

Poetry.

THE HOLY INNOCENTS.

These were redeemed from among men, being the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.—REVELATIONS, xiv. 4.

Say, ye celestial guards, who wait
In Bethlehem, round the Saviour's palace gate,
Say, who are these on golden wings,
That hover o'er the new-born King of kings,
Their palms and garlands telling plain
That they are of the glorious martyr train,
Next to yourselves ordain'd to praise
His name, and brighten as on Him they gaze?

But where their spoils and trophies? where
The glorious dint a martyr's shield should bear?
How chance no cheek among them wears
The deep worn trace of penitential tears,
But all is bright and smiling love,
As if, fresh-borne from Eden's happy grove,
They had flown here, their King to see,
Nor ever had been heirs of dark mortality?

Ask, and some angel will reply,
"These, like yourselves, were born to sin and die,
"But ere the poison root was grown,
"God set his seal, and mark'd them for his own.
"Baptiz'd in blood for Jesus' sake,
"Now underneath the cross their bed they make,
"Not to be scar'd from that sure rest
"By frighten'd mother's shriek, or warrior's waving crest."

Mindful of these, the first-fruits sweet
Borne by the suffering Church her Lord to greet;
Bless'd Jesus ever lov'd to trace
The "innocent brightness" of an infant's face.
He rais'd them in his holy arms,
He bless'd them from the world and all its harms;
Heirs though they were of sin and shame,
He bless'd them in his own and in his Father's name.

Then, as each fond unconscious child
On th' everlasting Parent sweetly smil'd,
(Like infants sporting on the shore,
That tremble not at Ocean's boundless roar,)
Were they not present to thy thought,
All souls, that in their cradles thou hast bought?
But chiefly these, who died for Thee,
That thou might'st live for them a sadder death to see.

And next to these, thy gracious word
Was as a pledge of benediction, stor'd
For Christian mothers, while they moan
Their treasure'd hopes, just born, baptiz'd, and gone.
Oh joy for Rachel's broken heart!
She and her babes shall meet no more to part;
So dear to Christ her pious haste
To trust them in his arms, for ever safe embrac'd.

She dares not grudge to leave them there,
Where to behold them was her heart's first prayer,
She dares not grieve—but she must weep,
As her pale placid martyr sinks to sleep,
Teaching so well and silently
How, at the Shepherd's call the lamb should die:
How happier far than life the end
Of souls that infant-like beneath their burden bend.
(Keele's Christian Year.)

CHURCH CALENDAR.

Dec. 31.—Sunday after Christmas.

1838.

Jan. 1.—Circumcision.
6.—Epiphany.
7.—First Sunday after Epiphany.
14.—Second do. do.

PASSING THOUGHTS.

BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

No. VIII.

LOST TIME.

It is a hackneyed subject, but one of such growing importance in the history of each individual, that too much stress can hardly be laid on it. The simple fact of a past hour being wholly irrecoverable, would alone stamp it with awful interest; but when to this is added the equally certain truth, that it has not passed unremarked or unrecorded by the Most High, and that what is our loss, is also our theft, a robbery committed against Him,—we may well mourn the past, and watch unto prayer for a right use of the future.

Time-losers form a very considerable majority in the upper classes of society, and no small proportion even among those on whose daily labour their daily bread depends. The former, by late rising, by lingering at the toilet and over the breakfast and dinner-table, squander so many hours, that they may almost be said not to live out half their days, such inaction being unworthy the name of life. When to this is added the frivolous employments of what are termed morning calls, the needless lounging in shops, and the utterly useless occupation of writing letters full of gossip and egotism, it is fearful to calculate the amount of this robbery. The humbler sort of people appear, on a comparison with those, to pass a life of incessant labour; but they too are chargeable with much sinful waste of what they are equally bound to improve, though happily exempt from many of the temptations that assail others. Are we, then, to stigmatise as criminal the occasional relaxation of mind and body, that experience shows is necessary to the health of both? By no means: we do wrong when neglecting to ensure it to ourselves, and to those under our authority, or within our influence. Rest and recreation, too, are among the blessings provided for us, and which we have no right to reject. Unbelief alone can lead us to sacrifice them to an over-anxious care for the morrow's supply; and I do not consider the time so spent as being *lost*, any more than the moments which the mechanic sets apart for sharpening the tools necessary to his especial work, is lost to him. Deduct from all unemployed hours a fair proportion for such rest and refreshment, and account only for the remainder,—it will prove a formidable arrear.

