

Poetry.

SONG OF THE WINTER KING.

I come! I come! with my frozen breath,
To blight your fields and scatter death;
My car is seen in the rigged cloud,
My voice is heard when the storms wail loud;
My merciless hand
Shall cover the land
With chains of ice and a snowy cloud.

I'll seize each mount in my ruthless grasp,
And every vale in my cold arms clasp;
The forest oaks at my nod will shake,
And fast I'll fetter the stream and lake:
The sun will look down
With desolate frown,
And nature's self at my reign shall quake.

I'll rush at night from my hidden seat,
And fill the air with a driving sleet;
And when some pilgrim alone is found,
I'll bind him stiff to the frozen ground:
And as the storm moans
Will he utter his groans,
And I will laugh at the dismal sound.

I'll ride the gale to the roaring sea,
Where sailor's cries shall my welcome be;
I'll sport awhile with the reeling mast,
Then crush the ship with a fearful blast:
And mock at the prayer
They utter there,
And flee away when the sound is past.

I'll seek some widow in lonely cot,
Where peace and plenty inhabit not—
And where the flame on the cold hearth dies,
Heeding not tears, nor cold, nor cries—
I'll seize the fowl child,
Rave she ever so wild,
And bid her look where the victim lies!

I'll clothe the earth with my dazzling sheen,
And who shall live where my track is seen?
The leaves shall fall, and the birds take wing,
When first approacheth the Winter King:
A sound will go out,
With echoing shout,
Beware! beware! of the Winter King!

SCENES IN OUR PARISH.

NO. XII.

CHRISTMAS-DAY.

"—With thy leave I'll fetch thee flowers that grow
In thine own garden—Faith and Love, to thee:
With these I'll dress it up—and these shall be
My rosemary and bays."—*Sir Matthew Hale.*

It was a very clear bright day indeed; quite the beau ideal of a Christmas-day; fresh and cold but not unpleasantly so, as the wind was hushed. It scarcely waved the dark branches, and the clear purple shadows lay still in the unclouded sunshine, on the unspotted snow. It would have been very pleasant weather for walking, but there had been a thaw, and afterwards a hard frost, so that the pathway to the school was slippery: so our poor clerk found it to his cost, for he met with a fall, and came to church looking graver than usual, and his arm tied up in a red handkerchief, under his loose great coat. We are all sorry for him; he is a civil, industrious young man, and he has a household of little children. It is well that children's frames are so constituted as not to mind tumblers; certainly they do not, or we should not have assembled so many merry creatures as met both in the morning and afternoon of to-day. What a pretty sight our school-room was! Such a circle of healthy looking country girls! Such a variety of gay colours and picturesque forms, in the way of clothes! For this is one of our high days, when all who have any claim to belong to us, exhibit themselves in their best apparel; and as it is cold, many are decked with shawls or silk handkerchiefs, borrowed from mothers and elder sisters; and many have their black bonnets newly trimmed with gay ribbons, red, green, and yellow. And there was a happy look in almost every face that it did one's heart good to see. I say almost, for I am sorry to acknowledge that, even amidst our hardy country children, I have known some whose constitutions are unequal to the hardships with which they have to contend; I have seen young faces traced by care; cheeks that ought to have been bright, already faded by want; some poor little ones to whom Christmas-day was not a feast day. Yet it was a happy day even to them. They are allowed as a particular treat—any thing can be made a treat to simple country children—to go into the boys' school-room to sing; that twice in a year, at Christmas and Whitsuntide, we may have the pleasure of seeing all the children together; and many amusing glances pass between them, as the little shy girls come one after another through the wide-opened door, and range themselves in decent order, up the west side of the long room under the windows.

