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

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POETRY.

AFAR IN THE DESERT

The following Ode was pronounced by Coleridge to be one of the best he ever read. The author of it is Mr. Pringle, who formerly travelled in Africa.

Afar in the desert I love to ride
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side ;
When the sorrows of Life the soul o'ercast,
And sick of the Present I cling to the Past.
When the eye is suffused with regretful tears,
And the joys and the hopes of other years,
From the shadows of things that have long since fled,
Flit o'er the brain like ghosts of the dead—
Bright visions of glory—that vanished too soon,
Day dreams—that departed e'er manhood's noon ;
Attachments—by fate or by falsehood rest ;
Companions of early days—lost or left ;
And my native land, whose magical name,
Thrills to the heart like electric flame,
The home of my childhood, the haunts of my prime,
All the passions and scenes of that rapturous time,
Like the feelings were young and the world was new,
Like the fresh bowers of Eden unfolding to view ;
All—all now forsaken—forgotten—foregone !
And I—a lone exile—remembered by none ;
My high aims abandoned—my good acts undone—
And weary of all that is under the sun,
With a sadness of heart which no stranger may scan,
I fly to the desert afar from man.

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side ;
When the wild turmoil of this wearisome life,
With the scenes of oppression, corruption, and strife ;
The proud man's frown and the base man's fears—
The scorner's laugh and the sufferer's tears :
And malice and meanness—and falsehood and folly,
Dispose me to musing and dark melancholy ;
When my bosom is full, and my thoughts are high,
And my soul is sick with the bondsman's sigh—
Oh ! then there is freedom, and joy, and pride,
Afar in the desert alone to ride !
There is rapture to vault on the champing steed,
And to bound away with the eagle's speed ;
With the death-fraught firelock in my hand—
The only law of a Desert Land !

Afar in the desert I love to ride,
With the silent Bush-boy alone by my side ;
Away, away in the wilderness vast,
Where the white man's foot hath never passed,
And the quivered Coranna or Bechuan
Hath scarcely crossed with his roving clan :
A region of emptiness, howling and drear,
Which man hath abandoned from famine and fear,
Which the sucker and lizard inhabit alone—
With the twilight bat from the yawning stone ;
Where grass, nor herb, nor shrub take root :
Save poisonous thorns which pierce the foot :
And the bitter melon for food and drink.
Is the pilgrim's fare by the Salt Lake brink.

A region of drought where no river glides,
Nor rippling brook with its grassy sides—
Where sedgy pool, nor bubbling fount,
Nor tree, nor cloud, nor misty mount
Appears, to refresh the aching eye ;
But the barren earth and the burning sky ;

And the black horizon, round and round,
Spread—void of living light or sound.

And here, while the night-winds around me sigh,
And the stars burn bright in the midnight sky,
As I sit afar by the desert stone,
Like Elijah by Horeb's cave alone,
A still small voice comes through the wild,
Like a father consoling his fretful child,
Which banishes bitterness, wrath and fear,
Saying—"MAN IS DISTANT, BUT GOD IS NEAR."

THE CASKET.

PARENTAL UNFAITHFULNESS.

