

[From the Philadelphia American Daily Advertiser.]

MASSACHUSETTS BOJNERY.

Tax son, O New-England, though wand'ring afar
From the scene which affection once lit with a smile,
Still recalls the gay vision when childhood's young star
Could lead to enjoyment, and sorrow beguile.

And merrily yet rambles o'er life's reckless dawn,
When hope smil'd so lovely, and earth seem'd so true,
When thought—fond deceiv'—had welcome the morn,
That imparted to bliss its coreless hue.

Then careless, to linger in love's native bow'ns, (scene,
Where spring—pleasure's hand-maid—rejoic'd o'er the
Or when sober autumn succeeded the flow'rs,
To stray while contentment lent zest ever keen.

Where Brookline,* half hid in the wood land, appears;
Whose white steeples rises in pride from the grove;
Whose villas delight, and seclusion endears;
I roam'd when this heart beat to pleasure and love.

And sweet, lovely village! thy valleys to me,
Are dear, and thy hills where I hail'd the first sun,
When a school-boy romantic, from apathy free,
I repos'd in thy orchard, and bath'd in thy run.

Afar the gay hamlets of plenty are found,
Though nameless in pomp, to simplicity dear;
And queen of the villas bespangled around,
See Boston, thy pride, O New-England, appear.

O dear is the land of my fathers,—and long
Recollection shall stray o'er the mountain and plain;
Though far, far away, yet in story and song,
Shall the minstrel return to thy bowers again.

For thy son, O New-England! now wand'ring afar
From the scenes which affection once lit with a smile,
Still recalls the gay vision when childhood's young star
Could lead to enjoyment, and sorrow beguile.

* A beautiful village in the environs of Boston.

Literary Extracts, &c.

Variety's the very spice of life,
That gives it all its flavor.

Kingdom of Ashantee.

From an article in the 44th No. of the London Quarterly Review, on a "Mission from Cape Coast Castle to Ashantee, by T. E. Bowdich, Esq."

It now remains to give a short summary of the state of society, and of the moral character and customs of the Ashantees, which in truth differ but little from those published in the course of the last two centuries, concerning the several petty states of the coast of Guinea, extending in an eastern direction from Cape Mesurada to Old Calabar, and occupying a line of twelve hundred geographical miles.

The history of the Ashantees, to which Mr. Bowdich has dedicated a whole chapter, is, like that of all other savages who can neither read nor write, the history of a day, and little worthy of notice: in the words of Mr. Bowdich, 'there is nothing (in it) to recompense either the investigation or the perusal.' The constitution and laws, as indicating the state of society, would have been more important, had Mr. Bowdich been better informed on these subjects—but ignorant of the language, and destitute of records, what indeed could he know on such matters?—He says, 'the king, the aristocracy, now reduced to four, and the assembly of captains, are the three estates of the Ashantee government;' but that the king, who in private is supposed to be governed by this aristocracy of four, (who created him,) receives from them, in public, the most obsequious homage; that they approach him crawling on all fours, and covering their heads with dust; as do the captains and caboccers, or heads of villages. As for the people, all we are told about them is, that they are ungrateful, insolent and licentious.' If it be true that his Ashantee majesty repeatedly expressed his belief that his subjects were the worst people existing, except the Fantees; they might, as far as we can ascertain the compliment, by declaring him to be the most ferocious brute in the world, except his brother of Dahomey, with whom he is pretty nearly on a par.

The laws, we apprehend, are just what it may suit the king and his counsellors to make them; so that what is law to-day may be treason to-morrow. We must therefore deal briefly with them. If any subject picks up gold in the market-place, it is death; the scourings of the mud being a royal perquisite. A creditor may seize the person of his debtor, or any of his family, as slaves. Murder is redeemable by a fine to the family of the murdered, except in the case of a slave, who may be murdered by his owner with impunity. If a person kills himself, on the head of another, that other must kill himself also, a practice frequently resorted to out of a spirit of revenge, of which the following is an instance:—Adumissa, an extraordinary beautiful red-skinned woman of Cape Coast, possessed numerous admirers, but rejected them all. One of them, in despair, shot himself on her head, close to her house. The family demanded satisfaction; to save her relations from a ruinous palaver, she resolved to shoot herself in explanation. She accordingly assembled her friends and relatives from various parts of the country, and sitting, richly dressed, killed herself in their presence, with golden bullets. After the body had been exposed in state, it was buried with a profusion of cloths and gold. The beautiful Adumissa is still eulogised, and her favorite patterned cloth bears her name amongst the natives.—p. 23, note.

