

The Christian Visitor.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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LITERARY NOTICE.

THE GREAT CONCERN, OR MAN'S RELATION TO GOD AND A FUTURE STATE—By NEHEMIAH ADAMS, D. D.

Such is the title of a work recently issued by Gould & Lincoln, 59 Washington St., Boston. It treats—1st. Of Instantaneous Conversion. 2nd. Justification and its consequences. 3rd. Our Bible. 4th. Scriptural Argument for future Endless Punishment. 5. Reasonableness of future endless punishment. 6. God is love.

These important doctrines are treated by the learned author with much perspicuity and force, and in perfect harmony with the religious views of all evangelical christians. We cordially commend it as a book adapted to do great good.

SPURGEON'S SERMONS.

A SERMON DELIVERED BY REV. C. H. SPURGEON, AT SURREY GARDENS, LONDON, MAY 15TH.

Conclusion.

"From the days of John the Baptist until now the kingdom of heaven suffereth violence, and the violent take it by force."—*Matthew, 11: 12.*

II. NOW, BRING THESE VIOLENT MEN FORWARD AND LET US ASK THEM WHAT THEY ARE ABOUT. When a man is very earnest he ought to be able to give a reason for his earnestness. "How now, sire, what is all this strife about? Why all this earnestness? You seem to be boiling over with enthusiasm. What is up? Is there anything that is worth making such a stir about? Hear them, and they will soon convince you that all their enthusiasm and striving to enter the kingdom of heaven by force, is not a whit more strong than reasonable.

The first reason why poor sinners take the kingdom of heaven by force is, because they feel they have no natural right to it; and, therefore, they must need take it by force if they would get it at all. When a man belongs to the House of Lords, and knows that he has got a seat there by respective rights and title, he does not trouble himself at the time of elections. But there is another man who says, "Well, I should like a seat in the House of Commons, but I have no absolute right to it. If I get it, it will be by a desperate struggle." Do you not see how busy he is on the day; how the carriages fly about everywhere; and how earnest are his supporters that he may stand at the head of the poll and win the day! He says, "I have no absolute right to it; if I had, then I would just take it as I walk into my seat at the proper time." But now he labors, and strives, and wrestles, because without so doing he does not expect to succeed. Now, look at those who are saved; they have no right to the inheritance they are seeking. What are they? Sinners, the chief of sinners; in their own esteem the vilest of the vile. Now, if they would get heaven they must take it by force, for they have no right to it by birth or lineage entail. And what are they else? They are the poor bones of this earth. There stands the rabbi at the gate, and he says, "You can't come in here; this is no place for the poor to enter." "But," says he, "I will!" and pushing the rabbi aside, he takes it by force. Then, again, they were Gentiles too; and Jews stood at the gate, and said, "Stand back, you Gentile dogs, you cannot come in." Now, if such would be saved, they must take the kingdom of heaven by storm, for they have no rights to assert. Ah, my fellow men, if ye sit down and fold your arms, and say, "I am so good I have a right to heaven,"—how deceived you will be. But if God has convicted you of your lost, ruined and undone condition, and if he has put the quickening Spirit within you, you will use a bold and desperate violence to force your way into the kingdom of heaven. The Spirit of God will not lead you to be obsequious in the presence of foes, or faint-hearted in the overwhelming crisis; he will drive you to desperate labour that you may be saved.

Ask one such man, again, why he is so violent in prayer; he replies, "Ah, I know the value of the mercy I receive. Why, I am asking for

pardon, for heaven, for eternal life, and am I to get these with a few yawns and sleepy prayers? I am asking that I may wear the white robe, and sing the never-ending song of praise; and do you think that a few poor supplications are to be enough? No, my God; if thou wouldst make me tarry a hundred years, and sigh, and groan, and cry through that long century;—yes, if I might but have heaven at last, all my prayers would have been well spent; nay, had they been a thousand times as many, they were well rewarded if thou wouldst hear me at last. But" says he again, "if you want to know why I am so earnest, let me tell you it is because I cannot bear to be lost for ever." Hear the earnest sinner when he speaks. You say to him, "Why so earnest?" The tear is in his eye, the flush is on his cheek, there is emotion in every feature, while he says, "Would to God I could be far more earnest; do you know I am a lost soul, perhaps before another hour is over I may be shut up in the fires of hell! Oh, God, have mercy on me for if thou dost not, how terrible is my fate. I shall be lost—lost for ever!

