

THE
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REVIEW.

Bertram, or the Castle of St. Aldobrand, a Tragedy, in five Acts.
By the Rev. R. C. Maturin. Author of "Fatal Revenge," "Wild Irish Boy," "Milesian Chief," &c. The first American, from the third London Edition. Philadelphia, 1816.

The play which we think it proper her to notice, has had a *greater run* than perhaps any dramatic performance of modern times. How often it was acted we have not been informed. It is certain that a seventh English edition has been sold; and that it has been well received in the United States. We may therefore consider it as a fair sample of what suits the public taste. It is a "deep tragedy," written by a *clergyman*, and may therefore be regarded, in relation to its moral tendencies, as free from objection as any dramatic piece that may be expected. It is for this reason that we have undertaken to make some remarks on it in the Christian Monitor.

The story is very brief and inartificial. There are only two characters in the piece, Bertram and Imogine; the rest are all walking images, mere automata, introduced, it can scarcely be told for what purpose. Imogine is married to the lord of St. Aldobrand, a wealthy nobleman, (an honest, kindhearted, goodsort of man,) for the sake of preserving her father from perishing through poverty. Bertram however is the idol of her soul. They mutually loved in youth—This Bertram appears first in the play, as a leader of a band of pirates. He was once high in honor, and authority; but pushing his ambitious schemes too far, he, through the instrumentality of St. Aldobrand, is disgraced, and becomes abandoned. Some years after this, when St. Aldobrand has been blessed with a boy, and is living in domestic peace, Bertram is thrown by a storm on the Coast of Sicily, is invited to St. Aldobrand's Castle, as a stranger in distress, seduces the wife; murders the husband; sees Imogine die a maniac in his arms, and kills himself!!

The heroine, it seems had discharged all the duties of her various relations for years, in a manner so unexceptionable that her father confessor testifies that,

She is a gracious and a pious dame—

and her husband, a considerable time after she had borne him a son, entirely free from all suspicion addresses her in these very tender lines;

—Mine heart's sole wish

Is to sit down in peace among its inmates—

To see mine home forever bright with smiles,

'Mid thoughts of past, and blessed hopes of future,

Glide thro' the vacant hours of waning life—
 Then die the blessed death of aged honour,
Grasping thy hand of faith, and fixing on thee
 Eyes, that, tho' dim in death, are bright with love.

Yet this lady, all the time, loves with most entire devotion, another man. The intenseness of her passion is represented by the poet in the following terms, which we quote both for illustration of the powers of the author, and the character of Imogine. She is sitting alone, looking at the picture of her lover, and utters the following soliloquy.

Yes,
 The limner's art may trace the absent feature,
 And give the eye of distant weeping faith
 To view the form of its idolatry ;
 But oh ! the scenes 'mid which they met and parted—
 The thoughts, the recollections sweet and bitter—
 Th' Elysian dreams of lovers, when they loved—
 Who shall restore them ?
 Less lovely are the fugitive clouds of eve,
 And not more vanishing—if thou couldst speak,
 Dumb witness of the secret soul of Imogine,
 Thou might'st acquit the faith of womankind—
 Since thou wast on my midnight pillow laid
 Friend hath forsaken friend—the brotherly tie
 Been lightly loosed—the parted coldly met—
 Yea, mothers have with desperate hands wrought harm
 To little lives from their own bosoms lent.
 But woman still hath loved—if that indeed
 Woman e'er loved like me.

Again, when she is giving her own, in the history of a third person she says,

Was it not love to pine her youth away ?
 In her lone bower she sat all day to hearken
 For tales of him, and—soon came tales of woe.
 High glory lost he recked not what was saved—
 With desperate men in desperate ways he dealt—
 A change came o'er his nature and his heart
 Till she that bore him had recoiled from him,
 Nor knew the alien visage of her child.
 Yet still she loved, yea, still loved hopeless on.

We quote, again, the reasons assigned by Imogine for marrying another while thus devoted to Bertram,

—What could I do but wed—
 Hast seen the sinking fortunes of thy house—
 Hast felt the gripe of bitter shameful want—
 Hast seen a father on the cold cold earth,
 Hast read his eye of silent agony,
 That asked relief, but would not look reproach
 Upon his child unkind—

I would have wed disease, deformity,
 Yea, griped Death's grisly form to 'scape from it—
 And yet some sorcery was wrought on me,
 For earlier things do seem as yesterday,
 But, I've no recollection of the hour
 They gave my hand to Aldobrand.

Although wedded, and a mother, she declares however that her heart is, "Bertram's still, and Bertram's ever."

