

# THE GUARDIAN.

"HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

VOLUME II.

LONDON, N. S. WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 21, 1839.

NUMBER 8.

## POETRY.

### PRaise FOR THE PAST.

"Hitherto hath the Lord helped us."—1 SAM. vii. 12.  
O thou who hast hitherto led us along,  
And borne with our weakness, and banished our fears,  
To thee, O! our God, would we tune the glad song,  
Whose mercies have filled up our circle of years.

The winter's keen frost, and the spring's blooming flowers,  
The summer that ripens the autumn's rich store;  
The seed time and harvest, the sunshine and showers,  
Thy promise fulfilled, and thy love we adore.

Though crosses and trials we meet on our way,  
Our cup though with sorrows our father may fill;  
The rod of correction but quickens delay,  
The cup is the medicine to cure us of ill.

Though slow is our progress in lessons divine,  
And little we learned through the years that are past,  
Yet precept on precept, and line upon line,  
Thou givest to teach us improvement at last.

Though time is so fleeting, uncertain and short,  
And earth but a desert for spirits to roam;  
Yet life is the portal that leads to thy court,  
And death but the herald to usher us home.

O! sweet is the hope of the mansions above,  
And sure is the promise the gospel has given;  
And precious the Saviour, whose infinite love,  
Redeems us from earth, and prepares us for heaven.

## LITERATURE.

### THE FIRST ESTABLISHMENT OF A PRESS AT TAHITI.

In the deeply interesting details of the labours of the Missionaries in the Polynesian Islands, we have an account of the difficulties which they experienced, in conveying clear notions to the natives, previous to the introduction of printing, and the account given by Mr. Ellis (who acquired a knowledge both of the art and of bookbinding,) of the first establishment of a press at Tahiti is so curious and amusing, that we cannot refrain from quoting it. This important event took place in 1817, but some years previously, copies of a Spelling Book had been circulated in the island. The King Pomare took very great interest in the press, and was present when operations were commenced.

"Soon after his arrival," says Mr. Ellis, "I took the composing-stick in my hand, and observing Pomare looking with curious delight at the new and shining types, I asked him if he would like to put together the first AB, or alphabet. His countenance was lighted up with evident satisfaction, as he answered in the affirmative. I then placed the composing-stick in his hand; he took the capital letters and fixing them, concluded the alphabet. He put together the small letters in the same manner, and the few monosyllables composing the first page of the small spelling-book were afterwards added. He was delighted when he saw the first page complete, and appeared desirous to have it struck off at once, but when informed that it would not be printed till as many were composed as would fill a sheet, he requested that he might be sent for whenever it was ready. He visited us almost daily until the 30th of June 1817, when having received intimation that it was ready for the press, he came attended by only two of his favourite chiefs. They were, however, followed by a numerous train of his attendants, &c. who had by some means heard that the work was about to be commenced. Crowds of the natives were already collected around the door, but they made way for him, and after he and his two companions had been admitted, the door was closed, and the small window next the sea was darkened, as he did not wish to be overlooked. The King examined with great minuteness and pleasure the form as it lay on the press, and prepared to take off the first sheet ever printed in his dominions. Having been told how it was to be done, he jocosely charged his companions not to look very particularly at him, and not to laugh if he should not do it right. I put the printer's ink-ball (rollers, which are now generally used, were not then invented) into his hand, and

directed him to strike it two or three times upon the face of the letters. This he did, and then placing a sheet of clean paper upon the parchment (or tympan,) I covered it down, and turned it under the press, and directed the king to pull the handle. He did so; and when the paper was removed from beneath the press, the chiefs and attendants rushed towards it to see what effect the king's pressure had produced. When they beheld the letters black and large, and well defined, there was one simultaneous expression of wonder and delight."

The king afterwards printed one or two more sheets, and while he was so engaged, the first was shown to the crowd without, who, when they saw it, raised one general shout of astonishment and joy. His majesty, on being asked his opinion of the art, said he had supposed, as many do who have never seen the process, that the letters were pressed upon the paper, not the paper upon the letters. Multitudes continued to throng the office for a long time afterwards, and extraordinary value was attached to the books printed there, the natives coming from great distances to obtain them. Mr. Ellis, it appears, also found much facility in acquiring the language by setting up the types.

### LONDON SUPPLIED WITH THE SCRIPTURES.

The following statement is taken from the London Tract Society's monthly periodical, called the "Christian Spectator:"—

In the spring of 1838, efforts were made to ascertain how far the humbler classes of the metropolis were supplied with the Holy Scriptures. About one hundred and twenty-one thousand and eighty houses, inhabited by upwards of seven hundred thousand persons, have since been visited; and it appears that thirty-five thousand three hundred and ninety-three families, consisting of about one hundred and seventy-five thousand persons—a population greater than that of Birmingham and Coventry—had not a page of the Word of God. It appears that one person, aged about eighty years has been destitute upwards of seventy years; about forty families have been destitute from fifty to seventy years; fifty-two families from forty to fifty years; two hundred and twenty-four families between thirty and forty years; one thousand one hundred and sixty families between twenty and thirty years; three thousand one hundred and sixty families between ten and twenty years; six thousand and eighty-four families between five and ten years; eighteen thousand four hundred and twenty families between one and five years; and upwards of six thousand families never had any part of the Scriptures in their possession!

