

POETRY.

PLEASANT CHILDREN.

BY THE LATE R. EDMONSTONE.

EVERYWHERE, everywhere—  
Like the butterfly's silver wings  
That are seen by all in the summer air  
We meet with these beautiful things;  
And the low sweet lisp of the baby child  
By a thousand hills is heard,  
And the voice of the young heart's laughter wild,  
As the voice of a singing bird!

The cradle rocks in the peasant's cot  
As it rocks in the noble's hall,  
And the brightest gift in the noblest lot,  
Is the gift that comes to all;  
For the sunny light of childhood's eyes,  
Is a boon like the common air;  
And like the sunshine of the skies,  
It falls everywhere!

They tell us this old earth no more  
By angel-foot is trod;  
They bring not now, as they brought of yore,  
The oracles of God.  
Oh! each of these young human flowers  
God's own high message bears  
And we are walking all our hours  
With angels, unawares.

By stifling street and busy hill,  
We meet their spirit-mirth:  
That such bright shapes should linger still—  
They take the stains of earth!  
O! is not theirs a blessed part,  
To whom the boon is given  
To leave their errand with the heart,  
And straight return to heaven?

H Y M N

Written for the morning of Communion Sabbath,  
November 12th, 1848.

Father, we have come to praise thee,  
Good and glorious as thou art,  
Praise thee with our songs of gladness,  
Rising from each grateful heart.

Gathered on this joyful morning,  
Sacred to redeeming love,  
Send us, while we kneel before thee,  
Blessings from thy throne above.

Father, we would ask forgiveness  
For our many, many sins,  
Oh! be ours that true repentance,  
Which the soul to goodness wins.

Grant us strength against temptation,  
Fidelity in thought and deed,  
High endeavour, firm endurance,  
Comfort in our utmost need.

In our daily, hourly, journey,  
Through this tempting, weary world,  
O'er our pathway let the banner  
Of thy mercy be unfurled.

For we need its sweet protection  
In our onward toilsome way;  
Pilgrims wandering in darkness,  
Longing for eternal day.

On our weakness, we implore thee,  
Look with kind indulgent eye,  
Kneeling here in humble worship,  
May our prayers ascend on high.

Gazing on the sacred emblems  
Of our Master's dying love,  
May our souls hold sweet communion  
With our risen Lord above.

E. H. H.

LECTURE BY MR. G. DAWSON.

From "the London Inquirer."

On Thursday evening, Mr. George Dawson delivered the first of two Lectures, at the Whitington Club, in the Strand, "On the Relation of Literature and Art to Religion." The room, which is one of the largest in London, was filled to excess, many being compelled to stand throughout the evening. There were nearly one thousand persons present. We have never heard a lecture better calculated to arouse and sustain the attention of a numerous and mixed audience. It is, we think, the happiest effort Mr. Dawson has yet made in public lecturing. Without the powers of an accomplished orator, his naivete of manner and originality of illustration produce the effects of finished oratory. However his views may contrast with those of the hearer, he is always listened to with pleasure. We give a few of the thoughts which were contained in his address.

Mr. Dawson commenced with explaining his view of Religion, and its connection with his subject. The most dangerous thing religious men could do, was to wage war with anything based upon the principles of human nature. It was like an army marching on to the conquest of a city, while it left districts

on its road unconquered; the necessary consequence of which was, that those districts, after the city had been taken, rose up to attack and hem in the citadel, and keep up a constant warfare. Those religious men who so taught religion, that it did not give full scope for the development of primary principles in humanity, passing them over unsubdued and unconquered, would find that those principles would be in continual enmity to Religion itself, till many were thereby led to reject the truth. Religion, in the sense in which he should use it, was not a matter of the intellect or a process of logic. It was common to all men, and were its expression was most faulty, its existence was no less certain. Every man was religious by nature. He did not mean that every man was a believer in Calvinism, Arminianism, or any other *ism*; but that every man of whom he had ever heard, or read, until, by careful discipline he had rooted it out of him, possessed that longing for the unknown, that bowing down before the Omnipotent and unseen, that certain seeking, that happily he may find a God or Gods, which constituted Religion in its true and primitive sense. Let them make a difference between religiousness and religion. They could find a distinction between bread and hunger. The appetite was not affected by the diversity of its gratification. If religion had not a hold on man, it could not have established itself.

