

The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN, AND YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.—JEREMIAH VI. 16.

TORONTO, CANADA, SATURDAY, JUNE 12, 1841.

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VOLUME IV.]

Poetry.

To the Editor of the Church.
COLERIDGE.

Sir,—I send you a jewel of rare price. It is part of one of the Sybilline leaves of Coleridge, with original notes by the poet himself, that have never, I believe, appeared in print. They were written in pencil on the margin of his own copy of his poetical works, from which I took them. I have now, in my possession, notes and observations on several other of the poems, which I will most probably forward to you. Your's &c.
O.
Brock, H. D., May 24th, 1841.

ODE ON THE DEPARTING YEAR.

1.
Spirit who sweep the wild harp of Time!
It is most hard, with an untroubled ear
Thy dark inwoven harmonies to hear!
Yet mine eye fix'd on Heaven's unchanging clime
Long when I listened free from mortal fear,
With inward stillness and submitted mind.

4.
Departing year! 'Twas on no earthly shore
My soul beheld thy vision! Where alone
Voiceless and stern, before the cloudy throne
Aye Memory sits; thy robe inscribed with gore,
With many an unimagined groan
Thou storiedst thy sad hours: Silence ensued,
Deep Silence o'er the ethereal multitude
Whose locks with wreaths, whose wreaths with glories shone.
Then, his eye wild ardours glancing,
From the choir'd Gods advancing,
The Spirit of the Earth made reverence meet
And stood up, beautiful, before the cloudy seat.

NOTES.

* When strange blunder! and very suspiciously interlined on the part of the Composer or volunteer Corrector of the Press. † Submitted. ‡ A bowed mind! in the original copy: Mr. Carey greatly prefers it to "submitted." § The Rhythmus of this Stanza, I venture myself to pronounce excellent.

OBSERVATIONS

ON THE IV. CHAPTER OF REVELATIONS, BEING THE EPISTLE FOR TRINITY SUNDAY.
By a Clergyman of the Church of England.

THE CHERUBIM OF EZEKIEL.

Let us now with this key approach the mystery of Ezekiel's vision, and see if it will open unto us, that through it we may reach the mystery of John's vision. Ezekiel was one of those who were carried away captive with Jehoiachin their king, when Jerusalem was taken by Nebuchadnezzar, (2 Kings, xxiv.)—the Lord permitting his prophet's captivity for his people's sake, as he so ordered Daniel's also, that they might be his voice to them in their exile, the one at the commencement, the other even to the very conclusion of their captivity, to show that God had not forgotten to be gracious.—Jeremiah was not now carried away, but was left at Jerusalem to be the voice of the Lord to those remaining there. Accordingly, in the vision to Jeremiah of the two baskets of figs, (Jer. xxiv.) the one good, the other bad, so as not fit to be used, God makes known his gracious purposes of acknowledging those that were carried away captive, and of setting his eyes upon them for their good, while his judgment should overtake the others, to consume them from off the land.

Now in this vision of Ezekiel before us, we have the Lord coming to acknowledge his people in their captivity. The glory of the Lord, leaving the temple at Jerusalem to visit this band of mourning exiles by the rivers of Babylon. He comes to his prophet Ezekiel, (c. 3.) and the Spirit of the Lord is there upon him by the river Chebar, as upon John in the isle of Patmos—the brightest vision in the darkest hour.

Ezek. i. 4.
"And I looked, and, behold, a whirlwind came out of the north, a great cloud, and a fire infolding itself, and a brightness was about it, and out of the midst thereof as the colour of amber, out of the midst of the fire."

Under the power of the Spirit he looks for the vision of the Lord, and lo, there breaks on his view in the distant horizon, a great cloud whirled rapidly onward by a whirlwind, and, therefore, necessarily appearing in a pillar form. As it approaches nearer, he sees within it a burning flame—and here a miracle strikes his sight. The flame breaks not through the cloud, but like a flame in a furnace that strikes the top, and then darts down again its tongue of fire, so does this flame roll and fold itself upon itself, within the cloud, under the controlling hand of some supernatural power—"A fire infolding itself" in the thin veil of a transparent cloud!

