

“And confessed that they were strangers and pilgrims on the earth.”—HEB. xi. 13.

Thus far on life's perplexing path,

Thus far, thou, Lord, our steps hast led;
Snatch'd from the world's pursuing path,

Unharm'd, though floods hung o'er our head:
Like the ransomed Israel on the shore,
Here then we pause, look back, adore.

Strangers and pilgrims here below,

Like all our fathers in their day;
We to the land of promise go,

Lord, by thy own appointed way:
Still guide, illumine, cheer our flight,
In cloud by day, in fire by night.

Safety thy presence is, and rest

While—as the eagle o'er her brood,
Flutters her pinions, stirs the nest,

Covers, defends, provides them food,
Bears on her wings, instructs to fly—
Thy love prepares us for the sky.

Protect us through the wilderness,

From fiery serpent, plague and foe;
With bread from heaven thy people bless,

And living streams where'er we go;
Nor let our rebel hearts repine,
Or follow any voice but thine.

Thy holy law to us proclaim,

But not from Sinai's top alone;
Hid in the rock-cleft, by thy name,
Thy power, and all thy goodness shown;
And may we never bow the knee,
To worship any God but Thee.

When we have numbered all our years,

And stand at length on Jordan's brink,
Though the flesh fail with mortal fears,

Oh, let not then the spirit sink;
But, strong in faith, and hope, and love,
Plunge through the stream to rise above.

J. MONTGOMERY.

From the London Christian Guardian.

THE PERNICIOUS EFFECTS OF SIR WALTER SCOTT'S NOVELS.

It is matter both of surprise and regret that I so frequently find the Waverly Novels in Christian Families. I am fully aware that they are countenanced upon the ground of their containing much useful historical knowledge, as well as being in a great measure free from the profanity and licentiousness which is constantly met with in novels of the by-gone ages.

As regards the historical knowledge which is to be met with in the Waverly Novels, it is at best but a mixture of ideal fancy and fact, precluding the possibility of the reader, who is unacquainted with history, forming a right judgment between truth and falsehood, and hence, so far from imparting knowledge, they must lead to erroneous impressions. Add to which, I strongly suspect little information is sought for by most novel readers, and that the Narrative is the all-engrossing topic of their thoughts and attention; but granting that knowledge is to be gained from the perusal of such works, how soon it is lost amidst the affecting scenes of the hero of the romance, how soon for instance is all the beautiful topical scenery in Waverly lost sight of in the doleful end of Vicklan Vohr, and in the distressing musings of his sister Flora, who is described as engaged in making his shroud.

Again—it is said by the advocates of novel reading, that the lives of the most profligate murderers, &c. are held up as a warning beacon to others, and hence much good may rise to the reader. But if such is the intention of the author, he takes the most effective means for defeating his views; for instead of representing their characters in the dark and dis-

graceful colours which their conduct calls for, they generally substitute vice for virtue, breach of promise for good faith, and clothe them with so many fancied excellencies, that instead of the reader feeling a just indignation and destination of their crimes, he is led to feel a deep and impassioned interest in their behalf. I appeal to those persons who have read the Heart of Mid-Lothian, Rob Roy, &c. whether such is not the case.

It is true, there is not that licentious spirit in so great a degree in Sir Walter Scott's novels as is to be found in the generality of such publications, but he is guilty of that which (to my mind at least) is as bad—gross misapplications, if not perversions, of Holy Writ. But not only does he pervert sacred lore, but he treats in many instances history in the same manner; he caricatures in the most distinguishing manner honest feeling and religious principle, and would lead many to imagine that those godly men (however some may think them misguided) who fell in the unhappy religious wars in Scotland, were little better than loose fanatics and superannuated fools.

I would therefore desire to raise my voice, however feeble, against the admission of Sir Walter Scott's novels into Christian families, and I do most earnestly entreat of Christian parents who wish to preserve their children's minds in a pure and healthy state, and who desire to keep them “unspotted from the world” and to bring them up in the “nurture and admonition of the Lord,” to beware how they put such works into their hands; as I am well persuaded (alas! by personal experience) that the EVIL EFFECTS arising from the perusal of one novel, counteracts the GOOD EFFECTS of twenty sermons: the novel reader lives in a fancied world of his own, without sorrow and without pain, where all is happiness and peace; and consequently, when REAL misfortune drags him down from his visionary world, and compels him to review things as they REALLY ARE, and reminds him that he is but man, he murmurs against the providence of God, repines at his station, becomes irritated with all around him, neglects the duties which he owes to his God, his country, and to himself; lives in misery, and oft-times dies in woe; and this arises from the mischievous habit of novel-reading.

