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Miscellaneous.

[From the "Pulpit"]
Literary Excellence, &c. of the Bible generally.

"It has God for its Author; Salvation for its end; and truth, without any mixture of error, for its matter." [Locke]

Of the Bible, it may be truly said, that in whatever way we regard it, it is the *pre-eminence* of excellence. If we look at it as a mere literary production, it stands pre-eminently over every other volume in the world; or if we regard it as the revealed word and will of God, then, indeed, it is "quick and powerful, piercing even to dividing assunder of soul and spirit, and of the joints and marrow;" or when we look at it as a system and a guide, in all vicissitudes and changes, what a thesaurus of golden rules is this one book! In all things it is the Christian's treasury, whether in the letter or in the spirit; and there are thousands who have experienced an *exhaustless* source of spiritual and intellectual enjoyment in their practical study of this blessed volume; so that it was justly remarked by a late eminent divine,* that "the most learned, acute, and diligent student, cannot, in the longest life, obtain an entire knowledge of this one volume; because, the more deeply he works the mine, the richer and more abundant he finds the ore."

As a literary production, beauty of expression, utmost sublimity of imagery, unequalled grandeur of ideas, the most harmonious periods, the softness and mellifluousness of its verse, and the eloquence and cogency of every component part, are the characteristics of the Bible.—Viewed in this point, where is the author or the volume that has half so engaged the attention and labours of mankind? Homer, Euripides, Xenophon, Menander, Virgil, and many others, have, indeed, all employed the "abilities and labours of past ages, and volume after volume have been composed, in annotation and comment, upon various volumes of those geniuses of antiquity; but what is this, compared with the attention which the Bible has excited? What are all these compared with what has been written on the contents of this blessed book? they are but as a partial drop of water in an universal sea! Not to mention, indeed, that many of those great authors themselves read and borrowed many of their grand ideas from the sacred writings; thus, Homer seems to have copied the idea of his list of warriors from the enumeration of David's worthies—Virgil has, it is well known copied the subject of the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah for the theme of his "Polio," and many others. The works of Plato and Socrates afford ample proofs that the Bible has been the subject of admiration and imitation in all ages. Longinus bore ample testimony, and affirmed it to be the very excellent of excellency, and divine! Nay, more; even *infidelity* has been constrained to admire, while it contemned the sacred oracles of the Most High, and seems to have felt conscious of its wrongfulness, in rejecting them as the rule of life, and guide to Heaven. Let us hear the sentiments of that well known sceptical writer, Mr. GIBBS:

"In Christ we have an example of a quiet and peaceable spirit; of a becoming modesty and sobriety; just and honest; upright and sincere; and, above all, of a most gracious and benevolent temper and behaviour. One who did no wrong, no injury to any man; in whose mouth was no guile; who went about doing good, not only by his preaching and ministry, but also in curing all manner of diseases among the people. His life was a beautiful picture of human nature, when in its native purity and simplicity, and shewed at once, what excellent creatures men would be, when under the influence and power of that gospel which he preached to them." Astonishing! that man should force himself beyond his own conviction, to be an infidel! But let us hear the celebrated French naturalist, ROUSSEAU:—

"I confess that the majesty of the scriptures, and the holiness of the gospel, greatly affect me. View the books of the philosophers with all their pomp, how little do they appear placed beside this! Is it possible that a book, at once so sublime and simple, can be the work of men? Is it possible that he, whose history it records, can be but a mere man? Does he speak in the tone of an enthusiast, or of an ambitious secretary?—what mildness, what purity in his manners! what persuasive grace in his instructions!—what elevation in his maxims! what profound wisdom in his discourses! what presence of mind; what

*Key, T. Spott,

ingenuity; and what justness in his answers! what empire over his passions! Where is the man, where is the sage, who knows how to act, to suffer, and to die, without weakness and without ostentation?" O infidelity! that, self-convicted and self-hardened, are thus, Balaam-like, constrained to praise where thou didst intend to scoff!

But to return; where, in the whole massy volumes of antiquity and modern times, where do we find any thing that may be placed in competition with the scriptures in point of sublimity? Where is there any thing like that celebrated picture of the horse in Job—that has baffled the imitative attempts of the Augustan and all other ages? Where do we find the song of Deborah and Barak equalled? Where is there a parallel to the holy song of Moses; and the timbrel of Miriam; or aught like that, justly entitled "The Song of Songs, which is Solomon's?" Are not these the very voice and language of the soul? Or "did we ever find," say an eloquent divine,† "sorrow flowing forth in such a natural prevailing pathos, as in the lamentations of Jeremv!—one would think, that every letter was wrote with a tear; every word was the voice of a braving heart; that the author was a man compacted of sorrows, disciplined to grief from his very infancy; one who never breathed but in sighs, nor spoke but in a groan!"

