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Poetry.

The Song of the Year.

FOURTH QUARTER—WINTER.

The notes of my song are harsh and are loud,
I come with a dismal wail;
Whilst the fields and the forests, the valleys and hills,
Only tell of the snow and the hail:
The moaning of storms o'er the lakes and the streams,
Are the tones that my voice usher in;
And symphonies' loud roar and surge's wild sweep,
Serve to keep up the noise and the din.

Tho' all dreary without, and cloudy and cold,
Is the scene I present to the view;
And ruin alone over nature seems spread,
And my comforts are brief and are few:
Yet around the warm ingle are smiles to be seen;
Where the fire blazes fiercely and high;
Where true hearts in friendship and love circle round,
All the world's cruel taunts they defy.

Tho' the soil lays a cold and stiff dreary clod,
By a mantle of snow covered o'er;
The barn snugly stowed with summer's rich fruits,
Secures for the birds a full store:
The swift gliding sleigh pursues its quick course,
Amid sounds the sharp tinkling bells;
And joyous and happy, in throngs hurry on,
The proud village youths and their belles.

The stout woodman's axe in the forest's vast depths,
Is heard as he falls the tall tree;
In pride of the masculine strength of his arm,
And spirits so buoyant and free:
Beneath his strong stroke fall the fir and the pine,
The maple—the ash, and the oak;
While the teamster now tries with his steers duly trained,
To patiently yield to the yoke.

But hark to the post-boy's shrill sounding horn,
As the forest the sharp echo wakes;
With a burden of news to his saddle close pack'd,
Through the village his progress he makes:
Little heed he the tidings he carries along,
If of wealth or of joy or of woe;
Only anxious his well-secured load to lay down,
On his errand he cheerfully goes.

Tho' gloomy my reign, and tho' surly its tones,
Thus, these are my mingled voice;
Tho' sadness seems marked on my old withered face,
Yet still I cause some to rejoice:
Tho' the day may be wild—its period is short,
The night has its comforts and joy;
And like all in time and its changing career,
Its charms will partake of alloy.

Christian Miscellany.

"We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts and reasonings of pure and lofty minds.—Dr. SHERBURN."

Biblical Antiquities—The Kings of Assyria.

Colonel Rawlinson, the celebrated English antiquary, the greatest of living archaeologists, has, of late, as is well known, devoted all his learning and efforts to the task of deciphering the inscriptions obtained by Layard and the French explorers from among the ruins of Nineveh, and other Assyrian towns. His success has been considerable; but he announces in the last received number of the London Athenæum a triumph which transcends all previous ones in importance, being nothing less than the discovery of records of the reign of Sennacherib, and of his war against Jerusalem and King Hezekiah. "I have succeeded," says he "in determining the Assyrian kings of the lower dynasty, whose palaces have been recently excavated in the vicinity of Mosul; and I have obtained from the annals of those kings contemporary notice of events which agree in the most remarkable way with the statements preserved in sacred and profane history." From this paper, which is a pretty long one, in the Athenæum, we abbreviate some of the more interesting particulars.

The king who built the palace of Khorsabad, excavated by the French; he says, is named, *Sarainia*; but he also bears, in some of the inscriptions the epithet of *Shalmaneser*, by which title he was better known to the Jews. One of the tablets, which is much mutilated, records his going up, in the first year of his reign against the city of *Samarina*, (Samaria) and the country of *Beth Homri*, (Omri) was the founder of Samaria; whence he carried off into captivity into Assyria no less than 27,280 families of the conquered, settling in their places Colonists from Babylonia. This event, which is commemorated in the Bible as having occurred in the sixth year of Hezekiah, Col. R. supposes must have taken place subsequently to

the building of the palace of Khorsabad, on one of the tablets of which the monarch styles himself "conqueror of the remote Judea."

