

POETRY.

For the Wesleyan.

ELEGIC STANZAS,

ON THE DEATH OF WILLIAM S. BLACK.

SON OF MARTIN S. BLACK ESQ. OF HALIFAX.

And art thou gone,—thou whom we late beheld,
In all the freshness of thine early years;
Thy open sunny brow unmarked by care,—
And thy clear eyes undimmed by gath'ring tears;
Gone! could not Death the stroke, awhile delay,
Nor summon the beloved so soon away!

Ah! little thought thy Parents, when they bade
In parting-words, their darling son adieu;
Sisters and Brothers dreamt not, as they gazed
Upon the bark that bore thee from their view:
The last farewell was said,—that never more
Thy bounding steps should press thy native shore.

Who, who can paint the bitter pang that wrung
Thy mother's heart, when struggling all in vain,
To reach thy home, the sad conviction dawning,
For thee its portals ne'er should open again;
How hard it seemed, beneath a stranger sky,
Far from the household band, to droop and die!

Weeps now thy Mother, for her Son is not;
Laments a Father, for his much loved child;
The playmates of thy boyhood shall recall
Thy generous deeds, thy accents ever mild,—
And while, in memory, come they back to view,
The fount of grief, unchecked, bursts forth anew.

They mourn, yet wherefore? blessed is thy lot,
So early taken from a world of care;
Not thine to watch beside the dying couch,
Where lie the friends thy soul hath held most dear;

Nor shalt thou mark youth's glowing visions fade,
Love scorched, hopes blighted, generous trust betrayed.

Then, rather, let the song of praise ascend,
That thou, so soon, heaven's joys art called to share,—

And let us patiently "our cross sustain,"
Until we, too, a crown of glory wear;
Until we, in our Father's House, shall tell
Of trials past, till then, Farewell, Farewell.

M. E. H.

FAMILY CIRCLE.

A Word to Fathers.

FROM A FATHER'S PEN.

Many fathers appear to think that all the religious instruction of the children devolves exclusively on the mother. They act upon this principle. If God so regarded it, He would, in justice, order that the consequences of their ruin should fall upon the mother alone; but God has, by connecting both parents in the penalty of the neglect, shown that the responsibility is equally divided. The father who does not pray with his children; who does not, with his own lips, guide their infant affections to the Saviour; who does not give time and thought to their mental and moral culture, must expect that the displeasure of God will meet him, embittering his declining days, and almost destroying the anticipation of joy in heaven. How many dreadful facts might, in this connexion, be narrated, which would cause even the ears of them that heard to tingle. Each family is, in itself, an independent empire, of which the father is monarch; he has power to oppress his wife—he has power to oppress his child. The arm of the State cannot be thrust in, and the cry of oppression may not come out. The relation between parent and child is such, that it is the parent's duty, for many years, to secure the obedience of the child; at the same time, the parent must himself be all that he would desire his child to be, both in the things of God and the things of the world. The Christian father will desire the temporal, as well as the spiritual happiness of his family. The man who has too much dignity to play with his children; who can look coldly and distantly upon their sports in the yard; who takes no interest in their wagons and tops; who will not lend them an encouraging smile, in building a rabbit-warren, or a dove-cote, disgraces the name of father. A snow-drift must be warmer than such a man's heart.

The Sweetness of Home.

He who has no home has not the sweetest pleasure of life, he feels not the thousand endearments that cluster around that hallowed spot to fill the void of his aching heart, and while away his leisure moments in the sweetest of life's joys. Is misfortune your lot, you will find a friendly welcome from hearts beating true

to your own. The chosen partner of your toil has a smile of approbation when others have desisted, a hand of hope when all others refuse, and a heart to feel your sorrows as her own. Perhaps a smiling cherub with prattling glee and joyous laugh, will drive all sorrow from your care-worn brow, and inebriate it in the wreaths of domestic bliss.

No matter how humble that home may be, how destitute its stores, or how poorly its inmates are clad; if true hearts dwell there, it is yet a home—a cheerful, prudent wife, obedient and affectionate children will give that possessor more real joy than bags of gold and windy honours.

The home of a temperate, industrious, honest man will be his greatest joy. He comes to it, "weary and worn," but the music of the merry laugh, and the happy voices of childhood cheer him. Envy, ambition and strife have no place there, and with a clear conscience he lays his weary limbs down to rest in the bosom of his family and under the protecting care of the poor man's friend and helper.

The Forsaken Lamb.

