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Poetry.

LOSING AND LIVING.

Forever the sun is pouring his gold
On a hundred worlds that beg and borrow;
His warmth he squanders on summits cold,
His wealth on the homes of want and sorrow.
To withhold his largess of precious light
Is to bury himself in endless night;
To give is to live.

The flower shines not for itself at all,
Its joy is the joy it freely diffuses;
Of beauty and balm it is prodigal,
And it lives in the life it sweetly loses.
No choice for the rose, but glory or doom—
To exhale or smother, to wither or bloom.
To deny is to die.

The sea lends silvery rain to the land,
The land its sapphire streams to the ocean;
The heart sends blood to the brain of command,
The brain to the heart its lightning motion;
And ever and ever we yield our breath
Till the mirror is dry and images death.
To live is to give.

He is dead whose hand is not opened wide
To help the need of a human brother;
He doubles the life of his life-long ride
Who gives his fortune's place to another;
And a thousand million lives are his
Who carries the world in his sympathies:
To deny is to die.

Throw gold to the far-dispersing wave,
And your ships sail home with sons of treasure;
Care not for comfort, all hardship brave,
And evening and age shall sup with pleasure;
Fling health to the sunshine, wind, and rain,
And roses shall come to the cheek again:
To give is to live.

What is our life? Is it wealth and strength?
If we for the Master's sake will lost it,
We shall find it a hundred fold at length,
While they shall forever lose that refuse it:
The people that save their union and peace
At the cost of right, their woes shall increase:
They save a grave.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

REVIEW.

The Martyr Church: a narrative of the Introduction, Progress, and Triumph of Christianity in Madagascar. By the Rev. William Ellis, Author of "Polynesian Researches," "Three visits to Madagascar," &c. &c., London, 1870, pp. 404.

Mr. Ellis is a veteran author. His first work, "A Tour in Hawaii," was published in 1826, and was well received by the public. The "Polynesian Researches" established his reputation as a writer. As a missionary as well as an author his name stands high, and "his works praise him." Of late years his attention has been almost exclusively turned to Madagascar, where he is loved and honored by the native Christians, to whom he has become justly endeared by his persevering efforts on behalf of the cause of Christ in that Island.

Mr. Le Brun was sent out by the London Missionary Society in 1814. He settled in the Mauritius, intending to operate thence on Madagascar, as Providence might open the way. Other Missionaries followed, who established a mission on the Island. Their first attempt was by education, in which they met with great success. In 1824 they commenced public worship on the Lord's day. The first Christian Church in Madagascar was formed in 1831. The work went on prosperously, till a large number of the natives had received the gospel. The New Testament had been translated, and evangelical light was spreading in every direction. Then the priests and the magicians took the alarm.

Under king Radama I. the labours of the missionaries were carried on without molestation. He died in 1828, and was succeeded by Ranavalona I., one of his wives. She soon became a cruel persecutor, and endeavoured to "wear out the saints of the Most High" by all kinds of vexations and annoyances, varieties of tor-

ture, and horrible modes of death. The missionaries were compelled to leave the country. The last of them departed in 1836, and for twenty-six years the native Christians were exposed to all the fury of a barbarous government. It was perilous to be known to pray. It was treasonable to meet for worship. Yet the servants of God maintained their "loyalty, their love, their zeal." They assembled in the dead of night to worship God, after travelling many miles to accomplish their purpose. They encouraged and aided each other; they carried on home missionary work, and with such success that great numbers were converted, so that, as it was with the Israelites in Egypt, the more they were afflicted the more they "multiplied and grew." All this was in the face of accumulated sufferings. Some were thrown into prison, and loaded with heavy fetters; some were driven into slavery; and martyrs were speared, or hurled down the precipice, or burned alive.