This is the pillar of cloud and fire that took the command of the host of Israel, to lead them out of Egypt, (Exod. xiii. 21, 22,) the fire not seen by day, being obscured by the sun, and veiled by the cloud, but seen through the cloud by night as a pillar of fire. That the one was thus within the other we see by Exod. xiv. 24, where it is said, "The Lord looked through the pillar of fire and of the cloud." It is the same glory of the Lord that dwelt between the Cherubim, and that now appears to the prophet.

As it draws nearer he sees in the heart of the flame an amber colour, the peculiar glow of intense heat, and around the flame he sees a brightness lining the cloud within—a furnace with a crystal roof.

Verses 5 and 6.
"Also out of the midst thereof came the likeness of four living creatures. And this was their appearance; they had the likeness of a man."
"And every one had four faces, and every one had four wings."

As the cloud of glory drew nearer, it opened out more and more in the distinctness of its parts into that "appearance of the likeness of the glory of the Lord," (c. 28.) which he now proceeds to describe part by part. A throne of glory, supported upon the wings of four living creatures. Those four living creatures had the likeness of a man, but this likeness extended no further than to the erect figure and gait of man, for they were not in other respects like man, as their description testifies, having four faces, and having feet like an ox.

Verses 7 and 8.
"And their feet were straight feet; and the sole of their feet was like the sole of a calf's foot: and they sparkled like the colour of burnished brass."

In entering upon the examination of these living creatures, we are to recollect that our object is not to inquire whether they resemble the Cherubim of Moses, in appearance—but whether the key that opens the mystery of those, will open the mystery of these also—whether these shadow forth the Church in ultimate glory. In the Cherubim of Moses, we had no description of

their form given; but merely that they had faces and wings. We had their nature given—one with the Mercy-seat, and their station—in the glory. Now, here we have the reverse: we have not their nature given, but we have instead, an accurate description of their form; and we have also their station in the glory. Now, in the Cherubim of Moses, their nature marked them out as the Church—so here their form does the same, however singular, or grotesque, or inexplicable, that form may otherwise appear. This we now proceed to consider.

By feet in this verse must be meant the entire limb, a part for the whole, as in the next verse by hand is meant the hand and arm; for we see the Cherub afterwards stretching forth the hand, (x. 7.) which it could not do without an arm. By the sole of the feet appears to be meant also the hoof or foot itself. Their legs and feet, therefore, were like those of a calf or ox—not crooked like the hinder legs, but straight like the fore-legs of the ox; and this is a beautiful distinction, as we shall see immediately. Their feet and legs appeared to be made of brass for strength; and they were dazzling to behold. This beautifully corresponds with the description of the Church of God, and also with the description of the body of Jesus; and we know the Church also is His body.

The harvest was the end of the husbandman's year of waiting. On the threshing-floor he reaped the reward of his toils, treading out the wheat with his *heaviest* oxen, and gathering it into his barn, and burning up the chaff with fire.

God's day of coming out against his adversaries is called His day of harvest—when He comes to reap the world and thresh the nations. Now all grow together till the harvest; but "then shall ye return and discern between the righteous and the wicked;" "for the day cometh that shall burn as an oven, and all that do wickedly shall be as stubble;" "but unto you that fear my name, ye shall go forth and grow up as calves in the stall;" and become as heavy oxen, whose every tread ponderous shall tell upon the threshing-floor; "and ye shall tread down the wicked, for they shall be as ashes under the soles of your feet, in the day that I shall do this, saith the Lord of Hosts. (See Mal. iv. 2, 3.) "For he shall gather them as the sheaves into the floor. Arise, and thresh, O Daughter of Zion, for I will make thine horn iron and thy hoofs brass." (Micah iv. 12, 13.)

