

The Watchman.

"I HAVE SET WATCHMEN UPON THY WALLS O! JERUSALEM THAT SHALL NEVER HOLD THEIR PEACE, DAY NOR NIGHT."

VOL. I.

TORONTO, CANADA WEST, MONDAY, DECEMBER 30, 1850.

No. 50.

Poetry.

A Dirge for the Dying Year.

A dirge for the year that is growing old,
And is track'd by life's decay;
For its number'd hours are well nigh told,
And speed to the past their way.

We hail'd the morn of its hopeful birth
With music and festive cheer;
But a sadder song, as it parts from earth,
We must sing of the dying year.

Oh! its early days were fair and bright
As youth's visions of love or fame;
And the balmy eve and the star-lit night
With a joy to the spirit came.

Then smiles were wreathing its azure brow,
And its path was gay with flowers;
Then the bird-chorus sang from the leafy bough,
And as merry a song was ours.

But the mantling garlands that spring put on
Are faded and fallen now;
And the flowers that brighten'd its path are gone
With the smile from its azure brow.

Like the friends that flock in our sunny days,
But fly when the clouds appear,
The birds, that caroll'd to spring their lays,
Have fled from the dying year.

For the glow of its youth there are gloomy skies,
For its breezes the ice-king's breath;
And forsaken and cheerless, the year now lies,
Like an old man, down to death!

It hath donn'd its funeral mantle chill
Of December's drifted snow;
And is wailing a requiem sadly shrill
For the glories of months ago.

And our dirge, as well, for the lost be sung,
Who hail'd the year's dawning day—
For the loved and the gifted, the fair and young,
Who have pass'd with the flowers away;

For the hopes that had with the year their birth,
But long ere its death have died;
For the change that has come over home and earth,
Over love, and joy, and pride;

For the fruitless hours that come not back,
Save to haunt us on memory's waste;
And for those, perchance, we would gladly lack,
Whose sin on the soul is traced.

With a solemn march, in the train of those
That people the silent past,
We bid farewell to the year that goes,—
Farewell!—that may be our last!

And the year that follows apace we hail
As others were hail'd before;
But some, with the winds, its dirge shall wail,
When its glorious days are o'er.—*Chris. Witness.*

Miscellany.

BURIAL OF OLD BIGOTRY.

A MISSIONARY SPEECH, BY JONATHAN SAVILLE.

The speaker who addressed the meeting next before him had proposed a marriage between the missionary and the Bible Societies. He got up and said, "Sir, we have had talk of a marriage on the platform; what, if we have a funeral, too? There is an old man of whom we have all heard, who has lived to be a plague to all about him for now nearly six thousand years. It was he who tempted Cain to murder his brother Abel; he has been going on in the same way ever since. This old wretch happened to be in London at the time the Bible Society was first instituted. He went, you may be sure, to the meeting. Peeping in at the door, he asked a person standing there, 'What all those gentlemen on the platform were going to do?' The answer was, 'Why, they are met to devise means of sending out the Bible, in all languages, to all parts of the earth where there is a human being to be found.' Then he asked, 'Who is that in the chair?' 'That is Lord Teignmouth.' 'And who are those on his right and left?' 'Those are two of the princes royal.' 'And those in lawn sleeves? Are bishops; and all those dressed in black, with white cravats are ministers of every sect and party. Upon hearing all this, the old man turned himself round, and said, 'What! lords against me! princes, bishops, and ministers of all denominations against me! Ah, then, it's all over with me?' He reared his back against the wall, and began pecking and coughing; exhibiting, in short, all the symptoms of asthma. 'Alas, alas!' said he, after a pause, and one or two gasps for a mouthful of air, 'so long as I had bishops and

