

CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF RELIGION AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

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

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GENERAL LITERATURE.

From the N. Y. Christian Intelligencer. A WELL AUTHENTICATED FACT.

In the year 1814, the late Mr. and Mrs. Foster were acquainted with three sisters residing in London, two of whom were serious retiring women, and the third just as gay and volatile. They were all elderly, which rendered the gaiety of the third less becoming, and also inclined her the more easily to take offence at any remarks made upon it; she hated the piety of her sisters, and opposed it in many petty spiteful ways, though they endeavoured sedulously to accommodate themselves to her wishes; and to render the differences of their opinions as little disagreeable to her as possible.

One night toward the close of the year 1814, she had been out at an assembly very late, and the next morning at breakfast was so remarkably different from her usual manner, that her sisters thought she must be either unwell or had met with some misfortune that had affected her deeply. Instead of her usual incessant chatter about every person she had met, every thing they wore and said and did, she sat silent, sullen and absorbed. The gloom upon her brow was a mixture of temper and distress, which seemed to indicate a fixed resolution, formed upon circumstances disagreeable to her, as if she were determined to pursue her own will, though it should lead her into trouble, rather than pursue the course she knew to be right, but would reduce her to submit to the controul of another. As she ate nothing, her sisters asked her if she was unwell?

"No."

"What was the matter?"

"Nothing."

"Had nothing distressed her?"

"She had no idea of people prying into what did not concern them."

The whole of the morning she spent in her own room, and at dinner the same scene as in the morning occurred. She ate little, never spoke but to answer uncivilly, and then with an appearance of depression and melancholy that spread their influence very powerfully over the cheerfulness of her companions. She retired to rest late, and with the spirit of one that expects from sleep neither alleviation nor refreshment.

The next morning she again scarcely tasted breakfast, and seemed in the same distressed, uncomfortable state as on the preceding day. Her sisters again renewed their inquiries. She said, "I am well, and nothing pains me."

"Then you have something on your mind;—why will you not tell us? Do we not love you; have we not the same earthly interest as you; and can we seek any good but yours in our anxious wish to share your sorrow?"

"Oh, you have superstitions enough of your own, without mine being added; I shall not tell you what ails me, so you have no occasion to rack your curiosity. I dare say you will think it some spiritual triumph, but I laugh at such things. I am not quite old enough yet to be the victim of dreams and visions."

"We do not live in dreams and visions, Anna," was replied.

She answered harshly, "No, and I do not intend you shall."

The sisters looked at each other, and remained silent.

The second day passed as the first. Anna was gloomy and moody, and her sisters, from pity and anxiety, were unhappy. The third morning she again entered on the day as one who loathed the light, who has no object in living, and to whom the lapse of time, in the prospect of futurity, brings neither comfort nor hope.

As her sisters looked on her, one of them suddenly said, "Anna what was your dream?"

"Ha, what was it? You would give the world to know, but I shall not tell you. I thought you did not believe in dreams."

"Neither do we in general. We know them to be the offspring of a disordered stomach, confused images and fancies, when reason is dormant, and the memory of them passes away as soon as we are engaged in our daily avocations, yet there is no doubt some dreams are no more sent in vain than any other affliction or warning. There is a verse in Scripture which mentions God as speaking 'In the visions of the night, when deep sleep falleth upon man.'"

She laughed again. "You have a verse in the Bible for everything that suits you, but I do not choose to be warned in such a manner, and there is no doubt I shall get it out of my head in a day or two."

"Anna, we do beseech you to tell us,—if you really have a dream from Heaven, you surely would not wish to forget it; and if not, we will help you to laugh it off."

She answered, "Well, if I must tell you, I must; no doubt it was very extraordinary and very frightful; I should have thought it the effects of the ball, but that I never saw anything anywhere the least like it."

"I thought I was in the wide street of a great city. Many people were walking there besides myself, but there was something in their air which immediately struck me. They seemed thoughtful and cheerful, neither occupied with business nor with pleasure, but having about them such a dignity of repose, such high and settled purpose, such grace and such purity as never was stamped on mortal brow. The light of the city was also strange. It was not the sun, for there was nothing to dazzle. It was not the moon, for all was clear as day. It seemed an atmosphere of light, calm, lovely & changeless. The buildings seemed all palaces, but not like palaces of earth. The pavements were all alike of gold, bright and shining, as clear as glass. The large and glittering windows seemed like divided rainbows, and were made to give and transmit none but the rays of gladness. It was indeed a place to which Hope may bend, and wherein Charity might dwell. I could not help exclaiming, as I passed along, 'These are the habitations of righteousness and truth.' All was beauty, bright and perfect. I could not tell what was wanting to make me wish

for an eternity in such a place; and yet its very purity oppressed me. I saw nothing congenial, though looks of kindness met me in every face of that happy throng. I felt nothing responsive. I returned in silence their friendly greetings, and walked on alone, oppressed and sad. I saw that all went one way, and I followed, wondering the reason.

"At length I saw them approach a building, much larger and finer than all the rest. I saw them ascend its massive steps, and enter beneath its ample porch, but I felt no desire to go with them, further than to the foot of the steps. I approached, from curiosity. I saw persons enter who were dressed in every variety of costume of the nations, but they disappeared within the porch, and then crossed the hall in white. Oh, that I could describe that hall to you. It was not marble—it was not crystal—it was not gold—but light, pure light consolidated into form. It was the morn, without its coolness—it was the sun, without his dazzling ray—and within was a stair-case mounting upwards, all of light; and I saw it touched by the snowy feet and white and spotless garments of those who ascended. It was indeed passing fair; but it made me shudder, and I turned away."

"As I turned, I saw on the lowest step one looking at me with an interest so intense, and a manner so anxious, that I stopped to hear what he had to say. He asked me, in a voice like liquid music, 'Why do you turn away? Is there peace elsewhere? Is there pleasure in the works of darkness?'"

"I stood in silence; he passed me to enter, but I neither answered nor moved. Suddenly he disappeared, and another took his place, with the same look and manner. I wished to avoid him, but I seemed rivetted to the spot. 'Art thou come so far,' he said, 'and wilt thou lose thy labour? Put off thine own garments and take the white livery here.'"

"He continued to press me till I got weary and angry, and said, 'I will not enter; I do not like your livery, and I am oppressed by your whiteness.' He sighed, and was gone. Many passed by me with looks of mingled kindness and pity, and pressed me to follow on with them, and offered me a hand up the stairs, which led to their mysterious change, but I rejected them, and stood melancholy and distressed."

"At length one bright young messenger came up to me, and entreated me to enter with a voice and manner which I could not resist. 'Do not turn away,' he said, 'where canst thou go? Do not linger, for why shouldst thou weary thyself for naught? Enter thou and taste of happiness. Do not all tribes and colours press into that hall? Are they not clothed and washed and comforted?' He gave me his hand, and I entered along with him. Here I was sprinkled with pure water, and a garment of pure white was put upon me, and I know not how, but I mounted the white stair-case with my happy guide."

"Oh, what a light burst upon me, when I reached its summit! Mortal words cannot describe it, nor mortal fancy conceive it. Where