"I am always employed in one way or another," is the remark frequently heard from busy idlers, who fancy that, so long as their bodies are not stretched on a couch, or their hands folded before them, they may be said to be up and doing. But what is

it to be employed? Johnson defines the word "business, object of labour." We have, therefore, only to inquire, what is men's business in the world? what is the object pointed out to them as most worthy to be laboured for? If they be of the Israel of God, the answer is given by him, "This people have I formed for myself, that they may shew forth my praise." If they be not of that Israel, O how awfully startling is the cry of every squandered hour, while they linger unmindful of the thrilling call, "Escape for thy life; flee to the mountain!" That is lost time in which the follower of Christ does nothing to glorify his Master; and that is lost time, involving a lost eternity too, wherein the soul, that has not yet found peace through the blood of the cross, does nothing towards seeking and finding it. That the angels of God take a lively interest in the concerns of our world, is unequivocally shewn in Scripture; and often do I think with what wonder and indignation these heavenly creatures, who, for ages that we cannot number, have been serving the Lord day and night, with an eternity of such joyous service still before them, must look on man. Limited, at the utmost stretch of his mortal existence, to a few fleeting years, to work out his own salvation and to glorify God, who works in him both to will and to do, man, who might be expected to number his moments as a miser numbers his golden pieces when compelled to deal them out, will fling away hours, days, months, years, as though he too had an eternity in possession, with no object but to gratify his own capricious will. Surely these two words, *LOST TIME*, will be found engraven on the gates of hell.

What is the remedy? For the past, none, save in the cleansing stream of a Saviour's blood, washing out the sin. For the present and future, "looking unto Jesus" in a threefold light, is the remedy. Look to him as an example; watch his course, when on earth, going about doing good; speaking words of heavenly truth, warning, invitation, consolation, to all around; finding it meat and drink to do the will of his Father. Look to him as able to supply all your need, to overcome your besetting sin, to strengthen and cheer you in the struggling race. Look to him as the end and object of that race; as the great arbiter, holding forth the crown of life, not so much as a reward for the victor's exertion, as the free gift of his own grace, the purchase of his merit, the token of a love for which the devotion of our every energy, feeling, word, and thought to his service, is so poor and mean an acknowledgement, that the same mercy which impels him to confer the boon, can alone induce a reception of our praiseful thanksgivings.

THE REWARD OF DISOBEDIENCE.

"It blew a tremendous gale last night," exclaimed Mr. Thompson to his son, as he entered the breakfast-room; "I fear we shall hear it has done great damage to the shipping."

"Thomas has just told me," replied Lewis, "that there are two brigs on the sands near the Goodwin light; and only think papa, the large vessel that sailed with the evening tide is totally wrecked. She, too, was driven on the sands, but succeeded in getting off; however, she was so much injured, that before she could put back again into the harbour, she went to pieces, and almost all on board perished." "Put on your hat," said Mr. Thompson, "and we will walk to the pier; we shall be back before your mamma is ready for breakfast." Lewis readily obeyed—not that it was his usual custom to do so, for, like many other little boys, he was very headstrong, and preferred his own gratification to complying with the wishes of his parents; but curiosity now prompted him, and he eagerly accompanied his father.

They soon beheld a dreadful spectacle. The sea was still agitated in a frightful manner, and the wind continued to blow very strongly. All was bustle and anxiety among the sailors and fishermen, and the bodies of several persons lay extended on the pier-head. Lewis shuddered. "Oh, pray let us go back!" he exclaimed; but before his father could make any reply, the attention of both was attracted by the piercing lamentations of a poor woman, who was kneeling by the side of a boy apparently about twelve years old, and wringing her hands in an agony of distress. "Oh Ned, Ned," she sobbed, "and is it come to this! Oh, he would always have his own way;" an expression which she repeated several times. Mr. Thompson turned to one of the spectators, and asked the cause of her words.

"Why, your honour," replied the fisherman whom he addressed, "that poor boy who lies there, Lord have mercy on him, was always a sad wilful lad; he was very anxious to go to sea, but neither his father nor mother were willing, for he was their only child, and not very strong. All they said, however, was of no use—nay, perhaps, it made him still more determined to have his own way; so last night, while his father was gone out with the mackerel boats, he got on board the Resolution, and sailed before any one knew any thing about the matter. His mother was looking for him the whole of the night, almost wild with distress: his dead body has just been hauled up with those other poor fellows."

