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Poetry.

THE TWO VINES.

JOHN xv: 1; Rev. xiv: 18, 19.

I saw a noble vine, whose spreading green
Checked the grass beneath with light and shade,
And the bright sun rays stealing in between,
A tender twilight made.

Soft tendrils twined around its graceful form,
And on the air a faint, sweet fragrance threw;
And on its leaves beneath the sunlight warm
Lay drops of purest dew.

Its luscious fruit in heavy clusters hung,
Each grape complete, from spot and blemish free;
And at the sight glad praises filled my tongue,
So fair a plant to see.

The Husbandman drew near. "Behold!" he said,
"I've toiled, that beautiful my vine might be;
I've watered it with my own blood, and none
May pluck its fruit but me."

Cluster by cluster drop the ripened grapes,
And the rich fragrance overflows his hands,
Till 'mid the swelling mounds of purple bloom
With smiling face he stands.

I saw another vine: it boldly tossed
Its coarse green leaves abroad upon the air;
No wondrous flower its baleful shadow sought,
No bee e'er tarried there.

No tired bird e'er nestled 'mid its leaves,
Nor made the place melodious with its song;
But stealthy serpents, coiling round its root,
Dragged their cold length along.

Its blood-red clusters shone like fiery eyes
Under the frowning of a darkening sky;
And 'mid the blackening shadows of the night
It stood defiantly.

No husbandman its clusters gathered in,
But a stern angel, with a sickle broad,
Into the wine-press cast the worthless vine
Of the fierce wrath of God.

Religious.

For the Christian Messenger.

FALLEN VETERANS.

(FROM AN ENGLISH CORRESPONDENT.)

Three great men in Israel have fallen before the scythe of the reaper Death since this year made its advent. Two of them were numbered amongst the brightest ornaments of our own Church, and the third, though an eminent leader in another community, was claimed by all sections of the Church of Christ as friend, brother, and fellow-helper, and his loss is felt as deeply, and mourned as sincerely, as if he had been "numbered with us." Scarcely had we reached the second week in the month of January, when the reports concerning the health of our venerable brother

THE HON. AND REV. W. B. NOEL, were ominous of coming ill. He had been ailing for some time past but his friends devoutly hoped that the quietude of his delightful home at Stanmore, and the loving attention with which he was blessed, would in the end restore to active service this earnest and gifted labourer in the Lord's Kingdom. However this was not to be. On the afternoon of Sunday the 19th Jan. he quietly passed away to his eternal rest and reward. With the broad outline of the life and labours of this truly nobleman the friends of the Baptist denomination in every land will be more or less conversant. The son of Sir Gerard Noel Noel, Bart., and the grandson of Lord Barham, he was connected by birth to the noble and aristocratic houses of the land; educated in the ancient university of Cambridge, where he took the usual degrees of Bachelor and Master of Arts, graduating with distinction in the 27th year of his age, he was fully qualified by his advantages of culture to take a leading position in any department of life to which he might choose to devote himself. He chose, and we believe conscientiously, to give himself to the work of the Ministry in the Established Church of England. From the first, "says the *Times*, he warmly attached himself to the Evangelical party, of which he was one of the acknowledged leaders during those years through which he occupied the pulpit of St. John's Chapel. There he drew together a very numerous audience of the upper classes; and churchgoers of forty years ago will re-

