

Reviews.

THE EDINBURGH REVIEW. October, 1851: Toronto, T. Maclear.

This is a peculiarly readable number of the Scottish organ of Whiggism. Our remark being specially applicable to the papers entitled "Dennis-toun's Duke's of Urbine," "The Metamorphoses of Apuleius," and "Neapolitan Justice" all of which will well repay an attentive perusal. We can not say much, however, either for the accuracy or the orthodoxy of the article headed "Anglo-Catholic Theory," the author of which brings both prejudice and ignorance to the performance of his task.

BULLETIN OF THE AMERICAN ART UNION.—New York.

The eighth number of this carefully got up periodical fully sustains the reputation of its predecessors. We are particularly pleased with the digest of intelligence regarding foreign art. They are judiciously compiled, and present us with a great mass of information in little space. The number before us is of average merit so far as its illustrations are concerned.

THE HOMEBOOK OF THE PICTURESQUE. By P. PUTNAM, New York, 1852. Toronto: T. Maclear.

This is a publication intended expressly for the coming season, when the custom of gift-making is generally honored with the most scrupulous observance, and very well suited it is for its purpose. Unlike the common run of *annuals* which spring from the press for a similar purpose, many, if not most of them to "blush unseen," its pages are filled with useful matter. The several articles are written by the leading celebrated American authors, and are for the most part descriptive of the scenes which form the subject of the steel engravings with which the volume is embellished. To enter into a detailed criticism of the literary merits of these would be foreign to our purpose, but we can unhesitatingly say, that they are such as to maintain the well earned reputation of the several contributors. Of the engravings we would however, speak more freely and fully. It has long been a source of surprise and regret to us to see the wretched attempts which were some times, and indeed very generally put forth from the American Press, as pretended steel or copper engravings. The want of due care both in the mechanical finish, and in general pictorial effect, have always brought us to the conclusion, that for such works there existed no genius in the American people; more particularly when we found that the best productions which have hitherto appeared in that country have been impressions from retouched imported plates, the subjects of which, although issued under different designations, were familiar to us. In latter years we have observed improvement it is true in the issues of several publishers, both in execution and in originality of design.

The present publication justifies the opinion that a desire to improve does exist, and that already native artists have attained a high standard of excellence. We believe that these illustrations, which are all views of places in the United States remarkable for their picturesque beauty, would do honour to the atelier of any European artist. The softness of some of them is exceedingly pleasing and the general effect produced on the mind while examining them, is one of truthfulness of delineation, good perspective, and skilful finish! The binding, paper, and typography of the work are in good keeping with the merits of the plates and matter. It has never fallen to our lot to see a better finished book of this description sent from the United States press,—not even from Mr. Putnam, already so well known for his enterprise, taste, and judgment.

HARPER'S MONTHLY FOR DECEMBER, 1851: A. H. Armour & Co., King-street.

Albeit we grumble at much of the politico-doctrinal spirit infused throughout the original articles contained in this publication, and also, deprecate a certain flippancy of style in the articles headed the "Editor's Table and Drawer," which we consider unworthy the character of this work, yet we must acknowledge the merit of industry, energy, and enterprise displayed in keeping up so cheap and useful a publication.

SCENES IN OUR PARISH.

NO. XI.

A DAY OF GLOOM.

Continued from our last.

My gentle reader, I fancy you young, healthy, blest with a competent supply of this world's goods; and perhaps with what is much more valuable good sense and leisure. I charge you, as you will answer it at the day of judgment, use these things, for they are "talents." Let there be in your neighbourhood no forsaken Esther to whom you might have ministered. I do not advise you to look for your reward, in the gratitude of those for whom you may exert yourself. I would say,—I believe it is a sentence of the excellent Fenelon,—"Sanctifiez