"Dreadful!" murmured Mr. Thompson. Unable to endure the scene longer, Lewis grasped his father's hand and drew him away. He did not attempt to speak a single word as they walked home; and when seated at the breakfast-table, his looks shewed so much distress that his mother anxiously inquired if he were well. Lewis returned no answer, but, rising from the table, threw his arms around her neck, and for some minutes wept violently: "Oh, mamma," at length he cried, "I have seen such a sight—I have heard such cries—Oh, I shall never forget them! forgive me for being so naughty and obstinate as I have often been, and never, never, I think, will I disobey you again." Mrs. Thompson looked at her husband for an explanation, which he in a few words gave her.

"Thus," said he, as he concluded his distressing narrative, "thus has God thought fit to punish this breach of his holy commandment, which enjoins us to 'Honour thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land.' The sea, at His word, has opened her mouth, and swallowed up the disobedient child, almost in sight of his home; and made his fate an awful warning to all who, like him, are tempted to forget the great and sacred duty they owe to their parents."—*National School Miscellany.*

DR. HACKET.

Dr. Hacket, the Ezra of his age, was born in 1592. In the year 1640, he was appointed one of the committee for settling the peace of the Church. His admirable speech concluded with these prophetic words: "Upon the ruins of the rewards of learning no structure can be raised up but ignorance; and upon the chaos of ignorance, no structure can be built but profaneness and confusion." Dr. Hacket suffered imprisonment; his zeal for the honour of God, and his love for the Church of God, brought down this evil upon him. Although subjected to heavy penalties during these barbarous and bloody times, he continued to read the service in his parish church of St. Andrew's, Holborne. One day, while on his knees, like a second Daniel with the lions in view, a sergeant with a body of soldiers entered the church, and threatened him with instant death if he did not leave off. "Soldiers," said this intrepid soldier and servant of a higher and better Master, "I am doing my duty, do you do yours!" and with a louder and firmer voice continued the service; thus, in the language of the Psalmist, "made he even his enemies to be at peace with him;" for the soldiers, awed by his fortitude, left him to finish the service. Dr. Hacket was appointed to the bishopric of Lichfield in 1661.

SPIRITUAL FOOD.

Two friends, living in the country, met together at the village church, a little way from their dwelling. "What is the use of going to church so often," said the younger to his companion, "since we always hear nearly the same thing?" "What is the use," replied the other, "of taking your meals so regularly every day, since they are composed of nearly the same dishes?" "The cases are very different. I must eat to nourish my body, which would otherwise perish." "Not so different as you suppose; for what food is to the body, the exercises of worship are to the soul; and spiritual life will languish if we cease to support it by the means which God has graciously given us."—"But how happens it," says the younger, "that all men have not the same relish for these exercises as they have for their food?" "You mistake again," replied his friend: "all men, it is true, receive their food with pleasure when they are in health; but when they are sick, food becomes not merely tasteless but disgusting. It is the same with the soul: that is in health while it has peace with God through the redemption that is in Christ Jesus our Lord: then it desires the exercises of religion; it enjoys them, and cannot consent to omit them. It is sick when it is hardened in sin: it has then no appetite for spiritual food; it avoids opportunities of receiving it. The sanctification of the Sabbath is a burden, and the conversation of Christians is unpleasant. The resemblance goes further still; for a sickness of the body, if not cured by medicine, ends in death, so also the corruption of the soul—that disease with which all men are infected ends, unless God heals it, in spiritual and eternal death, that is, in the exclusion of the soul from the presence of its God."

LIBERALITY.

There is no one of the current terms of the day, against whose mis-use in argument we should be more vigilant, than the word *liberality*. It is a most seductive word, because it seems connected with enlargement of mind, and a freedom from contracted views of things. But it has been so often claimed by those who in their sentiments and acts, "betray" Christ, that we cannot be too suspicious of its application. It is the candour which is found within the realms of truth, which is alone legitimate: that which stands on the confines of truth and error, and casts, alternately, a smile on each, is indifference—is treason.—*Rev. R. Eden.*

The Church

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