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Poetry.

A SONG OF LIFE.

BY CHARLES MACKAY.

A traveller, through a dusty road,
Stooped across on the lea;
And one took root, and sprouted up,
And grew into a tree.
Love sought its shade at evening time,
To breathe its early vow,
And Age was pleased, in heats of noon,
To bask beneath its boughs:
The dormouse loved its dangling twigs,
The birds sweet music bore;
It saved a glory in its place,
A blessing evermore!

A little spring had lost its way
— Amid the grass and fern:
A passing stranger scooped a well,
Where weary men might turn;
He walled it in, and hung with care
A lute at the brink—
He thought not of the deed he did,
But judged that toil might drink,
He passed again—and lo! the well,
By summers never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parching tongues,
And saved a life beside!

A dreamer dropped a random thought:
"I was old; and yet, was new—
A simple fancy of the brain,
But strong in being true;
It shone upon a genial mind,
And lo! its light became
A lamp of life, a beacon ray,
A monitor flame.
The thought was small—its issue great,
A watch fire on the hill;
It sheds its radiance far a town,
And clears the valley still!

A nameless man, amid a crowd
That thronged the daily mart,
Let fall a word of hope and love,
Unstudied, from the heart:
A whisper, on the tumult thrown—
A transitory breath—
It raised a brother from the dust,
It saved a soul from death—
O gem! O fant! O word of love!
O thought, at random cast!
Ye were but little at the first,
But mighty at the last!

Christian Miscellany.

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

For the Wesleyan.

The Destroying Angel.

The day had been hot and sultry, and as night drew on and the shadows of twilight gathered around, gently and softly fell the refreshing dews of evening upon the now parched and weary earth. Beautifully did the sun go down that night upon Egypt, and when the last tints of day were gone, the stars stepped forth, as was their wont, in the clear heavens, the moon shone down as calmly as ever upon leaflet and tree, and the glorious Nile rolled proudly on its wonted course. Surely that night nothing betokened aught but peace.

The evening waned away, and as silence reigned and "not a leaf stirred in the awakening breeze," a figure was seen moving, half hid, among the dark clustering shrubbery of the palace. It was the monarch of Egypt, who in the stillness of the evening, was gazing around. He stood looking upward—but it was no sentiment of gratitude or adoration that trembled on his lip, as Egypt in her loveliness glowing in the silver light, lay spread like a picture before him—triumph and exultation indeed filled his soul—but it was but the triumph of the tyrant over his victim—the unholly exultation of the oppressor over his prey. Far down among the fair fields of Goshen, was another and a different scene. There, a little band of Israelites had gathered, and their melody broke upon the quiet of the hour, as their voices mingled in a hymn of praise with which they were concluding their evening

service. But time passed on, and ere long the Egyptian monarch, and the lonely stricken Hebrews had alike retired from the scene, the one to the silence of repose—the others to prepare for the celebration of that mysterious rite, upon the issue of which trembled the destiny of Israel's first-born—when the sky which had been so clear and undimmed became suddenly obscured—dark heavy masses of clouds came rolling up the firmament, unfolding themselves in the heavens, and the mournful breathings of the wind, as it swept up in strong and fitful gusts, seemed to warn of an approaching storm. Ah! those blasts thrilled through many an Hebrew, who as he listened and marked the fierce scowl of the heavens, and heard the Nile surging and coursing by so fearfully, drew closer to his bosom his firstborn and fancied the hour had come.

It was midnight—and the terrible transitory tempest had passed—the black clouds had rolled far back from the sky—the breeze was sweeping through the thick olive boughs, and the moon and stars were again looking forth, in quenchless, undying brilliancy—and so passed that solemn, midnight hour. But oh! who may paint the tide of troubled feeling that broke over the soul of many an Israelite, when as in the deep silence and quietude of night, he stood girdled for his triumphant march, he heard the rush and fluttering of pinions, as the unseen visitant swept past his dwelling. He knew truly that the *Lord God of his fathers* was his sure defence, that he rested beneath the wing of the Omnipotent—but as he thought of Egypt, he trembled—and well might his cheek turn pale and his lip quiver on that fearful night, as the destroyer spread forth his wings on the blast; for at "midnight there was a great cry throughout all the land of Egypt, such as there was none like it, nor shall be like it any more." Oh! the deep bitterness, the untold anguish of that wailing cry, as it rose to heaven, from the agonized bosom of many an Egyptian mother! Who may tell of the rending of hearts, the blighting of cherished hopes, as Egypt arose and mourned for her firstborn! * * * * *

