

Poetry.

HYMN TO THE SAVIOUR.

[Lord] thou wert born of woman! thou didst come Oh holiest! to this world of sin and gloom, Not in thy dread omnipotent array; And not by thunders strove; Was thy tempestuous road; Nor indignation burnt before thee on thy way. But thee, a soft and naked child, Thy mother undefiled, In the rude manger laid to rest From off her virgin breast. The heavens were not commanded to prepare A gorgeous canopy of golden air; Nor stoop'd their lamps th'entranced fires on high: A single silent star Came wandering from afar, Gliding uncheck'd and calm along the liquid sky; The Eastern sages leading on As at a kingly throne, To lay their gold and odours sweet Before thy infant feet. The Earth and Ocean were not hush'd to hear Bright harmony from every starry sphere; Nor at thy presence brake the voice of song From all the cherub choirs, And seraphs' harping lyres, Pour'd thro' the huts of heaven the charmed clouds along. One angel troop the strain began, Of all the races of man By simple shepherds heard alone, That soft hosanna's tone. And when thou didst depart, no car of flame To bear thee hence in lambent radiance came; Nor visible Angels mourn'd with drooping plumes: Nor didst thou mount on high From fatal Calvary With all thine own redeem'd outbursting from their tombs. For thou didst bear away from earth But one of human birth, The dying felon by thy side, to be In Paradise with thee. Nor o'er thy cross the clouds of vengeance brake; A little while the conscious earth did shake At that foul deed by her fierce children done; A few dim hours of day The world in darkness lay; Then bask'd in bright repose beneath the cloudless sun: While thou didst sleep beneath the tomb, Consenting to thy doom; Ere yet the white-robd' Angel shone Upon the sealed stone. And when thou didst arise, thou didst not stand With Devastation in thy red right hand, Plaguings the guilty city's murderous crew; But thou didst haste to meet Thy mother's coming feet, And bear the words of peace unto the faithful few. Then calmly, slowly didst thou rise Into thy native skies, Thy human form dissolv'd on high In its own radiance. REV. H. H. MILMAN.

A GLANCE AT THE EPISCOPAL CHURCH IN SCOTLAND.

(From "The Book of Scotland," by William Chambers.)

Notwithstanding the small number of clergy in the Episcopal church, it has ever possessed names distinguished in theological, historical, and classical attainments. Spotswood, Sage, Scougal, the Forbeses, Falconer, Rattray, and Skinner, have left behind them a fame not confined to Scotland; and in the nineteenth century, besides Gleig, Alison, Jolly, Sandford, Walker, and Russell, there are others whose names could be mentioned as reflecting honour on the body to which they belong. As preachers, the Episcopal clergy are now beginning to exert their pulpit eloquence, in adaptation to the taste of the age; and as such, several enjoy a well-merited reputation. The ordination of the North American Episcopal communion was first derived through the Episcopal church of Scotland. Dr. Scabury of Connecticut, having been sent to England shortly after the assertion of Independence, in order to procure Episcopal ordination, it could not be given to him by the church, on account of a law prohibiting such to be done; but with the warm concurrence of the Archbishop of Canterbury, he was introduced to the Scottish bishops, and was ordained by them at Aberdeen, from whence he carried across the Atlantic that mysterious and ancient heritage of the apostolic succession, which has come down on the stream of eighteen centuries, a pure and undying memorial of the divine institution of the church. It is a fact, which is perhaps not generally known, that John Wesley also applied to the Scottish bishops to grant the ordination of a bishop to himself, and some of his coadjutors. Luckily for the security of the church of England, this request was negative. We have heard that he afterwards applied to the Greek church, by means of a bishop of that communion at the time in London, which attempt to gain apostolic authority was similarly frustrated. He then disregarded what he could not acquire, and founded his church [his Society] with lay ordination. Jacobitically inclined as this communion once was, it cannot be said that any feeling of this nature now remains to it. Few of those clerical or lay members remain who remember of the period of its proscription, and a new race has sprung up with modern associations and sentiments. As a refutation of those calumnies which have unscrupulously been directed against it, as respects its opposition as an episcopacy to civil and religious liberty, it may be mentioned, that it possesses many members who would yield to no covenant or presbyterian in the avowal of firm constitutional principles, and who would not lag behind in the assertion of civil and religious freedom. The chief peculiarity of the whole body of Scottish Episcopalians is, however, a desire to pursue a career involving no controversy, and provoking no exacerbation of sentiment.—The communion is humble, we might say, almost to a fault; for it suffers indignities with such meekness that many might be tempted to suppose that it was actually deserving of such contumely. The Christian virtue of charity seems indeed to be deeply imbedded in its constitution. It pursues a serene and temperate course, disturbing the complacency of no one, and fulfilling the idea of a simple, yet efficient ecclesiastical institution. It seems to have prayed with success to be delivered "from all false doctrine, heresy, and schism, and contempt of His word and commandment,"—for few communities of Christians trouble society so little with their internal or external arrangements. Within its sacred pale no jars or heresies are ever known to fester or break out. By the constant use of an orthodox liturgy and creeds, and the daily reading of those parts of scripture comprehending the plain principles of a true religion, no new dogma of belief can be started;

