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"HOLD FAST THAT WHICH IS GOOD."

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POETRY.

From the Rose of Sharon. MY STUDY.

BY J. G. ADAMS.

Is the reader ready to ask for the best book in my study? Most cheerfully do I answer, the Bible. Beyond all others in comparison, it contains the rich words and treasures of immortal life. I have, indeed, heard it ill spoken of, derided, and abused; but could never find out the reason why this was done. I presume because I could not know the hearts of its opposers; for I am of opinion that the fault has been there. Nevertheless I love the book, "and neither the sneers of a worldly scepticism, nor the groans of a gloomy theology," can disturb my faith in its doctrine of life, and eternal felicity. Lord, increase this faith! As the Book Divine is before me, a few thoughts may be indulged in the running numbers of the Muse.

TO MY BIBLE.

Gift of a Father's holy love! thy face, how dear to me,
When from the folly of this world my longing soul would flee,
To spend the sacred moments at that feast of wisdom spread
In thee by God's own gracious hand,—life giving, heavenly bread!

Food of my soul! by thee sustained, I cannot faint nor tire;
Salvation's water! as I drink, the well is rising higher;
The naked's clothing! thou dost guard in sunshine and in storm;
Armour complete! in thee my strength can mightiest deeds perform.

Sword of the Spirit! when the foe appears in dark array,
And by feigned words would captive lead my soul in chains away,
In wielding thee, how quickly fly his forces from the field!
For who thus armed, was ever known in error's grasp to yield?

Book of all books! O may I find thy presence ever dear;
And when I turn aside, be thy reproving wisdom near;
As when the sands of life run low thy counsel I shall need,
So while that life is spared, do thou the hungry spirit feed.

Lamp of Salvation! light my way to Zion's holy hill,
Where I can bid my passion, sin, and unbelief, "be still!"
And learn of Christ, and find his truths most precious to the soul,
The sovereign balm, that makes the sick and wounded spirit whole.

Blest volume! I can praise and love, with thee before my eyes,
In hope that purer joy in heaven from this glad heart shall rise;
Where glorious themes on earth commenced, in truth and power
with thee,
Shall be prolonged, in highest bliss, throughout eternity.

LITERATURE.

HINDOO SHRADDHA, OR FUNERAL FEAST AT CALCUTTA.

The misery and oppression arising out of the Hindoo system are almost inconceivable by a European. Innumerable evils encompass its votaries, so that they are unable to look up. The burning of the poor widow was one of these; let us hope that the horrid practice is abolished for ever; but far greater evils remain. The pilgrim-tax, to which Britain has so long given sanction, is one. The Shradha, or funeral feast, is another. How degrading to human nature, that an idea so full of absurdity, associated with such enormous expense, and followed by so much misery, should form one of the great supports of Hindooism! At the moment of death, says the Brahmin, the soul of the departed assumes a body about the size of the human thumb; and if the shradha is not performed, the deceased must ever remain in this state—cannot enter another body, or advance one step towards any relief or enjoyment; while, according to the Hindoo law, the person who has neglected it cannot inherit an estate! The act is professedly one of benevolence to the poor, but the effect is only an increase of their misery, as the Brahmins engross nearly the whole distribution. A case has lately occurred which will prove the misery that accompanies a shradha.

The shradha performed in Calcutta by Baboo Ram Gopal Mullick, one of the most wealthy inhabitants of Calcutta, has occasioned much deep distress to the poor, and the loss of many lives. The Mullick family are famed in Calcutta and its vicinity for the splendour of their shradhas, and more particularly for the large sums they have been in the habit of

distributing among the mendicants who flock to these festivals. It was, perhaps, owing to the great fame they had acquired for such liberality, that when it was rumoured through the country that the Mullicks would perform a shradha, men, women, and children, and even those afflicted with disease, forsook their occupations, and began to flock in crowds to Calcutta in the hope of obtaining money. We have also heard that proclamation was made by beat of drum, that a rupee (some say two rupees) would be given to each individual. This naturally increased the frenzy of the poor creatures, and for several days all the roads leading to Calcutta were crowded with people hastening to the Mullick's shradha. The villages for thirty miles round Calcutta were emptied of half their inmates; nor was it single individuals who undertook this journey, but whole families, including the father the mother, and all the children, however little; some led by the hand, others in arms, some on the breast, others on the head or on the shoulders, all quitted their homes to obtain a single rupee. In a short time the number of people assembled in the metropolis is said to have reached two hundred thousand; these were crowded together, as usual, in the various almshouses of the Mullicks and their friends, with scarcely room to move, and no convenience for sleeping; and when locked in there, were detained for two or three days without food; they were then dismissed the greater part of them without a pice. The *Hurkaru* (newspaper) mentions, that not more than 4000 rupees were distributed among this immense crowd; and a writer in the Government Gazette affirms, that few besides the Brahmins received any thing.

This vast multitude, thus let loose in the city, goaded on by a long starvation, having a long journey before them, and being without a cowrie to purchase food for themselves or for their starving children, began to plunder the shops in every direction, and to seize upon food wherever they could obtain it. A report was spread among them that government had ordered them to help themselves to whatever they could find to support life; a report eminently false, but which served to stimulate their thirst for plunder. Though some, however, were able thus to obtain food, the great bulk of the mendicants were necessarily perishing through want. In this distressing dilemma, a number of the rich Baboos of Calcutta came forward, and supplying the wants of these miserable creatures to the extent of their ability, have secured their blessing. Among these Baboo Ashootosh Dey took the lead, and for eight days successively dispensed food to all who applied for it at his almshouse.—We also hear, with great satisfaction, that the *Zumeendars* (or holders of provinces) in the country, by whose doors the crowds passed, pitying their forlorn condition, most cheerfully opened their stores to supply their wants. How many lives have been lost on this occasion it is difficult to ascertain; but that the number of those who never returned to their homes must have been very great, there can be no doubt.