W. H. B.

† Dr. South's Sermons, vol. iv. p. 31.

[From Dick's Christian Philosopher.]

The economy of the human frame, when seriously contemplated, has a tendency to excite admiration and astonishment, and to impress us with a sense of our continual dependence on a Superior Power. What an immense multiplicity of machinery must be in action to enable us to breathe, to feel, and to walk! Hundreds of bones of diversified forms, connected together by various modes of articulation; hundreds of muscles to produce motion, each of them acting in at least ten different capacities; hundreds of tendons and ligaments to connect the bones and muscles; hundreds of arteries to convey the blood to the remotest part of the system; hundreds of veins to bring it back to its reservoir, the heart; thousands of ponds secreting humours of various kinds from the blood; thousands of lacteal and lymphatic tubes absorbing and conveying nutriment to the circulating fluid; millions of pores through which the perspiration is continually issuing; an infinity of ramification of nerves diffusing sensation throughout all the parts of this exquisite machine; and the heart at every pulsation exerting a force, of a hundred thousand pounds, in order to preserve all this complicated machinery in constant operation! The whole of this vast system of mechanism must be in action, before we can walk across our apartments! We admire the operation of a steam engine and the force it exerts. But though it is constructed of the hardest materials which the mines can supply, in a few months, some of its essential parts are worn and deranged, even although its action should be frequently discontinued. But the animal machine, though constructed, for the most part, of the softest and most flabby substances, can go on without intermission in all its diversified movements, by night and by day, for the space of eighty or a hundred years! the heart giving ninety-six thousand strokes every twenty-four hours, and the whole mass of blood rushing through a thousand pipes of all sizes every four minutes! And is it man that governs these nice and complicated movements? Did he set the heart in motion, or endue it with the muscular force it exerts? And when it has ceased to beat, can he command it again to resume its functions? Man knows neither the secret springs of the machinery within him, nor the half of the purposes for which they serve, or of the movements they perform. Can any thing more strikingly demonstrate our dependence every moment on a Superior Agent, and that it is "in God we live, and move, and have our being?" Were a single pin of the machinery within us, and over which we have no control, either broken or deranged, a thousand movements might instantly be interrupted, and our bodies left to crumble into the dust.

It was considerations of this kind that led the celebrated physician Galen, who was a skeptic in his youth, publicly to acknowledge that a Supreme Intelligence must have operated in ordaining the laws by which living beings are constructed. And he wrote his excellent treatise "On the uses of the parts of the human frame," as a solemn hymn to the Creator of the world. "I first endeavour from His works," he says, "to know myself, afterwards by the same means to show him to others; to inform them, how great is his wisdom, his goodness, his power." The late Dr. Hunter has observed, that

astronomy and anatomy are the studies which present us with the most striking view of the two most wonderful attributes of the Supreme Being. The first of these fills the mind with the idea of his immensity in the largeness, distances, and number of the heavenly bodies; the last astonishes us with his intelligence and art in the variety and delicacy of animal mechanism.

ENGLAND FIFTY YEARS AGO.

"In seventy years," says the Annual Register, "the people of Great Britain have advanced full eight millions in number. In twenty five years, the number of inhabited houses in England and Wales alone have advanced one half. Fifty years ago, the very existence of canals was a matter of incredulity. Fifteen millions of public wealth have now been profitably absorbed by these mighty ducts; and, at least, half as much more is at this hour destined for their formation. Fifty years ago, there was hardly a steam engine in the kingdom. There cannot now be less than twelve thousand—a creation of power equal to at least a quarter of a million of horses; an energy, which, in a single day, would have raised up the great pyramid of Egypt. Fifty years ago, our annual export of manufactured cotton did not amount to a quarter of a million in value; it has now swollen to nearly thirty millions. In the same period, our exported woollens, in defiance of Saxon, that of two millions. Fifty years ago, our imports of raw silk were only three hundred thousand weight; they are now nearly three millions. Fifty years ago, our export of iron was hardly twelve thousand tons; it is now about ten times as much. Fifty years ago, our exports of linens were about four millions of yards; they are now nearly forty millions. Fifty years ago, the whole value of our exported produce, both native and foreign, was just fifteen millions of money; the value of British produce exported alone, is now more than fifty millions. A hundred and twenty years ago, says old Tucker, there were only two or three vessels in Scotland above two hundred tons; our whole tonnage is now more than a quarter of a million, employing twenty thousand souls. A hundred and fifty years ago, says Chalmers, the whole navy of Britain did not amount to a hundred thousand tons; it is now, at least, three millions of tons, employing about two hundred thousand souls."

