

POETRY.

Selected for the Colonial Churchman.

ABDALLAH AND SABAT.

By James Montgomery.

From West Arabia to Bochara came
A noble youth;—Abdallah was his name;
Who journey'd through the various east to find
New forms of man, in feature, habit, mind;
Where Tartar hordes through nature's pastures run,
A race of Centaurs,—horse and rider one;
Where the soft Persian maid the breath inhales
Of love-sick roses, woo'd by nightingales;
Where India's grim array of idols seem
The rabble-phantoms of a maniac's dream:
Himself the flowery path of trespass trod,
Which the false prophet decks to lure from God.
But he who changed into the faith of Paul,
The slaughter-breathing enmity of Saul,
Vouchsafed to meet Abdallah by the way:
No miracle of light eclipsed the day;
No vision from the eternal world, nor sound
Of awe and wonder smote him to the ground;
All mild and calm, with power till then unknown,
The gospel glory through his darkness shone;
A still small whisper, only heard within,
Convinced the trembling penitent of sin;
And Jesus whom the Infidel abhorr'd,
The convert now invoked, and call'd him Lord.
Escaping from the lewd Imposter's snare,
As flits a bird released through boundless air,
And soaring up the pure blue ether sings,—
So rose his spirit on exulting wings.
But love, joy, peace, the christian's bliss below,
Are deeply mingled in a cup of woe,
Which none can pass:—he, counting all things loss
For his Redeemer, gladly bore the cross;
Soon call'd with life, to lay that burthen down,
In the first fight he won the martyr's crown.

Abdallah's friend was Sabat;—one of those
Whom love estranged transforms to bitterest foes;
From persecution to that friend he fled,
But Sabat pour'd reproaches on his head,
Spurn'd like a leprous plague the prostrate youth,
And hated him as falsehood hates the truth;
Yet first with sophistry and menace tried
To turn him from "the faithful word" aside;
All failing, old esteem to rancor turned,
With Mahomet's own reckless rage he burned.
A thousand hideous thoughts like fiends possessed
The Pandemonium of the Bigot's breast,
Whose fires enkindled from the infernal lake,
Abdallah's veins, unsluiced, alone could slake.

The victim dragg'd to slaughter by his friend,
Witnessed a good confession to the end.
Bochara pour'd her people forth, to gaze
Upon the *direst* scene the world displays,
The blood of innocence by treason spilt,
The seeking triumph of deep-branded guilt:
Bochara pour'd her people forth, to eye
The *loveliest* spectacle beneath the sky,
The look with which the martyr yields his breath,
The resurrection of the soul in death.
"Renounce the Nazarene!" the headsman cries,
And flashed the unstead' d falchion in his eyes.
"No! be His name by heaven and earth adored!"
He said, and gave his right hand to the sword:
"Renounce Him, who forsakes thee thus bereft;"
He wept, but spake not, and resign'd his left.
"Renounce Him now, who will not, cannot save;"
He kneel'd like Stephen, look'd beyond the grave,
And while the dawn of heaven around him broke,
Bow'd his meek head to the dis severing stroke.
Outcast on earth a mangled body lay;
A spirit enter'd Paradise that day.

But where is Sabat? Conscience struck he stands
With eye of agony and fast-lock'd hands:
Abdallah, in the moment to depart,
Had turn'd, and look'd the traitor through the heart:
It smote him like a judgment from above
That gentle look of wrong'd, forgiving love!
Then hatred vanish'd; suddenly repress
Were the strange flames of passion in his breast;
Not but the smouldering ashes of despair,
Blackness of darkness, death of death, were there.

Ere long wild whirlwinds of remorse arise;
He flies—from all except himself he flies,
And a low voice for ever thrilling near,
The voice of blood which none but he can hear.