toutes vos actions en leur donnant pour motif l'envie de plaire à Dieu;" but I can assure you that I have found among the poor of this place, uncivilized and disorderly as our genteel neighbors are pleased to account us, an affection which has repaid my coldness towards my greater Benefactor; and gratitude which has made me blush for my unthankfulness. So it was remarkably in Esther's case: "All good things," she has often said, "came to me in that day; I often think of it when you and that young lady came in first."—And really it was astonishing, how many friends we met with for her; one procured her a blanket, another some needful articles of dress; others supplied food: and after much consultation,—for ours is a very poor parish, and we are often obliged to manage in a way which would create a smile in richer neighborhoods,—we procured her a new bed. The tick was bought by subscription; then doubts arose as to the filling: millpuff was too expensive, and oat chaff not to be procured here; but "necessity," said our old neighbour at the shop, "is the mother of invention; we begged worn out pieces of carpet from various persons, delighted the younger children at the school, by employing them to pick it entirely thread from thread; and you would have been surprised to see what a respectable filling it made: and Esther's joy and gratitude for this unexpected, but most necessary gift, was such as she could not express, and I cannot describe. "Bless the name of the Lord!" "He has done all things well," were the phrases constantly in her heart, and on her lips. I believe I never, during the two years I knew her, heard her express any thing like dissatisfaction in God's dealings towards her. I never remember her complaining, though, indeed, there was cause of complaint of the carelessness with which her relations treated her. Those who approached her low door, were more than once astonished at hearing within a weak but not unmelodious voice of joy; for often when alone, she strove to amuse herself by singing the few verses of hymns which she knew; thus beginning in the dark valley of the shadow of death that song of praise and triumph, which I believe she is singing now, in a very different tone and under far other circumstances.

But you are getting weary: you think I have forgotten my motto.

"Although the day be never so long,
At last it ringeth to even song."

O no! Esther's day of gloom closed at length.—Her daily bread was provided to her to the very day on which she died. I saw her on a Saturday; she was wasted to a state that it was melancholy and humiliating to see. Some such form, perhaps, presented itself to Milton's mind's eye, when he described the place,

"Sad, noisome, dark, a lazar-house it seemed."

but no pen but Milton's should attempt to describe such a sight. O! blessed are they, who bearing about with them such a body of sin and death, yet cling with sure and certain hope to that promise, "It is sown in corruption it is raised in power." I recollect nothing particular in our last interview; she was patiently waiting until her Lord was ready for her; and though in great pain and very weak she smiled affectionately, and even cheerfully, when she saw me. I had been entrusted with a small sum of money, on her account; and as I knew some days would elapse before I came again, I went to the kind-hearted mistress of a little inn near, and engaged her to supply Esther with certain articles of food every day while the money lasted. We reckoned it over together: it would provide her with that particular comfort she so much needed, until the Monday week following. "And whom shall I ask next?" I thought: nay, take no thought for the morrow. Monday week came, and Esther thanked God for her last meal. On Tuesday morning we heard the bell toll for her. She had been no worse; had suffered no more than usual: her Father's still, small voice had said, "Come!" and she was gone home. What matter if the traveller's scrip is empty, when the sunset shines on him, and he ends his toilsome journey, and enters his own father's house?

Ah! it is time for us to think of our walk home; for the sunset shone on us long ago, and the silver mist rises, tracing the long course of the river in the low grounds beneath us. Come through the corn fields, the rustling of whose ripening ears, once more reminds us of his faithfulness, who promised that seed time and harvest should never fail;—down our own lilly ground, between the moist willows, and up the bank again into the home-field: and as we enter our silent garden, we cannot forget to take one look at the glorious jessamine. It is fifty, perhaps sixty years old; and covers a great part of the south wall of the house. Just now it is in most luxuriant blossoms, having lit up its ten thousand stars, and opened its stores of incense to greet us and the harvest moon; for the jessamine, you know, is a night flower. If we come to-morrow in the sunshine, we shall scarcely be able to gather one perfect spray. How gracefully it wreathes round the casement window; and hangs its light sprays about the low, heavy door! No, you need not open it; we cannot go into business and candlelight yet: come through the little white gate; the moon shines on the polished laurel leaves and on the white holly-oaks: the stately

lillies are gone; but this high path is my favourite evening walk still: for see how beautifully the light and shade are thrown on that group of trees, behind which the church tower rises. There are heavy clouds, but they are flying away before the clear night wind; and the few stars, and the full moon, shine in their most perfect brightness. "How beautiful is night!" and yet this is the evening of what I called "a Day of Gloom." O how mercifully God teaches us to seek peace in his word, and in the contemplation of his works; there, and there only it cannot but be found. Hush! listen! the wind is still at this moment; you may hear the distant chime of musical bells; they sound at this hour every evening. In one minute, our church clock will strike nine;—there it is, we must go in now; "It ringeth to even-song," and after prayers, I will show you some lines which, though they are not exactly suitable to my subject, yet have occurred to me so often, when I have walked here at evening, that now I scarcely ever do so without thinking of them.