This same Bertram has, as might be expected, feelings as lofty, passions as ardent as his faithful Imogine. From his first appearance in the drama, to the last, he is in a blaze. He never relaxes, even for a moment. But we will allow the poet to describe his hero in his own words. It must be premised, however, that Bertram has been shipwrecked, and is kindly received by the monks of St. Aldobrand. The Prior, a very accommodating priest, contrives to procure for the hero, an invitation to the Castle in the absence of the lord—A very edifying example of priestly prudence, and gratitude! But let Bertram enter and speak for himself—After being roused from sleep, he says,

"I dreamed I stood before Lord Aldobrand
 Impenetrable to his searching eyes—
 And I did feel the horrid joy men feel
 Measuring the serpent's coil whose fangs have stung them;
 Scanning with giddy eye the air-hung rock
 From which they leapt and live by miracle;
 Following the dun skirt of the o'erpast storm
 Whose bolt did leave them prostrate—
 —To see that horrid spectre of my thoughts
 In all the stern reality of life—
 To mark the living lineaments of hatred,
 And say, this is the man whose sight should blast me;
 Yet in calm dreadful triumph still gaze on:—
 It is a horrid joy."

And again,

"Oh, that I could but mate him in his might,
 Oh, that we were on the dark wave together,
 With but one plank between us and destruction,
 That I might grasp him in these desperate arms,
 And plunge with him amid the weltering billows—
 And view him gasp for life——"

After meeting Imogine, and hearing her acknowledgement that she is the wife of Aldobrand, he speaks thus:

"—Talk of her father—could a father love thee
 As I have loved?—the veriest wretch on earth
 Doth cherish in some corner of his heart,
 Some thought that makes that heart a sanctuary
 For pilgrim dreams in midnight-hour to visit,
 And weep and worship there.
 —And such thou wert to me—and thou art lost.

—What was a father? could a father's love
Compare with mine?—”

Once more, in answer to the advice of the Prior, who, warning him of the danger to which he was exposed, as leader of a band of robbers, recommends that he should fly to the Castle of St. Aldobrand, the lady of which may plead for him, he says,

“His dame plead for me!—

When my cold corse, torn from some felon wheel,
Or dug from lightless depth of stony dungeon,
Welters in the cold gaze of pitiless strangers,
Then fling it at his gate, whose cursed stones
My living foot treads never,—yet beware
Lest the corse bursts its cerements stark, and curse thee—”

In reference to this and some similar heroics, the Prior says,

“High-hearted man, *sublime* even in thy guilt,
Whose passions are thy crimes, whose angel-sin
Is pride that rivals the star-bright apostate's.—
Wild admiration thrills me to behold
An evil strength, so above earthly pitch—
Descending angels only could reclaim thee—”

This same Prior frequently admires the *sublimity* of the feelings of this adulterer, murderer, and captain of banditti, as for example again

“Oh thou, who o'er thy stormy grandeur flingest
A struggling beam that dazzles, awes, and vanishes—
Thou, who dost blend our wonder with our curses—
Why didst thou this?”

We need quote no more for illustration of character: as the play advances the passions of Bertram and Imogine become more and more *sublime*, until the catastrophe; in which with all the dignity, and heroism of modern philosophy he—does not indeed take a dose of laudanum, and die in a ditch, as the fashion now is—but stabs himself, and, *sublime* to the last, exclaims with exultation

I died no felon death—

A warrior's weapon freed a warrior's soul.

On the poetry, and style of this play we shall offer a few remarks principally because they will serve, in part at least, to account for the very great popularity of the piece. We acknowledge that the author gives evidence of considerable powers. He describes some scenes with great effect, and exhibits some passions with vast force—But when he would make the deepest impression, he is quite apt to present us with some strange mixture of figures, which however beautiful, or *sublime* they may appear to the mercurial, or perhaps it would be better to say *ethereal* readers of the present day, seem wonderfully extravagant and nonsensical to one whose taste has been formed on the models of the old school. As an example we would refer to a quotation already made beginning with,

“I dreamed I stood before lord Aldobrand”—

Again,

Dare thine eye scan that *spectred vacancy*?—

—A blasted world

Dispeopled for my punishment, and changed
Into a *penal orb of desolation*—

Yea, *spend his life* upon the *mortal throe*—.

