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OLD HUMPHREY'S

ADDRESSES.



The tower may stand—the tree may bloom,
Yet time their strength will sever ;
But thou in glory or in gloom,
O man ! shalt live for ever.

A NEW EDITION.

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THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY ;

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INTRODUCTION.

It may, reader, savour of vanity in me to suppose, that my poor Addresses will effect any beneficial purpose. A stump of a pen in the infirm hand of an old man, is, to appearance, but a sorry source of advice and comfort; and yet, before now, such a thing has been made mighty in reproof and in consolation, in strengthening weak hands and in confirming feeble knees.

When we consider what important purposes have been frequently brought about by weak instruments, it is enough to encourage us in every well-meant endeavour to be useful. A mite is but a small sum, yet when freely given by the poor, it has been reckoned of greater value than the largest amount cast into the treasury. A sling in the hand of a stripling shepherd is but a poor weapon of warfare, but when God strengthens the arm that wields it, a mail-clad giant may be therewith felled to the ground.

You see by what kind of reasoning it is, that I encourage myself to lay my Addresses before you. Try to read them in the same spirit with which they have been written.

Your friend,

OLD HUMPHREY.

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OLD HUMPHREY'S

ADDRESSES.

SANCTIFIED SORROW.

COME, listen to an old man, and let him catechise you. I do not ask if your heart be well bound up, but whether it be well bruised and broken? I do not ask if you have rejoiced for righteousness, but whether you have sorrowed for sin? for sure I am, that hearts broken by God's holy law, can only be bound up by the gospel of Jesus Christ; and that those who have in their souls a godly sorrow for sin, are not far from bursting out into a song of thanksgiving: "Come, and let us return unto the Lord: for he hath torn, and he will heal us; he hath smitten, and he will bind us up," Hos. vi. 1.

A COMFORTABLE HOME.

I AM not going to fire a shot from a distance, that may never reach you ; I am not about to draw a bow at a venture, where the arrow may miss its mark ; but, on the contrary, to come to close quarters, to grapple with you at your own door, and to enter, like a strong man armed, into your habitation.

What sort of a home have you ? What sort of a home have you ? You may think this an odd kind of a question, but I will repeat it : What sort of a home have you ? If it be comfortable, may it ever remain so ; and if it be otherwise, willingly would I tell you how to make it comfortable. A miserable thing it is to have a comfortless home. It is bad for the husband, bad for the wife, and bad for the children. Where the hasty heart, the angry eye, and the clamorous tongue, wage war together, peace is banished from that habitation.

Oh, sweeter far in peace to live,
Each other's failings to forgive,
 Each other's burdens bear !
For lasting love alone can bless,
Content alone give happiness
 In this wide world of care.

Oh the misery of an unwashed, unswept, fireless house, with a drunken husband, and a dirty, untidy scold of a wife at the head of it ! Fine bringing up of children in such a habitation ! Homes there are of this kind, in abundance, but what sort of a home have *you* got ? Is God acknowledged there ? Is he feared, loved, obeyed, worshipped, and praised ? For there is a peace and a glory around the poorest cottage, where God is worshipped, not to be found in the palace where his name is not known. If God be in your habitation, in none of your wants will you be forsaken ; and if he be not there, amid all your comforts you are far from happy. If your home be a wretched one, think not to mend it by merely scrubbing the floors, and rubbing the chairs and tables ; by mending your clothes, washing your children, and by keeping away from the pawn and gin shops. These things must all be done, but something else must be done first. You must begin at the right end. The presence of God is first wanted among you.

Seek it humbly, seek it heartily; and then you will go on improving, till the most wretched home becomes one of a different description. You may, perhaps, be often puzzled, and not know how to manage matters, you may at times be driven even to your wit's end, but, for all this, if you begin well, you need not despair. "Acquaint now thyself with God, and be at peace: thereby good shall come unto thee," Job xxii. 21. "Trust in the Lord with all thine heart, and lean not unto thine own understanding. In all thy ways acknowledge him, and he shall direct thy paths," Prov. iii. 5, 6. If, then, you want a comfortable home, bend down on your knees, at once, and pour forth your prayer to the Father of mercies, in the all-prevailing name of his well-beloved Son, that he may remove or sanctify your troubles, making your crooked paths straight, and your rough places plain. Where the presence of God is fully felt and enjoyed in a family, the wife will be ashamed of having a dirty, neglected, miserable habitation; the husband will be afraid to be found wasting his time and his wages in drunkenness and iniquity; and their children will be taught to remember their Creator in the days of their youth. Without the favour of God, you may work and slave like a negro; you may get up at sunrise, and go

to bed at midnight ; you may weary your bodies and souls in scraping together this world's gear ; but you will never have a comfortable home : fear, and distraction, and discontent, and disappointment, will continually await you. If, then, you desire to possess a peaceable, cheerful, and happy home, let God be worshipped there, that his presence and his blessing may abide with you always.

THE CHARACTER
OF THE
BRITISH SAILOR.

How hard it is for inclination to give way to judgment and conscience! There are a thousand things in the world, the evil of which we are backward to discern, merely because they give us pleasure: we smile at the antics of a fool; we laugh at the absurdities of a drunkard; while their folly and wickedness are scarcely noticed. When sin is a subject of laughter, a source of pleasure, it cannot excite that abhorrence with which it ought ever to be regarded.

There is much in the character of the British sailor, which leads us to make great allowance for his irregularities: his frankness, his good-nature, his courage, his attachment to his country, all enlist us in his favour; and if we meet him when he has taken an extra glass of grog,

occupying more of the pathway, by his reeling to and fro, than he ought to do, most of us are disposed to smile rather than to frown. But though this be the case with our inclination, judgment and conscience must condemn it. A drunkard is a drunkard still, whether he be the squalid and wretched frequenter of a gin-shop, or the jolly Jack Tar in his check shirt, blue jacket, and trowsers like the driven snow.

The British sailor has long been a favourite with the public, and his wildest excesses are viewed with a forbearance which is not favourable to virtue.

A short time ago, one of those scenes was presented on the Thames, which never fail to attract attention, and afford thoughtless merriment. A Jack Tar, seated in a wherry, was rowed up the river against wind and tide. He had just returned from India, and, sailor-like, was industriously disposed to get rid of his spare cash. He had a pipe in his mouth, and the clouds of smoke poured forth, showed that the smoker was in earnest, while with his right hand he flourished a flexible bamboo. Behind him was a large shaggy Newfoundland dog, who appeared as well pleased as Jack himself. Before him sat a musician, with a huge drum and Pandean pipes, playing away with all his power. As Jack passed the vessels

in the river, and the wharfs, and the drinking rooms, overlooking the water, he was cheered continually. When he arrived at St. Katharine's docks, he quitted the wherry, and hopped along on his real leg, for his other was a wooden one, as nimbly as a kangaroo, while the spectators, assembled to witness his landing, greeted him with a cheer. Jack and the Newfoundlander were soon stowed in a coach; the musician occupied the roof, striking up "Rule Britannia;" and the crowd loudly cheered as Jack drove off, waving his hat good-humouredly from the coach window.

Now, though hundreds laughed at the manner of the sailor spending his holiday, how few would regret the excesses to which such a beginning was likely to lead! It is a melancholy reflection, that sin should so mingle with the buoyant emotions of the heart; but on this very account we ought to be more watchful over ourselves, yea, doubly mistrustful, in seasons of pleasure. The poison berry is no less fatal on account of its enticing appearance. The adder is no less deadly because its hues are beautiful; and sin is as destructive to our present and future peace, when, smiling, it presents us with its honied cup, as it is when, in the shape of a monster, it opens its frightful and devouring jaws.

Every word that I have written, savouring of reproof, has been directed to my own heart; for the love of character and novelty is a sad temptation to Old Humphrey, and often leads him to smile when he ought to frown: but it may be that you want a caution too. I have somewhere met with the saying, "He who laughs at sin is very likely to commit it." Let this be a caution to us both, for "he that covereth his sins shall not prosper: but whoso confesseth and forsaketh them shall have mercy," Prov. xxviii. 13.

PLAIN AND PITHY REMARKS.

I WANT no more than two minutes of your time, for I have very little to say, and that little will lie in a very small compass, though, if you attend to it, it may give you a great deal of peace.

The best thing in this world is the assurance of a better; and our more immediate wants are food, raiment, and rest. If you would relish your food heartily, labour to obtain it. If you would enjoy your raiment thoroughly, pay for it before you put it on; and if you would sleep soundly, take a clear conscience to bed with you. The observance of these rules will make your earthly path tolerably smooth; and as to heaven, if you have any desire to attain it, you must follow Him, who hath said, "I am the way." Rely upon his atonement, and walk in his ways, and you will be well provided for time and eternity.

If thou wouldst dwell with raptured eyes
Near God's eternal throne,
"I am the way," the Saviour cries,
Walk in that way alone.

CLOSE QUESTIONING.

Do you pray without ceasing? Do you strive as though salvation depended on works, and believe as though it could only be obtained by faith? And do you, after all, renouncing your faith and your works, look only to the righteousness and death of Jesus Christ?

Do you feel sin, repent of sin, abhor sin, and forsake sin? Do you know what it is to doubt, to fear, to tremble, to despair, to believe, to hope, to trust, and to rejoice?

Do you feel your need of Jesus, and are you satisfied that he, and he alone, is able and willing to save you? Can you trust, even while you feel sin struggle within you, that the guilt of sin is removed from you? Yea, that the blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth from all sin?

Do you believe that the work of your redemption is finished, and yet long to be doing the will of your heavenly Father day by day? Do you mourn a hard and unbelieving heart, and

yet melt at a Saviour's sufferings, believing in the hope set before you in the promises of God? Do you see yourself surrounded with dangers, and yet feel conscious of security? Do you grieve for an unholy heart, and pant after holiness?

