

CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

DEVOTED TO THE INTERESTS OF RELIGION AND GENERAL LITERATURE.

"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL xii. 4.

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POETRY.

For the Christian Mirror.

THE CHRISTIAN.

BY S. O. H.

WHEN slowly ope the rosy-finger'd dawn,
That tints with gold the woods or verdant lawn,
Night's shadows yielding to the blushing east,
To daily toil recalling man and beast,
Ere the majestic sun hath shot a ray
The mountain tops above, proclaiming day—
Then is the time our souls to sacrifice,
With blessings fresh let grateful incense rise,
To Israel's God, who slumbers not nor sleeps,
And watch o'er our unguarded hours keeps;
Whose undiminish'd mercies, small nor few,
Our wearied bodies vigorously renew;
O then! how sweet, with primordial breath,
Fresh as the blooming rose on dewy heath,
With hearts obedient and submissive, yield
Him grateful homage for all sorrows heal'd;
To God the humble Ebenezer raise,
In tranquil prayer and orisons of praise.
The Christian patriot thus devoutly kneels,
Far from the crowd tumultuous he steals—
Holy emotion in his bosom swells,
Whilst twilight hovers o'er the distant hills;
Forth gushing from his swelling heart o'erflows
Devotion's kindling fire; and upward throws
The heart's n'it holy-caest, upborne on high,
Mingling with faith and love the earnest cry,
The penitential tear and broken sigh
Accepted is;—for him the Saviour pleads,
And for his heav'n-born child He intercedes;
In solitude sweet intercourse he holds
With God; his ev'ry trouble there unfolds,
And in reserve he views the dazzling crown—
Answers of peace his Father scatters down,
Like dew descending on the meadow down,
Wat'ring the seed his Holy Spirit's sown;
With mind unburden'd and with vigour new,
The glorious prize and Christian race pursue;
With thankful heart, when none but God is there,
Morn, noon and eventide ascends his prayer.
The babbling worldling cannot there intrude
To rob his panting soul of heav'nly food;
Thus forth delighting in his Maker's smile,
Boldly defiance bids to Satan's guile—
Triumphant feels amid the sceptic's sneers,
And frowning foes, and scoffers' snarling jeers;
Warring beneath the blood-stain'd cross; he wields
The Spirit's sword and faith's emblazon'd shield,
Fed by his Parent gracious day by day,
Stoops to adversity, and weeds his narrow way.

Montreal, June, 1842.

GENERAL LITERATURE.

MY FIRST AFFLICTION.

I HAD heard often of the grief of parents at the loss of children, I thought I sympathized with the afflicted, and so I did to a certain extent. I never could see a fond mother bend over the dead form of her beloved child without desiring to weep with her—but ah! with that grief a stranger intermeddled not. To me there was always something affecting in the deep and solemn dignity of death, and in the speechless eloquence of the grave. Living for

the most part of my days within sound of the sweet village bell of New England, nothing could be more solemn than its knell, when tolling at the occasional burial of an inhabitant—But oh, how different the sound, when it was for my child! Little Gertrude had wound her silvery cords round and round my heart.—From the time of her birth she had gradually insinuated herself into the bosom of parental affection, until no child seemed so tender, so lovely, so triumphant over a father's heart.—How mysterious the growth of attachment! It is the work of God, that he may fulfil his purposes! What a chaos of *disjuncta membra* would the world present without it! So little Gertrude lived for me, and I—too much for her. At table she sat next me—abroad she walked with me, at church she sat by my side, at night she lay by my bosom—she loved me with the pure simplicity of a child, and with the enthusiastic ardour of a daughter, yes, a daughter.—Let no father impatiently long for sons. He may please himself with the idea of boldness and masculine energy, and moral or martial achievement, but to no one he will meet little else than forwardness, recklessness, imperiousness, ingratitude. 'Father give me the portion that falleth to me,' was the imperious demand of the profligate prodigal, who had been indulged from his childhood. This case is the representation of thousands. The painter that drew that portrait, painted for all posterity.—But the daughter—she clings, like the rose-leaf around the stem, to the parental home, and the parental heart; she watches the approving smile, and deprecates the slightest shade on the brow; she wanders not on forbidden pleasure grounds; wrings not the hearts at home with her midnight absence; wrecks not the hopes to which early promise had given birth, nor paralyzes the soul that doats on this, its chosen object. Wherever the son may wander in search of fortune or pleasure, there is the daughter within the sacred temple of home, the Vestal Virgin of its innermost sanctuary, keeping alive the flame of domestic affection, and blessing that existence of which she is herself a part.

