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Poetry.

A MEMORY.

My heart, my heart is sad to night,
I'm looking on the past,
For olden memories still have power
Their spell on me to cast.

'Tis strange that we should live so oft
The scenes of olden time,
That joys, and griefs of other hearts
Should win such power o'er mine.

I'm thinking now of a bright home
In a far distant land,
It was not mine, but well I loved
To join its household band.

The matron looked on each fair child
Around her own hearth stone,
And looked with pitying love on me,
The motherless, the lone.

Ah! me—her children vainly yearn
For that dear look of love,
Her eyes are closed to earth-scenes now,
Her home is far above.

And one of those bright ones she watched
With such unwearied care,
Who made sweet music in her home,
She too is missing there.

For well the Father knew the child
Could never stem the tide,
The waves of life's deep troubled sea,
With no one by her side.

So, early from the hills of earth
The timid dove hath flown,
And joyously the spirit freed
Fled to its better home.

So, all is changed now, the old house
Is desolate they say,
For those who made its sunlight then
Are fled, or gone away.

And I, who watched them then in joy,
Am left alone to dream
On scenes so sadly different now,
On joys that once have been.

But with these twilight memories come
The blessed promise giv'n,
To soothe me in my loneliness,
The promised rest of heav'n!

ORIG.

Baltimore, November 14th 1851.

Christian Miscellany.

* We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts and reasonings of pure and lofty minds.—Dr. SAUNDERS.

State of the Pious Dead.

They that are asleep in Jesus are as truly alive as you, and in a thousand times more excellent sense, and to more particular purposes; for He who died for us did it for this end, that "whether we sleep or wake, we should live together with him." (1 Thess. v. 10.) For "God is not the God of the dead, but of the living;" (Luke xx. 38.) living, at present, as to the soul; and shall live hereafter in the body again.

We live together with him whether we wake or sleep. They who sleep in Jesus live together with him in his presence and enjoyment. In this respect it is, that Christ says, "He that believeth in me shall never die;" never die totally. When the body sleeps in Jesus, the "soul lives together with him," and proceeds in a life that death cannot discontinue, nor eternity exhaust.

Sleep is a rest from weariness; from the cares and labours of the day. Such is the death of the Christian.

"Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord; for they rest from their labours;" from the labours of their calling, as men; from the labours of their duty, as Christians; because all the duty that follows in the separate state will be without labour and weariness: from the labour of opposing sin and temptations to it: from all the troubles of life, and the sorrows attending it. It is not merely, "Farewell, husband wife and children;" but, "Farewell, sorrow and sin; farewell, suffering; farewell, corruption, weakness, temptation. Welcome rest from all these troubles."

Sleep is a refreshment, and a reparation of spirits; and to the better part death gives a refreshment that amounts to satisfaction. "I shall be satisfied when I awake with thy likeness;" (Psalm xvii. 15.) which some have understood of the soul's awaking to a nobler life upon the body's falling asleep.

Sleep is but for a while, and then we awake again; and death is but for a while, and we awake in the morning of the resurrection. What David says of his lying down on his bed, and rising, we may say of our lying down in the grave, and rising. "I laid me down, and slept; for the Lord sustained me." So "man lieth down, and awaketh not," as to the body, "till the heavens be no more." "If a man die," says Job, "shall he live again?" Shall he indeed? If so, then I acknowledge there is consolation in the thought, and wonder in the work, to support and stay my mind.—Therefore "all the days of my appointed time," that I have to lie in the grave, there "will I wait, till my change," by the resurrection, "come." For thou shalt call, "by the sound of the last trumpet, and the voice of the Lord, "and I will answer. Thou wilt have a desire to the work of thine own hands," to restore and improve it, and not suffer it always to lie there in the rubbish. Sleep is but a short death, and death a longer sleep to the body. "The hour is coming, when all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth: they that have done good, unto the resurrection of life." (John v. 28, 29.) May they sleep sweetly! may they wake joyfully! They were Christ's friends, as well as ours. Allow him to have his friends about him, as well as you who have had them so long. It may be, before Christ has had them so long with him, as some of you have had them here below, you will be with them again; and Christ, and you, and they be all together.