Now, we see why these living creatures are represented with feet like oxen. And why with the straight feet of oxen only? The weight of the oxen in threshing being chiefly on the tread of the fore-feet. And why like brass? All descriptive of a power and strength that will overcome and endure in the day of harvest and burning. With reference to this day of purification it is, that the feet of Jesus, the great conqueror, who is to tread the wine-press alone, are represented also like polished brass, burning as if in a furnace. (Rev. i. 15, and Dan. x. 6.)

The Cherubim of Moses are not so described, because there the Church is not considered with respect to any passing state of militancy, but as to its ultimate state of glory—all warfare over, enjoying the favor and glory of Him who hath made her more than conqueror. But here the Church is so described, for the comfort of the Jews in their then captive state, and for the encouragement of the Jews in their now suffering and dispersed state; to show to them and to the world, that though they had been given into the hands of the nations, yet would it be found for their good; (Jer. xxiv. 5.) and the day would come when it would be seen that the very imprisonment into which they had been cast, was but as a stall of the Great Husbandman, where his Jewish flock had been laid up, till they (Mal. iv. 2.) should come forth grown to the strength and might of the Israel of God.

Verse 8.

"And they had the hands of a man under their wings." Hands as well as wings—ability to execute as well as readiness to go. The hand of a man, because in the wonderful mechanism of it, there is a facility and capability of execution beyond any member of the most powerful animal. All this is true, but it is not the full truth intended here. They are, indeed, also necessarily provided with hands, in order to the giving forth of the coils of judgment in x. 7, but it is, perhaps, chiefly to point them out to us as human nature, and that all their actions, however wonderful or within the nature of angels only, are nevertheless the actions of men, and that not of men in a weak, suffering state, but in a more than angelic state, the glorified Church the instrument of God's will and power.

Verse 10.

"As for the likeness of their faces, they four had the face of a man, and the face of a lion, on the right side: and they four had the face of an ox on the left side; they four also had the face of an eagle."

Four faces. Observe it is not four faces as often represented in the pictures of them—but four faces on one head. Why, what feature of the Church in glory shall we find here, when the face of the inferior animals is united with that of man, bringing up before the mind a form and combination of features too hideous to look upon. That, however, which in nature would be revolting, when considered as an emblem of things desirable or great, becomes in the same proportion pleasing to the mind, by presenting vividly to the eye what the thought is itself anxious and labouring to conceive. Of this there is no more remarkable instance than the vision before us. The Spirit of God wishes here to show forth the future dominion of the Church, when not merely one land would be the conquest of one people, but all God's people shall hold the dominion of all God's works, man receiving into his hands again through the second Adam, those reins of creation-rule which dropped suddenly from the hands of the first Adam, by the paralyzing and benumbing stroke of sin. To show forth this, God has grouped all animated creatures here below in one emblem, uniting them to man; and by the specific combination, leading us back to the first and the only instance given unto us of the supreme dominion of the first Adam over all earth-creation—for that recorded of Noah, (Gen. vii. 8, 9.) was not the dominion of Noah, but the power of God. Supreme dominion was given to Adam by commission, (Gen. i. 28.) and the reins placed in his hand by act in Gen. ii. 19, when God causes every living thing to pass in review before Adam, to receive their names from him, as their liege lord. Now, the very classification of every living thing given there, is the very classification that is combined in emblem here, (c. 20.) "Adam gave names to all cattle, and to the fowl of the air, and to every beast of the field;" or as we denominate them from the lost dominion, tame animals, and wild beasts, and fowls. These are grouped in em-

blem by the union of the heads of each tribe,—the lion of wild animals—ox of tame—the eagle of fowls,—the faces of each with the face of man in one head, is, therefore, to show forth by the dominion that man hath lost, the type of that which the Church will regain. This is confirmed, yea, fully established beyond controversy, by the eighth Psalm, where the very same classification is used to describe this regained dominion of man, (c. 7.) sheep and oxen forming one class, beasts of the field another, and, (c. 8.) fowl of the air and fish of the sea, the third—both having been formed out of the same waters. (Gen. i. 20.) That it is future dominion we see by comparing v. 6, "Thou hast put all things under his feet," with Heb. ii. 8, "Now we see not yet all things put under him." That it is not only future, but resurrection, yea, ultimate dominion, after millennial glory, we see from comparing same passage (v. 6.) with 1 Cor. xv. It is quoted in v. 27, and in v. 28 we read, "When all things shall be subdued unto him, then shall the Son also himself be subject unto him that put all things under him, that God may be all in all." The Mediator having made God and man one, the office of mediator ceasing, and man being face to face with God—man for ever—the head of all dominion under God—holding the censer of creation's praise. It is then ultimate and complete dominion; for I reject the opinion of those who hold the reign of v. 25 to be Christ's present session at the right hand of God.