member at once the eloquence and length of his sermons, and the long string of carriages which blocked up the adjoining streets at the end of his Sunday morning service." The vital truths of the gospel were the topics which he constantly kept in the forefront of his pulpit teaching; he distinctly recognized the whole bearing of Evangelical truths; he was manly, generous and disinterested in his conduct; hence it became a matter for wonder on the part of many Evangelical Nonconformists how such a man could keep his connection with the Church of England. However the time came when he himself saw that the position was no longer tenable; then, in spite of the warnings, entreaties, and threatenings of friends; in spite of all his popularity as the acknowledged preacher of his day; in spite of his position as Queen's Chaplain and the member of an aristocratic house, he left all that he might be loyal to his conscience, and true to his Lord. His secession from the Establishment was the leading ecclesiastical event of the year 1848 in this country. At first it was reported that his chief reasons for coming out was the Church and State question. It was also rumoured that the baptism of believers only had also occupied much of his attention. These rumours were publicly confirmed when he was baptized by immersion and when he published his "Essay on the Union of Church and State," and his essays on "Christian Baptism," and on the "External act of Baptism." These made it plain that he was not only a seceder, but that he had gone further, and was in principle, as well as practically a Nonconformist. The excitement created by his secession was wide spread and intense. The evening on which he was baptized (Aug. 9th, 1849) John-street Chapel, Bedford row, was crowded to excess. Hon. Mr. Noel with 13 other candidates confessed his Lord before men: here he gave his reasons for this step which he was taking; and here, as a fitting sequel to this splendid exhibition of consistency to Christian principle, we find him located a month afterwards as pastor of the Church. From that day till the year 1868—a period of 37 years—did he go in and out amongst this people ministering to them, as few could minister, the word of eternal life. Ever busily engaged in his own Church; on the affairs of the denomination; on the great ecclesiastical and political questions of the times; bringing to bear on all that he did his ripe, full Christian spirit, his broad culture and his intense spiritual earnestness. During these years Mr. Noel was as busy with his pen as with his tongue, and, as a result of this activity, we have some eighteen volumes of essays, sermons and pamphlets all connected more or less with his grand fundamental work of teaching Christian truth. At the age of 70 he retired from the active duty of the pastorate, but not into "an inglorious idleness." He now entered upon evangelistic work in sea side and other towns, his engagements being made, as the conditions, that no collections were to be taken; but that the object should alone be making known the tidings of salvation. As may be supposed, these services were largely attended, and produced good results, both in quickening the zeal of the churches, and in adding to their numbers. Thus, at the ripe age of 75, there has passed away from us one of our grand denominational veterans. A gentleman, a scholar, a true Christian teacher and philanthropist. A man whose existence was a public power, and whose loss has caused a gap in our ranks which will not easily be filled.

The death and funeral of Mr. Noel had scarcely ceased to be the objects of common talk amongst us, when the tidings spread abroad through the land that

DR. NATHANIEL HAYCROFT,

the much esteemed and honoured pastor of the Victoria-road Church, Leicester had been smitten with a severe illness. For ten days all that the best medical skill, and the earnest careful

attention of loving friends could do, was done, in order that health might be won back again to the stricken body. All endeavours proved fruitless; on Sunday, the 16th Feb. our brother, who was quite conscious to the end, breathed his last about 5 o'clock in the evening. The death of Baptist Noel, though not expected, did not surprise us, he was "old and well-stricken in years," but the death of Dr. Haycroft came upon us with the swiftness of a lightning flash. We saw him a few months ago, strong in body, in intellect, in heart. He seemed to be rejoicing in the full prime of manhood's power, and now, at the comparatively early age of 52, we have to number him with the dead, speak of him as one who has been. Dr. Haycroft, though not such a prominent man, in many respects, as Baptist Noel, can still be classed as one of our leading men, and his loss creates a vacancy in our Ministry which we shall with difficulty supply. He was essentially a man for the times. Naturally endowed with gifts above the average of men, these gifts had been diligently cultivated, and duly exercised in every department of thought and labour that can occupy a Christian minister in these times of great mental activity. From the time he entered Stepney College, to the day that he left the University at Glasgow, "he was not only a laborious and brilliant student, but a most active worker for Christ, both in Church and Sunday school." Dr. James Paterson, the pastor of the church at Hope street, Glasgow, says of Haycroft, "that of all the students from England who had connected themselves with his congregation, no one was such a constant and zealous worker, with the brethren, as Nathaniel Haycroft. In that respect he excelled all the young friends from the South with whom he had been brought in contact."