"I would not have you ignorant, brethren." Immoderate sorrow is very much owing to ignorance, or a knowledge that has no effect to govern the passions; which is the same thing with ignorance; except that it entitles to a greater number of stripes. Do not behave as if you were ignorant of the frail nature and short duration of the comforts of this life; as if you were ignorant of the Christian hope, life and immortality; as if you were ignorant of the present state of those who sleep in Jesus,—how happy it is; and of the certain future meeting again, with advantage to all those excellencies for which you loved them here so well. Prayer will give a vent to a great deal of that sorrow which torments others; and hope will fetch in a great deal of comfort which "a stranger intermeddled not with." They are therefore mentioned together by the Apostle: "rejoicing in hope; patient in tribulation; continuing instant in prayer." (Rom. xii. 12.) He is a miserable man indeed, who is afflicted, and cannot pray; and whose "days are spent without hope." (Job vii. 6.) Where there is no hope, there is no comfort. And when the prospects of hope are neglected, and we act as if we were ignorant of them, or know not how to use them, the grievousness of our sorrow is very much owing to ourselves, and is its own punishment, though not the only one we deserve.

Moderate sorrow is allowable on account of our own loss, even of those who do sleep in Jesus. The Apostle does not say, he would not have believers "sorrow" at all, but not "as do others." He does not say, "I would not have you sorrow at all;" but "not as those who have no such hope as you have." It is the regulation of sorrow that he aims at, and not the total suppression of it. Grace does not destroy nature, but refines it. It does not extinguish the affections and passions, but rectifies and moderates them. To be altogether unconcerned concerning our pious dead is unnatural. To be overmuch is unchristian. They are both hurtful extremes to the soil: to have no water at all; and to have it so as to overflow and drown the land.—Dr. Grosvenor.

Christmas.

This festival, commonly called Christmas but more properly "The Nativity of our Lord," should be observed with universal joy and gladness. Songs of praise should be heard in all our private dwellings; and we should meet in joyful assemblies, to celebrate the high praises of our Lord and Saviour. Our places of public worship, where we meet in the name of Jesus, should ring with loud acclamations to the Son of David. We do not mean to insinuate that there is any particular sanctity in this day; but that it is a day which brings to our recollection an event of such importance, as should fill our hearts with gratitude, and our mouths with praise. But, it may be said, to the great scandal of nations professing Christianity, that the nativity of our blessed Saviour is generally observed as a carnal festival. Like the feasts of Bacchus, amongst the Greeks and Romans, it is a scene of the wildest confusion, and of the most abominable wickedness. At this season, hell seems to be let loose, and devils seem to triumph over the nations. Large companies assemble, in our cities, towns and villages, to provoke one another to sin. Gluttony, drunkenness, and debauchery, quarrelling, brawling, and fighting, are the reigning sins of this sacred festival. What a wonder it is, that God, whose Son is so highly dishonoured, does not overwhelm us with his judgments!

As Christians, we should spend this day in a grateful remembrance of Jesus's love. Viewing him in his lowly estate, we should learn lessons of humility; but viewing his real character, as our lawful King, we should hasten to pay him homage. The heathen Magi, guided by a star, found him at Bethlehem, and worshipped at his feet. Let us, under the guidance of a superior light, pay him those honours which are justly due. At the same time, let the benevolence of our Lord inspire our hearts with love and pity to all the sons of grief and pain. It would be to the honour of all Christian assemblies, to make public collections, for charitable purposes, on every return of this day. Thus, the poor would be made to rejoice; God would look down with approbation; and we might hope for a gracious reward.