While, then, for the particular object of the vision in Ezekiel, the form of the feet represents the Church in its Jewish aspect, at the commencement of the Millennium, as breaking down its enemies, going forth conquering and to conquer. The form of the head represents the whole complete Church or body of Christ, holding, beyond the reach of time, superior, ultimate, and immutable dominion, and both united in the one figure, show forth the Millennium Church as consisting partly of its eternal and partly of its passing state—the union of the Resurrection Church and of the Restoration Church—Peter, James, and John, with Moses and Elias in the glory of Jesus. Now, we may see the reason, therefore, that the feet of the Cherubim of Moses are not represented to us, because the feet show the Church in its passing state on earth; and the Cherubim of Moses are to show the Church only in its complete state, all swallowed up in glory.

And now, also, we can see why the feet of the living creatures, in Revelation, are not particularly described to us as the feet of those living creatures are here—because the opening of the seals in the vision of John, serves the same purpose, by showing the coming victory to the Church militant, and coming glory to the Church triumphant.

Where are now gone our revolting feelings? Now we can turn and gaze with delight upon the vision, and read in the emblem of our future dominion the consummation of grace and glory.

Verse 11.

"Thus were their faces: and their wings were stretched upwards; two wings of every one were joined one to another, and two covered their bodies."

The living creatures have their wings so stretched out, and so stand themselves, as to be a seeming support for the throne and glory that rested above them. If we conceive, therefore, some antique throne of royalty, of four colossal figures which stand one at each angle; and if these have each a pair of wings, so stretched out as to form sides also, to support the basements of the throne, the tips of the wings of each will just touch each other, and we shall be able to take in clearly the description of the texts before us. We see by verse 22, that an expanse or basement called a firmament was spread over their heads and extended wings, on which was placed the seat of glory. The application of this to the Church we shall see by taking the next verse with it.

Verse 12.

"And they went every one straight forward: whither the Spirit was to go, they went; and they turned not when they went."

This is to show us the mind of the Church as one with the mind of God, having no will of its own—saying, "thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." To show us also the preparedness of the Church in its present state to execute the mind of the Spirit. No preparation—not even so much as once turning itself round to proceed on any command, being necessary: the readiness being instantaneous with the will of God. This is signified by the living creatures not turning as they went, but going every one straight forward.

Therefore, it is, they have four faces, that one face might be pointing in each direction, so that there would be no occasion to turn round the face to go in the required way, there being one face of the Cherub ready in that way. What can more show forth the oneness of mind and purpose of the Church with God, and the oneness of action. God working in it both to will and do. God dwelling in the Church as a spirit in a body. The Church, the body of Christ, the fulness of Him who filleth all in all!

What but the glorified Church—the Church then raised as well above all mutability as above all principality, can be thus spoken of? The Church in ultimate glory? And what key will open the mystery of this vision if this open it not; or what can, by any possibility, move through the intricacies of its wards with freedom and facility, if it be not this where the emblem so vividly sets before us every feature of the anti-type—every line of beauty and of glory—and where the anti-type again animates the very emblem into reality?

Verse 13.

"As for the likeness of the living creatures, their appearance was like burning coals of fire, and like the appearance of lamps: it went up and down among the living creatures; and the fire was bright, and out of the fire went forth lightning."

Having thus minutely described the living creatures, he speaks again of their general appearance, as he did on their approach to him. He saw them as fire at a distance; but they approached gradually nearer, that he might be able to describe them minutely. Now, that being done, they seem to be receding again, and Ezekiel is now able again to take in their appearance more generally.