Sennacherib, the son of Sarginia or Shalmaneser, is the King who built the great palace of Koyunjik, which Mr. Layard has been recently excavating. The inscriptions on one of the colossal bulls at the grand entrance of the excavated palace, shows that in the third year of his reign, he conquered LULIGA, King of Sidon, and then, while turning his arms against some other cities of Syria, learned of an insurrection in Palestine, where the people had risen against their King PADIYA, who had been placed over them by the Assyrians, compelling him to take refuge with Hezekiah at Jerusalem, Padiya was restored by Sennacherib; and a quarrel then arising with Hezekiah about tribute, the proud King of Kings chastised him by ravaging his kingdom, threatening his capital, compelling him to pay a heavy and ignominious fine; and taking away a portion of his lands and villages, and transferring them to other more faithful, or more prudent vassals. The inscriptive history here tallies so perfectly with the Biblical that "the agreement," says Colonel Rawlinson "extends even to the number of the talents of gold and silver which were given as a tribute." The inscription only covers seven years of Sennacherib's reign, and, of course, does not reach the event of the miraculous destruction of his army, which Col. R., supposes to have happened fourteen or fifteen years later. The discovery of a complete set of stone annals, should it be fortunately made by Mr. Layard, will prove an event of incalculable interest.

Col. R. tells us there is in the British Museum an Assyrian relic, containing a tolerably perfect copy of the annals of Essar Haddon, the son of Sennacherib, in which is recorded a further deportation of Israelites from Palestine; which he says explains a passage in Ezdra, in which the Samaritans speak of Essar Haddon as the king by whom they were carried into captivity. Many of the relics sent home by Mr. Layard from Nineveh refer to Essar-Haddon, whose wars were, fortunately for the Jews, directed chiefly against Babylonia, Susiana, and Armenia. He was the father of Sarcus, or Sardanapalus, the last of the Assyrian kings, with whom the great empire, in fact, and the vast city, its metropolis, fell, never to rise again.

"One of the most interesting matters," says the learned antiquary, "connected with the discovery of the identity of the Assyrian kings is the prospect, amounting almost to a certainty, that we must have, in the bas-reliefs of Khorsabad and Koyunjik, representations from the chisels of contemporary artists, not only of Samaria, but of that Jerusalem, which contained the Temple of Solomon." "I have already," he adds, "identified the Samaritans among the groups of captives, portrayed upon the marbles of Khorsabad; and when I shall have accurately learned the locality of the different bas-reliefs that have been brought from Koyunjik, I do not doubt but that I shall be able to point out the bands of Jewish maidens who were delivered to Sennacherib, and perhaps to distinguish the portraiture of the humbled Hezekiah."

There is something of a character of sacred grandeur almost, as well as a most solemn interest, which attaches to the researches of Col. Rawlinson.

Fashionable Amusements.

BY J. R. PACKARD.

Who that has ever thoughtfully considered the great import of human life, has not come to the conclusion that the end to be sought is, to glorify God and thereby secure his favour, without which our natural and acquired talents—all the enjoyments which birth, and riches, and popular influence can give, only serve to enhance our future wretchedness; that, which entices from God and unfits us for communion with him, threatens our dearest interests. Worldly amusements divert the mind from serious objects; hence those who manifest extreme

anxiety for the welfare of souls, strive most to bring them into disrepute.

If fashionable amusements existed in the days of our Saviour, we have no proof that Christians engaged in them. If Paul visited the theatre, it was only to teach and preach the gospel to those he could not meet elsewhere. It is often argued that persons professing godliness send their children to dancing school, and allow of their playing cards; even, they, themselves, sometimes indulge in them. This is admitted and lamented. But a majority of Christians deem them decidedly wrong—as contrary to the Scriptures, which enjoin us that "whatsoever we do, do all the glory of God." Did any good person ever indulge in them without, on retiring, exclaiming, "Virtue is gone out of me." Do those who thus indulge themselves exhibit conformity to Him who was "meek and lowly in heart?" Have they their "affections on things above and not on things on the earth." Does the "word of God dwell richly in them in all wisdom?" Are they "instant in prayer," that they may live as "strangers and pilgrims on the earth?" Do they love the society of Christians, and are they ever found in the prayer-meeting, and do family duties suffer no neglect? Are they willing to contribute of their means to send the gospel to those who have it not? If not, we have great reason to conclude that they are not what they should be.

How many thousands of dollars are yearly expended in fitting up dancing saloons, in extravagant dress and useless ornaments.—If we only look around us, how many sons and daughters of affliction do we behold suffering for the comforts of life. How many institutions of usefulness suffer for pecuniary aid. How many there are destitute of the benefits of reading the Bible, and of hearing the gospel proclaimed. And shall an enlightened community allow such a waste simply for amusement! Diversions so purchased are bought at an infinite cost. When the "dead, small and great, shall stand before God" at the judgment, will not the heathen rise, and condemn this waste that denies them the gospel?

