

Poetry.

My Prayer Book.

THE BURIAL OF THE DEAD.

A VILLAGE FUNERAL.

"Earth to earth, ashes to ashes, dust to dust, in sure and certain hope of the resurrection to eternal life, through our Lord Jesus Christ."—*Order for the Burial of the Dead.*

The bells are tolling with a dreamy chime
That melts and mingles with the air around,
Mourning for her who died in vernal prime,
Queen of the village by her virtues crown'd.

Last week she bounded, full of girlish life,
Fleet o'er the turf, elastic as the breeze,
Radiant as morn, with bloom and beauty rife,
Fresh as the wave which gambols on the seas:

But Christ recall'd her for His home on high
To harp in glory God's incarnate love,
Ere guilt had waken'd one remorseful sigh,
Or earth untuned her for a heaven above.

Oh! gently lay her where the yew-trees wave
Their verdant darkness o'er some grassy tomb,
Where sunbeams learn the language of the grave,
Tinging their brightness with a temper'd gloom.

There shall the daisy rear its infant head,
And fairy wild-flowers drink the dew of spring,
While o'er the turf that greenly wraps the dead
Autumnal winds their plaintive descent sing.

'Tis the same spot her rosy girlhood sought
Where fresh from school, with bright companions gay,
In maiden fancy, free from troubling thought,
She work'd her sampler, or retired to play.—

Dear is the quiet village church to me,
Saxon, and simple, touch'd with tender glooms;
Lifting its widow'd form so gracefully
As though 'twere conscious of encircling toms.

Whatever shade expressive clouds can throw,
Or hills wood-crested may around it cast,
I love to view it in the vale below
Connect the present with our storied past.

Oh! have I paused, when lull'd by pensive bliss,
To hear the curfew, mellow'd on the wind,
Waft the farewell of day to scene like this,
Soft to the ear, as soothing to the mind.

But, far excelling all chaste morn bestows,
The hush of twilight, or the harvest-moon,
Or, what mere landscape to the minstrel shows
When silent thoughts their sanctity attune,

Is felt,—when village funeral winds its train
Slowly and sadly to some churchyard gate,
And our deep service tones its heaven-born strain,
To scatter darkness from bereavement's fate.

Hark! from the woodland floats the forward breeze
A low sweet dirge, the village maidens sing,
Whose white robes glisten through the waving trees
As on the dead to her last home they bring.

Nay, sob not, mother! for thy beauteous child,
Though like a tendril from thy heart it grew;
Eternity she felt, ere time defiled
Or made her soul untender and untrue.

And thou, hoar'd grandsire! with thy grief-worn face,
Of did the prattler on thy knee recline,
And hold up features fancy loved to trace,
Which matrons told thee, in thy youth, were thine;

I see thee now, with tott'ring step advance,
Wan are thy cheeks, and drops of aged wee
Bedew thy visage, and bedim thy glance
As onward to the grave the mourners go.

But ONE is present, whom no eye can see,
Except by faith, and that is, Christ the Lord!
And "weep not," childless mother, comes to thee,
If thy heart open to his gracious word.

Thou blessed Ritual! throbs of Jesu's heart
Still in thy tones of thrilling mercy live;
When yawns the tomb, most wonderful thou art,
By echoing all God's inspirations give.

The "Resurrection and the Life" is near,
By Spirit present, and in love as deep
As when he touch'd the young man's open bier,
And gently bid wild anguish, not to "weep."

As o'er that grave the "dust to dust" awakes
A dismal echo in the bleeding soul,
How the damp earth-clo'd on the coffin breaks,
Till the deep tides of inward anguish roll!

Yet, o'er the tomb heaven's canopy unfolds,
And, hark, these words of soothing magic sound,
While grief looks upward, and by faith beholds
The Lord of life and resurrection crown'd,—

"Blest are the dead, who in the Lord depart:
Yea, saith the Spirit, for their pangs are o'er;
Serene as heaven Christ keeps the sainted heart,
Whose works are ended, and who weeps no more."

¹ "The priest, meeting the corpse at the entrance of the church, shall say, 'I am the resurrection and the life.'—*Order for the Burial of the Dead.*

² Luke vii. 13.

³ John xi. 35.

DR. TOWNSEND'S INTERVIEW WITH THE POPE.

(Dr. Townsend's Tour in Italy.)

