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Poetry.

SEED-TIME AND HARVEST.

Cheer thee! faint and weary one,
Wearied with the sowing,
On the rugged paths of life,
Tears from eyes o'erflowing
Deem not one is shed in vain,
Doth not Heaven's gentle rain,
Set earth's blossoms blowing?

Sow in Faith, or tears, or seed,
O'er thy pathway flinging;
Then await the rich reward
From these germs upspringing.
Over each God's angel bends,
To the earth-born flowers he tends,
Dew and sunshine bringing.

Sow in Hope—no dark despair
Mingled with thy weeping;
Sad may be the seed-time here,
Joy awaits the reaping.
He who wept for human woe
Deems thy tear-drops as they flow
Worthy of His keeping.

But o'er all things, sow in Love,
Hand and heart o'erflowing;
Soon, oh, faint and weary one!
Thou shalt cease from sowing,
And, behold, each seed-time tear,
"First the blade and then the ear,"
In God's harvest growing!

Christian Miscellany.

We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts
and reasonings of pure and lofty minds.—Dr. S. S. S.

A Sabbath-keeper in the Mediterranean.

The Rev. John H. Hill, missionary at Athens, Greece, gives an interesting narrative of God's merciful regard to one of his servants in the island of Crete, who in the midst of abounding irreligion, "kept the Sabbath from polluting it," obeying the command, "In sowing time and in harvest thou shalt rest." The sheaves of a bountiful harvest had been gathered, as of old at "the threshing-floor of Ornan the Jebusite," in a smooth area under the open sky, where sharp instruments were drawn over them, cutting the straw and separating the wheat; but a dead calm long prevailed, and there was no wind to winnow even enough for the families of the threshers.

On a Saturday evening the good man went out to them, bade them to "rest on the Sabbath according to the commandment," and distributed flour enough among them for their present wants. The next day he was in the house of God meditating on his precepts, and near the close of the day went on an errand of benevolence, when he ascended a hill which overlooked the threshing floor, and saw that, as a wind had sprung up, the workmen had been winnowing the grain. He repaired to the spot, expressed to them his grief, and firmly and earnestly rebuked them for violating his own directions and the command of God.

The good man died, leaving a widow and an orphan son and daughter, the latter born after her father's decease. The desolating Turkish war came upon them, and the mother and orphans fled to Greece, where they met supplies of food from America, and more than this met American missionaries, to whom the daughter attached herself, imbibing their instructions, learning the way of life, and with whom she remained. Her mother and brother returned to the island of Crete, where, however, they were able to recover very little of the good husband and father's estate.

Nearly thirty years had elapsed, when the orphan daughter went to Crete to visit her mother and brother. While there, her greatest pleasure was to gather the simple peasants in groups around her, tell them the story of redeeming love, and hold up before them their duties to God and to one another.

On one occasion while she was speaking, an old woman, who had been attentively listening, cried out, "Well, you are indeed your father's child!" "Do you remember my father?" asked the orphan daughter.

"Certainly; I remember him well. I came to this village a young and foolish bride; and young and foolish enough I was. The old people would often caution me, 'Take care how you behave; our master is very severe against folly.' As for me, I could not understand how our master could be severe, for he always appeared to be so kind and gentle. One day, however, I was made to understand what my old friends meant by their caution." She then related the whole story of the winnowing on the Sabbath against his directions, and his grief and severe rebuke for their sin, in breaking the fourth commandment as above related.

The widow, who had not been an inattentive listener, when the old woman had ended, said to her, "But you are speaking of that part of the island as if it belonged to my husband." "Certainly," replied the old woman; "it is well known that all that part of the island belonged to our master, your husband." "I always knew it belonged to us," said the widow, "but I never could establish my claim. Would you be willing to be a witness for us?" "That I will; and I know others still alive who will testify in your behalf." The matter was investigated, the claim clearly proved, and the widow and two orphan children entered on the inheritance of the property of their husband and father, whose "faithfulness concerning the law of his God" in due time verily had its reward.

The Woodbine and the Thorn.