Many years ago, when taking my morning walk along the base of Shehallion, one of our loftiest Highland mountains, I met a shepherd, a regular attendant on my Sabbath meetings. He had his plaid closely wrapped about him, and had evidently something in it, that he was carrying with unusual care. After the usual friendly salutation, I said, "What is this, Malcom, that you have got in your plaid?" He answered, "It is a poor forsaken lamb. When I was going my rounds this morning, I found it lying on the cold ground; its mother had left it, and it would soon have died. I took it up, wrapped it in my warm plaid, and am now carrying it home to my homestead." "And what," I asked, "do you intend to do with it?" "I will feed it," said the kind shepherd, "and it will soon be one of the flock." He did so. The poor forsaken lamb revived, grew, and became one of the liveliest and strongest sheep of the flock; while it must have pined and died, if my kind friend had not had compassion upon it. At that time I had an interesting Sabbath-school among the cold mountains. There were among my scholars many lambs that had strayed from the fold of Jesus. Many a time had I mourned over them, and feared that they would die in their sins. This little incident encouraged me. I remembered that Jesus had left the ninety and nine sheep in the wilderness, and gone after the one that was lost. I could see Jesus walking over the cold mountains of this world. He finds the poor dying lamb. Filled with love, he says unto it, "Live!" He takes it into his arms—he carries it in his bosom—he brings it into his own fold—he feeds it with the pure milk of the Word—with the finest of the wheat.

Dear young people, have you met with Jesus? You are by nature lying on the cold mountains, not dying merely, but dead; if Jesus does not meet you, and save you, your portion must be misery for ever. He is going about the hills, seeking for the wanderers of the dark. His sweet though loud voice you may now hear, calling upon you to return. "Turn ye, turn ye; why will ye die?" It may encourage you to hear that last year I met one of my former little Highland flock, who seems to have been brought into the fold of Jesus. He was then a diligent attentive boy, but without grace. He is now a strong young man, and appears to have tasted and seen that the Lord is gracious. He was then the dying lamb; he is now a living member of Christ's little flock. —Anon.

Domestic Accomplishment.

In the domestic relationship there ought to be no selfishness. Whatever elegant acquirements we may chance to have made, instead of being reserved for rare occasions, should be suffered to shed their softening influence on every day experience. The prints should not be carefully kept out of sight of the children of the family, and turned over only for the benefit of the stranger; the picture should not be curtained except when there is company; or the piano be dumb because there is "no one but ourselves" to listen. There may be less triumph, but there is surely equal if not greater happiness in singing by the fireside than by warbling in the saloon; and though the thanks of the father or brother be homely in expression, there is more sweetness in them than in all the studied commonplace of society. A sadder sight can scarcely be conceived than that of the spirit of dullness taking possession of the family circle. We see it in the husband, who, hour by hour, gazes moodily by the fire; in the wife who occupies herself with her mechanical employment, without seeking to break the enchanted silence. Neither entertains the intention of injuring the other, and yet they are mutually defrauded of the happiness they ought to enjoy.

The Two Neighbours Reconciled.

Two merchants of the same city, being neighbours, and jealous of each other, lived in a scan-

dalous enmity. One of them, entering into himself, submitted to the voice of religion, which condemned his resentments; he consulted a pious person, in whom he had great confidence, and inquired of him how he should manage to bring about a reconciliation. "The best means," answered he, "is what I shall now indicate to you: Whenever any person shall enter your store in order to purchase, and you have not what suits them, recommend them to go over to your neighbour." He did so. The other merchant being informed of the person by whom these purchasers came to him, was so struck with the good offices of a man whom he considered his enemy, that he repaired immediately to his house to thank him for it, begged his pardon with tears in his eyes for the hatred he had entertained against him, and besought him to admit him amongst the number of his best friends. His prayer was heard, and religion closely united those whom self-interest and jealousy had divided.

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PROTRACTED MEETINGS.

To those who are familiar with the working of PROTRACTED MEETINGS, it may appear an act of supererogation to enter at large into a vindication of them; but when they are made either the objects of attack, or the subjects of ridicule, their advocates may not keep silence. We have this advantage—if advantage it may be considered—that we are well acquainted with the manner in which they are conducted, and with the gracious results, which, under the divine blessing, generally follow. On this ground we feel ourselves competent to bear decided testimony. Had we reason to believe they were either commenced or continued with dependence on human instrumentality only, and without implicit reliance on the agency of GOD THE SPIRIT; or had we reason to question the legitimacy of the means employed, or to suppose the good effected did not greatly exceed any inconveniences that might incidentally accompany their use,—we should, as in duty bound, hesitate before throwing into the scale even the weight of our humble sanction. But not only do we approve of Protracted Meetings as a means of promoting a revival of the work of God, but, from personal knowledge of their great and important benefits, we give to them our sincere and hearty recommendation.

Nothing is easier, or more common, than, under the influence of ignorance or prejudice, to condemn what in itself is right and good. Against this species of weapon Protracted Meetings have had to contend. Instead of calm consideration, impartial investigation, and candid trial of things that apparently "differ," some things are supposed, others fabricated, the whole regarded through some distorted medium, and sentence of unmitigated censure or unqualified condemnation is recorded. Tested in the same way, or by similar process, what instrumentality employed by the Church for its own and the world's benefit would escape unscathed?