Let all those who feel the need of reformation in these things, not only refrain from them, but make a decided effort to induce others to do so. Many pretend that dancing schools reform the manners; but do they improve the mind? Do they secure a well-cultivated taste? Do they give light to the understanding? Do they impart a knowledge of business, habits of industry and strict economy? All these requirements are indispensable for a young gentleman or lady. They are to go out, be and act for themselves; to sustain the relations of husbands or wives, and take their position in society. Without these accomplishments religion, science and civilization, even, would be lost to the world.

It cannot be said that any good arises from card-playing, except as a means of passing off time, which is most certainly an evil, since all our time, might be pleasantly and profitably employed, either in storing our minds with useful knowledge, or in caring for the sick, or those distressed for the comforts of life. Our Saviour and his disciples aimed at doing good, therefore we should try to imitate their example. Convivial pleasures draw us from the "fountain of living waters" to "broken cisterns which can hold no water." Look at the increasing and melancholy list of early deaths caused by consumption, especially among females, and may we not trace many of these back to the ball-room? Exposed, after being a long time in a heated room, to the inclemency of a cold, wintry morning, perhaps thinly clothed, and these heats and chills off repeated, no wonder that the lungs become so deeply affected that they become an easy prey to death. Oh friends, beware, lest destruction come upon you as a whirlwind, and there be none to deliver.—*Vermont Christian Messenger.*

A New Year—Looking Forward.

We are now beginning a new year. Should you live through this year, (and that question is one of awful uncertainty,) it will be an important period to you. A year rolling over an immortal and accountable being, will do more than carry him onward towards the judgment. It will do much towards fixing habits upon him which will decide his eternal destiny. The wind let loose upon the ocean for a given period rolls up the waves upon the shore, not merely while it blows, but the waves continue to roll long after the wind has retired to slumber. Just so one period of time commands another, and one set of habits determine what shall follow; and thus one year, with an iron grasp, takes hold of the year which is to follow. It is this, that will make the present year so important to my reader. Go through this year with a moral character decidedly wrong, and, should you live, you will find that the next year you are bound in cords that are new, and in withs that are green. This year will have much to do with all future time that you spend on the shores of time, and much to do with the uncounted ages which will meet you, after you have launched on the ocean of eternity.

Pause, then, a moment, and look forward. If, during this year, some professed Christians shall forget their vows, and have their love grow cold, and go backward, and walk no more with Christ, will they have to say, at the day of accounts, that you aided and encouraged them by your influence, in praying Christ to depart out of our coasts?

If the heart of your minister should faint; if the waters of life flow not in the sanctuary; if the sabbath-school is not a blessing to the youth and children; if those whom you love most are not converted to God; if your own soul lives in darkness and doubts, will these things be owing to you—because you are unfaithful to God and to your own soul?

Look forward, forward, my reader. You now stand at the beginning of a new year. You hail it with joy. You hope to live through it; if you do, Will you redeem the time, and spend it in the fear of God?

You hope to gain property, and to be prosperous in business; if so, Will you now promise to use it as the steward of the most high God?

You hope to be surrounded with friends and kindred; if you are, Will you set them an example that will be likely to lead them to Christ, and not to cause them to curse your name and memory for ever?

You hope to have the Lord's day rest, the Bible, the preached word, and the offers of eternal life. I hope and pray that you may. If you do, will you improve these mercies to the salvation of your soul? Oh! give me the promise, before you lay down this paper, that if this year be your last, it shall be improved the best, and that every day you will look forward to your end.

Former Times.

A great many years ago, before the Wesleyan Missions were much thought of, a gentleman wrote to say he would send a hundred pounds for the Missions. The Secretary was astonished at so large a sum being given, and showed the letter to the Committee; and they all thought that the gentleman could not be in his right mind to give away so much money, and that, before they took it, they had better make some inquiries about him.

In answer to these inquiries, they were told that the gentleman knew very well what he was doing, and that he wished to devote a hundred pounds to send a Missionary to the Heathen.

Blessed be God, things are altered now; for when a kind friend gives a thousand pounds for the Missions, instead of thinking he is mad, we see that he is only just getting the right use of his senses, in feeling it to be his duty to give back to God part of the property with which He has intrusted him.—*Juvenile Offering.*