Among these high beauties, we have others not less exquisite, as “*momently gleams of sheeted blue*”—and quivering gleams of livid blue, and *weltering-waves*, and *wave-washed crags*, and various other alliterative ornaments, *so studiously sought* by some popular poets, and orators. Nothing indeed will now *take* unless it is very dashing; and whatever has this quality will certainly be admired as elegant and sublime.—A human head, horse’s neck, and fishes tail may be united in one picture; nay, as great and strange variety may be huddled up in a sentence, as is to be found in a symbol of the Hindoo Deity, yet all will be well, provided there be a sufficient intermixture of the ingredient abovementioned, with an addition of *Oh*s and *Ah*s, and other eloquent interjections.—But there are other matters of more serious import, to which we wish to turn the reader’s attention.

If this drama be according to nature, the case of us married men, of ordinary temperament, and unsuspecting nature is very uncomfortable. If one may live for some ten or a dozen years with a woman, supposing, all the time, that she is fondly devoted to him, while her heart long has been, is now, and forever will be, with all the intense-ness of its feeling, and ardour of its passions, devoted to another, then “it is not good for a man to marry.” The truth is, this fiction of the poet is out of character; it is revolting to nature. A virtuous woman, such as Imogene is represented until she yields to the wishes of the bandit Bertram, even if she marry from motives of prudence, or filial affection, when once she has pledged her troth, given up her person to a husband, and became a mother to his children, from the constitution of the female heart contracts an affection for the objects to which she is in duty bound, which generally warrants the confidence which a virtuous husband is disposed to place in a virtuous wife. And, considering how affairs of courtship and marriage have generally been managed in this world, it is a wise appointment of providence that it should be so. We consider the tragedy in this point of view as a misrepresentation of the female character deeply injurious. Again, according to the moral of the play, it is in the highest degree dangerous for daughters to make sacrifices of their inclinations, to save even from the worst of evils, in their most horrible forms, the parents who have brought them forth, and nurtured them—Nay, farther, if parents should think it prudent to interfere, and prevent the marriage of their daughters, with young men, whose high feelings, and chivalrous courage, have captivated their inexperienced hearts, however hopeless the fortunes, vile the principles, or ferocious the tempers of these men, the most terrible consequences may be expected—they may indeed be the honoured wives of noble husbands for a time, but may become as the lady did in the play

—“The scorned minion of a ruffian,”

These are some of the precious doctrines taught in "this great school of morals." But there are subjects of more awful import still, on which we feel it our duty to animadvert. The present age is one of luxury and what is called, *refinement*—a term, by the way, used to designate a thing, or rather, an aggregate character, of very suspicious nature. The world is run mad after pleasure. Ordinary enjoyments have become so common, and are so often repeated, that they pall on the taste, and our fastidious palates reject them with disdain. It is the office of those who cater to the luxuries and vices of the world, to exert their ingenuity to find out something more pungent, something to excite more powerful sensations. The imaginations of men are like the organs of taste in a habitual drunkard—even double rectified spirit must be warmed with the addition of Cayenne pepper, to make it sufficiently stimulating. In conformity to this state of things, there has risen up a race of poets, who seem determined to afford sufficient stimulus for the taste of the public. The heroes most in favour, are as proud as Satan, as wrathful as Moloch, as revengeful, and insidious as Beelzebub—Their passions are all the passions of Demons; and even Love, whose gentle influences, according to ancient fictions, softened the hardest heart, and smoothed the most rugged temper, is such a passion as might well become the prince of Devils. Bertram is another Corsair, and Imogine, although reckoned "a pious dame" is an exact counterpart to the idol of her heart. This is the true secret of the popularity of the play, And it deserves serious consideration what effects are likely to result from the representation of drama's such as this. When the hearts of an audience have been accustomed frequently to sympathise with such beings as these; when the *moral sublimity* and intellectual force exhibited by the most atrocious wretches that can exist in the form of human nature, have seized our feelings; when the imagination is used to stimuli of such power how far are we removed from the refinement of the Romans, who would leave every other pleasure, and all business, for the exquisite enjoyment of a gladiator's show? And what is most alarming of all, there is no end to this thing. He who was once delighted by the murmuring of a brook, or the sight of a simple wild flower, may be brought to require, for his gratification, an exhibition of the most fierce and frenzied passions that the human bosom can bear, or the human mind can feel. And by the same process of *refinement*, he may proceed to that length, that nothing will satisfy but the sight of wretches engaged in mortal conflict, and of the spasms, and convulsions, and agonies of death. These are no fancies. Such is the human heart. The very men whom we are taught to admire as the conquerors of the world, and whose writings are put into our hands as the best models, on which to form our taste, were as passionately devoted to the unutterable abomination before alluded to, as any citizen of London or Paris, of Philadelphia or Richmond, ever was or can be to the amusements of the theatre.