Once let a man know that hell is beneath his feet, and if that does not make him earnest, what would? No wonder that his prayers are impotent, that his endeavours are intensely earnest, when he knows that he must escape, or else the devouring fire will lay hold on him. Suppose, now, you had been a Jew in the olden time, and one day while taking a walk in the fields you should see a man running with all his might. "Stop!" you say, "stop! my dear friend, you will exhaust yourself." He goes on, and on, with all his might. You run after him. "Pause awhile," you say, "and rest; the grass is soft, sit down here, and take your ease. See here I have found some food and a bottle; stop and refresh yourself." But without saluting you, he says, "No, I must away, away, away." "Why? wherefore?" you say. He is gone so far ahead, you run after him with all your might; and scarcely able to turn his head, he exclaims, "The city of refuge! the city of refuge! the manslayer is behind me!" Now, it is all accounted for; you do not wonder that he runs with all his might now. When the manslayer is after him, you can well understand that he would never pause to rest until he has found the city of refuge. So let a man know that the devil is behind him, that the avenging law of God is pursuing him, and who can make him stop? Who shall endeavor to make him stay his race until he enters Christ, the city of refuge, and finds himself secure? This will make a man earnest indeed—to dread "the wrath to come," and to be laboring to escape therefrom.

Another reason why every man who would be safe must be in earnest, and be violent, is this, there are so many adversaries to oppose us that if we are not violent we shall never be able to overcome them. Do you remember that beautiful parable in John Bunyan's *Pilgrim's Progress*? "I saw also, that the Interpreter took him by the hand, and led him into a pleasant place, where was built a stately palace, beautiful to behold; at the sight of which Christian was greatly delighted. He saw also upon the top thereof certain persons walking, who were clothed all in gold. Then said Christian, 'May we go in thither?' Then the Interpreter took him and led him up toward the door of the palace; and behold, at the door stood a great company of men, as desirous to go in, but durst not. There also sat a man at a little distance from the door, at a table-side, with a book and his ink horn before him, to take the name of him that should enter therein; he saw also that in the doorway stood many men in armor to keep it, being resolved to do to the men that would enter what hurt and mischief they could. Now was Christian somewhat in a maze. At last, when every man started back for fear of the armed men, Christian saw a man of a very stout countenance come up to the man that sat there to write, saying, 'Set down my name, sir; the which when he had done, he saw the man draw his sword, and put a helmet upon his head, and rush toward the door upon the armed men, who laid upon him with deadly force; but the man, not at all discouraged, fell to cutting and hacking most fiercely. So after he had received and given many wounds to those that attempted to keep him out, (Matt. 11: 12; Acts 14: 22) he cut his way through them all and pressed forward into the palace; at which there was a pleasant voice heard from those that were within, even those that walked upon the top of the palace, saying,

"Come in, come in,
Eternal glory thou shalt win."

So he went in, and was clothed with such garments as they." And surely the dreamer saw the truth in his dream. It is even so. If we would win eternal glory we must fight.

"Sure we must fight, if we would reign;
Increase our courage, Lord P."

Ye are enemies within you, enemies without, enemies beneath, enemies on every side—the world, the flesh, and the devil; and if the spirit of God has quickened you, he has made a soldier of you, and you can never sheath your sword till you gain the victory. The man who would be saved must be violent, because of the opposition he has to encounter.

Do you still condemn this man, and say that he is an enthusiast and a fanatic? Then God himself comes forth to vindicate his despised servant. Know that this is the sign, the mark of distinction between the true child of

God and the bastard-professor. The men who are not God's children, are a careless, stumbling, cold-hearted race. But the men that are God's in sincerity and truth, are burning as well as shining lights. They are as brilliant constellations in the firmament of heaven, burning stars of God. Of all things in the world, God hates most the man that is neither hot nor cold. Better have no religion than have a little; better to be altogether without it, enemies to it, than to have just enough to make you respectable, but not enough to make you earnest. What does God say concerning the religion of this day? "So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither hot nor cold, I will spue thee out of my mouth." Lukewarmness of all things God abhors, and yet of all things it is the predominant mark of the present day. The time of the Methodists, Whitfield and Wesley, was a time indeed of fire and divine violence and vigor. But we have gradually cooled down, now, into a delightful consistency, and though here and there is a little breaking out of the old desperado spirit of the christian religion, yet for the most part the world has so mesmerized the church, that she is as nearly asleep as she can be; and much of her teaching, and much of the doings of her religious societies in sheer somnambulism. It is not the wide-awake earnestness of them that walk with their eyes open. They walk in their sleep; very nimbly they walk, too, and very nicely they "trim their way," but very little is there of the life of God in aught they do, and very little of divine success attending their agencies, because they are not violent with regard to the matters of the kingdom of God.

