

tical spot where our Saviour was born. It is a large and magnificent basilica, built by the Empress Helena, in the earliest Christian ages, and is now jointly occupied by Roman Catholic, Greek, and Armenian monks. It is hoary with years, and most venerable in appearance; and as I looked on its pictures of Saints and Martyrs dim with age, and on its pavements deeply worn by the dusty feet of weary pilgrims, who for fifteen centuries have been coming from afar to bend in gratitude and love over the spot where their Redeemer was born, in solemn reverence, I could not but feel that the very air of the place was sacred. A monk soon conducted me down to the cave of the Nativity. Descending a long narrow flight of steps, I found myself in a splendid subterranean recess paved with marble and draped with silk, and ornamented with a rich altar and all the appendages of Catholic worship. On one side was a semi-circular niche, encased with marble, encompassed with splendid lamps, and containing a Latin inscription signifying that here Jesus was born. The Manger itself is among the relics preserved at Rome. Although caves are sometimes used even at this day in Palestine as stables for horses, yet this was evidently too deep and inconvenient ever to have served for such purpose, and I am inclined to consider this as rather an absurd instance of the strange propensity of the ancient monks to locate all the holy places under ground. Yet St. Jerome expressly affirms that this was the place of the Nativity, and his authority is not without weight. At the distance of a few yards was the cell where St. Jerome passed the last years of his life, and wrote most of his works. It was a cold, dimly lighted stone apartment, just suited for an arctic life. Adjoining it was a little dark cave where he died. There is no doubt about the authenticity of these places, and with no little interest did I associate them with the memory of the great Christian Father. Not far distant was an excavation in the rock, the narrow entrance into which was closely grated with bars of iron. This I was told, and a picture above it confirmed the story, was the place where the Innocents murdered by Herod were buried. I was glad when I got out once more under the same broad blue sky that once sparkled with the "Star of the East," and was careering among the hills that once resounded with the songs of the angels.

CHRISTIAN VISITOR.

SAINT JOHN, FRIDAY, JANUARY 18, 1860.

FUNERAL POMP AND EXPENSE.

The orders of the late Queen Dowager in regard to her burial have afforded a text and topic to some of the English papers, which we would be glad to see discussed and properly settled on this side of the Atlantic. We always considered the formalities and extravagant expenses attendant on the death of friends unnecessary and absurd; and especially is this our present conviction in observing the extent to which they are carried in this Province beyond what we have been used to elsewhere. Few masters are so tyrannical as fashion, yet few are more willingly served, and we have already discovered the tenacity with which people will cling to this evil custom for which it would be in vain to seek a better reason or apology than that it is the fashion. We honor the good sense as we admire the unaffected piety of the excellent lady alluded to, and who has, we may hope, now been honored with the crown of life.

"I die in all humility, and I request therefore that my mortal remains be conveyed to the grave without any pomp or state. I die in peace, and wish to be carried to the tomb in peace, and free from the vanities and the pomp of this world."

We admire this not merely as the sentiment of a royal personage, though such authority and example may give it force, but the expression represents and reveals the royalty of sound reason and religion.

If pomp and vanity and display and the accessories of pride are ever unreasonable and out of place they are certainly so in connection with the solemnities of death; and he who cannot discard affectation and be still and chaste and devout when God thus passes by cannot be deeply religious.

We have deliberated long and frequently upon such evils as the following in connection with this subject.

1. The stifling of religious conviction. Death makes a solemn appeal to a family.— "That is the end of all men; and the living

will lay it to his heart." Such would be the natural and appropriate impression. If this should be the case it would more frequently appear a good thing to be afflicted; many might be led to Christ and be savingly converted thereby. How important then that there should be no disturbing influence introduced. What a responsibility is incurred by interposing any engrossing topic to the minds of those with whom God is treating in this solemn business of the soul's concerns. But what has become the custom in this case?—Why the house which God would invest with the stillness and seriousness of mourning is immediately transformed to a Millinery and Mantau establishment and there is all the hum of buying and cutting and fitting and making articles of apparel.

2. God's commands are frequently set at naught in regard to the Sabbath. David came immediately to the house of God and worshipped. If there has been sufficient stir and expedition in the family to procure such an outfit as Fashion demands, families may now be able to attend in the house of God the Sabbath after this solemn visitation of God; but if want of means or time has delayed the provisions for appearance, Fashion forbids the observance of the Sabbath; and where God has opened the ear and laid his finger to soften the heart, the gospel cannot be heard.

