

The Salace.

WHEN through the desert's arid wastes of old
Journey'd the tribes of Israel, with what strains
Of gratitude the fainting thousands hail'd
Elim's twelve fountains! Underneath the shade
Of the umbrageous palm (Nature's own tent)
They bathed their parched brows. From every
tongue

Arose the hymn of praise. The cloudy pillar
Conducted once the parched host beside
One brook less favour'd. Yet, though only *one*,
Elim's *twelve* fountains often seem'd forgotten,
While Marah linger'd in ungrateful hearts.
Bereaved Christian! has thy Covenant God
Placed thee beside some Marah; caused thee drink
Some stream of earthly woe? Say, shall *one* draught
Of bitter trial bury in oblivion
The record of past mercies,—rill on rill

Of providential bounties which were made
To cheer thy path? Oh! rather while thou sitt'st
In solitary sadness brooding o'er
Thy brook of Sorrow, let thy mem'ry dwell
On the ten thousand wells of earthly bliss
Which crowd life's retrospect: the Ebenezers,
Each with its own inscription, testifying
To God's unchanging faithfulness and mercy.
Yes; while thy Marah has been only *one*,
Are not thine Elims many? And instead
Of wond'ring at His dealings, rather wonder
The past should teem with pledges of such love
All undeserved! For if His thoughts had been
As are thy thoughts, His ways as are thy ways,
How different its annals! Oh! if sin
Received its due, thy tears would never dry;
If justice had been laid unto the line,
There had been weeping which eternity
Could ne'er have ended!

Hush'd, then, be thy grief.
What, after all, the heaviest of thy pangs?
There might have beat within thy deathless spirit
The pulse of Immortality undone,

And thine awaking from the bed of death
Have been in outer darkness! Pause and think.
Thou might'st have drunk the Marah of despair,
The gall and wormwood mingling in its streams!
Fear not the Marah-fountain, which, in love,
Thy God appoints thee. As His pillar led
The hosts of Israel thither, be assured,
For some high purpose has He brought thee there.
And if thou wouldst, like Israel, transmute
From bitter into sweet this pool of sorrow,
Cast in the Tree of Life! Oh! blessed antidote
To every bitter cup and bitter hour!
JESUS! one ray of Thine approving smile
Can change the gloom of midnight into day,
And make the gate of death the gate of Heaven!

But does no solace still remain to cheer,
Mourner, thine alter'd lot? What! has the scourge,
The besom of destruction, left behind
No earthly comfort to support the heart
So rudely swept? And art thou doom'd to sit
Brooding disconsolate amid the dust
And ashes of thy woe? Nay; while thou tunest
Thy mournful Lyre to sing in plaintive strains

Of Judgment, thou canst sing of Mercy too!
Ne'er does the heart, till wounded, prize its blessings.

One rill has dried, one source (perchance the chief)
Of earthly pleasure suddenly has fail'd;
But streams before unthought of, unobserved
And unacknowledged, claim thy gratitude.
While one beloved tie has been dissever'd,
Are there not hallow'd friendships still surviving,
To mitigate thy sorrows? precious bonds,
Approximating closer by each loss
Of broken links? Are there not many drops
Of mercy mingled in thy draught, enough
To check each rising murmur, and to tell
How much severer might have been thy pangs
Had God so will'd? Consider how He might
Have mix'd the cup with anguish, far beyond
The reach of tears—refusing sympathy!
Ah! there are speechless sorrows, cutting wounds,
Too deep for solace!—lacerated hearts
Bleeding in secret over woes they dare not
Confide to earthly ears; and, worst of all,
There is the heaviest of affliction's pangs,
The pang of watching by the dying couch,

At which you dare not feel "To die is gain."
The hopes of Immortality proscribed !
The Spirit ent'ring the realities
Of an undone eternity. Dread thought !
A thousand deaths (if the sweet sleep of Saints
Can be so called) is nothing to *one* such !

Mourner in Zion, then, be comforted :
Thou hast no cause to weep for the departed.
Mourn not their loss ; rejoice thou in their gain ;
For they are to be envied who have fallen
"Asleep in Jesus." Earthly ties are broken,
Only to draw thee nearer to the Skies,
By everlasting cords of sacred love,
Leading affection to associate
Sweetly in thought a glorified Redeemer
With those now at His side ! Repose on Him
Who still vouchsafes unnumber'd benefits.
The Hand that smites is able, too, to heal ;
And in His very smiting there is all
A Father's tenderness. Thy cup is still
Full to the brim with blessings infinite ;
"Double for all thy sins, thou hast received."
Adore Him for the past, and for the future

Cheerfully trust Him. Thou hadst but a loan,—
No more; and if the Great Proprietor
Sees meet the boon He lent thee to recall,
Becomes it thee to murmur? Rather own
His undeserved kindness, that thou art
Preserved from day to day, and hour to hour,
The monument of God's forbearing love;
That He has not, ere now, pronounced against
thee
The Cumb'rer's sentence and his awful doom,
With righteous vengeance, "Swearing in His
wrath
That thou shouldst never enter into Rest!"