"Just look at that beautiful flower!" said one of our party, pointing to a luxuriant woodbine that bloomed in a hedge hard by. After some trouble we succeeded in gathering it, and found that it had entwined itself around a thorn. While disentangling the woodbine from its unsightly companion, I remembered an elegant and truthful allegory of an ancient, that though pleasure and pain are contrary in nature, and look different ways, Jupiter had so tied them together, that he who takes the one must have the other. True it is that we all endeavour to separate them. Many at this moment are trying to untwist the woodbine from the thorn; to get happiness apart from sorrow. This is natural. All prefer the flower to the prickly, health to affliction, prosperity to adversity, friends to enemies. It is only the believer in the Lord Jesus who knows how to accept them together. Still, it must be conceded that human life is a mixture of the pleasant and the painful. It is a garden with a sepulchre therein. Illustrations of this truth everywhere abound. When people relate their experience, we hear that each heart has had its *ora* bitterness. Families, too, bring their evidence. Of the first family there was a murdered son. Job tells us how the wind blew down the house upon his children; and all perished. The sweet singer of Israel lays aside his harp because his son Absalom is slain. In this family there is a poor idiot child, in that a cripple. Here are babes without a father, and there without a mother. Here life's cup is embittered with grief like that of the importunate widow, and the oppressed one has no rest night nor day; there poverty lowers like a dark thunder-cloud over the once-cheerful circle. In this household hearts are bleeding from bereavement; and where are those locks whitened by the winds of time? You hear the sound of those well-known words "My child! my child!" Where is that happy little face you once looked on with such tender love? Why are those toys put aside? Has the hand of death plucked that opening bud? What means the question, "When will mother come again?" "Why does father stay so long away?" "Where is our little sister?"

Indeed, the woodbine and the thorn are twisted. Life has comforts; but it has sorrows too. No situation is exempt. The mysterious combination of contraries is universal. Is there not a cause? Let the infidel ascribe all to "chance;" but those who believe in the Bible must acknowledge a design in the mingling of sorrow with our joys. The Christian is satisfied that the God of Love would never have allowed grief to enter our world unless man had sinned. Melodious as the responsive note of the well-tuned harp were the songs which rose from the lips of man in Eden when primeval glory rested on him: a stream of sacred peace watered the happy garden. There was no broken link in the golden chain whereby kindred hearts were united. There was no clouds between that holy man and the Son of Righteousness. But sin entered our world. Now, how changed the scene! The harmony is disturbed. Sighs mingle with our songs. We gather the woodbine, and in it find the thorn. Who, then, can love sin when such mournful consequences followed from its introduction? But may not even the sorrows of life be turned to good account? Do they not call into exercise many Christian graces? St. Paul so teaches, "We glory," says he, "in tribulation also; knowing that tribulation worketh patience, and patience experience, and experience hope." Affliction has been familiarly called God's school, where some of the most eminent saints have had the best part of their education. Abundant are the blessed fruits of sanctified affliction. And no doubt one reason why no one has perfect happiness in this world is, that men may have their affections withdrawn from earth and fixed upon those things which are above. The woodbine, even when twisted around the thorn, is eagerly gathered; and this present life, with all its sorrows, is too much loved: then how would it be if there were no thorns, no trials? When all is calm and sunshine, we are apt to say, "It is good for us to be here;" but when the sky is overcast, we cry, "Let us go hence." In times of joy we are for building "tabernacles;" but in hours of distress one moans, "I would not live always." We do not say that these outgoing of the heart are inexcusable. O no! Hope of heaven is not planted in the believer's heart to deceive him. Only let us be satisfied that our hope springs from present faith in the death of Christ, and that it glows in a regenerated heart, and is such as "maketh not ashamed." Joyously we may sing, "There is a land of pure delight." There everything is perfect. All is cloudless glory and unmixed delight. Rachel no longer refuses to be comforted. The immortal Psalmist utters no lament.—Peter's heart no longer bleeds with penitential grief. The tears of Magdalene are all wiped away. In heaven the days of mourning will be ended.

No more fatigue, no more distress,
Nor on our bed shall each the place;
No sighs shall mingle with the songs,
Which warble from immortal boughs.

