

Christian Mirror.

NEW SERIES.

WEEKLY.]

"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL XII. 4.

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POETRY.

(For the Christian Mirror.)

ON SEEING A HEARSE.

WHAT see I yonder, passing still and slow,
Enrobed in blackest sable—dismal mask!
The sight appals my heart, my spirit fails,
Oppress'd with human nature, born to weep!
What is thy name, thou eerie thing? Thou speak'st
Whilst other oracles of God to man
Are dumb!—those living oracles that speak
Of death, of life—and these eternal both;
And one of either sure betideth each man
The thunder of his power betok'ning grand
And full of awe, the majesty of Him
At whose tribunal every child of man
Shall stand—these whisper in his slum'ring ear.
But when of death the ensigns crowd the streets,
How much he fears and feels of human woe!
Well know I what they mean—their use—but ah!
Thy language, or of humbler passing bier,
Ne'er turns my contemplation inward on
Myself—so soon to pay thy mighty fare!

The gazing street, or village more sincere,
Pore on thy dreary pageantry, nor wish
To penetrate thy rotten inmost core,
But mark the foliage of thy tenant soul!
O that the sight would pierce their living soul!
That better part, which to escape the grave
Is doom'd, and must [if God be true] a fate
Of everlasting bliss or woe abide.
But thus with man—"objects pressing ever
Dinn his sight," and scar to adamant
His heart of stone; hence oft precipitate
On death he falls—a subject not explor'd.

Increase'd thy dreary hue when whitened tofts
Bespeak thy tenant young, perhaps in bloom:
The forlorn mother's son, or youth betroth'd,
And eager to salute the approaching morn,
When every hope would change to full fruition!
Yes! e'en when most adorn'd, thy solemn garb
More serious seems and lectures louder still.
On age its force is doubly felt; on youth
'Tis doubly keen. And wherefore is it so?
Old age is but a step from death, and oft
It feels a thousand deaths in dreading one
So near; and having past the days of youth
It sighs for human frailty in its prime.
The young far off put death; but when he near
Intrudes, and with his naked grisly arm,
His gaudy plumage thrown aside, engrasps
The youth—they see the veteran's ghastly grin,
And own him near—an age too near—too soon!
O could I view thee, as the simple bier,
The vehicle, to bear my bones to rest;
Whilst my ethereal part is fled to light,
Him to contemplate who redeem'd my soul!

Glasgow, 1813.

PROVIDENCE.

Just as a mother, with sweet pious face,
Years towards her little children from her seat;
Gives one a kiss, another an embrace,
Takes this upon her knees, that on her feet,—
And while from actions, looks, complaints, pretences,
She learns their feelings, and their various will;
To this a look, to that a word dispenses,
And whether stern or smiling, loves them still.

So Providence for us, high, infinite,
Makes our necessities its watchful task—
Hearken to all our prayers, helps all our wants;
And e'en if it denies what seems our right,
Either denies because 'twould have us ask,
Or seems but to deny, or in denying grants.

CHOICE EXTRACTS.

ELOQUENT EXTRACT.

"Generation after generation," says an eloquent writer, "have felt as we feel, and their fellows were as active in life as ours now. They passed away like a vapor while nature wore the same aspect of beauty as when her Creator commanded her to be. And so likewise shall it be when we are gone. The heavens shall be as bright over our graves as they now are around our path; the world will have the same attraction for offspring yet unborn that she had once for ourselves—and that she has now for our children. Yet a little while and all this will happen. The throbbing heart will be stilled, and we shall be at rest.—Our funeral will wind on its way, and the prayers will be said, and the grave cloths will be thrown, and our friends will all return, and we shall be left behind to darkness and the worm. And it may be for some short time that we shall be spoken of, but the things of life will creep in, and our names will soon be forgotten. Days will continue to move on, and laughter and song will be heard in the place in which we died; and the eye that mourned for us will be dried and glisten again with joy; and even our children will not remember to hush our names. Then shall we have become, in the touching language of the Psalmist, 'forgotten and clean out of mind.' [But, blessed be God, it is the glorious privilege of the Christian to say, with the pious Job, "Though after my skin worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God."—Ed.]