3. Vanity and pride find here one of their chief incitements. A person can have but little knowledge of human nature who supposes that a family can be set off in a new dress, from the oldest to the least, though it be a "suit of mourning," without gratifying and feeding a foolish passion from which none of us are exempt, and which is ever craving indulgence. How much pious council from the bed of death is here buried! How many anxious prayers are here prevented! How many children and youth, and older ones are in this very circumstance hardened against God and confirmed in folly and sin.

4. We might add to these evils the expense. Sinful indulgences, and we do not hesitate to class this amongst such, are always expensive. Much might be urged on this head. Few can afford the expenses ordinarily incurred; and although they are to a certain extent graduated by different classes yet they bear often intolerably upon the poor and those in humble circumstances. Here fashion is unwontedly tyrannous. To be counted poor is in the judgment of most worse far than real poverty; so for fear of being thought of as they are, their moral sense must be blunted by an act of plausible hypocrisy; they must at all costs maintain appearances. Debts must be incurred with but little probability of payment except by denying education to the children, or support to the provisions of the Lord's house, or help to the more needy. Now in closing these hints we would call upon those who have the command of any special influence from office rank or wealth to do themselves justice and their community a most beneficial act, by disavowing the controul of this pernicious and expensive custom. It is only the example of such, which we regard a religious duty, that can effect anything towards emancipating others, and allowing God's solemn providences to work their appropriate and desirable results.

The present number closes the Second Volume, and we are hoping for a large accession for the Third Volume. We would call the attention of our ministering brethren to this one fact. If every Minister of our two Associations would send us each eight new paying subscribers to commence the new Volume, and collect in their several districts, it would give us an excess above all expenses sufficient to pay a Missionary's salary for his uninterrupted services the next year. How many stimulated by this fact will act? One brother knowing this gave one day and a half, and in that time secured *Ten*. Who will send the next ten?

We are under great obligation to brother McDonald for a list of new subscribers for the next volume from Hampton and Norton.—Brother McDonald will shortly visit the following places for arrears and for new subscriptions: Springfield, Little River, Upham, Norton, Sussex, Studholm.

Owing to our absence from the office when our last paper went to press, some curious mistakes occurred; amongst others, our leading editorial was severed in twain, and the latter half placed after the insertion of a number of smaller items in the next column to its other half. What is said of Webster's Dictionary in the second column of editorial mat-

ter should have been separated only by a comma, as will be seen on reverting to it, from the first article which as published, closed very abruptly.

After very pleasant exercises at the opening of the Hall in Springfield, our friends from the city stopped at Norton, and opened a Division of the Sons of Temperance in that place, on Wednesday morning last.

Our readers will see by notice in another column that two Divisions of the Sons of Temperance have been opened in Liverpool, the *Queen's*, No. 1, and *Mariner's*, No. 2. Capt. R. Wright, who was present, returned by the last steamer, and laid us under obligation by his kindness. Our deputation are still meeting with success in Liverpool, and doing good.

THE PILOT.—The new Temperance Paper published in Halifax, comes this week in a new, enlarged, and much improved dress. We would be happy to see it much more enlarged. The cause warrants greater pretensions.—We wish it much success.

The passport system, as we learn from the *Christian Times*, so far at least as foreigners are concerned, has been definitively abolished in France. This will relieve the Tourist from much annoyance.

DR. ACHILLI.—The *Christian Times* of December 28, reports a rumour which had just reached the Editor that Dr. Achilli had been liberated by the French authorities at Rome. Without the means of testing its accuracy he was still inclined to believe it correct.

BAPTISING BELLS.—The Romanists in Cincinnati have recently enacted the farce, which till lately it was supposed they would not attempt in this country. A bishop and three priests have put on a sober face, and gone through the ceremony of baptising four bells. They have from God no warrant to do such things, and if the devil instigated it, he must have a strangely constructed mind, to take pleasure in seeing men befool themselves and their spectators after that sort.

We cut the above from a respectable Pædo-baptist exchange, and though we think with that Editor, it is egregious trifling, we can rejoice that the irresponsible bell is not in days hence to become responsible, and then rely upon its baptism, as multitudes of souls have done and are now doing, upon whom this same ceremony was performed when "they have from God no warrant to do such a thing." We feel disposed to ask, as many do in regard to infant baptism, where do you find bell-baptism forbidden in the bible? or if it was not practised in the apostolic age, how could it ever have been introduced so as to have prevailed with infant baptism and all the ceremonies of St. Nicholas Day?

LETTERS RECEIVED.—Joseph Blakeney, with remittance; D. Crandal, do.; Asa Filamore, do.; Rev. W. Jackson, do.; Rev. W. D. Fitch, do.; Rev. J. B. Cogswell, do.; Rev. J. Francis; V. Graves; P. A. Wilson.

Correspondence.

[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

SABBATH SCHOOLS.

