

Read at the Annual Review.

L O V E .

Oh, what is friendship pure and true, but the first strong links of Love ?
 And what is Love, but that bright chain which binds us, from above ?
 A beautiful and cloudless sky, with no horizon found ;
 A sea without a rocky shore ; a space without a bound.
 Man gives no limit to its power, nor stays it in its roll ;
 For its billows gush unceasingly in the caverns of the soul.
 To the bright regions of the heart, the radiant stream is given,
 O'er which bright beams of glory dart, whose fountain is in heaven.

Not only o'er the human heart, is the glowing radiance strewn,
 'Tis thrown round Nature's ample field, from the river to the moon.
 I saw the bright and gorgeous sun in crimson garments dress'd,
 As the weary monarch laid asleep on the bosom of the west ;
 And the summer breeze played tenderly over the quiet grave,
 And the glorious sweep of sunbeams then, encircled the blue wave :
 I asked of Nature in her joy, who, with such radiant bloom,
 Lit up her glowing features, banishing far all gloom ?
 And the wind that murmur'd through the grove, fanning the stately fir,
 With all the tones of melody, that sweetly mingled there,
 The voices of the singing birds—the soft tones of the dove—
 The rushing stream—the evening breeze—all softly whisper'd "Love."

The splendor of once glorious Rome, the might of classic Greece,
 The power of Chaldea's plain—are all in death-like peace—
 The ringing shouts of victory have long passed far away ;
 And the laurel wreaths of heroes lie mouldering with the clay.
 And gazing on the ruined walls, we mourn for those who were ;
 But we smile to see that *Love* has wove her wildflowers even there.

But *Love* is purest when it gives its power to the heart,
 And in that strange mysterious thing bears an unrival'd part.
 'Tis no light thing to know we claim a mother's earnest thought,
 And know a father's every prayer with our memory is fraught,
 And feel that from a sister's heart our names have never fled ;
 (Who knows a brother's love, but they who long have mourned one dead ?)
 With many another tender tie, that to our hearts is given
 To comfort us in earthly woo, with pleasing dreams of heaven.

Love lights the rude torch, whose bright gleam shines in the forest gloom ;
Love lights the shining lamps, that burn in many a quiet room,
 Where brethren meet but to renew "the covenant of love,"
 'Till the "God of Love" shall call them home, to a temple far above.
 How can we forget the charge given by our Elder Brother ?
 "A new command I give to you, that ye love one another."

Love for the dead will stay the smile that beams upon the brow ;
 As England's monarch smiled no more, when his darling was laid low—
Love will pace dreary mountains o'er, and dare dark ocean's rush ;
 Danger and doubt, each melt away at its all-powerful touch,
 Deeper than mortal thought can grasp where ends its mighty flow—
 "Higher than heaven"—"stronger than death"—what of it can we know ?
 Gentle as breath of balmy eve, 'twill soothe the troubled breast,
 And calm the wildest passions' powers, and call them to their rest—
 Enduring more than mighty rocks that guard the treacherous flood—
 More than the patriarchal woods, which ages long have stood.
 It watches by affliction's couch, night following dreary night,
 And asks not for the rest that comes with the vanishing of light ;
 And bearing still unnumber'd griefs, still beautiful and pure—
 'Tis *Love's* prerogative to weep and still endure, endure.

Love is the brightest, richest gem with which the world is stored—
 It welcomes in the lonely one to the kinsman's joyous board ;
 It cheers the widow's suffering heart, and quells the orphan's grief ;
 For *Love* is to the sorrowing one, what rain is to the leaf.
 To it we owe the blessings pure, of social gloe and mirth ;
 'Tis *Love* that gives the light of joy to each domestic hearth,
 Fresh as the bloom of coming spring, it fades not, grows not old ;
 'Tis heaven's own alchemy, that turns the flinty stone to gold.

What brought the world's Redeemer down from glittering thrones on high ?
 Why came He as a sojourner, and laid His honors by ?

No wreathing flowers of smiling peace came, round His head to twine ;
 None of the people staid by Him—lone "treacher of the vine."
 Not slackening Orion's bands ; not gilt with many a star ;
 But a stranger low and sorrowing, so came he from afar :
 One motive only, brought Him down from holy worlds above,
 And for the battle made Him strong—that principle was *Love*.
 Now, in the glorious land of heaven, the loving Son is there,
 And often, at His Father's throne, breathes forth this pleading prayer—
 "Father, I will that those I love, in glory soon may be,
 And one in our Unity, as I am One with Thee."
 Then do resounding shouts pour forth, from those celestial wardens,
 While heavenly harmony is heard through the eternal gardens.

We shall not always gather here, as we are gather'd now,
 All in one bond of amity—one in affection's vow.
 The day of separation comes—the night of death draws nigh—
 Hush'd must be every beating pulse, closed every beaming eye ;
 And solemn though the thought may be ; yet who among his train
 Shall reassemble here ? O God, when shall we meet again ?
 If we greet each other not on earth ; yet, in a world above,
 May all who are with us this night, meet in that land of *Love*.

We speak of glorious worlds of light, and blissful regions fair,
 And bright winged worshippers, that now are chanting music there ;
 But, 'twixt us and that better land, a dreary sea doth gleam—
 What shall support us, when our feet touch its dark rolling stream ?
 Fame starts away from those strange shapes, that by those waves have stood,
 And Science and her classic sons, shrink from that brotherhood ;
 "His rod and staff shall comfort us," who came from worlds above
 To save us in His pity, and redeem us in His *Love*."

"*Love* never faileth"—Are there tongues ? Yet shall their language cease,
 And every strange discordant sound be changed to notes of peace—
 Music shall reach its blissful height, in thrilling joyous strains ;
 Hope, sure and steadfast, shall rejoice, when a calm rest she gains.
 Faith, clear and beautiful, shall then "be lost in perfect sight ;"
 The moon and stars shall shine no more, "there shall be no more night."
 But *Love* will still continue bright, aye brighter than before,
 For we shall not know how to love until we reach that shore.
 When we have seen the broad earth shake, the high cliff bow his head,
 And felt the ocean's last told pulse, and "seen him give his dead,"
 When the deep blue firmament of heaven, shall far away be roll'd,
 And the morning stars grow pale and dim, amid their curtain fold—
 Where shall we be ?—let us live, so that we may meet again,
 Beneath the cloudless sky of bliss, where all is *Love*.—Amen.

Habits of Reading.

CHARACTER is formed more as the result of habits of daily reading, than we are accustomed to think. Scarcely less depends on this, than on the character of the book read. One man will glance over a dozen books, gaining some conception of their contents, but without mastering a single thought, and making it his own, while another, in the perusal of a single work, will gather materials for thought and conversation for a life-time. Grimke of South Carolina, an eminent scholar and orator, attributes his distinction to the influence of the thorough reading and study of a single book—Butler's Analogy—while thousands, if they would confess the truth, might ascribe their mental dissipation and imbecility to the indiscriminate and cursory reading of whatever comes in their way. There is an evil in this direction that lies back of the character of the popular literature, and that could not but work immense mischief, even if what is so universally read were a great deal better than it is. We allude to the habit of reading for amusement or excitement. There are multitudes who have no other or higher object in reading. If the book is only "interesting," it suffices. No matter whether it contains a single valuable thought, fact, or principle ; no matter if it is true or false. It is enough that a morbid love of what is wonderful or amusing is gratified. It helps to "kill time," and satisfies an appetite that is about as craving and about as healthful as that of the drunkard for his cups.