III. Having thus endeavored to screen the violent men from harsh criticism, I shall now invite you for a moment to reflect that THE VIOLENT MAN IS ALWAYS SUCCESSFUL. Do you think you are going to be carried to heaven on a feather bed? Have you got a notion in your heads that the road to paradise is all a lawn, the grass smoothly mown, still waters and green pastures ever and anon to cheer you? You have just got to clear your heads of that deceitful fancy. The way to heaven is up hill and down hill, up hill with difficulty, down hill with trials. It is through fire and through water, through flood and through flame, by the lions and by the leopards. Through the very mouths of dragons is the path to paradise. But the man who finds it so, and who desperately resolves in the strength of God to tread that path—nay, who does not resolve as he could do nothing else but resolve, but who feels driven, as if with a hurricane behind him, to go into the right road, this man is never unsuccessful, never. Where God has given a violent anxiety for salvation he never disappoints it. No soul that has ever cried for it with a violent cry has been disappointed. From the beginning of the creation until now there has never been raised to the throne of God a violent and earnest prayer which missed its answer. Go, soul, in the strong confidence that if thou goest earnestly thou goest successfully, God may sooner deny himself than deny the request of an earnest man. Our God may sooner cease to be "the Lord God, gracious and merciful," than cease to bless the men who seek the gates of heaven with the violence of faith and prayer. Oh, reflect, that all the saints above have been led by divine grace to wrestle hard as we do now with sins, and doubts and fears. They had no smooth path to glory. They had to dispute every inch of the way at the sword's point. So must you; and as surely as you are enabled to do so, so surely you will conquer. Only the violent are saved, and all the violent are saved. When God makes a man violent after salvation, that man cannot perish. The gates of heaven may sooner be unbarred than that man be robbed of the prize for which he has fought.

IV. And now I have to close, for I find my voice fails me this morning, when most I need it. I have to close abruptly by endeavoring earnestly to excite each of you to a violence AFTER THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN. In this great crowd there are surely some of the class I am about to describe. There is one man here who says, "I don't know that I have done much amiss in my life; I am about as regular a man as there is living. Don't I attend a place of worship regularly? I believe that I shall most certainly be saved. But I don't take much trouble about it, it never disquiets me particularly. I don't like" says this man—"that intrusive kind of religion that always seems to be thrusting itself in everybody's way. I think it is quite right that people should go to their place of worship, but why take any further trouble? I just believe that I shall fare as other people fare; I am a steady unpretending sort of man, and I have no reason to doubt that I shall be saved." Ah, friend, you have never seen the gate of heaven? It is obvious that you have never seen it, or else you would know better; for at the gate of heaven multitudes are struggling, the gates of heaven are thronged, and he that would enter there must press, and elbow, and push, or he may go away certain that he can never enter. No! your easy religion will just bring you in too late. It may carry you nine miles out of ten; but what is the good of that to a man who must perish unless he is carried the whole way? It will go a good way with you when you follow the counsels of a gospel ministry with outward propriety; but at the bar of God it will utterly fail you, when you lack the inward witness of strong crying and supplications. No! an easy religion is

the way to hell, for it is not the way to heaven. Let your soul alone, and you need not expect much good fruit to come of it, any more than a farmer who leaves his fields alone, need expect to reap a harvest. Your religion is vain and futile if that is all. "Ah," cries another, "but I am in quite a different case. I am a sinner so vile that I know I can never be saved, therefore, what is the use? I never think about it now, except with blank despair. Have I not long rebelled against God; will he ever pardon me? No, no; don't exhort me to try. I may as well keep my full swing of pleasure while I am here, for I feel I never shall enjoy the pleasures of heaven hereafter." Stop friend, "The violent take it by force." If the Lord has taught thee thy utter unfitness, go and try—say,

"I can but perish if I go,
I'm resolved to try;
For if I stay a while I know
I must forever die."

