

to see the victim of his own follies, depicted as the martyr of benevolence, and every project which the strong energy and self devotion of Martha carried out, held up as another proof of the good he wished to do.

We can pity and sympathise with Harry Muir, and grieve over the sin that destroyed a spirit so richly gifted, yet we feel he was but the architect of his own destruction, and while mercy must excuse, justice must condemn. And it is here that we find it difficult to discover the moral of the story, and feel inclined to ask why it was written with so obscure a design? A writer possessed of such deep appreciation of the good and the beautiful as the authoress of 'Harry Muir,' must be anxious to benefit and elevate her brethren, and she should not become the apologist of error by the veil of pathos she throws over its darkness. If we believe in the truth of religion as revealed to us, the authoress has no right to assume that Harry is 'safe in the strong hand of the Father, where temptation and sorrow can reach him no more,' for he was a wilful sinner, loving and loveable though he may have been, and he preferred the gratification of his own disposition and appetites to the happiness of home, and the peace and joy of an unsullied conscience. 'Poor Harry' indeed that he so wilfully destroyed himself, but he did it, warned and entreated to stop, the fault lay at his own door, the punishment was sought for by himself.

But we will not further censure a work of which some passages entitle it to the highest praise. Lettie's is a beautiful character, and we rejoice that Martha's ambition at last met with such perfect gratification in the poet excellence of her child sister. The closing scene in the book is a holy and tranquil picture: peace at last rests upon the stormy soul of the noble woman who battled with all the fierce passions which shake the spirit, and came off the conqueror. She lived to see the fruit of her labours; by her own exertions she carried out all her brother's projects for the benefit of his tenantry, and by reflecting the lustre of her own good deeds upon his memory, saw that beloved brother's name revered and cherished by those for whom she had laboured. A work of fiction does not oft present a more interesting character than that of Martha Muir, or one better sustained from first to last. Apart from the objections we have stated, this simple story of Scottish life is well entitled to a perusal, and we only hope that its writer, if she take up her pen again, will give greater consideration to her work, and while she paints the allurements of vice, will also add a warning to enforce the fate of its victims.

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#### OUR MONTHLY GOSSIP.

By the Cunard steamers which arrived at this port since our last publication, a large number of Civil Engineers and Surveyors have been brought to our shores. Mr. Beattie, with a numerous staff, has made Halifax his