Fifty years ago—This country consisted of thirteen distracted provinces, struggling for independence, without any government but such as necessity produced and common danger kept together; with a population not exceeding three millions in number; not a single legislator of regular authority, not a commissioned magistrate among the whole. The fountains of instruction were dried up; the plough-share was beaten into swords, and the pruning hook into spears. The war raged—but we were without arms, munitions of war, or naval force; distress was every where around us, and hope hardly gilded the dark clouds which hung over the land. Fifty years has done much. In that time the population has increased nine or ten millions. Twenty-four sovereign and independent States have been formed. A general Government has also been formed, by their union. Legislators and magistrates, with legitimate and wholesome authority, are found in sufficient numbers for all the purposes of guidance and protection: the former, including Congress, from States and Territories, probably amount to four thousand. There are 216 members of the House of Representatives in the National Legislature, and forty-eight Senators. It is a reasonable calculation, and within bounds, to say that the average number of the several State Legislatures is equal to one hundred and fifty for each State. These, added to the number of members of Congress, amount to three thousand eight hundred and sixty-four—and with the members of the Legislative Councils of the several Territories, will make up the four thousand. All these must be considered laboring for the public weal, in advancing knowledge, encouraging virtue, and extending all the blessings of civilized life. These bodies are constantly changing in such a manner as to keep up a regular succession of classes in the great schools of political instruction. There are also forty Judges of the United States Courts—who hold on an average four terms, at least, a year, making one hundred and sixty tribunals for the benefit of the great body of the people. Each State has its own sovereign concerns a number of judges, in their several courts, supreme, common pleas, county, and municipal courts, at least equal to three times the number of its representatives in Congress; and all these hold many terms in the year, so that justice may literally be said to be brought to the door of every man, and to guard every man's dwelling.

It would be a safe calculation to say, that there were eight thousand lawyers in the United States, who are, or ought to be, well read in the principles of our Government, and in the history of other governments; and of course, so many public instructors in the great duties of freemen. In the various courts, on a moderate calculation, there are four hundred thousand suits brought in a year. These may be to some, painful lessons of wisdom, but are, nevertheless, often very salutary modes of getting knowledge. There can be but very little arbitrary power, when so many appeals are made to judicial tribunals. The short-sighted who groan at this feature of the picture, may be consoled by reflecting that there are not half as many suits brought in Algiers or at Constantinople in a year as in this country!

Fifty years too have built up numerous other institutions of civil life. Schools of learning abound in every part of our land. Five millions of dollars are spent annually for what may fairly be called primary instruction in the several States. The medical schools, and the professors of the healing art, are numerous and increasing. There is one perhaps wanted to every fifteen hundred inhabitants, and the number has been estimated to amount to seven thousand now in practice. This is also a moderate calculation. The sufferings of humanity are certainly ameliorated from the advancement in skill and science which this profession has made within a few years past. The great schools of morals and divinity, the pulpits of this country, require about as many more professors; but the number is not probably so great at present.

Fifty years ago, we had but a trifling commerce, a scanty agricultural interest; no manufacturing establishments; no labor-saving machines; no canals, no steam boats, but few bridges—scarcely a mine of coal or metals opened, or science enough to discover, or work them if discovered—not a mail coach running, nor a turpentine made. Our commerce is more valuable now than Great Britain's was at that period—and our agricultural produce is increased twenty fold. Our manufacturing establishments employ seventy thousand people, and the labor saved by useful inventions is incalculable. More than a thousand miles of canal communication has been completed, or nearly so; and more than an hundred bridges which span large rivers, besides a countless number of small ones, have been erected within fifty years. Turnpikes to the extent of a number of miles equal to that from our own country to China have been made since that period within our limits. Fifty years ago, there was not a steam boat on the globe; now more than three hundred of them navigate the waters of our country, on the sea-board and the interior. Coal mines have become so numerous that the philosopher no longer fears that the want of fuel will retard the progress of population.

Fifty years has taught us that the bowels of the earth is full of metals of all sorts for the use of civil life. Shafts are sinking in every part of our country, and in half the term of fifty years to come, we shall not have to go abroad for any but the precious metals, and perhaps not for them—Iron and copper, the two great metals, we have in abundance. Our conveniences for travelling have so much increased, that by stage and steam boat, the number of miles performed in the United States each day, during a considerable part of the year, is estimated to amount to three times the extent of the circumference of our globe. The value of the buildings in the United States are worth more than fifty times the sum they were in 1777, from their increased number and superior structure.

