

POETRY.

THE SORROWING SINNER'S PRAYER.

Pardon, O God! O God, assist!  
And all may yet be well;  
Disperse the thick deluding mist,  
And break the fatal spell.

O call me to thy sainted Court,  
Within thy Halls of Peace!  
Let Hells no more be my resort;  
My sin, my sorrow cease!

O let me ne'er forget, that all  
Of woman born must die;  
And as the stricken tree doth fall,  
So, changeless, it must lie.

That none repent within the grave;  
That Death to Judgment leads;  
Sorrow from wrath then cannot save—  
Wrath due to sinful deeds!

O Lord, now wake repentance pure  
Within my sinful breast!  
O grant me Death's eternal cure,  
And take me to thy rest!

But, should it be thy will, O God,  
To lengthen out the date  
For which, by me, earth must be trod,  
Ere summon'd to my fate,

O give me, with a single mind,  
To godly men to turn;  
And, in my faith, the strength to find  
Their godly race to run!

And nought though be our efforts all  
O Lord, I well believe,  
That when we break the sinner's fall,  
That act thou wilt receive.

Then, as in sorrow, tremblingly,  
I seek the heavenly way,  
Grant me, O God, to win to thee  
One soul of those that stray!

O then, perhaps, when Death's gaunt hand  
Shall beckon me away,  
It may be to "the promis'd land."  
O, Lord God, grant it may!

R. B. I.

27th Dec. 1839.

LITERATURE.

THE LIFE AND TIMES OF  
SELINA, COUNTESS OF HUNTINGDON.

[By a member of the Houses of Shirley and Hastings.]

There is not one Female Character of the last century, connected with Great Britain, whose biography suggests so many curious sources of contemplation and instruction to the reader who is prepared to examine the progress of Christianity in the spirit of a statesman, a religionist or a philosopher, as that of the celebrated Countess of Huntingdon. Her extraordinary career was distinguished by marked and peculiar differences, from that of any other women who have been at any time awakened into action by strong religious convictions. Though her zeal for the promotion of Christianity was sleepless, and of surpassing energy, and though she devoted her whole life and fortune to the good work in which she thus heartily embarked, yet, unlike most excited agents, she became neither a fanatic nor a bigot. It is impossible to read these volumes without at once feeling convinced of the incorrectness of Mr. Southey's hasty assertion, that her zeal was the result of insanity. Her conduct, as it is here described, shows her to be one of the most prudent and sensible women of her age, and to have pursued with the greatest discretion and perseverance that high object to the attainment of which she devoted her entire energies. In this pursuit she evinced a good sense, and a knowledge of the judicious adaptation of means to ends, which would have been a very desirable acquisition to some of the reverend dignitaries, whose wisdom the Poet Laureate has celebrated in prose and verse.

We know not upon what pretence Mr. Southey could have committed himself to a statement so utterly irreconcilable with truth. Was her object good? This is a question which no human tribunal can attempt in this nation and age to determine. Her means were pre-eminently so. To us, after a careful perusal of these volumes, she appears to have done more for the cause of genuine religion, than any one of her contemporaries. Upon the correctness of her religious opinions we do not presume to offer an opinion. They were, we believe, on almost every point but one, identical with those of the Protestant Church, and on that one Protestant divines are found to differ among themselves.—It is true that in reference to matters of discipline, such as the occasional appointment of lay preachers, she openly dissented from the establishment; but surely these are trifles in the examination of the great question of salvation to which her meritorious labours invite our consideration.

The Countess of Huntingdon was the second of the three daughters and co-heiresses of Washington, second Earl Ferrars. She was born in 1707, and married in 1728 to Lord Huntingdon. From her infancy she was of a serious turn of mind, and as she grew up she became a perfect and amiable moral character. Having, soon after her marriage, fallen dangerously ill, her thoughts took a more decidedly religious cast than before, and as the Methodists were just then beginning to excite attention, and the Messrs. Wesley happened to be preaching in her neighbourhood, she formed an acquaintance with them; was soon distinguished as one of the principal supporters of the society; continued so until a schism arose between the Messrs. Wesley on the one part, and herself and Mr. Whitefield on the other; and then became the recognised head of the Calvinistic Methodists, who to the present day are known by the title of *Lady Huntingdon's Connection*. A woman who could take so prominent a position among such men as the Wesleys, Whitefield, and the other energetic reformers of that period, must have been no ordinary person.

