

Reviews.

LONDON LABOUR, AND THE LONDON POOR.—
Toronto: Thomas Maclear, 1851.

We have before us the first number of the second volume of Mr. Mayhew's valuable and most interesting serial, which demonstrates that the subject upon which it treats is far from being exhausted. With confidence may we affirm that till the appearance of this work the toils, trials, and temptations of thousands in the British metropolis were for the most part unknown to the world.—The effect of Mr. Mayhew's labours, will be, we trust to induce man to interest himself more than he has ever yet done, in the fortunes of his less opulent brother, and thus fulfil with greater fidelity the scriptural maxim "bear one another's burden."

THE PSALMS: IN A NEW VERSION, FITTED TO THE TUNES USED IN CHURCHES. By A. M. MONTAGUE. London: Hatchard, 1851.

Rough and rude as many of the Psalms in Brady and Tate's translation may be, we have ever regarded their production as superior, on the whole, to any other English metrical version.—Mr. Montague's attempt, has by no means made an exception to this rule. One specimen will be sufficient, we opine, to prove our assertion.

The first stanza of the XXIII Psalm reads thus in the "New Version":—

The Lord himself, the mighty Lord,
Vouchsafes to be my guide,
The shepherd by whose constant care
My wants are all supplied.

Instead of this Mr. Montague gives us the option of two versions, the first of which runs thus:

The Lord my shepherd is a guide,
He teaches me my track;
With him I need me naught provide,
With him I naught shall lack.

The second, which embraces the matter of two verses in one stanza, is as follows:—

The Lord my shepherd is a guide,
With him I naught shall want;
He the still waters leads beside,
He in green pastures makes me bide,
Where food is never scant.

It may safely be predicted that Mr. Montague is not destined to revolutionize our Church Psalmody.

SCENES IN OUR PARISH.

NO. IX.

A WALK ON A WET DAY.

—"How many a cause without a name,
Will from our spirits hide the blame,
When, thinking of ourselves, we cease,
To think upon another's peace!"

WILSON

"How much better to walk out than stay at home even on such a day as this!" said my dear companion, as we climbed the wet and slippery hilly field on our way home. Much better! there we might have been sitting now chilly and comfortless over the fire, shivering whenever the door was opened, and thinking the day even more gloomy and stormy than it is.

But now we have paid two or three interesting visits, we have admired the irregularity of the broken ground on the steep sides of the lane, the wintry tints of the deep moss, and the withered oak leaves, and the ever green broom and ivy. We have stopped at "the house that Jack built"—that low hut reared against the ruined glass factory; by which contrivance Jack, saving himself the trouble of building a back and side wall to his mansion, soon reared up the other side and the low front and laid on the rafters and tiles. I need not say how many of the latter, we may guess to have been procured from the ruin. Jack, I suppose, thought that of little consequence, as their situation was but slightly altered, and they were of no use either to man or beast where they stood. The sin and shame he would have thought consisted in letting such good things be wasted. Well, I am not his conscience keeper—I make no inquiries—at any rate I admire his ingenuity.

"And did Jack do all this himself?" said I to his wife. "Jack and I," she answered a little offended. "I did the work of a mason—I worked as hard as any horse." Whether all masons work as hard as horses, I leave those to settle who have had such gentlemen's long bills to pay: and I go on to the rest of their territories. Besides their own dwelling, he and his wife have built a stable of equally large dimensions for his steeds, those three poor asses that you see taking right of common on the broken and steep bank above their home. He has also fenced in two diminutive and oddly shaped pieces of garden, which he would willingly make larger at the expense of the public; but as this lane is a church path, he is not permitted. He has planted a vine against one side of his hut, and its long untrained branches hang straggling on the low roof, and contend with the small purple leaves of the ivy for its place on the ruin above. In the little garden also, there are beautiful double holly-oaks, delicate lemon color, and pink, and deep purple, which every year excite our admiration; and there are rue, and peppermint

and thyme, and spearmint, and lavender and "featherfew," as Joyce calls it, as fine an herb, she says as any "canny mile."