[The writer evidently treats the doctrine of the Apostolic Succession with the greatest reverence: there is, however, nothing mysterious in it, in the general sense of that word: perhaps he only meant to signify that it was a sacred heritage.—Ed. Church.]

and its adherents would lay no stress on the declamations of pulpit orators, if at variance with the doctrines therein set forth and fixed. There is a completeness about this communion which must strike every one who examines it. Its constitution and forms require little or no amendment. Its creed is one and unchangeable. It does not consider Christianity a science susceptible of improvement every generation. It lays claim to no occult power of discovering new meanings or readings in the verses of the sacred volume.—By reason of this continuity of principle, this steadfastness in belief, the Episcopal church of Scotland is perhaps destined to stand as an impregnable bulwark of orthodoxy in the land; and should it be the fate of the kirk and its dissenting bodies, to be frittered away by the conceits of erring and short-sighted men, this poor, this oft-contemned, but this unchanging communion, may be the means of still keeping alive, and handing down unimpaired to the latest posterity, that pure and beneficent faith "once delivered to the saints."

AN OCCURRENCE ON CHRISTMAS DAY, 1624.

(From Bishop Hackett's Life of Archbishop Williams.)

[Archbishop Williams was Lord Keeper and Dean of Westminster. The Abbot had come to England, with the French Ambassador who was dispatched by the Court of France to negotiate the marriage between Henrietta, the daughter of Henry IV. and Prince afterwards King, Charles. The work from which this account is transcribed, is scarce and valuable.—Ed. Church.]