Her acquaintance having been courted to the close of her life by the principal members of her own order in society, we find in these volumes

numerous anecdotes of almost every person of note who flourished in the last century. There was scarcely an individual worth knowing from the time of Queen Anne down to the close of the century of whom some notice is not preserved in the work. The volumes are especially rich in materials relative to Methodism, of which they present nearly a complete history, except that they do not particularly specify the doctrines inculcated at various periods by different ministers. The articles which were adopted by the *Connection of Lady Huntingdon*, after the schism with Wesley, are, however, given from the original document. Considered as an accurate account of Calvinistic Methodism during the life-time of that celebrated woman, the publication will be highly acceptable to the religious reader, while to those who look merely for anecdotes of bye-gone days they will be equally welcome. These anecdotes, however, are generally of a serious or religious tendency; so that the reader must not expect any light or trivial stories, although there are many passages of an entertaining and agreeable kind.

The first Methodist society was formed in 1738 in a chapel in Fetter-lane; here the love feasts were held, and here the following extraordinary circumstance occurred. As miracles are now allowed by all reformed churches to have ceased for many centuries past, we must attribute these circumstances to over-excited religious enthusiasm.

"On the first night of the new year," says Mr. Wesley, "Messrs. Hall, Kington, Ingham, Whitefield, Hutchins, and my brother Charles, were present at our love feast, with about sixty of our brethren. About three in the morning, as we were continuing in prayer, the power of God came mightily upon us, inasmuch, that many cried out for exceeding joy, and many fell to the ground. As soon as we recovered a little from our awe and amazement at the presence of the Divine Majesty, we broke out with one voice, 'We praise thee, O God! we acknowledge thee to be the Lord!' "It was a Pentecost season, indeed," says Mr. Whitefield: "Sometime whole nights were spent in prayer: often have I seen them filled up with new wine, and often have I seen them overwhelmed with the Divine Presence, and heard them cry out, 'Will God indeed dwell with men upon earth? How dreadful is this place! This is no other than the house of God and the gate of Heaven!'"

The Duchess of Buckingham, in the early days of Methodism, had attended the preaching of Mr. Whitefield, and seems to have formed as aristocratic notions of the duty of clergymen as some of our lords do, when they happen to be reproved for their misconduct by the lights of the church. In a short letter to Lady Huntingdon, her grace says:—

"I thank your ladyship for the information concerning the Methodist preachers; their doctrines are most repulsive and strongly tinged with impertinence and disrespect towards their superiors, in perpetually endeavouring to level all ranks, and do away with all distinctions. It is monstrous to be told that you have a heart as sinful as the common wretches that crawl on the earth. This is highly offensive and insulting; and I cannot but wonder that your ladyship should relish any sentiments so much at variance with high rank and good breeding."

Lady Huntingdon was fond of relating an anecdote about Bishop Burnet, who exclaimed against pluralities as a sacreligious robbery:—

In his first visitation to Salisbury, he urged the authority of St. Bernard, who, being consulted by one of his followers, whether he might accept of two benefices, replied, "and how will you be able to serve them both?" "I intend (answered the priest) to officiate in one of them by a deputy." "Will your deputy be damned for you too?" cried the saint. Believe me, you may serve your cure by proxy, but you must be damned in person.

Foote was employed to burlesque the Methodists. His piece, the *Minor*, was successful for a time, but was at last suppressed. This talent for ridicule ultimately worked his ruin.—In 1776 he drew a character of the Duchess of Kingston, who was then much talked of, and who had influence enough to procure the prohibition of his play. He threatened to publish it, and in this manner endeavoured to extort money from her. The affair at length ripened into a legal charge, and the shock of the disgraceful exposure is said to have had a fatal effect upon him. He died soon after at Dover.