Then the hymns sung on Christmas-day are particular favourites. They know and understand them perfectly, both the words and the tunes; and they sing with all their voices, and as far as can be expected, with all their hearts. They sing as if they rejoiced certainly. And the room is decorated according to old custom, with sprays of holly and evergreen, and so is the church; and I dare say it is part of the children's pleasure—I am sure it is part of mine—to see the varnished hollyboughs glittering in the sun, and the feathery yew and the dark ivy berries clustering from the sconces and round the pillars. I know there are good people who object to this "dressing up" on various grounds, and some prudent ones who think it a

needless waste of shrubberies and plantations. But the children who cried Hosanna! did not begrudge the palm-boughs and branches of trees that were strewn in *His* way, the remembrance of whose blessed coming we to-day celebrate with deep gratitude and with fervent joy. O! I love customs hallowed by the use of our fore-fathers: and when that solemn creed which their wisdom has transmitted to us, was repeated to-day, there were hearts that responded not the less deeply, lips that replied none the less firmly because it is the fashion of the present day to cavil at it, and because we are threatened that the men "who are given to change" may, before another year, expunge its form of sound words from our beautiful ritual. But we will not darken Christmas-day with gloomy forebodings. I said it was a day of joy. Of joy? O yes! even in such a world of weeping as this, though remembrances that make the heart ache weigh down the mind even to-day.

But for us the holy and spotless table was spread which must in no wise be approached by complaining hearts: nay, if it is possible, we must draw near cheerfully, as well as patiently; and our feelings must not believe our words when we bless God's "holy name for all his servants departed this life in his faith and fear."

I am no judge of music, but the singing at church this morning, seemed to me very sweet: and in the afternoon when the Angel's Hymn, as it is called, was sung, the words seemed verified,—"The glory shone around." The last sun-light of that bright day streamed in through the south windows, quite across the church, lighting up the boughs of fresh evergreens on its way, and reddening the white wall over little Mary's grave, and then reflected back on the marble figure of Hope, and the tablet against the chancel window, inscribed with the names of our member's family; and then the red gleam faded away, and the aisles became more and more shadowy, and the outlines of the pillars were less and less clearly defined, until by the time the service was over, the uncertain day-light had quite given way to the glimmer of the few sconces were placed at the top of the middle aisle and on the altar rails. No very splendid illumination; yet sufficiently bright to gladden the eyes and hearts of the long and varied procession that presently came up towards it.—Look the children are leaving their seats in the gallery, and are coming up the aisle two and two. At first, as they come down the dark steps, there was a little shuffling and pushing for pre-eminence but now as they come into the light they appear more orderly. Here they come! a joyous train, and what a variety of faces, and dresses, and sizes! First the tall school-girls, looking almost as much ashamed as they are pleased. They have just arrived at the age when the outward appearance of children outstrips the improvement in manners and understanding; a most awkward and unprepossessing age; and then, seeing that they grow tall, they unfortunately take it for granted that they grow wise also; and just when they most need instruction, leave school. Ignorant as we know these girls to be, we scarcely hope they will condescend to stay with us another year. Yet there are exceptions. Here is one; little grave Betty, with a plain pale face and a tidy nankeen gown; a present, I rather think, for there is something genteel in the cut, though the colour is faded, and her handkerchief is tidily crossed and tied behind. She has a great love of learning; gets by heart all the hymns in all the hymn books she she can meet with, and always when she has said her appointed lessons, comes up shyly, with a contrived courtesy, and a modest request, "Please to hear me say my Psalm, ma'am?" She is what our quondam mistress used to call "a quiet girl."—It was the chief praise she ever bestowed; and indeed considering little Betty's unfortunate sex, there are those, I know, who would only say.

"Wonderous strange if it be true!"

