

POETRY.

A PARAPHRASE OF THE LATTER PART OF THE 19th PSALM.

Intended as a continuation of Addison's hymn.

By a Lady in England.

But not the vault of heaven alone
The Hand omnipotent makes known :
Sun, moon, and stars, a countless host,
With all the planets shall be lost,
The music of each radiant sphere
Shall cease to charm earth's listening ear,
And, world on world, the splendid whole,
Shall perish, like a burning scroll.

Not so the moral world!—there shines
A Sun that sets not, nor declines—
The uncreated WORD—who brings
The balm of healing in his wings ;
Whose intellectual ray can pierce,
The sullen mind's dark universe,
Till, in each deep recess, we trace
The greater wonders of His grace.

His perfect law converts the soul,
And leads it to the promised goal;
His testimony, sure and wise,
With mental strength the weak supplies,
His righteous judgment, to the heart,
True peace and holy joy impart,
And his commandment, clear and bright,
Pours on the eye celestial light.

Let but His fear the bosom sway,
All other fears are chased away
Pure is the fountain whence it flows,
The bliss unchanging it bestows—
The judgments which his lips decree,
Are framed in truth and equity;
Richer than gold with gems combined—
Sweeter than honey twice refined!

Be Thou, Eternal Lord, my stay!
My Lamp by night, my Sun by day!
Then the material world may flee,
Heaven's shining fabric cease to be ;
Kindled by thine almighty breath,
The soul can never taste of death,
But will to countless ages prove,
A monument of Power and Love!

BETHLEHEM.

From Travels in the Holy Land, by William Rae Wilson, F. S. A.

I set out for the village of Bethlehem, six miles east of Jerusalem, signifying 'the house of bread,' from the fertility of the soil, which is distinguished from another Bethlehem, in the tribe of Zebulun, and the scene of events, which to Christians, must ever invest it with the deepest interest.

Bethlehem, thou sacred spot,
Henceforth be thou my paradise ! O God
Eternal, infinite ! thou, who thy Son,
Thy only Son hast giv'n, to save the race
Of Adam's long bewailed posterity,
Holy art thou !

I entered this sacred village with feelings which quite overpowered me; the birth-place of our adorable Redeemer; the very cradle, I may add, of the Christian world. Truly was the prediction fulfilled, 'In this place will I give peace, saith the Lord of Hosts.' One circumstance most forcibly struck me on entering an archway or gate. On the left were wells of antique structure, each three feet in circumference, which unquestionably must have been the same that David longed to drink from, when he waged battles with the Philistines, who occupied the place, and which was well adapted for a garrison. These are 'just by the gate;' and were so much fill-

ed up with earth, that I was reminded, that to stop them up was constructed an act of hostility. (2 Sam. xiii. 14-16)

But it is impossible to find language sufficiently strong to describe my emotions on setting my feet on the chosen spot of earth, where the 'Holy child' was born, in all the helplessness of sinful, suffering humanity, reposing in the arms of his mother, in a mean stable: I can only say, that at this deeply interesting moment, my heart was filled with the most profound and awful reverence, accompanied with heart-felt gratitude, when calling to recollection those ever memorable words, 'To you a child is born, to you a son is given, the Saviour who is Christ the Lord,' and who, passing by the nature of angels, took upon him that of man, leaving the bosom of his Father, for an heritage of the greatest poverty. Here was produced that inscrutable mystery of godliness—God manifest in the flesh, in whom all things most opposite, which never met before, existed in harmonious union—the divine and human nature, peace and righteousness. There reigned around at the moment, a truly glorious solemnity amidst the serenity and stillness of the day, and in unison with that train of reflection which the inspection of such scenes raised to a high degree of excitement. The sun shone most brilliantly, and in its beams I beheld a piece of glass or metal, on the roof of the convent, which sparkled with a beauty altogether indescribable, like a star; and, by a singular coincidence, it was exactly over the spot of the nativity. The evening was calm, as if the general pulse of life stood still; and as the host of heaven one by one appeared in the fine deep blue sky, like the patriarch of old, I yielded to the pensive influence of the hour in such a place, and walked forth at eventide, to meditate in the valley beneath, where the heavenly host appeared to the shepherds watching their flocks.

