

SADDLEWORTH. A HALF-HOUR'S RAMBLE IN THE PARISH CHURCH YARD.

On the morning of Wednesday last, having to go past Saddleworth church, we could not resist the temptation to enter the grave yard and spend a few moments amongst the habitations of the dead. Such scenes have an inexpressible charm to our mind. As we walk about from stone to stone, and decipher the records on them engraven, our thoughts involuntarily take flight into times past when men and women on whose ashes we are stepping performed their parts in the drama of life. We muse on the part some of those whose bodies are now mouldering in the silent earth took in the doings of bygone times. The more ancient the date on a stone, the more the interest we take in the sleeper whom it covers. To imagine what were the thoughts and feelings of the various parties whose names we read over, together with the scenes consequent on, and the emotions of pain or otherwise, in the breasts of friends, relatives, and acquaintances on their exit from this world to the unknown world of spirits, gives to the mind a great variety of sublime ideas, improves the heart, and imparts a tone of pleasing melancholy to the general feelings. The commonest inscriptions, differing from one another only in name, age, and date,

have an attraction for us that we cannot resist, yet the charm they contain is as nothing compared with that possessed by epitaph. The following are a few that we culled indiscriminately from hosts of others, all alike interesting and worthy of notice, together with a portion of the thoughts they presented to our minds at the time.

The first follows the name of a wife who had to give up her existence in the prime of her days.

Dear husband, now my life is past,
And you proved faithful to the last,
Mourn not for me; but pity take
On my dear children, for my sake.

On reading the above lines we naturally think of the scene of the woman's death; behold her stretched on a bed, pale and feeble, with three or four little children standing near, and whilst her husband holds her hand in his, and gazes intently on her features, we imagine her, more perhaps by looks than words, to address to him the ideas contained in the above lines.

The next bears date 1799, and follows the name of a boy who died in his 11th year:—

A pale consumption gave the fatal blow;
The stroke was certain, but the effect was slow.
With wasting pain death found him long oppress,
Pity'd his sighs, and gave the mourner rest.

We think, after reading the above, of a beautiful little boy, the pride of both his parents. They might have other children, but they were strong and healthy, and hence all their affection clung to the poor invalid. The bereavement needs no describing.

The next we copied is in memory of a woman who died in 1796. It shall tell its own tale:—

When first Death's summons came to me,
My sins did me confound;
I called on God by fervent prayer,
And speedy comfort found.

On a stone recording the death of James Kenworthy, late of Saddleworth, who died about six years ago near Richmond River, in New South Wales, is the following truthful and impressive axiom:—

Man knows the place of his birth, but not of his death.

We thought of a man dying in a strange land, with none near him except strangers, and none but hireling hands to smooth the bed of death.

The following lines on the stone of a young woman, about 25 years of age, breathe a spirit of pious resignation, which it would do well for young people to imitate:—

My glass is run, my days are spent,
My life is gone, it was but lent;
But God, in Christ, to me hath given
Henceforth eternal life in heaven.

Near the east end of the church we found a stone which covered the remains of a young girl 12 years of age, who was spoken of as being the daughter of one person and the granddaughter of another:—

Th' unworthy world no longer could retain
So much true goodness. No, the hope was vain.
Beloved, lamented, her sweet spirit fled
To brighter realms: blest are the happy dead.

Reader, after perusing the above lines does not your imagination involuntarily picture a room in some quiet country house, where in an old arm chair in the chimney nook sits a grey headed old man, almost in dotage, holding on his knee a little girl with a doll? Do you not imagine that you see the father of the child enter the room, the little girl leap from its grandfather's knee, run to meet him and turn up its bright face to receive a kiss, and to tell, in loving accents, what the old gentleman has done to make it happy during his absence? We can picture to ourself all this, and more from the epitaph, and the fact that both the father's and the grandfather's names are given in the record of its death.

We think it due to the memory of the following person to give to the public the inscription to his memory entire, that the people of Saddleworth may know how far they are indebted to him for the present appearance of their parish church:—

Here resteth the body of James Kenworthy of Quickwood, who departed this life ye 8th of August, 1732, in the 67 year of his Age. He of his owne proper charge erected the Gallery in ye West End of this Church in ye Year of our Lord 1711.

The next will be the last with which we shall trouble the reader for the present. We found it on a stone at the north side of the church. It is rather commonplace, yet still contains something which it would be well to keep in mind and always act upon.

Our days on earth do quickly pass away,
And soon we quit this tenement of clay.
Each hour, each minute, wisely then improve
To gain an interest in redeeming love;
That death may land you on that happy shore,
Where sickness, pain, and sorrow are no more.

Thus ended our half hour in the graveyard; but before laying down the pen let us again advise thee, O reader, to visit the place of tombs thyself! If thou goest alone it will be all the better, for it is in solitude that the voice of God is the most distinctly heard; but whether alone or with company, if thou goest to ask counsel of the dead, assuredly thou shall go away a much wiser man than thou wert before.