These remarks afford to the impartial observer of human nature, a very strong objection to all theatrical amusements. They create a passion, the indulgence of which is in a high degree injurious to human

character; a passion which by its overbearing influence suppresses the best affections of the heart; destroys the relish for simple, and truly innocent enjoyments; and produces a craving for powerful sensations, which nothing but the most criminal excesses can gratify. It is not pretended that this is universally the case; there are many counteracting causes, which, especially, in Christian countries, prevent these disastrous results.—But such are the tendencies of this species of amusement; and therefore, not only the rigid Christian, but the sober moralist, the prudent father, and the wise statesman will discountenance theatrical entertainments. Every one has heard from his infancy, of the patriotism of the Athenians. Marathon and Salamis are the themes of our schoolboy declamations; and our early recollections are strongly associated with the exploits of Greeks, who generously, and heroically devoted themselves to death for the cause of their country. Athens too, boasts of its drama; and Euripides, Sophocles, and Aristophanes, are regarded by many, as having contributed as much to the glory of their nation, as their ablest generals, and most successful warriors. But mark the result; when the Athenian drama was in all its glory, the money, contributed by the people for the support of a war, in which all was at stake that could interest the feelings of men, of patriots, of Athenians, was lavished in theatrical representations, by popular demagogues, to please this corrupt and degenerate people. So much for this ancient school of morals, and the salutary effects of those dramas, which are appealed to as standards, and as evidences, by the advocates of the theatre. In modern times, it is absolutely notorious, that the purlieus of the Theatre, are consecrated to what in the true style of heathenism, are called *the powers of love*; or as we would choose to express it desecrated by uncleanness, and all manner of pollutions. It has been said “that one great benefit of the stage is that it prevents vice. For many at least, would be worse employed, if they were not at the Theatre. We must have amusements, and the drama happily affords that very species of amusement which by its fascinations attracts persons of all sorts, and keeps them from evil.” There would be something in all this, if it were true. But nothing in the wildest extravagancies of fiction, has less foundation. What is the voice of experience? The citizens of some of our towns have had the opportunity of learning from this teacher; because they have had theatres, *and have been without them*. When this school of morals was frequented by multitudes, were their wives and daughters more engaged in domestic duties, their sons and young men, less licentious than they now are? Did religion, and morality flourish more? Were better principles in general, adopted, and did better practices prevail than in the present day? There once was a time, it is said, when *gambling*, yes *gambling* among *females*, was carried to great height. Was there no theatre then? Or did the passions excited by one play, alternate with those raised by play of another character? And yet, it is a deplorable evil to be without a theatre! And when there are absolutely, not churches sufficient to accommodate one half the citizens, go to what town you will; when pecuniary embarrassments are sore; when providence has been frown-

ing on our whole country, "and the staff of bread, and the stay of water have been in a great degree removed" and many have to suffer the gnawings of hunger, superadded to all the other evils of poverty; at such a time as this, it is thought worthy to raise large sums of money for the erection, or support of Institutions; in favour of which not one single well authenticated instance of moral good, or intellectual improvement, can be produced!

It is high time for the vain pretensions of the theatre to be put to rest.—It is truly revolting to hear what are termed arguments urged, until they are as stale as the remnants of yesterday's beer, against the whole tenor of experience. It is not in the nature of scenical representations, habitually attended, to produce moral good. The high excitement produced by them prepares the minds of the young, and ardent for intemperance, and debauchery. And it is not at all surprising that young men should leave the playhouse for the brothel. I would ask any father, too who has knowledge of human nature, how he would feel, on knowing that his daughter were under the *protection of a young man of gallantry*, after having sympathised for a time with a stage heroine, and experienced all the contagious influence of high passions? Certainly none deem more highly of the virtue of our fair countrywomen than we do. But we like not experiments of this nature.—We wish them to continue what they now are, patterns of female purity, and of domestic virtue, finding their highest enjoyments at home. We deprecate the destruction of their sensibility, and virgin modesty; of their simplicity of heart and mental purity, by the grossness, the coarse wit, the broad innuendos, the ribaldry of Comedy; and the high wrought passions, the false principles, and often the monstrous impiety, presented, indeed, in all beauty of poetic diction, of Tragedy.