The coals of fire are afterwards used as symbols of judgment, (x.) the lightnings that come are the same. We see the lightnings in Rev. iv. flashing from the throne where the living creatures are. We see them on Sinai—we see them every place where God is as a God of judgment. From the cloud in which he shall come to judgment shall the fire and the lightnings come forth, as we see by Ps. l. into which very cloud are taken up God's sleeping, and suffering Church, before the judg-

ments roll. (Is. xxvi. 19, 20, 21.) How far previously to that time any portion of the departed Church may be so used of God, then, at least, we know shall this text be verified.

Verse 14.

"And the living creatures ran and returned as the appearance of a flash of lightning."

In this verse the prophet sees them receding still further off, and in the discharge of their high office, shooting athwart the heavens like the lightning's flash. It is thus Jesus is described, whose second coming is to flash like lightning upon the world. Therefore, it is thus his Church is described, instantaneous in action as in volition; and this description gives an idea beyond what we can now take in, of the attributes with which the redeemed Church shall then be invested, to fit it for its station, where through eternity, it is made, over all ranks of intelligences, the great instrumentality of the Almighty power of God, as it will be through all ages the great exhibition of the inexhaustible grace and glory of the Godhead.

Verses.

15.—"Now as I beheld the living creatures, behold one wheel upon the earth by the living creatures."

16.—"As it were a wheel within a wheel."

17.—"They turned not as they went."

18.—"And when the living creatures went, the wheels went by them: and when the living creatures were lifted up from the earth, the wheels were lifted up."

19.—"For the spirit of the living creature was in the wheels."

We are here introduced to another part of the same emblem, but not a portion of the living creatures; yet as it is given in order to bring out the emblem more fully, and to make more distinctive that of which the whole is a type, we cannot pass it over.

Beside each living creature stood a wheel, so high as to be dreadful, (v. 18.) and full of eyes, not connected with the living creatures by any visible union, but instinct with the same life and speech—one with them in mind—will—action, in every attribute and quality, but no visible union—the union only seen in the unity of the same spirit. In order to show this more clearly, each was a wheel within a wheel—that is, as it were, one hoop or rim running through and crossing another, so as to present to the eye four half-wheels or faces—one-half in each direction, with one of the faces of the living creatures, and for the same purpose, so that of the wheel too it might be said, "they went every one straight forward; whither the Spirit was to go they went, they turned not as they went." The wheel within the wheel not being used to signify, as the phrase is commonly used, complexity or perplexity of operation, but simplicity and unity of readiness and motion.

This proves it is not another emblem, but a necessary part of the same emblem, yet necessarily exhibited without any visible connection.

To show to us that Providence itself is subservient to Grace; all providences being ordered and working together for the good of God's Holy Church. Though the eye of flesh sees not the union, yet the eye that rests on the page of Revelation sees it, eye, and sees in it the only consolation that can support the soul when flesh and heart both fail—seeing in the God of Providence the God of Grace, and the Lord of Glory—the strength of his heart and portion for ever.

When we say Providence is subservient to Grace, we do not barely mean providences, but that the world itself is spared for the sake of the Church—yea, was made for the sake of the Church, and will be destroyed for the sake of the Church; and will be made again for the sake of the Church, and this union, now invisible, will only then be fully manifested, when the Church is planted in the New Heaven and New Earth, the crowned Bride of the Second Adam, Creation's Lord. Providence and Grace then terminating, both in unchanging glory.

We have another feature still of the glorified Church in this emblem.

Verse 24.

"And when they went, I heard the noise of their wings, like the noise of great waters, as the voice of the Almighty, the voice of speech, as the noise of an host: when they stood, they let down their wings."

The voice of the Almighty is the voice of thunder. (John xii. 29.) Now these three are the characteristics only of Jesus, (Rev. i. 15; Dan. x. 6; Rev. x.) or of the Church the body of Jesus. We have them all united in that one simultaneous, universal outburst of praise from the hearts of all the servants of God, when the marriage of the Lamb is come, and the Bride hath made herself ready. (See Rev. xix. 6.)

