

lights were imaged in their closing eyes; and the whisperings of the last worlds they exchanged on earth might well have reached the listening ears of their children.

This perished—called with indescribable awfulness into the divine presence—these two wilful transgressors of the sabbath commandment.—Their punishment was for themselves, the warning for us, who are alive and remain. Yielding to a weak “refuge of lies,” they had vainly hoped to sanctify their morning’s journey by attendance upon public worship at its end. This equivocal intention having been relinquished in favour of the converse of friends, their next subterfuge was the contemplated lifting up of the hands at the evening sacrifice beneath their own roof. There again, the temptations of sin prevailed over the admonitions and reproaches of conscience, and the world, the flesh, and the devil, achieved an easy victory over that faith which, united to virtue, would have overcome them all.

Infatuated beings! they hastened to their home bent upon imploring a blessing from above before they slept. But upon what was the blessing so invoked to descend? Was it upon the worship, or the prayers and the meditations, and the holy delights of the sabbath; that God would fix them firmly in the good soil of their hearts, and water them with the dew of his especial grace? Were these the sounds which, cleaving the still air of night, had risen acceptably to the throne of him who seeth in secret? Alas, no. They dared not have mocked the Eternal Majesty by such dissembling. What then? Would they have asked of God to ratify a broken covenant and a polluted sign, or thank him that Satan had obtained power to triumph in them over the image of heaven? Not openly or avowedly, could they have so addressed him who “heareth the prayer.” But they would have knelt, and prayed, and lifted up the hands of evening sacrifice, and promised future obedience, and alas! expediated their day’s departure from the commandment, and in the hollow voice of insincere entreaty, stifled the upraidings of conscious transgression.

But it pleased the Sovereign Disposer of all suddenly to “visit for these things,” and so the commissioned angel of death met them on the way, and seeing the brand of sin upon their foreheads, he slew them.

The incident, of which the narrative is now closed, produced, as might be expected, a profound sensation, and awake much solemn thoughtfulness throughout the neighbourhood. Every soul, not wholly “dead in trespasses and sins,” discerned the contrast between what had been and what ought to have been done, on the day of sacred rest, by the wrath-stricken outcasts. In every temple dedicated to public worship, the ministers of religion were diffuse and earnest upon the painful theme. They pointed to their people how the holy assembly had been wantonly forsaken: they spoke of godless mirth standing in the place of Christian joy—pictured the return of the travellers, as they drew near their dwellings, with hypocrisy upon their countenances and a lie in their right hand—but still rejected all despair of heavenly mercy, and set forth the sinner’s unshamed hope. Such topics did preachers press, such did the people confess the truth of.

Years have rolled on, and men, who then trode vigorously the earth, now totter feebly over its surface, as though they felt it sink beneath them; or else, beneath many it has sunk, and closed over them again; and children, men waiting at their mother’s breasts, as the alarm of that sad morning started cottagers from bed or bedside, now half-grown to maturity, visits the green bank of death. And still the story of the transgressors finds ever a ready narrator and a listening audience, and will

do so long after this generation shall have passed away.

And now, dear reader, pray with me, that God, who created the world out of nothing, may bless this humble endeavour to do honour to his laws, and to turn many souls to righteousness, and so fit them here for the enjoyment of the endless sabbath above—the eternal rest that remaineth for his chosen people.—Amen.

SOWING AND REAPING:

BY L. R. CHANDLER, ESQ.

‘Reaping where you have not sown.’

WE took occasion, one of the fine mornings of last week, to make an excursion beyond the city limits, attracted by the freshness of the air, the cool crispness of which seemed to give new play to the lungs, and new gush to the blood. The blue sky above had not yet put on the hazy dimness of Indian summer, though the gossamer was flitting away in the breeze, twisted and distorted by its rapid motion; and the lovely hues which the forest had lately worn—its variegated garments of autumnal beauty—were fading to a sober brown, and the leaves were pouring down from the trees, shaken by the wind, and crisped and curled by the sun, till the stem could no longer hold them to the branch.

It was a day for a poet—we are none—and so we thought of poor Clark, and his rich fancy, that seized on all these attractive beauties of nature, combined them into song, and gave them to the world—to that world which learned to love nature from the loveliness of his verse. Clark is low; his foliage was shaken from the branches before the autumn storm had dimmed its beauty. It fell while it was receiving and giving charms; and we now, in the dryness of age, remember the richness and lustre of his blossoms, that shall bring forth fruit, where no tempest deform the skies, and no autumn frosts wither the herbage.