Never mind, she is a very nice child at any rate: she is always first in her place, and if her teacher has been ill or absent, there is, when she comes again, a sparkle in the grey eyes and a colour in her white cheek, that makes little plain Betty look almost pretty. But I have said quite enough about her. She has past the huge basket at the corner of the aisle; has received her cake, and has followed the others into the vestry, and, I suppose, into the snowy church-yard. O no! look, they are gathered in a group round the blazing fire, which throws its quivering and sparkling blaze on the pictures of the Oxford Almanac, and the sprays of laurel and yew with which they are decorated, and brightens the soft folds of the fair white linen surplus which has been thrown across one of the chairs. "Go on, children; make haste home before it grows darker, and slippery as it is, take care that you neither fall down nor fall out by the way." But here comes a petitioner, and I observe that when our children are disposed to be very polite, they will not ask a favor for themselves, but speak for each other—"If you please, ma'am, Ann Miles says, may she wait for her brother?" "O yes, brothers are worth waiting for."

And here comes the boys; another long and noisy procession, not quite so gay looking as the young ladies, but displaying enough of variety, both of form and colouring, to employ a far abler

pen in the description than mine. Here are some with clean pinbefores and nicely plaited frills; these have tidy mothers I am sure; and some with well fitted velveteen jacket and trousers, evidently new for the occasion; and some who look very different; whose wild hair and dress, untrimmed clothes, to hide which, to-day, is pulled on the father's waistcoat, perhaps of scarlet or spotted plush, and buttons that look like fire stones; none of it old, yet none in good condition, all telling more of bad management than of poverty. And yet the wildest and most uncouth among them looks up to-night with a pleasant smile and a well-intentioned, though not very graceful bow, and seems, at present at least, disposed to behave himself "lowly and reverently to all his betters;" and indeed I trust they are disposed to do their duty by him. How long the good feeling may last it is not for us to know; we will take care that it does not fail on our side. The word of life is put into their hands and though many of them have the worst examples at home, we will remember who has said, "Blessed are they that sow beside all waters."

Here come the very little ones: the sexton's three fair grand-children, with blue eyes and curly flaxen hair. They always look very neat. I think there must be good management at home, for there is another baby there, and the father's wages are only eleven shillings a week. Now they are all served: all the children at any rate. But there appears to me a consultation of graver persons gathered round the great basket. I understand what it is. The cakes that are left are always divided amongst those who are so lucky as to be on the spot—clerk, sexton, singers, schoolmaster and mistress. There is a scarcity I find; this year they will have short commons, I am afraid: yet they all look cheerful and contented; and so the congregations separated, and the lights were put out, and the church doors shut, and we all went home. Then came the long quiet evening, when some of us gathered, as closely as possible, round the bright fire, and listened whilst one and another dear voice read some passage from *Keble's Christian Year*. Soothing, beautiful poetry! well calculated to lift the heart above the cares of this troublesome world, and to light the path with the sunshine of heaven. And then came the holy hour of evening prayer, and we all assembled. Not all who had ever assembled there, certainly; but if there was cause for sorrow, there was more for joy and gratitude: for those who met there loved each other well, and there was good hope to meet again those who were parted: there we listened to the word of our hope, and the promise of our salvation and we joined in prayer to him who is able to keep us from falling and to present even us mourners before his presence with exceeding joy; and we lay down to rest with humble and thankful hearts, and our pleasant Christmas-day was ended.

THE MISSIONARY CHARACTER OF THE CHURCH.

From the Scottish Magazine.

