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Poetry.

GOD'S BLESSING ON THEM!

BY CHARLES WILTON.

God's blessing on them!—those old saints
Who battled hard and long;
Who cleft in twain a stubborn chain;
And conquered might and wrong!
O, Time! revere their sanctity,
Nor let their glory cease;
For by a mortal victory,
They sealed immortal peace.

God's blessing on them!—those stout hearts,
In these advancing days,
Who seek to guide the progress stride
From error's countless ways!
O, be their track a track of light,
The onward march of man:
The wise to shape our steps aright—
The good to lead the van!

God's blessing on them!—one and all,
Of every rank and clime,
Who strive to aid the stern crusade
Against the growth of crime!
O be their names a rallying cry
For ages yet to come:
A word whose echo shall not die
Till Nature's self be dumb!

THE OPEN SECRET.

BY FRANK E. MILLSON.

The all-teaching Spirit
For ever is near;
He speaks, could we hear him,
In voice strong and clear.
But not to the worldling
His secret is known;
The open soul only
Can call it his own.

At the altar of Beauty
The worshippers fall,
But the child playing round it
Sees more than them all:
For pure beauty, pure being,
Can never be theirs
Who want eyes for true seeing,
And hearts for true prayers.

Christian Miscellany.

"We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts and reasonings of pure and lofty minds."—*Dr. Sharp.*

The Bible-Fragment.

(Concluded.)

A class for catechetical instruction assembled every Sunday in Kilsallaghan, before Divine service commenced. It lasted generally from eleven to twelve o'clock. At this Mick Healy regularly attended, and took his seat in the midst of the class. Between him and the children, the contrast in years, in figure, in dress, and in manners, was of course strikingly marked; but, in simplicity and guilelessness, the difference, I may say, was none.

Imagine to yourselves, then, an athletic-looking peasant, in a large frieze coat, with head erect, sitting in the midst of a group of children, a thick, stout Bible open in his hands, while some twenty or thirty of the friends of the children, sitting or standing around, were listening, with open ears, and eyes, and mouths, to what was going on.

Questions and answers to the following effect might frequently be heard from Sabbath to Sabbath:—

"Well, Mick, why don't you now pray to the Virgin Mary?" "Because it is not in the Book, your Reverence." "To whom only should you pray, Mick?" "To God only, your Reverence." "Why don't you now confess your sins to Peter and Paul, Mick?" "Because it is not in the Book, your Reverence." "Mick, why don't you call the Virgin Mary 'Refuge of sinners,—your life, your hope, your advocate, and the gate of heaven,' as Romanists do?" "Because it is not in the Book, your Reverence." "Who is the Refuge of sinners,—your life, your hope, and your Advocate, Mick?" "The Lord Jesus, your Reverence." "How do you know, Mick?" "Because it is in

the Book, your Reverence." "Why, Mick don't you worship the host which the Priest holds in his hands?" "Because it is not in the Book, your Reverence." "Why are you not now satisfied with Latin prayers? why don't you keep the holy water in the house, the blessed clay, and the blessed candles, Mick?" "Because it is not in the Book, your Reverence." "Why don't you believe in purgatory, Mick?" "Because it is not in the Book, your Reverence."—"Why don't you believe that the Bishop of Rome is the head of the Church, and the Vicar of Jesus Christ, Mick?" "Because it is not in the Book, your Reverence."—"Why don't you believe that fasting, and penance, and giving alms, can make satisfaction for your sins, Mick?" "Because it is not in the book, your Reverence." "Mick, why don't you believe that the Virgin Mary has power in heaven, and that we ought to seek her intercession?" "Because it is not in the Book, your Reverence." "Mick, why don't you believe that the Church of Rome is the mother and mistress of all Churches; and that, if we don't belong to her, we can't be saved?" "Because it is not in the Book, your Reverence." "How do you find out which Church teaches the truth, Mick?" "By the Book, your Reverence." "How do you know that the Church of Rome leads people astray, Mick?" "By the Book, your Reverence."

