

# Christian Mirror,

AND GENERAL MISSIONARY REGISTER.

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

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## POETRY.

FOR THE CHRISTIAN MIRROR.

LINES,

BY MRS. J. R. SPOONER.

WHEN evening shades are gathering fast,  
And moon and stars their glory cast,  
O'er earth and sea and sky,  
I love to gaze on high, and trace  
The wonders of that glorious place,  
In all that meets the eye.

How pure and holy seems the light,  
Shed o'er the darkness of the night,  
By all the stars above.

A solemn feeling seems to rise,  
As thus I commune with the skies,  
And with a God of love.

I look down on the world below,  
Distressed by tumult, cares, and wo,  
And vanity and pride;  
And marvel much that men should give  
Their hearts to things that cannot live—  
That cannot long abide;

And turn away from holy things,  
To quench their thirst at earthly springs,  
Where heaven is all forgot!  
If there are those so callous grown,  
No influence they of nature own,  
I envy not their lot.

Be it my fate my heart to raise,  
To God with high aspiring praise,  
In such an hour as this:  
To soar in thought through yonder spheres,  
While to my fancy's eye appears,  
A sight of heaven's bliss.

December, 1842.

## GENERAL LITERATURE.

From the London Christian Observer.

### THE HORRORS OF VOLTAIRE'S LAST DAYS.

We lay before our readers a remarkable letter, respecting the last days of Voltaire, from Dr. Tronchin to M. Bonnet; which had continued in manuscript till the recent publication at Lausanne of an "Essai sur la Vie de Tissot, contenant des lettres inedites du Tronchin, Voltaire, Haller, Zimmermann, Rousseau, Bonnet, Stanislaus, Auguste II, Napoleon Buonaparte, etc., par Ch. Eynard." Several accounts were given to the world, shortly after Voltaire's death, of his closing days: and some of them quite contradictory; for Diderot, D'Alembert, and others of his infidel friends, asserted that he died as he had lived; that is, that he was to the last a hardened infidel, betraying neither terror nor remorse. The lapse of sixty-four years has so far cleared up the facts, which contemporary partizanship endeavoured, for the credit of infidelity, to conceal, that few persons, we presume, would now be found to maintain that the last days of this wretched man were not full of bitterness and despair; displaying the most awful contrast to the faith, peace, hope, and joy, of the expiring believer, who, like St. Paul, can say, when his eye is closing upon all earthly scenes,

"I am now ready to be offered, and the time of my departure is at hand. I have fought a good fight, I have finished my course, I have kept the faith. Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous Judge, shall give me at that day." To such "to live is Christ, and to die is gain;" but how miserable beyond description must be the dying moments of one who entertains no hope beyond the grave; who looks back with remorse on the past, and forward with terror to the future; and if told of a Saviour, thinks of him but as having hated and blasphemed him, and as dreading to appear before his tribunal. Chesterfield wished only to "sleep out the remainder of the journey in the carriage;" but the last days of Voltaire exhibit a terrific proof that infidelity affords no downy pillow for the slumbers of a dying man. Among the inedited correspondence now published by M. Eynard, is the letter to which we have alluded, from Dr. Tronchin, one of Voltaire's physicians, to M. Bonnet at Geneva, which strongly corroborates the statement published by the Abbe Barruel, in his "History of Jacobinism." The occurrence in that letter of the comparison of Voltaire to Orestes tormented by Furies, shews that Barruel, or whoever first published Tronquin's remark, must have had it either from his own lips, or from this identical letter.

As Barruel's narrative is necessary for comparison, and as some of our readers may not be able promptly to refer to it, we will transcribe it.

"It was during Voltaire's last visit to Paris, when his triumph was complete, and he had even feared that he should die with glory, amidst the acclamations of an infatuated theatre, that he was struck by the hand of Providence, and fated to make a very different termination of his career.

"In the midst of his triumphs, a violent hemorrhage raised apprehensions for his life. D'Alembert, Diderot, and Marmontel hastened to support his resolution in his last moments, but were only witnesses to their mutual ignominy, as well as to his own.

"Here let not the historian fear exaggeration. Rage, remorse, reproach, and blasphemy, all accompany and characterize the long agony of the dying atheist. His death, the most terrible ever recorded to have stricken the impious man, will not be denied by his companions in impiety. Their silence, however much they may wish to deny it, is the least of those corroborative proofs which might be adduced. Not one of the sophisters has ever dared to mention any sign given of resolution or tranquillity, by the premier chief, during the space of three months, which elapsed from the time he was crowned in the theatre, until his decease. Such a silence expresses how great their humiliation was in his death!

"It was in his return from the theatre, and in the midst of the toils he was resuming in order to acquire fresh applause, when Voltaire was warned that the long career of his impiety was drawing to an end.

"In spite of all the sophisters flocking around him in the first days of his illness, he gave signs of wishing to return to God whom he had so often blasphemed. He called for the priest who ministered to him whom he had sworn to crush, under the appellation of the Wretch. His danger increasing, he wrote the following note to the Abbe Gaultier:—'You had promised, sir, to come and hear me. I entreat you would take the trouble of calling as soon as possible.' Signed, 'Voltaire. Paris, the 26th February. 1778.'

"A few days after this he wrote the following declaration, in the presence of the same Abbe Gaultier, the Abbe Mignot, and the Marquis de Villeveille, copied from the Minutes deposited with Mr. Momet, notary, at Paris:

"I, the under-written, declare, that for these four days past, having been afflicted with a vomiting of blood, at the age of eighty-four, and not having been able to drag myself to the church, the Rev. the Rector of St Sulpice having been pleased to add to his good works that of sending to me the Abbe Gaultier, a priest, I confessed to him! and if it please God to dispose of me, I die in the Holy Catholic Church, in which I was born; hoping that the divine mercy will deign to pardon all my faults. If ever I have scandalized the Church, I ask pardon of God and of the Church. Second of March, 1778.' Signed, 'Voltaire. In presence of the Abbe Mignot, my nephew, and the Marquis de Villeveille, my friend.'

"After the two witnesses had signed this declaration, Voltaire added these words, copied from the same minutes:—'The Abbe Gaultier, my confessor, having apprised me that it was said among a certain set of people, I should protest against every thing I did at my death; I declare I never made such a speech, and that it is an old jest, attributed long since to many of the learned, more enlightened than I am.'

"Was this declaration a fresh instance of his former hypocrisy? for he had the mean hypocrisy, even in the midst of his efforts against Christianity, to receive the sacrament regularly, and to do other acts of religion, merely to be able to deny his infidelity, if accused of it.

"Unfortunately, after the explanations we have seen him give of his exterior acts of religion, might there not be room for doubt? Be that as it may, there is a public homage paid to that religion in which he declared he meant to die, notwithstanding his having perpetually conspired against it during life. This declaration is also signed by the same friend and adept, the Marquis de Villeveille, to whom, eleven years before, Voltaire was wont to write, 'Conceal your march from the enemy, in your endeavours to crush the Wretch!'

"Voltaire had permitted this declaration to be carried to the rector of St. Sulpice, and the archbishop of Paris, to know whether it would be sufficient. When the Abbe Gaultier returned with the answer, it was impossible for him to gain admittance to the patient,