At the same time, among those persons of gallantry [i. e. fashion] that came into England to make up the splendour of the embassy, * * * there was an Abbot, but a gentleman that held his Abbey, a la mode de France, in a lay capacity. He had received the gift of our Service-Book, [Prayer-Book], and, to requite the donor, being much of a scholar, and of ingenious breeding, he layed aside all other business to read it over. Like a vowed person to another profession, he was not hasty to praise it, but suspended his sentence, till he might come in place to see the practice of it. It was well thought of by him, that the trial of the soundness in religion consists not altogether in the draft of a book, but in the motion likewise, and exercise of it. The Abbot made his mind known to the Lord Keeper by Sir George Gorring (now Earl of Norwich) that he would gladly be present in the Abbey of Westminster upon our Christmas Day in the morning, to behold and hear how that great Fast was solemnized in our congregations, which heard very ill [were very ill-spoken of] beyond the seas for profaneness: whereas the book for uniformity of Public Prayer, which he had received, though it was not set off with much ceremony to quicken devotion, yet it wanted neither a stamp of reverence, nor the metal of godliness. Yet he would be careful in launching out so far in curiosity, to give no scandal to [Roman] Catholics, whose jealousy might perhaps suspect him, as if he thought it lawful to use both ours and the Church of Rome's communion. Therefore he made suit to be placed where none could perceive him, and that an interpreter of the Liturgy might assist him to turn the book, and to make right answers to such questions as fell by the way into his animadversions. None more forward than the Lord Keeper to meet the Abbot in his request. Veritas oculatus testes non reformidat.—Truth does not dread eye-witnesses. The Abbot kept his hour to come to Church upon that high Feast, and a place was well fancied aloft, with a lattice and curtains to conceal him. Mr. William Boswell, like Philip riding with the treasurer of Queen Candace in the same chariot, sat with him, directing him in the process of all the sacred offices performed, and made clear explanation to all his scruples. The church-work of that ever blessed day fell to the Lord Keeper to perform it; but in the place of the Dean [i. e. as Dean] that collegiate Church. He sung the service, preached the sermon, consecrated the Lord's table, and, being assisted with some of the Prelendaries, distributed the elements of the Holy Communion to a great multitude, meekly kneeling upon their knees. Four hours and better were spent that morning, before the congregation was dismissed with the Episcopal blessing. The Abbot was entreated to be a guest at the dinner, provided in the College Hall, where all the members of that incorporation feasted together, even to the elemosynaries, called the Breads-men of the foundation; no distinction being made, but high and low eating their meat with gladness together, upon the occasion of our Saviour's Nativity, that it might not be forgotten that the poor shepherds were admitted to worship the babe in the manger, as well as the potentates of the East, who brought rich presents to offer up at the shrine of his cradle. All having had their comfort, both in spiritual and bodily repast, the Master of the Feast, [the Archbishop], and the Abbot, with some few beside, retired into a gallery. The good Abbot presently showed that he was bred up in the Franco-Gallican liberty of speech, and, without further proem, defies the English that were roosted in the abbies of France for lying varlets, above all others that ever he met. "We have none of their good word, I am sure," says the Keeper "but what is it that doth impasse you for the present against them?" "That I shall calmly tell you Lordship," says the Abbot—"I have long been inquisitive what outward face of God's worship was retained in your Church of England,—what decorems were kept in the external communion of your assemblies. St. Paul did rejoice to behold good order among the Colossians, as well as to hear of the steadfastness of their faith, cap. ii. 5. Therefore, waving polemical points of doctrine, I demanded after those things that lay open to the view, and pertained to the exterior visage of the House of God. And that my intelligence might not return by broken merchants, but through the best hands, I consulted with none but English in the affairs of their own home, and with none but such as had taken the scapular, or habit of some sacred order upon them, in affairs of religion. But, Jesu, how they have deceived me! What an idea of deformity, limned in their own brain, have they hung up before me! They told me of no composed office of prayer used in all these Churches by authority, as I have found it this day, but of extemporary babblings. They traduced your pulpits, as if they were not possessed by men that be ordained by imposition of hands, but that shop-keepers, and the scum of the people usurp that place, in course, one after another, as they presumed themselves to be gifted. Above all, they turned their reproaches against your behaviour at the Sacrament, describing it as a prodigious monster of profaneness,—that, your tables being furnished with meats and drinks, you took the scraps and relics of your bread and cups, and call upon one another to remember the passion of our Lord Jesus. All this, I perceive, is infernally false. And though I deplore your schism from the [Roman] Catholic Church, yet I should bear false

witness, if I did not confess that your decency, which I discerned at that holy duty, was very allowable in the consecrator and receivers."