[After describing the Franciscan convent, the narrative proceeds thus]—I was conducted to a small staircase by the monks, of about twenty steps, leading to the chapel of the nativity under ground. This is thirty eight feet long by twelve broad, and ten in height, lined and floored with marble. Before the altar forty massy silver lamps are kept constantly in a state of illumination. On the east side of it is that identical spot where the Son of the most high God came forth and was cradled in obscurity.

Glory to God on high, who gives
Love's grace, and peace on earth,
Let every sex and age adore,
And sing our Saviour's birth.

This is most distinctly formed of white marble, inlaid with Jasper, surrounded with a radiance of glory, and with the following inscription:—'Hic de Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est.' To the right of it, and at the distance of seven paces, is pointed out a low recess, hewn out of the rock, raised about two feet above the floor, and scooped in the form of a manger, and of white marble, where the infant Jesus lay, which belonged originally to a caravansary, or inn. (Luke ii. 7, 12 16.) Here also lamps of silver always burn, though faint symbols indeed, of that ever blessed light, which, rising here, shed its healing influence upon the nations. I saluted, on my knees agreeable to the practice of pilgrims, the spot of the nativity, although no kind of ceremony was necessary to enhance, or to express that sublime sense I entertained at this moment, of those eternal obligations, which, in common with the whole race of mankind, I am under, to that now glorified and exalted being, who, in this place, entered upon his estate of humiliation and suffering.

[After describing other places connected with the chapel, the account concludes thus.] I now departed from this deeply interesting spot, at the moment when the brethren of the convent were engaged at their devotions. At this time, the organ, with its solemn tones, an instrument employed in the earliest ages, and so eminently calculated to attune and elevate our affections to the Supreme Being, sounded its sacred notes, accompanied by the loud chanting of the juvenile choir. This, combined with the exalted consideration that my feet were passing over that blessed ground where a child was born, whose name

was 'Counsellor, Wonderful, the Prince of Peace, and only begotten of the Father,' and whom the Almighty had commanded all the angels to worship, was most deeply affecting, penetrated the very heart, and overpowered me with profound veneration. 'If I forget thee,' O Bethlehem, 'may my right hand forget its cunning.'

ROBERT HALL'S FIRST SERMON.

He was appointed agreeably to the arrangement already mentioned, to deliver an address in the vestry of Broadmead chapel, 1 Tim. iv. 10: 'Therefore we both labor and suffer reproach because we trust in the living God, who is the Saviour of all men; especially of those that believe.' After proceeding for a short time, much to the gratification of his auditory, he suddenly paused, and covering his face with his hands, exclaimed, 'O ! I have lost my ideas,' and sat down, his hands still hiding his face. The failure, however, painful as it was to his tutors and humiliating to himself, was such as rather augmented than diminished their persuasion of what he could accomplish, if once he acquired self-possession. He was therefore appointed to speak again on the same subject, at the same place, the ensuing week. This second attempt was accompanied by a second failure, still more painful to witness, and still more grievous to bear. He hastened from the vestry, and on retiring to his room, exclaimed, 'If this does not humble me, the devil must have me !' Such were the early efforts of him whose humility afterwards became as conspicuous as his talents, and who for nearly half a century, excited universal attention and admiration by the splendor of his pulpit eloquence.—Greg.

Query. Does not a case like this show the propriety if not the expediency and necessity of written sermons before the preacher? The common notion of a sort of inspiration in extemporary preaching seems to be condemned here.—Gos. Mes.

To give our discourses weight, it should appear that we were led to them by our texts.—Bishop BURKETT.

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