Go home, go to your closet, fall on your knees, put your trust alone in Christ, and, my friend, if the Lord does not have mercy upon you, then he is not the God we have preached to you, and he has not substantiated his faithful promise: you cannot, you shall not seek in vain. But mark, you must not think that your once seeking is enough; continue it. If God has given you his Spirit you will continue—you will never leave off praying until you get the answer. Oh! my friend, if God hath given thee this day a longing after his love; if he has caused thee to say, "I will never give it up, I will perish at the foot of the cross if I perish at all;" thou canst no more perish than the angels in Paradise. Be of good cheer; use violence again and again, and thou shalt take it by force.

And then let each one of us as we retire, and if we have tasted that the Lord is precious, determine to love him more earnestly than before. I never leave my pulpit without feeling ashamed of myself. I do not remember a time when I have been able to go home without being suffused with humiliation and cast down with self reproach, because I had not been more earnest. I very seldom fog myself for using an ugly word, or anything of that sort; it is for not having been earnest enough about the salvation of men. When I sit down, I begin to think of this vast stream of people being swept along towards the gulf of eternity—bound for heaven or hell; and I wonder how it is that I do not weep all the time I am here—why it is that I do not find red hot burning words with which to address you. I find fault with others sometimes, but far more with myself in this matter. Oh! how is it that a man can be God's ambassador, and yet have so callous, so insensitive a heart, as many of us have in this work? Oh! how is it that we will the tale of death and life, of heaven and hell, of Christ crucified and his gospel despised, so quietly as we do? Condemn not the minister for excitement or fanaticism; condemn him because he is not half in earnest, as he ought to be. Oh! my God! impress me, I beseech thee, more with the value of souls, and then impress my hearers, also with the value of their own souls. Are you not going to day, many of you, post haste to perdition? Is it not the fact, that you; conscience tells you that many of you are enemies to God? You are without Christ, you have never been washed in his blood; never been forgiven. Oh! my hearers, if ye continue as ye are, a few more rising suns, and then your suns set forever. Only a few more Sundays have you to waste, a few more sermons to hear, and the pit of hell must open wide its jaws and where are you? But a few more days, and the heavens shall be rent, and Christ shall come to judge the earth, and *sinners where are you?* Oh! I beseech you now by the living God, and by his Son Jesus Christ, think of your state; repent of your sins; turn you to God. Oh Spirit of God, turn, I pray thee, turn the hearts of sinners now. Remember, if you now repent, if you now confess your sins, Christ is preached to you. He came into the world to save sinners. Oh! believe on him; throw yourselves before his cross trust in his blood; rely on his righteousness.

"But if your ears refuse
The language of his grace,
And hearts grow hard like stubborn Jews,
That unbelieving race;
The Lord in vengeance dressed,
Will lift his hand and swear,
You that despised my promised rest,
Shall have no portion there."

Oh! if I had the tongue of Whitfield, or the mouth of an archangel, if I could speak like a cherubim, I would pour out my heart before you, and pray you in Christ's stead, be ye reconciled to God. I must face you soon before God's great bar, and shall your blood be laid at my door? Shall you perish, and must I perish with you for unfaithfulness? May God forbid it! Now may he

"Let you see your lost estate,
And save you ere it be too late,
Wake you to righteousness."
The Lord have mercy on you all for Jesus' sake.

THE CONTRAST.

Within a richly furnished apartment I sat watching the sick man, tossing upon his bed of pain.

Rich paintings hung upon the wall, and images sculptured from the purest marble, stood in their snowy whiteness, revealing forms of matchless symmetry, while choicest flowers drooped in the silver vases, and cast their dying fragrance with-

in the darkened room. But unheeded now were those works of genius and beauty—forgotten even those meeds of praise and worldly honors, which the world had lavished upon the man of wealth and intellect; for he was dying—surely dying. Beside him watched an anxious group, who knew that ere long those strugglings would cease, and the spirit would be called from its earthly home to an untried eternity. His companion, in mute agony, sat by him, now smoothing his tumbled pillow, and now wiping from his brow the death-damp which was fast gathering there. "Is he dying?" she whispered to the venerable physician who stood near.

