

AN EMINENT MINISTER.

[We are obliged to our kind correspondent at Guelph for the following communication, especially as we well knew and frequently heard the "EMINENT MINISTER" portrayed, during sixteen years spent in London. We can bear testimony to the accuracy of the delineation, and to the character and talents of the preacher.—EDITOR.]

The following article is extracted from a work entitled "Dialogues, Moral and Scientific."

"I have occasionally heard discourses from several eminent men in the (Wesleyan) connexion, who have long since gone to their reward. Perhaps you will not be impatient if I allude to one of them. I remember that some years since I was invited to attend the public service at the City-road Chapel, in London. The time was Sunday evening; and the minister appointed to preach was said to be popular. The building was crowded to excess; and just as the clock struck six, all eyes were directed to the passage leading from what is termed the morning chapel, through which the minister proceeds from the vestry. Having heard of his pulpit talent, and consequent celebrity, my imagination had pictured the idea of an erect and portly personage, rustling to the scene of action with a due measure of clerical dignity; when, to my surprise and disappointment, came forward with solemn pace, a spare, unassuming figure, habited in a strait-fronted black coat, of the plainest form. There appeared in him an inward lowliness, which I thought unique and remarkable; his countenance was composed and placid, and of that cast which indicated deep thinking; he was about the medium height; had a small stoop in walking; and, from the few straggling hairs which yet barely lingered on his forehead, he must have been advancing in years. On ascending the pulpit, my first impression was, that the congregation was disappointed; the favourite, thought I, is not come; this person is the deputy, and I wonder what such a dry stick can have to say. "Judge nothing before the time," was the wise reply of my friend. I consented, therefore to hear with patience, or, at least, to try. On giving out the hymn which was to be sung, I found the minister had the disadvantage of a voice by no means musical, and exceedingly weak withal. The prayer which followed was delivered in a tone rather low, but was remarkable for its comprehensiveness and fluency. In pronouncing the text of Scripture on which the discourse was to be founded, it was with some difficulty that he was heard, especially at the most distant parts of his audience, where I happened to sit. With the exception of a few notes written upon a small piece of paper, placed before him on the opened leaf of the bible, his sermon was extemporaneous; and the utterance of a few sentences was sufficient to show that he was no ordinary man. The exordium was finely conceived, was delivered with a clear and distinct voice, and with an earnestness of manner which visibly increased as he proceeded. The structure of the discourse, and his intended line of reasoning, were then propounded, with remarkable perspicuity and force; and for a full hour, which was the time the exposition lasted, not fewer than two thousand persons listened with breathless attention to this master in Israel. But, beautiful and impressive as was the manner in which the argumentative parts of the sermon were sustained, it was towards the close that the peculiarities of this marvellous man were evinced. If the most difficult part of a discourse be the application, it was here that he particularly shone. Supernatural aid seemed to come down: out of weakness he was made strong—the disadvantage of a weak and tremulous voice was forgotten in overwhelming appeals to the consciences of the auditory. They seemed to expect an approaching storm; all bent an expectant ear, and sure enough it came. On this occasion the preacher made a tremendous calculation of the requisitions of the moral law, and the penalties attached to disobedience. There was blackness, and darkness, and tempest; Sinai was altogether on a smoke; and great searchings of heart were produced, as when of old the trumpet sounded long, and waxed loud, and the people did exceedingly fear and quake. Then, by a transition of thought, managed with singular ability, the terrors of the last day were exhibited:

the Ancients of Days did sit; the books were opened; creation crashed to its centre, and was passing away with a great noise; the inexorable throne was unveiled, and before it stood the cited dead of a thousand generations. The condition of those who had perished in an impenitent rejection of the Gospel, was then portrayed, in colours vivid as the light of truth; guilt stood impeached and abashed; subterfuge and evasion were driven from their last retreat; forgotten sins seemed to be remembered—and, like the prophetic roll, were exhibited in characters of lamentation, and mourning, and woe. "See," said the preacher, "see that ye refuse not him that speaketh; for if they escaped not who refused him that spake on earth, much more shall not we escape if we turn away from him that speaketh from heaven." This and other passages of sacred writ were quoted in the utmost height of excited fervour, when, as was commonly the case with him, his voice partially failed, and gave way before the fullness of his spirit; but this circumstance, so far from impeding the current of his eloquence, rendered it exceedingly touching. Every one saw that he was big with matter, and that "the spirit of convincing speech" was with him. There was no failure but that of corporeal strength. Many were deeply smitten; many sorrowed after a godly sort; and not a few were melted into tears; when, with the skill of a physician who knew his time, and when to probe, and when to stay his hand, the preacher opened another leaf of his commission; and the promises of the Gospel, of which he had an ample store at command, were announced with charming pathos and volubility. The perspiration had, for some time, stood in drops upon his forehead, which he repeatedly removed with his handkerchief; meantime, the hearers remained mute with attention: you might have heard a sigh. The entrance of the word seemed to give life. There came on a lifting up of the head, as if redemption drew nigh. The expectation of some spiritual blessing was tremblingly alive; as in the year when king Uzziah died, the door-posts seemed to shake at the presence of the Lord. It reminded one of the moment when Moses smote the rock, and of the eager multitudes who pressed to catch the gushing stream. The preacher concluded with a short aspiration of prayer, which was instantly followed by an "Amen" which, as the voice of many waters, arose from all parts of the chapel—and the effect was singularly powerful.

