

abstract, and too little with the concrete. period, indeed, Shakespeare wrote some of his poetry is a poetical speculation revelling in his plays, Milton, his *Paradise lost*, and in all phases of thought, and presenting John Bunyan, his beautiful allegoric journey. But these men were superior to the ever, lends it an air of heaviness and makes evanescent tastes of any age. They could take to pieces the false education of their minds, and, falling back upon nature, cast off the dross that contact with the depraved taste of society had gathered around them. And even with them, though we do not find it in the poetry of Milton we find it in his speech, closely resembling wit. These were, John Bunyan did not lie under the temptation of place in any feeling delineations. But especially are they incongruous in religious poetry. Indeed all turns of expression that are not natural injure poetry. The easier and more negligent it is the better does it find access to the soul. There is one poem in which Herbert describes with deep fervency and seriousness the sufferings of Christ, where these turns of wit, these quips of fancy and this labored point are lugged in with singular inappropriateness. He represents the Saviour's sufferings in his own words, each stanza ending with: "was ever grief like mine." When we read that poem, we cannot but regret that taste which could introduce such words into such lips at such a time and in such circumstances.

Another defect in George Herbert is to be sought in his turns of language, and closely associated quaintness of thought. There are too many sharp turns in his speech, closely resembling wit. These were, John Bunyan did not lie under the temptation of place in any feeling delineations. But especially are they incongruous in religious poetry. Indeed all turns of expression that are not natural injure poetry. The easier and more negligent it is the better does it find access to the soul. There is one poem in which Herbert describes with deep fervency and seriousness the sufferings of Christ, where these turns of wit, these quips of fancy and this labored point are lugged in with singular inappropriateness. He represents the Saviour's sufferings in his own words, each stanza ending with: "was ever grief like mine." When we read that poem, we cannot but regret that taste which could introduce such words into such lips at such a time and in such circumstances.

This observation, however, leads to another in justification. Herbert follows the literary taste of his time. At the time of Herbert, purity and beauty of English style was not at its highest stage. Speaking generally it had declined. Far rather would we have the style of Chaucer in the 14th than that of most writers in the 16th and 17th centuries. There was an unhealthy exuberance about it, which darkened and encumbered the thought. We find this in prose writers most unmistakably, because they had more perfect freedom to express themselves as they pleased. Thus in the essays of Bacon, which are vigorous in thought and generally rich in expression, in which indeed there is a perfect plethora of ideas, we find recurring ever and anon those cramped expressions as an homage of the great man to the corrupt taste of his times. We discover this quality in the style of Hooker. Sometimes it adorns more than defaces. In the writings of the English Seneca, Bishop Hall, it brings out the pith and point of his sayings and renders them more forcibly because more naked and angular. This quality was full blown in the times of the first and second Charles. It stained our literature, which recovered itself only after the revolution, when church, state and literature seem to have righted themselves. During the reign of James the first this style was fashionable both in poetry and prose. The writings of James himself are full of it. All literature was a constant witticism. James punned and joked, (and his jokes were not foolish, but good, as D'Israeli has shown in his *Curiosities of Literature*; and Sir Walter Scott has well represented in his romance.) Herbert had spent much of his time at court, and this appears in his writings. During that

period, indeed, Shakespeare wrote some of his plays, Milton, his *Paradise lost*, and John Bunyan, his beautiful allegoric journey. But these men were superior to the evanescent tastes of any age. They could take to pieces the false education of their minds, and, falling back upon nature, cast off the dross that contact with the depraved taste of society had gathered around them. And even with them, though we do not find it in the poetry of Milton we find it in his speech, closely resembling wit. These were, John Bunyan did not lie under the temptation of place in any feeling delineations. But especially are they incongruous in religious poetry. Indeed all turns of expression that are not natural injure poetry. The easier and more negligent it is the better does it find access to the soul. There is one poem in which Herbert describes with deep fervency and seriousness the sufferings of Christ, where these turns of wit, these quips of fancy and this labored point are lugged in with singular inappropriateness. He represents the Saviour's sufferings in his own words, each stanza ending with: "was ever grief like mine." When we read that poem, we cannot but regret that taste which could introduce such words into such lips at such a time and in such circumstances.

