



The Late Inundations

The Reverend Thomas Anthony Methuen, Rector of Allcannings and Garsdon, a gentleman whose pious and benevolent character is too well known to require any eulogy from us, has just published a poem, entitled "SHREWTON," on the subject of the desolation floods that so recently prevailed in Wiltshire, the profits of which are to be entirely given to the unfortunate sufferers. In making this announcement, the author modestly says, "the profits, if any;" - but we feel no doubt that the profits will be considerable, not only on account of the beneficent purpose to which they are destined, but of the intrinsic merit of the poem. It owes little, indeed, to those florid and artificial ornaments which often diffuse a false brilliancy over poverty of invention and feebleness of thought: but it is imbued with the best of all poetry - the poetry of heart: while the language in which the poet conveys his thoughts and feelings, though simple and unadorned, is always elegant and correct, and sometimes impressively eloquent.

The poem sets out with a description of the tremendous visitation which destroyed the peaceful village of Shrewton, embracing the most remarkable features of that dreadful scene. Our readers will at once remember the incidents alluded to in the following striking stanzas -

As some fell monster of the waste,
Aroused from sleep, with ravenous haste,
Springs on the trembling hind,
So threatens the dissolving snow,
Impetuous, with its flow,
And leaves a wreck behind.

Whence is that call so strong, so nigh,
That overwhelming agony?
It is a village maid:
That "help" oh, help me," vainly cries,
The flood has closed her youthful eyes,
And laughed at human aid.

"The flood!" whose powers terrific grew,
Leagued with the winds that madly blew,
Leagued with the gloom profound,
To human skill and mortal force
Opposed its own resistless course,
The hardest to astound.

But who is he, whose manly form
The torrent breasts, and braves the storm?
It is a peasant bold:

His wife, his children he would save,
As succour at his hands they crave,
With tenderness untold.

Yet saves he not - the crash he hears,
His cottage falls, the worst he fears,
Yet, while one sinks in death,
By an outstretched, Eternal arm,
The rest, now rescued from alarm,
Yet draw their vital breath.

There stands the matron, prompt to call,
Endangered, on the Lord of all,
On Him her hopes depend:
She prays, she faints, she prays again.
She does not, cannot pray in vain
To an Almighty friend.

The author enters into a train of reflections which such an awful manifestation of Divine power ought to excite in the mind of a Christian: its circumstances naturally calling up thoughts of the general destruction of mankind, by the same terrible agent, which has already happened, and the dreadful day, yet to arrive, when the earth

“And all that it inhabits, shall dissolve,
And, like the baseless fabric of a vision,
Leave not a wreck behind.”

The sublime topics are impressively treated by the reverend poet: and there is much feeling in the earnest appeal in behalf of the sufferers from the calamity which has given occasion to his work. It concludes as follows -

And ye, who ransomed souls possess
The hope of coming happiness,
Who tread where Jesu trod:
Hear ye unmoved the piercing cry
Of homeless, helpless poverty,
Now chastened by its God?

Oh no - “the love of Christ constrains”
Your heart to mitigate their pains,
By aid most gladly given:
Till each sad sufferer’s brightened eyes
Shall see again his cottage rise,
And own the grace of Heaven.

Nor are ye heedless of the voice
That soon shall bid his saints rejoice,
“To me YOUR LORD was done
Each deed of sympathizing love,
Affiance in my eyes to prove,
And honour me alone.”

Who would such deeds of love recall,
When fire consumes earth’s transient ball:
Who will not then admire
The grace that taught his hand to give,
His soul in holiness to live,
And Jesus self desire?”

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