Mr. Dawson proceeded to consider the historical relations which Art had sustained to Religion. He dwelt at some length on the manner in which Art was held by the early Hebrews. It was with them a mode of worship. Every thing came direct from God. Their very embroidery patterns were taught them by the Deity. Nature was the veil which covered Infinity. And truly Nature, if they watched it rightly, was like the eyelid to the eye, it keeps us from the excess of light. It was said, man may not look on God and live; infinity is seen through Nature, as far as it can be seen, but she keeps back that which cannot be seen with pleasure and profit. Moses and Solomon made an inroad into idolatry by making that which was the object of worship the mode of expressing worship. The artist was a part of Nature. With an eye keener than others, his mission is to read for us God's word in the universe; to gather up its beauty into his own soul, and produce it in active forms, for the world's gaze. He looks on the world, and reads its secrets to us. And some of us needed a picture reader; we could go forth in the midst of beauty and see it not. We are astonished to find Pythagoras in nature; we had never seen him. He reads to us in an earthly tongue, the message of Heaven. There was a comprehensive faith, and the artist was one of its priests. The Puritans, it was remarked, waged war against Art. He granted that. Another point he would also grant, the New Testament said little about Art, nor did it about courtship and other matters we are not content to part with just yet. As he viewed the New Testament, its errand was this: to humanity it says, "Thou art sick and must be healed, like the man left wounded by the way-side, thou must be lifted up, oil must be poured into thy wounds, and shelter be given thee. Thou art weeping—thy tears must be dried; thou art sorrowing—thou must be comforted." To the sick it would be worse than wickedness for the physician to discourse on astronomical systems or geographical boundaries. The mission of Christianity was to heal and to bind up, to gladden and to bless. That done, other matters will follow. The New Testament was not a law-book at all. It was a great book of principles, which were far greater than laws. Give us a great principle, and a thousand laws spring from it. Laws were temporary; any faith that dealt much with laws could not live long. The laws were but the temporary expression. The principle branches out into laws to guide little people. He thought that the New Testament contained little law, but a great well of principles. Hence was the reason that there was nothing in it concerning the Fine Arts. Get its principles deep down in the soul, and it will take care of the rest. In the middle ages, for a time, the artist was a servant to the church. The Catholic Church opened its wide gates, that human genius and skill, in their various developments, might contribute to the glory of God. He found the Catholic Church expressing many mighty truths. It took the primitive principle, that the physical powers came from God, and that their best offerings belonged unto him.

Mr. Dawson then gave utterance to some very noble sentiments, lying at the root of Christian charity and human reason. He pitied the Puritan who could not find room in his heart for Fenelon; and he pitied the Catholic who could not view as a Christian brother glorious John Bunyan. He then entered into a comparison of modern works of art with those of the middle ages. Both

the paintings and the architecture of modern times met with his unsparing ridicule. The latter, he said, was "an abomination to the righteous." The former was great in horse-flesh; it could paint you your poodle or lap-dog, so that you might almost touch it; but of the Divine it could tell you nothing. He honoured the old paintings. He would rather have the rudest Madonna than the most accurate representation of horse-flesh, ever painted. Modern Art could but show you the outer things of the world. It had been said, that religion writes itself in its buildings. If this be true, what sort of religion was that written on our Bethshas and Zions? Why had painting degenerated? because the artist's source of inspiration was changed. In the old school, the artist lifted up his brush for God; and let a man do anything for God, and his work becomes divine. Moses looks on God, and his face shines. A lofty ideal brought a lofty work. But, happily, God has not left us without a witness in these things. He has given us glorious music. He loves this generation, in that he has reserved to it a Handel, a Haydn, a Mozart, a Mendelssohn, God vindicates his own; and he has made the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries glorious by giving to them the chief masters of song. And their source of inspiration made their work what it was. Who would dare to compare the best opera that had ever been produced, with their glorious productions? Man, in working for God, derives a double inspiration, one from the Primitive source, and one from the end for which he is labouring. Work with the loftiest aims of humanity, and thy work will be lofty. Compose music for the Casino and it will be worthy of its end. Work for the Church, and thy work will be divine. Every true writer, poet or musician, know that their best works are the strangest to them. They cannot tell whence they came. They look them in the face and say "thou art not mine, thou wert given to me." The Puritans were then defended by Mr. Dawson on their destruction of the works of Art, inasmuch as Art was taking the ground of Religion. They looked upon Art as impertinent, and when is it so? When it offers to become greater than the soul. Whenever Art says, "Without me thou canst not see God," it is time to dismiss Art and Artists. The Puritans asked themselves, is it possible to serve God without lofty cathedrals, gorgeous paintings, or any outward manifestations of human skill? was it possible for Robinson Crusoe to serve God in his island alone? they answered "Yes." They thought Religion had become too luxurious and cushioned, they sent her out from velvet couches into the bleak air, and she had looked healthier ever since. Then came the question, are we Puritans! Some of us try to be. Enter our meeting houses and see what a sublime defiance they set to Art. As to music, they will not be beholden to it. Wearisome to the man whom God has afflicted with the sense of beauty are these places. There are some which almost make us regret that we are not deaf, and others that we are not blind, and in which we almost wish to depart in peace, not however, that we have seen salvation. But it is far easier to get a Puritan dress and Puritan forms, than to get a Puritan soul. These forms were simply reminiscences, not justifiable, for the spirit which originated them was gone. Not that this age was less Religious: though he knew many differed from him in this respect, he nevertheless regarded this age as more spiritual than any preceding one. These were, he believed, the best days this old world has ever seen. This year, this terrible year, is the bravest and noblest that has ever been. If he did not believe this, his faith collapsed, and his past opinions had all been mistaken. Man is never worse than he was. If there ever be a Sabbath-day for this world, it cannot have been Friday the other day, and now gone back to Monday. He believed that we get nearer and nearer to this Sabbath. There were those who said that infidelity was spreading itself and the Christian faith was waning away, but it was the cry of those who cannot bear the dazzling light of the sun which is rising from the east. It was for these reasons that he saw no necessity for keeping up the old Puritan forms or language. He honoured those most who could make eloquent all that was good in the spirit of the past in the fashion of to-day. To dress for your part you take from its spirit. It is a poor Puritanism that must dress to play its part. It is as though to have Cato's honesty you must have Cato's beard. A form never goes out of this world till it is worn out. But we are improving in some of these matters. Dissenters are venturing on a little Gothic, there is even a distant hint about bells and spiral towers. There wants in this country some clear theory which shall make our religion and our aesthetics one. The Jew, in his sacrifice, offered up the best of his flock, the finest of his flour and the