Have you more love for the Saviour, and do you feel more fear to offend him, than ever? Is He your hope, your trust, your joy, and your only dependence? Does the Holy Spirit bear witness with your spirit that you are a child of God? In the midst of your infirmities and your sins, can you say, mourning or rejoicing, abounding or suffering loss, hoping or fearing, sinking or swimming, fighting or falling, living or dying, I have no hope but in Jesus Christ, and him crucified?

TOPPERS.

WELL, my friends, how passes time with you? With me it seems to hurry along as rapidly as a railroad carriage; if every week had fourteen days, and every day eight-and-forty hours, I should not even then be able to accomplish one-half of what I undertake. Still, in the busiest life there are moments of leisure, and as even these ought to be turned to a profitable purpose, you shall now have another hint from Old Humphrey.

Many of you know London city, but as to knowing a hundredth part of the strange things which take place there, that is quite out of the question. My method is, when witnessing a multiplicity of odd occurrences, to treat them as I do blackberries—I pass by a great many, and pick out those only that I like best.

Whoever has been in London in the fruit season, must have heard men, women, and children, crying out in all directions, “Hautboys, fine hautboys.”

These hautboys are large strawberries, and are

sold in baskets called pottles, which, tapering from the top, go off less and lesser to the bottom.

I was passing along, on a hot day, when a pile of these pottles, in a fruiterer's shop, caught my attention. There was one of particularly fine fruit, and I soon had hold of it; but the man cried out in a hurry, "Stop, stop, sir! I cannot sell *them*."

"Cannot sell *them*!" said I, "and for what reason?"

"Oh," replied he, "I cannot sell *them*, for they are *toppers*."

Now, these toppers were the largest sized strawberries, picked out on purpose to put on the tops of the other pottles, to make the fruit look better than it really was. "Come," thinks I to myself, "if you will not let me have the toppers, you cannot hinder me from taking away the lesson they have taught me." So I walked off, talking to myself about the toppers.

At the corner of the next street, at a draper's shop, some dozens of good-looking handkerchiefs were hanging at the door, and marked at the low price of fourpence each. Thinking this no bad opportunity of laying in a stock of half-a-dozen or a dozen good handkerchiefs, for a worthy but poor friend, I entered the shop, but was told that they only sold these handkerchiefs to customers,

and that if I had any of them, I must buy something else with them. Old Humphrey was soon out of the shop again, thinking to himself that he ought to have known better than to have gone into it. The handkerchiefs were nothing in the world but toppers, and were hung at the door to make people believe that things were sold cheaper at that shop than they really were.

One of the objects I had in view in my walk, was to buy a leg of mutton; and observing two very fine legs hanging by themselves at a butcher's shop, I told the butcher to pull one of them down, for that I had set my mind upon it.

"The legs are sold, sir," said he; "but you may have the shoulders to match them."

"Sold!" replied I; "why, if they are sold, what is the use of letting them hang up there?"

"Only to show what sort of mutton I sell," said the butcher. I saw in a moment that the two legs of mutton were his toppers, and that, of course, he would not part with them.

When I came to Smithfield, I stopped a while, for a horse-jockey was selling a horse to a young gentleman, who appeared to me to have far more money in his pocket than judgment or discretion in his head. The gentleman seemed disposed to fancy a black horse, but the jockey began to puff off a brown one, and talked so much of "thorough

bred," "courage," "spirit to the back-bone," "high action," "sure-footed," "fast-going," "free from vice," "quiet as a lamb," and fifty other puffing phrases, that I thought to myself, "Ay! ay! Mr. Horse-dealer, these highflying terms are your toppers, and will enable you, no doubt, to get rid of your brown horse."

About an hour after, I saw two ladies getting into a coach: they were very gaily dressed; so much so, that the scarf of the one, and the shawl of the other, were quite sufficient to attract attention; but their head dresses struck me more than either the scarf or the shawl, for in one of them was stuck a bunch of artificial flowers almost as big as a besom, and in the other, several ostrich feathers, a foot or two high. "More toppers," thought I, hurrying along; "and those who are caught by them may find, perhaps, the heads of the wearers still lighter than the feathers and the flowers."

Having occasion to call on a tradesman, to settle an account, I found him in a violent passion with his shopman for a trifling mistake; this grieved me the more, because he had the credit of being a religious man, and a truly religious man will seek for grace to restrain his passions. The tradesman soon after began to talk to me on serious subjects, and quoted several

texts of Scripture; but I soon perceived that he was not sincere, that he was not religious at his heart, and that he merely used the texts of Scripture as toppers, to enable him to pass as a religious character.

Now, what shall we say to these things? Why, seeing the errors of others, let us try to avoid them, and act with godly sincerity in things spiritual and temporal.

Take, then, the hint of Old Humphrey; bearing in mind, that there are toppers in dress, toppers in trade, and toppers in religion, as well as toppers in strawberries.

RICHES.

Do not be over-anxious about riches. Get as much of true wisdom and goodness as you can; but be satisfied with a very moderate portion of this world's good. Riches may prove a curse, as well as a blessing.

I was walking through an orchard, looking about me, when I saw a low tree laden more heavily with fruit than the rest. On a nearer examination, it appeared that the tree had been dragged to the very earth, and broken by the weight of its treasures.

“Oh!” said I, gazing on the tree, “here lies one who has been ruined by his riches.”

In another part of my walk, I came up with a shepherd, who was lamenting the loss of a sheep that lay mangled and dead at his feet. On inquiry about the matter, he told me that a strange dog had attacked the flock, that the rest of the sheep had got away through a hole in the hedge, but that the ram now dead, had more wool on his

back than the rest, and the thorns of the hedge held him fast, till the dog had worried him.

“Here is another,” said I, “ruined by his riches.”

At the close of my ramble, I met a man hobbling along on two wooden legs, leaning on two sticks.

“Tell me,” said I, “my poor fellow, how you came to lose your legs.”

“Why, sir,” said he, “in my younger days, I was a soldier. With a few comrades, I attacked a party of the enemy, and overcame them, and we began to load ourselves with spoil. My comrades were satisfied with little, but I burdened myself with as much as I could carry. We were pursued, my companions escaped, but I was overtaken, and so cruelly wounded, that I only saved my life afterwards by losing my legs. It was a bad affair, sir; but it is too late to repent it now.”

“Ah, friend,” thought I, “like the fruit tree, and the mangled sheep, you may date your downfall to your possessions: it was your riches that ruined you.”

When I see so many rich people, as I do, caring so much for their bodies, and so little for their souls, I pity them from the bottom of my heart, and sometimes think there are as many ruined by riches as by poverty. “They that

will be rich fall into temptation and a snare, and into many foolish and hurtful lusts, which drown men in destruction and perdition," 1 Tim. vi. 9. The prayer will suit you, perhaps, as well as it does me, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me: lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain," Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

GIN-DRINKING.

LISTEN! listen! for one hour's attentive hearing is better than two hours' thoughtless talking; and I intend to keep you only a few minutes.

What would the gin-drinker say, if, in passing along the street, he were to be suddenly dragged into a dirty, close, disagreeable hole; to have his mouth forced open, and a poison poured therein, so strong as to deprive him not only of the use of his limbs, but of his reason; and afterwards to be left to all the dangers of accident, robbery, and ill-usage? No doubt he would bitterly complain of such an outrage, and yet he acts in this outrageous manner against himself every time he visits a gin-shop, and drinks to excess. If other men used the gin-drinker as ill as he uses himself, they would be sent to the tread-mill, at least, for their pains.

What would the gin-drinker say, if, in his absence from home, some scoundrel were to rob his house of furniture, food, and comforts, leaving his

wife and children destitute and afflicted? Why, he would cry aloud for justice against the man who had robbed him of his property. And yet, he is acting the part of this thief himself, for by habitual gin-drinking he robs himself and his family continually.

What would the gin-drinker say to the man who made it his business to go from one place to another, blasting his reputation, and spreading the report that he was idle, wasteful, disorderly, riotous, a brawler, and a drunkard? No doubt he would be filled with rage against such a libeller. And yet he goes about, and proclaims all this, and ten times more, by gin-drinking, every day of his life. These things are bad enough, but the gin-drinker is not satisfied in doing even evil by halves. It is not enough to render himself and those around him miserable in this world, but he is industrious in blotting out all hope of happiness in the world which is to come. There are many ways to present and eternal misery, but gin-drinking is one of the nearest.

If you happen to be an honest and diligent workman, with plenty of work to do; if you possess the respect of your master, and the goodwill of your fellow workmen, and have taken a fancy into your head, all at once, to get rid of your industry and your honesty, to lose the re-

spect of your master, and the good opinion of your shopmates, I will tell you how you may manage the matter in a very little time, and with very little trouble—*learn to drink gin!*

If you have a strong constitution, a colour in your cheek, a firm and a nimble step, a regular pulse, and a body altogether free from disease, and suddenly desire to become weakly and pale, and to move along like a tottering old man, and to have a feverish pulse, and to be afflicted with half a dozen complaints at the same time, you cannot do better than listen to me. You may go the wrong way to work about the matter, you may lose time, but I will tell you how you may be sure to succeed, with great despatch—*learn to drink gin!*

If you have a comfortable and peaceful home, a cheerful fire-side, a good bed, a joint of meat to put in the pot, with a trifle of money beforehand towards paying your rent, and have resolved to get rid of all these good things together, there are many ways of doing it, but the easiest way is to *learn to drink gin!*

If you have a tidy suit of clothes for Sunday; if your wife is able to dress as comfortably as her neighbours; if your children have good stuff frocks, or strong jackets and trowsers; and you have any inclination to see how differently you

would all look if you were dressed in rags, you may easily gratify your curiosity, you have nothing more to do than to *learn to drink gin!*

If your credit is good; if you owe nothing to any one; if you have friends who are willing to assist you in your plans, and to stand by you in difficulties; and you wish to run into debt, to ruin your credit for ever, and to be left without a single friend in the world, all this may be done at once, if you *learn to drink gin!*

If you have slept well; if your mind has been at peace; if your prospects have been cheerful; if you have valued your Bible; if you have taken pleasure in religious services, and at length feel a hankering after a change; if you choose your slumbers to be broken, your mind to be disturbed, your expectations to be clouded, your Bible to be despised, and religion to become a jest, then *learn to drink gin!*

If there are those in the world who have been dear to you; if you have loved to add to their happiness; if you have desired their eternal welfare, and now resolve to love them no longer, but to wring their heart-strings with sorrow, and to leave them undefended and uninstructed, to pass through poverty, wretchedness, and crime, to destruction, *learn to drink gin!*

If, in short, you mean to make yourself com-

pletely miserable; to look backwards with remorse, and forwards with fear; to live in terror, and to die in despair; there is no surer way of doing it in the whole world than that of resolutely determining to *learn to drink gin!*

But now, if instead of running this wretched course, you really desire to do good and avoid evil, to live in favour with God and man, to be hopeful through time, and happy in eternity; with every faculty of your body, soul, and spirit, cry aloud to the Strong for strength to resist temptation, and for grace so to influence your heart, that you may **NEVER LEARN TO DRINK GIN!**

SLEEP.

