

ther. And thus she spoke:—"Father of the fatherless, and God of the widow!"—these were her very words—"hast Thou brought me so far through misery and temptation, to forsake me now?" I might perhaps have heard more, but I could not refrain from pressing forward, and asking the cause of her new distress. She made no reply; but smiling as before, showed me her empty apron, and pointed to her children. The occasion of her grief was now apparent. It seemed that she had fallen, from pure weakness, in stepping over the stile. The produce of the alms-seeking of a long summer-day, consisting of about a dozen of potatoes, was scattered on the grass. A flock of geese, scarcely less hungry than herself, promptly seized the poor provision, and fled away. The children engaged in a fruitless pursuit—the mother, addressed a not unheeded prayer to the footstool of the divine throne.

Such was the sight then presented to my eyes;—such it still remains, ever abiding in my recollection. More than twenty years have elapsed since the incident occurred. I have related it to many friends; I have thought on it with a frequency that would have rendered any other subject faded and irksome; but yet I am firmly persuaded that this one scene—one amidst the varied multiplicity of life's chequerings—is destined of God never to be obliterated from my memory—never to diminish in freshness or in force. It seems traced as by an iron pen upon the tablets of my very soul, to remain while life and faculties shall endure.

I questioned the poor woman, whom I made sit down on the grass beside me, as to where she had come from, whether she was going, and her name. She told me that "she was an inhabitant of a remote part of the county of —; that she had gone over with her husband and children, about three months before, to Workington, in the hope that the former would find employment in the coal-pits, where he had on previous occasions laboured. She was herself well skilled in needle-work, and a tolerable laundress; and calculated, between their joint earnings, to bring up their family in comfort and decency. But God, she said—and profound was her anguish as she pronounced the sentence—God, in his unsearchable counsels, had decreed otherwise.

*To be continued.*

#### NOVEL READING.

I CANNOT dismiss this subject, without adverting to another and yet more fatal error in the literary studies and pursuits of the female. I allude to that *passionate and excessive devotion to fictitious writings*, which is the reigning idolatry of the sex. It is now my purpose to describe how this species of literature mingles poison with the elements of thought and feeling, and sensualizes the motives, hopes, and operations of the soul. My object is to speak of its influence in seducing the mind from the rarest intellectual fountains, gushing with rich and exhaustless delights, and leading it to the turbid streams, which, swollen by the sudden freshet, bear all the impurities of lull and dale in their currents. The highest merit ever claimed for popular fictions is that they supply relaxation and amusement for the exhausted intellectual energies. They were never intended to hold any higher station in the empire of literature, than the rose, the lily, or the daffodil, in the natural world. And the mind that relies on them for enduring entertainment, will be as poorly sustained as the body whose only nutriment consists of the productions of the flower-bed.—They elicit no patient thought—summon none of the sterner faculties of the mind into exercise—supply no discipline for the high pursuits of literature and science, furnish no armour with which the intellect may gird itself for bold and effective action, and above all, propose no lofty and enduring rewards for time and toil. What orator ever goes to the novel or romance for fire to kindle thought,

elevate feeling, and quicken the mind for high exploits.

And yet unpractical and unintellectual as this literature is, it constitutes three-fourths of the reading of the young females of our land. Go to your public libraries, and you will see the works of Bulwer, Scott, Fielding, and Smollet, thumbed and marked, bedewed with many a tear, and adorned with many a flower; whilst the standard works on history, philosophy, and biography, and even the English classics, are untouched. Yes, so wide-spreading and pernicious is this passion for fiction, that it vitiates the taste for pure and lofty conceptions, and blinds the eye to all that is splendid in substantial literature. You find the fond admirer of novels preferring the crude sentimentalism of some love adventure, over which she may languish and pine, to the inspiring sentiments of a Cowper, which might woo her to the highest luxuries of intellectual life, or the lofty strains of a Milton, which might roll her soul to heaven.—You find her familiar with the rise, progress, circumstances and catastrophe of some imaginary achievement of chivalry, of treason, or of love, and yet unacquainted with those events in the history of our race, which have overturned empires—peopled continents,—shaken down the strong holds of superstition and cruelty—established the triumphs of Christianity—consummated all that is grand in art and science—in a world, which have produced all that is splendid and sublime in matter or in mind. Yea, more, you find the fond reader trimming the midnight lamp, passionately threading the incidents, and details in the fanciful life of some mock hero or heroine, and yet she never glances her eye over the biographies of Socrates, Cicero, Chatham, Luther, Burke, Calvin, Knox, Wesley and Whitefield—of all those gigantic spirits who have, under God, wielded this world's destinies, and whose deeds are identified with all that is noble, spirit-stirring and enduring in the choice possessions of our age. Who would not be surprised to see an individual more interested in culling flowers on the banks of the Niagara, than in the listening to the roar of its cataract, or in gathering pebbles on ocean's beach, whilst navies were rushing to the conflict? And yet who is surprised to see individuals standing in the midst of the wonders of the universe of God, more enraptured with the dreams of fancy than with those facts which comprehend all that is thrilling in the deeds and destinies of man, and sublime in the operations of God.—*Galloway.*