"My brother Abbot," says the Lord Keeper with a smile, "I hope you will think the better of the religion, since on Christ's good day your own eyes have made this observation among us." "The better of the religion,"—says the Abbot, taking the words to relate to the Reformed of France,—"nay, taking altogether which I have seen among you,"—and he brought it out with acrimony of voice and gesture,— "I will lose my head, if you and our Hugonots are of one religion."—"I protest, Sir," says the Keeper, "you divide us without cause. For the harmony of Protestant confessions, divulged to all the world, do [doth] manifest our consonancy in faith and doctrine. And for diversity in outward administrations, it is a note as old as Ireneus,* which will justify us from a rupture, that variety of ceremonies in several Churches, the foundation being preserved, doth commend the unity of faith."—"I allow what Ireneus writes," says the Abbot, "for we ourselves use but the same offices and breviates in all places. But why do not the Hugonots at Charenton [a place in France, where they had a house of worship] and in the districts, follow your example?"—"Because," says the Lord Keeper, "no part of your kingdom but is under the jurisdiction of a Diocesan Bishop, and I know you will not suffer them to set up another Bishop in the precincts of that territory, where one is established before. That would savour of schism in earnest. And where they have no means to maintain God's worship with costly charge, and where they want the authority of a Bishop among them, the people will arrogate the greatest share in government; so that in many things you must excuse them, because the hand of constraint is upon them."—"But what constrains them," says the Abbot, "that they do not solemnize the Anniversary Feast of Christ's Nativity as you do? Nay, as we do? for it is for no better reason than because they would be unlike to us in every thing."—"Do you say this upon certainty?" says the Keeper. "Or call me poltroon, if I feign it," says the other. "In good truth," says the Keeper, "you tell me news. I was ever, as Tully writes of himself to Atticus, in curiositate Chrestivus, apt to search narrowly into Foreign Churches; and I did never suspect that our brethren that live with you were deficient in that duty. For the Churches of the Low Countries, of Heidelberg, Helvetia, Hassis, Brene, and others do observe a yearly day to the memory of our Saviour's birth. I conceive the like for Geneva. For when Calvin had retired to Basil, some mutation about Holy Feasts was made in Geneva. Upon his return thither again, Hallerius, both in his own and in Musculus his name, complains that the celebration of that memorable Feast was neglected. Calvin returns him answer, (the Epistle is extant Dat. anno 1551, Jan.) "Sancti testari possunt me inscio, ac ne optante quidem, hanc rem fuisse transactam. Ex quo sun revocatus, hoc temperamentum quasi, ad Christi natalis celebraretur vestro more: I can solemnly bear witness that this thing was done without my knowledge and indeed against my will. Since I have been called back I have endeavoured to establish the rule that the Nativity of Christ should be celebrated according to your custom." But will you have the judgment of Protestant divines when they were in a globe [i. e. body] and collected together from all quarters. At the Synod of Dort, convened about six years past, all the Divines, with the assessors from the States, intermitted their sessions against the Feast of Christ's Nativity with unanimous suffrages; and the reason is given in plain words, Sessio. 36. Decem. 19. Quia eo tempore festum Natalis D. [omni] N. [ostri] Jesu Christi instabat, propter cuius celebrationem scilicet, Because at that time the Feast of the Nativity of our Lord Jesus Christ was at hand, on account of the celebration of which &c. It will be harder for those of the [Reformed] Religion in France to answer for this omission. Yet judge more charitably than to think they do it only out of crossness to discomform to your practice. He that runs backward farther than he need from his adversary, plays his prize like a coward. And I use to say it often, that there ought to be no secret antipathies in divinity, or in Churches, for which no reason can be given. But let every house sweep the dust from their own door. We have done our endeavour, God be praised! in England to model a Churchway, which is not afraid to be searched into by the sharpest critics for purity and antiquity. But as Paucat. said in his Paneg. in another case, Parum est quando caperit, terminum non habebit, it little matters when it began, it will never have an end. Yet I am confident it began when Christ taught upon earth, and I hope it shall last till he comes again." "I will put my attestation thus far to your confidence," says the Abbot, "that I think you are not far from the kingdom of Heaven."—So with mutual smiles and embraces they parted.

[*This holy father and martyr, was the pupil of Polycarp, the Bishop of Smyrna, and disciple of St. John, and suffered after 202. Bishop Sallustianus mentions his "testimony" the succession of Bishops from the Apostles' times as being so plain.—(Unreasonableness of Separation. Part III.)—Ed. Church.]

