

GENERAL LITERATURE.

THE YOUNG LAIRD.

(From the Halifax Guardian of the 2d inst.)

THE following striking and affecting narrative was selected by an unknown friend at sea, on the 12th of June, 1844, for publication in the Guardian, should it be acceptable to the editors. We think we can easily recognise in this communication, the well known and elegant pen, and the deep and ardent piety of an early and intimate associate, who repeatedly visited this station as a Medical Officer in the Fleet, and formed a pleasing and profitable acquaintance with a number of persons in this city.

In the Parish of Abernethy, (Perthshire) about four miles from the mansion house of Kilfogie, the residence of the Rev. Mr. Moncrieff, there lived a wealthy young laird. He revered Mr. Moncrieff the Pastor, as every one did; but he rather feared than loved him. He had neglected his duties and misimproved his pious education. He had forsaken the ways of the God of his fathers and had gone on headlong in the career of vice and wickedness. He was an heritor of the Parish and the representative of a distinguished family, and as such he had occupied a conspicuous seat in the house of God. This was now deserted; and he sought by every means diligently to shun the presence of the Pastor at home and abroad, as well as that of his associates in the discipline of the Church. Every one said that the young man was hastening on to ruin. His amiable spouse was now neglected and broken-hearted. His very children seemed to be forgotten; and the peaceful and happy fire-side scenes of his former days were lost sight of and forsaken, for the revolting scenes of drunken companions and blasphemers; his fine estate was fast melting away as the snow before the summer's sun; and pious and prudent parents pointed him out and set him before the eyes of their sons, as a painful example of the utter ruin, which the vices of gambling and drunkenness fail not to bring on a young man. The young laird soon wasted and wore out the powers of nature and exhibited, like the rest of his reckless companions, the enfeebled energies of a wasted and broken down constitution. He in fact found himself deserted by all his companions, tormented in his conscience, oppressed by severe bodily pains, and as he thought nigh to death. The instructions of his father, the tears of a pious mother, the family devotions in which he had been reared with a gush of a parental emotions, now rushed on his busy memory and conscience, and especially these words often uttered in his father's prayers: "O good and merciful God, the God of our fathers, remember in thy love our dear child! O grant that the grace of the good Spirit may be lodged deep in his breast; and may he stand up in our stead, when we shall sleep in the silence of the grave!"

The first dawn of this young man's sensibilities and the awakenings of his conscience, appeared in a gush of tenderness of spirit, toward his long neglected and amiable spouse, and his sweet little children. They were all hanging around him: he took his wife gently by the hand and said with tears: "My dear, canst thou forgive me the wrongs I have done thee?" She could make no reply: She burst into tears, and when the first surprise of her long-sorrowful mind, unaccustomed to such words of tenderness, was over, she replied in silence by kissing first the one cheek and then the other of her long estranged husband, and shedding a flood of tears in his bosom; while the children melted by the new and unusual tenderness of a father's voice, drew nearer him and sobbing as if their hearts would burst, affectionately kissed their afflicted father. "My dear!" said his spouse, as she witnessed his pain and mental distress, "shall we send for our dear old minister, Kilfogie?"—He waved his hand in a very dubious expression of his will: he was evidently overwhelmed at the idea of meeting the minister. She however ventured on her own course and whispered to the servant in attendance to send an express for the Pastor, and give a hint to the good man not to lose any time in coming to the Laird's sick-bed.

Kilfogie heard with surprise and sorrow of the mournful condition of the son of his old friend; and calling an attendant who always accompanied him in his pastoral visitation, he ordered him to

have two horses forthwith saddled; and in less than forty minutes from the time of receiving the message he was sitting by the bed of the sick Laird. There was a long and distressing silence. None of the parties seemed disposed to break it. The Pastor on his part was anxious to ascertain the true condition of his parishioner's mind. He saw his agony; but did it proceed from bodily pain or from conscience. He took the Laird by the hand, and began to remind him of the example set before him, by the good old man his father, now in heaven,—of the religious instructions by which his parents, and he, his Pastor, had laboured long to impress the word of God upon his soul and heart. "And oh! young man," said he "what a return hast thou made! We sowed what: nothing has yet sprang up in thy wicked heart and life but tares—all tares! Thy Maker and Redeemer called on thee, saying to thee, O young man give me thine heart. Oh how tenderly this call was followed up, by every means calculated to enforce it! But thou didst turn away from him; and thou—thou didst sin still more and more. Oh! thou hast made thy brow as brass and thy neck as a sinew of iron! Thou wouldst not hear Him that made thee. He stretched out his hands to thee all the day long; thou hast dashed from thee the cup of mercy held out to thy lips. Ah! sinful young man, laden with iniquity, thou hast forsaken the Lord, thou hast provoked the Holy One of Israel to anger; and now that anger is burning hot against thee." The Pastor paused, for he was overcome with grief. The anguish of the Laird seemed now insupportable; he groaned and sobbed out, "wo is me for I am undone! mine iniquity is ever before me—against Thee, O God, against Thee only have I sinned; and in Thy sight done all these evils." The Pastor rose abruptly and casting a mournful glance on the afflicted man, hurried out of the room, mounted his horse and followed by his attendant, stooped not until he reached his own door. "My good John," said he, as he threw the reins into the hands of his groom who helped him to dismount, "let the horses remain saddled, and retire not to thy bed, be ready at a moment's notice to attend to my call. John afterwards stated that according to orders he remained in the anti-chamber,—incapable of penetrating his master's intentions. But he soon discerned his master's purpose. Mr. Moncrieff wished to be in a spot where he could enjoy perfect retirement, for the purpose of wrestling in prayer for the young Laird; and there was no place like his own study, for that purpose.

