Poetry.

LOVE.

(From the Christian Year.)

The clouds that wrap the setting sun
When Autumn's softest gleams are ending,
Where all bright hues together run,
In sweet confusion blending:
Why, as we watch their floating wreath,
Seem they the breath of life to breathe?
To Fancy's eye their motions prove
They mantle round the sun for love.

When up some woodland dale we catch
The many twinkling smile of ocean,
Or with pleas'd ear bewilder'd watch
His chime of restless motion;
Still, as the surging waves retire,
They seem to gasp with strong desire;
Such signs of love old Ocean gives,
We cannot choose but think he lives.

Would'st thou the life of souls discern?
Nor human wisdom, nor divine,
Helps thee by aught beside to learn;
Love is life's only sign.
The spring of the regenerate heart—
The pulse, the glow of every part—
Is the true love of Christ our Lord,
As man embraced, as God adored.

PARABLE OF THE TEN VIRGINS.

(From Conversations on the Parables of the New Testament, for the use of Children, by the Rt. Hon. Lord Stanley.)

Mrs. B.—We will begin, then, at once, with the parable of the Ten Virgins.

"Then," says our Lord, speaking of the last day, "shall the kingdom of heaven be likened unto ten virgins, which took their lamps and went forth to meet the bridegroom."

Henry.—What, is this another parable about a marriage?

Mrs. B.—Yes; and the meaning of the verse is, perhaps, not very clear without understanding something of the Jewish customs with regard to marriages. They are all celebrated at night; and the new married couple go about in a sort of procession for some time, with all their relations and friends attending them, with drums and trumpets, and lights. When they return home, they find the whole house lighted up, and a feast prepared, and the servants and attendants, with torches or lamps, waiting to receive them. These ten virgins, therefore, who are spoken of, were some of those whose duty it was to remain in the house, and "go forth to meet the bridegroom," with their lamps, when he returned.

Henry.—Thank you, mamma; and now, if you will go on, I will not stop you again.

Mrs. B.—"And five of them were wise, and five were foolish." Their wisdom or folly we shall see directly. "They that were foolish took their lamps, and took no oil with them; but the wise took oil in their vessels with their lamps. While the bridegroom tarried, they all slumbered and slept. And at midnight there was a cry made, Behold, the bridegroom cometh, go ye out to meet him. Then all those virgins arose, and trimmed their lamps. And the foolish said unto the wise, Give us of your oil, for our lamps are gone out: but the wise answered, saying, Not so, lest there be not enough for us and you: but go ye rather to them that sell, and buy for yourselves."

Henry.—That may have been very wise, mamma; but it seems to be very ill-natured and selfish.

Mrs. B.—No, my love, not so; if they had had abundance for themselves, or more than was necessary, *then*, indeed, they ought to have given to their neighbours who were in want of it; and that without considering whether they were in want by their own neglect or not; but it is the duty of every one to attend to his own *necessities*; and to give away what we require to perform a part of our duty, in order to assist others, is an act, not of generosity, but of injustice as well as folly. The five wise virgins had provided oil for themselves, to perform that which they were bound to do: and they could not give to the others, without neglecting the orders which they had themselves received.

Henry.—I suppose you are right, mamma; but still, it seemed very hard upon the others.

Mrs. B.—But whose fault was it, that they had not oil, as well as the wise?

Henry.—Oh! their own, mamma.

Mrs. B.—Well, then, whom had they to blame but themselves? The wise virgins, however, gave them the best advice; "We have none to spare; if we give to you we shall also be in fault: but lose no more time, go to them that sell, and buy for yourselves; perhaps you may yet be in time to be admitted to the feast." "But," continues the parable, "while they went to buy, the bridegroom came; and they that were ready went in with him to the marriage; and the door was shut. Afterward came also the other virgins, saying, Lord, Lord, open to us. But he answered and said, Verily I say unto you I know you not."

Mary.—What did he mean by saying, I know you not?

Mrs B.—It is not an uncommon form of expression in the Scriptures, meaning, as it does here, I disown you, I refuse to acknowledge you. In this instance it is as if the bridegroom had said, "You claim to be admitted, and pretend to be my followers and attendants; I know you not as such, I know of none such, but those who were in attendance when I returned, who were fulfilling their duties, and who, having been ready, have long been admitted. The door is now shut, and I can no longer allow you to come in." And now can you apply this parable?

Mary.—Yes, mamma, I think I know what it means, after what we were talking about just before we began to read it.

Mrs. B.—Well my love, what does it mean?