The Methodists met with great opposition in some places. The following is one of the most ludicrous illustrations of the church militant we have found in these volumes:—

Whenever the Vicar of Colne heard of the arrival of any of the Methodists in his neighbourhood, it was his usual practice to call the people together by beat of drum, issue a proclamation at the market cross, and enlist a mob for the defence of the church against the incursions of the Methodists. The following proclamation, a curiosity of its sort, is transcribed from the voluminous private journals of Mr. Ingham and Mr. Batty, in their handwriting—journals which contain a mass of information relative to the religion in the North of England, of the deepest interest:—

"Notice is hereby given, that if any men be mindful to enlist in His Majesty's service, under the command of the Rev. Mr. George White, Commander-in-Chief, and John Bannister, Lt. General of His Majesty's Forces, for the defence of the Church of England, and the support of the manufactory in and about Colne, both of which are now in danger, let them repair to the drum head at the cross, where each man shall receive a pint of ale in advance, and all other proper encouragement."

Such was the conduct of the then Vicar of Colne.

Yet the methodists were in reality the most effective allies of the church.

The following circumstances are really awful:—

At one of these assemblies, when Mr. Whitefield mounted the temporary scaffold, to address the thousands spread before him, he was observed to engage in secret prayer for a few seconds. Then casting a look over the multitude, elevated his hands, and in an energetic manner, implored the Divine blessing and presence.—With a solemnity peculiarly his own, he announced his text—*It is appointed unto men once to die, and after death the judgment.* After a short pause, as he was about to proceed, a wild, terrifying shriek issued from the centre of the congregation. A momentary alarm and confusion ensued. Mr. Whitefield waited to ascertain the cause, and besought the people to remain still. Mr. Grimshaw hurried to the spot, and in a few minutes was seen pressing through the crowd towards the place where Mr. Whitefield stood. "Brother Whitefield, said he, with that energy which manifested in the strongest manner the intensity of his feelings, and the ardour of his concern for the salvation of sinners, 'you stand amongst the dead and dying—an immortal soul has been called into

eternity—the destroying angel is passing over the congregation—cry aloud, and spare not!' The awful occurrence was speedily announced to the people. After the lapse of a few moments, Mr. Whitefield again announced his text. Again a loud and piercing shriek proceeded from the spot where Lady Huntingdon and Lady Margaret Ingham were standing. A thrill of horror seemed to spread itself over the multitude, when it was understood that a second person had fallen a victim to the king of terrors. When the consternation had somewhat subsided, Mr. Whitefield gave indications of his intention to proceed with the service. The excited feelings of many were wound up to their highest point. All was hushed—not a sound was to be heard—and a stillness, like the awful stillness of death, spread itself over the assembly, as he proceeded in a strain of tremendous eloquence to warn the careless, Christless sinner to flee from the wrath to come.

As a contrast to this take a sketch of Beau Nash.

When Mr. John Wesley was preaching at Bath, some time before the coming of Charles, Beau Nash entered the room, and approaching the preacher, demanded by what authority he was acting? Mr. Wesley answered, "By that of Jesus Christ, conveyed to me by the present Archbishop of Canterbury, when he laid his hands upon me, and said, *take thou authority to preach the Gospel!*" Nash then affirmed that he was acting contrary to law. "Besides (said he) your preaching frightens people out of their wits." "Sir (replied Mr. Wesley) did you ever hear me preach?" "No," said the Master of the Ceremonies. "How then can you judge of what you never heard?" "By common report," (replied Nash.) "Sir (said Mr. Wesley), is not your name Nash?" "I dare not judge of you by common report." Nash finding himself a very different person in the meeting-house from what he was in the pump-room, thought it best to withdraw.