That Missionary zeal is a characteristic of the Church, and has ever been so, is one of those truths which we suppose may be considered patent. The very first effusion of the Holy Spirit on the day of Pentecost was followed by a display of this characteristic on the part of St. Peter, who, in this, as in many other ways, acted for the Apostolic College. And, indeed, the gift of tongues must have been principally for this end,—to give the first preachers a necessary endowment for spreading the Gospel beyond the confines of their own land. It does not, however, appear, though they had heard our Lord's words commissioning them to go into the world, to preach the Gospel to every creature, that the disciples were quick to take measures for the accomplishment of their Master's desire. It was not till the Providential interference of a persecution, when the malice of the world was clearly shewn, and the death of the proto-martyr evinced the determination of both rulers and populace to put down the new religion by force, that the disciples became scattered, and made converts wherever they went. Then again, St. Peter required to be assured by a vision that the Gentiles were made fellow-heirs with the Jews of the promises of God. And that the general mind of the converts was against the admission of the Gentiles, is a fact so well known to all who have read the New Testament, that it is unnecessary to refer to it more at large. These were, however, only the prepossessions of education, and in a very short time men had so far conquered their feelings, that Jew and Gentile united in the one fold into which they had been gathered by the Good Shepherd. Ever since the foundation of the Christian Church, the missionary enterprise has been one of its distinguishing marks. When men would have stopped short, the Holy Spirit would not suffer them; and it may safely be affirmed, that at no time since Christianity was first preached has the Church been forgetful of her high commission.

But though this be true of the Church at large, it is not true of particular branches. The African Churches have been swept away, and among other reasons for this, that their vitality did not suffice to send forth succours which might have been for a refuge from the storm when Vandal, and, after

that, Saracenic violence fell upon them. The Church in the East has not been so severely punished, and we really know very little what steps the old patriarchates are making to recover the ground they have lost. In Russia the case is different. There a well organized missionary scheme is yearly advancing the Church's dominion.

In the West, however, missionary enterprise is at the present time most conspicuous. Rome takes the lead, as she has ever done in this particular; and, of the individual churches within her pale, none is, at this time, so forward as that of France. Spain, Portugal, and Austria, seem to be doing a little, and that little in an unsatisfactory way. Beyond the Roman pale in the West, the English and the Anglo-American Churches need not be ashamed of their efforts, albeit what they are doing is very much less than they might do—the former especially, from the fact of her having left societies to do that which she ought to have done as a united whole.

At no time of her history, however, has the Church of England been more in earnest than at the present moment. Indeed, it is not a little curious to remark that her efforts have always been most zealous when unconnected with the great Patriarchal See of the West. The old British Church was not unfaithful to her trust, as has been too generally assumed. Even when cooped up, as she was, within the narrow limits of Wales, she did not forget her mission. She sent out from her bosom many who planted in Ireland offshoots of the parent monasteries of Bangor and Llanyfad, places, be it remembered, which owe their origin to a period posterior to the Saxon invasion. Indeed, the judgments formed by the advocates of Rome as to the deadness of the British Church, are both exaggerated and inconsistent. It is acknowledged that in the seventh century, and even earlier, Ireland and western Scotland were the great resort in western Europe of those who sought learning. Now, whence did they derive their Christianity? Why, from the persecuted Church of Roman Britain, after the Saxons had driven it into the wilderness! This wilderness these hardy bearers of the Cross soon made to blossom as the rose. From the rugged shores of Iona her sons spread themselves over the northern and midland counties of England, and even reconquered Sussex to that faith which the Saxons had fiercely driven out, and to which they now meekly submitted. "Bavaria, Belgium, part of Switzerland, all France north of the Loire, with portions of Germany," writes Frederick Faber in his *Life of St. Wilfrid*, "were impregnated with the spirit of the Scotch Church, traversed by Celtic missionaries, peopled with Celtic monasteries, and accustomed to send their young men to be educated in the Irish colleges; in fact, Ireland was a great centre of ecclesiastical civilization, and its temper was vehemently opposed to that of Rome." Indeed, monasteries, under the rule of St. Columban, were even founded in Italy itself. So much for the want of life of the early British Church!

Advertisements.

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16-17

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29-37

MR. S. J. STRATFORD,
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The Toronto Dispensary, for Diseases of the EYE, in
rear of the same.

Toronto, May 7, 1851.

41-117

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No. 7, Waterloo Building, Toronto.

September 4th, 1851.

6-17

J. P. CLARKE, Mus. Bac. K. C.
PROFESSOR OF THE PIANO-FORTE,
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Residence, Shuter Street.
Toronto, January 13th, 1837.

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