The ignorance frequently displayed of the name and contents of the Scriptures is scarcely credible. Many persons inquired what was meant by a Bible or a Testament; and some, when asked if they had either, replied that they had, but then produced some other publication. Education, in many districts, is fearfully neglected; yet out of about one hundred and nineteen thousand six hundred and thirty names reported, sixty-seven thousand two hundred persons, or nearly four-sevenths of them, can read the Word of God.

It is truly gratifying to state, that in connection with these inquiries, the committee of the British and Foreign Bible Society resolved to prepare an edition of the new Testament and Psalter in one volume, and to supply the existing destitution by means of the Bible associations and other institutions formed for the benefit of London. Care has also been taken to prevent an improper use of this bounty by even the most reckless. In addition to the stampedness of the gift, the mark of the society is stamped on the outside, the title-page, and the last leaf, so that were there any intention to dispose of it, it must be greatly mutilated, and would thus be rendered unsaleable. Every pawnbroker in the metropolis has likewise been apprised of the circumstances of the case, and guarded against lending on any copy the smallest sum.

The distribution, so far as it has proceeded, has furnished cause for satisfaction and gratitude. The Scriptures have generally been received with much thankfulness. There are, however, instances of a different class, chiefly among Roman Catholics; yet many of these have gladly received the Word of God. A desire to possess the entire Scriptures has caused a considerable increase in the number of subscribers for them, and this result, it is fully expected, will become more and more apparent.

The cost of this supply of London will be about five thousand pounds, and for about twenty-five thousand pounds every family in the cities, towns, and villages of our country may receive the same boon. The proposal to give the Scriptures to every negro who could read, in our West Indian colonies, on the day of emancipation, excited great interest, and was carried into full effect; and we hope, before many months have elapsed, to record that a similar boon has been conferred on the whole population of England.

### From the Church of England Quarterly Review. A COUNTRY LIFE.

Of all the modes of life which man can pass, a country one is the most innocent, the most serene and peaceful, and, taking every thing into consideration, the most happy. It is the most calculated to promote our moral welfare, our spiritual improvement, and is at the same time most conducive to our physical health. Man was originally intended to pass such a life by his Maker. God, who has created all things, has in a more especial manner rendered visible the operations of his Almighty hand in the country. The different processes of vegetation, the changes of the seasons and the effects resulting from them—the decay and the revival of nature—the firmament above us, adorned with its innumerable bright and shining lights—the beautiful and verdant surface upon which we walk, enamelled with its bowers of various hues—the feathered inhabitants of the forest, the grove and the plain, pouring forth their daily concert of joy and delight—these, and ten thousand other objects as beautiful, as varied, and as sublime, all attest the existence of that great Being, who is above all, and in all, and through all, and by whom all things consist, and stamp in characters of life and light His omnipotence, benevolence and wisdom. And where, it may be well asked, can these marks of an all-wise and superintending Providence be so well observed, or so thankfully acknowledged, as amidst the quietness and retirement of a country life? The dweller in the city is so surrounded by the works of his fellow-men, and is so much accustomed to regard the art and skill of the creature, that he is apt to forget, and, to his shame be it spoken, to disregard the omnipotence of the Creator. The din of the crowded street, the noise and excitement of the public Assembly, the bustle and hurry of commerce and amusement, too often, alas! repress that still small voice within, which, if permitted to speak, would tell us of the great source from whence all blessings flow. But the case is far different in the country. There, every individual, whatever may be his station, is almost insensibly affected by the softening and ameliorating influence of the scenes and objects which surround him. The most humble peasant who pursues his labours in the fields, however unenlightened by education, cannot fail to draw conclusions from the very occupation in which he is engaged, favourable to his condition as an accountable being. He cannot cast the grain with his hand over the ploughed field, and watch its progress from a small and tender green shoot, until it becomes a stately plant, ripened for the sickle, without being led sometimes to consider within himself who has given this quickening power to so small a grain, which enables it to grow to a tall stem? When he goes forth to his daily task in the morning, and returns at the even-tide, he beholds the great luminaries of the sky shining forth in all their brightness and glory—the thunder-storm, the rain, and the sheeted lightning, the torrent descending from the mountain's side, and the snow-wreath enveloping all around with its fleecy covering,—sights and scenes which he is accustomed to witness at different periods of the year—all these induce him to reflect, and lead him up to Him "who hath given life and light to all, who causeth his sun to shine and his rain to fall on the just and on the unjust." But if the uneducated individual who earns his bread by the sweat of his brow is liable to be so affected by the scenes and operations of nature, how much greater will be the effect produced upon the educated man, who has had his feelings and sensibilities heightened, and his powers of observation drawn forth and improved by intellectual culture!

We are told in holy writ that Isaac went forth to meditate at even-tide. We cannot doubt but that the subject of his meditations was the goodness, the benevolence, and the wisdom of God, as displayed in the works of the creation. And who is there who possesses a cultivated mind, and a heart attuned to feeling, who does not sometimes experience a wish to imitate the example of the patriarch of old,