Nash sometimes conversed with Lady Huntingdon on religious subjects, and was once prevailed on to hear Mr. Whitefield at her house. Beau Nash was congratulated on his conversion by his gay associates, who failed not to rally him on turning methodist. Verses were written on her ladyship and Mr. Nash, which were fastened to the walls of the pump-room and the assembly-room; and printed notices were circulated in every direction, one of which was shown to the writer many years ago by Mr. Haws, stating that the Countess of Huntingdon, attended by some saintly sister, purposed preaching at the pump-room the following morning, and that Mr. Nash, henceforth to be known as the "*Rev. Richard Nash*," was expected to preach in the evening at the assembly-room. It was hoped that the audience would be numerous, as a collection was intended for the late Master of the Ceremonies, who was retiring from office. This profane raillery never discomposed the Countess, but gave great offence to Mr. Nash; and no inducement could ever prevail upon him to go to Lady Huntingdon's house.

This man of pleasure died as he lived—a monument of irreligion, folly, and vice, in the year 1761, aged 87! He dreaded the approach of death more than the generality of mankind; and sought refuge in some fancied devotion, while it threatened him. Though a complete libertine in practice, none trembled more than he did. To embitter his hopes, he found himself at last abandoned by the great, whom he had long endeavoured to flatter and to serve, and was obliged to fly for protection to those of humbler station, whom he had once affected to despise. The corporation of Bath allowed him a scanty pittance, which saved this miserable trifler from starvation in his last days.

It appears that, about a hundred years ago, when "Protestant ascendancy" was in the height of its power—when all manner of dissent was repressed as an engine dangerous to the security of our glorious constitution—when Popery was regarded as such an abomination before the Lord, that those who were so lost as to profess its tenets were not recognised as subjects, were deprived of all civil rights, and were supposed to exist only by the connivance of government—when one would naturally imagine that the ministers of the establishment were deeply engrossed in the industrious propagation of Christianity through this benighted country—and when our venerable church was in the highest state of earthly perfection—it appears that, at that magnificent epoch, vital godliness and evangelical truth were at a much lower ebb than they are at this moment, when "Popery, Socinianism, and Infidelity" are stalking stark naked through the land, seeking whom they may devour. Hear the author of the volume before us:—

Ireland, unhappily sunk in darkness and the superstitions of Popery, and but little adorned with real evangelical knowledge, even in those who had assumed the name of Protestants, had long afforded matter of sorrow to such as looked for the life and power of religion. Vital godliness had sunk to a very low standard; and only here and there an individual cleaved to the faith once delivered to the saints, and dared to be singular. The conduct of the clergy was indeed such as, with few exceptions, to merit the severest reprobation. Not only perhaps in the country was an active parish priest, suited to the state of the country and the people, preaching the pure doctrines of the Gospel, visiting or catechising his flock, entering into the cabins of the poor to instruct them, to fortify their minds against the attempts of the Romish emissaries, and to reclaim those that had been led astray.—Such, indeed, was the criminal sloth of the clergy, that it merits to be held up to the execration of all succeeding ages, as the grand cause of the deplorable state of religion in that country, and of the political calamities which have sprung from it, and been so severely felt.

It was during this state of torpor—this departure from all godliness, that those distinguished advocates of evangelical truth, the Wesleys and Whitefield, with their zealous coadjutors in the blessed work, passed from England into that kingdom, since which time true religion has spread out its branches through many parts of that unhappy country.

Such an opportunity for spreading the light of the gospel over poor Ireland is not likely, we fear, to occur again for many generations.

Here is a curious specimen of the philosophy that finds "sermons in stones, and good in every thing:—"

"In May, 1798, the rebellion broke out with alarming violence: terror and dismay were visible in every countenance; and never, perhaps, did the Lord appear more awful, as coming out of his place to punish the inhabitants of a land for their iniquity. The Lord maketh the wrath of man to praise him; and has promised that when his judgments are abroad in the earth, the inhabitants

thereof shall learn righteousness.—This promise he graciously fulfilled during the disturbance that at this time agitated Ireland."