There is another thing. The principle of association has a very powerful and extensive influence. Persons or things instrumental in affording pleasure, will be regarded with complacency. Hence male and female stage players often become the great favourites of the town—And they whose principles are debauched, whose persons very often are prostituted, and whose touch is pollution, are received into the best company, and caressed, and flattered as though they were the identical heroes and heroines, lords and ladies, that they sometimes personate. This, besides the obvious consequences resulting from it, affords "confirmation strong" to the remarks which have been made respecting the infatuation produced by theatrical representations. The passion is strong, indeed, which thus puts aside our feelings of propriety, suppresses our contempt of the vicious and profligate, extinguishes our indignation against low and grovelling debauchery, and abolishes the maxims of prudence in the management of our families. The father who encourages stage-players and aids in support of the theatre, ought to prepare his mind for the event of his daughter running away with a tragedy-hero; or his son marrying an actress, and it may be, exhibiting as a Thespian himself.

Concerning the play which has afforded occasion for these remarks, it may be observed that, as far as it leaves an impression on the mind,

it is one of pity for the principal characters. The honest, and brave lord Aldobrand is thrown out of sight, and we are wholly occupied with Bertram and Imogene, who loved so long, so faithfully, so intensely; and we are made to pity those whose dreadful guilt was the result of their natural dispositions and untoward circumstances! In this respect the reverend author is chargeable, in the court of conscience with a high misdemeanour—*Reverend!* We are ashamed to see such a title in any shape whatever connected with the theatre.—Ill does it become an ambassador of the Lord Jesus Christ, a herald of the cross, to descend from his high functions, to be a writer for the stage! For far other purposes was the ministry of reconciliation ordained by the head of the church.—What should we think, how should we feel, upon meeting with a tragedy, by the Apostle Paul? He indeed determined “to know nothing but Christ, and him crucified.” And, in conformity to this solemn purpose, his whole life was devoted to the instruction of the ignorant in the lessons of heavenly wisdom; the reclaiming of the wicked from the error of their ways; and the consolation of the afflicted in the ever varied, and multiplied calamities of this life of sorrow. But here is one who boasts himself as a successor of the Apostles; and yet, instead of imitating this high example; of performing the offices of a pastor; and training “by every rule of holy war, the sacramental host of God’s elect,” is a pander to the passions, if not a minister to the vices of those to whom he ought to show the way to Heaven. We contemplate these things with feelings of deep and unutterable regret; because we cannot lose sight of the close of the great drama of human life; when every actor shall be rewarded according to the deeds done in the body; when we shall give an account of our time, and talents, our thoughts, and purposes, and every thing that heaven has bestowed. Then will poets, and players, preachers, and hearers stand before the judge of all, and receive the sentence that is meet; “and the unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and sorcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone.”

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DOMESTIC INTELLIGENCE.

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FOR THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

MR. EDITOR,—In your 12th No. page 185, you observe, “It will be highly gratifying to us to receive from those interested in any charity, information of donations made, or of measures adopted to promote their object.” Upon this hint, I send you a short extract from the annual report of the managers of the Female Orphan Society of this place. And, if you please, I should be glad to see it published in your paper; as I think the instance of benevolent liberality which it records, deserves to be more generally known, at least for the sake of example.

▲ SUBSCRIBER.

Norfolk, March 12, 1817.

EXTRACT.

" We are happy to inform you, that some time in July last, we received a letter from the executor of the late capt. John Maxwell, apprising us that the sum of two thousand five hundred dollars had been bequeathed by the testator, to certain trustees named in his will, for the purpose of establishing an Asylum for Female Orphans, which might be placed under the care of our society at their discretion; and informing us of their readiness to transfer the donation to us for the object intended. We accordingly lost no time in communicating our acceptance of their offer; and we would desire here to proclaim our gratitude to our deceased benefactor, and to God the inspirer of all good, for this generous gift, which promises to perpetuate our institution as a lasting honor and blessing to the community. We are further gratified to add, that the executor has already purchased a lot, conveniently situated on Briggs' Point, for the scite of the proposed Asylum, and caused the deed for it, executed to the Society, to be duly recorded in the court of the borough."



FOR THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

HYMN.

Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his!

Numbers xxiii. 10.

O! for the death of those
 Who slumber in the Lord,
 And be like theirs my last repose,
 Like theirs my last reward.

Their bodies in the ground,
 In silent hope may lie,
 Till the last trumpet's lively sound
 Shall call them to the sky.

Their ransom'd spirits soar
 On wings of Faith and Love,
 To meet the Saviour they adore,
 And reign with him above.

Their memory shall live,
 Through long succeeding years,
 Embalm'd with all our hearts can give,
 Our praises and our tears.

O! for the death of those,
 Who slumber in the Lord!
 And be like theirs my last repose,
 Like theirs my last reward!