Here also we have the time when the wings of these living creatures shall first find their echo in the glorious and soul-thrilling reality of a Church uprising from the opened grave, and descending out of the opened heavens, and filling earth and heaven with one tumultuous shout of resurrection joy.

In the very motion, then, of the wings of these living creatures, are we made to hear the voice of his Spouse. The utterance of speech they have not, lest, perhaps, speech might have seemed somewhat incongruous in an emblem of such varied combination, or, as God is not a superficial painter, because the waving of their plumes of light could, in his hands, be made equally to characterize them as emblematic of the Church, and to seal that Church as the key of their mystery.

O! what a devoted linner is our gracious God, adding to every emblem line after line of varied beauty, that no shade of uncertainty might cloud for a moment the object of His Everlasting Love!

Having given us this description of the living creatures, whereby we see their metness for glory, the prophet now presents them to our view in that station for which they were made meet, upbearers of the glory of God. Above their wings is spread the basement of terrible crystal, upon which sits enthroned in glory one in the appearance of the likeness of man, and encircled by the bow of God,—he that dwelt between the Cherubim in the tabernacle, now riding upon the wings of a Cherub. The same glory is shown to us as leaving the temple before the final destruction of it by Nebuchadnezzar, and ascending into heaven.

In chapter x. 18, we see it withdrawing from the temple. In xi. 22, 23, we see it departing from the city, and taking its station on the Mount of Olives; and in ver. 25, it is received up into heaven, where it now is, and where it is shown to us in the vision of John, which will (D. V.) be the subject of our next. This glory we see again descending upon the Mount of Olives, returning by the way of the east, (xiii. 2, 4.) and filling the house of God, (5.) "And I heard him speaking unto me out of the house; and the man stood by me, and he said,

Son of man, the place of my throne, and the place of the soles of my feet, where I will dwell in the midst of the children of Israel for ever." (6, 7.)

JESUS, the Angel of the Covenant—JESUS, the man of sorrows—who wept over the beloved city as he entered it, seeing over it the Roman sword, and poured out his heart over the temple as he left it, (Matt. xxiii. 37,—"O Jerusalem! Jerusalem!—Behold your house is left unto you desolate. Ye shall not see me henceforth, till ye shall say, Blessed is he that cometh in the name of the Lord. And Jesus went out, and departed from the temple," to weep tears of blood, and ascended into heaven from the Mount of Olives.

JESUS, who will stand again upon the Mount of Olives, (Zech. xiv. 4.) and fill that house with glory, (Hag. ii. 6—9.)—"The Lord my God shall come, and all the saints with Thee." (Zech. xiv. 5.) The saints—the living creatures—the Church in glory—the channels of his grace—the executors of his power—the sharers of his throne.

The mind is lost—the sight is blinded—the creature is consumed in the blaze of this great glory. O! what is man, that thou art mindful of him, or the son of man, that thou so visitest him, crowning him with thine own glory and honour!

"Not unto us, O God; not unto us; unto thy Name be the glory; for thy mercy and thy truth's sake." Worthy—worthy alone is the LAMB that was slain to receive this honour, and glory, and blessing.

O my Friends, seeing we look for these things, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for and hastening on the coming of the day of God. BELOVED, seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent, that ye may be found of him in peace, without spot and blameless. (2 Pet. iii. 14.)

O God of all grace and glory, pour upon us the Spirit of the suffering Jesus, that we may indeed be made meet for this glory that is to follow. O let thy Holy Spirit be shed abroad in our hearts, that we may ever have a hope that will not make us ashamed—that justified by faith, and having peace with thee, through Jesus, we may rejoice evermore with a joy unspeakable and full of glory!

Crucify the flesh, O our God—take away our own spirit—empty us of ourselves—fill us with the abundance of thy grace—quicken the new life within—increase our faith—enlarge our hope—absorb our affections, heart and soul, unto thine own self—and be thou only, O God, our LIFE here, our GLORY hereafter! Amen.