Church. Soon after him St. Cyprian hath a treatise on this day. And Ammianns Marcellinus, speaking of Julian the Apostate, above 1300 [now 1500] years ago, mentions it (as his design to cover his Apostatical intentions) that he went solemnly to the Christian Church, and worshipped God on that holy-day in January, which the Christians call Epiphany: which day being mentioned so anciently as a known festival of the Christian Church, gives not only to that day, but to Christmas, which that concludes, a far greater antiquity than that time of Julian's on occasion of which it is there mentioned. And so saith St. Chrysostom, that, though till this time the observation of it on December 25, was not fixed at Antioch, yet from Rome over all the West it had been so observed from the most ancient records of Christianity.

By this, and much more that might be produced, it appears to be at the least an ecclesiastical institution, very early received over all the West, and the far greatest part of Christendom, and within 400 years universally solemnized: and sure this is a very competent authority (when withal it is so probable, that it may be more, according to a rule of the fathers, that every ancient and general usage, whose beginnings are unknown, may be resolved to be of apostolical institution or practice) to oblige the continuance of so pious a solemnity in the Church, according to that of St. Augustin, that all that acknowledge themselves sons of the Church, observe the festivals of the Church: (in which number he places this of the Nativity in the front) to which it is consequent, that they which observe them not, disclaim this son-ship, and cast themselves out of this family, upon a temptation too slight to own or excuse an act of such unkindness to themselves, and ingratitude to the Christian Church, which designed it so much to their advantage. To this head of the ancientness of this institution in the universal Church I shall add but one evidence more, and it is this, that as most of the first customs or institutions of Christianity were taken (by some light change) from the customs of the Jews (Christ's baptism from their washings at the initiation of Jews and proselytes in the temple, the sacrament of the Lord's Supper from their loaf and cup of benediction after supper, our Easter from their Passover, the Christian from the Jewish Pentecost, and many other the like) so it was in this matter also. The beginnings of all months, and seasons, and years, were kept festival among the Jews: in like manner, the feast of the dedication of the temple, the anniversary commemoration of the beginning (or birth as it were) of that house of God (as among other people the birth-days of cities, the day wherein the trench was first cast up, but both usually been solemnized. And then, as the temple was a type of Christ (and he said by himself to be greater than the temple, as the substance which the temple fore-shadowed, his flesh the walls, and his divinity the glory which inhabited it) so are these two, the type and anti-type, the feast of dedication among them and the nativity among Christians, most perfectly answerable the one to the other. And proportionably as among them the beginnings or Calends of every month were kept holy, so here twelve days together (one for every month) are joined to attend the Calends or Nativity of Christ. And all this, as it is a fair compliance with God's institution among the Jews, so sure is it an argument of the antiquity of the observation, that it is thus imitated from the Jews, for that signifies it to have been begun about that great time of reformation, before the Jewish ceremonies were quite abolished, as the Egyptian jewels were then taken from them, when the Israelites departed out of the land, and began their journey toward Canaan. As for this particular Church wherein we live, there is little doubt but that this festival is of the same standing with the first plantation of Christian religion among us. If we reckon that from the conversion of the Saxons (to which the name of English is properly affixed) it is then most clear by the records of king Ethelbert. But if we speak of the Britons, then as their conversion is much more ancient (and Tertullian's testimony is clear, that the British islands were converted to Christianity before his time) so if there be any truth in that objection which some men have made against the celebration of this feast among us, (viz. that some heathen usages are retained in it) this will be yet an higher evidence of the antiquity of this festival in this nation, so far as to render the original of it, if not apostolical, yet very primitive, and near the apostles' age; that being the time of the conversion of the nation from heathenism: and if they were not of the usage of this festival also, it is not imaginable how any heathen custom should come to be adherent to it. This, I suppose, may help to recover this festivity to some competent part of that reverence which in reason is due to Christian antiquity in point of ceremony or observation (in a kingdom especially where common usage is common law, the best that any man holds his estate by) and awake us to a more pious, Christian, spiritual, and not to a more voluptuous, carnal, heathenish observance of it.

THE MANNER OF OUR SAVIOUR'S APPEARANCE.

(From Bishop Stillington's.)