How do you sleep at night, my friends? How do you sleep at night? I have just risen from my bed with buoyant feelings and a grateful spirit, comforted and invigorated by refreshing slumber. What a merciful provision of an all-merciful God, for the bodily ills and mental sorrows of human beings, is the blessing of sleep! How gently it extracts the thorny cares of the mind! How delightfully it soothes the throbbing pulse and agonizing head! And how mysteriously it pours its balm into the wasted frame, composing, comforting, and strengthening it, again to endure, to achieve, and to enjoy.

Though the rich often enjoy it, sound sleep is the peculiar heritage of the working man. How frequently does it quit the tapestried chamber and the damask-curtained bed, to rest on the pallet of labour and toil! "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much: but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep," Eccles. v. 12.

A quiet chamber is very necessary to secure us rest, but a quiet conscience is even yet more so ; indeed, without it, refreshing slumber is almost out of the question. Trust in the Lord ; commit your ways to him ; cast your sins and sorrows upon the Saviour, and seek his grace to love him, to serve him, to obey him, and to rejoice in him : then, “when thou liest down, thou shalt not be afraid ; yea, thou shalt lie down, and thy sleep shall be sweet,” Prov. iii. 24.

Squire Jenkinson, who was both weak and wicked, could get no rest. He had a noble mansion, fine pleasure grounds, and a beautiful carriage drawn by beautiful horses. His table was supplied with every luxury, and his friends were the most cheerful companions in the world ; but, still, Squire Jenkinson could get no rest. Sometimes he went to bed early, and sometimes he went to bed late ; but whether late or early, it was just the same. “There is no peace to the wicked,” and there was no rest for Squire Jenkinson.

He applied to his friends, who told him to take exercise, and to drink an extra glass of grog before he went to bed. He applied to his doctor, and he gave him laudanum and opium ; but in spite of exercise, and grog, and laudanum, and opium, no sound rest could he obtain. At last

he consulted Thomas Perrins, his gardener. Now, Thomas Perrins was an humble Christian, and well knew that his master feared not God; that he was unjust, and cruel, and oppressed the widow and the fatherless, and that his conscience troubled him; so Thomas told him, that old Gilbert Powell, who lived hard by on the waste land, always slept famously, but that, perhaps, he wore a different kind of a night-cap.

Mistaking the meaning of Thomas Perrins, away went Squire Jenkinson, who was, as I said, a weak-minded man, with one of his best night-caps in his pocket, to exchange it for that of old Gilbert Powell. He soon got the cap, and had it washed and well aired; and when night came, he went to bed in good spirits, hoping to have a comfortable night's sleep; but no! though he put it on in all shapes, and placed himself in all postures, Squire Jenkinson could get no rest.

As soon as the sun rose, he hastened to the cottage on the waste land, to know how Gilbert Powell had rested, when Gilbert told him that he had never had a better night's rest in all his life; and he was quite delighted with his new night-cap.

Perplexed and cast down, Squire Jenkinson then went once more to his gardener, to tell him

of the ill success which had attended his plan of borrowing the night-cap of Gilbert Powell.

“It cannot be Gilbert’s cap,” said he, “which makes him sleep so soundly, for he wore one of mine, and he tells me that he never had a more comfortable cap in his life.”

“Ay, master,” said Thomas Perrins, shaking his head significantly, as he leaned on his spade, “but to my knowledge he wears another cap besides the one you gave him, the cap of a quiet conscience, and he who wears that is sure to sleep well, let him wear what other cap he pleases.”

SELFISHNESS.

I WANT to speak a word or two about selfishness, in such a way that you will be likely to remember my observations. Listen, then, to a pleasant tale, without asking me where I picked it up. When a man buys a new coat, it matters but little whether it be ready made, or made on purpose for him, so that it fits him, and answers his purpose: the same remark will apply to my story.

Once on a time, a great commotion took place; never, indeed, was there a greater hubbub in the town, for all classes were huddled together, as though they were determined to create confusion. They seemed to be contending the point which was of the most importance amongst them; and as they all entertained a good opinion of themselves, so every one was more anxious to speak, than to listen to his neighbour. After a while, the hubbub a little subsided, and the people, instead of speaking all together, spoke one after another.

The Lawyer remarked, that society could not be held together without law; that it was the perfection of reason, and the bond of union; and that the lawyer ought to be first in every legal assembly.

The Doctor could by no means treat the case in this way, as he was sure it would sadly derange society. "There is," said he, "a physical reason why mankind should prefer the use of their limbs to anything else; for if a man has not health, all the wealth and all the law in the world will be of no use to him."

A Farmer, dressed in his Sunday clothes, kept thrashing his boot, while he frankly told them his mind. "Hark ye, gemmen," said he, looking at the Lawyer and the Doctor, "I have one plain question to put to you: What would you do with all your law, and all your physic, if ye had no corn? Now, I reckon him to be the first man who follows the plough."

"Following the plough is useful enough," said a Miller, "for, as you say, none of us can do very well without corn; but, Farmer Brown," continued he, winking his eye as he spoke, "we are not to eat our food like pigs in a sty! 'Tis the flour that we eat, not the straw and the chaff; therefore, there is not a more useful man than an honest Miller."

“You seem to know how to speak a good word for yourself, Mr. Grist,” cried out a Baker, “but your flour would be but poor stuff to set before a man, if it was not made into bread. There is a batch of people in the world who are as crusty as you please, and all because they cannot draw as much applause as they want; but, for all that, a good Baker is as good as any of them.”

No sooner had he done speaking, than a Butcher, in his blue apron, with a face red like his own beef, came forward: “What,” says he, “Mr. Gnawcrust, you want us all to carry faces as deathly pale as your own dough, do you? but that won’t do, let me tell you. The roast beef of old England is the only food to make a man what he should be.”

“What you have said about beef is all right,” said a Cook, “but, then, the beef must be roasted, and not raw. I do not care a dumpling for any man who sets himself up above his neighbours, and I will maintain that a Cook is as fit as another to sit at the head of the table.”

A Publican, with a ruby-coloured nose, declared, that though good eating was a good thing, a glass of good stingo was much better. He said a Publican ought to rank high in the world, since he made all his customers as happy as kings.

“But where would be the use of your eating and drinking,” said a Builder, “if you had no house to put your heads in? A Builder defends you from the storm and the tempest, and has as firm a foundation for the good-will of his neighbours as any one amongst you.”

“Not so fast!” cried a Carpenter; “you may build a wall and a chimney, but you cannot keep out the tempest that you talk of, without me; for where is your roof to come from, and your door? A Carpenter is a better man than a Builder, for he finishes what you begin.”

A Tanner told them that a hide of good leather was more useful than all. In this opinion a Currier agreed, but added, that the hide must be dressed and improved, and then the old saying was true, “There is nothing like leather.”

The Shoemaker, the Tailor, the Tinker, and various others, had each something to say in his own favour. The Grocer was very spicy in his remarks, caring not a fig for the best of them; and the Undertaker declared, while he adjusted the crape on his hat, that he had a claim on their regard, because, when all mankind had done their best for one another, his assistance was still necessary.

It is uncertain how long the debate might have

lasted, had not a Watchmaker, who well knew what was working within them, thus touched the mainspring of every heart.

“Doctor,” said he, “as I passed by the Red Lion, poor Lighthead, the landlord, fell down in a fit.” “I hear,” said he to the Lawyer, “that Alderman Hawkes is much worse, and thinks of making his will.” These words worked wonders, for the Lawyer and the Doctor instantly disappeared.

“My good friends,” said he to the rest of the multitude, “I have just heard capital news. My Lord Dash is come down to spend some months at the Hall, and his steward is now waiting at the Golden Cross to open accounts with the tradesmen around. They say that he gives out his orders freely, and pays nothing but ready money.”

What the Watchmaker said was true; and never, sure, had words a more sudden effect on a crowd. All started off immediately, except the Undertaker, who was left all alone. Some went one way, and some another, but they all found their way to the Golden Cross.

Come, I have told you a long story, but it will be your fault if it do you no good. We are all of us sadly too selfish, and we see this failing in others, but not in ourselves. Look at it, then, and try to amend it. Good nature is preferable to

ambition. Contentment is better than affluence; indeed, "godliness with contentment is great gain;" and that man is richer than Cræsus, who can find pleasure in the success of his neighbour. Learn the lesson that I wish to be inculcated—Avoid selfishness, cultivate benevolence; then your hearts will be light, and your consciences peaceful, and you will never regret having heard these observations.