Dr. Haycroft's student life only foreshadowed what his ministerial life would be. His ardent zeal and love were not destined, like "the morning cloud and the early dew," to pass away; they grew and expanded as his advancing position and the conditions of the times made new demands upon him, so that at the time when death, "like a friend's voice," called to him to cease his work and enter his rest, it found him more busily employed than at any previous time in his zealous career. The history of his ministry has many features in common with the histories of many of our most honoured brethren. He did not rise to the height of distinction by one grand and brilliant leap, or by any special series of extraordinary efforts; his success was the success of steady, persistent work, and careful conscientious fulfilment of the duties that lay nearest to him. Entering upon his work with a good education, and after having honourably earned his M. A. degree at the Glasgow University, he did not wait until some influential church should call him to the pastorate, but as soon as his college curriculum came to a close he began his ministry in the, comparatively small, town of Saffron-Walden in Essex; and there laboured with faithfulness, and with success, until the call came to him to step out into the more important and onerous field of labour, as pastor of the time-honoured church of Broadmead, Bristol. For a man, comparatively young and unknown to fame, to enter the pulpit once made famous by the marvellous eloquence and wide-reaching ability of "the Prince of Preachers," was no small undertaking; and one can well imagine that Haycroft would feel, as much as most men what such a position deserved at his hands. He gave to that position the best of his heart and brain. He soon occupied a position of great influence in the town and in his denomination. The various institutions of Bristol soon began to benefit by his active help, and large intellectual abilities; and, to the end of his stay in that city, did not fail to testify their thorough appreciation of his services. Some seven years ago

he resigned the pastorate of Broadmead to take charge of the newly-opened church in Victoria-road, Leicester. "Here," one of our denominational papers says, "he soon won by his intellectual attainments a high position on the local platform. He was one of the first elected members of the Leicester School-board, and rendered most useful service to that body in their preliminary labour. He has occupied ably and well the presidential chair of the 'Literary and Philosophical Society,' during the current session; and, in that capacity, delivered an address of marked ability on 'The Limits of Philosophical Thought.' At our annual and denominational meetings his manly form was readily observed; and his skill in discussion was well-known. For many years he was a prominent member of the Baptist Missionary Committee, and his aid in several emergencies was gladly given and highly appreciated; notoriously in connection with the questions which have recently arisen relative to our Indian Mission." One of the daily papers, issued in the Locality of Leicester, says of Haycroft, "In debate he was quick and keen; in the pulpit more reasoning and persuasive than commanding. As a man he was gentlemanly, and affable in his bearing. In his ministerial labours, he enjoyed as much of the love and esteem of his people as it was possible for a pastor to do, and it will be long before his congregation will find another to occupy the same place in their affections as he did. Dr. Haycroft lived respected by all who knew him and has died most deeply lamented." Thus, we mark the fall of another Christian warrior. In the midst of battle, with "harness on his back," the "call" of God came once more, not this time summoning to fresh and more arduous fields of labour, but to the enjoyment and never-ending satisfaction of that Divine rest, which the Church's Lord has prepared for all the soldiers of His Cross.

Four days after Dr. Haycroft's mortal remains had been carried to their last resting place, the sound of funeral notes was again heard in the land. This time "the last enemy of man" had passed away from our ranks, to those of the "Free Church of Scotland," and smitten the aged and venerable form of that great philanthropist, and divine,

DR. THOMAS GUTHRIE.