Wives are held in little estimation, and a man may take as many as he chuses to purchase; yet adds Mr. Bowdich, very gravely and learnedly, 'It is forbidden, as it was by Lycurgus, to praise the beauty of another man's wife, being intriguing by implication.' They were very jealous of letting their women hear any thing regarding the state of female society in Europe; and Mr. Hutchinson says that Odamatta, one of the principal counsellors, locked up his wives because he (Mr. Hutchinson) put evil into their heads, by telling

them that Englishmen allowed every woman to have a husband to herself. But we are losing sight of this sovereign power.'

The king is heir to all the gold of every subject, from the highest to the lowest. The blood of the royal family must not be shed; royal crimes, however, may be washed away by drowning the criminal in the river Dah. The king of Ashantee is allowed by law three thousand three hundred and thirty-three wives, this being the precise mystical number on which the prosperity of the nation depends. The number, it appears, on actual duty is not more than six, the rest being shut up in two particular streets of the town closed at each end with bamboo doors, and guarded by soldiers. The king of Dahomy turns his three thousand wives to a better account; the stoutest of them are embodied in a regiment, and regularly trained to the use of arms, under a female general and subordinate officers; and, according to the testimony of several Europeans, they go through their exercise with great precision. Governor Abson was present at Abomey when the king marched against Eycos, on which occasion he was attended by a body guard of 800 women.

On the death of the king, a most horrid scene of human slaughter takes place; all the sacrifices that had been made for the death of every subject during his reign, being required to be repeated, 'to amplify that of the death of the monarch, and to solemnize it in every excess of extravagance and barbarity.' The brothers, sons, and nephews of the king, says Mr. Bowdich, 'affecting temporary insanity, burst forth with their muskets, and fired promiscuously amongst the crowd.' The crowd, we take for granted, would not be very numerous on such an occasion. Indeed we are told that 'few persons of rank dare stir from their houses for the first two or three days;' but that they drive forth their slaves as a composition for their own absence.' He adds, 'the king's ocras, (a kind of dependant, or household-slaves,) are all murdered on his tomb, to the number of a hundred or more, and women in abundance.' What becomes of the mystic number of wives we are not told. They are probably sent, at least no inconsiderable number of them, according to the notion that prevails in this unhappy country, to attend their deceased lord in the other world.' On this principle, human victims are slaughtered on the death of every member of the royal family, the captains, caboccers, and all, in fact, who can afford it. Mr. Bowdich says that the present king, a very amiable and benevolent sovereign, on the death of his mother, devoted 3000 victims to 'water her grave,' 2000 of whom were Fantee prisoners, and the rest levied in certain proportions on the several towns.

This devilish custom of immolating human victims, under the notion of their being subservient to the use and administering to the pleasures of the deceased in the other world, has been the practice of nations who ranked higher in the scale of civilization than the negroes; with all it is grounded on temporal pride or pre-eminence, as well as on imperfect and irrational notions of a future state. The king of Dahomey used to hold a constant communication with his deceased father. Whenever he wished to announce to him any remarkable event, or to consult him on any emergency, he would send for one of his ablest messengers, and, after delivering to him his errand, chop off his head. It sometimes happened that, after the head was off, he recollected something else which he wished to say, in which case a second messenger was despatched in like manner, with a postscript to his former message. Mr. Abson was present on an occasion of this kind. The poor fellow who was selected for the honor of bearing his majesty's despatch, aware of what was to happen, declared he was unacquainted with the road; on which the tyrant, drawing his sword, vociferated, 'I'll shew you the way!' and with one blow severed his head from his body, highly indignant that an European should have witnessed the least expression of reluctance in the performance of a duty which is considered as a great honor.

MORAL and RELIGIOUS.

THE PENITENT SON. [CONCLUDED.]

The body of the old man had been laid out by the same loving hands that had so tenderly ministered to all his wants and wishes, when alive.—The shroud in which he was now wrapped had been in the cottage for many a long year, and white as it was, even as the undriven snow, scarcely was it whiter than the cheeks and the locks now bound in its peaceful folds. To the eyes of my childhood the Elder's face had sometimes seemed, even in its benignity, too austere for my careless thoughts, impressed as it ever was with an habitual holiness. But all such austerity, if indeed it had been ever there, death had now removed from that silent countenance. His last moments had been blessed by his son's contrition—his daughter's love—his grandchild's pity—his pastor's prayers. And the profound peace which his parting spirit had enjoyed, left an expression on his placid features, consolatory and sublime.

The Penitent Son was sitting at the bedside. We all took our places near him, and for a while remained silent, with eyes fixed on that countenance from which beamed the best memories of earth, and the loftiest hopes of Heaven.

