

THE

MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE



Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia and the adjoining Provinces.

"IF I FORGET THEE, O JERUSALEM! LET MY RIGHT HAND FORGET HER CUNNING."—PSALM 137, v. 5.

Vol. III.....No. 12.

HALIFAX, DECEMBER, 1857.

2s. 6d. per ann. in advance.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

The Late Rev. Thomas Hunter.

At the close of a sermon on Revelation vi. 8, lately preached by the Rev. Dr. Macfarlane of Duddingstone (who was Convener of the General Assembly's Committee at the time our lamented missionary, Mr. Hunter, was ordained), the following eloquent and appropriate reference was made to the distressing circumstances which have deprived the Church of Scotland of her first missionary to the North-West of India—

We cannot close these observations on this vision of the Apocalypse without calling more especially on the people of God to "come and see," that while it passes by and awakens awe, it may not deprive them of the rich consolations of the Gospel. No doubt, death is a universal appointment; and by a law, whose influence none can elude, this world, while delivered from the foolish and vain—from the wicked and the vile—from the plagues and curses of the community, is also bereft of the good as well as the bad—the useful as well as the injurious—of public and private benefactors—of those who have turned many to righteousness—who have saved states—who have adorned families—who have proved in their day and generation a blessing to the world, and an honour to the religion of their Saviour and God. Nor is it to be supposed that the righteous are clear of the destroyer's hoof when the judgments of God are abroad on the earth—when, in the language of Cowper:

"God proclaims
His hot displeasure against foolish men,
That lead an atheist life,—involves the heavens
In tempests, quits his grasp upon the winds,
And gives them all their fury, bids a plague
Kindle a fiery boil upon their skin,
And putrify the breath of blooming health.
He calls for famine, and the meagre fiend
Blows milder from between his shriv'ld lips,
And taints the golden ear. He springs His mines,
And desolates a nation at a blast."

In such seasons, brethren, it is not to be anticipated that while the pestilence walks in darkness, or destruction wastes at noon-

day, the very best of God's people should see from the secret place of the Most High, safe and secure, the gathering judgments. Much less do they stand on sacred ground rescued from the inroads of death, when God withdraws His restraining hand, and man is left to be a scourge to his fellow. How sad then the spectacle of the promiscuous massacre of thousands—corpse heaped upon corpse, and limb torn from limb, in quivering agony, till sickened by the sight, there is nothing left us but to close our eyes upon the appalling vision. How indiscriminate the fury that spares neither age nor sex—meeting nothing in an infant's cry, or a mother's prayers—nothing in the helplessness of youth, or in the inhumanities of age—nothing in the tenderness of a common nature, or in the possession of a common form, to appease its vengeance or slake its thirst. How refined the atrocity which impales the father with other tortures than those of iron—which, if it spare him the slow fire or suspend the sword for a little over his head, does so only to reserve him for the heavier ordeal of agonies he cannot alleviate—of tortures inflicted on the wife of his bosom or the light of his eyes, which he can as little avert in his impotency as he can avenge in his wrath! Alas, for the horrors of such a scene of atrocity, darkening the page of history, and leaving behind it its foulest stains on the human race! The wilderness, where the serpent hisses and the wild beast howls—the tornado, in its fury spreading desolation far and wide over the plains—the volcano, with its liquid fires, in one fell swoop hurrying promiscuously thousands into the grave—are but the faintest emblems of this cruelty. War, thou hast no wound—famine, thou hast no scourge—pestilence, thou hast no sting, to inflict like this. Its story is borne to the ends of the earth on the piercing shriek of an outraged humanity; and as it arises before God, laden with the sufferings of the dead, and the cry of the fatherless, and the widow, and the orphan, methinks I here

another voice, not low and feeble but loud as the sound of many waters and of mighty thunderings. "How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the face of the earth?"

It is not for me, on such an occasion, and in this place, to detail those scenes of suffering with which we are all familiar, or to expose those wounds which are bleeding so profusely in the homes and in the hearts of many around us. With these a stranger may not intermeddle; and in the hour of sore bereavement—when the sister is mourning for the brother, or the wife for the husband—when the parent is mourning for his offspring, or the son for the father who gave him birth—we would only remind them of One who, depriving death of its terrors and the grave of its sting, has let in the light and comfort of another world on all the darkness and desolation of this. What a blessed thing it is we have such an High Priest within the veil, all sufficient in His grace as He is all-prevalent in His intercession, accessible to us at every season, and never more so than when pressed down with affliction, we are ready to faint or fail by the way. And far less, my friends, would we venture to penetrate the councils of the Almighty, and drag into light those secret things which belong to Him. There is a wide-spread diversity of opinion as to the immediate causes which have hurried on this sad catastrophe, and it is only right that so momentous an event should be thoroughly sifted in its origin, as it has made itself felt in its effects. This much, however, we believe, that when that investigation is complete, it will not be found that the blame of this wide-spread disaffection is resting with him who, taking his life into his hand, has been proclaiming to the her then the glad tidings of salvation. Rather would we say, in the language of a writer in the leading journal of the day: "Above all, let the British Government assume a more consistent and dignified position than heretofore,