He had gone to the beautiful and picturesque retreat St. Leonards-by-the-Sea, to recruit his strength a little before starting on his journey to Rome, at which place he had intended to pass the winter. Rome, however, was not to be the City of his refuge, but a far more splendid and Imperial city than she was in the days of her loftiest grandeur; the city, whose builder and maker is God, was the place where Guthrie had—not to winter in—but to enter on the summer of eternal life. To throw the life of Dr. Guthrie into a mere brief outline is almost an impossibility. To see the man, as he really was, it is needful to have all the play of the light and shade of minor detail thrown upon the canvass; the life was so full and complete, it will hardly bear any abridgement, if justice is to be done to its beauty and moral grandeur. Now, however, a sketch is all that can be attempted. Dr. Guthrie was born at Brechin in Forfarshire in the year 1800. His father was a member of the established church, but his mother was a seceder of "the most straightest sect." She did not believe in State patronage, and disbelieved most fully in the ecclesiastical abuses that were so prevalent at that time. Thus, from his mother, young Thomas inherited his strong love of religious liberty; and by attending with her at the seceders' meeting house, became acquainted early in life with the Dissenters for whom he ever afterwards entertained a profound respect. After passing through the prescribed course of study at the Edinburgh University he was licensed by the Presbytery of Brechin, to preach. Failing to get a church he went to

Paris, and there studied medicine for two years. On his return from Paris he entered his father's bank in Brechin, where he went through all the routine of office work, and made himself familiar with the science of finance. On attaining his 30th year however a way was made for him to begin his life's work as preacher of the Gospel. He was ordained minister of the parish of Arbirlot, in his native county. Here, at first, his ministry was not a success. His sermons were prosy and tedious, and as a consequence his audience was unedified, and inattentive. One day, by accident, he introduced an anecdote into his discourse; his hearers brightened up and became interested, and at the end of his discourse congratulated him upon the felicity of his story. Guthrie laid this to heart, and soon found that he had hit upon a method of interesting his hearers. "From that time forward his sermons and speeches were cast in an entirely different mould, the anecdotal predominated over the didactic, and he became more and more skilled in the rare art of rivetting and retaining undiminished the interest of his audience." In the year 1837, Guthrie left the quiet scene of his labours at Arbirlot, to enter upon the arduous duties of the pastorate of the Collegiate church of Old Greyfriars, Edinburgh. This change of pastorate produced a profound impression on Guthrie. His parish included the vilest haunts in Edinburgh, and to purify these he was determined to devote the best energies of his life. One day as he was standing upon the North Bridge looking down upon the wretchedness and vice below, and contrasting it with the quiet village he had just left, he was tapped on the shoulder. Looking round he confronted Dr. Chalmers; the great and good man nodding his head in the direction of the slums, said, "A grand field, sir; a grand field for operations." Into this field Thomas Guthrie went, and laboured with so much zeal and success that soon the fame of him went abroad through all the churches, and in 1840 he became minister, by his own desire, of the parish of St. John's, which was formed principally out of his old parish and included some of the most destitute places in the city. In this he laboured till the memorable year 1843. At the Disruption he was obliged to vacate his post. His congregation followed him almost to a man; and after an interval of several years, during which time they worshipped in a temporary church, they entered upon the New-Free Church of St. John's, of which Dr. Guthrie was till the time of his death, the nominal head. Guthrie's conduct at the time of the disruption forms one of the brightest pages in his history. Leaving the debates concerning the minutiae and formalities of ecclesiastical law to be dealt with by others, he threw himself heart and soul into the work of providing homes for the displaced ministers. He travelled through the country pleading their cause, and in six months had raised a sum of £150,000 towards this object. When his work was done he reappeared in the General Assembly in 1845, and received a most enthusiastic reception. It was one of the proudest moments in his life; but it cost him dear, his health had been so shattered with this undertaking that he had to rest from work for a whole year.

The ragged-school movement, and the name of Guthrie, must ever be linked together in this country. By his energetic and persistent advocacy of this cause, both before the Christian public at large, and the various Governments of this country he has laid claim to be gratefully remembered by all posterity. This was a work that lay close to his heart, this uplifting of the ignorant and fallen, and the rescuing from vice of those who had not yet fallen victims to sinful habit; and he left no stone unturned to call the attention of legislators to the duty of providing for this class some means of rescue, and it was due in great measure to his efforts that