There have been various opinions about the precise day on which Jesus was born. Chronologers have placed that event in almost every month in the year. Some think our Saviour could not have been born in the month of December, because the shepherds and their flocks were out in the fields, when the angel proclaimed his birth; but they do not recollect the difference of climate between Judea and Britain, nor even that in our climate it is not always alike cold in this season of the year. We contend not, however, for the exact date of the day; but we do contend for the thing. It is proper to have a day set apart for this purpose, and to observe it religiously in honour of our Redeemer. May every return of this festival find us on our way to the heavenly kingdom, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen.—*Ecc. Jonathan Edmondson, A. M.*

Wise Stewards.

In reading the biography of the most eminently pious and useful in different ages, we have been struck with the fact, that almost all of them devoted a regular portion of their income to pious and charitable uses. We will mention a few whose names are familiar, whose writings are venerated, and whose memory is precious. Among those who made a tenth the fixed proportion of their almsgiving, were Lord Chief Justice Hale, the Rev. Dr. Hammond, and the Rev. Dr. Annesley. Baxter informs us, that he long adhered to this, until, for himself, he found it too little; and he observes, "I think however, that it is as likely a proportion as can be prescribed; and that devoting a tenth part ordinarily to God is a matter that we have more than human direction for."—Doddridge was another instance of this kind.

"I make a solemn dedication of one-tenth of my estate, salary, and income, to charitable uses; and I also devote to such uses an eighth of everything I receive by way of gift or present." Mrs. Elizabeth Rowe says, "I consecrate half of my yearly income to charitable uses; yea, all that I have beyond the bare conveniences and necessities of life, shall surely be the Lord's."—Such, too, was the constant practice of the Hon. Robert Boyle, of the Rev. Mr. Brand, and of the Rev. Thomas Gouge. Of the latter, Archbishop Tillotson says, in his funeral sermon, "All things considered, there have not been, since the primitive times of Christianity, many among the sons of men to whom that glorious character of the Son of God might be better applied, that 'he went about doing good.'" The list might be extended to those who have lived since, and to many of our own age; but these examples are sufficient. If Christians generally were to act thus, to fix some due proportion, and keep a separate fund for charitable purposes, with how much more wisdom, prudence and cheerfulness would they perform this Christian duty! How often would they lift up their hearts to God, in devout thanksgiving, for affording them opportunities of enjoying this privilege, and of showing to themselves and others that "it is more blessed to give than to receive!"—*Christian Miscellany.*

Piety and Mental Growth.

An hour of solitude passed in sincere and earnest prayer, or in the conflict with and the conquest over a single passion, or "subtle bosom sin," will teach us more of thought, will more effectually awaken the faculty, and form the habit of reflection, than a year's study in the school without them.

A reflecting mind is not a flower that grows wild, or comes up of its own accord. The difficulty is indeed greater than many, who mistake quick recollection for thought, are disposed to admit; but how much less than it would be, had we not been born and bred in a Christian and Protestant land, very few of us are sufficiently aware. Truly may we, and thankfully ought we to exclaim with the Psalmist:—"The entrance of thy word giveth light; giveth understanding even to the simple."—*Coleridge.*

The Christian Merchant.

There are seasons when a Christian's distinguishing character is hidden from man.—A Christian merchant on 'Change is not called to show any difference in his mere exterior carriage from another merchant. He gives a reasonable answer, if he is asked a question. He does not fanatically intrude religion into every sentence he utters. He does not suppose his religion to be inconsistent with the common interchange of civilities. He is affable and courteous. He can ask the news of the day, and take up any public topic of conversation. But is he, therefore, not different from other men? He is like another merchant in the mere exterior circumstance, which is least in God's regard; but, in his taste, his views, his science, his hopes, his happiness, he is as different from those around him as light is from darkness.—*Ocell.*

The little Shovel.

A poor woman had a supply of coal laid at her door by a charitable neighbour. A very pretty little girl came out with a small fire-shovel, and began to take up a shovelful at a time, and carry it to a sort of bin in the cellar. We said to the child: "Do you expect to get all that coal in with that little shovel?" Child, (quite confused by the question.) "Yes, sir, if I work long enough." There is no labour too great for industry and perseverance to accomplish, and it is not so much the tools we have to work with, as the spirit with which we use them, that gives us success.—*Youth's Penny Gazette.*