It is consoling to reflect, that amidst this prosperity and general influx of wealth, that offence and crime have not increased, as those who mourn over the depravity of the times would imagine. Of convicts for felonies or high handed misdemeanors, there is about one yearly to every two thousand three hundred inhabitants. The capital punishments throughout the United States have not been, for fifteen years past, more than one yearly to every million of inhabitants, not so many since the first settlement of this country, as suffered in one year in England, in the reign of Henry VIII. or Elizabeth. Common schools and mild laws are the best methods to prevent crimes. The subject might be pursued to a great extent. The man of leisure should do it, for the amusement, pride, and benefit of his countrymen.

National Journal.

Duels of French Soldiers.—In the "Adventures of a French Sergeant," the following laughable account is found of the duels that were constantly taking place at Cabreira, a small barren island in the Mediterranean, seven miles south of Majorca, and which served as a depot

for French prisoners during the Peninsular war. Weapons were still scarcer than food, but the point of honour was to be maintained by razors and scissors, when swords and pistols could not be procured:

The sun had just risen, when Ricaud roused me to request me to act as his second. I was not in one of those beds from which one rises with reluctance.—Our dressing arrangements were soon made, and as we had entered our hot the evening before, head-foremost, and were unable to turn ourselves, we crawled out one after another, feet foremost, resting upon our heels and elbows.

After drinking some rum with Ricaud and his antagonist, I tried to bring about a reconciliation, but they told me it was of no use, and they both declared that the thing must be done. I was too well acquainted with military customs to make any attempt at combatting a reason so peremptory. Besides, I had no great fears of the result of the duel; I presumed that the shadow of a sword, sabre or pistol, was not to be found in the whole island, and I fancied that these worthies were going to have a game at fifty-cuffs, in imitation of the ancient Romans, to whom they already bore so much resemblance. But I soon saw that a determined mind will always find means to accomplish its purpose. Before setting out, Ricaud said, that as he was the person challenged, he had the choice of weapons, and wished to fight with scissors. "You know," said Lambert, a corporal of a regiment I had forgotten the name of, "that I am unacquainted with the point, so that if we wish to fight on equal terms, let us draw the razor." This sadly puzzled me, for I had no idea of the matter. Ricaud was determined to have the scissors; Lambert would not give up the razors; so that they were forced to draw lots, when the latter gained his point.

He left us and returned in about a quarter of an hour, with a pair of English razors. During his absence, Ricaud had instructed me concerning the manner in which they were going to fight, and the kind of duels that daily took place at Cabreira. Sometimes they fixed the halves of razors at the end of long sticks, and used them as swords; at other times they used knife blades, razors, and sometimes even awls and sail-maker's needles.

We took two sticks about an inch thick, and 3 feet long, and prepared to fix the razors on them. But as we had not what was necessary for the purpose, we went to the bazaar to buy some articles. This was the market for the prisoners. It was situated at a spot honored with the name of Palais Royal, surrounded by ten or twelve huts, and containing as many stalls, some in the open air, others with a slight covering, with one end fixed to the ground, and the other supported by two poles. Here were sold bread, some salt fish, scraps of cloths, thread, needles, wooden forks and spoons, the various produce of the industry of the prisoners; pepper, twine, and other articles in the smallest quantity, for one could buy a single thread, a scrap of cloth no bigger than one's hand, and even a pinch of snuff, three of which cost a sou. I remember a Polish officer who owed for nine pinches, and the shop keeper refused to give him any more credit.

We bought two bits of twine, and after fixing on the weapons, we hastened to the cemetery. It was on a hill about a quarter of an hour's walk from the Palais Royal. Since the arrival of the prisoners at Cabreira, they had uniformly chosen this spot as a place of rest for those who had sunk under their misery, or who had fallen by the hands of their companions; it was there that they also met to settle their differences in a single combat.

When we reached the ground, I again, for form's sake, spoke, about making the matter up. When I saw they were determined on fighting, I told them that as I was the first cause of the quarrel, it was for me to uphold it, and take Ricaud's place. Neither he nor his adversary would agree to this, and I saw myself forced at last to give them up the weapons, which I had carried till now. Ricaud threw off his waistcoat; and as Lambert had nothing but pantaloons on, he was soon ready. They put themselves in a fighting attitude, and both displayed great coolness and courage.

Lambert was much the stronger of the two, and my friend required all his skill to parry the thrusts that were aimed at him; the razor flourished round his head and shoulders, without intermission, and struck him at last on the chin. He made a furious thrust in return, but fortunately it did not reach its object fully, though it made a pretty scratch on Lambert's nose; we rushed between them, when blood began to flow; we separated them and made them shake hands; as their wounds were not of much consequence, we all returned to breakfast together in front of our hut.