

POETRY.

THE PARISH CHURCH.

BY GEORGE MENZIES, NIAGARA.

Mine own beloved Zion, built upon
The eternal Rock of Ages! wheresoe'er
I roam, the blessed sabbath-memory
Of the old Parish Church is with me still—
The holiest link that binds me to my home.
Peace be within thy walls, prosperity within
Thy palaces. O! if a day should come,
In which my country owns no Parish Church,
How dim will be her gold—her most fine gold,
Alas how changed! Then *Ichabod* will be
The epitaph inscribed upon her tomb.
And she will be a hissing and reproach
Like other lands that have preceded her
In this the modern *reformation*.

God

Hath stamped his seal upon the martyr-blood
That yet is on its pillars as a sign
For the destroying angel to pass by,
And leave unskathed the holy Parish Church.

Albeit the broad Atlantic intervenes,
Mine own old Parish Church is vividly
Before me, and a thousand memories
Of sunny Sabbath-days are on my heart.
Methinks I hear the gray-haired man of God,
Whom I regarded as a father—well I might—
Uttering in deep and solemn earnestness,
The promise and the prophet-warning to his flock.
I pause from more befitting thoughts to trace
Again my own initials rudely notched
Long years ago, upon the "bible-board;"
The old familiar faces are around;
And I am seated in my own old pew,
Beside the young, the beautiful, the dear.
Along the board is ranged a row of books,
With here a faded rose, and there,
A sprig of fragrant thyme or southern-wood,
Between the leaves, to mark the preacher's text.

Within that Church the name I since have borne,
Before unheard beyond the household-heart,
Was first revealed amid the holy words
Of the baptismal rite—the sprinkling hand
Long, long ago hath mouldered into dust;
And the first voice that breathed a prayer for me,
(Except a mother's and a father's prayer,)
Hath joined the diapason of the just
Made perfect, near the throne of God.
Within that Church, it was with fear
And trembling that I first approached
The table of the Lord. While in my hand,
I held the symbols of the sacrifice,
And touched the chalice with a quivering lip,
I felt upon my soul the awful vow,
Then registered in heaven, but ah! too oft
Forgotten since, though since repeated oft.

The Parish Church!—Behold its ancient spire,

Peeping from forth the tall ancestral elms,
Beneath whose shade thousands are sleeping well,
In undistinguished and forgotten graves;
While here and there are old gray stones inscribed
With quaint memorials—images of *Death*,
Time with his sandless hour-glass and his scythe,
And legends of high hopes for ever crushed,
Of young loves blighted, and of elder ties
Dissolved, not broken—*scripture-texts*,
Old epitaphs and rudely chisselled rhymes.

The Parish Church!—A blood-sealed Covenant
Is written on her tablets; and the gates
Of he'll shall not prevail against her. There
She stands, a moral oasis; and here—
Even here in the deep forest-wilderness,
She hath a voice that speaketh peace on earth,
And good will unto men. O, let my tongue
Cleave to my mouth, and may my right hand lose
Its cunning, if I e'er forget my own
Old Scotland and her Parish Church!

PARTING WORDS.

"And he said let me go, for the day breaketh."—
Genesis xxxii. 26.

Let me go, the day is breaking—
Dear companions, let me go:
We have spent a night of waking
In the wilderness below!
Upward now I bend my way;
Part we here at break of day.

Let me go; I may not tarry,
Wrestling thus with doubts and fears;
Angels wait my soul to carry
Where my risen Lord appears;
Friends and kindred, weep not so—
If ye love me, let me go.

We have travelled long together,
Hand in hand, and heart in heart,
Both through fair and stormy weather,
And 'tis hard, 'tis hard to part:
While I sigh, "Farewell!" to you,
Answer one and all, "Adieu!"

'Tis not darkness gathering round me
That withdraws me from your sight:
Walls of flesh no more can bound me,
But translated into light,
Like the lark on mounting wing,
Though unseen, you hear me sing.

Heaven's broad day has o'er me broken,
Far beyond earth's span of sky;
Am I dead? Nay, by this token,
Know that I have ceased to die.
Would you solve the mystery,
Come up hither—come and see.

J. MONTGOMERY.

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