TO THE MEMBERS
OF A
TEMPERANCE SOCIETY.

SHARP weather this, my friends, sharp weather, and we all require something to warm us, for the blood does not flow so rapidly through our veins as it does in summer, when the lark sings blithely, and the morning sun blazes in the sky. Old Humphrey would just ask this question, "Who among you ever got any good by gin-drinking?"

I said that we all required something to warm us. So we do; and a coat or a jacket that is not out at the elbows, however coarse it may be, is a comfortable covering, especially if it be paid for. By the bye, did you ever take into consideration why it is, that a coat which is paid for is more comfortable than one procured on trust? Those long tailors' bills for cloth, buttons, tape, twist,

buckram, and thread, with scrawling figures on the right hand, Dr. at the top, and no receipt at the bottom, are very ugly things. The tailor calls for his money at the wrong time ; just when there is not a sixpence to spare ; and then the landlord, if the rent runs a little behind, looks so sulky, that to face him is about as agreeable as to meet a wild bull in a miry lane. Now, these long tailors' bills, and these sulky landlords, that often turn a merry Christmas into a mourning new year, may be avoided by being industrious, and refraining from drinking gin.

Let us soberly live,
And leave folly and vice
To those who drink gin,
And detest good advice.

But I am forgetting myself again, for I was speaking about keeping ourselves warm in cold weather. The poor fellow who sits so close to the fire as to be half roasted on one side, and yet so much exposed to the cold draught from the door, that the other side is almost frozen, cannot be very comfortable ; this, however, is just the case with the gin-drinker. He is piping hot one hour, and half-frozen to death the next. I will answer for it that a good sharp run, for about ten minutes, will warm you even in this cold weather, twice as much as a glass of the best gin that was ever

made; and then you will save three halfpence into the bargain.

“A penny saved is a penny got,”

And will help to get something to put in the pot.

Why that rhyme is worth another penny; if I go on in this way, I shall make you all as rich as Jews.

What strange things happen! This temperance plan that is now so well known, would have been finely laughed at when I was a boy. Indeed, for the matter of that, it is often well laughed at now; but there is a great deal more got by joining a Temperance Society than by laughing at it. Simpkins laughs at it for one, and Holloway for another; but Simpkins' jacket is sadly out at the elbows, and Holloway is but just out of prison, where he has been for debt. The old proverb says, “Let those laugh that win!” and therefore I think that you who are temperate have much more reason to laugh than Simpkins and Holloway.

Temperance is the father of health, cheerfulness, and old age. Drunkenness has so large a family that I cannot remember the names of one-half of his children: however, disease, debt, dishonour, and destruction are among them—not the most hopeful household this!

He that wishes his cares and his troubles to cease,
Must be sober, and ponder his Bible in peace ;
But he who, mad-headed, thro' thick and thro' thin,
Would dash on to ruin, may learn to drink gin.

Within two hundred yards of the place where you are now assembled, I was, many years ago, roused at the dead of night from a sound sleep, by a man who was rolling and tumbling about among the gardens, and roaring out for assistance. I arose very unwillingly,—for it is no joke to leave a comfortable warm bed, on a raw cold night, to wait on a drunken fellow, who is likely enough to kick your shins for any kindness you may render him. Well, the drunken man proved to be a soldier, who had taken so much grog after a review, that he had not only lost his musket, cap, and feather, but himself also ; for he had, no one knew how, scrambled over two or three garden walls, coming, at last, quite to a stand-still, and roaring out lustily for assistance.

All this came of drinking grog. As I led him home—and a pretty affair I had of it—he promised me half the riches of the West Indies for the part I had taken ; but I never saw him again.

Now, what a brave fellow he would have been, when in the pickle in which I found him, to quell a riot, or to attack an enemy, or to defend property ! Why, a lad of fourteen, with a knobbed

stick, would have been a match for half-a-dozen such valorous heroes. Take my word for it, drinking never yet made a good soldier, nor a good citizen.

Let Old Humphrey encourage you to continue your temperate career; for though it may not remove all the troubles you have, it will assuredly prevent many more from coming upon you. However temperate we may be, we shall be sure to make mistakes enough in the world, and bring upon ourselves enough of trouble, at least Old Humphrey has found it to be so; but the drunkard goes abroad in quest of care, buckles it on his back, and carries it home to his miserable habitation.

Again I say, Be sober.

 Temptation's luring wiles beware,
 And, 'mid ten thousand mercies given,
Walk humbly through this world of care,
 And keep your eyes and hearts on heaven.

COAL.

Read it not in summer, but when the snow is on the ground, when the waters are congealed with frost, and your hands tingle with cold.

DID you ever thank God, unfeignedly, for the comfort you derive from coal? If you never did, do so now. What would be the condition of ten thousand times ten thousand people in the world, if this useful commodity were suddenly taken away? And yet how few of the millions who are benefited by it, ever offer up their thanksgiving in an especial manner to its bountiful Donor, for so pleasant, so animating, so comforting a commodity! Every hand that is spread to the glowing coals should be spread also in thanksgiving; and every heart that glows with the genial warmth should glow also with praise. A cheerful fire in the chilly months of winter, wears the face of a friend. It brings, also, to mind the words of the poet,

E'en while the curling flames arise,
They seem the ascending sacrifice,
The incense of man's gratitude
To the great Father of the good.

Coals are found in almost every kingdom of the earth; and the coal-mines of England have been much more productive and valuable than the gold and silver mines of America. The supply of London alone, is one million eight hundred thousand chaldrons of coal yearly.

The night was stormy, and not a star was seen in the heavens, as I hastened homeward, wet and weary. The deep snow, which lay on the ground, was thawing fast away, and the wind and the rain beat upon me fearfully. Drenched to the skin, with my hands and feet numbed with cold, I reached my cheerful habitation. In a short time, I had changed my wet clothing for comfortable habiliments, and was seated, with my coffee before me, at no great distance from a blazing fire. It is wonderful how a partial deprivation increases our enjoyments! As the genial warmth of the glowing fire was diffusing itself over my frame, I felt grateful, almost to tears, and gazed on the burning coals as on one of His gifts who is "good to all, and whose tender mercies are over all his works," Psa. cxlv. 9.

Fire is a comfortable thing even to the young,

in the pinching days and nights of December, for the frosts and the thaws are both searching ; but, to the aged, fire is almost as necessary as food.

After sipping my coffee, I turned towards the fire, while the wind roared around the house, and began to reflect how much our winter comforts depend on coal.

When the heart is softened with a sense of God's mercies, it matters but little what is the subject on which it dwells ; like the fabled stone of the alchemist, it turns every thing into gold. An instrument, finely strung, will produce harmonious sounds, whatever be the air that is played upon it.

I thought upon the various uses of coal in cookery, in manufactures, in steam engines, and especially in communicating warmth to the human frame, and I thanked God "for his goodness, and for his wonderful works to the children of men," Psa. cvii. 8. But man is ever wondering why the operations of nature are not carried on in agreement with his own wisdom ; and I, for the moment, thought what difficulty and danger man would be spared, if coal lay nearer the surface, instead of being bedded in the depths of the earth. But had this been the case, unknown evils might have arisen from it ; and we know that thousands and tens of thousands of people, now

employed in obtaining this useful substance, must have laboured for subsistence in a different manner. I passed by the getting of the coal from the mine, and the transporting of it in boats, in barges, and in ships, and considered the classes of people who purchased it for their comfort. He who is engaged in large undertakings, buys it by the barge load, and others by the boat load; but where an article is plentiful, it seldom excites that thankfulness which privation calls forth from the needy. It is bought in tons or chaldrons by the middle classes of society, who usually lay it in when it is sold at the cheapest rate. But, even here, the comfort it imparts is not duly estimated. Those who buy coals by the chaldron are not the most grateful for so valuable a gift of the Almighty.

Another class purchase coals by the sack: many a poor widow, slenderly provided for, many a decayed householder, and many a man of genius, struggling with poverty, are included in this class. The coal is placed on the fire with care, and the lessening store regarded with anxiety: by these, the value of coal is known, and ought to be continually and gratefully acknowledged. But there is yet another class, who buy coals by the hundred weight, or by *two pennyworth at a time*. When I contrast the heaped-up, glowing hearths

of the rich with the slenderly supplied fire-places of the poor, I yearn to be the owner of a coal mine. Would that I could in the drear and dark months of winter so warm the hearts of the rich, as to move them to supply the hearths of the needy. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor; the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble. The Lord will strengthen him upon the bed of languishing, and make all his bed in his sickness," Psa. xli. 1, 3. O ye barge and boat load buyers! ye ton and chaldron purchasers! think a moment on their privations who can only afford *two pennyworth* of coal at a time! How many a shrivelled arm and bony finger is held shivering over the expiring spark, on a cold winter's night, in habitations where food and raiment are scanty! Think of this, and be more grateful for the gifts of God so abundantly bestowed on yourselves. Seek out the ill-supplied hearths of the poor and the miserable, light up their cheerless habitations, and warm their hearts with your bounty.

CAPITAL;

OR,

PLENTY MORE IN THE CELLAR.

MANY things surprise me, my good friends, in this wonderful world, and, among them, I am amazed at the small capital with which some people begin and carry on business. Were we to judge by the magnificent names that are given to many trading concerns, we might be led to suppose that they must produce a princely return.

“Original Establishment,” “Grand Dépôt,” “Metropolitan Mart,” and “National Institution,” so amplify our expectations, that we are not, all at once, prepared to witness the slender stock, the “beggarly account of empty boxes,” that too frequently compose them. We might almost think, by their hand-bills, that some small grocers, who have hardly a chest of tea on their premises, had opened a regular account with the merchants at Canton.

There is a deal of outside in this world, both in persons and things.

