

AGRICULTURAL BOYS' SCHOOL.

THE following account was published in the CHRISTIAN ALMANAC, of a plan for the education of boys in Agriculture, at Southam, Warwickshire:—

“It is not a school; it is simply three roods and ten poles of land divided into twelve gardens, occupied by boys, from twelve to eighteen years of age, in the cultivation of garden vegetables, peas, carrots, cabbages, kidney-beans, celery, parsnips, &c. I allow only one-fourth to be cultivated for potatoes, and wheat not at all. They pay all prices, from 6d. to 1s. per month, according to the size. The rent for the whole amounts to about £4 17s. per annum. The 17s. I expend in one rent dinner, and a cup of ale, monthly, when they bring their rent, which I am glad to tell you my little tenants have done to an hour. If I were rich enough, I should be happier in having 500 such tenants, than as many renting 200 acres each. It is a glorious sight, (or rather was a glorious sight,) in the summer, to see all the gardens so clean and full of stuff. I could have challenged it, for produce and cleanliness, against any acre of ground in the country. The moral advantages, too, have been very great. If it could be copied and extended, in a small degree, all tendencies to sedition and anarchy might be neutralized and suspended. For instance, in this town we have 1,200 inhabitants, the greater part of whom, being agricultural labourers, have been fully and fairly employed the whole summer. There are about forty boys or young men who have been at the national school, but who are not yet old enough to go out into service. In the summer evenings, if unemployed, they are very apt to be in mischief; but my boys, since they have had a garden to resort to, have forsaken the streets, and are acquiring that sort of knowledge which is likely to be serviceable to them when they become men. Their fathers and mothers, especially the latter, are made very happy; their cottages have been filled with good vegetables all the summer, at no expense to the father's strength or mother's care; for the boys, whilst they will work hard to procure the rent, are very willing to let their parents have the produce. This they sometimes pay the poor boys for, and sometimes not: whichever they do it amounts to the same thing—if the boys sell their vegetables to their mother, the money is laid out in clothing, so that saves the father's purse. If four acres of land could be procured for every forty boys, (which is about the number for 1,200 inhabitants,) we should have the whole country smiling with health, activity, and content.”

NOTICE OF THE LATE REV. SYDNEY SMITH.

[THE subject of the following remarks was so well known during his life time, by his writings and upright character, that to say aught by way of eulogium, or by way of introducing the following extract from a late London periodical, would be a work of supererogation.]

THE comment on the Rev. Sydney Smith's character and writings which appeared in the SPECTATOR of 1st March, struck me as being at once accurate and discriminating, in so far as it took a view of both, such as a thoughtful observer of his times might well arrive at, having no personal feeling towards or even private acquaintance with the eminent divine lately lost to the world. But those who enjoyed the privilege of private intercourse with this remarkable man must feel that quite as much remains

to be said of him under that aspect; and I venture to speak as one of them, although admitted within the circle of his familiar associates only during the latter years of his life, when of course his beams must have been shorn of a part of their former splendour. Still the setting glories of Sydney Smith were more brilliant than most other men's meridian rays.

In the varied flow of his conversational powers, the point of his playful satire, and the force and vivacity of his illustrations, few, if any, have ever approached him: added to these, there was a natural buoyancy of temper, and genial aptitude for mirth and for the enjoyment of society, which had so exhilarating an effect on those around him that no one ever felt reluctant to be made the subject of his pleasantry. His attacks were indeed like summer lightning—they never harmed the object illumined by their flash.

But not in the convivial hour alone was Sydney Smith qualified to bear a leading part. In temperate and philosophic discussion—on topics embracing the substantial interests of the human race—on ethical questions—he was luminous in his remarks, large and liberal-minded, and even patient of contradiction. In fact, he had read much, and always with the sincerest desire to arrive at truth; and if he lacked that quality of intellect which is capable of imparting original views on profound subjects, no man was ever more successful in possessing himself of the results of other men's thoughts, and in diffusing them in a form suited to the apprehension of ordinary readers. A distinguished scholar now living, writing of Sydney Smith to a friend in 1840, observes—"Ridicule seems to me to be admirably fitted to confound fools, and to destroy their prejudices. It is not needed in order to recommend truth to wise men; and indeed, from its general dealing in exaggerating and slight misrepresentation, is likely to offend them. It is his mastery of ridicule which renders Sydney Smith so powerful as a diffuser of ideas; for in order to diffuse widely, it is necessary to be able to address fools. His powers as a diffuser, as compared with the powers of a great inventor, who was latterly altogether wanting in the diffusing power, are well shown in his article on Bentham's *Book of Fallacies*. Indeed, as a diffuser of the good ideas of other men, I do not know whether he ever had an equal."