Christian parents! you may perhaps think this picture is over-wrought, but I assure you it is not; I have had cases come under my own personal observation, in which the above-named fearful truths have been strikingly illustrated; I have known ladies in the highest grade of society, who, from the love of the marvellous, have given themselves up to reading novels, fraught with supernatural absurdities, in which, however, after a time, they have put such implicit faith as to produce in them so great a degree of nervous excitement, that nothing would induce them to go into their own chamber without a servant after dark. Others again I have known whose tempers and habits have been completely ruined by that pernicious habit.

P. S.—I cannot forbear appending the following extract which I have lately transcribed from a highly-esteemed novel—the History of Eleanor was originally began, some years since, to draw off her mind from dwelling too poignantly on a recent calamity, by endeavouring to lose in the regions of fiction the overwhelming sorrows of real misfortune—it was continued at intervals to amuse the languor of a sick chamber.

Can any thing be more unsuitable than such sentiments as these; when the Almighty calls us by His rod of mercy and commands us “to be still and know that he is God,” we are here taught to refuse to listen to His voice by plunging into ideal scenes. Christians, meditate on these things; it can require no eloquence of mine to show you the awful impiety of such sentiments.

“I resolve,” says Bishop Beveridge, “never to speak of a man's virtues before his face; nor of his faults behind his back;” a golden rule! the observation of which, would, at one stroke, banish flattery and defamation from the earth.—Bishop Horne.

When a man owns himself to have been in error, it is but telling you, in other words, that he is wiser than he was.

YOUTH'S DEPARTMENT.

SKETCHES OF SCRIPTURE CHARACTERS.

No. 4.

DAVID FIGHTING GOLIATH. B. C. 1060.

David—Beloved.

David was able to conquer the giant Goliath, because he looked to God for strength and direction.

Our evil tempers and passions, are more powerful foes to our souls, than the giant was to young David. Remember, that we cannot subdue these our enemies, by our own strength and power. We may however look to the Lord for grace and strength, beseeching him to subdue those evils which beset us, and he will hear us. Jesus said, ‘If a man love me, he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him.’ ‘Great peace have they that love the Lord.’—1 Samuel 17. 49.

When call'd to fight, young David took

A few small pebbles from the brook;

And, by a heaven-directed blow,

Soon laid the boasting giant low.

God can our inward foes subdue,

And make us more than conquerors too.

THE PROPHET ELIJAH. B. C. 909.

Elijah—God is my Lord.

Elijah was a faithful servant of God, and very zealous for the honour of his divine Master. He was bold and courageous in rebuking sin; and he was preserved from the power of sinful men, who sought to destroy him.

As for us, we are often very ready to blame others who have done wrong, not so much because they have offended God, as on account of the trouble or uneasiness which their misconduct may have occasioned to us; while, perhaps, we are indulging the same, or worse evil in ourselves.—1 Kings. 17. 2 Kings 1.

When Israel the Lord forsook,

They met Elijah's sharp rebuke.

O may we always sin detest,

But most of all, in our own breast;

Nor dare in others to reprove,

What we ourselves will dare to love.

HEZEKIAH'S SICKNESS AND RECOVERY. B.C. 713.

Hezekiah—Strengthened of the Lord.

Hezekiah was very ill and expected to die. He prayed to God to make him well again, and his prayer was answered. God promised to add to his life fifteen years.

It is most probable that Hezekiah desired to live and be well, that he might be active and useful in the service of God. This should be our constant endeavour, whether in sickness or in health; remembering that to the believer, to ‘live is Christ, to die is gain.’ Are we ready to give up ourselves and all that we have to the Saviour? Do we desire Him to come and dwell in our hearts? (See Rev. iii 20.)

38 Isaiah.

When Hezekiah sought the Lord,

His health was speedily restor'd.

Nothing indeed have they to fear,

To whom the Lord is always near;

In health or sickness, ease or pain,

For death itself to them is gain.

THE PROPHET DANIEL. B. C. 603.

Daniel—God is my Judge.

Daniel prayed to God three times a day, because he felt that he needed grace and strength continually.—Wicked men persuaded the king to cast Daniel into the lions' den, because he prayed to God: but He sent His angel and shut the lions' mouths, so that they should not hurt him; and also preserved him in many other difficulties and dangers. Let us pray that we may be kept from evil, for many dangers and temptations surround us. Christ is the good Shepherd: he will preserve his sheep. We are only safe while He is present with us. ‘Let us run with patience the race that is set before us; looking unto Jesus the author and finisher of our faith.’

1 Samuel 14. Ezekiel 14.

Three times a day for heav'nly aid,

To God, the prophet Daniel pray'd.

God heard his pray'r, preserv'd him still,

And kept him safe from ev'ry ill.

In sacred peace their souls abide,
Who in the Lord their God confide.