TO THE EDITOR OF THE CHRISTIAN MONITOR.

SIR,—You propose publishing in the Monitor, essays calculated to point out the moral tendency of theatrical exhibitions; and it is hoped you will soon present your readers with something on that subject, worthy their attention. Instead of an essay, I send an extract of a letter, written January 7, 1812, which, if you think proper, you are at liberty to publish.

N. S.

“ WE have just heard from Richmond, that on the night of 26th December last, the theatre was consumed by fire, and perhaps upwards of *seventy* persons perished in the flames! A more affecting tragedy never was exhibited in that house! The Play-Actors had there, no doubt, often mimicked the awful close of life, and given a representation of death, of a violent death, for the amusement, or, as the friends of such exhibitions would say, for the improvement of the audience and spectators. On this occasion, it pleased the Wise Disposer of all events to exhibit, not merely by representation, but in *reality*, a most heart-affecting tragedy, for the improvement of the survivors.

“ Deep as the impressions of grief no doubt are on the minds of the people of Richmond, it is probable that before these impressions are effaced by the lenient hand of time, before the sable ensigns of mourning are laid aside, another theatre will be erected, crowded with an audience as gay and as numerous as the former. It is contended that the theatre not only answers for the amusement of a leisure hour, but that it is useful to polish the manners and correct the morals. If improvement be indeed the object, they cannot do better than employ the pen of some modern Shakspear to write a piece, the subject of which should be the dreadful scene which has lately taken place. With this tragedy the new theatre should open; with the representation of a theatre in flames; with the shrieks and dying groans of those within, and the frantick distress of those who have escaped. If this should not move the audience, especially those who have lost their friends in the late fire, the tragedian may despair of ever exciting any emotions in their breast. This ought to be performed, at least once a year, on the memorable night of 26th December. Another regulation ought to be, that tickets of admission should be sold no where but at the monument erected over the ashes of the late sufferers; and that every person applying for a ticket should be required to read over the names of those who perished. With the mind thus prepared, some improvement might possibly be derived from such a representation.”

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The Third Report of the Managers of the Norfolk Bible Society, submitted at the Annual Meeting, held on the eleventh of March, 1817.

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ON reviewing our proceedings since the last annual meeting, we are happy to observe some proofs of the increasing usefulness of our

labours. At no time indeed since the establishment of our Society, have its prospects been fairer than they are at present; and it is with feelings of sincere satisfaction, that we beg leave to congratulate you accordingly.

Our receipts for the past year, are	\$ 347 85
Our expenditures for the same period,	457 05½
The balance in the Treasury, is	26 55
The number of Bibles distributed, is	167
That of Testaments,	89
Bibles sold at cost,	19
Testaments,	1
Bibles on hand,	64

In distributing the books we have been careful, as formerly, to guard against the abuses of charity, by the selection of proper objects; and with general success. In all instances indeed, as far as our information extends, our donations have been thankfully received, and in many we hope faithfully improved. And although we have not always been so happy as to see the immediate fruit of our charity, in the signal reformation of its objects, we are not discouraged on that account. We know that it is our duty to sow the *precious seed* in hope, and commend it with prayer to the blessing of that God, who alone can *give the increase*.

In this duty of distributing the Holy Scriptures, it has been a favorite object with us, to furnish those Sister Charities, the Sunday Schools, with a proper supply for the use of their pupils. And we would desire in this place to return our grateful acknowledgements to their pious conductors and other friends, for the prompt and cheerful benevolence with which they have assisted us in the office of distribution.

It has been particularly gratifying to us, to learn from our Depository, that the demand for Bibles is continually increasing; and if any part of this happy result may be fairly ascribed to the influence of our labors, we must be allowed to rejoice in the fact, both as a present encouragement, and still more as an earnest of that future reward to which we aspire.

At an early period of the past year, the establishment of the American Bible Society excited our particular attention. Having received from our delegate to the convention at New-York, a copy of the constitution which that body had formed, we hastened to call a meeting of the members, to consider the invitation which it held out to the various societies of our country, to render themselves auxiliaries to the National Institution. The result was a cordial and unanimous adoption of the proposal, accompanied with a donation of three hundred dollars as a pledge of our friendship and union. We have since been gratified to find, from the official statement of the Board of Managers, that the success of the new system is now secured, and its influence already felt throughout the nation. The number of auxiliary societies is upwards of eighty; and the numerous donations to

the general treasury, both from individuals and associations, reflect the highest honor upon the liberality of the American People.

