

Passing away.

BRIGHTLY did the sun look down on Ocean's vast expanse, on its sheet of boundless blue, and swiftly did a gallant ship speed on its way. But soon clouds obscured the sun; darkness brooded over the sea, like a funeral pall; the waves roared angrily, and lashed the sides of the vessel; and as it went down beneath the mighty waters, a wail, loud and long, came up from the sinking crew. The rolling billows, white with foam, gradually became calm, their murmurs grew fainter and fainter, and, as the last low sound fell upon the ear, it seemed to whisper, "passing away." Far, far remote from the noise and din of the busy world, in a quiet and secluded nook, stood a vine-clad cottage. A silver stream ran murmuring near it; trees, in all their natural wildness and beauty, shaded it from the scorching rays of the sun; the humble violet, and blushing rose, wafted their perfume around. It was indeed a fair and lovely spot; but storm-clouds rent the air, the deep thunder muttered in the distance, and the forked lightning flashed fearfully about. One moment of dread calm, then a loud crash, and the beauty of the scene had fled; its loveliness had forever "passed away." 'Twas a calm summer's morn. The sun arose with more than his wonted splendor; beautiful flowers were spread around in the greatest profusion, and on each blade of grass, rivalling the most brilliant diamonds, sparkled bright drops of dew. But, ere the sun had reached his meridian, the flowers, parched by his beams, had drooped their heads, and died, and the morning dew had "passed away."

From a wild and lonely spot, thickly shaded with heavy forest trees, issued a small streamlet. Gently o'er hill and dale it pursued its course, now meandering through green meadows, and anon forcing its way among rocks and stones; sometimes, almost hid from view, and again bursting into sight, having gained, in its wanderings, additional size and strength. Yet still, as it glided along, whether in the dark shade of the forest, or brightly glittering in the sun, whether calmly gurgling, gaily dancing or wildly dashing onward, it too seemed to murmur, "passing away." Alone, unwatched and ununsured, a delicate flower raised its head, and opened its tiny petals to the light, diffusing beauty and fragrance around. But, though fair, it was also fragile. Crushed and broken, it soon fell to the earth; and, as it wafted abroad its last faint gush of perfume, it seemed to breathe forth the words, "passing away." In a shady dell, roamed a fair child, culling flowers from the banks of the stream that rippled at her feet. Twining a garland for her head, she bent over the clear waters, and as she there saw her youthful brow so gaily ornamented, with a bounding step she hastened homeward; but, ere there, the flowers had withered and died; and, while with tearful eyes she gazed upon them, she received, thus early, her first lesson of the vanity of all things earthly, that, like flowers, they swiftly "pass away." The sun had set behind the western hills, and twilight was gradually deepening into night, as a strain of music, low and sweet, fell upon the ear. Louder and clearer came the notes, till at length they burst forth into one rich, full peal; then, grew fainter and fainter, weaker and weaker; but, as its last, low tone died in the distance, it feebly murmured, "passing away." In a dark and lonely room, sat an aged man. His head was bereft of hair, save a few locks, which were completely silvered o'er. Life, with him, was ebbing fast; his course was nearly run. The threescore years and ten allotted to man, he had more than numbered; but, to him, they had brought nothing only "vanity and vexation of spirit;" and, as he silently gazed on a clock which stood near, whose distinct and regular ticking told of the flight of time, he felt that he too, like the moments, was swiftly "passing away." Thus is mutability stamped on all things: the fashion of this world, and even the heavens and earth, will finally "pass away;" nothing is exempted; wherever we turn our eyes, we behold stamped, as in words of fire, "passing away;" and on every sound that comes to our ears, are borne the words, "passing away! passing away!"

MARGARET.

The Bible.

WHAT sort of a book is this, that even the wind and waves of human passion obey it? What other engine of social improve-

ment has operated so long, and yet lost none of its virtue? Since it appeared, many boasted plans of amelioration have been tried and failed; many codes of jurisdiction have arisen, and run their course and expired. Empire after empire have been launched on the tide of time, and gone down, leaving no trace on the waters. But this book is still going about doing good—leavening society with its holy principles—cheering the sorrowful with its consolations—strengthening the tempted—encouraging the penitent—calming the troubled spirit—and soothing the pillow of death. Can such a book be the offspring of human genius?—does not the vastness of its effects demonstrate the excellency of the power to be of God?

No proof of the present existence of a single Star or Planet.

SIR JOHN HERSCHEL, in his "Essay on the power of the Telescope to penetrate into space," a quality distinct from the magnifying power, informs us that there are stars so infinitely remote as to be situated at the distance of twelve millions of millions of millions of miles from our earth; so that light, which travels with a velocity of twelve millions of miles in a minute, would require two millions of years for its transit from those distant orbs to our own; while the Astronomer who should record the aspect or mutation of such a star, would be relating not its history at the present day, but that which took place two millions of years gone by.

MECHANIC'S MAGAZINE.

Beautiful Passages.

[Selected from a little work entitled "Nature," by Ralph Waldo Emerson.]

To go into solitude, a man needs to retire as much from his chamber as from society. I am not solitary whilst I read and write, though nobody is with me. But if a man would be alone, let him look at the stars. The rays that come from those heavenly worlds, will separate between him and vulgar things.—One might think that the atmosphere was made transparent with this design, to give man, in the heavenly bodies, the perpetual presence of the sublime. Seen in the streets of cities, how great they are! If the stars should appear one night in a thousand years, how would men believe and adore, and preserve for many generations the remembrance of the city of God which had been shown! But every night come out these preachers of beauty, and light the universe with their admonishing smile.

The stars awaken a certain reverence, because, though always present, they are always inaccessible; but all natural objects make a kindred impression, when the mind is open to their influence. Nature never wears a mean appearance. Neither does a wise man extort all her secrets, and lose his curiosity by finding out all her perfections. Nature never became a toy to a wise spirit. The flowers, the animals, the mountains, reflected all the wisdom of his best hour, as much as they had delighted the simplicity of his childhood.

In the woods, a man casts off his years as the snake his slough, and, at what period soever of life, is always a child. In the woods is perpetual youth. Within these plantations of God a decorum and sanctity reign, a perennial festival is dressed, and the guest sees not how he should tire of them in a thousand years. In the woods, we return to reason and faith. There I feel that nothing can befall me in life—no disgrace—no calamity—(leaving me my eye)—which Nature cannot repair. Standing on the bare ground, my head bathed by the blythe air, and uplifted into infinite space, all mean egotism vanishes. I become a transparent eye-ball. I am nothing. I see all. The currents of the Universal Being circulate through me; I am part or particle of God. The name of the dearest friend sounds then foreign and accidental. To be brothers—to be acquaintances—master and servant—is then a trifle and a disturbance. I am the lover of uncontaminated and immortal beauty.

Nature always wears the colours of the spirit. To a man labouring under calamity, the heat of his own fire hath sadness in it. Then, there is a kind of contempt of the landscape felt by him who has just lost by death a dear friend. The sky is less grand as it shuts down over less worth in the population.