

From the Christian World.

AN ESTIMATE OF JAS. MONTGOMERY, ESQ.

IN A LETTER TO THE REV. T. H. STOCKTON.

REV. AND DEAR SIR,

In our interviews, we have occasionally spoken of the religious poets, and Montgomery is for the present at the head of this school. He was held up to ridicule by Lord Byron; but when the latter attempted sacred verse, he fell far short of the man he had satirised. He is supposed to resemble Cowper; but there are some points of discrepancy between the poet of Weston and the bard of Sheffield. Cowper's descriptions of domestic life are far more minute, and his superiority in piquant satire is very decided. There is a much stronger likeness between Montgomery and Grahame, the author of "The Sabbath."

The poet on whose writings it is my intention to make a few remarks, has risen from obscurity. His father was a Missionary of the Moravian Church, in the island of Tobago. But his adventures, from the time he left the Moravian Seminary at Fulnick, show conclusively that he was destined for literary life. He has conquered the frowns of poverty—the rigours of a prison—the asperity of politicians—and the bitterness of criticism. Jeffrey, who fell heir to the shoes of Johnson, has long stood at the *foot* of Parnassus, with full purpose to dispute the title of each pretender to the inspiration of the muses. But after a brief altercation with the critic, the poet was permitted to go on his way.

Montgomery has unreservedly devoted his talents to the cause of religion. In all his works, we may see the influence of a pious education. Though born in Scotland, he was early taken to Yorkshire, England, and secluded for years. We admire Moravian simplicity, but it may still be a question whether their modes of training youth, may not tend to limit the intellectual powers. Be this as it may, it is probable that the mind of Montgomery received its tone from the humble scenes of Fulnick. He was inquisitive of those islands, with which its inmates were familiar, and he was taught to revere the Missionary toiling in benighted lands. With such impressions, he escaped from what appeared to his impassioned fancy to be the trammels of seclusion; but happily these impressions were destined to revive, after his acquaintance with a cold unfeeling world. Such sentiments have been his consolation in adversity, and they are ornamental to him now that he is prosperous. How different from the education of Lord Byron! But the effort of Byron to cast the blame of his vices into the lap of his mother, was ignoble in the extreme. He should have dealt more tenderly by the ashes of the woman to whose heart he had sent many pointed arrows.

It is not my purpose, in a short letter, to give more than a compendious view of the writings of Montgomery, and it is probable that our critical remarks will be less numerous than our moral reflections. His writings consist, in part, of short pieces, and of poems on a more enlarged scale. Some of his productions have already disappeared, and among them his Prison Amusements. It is certain that good poetry has been made in the cells of prisons; but, generally speaking, outward comfort is the best for an individual invoking the muses. Let us hope, however, that the time has come when the iniquity of incarcerating such men as Tasso, Bunyan, Sir Walter Raleigh, and Montgomery, will be remembered only to provoke detestation. A persecutor of piety and genius united in the same individual, takes on himself a fearful office, and he generally feels the mortification of finding the object of his envy exalted to renown.

In the "Wanderer of Switzerland," there is a preponderance of pathos over its other qualities. It is written in an awkward measure, but the ruin of the Swiss Republics, and the miseries of war, are forcibly portrayed. In war, the fell passions which agitate our race are conspicuous. Men will dispassionately speak of the battle of Waterloo, when, if they should break an arm or dislocate a wrist, their martial spirit soon dwindles into puerile lamentation. This work derives the most of its interest from the associations which the mind must always indulge about the lakes and the glaciers of the Helvetic Republic. The mountains of that country are filled with a hardy peasantry, animated by the love of freedom, whilst, at the same time, literature has shed its softening

influence over the towns of Switzerland. Lavater, Bodmer, the Gessners, and Euler, are considerable names in the Republic of Letters, whilst few men have employed more eloquence in favour of infidelity than Rousseau. Montgomery has here touched a well-known chord in the sympathies of our nature. We feel interested in a family relinquishing objects with which they have been familiar, severing tender connexions, and pausing to catch, for the last time, the sound of their mountain rills, and the chime of the church-going bell. This subject seems to be a favourite one with the poets. Virgil has described the pains of expatriation. Mrs. Hemans, though her poetry is distinguished by sameness, has written a spirited song for the emigrant. Goldsmith, both in his Traveller and Deserted Village, has spoken, on this point, to our hearts. But the emigrant does nothing more than remove his person, for, generally, he leaves his affections on his native spot. Hence, there is one thing that operates like a talisman in gaining the confidence of foreigners, and that is to converse with them frequently about the objects they have left at a returnless distance. This remark is practical, in application to our country:

For here the exile meets from every clime,  
And speaks in friendship every distant tongue.