Thus ended this great shradha. The Chundrika says that the indiscriminate gift of money to mendicants is no essential part of the ceremony; and we most sincerely hope it will fall into disuse. It is a source of great inconvenience to the country. It leads the industrious to travel, under every inconvenience, for several days, in the hope of obtaining gratis about as much money as they might have earned by their own labour at home. It puts a stop for nearly a week to business in and about the metropolis; and occasions the greatest distress, both to those who employ the poor, and to the poor themselves. It is to be hoped that the disastrous termination of this shradha will serve to discourage the practice. The disgrace which it has entailed on those who thus drew these crowds together, and then dismissed them in a state of hopeless starvation, is of such a nature as to be almost sufficient to deter other rich natives from holding out expectations which they cannot fulfil.—Since the great famine in 1770, there has been no distress in Calcutta similar to that occasioned by this shradha. Go where we will, we hear of nothing but the Mullick's great shradha; and the remembrance of it is not likely soon to be lost in the circle of the poor. It is in the nature of man to remember disappointments longer than success. In one respect, therefore, though this festival has inflicted incalculable distress on thousands of the poor and miserable, it may prove an essential benefit to the country; inasmuch as it will, for a long time to come, deter the poor from again leaving their homes, and flocking to the metropolis upon such delusive expectations.—How true it is, that "their sorrows shall be multiplied

that hasten after another god!" Were the vast sums thus expended in funeral feasts to be spent in the instruction of the living, what amazing progress might be made in the mental improvement!

A SPECIMEN OF WELSH PREACHING.

At a meeting of Ministers of Bristol in England, the Rev. Mr. — invited several of the brethren to sup with him; among them was a Minister officiating at a Welsh meeting house in that city. He was an entire stranger to all the company—silently attentive to the general conversation of his brethren. The subject on which they were discoursing, was different strains of preaching. When several had given their opinion and mentioned some individuals as great preachers and such as were models as to style of composition &c. Mr. — turned to the Welsh stranger and solicited his opinion. He said, "he felt it a privilege to be silent, when such men were discoursing, but he felt it his duty to comply with this request; but said he, if I must give my opinion, I should say that you had no good preachers in England;" "no?" said Mr. — "no," said he, "that is, I mean no such preachers as we have in the Principality." "I know," said Mr. —, "you are famous for jumping in Wales; but that is not owing, I suppose, so much to the strain of preaching which the people hear, as to the enthusiasm of their character." "Indeed," said the Welshman, "you would jump too, if you heard and understood such preaching." "Why," said Mr. — "do you not think I could make them jump, if I were to preach to them?" "You make them jump! a Welshman would set fire to the world, while you were lighting the match!" The whole company became very much interested at this turn of the subject and unanimously requested the good man to give them a specimen of their style and manner of preaching in the Principality. "Specimen?" said he, "I cannot give you; if John Elias were here, he could give you a specimen indeed; oh, John Elias is a great preacher." "Well," said the company, "give us something that you have heard from him." "Oh, no," said he, "I must do justice to it,—besides, do you understand the Welsh language?" they said no—not so as to follow a discourse.—"Then" said he, "it is impossible for you to understand, if I were to give you a specimen." "But," said they, "cannot you put it into English?" "Oh," said he, "your poor meagre language would spoil it; it is not capable of expressing those ideas which a Welshman can conceive; I cannot give you a specimen in English without spoiling it." The interest of the company was now increased, and nothing would do but a specimen, while they promised to make every allowance for the language. "Well," said the Welshman, "if you must have a piece, I must try, but don't know what to give you—I do not recollect a piece of John Elias, he is our best preacher, I cannot think a little—well, I recollect one of Christmas Evans's. Christmas Evans is a good preacher, and I heard him a little time ago at our association of Ministers; he was preaching on the depravity of man by sin, of his recovery by the cross of Christ, I should represent it somewhat in this way.—

'Suppose a large grave-yard surrounded by a high wall, with only one entrance, which is only entered by a large iron gate, which is fast bolted, and within these walls are thousands and tens of thousands of human beings of all ages and of all classes, by one epidemic disease bending to the grave; the grave yawns to swallow them, and they must all die. There is no balm to relieve them, no physician! there they must perish. This is the condition of man as a sinner; all, all have sinned, and the soul that sinneth, it must die.—While man was in this deplorable state, Mercy, the darling attribute of the Deity, came down and stood at the gate—looked at the scene and wept over it, exclaiming, Oh that I might enter. I would bind up their wounds,—I would relieve their sorrows I would save their souls. While mercy stood weeping at the gate, an embassy of Angels commissioned from the Court of Heaven to some other world, passed over, paused at the sight, and Heaven forgave the pause.—Seeing Mercy standing there, they cried,—Mercy, Mercy, can you not enter; can you look upon this scene and not pity, can you pity and not deliver?—Mercy replied, I can see, and in her tears added, I can pity; but I cannot relieve. Why cannot you enter? Oh, said Mercy, Justice has barred the gate against me and I cannot, I must not unbar it. At this moment Justice himself appeared as it were to watch the gate; the Angels enquired of him. Why will you not let Mercy in? Justice replied, my law is