princes on my side, I could do well. I must off to my old and best friend the Pope, and try to keep him from joining them in this mad scheme. If he forsake me, I must go to the poorhouse. I am ruined for ever! Here Jonathan called out to the meeting, 'Are there any doctors here?' Somebody said, 'Yes.' 'Well, then,' said he 'whatever you do, do not recommend a sea voyage to the old man; for if you do, and he gets once on shipboard, he will never stop till he gets to the East or West Indies; and then we shall have nothing but disturbances among the missionaries. He will take with him all their differences, which they left behind them; and when he gets there he will distribute them privately at every missionary's door. At present, they are all quiet and friendly; so mind now and keep him from going abroad to recruit. If you are called in, give him plenty of mercury, and get rid of him. I can tell when he used to be so impudent, that he would sit nowhere but at the back of the preacher, in the pulpit. And if it was an Arminian that was preaching, he would whisper in his ear, 'Now give old John Calvin a knock.' And then he would off to a Calvinist pulpit and say, 'Give old Arminius a knock.' And whenever two ministers of the Gospel are engaging in controversy, he runs directly to hell's mouth, and calls out that two ministers are fighting a duel. Whereupon hell rings again with shouts, and they say to him, 'Well done, keep them at it; supply them well with gall. We know that while they are at work, they will compose no more gospel sermons.' However, the blow which Old Bigotry received in London has all but killed him. He grows worse and worse; and they won't suffer him now to go farther into the chapel than just in at the door; for he coughs and spits so, that the dog whipper has orders to give him a good rap on the shins if he comes further. He'll die! and as he is such an old gentleman, and has made such a great stir in the world, we must even give him a decent funeral; and as he has plagued all sects and parties, it is but fair that all should have a share in the cost of his funeral. They call the Methodists, in general, a clumsy sort of folks; so they shall have the making of the coffin; I care not how many inches thick. The Moravians shall make his shroud, as they are good needle folks; and I have no doubt they will make it very nice! There were some students on the platform, and he turned round to them, and said, 'Have you any confectioners among you Independents?' They said, 'Yes.' 'Well, then, you shall find biscuits for those who come to the funeral.' There was an old Baptist minister there; and turning pleasantly to him, he said, 'And the Baptists shall furnish drink, as they love to deal in wet. And as Church and State are linked together, the Church can afford gloves and scarfs. But who is to dig his grave? I have somebody in my eye for that, too. The Methodists shall not; for they are such a friendly, communicative set that they will be telling about it; and then the resurrection men will come and take him up again. If the Church had it to do, they would perhaps be putting up a monument over him. The Quakers shall dig the grave; for they can keep a secret. They shall dig it twenty yards deep. I have no ill design in giving this hard work to them. I owe it to the kindness of a Quaker that I ever got on feet after my thigh was broken. But they will not put a grave stone over him; and if any one asks them, 'Will you, pray, tell me where you have buried Old Bigotry?' the Quaker will reply, 'I suppose, friend, thou wants a grave by him?' The Pope and three of his cardinals shall be soul-lookers, (mutes); and they will look foul enough, for they have had the greatest interest in him. And the Primitive Methodists shall collect all the broken bottles they can find, break them small, and mix them with mortar, and so fill up his grave; and let them that like scratch him out.'

KNOX AND QUEEN MARY.

Knox has been much abused for his violent treatment of Queen Mary. His addresses and appeals to her have been characterized as impudent and cruel; but, thoroughly inspected, they will be found the reverse. Strong and startling they were, but neither impudent nor cruel.—Doubtless they fell upon her ear like the tones of some old prophet, sternly rebuking sin, or vindicating the rights of God. Mary was a woman of matchless beauty; and had she been educated differently, might have blessed the world with the mind lustre of her Scottish reign; but she was the dupo of bad counsels, in spirit and practice a despot, the plaything of passion and the reckless opposer of the best interests of her country. Her beauty and sufferings have shed false lustre over her character; above all, have aided in concealing the terrible stain of infidelity