The establishment of the National Bible Society, under such favorable auspices, is a subject for devout gratitude to God. The event indeed is an era in the history of our cause, which will long be remembered with the happiest emotion. Previous to this, we were obliged to look beyond the Atlantic to the British and Foreign Bible Society, not only as the first source of our existence, but as the constant spring of our exertions. This circumstance was not without its regret. For though we can never cease to regard that institution with the honor due to its generous and splendid labours in the cause of Truth, we could not but feel its very title a sort of undesigned reproach of our nation, for her comparative remissness in the same sacred engagement. But the stain is now effaced. It was worthy of a people enjoying the freest Government and the largest share of happiness upon earth, to express their gratitude to God—the author of their blessings, by the establishment of a National Society, to disseminate His Word with united efforts throughout our empire, and throughout the world. The sentiment was felt, and the American Bible Society is established. Surely, we may be permitted to say in the language of its address: “No spectacle can be so illustrious in itself, so touching to man, or so grateful to God, as a nation pouring forth its devotion, its talents, and its treasures, for that Kingdom of the Saviour, which is righteousness and peace.”

The advantages too, which must be derived from this new system, for the furtherance of our cause, are obvious and striking. “Concentrated action is powerful action. The same powers when applied by a common direction, will produce results impossible to their divided and partial exercise. A national object unites national feeling and concurrence. Unity of a great system combines energy of effect with economy of means. Accumulated intelligence interests and animates the public mind. And the catholic efforts of a country, thus harmonized, give her a place in the moral convention of the world; and enable her to act directly upon the universal plans of happiness which are now pervading the nations.”

Feeling the full force and spirit of these remarks, it will henceforth be our ambition to co-operate with the National Institution, in its noble engagement of circulating the Holy Scriptures throughout the United States, and throughout the world. Accordingly, we shall endeavor to extend our views and our exertions, with the extended sphere of action and usefulness which is now opened to our benevolence. And we cannot but indulge the hope, that our members, and other friends to our cause, will be animated to fresh diligence in this generous enterprize, which is worthy to engage all the best and holiest feelings of our hearts in its advancement and success—It is a work indeed which immediately affects all the dearest interests of our common nature; the happiness of our social relations, the permanence of our political institutions, the peace and harmony of the nations of the earth. It has been inspired by the counsel, and will be crowned with the blessing of Jehovah.

Let us come forward then to this vocation of Heaven, with hearts sanctified by the word of truth, and prepared to devote our talents and our treasure as *a sacrifice a sweet smell, acceptable to God*. Let us suffer no difficulties to discourage, and no indolence to relax our efforts: but let us go on in the spirit of Faith and Prayer, to do our part in diffusing the streams of sacred knowledge through all the regions of the Globe, till *the desert shall rejoice as the rose*, and the Earth shall bloom around us as *the Garden of the Lord*.

Managers for the Present Year.

JAMES NIMMO, *President.*

WRIGHT SOUTHGATE, *Vice-President.*

WM. MAXWELL, *Corresponding Secretary.*

GEORGE W. CAMP, *Recording Secretary.*

JOHN M'PHAIL, *Treasurer.*

Rev. Rich. L. Green,	Seth Foster,
— Samuel Low,	Walter Heron,
— James Mitchell,	William K. Mackinder,
— Geo. Patterson,	William T. Nivison,
— John D. Paxton,	Robert Robertson,
Robert Brough,	Thomas Seaman,
Arthur Cooper,	William Sharp.
William M. Fauguier,	



EXQUISITE POETRY OF THE NEW STYLE.

IN looking over a file of the London Courier, the words "David's Lamentation for Saul and Jonathan," caught my attention. They are a sort of transposition of 2. Sam. i. 19, 27. "The beauty of Israel is slain upon the high places: how are the mighty fallen! Tell it not in Gath, publish it not in the streets of Askelon; lest the daughters of the Philistines rejoice, lest the daughters of the uncircumcised triumph. Ye mountains of Gilboa, let there be no dew, neither let there be rain upon you, nor fields of offerings: for there the shield of the mighty is vilely cast away, the shield of Saul as though he had not been anointed with oil. From the blood of the slain, from the fat of the mighty, the bow of Jonathan turned not back, the sword of Saul returned not empty. Saul and Jonathan were lovely and pleasant in their lives, and in their death they were not divided; they were swifter than eagles, they were stronger than lions. Ye daughters of Israel, weep over Saul who clothed you in scarlet, with other delights; who put on ornaments of gold upon your apparel—How are the mighty fallen in the midst of the battle! O Jonathan, thou wast slain in thine high places. I am distressed for thee my brother Jonathan; very pleasant hast thou been unto me; thy love to me was wonderful, passing the love of women. How are the mighty fallen and the weapons of war perished!" In this quotation we have the effusions of a feeling heart, in terms remarkable for simplicity: a quality by the way essential to the highest order of eloquence. After reading the history of the king of Israel and his son, it is hardly possible to avoid mingling our tears with David's, while he sings his

dirge over the mighty who had fallen in battle. Yet it is not unlikely that the paraphrase in verse will, in the present day find many more admirers, than the genuine lamentation of the Jewish Plasmist.