No Quaker could have received us with more simplicity than Pio Nono—no Sovereign with more dignified courtesy—no Presbyterian with more plainness. There were no lords in waiting, no tedious ceremony, no trains of state. The Pontiff was alone. The room in which he received us was about the size of a well proportioned modern London drawing-room. The floor was brick, as is the custom in Italy. It was uncarpeted, except a small carpet on the dais on which the Pope was standing. It was unfurnished, except that two small ottomans were placed near an elevated seat, at which, close to a table, resembling those in a merchant's counting-house, the Pope sat or stood. The dais was raised not more than a few inches above the rest of the floor. A canopy, not a very splendid one, was over the Pope's head. He was dressed in the long white fine cloth Dominican robe, reaching from the throat to the feet; and he wore the Dominican cap upon his head. We approached him as to a temporal Prince, with the courtesies

we should have paid to our own Queen, bowing three times. He seemed to be about sixty years of age, of a fresh complexion, and most benevolent expression of countenance. He gazed at us, as we might have expected, with intent curiosity as we approached him. It was the first time, perhaps, that a Protestant Clergyman accompanied by his wife had ever ventured to enter the Vatican upon such an errand as that which had brought me from England. On approaching close to him he gave us his hand to kiss in the manner which is customary with sovereign princes; and he then mentioned, with an inclination of his head, to Mrs. Townsend and myself to be seated on the ottoman near the dais.

The conversation began on the part of the Pope in Italian, addressed to Mrs. Townsend as to whether she had ever been in Italy or Rome before? Whether she admired the country? What objects in Rome had interested her most? And so on. To all such questions she replied in the same language. She had been my interpreter in French throughout France, and my interpreter in Italian through Italy; and she interpreted my expressions to the Pope on the present occasion, when the difference of the Italian and English mode of pronouncing Latin made it necessary to require her assistance. When the conversation upon these different subjects was over, the Pope inquired in what language he should converse with me? Mrs. Townsend answered that I wished to address him in Latin. He bowed, I then presented to him the letter of the Archbishop of Paris, and explained to him the object for which I had presumed to solicit that letter; that I was grieved to see the prevalence of modern infidelity resulting from the disunion of believers in the same revelation; that I had presumed, in conformity with the customs of the Primitive Church, to request a letter from the Archbishop of Paris that I might, through his intervention, obtain permission to speak with the Pope on the subject of re-considering all the past controversies among Christians in a General Council. I related the correspondence, to which I have alluded more than once alluded, between the Archbishop of Paris and Dupin, in the reign of Queen Anne, and told his Holiness the conclusion of the English Archbishop—that in a General Council of the West we would give the Pope the first place of order, though not of jurisdiction. It was in his power, I added, to commence the movement towards the re-union of Christians, by summoning such Council with a view to the re-consideration of the past; and the princes of the Christian world would rejoice at the anticipation of peace among the nations on the basis of such reconsideration.

To all this, which was not, of course, said in a speech, but in reply to questions as a conversation, the Pope made the same reply which had been previously made to me by the Archbishop of Paris, the Cardinals Mai and Franzoni, and other Ecclesiastics of the Church of Rome with whom I had conversed on the subject. He urged the difficulty of calling such a council from the expense, the difference between the opponents and the adherents of the Church, and the variety of opinions even on the subject of the sacraments. The Church, he remarked, as I expected he would do, had already decided on the chief points; but that the several provincial councils which are now being summoned in various parts of the world would possibly prepare the way for the more general council which I desired.

The earnestness and energy with which I spoke—the nervous agitation of the moment—the importance and solemnity of the occasion which had brought me to the Vatican—and, may I add, the inward prayer I was offering that the God of Truth would change the policy of Rome and give peace to the Church Universal on the basis of the reconsideration of the past, which I was now soliciting, made my voice tremulous with emotion. I spoke from the heart; and I believe that my words went, therefore, to the heart of the Pontiff. I appealed to him as to the one chief person now on earth who had the power to commence the appeal to the nations. I so proceeded in that appeal that the tears came into his eyes, and he declared with much animation—and I believed him—that he had prayed earnestly to the Omnipotent that he might be honoured as the healer of the wounds of the Church. I then placed in his hands the document which I had prepared, with the observation that I had therein written the request which I had presumed to submit to him. "I am a Protestant (I said), and I have always been an enemy to your Church; but there will not be found in this document any expression which will be personally offensive." The Pope looked surprised at my declaration; and Mrs. Townsend, observing his silence, confirmed the truth of my assurance by an exclamation. The Pope took the memorial and said he would read it with attention. I then informed him of the subject of the paper, telling him that it contained the expression of my persuasion, that as the Church of Rome could not conquer the Church of England, nor the Church of England conquer the Church of Rome, the time had arrived when the common enemy, Infidelity, must be met by an effort on the part of all Christians to reconsider the past; and that very many Christians in England would rejoice at the hope of the re-union of the