No more alarms of raging foes;
No cries to break the long repose;
No midnight shade, no clouded sun,
But sacred, high, eternal noon.

—YOUTH'S INSTRUCTOR.

Love of the Truth.

It is John Newton who somewhere says, that he never knew any person who appeared to be actuated by a sincere love of the truth, who did not come right after a while, however far off he might have been when he began to feel this motive operating. The case of the Rev. Thomas Scott is a remarkable illustration of this remark. When he commenced his correspondence with Mr. Newton, he was a Socinian, and was solicitous to engage his correspondent in a controversy on the points of difference. Mr. Newton, however, while he avoided controversy, still entertained and expressed the hope that Mr. Scott would come to a right belief, because he thought he perceived in him a sincere desire to know the truth.

This is one of the first lessons which they learn, who are taught of God. The Holy Spirit, when he would lead any one to the saving knowledge of the truth, produces in him a spirit of humble docility. The soul, led by the Spirit, thirsts for a humble knowledge of the truth. This is a very different thing

from ardent attachment to particular opinions, which have been imbibed from education, or from connexion with a particular sect. Such attachment cleaves to error as tenaciously as to truth. A man may be willing to lay down his life in defence of his opinions, and yet may be destitute of the love of truth. The genuine love of truth makes its possessor willing to relinquish his most cherished opinions as soon as it shall be satisfactorily demonstrated that they are not true. The love of truth renders a man not only earnest in the pursuit of the beloved object, but impartial in his judgment of evidence. He fears deception, and admits new opinions only after the evidence has been thoroughly sifted and weighed.

Who is Most Useful?

He that retains, by the exercise of lively faith in the atonement, the largest measure of the Spirit in the church below. Many pious persons have been depressed by the notion that, because they are laid aside from public view, and are now living in obscurity, they must needs be useless, even a burden to others. This is unbelief. It is a dishonour to the God of life. Not a few have been tempted to question the wisdom of Divine Providence, because some visible useful agent has been removed by death, and another spared, whose life appears of little or no value to the world. In our present position, and with our present light, it is not easy to answer, on this point, all the unbelieving queries of the faithless. But admitting, as we may, that where there is most of the Holy Ghost in "the living temple," there is the most useful person among men, we open to all parties the door of the highest degree of usefulness. Listening to the Divine injunction, "Be ye filled with the Spirit," we may start, even on a sick bed, for a philanthropic prize that the highest angel might covet. If man is the greatest "blessing" on earth, at that moment of his existence in which he has most of the Divine nature, we may live and die in faith, in a degree that some victims of discouragement have not thought it their christian privilege to aspire after. They have been oppressed with the fear that they should live to be useless. In one sense this godly jealousy is right; for the "salt may lose its savour," and then a man is useless; yea, worse than useless, he is a curse. But a Christian is not useless because not in office; or because "sick of the palsy," and laid on the bed. The most useful part of a minister's or a philanthropist's life may be the period of confinement to his chamber; because that part is the holiest. "Supplication for all saints," "prayer for all men," when we "pray in the Holy Ghost," is, perhaps, the greatest benefit that mortals can render to the world. This, surely, is best done when we are nearest the throne of heaven; when our union with God is more perfect. This kind of usefulness requires "mighty faith," and the spirit of quenchless, burning charity Divine. Charity, kindling every moment by the descent of celestial fire; faith, sustained by the heart's constant grasping of the "precious promises." What section of the church, what grade of Ministers, what class of persons in civil society, is most useful in promoting human happiness? We may safely answer, "Those who live and walk most in the Spirit;" those who have the greatest "power with God" in saying, "Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven." It is the piety of a nation that preserves and "exalts" it. That piety is personal,—the indwelling of the Spirit in individual believers. Consistent faith in Christ according to its various measures, is the multiform channel for the "rivers of livings, waters" to flow in from heaven, and fertilize the world. "In doing good," then let no man's heart be discouraged, for want of learning or money, office or health; for there is reason to believe that he is the most useful man to the world, who has the most of God in him. "BE YE HOLY, FOR I AM HOLY."—*Christian Miscellany.*