to her marriage vows, and the implied murder of her wretched husband, charges which her apologists can extenuate, but not deny. But, forsooth, it is an insufferable thing for a plain honest-hearted man like John Knox to tell the truth to such an one! she was young, beautiful, fascinating; and however recklessly, madly, ruinously wrong, he must not advise her—above all, must not warn her! Now, such a notion may possibly commend itself to your "absolute gentlemen, of every soft society full of most excellent differences and great showing; indeed to speak feelingly of them, who are the card and calender of gentry," but it cannot be imposed upon our plain common sense. Mary was a queen, however, and John Knox a poor plebeian! Aye, aye! that is a difficulty! Kings and queens may do what they please. The people are made for them, not they for the people. And sure enough it is a vulgar thing to oppose them in their ambitious schemes, or to tell them the honest truth betimes! Poor John Knox! thou must fall down and worship "a painted bredd" after all. A beautiful queen must be spared, if Scotland should perish. But looking at the matter from the free atmosphere of New England, we maintain that John Knox was of higher rank than Mary Queen of Scots. He was more true, more heroic, more kingly, than all the race of the Stuarts. He had a right, in God's name, to speak the truth, "to reprove, rebuke, and exhort, with all long suffering." Hence, though his words were stern and appalling, they were uttered with a kind and generous intention. "Madame," said Knox, when he saw Mary burst into tears from vexation and grief, "in God's presence I speak; I never delighted in the weeping of any of God's creatures, yea, I can scarcely well abide the tears of mine own boys, when mine own hands correct them, much less can I rejoice in your Majesty's weeping; but seeing I have offered unto you no just occasion to be offended, I must sustain your Majesty's tears, rather than I dare hurt my conscience, or betray the common wealth by silence."

Yes, he was a stern old puritan, a lion of a man, who made terrible havoc among the "painted bredds" of Popery, and turned back the fury of wild barons and persecuting priests. "His single voice," says Randolph, "could put more life into a host than six hundred blustering trumpets." Single handed, he met the rage of a disappointed government and an infuriated priesthood, and conquered by the silent might of his magnanimous audacity. In the wildest whirl of contending emotion, he never lost sight of the great end of his being, as a servant of God, nor swerved a hair's breadth from truth and right.

Yet this stern old Conventer was not without a touch of gentleness and even of hilarity. An honest, quiet laugh often mantled his pale earnest visage. "They go far wrong," says Carlyle, whose thorough appreciation of such men as Luther, Cromwell, and Knox, is truly refreshing amid the rapid inanities or coarse prejudices of ordinary historians, "who think that Knox was a gloomy, spasmodic, shrieking, fanatic. Not at all. He is one of the solidest of men. Practical, cautious, hopeful, patient; a most shrewd, observing, quietly discerning man. In fact, he has very much the type of character we assign to the Scotch at present: a certain sardonic taciturnity is in him; insight enough; and a stouter heart than he himself knows of." An honest hearted, brotherly man; brother to the high, brother also to the low; sincere in his sympathy with both.

Knox, doubtless, had his faults; and what of that? He made some mistakes! and what too of that? Was he not a true man, and a true minister of God's Word? Did he not accomplish a great and beneficial work of Reform, and having done this, did he not die a sweet and triumphant death? God has set his seal upon him, and upon his work; and that is enough for us.

ENTHUSIASM IN DEVOTION.

By the constitution of the human mind, its emotions are strengthened in no other way than by exercise and utterance; nor does it appear that the religious emotions are exempted from this general law. The Divine Being is revealed to us in the Scriptures as the proper and supreme object of reverence, of love, and of affectionate obedience; and the natural means of exercising and of expressing these feelings are placed before us, both in the office of devotion and in the duties of life; just in the same way that the opportunities of enhancing the domestic affections are afforded in the constitutions of social life. Why, then, should the Christian turn aside from the course of nature, and divert his feelings from their outgoings towards the supreme object of devo-

tional sentiments, by instituting curious researches into the quality, and quantity, and composition of all his religious sensations? This spiritual hypochondriasis enfeebles at once the animal, the intellectual, and the moral life, and is usually found in conjunction with infirmity of judgment, infelicity of temper, and inconsistency of conduct.