"Yes, dying," he answered in a mournful voice. "Dying! dying! did you say?" he shrieked, as the fearful words reached his ear; and half raising himself from his pillow, exclaimed, "I cannot, will not die! O save me, for God's sake save me!" He sank back upon his pillow exhausted, but soon opening his eyes again, with a look of despair and unutterable anguish depicted upon his countenance, said, in a hollow voice, "I am lost! lost! lost!" and with a wail of anguish, and a moan of fearful uncertainty, plunged within the "dark waters," there to learn the mystery of life and death.

Again I stood in the chamber of death. Through the open casement the rays of the September moon stole softly in, shedding a silvery light upon the snow-white couch where reposed the pale and drooping form of the widow's only son. Softly the long fringed lids closed over the blue eyes, and the anxious mother, pushing back the sunny tresses which clustered around the pale brow, kissed and kissed again those pallid lips; then kneeling by his side, breathed forth her soul in prayer to the Fountain of all consolation.

The hushed footsteps of a few attendant friends alone broke the solemn silence of the death-chamber, until the voice of the dying youth was heard, singing, in sweetest tones,

"Jordan's stream shall ne'er overflow me,
While my Saviour's by my side;
Canaan, Canaan lies before me,
Soon I'll cross the swelling tide.
See the happy spirits waiting
On the banks beyond the stream,
Sweet responses still repeating,
Jesus, Jesus, is their theme."

Then unclosing his eyes, over which the film of death was fast creeping, and fixing them upon his mother, he said "Mother, I must leave you now; already I feel the chill of death upon my heart, but I fear not to pass the dark river," his promises are sure. I had hoped to have completed my studies, and to have taken a place upon the walls of Zion, but God wants me there," he added, pointing upward, "and I shall soon be with him. Weep not, dearest mother, when you see my wasted form laid in the grave. Jesus has lain there before me, and there is no fear to those who trust him." Folding his pale hands upon his faintly beating heart, he whispered, "Blessed Saviour! Dear Redeemer! Wondrous, wondrous love! Mother, I'm going now. They call—the golden gates are opened—angels beckon me on. O, beautiful, beautiful!"—and that voice was hushed on earth. The wheels of life stood still. A seraphic smile passed over the placid face, as the soul winged its upward flight, and rested upon the parted lips, bespeaking the happy spirit's exit.

"So fades a summer cloud away;
So sinks to the gate when storms are o'er;
So gently sheds the eye of day,
So dies the wave along the shore."
—*Zion's Herald.*

FULTON STREET PRAYER MEETING.

The highly intelligent correspondent of the *Boston Journal* furnishes this very pleasant sketch of our city devotions:—

"Monday is usually one of the most interesting days in the week at the Fulton Street Prayer Meeting. It is the day that clergymen select to be present. Usually one presides on that day. And as most of the clergy in the vicinity come to New York once in the week, numbers of them come and attend the daily meeting. So the news of the city and the vicinity is heard in the meeting on Monday, if on no other day in the week. I looked in on the meeting to-day. The same crowds attend, and the same faces are to be seen. The Missionary stands at the door—trim, sleek, hair cut close to his head, with his tip-toe tread, bland face, and resolute will to make the ladies 'move up and sit close.' And the task is one to try the patience of a christian. If left to themselves, the dear creatures would each take the room that must now be shared with three; and as they are disposed to sit near the door, it is with great trouble that they can be made to take the seats clear up to the wall. But the work is done at last. About one-half of the audience are ladies. A Rev. Mr. Anderson from Illinois is in the chair. And as the minute hand points to 12 the service begins. Men of all denominations are present—the Baptist, the Episcopalian, Methodist, and Presbyterian, of the old school and the new—not as idle spectators, but as active participators in the meeting. A hymn is sung, 'Every swelling wind that blows' is sung to the tune of Hamburg. Such congregational singing would be popular anywhere. The room is small. The audience is made up of the cream of our churches, all trained to sing. It is no more than a vast choir. The tunes are familiar, the hymns associated with the heart's best affections; and on the tide of warm and deep emotion, the full, swelling song of praise is wafted