Mary.—It means, mamma, I think, that we should be ready prepared whenever our Lord calls for us.

Mrs. B.—And that if we are not so ready—?

Mary.—That he will not admit us to heaven.

Mrs. B.—Very well, my love, you are quite right as to the object which the parable has in view; let us now consider it verse by verse. In the first place, I wish you to observe, that all the ten virgins, the wise and the foolish alike, lit their lamps, and went forth to meet the bridegroom. What do you think this means?

Mary.—I do not know, mamma; it surely does not mean that they all meant and tried to do their duty.

Mrs. B.—Most assuredly not, my love; but we may take them to represent two very different sorts of persons; all of whom, however, are outwardly and in name Christians; all of whom alike have been called, and ordered to attend at the heavenly feast: all of whom are instructed in their duties, and have "lit their lamps" by the sacred light of the word of God, and the Gospel of Jesus Christ; but who afterwards conduct themselves in very different ways; "for five of them were wise, and five were foolish."

Mary.—Then, mamma, if all this is meant, what is the oil, which the wise ones took with them, and the foolish did not?

Mrs. B.—You know that if you light the wick of a lamp, and put no oil underneath it, the lamp will burn a very short time indeed, and then go out; and the lamps which were used by the Jews required to have oil poured upon them constantly, to keep them burning; in that respect they were a fitter representation, than those which we now use, of the spiritual meaning of the parable. It is not enough, you see, to light the lamp, even though it be lit from the word of God: though religion be kindled in our hearts, yet if we carelessly neglect it, if we omit to feed it, it will die away like the lamp which had no oil. The oil, then, that which must feed it, is the word, and the love, and the spirit of God: constant and daily prayer for his grace, study of his will, and attention to his commands. Without this, the flame will soon go out, and when our Lord calls us, we shall wish in vain that we had not neglected this preparation. But to make it effectually, unceasing watchfulness is necessary, lest we fall into temptation.

Mary.—But, mamma, even the wise virgins slumbered and slept, while they were waiting for the bridegroom; that was not very watchful, was it?

Mrs. B.—And it is very possible, that this may be intended to teach us, that even the very best among us occasionally slumber, and are negligent over our duty; to show us how far we all come short of the perfect law of God; and at the same time to encourage us with the hope, that if we not only light our lamps, but make a provision of oil in our souls to feed them, God, for Christ's sake, will not severely visit our transgressions.

Henry.—How frightened the foolish virgins must have been, when they found that they had no time to get any more oil!

Mrs. B.—And what do you think must be the feeling of the sinner, who, having all his life neglected that religion which was taught him as a child: having made no preparation to receive the great Bridegroom, when he shall come to judge the world, is at length awoke from his slumber by the awful cry, "He cometh!" When he finds himself visited by disease, laid upon a bed from which he shall never rise; but from which, according to all probability, in a very few hours, he shall be summoned to appear before his Judge, to account for his neglect of that precious light, which was given to him to keep burning?

Mary.—How dreadful, mamma! but I am sure I have heard of persons who had been very wicked, and who repented and were very good when they found that they were dying. Do you mean that they would be too late?

Mrs. B.—God alone, my love, who knows all hearts, can know what are the real feelings of such persons, and he alone can judge how far such late repentance can be admitted before him "who is set on the throne, who judgeth right;" but at least the risk of such delay is awful. The Lord may come without even such short warning; the sinner may be cut off in a moment, before he has even time to reflect upon his conduct. God forbid, my dear children, but that you and I, whenever we are called, may be ready to appear with a sure trust in the merits of our Saviour Christ, and with humble consciousness that we endeavoured to keep his light burning in our hearts. But he who feels that he has too long neglected the care of his soul, and has suffered the fire of his religion to grow cold and dim, he should hasten, before it be too late, to redeem the time: and knowing that none of his fellow-creatures have enough for them and him, that none of them can aid him, he should "go to them that sell, and buy for himself."

Mary.—To those that sell, mamma! How do you mean? If the oil means what you said it did, there is no one that can sell it.

