

CHRISTIAN



VISITOR.

A Family Newspaper: devoted to

Religious & General Intelligence

REV. E. D. VERY,

"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."—ST. PAUL.

EDITOR.

Volume IV.

SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, FRIDAY, OCTOBER 17, 1851.

Number 39.

LINES BY MILTON IN HIS OLD AGE.

This sublime and affecting production was but lately discovered among the remains of our great epic poet,—and is published in the recent Oxford edition of Milton's Works.

I am old and blind!
Men point at me as smitten by God's frown;
Afflicted and deserted of my kind;
Yet I am not cast down.

I am weak, yet strong;
I murmur not that I no longer see;
Poor, old, and helpless, I the more belong,
Father Supreme! to Thee.

O merciful One!
When men are farthest, thou art most near,
When friends pass by, my weakness shun,
Thy chariot I hear.

Thy glorious face
Is leaning towards me; and its holy light
Shines in upon my lonely dwelling-place,
And there is no more night.

On my bended knee
I recognise Thy purpose, clearly shown;
My vision thou hast dimm'd that I may see
Thyself—Thyself alone.

I have nought to fear;
This darkness is the shade of Thy wing;
Beneath it I am almost sacred, here
Can come no evil thing.

O! I seem to stand [been,
Trembling, where foot of mortal ne'er hath
Wrapp'd in the radiance of Thy sinless land,
Which eye hath never seen.

Visions come and go;
Shapes of resplendent beauty round me throng;
From angel lips I seem to hear the flow
Of soft and holy song.

It is nothing now,
When heaven is opening on my sightless eyes—
When airs from paradise refresh my brow
The earth in darkness lies.

In a purer clime
My being fills with rapture—waves of thought
Roll in upon my spirit—strains sublime
Break over me unsought.

Give me now my lyre!
I feel the strings of a gift divine,
Within my bosom glows unearthly fire
Lit by no skill of mine.

RECOLLECTIONS OF WITTENBERG.

It was in the convent of Erfurt that the great German Reformer passed through his dreadful spiritual conflict, and it was here that he finally obtained that insight into the doctrine of gratuitous justification through Christ's righteousness, which broke his cruel fetters, and filled him with unspeakable joy. No one, therefore, who has any knowledge of the strength of Luther's feelings, can doubt that Erfurt was to him a hallowed spot, and that, in after life, he frequently thought of it with lively emotions. But however Luther may have regarded Erfurt, the Protestant world will ever look upon Wittenberg with far deeper interest, and there is no danger in affirming that it will not soon fade from the memory of the Church of Rome. It was Saturday afternoon when I reached Wittenberg, and as my fellow-traveller and I both had conscientious scruples about spending any portion of God's holy day in sight-seeing, we hastened to visit the principal objects of attraction before night. We wished to make sure of the old

Augustinian cloister, where Luther once lived; and our guide immediately conducting us to that spot, we soon found ourselves in

LUTHER'S APARTMENT.

He took up his abode in this room, as a monk, in 1509, when he went to Wittenberg, in his twenty-fifth year, to lecture on Philosophy in the University, and he had no other home the rest of his life. How little he thought, when he first took possession of it as an obscure monk, that it was destined to be the abode of the Reformer of Germany! When, long after this, it had to be repaired, he remarked, "If I should live another year, I must behold the removal of my poor little room, from whence I have stormed the Pope, for which cause it deserves to stand forever." It is unnecessary to say that we lingered long, and left it with regret. It seemed truly a sacred spot, and remaining, as it does, almost unaltered, it almost seemed as if the occupant would suddenly come in, and look upon us as intruders. There stands his chair, with the table at which he wrote, and his stove, made according to his own directions, with peculiar devices. We were also shown the jug from which he drank, as well as various little articles which his "Katy" made with her needle. From Luther's apartment we were taken to the

ELECTORAL CHURCH.

As early as 1353, the Elector of Saxony, received as a reward for services done to the King of France, a *thorn from the crown worn by Christ*. For this relic a chapel must needs be built, which grew by degrees into an important collegiate church. The present edifice, which occupies the place of the old chapel, was built by Frederic the Wise, the friend and protector of Luther, and was finished nine years previous to Luther's removal to Wittenberg. At that time it contained five thousand and five relics, belonging to martyrs, apostles, prophets, &c., and some also relating to Christ. Frederic himself expended a sum amounting to no less than one hundred and twenty-five thousand dollars on this church and its relics. Whoever obtained a sight of all these relics, and another collection, was entitled to fourteen hundred and forty-three years of indulgence! Against the doors of this church, Luther hung up his ninety-five theses, in which he condemned the doctrine of Papal indulgences; but what chiefly invests it with interest is the fact that both Luther and Melancthon were buried in it; we saw the tablets of bronze inserted in the floor over their graves. It contains likewise the tombs of Frederic the Wise and John the Steadfast, as well as statues of each of these Electors. Adjoining this church is the castle and palace which belonged to the Electors of Saxony. From this place we proceeded to the

PAROCHIAL OR CITY CHURCH.

