

THOUGHTS FOR AUGUST.

Then cometh harvest.—

Lift up your eyes, and look in the fields; for they are white already to harvest.—*John iv. 35.*

Spring and Summer, with all the bright hopes they inspired, have now all but passed away, leaving to us the realization of those hopes to which the advent of the former gave birth, and which were fostered by the heats of the latter.

The year has now assumed the appearance of a matron, who, having laid aside the girlish graces of early youth, appears in the full perfection of womanly beauty, and in whom the transition from youth to maturity has been so gently developed as to create a doubt whether instead of beauty lost, fresh charms have not been added.

In like manner it may be said of the present month, that it partakes in some degree, of the beauties of those preceding; and the meadows, from which has been already gathered the crop that now fills the barn yard, again smile with the renewed herbage springing up in the first mown fields.

In a little work, entitled a "Harvest Tract", the harvest and its associations have been made the basis of many interesting and apposite reflections.

The allusions to pastoral and agricultural labours in the Old Testament are indeed calculated to awaken in all minds a lively interest, as links connecting those old times with our own; while, in the New Testament, the harvest is made the type of the most solemn and momentous of all coming events relating to man.

"From the time of Adam," runs the tract, "who was himself the first harvest reaper, the Bible gives many notices of harvest time. We read of Cain being a tiller of the ground, and bringing his first harvest fruits as an offering to the Lord; again we read of Noah becoming a husbandman, or man of the ground, gathering, doubtless, rich crops from the renewed face of the earth. Next, of Ruth following her kinsman's reapers during the barley harvest in one of the valleys of Bethlehem; two hundred years later, we read of the prophet Samuel, when he was bent with age, at the time of the wheat harvest, calling down rain and thunder from heaven." Before giving another extract from the same work, it may be added that our Saviour himself when looking around on the glories of the harvest season, uttered to his

disciples the verses with which this notice is headed.

The second quotation we make shows us that the harvest season is the fulfillment of a covenant promise, pledged to man with all the solemnity and earnestness with which we can conceive the Divine condescension capable of yielding to man.

"One summer-evening after the deluge, Noah was seen standing by an altar of burnt offering. No sooner did the blood of slain animals stream over its sides, and the column of smoke from the blazing sacrifices reach the sky, than a rainbow was observed to span the sky. God pointed out to that aged worshipper that bow in the cloud. He told him it was the sign and seal of a new covenant. In that grant the harvest has a foremost place: while the earth remaineth, seed time and harvest, and cold and heat, and summer and winter, and day and night, shall not cease."

When we remember that we read in sacred narrative of the consequences of the failure of the harvests in Egypt, and when we reflect on the misery entailed on European countries, in modern days, by a similar failure, we cannot but feel convinced that the promise "that seed time and harvest shall not cease", was well suited to the advent of that new order of things which succeeded the deluge.

Again, harvest may be looked at by the Christian in another light; by him it may be regarded as a picture of true religion, which having plucked out the tares of this world is now about "to reap in joy", and this view is confirmed when we remember that the Bible takes a harvest field to describe the joys of salvation. "They joy before thee according to the joy of harvest."

August owed its name to Augustus, in the same way that from Julius Cæsar was July named, by our Saxon ancestors it was, however, called, according to Verstegan, *Arn-monath*, *barn-month*, from the filling of their barns; *arn* meaning harvest. It was also named, according to other authorities, *Wood-monath*.

To the sportsman, August in this country lacks one great attraction; to him the 12th sounds no note of preparation. To him the bloody harvest to be gleaned on the moors is denied, and true cause of thankfulness have we all that such is the case. In our happy land the frightful list of poaching penalties is unknown, and to every man is conceded the right