Churches after this re-consideration of the past. "Yes" (the Pope answered), "there are in England many persons of good will." "There are many good men there (I answered) who would rejoice in peace on the basis of that reconsideration." Here, after some more observations which I do not remember, the conversation may be said to have ended. He asked me whether I knew Dr. Wiseman? I told him that I lived in retirement, and knew the literary labours of Dr. Wiseman; but that I was not personally known to him. I rose to take my leave, and after briefly repeating my assurance that the Pope had the power to commence the repentant movement I solicited, we left his presence. The audience lasted for nearly forty minutes, though it is so briefly related here. We left his presence with the same observances which are paid to our own Queen, bowing towards the Pope till we reached the door of the room.

The chamberlains, or monsignores, or lords in waiting, as we might call them in England, asked me in the ante-room, where they had been in attendance, after the interview, some questions which I do not now distinctly remember; and I expressed to them, with great truth, my satisfaction at the courteous demeanour, benevolence, and kindness of the Pontiff. The Cubans were called in, we observed, next to us. To our great astonishment they both knelt down, as to God, at the folding-doors of the audience chamber, and repeated the same homage in the middle of the room. We had not done so. We had rendered every respect to the Pope as an earthly Sovereign: we could not venerate him as our God.

An amusing though affecting scene followed our interview. On arriving at our apartments later than our servants expected (for we had been kept waiting during the audience of some of the parties of high rank who were received by the Pope before us), we found them in tears. With the not unusual feelings towards the Church of Rome, they imagined that great cruelties and treacheries are still exercised on all who differ from that Church, and who may entrust themselves to its power. They believed that we were imprisoned or assassinated; and were in tears for the supposed calamity of their master and mistress.

LIBERIA.

(From the Spirit of Missions.)

CLIMATE OF WESTERN AFRICA.

With the view of imparting information in relation to the climate and character of the country on the West Coast of Africa, now become of so much importance in a Missionary aspect, we continue our selections on this subject:

The territory of Liberia being within a few degrees of the equator, of course the nature of the climate is essentially different from that of the United States, the vicissitudes of spring, summer, autumn and winter, not being experienced in the equatorial regions of the earth; there being continued summer weather throughout the year, interrupted only by occasional slight variations in the thermometrical state of the atmosphere, caused by the greater strength of the ordinary breezes, and by clouds and rain; which latter prevails so much more, during one half of the year, than during the other half, as to give rise to the usually recognized division of the year in two seasons—the wet or rainy season, and the dry season; or, in common parlance, "the rains" and "the dries:" the former of which answers nearly to summer and autumn, and the latter to winter and spring in temperate latitudes.

This unqualified and somewhat arbitrary division of the year, however, has led many persons into error, respecting the real state of the weather during these two seasons; some supposing that during the rainy season more or less rain falls every day; and, on the other hand, during the dry season, an uninterrupted spell of hot and dry weather prevails for six successive months. This is so far from being the case, that, as a general rule, it may be stated, that some rain falls during every month in the year; and, in every month there is some fine clear, pleasant weather. During my residence in Liberia, I seldom observed a deviation from this general rule. Much more rain, however, falls during the six months beginning with May, than during the remaining six months beginning with November. It is difficult, however, to determine at what time each of the two seasons actually commences and closes. As a general rule, I think the middle of May may be set down as the beginning of the rainy season, and the middle of November that of the dry season. In order, however, to give an accurate and comprehensive statement of the character of the climate and seasons of Liberia, it may be the best plan to note the vicissitudes of each month in the year, as they are usually presented.