—
DAVID'S LAMENTATION FOR SAUL AND JONATHAN.

THE beam of the mighty is mantled in night,
His glory is set in the blaze of its light;
His bow-string is shaftless, his spear is at rest,
His sabre unwavering, and sighless his breast.

The beauty of Jacob is laid in the dust,
His armour is broken, and canker'd with rust;
His eye is in darkness, a spot on its ray,
His vigour is death, and his bloom is decay.

The hills of Gilboa shall summer no more,
Jehovah's anointed hath stain'd them with gore;
Their trees shall be leafless, their verdure destroy'd,
Their altar a ruin, and Nature a void.

Philistia shall triumph—the pulse of the brave,
Whose thrill was destruction, is lost in the grave:
One spirit sublim'd them—adversity tried—
They existed in love, and in unity died.

Weep, daughters of Jacob, for Saul and his son;
Attune your bright harps to the deeds they have done;
The arm of the lion, the foot of the roe,
Weep, daughters of Jacob, be mighty in woe.

Oh, Jonathan! Jonathan! Ghostless art thou;
There's gore on thy visage, and dust on thy brow:
Yet the angel of Beauty is lingering by,
She revels in rapture, and flits to the sky.

Yes, thou art a corse, but thy spirit's above,
Diverging in glory, and beaming in love;
And Friendship is blasted, and saintless her shrine,
My soul has no kindred, and anguish is mine.

This is one of the most complete specimens, which we have seen of the *new sublime and beautiful*; and for this reason we have inserted it. In remarking on it, one would scarcely know what particularly to notice. The very first couplet is so *luminous*, and so *dark*, that the reader is at once astonished and confounded. The last couplet, however, in the second stanza, is perhaps more lofty and incomprehensible than the other.

His eye is in darkness, *a spot on its ray,*
His vigour is death, and his bloom is decay.

Without venturing to determine so nice a point, we shall leave it to the reader to decide whether this is not equalled by

The hills of Gilboa shall *summer* no more, &c.

Yet after all, the young and ardent, especially young soldiers, and those who desire to be soldiers, will be most captivated with the first couplet of the fourth stanza

Philistia shall triumph—*the pulse of the brave,*
Whose thrill was destruction, is lost in the grave.

We expect the thanks of the public for presenting this precious morceau, for their entertainment.—We know not how it has hitherto escaped the attention of the industrious editors of papers in this country, who in the present dearth of news, are so diligent in culling the beauties of foreign papers, and so often publish *eloquent speeches*, nice scraps of poetry, and feats of pugilism for the refinement of our taste, and the delight of our imaginations.

By studying the models, of which this is so exquisite a specimen, obtuse as our wits now are, and barbarous as is our taste, we shall soon become as wise as our brethren beyond the atlantic; and from the heights of science and learning, look down with as much contempt upon Messrs. Addison, Pope, and Swift, as even an Edinburgh Reviewer.



NOTICES.

We regret to be obliged to state that the obituary promised in the last number has, by some means, been mislaid—we hope, not lost. Yet, in case this hope should prove unfounded, we should be singularly obliged to our correspondent to furnish us with another copy.

Several complaints of subscribers that their papers do not regularly come hand, have lately reached us. This is particularly the case in relation to our worthy friends in Norfolk. The Editor has repeated these complaints to the Printer, and has received satisfactory assurances that the Monitors for that place are invariably put up with the greatest care, in three packages, and deposited in the Richmond Post-Office, in due time for the first mail that departs after publication. We wish if possible to discover the reason of this failure, and shall neglect no measures calculated to effect this purpose, and “correct the procedure.”

The Convention of the Protestant Episcopal Church of this State, will meet in Fredericksburg on Tuesday the 6th of May.

The Presbytery of Hanover will meet in the Borough of Norfolk on Wednesday, the 7th of May.

The first Annual Meeting of the American Bible Society will be held in New-York, on the 2d Thursday in May.