The manner of our Saviour's appearance hath been always the great offence to the admirers of the pomp and greatness of this world. For when they heard of the Son of God coming down from heaven, and making his progress into this lower world, they could imagine nothing less, than that an innumerable company of angels must have been despatched before, to have prepared a place for his reception; that all the sovereigns and princes of the world must have been summoned to give their attendance and pay their homage to him; that their sceptres must have been immediately laid at his feet, and all the kingdoms of the earth been united into one universal monarchy under the empire of the Son of God; that the heavens should bow down at his presence to show their obedience to him, the earth tremble and shake for fear, at the near approaches of His Majesty; that all the clouds should clap together in one universal thunder, to welcome his appearance, and tell the inhabitants of the world what cause they had to fear him whom the powers of the heavens obey; that the sea should run out of its wonted course with amazement and horror, and if it were possible, hide itself in the hollow places of the earth; that the mountains should shrink in their heads, to fill up the vast places of the deep; so that all that should be fulfilled in a literal sense, which was foretold of the coming of the Messiah (Luke iii. 5. 6), that every valley should be filled, and every mountain and hill brought low; the crooked made straight, and the rough ways smooth, and all flesh see the salvation of God. Yes, that the sun for a time should be darkened, and the moon withdraw her light, to let the nations of the earth understand that a glory infinitely greater than theirs did now appear to the world. In a word, they could not imagine the Son of God could be born without the pangs and throes of the whole creation; that it was as impossible for him to appear, as for the sun in the firmament to disappear, without the notice of the whole world. But when instead of all his pomp and grandeur he comes incognito into the world, instead of giving notice of his appearance to the potentates of the earth, he is only discovered to a few silly shepherds and three wise men of the East; instead of choosing either Rome or Jerusalem for the place of his nativity, he is born at Bethlehem, a mean and obscure village; instead of the glorious and magnificent palaces of the East or West, which were at that time so famous, he is brought forth in a stable, where the manger was his cradle, and his mother the only attendant about him: who was his nurse none of the great persons of the court,