It might with equal propriety be called Luther's church, for not only did he often preach in it, but it was this preaching "that made him as absolute ruler over the people of Wittenberg, as Chrysostom was at Antioch and Constantinople, or Calvin at Geneva." We are told that when Knox was called to the ministry, so great was his modesty and his sense of the importance of the ministerial office, that it was with great difficulty that he was prevailed upon to engage in the work. The case of Luther was exactly similar. When first called upon by Staupitz to preach, he manifested extreme reluctance; afterwards, when alluding to this subject, he said, "I was constrained to preach, and to make a beginning in the refectory with the brethren. Oh, what a horror I had of the pulpit!" Dr. Merle d'Aubigne tells us that he began in an old

wooden chapel which was falling to pieces, and that his pulpit was made of planks raised three feet from the ground. "In a short time," says the same writer, "the little chapel could no longer contain the crowds that flocked thither. The Council of Wittenberg then chose Luther for their preacher, and called upon him to preach in the church of that city."—In that very church we now stood; and surely, if there is a propriety in visiting places on account of their historical associations, it is no wonder that we desired so much to take a look at the old-fashioned city church of Wittenberg. The same baptismal font of bronze, from which Luther and Melancthon often baptized, stands near the pulpit. Our guide then showed us the spot where Luther burned the Pope's bull. It is a little out of the city, and an old oak tree which stands there is planted, it is said, on the site of the one under which the Papal bull was burned; they have enclosed the place with a railing. We then visited the

MARKET-PLACE.

in the centre of which stands a bronze statue of Luther, erected in 1817-1821. It stands on a pedestal, and over it is a Gothic canopy of cast iron. In the market-place, and immediately behind Luther's statue, in the City Hall, which is interesting, as containing some things associated with the great heroes of the Reformation, and of the Thirty Year's War. Here are a great number of portraits—of Luther, Melancthon, Dr. Eck, Gustavus Adolphus, and other military characters, as also the sword of Gustavus Adolphus, Luther's rosary which he once used, as well as five hour-glasses which belonged to him. These hour-glasses are all fastened in one frame, and are so made that the sand in the first runs out in a short time, and the next still longer, and so on.

Wittenberg is situated on the Elbe, about forty-eight miles south-west of Berlin, and contains at the present day 11,300 inhabitants.—It was once included in the jurisdiction of the Electors of Saxony, but it now belongs to the kingdom of Prussia; it is a gloomy, dirty place, and ill paved. We spent the Sabbath there, and the associations connected with the place, as well as the novelty of our situation, made it a memorable Sabbath in our lives; but alas! we saw few signs of that spiritual religion for which it was once noted. I cannot close without earnestly recommending to those who may read this, an admirable little work published by the American Sunday-school Union, called the "Life of Luther, with special reference to its earlier periods, and the opening scenes of the Reformation," by Dr. Sears. It is intensely interesting, and it contains a number of plates, illustrating some of the things I have briefly described.—*Presbyterian*.

The Present and Future of Mexico.

Recent accounts from the city of Mexico show that the government is on the eve of a general bankruptcy, which it is supposed, will speedily be followed by a revolution, until the nation is dissolved, and its elements formed into new combinations. What those combinations will be, is to be determined by circumstances. Congress has been in session for more than two months, trying to devise some method of meeting the crisis, but no practicable one has been proposed, and for some time past it has been almost impossible to secure a quorum of that body. The proposal which meets with most popular favor is to seize upon the immense revenues of the priesthood, and appropriate them to the purposes of government. The priests of course oppose this proposition, and by their immense power and influence have thus far been able to put off the evil day. The \$15,000,000 received from our government has up to this time enabled them to postpone the attack upon their purses,

but now that it is all gone they will not be able to do it much longer. They know well enough when their wealth is gone that their power goes with it. Hence the tenacity with which they cling to it. It is probable that depriving them of it Providence designs to open the way for the introduction of a purer religion among the people. The New York Tribune translates an article from the Monitor of the 1st of August, the leading journal in the city of Mexico, in which the Editor with great earnestness urges the Clergy to come forward and yield up willingly what the government so sadly needs. He says:

"The clergy are the richest class of our society; their revenue is sufficient not only to enable them to provide in a proper manner, but with luxury and profusion, for all the expenses attendant on religious rites. Well, then, those expenses under the present circumstances, far from being meritorious, are ridiculous and insulting to the misery of so many widows, of so many orphans, who, in order to appease their hunger, were for a miserable pittance from the public treasury as a premium for the blood shed by their husbands and fathers, in order to satisfy their rights. If those enormous sums that are spent in foolish parades were spent for the purpose of diminishing the sufferings of the people, much more pleasure would be given to the Deity; because then one of the great and good maxims of the gospel would be thus complied with.

"Should the Clergy, uniting themselves with the Government, provide them the means which they can easily dispose of without ruining themselves, the future indubitably would not present itself so gloomily; the Nation would be saved, and the government could with fewer afflictions agree upon the means of attending to our necessities, without being compelled to have recourse to those revenues, restoring them to the Clergy, who would possess the gratitude, and obtain the blessing of all the families who should be thus saved from misery and desolation.

"The revenues of the Church can provide resources sufficiently efficacious, without destroying those capitals which, being put in circulation, would restore to commerce its activity. The credit of government would be restored, and the whole people and clergy even would enjoy all the benefits that are consequent upon a commercial activity. Manufactures and Agriculture, which at present are paralysed for want of capital to promote them, would flourish, providing for the government all the resources necessary to enable them to comply with their obligations. And what would be obtained, above all, would be the saving the nation from the ruin towards which it is approaching with an accelerated pace, impelled by misery and want of estimation.

"A thousand times have we drawn this sad picture which the nation presents—weakened by factions, without resources, without credit, borne down by the innumerable weight of compromises, its independence and nationality threatened by the neighboring nation (?) It needs, in order to free itself from this extreme situation, to have recourse to violent means, because the first of all considerations is its own salvation. We should desire that extreme measures should not be employed but when no others are presented; and for this reason we have thought proper to excite the patriotism of the clergy, in order that they may make a sacrifice for our unfortunate country.

"But if, as we do not believe, the clergy refuse to contribute in a prompt and efficacious manner, then, whatever measures will be taken will be just, because it is better to have a country than Church revenues and privileges, and because all those accumulated and unproductive sums belong to the nation; they are