The Archbishop of Canterbury, having at one time given several balls and convivial routs at Lambeth Palace, Lady Huntingdon sought a private interview with him, for the purpose of demonstrating on "such gross violations of established order and decency;" but his grace was thereby highly offended, and when she remonstrated a second time, through a friend of his, he talked about Methodists and hypocrites. To save the church from such scandal, the Countess made formal application for a private audience of the King, and succeeded. She had an interview of upwards of an hour with George III. and the Queen, and a few days afterwards the Archbishop of Canterbury received a letter from His Majesty, of which the following is a copy:—

"My good Lord Primate—I could not delay giving you the notification of the grief and concern with which my breast was affected, at receiving authentic information that routs have made their way into your palace. At the same time, I must signify to you my sentiments on this subject, which hold these levities and vain dissensions as utterly inexpedient, if not unlawful, to pass in residence for many centuries devoted to divine studies, religious retirement, and the extensive exercise of charity and benevolence; I add, in a place where so many of your predecessors led their lives in such sanctity as has thrown lustre on the pure religion they professed and adorned.

From the dissatisfaction with which you must perceive I behold these improprieties, not to speak in harsh terms, and on still more pious principles, I trust you will suppress them immediately; so that I may not have occasion to show any further marks of my displeasure, or to interpose in a different manner. May God take your grace into his almighty protection!

I remain, my Lord Primate,  
Your gracious friend,  
G. R.

The King afterwards declared that he thought Lady Huntingdon one of the best of women—sentiment in which the Queen cordially concurred, and from which his grace the Archbishop may be presumed to have as cordially dissented.

So varied and extensive was the circle of her ladyship's acquaintance, that even the infidel Lord Bolingbroke, and Chesterfield, were among her most intimate friends. Some curious anecdotes are given of both, but we have already extended this notice to such a length that we have not room for more extracts.

Lady Huntingdon died in 1791, in peace with the world and her God, after having dedicated a fortune of £100,000 to the establishment of Methodist Ministers and missions in every part of the British dominions, and having seen her pious labours crowned with unexampled success, and innumerable congregations formed to carry down her fame and her doctrines to the latest posterity. Her life was useful and honourable, her religious views were liberal and just, so far as could be expected from her position; and these volumes, recording every event of importance connected with her and the sect she established, and containing the entire of her correspondence, and that of the principal persons with whom she was connected, cannot fail to engage the anxious interest of all those who sympathise with her in the cause to which her life, her talents, and her fortune were devoted.

NEW ZEALAND.—Extract of a letter dated Bay of Islands (New Zealand), April 11:—I presume you have read an account in the newspapers of the capture of a French whale-ship at Chatham Island, by the natives, who murdered all the crew and ate them, ran the ship on shore and burnt her to the water's edge. We were bound to Chatham Island when we got the news, which made the Captain relinquish his design of coming to an anchor there, but we cruised about the island two days. The natives would not venture on board, fearing we should detain them. A short time ago a French man-of-war went there for the purpose of avenging the murder of their countrymen; but they did not land, and could not see a single native; they had fled to the mountains. She then came out, and fell in with an American whale-ship, bound in, and the captain formed a plot for taking them. The man-of-war disguised herself like a whaler, and put twenty marines on board the American; they both stood in and came to anchor. On the third day they saw some natives; the American sent a boat on shore to endeavour to entice them on board, but it was a long time before they could succeed; but at last got the chief and ten or twelve of his men and two women on board. The captain plied them with liquor, when he thought they had enough he gave the signal, and the marines made a rush upon deck, and after a severe struggle they were all secured, with the exception of one woman, who jumped overboard, and was shot dead by one of the marines, who mistook her for a man. They were all taken on board the French ship to be conveyed to France. It appears it was their intention to take the American ship and serve her as they had done the other."

CAUSE OF DEFORMITY IN CHILDREN.—The infant's first mode of progression is crawling, and it is the mode best suited to the condition of its bones and muscles, and calls them all equally into action. The bones are soft and flexible, the muscles weak; so that neither the bones nor the muscles are capable of supporting the weight of the body. Many persons inflict permanent injuries upon infants by making them stand upon their feet, and walk upright, before their limbs are sufficiently strong; the consequence is, that the bones of the legs bend beneath their burden, the muscles become shorter on one side than on the other, and thus the efficiency of both is impaired. To this cause must be attributed the prevalence of deformities of the lower extremities.—*Curtis on Health.*