

GENERAL LITERATURE.

From the Literary Garland.

THE JUBILEE.

A SKETCH.

THE sun rose, bright and beautiful, above the mountains of Lebanon, and the sultry breeze, cooled in its passage over their snow-crowned summits, descended, laden with the breath of the fragrant cedar tree, to mingle with the odours of Autumn, and waft health and activity around the fertile plains of Judea. Nature had lavished her bounties upon man: the olive and the date were gathered; the vine had yielded its fruit; "the former and the latter rain" had fallen, and their abundant produce had filled the barns of the cultivators with rich provision. But a nearer joy, a dearer interest, awoke the gratitude of Israel. It was the first of the year of Jubilee. The great atonement for the sins of a guilty nation had been made, and the trumpets were sounding their notes of joy, in unison with the voices of thousands of anxious and rejoicing ones, who hailed the arrival of that blessed morning. Hearts, whose cherished hopes had been deferred until they were almost extinguished, now swelled with grateful praise. The languid frame which poverty had attenuated, was invigorated by the certainty of again receiving its necessary comforts—the bondman was free—the wearied wretch, who for years had been the slave of another, was now to be the possessor of his own inheritance, the tiller of his native soil. And he will return to freedom a wiser man.—He has learned, from his own experience, to pity the sufferings of others—he has learned that a little shared with his beloved ones in his own dwelling, is better, far better, than abundance, in slavery and exile. What wonder, then, that a whole people should rejoice and shout their thanksgiving to the All-Wise, who, foreseeing and pitying the weakness of His creatures, had thus graciously provided against its consequences! What scenes of deep interest occur, as long parted friends meet, to return together to their former homes! What grief mingles with their joy, as they miss from their circle, the dear ones whom death has withdrawn from their anticipated happiness! And are no tears shed in remembrance of those whom they leave behind? Does not tie of sympathy, no bond of affection, cause them to regret the homes they are leaving? the chains they are discovering?

Behold that group of noble forms, assembled under the shade of those lofty Palms—joy and grief struggling in their hearts. They embrace, they smile, they weep.

They have met after years of separation, to return to their own Judah, the land of their inheritance, the home of their fathers. Famine had assailed them; disease and poverty had afflicted them, and they sold their possessions until the year of Jubilee, dispersing themselves among other tribes as servants, to await the period of their reunion.

It has arrived—but has it brought with it no wayward circumstances, no bitter remembrances to mar their happiness? Let us listen to the words of Nahshon, the father of the family, as he addresses a young man, whose stately figure, and noble countenance, might adorn the station of a prince.

"Elzaphar! wilt thou bring the gray hairs of thy father to the grave with sorrow, for thee, my son, my first-born? shake off this unmanly weakness; among the thousands of Israel canst thou find no other choice for thy heart than a maiden from the land of Syria? Remember, the sons of Judah will not with the daughters of the heathen."

"Alas, my father! no daughter of Israel can surpass my Salome in loveliness, and is she not the affianced of my soul? Compel me not to leave her alone in her sorrow, but suffer me to return to my servitude, and fulfil my vows to my beloved."

"Rash and degenerate boy!" cried the father, "wouldst thou relinquish the splendid hopes of thy birthright; the noble aspirations of the freeman, wouldst thou endure the degrading ceremony, which would condemn thee to willing slavery for all the years of thy life? Go to, thou art beside thyself.—Arise, and let us proceed on our way."

So saying, he assisted his wife and daughter to rise from the bank on which they were reclining. They ap-

proached the unhappy youth—they clasped him in their arms, and the tears of the sister bedewed the cheeks of the brother.

"Son of my love!" cried the mother, "listen to the voice of thy father, for his are the words of wisdom. Return to thy home with us, and when our cares shall have restored its comforts and we shall be established in the inheritance of our fathers, thy father will buy the maiden of her master—she will become thy wife, and we shall not lose our son."

"Nay, my mother, the man Ahiezer will not part with the damsel; she is his slave—no Jubilee can free her from her bondage—and if I desert her, no flower of happiness will ever bloom for her."

"Say not so, Elzaphar my son; thy father will seek the man, and peradventure, a great ransom shall obtain her deliverance from him. Now obey his commands, lest his anger fall upon thee, and thy soul tremble beneath his reproof."

With a sad countenance Elzaphar bowed his head in submission to the commands of his parents, and taking the arm of his young sister, they followed their footsteps in silence.

In the city of David is seen a stately mansion—rank and opulence are displayed in its architecture and adornments; magnificence and beauty pervade its apartments, yet there is bustle and confusion, indicating preparation for a departure. Nahshon and his son are leaving their home to seek the habitation of the Syrian maiden. Their journey is to the distant city of Dan; and after two days of travel, they enter the dwelling of Ahiezer.

"We come," cried Nahshon, "to traffic with thee for thy Syrian slave, Salome. Elzaphar, my son, seeks her for a wife."

The brow of Ahiezer grew dark, as he rudely answered. "The slave of Ahiezer may not become the wife of the son of Nahshon. Thrice have I said to him I will not sell her."

"Be wise, and accept a great ransom for her," cried Elzaphar. "The money my father will give thee, will purchase many damsels."

"Let thy son seek another wife," replied the Damite, not deigning to answer his former servant; "this maiden loveth him not."

"Saidst thou not that she was betrothed to thee?" enquired Nahshon, turning to Elzaphar.

"I deceived thee not, my father. Let Ahiezer summon the maiden to answer for herself in this matter."

The fair girl obeyed the mandate of her master; and when the eyes of Nahshon fell upon her graceful figure, and lovely face, he started with surprise.