The morning arose clear and glorious, and the sun looked forth in splendour upon smitten and scathed hearts; for he that swayed the sceptre, and "the captive that was in the dungeon," were alike smitten that night. But far on in the distance toward Succoth, moved the glittering phalanx of the Lord's chosen ones, for the same unseen hand that was laid so witheringly upon the glory of Egypt, had, as with the grasp of Omnipotence, burst the galling shackles of Israel's bondage, and proclaimed her disenthralled. E. M.

The Man who Ridiculed Prayer.

In a congregation with which the writer was intimately acquainted, the pastor, at the commencement of the winter amusements, preached a sermon against dancing. Though he was a man of great prudence, and treated the subject with great kindness and delicacy yet a young physician, who was a prominent leader in the dissipation of the place, was greatly offended, and swore that he would dance every night that week, to show his pastor that the young people were not to be influenced by his officious meddling with their concerns. In accordance with this resolution, he got his young associates together and after kneeling down and offering a *mock prayer*, to ridicule his minister, he induced them to make arrangements to spend every night that week in the ball-room. On Monday evening, the young people assembled to commence their week's dissipation, in accordance with the arrangements which had been made. Some time in the evening, the doctor was sent for, to visit a sick man, who lived a few miles out of the village. Though the night was extremely cold, he started on horseback, with his silk stockings and dancing slippers on, to go and see his patient. Though he had no appearance of being intoxicated, and was perfectly acquainted with

the road, yet he missed his way, and after wandering round in an untravellered path, where the snow was deep, for some time, he was thrown from his horse, and the next morning was found near the road which he had left, crawling upon his hands and knees in the snow. He was taken home, and medical assistance immediately called in; but his lower limbs were so badly frozen, that after great suffering, he was obliged to have them amputated just below the knee-joints. He ultimately recovered his general health, but was obliged to walk on his knees the rest of his life. When he saw that he must be reduced to this sad necessity, he remarked to some friends that he had never bowed the knee to God or man, but that he should now have to humble himself in the sight of them both.

I have seen him often since his recovery, going about the village in this painful posture, and could not avoid feeling that he had been left to eat the fruit of his own doings, and was a sad monument of man when he sets himself against the Almighty. From the day he resolved to dance six nights in succession, to grieve his pious minister for kindly warning the youth of his charge of the dissipating tendencies of that amusement, he was forever unable to step to the sound of the viol; and from the day on which he impiously knelt to ridicule the prayer of his godly pastor, he had been doomed to go upon his bended knees to the close of his life.

I would never rashly interpret the providences of God, but I love to study them:—and when they speak as plain a language as they did in this case, I feel that we should be belying the Lord, to say, "that it was not He." His providences, like his word, are designed for our own instruction and admonition, and when we see him rebuking presumptuous sins, by signally punishing them in this world, others should take warning that they fall not under the same condemnation. It is a fearful thing to disregard the admonitions of those whom God has set to watch for our souls, and give us warning from him; but when, in addition to this sin, we maliciously insult the Lord's messenger, and deride the very prayers which he is daily offering up for us, we ought to expect a severer punishment than that which falls upon ordinary transgressors.—*Rev William Wisner, D. D.*

For the Wesleyan.

"The Cedar Burial Ground."

A SKETCH.

How many varied emotions are awakened in the mind as we enter the "silent city of the dead."

From earliest remembrance it has been to me a melancholy pleasure, to visit the last resting place of those whom I knew, and loved, ere the chill breath of the Destroyer had passed over them, leaving vacant places in the home circle, and desolate hearts in many a dwelling.

