

RAMBLES AT WARWICK.*

By an American Clergyman revisiting England after
20 years absence.

Chapel of Our Lady—Sunday in the Country.

During service my attention was directed towards an aristocratic looking old gentleman, who kept a very vigilant eye upon the poor of the parish who were ranged on benches in the aisles, and if any delinquent appeared disposed to doze during the sermon, quickly brought him to a sense of duty by a hearty shake! This scene forcibly reminded me of that model of a knight, good Sir Roger de Coverly, who would allow no one to sleep in the church but himself! This old gentleman, possibly, had never read the Spectator in his life, and therefore had no idea of his great prototype drawn with so much truth by Addison; and although considered a fictitious portrait, it possesses all the identity of nature, which this little incident served to convince me has been the same at all periods. The close observer, like Addison, will always find objects around him to call forth attention—to excite a smile, or to cause the sympathies of his heart to deepen as he looks abroad, and a country church is an excellent place to study the lights and shades of life in. The same feelings prevail here as in the world at large: pride and vain glory displays itself and rears its pompous front, as well as the meek port of humility and unostentatious piety. The right spirit cannot be put on with the Sunday apparel, and the thin covering is seen through without much searching or penetration. Often times have we thought we should like to worship in an old church like this, not because our feeble prayers would be more devout or acceptable when offered up in the crowded temple than in the desert solitude, in a venerable edifice like this, or a building of yesterday, but the associations of time and place always had a charm for us. We like to be surrounded by remembrances of the past, such as we now see on all sides, sitting before us like shadows, and to feel and know we are but a shadow ourselves. Besides it was something novel to us thus to sit in this old nook, within these oaken pews and dark wainscoatings—to look around upon quaint monuments, and think of the ashes of those sleeping beneath them—of the many generations who once bowed the knee here, long since passed away! To cast our eyes within the Chapel of Our Lady, and see the antique tombs, trophies, and hatchments, with the gathering dust of ages settling upon them, and displaying the proud crests of ancient nobility even in death! To listen to the pealing organ—to familiar chants, and olden tunes—to hear the beautiful liturgy read in the land of its adaptation, yet to me, a strange land—to hear its solemn sentences uttered by unknown voices, and contrast its effect upon my feelings—and to think of kindred and friends worshipping at this hour in a distant country. These things made the place holy; even if our thoughts played the truant with us, and wandered occasionally from their duty. Yes, we did like to sit in this old church, although pride and ostentation were within its gray walls, and the vanities of pampered wealth were about us in striking contrast with humble poverty—the rich man in his elevated pew and soft cushion, and the poor and obscure worshipper who sat upon the lowly oak bench in the aisles. There should be deep solemnity here, and these old temples ought to produce serious impressions. For who can kneel calmly in these time-worn pews, with the yellow morning's sun streaming in through the lofty gothic window, and lingering upon the sculptured stone and oaken carvings, and neglect to offer up a thankful spirit? He must possess a callous nature indeed, who can look with indifference about him, or suppress the rising feelings of devotion, that like a harmonious voluntary steals over the senses at such a time as this.

"O Day most calm, most bright !

The fruit of this, the next world's bud ;
The indorsement of supreme delight,
Writ by a friend, and with his blood ;

*From the New York Churchman.

The couch of time ; care's balm and bay :—
The week were dark, but for thy light ;
Thy torch doth show the way."—Herbert, 1615.

Around me kneel the peasant from the fields and the hamlet, with the scented nosegay at his bosom—the village maiden dressed in modest white, with straw bonnet, a ribbon, and smiling countenance—the lord and the dignitary of the place, here meet together. This is a time when the crowd jostle not each other. The busy hum of labour in the village has ceased, and the laborer from the cottage, and the peer from the castle, come forth to pay their morning orisons. The world's din and strife has a breathing time. The axe of the wood-cutter sounds not in the bosky dingle—he is here with his wife and little ones kneeling round the altar. The aged grandame, and the sober matron with her lisping children, are near me, and as I look around, I feel not at such a moment, and viewing this scene, to be that which I truly am—a stranger, in a strange land! No!—I did not think myself entirely a foreigner as I sat here, for I was surrounded by objects and cherished associations implanted in my memory from infancy too familiar for that. I heard the solemn organ, the tones of which no one can listen to without a sentiment of religious feeling—the chant response heard from childhood—the blending of united voices in that prayer to our common parent, for our daily bread—for pardon and deliverance from evil, and the manifold ills flesh is heir to. All this conspired to assure me that a mutual bond of faith united us, and we felt implicitly assured that our mutual thanks were offered up together for the same wants and for forgiveness of like infirmities. Many we know have spoken and felt as we do now, there is nothing new in our thoughts to chronicle, we write in a threadbare vein and in humble language compared with others who have profited by attending service in an English Country Church!

BETHLEHEM.