#### THE TRAVELLER.

##### BETHANY.

BEYOND the Mount of Olives, on the east, is the village of Bethany—the quiet home of the happy family which "Jesus loved." The distance is not more than two miles from Jerusalem. The path winds over the lower heights of Olives, and has been "sanctified" by the feet which so often trod it at eventide. Here the last evenings of our Saviour on earth were passed; for we are told that, leaving the stormy scene of the day's labours, he "went out of the city into Bethany." On our way to the village, we pass the spot which tradition has fixed on as the site of the fig-tree which Jesus cursed. The path is still bordered by a few straggling fig-trees. Descending the eastern side of the hill, we enter Bethany—at this day a small hamlet, occupied by Arabs, the fields around lying uncultivated, and covered with rank grass and wild flowers. It is easy to imagine the deep and still beauty of the spot, when it was the home of Lazarus, and his sisters, Martha and Mary. Defended on the north and west by the Mount of Olives, it enjoys a delightful exposure to the southern sun. The grounds around are obviously of great fertility, though quite neglected; and the prospect to the south-east commands a magnificent view of the Dead Sea and the plains of Jordan. The monks undertake to show the ruins of the house in which Lazarus lived. The stones are large, and the architecture of a sombre cast: but the building unquestionably is of much more recent construction than the time of Lazarus.—Near to it is shown his tomb; and travellers are disposed to grant that this may indeed be the sepulchre in which he who was the "Resurrection and the Life," stood and cried, "Lazarus, come forth." It is obviously of great age, and if not the very tomb, in all probability it is similar in character and construction to that which Lazarus did indeed occupy. A flight of steps leads

down into a square chamber hewn in the rock. A second descent communicates with another small room, in the side of which is a recess large enough to contain three bodies. "We are allowed to suppose," says Elliot, "that kindred love had led Martha and Mary to select a resting-place for their brother, where their own mortal remains might sleep with his till the day of resurrection."—*Modern Judea, Ammon, Moab, &c.*

*From Roberts's Oriental Illustrations of the Scriptures.*

#### THE HINDOO BLESSING THE HINDOO.

"And early in the morning Laban rose up, and kissed his sons, and his daughters, and blessed them."—*Gen. xxxi. 55.*

EARLY rising is a universal custom. Thus, in every season of the year, the people may be seen at sunrise, strolling in all directions. At the time of the heavy dews, they bind a part of the robe round the head, which also falls on the shoulders. When a journey has to be taken, were they not to rise early, they would be unable to travel far before the sun had gained its meridian height. They therefore start a little before day-light, and rest under the shade during the heat of the day.

Here also we have another instance of the interesting custom of blessing those who were about to be separated. A more pleasing scene than that of a father blessing his sons and daughters can scarcely be conceived. The fervour of the language, the expression of the countenance, and the affection of their embraces, all excite our strongest sympathy. "My child, may God keep thy hands and thy feet!" "May the beasts of the forest keep far from thee!" "May thy wife and thy children be preserved!" "May riches and happiness ever be thy portion."

In the beginning of the Hindoo new year, when friends meet for the first time, they bless each other. "Valen, may your fields give abundance of rice, your trees be covered with fruit, your wells and tanks be full of water, and your cows give rivers of milk!" "Ah! Tambaar, we have met on the first day of the new year. In the next ten moons, may your wife have twins!" "May you never want sons in your old age!" "Venase, may your dhonies never want freight! May Varuna (the god of the sea) ever protect! and may you and your children's children derive an abundance of riches from them!" "Do I meet my friend the merchant? This year may your servants be faithful! when you buy things, may they be cheap; and when you sell them, may they be dear!"

"Have I the pleasure of meeting with our divine doctor? The gods grant your fortunate hand may administer health to thousands; and may your house be full of riches!" Thus do they bless each other and rejoice together, on any other great festive occasion.

#### HEATHEN WARFARE

Rev. J. Morgan at Tauranga, in New Zealand, writes:—"I took Peter and a crew of neutral natives, and crossed the harbor, to have an interview with a war party. As we approached the shore, the natives came down to the beach and fired a volley of about 200 muskets. We landed in the midst of their canoes; they were very civil, and requested us to go to a small hillock, a short distance inland from the beach. We did so; and immediately the whole party, nearly all of whom were naked, jumped up, and after the native manner, rushed backward and forward, danced, and occasionally fired their muskets. This being over, my first care was to inquire about the prisoners they had taken; and to entreat them if they were yet living, to spare their lives. They soon told me that they had killed them all. I inquired how many. They replied, 'Eleven.' Of the truth of this statement I had no reason to doubt as the murderers stood before me, their bodies stained from head to foot with the blood of the slain. In their hands they held hatchets, red with blood, with which they had just committed the horrid deed. I inquired where the bodies were. They replied, 'A short distance in the bush.' Some, from the quantity of blood on their bodies, appeared to have been engaged in the barbarous work of cutting them up for the oven. I saw many employed in looking about for fire-wood. I did not see the bodies, not having any desire for so horrid a sight. The leading chiefs promised that they would not land at, or in any way molest the mission station."