

the amiable and excellent sentiments he displays, the overflowing kindness of his heart, and the pensive morality scattered among his descriptions, serve to enliven them with something of a personal and tender attractive hue.

I cannot go

Where universal Love smiles not around,
Sustaining all yon orbs and all their sons ;
From seeming evil still educing good ;
And better thence again, and better still
In infinite progression.

The scholar, the friend and the idle dreamer, appear as conspicuously as the bard. The very familiarity of the scenes and circumstances, to which the poem is devoted, is attractive. It is worthy of note, that we are as easily interested by what is exceedingly familiar, as by the novel and extraordinary. If a writer does not "o'erstep the modesty of nature," we like him all the better for treating of what is very near to us. The curiosity of the multitude is not extensive. The most universal sympathy is that devoted to what is adjacent. Cervantes rose to fame by describing the manners of his own country. There are hundreds who follow Thomson with delight over the every-day scenes of the earth, to one who soars with Milton beyond its confines. Hence it has been said that "the Seasons look best a little torn and dog-eared;" and a man of genius who saw a copy in this condition on the window-seat of an ale-house, exclaimed—"this is fame!" Paul Jones was a devoted lover of this poem. What a contrast must its peaceful beauty have presented to the scenes of violence and danger in which he delighted!

The varying popularity of celebrated works is to be accounted for principally by their distance or vicinity to the associations of each age. We sometimes yawn over Ariosto's battles and knights, while we are often kindled and charmed by Childe Harold. Chivalric enterprises belong to the past; but a tour through Switzerland and Italy, is among the common achievements of the day. And thus Thomson is indebted to his faithful pictures of Nature's annual decay and renovation, for his continued estimation as a poet.

"Remembrance oft shall haunt the shore,
When Thames in summer-wreaths is drest,
And oft suspend the dripping oar,
To bid his gentle spirit rest."

GRIEF.

O! if thy heart be full of grief and despair, go forth in the twilight, under the leaves of the forest; for the breeze fanning softly these leaves, shall whisper a soothing unto thee: the stars shining through their interstices, shall shed their own brightness upon thy soul—telling thee that all earthly things pass quickly away; that the heavens only, are eternally bright, and the night in-

folded thee in her far-reaching presence, shall shed her dewy calmness upon thy soul, and shall soothe and comfort thee like the words of a loved one.

A FRAGMENT.

They were sitting by the light of a fire, in the twilight hour; and around them, in the room, there was that mystic appearance, which ever accompanies such an hour, in such a place. The shadows continually changing with the flickerings of the fire, moved through the room like dim phantoms; and the very sound of the wood fire's wavering flame, was mystic. And over her beautiful countenance, now revealing it wholly, now partially, came that magic light, as she gazed pensively on the fire; shadowing forth in her face, the dim melancholy of heart, and the looking into the vast and shadowy past, and the veiled future, which then were there. There they sat together: he talked to her in his low, spiritual, sweet voice, of past times, of all they had mutually undergone and felt, though not intimate at that time, yet, in the same place and scenes. And thus was she girt, as with an atmosphere of all the feelings springing from the contemplation of the past. The mystic hour unclosed her heart; and free from all but tender emotions, it was open to him, who with his low voice, thus exhibited before her, so much in which they sympathized. And when he went on in that same hour, gradually to declare his deep love for her, overcome by the tenderness of her emotions, at the time, she plighted him her affections.

Williamsburg, Va.

G.

THE OLD NEW-ENGLAND MEETING-HOUSE.

BY MRS. SEBA SMITH.

They all are passing from the land,
Those churches old and gray,
In which our fathers used to stand
In years gone by to pray—
They never knelt, those stern old men,
Who worship'd at our Altars then.
No, all that e'en the semblance bore
Of popedom on its face,
Our fathers, as the men of yore,
Spurn'd from the holy place—
They bow'd the heart alone in prayer,
And worship'd God thus sternly there.
And there was one, my mind recalls,
Where, when a little child,
I mark'd with awe its old gray walls;
And breathed, all fresh and wild
Such prayers as reach the holy throne,
From childhood's trusting lips alone.
It was a church, low-built and square,
With belfry perched on high,
And no unseemly carvings there
To shock the pious eye—
That belfry was a modest thing,
In which a bell was meant to swing.