THE BLESSING AFTER SERVICE.

I was within a house of prayer,
A many a wounded heart was there;
And many an aching head was bowed,
Humbly amidst the kneeling crowd:
Nor marvel, where earth's children press
There must be thought of bitterness.

O! in the change of human life,—
The anxious wish, the toil, the strife,—
How much we know of grief and pain,
Ere one short week comes round again!
Bend every knee, lift every heart;
We need God's blessing ere we part.

Then sweetly through the hallowed bound,
Woke the calm voice of solemn sound;
And gladly, many a list'ning ear
Watch'd that pure tone of love to hear;
And on each humbled heart, and true,
God's holy blessing fell like dew.

Like dew on summer's thirsty flowers;
On the mown grass, like softest showers;
On the parched earth like blessed rain,
That calls the spring-bloom back again:
O! to how many a varied sigh,
Did that sweet benison reply.

"The peace that God bestows,
Through him who died and rose;
The peace the Father giveth, through the Son,
Be known in every mind,
The broken heart to bind;
And bless ye travellers, as ye journey on!"

"Ye, who have known to weep
Where your beloved sleep;
Ye, who have pour'd the deep, the bitter cry!
God's blessing be as balm,
The fever'd soul to calm,
And wondrous peace each troubled mind supply."

"Young man, whose cheek is bright
With nature's warmest light;
Whilst youth and health thy veins with pure blood
Let remembrance be, [swell;
Of thy God blest to thee,
Peace passing understanding guard thee well."

"Parents whose thoughts afar,
Turn where your children are,
In their still graves, or beneath foreign skies;
This hour God's blessing come,
Cheer the deserted home,
And peace with dove-like wings around you rise."

"Ere this week's strife begin;—
The war, without, within:
The true God, with spirit and with power,
Now on each bended head,
His wondrous blessing shed,
And keep you all, through every troubled hour."

And then within the holy place,
Was silence for a minute's space;
Such silence, that you seem'd to hear
The holy Dove's wings hovering near;
And the still blessing far and wide,
Fell like the dew at evening-tide;
And e'er we left the house of prayer,
We knew that peace descended there;
And through the week of strife and din,
We bore its wondrous seal within.

THE EXISTENCE OF A GOD.

From the Scottish Magazine.

The general acknowledgment of the being of a God is, by common consent, admitted to afford the strongest presumption that this great truth must originally have been discovered to mankind by direct revelation: and the same account must, for the same reason, be given of that universal opinion, that the soul survives the death of the body in a state of expectancy, which prevails among the rudest and most uncivilized tribes of men in every region of the globe. Even the Esquimaux, and the natives of New Holland, who are reduced to the lowest degree of mental darkness, and amongst whom the knowledge of God seems to be all but obliterated, have yet preserved a belief that the soul survives the body, and exists in a separate state of consciousness, until the reunion of both. That their notions respecting this state are crude, absurd, and irrational, and rest on no sufficient warrant of assurance, is at once admitted; yet the fact of a widely diffused belief in an intermediate state re-conducts the inquiring mind to a primitive revelation from whence their obscure and defaced traditions were derived. It is a fact too evident to be denied, that at the time of our Saviour's Advent, the Jews not only believed that there should be a resurrection of the just, but likewise that the souls of men continue to exist in a state of separation from the body, during the interval between death and the resurrection, in a region specially assigned to them by

God. And as both the Elysium and Tartarus of the Pagan creed were supposed to be situated beneath the earth, *apud Inferos*: so the Jews believed, that the disembodied spirits of men, both good and bad, were received into a certain subterranean region, which they called "Shool," a word which the Seventy have, almost in every instance, translated by the synonyme *Hades*, or the invisible state. In this common receptacle of departed souls, the spirits of the just were represented as reposing in a paradise of delights, in the Garden of Eden, in Abraham's bosom; and the souls of the wicked as tormented in flame.

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