"In February, 1835, when the missionaries were forbidden to preach or teach Christianity at any time or in any form and death was threatened to any native who should read the Bible, pray to God, receive baptism or join the communion of Christians,—in this persecution, although no life was taken, two thousand five hundred suffered different punishments. In July, 1845, the capture of Raintshava and other fugitives attempting to escape from the country brought severe persecution, when large numbers suffered. In February 1849, four nobles were burned alive, thirteen were hurled down the precipice, and two or three thousand punished; and in July, 1857, when the names of seventy Christians were carried to government by Ratsimundisa, who had been a pupil of the missionaries and associated with the Christians, thirteen were stoned to death, and more than fifty fastened together in heavy fetters, under which half the number died. These were the several persecutions which had fallen on the church in Madagascar during Queen Ranavalona's reign.

"In these four great persecutions, besides those who suffered at other times, more than 10,000 persons were sentenced to different kinds of penalties; and what had been the result? After death had been threatened, in the name of all that was powerful and dreaded in heaven and on earth, to every one who should avow the hated faith—after encouraging informers, scouring the country with troops and recommending vigilance in Christian hunting as a test of loyalty and means of promotion; after employing divination, and invoking the gods of the country against the defenceless Christians, what had been the result? *The Christians had increased in the land from one thousand, when the persecution commenced, to seven thousand when it ended; the communicants, from about two hundred, had increased to a thousand.* Such, by God's grace and power, was the blessed fruit of six-and-twenty years of persecution!

"During these years the Christians had been destitute of all human guidance and all human aid. No European preacher or teacher had gone in and out amongst them. God had been their helper and the Holy Spirit, who, as the Christians said, was the best teacher, had been with them; and these were the marvellous results." p. 269.

The execution of those who were "hurled down the precipice" is thus described:—

"The remaining fourteen confessors were now taken along the public roads, through the agitated and deeply affected crowds in the city, to Ampamarinana, the Tarpeian rock of Madagascar. Here, on the top of a lofty precipice, at the edge of the western crest of the mountain on which the city is built, the matting wrapt round their bodies was removed, but their arms remained pinioned, and their ankles were bound with cords. Thus bound they were taken, one by one, to the edge of the precipice, and either pushed, or laid down and rolled, or kicked over the downward curving edge, whence they

fell fifty or sixty feet, when, striking a projecting ledge, they bounded off and fell amongst jagged and broken fragments of granite lying at the base of the precipice, one hundred and fifty feet below the edge from which they had been hurled. Life was generally extinct. One distinguished Christian, when the matting in which he was wrapped had been removed, is said to have asked permission to stand and view once more the scene before him. His request was granted, and after looking at each familiar object, he remained silent a few minutes, as if in prayer; then forced over the precipice, he was heard singing a Christian hymn as his body descended to be crushed and broken in death."

We must make room for the account of the martyrdom of the "four nobles." Two of them were husband and wife, as they were then conducted to the place of execution they were heard singing one of their own "simple and expressive hymns," the first verse of which begins,

"Going home are we to God."

"Thus they sung until they reached the spot where one large pile was kindled, and the flames were rising, they prayed and praised the Lord. Among the utterances then heard by those around them were these—'Lord Jesus, receive our spirit—lay not this sin to their charge!' and, as if visions of the future triumphs of the Lord were given to their departing spirit, one was heard to exclaim, 'His name, his praise, shall endure for ever and ever.'"

"Once if not more than once, the falling rain extinguished the fire, which was rekindled; and to one of the sufferers the pains of maternity were added to those of the flames. While their spirits were thus enduring and praying, a large and triple rainbow, the sign of God's promise and faithfulness, was stretched across the heavens, one end seeming to rest upon the spot whence the martyr's spirits were departing. Some of the spectators, to whom the phenomenon appeared supernatural, fled in terror; but one, who faithfully remained to the end, records of the Christians, 'They prayed as long as they had any life. Then they died; but softly, gently. Indeed, gently was the going forth of their life, and astonished were all the people around that beheld the burning of them there.'" pp. 369-172.

Blessed be God for the martyr spirit! It is the same in the nineteenth century as it was in the first—and the fourth—and the sixteenth.