first of his fruits. How do we carry this out? Where are our first fruits and choice offerings? What glee singing on the Friday and psalm singing on the Sunday? How are our pianos worked on the week day and a psalm only given on the Sunday? How do good people put their aesthetics under their arm when the minister comes? Is that the best of the flock? Like David, we dwell in a ceiled house while the temple of God is almost a hut. Could this be right? He liked not to see God put off with such shabbiness of things. He still demanded the best of our gifts.

Mr. Dawson concluded his remarks by a few sarcastic allusions to the numerous inconsistencies of the modern Puritans, and by stating the principal points he should consider in his next lecture.

A loud and unanimous burst of applause greeted the lecturer as he resumed his seat.

IMMORTALITY.

It has been imagined that religious faith does not like to draw attention to the decline which precedes, often by years, the approach of death; that the spectacle of a human being in ruins terrifies the expectation of futurity, and humbles the mind with mean suspicions of its destiny. Skepticism, which delights in the ill-bodings which can be drawn from evil and decay, takes us to the corner where the old man sits; shows us the bent frame, and fallen cheeks, and closing avenues of sense; points to the palsied head, and compels us to listen to the drivelling speech, or perhaps the childish and pitiable cry; and then asks, whether this is the being so divinely gifted and so solemnly placed, sharer of the immortality of God, and waiting to embark into infinity? I answer—assuredly not; neither in the wrecked frame, nor in the negation of mind, is there any thing immortal; it is not this frail and shattered bark, visible to the eye, that is to be launched upon the shoreless sea. The mind within, which you do not show me, whose indications are for a time suppressed,—as they are in every fever that brings stupor and delirium, in every night even that brings sleep,—the mind, of whose high achievements, whose capacious thought, whose toils and triumphs of conscience and affection, living friends will reverently tell you,—the mind, which every moment of God's time for seventy years has been sedulous to build, and from which the deforming scaffold is about to fall away,—this alone is the principle for which we claim immortality. Say not that, because we cannot trace its operations, it is extinct; perhaps, while you speak, it may burst into a flame, and contradict you. For sometimes age is known to wake, and the soul to kindle, ere it departs; to perforate the shut gates of sense with sudden light, and gush with lustre to the eye, and love and reason to the speech; as if to make it evident, that death may be nativity; as if the traveller, who had fallen asleep with the fatigues of the way, conscious that he drew near his journey's end, and warned by the happy note of arrival, looked out refreshed and eager through the morning air for the fields and streams of his new abode. And if any transient excitement near the close of life can, even occasionally, thus resuscitate the spirit; if some vehement stroke upon a chord of ancient sympathy can sometimes restore it in its strength, it is there still; and only waits that permanent rejuvenescence which its escape into the infinite may effect at once.—Rev. J. Martineau.

TOLERATION.—"Who art thou, vain mortal, that darrest intrude thyself between my God and me? If I have an account to settle with heaven, am I not competent to effect it myself? Can you be more interested than I am? or, if you are, why insult me; why denounce me—why publish me to the world as the vilest animal in existence? May I not possibly be right as well as you? If so, by what grant, either of Heaven or earth, can you be justified in assailing the purity of my motives? The great God of Heaven suffers me to enjoy liberty—suffers me to investigate freely, and without any fear, all subjects my mind may chance to pursue; and informs me by the eternal laws of my nature, that I can only believe as my understanding directs me. Yet you—you, dust and ashes of the earth—arrogating to yourself Heaven's power, would do what Heaven refuses to do—you would stave the progress of my mind—you would end all inquiry which did not exactly suit you—you would prostrate me in the eyes of society, and send me headlong to eternal punishment? Away, from this bad, persecuting spirit! Intolerance! Intolerance! Intolerance!—Benjamin Franklin.