

the proconsul with the fury of wild beasts. "Call for them," said Polycarp, "It does not become us to turn from good to evil." "Seeing you make so light of wild beasts," rejoined the magistrate, "I will tame you with the more horrible punishment of fire." But Polycarp bravely replied, "You threaten me with a fire that is quickly extinguished, but are ignorant of the eternal fire of God's judgment reserved for the wicked in the other world. But why do you delay? Order what punishment you please." Thus finding him impenetrable both to the arts of seduction and the dread of punishment, the fire was commanded to be lighted, and the body of this venerable father burnt to ashes, in the year 166.—*Jones' Church History.*

THE CHRISTIAN YEAR.

OXFORD. J. Parker; LONDON. J. and C. Rivington.

In a few modest words Mr. Kemble states the aim and object of his volume. He says truly, that it is the peculiar happiness of the Church of England to possess in her authorized formularies an ample and secure provision, both for a sound rule of faith, and a sober standard of feeling in matters of practical religion. The object of his publication will be attained, if any person find assistance from it in bringing his own thoughts and feelings into more entire unison with those recommended and exemplified in the Prayer-Book. We add, that its object has been attained; and that his name is now, most assuredly, among those of whom the heart breathes,

" Blessings be with thee, and eternal praise
The Poets, who on earth have made us heirs
Of truth and pure delight, by heavenly lays."

In England, "The Christian Year" is already placed in a thousand homes, among "household books," and its reception there has proved, that let as many worthless weeds spring up as raskly as may be, all eyes will yet be turned to "the bright consummate flower," wherever the air is gladdened by such an apparition. We are neither blind nor deaf yet to the sights and sounds of beauty—and a true poet is as certain of recognition now as at any period of literature. In Scotland we have no Prayer-book printed on paper—perhaps it would be better if there was—but the prayer-book which has inspired Mr. Kemble, is compiled and composed from another book, which we believe, is more read in Scotland than in any other country. Here the Sabbath reigns in power that is felt by soul and sense to be a sovereign power over all the land. We have, it may be said, no prescribed holidays; but all the events recorded in the Bible, and which in England make certain days holy in outward as well as inward observances, are familiar to our knowledge and our feeling here; and therefore, the poetry that seeks still more to hallow them to the heart will find every good heart recipient of its inspiration, for the Christian creed is "wide and general as the casing air," and felt as profoundly in the Highland heather-glen, where no sound of psalms is heard but on Sunday, as in the cathedral towns and cities of England, where so often

" Through the long-drawn aisle and fretted vault,
The pealing anthem swells the note of praise."

Poetry in our age, has been made too much a thing to talk about—to shew off upon—as if the writing and the reading of it were to be reckoned among what are commonly called—accomplishments. Thus even true, great poets have too often sacrificed the austere sanctity of the divine art to most unworthy purposes, of which, perhaps the most unworthy—for it implies much voluntary self-degradation—is mere popularity. Against all such low aims he is preserved, who, with Christian meekness, approaches the muse in the sanctuaries of religion. He seeks not to force his songs on the public ear; his heart is free from the fever of fame; his poetry is praise and prayer. It meets the soul like the sound of psalms from some unseen dwelling among the woods or hills, at which the wayfarer or wanderer stops on his journey, and feels at every pause a holier solemnity in the silent solitude of nature. Such poetry is, indeed, *got by heart*; and the memory is then tenacious to the death, for her hold on what she loves is strengthened, as much by grief as by joy; and when even hope itself is dead—if, indeed, hope ever dies—the trust is committed to despair. Words are often as unforgettable as voiceless thoughts; they become very thoughts themselves, and are what they represent. How are many of the simply, rudely, and fervently and beautifully rhymed Psalms of David very part and parcel of the most spiritual treasures of the Scottish peasant's being!

" The Lord's my shepherd, I'll not want,
He makes me down to lie
In pastures green: he leadeth me
The quiet waters by."

These four lines sanctify to the thoughtful shepherd on the braes, every stream that glides through the solitary places,—they have often given colours to the greensward beyond the beauty of all herbage and of all flowers. Thrice hallowed is that poetry which makes us mortal creatures feel the union that subsists between the book of Nature and the book of Life!

There is such perfect sincerity in the volume now lying before us, and which creates this strain of thought in which perhaps, we have been somewhat too long indulging, such perfect sincerity, and consequently such simplicity, that though the production of a fine and finished scholar, we cannot doubt that it will some day or other find its way into many of the dwellings of humble life. Such descent, if descent it be, must be of all reception the most delightful to the heart of a Christian poet. As intelligence spreads more widely over the land, why fear that it will deaden religion? Let us believe that it will rather vivify and quicken it; and that in time true poetry, such as this, of a character somewhat higher than probably can be yet felt, understood, and appreciated by the people, will come to be easy and familiar, and blended with all the other benign influences breathed over their common existence by books. Meanwhile, the "Christian Year" will be finding its way into many houses where the inmates read from the love of reading—not for mere amusement only, but for instruction and a deeper delight; and we may be happy if our recommendation causes its pages to be illumined by the gleams of a few more peaceful hearths, and to be rehearsed by a few more happy voices in the "parlour twilight."

The "Christian Year" contains upwards of a hundred poems—and from them we select the

Third Sunday in Advent.

" What went ye out to see
O'er the rude sandy sea,
Where stately Jordan flows by many a palm,
Or where Gennesaret's wave
Delights the flowers to lave,
That o'er her western slope breathes airs of balm?"

" All through the summer night
Those blossoms red and bright
Spread their soft breasts, unheeding to the breeze,
Like hermits watching still
Around the sacred hill,
Where erst our Saviour watch'd upon his knees.

" The paschal moon above
Seems like a saint to rove
Left shining in the world with Christ alone:
Below, the lake's still face
Sleeps sweetly in the embrace
Of mountain terraced high with mossy stone.

Here may we sit and dream
Over the heavenly theme,
Till to our soul the former days return:
Till on the grassy bed,
Where thousands once He fed,
The world's incarnate Maker we discern.

" O cross no more the main,
Wandering so wild and vain,
To count the reeds that tremble in the wind,
On listless dalliance-bound,
Like children gazing round,
Who on God's works no seal of Godhead find.

" Bask not in courtly bower,
On sun-bright hall of power,
Pass Babel quick, and seek the holy land—
From robes of Tyrian dye
Turn with undazzled eye
To Bethlehem's glade or Carmel's haunted strand.

" Or choose thee out a cell
In Kedron's stored dell,
Besides the springs of Love, that never die,
Among the olives kneel
The chill night-blast to feel,
And watch the moon that saw thy Master's agony.