But it is alleged that the heart, even after it has undergone spiritual renovation, is fraught with hidden evils, which mingle their influence with every emotion of the new life; and that an incessant analysis is necessary, in order to detect and to separate the lurking mischiefs. To know the evils of the heart is indeed indispensable to the humility and the caution of true wisdom; and whoever is utterly untaught in this dismal branch of learning is a fool. But to make it the chief object of attention is not only unnecessary, but fatal to the health of the soul.

The motives of the social, not less than those of the religious life, are open to corrupting mixtures, which spoil their purity and impair their vigour. As, for example, the emotion of benevolence which compels us to go in quest of misery, and to labour and suffer for its relief, is liable, in most men's minds, to be alloyed with some particles of the desire of applause; indeed there are nice and learned anatomists of the heart, who assure us that benevolence, when placed in the focus of high optic powers, exhibits nothing but a gay, feathery coat of vanity, set upon the flimsiness of selfish sensibility. Be it so—and let men of small souls amuse themselves with these pretty discoveries. But assuredly the philanthropist, who is followed through life by the blessings of those "that were ready to perish, and whose memory goes down in the fragrance of these blessings to distant ages, is not found to spend his days and nights in pursuing any such micrologies. Have the sons of wretchedness been holpen by Rochefoucaulds and Bruyeres—or by Howards? If the philanthropist be a wise and Christian man, he will, knowing, as he does, the evils and infirmities of the heart, endeavor to expel and preclude the corrupting mischiefs that spring from within, by giving yet larger play and action to the great motives by which exclusively he desires to be impelled; he will, with new intentness, devote himself to the service in which his better nature delights, and bring his soul into still nearer contact with its chosen objects, and oblige himself to hold more constant communion with the miserable, and he will spurn, with renovated courage, the whispers of indolence and fear. Thus he pushes forward on the course of action, where alone, by the unalterable laws of human nature, the vigour of active virtue may be maintained and increased.

If the heart be a dungeon of foul and vaporous poisons—if it be "a cage of unclean birds"—if satyrs dance there—if the "cockatrice" there hatches her eggs of mischief—let the vault of dark impurity be thrown open to the purifying gales of heaven, and to the bright shining of the sun; so shall the hated occupants leave their haunts, and the noxious exhalations be exhausted, and the deathly chills be dispelled. He surely need not want light and warmth who has the glories of heaven before him; let these glories be contemplated with constant and upward gaze, while the foot presses with energy the path of hope, and the hand is busied in every office of charity. The Christian who thus pursues his way, will rarely, if ever, be annoyed by the spectres that haunt the regions of a saddened enthusiasm.

The moping sentimentalism which so often takes the place of Christian motives, is to be avoided; not merely because it holds up piety to the view of the world under a deplorable disguise; nor merely because it deprives its victims of their comfort; but chiefly because it ordinarily produces inattention to the substantial matters of common morality. The mind, occupied from dawn of day till midnight, with its own multifarious ailments, and busied in studying its pathologies, utterly forgets, or remissly discharges the duties of social life; or the temper, oppressed by vague solitudes, falls into a state which makes it a nuisance in the house. Or, while the rising and falling temperature of the spirit is watched and recorded, common principles of honour and integrity are so completely lost sight of, that without explicit ill-intention, grievous delinquencies are fallen into, which bring a deluge of reproach upon religion. These melancholy perversions of Christian piety might seem not to belong, with strict propriety, to our subject; but in fact religious despondency is the child of religious enthusiasm. Exhaustion and dejection succeed to excitement, just as debility follows fever. Yesterday, the unballasted vessel was seen hanging out all the gaiety of its colours, and spreading wide its indiscretion before a breeze; but the night came, the breeze strengthened, and to-day the hapless bark rolls dismasted, without help or hope, over the billows.