

THE WESLEYAN.

Vol. II.—No. 49.]

A FAMILY PAPER—DEVOTED TO RELIGION, LITERATURE, GENERAL AND DOMESTIC NEWS, ETC.

[Whole No. 92.]

Ten Shillings per Annum.
Half-Yearly in Advance.

HALIFAX, N. S., SATURDAY MORNING, APRIL 12, 1851.

{ Single Copies,
{ Three Pence.

Poetry.

APRIL.

Capricious month of smiles and tears!
There's beauty in thy varied reign:
Emblem of being's hopes and fears—
Its hours of joy and days of pain.
A false inconstant scene is thine:
Changeful with light and shadow deep—
Out-tunes thy clouds with pure sunshine
Are pain—then in gloom they sleep.
Yet is there gladness in thy hours,
I'll follow of a brighter scene—
Though fragrant guide to buds and flowers,
To meadows fresh and pastures green!
For, as thy days grow few and brief,
The radiant looks of spring appear—
With swelling glow, and opening leaf,
To deck the morning of the year.
Yes, though thy light is checkered oft
With drifted showers of sorrowing rain—
Yet balmy airs and breezes soft
Are lingering richly in thy train:
And for thy ebbing guests will come
The lay of the rejoicing bird,
That tries his new and brightening plume—
Mid the void sky's recesses heard.
And soon the many clouds that hang
Their solemn drapery o'er the sky,
Will pass, in shadowy folds, away—
Lo! mark them now!—they break—they fly;
And over earth, in one broad smile,
Looks forth the glorious eye of day—
While hill, and vale, and ocean isle,
Are laughing in the breath of May.
Type of existence! mayst thou be
The emblem of the Christian's race—
Through all whose trials we may see
The sunshine of unending grace.
The calm that heaven-unkindled eye,
The faith that mounts on ardent wing,
That looks beyond the e'er-arching sky
To heaven's undimmed and golden spring.
A.M.

Christian Miscellany.

"We need a better acquaintance with the thoughts and reasoning of pure and lofty minds."—*REV. DR. STURGEON.*

On Sympathy.

Sympathy is one of the most refined pleasures of our nature—we call it pleasure, although it is akin to pain; for its disinterestedness, ennobling character, and beneficial effects, cannot but render it, with all its anxieties, a source of gratification. It frequently produces a depth of feeling equal to that occasioned by personal sorrow; but there is an essential difference in the influence it exerts on the mind. Severe affliction renders the sufferer dejected and inactive, and deprives him of that mental energy by which he might rise above the presence of his grief, or devise means of extricating himself from his trouble. Enfeebled in body, and weary in mind, he waits till the hand of time, that robbed him of his comforts, shall heal the wound which it has inflicted. But sympathy will be up and doing, and the stronger the attachment, and the deeper the distress, the more energy will be put forth to remove the evil. Hope mingles with our regrets, and as thought after thought arises in our mind, till we fancy we can restore to the object of our pity his former enjoyment, or provide a substitute for it, there is a generous glow and elevation of feeling which makes us happy even while we are sad.—Perhaps this may not inaptly furnish an illustration of that seeming paradox, "the joy of grief."

But though sympathy is a refined pleasure, the exercise of it is not restricted to any particular class of persons. It is open to all, and the various modes in which it is exhibited by different individuals form no bad criterion of their respective characters. Of course, we speak only of sincere sympathy, or at least what we believe to be such.

One person will tell you that he is sorry for your misfortune, with a bluntness that opens the wound afresh, and aggravates where it designs to soothe. All for which you can feel grateful to such an one is the intention.

Another, with peculiar tact and delicacy of feeling, will drop one consoling remark after another, not alien to, yet bearing but indirectly on, the occasion of sorrow, until the mind is wiled away as if by fascination into another train of thought, and returns not again to the same poignant contemplation of its own grief.

A third will listen with unwearied attention and interest to the recital of your troubles, leading you to empty your heart of its grief, eliciting a disclosure of all the bitter ingredients which fill your cup, and as it were, drinking of it with you,—ay, to the very dregs.

A fourth, of a more cheerful and sanguine turn of mind, will show you the bright side of your lot,—for there always is a bright side—will point out every circumstance connected with your affliction, or direct your thoughts to that course of conduct which is most likely to prove conducive to your future comfort and happiness, and stimulate you to its adoption.