"It has been asserted, that the ministry of this extraordinary man had been of special spiritual use to no fewer than ten thousand persons. His name was JOSEPH BENSON."

In this iniquitous world, for the most part, mistakes and misconceits, though never so unjustly apprehended, are graven in brass; and good turns and benefits, though never so kindly bestowed, are written in the dust.—*Sackville. Earl of Dorset.*

NONE do so foolishly, and yet so deservedly, miss of happiness, as those who are very careful to learn the way to Heaven, and when they have done, will take no pains to get farther.—*Archbishop Tillotson.*

POETRY.

LINES ADDRESSED TO A MUMMY.

The following very original piece, by an unknown author, though it has often been reprinted in Britain, is not, it is believed, very generally known in this country, and will probably be interesting to our readers.

AND thou hast walked about, (how strange a story!)
In Thebes' streets, three thousand years ago,
When the Memnonium was in all its glory,
And time had not begun to overthrow
These temples, palaces, and piles stupendous,
Of which the very ruins are tremendous.

Speak—for thou long enough hast acted dummy;
Thou'st a tongue—come, let us hear its tune;
Thou'rt standing on thy legs above ground, Mummy,
Revisiting the glimpses of the moon:
Not like thin ghost or disembodied creatures,
But with thy bones and flesh, and limbs and features.

Tell us—for doubtless thou canst recollect—
To whom should we ascribe the Sphinx's fame?
Was Crops or Cephrones architect
Of either pyramid that bears his name?
Is Pompey's Pillar really a misnomer?
Had Thebes a hundred gates, as sung by Homer?

Perhaps thou wert a mason, and forbidden,
By oath, to tell the mysteries of thy trade;
Then say what secret melody was hidden
In Memnon's statue, which at sunrise play'd?
Perhaps thou wert a priest—if so, my struggles
Are vain, for priestcraft never owns its juggles.

Perchance, that very hand now pinioned fast,
Has hub-a-nobb'd with Pharaoh, glass to glass:
Or dropp'd a halfpenny in Homer's hat;
Or doll'd thine own, to let Queen Dido pass;
Or held, by Solomon's own invitation,
A torch at the great temple's dedication,

I need not ask thee if that hand, when arm'd,
Has any Roman soldier maul'd and knuckled;
For thou wert dead and buried, and embalm'd,
Ere Romulus or Remus had been suckled:
Antiquity appears to have begun,
Long after thy primeval race was run.

Thou couldst develope, if that wither'd tongue
Might tell us what those sightless orbs have seen,
How the world look'd when it was fresh and young,
And the great deluge still have left it green!
Or was it then so old, that history's pages
Contain'd no record of its early ages?

Still silent, incommunicative elf!
Art sworn to secrecy?—then keep thy vows,
But prithee tell us something of thyself—
Reveal the secrets of thy prison-house;
Since in the world of spirits thou hast slumber'd,
What hast thou seen, what strange adventures number'd?

Since first that form was in this box extended,
We have above ground seen some strange mutations:
The Roman empire has begun and ended,
New worlds have risen, we have lost old nations—
And countless kings have into dust been humbled,
Whilst not a fragment of thy flesh has crumbled.

Didst thou not hear the patter o'er thy head,
When the great Persian conqueror, Cambyses,
March'd armies o'er thy tomb with thundering tread,
O'erthrew Osiris, Orus, Isis,
And shook the pyramids with fear and wonder,
When the gigantic Memnon fell asunder.

If the tomb's secrets may not be confess'd,
The nature of thy private life unfold;
A heart has throbb'd beneath that leathern breast,
And tears adown those dusky cheeks have roll'd;
Have children climb'd those knees and kiss'd that face?
What was thy name and station, age and race?

Statue of flesh—immortal of the dead—
Imperishable type of evanescence—
Posthumous man, who quits his narrow bed,
And standest undecayed within our presence:
Thou wilt hear nothing till the Judgment morning,
When the great trump shall thrill thee with its warning.

Why should this worthless tegument endure,
If its undying guest be lost forever?
Oh, let us keep the soul embalm'd and pure,
In living virtue—that when both must sever,
Although corruption shall our frame consume,
The immortal spirit in the skies may bloom!

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