

For the Pearl.

CHEAP LITERATURE AND THE DRAMA.

The piety and good sense which pervade the following remarks, (abridged from the "British Critic,") seem to me, Mr. Editor, to entitle them to a place in your instructive paper.

Perhaps the remarks on stage-players may be read by some of those whom we sometimes hear exclaiming, "I wish we had plays to relieve the dullness of the times." If the feeling of the Christian should ever be

"Whatever consists not with thy will,
Lord teach me to resign."

should we not anxiously check each rising desire to add to our temptations to scenes where HE is not? Life is short: let us, therefore, avoid whatever may occupy its hours with that which "in the hour of death: and the day of judgment," will rise up in judgment against us! OKION.

A vast and almost infinite deal is required, to put our education, our literature, *the prevailing tone of opinion*, and habits of conduct, in unison with our faith. At present the contrast in many respects is most wondrous and calamitous. The work, therefore, upon the Church is here immense, and the exertions of the clergy are imperatively called for. To trace the connection which these things bear to each other—to survey our literature, whether addressed to the reason or the imagination, by the light of Christianity—to examine with the Gospel for our guide and beacon, what its aspect is, and what it ought to be—to inquire, with sincerity and strictness, how far our modes of life are Christian, how far our public diversions are Christian, how far our poetry, for instance our novels, our magazines, and newspapers, are Christian—this is a business to which no member of the Church of Christ should be indifferent, who entertains a genuine solicitude for the social improvement of mankind, and who is at all competent to estimate the bearing of these subjects upon national character or individual happiness. High as is the value which we attribute to sound publications cheaply provided and universally dispersed, and entirely as we are of opinion that a channel is here opened for Christians into which they may force their energies with unspeakable advantage, it is scarcely of less consequence that they should frame to themselves just and comprehensive views of the *general literature* of their age or country, with express reference to its religion as also the general modes in which its intellectual and social activities are conspicuously developed. By way of explaining what we mean we would take the stage as an instance.

Now, we can well conceive the possibility as an abstract proposition, that the influence of the drama should be good; and that a well regulated stage might be an aid to morals, and through morals to religion: and we should regret to see the holy influences of Christianity forcibly and entirely rent apart from the polished arts and intellectual recreations of human society. But we cannot regard the theatres of Europe, or at least of England, in their actual state, as objects of panegyric. As places of assembly, they present little more than a focus for the profligacies of a capital: they are too often stepping-stones to other and more abandoned haunts,—schools of sensuality and disorder,—holding out incentives to passion, and facilities to seduction; offending taste, shocking decency, rubbing off the bloom, the freshness, the chaste and delicate sensitiveness of virtue, from all who habitually frequent them: and upon their scenes they furnish neither a guide to conduct, nor a mirror of life. Instead of tragedy, they exhibit for the most part, sentimental or melo-dramatic extravagancies, which outrage nature and reason, and propose dazzling but pernicious qualities for admiration and imitation, fall of mischievous clap-traps, and preposterous rant: instead of comedy, they exhibit low and witless farces, of which the gross immorality is only equalled by the unradicable vulgarity; which seem, as their chief aim, to inculcate the duty, and the pleasure, and the advantage of forbidden attachments and clandestine marriages; which make a point of rewarding the most equivocal stratagems, and exposing honest simplicity to scorn; which teach children to despise and defy the authority of their parents, by surrounding age with ridiculous associations, and showing how the appetites of youth are far wiser than the lessons of experience; which teach servants to deceive and betray their masters, which are

replete with notions with which no prudent man could wish his offspring to be imbued.

There are, of course, many and honourable exceptions; but we fear that our portraiture is only too exact of the general run of productions which are written for our stage, and the general aspect which our theatres display.

(From the New York Review.)

CHRISTIANITY.

It is one of the beauties of Christianity, that it not only warns the soul of the future and fits it for the life to come, but also sheds its kindly influence over the relations of the present. It is adapted to every situation and circumstance in which we may be placed. Interwoven with the best habits and dispositions of our nature, its gentle graces, like the dews of heaven, water every fertile soil. It is serious in the solemn worship of the sanctuary; it is tender and familiar in the affections of the household; it is the friendly companion amid the scenes of nature; it is the stay of adversity, and the best comfort of prosperity: it never deserts us. Wherever man has a true source of enjoyment it is present to sanctify and increase the happiness. Christianity embraces all the conditions of our state. It nerves the arm of the artisan at his daily labor; it strengthens the soldier in patriotism; it enlightens the studies of the philosopher; it teaches the scholar his just end and aim; it seconds the call of duty; it invigorates every faculty to its most perfect exercise. Nor does it fail the mere man of letters in his pursuit of literature, but it meets the author in his closet, and infuses into his page the real and natural interests of life. For it lays before him in the Bible the best model of composition ever penned, and awakes in him the influence of noble precept and example. It enlarges his understanding. It shows him effects not only in themselves, but linked to a first great Cause. It unfolds futurity and thus gives the necessary completion to the history of man. It creates new sympathies in the kind, for it teaches that all men are brothers, and humility the corner-stone of virtue. It cultivates the love of nature. It cherishes the domestic ties, and reads a brighter memorial in the tear of affection than in the most successful effort of policy. It is spiritual, and looks to the emotions of the soul above the great acts of fortune. In fine, it embraces the very spirit of literature; dwelling in the heart, and rendering every thought sensitive to the claims of humanity.