Mrs. B.—There is indeed but one from whom it can be obtained—and that one, by his holy prophet, by the most splendid of all his prophets, whose writings you will read and admire in the Holy Scriptures; by the mouth of Isaiah, that one has called to all his people, saying, "Ho, every one that thirsteth, come ye to the waters; and he that hath no money; come ye, buy and eat; yea, come, buy wine and milk, without money, and without price." The only price that God demands, is a humble and a contrite heart; when such a one is offered to him, he will give his Holy Spirit, he will light again the dying lamp, and make it burn brightly to the last. But if we neglect to apply to him, if we put off from day to day, he may at length come as he says he will, "as a thief in the night," we know not when, nor how soon; and if our sorrow and alarm be too late, we have only to look to the parable before us, to see what will be our fate. While we are in this world, while we are still in the land of mercy, we are told to "ask, and we shall have; to knock, and it shall be opened unto us:" but when the bridegroom has shut to the door, then his gracious permission ceases: then to them that knock, saying, "Lord, Lord, open to us," the fearful answer shall be, "I know ye not." "When once," says Jesus in another Gospel, "the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without, and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; he shall answer and say unto you, I know ye not whence ye are: depart from me all ye workers of iniquity."

Mary.—Mamma, I do not quite know what is meant by the time of the bridegroom coming. Does it mean the day of judgment, or does it mean the day of our death?

Mrs. B.—They are to us, my dear girl, one and the same thing: "for whatever may be the season appointed in the secret counsels of God for that great and terrible day, when the heavens and the earth shall flee from the face of him who shall be seated on the throne, and their place shall no more be found; the end of the world with respect to each individual, takes place at the conclusion of his own life.

Mary.—Then, mamma, what a terrible thing it must be to die suddenly! And yet one hears of it every day.

Mrs. B.—Sudden death, my love, is an awful idea to any one, even to the best among us: it is fearful to be called into the presence of God, our Maker and Judge; and fearful indeed, for those who have lived, and are living, in a regular course of violating his laws, and neglecting his commandments! And, as we know not whether it may not be our fate to be thus called, how anxiously should we follow the command with which our Saviour Christ concludes this very parable which we have now been reading; "Watch, therefore; for ye know neither the day nor the hour when the Son of man cometh: and in another place, he adds, "Watch and *pray*, lest ye enter into temptation." Here is our true safety; hence we may obtain the daily supply of heavenly oil to keep our lamps burning, till we are called to our everlasting inheritance with the saints in light.

Mary.—Mamma, I hope we shall always try to be ready whenever God is pleased to call us: but I do hope we may all live a long time yet.

Mrs. B.—And yet, dear child, how short, in comparison with eternal duration, is the longest life of man! How little does it signify whether we live here twenty, fifty, or a hundred years, if at the end of our life we are prepared for that better life which is to come! If we feel assured, through the mercy of God, that though by our death, we lose for a while those whom we most love on earth, we shall yet meet them again in an eternity of happiness inconceivable in heaven! May that merciful and gracious God so direct and sanctify here all that we do, and say, and think; may he so bless our conversations here, and these our endeavours to learn and to explain his Holy Word; that be our life longer or shorter, it may be passed in constant watchfulness over our own hearts, and constant submission to his most holy will! So, when he shall call upon each of us, when we shall hear the awful warning, "Behold, I come quickly," he may give us boldness to answer, with the holy Apostle St. John, "Amen! Even so, come Lord Jesus."

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From the Boston Daily Times.

☞ WISTAR'S BALSAM.—The following certificate has been handed us for publication, and as the case is one of a very remarkable character, we comply with pleasure. Certainly, well-attested cases of cures of severe diseases by the use of a particular medicine, should be made known to the public for the benefit of others similarly afflicted:—

No. 48 Union street, BOSTON, April 18, 1846.

MR. SETH W. FOWLE,—SIR: A sense of gratitude to you, and of duty to the public, prompts me to make the following statement, which, if of any service to you, is entirely at your disposal. It may have the effect to induce some other sufferers to make a trial of your invaluable medicine, which I can truly say, has literally snatched me from the grave to which I was fast hastening. Last July I was attacked by a sudden cold, which resulted in a very severe cough, with violent pains in the side and chest. From that time I began to waste away, notwithstanding I was under the treatment of skilful physicians. They prescribed for me in vain. I became so much reduced that my friends frankly told me that I must die, and that I was liable to do so at any hour. At this crisis I heard of Wistar's Balsam of Wild Cherry, by way of a neighbor, whose life had been saved by it, and immediately sent for a bottle. The effect produced was indeed wonderful. My physician, one of the most respectable in Boston, who had previously told me that a cure was hopeless, came in, and I informed him what I had taken, and told him the good effects I had experienced. He examined the Balsam, and told me to continue the use of it; since which time I have continued to improve daily: and the same physician who had given me up entirely, told me a few days since, that I might yet live many years. I feel that I am now nearly recovered, and gaining strength every day.

MARY ROWE.

We can cheerfully testify to the truth of the above statement, Mrs. Rowe having been an inmate of our family for some months past.

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