

MISCELLANEOUS.

VALUE OF THE BIBLE.

From the death-bed of his friend, Mrs. Henry Thornton, Mr. Wilberforce went to a meeting of the Brighton Bible Society. "When he entered the room," says an eye-witness, "he seemed so pale and fatigued, that his friends feared he would scarcely be able to speak. But he no sooner entered on his subject, than his countenance lighted up—he became animated and impressive." "Had it not been," he said, "for one painful circumstance, it was not my intention to have been present at this meeting to-day; for I have been compelled to curb the zeal which I always feel to attend on occasions like this, by making it a rule to myself to decline being present at such meetings, in places of which I am not a regular inhabitant, that I may not become too obvious and too intrusive. But to-day I have broken this rule; for I am just come from a scene in which the value of the book which it is your object to disperse, is displayed as with a sunbeam. I dare not withhold such a testimony as it furnishes to the healing and victorious efficacy of the inspired volume. I am come from a chamber in which a widowed mother, surrounded by her soon to become orphan family, is enabled to look the last enemy calmly in the face; herself possessing a peace which even the waves of Jordan cannot ruffle, because it is the gift of God; her children in some degree enabled to anticipate for her the hope of glory. It is a scene which must be witnessed to produce its full effect upon the heart—a scene such as, if I had not myself witnessed, I could not have adequately imagined—a happiness felt in the moments of the deepest outward dejection and sorrow, an elevation above the evils and trials of this mortal life. Trials, did I call them! Triumphs, let me rather say, of the believer's faith. And let me ask, is this consolation in affliction, this hope in death, anything peculiar to their particular circumstances or temper of mind; any family secret which they alone possess, and from which men in general are excluded?—No, sir, it is that which the blessed word of God offers to all who will embrace it; and, therefore, how could I but come and congratulate you and this assembly, on being permitted to be the honoured instruments of the Almighty, in diffusing such a cordial as this through a dying world!—How could I but rejoice in being allowed to join with you in endeavouring to circulate these imperishable blessings! It is true, indeed, some tears of mortality will fall, when we see a friend descending into the dark valley of the shadow of death, and the mortal frame suffering in its last agonies. Jesus wept; and he will allow his people to weep also; he will pardon and pity the tears we shed from human infirmity. But, notwithstanding this natural sorrow, it is the blessed privilege of the work in which we are engaged, whilst its end is glory to God, in the highest, the way by which it conducts us is pleasantness and peace; and it gives us substantial victory over the last enemy, whom, sooner or later, we must all of us individually encounter; for it is not only in the din and confusion of battle that the spirit may be so raised as to brave danger, and not turn away the eye from death when it stares you in the face. This may arise from the mere excitement of the occasion, or from driving away all thought about the consequences of death. But in the cool and silent hours of reflection, a nobler and more genuine courage may be evinced; and in the chamber of sickness, and from the bed of death, the soul, leaning on the word of her God, may meet that enemy without alarm, and calmly say, 'O death! where is thy sting? O grave! where is thy victory?'"—*Life of Wilberforce.*

AN INTREPID PROTESTANT IN HUMBLE LIFE.

BERNARD DE PALISSY, a native of France, was born in Agen at the close of the fifteenth century. His parents occupying a humble station in life, he was entirely indebted to his own unquenchable energy and perseverance for the success which crowned his industry. The original occupation of Palissy was that of a draughtsman, to which pursuit he added land-surveying. Accident having thrown into his hands an enamelled cup, he was immediately seized with the desire of improving the art, and thenceforward, relinquishing all other occupations, gave up his whole time, mind, and substance, during several years, to the

prosecution of experiments on the composition of enamel. He had himself given a narrative of his labours, sacrifices, and sufferings during the progress of his pursuit, which is intensely interesting. In this account, Palissy represents himself as alternately planning and building, demolishing and rebuilding his furnace, at every step buoyed up by hope, and as often met, but not subdued, by disappointment; the object of remonstrance and derision to his associates, subject to the expostulations of his wife, and witness to the silent but more eloquent reproaches of his children. In other respects, Palissy proved himself an amiable as well as a highly gifted man; for, notwithstanding that his efforts were ultimately crowned by success,—that standard whereby the judgment of mankind is most easily and, therefore, most usually formed,—one might hesitate to applaud a degree of perseverance, which, for so long a time, materially interfered with the welfare of his family. Amidst all this scene of deprivation and disappointment, Palissy bore outwardly a cheerful countenance, and throughout the lengthened trial, confined within the dungeon of his own breast, those feelings of bitterness which he has so forcibly described as being his portion. Nor did the firmness of his character forsake him for a moment to the end of his life.—Being a Protestant, and having ventured, in some of his lectures, to promulgate facts which made against the dogmas of the priests, he was, when in his ninetieth year, dragged by the infuriated zeal of these fanatics to the Bastille, and died with consistent firmness within its walls. His heroic reply, while thus imprisoned, to Henry III., is above all praise. "My good man," said the king, "if you cannot conform yourself on the matter of religion, I shall be compelled to leave you in the hands of my enemies." "Sire," replied the intrepid old man, "I was already willing to surrender my life, and could my regret have accompanied the action, it must assuredly have vanished upon hearing the great King of France say, 'I am compelled.' This, Sire, is a condition to which those who force you to act contrary to your own good disposition can never reduce me; because I am prepared for death, and because your whole people have not the power to compel a simple potter to bend his knee before images which he has made."