Some years ago, I happened to know a civil, well-behaved young man, who, anxious to make his way in the world, opened a shop for the sale of cheese, butter, soap, candles, and such like things; but not possessing ten pounds of his own, it was absolutely necessary to set off the little stock he possessed to advantage. His small shop was fresh painted, and the window well piled up with such articles as he had to dispose of. The world around him considered these articles to be his *samples*, while, in truth, they were his *stock*. All that he had, with a little exception, he crowded into his window. In a back room he had a few pounds of cheese, butter, and bacon, as well as a shilling's worth or two of eggs and other articles; but the bulk of his establishment was, as I before said, exhibited in his window. Whenever any customers came in, he begged them not to take what they did not like, as he had "plenty more in the cellar."

Every now and then he ran backwards, to fetch some part of the stores he had withheld; his customers concluding, on such occasions, that he had descended to his vaults below for his supplies; for though there was in reality no cellar to the

house, no one doubted the observation so frequently made by him, "I have plenty more in the cellar!" Now, while I commend his anxiety to make the best of his stock, his empty boasting and hollow announcements to his unsuspecting customers, I cannot but condemn.

Alas! my friends, there are crowds of people in the world acting exactly in the same manner. They begin and carry on their concerns, of whatever kind they may be, with very little capital. They make large pretensions; they carry an air of importance, and pass for what they are not; in other words, like the vender of cheese, butter, and bacon, they crowd all they have into the window, and boldly declare, that they have "plenty more in the cellar."

Do not suppose that I am speaking of shopkeepers only, for I allude to all classes of society. Whatever may be the profession and calling of men, who overrate their means and endowments, who pass for possessors of great capital in goods, riches, or talents, when their resources in all are slender; who occupy imposing positions, which they know that they are not qualified to sustain; they all come under the same description. You may speak of their conduct in what way you will, but if I attempt to describe it in my homely

way, I shall say, that all crowd the little they possess into the window, and try to persuade people they have "plenty more in the cellar."

Again I say, there is a deal of outside in the world. If we knew the little wisdom that is possessed by many a pompous declaimer in praise of his own understanding, and the little wealth of many who wear rings on their fingers, and chains of gold around their necks, we should, with one consent, agree, that their business is carried on with a small capital; that they do, indeed, crowd all they have into the window, and strive manfully to convince the world they have "plenty more in the cellar."

Do not think Old Humphrey severe; he would not willingly become so, for he knows too well, that in his own heart may be found the germ of every evil he condemns in the conduct of others: he must, however, be faithful, even though his remarks bear heavy on himself.

What think ye, my friends? Do you know any to whom these observations will apply? If so, it may be kind of you to repeat to them my admonitions; and if you yourselves should happen to be faulty in the thing of which I have spoken, bear with me, and endure my reproof. It is my settled conviction, after some knowledge of the world, and some acquaintance with my own

heart, that it is a general failing, "to think of ourselves more highly than we ought to think;" and that, sometimes knowingly, and sometimes unknowingly, we all crowd what we possess into the window, and cry aloud to our neighbours, "We have plenty more in the cellar."

A WORD OF ENCOURAGEMENT

TO

A CHRISTIAN.

WHAT! art thou faint-hearted? Hast thou forgotten the faithfulness of Him who has said, "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee?" Heb. xiii. 5. For shame! for shame! Fear not, for they that be with thee are more than they that be against thee.

Dost thou want to see horses and chariots of fire drawn out for thy protection, or thousands of angels on the wing for thy defence? Thou hast more, much more than these! Look around thee with the eye of faith, and see who is on thy side. See who is pledged for thy defence, thy comfort, and thy joy.

God the Father, in all his Divine and Almighty perfections, infinite in strength, in wisdom, and in goodness; whose word is power, and whose arm none can withstand. The lightnings are in

his hands, and the thunders ; and his are the hosts and the armies of heaven. He will not leave thee, nor forsake thee. " Fear thou not ; for I am with thee : be not dismayed ; for I am thy God : I will strengthen thee ; yea, I will help thee ; yea, I will uphold thee with the right hand of my righteousness," Isa. xli. 10.

God the Redeemer, clothed with grace as with a garment, in the richness of his mercy, and the fulness of his love, He is on thy side. He has suffered for thy sins, and atoned for thy iniquities. He has lived, he has died, yea, risen again, for thee. " When Christ, who is our life, shall appear, then shall ye also appear with him in glory," Col. iii. 4.

" Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world," Matt. xxv. 34.

God the Holy Ghost is ready to impart his gracious influences, quickening, consoling, guiding, and strengthening thee. He encourages thee with his merciful invitations. " Come. And let him that heareth say, Come. And let him that is athirst come. And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely," Rev. xxii. 17.

Take comfort, Christian ! The attributes of God, the graces of Jesus Christ, and the consolations of the Holy Ghost, are in league for thy

benefit, joined together for thy good ; and such a threefold cord cannot possibly be broken. Thou owest much, but thy debt is paid ; thy sins are many, but they have been forgiven. Christ has died for thee, and thou mayest now say, "Henceforth there is laid up for me a crown of righteousness, which the Lord, the righteous judge, shall give me at that day : and not to me only, but unto all them also that love his appearing," 2 Tim. iv. 8.

Go on, then, with confidence.

Though thousand foes thy heart appal,
And death and hell combine,
Yet faith shall win thy way through all,
And heaven, indeed, be thine.

THE OLD TREE.

I CAN remember the old tree in Bonfield's Close ever since I was a boy; and most likely it had been standing for many a long year before I set eyes upon it. Never were greener leaves than those it bore, nor finer acorns and oak balls: but by the time that I became a young man it had begun to decay.

It is amazing to me, dying worms as we are, that our minds are not more impressed than they are with the symbols of decay that surround us on every hand. We have "line upon line, and precept upon precept," in the withered leaf and the faded flower, the rotten bough and the perished root; but yet how rarely do we apply them to ourselves!

The old tree decayed more and more, and last year when the rude November winds began to blow, every body said it would be sure to come

down : but every body was wrong ; for though the blast blew, the old tree stood its ground.

The winter passed away, and the snow that lay thick on the ground melted. January was gone, and February was come ; and then some of the knowing ones shook their heads, and said, " We shall see what the next month will do for it ; the March winds will settle the business ; down the old tree must come." Old folks are not always wise : indeed, no one can be truly so, till God gives him wisdom from above. The March winds came, and blew fiercely ; but the old tree remained, seemingly as firm as ever.

In April, a saw-pit was dug under the tree, and many of its roots were severed ; and then the cry was, " It never can stand that : the first storm that comes across the country will blow down the old tree." During the month, two or three storms came, and sharp storms too, but the old tree was not blown down.

In May, and June, and July, it looked on one side fresh as a daisy, leafed, and acorned, and oak-balled as it was ; but in August, a hornet's nest being found in it, the boys at the school put some straw at the bottom of the hollow trunk, and set it on fire. " Oh, oh !" said the long-heads, " the touchwood will soon be all in a lightshine, and nothing can now save the old

tree." The long-heads were wrong again; for a shower fell, the straw went out, the touchwood was extinguished, and the old tree still occupied its accustomed spot.

In September, Farmer Bonfield threatened to cut it down; and I verily believe he would have been as good as his word, had he not been unexpectedly cut down himself. In a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, it pleases God sometimes to remove men. Farmer Bonfield fell, but the old tree stood as upright as before.

The cunning ones had so often been deceived, that they became a little chary of their opinion. There was, it is true, a little whispering in October, about the unlikelihood of its weathering the next blustering month, but nobody liked to speak decidedly about the matter. They did venture, however, to say that it was safe for a time. But here they quite missed the mark, for, when no one expected it, a storm came on at night, the old tree shook and groaned, and bent and bowed, till, at last, down it came; so that when the labouring men went through Bonfield's Close to their work in the morning, there lay the old tree.

Will this be read by any poor, infirm, aged, and storm-beaten brother, who has not yet fled for refuge to the hope set before him? who is not

trusting in Christ, and looking to him as a strong defence in the hour of calamity; but only thinking of days and years to come? To him would I say, "What is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," James iv. 14.

The old tree, whose root was vigorous, whose stem and branches were strong, and whose leaves were green, at last fell to decay; and, in an hour when least expected, it came to the ground.

You, like the old tree, have stood many years, and I dare say, if the truth were known, you are not without infirmity. Is there nothing in the decayed trunk, the faded leaf, and the rotten bough, that reminds you of yourself?

How are your legs? Can you tramp about as you used to do? Have you no stiffness in the knees, no cramps in the calves? How is the body? Do you feel all sound and strong? Is your appetite quite what it was? Is your breathing free? Do you never require cough drops, nor soothing syrups? And do you sleep as soundly as when you were younger?

How is your head? Do you never feel a giddiness? nor a singing in your ears? Are you as quick of hearing as ever? Is your sight clear? no motes? no weakness? no inflammation?

Come! come! own the truth. You are not what you have been. You cannot pick up a pin from the ground suddenly without feeling a screw in your back; nor run a hundred yards of even ground without panting fearfully, even if you are able to make a run of it at all.

Do not fill yourself up with the idle notion, because your rheumatism is a little better, and your breath not quite so short as it was, that you are growing young again.

What if you did live through the ague, and recover from the fever when every body thought you would die, is that any reason why the next malady which affects you will not lay you low? Old Humphrey cries aloud to you, "Set your house in order; for, one of these dull or sunshiny days, or one of these dark or moonshiny nights, you may be called away in a moment."

Fools that we are, to disregard as we do the merciful admonitions of heaven-sent afflictions! When we recover from sickness, and recruit our health, we regard it as a proof of the strength of our constitutions, rather than as a mark of the forbearing kindness of a merciful God. Oh that more frequently the words arose from our tongues and our hearts, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my

days, what it is ; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth ; and mine age is as nothing before thee : verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity," Psa. xxxix. 4, 5.

BLANKETS.