All this time he held the Bible open in his hands, from time to time casting intelligent and respectful glances at its pages.—Mick knew well what Romish error was, and on Scripture ground refused it; but he knew well also what Christian truth was, and on Scripture ground embraced it. Questions and answers, also, such as these, might be heard:—

"Well, Mick, why do you, who have no learning, read the Bible?" "Because the Book tells me to do so, your Reverence."—"But may you not take a wrong meaning out of it?" "I may, your Reverence; but, by the blessing of God, I hope I will take a right meaning out of it."—"But can you understand it all, Mick?" "No; but, with the Lord's help, I can understand enough, your Reverence." "Mick, why don't you take the Church for your guide, instead of the Bible?" "Because it might lead me astray, your Reverence." "How do you know that the Bible won't lead you astray, Mick?"—"Because it is the word of God, your Reverence." "What are the Priests most afraid of, Mick?" "The Book, your Reverence." "Why so, Mick?" "Because it is against them, your Reverence." "Why do you, who are a wicked and unworthy sinner, come to Jesus Christ for salvation, without asking the Virgin Mary or the saints to intercede for you, Mick?" "Because I am told in the Book to do it, your Reverence." "Why do you believe that there is bread and wine in the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper, Mick?" "Because the Book says so, your Reverence." "Why do you believe, Mick, that God's anger is turned away from you, and that you are in His favour, if you have faith in Jesus Christ, without any merits or sufferings of your own?" "Because the Book tells me so, your Reverence."

"Mick, why do you believe that every man who trusts in the Lord is blessed?" "Because it is in the Book, your Reverence."—"Why do you believe the Bible to be sufficient to make you wise unto salvation, without tradition; that the blood of Jesus Christ is sufficient to cleanse you, without penance and purgatory; that Jesus Christ is both able and willing to save you, without saints and angels?" "O! sure it is all in the Book, your Reverence." "Why do you believe that any poor sinner, at any time, may come to Jesus, and get pardon for all his sins, and peace with God, without help from saints or angels, or aid or leave from the Church?" "O! your Reverence, because it is all down in the Book." "Must everything in religion be proved by the Bible, Mick?" "Yes, your Reverence; whatever is not so is only moonshine."

As his mind became more enlightened, and his heart more warmed by the love of Christ, he gained more influence over his wife, Biddy, and his son, Micky. His example, and reasoning had some effect on them. This was a fresh provocation in the country, and was quickly resented. It soon reached the Priest's ears that the poison of heresy was spreading. He resolved to take decisive measures, and administer at once the sharpest antidote. He came to Mick's house; and alighting off his horse, entered with a whip in his hand. Biddy, one of the culprits, was sitting in the corner, and Mick, happily, was at home. The Priest, in a rough, imperious voice, looking at Biddy, and taking no notice of Mick, said, "I hear that the devil is in this house." "Please your Reverence," said Mick, "the devil, I hope is not in this house; but the Lord, I trust, is here." The Priest, as if scorning to take any notice of Mick's observation, raising his voice, and frowning darkly, said to Biddy, "The devil must be in the house; for did you not go to church?" "She did, your Reverence; and, with the blessing of God, she will go again," said Mick. "I have nothing to say to you," said the Priest. "But I have something to say to you, please your Reverence," said Mick. "You are not a Catholic," said the Priest. "I beg your Reverence's pardon, I am a Catholic," said Mick. "How so?" said the Priest: did you not turn Protestant?" "I did, your Reverence. I was a Roman Catholic before, but I am a Protestant Catholic now." "You are entirely in the dark," said the Priest.—"I was in the dark before, please your Reverence," said Mick; "but, blessed be God, I am in the light now." "O," said the Priest, in a torrent of impassioned speech, scarcely giving himself time to breathe, "you are not in the true Church—you are a heretic; you can't be saved; you must come back; you must do penance, and get absolution in the true Church, or you will be damned." When he had done, Mick, suspecting this wild storm of empty words, without any kind of proof, was intended to frighten his poor weak and timid wife, very coolly said, "Please your Reverence, as you are a man of learning, will you show me all that you say in the Book?" "What book?" said the Priest, thinking perhaps that he had made some impression on Mick. "O, the Book," said Mick: "I will bring it out to you." He went to the big trunk and brought his octavo Bible, and, opening it, offered it to the Priest, saying, "Will your Reverence show me what you say in this, and I will believe it?"