TRAITS OF CHRISTIAN FAITH AND COURAGE.

In a country town of Numidia, in A. D. 303, under the reign of the Roman Emperor Diocletian, a body of Christians, among whom was a boy of very tender age, were seized in the house of a reader, where they were assembled for Scriptural instruction, and for the celebration of the communion. They were led away to Carthage to the tribunal of the proconsul, singing on the road, songs of praise to God. Torture was employed on the greater part of these, in order to wring an avowal from all. In the midst of his torments one of them cried out, "Ye sin, unhappy men, ye sin, ye punish the innocent, we are no murderers, we have deceived no man; God have mercy on thee. I thank thee, God! and give me strength to suffer for thy name! Free thy servant from the slavery of this world. I thank thee, and yet I am unable to thank thee. To the glory of God! I thank the Lord of the kingdom. The eternal, the incorruptible kingdom is at hand: oh! Lord Christ, we are Christians, we are thy servants, thou art our hope!" On his praying thus, the proconsul said to him, "You ought to have obeyed the imperial edict," and he answered with a spirit full of power, though his body was weak and exhausted, "I now revere only the law of God which I have learnt. For this law will I die, in this law do I become perfect, and besides it there is no other." Another in the midst of the torture prayed thus: "Help me, O Christ! I pray thee, have pity on me; keep my soul, preserve my spirit, that I may not be brought to confusion. O give me strength to suffer." To the reader in whose house the assemblies had taken place, the proconsul said, "You ought not to have received them." He replied, "I could not decline to receive my brethren." The proconsul: "But the imperial edict ought to have outweighed these considerations." The reader: "God is more than the Emperor." The proconsul: "Have you then Holy Scriptures in your house?" The martyr: "Yes, I have them, but it is in my heart." On the same occasion, there was among the prisoners a girl named

Victoria, whose father and brother were still heathens. Her brother Fortunianus took care to be present to move her to an abjuration, and thus obtain her freedom. When she steadfastly avowed that she was a Christian, her brother gave out that she was of unsound mind; but she declared, "It is my firm and steadfast conviction, I have never changed." When the proconsul asked her whether she would go with her brother, she said, "No, for I am a Christian, and they are my brethren who obey God's commands." The proconsul thought that he would easily frighten the boy Hilarianus by threats alone, but even in this boy the power of God showed that it was mighty.—"Do what you will," he said, "I am a Christian."—*Neander's History of the Christian Religion and the Church during the three first Centuries.*

THE INFLUENCE OF MUSIC UPON SERPENTS.

THE wonderful effect which music produces on the serpent tribes, which is alluded to in the Sacred Writings, is confirmed by the testimony of several respectable moderns. Adders swell at the sound of a flute, raising themselves up on the one half of their body, turning themselves round, heating proper time, and following the instrument. Their head, naturally round and long like an eel, becomes broad and flat like a fan. The tame serpents, many of which the Orientals keep in their houses, are known to leave their holes in hot weather, at the sound of a musical instrument, and run upon the performer. Dr. Shaw had an opportunity of seeing a number of serpents keep exact time with the Dervishes in their circulatory dances, running over their heads and arms, turning when they turned, and stopping when they stopped. The rattlesnake acknowledges the power of music as much as any of his family, of which the following instance is a decisive proof:—When Chateaubriand was in Canada, a snake of that species entered their encampment; a young Canadian, one of the party, who could play on the flute, to divert his associates, advanced against the serpent with his new species of weapon. "On the approach of his enemy the haughty reptile curled himself into a spiral line, flattened his head, inflated his cheeks, contracted his lips, displayed his envenomed fangs, and his bloody throat; his double tongue glowed like two flames of fire; his eyes were burning coals; his body, swoln with rage, rose and fell like the bellows of a forge; his dilated skin assumed a dull and scaly appearance; and his tail, which sounded the denunciation of death, vibrated with so great rapidity as to resemble a light vapour. The Canadian now began to play upon his flute, the serpent started with surprise, and drew back his head. In proportion as he was struck with the magic effect, his eyes lost their fierceness, the oscillations of his tail became slower, and the sound which it emitted became weaker, and gradually died away. Less perpendicular upon their spiral line, the rings of the fascinated serpent were by degrees expanded, and sunk one after another upon the ground in concentric circles. The shades of azure, green, white and gold recovered their brilliancy on his quivering skin, and slightly turning his head, he remained motionless, in the attitude of attention and pleasure. At this moment the Canadian advanced a few steps, producing with his flute sweet and simple notes. The reptile, inclining his variegated neck, opened a passage with his head through the high grass, and began to creep after the musician, stopping when he stopped, and beginning to follow him again as soon as he moved forward." In this manner he was led out of their camp, attended by a great number of spectators, both savages and Europeans, who could scarcely believe their eyes, when they beheld this wonderful effect of harmony. The assembly unanimously decreed that the serpent which had so highly entertained them should be permitted to escape.—*Carpenter's Scripture Natural History.*

DISCOVERY OF A NEW RACE.

A LETTER from Stockholm of Sept. 7, says.—The Swedish brig Bull, Capt. Warrngresh, has just returned after a three years' voyage. On her arrival at Port Philip, New South Wales, she was freighted by an English firm to visit these small Islands of the Pacific, and obtain for manufactured goods sandal wood and other articles suited to the China market. During this voyage,