LATIN AND GREEK.

Greek, the shrine of the genius of the old world; as universal as our race, as individual as ourselves; of infinite flexibility, of indefatigable strength, with the complication and the distinctness of nature herself; to which nothing was vulgar, from which nothing was excluded; speaking to the ear like Italian, speaking to the mind like English; with words like pictures, with words like the gossamer film of the summer; at once the variety and the picturesqueness of Homer, the gloom and the intensity of Æschylus; not compressed to the closest by Thucydides, not fathomed to the bottom by Plato;—not sounding with all its thunders, nor lit up with all its ardours, even under the Promethean touch of Demosthenes. And Latin—the voice of empire and of war, of law, and of the state; inferior to its half-parent, and rival, in the embodying of passion, and in the distinguishing of thought, but equal to it in sustaining the measured march of history, and superior to it in the indignant declamation of moral satire, stamped with the mark of an imperial and despotizing republic; rigid in its construction, parsimonious in its synonymes; reluctantly yielding to the flowery yoke of Horace, although opening glimpses of Greek-like splendour in the occasional inspirations of Lucretius; proved indeed to the uttermost by Cicero, and by him found wanting; yet majestic in its barrenness, impressive in its conciseness; the true language of history, instinct with the spirit of nations, and not with the passions of individuals; breathing the maxims of the world, and not the tenets of the schools; one and uniform in its air and spirit, whether touched by the stern and haughty Sallust, by the open and discursive Livy, by the reserved and thoughtful Tacitus.—Coleridge.

EULOGIUM ON WM. PENN.

The following is perhaps the most elegant and highly finished eulogium which has been pronounced upon a man, in whose praise almost all men unite. May we be permitted to add, that it is as true as it is eloquent.

"WILLIAM PENN stands the first among the law-givers whose names and deeds are recorded in history. Shall we compare with him Lycurgus, Solon, Romulus, those founders of military commonwealths, who organized their citizens in dreadful array against the rest of their species, taught them to consider their fellow men—barbarians, and themselves as alone worthy to rule over the earth? What benefit did mankind derive from their boasted institutions? Interrogate the shades of those who fell in the mighty contests between Athens and Lacedæmon, between Carthage and Rome, and between Rome and the rest of the universe.—But see our William Penn, with weaponless hands, sitting down peaceably with his followers in the midst of savage nations, whose only occupation was shedding the blood of their fellow men, disarming them by his justice, and teaching them, for the first time, to view a stranger without distrust. See them bury their tomahawks in his presence, so deep that man shall never be able to find them again. See them under the shade of the thick groves of Coaquannock extend the bright chain of friendship, and solemnly promise to preserve it as long as the sun and moon shall endure. See him then with his companions establishing his commonwealth on the sole basis of religion, morality and universal love, and adopting, as the fundamental maxims of his government, the rule handed down to us from Heaven, "Glory to God on high, and on earth peace; and good will to all men."

Here was a spectacle for the potentates of the earth to look upon, an example for them to imitate. But the potentates of the earth did not see, or if they saw, they turned away their eyes from the sight; they did not hear, or if they heard, they shut their ears against the voice which called out to them from the wilderness.

Discite justitiam moniti, et non temere Divos.

The character of William Penn alone sheds a never fading lustre upon our history. No other state in this union can boast of such an illustrious founder; none began their social career under auspices so honourable to humanity. Every trait of the life of that great man, every fact and anecdote of those golden times will be sought for by our descendants with avidity, and will furnish many an interesting subject for the fancy of the novelist, and the enthusiasm of the poet."—P. S. Duponceau L. L. D.

VERY UNPLEASANT.—A young farmer in the interior of France had lately agreed to elope with the daughter of one of his neighbours, who refused to give his consent to their marriage. Every thing was arranged, but it appears our young Lothario had forgotten that secrecy was an important point in affairs of this kind. He had confided his projects to one or two of his particular friends, who, singularly enough, were no more discreet than the individual most interested in the prevention of publicity. On the appointed evening he was at the window of his innamorata; the trembling fair one alighted at the pre-arranged signal, and sprung upon the pillion of her lover's horse; but before the party had proceeded far, the gentle lady began to apply most vigorously to the shoulders of our amorous swain, who was some time before he discovered that his travelling companion was no other than the brother of the object of his affections, whose well-nerved arm inflicted a sound correction upon the would-be gallant, and extorted from him a solemn promise to abstain from all such attempts for the future.—French paper.

"THY WILL BE DONE"

Thy will be done! To us who walk below
In the dim shadow of this vale of tears,
Where joy a moment smiles, then disappears,
Is it not well, Oh, Lord of life to know,
Even when thou smitest, Mercy gives the blow?
Thy will be done! We but obscurely scan
The mighty mazes of thy wondrous plan—
And what Thou dost in love we make our wo.
Teach us to profit by each pain, oh God!
Heavenward, by faith, to raise our souls to Thee—
With deep humility to kiss the rod—
To trust the motive which we cannot see—
Until, when every earthly doubt be gone
Our hearts, in truth, may say, "Thy will be done"