While sympathy, to possess any real value, must be a spontaneous feeling of the heart, let it not be deemed altogether useless in a world offering such frequent opportunities for its exercise, to cultivate as an art the manner of expressing it. It will not necessarily be the less sincere for this, any more than courtesy is less real for being shown in conformity with the rules of politeness. If we look at the varieties of individual character, and the diversified trials of human life, it will be obvious that every mode of manifesting our sympathy may occasionally be employed with advantage. To participate with some—to divert the minds of others from their grief—to soothe—to cheer—to advise—to stimulate—to encourage, these are our means—our resources, but to use them appropriately will not be the result of mere chance; it will be accorded to those only who meditate long and deeply on the subject. We must look within, and learn the thousand springs of feeling and action that are there, before we shall be fully qualified to minister to the necessities of others. The key of our own hearts will unlock in any more, and procure us admittance into the otherwise impenetrable recesses of the human mind. We must observe, too, the result of our past efforts, how far they have been successful, or where-in they have failed, and gathering practical wisdom from our experience, go forth to make fresh advances in the course we have marked out for ourselves.

Hitherto we have spoken of sympathy only as it is manifested in words and directed to the mind; but there is a sphere of operation for the hand as well as the heart; there are many occasions requiring our kind offices to alleviate bodily affliction which should not be overlooked. These may sometimes involve a sacrifice of feeling and personal comfort; but we must not for this reason shrink from the performance of them. It is not sensibility, but selfishness, that leads us to avoid witnessing sufferings which we could in any degree mitigate by our presence and aid.

But it is to the Christian that we look for the brightest and loveliest exhibitions of this virtue; and he too has access to a richer mine, from whose inexhaustible treasures he may bring consolation adapted to every case. There are seasons and sources of affliction so deep that no human sympathy can reach it, and the heart that feels can alone know its own bitterness; in such cases, ordinary comforters will, like Job's friends, be constrained to sit down in silence, because they see that their grief is very great. Here the Christian stands on vantage ground, for while the mourner points in despair to the wreck of all his earthly pleasures and hopes, he can lead out his thoughts to a better state of existence, in which there will be no cause of disquietude, where the pleasures will be everlasting and the hopes unyielding, and there will be no change save that of passing from glory to glory. He can speak of One who was tempted in all points, and

is still touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and if He deign to say to the contending elements of the mind, as once he did when on earth, to the winds and the waves, "Peace, be still!" immediately there will be a great calm.

My reader, has the house of mourning any attractions for you? Do you often bend your footsteps thither? And desiring to go in the very spirit of Him, "Whose heart overflows with tenderness;" do you seek to pour balm into the wounds of suffering humanity?—and if so, do you not find the truth of the declaration—that "it is better"—better for yourself "to go to the house of mourning than to the house of feasting?"

The Mother's Last Lesson.

"Will you please teach me my verse; mamma, and then kiss me, and bid me good night?" said little Roger L., as he opened the door and peeped cautiously into the chamber of his sick mother; "I am very sleepy, but no one has heard me say my prayers."

Mrs. L. was very ill—indeed, her attendants believed her to be dying. She sat propped up with her pillows, and struggling for breath: her lips were white; her eyes were growing dull and glazed. She was a widow, and little Roger was her only—her darling child. Every night he had been in the habit of coming into her room, and sitting in her lap, or kneeling by her side whilst she repeated passages from God's holy word or related to him stories of the wise and good men spoken of in its pages.

"Hush!" said a lady who was watching beside her couch. "Your dear mother is too ill to hear you to-night!" As she said this she came forward, and laid her hand gently upon his arm, and she would lead him from the room. Roger began to sob as if his heart would break.

"I cannot go to bed without saying my prayers—indeed I cannot."

The ear of the dying mother caught the sound. Although she had been nearly insensible to everything transpiring around her, the sobs of her darling roused her stupor, and turning to a friend, she desired her to bring her little son and lay him on her bosom. Her request was granted, and the child's rosy cheek and golden head nestled beside the pale and cold face of his dying mother.