"The Cedar Burial Ground." Its very name brings thoughts of beauty, and it is a bright and lovely spot, meet resting place for the young, and fair, who sleep "the sleep which knows no waking."

I lingered there, as though I could not turn away from aught so lovely, and it will be long ere that parting glance is erased from my memory.

The soft beams of the setting sun, tinged the tree tops with golden light, and here and there rested lovingly, on the pure marble, above some dreamless sleeper.

As I stood there in the hush of evening, listening to the murmuring of water near, and the music of rustling leaves, I thought how humbling it should be to the proud heart to remember, "We are but dust, and fleeting shadows." Death spares neither the good nor great; the old and young alike must own his sway. "Earth to earth, and dust to dust," is the doom of all, and in the grave whither we are speeding, "How loved, how valued once, avails us not."

I stood by the grave of a little child, above whom the hand of affection had reared the monumental stone. It gave a name, and numbered the brief years of its young life. The device was singularly beautiful. On the white tablet rested the Book Divine, and below it a sculptured dove, which seemed as if it too would take its flight far beyond the earnest gaze: but the eloquent inscription spoke volumes to my heart; it spoke of Him, who became a little child, dwelt on earth, and laid within the grave, that through his death and resurrection, erring man might win eternal life; and "Suffer little children to come unto me," remains indelibly engraved upon my heart.

As I looked on the tomb of a father, whose children lay beside him, I thought that his was a happy lot. As in life he had taught them lessons of truth, so, when his Saviour bid them come, had led them to the throne, there to learn, that "of such indeed is the kingdom of heaven."

And many a sad yet truthful lesson, did I read on the perishing stones, that marked the sleeping dust which alone remained of what was once animated with an immortal spirit.

A broken column, emblem of the frailty of earthly hopes, stood in a green and quiet spot, telling of one, who in the pride of youth had been called to close his eyes, on the fair scenes of earth, while his spirit should awake to the glorious realities of a better world.

"Twas not in his early home, (with loved voices whispering peace, and hope, to the parting soul), that he died; but, far away, in a sunny land, where every breeze, that fanned his brow, was laden with the breath of flowers—there life had passed away; and yet, a memorial was placed near his home, betokening that his memory was fondly cherished; but the flowers he once loved bloomed round it now unheeded, for the hand that planted them is stilled in death. And thus it is,—form, after form, vanishes from the earth; yet, a little while and our very names will be forgotten.

I sought a sheltered nook, where the trees formed a pleasant shade, yet did not shut out the free glad sunlight, and on the marble, which time had robbed of its purity, I read "The Stranger's Grave." 'Twas a simple epitaph, yet full of meaning. I had heard, how years ago, a young beautiful girl had visited the city, none knew who she was, or whence she came, but long will be remembered the few eventful hours, succeeding her arrival. "Death found strange beauty on her polished brow, and dashed it out," and he who was thus suddenly bereft of the heart's idol, laid her there in her blighted loveliness, wishing in vain that he could sleep beside her.

She came, and passed away, but her memory still lives in hearts that knew her not, and oft as that tomb is pointed out, it wakes a mournful interest for the fate of the early dead. And as I broke a spray from the cedar by her tomb, I thought that when I too must die, I would fain sleep, in such a spot, e'en though mine too should be a "Stranger's Grave."

"The Stranger's grave"—"the stranger's grave"—
In vain we wonder who thou art,
The tall trees near thee seem to wave
A requiem for a broken heart.

"The stranger's grave," how mournfully
We linger near that old gray stone,
To weave a silent history
For her who sleeps beneath alone.

"The stranger's grave," it speaks to me,
Of a sad hour long, long ago,
Of a pure spirit, then set free
Forever, from all earthly woe.

"A stranger's grave," such too is hers,
The dearly loved, the young, the fair,
'Twas hallowed by a stranger's tears,
And strangers laid her gently there.

"The stranger's graves," one is afar,
Yet fondly I remember it,
And think o'er both, that some bright star
Will shed its pure, and holy light.

"The stranger's graves," 'tis sacred ground,
Where ye so lone, and lowly lie,
And may each spirit's home be found,
With God, when death himself must die.

Baltimore, Md.

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