

have been said that it was sown by an enemy; and it is also very likely that it closely resembled wheat, or there would have been no difficulty in discriminating between the two; were the two plants very dissimilar it might have been rooted up while the corn was young, in the same way that cherlock, and some other weeds, are frequently eradicated from our fields during spring and early summer. It is very probable, then, that our Saviour, who, in order that he might be better understood by his hearers, was accustomed to illustrate his meaning by referring to objects with which they were familiar, had this plant in view when he compared the end of the world to the harvest—the children of the kingdom being represented by the good seed, the children of the wicked One by the tares. What renders this the more probable is, that the latter only appeared when the blade of the wheat had sprung up and brought forth fruit. This description exactly agrees with the darnel, the leaves of which are so like the corn among which they grow, as not to be distinguished from it until the ear is formed. I was one day walking through a wheat-field in one of the western counties of England, just before harvest, when I observed a considerable quantity of darnel growing among the corn, and stopped to gather some. While I was thus occupied the owner of the field came up to me, and asked what I was gathering; I said that I was merely collecting a few specimens of a peculiar kind of grass which I showed to him. “Ah!” said he, that is a very bad sort of weed to grow among corn. I assented, and after mentioning to him what the properties of the plant were, said, that “some people supposed it to be the same with the tares of Scripture.” The farmer, however, appeared to know very little about the parable to which I alluded, but went on to say, that he found it a very troublesome weed; “for,” added he, “I am obliged to employ a number of women, at harvest-time, to pick it out from the wheat, and to tie it up in bundles.” No doubt, when thus “tied up in bundles,” it is usually burnt; for every prudent farmer would adopt such measures as he thought best calculated to prevent it from springing again from seed, which it would most likely do if the straw coming from it were converted into litter; for in this case, although the stems should rot, yet the seeds would be carried out into fields among manure, and he would thus perpetuate the evil which he had taken pains to extirpate. This incident, trifling as it was interested me very much. If it had taken place in Palestine, it would not have been so much to be wondered at, for there the face of nature is but little altered from what it was at the time when our Saviour appeared on earth. There the same plants and animals are still to be found which are mentioned in the sacred writings, and there man himself, prone as he is in other parts of the world to change his habits according to the whim of the day, retains the customs, and even the dress of his forefathers, who lived two thousand years before him. But when in a country like England, so far removed from the scene of the events recorded in the Bible, such an occurrence takes place, and that in the course of a country ramble, we are indeed, led “from nature, up to nature’s God.” Not only can we see how closely natural religion is connected with the revealed Word of God, but we can learn the same lesson (written in characters of the present day) which is contained in Holy Writ, namely, that the teaching of Christ is for all nations. “Go ye and teach all nations,” was Christ’s command to his apostles. They went and taught; and if we commune with the earth, the earth teaches the same doctrine.

THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

A PREMONITION OF ETERNITY.

FOUNDED ON FACT.

“And yet, sister, it was nothing but a dream; therefore do not look so sad about it.” “I know, Mary, it was nothing more; yet it was such a dream as might rationally make any one melancholy, and you will think so when you hear it.” “Tell it, then, and if there be a cause of grief, I will mourn with you.” “Well, then,” returned Adeline, “it was this. I thought my white satin dress was all completed, and we went to the party as we are now preparing to do: the scene was very splendid, and every thing around was bright and joyful; still I was

unhappy, and my countenance was filled with gloom. You said to me ‘cheer up, sister; we are to have a party at the house of Mr. B. next week, which will be worth a dozen, like this;’ but by the by, sister Adeline, I perceive nothing here so very contemptible as your long phiz would try to make us believe.” I made no reply, but cast my eye towards a distant grave yard, whose white monuments were just discernible; you turned suddenly from me, and mingled again in a dance. Soon after I grew faint, my eyes were heavy, and I sank into your arms; almost immediately I was carried to an adjoining apartment, and placed in a very large arm-chair before a mirror. I looked on myself, and oh! how black my countenance appeared! A physician was called in, who made an unsuccessful attempt to bleed me; my face still grew blacker, until at length I expired.”

“And are you afraid you are really dead, then?” replied Mary, laughing heartily; “I do not marvel that you are sorrowful; but here comes your satin dress, and it is all completed, sure enough. Come try it on.” “O, it makes me shudder to look at it! Indeed I cannot go to the party!” “Psha! put it on. Shall I tell them you had a dream (dreadful pressager!) and dare not come?” “Tell them any thing, but pray excuse me.”