"Dear," said the humbled man, "how the dew is bringing down the loosened torrent from the hills, even so is my soul now

within me!" "Aye, and it will flow, till its waters are once more pure and bright as a summer stream," said the Pastor with a benign voice. "But art thou sure that my father's forgiveness was perfect?" "Yes, William, it was perfect. Not on his death bed only, when love relents towards all objects glimmering away from our mortal eyes, did the old man take thee into his heart; but, William, not a day, not an hour has passed over these his silver hairs, in which thy father did not forgive thee, love thee, pray for thee unto God and thy Saviour. It was but last Sabbath that we stood together by thy mother's grave in the kirk-yard, after divine worship, when all the congregation had dispersed.—He held his eyes on that tomb-stone, and said, 'O Heavenly Father, when, through the merits of the Redeemer, we all meet again, a family in Heaven, remember thou, O Lord, my poor lost William; let these drops plead for him, wrung out from his old father's broken heart!'—The big tears, William, plashed like the drops of a thunder-shower on the tomb-stone—and, at the time, thy father's face was whiter than ashes—but a divine assurance came upon his tribulation—and as we walked together from the burial place, there was a happy smile about his faded eye, and he whispered unto me, 'my boy has been led astray, but God will not forget that he was once the prop and pillar of his father's house. One hour's sincere repentance will yet wipe away all his transgressions.' When we parted, he was, I know it, perfectly happy—and happy, no doubt, he continued until he died.—William! many a pang hast thou sent to thy father's heart; but believe thou this, that thou madest amends for them all at the hour of his dissolution. Look, the smile of joy, at thy deliverance, is yet upon his face." The son took his hands from before his eyes—gazed on the celestial expression of his father's countenance—and his soul was satisfied.

"Alas! alas!" he said in a humble voice, "what is reason, such poor, imperfect, miserable reason as mine, to deal with the dreadful mysteries of God! Never since I forsook my Bible, has the very earth ceased to shake and tremble beneath my feet. Never, since I spurned its aid, have I understood one single thought of my own bewildered heart! Hope, truth, faith, peace and virtue, all at once deserted me together. I began to think of myself as of the beasts that perish; my better feelings were a reproach or a riddle to me, and I believed in my perplexity, that my soul was of the dust. Yes! Alice, I believed that thou too wert to perish utterly, thou and all thy sweet babies, like flowers that the cattle-hoofs tread into the mire, and that neither thou nor they were ever, in your beauty and your innocence, to see the face of the being who created you!"

Wild words seemed these to that high-souled woman, who for years had borne with undiminished, nay, augmented affection the heaviest of all afflictions, that of a husband's alienated heart, and had taught her children the precepts and doctrines of that religion, which he in his delusion had abandoned. A sense of the fearful danger he had now escaped, and of the fearful wickedness, brought up from the bottom of her heart all the unextinguishable love that had lain there through years of sorrow—and she went up to him and wept upon his bosom. "Oh! say it not, that one so kind as thou could ever believe that I and my little ones would never see their maker—they who were baptised in thine own arms, William, by that pious man, in the name of the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost!" "Yes! my Alice; I feared so once—but the dismal dream is gone. I felt as if the ground on which this our own sweet cottage stands, had been undermined by some fiend of darkness—and as if it were to sink down out of sight with all its thatched roof so beautiful—its cooing pigeons—its murmuring bee-hives—and its blooming garden. I thought of the generations of my fore-fathers that had died in the Hazel Glen—and they seemed to me like so many shadows vainly following each other along the hills. My heart was disquieted within me; for the faith of my childhood was intertwined with all my affections—with all my love for the dead and the living—for thee, Alice, and our children, who do all resemble thee both in beauty and innocence, whether at thy bosom, or tottering along the greensward, and playing with the daises in the sun. Such thoughts were indeed woven through my heart, and they could not be torn thence but by a heavy hand. Alice! the sight of thee and them drove me mad; for what sight so insupportable to one who has no hope in futurity, as the smiles and tears of them he loves in his destruction!"

He who spake was no common man—no common man had been his father. And he gave vent to his thoughts and feelings in a strain of impassioned eloquence, which, though above the level of ordinary speech, may not unfrequently be heard in the cottage of the Scottish peasant, when the discourse is of death and of judgment. And the white

that he was speaking, the wife kept her streaming eyes close to his face—the grey-haired Pastor beheld him with solemn looks—the mortal remains of his father lay before him—and, as he paused, there rose the sound of the snow swollen flood.