We started again at noon, following the ancient road, along the brae side, and between corn-fields, olive groves, and vineyards, each with its watch-tower, the stones carefully gathered out, and fenced in with a stone wall as in the days of David, Isaiah, and our Saviour. At two we started at a place called Derrvuh, evidently an ancient site, and continued for some hours winding among hills, presenting the same monotonous but pleasing scenery. It was a lovely evening, the birds were singing sweetly, and numerous flocks of sheep and goats were cropping their evening meal as we drew nigh to the city of David, who so often must have fed his flocks on those very hills,—the scene too, just as probably, of that apparition of the heavenly host, who proclaimed to the humble shepherds of Bethlehem the birth of the good Shepherd, David's namesake,—“The Beloved of God—in those blessed words, “Glory to God in the Highest, and on earth peace, good-will towards men.”

At half-past seven, that evening, we reached Bethlehem. It stands on the slope of a hill, of difficult ascent, at least by night. The stars were out, but it was still unusually light as we entered the town, and proceeded to the Spanish Convent, a large fortress-like building, where we were kindly welcomed, and ushered into a very handsome apartment. The venerable Superior presently came to see us, and grew very talkative. He honored us with his company to breakfast the next morning, and we afterwards visited the church, and the supposed cave of Nativity, gorgeous all—but what most touched me was the simple tribute of several little children, who, speaking in a whisper, and with awe in their faces, lighted their little bodkins of tapers at the large candles, and stuck them at their side. The solemn chanting, the procession of the darked-robed monks, the confessionals, with all the pageantry I had been familiar with in Italy, so strangely blended with the turbans and oriental costume of the Armenian, Arab, and Greek Christians,—one might have fancied that the east and the west had met by common consent, to worship the star of Israel at its rising; but, alas! it was St. Mark's worship they were celebrating that morning, and the prostrations I witnessed on the spot said to

have been knelt upon by the Magi, were to the Virgin Mary—not to our Saviour.—Lord Lindsay's Letters on the Holy Land.

King George IV. desiring, in his sickness, to receive the holy eucharist, had appointed an hour at which the Bishop of Winchester should administer to him that blessed sacrament.—Through carelessness, or mistake of one of the attendants on his Majesty, the Bishop received a summons for half an hour after the time appointed by the king. His Majesty was not unjustly angry with the attendant, but when he seemed to carry his anger beyond the bounds of a christian temper, the pious prelate warned his sovereign of the danger of celebrating the holiest mysteries of our faith in so improper a spirit, and refused to administer the sacrament under such circumstances. His Majesty immediately recalled the attendant to his presence, and it was not until he had expressed his sorrow for his too hasty expressions, that he was admitted to communion.—Ban. of Cross.

THE COLONIAL CHURCHMAN.

LUNENBURG, THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 20, 1840.

DIOCESAN CHURCH SOCIETY.—The general Annual Meeting of this Society is to take place at Halifax on Wednesday the 26th inst. in the National School-house, at 7 o'clock, p. m. We hope there may be a full attendance, and that new life may be imparted to an Institution, from which, if vigorously carried out and supported as it ought to be by the laity, most important results may be expected to the benefit of the Church and of the cause of Religion in general throughout the Province.

CLERGY RESERVES IN CANADA.—It appears that the Bill respecting these, which has been aptly termed the “Church Spoliation Bill,” has passed the Upper Canada Legislature. We subjoin the remarks of the Editor of the ‘Church’ on the subject.

“We need hardly repeat that the measure they likely to pass both branches of our Legislature, will neither conduce to the satisfaction of the country nor to the welfare of society. It is destructive of the fundamental principles of the constitution, and must therefore be displeasing to Churchmen, not in this Colony alone, but in every part of the Empire. It is offensive, we understand, to the members of the Kirk of Scotland, and can hardly be agreeable to the Dissenters from that body; and it cannot fail to create, as soon as it comes into action, the most odious as well as bitter animosity amongst the various sectarians who are proposed to be included in its provisions. Be this as it may, the members of the Church of England cannot tamely contemplate a course so unjust and unconstitutional.

“It is refreshing to perceive, amidst the distressing conflicts of opinion around us, the head of the Church in this province so decided and uncompromising in his adherence to the law and equity of the case,—so resolved to resist to the last this mortal stab at the vitality of our constitution; and well assured we are that he will be manfully supported in the course he recommends his brethren at large to pursue. This is a course which, if adopted with that vigour which it is the solemn duty of Churchmen in a cause so sacred and important to manifest will create a sensation in England, the very anticipation of which, we believe, was the most weighty argument with the present weak Administration referring the question here; and we feel well assured that this is a sensation which will redound to the discomfiture of a measure than which none more unconstitutional or unjust is to be found in the annals of British legislation.”

TORONTO.—The new Bishop of this Diocese has published in the ‘Church’ a long circular to his clergy, on the present state of ecclesiastical affairs in that quarter,—together with the form of a Petition to the Imperial Parliament, in behalf of the Colonial Church, which he recommends as a model for adoption by every congregation in the Diocese. The Bishop's letter is very similar to