He fled from guilt; but guilt and he were one,—
A spirit seeking rest and finding none;
Visions of honor haunted him by night,
Yet darkness was less terrible than light;
From dreams of woe when startled nature broke
To woes that were not dreams the wretch awoke.
Forlorn he ranged through India, till the power
That met Abdallah in a happier hour,
Arrested Sabat; through his soul he felt
The word of truth; his heart began to melt,
And yielded slowly, as cold winter yields
When the warm spring comes flushing o'er the fields.
Then first a tear of gladness swell'd his eye,
Then first his bosom heaved a healthful sigh;
That bosom parch'd as Afric's desert land,
That eye a flintstone in the burning sand—
Peace, pardon, hope, eternal joy, reveal'd,
Humbled his heart, before the cross he kneel'd,
Look'd up to Him whom once he pierc'd and bore
The name of Christ which he blasphemed before.
Was Sabat then subdued by love or fear?
And who shall vouch that he was not sincere?

Now with a convert's zeal his ardent mind
Glow'd with the common weal of all mankind;
Yet with intenser faith the Arabian pray'd,
When homeward thought through childhood's Eden
There in the lap of Yeman's happiest vale, [stray'd,
The shepherds' tents are waving to the gale;
The patriarch of their tribe, his sire, he sees
Beneath the shadow of ambrosial trees;
His sisters, from the fountain in the rock,
Pour the cool sparkling water to their flock;
His brethren, wrapt on steeds and camels, roam
O'er wild and mountain all the land their home:
Thither he long'd to send that book unseal'd,
Whose words are life, whose leaves his wounds had
That Ishmael, living by his sword and bow, [heal'd;
Might thus again the God of Abraham know;
And Meccan Pilgrims to Caaba's shrine,
Like locusts marching in perpetual line,
Might quit the broad, to choose the narrow path,
That leads to glory, and reclaims from wrath.

Fired with the hope to bless his native soil,
Years roll'd unfelt in consecrated toil,
To mould the truths which holy writers teach
In the lov'd accents of his mother's speech;
While, like the sun, which always to the west
Leads the bright day, his fervent spirit press'd,
Thither a purer light from heaven to dart,
The only light that reaches to the heart,
Whose deserts blossom where its beams are shed,
The blind behold them, and they raise the dead.
Nor by Arabia where his labors bound,
To Persian lips he taught "the joyful sound."
Would he had held unchanged that high career!
But Sabat fell like lightning from his sphere;
Once with the morning stars God's works he sung;
Anon a serpent with envenom'd tongue,
Like that apostate fiend who tempted God,
Gifted with speech,—he spake but to deceive.

Let pity o'er his errors cast a veil!
Haste to the sequel of his tragic tale.
Sabat became a vagabond on earth;
He chose the sinner's way, the scorner's mirth;
Now feign'd contrition with obdurate tears,
Then wore a bravery that betray'd his fears;
With oaths and curses now his Lord denied,
And strangled guilty shame with desperate pride;
While, inly rack'd he proved what culprits feel,
When conscience breaks remembrance on the wheel.
At length an outlaw through the orient isles,
Snared in the subtlety of his own wiles,
He perish'd in an unexpected hour,
To glut the vengeance of barbarian power;
With sack-cloth shrouded, to a mill-stone bound,
And in the abysses of the ocean drown'd.
Oh! what a plunge into the dark was there!
How ended life?—in blasphemy or prayer?
The winds are fled that heard his parting cry,
The waves that stifled it make no reply.

When at the resurrection of the just,
Earth shall yield back Abdallah from the dust,

The sea like rising clouds, give up its dead,
Then from the deep shall Sabat lift his head,
With waking millions round the Judgment seat,
Once and but once again, those twain shall meet.
To part for ever—or to part no more:
But who the eternal secret shall explore,
When Justice seals the gates of heaven and hell?
The rest—that day, that day alone, will tell.

VALUE OF THE HUMAN SOUL.

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beautifully illustrates the benevolent character of
angels of God, than their rejoicing over the repentance
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heaven, in descending from the throne of his sanctuary
to seek and to save that which was lost."—*Rev. T. Bissland.*

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fully received.

Terms—10s. per annum:—when sent by mail, 11s.
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No subscriptions received for less than six months.

All Communications, addressed to the Editors, or
publisher, must be POST PAID.
General Agent—C. H. Belcher, Esq. Halifax.