

P O E T R Y.

From the Religious Souvenir.

SABBATH EVENING.

By Rev. Manton Eastburn.

Farewell, sweet day of rest!—
Gladly at morn I hailed thy light:—
And now I see thee in the fading way
Taking thy flight.

Bright, fleeting season, stay!—
Nor to the past yet hurry on;
Still, still, I would detain thee, on thy way,
To Sabbaths gone.

Dear was the early sound
That floated from thy joyous bells;
Inviting to the consecrated ground
Where Jesus dwells.

Deserted now thy fane!
The herald's voice,—the song,—the prayer,
Are silent—but the fragrance still remains
That filled me there.

Calm for the weary breast!—
I hail thee, foretaste of a life,
Where in an endless Sabbath, we shall rest
From mortal strife.

Saviour, thy gift I sing:
Thine is the day:—thine let it be;
And may each hallowed season nearer bring
My soul to thee!

RECOLLECTIONS OF WILBERFORCE.

Continued from our last.

His tact in bringing forward the sacred subject of religion was inimitable: It was never obtruded upon the House: when it was touched on, it was done naturally, boldly, and with a reference only to the broad commanding principles of Christianity: never foolishly, inopportunistly, harshly, or theologially, if I may so speak.

He was accustomed to prepare himself for every great debate not by composing or writing his speech, but by examining most closely and deliberately the question which was to be discussed, and calling in two or three friends, perhaps, to consult with.

His constant attendance to his Parliamentary duties struck every one. Wilberforce was always in his place, discharging to his utmost the obligations of a statesman and legislator.

He was never in office. Early in his career he disavowed party, and resolved to follow his own unbiased conviction on each question. In the first French war he supported generally Mr. Pitt, but on one occasion he moved an amendment to the address, and headed the opposition to the minister (about the year 1795 or 1796,) because he thought further endeavors for peace should have been made. I remember the astonishment this step created: in Yorkshire it almost lost him his seat.

I may as well say of his book, that it was published because he found it impossible to give his political friends a just conception of his real views of Christianity. They had some notions that he was peculiarly religious, but no explicit information. The book was dictated. He first arranged well his plan, then thought much over each topic; but when his ideas were in order, and his mind warmed, he poured out the chapters like a river's flow. It is one of the most eloquent books in the English language. The two first editions, of 2000 copies each, he gave away. The members of both Houses of Parliament first received presents. The effect was electric over the nation. The most prejudiced and irreligious paused at the beauty of the style and force of the arguments. The incidental topics discussed were much admired by judges of composition; that upon the affections for example, and the thoughts on the evidences—all admitted it deserved reading. It contributed very considerably to that revival of effective Christianity which the last forty years have witnessed.' pp. 43—45.

In his domestic circle he had long been the charm of all who approached him. His lovely character at-

tached them with a sort of devotion. His table was almost a public one, so long as he continued his residence at Kensington Gore (he had first resided in Palace Yard, and then, after his marriage, for many years at Clapham,) but after his removal to the neighborhood of Edgware and Hendon (twelve miles or so from London,) his circle was more select. His kindness to his wife and children, the unbounded repose and affection of his family towards him, and the love which reigned throughout his house, were there to be seen to the greatest advantage.

A friend told me that he found him once in the greatest agitation looking for a despatch which he had mislaid—one of the royal family was waiting for it—he had delayed the search to the last moment; he seemed at last quite vexed and flurried. At this unlucky instant, a disturbance in the nursery overhead occurred. My friend who was with him, said to himself, now for once Wilberforce's temper will give way.—He had hardly thought thus, when Mr. Wilberforce turned to him and said, 'what a blessing it is to have these dear children—only think what a relief amidst other hurries to hear their voices and know they are well.'

Upon his religious habits, the mind of the writer of these recollections delights to dwell. He was a Christian indeed. The elevated and consistent tone of spiritual piety, which he maintained during the whole course of his hurried public life, was sustained by much private prayer, by a religious observation of the rest of the Sabbath, and by study of the scriptures. His remarks in his family devotions on the passages which he read, were generally attractive, new, striking, practical, and in harmony with the spirit of the sacred book. The writer has seen the Bible which he used in private—the margins were crowded with annotations, references, critical emendations, and marks, all in pencil, and evidently the work of reference, and love for the sacred book. I remember his expositions dwelt much on the topics of gratitude to God for redemption, of the debt of love we owe, of the happiness of religion, and the misery of a life of sin.