For Joyce is an herb woman. O how different from the splendidly robed and sylph-like form, that one may fancy in connexion with that name—the high-born lady, whose honour it is to move in the gorgeous procession, strewing the king's way on the day of his coronation with precious exotics.—How very different Joyce looked to-day, as we saw her broad square figure seated on a low stool, just within the door of the hut, sorting the heaps of herbs, wild and cultivated, that she has been collecting for to-morrow's market. It was worth while to have taken the walk, if it had been only for the sake of learning the names of some hitherto unknown weeds; for it is under Joyce, and such as Joyce, that I study. It is amusing to hear her names; you can generally give a pretty fair guess at the real word, and consult the dictionary for the right orthography on your return home—then in a low mysterious tone she will add their medicinal uses, such as you may meet with in Culpepper's "Herbal," which by the way I once borrowed, when I was a child, from our clerk's wife. O! if half that Culpepper and Joyce say were true, it would be a ruinous day for the doctors. Jack and Joyce are a singular couple. Jack so gaunt and tall and spare, and Joyce so broad and square.—Jack certainly has the advantage in person, and I think his wife is rather proud of him; for though when he is ill, and we ask after him, her reply is that he is "piteous ordinary," I do not think she intends the words to be taken in its literal meaning. I dare say she thinks us wanting in proper respect, in following the phraseology of the people round about and calling her lord and master, "Jack;" she always styles him, herself, "Our John!" and she is very fond of exhibiting her marriage certificate, which she keeps carefully rolled up in a nutmeg grater.

The hut is certainly high enough for Joyce, but I am almost sure that Jack cannot stand upright in it, except it may be at the furthest side, and that is almost entirely occupied by the bed. I never saw him make the attempt; his rules of politeness not rendering it at all necessary for him to rise when we enter. His deep gruff, "come in if you please," is the only welcome we ever expect; but after we have been there a little, and talked or read, I have observed that for the time he softens—then it is, "Now you make free at any time if you please; you are welcome to my house any day." But by the time we pass next, the stern collier is his hard "self again." Yet the gruff "Come in!" is, I am sure, always intended as an invitation, and an invitation he wishes to be accepted. Joyce is, on the contrary, always good humoured, and in a bustle—always offers us her own chair, and presses us, hot or cold, to come "nigher the fire."

She is not half so attentive to the reading as her husband, yet loves the readers much better; and to day there was real feeling in her tone, when on our way back we said, "We are going home now;" she answered, "God bless ye, wherever you go!"

And now stop a moment, dear reader, and notice the date of my chapter. It is January 1831.—Now I am copying this on 16th January 1832, and I have been to pay a visit to poor Jack to-day. And O how gradually, but how very much he is altered. I could not in justice leave you with the impression, that he is rough and stern. O he is now so gentle—so very desirous of our visits. The tears stream down his pale cheeks when he himself speaks of his former sins. He is very ill—dying in a decline—but O what hope—what satisfaction we have in visiting him! "A broken and a contrite heart, O God, thou wilt not despise!"

One particular more I ought to mention. Jack and Joyce never ask for anything. They have no hungry children, to be sure, but they know well what want is themselves. "The other day," said Jack, but he did not say it in a way of complaint, "we had not a bit of bread in the cupboard, nor a bit of coal for the fire, nor a mouthful of hay for the poor neddies, nor a penny piece to buy none!" They are ill often; now indeed Jack is always ill; and a little broth or a morsel of meat might be thought a necessary; but though they seldom have it, they never complain of wanting it. They are grateful beyond the expression of gratitude for the little from time to time is done for them; but like a great many beside, I might say—indeed, I think it the general character of our people, there is a patient I had almost written—a magnanimous silence in the endurance of hardships which greatly commands my respect. You smile, may dear reader, and it seems to be an incredulous smile. You know something of my country people, for the surly collier who serves you with coal is from our hills; and he has been uncivilly earnest for his full price: or the market woman, whom you employed to carry home your laden basket last Saturday, as she saw the well selected luxuries taken out one after another, pressed you too importunately for an additional penny. Forgive them! they do endure hardships of which you little dream; for I am well assured, had the poor collier told you of his wife's long illness, and his children's want of bread, you would not have hesitated one moment

to comply with his reasonable demand: and if your market-woman had not objected to complain, she would have told you, and you are much too kind, I am sure, not to have listened—that yours was the first payment she has received to-day—that her husband has done no work all this long frost—and that her poor children, bare-footed and ill-clothed, were crying this morning for cold, and her heart ached to hear them. Forgive them it is all true: to those who know little of them, they may appear over reaching and discontented; we dwell among them, and know them to be enduring and grateful.