"I call the Almighty to witness," said the agitated man, rising from his seat, and pacing along the floor, "that these hours are yet unstained by crime. But oh! how much longer might they have so continued! Why need the unbeliever care for human life? What signifies the spilling of a few drops of worthless blood? Be the grave once tho't to be the final doom of all—and what then is the meaning of the word crime? Desperate and murderous thoughts assailed me by myself in solitude. I had reasoned myself, as I thought, out of my belief in revelation—and all those feelings, by which alone faith is possible, at the same time died away in my heart—leaving it a prey to the wretchedness and cruelty of infidelity. Shapes came and tempted me in the moors—with eyes and voices like, but unlike the eyes and voices of men. One had a dagger in its hand—and though it said nothing, its dreadful face incited me to do some murder. I saw it in the sun light—for it was the very middle of the day—and I was sitting by myself on the wall of the old sheep-fold, looking down in an agony, on the Hazel Glen, where I was born, and where I had once been so happy. It gave me the dagger—and laughed as it disappeared. I saw—and felt the dagger distinctly for some minutes in my hand—but it seemed to fall down among the heather—and large blots of blood were on my fingers. An icy shivering came over me, though it was a sunny day, and without a cloud—and I strove to think that a brain-fever had been upon me. I lay for two days and nights on the hill—and more than once I saw my children playing on the green beside the water-fall, and rose to go down and put them to death—but a figure in white—it might be thou, Alice, or an angel, seemed to rise out of the stream, and quietly to drive the children towards the cottage, as thou wouldst a few tottering lambs."

During all this terrible confession, the speaker moved up and down the room—as we are told of the footsteps of men in the condemned cell, heard pacing to and fro during the night preceding the execution. "Let not such dreadful thoughts to the charge of thy soul," said his wife, now greatly alarmed—"Hunger and thirst, and the rays of the sun, and the dews of the night, had indeed driven thee into a rufel fever—and God knows, that the best of men are often like demons in a disease!" The Pastor, who had not dared to interrupt him during the height of his passion, now besought him to dismiss from his mind all such grievous recollections—and was just about to address himself to prayer, when an interruption took place most pitiable and affecting.

The door, at which no footstep had been heard, slowly and softly opened, and in glided a little ghost, with ashy face and open eyes, folded in a sheet, and sobbing as it came along. It was no other than that loving child walking in its sleep, and dreaming of its grandfather. Not one of us had power to move. On feet that seemed, in the cautiousness of affection, scarcely to touch the floor, he went up to the bed-side, and kneeling down, held up his little hands, palm to palm, and said a little prayer of his own, for the life of him who was lying dead within the touch of his balmy breath. He then climbed up into the bed, and laid himself down, as he had been wont to do, by the old man's side.

"Never," said the Pastor, "saw I love like this"—and he joined his sobs to those that were fast rising from us all at this insupportable sight. "Oh! if my blessed child should awake," said his mother, "and find himself beside a corpse so cold, he will lose his senses—I must indeed separate him from his grandfather." Gently did she disengage his little hands from the shrouded breast, and bore him into the midst of us in her arms. His face became less deadly white—his eyes less glazedly fixed—and drawing a long, deep, complaining sigh, he at last slowly awoke, and looked bewilderedly, first on his mother's face, and then on the other figures sitting in silence by the uncertain lamp-light. "Come, my sweet Jamie, to thine own bed," said his weeping mother. The husband followed in his love—and at midnight the Pastor and myself retired to rest—at which hour, every room in the cottage seemed as still as that wherein lay all that remained on earth of the Patriarch and the Elder.

It was on May-day that, along with my venerable friend, I again visited the cottage of the Hazel Glen. A week of gentle and sunny rain had just passed over the scenery, and brought all its loveliness into life. I could scarcely believe that so short a time ago the whiteness of the winter had shrouded the verdant solitude. There and there, indeed, a patch of snow lay still unmelted, where so lately the deep wreaths had been drifted by the storm. The hum of insects even was not unheard, and through the glitter of the stream the trout was seen leaping at its gaudy prey, as they went sailing down the pools with expanded wings. The whole glen was filled with a mingled spirit of pleasure and of penitence.

As we approached the old Sycamore, we heard behind us a sound of footsteps, and that beautiful boy, whom we had so loved in his affliction, came up to us, with a smiling face, and with his satchel over his shoulder. He was returning from school; for the afternoon was a half-holiday, and his face was the picture of joy and innocence. A sudden recollection assailed his heart, as soon as he heard our voices, and it would have been easy to have changed his smiles into tears. But we rejoiced to see how benignly nature had assuaged his grief, and that there was now nothing in memory, which he could not bear to think of, even among the pauses of his pastimes. He led the way happily and proudly; as we entered once more the cottage of the Hazel Glen.

The simple meal was on the table, and the husband was in the act of asking a blessing, with a fervent voice. When he ceased, he and his wife rose to bid us welcome, and there was in their calm and quiet manner an assurance that they were happy. The children flew with laughter to meet their brother, in spite of the presence of strangers, and we soon sat all down together at the cheerful board. In the calm of the evening, husband and wife walked with us up to the glen, as we returned to the Manse—nor did we fail to speak of that solemn night, during which, so happy a change had been wrought in a sinner's heart. We parted in the twilight, and on looking back at the Hazel Glen, we beheld a large bevy of swallows flying over the cottage.