January is usually the driest, and one of the warmest months in the year. Sometimes, during this month, no rain at all falls; but generally there are occasional slight showers, particularly at night. Were it not for the sea-breeze, which prevails with almost uninterrupted regularity during the greater part of the day, on almost every day throughout the year, the weather would be exceedingly oppressive, during the first three or four months of the year. As it is, the oppressiveness of the rays

of the tropical sun is greatly mitigated by the cooling breezes from the ocean; which usually blow from about ten o'clock, A.M., to about ten, P.M., the land-breeze occupying the remainder of the night and morning; except for an hour or two about the middle of the night, and about an hour in the forenoon. During these intervals, the atmosphere is sometimes very oppressive. The regularity of the sea-breeze, especially during the month of January, is sometimes interrupted by the longer continuance of the land-breeze, which occasionally does not cease blowing until two or three o'clock, P.M. This is what is called the *harmattan* wind; about which, a great deal has been written; but which does not generally fully accord with the forced descriptions of hasty observers or copyists.

The principal peculiarity of the harmattan wind consists in its drying properties, and its very sensible coolness, especially early in the morning. It seldom, perhaps never, continues during the whole day; and usually not much longer than the ordinary land-breeze, at other times in the year.—When this wind blows pretty strongly, the leaves and covers of books sometimes curl, as if they had been placed near a fire; the seams of furniture, and of wooden vessels, sometimes open considerably, and the skin of persons sometimes feels peculiarly dry and unpleasant, in consequence of the rapid evaporation of both the sensible and the insensible perspiration. But these effects are usually by no means so great as they have been represented to be. What is generally called the harmattan season usually commences about the middle of December, and continues until the latter part of February. During this time, especially during the month of January, the atmosphere has a smoky appearance, similar to what is termed Indian Summer in the United States, but generally more hazy.

The average height of the mercury in the thermometer, during the month of January, is about 85°; it seldom varies more than 10° degrees during the twenty four hours of the day; and usually it does not vary more than four degrees between the hours of ten A.M. and ten P.M. During this month, however, I have seen the mercury stand at the lowest mark at which I ever observed it in Liberia, that is, at 68°. This was early in the morning, during the prevalence of a strong and very cool land-breeze. During this month I have also seen the mercury stand at the highest mark at which I ever observed it—thats is, at 90°. The air is sometimes uncomfortably cool before eight o'clock, A.M., during this month.

During the month of February the weather is generally similar to that of January. There are, however, usually more frequent showers of rain; and sometimes, towards the close of this month, slight tornadoes are experienced. The harmattan haze generally disappears about the last of this month; and the atmosphere becomes clear. The range of the thermometer is about the same as in January.

March is, perhaps, the most trying month in the year to the constitutions of new comers. The atmosphere is usually very oppressive during this month—the sun being nearly vertical. The occasional showers of rain, and the slight tornadoes which occur in this month, do not usually mitigate the oppressiveness of the atmosphere, as might be supposed. The variation in the state of the atmosphere, as indicated by the thermometer, seldom exceeds 6 degrees during the whole of this month. The average height of the mercury is about 85 degrees.

April is significantly called the "tornado month," the most numerous and most violent tornadoes usually occurring during this month. The ordinary state of the weather, in reference to the degree of heat, and its influence on the system, is not very different from that of the three preceding months. The showers of rain are usually more frequent, however; and the visitations of those peculiar gusts, called tornadoes, are much more common in April than in any other month. These are sudden, and sometimes violent gusts, which occur much more frequently at night than during the day. Although they usually approach suddenly and rapidly, yet certain premonitory evidences of their approach are almost always presented, which are generally easily recognized by persons who have frequently observed them. They generally commence from north-east, or north-east-east, and rapidly shift round to nearly south-east; by which time the storm is at its height.

At the commencement of a tornado, dark clouds appear above the eastern horizon, which rapidly ascend, until a dense lurid-looking mass spreads over the whole hemisphere. As the heavy mass of clouds ascends and spreads, the roaring sound of the wind becomes stronger and louder, until suddenly it bursts forth in its fury, sometimes seeming as if it would sweep away every opposing object.—Very seldom, however, is any material injury sustained from these violent gusts. The scene is sometimes awfully grand, for fifteen or twenty minutes, during the formation and continuance of a heavy tornado. Sometimes the whole hemisphere presents a scene of the deepest gloom; the darkness of which is momentarily illuminated by vivid flashes of lightning, in rapid succession; and sometimes tremendous peals of thunder burst upon