We would gladly say more of Herbert and his times, and his brothers in Christian song, but we believe that enough has been said to induce those of our readers who are lovers of such reading to prosecute the matter farther, and gain a more intimate acquaintance with the pious breathings of the Pastor of Bemerton. In their hands we are contented to leave him who, in the retirement of his study, his garden and its silent bower, sung the temple of Religion, the true temple, the spiritual domain of religious feeling, truth and beauty in the soul. The world was full of its ancient temples, and could point to its splendid piles and majestic memorials of the past of other days, but this spiritual temple, this delineation of spiritual experience, the true Christian Temple will outlive them all. If my readers, any of them, have ever gone far to see the abbeys, the cathedrals, the ruined monasteries of a former age, we trust that they shall visit this temple also. Let them take the guidance of Herbert and let them go with him along the floor of this great spiritual house, rich with gems of thought and truths of revelation more fully revealed, and let them turn their eyes with him, upward to the vault of heaven sparkling with stars invisible to the eye of sense, as common stars in the day time, but visible to the eye of faith through the night of the world full of trial, affliction, and death. If they seek for wisdom to direct them in ordinary life, they will find it here, for the poet is a truthful man. They will find it also plain and un-garnished, in which the wild flight of fancy shall not blind the eye to the soberness of fact. If they would relieve themselves for a time from the grave splendour of "Paradise lost," the tedium of the "Course of Time," which is too often poetical prose, and the soul-sickenening terrors of the "Night Thoughts," with strains of song breathing a sounder piety and a purer spirit, they will find this in the stanzas of Herbert. If they wish to obtain an insight into the religious sentiment which was reposing in many a quiet country home in that day, while the King was writing and talking of witches, or meditating ecclesiastical reforms, they may see it, as in a mirror, in the poems of Herbert; for, having spent part of his time at

court, part in town, and part in the country, he fairly represents general religious thought. When they see its force, and the soundness of constitution in the body of Christian Truth and Christian feeling, they will not be surprised that such sentiment, embittered in the wars of Puritan and Royalist, should become bitter as gall, and make the nation reel like a drunken man. If they seek for condensed wit and wisdom, they will find them in the "jacula prudentum," or "cutlandish sentences, proverbs, etc., selected by Mr. George Herbert, late Orator of the University of Cambridge." They will find thoughts which demand reflection. They will need for themselves to evolve their beauty. Perhaps they may now and then need to throw aside some dross, as the Australian digger knocks the quartz off his nugget of gold. But be assured, there is much to be made of these poems. However, let us close our observations with the words of the Author of Festus:—

"All rests with those who read; a work or thought is what each makes it to himself, and may be full of great dark meanings, like the sea with shoals of life rushing, or like the air beaught with the wing of the wild dove sweeping miles broad over the far western woods with mighty glimpses of the central light, Or, may be nothing, bodiless, spiritless."

Westchester Mountain, &c.

ALTHOUGH the means at our command of supplying our numerous vacant stations in this colony are in the meantime but limited we do not think our ministers and missionaries can fairly be charged with any lack of zeal in striving to embrace within the sphere of their labours as wide a field as each can possibly overtake. We regret, however, to learn that our missionary at Wallace, who as will be seen from another column, is now about to leave for Georgetown, Prince Edward Island, has been unable during his stay in the district, in consequence of his time being so much occupied to pay a visit to the friends of our church in the above interesting settlement. Such, however, we understand was his anxious wish if it had at all been in his power to carry it into effect, and our adherents in that quarter as well as in other neighbouring settlements not yet visited may confidently rest assured that however remotely situated some of them may be, their spiritual interests will not be overlooked, nor their wants forgotten. As soon as an opportunity offers, they may expect to receive a visit from some one of our missionaries.

We may mention that besides preaching regularly every Sabbath, either in Wallace or Pugwash, our missionary who at present occupies that extensive district has had various meetings for religious purposes at the Stake's Road and Fox Harbour on all which occasions notwithstanding the season of the year, the attendance was always very full, Victoria Settlement also, though situated at a considerable distance in the interior, and in spring almost inaccessible from the