I say was *want*—for never there
 " Church-going bell " was heard—
 No long-drawn peal to call to prayer
 Disturb'd the forest bird—
 The wind through its small arches rung,
 But never there a bell was hung.

Through coarse gray plaster might be seen
 Oak timbers large and strong,
 And those who reared them must have been
 Stout men when they were young—
 For oft I've heard my grandsire speak,
 How men were growing thin and weak.

The frosts of eighty years have passed
 Upon that grandsire's head—
 He seems a fine old relic cast
 From days that long have fled ;
 Alas that he should see the day,
 That rent those oaken planks away.

His heart was twined, I do believe,
 Round every timber there—
 For memory loved a web to weave
 Of all the young and fair,
 Who gather'd there with him to pray
 For many a long, long Sabbath day.

He saw again his youthful bride—
 His white-hair'd boys once more
 All walk'd demurely side by side,
 As in those days of yore.
 Alas ! those boys are old and gray,
 And *she* hath pass'd in death away.

It stood, like many a country church,
 Upon a spacious green ;
 Whence style and bye-path go in search
 Of cot the hills between.
 The rudest boor that turf would spare,
 And turn aside his teem with care.

I smile, with no satiric smile,
 As I each group review,
 That came by many a long, long mile
 In garments fresh and new ;
 The Sunday dress, the Sunday air,
 The thorough-greased and Sunday hair.

The straight, stiff walk, with Sunday suit,
 The squeaking leathern shoe,
 The solemn air of man and brute,
 As each the Sabbath knew ;
 The conscious air as pass'd the maid,
 The swains collected in the shade.

The females enter straight the door,
 And talk with those within—
 The elders on town matters pore,
 Nor deem it deadly sin.
 And now the Pastor, grave and slow,
 Along the aisle is seen to go.

Down drop the children from the seat,
 The groups disperse around—
 Pew doors are slam'd, and gathering feet
 Give out a busy sound—
 The sounding pipe and viol string
 No longer through the old church ring.

I do remember with what awe
 That pulpit fill'd mine eye,
 As through the balusters I saw
 The sounding-board on high.
 Those balusters !—a childish crime—
 Alas ! I've squeak'd in *sermon time*.

That sounding-board ! to me it seem'd
 A cherub poised on high—
 A mystery I almost deem'd
 Quite hid from vulgar eye ;
 And that old Pastor, wrapt in prayer,
 Look'd doubly awful 'neath it there.

I see it all once more ; once more
 That lengthen'd prayer I hear—
 I hear the child's foot kick the door—
 I see the mother's fear—
 And that long knotty sermon too,
 My grandsire heard it all quite through.

But as it deeper grew, and deep—
 He always used to rise—
 He would not, like the women, sleep—
 But stood with fixed eyes,
 And look intent upon the floor,
 To hear each dark point o'er and o'er.

Hard thinkers were they, those old men,
 And patient too, I ween—
 Long words and knotty questions then
 But made our fathers keen.
 I doubt me if their sons would hear
 Such *lengthy* sermons year by year.

But all are passing fast away—
 Those abstruse thinkers too—
 Old churches, with their walls of gray,
 Must yield to something new—
 Be-Gothic'd things, all neat and white,
 Greet every where the traveller's sight.

And stern old men with hearts of oak,
 Their *bed-room pews* must quit,
 And like degenerate, common folk,
 In cushion'd *stip* must sit—
 'Twas sacrilege most monstrous, vile,
 To tear away that old oak pile.

'Twas sound in every joint and sill,
 I've heard my grandsire say—
 And hard they work'd with right good-will,
 To pull its planks away.
 Young men were they, who little cared
 How old men felt—how old men fared.

Ay, pull them down, as well ye may,
 Those Altars stern and old—
 They speak of those long-pass'd away,
 Whose ashes now are cold.
 Few, few are now the strong-arm'd men,
 Who worship'd at our Altars then.

And they reproach you with their might,
 The pious, proud and free—
 The wise in council, strong in fight,
 Who never bow'd the knee.
 And those gray churches only stand
 As emblems of that hardy band.

Then pull them down, and rear on high
 New-fangled, painted things—
 For these but mock the modern eye,
 The past around their rings.
 Then pull them down and upward rear,
 A pile like those who worship here.

Not stern and simple like the race
 Now passing fast away,
 But painted, varnish'd things in place,
 Like those who come to pray—
 Who keep the outward form with zeal—
 Forget the heart, but learn to kneel.