Many words now succeeded, and the thoughtless Mary at length persuaded her sister to attend the party. The evening came, and Adeline went with a heavy heart, to the scene of mirth and hilarity; her singular dream was still deeply imprinted in her memory, and every thing she saw seemed as it then did in her fancy. She grew more and more melancholy, while every face around her brightened, and every heart seemed light with enjoyment. In the midst of the merriment, her unthinking sister, who had forgotten the dream, came and repeated the very words which Adeline dreamt she had done; they gave her a dreadful shock, but she made no reply, and endeavoured to forget her gloom by mingling in the midst of the dance. Her heart grew light, for no one can yield to the touch of vanity without losing in a degree the faithful monitor of the soul. A short time after she passed an open window, and, looking carelessly out upon the moonlight earth, she plainly discovered the white stones of a distant grave-yard; but, after having pointed it out to a young friend, she turned again to the sight of vanity, and the event passed from her mind. It was not long before great tumult was seen in the ball room; Adeline had fainted, and was removed to another apartment, where she was placed in a great arm-chair, exactly as she had dreamed. Her sister, who was supporting her head, saw her dying countenance reflected in a mirror which hung on the opposite side of the room, and suddenly she remembered that dismal dream, which she felt was now fast coming to pass. Adeline became more and more insensible. Her face blackened, her respiration grew more difficult, and soon after her unprepared spirit bade an eternal adieu to the shores of time, and went to meet its God.

Thus closed the dream and the earthly existence of a gay and promising young female! Her ear had often listened to the pathetic and solemn appeals of the minister of the sanctuary, and to many instances of mortality; but none had broken the deep sleep of sin in the soul, none had cut the cord that binds to earthly vanities. Still she slumbered on, rocked in the cradle of youthful hopes, and lulled with the music of youthful promises; but suddenly an alarm was breathed into her heart by the voice of the dreadful, the mysterious dream, yet it faded away like the gleam of the meteor. Her mind was unsettled between the choice of youthful hilarities and the holy religion of the cross. There was no time to be lost; her vision told her so; but she listened to the voice of temptation, and rushed forward into the midst of vanity, and perished, with impending clouds of darkness and sorrow, entering eternity from the ball-room, ere the dream grew dim to her sight.

Should not the thoughtless, who are wasting their precious moments in idle amusements, receive warning from this, and from similar signals of their danger in this living? They do not intend to die as they live; but oh! how awfully absurd and sinful to live as we would not wish to die, since we are not certain of a single hour; and God is angry with those who trifle with his mercies. The vainest of the vain would not choose to spend their last moments in the ball

room, nor hear with their dying ears the sound of a violin. They have disregarded death; but oh! how often are they left in the trying hour to darkness and agony of spirit, with no Saviour to light them over Jordan, no hope in the morning of the resurrection! And Death, too, not unfrequently does his work when he is least expected, and the heart that beats warm with passion and earthly enjoyments is suddenly cut off from the midst of time, and assigned over to the great day of accounts.—Mrs. H. M. Dodge.

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCE.

RELIGION IN SWEDEN.

A PROTESTANT missionary, a native of Sweden, has lately visited the country of his birth, and gives a gratifying account of growing interest in true religion, as having been observed by him among the people. He was present at two large assemblies of pastors, numbering in all about 500 individuals. He was favourably received, and attentively heard on the subject of missions, and was received as a brother by the old Archbishop of Upsal. “But chiefly among the people,” says he, “I have found a true hunger and thirst for the Word of God.” Crowds assemble to hear him, so large, that churches capable of accommodating 3000, could not contain them. Twice a week he was permitted to expound the Scriptures publicly in a church of the metropolis, and each morning many of the people flocked to the house in which he resided, in order to be present at family worship. Both among the pastors and people of this country, which has so long been spiritually dead, the truths of the gospel seem to be gaining ground, and an interest in missionary operations has been awakened.—Dundee Warbler.

THE SABBATH IN FRANCE.

We are gratified to learn that a movement has been made for the rescue of the Sabbath in France—where no Sabbath at all has been known for years. The Minister of the Marine has addressed a circular to the maritime prefects, desiring that no workman be employed on the Sabbath in the dockyards, except in cases of necessity.—The motive assigned for this novel order is the very common sense reason now so efficiently urged upon the community here, that those who do not repose on the Sabbath cannot work with energy on the other days of the week, and that consequently it is not profitable to the state to exact labor on that day. Another reason assigned does honor to the heart of the minister, viz., that the labouring classes may have requisite time and opportunity for religious instruction. If the spirit of this order pervades France, it will be like life for the dead of that country.

SCOTTISH LADIES’ ASSOCIATION.

We feel gratified in being able to state that one important branch of the Assembly’s Foreign Missions continues in active operation; and promises, by the Divine blessing, to be of essential service in promoting the great object in view. We refer to the Scottish Ladies’ Association for the Advancement of Female Education in India. This excellent Association has existed for a period of seven years, “during which it has sent out seven female teachers; has had schools established at Calcutta, Bombay, and Poonah; and has been the medium of transmitting to India, and otherwise expending, for these purposes, upwards of £6000.” One of the principal objects contemplated by the Ladies who have the direction of its affairs is, the training up of native females who may in time become qualified, by the influence of Divine grace, to impart instruction to their own sex. With this view the Association has, for the last two years, supported a separate establishment at Calcutta for the reception and education of female orphan children; of whom, according to the latest accounts, there are twelve enjoying the benefit of this truly benevolent institution. For the better carrying out of this design, the Association has resolved to build a permanent Orphan Refuge on-site adjacent to the Assembly’s Institution in Calcutta; the estimate cost of which, (including the sum offered for the site,) is £2100. Of this amount only about £300 have as yet been realized; but when the vast benefits likely to result from this philanthropic undertaking are considered by the Christian public, we have no doubt that it will be liberally supported, especially by