No. XXV.

Advantages of Sabbath Schools.

The following anecdotes would have found a more appropriate place in some of the preceding essays, but as they did not come under my notice till it was too late for so disposing them, I now group them together miscellaneously in this concluding essay.

Effect of Sabbath School Instruction.—The Rev. Mr. Hoover, in addressing a meeting of the Philadelphia Sunday School Union, thus spoke:—"If you had accompanied me in a walk through this district, two years ago, I could have led you to a house, or rather a hovel, not far from this spot, which was unfit to be the residence of man or beast. There you would have seen a widow, with her seven children, in the rags of poverty, and with the impress of misery on their countenances; the room and its occupants forming a scene of wretchedness seldom surpassed. If you will go with me to-morrow, I will show you the same house, but no longer a miserable tenement: Within you shall behold the same widow, and the same seven children, but clothed in comfortable raiment and peace smiling in

their faces. The Sabbath School Teacher has been there, and he has led them to the place of holy instruction. God has visited them in the plenitude of his grace, and five of those seven children give joyful evidence that they have passed from death unto life."

James Saunders.—The Rev. T. T. Bidulph, of St. James' Church, Bristol, mentioned from the pulpit, about 1818, that a boy, some years before, behaved so ill in the Saint James' Sabbath School, that neither kindness nor severity appeared to have any effect upon him. At length the teachers were very reluctantly obliged to expel him. For several years they heard nothing of him, and had almost forgotten the circumstance. Lately, as a clergyman (who was then a teacher in the School) was sitting in his study, in a distant country village, a sailor knocked at the door. On being admitted, he said to the clergyman, "I suppose you have forgotten me, Sir?"—"Yes," said the Rev. Henry Poole, "I have, if I ever knew you." "Do you remember a wicked boy, named James Saunders?" "Oh yes! I have cause to remember him; he gave me much trouble and anxiety. What do you know of him?" "I am the lad!" "You are grown so, and are so much altered, that I could not have believed it. Well, James, what account can you give of yourself?" "A very sorry one, Sir: when I was expelled the school, I left the city, and wandered I scarcely knew or cared where. At length I found myself at the sea-side; weary of living by lying and stealing, I got on ship-board; and, after sailing in various parts of the world, I was shipwrecked in a hurricane in the Bay of Honduras. After swimming till my strength failed me, I gave myself up for lost. In the middle of a dark night I came to my senses, and found myself on a rock half covered with water. I looked around and called out for my ship-mates and found that two of them were circumstanced like myself, every moment expecting a watery grave. For the first time since I left the school, you, sir, darted into my mind, I thought of your kindness, of my base ingratitude, and of some of the sacred truths you took so much pains to fix in my memory; particularly that passage in Numbers 23: 9.—

"From the top of the rocks I see him." In my extremity I looked to the Saviour of whom I had heard so much, but whom I had so long slighted and despised. I knelt down, up to my waist in water, and cried mightily that God would be the rock of my heart and my portion forever. I found your words true, that praying breath was never spent in vain. On the day breaking, we discovered some pieces of wreck on which we ultimately succeeded in reaching the shore. Then many precious truths you had taught me from the Bible came fresh into my memory; though I had almost forgotten during my career of iniquity that there was such a book. I thought, sir, you would be glad to find that all your care and anxiety on my behalf was not lost; I therefore walked from my ship, to thank you in the best manner I can, for your former kindness to me." On subsequently making inquiries of the captain under whose command James Saunders sailed, respecting his conduct and character, Mr. Poole received from him the most decided and satisfactory testimony respecting the change which the young sailor described himself to have undergone. Many months afterwards, Mr. Poole received a letter from the Captain, saying that poor James Saunders, in a distant part of the world, was seized with the fever; that during its progress he sent for the sailors, read to them while he was able out of the Bible, exhorted them to cleave to the Rock of Ages that never moves, to take example by him, though one of the vilest of sinners, who had found mercy and grace to help in every time of need; and commending them all to Jesus, he fell asleep in Him, without a struggle—a monument of saving grace and redeeming love."

The benefit of Sabbath School Teaching.—At the annual meeting of the British Sabbath School Union, in 1824, the Rev. Jacob Stanley said he would relate a fact respecting a Sabbath School Scholar. "Some years ago there was a widow in Staffordshire, whose son attended the Sabbath School, but he did not at first regard the religious instruction he received. He became wild and profligate; enlisted as a soldier, and was several years on the continent. Another young man, from the sametown, was proceeding to join his regiment, and called on the poor widow to ask her if she had anything to send to her son. She said she was very poor, she had no money to send, and, if she had, it might do him no good, but that she could send him a Bible; and she added,