of those pleasures retirement affords,
Secluded from strife and tumultuous hordes:

To visit the grove where the sweet-brier grows,
Apart from the world of confusion and noise;
Where peace, like a river, the heart overflows,
While calmly reflecting on heavenly joys!

How dear to the memory that hallowed sod
Made sacred by prayer and communion with God!
Where silence, unbroken, recorded the truth,—
Retirement hath pleasures for age and for youth.

'Tis there, in the silence of solitude alone,
Where the green-brier grew and the woodbine had
blown,—
Where the green turf beneath a carpet did spread,
And trees wove their foliage to shelter the head.

Those scenes of retirement! O, who can forget,
While mind can reflect on mementos so sweet,—
Where Spirit with Spirit communion may hold,
And feast on those pleasures no pen can unfold!

Walks of retirement! How rich with enjoyment!
Source, all-exhaustless, where mind finds employ-
ment;
While, 'neath the thick shade of wide-spreading
branches,
Like ship under sail, from Earth, the mind launches:

Though at home, in the dust, it soars in the sky,
And roams the fair fields of Elysium on high,—
And bathes in the chrysaline waters of Heaven,
And feels that her sins are absolved and forgiven.

Retirement! Retirement! how vain is fine gold
Compared with the treasure thy bosom doth hold:
Not Heaven, nor earth, such delights can afford;
Abstract from the presence of Jesus our Lord.

But when in the audience of Deity we meet,
Absorbed in devotion low down at his feet,
We feel the invisible of glory is near,
And exclaim in our hearts, 'Tis good to be here.

How sweet the communion we thus may enjoy,
While scenes so celestial our thoughts do employ;
Where Spirits from Heaven and Earth may unite
In retirement's embrace and ecstatic delight!

O Solitude! who would not frequent thy tower,
Or visit the closet each day for an hour!
To banquet with Angels from Heaven above,
And mingle with Spirits we formerly loved!

GENERAL LITERATURE.

ECCENTRICITIES OF GREAT MEN.

MANY have exhibited foibles and vices in proportion to the magnitude of the talents by which they were raised above other men, lest perhaps they might carry themselves above common humanity. Pope was an epicure, and would lie in bed at Lord Bolingbroke's for days, unless he was told there were stewed lampreys for dinner, when he rose instantly and came to the table. Even Sir Isaac Newton gave credit to the idle nonsense of judicial astrology; he who first calculated the distance of the stars, and revealed the laws of motion by which the Supreme Being organizes and keeps in their orbits unnumbered worlds; he who revealed the mysteries of the stars themselves. Dryden, Sir Isaac Newton's contemporary, believed in the same absurdity. The Duke of Marlborough, when visited by Prince Eugene on the night before a battle, when no doubt two generals were in consultation upon a measure that might decide the fate of an empire, was heard to call his servants to account for lighting of candles in his tent upon the occasion; and was once seen on horseback darning his own gloves. Hobbes, who wrote the 'Leviathan,' a deist in creed, had a most extraordinary belief in spirits and apparitions. Locke, the philosopher, the matter-of-fact Locke, who wrote, and in fact established the decision of things by the rule of right reason, laying down the rule itself, delighted in romance, and revelled in works of fiction.—What was the great Lord Verulam? Alas! too truly, "the wisest, greatest, meanest of mankind." Cardinal Richelieu, the minister of a great empire, believed in the calculation of nativities. Sir Thomas Moore burned the heretic to whom, in his writing, he gave full liberty of conscience. Alexander the Great was a drunkard, and slew his friends over his cups. Caesar sullied the glory of his talents by the desire of governing his country despotically, and died the victim of his ambition, though one of the wisest, most accomplished, and humane of conquerors; but we are travelling too far back for examples which should be taken from later times. Tasso believed in his good angels, and was often observed to converse with what he fancied was a spirit or demon, which he declared he saw. Raphael, the most gifted artist the world ever produced, died at the age of 37, his constitution weakened by irregular living. Dr. Samuel Johnson was notoriously superstitious. Sir Christopher Wren, who built St. Paul's Cathedral, was a believer in dreams. He had a pleurisy once in Paris, and believed he was in a place where palm-trees grew, and that a woman in a romantic dress gave him some dates, in full belief of their revealed-virtue, and they cured him. Dr. Halley had the same superstitious belief. Melancthon believed in dreams or apparitions, and used to say that one came to his study and told him to bid Guynæus, his friend, to go away for some time, as the Inquisition sought his life. His friend went away in consequence, and thus by accident really saved his life. Addison was fond of

the bottle, and he is said to have shortened his days by it. Burns, the poet, was a hard drinker, and there can be no doubt wore out his constitution by conviviality. Goldsmith was a gambler, and the victim of the fraudulent. Prior was the dupe of a common woman, whom he believed to be an angel. Garrick was as vain as a woman, and he equally loved flattery. Kneller's vanity was such that nothing was too gross for him to swallow. Porson, the first of Greek scholars, was a notorious tippler.

We might multiply examples of this kind without end; but we need not have quoted so many, to exhibit how wisely and well the balance is poised to keep human pride within due limits. The same lesson has been taught in all ages; we must, therefore, take our fellow men while living with the full recollection of their foibles and failings. When they are taken away from us, and our flattery can no longer injure them, our admiration may have its full measure, and we are justified in suffering their glory, which may serve the living for the example of emulation, to blaze in full refulgence; that being their more noble and earthly quality, destined for the benefit of future ages, in the way of instruction, imitation, or to afford harmless amusement.

FRICITION BETWEEN AIR AND WATER.

THE friction between air and water often produces the most magnificent, and sometimes disastrous consequences; for it is owing to this cause only, that the ocean rises into mountain waves, before the force of which all the works of man are nothing. It is true that waves are often seen when the wind does not blow, or when it has ceased, because the ocean, when once set in motion, continues to roll after the cause has ceased to act. A boat rowed across a lake form waves which do not reach the shore until long after the line of the boat has been obliterated. This propensity in water to perpetuate any disturbance in the natural smoothness of its surface is the reason why the ocean rises into waves, mountains high, beyond the reach of the storm which first sets it in motion, and perhaps many days after the storm has ceased. Seamen often know, from the appearance of the ocean, that there has been a storm at a distance, though not a sheet of their own has been filled with a breeze for days or weeks.—In rounding the Cape of Good Hope, it is said that the swell of the sea is sometimes so great that each wave and each hollow is a mile across. During the continuance of the wind, and in places where the waves are owing to its friction alone, the effect may be counteracted by pouring oil on the water, which spreading defends it from the contact of the air, and thus produces a calm. If this can be done at the windward side of a pond, where the waves begin, the whole surface, it is said, will soon become as smooth as glass. It is said, also, that boats having to reach the shore through a raging surf, have been preserved, in consequence of the sailors having thrown a barrel of oil on the water.