To be read on a cold night in November.

HELP me, my friends! help me; for the poor stand in need of comfort: let us try to do them a kindness.

How the casements rattle! and hark! how the bitter, biting blast whistles among the trees! It is very cold, and soon it will be colder. I could shiver at the thought of winter, when the icicles hang from the water-butt, when the snow lies deep on the ground, and the cold, cold wind seems to chill the heart, as well as freeze the finger ends.

Yet, after all, the darkest night, the bitterest blast, and the rudest storm, confer some benefit, for they make us thankful for the roof that covers us, the fire that warms us, and the grateful influence of a comfortable bed.

Oh the luxury of a good, thick, warm pair of blankets, when the wintry blast roars in the chimney, while the feathery flakes of snow are

flying abroad, and the sharp hail patters against the window-panes !

Did you ever travel a hundred miles on the outside of a coach, on a sharp frosty night ; your eyes stiffened, your face smarting, and your body half-petrified ? Did you ever keep watch in December in the open air, till the more than midnight blast had pinched all your features into sharpness ; till your feet were as cold as a stone, and the very stars appeared as if frozen ? If you have never borne these things, I have ; but what are they compared with the trials that some people have to endure ?

Who can tell the sufferings of thousands of poor people in winter, from the want of warm bed-clothes ? and who can describe the comfort that a pair or two of blankets communicate to a destitute family ? How often have I seen the wretched children of a wretched habitation, huddling together on the floor, beneath a ragged great-coat, or flimsy petticoat, striving to derive that warmth from each other which their scanty covering failed to supply !

In many places, benevolent persons give or lend blankets to the poor, and thus confer a benefit, the value of which can hardly be told. May they be abundantly repaid by the grace of that Saviour who said, when speaking of kindnesses

done to his disciples, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me," Matt. xxv. 40.

Think of these things now, for it will be of no use to reflect on them in summer. Charity should be especially excited when it feels the misery it seeks to relieve; while you feel the cold, then do something to protect others from the inclemency of the season. It is enough to be ill-fed, and ill-clothed, and to sit bending over a dying fire, without a handful of fuel to revive it; but after that to pass the night without a blanket for a covering, must indeed be terrible.

See, in the sharpest night, the poor old man, over whose head threescore and ten winters have rolled, climbing with difficulty his narrow staircase, to creep beneath his thin and ragged coverlet! See the aged widow, once lulled in the lap of luxury, but now girt around with trials, in fastings often, in cold, and almost nakedness, worn by poverty to the very bones, stretching her cramped limbs upon her bundle of straw! Fancy—but why fancy what you know to be true?—these poor, aged, miserable beings shivering through the livelong night, when a blanket would gird them round with comfort. I could weep at such miseries as these—miseries which so small an effort might relieve. The table crumbs of the

rich would make a banquet for the poor, and the spare remnants of their clothing would defend them from the cold.

Come, come, reader! you are not without some feeling of pity and affection for your fellow creatures. Be not satisfied in wishing them well; let something be done for their welfare.

If there be a heart within you, if you have a soul that ever offered up an expression of thanksgiving for the manifold mercies which your heavenly Father has bestowed upon you, then sympathize with the wretched, and relieve, according to your ability, the wants of the destitute. Let me beseech you to do something this very winter towards enabling some poor, aged, helpless, or friendless person, who is slenderly provided for, to purchase a blanket. You will not sleep the less comfortably, when you reflect that some shivering wretch has been, by your assistance, enabled to pass the wintry night in comfort. It is not a great thing that is required: do what you can, but do something. Let me not plead in vain; and shame betide me if I neglect to do myself the thing that I recommend you to perform.

Did you ever lie snug and warm in bleak December, the bed-clothes drawn close round your neck, and your nightcap pulled over your ears, listening to the midnight blast, and exulting in

the grateful glow of your delightful snugger? I know you have, and I trust, too, that the very reading of these remarks will affect your hearts, and dispose you to some "gentle deed of charity" towards those who are destitute of such an enjoyment.

Now, then, while the subject is before you, while you look round on your manifold comforts, while you feel the nipping and frosty air, resolve, ay, and act, in a way that will bless others, and give comfort to your own heart.

Youth and health may rejoice in frost and snow, and while the warm blood rushes through the exulting frame, we can smile at the wintry blast; but age, sickness, and infirmity, can take no exercise sufficient to quicken the sluggish current of their veins. Wrap them round, then, with your charity; help them to obtain a pair of warm blankets; and the blessing of the widow and the fatherless, the aged and infirm, the destitute, and those ready to perish, shall rest upon you.

GOOD LIVING.

Most people are fond of good living, and no doubt you are fond of it too ; but let me ask what it is that you call good living? For if you have fallen into the common mistake, that eating immoderately of dainty food, and drinking freely of intoxicating liquors, if you really think that these things constitute good living, we by no means agree : for such a course is the worst living in the world. The best living must be that which is most conducive to health ; for without health all other temporal blessings are vain.

Still further ; you would consider him to be not over wise, who would try to make one arm strong, and leave the other weak ; to render one foot swift, and leave the other slow ; to brighten the sight of one eye, and leave the other dim : but did you ever consider that he must be still more unwise, who endeavours to establish the health of his body, and altogether neglects the health of his soul? If bread to eat, water to drink, and clothing to wear, be necessary for the health of the body,

the bread of eternal life, the living waters of salvation, and the robe of the Saviour's righteousness, are equally necessary to the health of the soul.

Bear this in mind ; for that only which tends to the health of the body and soul, can truly be called good living.

"I am the bread of life, which came down from heaven," says Christ : "he that eateth of this bread shall live for ever," John vi. 48, 58. "If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink ; thou wouldest have asked of him, and he would have given thee living water," John iv. 10. "And white robes were given unto every one of them," Rev. vi. 11.

STORY OF
A SMOKY CHIMNEY.

My friends, I will tell you a story.

Abel Grave was a hard-working man, and his wife was a decent woman, and each was disposed to add to the comfort of the other; but, though they did all they could, they had a sad enemy to their peace, which often disturbed them. This enemy was a smoky chimney, which so continually annoyed them, that they were frequently as peevish as though they had a delight in provoking each other. When Abel came home at night, and would have enjoyed his meal in a clean house, and by a bright fire, he had to listen a long time to the complaints of his wife, who declared that to sit in such a smoke as she did, all day, was unbearable. Abel thought it bad enough to endure the smoky chimney, but to bear, at the same time, a scolding from his wife, for that which was not his fault, and which he knew not how to amend, tried him sadly, and many a half-hour did he sit brooding over his

troubles, contriving how he should cure his smoky chimney.

One night, when the smoke was making its way in every direction, except up the chimney, and Abel was puzzling his brains, and trying to hit upon some plan to lessen the evil, a neighbour of his, a slater, popped his head in at the door. "Abel," said he, "you are in a pretty smother; and so you are likely to be, until you place a slate or two at the top of your chimney, to prevent the wind from blowing down."

When his neighbour was gone, Abel Grave determined that, on the morrow, he would do as he had been advised, and put some slates on the top of his chimney.

By the time he had made this resolution, another neighbour, a glazier, made his appearance. "Master Grave," said he, "why your chimney gets worse and worse. I tell you what, you may try a hundred schemes, but none of them will do till you put a whirligig in your window. That is what you want, and you will have no peace till you get one."

Away went the neighbour, and Abel began to think about having a whirligig in his window; but was a little puzzled whether to try the whirligig or the slates.

"Hallo! Abel," shouted a third neighbour, a

bricklayer, who was passing by, "here is a pretty smother! I suppose you mean to smoke us all out."

"No, no!" said Abel, "I am tormented too much with the smoke myself, to wish to torment any body else with it; nobody knows what a trouble it is to me."

"Why, now," replied his neighbour, "if you will only brick up your chimney a little closer, it will be cured directly. I was plagued just in the same manner, but a few bricks put all to rights, and now, I have no trouble with my chimney at all."

This account set Abel Grave off a wool-gathering once more, and whether to put slates at the top, to brick up closer the bottom of the chimney, or to have a whirligig in the window, he did not know.

He mused on the matter before he went to bed, woke two or three times in the night, and pondered it over, yet, when he got up in the morning, he was as far from being decided as ever.

Just as he was about to set off to his work, old Abraham Ireland came by. Now, Abraham had the character of being a shrewd, sensible old man, which character he well deserved, so that he was often consulted in difficult cases.

Abel, as soon as he saw him, asked him to step

in for a moment, which he willingly did. "I want your advice," said he, "about my chimney, for it is the plague of my very life, it smokes so sadly."

"What have you done to it?" inquired old Abraham.

"Why, as to that," replied Abel, "I have done nothing at all but fret about it, for this neighbour tells me to do one thing, and that neighbour tells me to do another. The slater says, 'Stick some slates at the top;' the glazier advises me to have a whirligig in the window; and the bricklayer says nothing will do but bricking up the chimney closer; and so, among such different opinions, I am more puzzled about it than ever."

"There may be some sense in what they all say," said Abraham, pondering the matter over, "and if I found it necessary, I would take the advice of all three. Suppose," said he, "you tried that first which is the easiest to do; put a slate or two at the top, and if that will not do, have a whirligig in the window, and if both of them will not cure the smoke, why, then, brick up the chimney a little closer. The next best thing to that of knowing what will cure a smoky chimney is, to know what will not cure it, and you are sure to find out one or the other."

No sooner was old Abraham gone, than Abel

went in search of the slater, who, in an hour's time, had put the slates on the chimney-top. When Abel returned from his work at night, his wife told him that the house had not smoked quite so bad as it did before, but that, still, it was not fit for any human creature to live in.