nor of any fame in the country; but was only rich in her genealogy, and honourable in her pedigree. And according to the obscurity of his birth was his education too: his youth was not spent in the Imperial Court at Rome, nor in the schools of the great rabbies at Jerusalem; but at Nazareth, a place of mean esteem among the Jews, where he was remarkable for nothing so much as the virtues proper to his age, modesty, humility and obedience. All which he exercises to so high a degree, that his greatest kindred and acquaintance were mightily surprized when at thirty years of age he began to discover himself by the miracles which he wrought, and the authority which he spake with. And although the rays of his divinity began to break forth through the clouds he had hitherto disguised himself in, yet he persisted still in the same course of humility and self-denial; taking care of others to the neglect of himself; feeding others by a miracle, and fasting himself, to one: shewing his power in working miraculous cures, and his humility in concealing them: conversing with the meanest of the people; and choosing such for his apostles, who brought nothing to recommend them but innocency and simplicity; who, by their heats and ignorance, were continual exercises of his patience in bearing with them, and of his care and tenderness in instructing them. And after a life thus led with such unparalleled humility, when he could add nothing more to it by his actions, he doth it by his sufferings, and completes the sad tragedy of his life by a most shameful and ignominious death. This is the short and true account of all those things which the admirers of the greatness of this world think mean and contemptible in our Saviour's appearance here on earth. But we are now to consider whether so great humility were not more agreeable with the design of his coming into the world, than all that pomp and state would have been which the Son of God might have more easily commanded than we can imagine. He came not upon so mean an errand, as to dazzle the eyes of mankind with the brightness of his glory, to amaze them by the terribleness of his majesty, much less to make a shew of the riches and gallantry of the world to them: but he came upon far more noble and excellent designs, to bring life and immortality to light, to give men the highest assurance of an eternal happiness and misery in the world to come, and the most certain directions for obtaining the one, and avoiding the other: and in order to that, nothing was judged more necessary by him, than to bring the vanities of this world out of that credit and reputation they had gained among foolish men, which he could never have done, if he had declaimed never so much against the vanity of worldly greatness, riches and honours, if in the mean time himself had lived in the greatest splendour and bravery. For the enjoining then the contempt of this world to his disciples in hopes of a better, would have looked like the commendation of the excellency of fasting at a full meal, and of the conveniences of poverty by one who makes the greatest haste to be rich. That he might not therefore seem to offer so great a contradiction to his doctrine by his own example, he makes choice of a life so remote from all suspicion of designs upon this world, that though the foxes had holes, and the birds of the air had nests, yet the Son of Man, who was the Lord and Heir of all things, had not whereon to lay his head. And as he shewed by his life how little he valued the great things of the world, so he discovered by his death how little he feared the evil things of it: all which he did with a purpose and intention to rectify the great mistakes of men as to these things, that they might no longer venture an eternal happiness for the splendid and glorious vanities of this present life; nor expose themselves to the utmost miseries of another world, to avoid the frowns of it. From hence proceeded that generous contempt of the world, which not only our Saviour himself, but all his true disciples of the first ages of Christianity were so remarkable for; to let others see they had greater things in their eye than any here, the hopes of which they would not part with for all that this world thinks great or desirable. So that considering the great danger most men are in, by too passionate a love of these things, and that universal and infinite kindness which our Saviour had to the souls of men, there was nothing he could discover it more in as to his appearance in the world, than by putting such an affront upon the greatness and honour of it, as he did by so open a neglect of it in his life, and despoising it in his death and sufferings. And who now upon any pretence of reason dares entertain the meaner apprehensions of our Blessed Saviour because he appeared without the pomp and greatness of the world, when the reason of his doing so was, that by his own humility and self-denial he might shew us the way to an eternal happiness? which he well knew how very hard it would be for men to attain to, who measure things not according to their inward worth and excellency, but the splendour and appearance which they make to the world, who think nothing great but what makes them gaze upon, nothing desirable but what makes them flattered. But if they could be once persuaded how incomparably valuable the glories of the life to come are above all the gaieties and shews of this, they would think no condition mean or contemptible, which led to so great an end; none happy or honourable which must so soon end in the grave, or be changed to eternal misery. And that we might entertain such thoughts as these are, not as the melancholy effects of discontent and disappointments, but as the serious result of our most deliberate enquiry into the value of things, was the design of our Saviour in the humility of his appearance, and of that excellent doctrine which he recommended to the world by it. Were I to argue the case with philosophers, I might then at large shew from the free acknowledgments of the best and most experienced of them, that nothing becomes so much one who designs to recommend virtue to the world, as a real and hearty contempt of all the pomp of it, and that the meanest condition proceeding from such a principle is truly and in itself more honourable, than living in the greatest splendour imaginable. Were I to deal with the Jews, I might then prove, that as the prophecies concerning the Messiah speak of great and wonderful effects of his coming, so that they should be accomplished in a way of suffering and humility. But since I speak to Christians, and therefore to those who were persuaded of the great kindness and love of our Saviour in coming into the world, to reform it, and that by convincing men of the truth and excellency of a future state, no more need to be said to vindicate the appearance of him from that meanness and contempt, which the pride and ambition of vain men is apt to cast upon it.

EVERGREENS IN CHURCHES.

(From The Rev. W. Staunton's Church Dictionary.)

"Christmas, the joyous period of the year! Now bright with holy, all the temples strew With laurel green, and verdant mistletoe."

The practice of adorning Churches and dwellings with evergreens at the season of Christmas, may be traced back to a very remote age, when the minds of Christians were influenced by something deeper and purer than mere superstition and fancy. The Advent of our Lord was annually celebrated with universal joy, and demonstrations of gratitude, rising almost to enthusiasm. It was a time of triumph;—the feast, the anthem, the suspension of the ordinary avocations of life, and of the public games;—the crowded temples;—the eucharist, and the decoration of the Churches with boughs and garlands of evergreen,—all proclaimed it a religious jubilee, worthy to be styled by St. Chrysostom, "the metropolis and mother of all festivals." From this, the reader will learn the primary design of a custom now grown venerable in the Church. It is expressive