CHRISTIAN MISSIONARY.

A Missionary arises amongst his fellows almost like the denizen of another sphere; home, and country, and kindred, all are comparatively forgotten. He hath heard tidings of distant provinces over which superstition rolls her chariot-wheels, red with the blood of human sacrifice; he hath listened to the recital which speaks of tribes and multitudes passing into eternity, darkly and cheerlessly as the beast that perishes; he hath spread before him the map of the world, and he hath dissected it into moral partitions, and he hath wept when he thought that Christ, who died for the sins of the dweller in every land, is known and believed on only in scanty and scattered districts:—and all this hath agitated and convulsed his spirit; all this hath conspired to annihilate the ties of former citizenship, to link him in brotherhood with the benighted and degraded of his race; and he snatches up a banner, and emblazoning thereon simply the name of Jesus Christ, leaps upon the waters, and hastens to erect the standard amid polar snows or arid sands, in the valleys and on the mountains of secluded and scarce accessible dominions.—Melville.

THE RESPONSIBILITY DEVOLVING ON A WIFE.

It is a serious and alarming thought, but one which ought to be ever present with the young wife, that no servant can leave her establishment without being either better or worse for her experience there; that no party can meet beneath her roof without receiving some good or evil bias from the general tone of her conversation and manners; and above all, that the rules she lays down for the regulation of her household—the principles of justice and integrity, of benevolence, temperance, order, and Christian charity, which

are to be acted upon, will diffuse themselves through the different members of her household, and flowing thus through various channels, will become the foundation of peace and comfort in other families, they in their turn disseminating the same principles to the end of time.

What a sublime—what an elevating thought! May it fill the happy bosom of every English bride, and may the closing resolution of the first year of her married life be this—"Let others do as they will, but as for me and my house we will serve the Lord."—Mrs. Ellis.

WONDERFUL PROVIDENCE.

The great drama of a nation's politics may hinge on the slightest bagatelle that could modify or suggest some process of thought to the heart of a single individual. The most remarkable instance of this which I recollect is, when the pursuers of Mohammed who followed hard upon him to take his life, were turned away from the mouth of the cave in which he had the moment before taken shelter, by the flight of a bird from one of the shrubs that grew at its entry—infering that, had he recently passed that way, the bird must previously have been disturbed away, and would not now have made its appearance. It is a striking remark of the historian, that this bird, by its flight on this occasion, changed the destiny of the world, instrumental as it was in perpetuating the life of the 'False Prophet,' and with him the reign of that superstition which to this day hath a wider ascendancy over our species than Christianity itself. Such are the links and concatenations of all history. It is well that God has the management; and that what to man is a chaos, in the hands of God is a sure and unerring mechanism.—Dr. Chalmers' Lectures on Romans.

RELIGION.—He who would undermine those foundations upon which the fabric of our future hope is reared, seeks to beat down that column which supports the feebleness of humanity. Let him but think a moment, and his heart will arrest the cruelty of his purpose. Would he pluck its little treasure from the bosom of poverty? Would he wrest his crutch from the hand of age, and remove from the eye of affliction the solace of its woe? The way we tread is rugged, at best; we tread it, however, lighter by the prospect of the better country to which, we trust, it will lead. Tell us not it will end in the gulf of eternal dissolution, or break off in some wild, which fancy may fill up as she pleases, but reason is unable to delineate: quench not that beam which, amidst the night of this evil world, has cheered the despondency of ill-requited worth, and illumined the darkness of suffering virtue.

A FATHER had better extinguish his boy's eyes, than take away his heart. Who that has experienced the joys of friendship, and knows the worth of sympathy and affection, would not rather lose all that is beautiful in nature's scenery than be robbed of the hidden treasures of his heart. Who would not rather bury his wife than bury his love for her. Who would not rather follow his child to the grave than entomb his parental affection. Cherish then your heart's best affections; God is love, love God. Religion is love—love to God—love to man.

KNOWLEDGE AND IGNORANCE.—The man of knowledge lives eternally after his death, while his members are reduced to dust beneath the tomb. But the ignorant man is dead even while he walks upon the earth: he is numbered with living men, and yet existeth not.—Arabian Author.