When the Priest looked at it, and saw what it was, he said, "I will have nothing to say to your heretical book. Hear the Church," said he, "and I am its Minister." "O, your Reverence," said Mick, "I will hear no Church which does not hear the Book; whoever speaks, if what is said be not in the Book, I will not mind it." Mick pressed the Book upon him; but it was a bow that the Priest could not shoot with, a sword that he could not handle without wounding himself. With a growl he ran away from the conflict, leaving Mick, erect and unscathed, in possession of the field; and he never came into contact with Mick again.

Mick called on Mr. Gregg one day, and put his hand into his bosom, and took out what appeared to be a book. It was the fragment of the Bible which God had so richly blessed to his soul. Gracefully presenting it to him, he said, with an air of deep solemnity, "I bring this to your Reverence, hoping you will take care of it. I was afraid that, when I was gone, it might receive some bad usage. I did not know where I could leave it, or to whom I could so well give it, as to you." Mr. Gregg, of course, willingly received it from him. It was in part black with smoke, as if it had been much used in the chimney-corner. It had a cover on one side; not the original one, but a piece of leather stitched on to protect it. After carefully preserving this fragment for thirteen or fourteen years, he

placed it, appropriately, in that storehouse of treasure, the depository of the Bible Society. There it now lies.

At length, in the commencement of 1835, Mick Healey's health began to fail, and completely broke down before the middle of it. He exhibited the same Christian spirit and maintained the same Christian consistency, to the very last.

At a visit which Mr. Gregg paid him, he found that his son, who, perhaps was urged to it by others, was trying to work upon his father, in the hour of his weakness, to bring him back to the Church of Rome. He asked the dying man, "Would he not like to have the Priest with him, and to have mass said for him, or to hear the Litany of the Blessed Virgin? and would he not wish to have a mass said when he was dead, to get his soul out of purgatory?"

The dying peasant, gathering up all his strength, said, in answer to his son, "Priest! Micky, trash; mass, trash; litany of the saints, trash; purgatory, trash; praying for the dead, trash; help of the Virgin, trash." Then he spoke of Christ and the Spirit.—He said, "Christ was all and everything the sinner could want." "I am," said he, "a sinner, a great sinner; and Christ is all and everything to me." "Roman Catholics will be trying," said he, "to get to heaven their way, but they won't be able: there will be a bush in the gap." This phrase is taken from the language of shepherds, alluding to the difficulty of sheep getting into a field, where the only entrance to it is stopped up by a thorny bush.

"Are you happy, father?" said his son, thinking, perhaps, according to the false teaching of the Church of Rome, that he could not be happy if he died a Protestant. "Micky, jewel," said the father, "no King ever went to his throne so happy as I now am, going to my Saviour, the Lord Jesus Christ."

The night before his death, his wife, who continued in darkness, urged much that he would allow her to send for the Priest, stating that he should have the rights of the Church before he died; to which he answered, "No, no! trash, trash! it is all trash!" The night being stormy, she said, "It was a dark, dreary night for a poor soul to leave this world, and appear before God!" He raised himself in the bed, and said, "It is dark and dreary to you; but it is all light to me. It is dark to you, because you don't know the way; and, when you are going by your own way, you will find the gaps stopped."

A Word to Parents.

What the princess of Egypt said to the mother of the babe that wept in its ark of rushes on the reedy Nile, the voice of the Almighty addresses to every parent on whose bosom is laid a bud of immortality:—"Take this child and nurse it for me, and I will give thee thy wages."

"Nurse it for me!" For the "King eternal, immortal, invisible, the only wise God." Are you able? Will you engage to make it his loyal subject? Then labour night and day, at the dawn and in the dews of morning, with sleepless prayer and a patience next only to that of redeeming love.

"I will give thee thy wages." Do you accept the condition? Do you believe the promise? Years may pass and you see no recompense, reap no harvest but tears. Still go forth, weeping if you will, yet bearing precious seed, for unless the treasury of heaven be empty, or the truth of God can fail, your toil shall find payment.

But you must be faithful to the articles of agreement. "Nurse it for me"—not for the world. The world hath wages too. Yea, and she will doubtless, pay those who train up their child after her fashions, in the broad road where thousands go. She hath a variety of wages, suited to the degree of services that may have been rendered, apples of Sodom, wood, hay, stubble, the whirlwind, "the worm that never dies, and the fire that is never quenched."—*L. H. S. in the American Messenger.*