As my youngest cherub threw her arms around my neck, and breathed into my ear, 'Dear Father,' could I have imagined that that very night would witness her little form struggling with a fierce disease? But so it was. Ah! father, fond doating father! you think that child is yours. Its cheeks are full in bloom—her eye, gay with childhood's, innocent joys, looks cheerily and confidently into your own delighted face, her step bounds over the garden path, and in her little hand she brings you a bunch of flowers. This is happiness too exquisite for death to permit. It was mine. In one month it was mine. In the next it was all buried in the depths of the grave that opened to receive the precious form of my Gertrude. I then learned a lesson, of which I had not before a suitable conception, that I do not own any thing in the creation of God. I had closed the dying eyes of my beloved mother, and much I loved her, no child could love her more; but a lingering consumption, after de-

taining her a long time in view of the promised land, at length let her go to take full possession. I had buried a beloved sister, who under a similar course of protracted discipline, was ripened for her heavenly rest; but this was my first affliction.

Every parent understands me. Every father knows I speak the truth. There is not on earth a tie so peculiar, so mysterious, so inexpressible.—Ten thousand infinitely minute fibres are instantly sundered at that bold stroke of death. The breaking of a million arteries would not cause such a flow.—The actual loss is not indeed like that of losing a conjugal partner, but the feeling, the emotion, the perplexity of griefs is too intense to be surpassed. A part of both yourselves dies, the pledge of your affection—the joy of your souls, the concentrating point of your love, is snatched away, and an appalling vacancy is created in the soul. The strength of a parent's love is seen in the appropriate evidence, while life lasts—in the anxious look, the eager inquiry, the restlessness of the heart, the assiduity of attention, the sleepless vigilance. Oh how the mother watched over that child! Every power, faculty, and appetite of the system seemed to pay its tribute to the impending danger. When nature was exhausted, the mother would lie on the bed in vain efforts to sleep; her soft and suppressed groans re-echoing through the silence of midnight the afflicting groans of the little sufferer. To see a child, whose powers of moral agency have no suitable sense of responsibility, writhing under the scourge of a relentless disease, looking at you most imploringly for that help which you can no more give than create a world; this is as humiliating as it is heart-rending—you are the cause of those sufferings—you can entail, but you cannot relieve. You could be the means of a sinful, painful existence, but could not impart holiness to that existence.

In the case of my sweet Gertrude, hope clung to the last relic of probability of recovery—nay, forced itself an existence in the very mouth of despair, and even tried to rally its expiring energies over her breathless corpse. After four weeks suffering, the last night came. Gertrude requested me to lie by her side that night, as if to give me some consolation for the approaching stroke of Death, and ere the morning dawned her spirit had fled! That indeed was the opening of a new scene in the hurried drama which was passing before me. It was my first affliction. I could write a volume on its impressions and its tendencies, but it would weary.

In a lonely grave, in a romantic situation, repose the remains of my cherished one, secure alike from present suffering and the danger of future ills. That spot I love to visit, and to repeat in Kirke White's touching lines:

Securely laid

In this thy last retreat,
Unheeded o'er thy silent dust
The storms of life shall beat."

And another day (which the Father hath in his own power) shall gather me and my belo-