Next morning, Abel went to the glazier, who, in the course of the day, put a ventilator in the window, which many people call a whirligig. This mended the matter surprisingly. Abel was pleased to find so much improvement; but as the smoke still did not go right up the chimney, he set off to the bricklayer, who, the following morning, bricked up the chimney a little closer, to make the draught quicker; so that when Abel once more returned home, he found a clean hearth, a bright fire, a good-tempered wife, and a house as little troubled with smoke as any house in the parish.

“Well, Abel,” said old Abraham Ireland, who had called to know how the improvements were going on, “you and your wife are able to see one another now.”

Abel told him what he had done, and that his chimney was quite cured.

“I am right glad of it,” replied Abraham, very heartily; “and the next time you get into a difficulty, instead of wasting your time in fretting

over it, and snarling with your wife, listen to the advice of others, weigh it in your mind, think on the most likely means to get rid of your trouble, and proceed directly to put it in practice ; for this plan will cure a thousand troubles, quite as well as it will cure a smoky chimney.”

There, I have told you my story, and I hope you will reap from it some advantage. It is a good thing to take advice from a prudent man, who can guard us from error, and assist us when in difficulty ; and a better thing still, to take advice from a heavenly Counsellor, who can guide us by his counsel, and bring us to his glory.

A SUITABLE TEXT.

Do you like sunshine? Do you love to see the heavens and the earth glittering around you? Do you desire to be defended from danger, and protected from every evil, temporal and spiritual?

Are you a sinner, and does your soul yearn for forgiveness and mercy? Is this world dark and dreary, and is the world to come the object of your constant desires? Turn to the Lord, your righteousness and strength, and see what a comforting text he has provided for your especial case. "The Lord God is a *sun* and *shield*: the Lord will give *grace* and *glory*: no good thing will he withhold from them that walk uprightly," Psa. lxxxiv. 11.

TO THE READER,

WHAT a number of books are now abroad in the world! New works spring up like mushrooms, so that, were we to make reading the business of our lives, we could peruse but a small part of the books which are printed. What a library would that be which should contain them all! Folios, quartos, duodecimos, magazines, tracts, and children's books, appear endless; yet month after month, week after week, and day after day, something new is added to the number. A book appears to be a sort of seed, which goes on producing others of the same kind, so that the more books there are, the more are there likely to be.

In such a reading age, it may not be amiss to make a few inquiries.

Do you read? I do not mean, can you read? or, do you occasionally read? but, are you what is called a reader? If so, whether the hours of your leisure be few or many; whether your object be to instruct your head, or reform your heart,

you have a choice of books sufficiently extensive. Histories, travels, arts and sciences, law, physic, and divinity without end. You may weary yourself in wading through prose and poetry; you may smile over the light productions of fancy, and knit your brow while pondering the weighty arguments of graver writers. There are books to suit all dispositions; every kind of mental appetite is abundantly provided for; the table is spread, and the feast is ready: before you sit down, however, let me ask you a few questions.

When do you read? This is a more important question than at first sight it may appear to be: for, if you read when you have duties to perform, you read when you ought not to read. He who purchases amusement, or even knowledge itself, at the expense of duty, will have reason to regret his having been a reader. If you read in bed, with a lighted taper beside you, you are endangering not only your own safety, but that of all who are around you; better keep your book shut all your days, than be burned to death in your own bed-clothes. If you sit up later at night to read than your health can endure, you are reading at the expense of your life; for he who habitually and recklessly sits up late, "not only lights the candle of life at both ends, but runs a red-hot poker through the middle of it." Do you

not see now, that the question, "*When* do you read?" is a very necessary one to be put to you? But we will go on to another, and that is—

How do you read? For a bad method of reading very often renders the habit of reading worse than useless. If you read carelessly, not giving yourself time to understand the meaning of the words before you; or if, understanding them, you read without reflection, your reading will yield you but little profit. If you read credulously, believing every thing that is printed, you may be led into many errors and absurdities; and if you read doubtingly, and disposed to disbelieve every sentence in your book, you will rob yourself of much knowledge, wisdom, and consolation. To read profitably, you must read with care and reflection: care will enable you to comprehend your author, and reflection, to turn his observations to the best advantage. But now comes the question—

What do you read? Some read fairy tales and romances, so that enchanters, and monsters, and dwarfs, and giants, and brazen castles, and black forests, and dark dungeons, and captive ladies, and knights clad in armour, are for ever flitting before them. Some read antiquities, and think much more of what took place a thousand years past, than they do of what is taking place now, or what will take place a thousand years

to come. Some read nothing but the newspapers ; ardent after novelty, they must know every day, ay, twice a day, about all that has taken place in the wide world, from the bursting forth of a volcano in the east, to the invention of a lucifer match in the west ; but the question is not what *they* read, but, “ What do *you* read ? ” and a very important question it is.

The pleasure we enjoyed yesterday is of little use to us to-day, and that of to-day will not benefit us much to-morrow ; therefore profit, not pleasure, should be the main object of our reading.

But do you think that profit can be obtained from foolish books ? You can hardly think so. The good you will derive from them will indeed go into a small compass. “ Do men gather grapes of thorns, or figs of thistles ? ” Matt. vii. 16. If you look for honey in an ant’s nest, or for money in a pauper’s purse, you will not be likely to find them ; but still you will be acting quite as wisely, as to expect by reading foolish books to make yourself more wise and happy.

Amusing books should be read very sparingly, and not as many read them, to pass away time. Pass away time ! Why what should you think of the man who would take up a pleasant story-book to pass away time, when a fearful monster was fast approaching to destroy him ? or of him, who,

when the tide of the roaring sea was gathering around him, kept musing over a jest book to pass away time? Would you not say, "Friend, flee for your life! There is no time to spare?" Death is more inexorable than the fiercest monster! Eternity is more overwhelming than the roaring tide!

Read, then, the works of the wise and good among men, but especially ponder over the word of God! Let no sun rise and set, without throwing its light on your opened Bible. No, nor without that blessed book throwing its light upon you. But—

Why do you read? For if you have no object in reading, no object is likely to be attained by reading. All the books in the world, read one after another, without care, reflection, and design, would do you but little good. It is not the mere counting of money that makes a man rich; he must make it his own before it adds to his store. It is not pronouncing wise words that renders a man wise; he must understand and practise them before he derives any advantage. The object of our reading should be to become wiser and better; or, in other words, to know and to do the will of God. "Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting get understanding," Prov. iv. 7.

Think of a man going a journey without making up his mind where he shall go; or, of a ship setting sail without directing her course to any port! The traveller and the ship are both like the reader whose eye is fixed on no object, and whose heart desires no improvement.

And now comes my last question: *Has your reading been of any service to you?* Have you read the word of man with profit, and the word of God with thankfulness and joy? for if you have not done so, something must be wrong, something must be out of order.

Perhaps you have not read sufficiently, according to your opportunities of obtaining information. You may have attended to other pursuits, and neglected reading. Perhaps you have read at an improper time, when your drowsiness, your hurry, or the confusion around you, may have rendered your reading useless. Perhaps you have formed bad habits in reading, neither attending much to the words, nor reflecting much on their meaning. Perhaps you have read silly and worthless books, which, containing nothing but folly, were not likely to impart any wisdom. Or, perhaps you have read without an object, caring little what your books contained, and still less about what effect they might produce on your mind.

In any of these cases, it is not remarkable that

you should not have been much benefited by your reading. Now, read over these remarks with consideration. The ability to read is a great advantage : to have the words of the wise before us is a great blessing ; but to possess the word of God is an unspeakable mercy. Let us all then be readers, adopting good habits, and seeking proper objects, that we may become wise. Especially let us remember that we are responsible to God for the opportunities of reading he has given us, and that we should continually seek his blessing on the books we read.

“Happy is the man that findeth wisdom, and the man that getteth understanding. For the merchandise of it is better than the merchandise of silver, and the gain thereof than fine gold. She is more precious than rubies : and all the things thou canst desire are not to be compared unto her. Length of days is in her right hand ; and in her left hand riches and honour. Her ways are ways of pleasantness, and all her paths are peace,” Prov. iii. 13—17.

BEGGING, BORROWING, AND STEALING.

THOUGH begging is a bad trade, and a beggar by profession, at best, is but an unworthy example, yet there are times when a-begging I must go.

Do not imagine that I tie up one of my legs, and hobble along on crutches, as some beggars do ; or that, buttoning myself in a blue jacket, I pass myself off for a one-armed sailor. No ! no ! I do neither the one nor the other, not even so much as slinging a wallet over my shoulder ; and yet, as I said before, often and often do I go a-begging. Let me advise you to do the same.

If, by accident or design, you have injured or wronged any of your fellow sinners, be not ashamed to beg their forbearance and forgiveness. If you have the opportunity of doing good, beg of the abundance of the rich to relieve the necessities of the poor ; and when kneeling at the throne of mercy, beg humbly and heartily for God's

grace, and every Christian affection, that you may live to increase the comfort of all around you, and the glory of the Redeemer.

I cannot get on at all without borrowing; and though in money matters there is no gainsaying the truth, "He who goes a-borrowing goes a-sorrowing" yet it is not exactly the same in all other cases.

I find that the more I borrow of some things, and the more I owe, the richer I get; so much so, that if I had borrowed more largely than I have done, during my life, I should now be abundantly better qualified to write for your edification.

Whenever I meet with a striking thought, and one better than my own on any subject—and if it be not better it must be bad enough—whenever I fall in with a valuable thought, I invariably borrow it, and make as good use of it as I can. Not that I wish to show off in the gifts of another, like the jackdaw decked with peacock plumes, but that I am more anxious to be a useful letter-carrier than a useless letter-writer.

If I cannot play "the first fiddle" in a good cause, I am very willing to play the second; and if I have no edifying remarks of my own to bring forward, I am anxious to lay before you some that I have borrowed from my neighbours.