"Greenland" is the next work of our poet which calls for a few remarks. In this production, he celebrates those good men, who acted as pioneers, in carrying Christianity to that bleak and misnamed country. Some have expressed surprise, that any poetical materials could be drawn from a part of the world in which man attains to but stunted materials. Poetry, however, is not always the result of climate, and it has been produced under rugged skies, as well as beneath the soft clouds of Italy. The Russian poets have excelled all others in sublime views of the Deity, and Burns has impressed a firmer footstep on the snow-drifts, than on the green sward of Scotland, and Montgomery has made good verse, with the icebergs and reindeer of Greenland for its basis. This work, however, will be destitute of interest, save to those whose tastes and habits are religious. A man of science might take an interest in the discoveries of Sir John Ross—but the Christian alone sees a meaning in the self-denial of men labouring in latitudes beyond the range of the sun. The Moravians have the true missionary tact. There is a promptness in their movements, and an astonishing neatness in the execution of their work. They are eminently imbued with the elements of religious taste. Hence, we associate with their stations a number of captivating subjects—such as the wild flower transplanted from the wilderness, the bee on its homeward flight, the burying-ground filled with the symbols of religious friendship, and the rustic church, with its bell to announce the hour of prayer. One reason of the efficiency of the Moravians, is the comparative smallness of their body. They prefer a small number of adherents, with purity, to a large number without it. This fact might give the denomination of which you are a minister, facilities in conducting missions, which ought not to be overlooked. We recollect having once officiated for a people of whom you were some time bishop. After retiring home, being much exhausted, sleep overtook me, and during that transient slumber, the following impression was made vividly on my mind. I thought, that during the discourse, a number of representatives from pagan lands, had entered the church, and requested me to pause. Their costume betrayed their distant abodes. Upon being asked what they wanted, they unfolded several maps, and showed the portions of the world assigned to their nations. Our countries, they said, are stocked with the bounties of heaven, but they are destitute of Christian knowledge; and being in darkness, we were sent to ask for light. From this incident a moral may be drawn.

(To be continued.)

HOPE.—It is by hope that we truly exist: our only true enjoyment is the expectation of something we do not possess: the recollection of the past serves but to direct and regulate these expectations; the present is employed in contemplating them; it is, therefore, only the future which we may properly be said to enjoy.

It is very easy to spread scandal, but hard to arrest it.

## SUNDAY SCHOOL RECORD.

### SABBATH SCHOOLS.

About sixty years have elapsed since Mr. Raikes opened his first Sabbath-school at Gloucester—the result of accident, as to himself, but of wise arrangement on the part of the Divine Being. He commenced the humane and Christian instruction of children in adversity and ignorance, with paid teachers; but it was not long before he met with the co-operation of persons whose services were bestowed gratuitously, and remarkable was their success. The report of an eye-witness in a neighbourhood where he commenced a school, was this:—

"That the behaviour of the children on the Sabbath was such as to convey to any serious mind the idea of hell, rather than any other place." Shortly after, he received another report: "That the place was quite a *heaven* upon Sundays, compared to what it used to be." Many a neighbourhood, since then, has been made heavenly by the same means. "The little one has become a thousand." In the thrilling words of Montgomery, we may exclaim:

"Through Albion's ocean isles,  
In near and distant lands,  
Where'er the Christian Sabbath smiles,  
The Sabbath school house stands."

The most useful and inviting aspect under which we can view the Sabbath-school, is that of a nursery for the Christian Church. And thousands of such nurseries cheer our eyes! Watch the Christian missionary as he steps on a foreign shore, and the first proof he gives you of his arrival, is the little band of pagan children, called together by him, and taught on "Sabbath morn." It is an indispensable appendage to a missionary establishment—rather it is its corner-stone.

Every such assemblage is an oasis in the desert, where the simoom of sin, by its blast, has destroyed many. Every such assemblage is a Polynesian island in the ocean for beauty, on which life's voyager casts his joyous, lingering look. How many an ignorant or superstitious child has been taught by devoted persons on the Lord's day! How many have received the truth as it is in Jesus! How many have stepped from a Sunday School class into the Church of God! How many have lived members of that Church on earth, and become members of the Church of Heaven. Scholars have become teachers, and teachers ministers of Christ, and they have raised other schools, which, but for the instruction they had received in such religious seminaries, never would have been instituted. There is another consideration, more affecting to us than any other. Many children have become the spiritual instructors of their parents, who have been conducted by them to the cross of the Redeemer. We know no which to admire most, the child whose love for the soul of his parent overcomes his modesty, or the parent who has nobility enough to approve of the conquest, and crown the exhibition of such love with attention to entreaties, and submission to the Saviour. If rapturous interruptions are permitted when God is judging the world on the last day, it will be when redeemed parents bear testimony, in the presence of angels, to the means used by the Spirit in their salvation, and then it will be said by fathers and mothers, "We owe our heaven to our children."

"And ye INSTRUCTORS, in this humble sphere,  
To deeds of saint-like charity inclined,  
Who from your homes of meditation dear,  
Come forth to guide the weak untutored mind—  
Ye ask no payment, save one smile refined,  
Of grateful love, one tear of contrite pain.  
Meekly you forfeit, to your mission kind,  
The rests of earthly Sabbaths. Be your gain  
A Sabbath without end, 'mid yon celestial plain."  
Christian Guardian.

DOMESTICS.—Children should be required to treat domestics with propriety. Those in whom the comfort of a family so essentially depends, are entitled to kindness and sympathy. The theory, that industry and good conduct are worthy of respect, in whatever rank they are found, cannot be too early illustrated and enforced on the members of the household.