When the imaginative faculty was in question, however, Sydney Smith was creative and original enough, God knows. When in good spirits, the exuberance of his fancy showed itself in the most fantastic images and ingenious absurdities, till his hearers and himself were at times fatigued with the merriment they excited. He had the art, too, of divesting personalities of vulgarity; and not unfrequently was the luckless victim of his wit seen to enjoy the exercise of it quite as much as others. In fact, many persons rather felt it as a compliment when Sydney singled them out for sport. And he was so universal in his sympathies, that he did not require a select or distinguished circle to be incited to display. His rich resources flowed so freely forth, that I have heard some of his happiest inspirations uttered to persons of comparatively humble pretensions either to intelligence or fashion. The presence of men and women—so they were but of the educated class—always unlocked his sympathies, and he expanded without difficulty as without vanity. Not that he was insensible to the value of choice society—none knew better how to prize and enjoy it. But he had such a store of kindly benevolence in his heart, that he liked to contribute to the happiness of whomsoever he found himself in company with. Nobody too obscure, in fact, for Sydney to put into good humour with themselves. Nay, I have seen him brighten the countenance of his

poor parishioners, for the day, by a captivating phrase or two, when he met them, or visited their cottage in quality of "doctor," as he was wont to do at Combe Florey.*

It has been objected, that his temperament unfitted him for the clerical profession. It certainly did not prevent his active discharge of those duties which belong to the office of parish-priest; and I have heard from good authority, that during his long residence (of sixteen years, I believe) on his living in Yorkshire, no clergyman ever performed the duties with better effect. I know he performed them at Combe Florey, and recollect it with admiration and respect. Such village sermons are rare; such pastoral protection and care not frequent; whilst his medical knowledge (which was purposely acquired at Edinburgh in this view) was available to his poor neighbours' comfort and relief. But he indulged in levity, it is asserted, on religious topics. To this I reply, that, whatever may have passed in the familiar confidence of his intimate society, nothing that the public have a right to deal with is obnoxious to this cavil. Professionally speaking, Sydney Smith was without blemish; and this is saying much. Let such dignitaries as are without spot throw the first stone. He did not, moreover, choose his profession; and the most that can be said, therefore, is, that being made a priest by his father's will and desire, he did not compress and subjugate the original man into the ideal of a churchman. Yet it has been suggested, on the opposite view of his character, that he used his powerful pen in behalf of his corporation interests! [*Letters to Archdeacon Singleton, to wit.*] The truth is, that Sydney conceived it to be his professional duty to espouse the corporation interests; and accordingly he sustained them by his one-sided professional remonstrance against Lord John Russell's interference with its rights. But it is difficult to please all objectors, and even Sydney Smith could not hit the mark—too catholic for some, too clerical-minded for others; the only sure course being a blind and steady party-zeal: and this was just what my rev. friend could not practise. He aided the Whigs prodigiously when they figured as the apostles of the principles he had at heart; for he wrote with the force of conviction. At a later season, they were in the ascendant, and he wielded his pen in the clerical service as the paramount obligation of his later days. That he should have been something more—or something less, as you will—than a member of the sacerdotal corporation, seems to me inseparable from the enlarged and beneficent character of Sydney Smith's mind; and I can only add, would that the Church were never worse served than by my lamented friend!

10th March, 1845.

* On one occasion, his parish-clerk being laid up with a broken shin, Sydney called round to know if *his plaister* had wrought benefit. "I'm getting round, Sir: but I doubt I shan't be fit for duty by Sunday next." Sorry for that, David, indeed; we shall miss you at the singing." Then turning to me, "You can't think what a good hand David is at a psalm—you should hear him lead off *the old Hundredth*." At which the old clerk's eyes fairly glistened as he stammered out, "Ah! your honour's only saying that to cheer me up a bit."

A SHARP RETORT.—"Please to bestow your charity on a poor sweeper," said one of the crossing gentry to a frequent passer. "I have n't got any," was the gentleman's reply. "Sir, I believe you," was the retort; and the gentleman was so struck with it, that he turned back and gave him sixpence.

ON THE CUSTOM OF TURNING TO THE EAST IN PRAYER.

ALSO,

ON THE SCRIPTURAL METAPHORIC SIGNIFICATIONS OF NORTH AND SOUTH.

[BY VIRBIUS.]

MANY customs which might fairly be traced as far back into the obscurity of past ages, as the first institution of human societies, are still observed with undiminished veneration, although the cause of their establishment must remain for ever an unsolved problem; and they continue to fetter our minds with the same spell, and influence our actions with the same hallowed respect and devotion to them, as when they first became necessary-conventional usages.

