

COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

"BUILT UPON THE FOUNDATION OF THE APOSTLES AND PROPHETS, JESUS CHRIST HIMSELF BEING THE CHIEF CORNER STONE..... Eph. 2 c. 20 v.

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INTEMPERANCE.

By Mrs. Sigourney.

Father!—who with speechless feeling
O'er thy cradled treasure bent,
Every year now claims revealing,
Yet thy wealth of love unspent—
Hast thou seen that blossom blighted,
By a dread, untimely frost?
And the labour unrequited?
Every glorious promise lost?

Wife!—with agony unspoken,
Shrinking from affliction's rod,
As thy prop, thine idol broken—
Fondly trusted—next to God?
Husband!—O'er thy hopes a mourner,
Of thy chosen friend ashamed,
Hast thou to her burial borne her,
Unrepented—unreclaimed?

Child in tender weakness turning
To thy heaven appointed guide;
Dost thou see a lava poison burning,
Tinge with gall affection's tide?
Sill that orphan burden bearing,
Darker than the grave can show,
Dost thou turn thee down despairing,
To a heritage of woe?

Country!—on thy sons depending,
Strong in manhood, bright in bloom,
Hast thou seen thy pride descending,
Shrouded—to thy unhonored tomb?
Rise! on eagle pinion soaring,
Rise! like one of God-like birth—
And Jehovah's aid imploring,
Sweep the spoiler from the earth.

ASTRONOMY.

For the Colonial Churchman.

WONDERS OF THE HEAVENS.

Dear Editors,
In a late number of the Colonial Pearl, published by Halifax, I noticed an extract from Nicholl's Phenomena, on the "Probable extinction of the Sun," in which the following mention is made of the new star in Cassiopeia, seen by Tycho, "that it never departed from its place, and during its course from extreme brilliancy to apparent extinction, the colour of the light altered, passing through the hues of a dying emerald to a deep red." To those of your readers who have not their possession many works on astronomy, it would not be uninteresting to have a somewhat more full account of the remarkable star above alluded to. Therefore forward for insertion, an extract from— "A Popular View of Astronomy, by Duncan Bradley," published in Boston a year or two since. Beginning with the intended extract however, respecting the star in the constellation Cassiopeia, it may be improper to mention, (as I trust your useful paper is attentively read in the cottages of those who are in the humble walks of life) that it is not generally known at what time the Chaldeans (who

are supposed to be the first that cultivated the science of astronomy to any great extent) divided the Heaven into constellations, or collections of stars.— To some of these, they gave the names of celebrated individuals, whose memory they wished to perpetuate; to others such birds, beasts, fishes, insects, as (if delineated) would occupy the space allotted to the constellation. The divisions are arbitrary in themselves, and often perhaps ill chosen; but as the only real use of them is for the convenience of reference, and the one important object is, to have a single received standard; it would consequently be very undesirable to alter them, even for the purpose of making what would originally have been a simpler and more distinct division.

The surface of the heavens being thus divided into constellations, consisting each of a moderate number of stars, those in each are arranged nearly in the order of their apparent brightness. Stars thus registered on maps or globes, or their places defined, become known bodies; and any astronomer making observations on a particular star, may communicate them to any other, who will at once know the star in question, and be able to compare the results with his own.

"The figures and names of the constellations, though arbitrary, are connected with each other, and with chronology, physics and mythology.— It is not without interest to go back to the origin of these symbols, and to read in the heavens the history of the civil and religious customs of the ancients who have consecrated their memory in those poetic fictions, despised by those only who cannot comprehend them. Still it is difficult to give the explanations of those figures that character of certainty which belongs to positive truth."

Respecting the constellation in which the new and lost star was observed, I now copy the following from the work before alluded to:—

"Cassiopeia, or the lady in her chair, was the wife of Cepheus and mother of Andromeda. As a reward for her hard-wrung consent to sacrifice her daughter for the good of the country, she was said to be carried to heaven after death and placed among the constellations by Minerva. This constellation is visible at all hours of the night in our latitude, being in such high northern declination that it never sets. It contains fifty five stars, five being of the third magnitude, which form (as many persons imagine) the figure of an inverted chair. Beta is the western star of the bright cluster; the situation of Beta is important to mariners—it is used for finding the latitude, and for determining the variation of the needle of the compass from the true north. It also serves to mark a spot memorable as the situation of a lost star.

"In November 1572, a star was seen about five degrees from Beta, which became suddenly so brilliant that it surpassed the planets in brightness, and could be seen in the day-time. The brilliancy diminished until 1574, when it became entirely invisible. Its color exhibited the appearances of flame.

It was first of a dazzling white, then of a reddish yellow, and lastly of an ashy paleness, in which its light expired. Some imagined that it would reappear after 150 years, but it has not been seen since. Vince, one of the most learned astronomers of the age, has remarked, that the disappearance of stars may be the destruction of that system at the time appointed for the probation of its inhabitants; and the appearance of new stars may be the formation of new systems for new races of beings then called into existence to adore their Creator. The conflagration (if so it were) was visible for sixteen months.— How tremendous must it have been to be visible so far! La Place says—"that the supposition of such a conflagration on the surfaces of some of the stars is confirmed by their change of colour. The appearance of this star was so sudden, that Tycho Brahe, a celebrated Danish astronomer, returning one evening from his laboratory to his dwelling house, was surprised to find a group of country people gazing at a star which he was sure did not exist half an hour before. This was the star in question. It was then as bright as Sirius, and continued to increase until it surpassed Jupiter when brightest, and was visible at mid-day. It began to diminish in December of the same year, and in March 1574, had entirely disappeared. So also on the 10th October 1604, a star of this kind and not less brilliant, burst forth in the constellation Serpentarius, which continued visible until October 1605. Similar phenomena, though of a less splendid character, have taken place more recently, as in the case of the star of the third magnitude discovered in 1670, by Anthelm, in the head of the Swan, which after becoming completely invisible, reappeared, and after undergoing one or two singular fluctuations of light, during two years, at last died away entirely, and has not since been seen."

How sublime and reverential are the thoughts with which facts like these should fill the mind of the humble christian! How sincere and earnest should reflections of this kind cause him to be, in all things faithfully to serve that Almighty God "with whom we have to do, with reverence and godly fear."

Before Jehovah's awful throne
Ye nations bow with sacred joy;
Know that the Lord is God alone,
He can create and He destroy.

"Seeing then that all these things," as St. Peter says, "shall be dissolved, what manner of persons ought we to be in all holy conversation and godliness, looking for, and hastening unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire shall be dissolved, and the elements shall melt with fervent heat." Ever remembering for our comfort, while passing through life's varied scenes of joy and sorrow, that "according to the promise of our Lord, we look for a new heavens and a new earth wherein dwelleth righteousness. Wherefore, beloved, (the same apostle affectionately adds) seeing that ye look for such things, be diligent that ye may be found of Him in peace, without spot and blameless."