The persecuting Queen died in 1861, and was succeeded by King Radama II. Then the dark cloud passed away. One of the new king's earliest proclamations gave full liberty of worship to the people; they might be Pagans, or Mohamedans, or Christians; and every man might preach and teach his religion, without molestation. Two years afterwards, in a political revolution, Radama was murdered. His widow, Rasoharina, ascended the throne, and reigned five years. Religious freedom was continued under her reign, and missionary labour resumed.

Our own beloved Queen gave utterance to her kind feelings on this subject. When a commercial treaty between England and Madagascar was agreed to by the respective governments of those countries, Olitoria requested, "as an expression of friendship to herself (or words to that effect that Queen Rasoharina would not allow the Malagasy Christians to be persecuted on account of their religion." Rasoharina responded in the following terms:—"Her Majesty the Queen of Madagascar, from her friendship for her Britannic Majesty, promises to grant full religious liberty to all her subjects, and not to persecute, or molest any subject or native of Madagascar on account of their embracing or exercising the Christian religion." The Queen kept her word faithfully.

Rasoharina died April 1, 1868. The throne is now occupied by Queen Ranavalona II. On occasion of the grand public ceremonial, equivalent to a coronation when the sovereign receives the homage of the subjects, the Queen said, respecting

Christian worship. "It is not enforced, and it is not forbidden, for God made you. Grand words for a sovereign to utter! Would that all the kings and queens in the world understood religious freedom as well as the Queen of Madagascar!"

Again:—"At the annual festival of the Malagasy new year, which was held on the 21st of January, 1869, the Christians and the English were invited, with other guests, to the palace, where the feast in former years had been celebrated with idolatrous ceremonies. But on this occasion there was neither idol, priest, nor recognition of the gods of the ancestors. Instead of this, three of the preachers engaged in prayer, and in his address on the occasion the queen said: "This is what I have to say to you, my people, I have brought my kingdom to lean upon God (or, I sustain my kingdom by leaning upon God) and I expect you, one and all, to be wise and just, and to walk in the ways of God."

More than this—the Queen has become a Christian, and has joined the Church. Her Majesty did not enter by a "royal road;" she had to go through the same course of instruction, and pass the same examination, as other candidates for fellowship; nor was she admitted till satisfactory proof was afforded that she was a true convert.

The national idols have been burned. In every part of the Island a spirit of inquiry after truth has arisen. The family altar is erected in all Christian households; and among the members of the churches an earnest desire for "higher spiritual life" is manifested.

In December, 1868, there were twelve English Agents, eight of whom were ordained ministers; twenty native pastors:—437 native preachers and teachers:—37,112 adherents to Christianity:—7,066 communicants.

Such is the statement of the book. But a year has passed away since then; and what is the present report? One of the missionaries says (as stated in the annual report of the society last month.) "The total number of adherents has risen from 37,000 to 153,000 in twelve months, and even this is too low an estimate if we wish to include all who call themselves Christians. We have purposely reported lower numbers than the natives have given us in very many cases. Besides this, there are congregations scattered over the whole island in the various ports and military stations, of which very few are included in our report. The missionary further states that "the number of Church members has increased from 7066 to 10,546," which increase, he observes, "is very moderate, and shows how careful the missionary brethren are to see their people well instructed and their religious character tried before they are admitted to the full privileges of Christian fellowship."

It is said that the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel will soon send a "bishop to Madagascar, with full ritualistic apparatus. This is very unlovely—very unlike the spirit of the Apostle Paul. See 2 Cor. x 15, 16. The Church Missionary Society, we are happy to say, disapproves of the measure.

There is no need to characterise or commend the volume before us. It is enough to say that it was written by the Rev. William Ellis.

C.

For the Christian Messenger.

"A TIME TO MOURN AND A TIME TO DANCE."

It is desirable to know the proper time for these different exercises. None can know better the proper time than He who has said there is a time for each. Of His knowledge we can avail ourselves by a prayerful study of his word.

By that word we learn that mourning arose from a variety of causes, some having relation to things temporal such as the loss of relatives or property; famine or pestilence; others having more immediate reference to things spiritual such as