But the greatest pleasure of our walk was the visit to lame Myles.

There are some people born with amiable manners, and Myles is one of them. He could never have been other than civil and agreeable, but it is religion that has made him so gentle and so patient; religion that has quickened his perceptions and exalted his ideas, and refined his feelings.

He was sitting by the fire in the same spot in which we always find him, his crutches in the corner at his side; and his bible, in which he is too weak to read for more than a few minutes at a time lying on the table. We found him, as we too often do, paler than his natural paleness and very faint from hunger; for his wife was not returned from town, and the children had taken the last bit of bread to school for their dinners.

The youngest boy was restlessly walking about the room, rummaging in the cupboard under the dresser, for a potato to roast, and cried because he could not find one. His father apologized for him: "I really am very sorry, ma'am," said he, "that he should be so troublesome; he is a good boy generally, but he must be hungry now; that is what makes him so restless: very hungry he is I am sure; he had but a little bit at seven this morning, and I have not any to give him till his mother comes home. I hope you'll please to excuse him." Poor little boy! his peevishness was indeed excusable. He is a dear, fine child, with mild black eyes, and curling brown hair: it is wonderful, through what hardships (for "want can quench the eyes bright grace") some children maintain their claim to beauty. It is a worthless thing, we know—we are told so constantly—"a fading flower," that is written in every copybook—"vain," so even the word of God calls it; and yet what a lovely thing beauty is, and whether we own the weakness or not, how we all love it! All Myles's children are very pretty, most of them even prettier than this little one; yet I recollect he excited my admiration one day last summer, when I found him asleep on the sunny bank a few yards from the door. The daisies that he had gathered had fallen from his relaxed hold, as one hand was thrown over his head to shade his face from the light.—One longed to see a sketch made of him: what a simple, graceful thing it would have been! One would not have had him moved for the world.—But the father had either more regard than I for his boy's safety, or less love of the picturesque.—"He looks very pretty," said I, "asleep on the bank." "I dare say he does, ma'am," he answered quietly, "but I'd sooner he was lying on the bed;" and forthwith he sent Annie to waken her brother. I thought it was a great pity. Little Tom was not then the youngest. There was a baby—as sweet a little flower as ever blossomed amongst the thorns of poverty.—Its young nurse Annie, took great care of it in the daily absence of its mother, and the infant did her credit. The poor sickly father might perhaps, sometimes, look with a sigh on the sixth helpless one, for the supply of whose wants he could make no exertion: but the mother joyed in her darling; and her weary pace quickened after her long day's toil, at thought of her baby.—I was there one day, when the little one looked lovelier than ever. It had begun to take notice; I smiled at it, and it smiled at me again. We were there some time, and it was quiet all the time we were reading; and before we went, we praised little Annie for keeping it so neat. It was but on the fourth day afterwards, and we came again; the baby was yet quieter and cleaner. The little one was dead. She was dressed in her best cap and snowy robe, and laid on the table covered with a spotless white sheet. One blast, only one, had swept over the frail flower, and it was gone! Who weeps over such scattered blossoms?

Like buds rent off before the blast
On the cold ground they lie;
They shall be flowers—in God's bright bowers,
Where never storm sweeps by.

O! the mother grieved for her. She wept over her as if her heart would break. "I have known great trouble before," she said, "but O! this is the greatest. It is so hard to lose a baby out of one's bosom." It was but natural passion. "Can a mother forget her sucking child?" "Yes!" answers the word of truth, "she may forget!"—Then blessed are they who claim an interest in that love which adds, "yet I will not forget thee!" I comforted her with such common-place considerations as her extreme agitation gave me room to suggest. "You are sure that she is safe now," said I; "if she had lived to grow up, you don't know what trouble she might have caused you.—Now you are sure the last trouble with her is over." "It will be," she answered sadly, "when we have laid her in her grave;" and then I understood that

one part at least of their trouble arose from their extreme poverty. They had not one shilling towards buying the coffin, and she had been all the morning trying to make up her mind to take her Sunday's gown to pawn. It was the only thing she had worth taking, and she had never yet known the disgrace of pawning; besides she was very desirous to keep a decent dress in which to appear at church on Sundays; but must give it up now. Ah! she would have given more than that to have kept her darling with her. Are the poor sometimes accused of being hard-hearted?