During the whole night, John heard Kilfogie engaged in prayer for the heart-stricken penitent. He could hear him, prostrate on the floor, pleading, with strong crying and tears, for the poor perishing son of his eminent friend. He heard him say, "Oh! for his sake, for his dear sake, who hung upon the tree, thine own well beloved Son's sake, O Lord have mercy on this sin-stricken soul. Spirit of all grace, O life-giving Spirit, come in thy love, revive and quicken him: he is broken in the place of dragons: let the bones which thou hast broken yet rejoice. O bind up that broken heart! Look on his diseases, and his pains, and forgive him all his sins!" Just as the early dawn began to break in the east, the Pastor summoned John, and, setting off at full speed, in forty minutes he was again in the sick man's chamber. The Pastor walked up with a smart benignant smile. He had been like Jacob wrestling with the Angel of the Covenant; and he felt a cheering assurance of hope animating his soul, in humble confidence that he had prevailed at the mercy-seat. "O Kilfogie, come away," cried the distracted Laird, the moment his eyes fell on him, "my heart has been broken by the terrors of your message and the law of God, and O how I have longed these slow-moving hours past to see your face again. In the hour of my overwhelming darkness, after you left me, dear Pastor, and after I tried again and again to call on the Deliverer, a beam of hope seemed to spring up in my distracted soul. Oh! said I, there is, there is One mighty to save; God of my fathers, surely thou wilt not leave me in my extreme necessity! And now sit down, dear Kilfogie, and preach to me this Saviour; and tell me if there be in the holy word one drop of comfort for this burning spirit of mine?" This was a joyful moment to the Pastor's heart. He sat down by the bed-side, as he secretly breathed a prayer for wisdom, that he might speak a word in season to

the broken-hearted man; and he took the Laird by the hand, as the delicious tears of joy stole down over his cheeks—the spouse and children the while clustering around the bed of their benevolent husband and father. Then he opened his mouth and preached Jesus Christ and him crucified. It was an hour, said one present, of the most thrilling joy to all. He spoke of the love of God—of Christ, as God and man, our Redeemer, the head of the everlasting covenant; he discoursed of the atonement, its necessity, truth and perfection; he made a free and formal offer of the Saviour, to the distressed man, and in the name of his Divine Master, he called upon him to believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and declared to him officially that in doing this he would be accepted and saved. He next discoursed on the Holy Spirit—his divine person, his offices and work of grace on our souls, and the nature and necessity of a new heart; and he concluded by imploring in a fervent prayer, the plentiful effusion of the Spirit on the soul of his young friend, now coming up from the fearful pit, and from the miry clay! As he closed the address and the prayer, both of them wept some time in silence; the whole family were bathed in tears. The Laird first broke silence; he would no longer conceal his emotions. "O Lord" he exclaimed, "I believe, help thou mine unbelief. My Saviour, here I lay down my guilt and worthlessness at the foot of thy cross; and I accept thy blessed righteousness as freely offered and given to me. My Divine Teacher, thou blessed Spirit, O teach a poor wandering prodigal to come to Thee, O my God, and to walk in thy ways. Blessed and pitying Saviour accept a poor sinner, the vilest of the vile, who ventures at thy bidding to come in all his poverty and need to the foot of the cross; on thy atonement, and on that alone I rely. And O Redeemer, of poor perishing sinners, may I venture to call Thee my Redeemer. Then take this heart, it is thine; wash it in thy blood O my Saviour, to Thee I give it away, to Thee my God, I dedicate this body, this soul, and my all, O what a debtor to free grace! Thine I am now and evermore; for Thou hast redeemed me, Lord God of truth."

By a kind providence the Laird recovered and lived to a good old age, and gave, during a life of active and benevolent piety, satisfactory evidence of having been born of God.

SUMMER.

(From the Ladies' Temperance Mirror.)

The spring season, at first dreary and forbidding but afterwards awakening joyous hope in the bosom of the husbandman, has now given place to an auspicious summer.—The earth is even now robed in her emerald mantle. Warming suns and refreshing showers, have fostered the fruits of the ground, and produced a more than ordinarily abundant vegetation. He who has promised that summer and winter shall not cease, is fulfilling his promise. He who has pledged his word, that seed time and harvest shall continue, in regular succession, till the end of the world, has given the former, and is encouraging us, with humble confidence, to look to the latter. "God knows our wants, and God is kind." The changes of the whole "revolving years," infinite wisdom and goodness have rendered subservient to the benefit and happiness of man. Stern winter, with his denuded branches, and wide barrenness, possesses advantages peculiar to himself, independently on preparing us for the enjoyment of opening Springs, and returning summer.

In summer, nature's landscape exhibits peculiar richness, beauty, and variety. Look we to the grove or mead, the well cultivated field, or the pasture land with its almost spontaneous treasures, all are full of richness. And what endless beauty and variety: "Behold, said our Saviour, the lilies of the field, they toil not, and neither do they spin, and yet I say unto you, that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these." In the mingled colours of trees, and herbs, and flowers, what infinite combinations of loveliness! how admirably calculated to please the eye and to rejoice the heart of man.

In summer, the scenery of mountain and moor, of lake and sea, is unusually interesting. These objects, amid the coldness and desolation of winter, are too deeply clothed in gloom, to excite in the mind pleasurable emotions. We visit them not,