"God of my fathers!" he exclaimed, "hast thou indeed, restored the dead to my arms?" Then seizing her hand and gazing earnestly in her face he cried, "Tell me, maiden, art thou a daughter of Syria?"

Her voice was sweet and low, as she replied, "The days of my youth have been passed in that country, but my childhood was spent with my parents in the land of Judah."

"Thou sayest falsely," interrupted Ahiezer, "the man who sold thee to me told me thou wert Syrian."

"He feared to speak the truth, lest the price which thou wert to pay him for me should be diminished, for he knew well that no daughter of Israel might remain a slave; after the glorious Jubilee had come."

"And how didst thou fall into his power?"

"My parents visited a friend at Keilah and took me with them—a little child. The Philistines invaded the land, and in the hurry of flight, I was separated from them, and from my attendant, and fell into the hands of the enemy. In their retreat before the army of King David, I was borne away and sold to my first purchaser, from whom you bought me."

"Know you aught of your mother's family—of her name?" anxiously enquired Nahshon.

"Her name was Miriam—the daughter of Obed, of the tribe of Judah."

Nahshon arose, and folded the damsel in his arms.

"Now, the Lord be praised! who, in his own good time, hath shewn mercy to the house of Obed. Thou art, indeed, flesh of my flesh; the daughter of my sister, returned by Jehovah to comfort and sustain her in her lonely pilgrimage. She weeps even now for the long lost child of her affection, killed, as she believes, in that terrible slaughter, of the families of Keilah." Then turning to Ahiezer, he continued, "This daughter of Judah thou canst not hold in bondage—the blessings of the Jubilee extend to her. Nevertheless, as thou hast paid a price for her, I will redeem her with the same; for am I not her nearest kinsman, and doth it not remain with me to provide a husband for her? Let my name be free from reproach in this matter, I pray thee, and yield the damsel to our demand."

The unwilling Ahiezer was forced to acquiesce in this arrangement, and the happy Elzaphar bore away his lovely bride in triumph, blessing the God of Israel, Jehovah who had thus visited and redeemed his people. Quebec. M. W. B.

BIOGRAPHY.

THE REV. G. G. COOKMAN,

WESLEYAN MINISTER.

THE following brief notice of this lamented servant of God, is abridged from the *Philadelphia Christian World* and the *National Intelligencer*.

The loss of the *President*, it seems, must be admitted. Even love, ever since the first fear still praying and hoping, must change its prayer, and transfer its hope. We wonder not that it has been so difficult to persuade those who are most dearly and nearly concerned in it, of the reality of this sad event. With no personal knowledge of any on board except the lamented Preacher, whose apparently premature decease has excited so general and lively an interest, we could never until recently yield to the conviction that ship and men are indeed down the deep. Nay, while we thus write, hope returns, as from a distant search, and as if to reproach us for taking advantage of her temporary absence. In an exchange paper, but a few days since, we saw a notice of a letter reported to have come from France, and giving information of the arrival of the steamship, after detention in the ice for seventy-six days. But none can believe it. By the storm, by the ice, by fire, by steam, or by some other equally awful agency, all agree in the deplored conclusion that verily the work has been wrought. Still be Thou adored—O Lord of the land and of the sea!

The following sketch is from the *National Intelligencer*. It is a glowing tribute, and will doubtless long be treasured by the friends of its subject:

The dead are everywhere!

The mountain side, the sea, the woods profound,
All the wide earth—the fertile and the fair—
Is one vast burial-ground.

It was a beautiful Sabbath, toward the close of February last, when, with many others, I repaired to the Hall of Representatives, to listen to the farewell sermon of the eloquent COOKMAN. All who were present will recollect his last impressive words—"Perhaps," he said, "it is the last time, my beloved hearers, that I shall ever address you, or that we shall ever meet again upon earth. I go to my native land to receive the blessings of an aged father, and to drop a tear upon the grave of a sainted mother." There was something prophetic, solemn, and deeply affecting, in the tones and manner of the preacher. Small in stature, and slender in body, he stood like the image of St. Paul before Felix. All who had known him, or who had listened with rapt attention to the eloquence which gushed from his lips, touched as with a living coal from the altar, were moved to tears, and seemed to feel as if they were taking in reality a last farewell of one who had given a new ardour to their piety, and thrown an additional interest into the services of the sanctuary. The whole scene was in no ordinary degree grand, imposing, and affecting. Who of all that crowd of admiring auditors believed for a moment that in a few short weeks he who then stood before them, in the impressive dignity of an apostle, and with the appearance of one inspired of Heaven, would be buried in one of the "dark unfathomed caves" of the ocean, there to repose till the last trumpet shall call him before the throne of that great Being whose cause he loved, and to whose service he had long devoted all the energies of a superior intellect? It would seem most strange; but the ways of Providence are often mysterious and inscrutable.

Mr. Cookman was one of the most eloquent pulpit orators in this country. Many were, perhaps, his superiors in polish and elegance of style, extent of acquirements, and depth of research, but none surpassed him in the power which belonged to the orator, in rousing the feelings and passions of the hearer, in the felicity and appropriateness of illustration, the splendour of his rhetorical figures, and the occasional bursts of impassioned eloquence. Such was the lamented Cookman as a minister of God and a pulpit orator. He sleeps the long sleep of death in quiet and peace, amid the deep dark waves of the bottomless ocean—no longer to mourn over the vices, or to weep for the miseries of mankind. He rests on the bosom of his Saviour, but his widowed relict and her helpless offspring are left to weep in anguish over their irreparable loss.