heavenward. It is a song of Christian praise. The chairman led in prayer, and then read the story of the man who would not rise to give a man bread because he was his friend, but did so to get rid of the importunity. Next in order came the requests. They were few. From Kentucky a request came for the salvation of the nephew, and the wife of the writer: from Virginia that an intemperate brother might be cured; from Illinois, by a mother, that her daughter might be converted; from a sister, that a brother with noble intellectual qualities and powers might not die in sin, but be rescued while near the grave. Following that is what was called a prayer. It is one of the files in the ointment in this meeting, that a few men who ride hobbies, and have impracticable theories, persist in thrusting themselves and their views on the meeting. The oratory in prayer! A petition to God made up of sounding phrases, pompous words, argument and colloquial address, as if the man who undertakes to pray boarded with the King of Kings! All this is awful. It comes over the spirit of the occasion like an iceberg. No one can cheat the heart. A real, honest, touching petition will touch the soul, and make the feeling well up and out of the eye. But all parade, and fine language, and pompous declamation, is an abomination. A plain, common sense layman follows on spiritual pride and need of humility in prayer. It was not a bow at a venture. Many hearts hoped it would find its way home. A Brooklyn clergyman led in prayer, a song was sung; a Canadian clergyman made an address on the Scriptures, and, to show that men do not ask enough of God. He followed in prayer, which was only a repetition of the address. A warm, zealous man wanted to speak his mind on slavery and he did. But he won't probably repeat it. It is argued that the Fulton street meeting has been formed for a specific purpose and aim. Those who do not like it need not attend it, but can go elsewhere and "express their feelings." A clergyman from Pennsylvania made a statement that he knew of one case near him where, in answer to a request made at the meeting, a great blessing had followed. The chairman made the closing address. He said his home was 4000 miles away. He was licensed to preach in that room. It was dear to him. He had heard of the meeting in his prairie home. He now saw the half had not been told him. He said the prayer meeting at Chicago was a failure—that at the Union day meeting more than 15 persons attended. He asked prayer for Chicago. He then pronounced the Benediction. But as the order of the meeting was not to be departed from, some one calling out for the Doxology it was sung, and thus closed the Monday noonday prayer meeting."

For the Christian Visitor.

New York, July 4, 1859.

MR. EDITOR:—After a most beautiful passage, we arrived here on Wednesday morning. The weather was fair, the sea smooth, and everything tended to make our journey pleasant. At Stonington we met our brethren Higgins and Walton, of Nova Scotia, who had been fellow-students with us at Acadia College, and whom we had not seen for more than seven years. A meeting with such friends after so long an absence was truly refreshing to the spirits, but the pleasure was soon interrupted by separation. Such, however, is life. It is made up of meetings and partings, but there is a world where partings are not—we hope to meet our brethren there.

The day we arrived here was excessively hot. Several laborers died of sun stroke, and others were seriously affected by it. Hitherto the weather here has been so cool as to keep the crops in a backward state. As we passed through parts of Massachusetts, Rhode Island and Connecticut, we noticed that vegetation was but little in advance of vegetation in New Brunswick. In the New York market, however, we observed green peas, new potatoes, cabbages, raspberries, cherries, and other kinds of fruit and vegetables.

We found the Rev. Mr. Dunbar very well, and much pleased to hear from some of his numerous friends in the Province. He wishes to be kindly remembered to them all. His church seems to be in a pretty lively state, and several conversions have recently taken place in connection with his congregation. Morning prayer meetings are held daily in his church, and have been the means of doing much good. The Fulton Street noon prayer meetings are yet continued with interest, and remarkable cases of conversion have taken place in connection with them, to which we need not refer as accounts of them appear in the city papers.

After we had spent some time with our friends, we went over to Brooklyn to visit our favourite spot—Greenwood Cemetery. As we attempted to give a description of the grounds a little more than two years ago, we need only say that they look increasingly beautiful. Flowers of almost every description that will grow here are bursting into full bloom over the graves of those whose friends have been able to place them there. And while the willow is weeping over the desolations of death, the roses are smiling in the "garden of the slumbers," and seem to point to the bright rovers in the skies. For this life is but the bud of being—the text of today. Soon the hovel will grow into a palace—the bulb will burst into a flower.

As we passed by the grave of an insane poet, on whose monument we noticed a wreath and a lyre, we indulged in the thought that if the soul