

POETRY.

THE VOICE OF PRAYER.

I HEAR it in the summer wind,  
I feel it in the lightning's gleam !  
A tongue in every leaf I find.  
A voice in every running stream.  
It speaks in the enamel'd flower,  
With grateful incense borne on high ;  
It echoes in the dripping shower,  
And breathes in midnight's breathless sky.  
Through all their scenes of foul and fair,  
Nature presents a fervent prayer ;  
In all their myriad shapes of love,  
Nature transmits a prayer above.

Day unto day, and night to night,  
The eloquent appeal convey ;  
Flasheth the cheerful orb of light,  
To bid creation bend and pray :  
The shadowy clouds of darkness steal  
Along the horizon's azure cope ;  
Bidding distracted nations kneel  
To Him, the Lord of quenchless hope ;  
To Him, who died that hope might live,  
And lived, eternal life to give ;  
Who bore the pangs of death, to save  
The dead from an eternal grave.

Oh ! tread you tangled coppice now,  
Where the sweet brier and woodbine strive ;  
Where music drops from every bough,  
Like honey from the forest-hive :  
Where warbling birds, and humming bees,  
And wild-flowers round a gushing spring,  
And blossoms sprinkled o'er the trees,  
And gorgeous insects on the wing,  
Unite to load the gladden'd air  
With melody of grateful prayer :  
Unite their Maker's name to bless  
In that brief span of happiness.

And can it be that MAN alone  
Forbids the tide of prayer to flow ;  
For whom his God forsook a throne,  
To weep, to bleed—a man of woe ?  
Ah ! 'tis alone the immortal soul  
That endless bliss ordain'd to win,  
The heaven of heavens its destined goal  
That this is sunk in shameful sin !  
Scarcely permitting to intrude  
The faintest gleam of gratitude ;  
And but in hours of dire despair,  
Responding in the voice of prayer !

THE CHILD'S DEPARTMENT.

ON IDLENESS.

*Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger.* Prov. xix. 15.

At Athens idle persons were liable to an action at law, and, if found guilty, were branded with infamy. I have heard of an ancient people, who would not let any one come into their city that was not skilled in some useful trade or calling; and it is said, that the Persians required that each subject of the empire should, at the end of every year, repair to a magistrate and give an account how he had been employed.

Children are often tempted to waste their precious moments, as if God would never call them to an account for it; they are unwilling to engage in necessary and important duties, and are in danger of contracting habits of idleness, which may injure them for the rest of their lives. To warn my young reader against this snare; I shall, I. Point out the sin of idleness; and II. The means of avoiding it.

1. To be idle is contrary to the end for which God made us. In furnishing our bodies with members, and our souls with powers and faculties, he designed that we should be actively employed. He appointed Adam to dress the garden in which he was placed. (Gen. ii. 15.) If as one observes, high extraction, a great estate, large dominion, perfect innocence, a genius for contemplation, or a small family, could have been a reason for idleness, Adam had not been set to work. After the fall, man's subsistence was made to depend on his labour: "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return to the ground."

2. In the natural world every thing is in motion, working towards the end designed by its Creator. The sun, moon, stars, rise and set in their courses; the earth continues to bring forth plants and fruits; the rivers run; the sea ebbs and flows; the wind blows; and from the meanest living thing we may learn diligence. (See Prov. vi. 6-8.) So that idleness is practically condemned by every creature.

3. Idleness not only makes a person of no use in the world, but a burthen to society. In China, where the pro-

duce of the soil is only sufficient to support the inhabitants, it is a maxim; that if there be a man or woman in the empire who does not work, somebody must suffer hunger or cold. Every one is a member of some society, city, family, and if he does not labour to promote his welfare, he hangs a useless weight upon it, and weakens and consumes its strength: Besides,

4. Idle people are constantly exposed to temptation, and always ready to enter into it. They tempt the Devil to tempt them. An old writer well remarks, that if our parents had been diligently employed in dressing the garden, according to God's command, instead of talking with the serpent, they would not unhappily have been seduced into sin: how much more, he adds, is idleness now to be shunned and avoided by all, since out of Paradise we are every where exposed to Satan's snares.

II. How is idleness to be avoided?

1. Endeavour to impress your hearts with a deep sense of the evil of idleness. You are sent upon earth to be diligent; your duty to God and man, your interest in this world and the next, require you to be so. To be idle is to ruin your reputation, sin against God, and fall into disgrace. Every idle man is guilty of injustice and theft,—he takes and uses that to which he has no right. Others labour, and he consumes the fruit of their toil; which is a shame to him: but St. Paul teaches, that he who would not work, should not eat.

2. Consider the value of that time which is lost by idleness. On its right improvement depends your salvation. Have you then a soul to save; a hell to escape; a heaven to secure; and can you be idle? Is there one moment that you can afford to lose? If you wish to know the worth of time, ask the dying sinner. But do not forget, that soon you shall be in his situation, if you indulge in idleness.

3 Remember that in the days of your youth, you may be called away. "The living know that they must die," the event is certain, but the time unknown. It is the indolent man whom death surprises. Since you know that you must die, wisdom points out the propriety of often looking forward to the end of life, and preparing to meet what you cannot shun. Proper views of death will rouse you to diligence: and seeing there is no work, device, knowledge, or wisdom, in the grave, whatsoever your hand finds to do, you should do it with your might.

Whilst you resolve to improve your time, according to the will of God, always recollect that his blessing only can give success to your endeavours. Apply therefore for his assistance by fervent prayer, offered up in the name of Christ. God will hear your sincere and earnest applications; he will send down his Holy Spirit, to enlighten your mind, direct your will, and renew your affections; you shall live in a rational and scriptural manner; serving God and your generation, according to his will. Your reflections will afford you comfort, and your prospects joy. Having the testimony of a good conscience, you will possess the pleasing hope of hearing the Judge, at the last day, address you, "Well done, good and faithful servant, enter thou into the joy of thy Lord."

TERMS.

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