The book of human life is a record of astonishing events. Every page of the past is distinguished by a title fearfully characteristic of the incidents which it chronicles; it is written with human blood or tinctured with human gall. And every page discloses the history of such events and scenes forming part and parcel of the realities of life, as would make an Angel weep. And no doubt the scroll on which shall be written the terrible FINIS of all things ten thousand years hence, when Time shall have closed his account with mortality, will wind up with the same common and distinguishing characteristic of human life, a final display of the constitutional habit of man devouring man. Such is the nature of this God-like mortal. And whether this appetite for human flesh be whetted by ambition, depraved by bigotry, or precipitated by a whirlwind of the evil passions of the heart, it is still a part of himself; and hence the perpetuity of social customs. Because the book of life informs us that man is the same yesterday, to-day, and for ever. This is both a physical and a moral axiom, and proves the question of our personal identity. In that book we see the mightiest monarchs hurled from their thrones, and the thrones themselves crumbling in the dust; empires annihilated or broken into a thousand fragments, and the very forms and names of Governments effaced from remembrance; but the customs of nations remain unchanged through all the revolutions of empires and the exterminating contentions of political interests. Custom is the immortality of human expediency — the ghost of the primitive necessities of civil communities as they existed before they were encumbered by the later inventions and complications of political systems.

I have devoted many a leisure hour to the amusement of endeavouring to trace the customs of nations to their origin, and I have as often found the result of the task to be profitable and instructive, as well as amusing. My attempts to grasp the object of my pursuit have not always been attended with success, but I have never failed to gather sweet flowers and wholesome fruit by the way. This observation extends to all literary and scientific enquiry, and is offered for encouragement of the young in their search after truth, and the acquisition of useful knowledge. Occasional recourse to the rich and abundant stores of antiquity is a much more rational and profitable occupation than the valueless attempts to unveil the mysteries

of futurity, or force premature, unnatural, and unsatisfactory disclosures from the womb of time. It is a delightful and refreshing recreation to a mind harrassed and perplexed with the grosser concerns of life, because it both invigorates the faculties of the soul, and gives a higher and purer tone to the sentiments, the feelings, and the passions of the heart.

I am at a loss to account satisfactorily for the custom which prevails among almost all nations, of turning towards the East in prayer. It seems to have been an essential act of the religion of ancient ages for the people to turn to the East in adoring the Deity. This custom of associating the idea of sanctity with that quarter of the Heavens, was common to several of the Oriental nations in the most ancient times, and adopted afterwards by those of the West; and even to this day the East is held in particular reverence both by the Christian and the Pagan.

We can easily imagine how readily and sincerely the untutored and single minded savage or pagan would be led to entertain sentiments of awe and veneration for the rising sun, that being the most glorious and captivating of all the visible works of God. But why a notion which has no solid foundation in reason or true religion should continue to influence the actions of the enlightened Christian, is altogether unaccountable, except it be on the plea of ancient custom; a plea which has too frequently been esteemed sufficient to sanctify the greatest absurdities and the grossest acts of impiety in the Christian Church. The habit of turning to the East in prayer, cannot fail to impress on weak minds the idea of a *local Deity*; and such impression must detract from God one of the most amazing, incomprehensible, and essential of the attributes of Divinity—his Omnipresence.

In subservience to this singular practice, which would confine the presence of God to one corner, the Christian of several denominations still scrupulously arranges the most sacred parts of his temple, worships his God, and buries his dead, with a religious regard to the East.

The origin of this superstition is referred to an ancient tradition of the Jews, or rather of the Chaldees, who, according to the Rabbis, believed that the first man whom God made, was created with his face to the East. Whether this belief be established on a true or false foundation is impossible to decide, but it receives countenance, both from Scripture and a singular fact, or coincidence, in the Hebrew language, in which the words *before, behind, right, left*, are used also to signify *East, West, North, South*: thus *kedem*, before, eastward—or, as in the Chaldaic, *panim*, the face, eastward—*achar*, behind, westward—*jamin*, the right, southward—*shemali*, the left, northward. This is literally exemplified in the sublime language of Job—“Behold I go forward, but He is not there; and backward, but I cannot perceive Him; to the left hand where He doth work, but I cannot behold Him; He hideth himself on the right hand, that I cannot see Him.” That is, he goes East, West, North, and South, but God is not there.

The custom of worshipping towards the East, is countenanced by many parts of Holy Writ. Ezekiel, xliii. 1, 2, 4 —“Afterwards he brought me to the gate, even