Pursuing this idea, we leaned against a fence, and contemplated the brilliant, but fading scene around us, and started as a footstep denoted the approach of a man. It was an old man, too; he had come across the ploughed field, and seemed intent upon the tender grain just shooting up from the mellow earth. We saluted him respectfully—age and usefulness should respect. He returned our salutations with a quiet courtesy, that induced conversation.

With the farmer, the talk about the weather is not a mere gossip. He looks to winds and clouds, not to avoid labor, but to insure success; and the former and the latter rains are to him blessings, like the dew upon Hermon, and the dew upon the mountains. So we remarked that the weather had been remarkably fine during the present month.

‘Delightful, delightful,’ said he, ‘delightful. The sun has shone out almost continually, and the air has been healthful and bracing. Now and then a cloud has gathered in the heavens, but it seemed scarcely large enough to cover the deep blue above, that hung upon its white skirts, in lovely contrast, like the eye of fancy. And when it has rained, it seemed so sparing and so gentle, that the sun looked out upon the waterdrops before they had been absorbed, like the smiles of an infant in the midst of tears.’

‘You have needed rain, then—more, perhaps, than you have had.’

‘The earth has required much rain—it is dry and parched—the grass has been burnt out of the upland.—But one of the worst effects of the exceedingly dry weather in September & October, is the difficulty of sowing our winter grain; and the still greater difficulty of its taking root, and springing up.’

‘That requires rain, then,’ said we.

‘Frequent showers; indeed, we ought almost to scatter the seed in a shower, if we hope to have much pleasure in reaping.’

‘Que seminant in lachrymis, in exultatione metent,’ thought we, rather aloud.

The man, when we looked up, was gazing in our face.

‘Sow in tears, and reap in joy,’ said we, pointing to the field.

A slight smile upon the face of the farmer faded away slowly into a thoughtful, melancholy look.

‘I have, indeed,’ said he, ‘in this field, sown in abundance of tears. Whether I shall reap in joy—whether I shall share in the glorious harvest, I know not.’

‘I trust you will for many harvests,’ said we; ‘but has that come up which you sowed in the field?’

We both looked across the broad lot, till our eyes rested upon a stone wall at a distance; in the lower part of the field; and after a moment’s pause, our friend said—

‘All has not come up that I have sowed here—sowed in tears, too, and sowed in hope.’

‘The earth-clods,’ said we, ‘seem to be strong and heavy; they probably prevent the fulfilment of your hopes.’

‘Yes, yes,’ said our friend, looking away again into the vale, and evidently speaking to himself, rather than to us, ‘the clods of the valley do rest upon them. Will you walk across the fields?’

There was something so attractive in the melancholy of the stranger, that we accepted his invitation.

Entering the lower part of the field by another avenue, we found ourselves close to the stone wall that we have noticed at a distance, and we entered a narrow enclosure. It was a family burying-ground. A few trees had grown up among the long grass, and they were pouring down their sacred leaves upon the graves below.

My companion leaned over the headstone of a principal grave, and pointed to a smaller one at its side.

‘The frost and wind,’ said he, ‘that are stripping the trees above us, can scarcely make them barer than I have been left. One after another they have been dropped from me, and the last; the hardest, because the last.’

A little hillock was swelling up, whose newly-laid sod told of the recency of the poor man’s affliction—wife, child, and grandchild.

‘And these,’ said he, ‘I have planted in tears. Beyond the wall, the grain which my hand scattered abroad, comes forward to repay my toil, and I may reap in joy; but from this narrow field nothing springs up, and I can never reap with joy when I have planted with many tears.’

The dryness of the season and the melancholy fall of the leaf, had evidently conspired with recent affliction to disturb the philosophy of my companion, and I sought to cheer him, but scarcely with effect; he seemed to cling to the comparison of the wheat.

‘The grain,’ said we, ‘which you reap is not that which you sow; the earth receives the decaying seed, and gives back a perfect harvest. And that which you have deposited here must be garnered in incorruption, and you can reap in joy only where tears are unknown.’

‘I have, then,’ said the stricken man, ‘set up my expectations of happiness on earth! It was wrong, but unintentional wrong. My declining years should have taught me other things. And I will, hereafter, make my faith superior to my earthly grief; and mark the signal,’ said he, pointing backward to the slender shaft just raised at St. Peter’s Church, ‘mark the beautiful signal. The beams of the declining sun are reflected with lustre from