Next to his general consistency and love to the Scriptures, the humility of his character always appeared to the writer remarkable. No ostentation, no counting of applause, no selfishness, no vanity, no display—the modest, unobtrusive, simple, Christian statesman and friend, always appeared in him. He was in as little measure as possible elated by the love and esteem of the whole civilized world almost, which, long before his death, had been fixed upon him. It required some management to draw him out in conversation. And the nearer you observed him, the more the habit of his mind appeared obviously to be modest and lowly. And therefore, some of those who only saw him once, might go away disappointed. But if he was lighted up, and in a small circle where he was entirely at his ease, his powers of conversation were prodigious, a natural eloquence was poured out, strokes of gentle playfulness and satire fell on all sides, and the company were soon absorbed into admiration. It commonly took only one visit, to gain over the most prejudiced stranger.

I hardly know whether it would be worth while particularizing two occasions. He was on a visit to Brighton; the king hearing of it, sent for him one evening, without a moment's notice, to attend at the Pavilion. Mr. Wilberforce was so much surprised, that he actually called in the orderly, that he might have the message from the man's own mouth. He hurried on his dress and went. A large party was assembled, and the king (George IV.) paid him much attention; by degrees he was engaged in conversation, and so fixed the royal circle, that the company did not break up till a late hour—his Majesty playfully accusing Mr. Wilberforce of being the occasion.

At another time he was invited to meet the celebrated Madame de Staël at, I believe, Lord Lansdowne's: there were only two or three guests; one of whom told me that Wilberforce broke out on a suitable topic, leading from it into so eloquent a panegyric of missionaries carrying the Gospel to the heathen nations, that the party were rapt in amazement; the conversation afterwards naturally fell into his hands (such was the expression used to me,) and the evening was altogether delightful.

His particular views of Christian doctrine may be gathered from his work on that subject—they were evangelical, wise, moderate on doubtful questions, and

eminently practical. He was no Calvinist, if by that be meant a strong opinion on predestination, and the order of the Divine decrees; but he was a sound heart-felt believer in the Revelation of the Gospel according to the Articles and Homilies of the Church of England of which he was through life a sincere member. I remember, only a few years since, his walking with me up and down his drawing-room some time beyond midnight, discoursing on some of these subjects—his figure is now in my mind—his benevolent eye—his kind considerate manner of speaking—his reverence for Scripture—his address—the pauses he made in his walk, when he had any thing emphatic to say. I recollect one sentiment was, that the passages so frequent in Scripture, importing the unwillingness of the Almighty that the sinner should perish, the invitations addressed to him to return, the remonstrances with him on his unbelief, &c. must be interpreted strictly and literally, or they would appear to be a mockery of man's misery, and to involve the most fearful imputations on the Divine character. Evasions of the force of such passages were, he thought, highly injurious, and want to sap the whole evidence and bearing of the Christian revelation.' pp. 47—50.

Concluded.

MORAL CONDITION OF HINDOOSTAN.

A missionary, at a public meeting in London in May, 1834, communicated most of the subsequent facts, introduced with the following forcible language: 'I am anxious to say nothing but what I have seen, heard, and felt, and which my conscience will bear witness to in sight of God in the judgment day.'

Facilities for Preaching.—From the southern boundary of the ocean that rolls at our feet, to the northern boundary of Hindoostan that climbs to heaven, a missionary will meet with friends glad to cooperate with him, through that wide extent. A missionary may stand on the steps of any temple in all that range of country, without fear of molestation, and under the protecting shadow of the British government.

Temples.—There now is very rarely a new temple erected in that land, I do not say that there is no such thing—but it is a rare occurrence. For where one new temple is built, there are scores in ruin.

Hindoo Colleges.—Many of the native Hindoo colleges, in which the Shasters and all the native literature are studied, are closed for want of students, and many others are in a state of decay. Nadia and Sankh are the Oxford and Cambridge of Hindoo literature, which formerly numbered from 3000 to 5000 students every year, have not now as many hundred as their establishments.

The Board of education at Calcutta, understanding this to be a fact, appointed a committee to go and investigate the state of things. This committee found, as they declared, 'the fountain of Hindoism nearly dried up—the Braminical system a pauper establishment.' At this very day, May, 1834, there are not more than from 300 to 400 students in those very places where formerly, were graduated from 3000 to 5000 every year.

The Bramins.—There was a day when the Bramins were sought after with the most fawning and cringing adulation—when their curse was feared as the severest affliction which could befall an individual or family. I cannot say that in every case that state of things had passed away. But there are thousands so far set free, that they neither court the Braminical blessing, nor dread his curse. The Bramins are less supported by the offerings of the Hindoos than formerly, and hundreds of them have been constrained to change their craft, and, for want of food, to devote themselves to secular employments.

'These facts,' continues the missionary, 'clearly teach us that Hindoism has receive a wound—a deep wound, which, though it may while be staunch, can never be healed. There has been a mine dug beneath the ramparts and citadel of Hindoism—we wait only for the springing; but we want men to advance, like Joshua's army, and take possession of the city when the walls come down.—From the Cincinnati Journal.'

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