"Roger, my son, my darling child," said the dying woman, "repeat this verse after me, and never forget it: 'When my father and mother forsake me, the Lord will take me up.'" The child repeated it two or three times distinctly, and said his little prayer. Then he kissed the cold, almost rigid features before him, and went quiet to his little couch. The next morning he sought, as usual, his mother, but he found her still and cold.

This was her last lesson. He has never forgotten it—he probably never will. He has grown to be a man—a good man, and now occupies a post of much honor and profit in Massachusetts. I never could look upon him without thinking about the faith so beautifully exhibited by his dying mother.

The Creed of St. Patrick.

A short time ago the first stone of a Protestant church was laid in the valley of Dunlewy, situate twenty miles northwest of Letterkenny, in the county of Donegal, adjoining the extensive estate of Lord Geo. Hill. A highly respectable company assembled on the occasion to witness the ceremony. At the conclusion of the prayers the Rev. Geo. D. Doudney addressed a very large assemblage of the peasantry in the Irish language. During the prayers the people were attentive and respectful; but the moment they heard the first word in their own dear tongue it was as though a current of electricity passed through them all. Many who were sitting or lying down instantly rose and rushed forward to hear every accent; and although they evidently did not relish the idea

of parting with their patron saint, yet every countenance was lighted up with animation during the delivery of the address, a translation of which we subjoin:

"My dear people and neighbours—I know you all love and honour St. Patrick, I love and honour him too! You love him because you think his religion and faith were the same as yours, and I love him because I think his faith was the same as mine. You think St. Patrick was a Roman Catholic, I know from his writings he was a Protestant. The oldest piece of writing in the sweet Irish tongue is called St. Patrick's armour or breastplate. It is a prayer or hymn written when St. Patrick was going to Tara, to preach before the kings and nobles of Ireland, and at that time all the great people of Ireland were Pagans, and he greatly feared he should be killed at Tara. Now, if St. Patrick had been a Roman Catholic, is it possible he could have written such a prayer at a time of such great trouble, and not once mention the Virgin Mary in it? Yet we find there is not one word in the whole prayer addressed to any but to God alone. He does not ask the help of the Virgin Mary. Hear the prayer of St. Patrick—'At Tara, to-day, the strength of God pilot me—the power of God preserve me—may the wisdom of God instruct me—the eye of God watch over me—the ear of God hear me—the word of God give me sweet talk—the hand of God defend me—the way of God guide me; Christ be with me—Christ before me—Christ after me—Christ in me—Christ under me—Christ over me—Christ on my right hand—Christ on my left hand—Christ on this side—Christ on that side—Christ at my back—Christ in the heart of every one to whom I speak—Christ in the mouth of every one who speaks to me—Christ in the eye of every person who looks upon me—Christ in the ear of every person who hears me at Tara to-day.' Now this is the doctrine and faith of St. Patrick, and not one word is there in it about the Virgin Mary, and this is the faith of Protestants. Now, therefore I say, St. Patrick was a Protestant, and this is the doctrine which, by God's help, we hope to preach to you in Dunlewy Church. God bless you all."—*Irish Paper.*

Too Late.

Once the godly Jeremiah Hallock, yearning over his impatient hearers, spoke to this effect: "Think of a fatal and mortal disease raging among us. Only one physician in all the country understands and can cure it. He never undertook a case committed to his hands without success. He offers his services to all, without money and without price. You find yourself seized with the sure symptoms of the disease, while many are dead, and many are dying around you. You send a messenger with all haste to a seaport to call him. Your messenger, driving day and night, arrives, and all out of breath, asks, 'Where is the physician?' Forthwith he receives answer, 'He has just sailed for England; you are too late.' The plague of sin is upon you, my impatient hearers. It does its work fast, and when finished, it bringeth forth death. Apply to Christ, the only physician; apply in season, apply now: for how many, by a brief delay, have found themselves for ever too late. A dying queen once exclaimed, 'A kingdom for a minute of time—a kingdom for a minute of time!' The price was too small, and the prayer was not heard. Take care, dying sinners, lest with life's last sands running, you call when the Lord will not answer!"—*American Messenger.*

Dancing.

It was a true and forcible remark made of dancing, that "if it does sometimes make us more graceful, it much more frequently makes us graceless."