PASTORAL POETRY.

The prodigious number of writings, called pastoral, which have been current in all times, and in all languages, shows there is something very taking in this poem. And no wonder, since it addresses itself to three leading principles in human nature, the love of ease, the love of beauty, and the moral sense: such pieces as these being employed in representing to us the tranquillity, the innocence, and the scenery of the rural life. But though these ideas are of themselves agreeable, good sense will not be satisfied unless they have some foundation in truth and nature. And, even then, their impression will be but faint, if they are not further employed to convey instruction, or interest the heart.

Hence the different forms under which the poem hath appeared. Theocritus thought it sufficient to give a reality to his pictures of the rural manners. But in so doing it was too apparent that his draught would be often coarse and unpleasant. And, in fact, we find that his shepherds, contrary to the poet's rule,

—immunda crepent ignominiosaque dieta.

Virgil avoided this extreme. Without departing very widely from the simplicity of rustic nature, his shepherds are more decent, their lives more serene, and, in general, the scene more inviting. But the refinements of his age not well agreeing to these simple delineations, and his views in writing not being merely to entertain, he saw fit to allegorise these agreeable fancies, and make them the vehicles of historical, and sometimes even of philosophic, information.

Our Spenser wanted to engross all the beauties of his masters; and so, to the artless and too natural drawing of the Greek, added the deep allegoric design of the Latin poet.

One easily sees that this enigmatical cast of the pastoral was meant to give it an air of instruction, and to make it a reasonable entertainment to such as nauseate a writing.

"Where pure description held the place of sense." But this experiment was out of place, as not only inconsistent with the simplicity of the pastoral character, but as tending to rob us in a great degree of the pleasure which these amusing and picturesque poems are intended to give.

Others, therefore, took another route. The famous Tasso, by an effort of genius which hath done him more honour than even his epic talents, produced a new kind of pastoral by engraving it on the drama. And, under this form, pastoral poetry became all the vogue. The charming Aminta was even commended by the greatest scholars and critics. It was read, admired, and imitated by all the world.

There is no need to depreciate the fine copies that were taken of it in Italy. But those by our own poets were by far the best. Shakespeare had, indeed, set the example of something like pastoral dramas in our own language; and in his *Winter's Tale*, as you like it, and some other of his pieces, has enchanted every body with his natural sylvan manners and sylvan scenes. But Fletcher set himself, in earnest, to emulate the Italian, yet still with an eye of reverence towards the English poet. In his *Faithful Shepherdess* he surpasses the former, in the variety of his paintings and the beauty of his scene, and only falls short of the latter, in the truth of manners, and a certain original grace of invention which no imitation can reach. The fashion was now so far established, that every poet of the time would try his hand at a pastoral.—Even Surly Ben, though he found no precedent for it among his ancestors, was caught with the beauty of this novel drama, and, it must be owned, has written above himself in the fragment of the *Sud Shepherd*. The scene, at length, was closed with the *Comes of Milton*, who, in his rural paintings, almost equalled the simplicity and nature of Shakespeare and Fletcher, and, in the purity and splendour of his expression, outdid Tasso.

In this new form of the pastoral, what was childish before is readily admitted and excused. A simple moral tale being the groundwork of the piece, the charms of description, and all the embellishments of the scene, are only subservient to the higher purpose of picturing the manners, or touching the heart.

But the good sense of Shakespeare, or perhaps the felicity of his genius, was admirable. Instead of the deep tragic air of Tasso, (which has been generally followed,) and his continuance of the pastoral strain, even to satiety, through five acts, he only made use of these playful images to enrich his comic scenes. He saw, I suppose, that pastoral subjects were unfit to bear a tragic distress. And besides, when the distress rises to any height, the wantonness of pastoral imagery grows distasteful; whereas the genius of comedy admits of humbler distresses, and leaves us at leisure to recreate ourselves with these images, as no way interfering with the draught of characters, or the management of a comic tale.—But to make up in surprise what was wanting in passion, Shakespeare hath, with great judgment, adopted the popular system of