How strange it is that the same parent who is so intent on the preferment of his children in the world, should be so utterly listless of their prospects, nor put forth one endeavour to obtain for them preferment in heaven—that he who would mourn over it as the sorest of his family trials, should one of them be bereft of the corporeal senses ; and yet should take it so easily, although none of them have a right sense of God, or a right principle of godliness—that he, who would be so sorely astounded did any of his little ones perish in a conflagration or a storm, should be so unmoved by all the fearful things that are reported of the region on the other side of death, where the fury of an incensed Lawgiver is poured upon all who have not fled to Christ as their refuge from the tempest, and they are made to lie down in devouring fire, and to dwell with everlasting burnings—that to avert from the objects of our tenderness the calamities, or to obtain for them the good things of this present life, there shall be so much of care and of busy expedient, while not one practical measure is taken either to avert from them that calamity which is the most dreadful, or to secure for them that felicity which is the most glorious. Why there is, indeed, such obvious demonstration in all this of time being regarded as our all, and eternity being counted by us as nothing—so light an esteem in it of that God, an inheritance in whom we treat as of far less value for those who are dear to us than that they should be made richly to inherit the gifts of His providence—such a preference for ourselves, and for the fleeting generations that come after us, of the short lived creature to the Creator who endureth for ever ; as most strikingly to mark, even by the very loves and amiable sensibilities of our hearts, how profoundly immersed we are in the grossest carnality—that, after all, it is but an earthly platform we grovel on—that nature, even in her best and most graceful exhibitions, gives manifest tokens of her fall, proving herself an exile from Paradise even in the kindest and honestest of the sympathies which belong to her ; that retaining, though she does, many soft and tender affinities for those of her own kind, she has been cast down and degraded beneath the high aims and desires of immortality ; accused even in her moods of greatest generosity, and evil in the very act of giving good gifts unto her children.

The man whose heart is set on the conversion of his children ; the man whose house is their school of discipline for eternity ; he it is, and we fear he only of all other parents, who lives by faith. If you love your children, and at the same time are listless about their eternity, what other explanation can be given than that you believe not what the Bible tells of eternity ? You believe not of the wrath and the anguish

and the tribulation that are there. Those piercing cries that here from any one of your children would go to your very heart, and drive you frantic with the horrors of its sufferings, you do not believe that there is pain there to call them forth. You do not think of the meeting place that you are to have with them before the judgment seat of Christ, and of the locks of anguish and the words of reproach that they will cast upon you for having neglected and so undone their eternity.

The awful sentence of condemnation—the signal of everlasting departure to all who know not God and obey not the Gospel ; the ceaseless moanings that ever and anon shall ascend from the lake of living agony ; the grim and dreary imprisonment whose barriers are closed inseparably and for ever on the hopeless outcasts of vengeance. These, ye men who wear the form of godliness, but show not the power of it in your training of your families ; these are not the only articles of your faith : to you they are as the imaginations of a legendary fable. Else why this apathy ! Why so alert to the rescue of your young from even the most trifling calamities, and this dead indifference about their exposure to the most tremendous of all ! O, the secret will be out ! The cause bewrayeth itself ! You have not faith ; and, compassed about though ye be with Sabbath forms and seemingly observances, and the semblance of a goodly and well looking profession, yet, if you labor not specifically and in practical earnest for the souls of your children, your doings short of this are, we fear, but the diseased and lame offerings of hypocrisy ; your christianity, we fear, is a delusion.—*Dr. Chalmers.*

WORM AT THE ROOT

"Good morning, neighbour Phillips," said a sagacious farmer as he was riding past an adjoining farm, and saw his neighbour busy with ladder and pruning knife at a fine fruit tree : "What are you doing that you seem so intently engaged."

"Ah, friend Thomas," was the reply ; "this is a choice and favourite tree, upon which I have bestowed great attention, and yet every morning I find withered leaves, and wilted fruit, which I am under the necessity of clipping away."

"That may all be very well," said Thomas "but I think I can show you a better way of improving your tree," and dismounting from his horse, he took the knife, and baring the root, he made an incision and extracted a worm ; at the same time remarking, "Rely upon it, rely upon it, it is all owing to the worm at the root."

Moral.—The outward defects of human character are but the evidences of the worm at the root. One swears, another cheats, a third gets drunk ; and the true method of reform is to apply the cure to the native depravity of the heart—the worm at the root.

CHRISTIANITY. In her progress, she has accumulated such an overwhelming amount of evidence that her origin is from Heaven ; that she, and she only, can administer salvation to lost and perishing man, that her claim cannot well be resisted. Other systems have arisen and flourished, and subsequently faded away, because they were not effectual ; they have not been able to satisfy the wants of the human soul.

UPON the one side or the other of that line which separates those whom the Lord knows to be his from the rest of mankind, is ranged every human soul living, sea and every soul of all the countless multitudes who have departed.