But what are Protracted Meetings? and in what do they differ from the ordinary

means employed in advancing the cause of Christ in the earth?

The terms themselves are sufficiently explanatory of the character of the services. They imply a series of religious meetings held more frequently, and extending over a longer period of time, than is usually the case. As far as we know, prayers, exhortations, singing, and preaching the Word of God, are the means employed. Sometimes, but very rarely compared with the others, there may be the relation of christian experience. No just exception, we apprehend, can be against the kind of means used at Protracted Meetings—except the impugner is prepared to condemn those which distinguish the ordinary services of the sanctuary on the Lord's Day. The difference then is not in kind but in degree—in the more frequent and continuous use of the ordinary means of grace.

A Protracted Meeting generally continues—with proper intermissions, or intervals of time—from four to five days,—sometimes for seven, and, under extraordinary circumstances, for twelve or fourteen days; the time being regulated by indications or manifestations of the divine presence, or other important considerations. Now, should the objection be urged against the frequency of the religious exercises, or the length of time allotted and expended, then, for its sustenance, it should be clearly shown that God, in His Word, has limited acts of public worship not only to the holy Sabbath, but to so many given hours of that day; that, by express enactment, He has excluded such acts from all week-day observance, or restricted them to certain days of the week, and to certain hours of those days; which restrictive or limiting clauses, we may safely challenge the stoutest opponents of protracted meetings to adduce. They exist not on the Statute-Book. While the Sabbath is to be kept holy, and suitable portions of it are to be spent in public devotional exercises,—on the frequency of His worship on the other days of the week, God has been pleased to give no deliverance. Wisely has this matter been left to the judgment and action of the Ministers and members of the Church. Only we may presume that portions of some of the working-days should be redeemed from the calls of labour for the religious instruction and edification of the pious, and the reclamation of the wicked from the error of their ways; and that the more zealous any particular Church is for God and the salvation of souls, the more frequently will it secure and improve such favourable opportunities of receiving and doing good.

Strange it is—but not more strange than true—that the very parties, who object the loudest to Protracted Meetings, are in the habit of holding religious services on week-nights, and sometimes on week-days, and as frequently too as they in their wisdom and zeal deem necessary or prudent. The principle on which protracted meetings are held is here surrendered, and their objections to these services "vanish into thin air." They should be the last to condemn in others what in reality they do themselves. Nor, if they thought it promotive of the interests of their Church, would they hesitate to summon special meetings for that object at any time, and hold them as frequently and as long as they had reason to believe those interests would be advanced. We cannot, therefore, help regarding the objection urged by such parties against protracted meetings as capricious, without just or reasonable foundation, arising from sheer prejudice or from some less worthy motive.

We refer our readers to the Epistle of Nehemiah, in which it is recorded that Ezra the priest brought the congregation both of men and women and read therein—from the morning to the evening—and that "day by day" first day unto the last day, he read book of the law of God,—giving and causing them to understand the things keeping the feast "seven days," as this looks very much like a meeting. We are also quite sure that the Nineteenth Chapter of the Acts of the Apostles, we have read of Paul, daily in the school of one Tyrus, that "this continued by the space of years; so that all they which dwelt there heard the word of the Lord Jesus and Greeks." We do not style the course pursued by the Apostle a Protracted Meeting, as he was not so fastidious in frequent and continuous services, the purpose of disseminating religious doctrine, and souls of people, as some mode who boast much of their superior Apostolic faith and practice, are.

But are not Protracted Meetings "up" by certain Ministers, "as if to control the sovereign agency of potent Spirit?"—No. Such a theory enters their minds. They are not, allegation, or insinuation, from hearts. But they employ Protracted Meetings as a means to attain an end, and Paul in the cases before us, like WHITEFIELD and WESLEY, labours were abundant, and well and prayed, and set the people praying, in the firm belief that the point of the means, and had produced render them efficient. The of protracted meetings, like the servants of God, believe God's by on his faithful promise; and ing and relying, they go and Gospel from day to day, calling upon God, setting the Church with earnest prayers, and expecting, the descending influence of And when the Spirit descend power, convincing sinners, at their sins and desert of punishment in their hearts the cry of was the case in meetings protracted, they dare not abandon continue in the same spirit prayer, using the means, and still greater things; or, to use a contemporary quoted in our papers and people spread out their souls, to catch the heavenly thus are waited onwards in the rival.

These, in brief, are the theories of Protracted Meetings they were multiplied in the all the Churches—and yet blessed of God. Then wouldness and the solitary place be and the desert rejoice and rose," and the people "see the Lord, and the excellency of

In connexion with the above we hope our readers will peruse an article on the subject Religion in Scotland, which second page,—in which they have said in favour of Protracted Meetings abundantly confirmed.

THE RECENT CONTIN

From personal expression in the City, and from letters