It is not wonderful, that with so much to bear, their feelings should become callous. It is well, perhaps, if, in some measure, it should be so; at any rate it does not become those to reproach them, who when trouble come almost faint under it, though they have nothing to do, but to close their windows, and sit down in the quiet gloom to nurse their grief. It would be better, perhaps, to consider what effect, strong, and painful, and unrequited exertion, made at such a time would have on their own minds. But it was Anna's time of trouble, and she and her husband know well who is a present help at such a time. Such they proved him then. Friends unexpectedly provided for them, lent them the money so sadly needed; and in the midst of their succeeding poverty, it was regularly and faithfully paid. They are indeed very poor: Myles has been ill for six years, and since he broke his leg two years ago, has not earned one day's wages. His wife exerts herself beyond her strength. "The man that helped her up with her basket this morning," said Myles once to me, "said it was a shame a woman should carry such a burden!" Poor fellow! the blood rose to his cheek as he added, "It would not be so, if I had strength to help it." But poor Anna's greatest distress with regard to her labor, except indeed when she has made herself really ill by violent exertion, is not that she does too much, but that she can find so little to do. They have a pretty little sunny garden on the hill side, above the house, where I see the earliest primroses; but pretty as it looks, it is so parched and so stony a spot, that with all their care, it produces no supply for the market. Anna is often obliged to borrow the money necessary to fill her basket, in the morning before she leaves home, and after having discharged her debt, her earnings, even on a prosperous day, when she has been up early, and travelled far, and that perhaps in inclement weather, seldom amount to more than eight-pence or nine-pence. Then there is the scanty parish allowance, and the low wages of the young boy; altogether so few shillings, that one can hardly help saying, "What are they among so many?" But the question brings its own answer with it reminding one of Him who once had compassion on the multitude that had nothing to eat, and who being the same yesterday to-day, and for ever, will not now send his followers away fasting. There may be a great company; and "only five loaves, and those barley—two fishes, and those little ones." Yet if ye take and bless the provision, they shall all eat and be satisfied. So I always think when I see Myles's decent children come into the school room on a Sunday morning. The boy's pinafore is of the coarsest and little Martha's blue gingham frock something of the shortest; and her nankeen spencer, faded almost white, is very scanty, and her small bonnet of the same material, bent out of shape; or rather in a variety of shapes, by so frequent washing, scarcely shades the handsome childish face.

But the straight auburn hair is so nicely cut, and brushed so neatly over the smooth brow, there is such a clean, wholesome, healthy look in all the children, such a gentle expression in the dark eyes, and their voices and tones are so sweet, and their words so proper; that if it were only fancy, it would be one worth nourishing,—there is a blessing on them. It is not fancy—the word of truth has promised, "the seed of the righteous shall be blessed!" In such belief, then, we cheerfully take leave of them, though this hard winter, in which we have seen so much want borne so patiently, is not yet over: and though since I begun my story, I find that the eldest son is come home from his place ill, and the two young boys have the measles, and that pleasant, civil child Annie, her mother's right hand is very poorly too. It is a sad house indeed! Yet Myles's calm smile of peace is enough to set any one's heart at rest, and the humble and steady tone in which he expresses himself: "The Lord has kept me through many trials, and I am assured he will keep me, until I am fit to appear in his presence." And then with tears in his eyes, he adds, "and I have a hope and a firm trust that I shall be fit when he calls me out of time into eternity, not in my own righteousness, for I am a sinner; but clothed in the righteousness of Jesus Christ, my hope and my salvation!" In such belief and hope, then, we may cheerfully leave him in his troubles. Patience—and may the writer and the reader willingly apply the sentence to themselves—patience must have her perfect work! There is a land where none shall say, I am sick—to that land of health our feeble friend is hastening. A land where there shall be no more sorrow, nor crying; can we wish the entrance of this child of affliction should be long delayed? There they shall hunger no more—neither thirst