But, if you have thought it at all strange that I should beg and borrow, what will you say when you know that I now and then steal, or try to take away from others what is their own, and not mine? Though I pick no man's pocket, and filch no man's purse, yet I do try to deprive many of their bad habits and propensities. I try to take from them, against their own consent, that which they dearly prize. I take away, without permission, when I can, one man's folly and pride, and another man's bitterness and infidelity. I would not willingly have the things I steal found in my possession, for they would do me more mischief than good: but I would, if I could, deprive old and young, simple and sage, friends and enemies, of every evil thought, and word, and deed.

OCCUPATION.

IF you were to ask me, What tends most to mitigate earthly sorrow, with the exception of the comfort derived from Divine things? I should unhesitatingly reply, Occupation.

Yes! occupation cures one half of life's troubles, and tends to mitigate the remainder. Of whatever kind they may happen to be, troubles always appear great; and our own cares, in our own estimation, are invariably greater than those of our neighbours: but whether we are afflicted in mind, body, or estate, occupation is the best prescription we can take.

Suppose you have had a loss, say it is five silver shillings, or as many golden sovereigns; nay, let it be, if you like, a hundred pounds, or a thousand, for it is not the amount of our losses that weighs down our spirits, but our real or fancied incapability to bear them—suppose you have had a loss, I say, why all the sighing and the sorrowing, the moaning and repining, in the world,

will not bring back a single sixpence of your money again, though it may disqualify you for making an attempt to recover your loss. You may get friends to condole with you, and make your loss greater by losing your time in brooding over it, but occupation is the only thing to relieve you. It is the most likely of any thing to make up your money again; and if it do not that, it will engage your mind as well as your fingers, and keep you from despondency.

Suppose your body is afflicted; will sitting or lying down, doing nothing, with your dejected eyes fixed on the wall—will this, I say, pull out a thorn from your finger, or assuage the pain of an aching tooth, or cure a fit of the gout? Not a bit of it. So long as pain does not deprive you of the power of occupying yourself, occupation will be for you the best thing in the world. Let it be suited to your condition, and persevered in with prudence. A weak body cannot lift a heavy burden, nor a confused head think clearly; but do something, whether it be much or little, hard or easy. So long as you can write a letter, wind a ball of cotton, make a spill, read a book, or listen while another reads it to you,—so long as you can do any of these things, by doing them you will be mitigating your affliction.

In like manner, if your mind be wounded, apply

the same remedy. If your enemy has injured, or your friend deceived you; if your brightest hopes have been clouded, or your reputation blackened, pray for your enemies, and then, up and be doing. Better gather field-flowers, plat rushes, weed the garden, or black your own shoes, than be idle. Occupation will raise your spirit, while idleness will bring it down to the dust. Occupation will often blunt the edge of the sharpest grief, keep the body in health, and preserve the mind in comparative peace.

He that is in trouble should do something to get rid of it. I have known many a man get to the top of a mountain by resolutely clambering up its rugged sides, who would never have got there at all, by sitting down and fretting at the bottom of it. And many a hardy swimmer has crossed a rapid river, by sturdily buffeting its rushing waters, who never could have achieved such an adventure, by despondingly allowing himself to be carried along by the current. Something must be done, and done by yourself too, when you are in trouble; or otherwise, it will stick as close to you as the skin that covers you. If I had not been a man of occupation, my heart would have been broken long ago. I never could have stood up under the load of troubles and trials—not so heavy as I have deserved—that God, in mercy, has

given me strength to sustain. Old Humphrey is always occupied ; his tongue, his hands, his head, or his heels, are in constant requisition ; and, rather than sit down, and do nothing, he would willingly break stones on the highway, or make brimstone matches, and hawk them about from door to door.

Time flies rapidly with those who have more to do in the day than they can accomplish ; and drags along as heavily with all who have no employment for their hours. Occupation is the great secret of cheerful days and tranquil nights ; for he that is well employed while the sun is in the skies, will not only enjoy much, but most likely sleep soundly when the stars are shining above him.

The moment you feel yourself getting moody and miserable, seek Divine support by prayer, and then set yourself a task immediately, something that will compel you to exert yourself ; and you will be surprised at the relief it will afford you.

Though Old Humphrey advises you to do something of a trifling nature, rather than be idle, he is no advocate for trifling. So long as this world endures, there will always be employment enough, and to spare, for all those who either wish to guide others to heaven, or to get there themselves. If you cannot employ your body,

employ your mind, for there is a time to employ it profitably ;

A time to reflect on our words and ways ;

A time to pray, and a time to praise.

And especially employ yourself in doing good, and mitigating the sorrows of others : while taking a thorn from the bosom of another, you will lose that which rankles in your own.

Thousands, who know how much comfort occupation gives, do not know how much distress and uneasiness it keeps away. Show me two men, who have equal advantages—one of them idle, and the other fully occupied, and I will venture to pronounce the latter ten times happier than the former. Care is a sad disease ; discontent a sadder ; and despondency, perhaps, the saddest of the three ; but, if you wish to be cured of all these together, next to seeking Divine support, my prescription is—OCCUPATION.

T I M E.

MY tale is plain, but pithy ; give it a moment's consideration.

When I was a boy, my father one day called me to him, that he might teach me how to know what o'clock it was. He told me the use of the minute finger, and the hour hand, and described to me the figures on the dial-plate, until I was pretty perfect in my part.

No sooner had I gained this additional knowledge, than I set off scampering to join my companions, at a game of ring-taw ; but my father called me back again : — “ Stop, Humphrey,” said he, “ I have something else to say to you.”

Back again I went, wondering what else I had yet to learn, for it seemed to me that I knew all about the clock, quite as well as my father did.

“ Humphrey,” said he, “ I have taught you to know the time of the day, I must now teach you how to find out the time of your life.”

All this was Dutch to me ; so I waited rather

impatiently to hear how my father would explain it, for I wanted sadly to go to my marbles.

“The Bible,” said he, “describes the years of man to be threescore and ten, or fourscore years. Now, life is very uncertain, and you may not live a single day longer; but if we divide the fourscore years of an old man’s life into twelve parts, like the dial of the clock, it will allow almost seven years for every figure. When a boy is seven years old, then, it is one o’clock of his life, and this is the case with you; when you arrive at fourteen years, it will be two o’clock with you; and when at twenty-one years, it will be three o’clock, should it please God thus to spare your life. In this manner, you may always know the time of your life; and your looking at the clock may perhaps remind you of it. My great grandfather, according to this calculation, died at twelve o’clock; my grandfather at eleven, and my father at ten. At what hour you and I shall die, Humphrey, is only known to Him to whom all things are known.”

Never since then have I heard the inquiry, “What o’clock is it?”—nor do I think that I have even looked at the face of a clock,—without being reminded of the words of my father.

I know not, my friends, what o’clock it may be with you, but I know very well what time it is

with myself; and that if I mean to do any thing in this world which, hitherto, I have neglected, it is high time to set about it. The words of my father have given a solemnity to the dial-plate of a clock, which, perhaps, it never would have possessed in my estimation, if these words had not been spoken. Look about you, my friends, I earnestly entreat you, and now and then ask yourselves the question, "What o'clock is it with me?"

FAIR-WEATHER CHRISTIANS.

IF you are among the lowly disciples of Him who suffered on Calvary, and if, on the sabbath day, you go gladly to meet him in his house, drawn there by a sense of your own unworthiness, and of his unspeakable mercy and grace; if, as a pardoned sinner, or as a sinner seeking pardon and salvation, you go there, my present remarks will have little to do with you. To God's house you will go, if health permit, hail, rain, or sunshine. It is a pleasure, a high and a holy privilege to go, and it is a punishment to stay away.

But if you go there to show off your fine clothes, to quiet your conscience, to get a name for piety, or for any other purpose than that of offering up the sacrifices of praise, and getting good to your own soul, and the souls of others, why, then, a word with you, and it shall be but a short one.

Are "the means of grace, and the hope of

glory" such trifling things, that you will let a shadowy cloud, or a summer shower, rob you of them? The time may come when you may rave, and tear your hair, for the golden opportunities thus neglected. To be robbed of them by others would be bad enough, but to rob yourself of them is much worse. Turn this over in your mind.

If some enemy of your body and soul, your earthly comforts and heavenly hopes, were to shut the door of God's house against you, would you not take it to heart, as a hard case? Would you not fret and fume, and talk about your rights, and insist upon it, that no one should prevent you from attending Divine worship? I fear you would. Think the matter over with yourself.

God has promised to be in the midst of his people gathering themselves together in his name. Is it right, then, when his house is open on the sabbath day, and perhaps his table spread, to refuse to meet him? Have a care! What if he should refuse to meet you! Did you ever look at the thing in this light? A little reflection upon it will not hurt you.

It is unkind to God's ministers to weaken their hands, and depress their hearts, by staying at home on the sabbath; it is unkind to your neighbours to set them so bad an example; and it

is still more unkind to act such an unworthy part to your own soul. Take it into consideration.

A worthy friend of mine, a minister of the ever-blessed gospel of peace, once reproved a few of his careless hearers, by penning down the following lines :—

“ As butterflies, with gaudy wings,
Display themselves on sunny days,
So summer saints, more gaudy things,
Will seek God’s house to pray and praise.

“ But if a mist bedew the ground,
Or e’en a cloud obscure the skies,
These painted saints are weather-bound,
And keep at home like butterflies.”

Though our sins are without number, our lives are short, and our sabbaths few. There is but one way of salvation, even Jesus Christ, who is “the way, the truth, and the life.” We have the promise; if we seek that way, we shall find it; that if we knock at mercy’s door, it will be opened to us. If thou art not a seeker, hope not to be a finder. If thou knockest not at the door, hope not to have it opened unto thee.

Let these points be thought over, in as kindly a spirit as that in which I lay them before you.

Sabbaths are costly things; fling them not away. You may judge of your state pretty well

by asking yourself this question, How do I value the sabbath day?

If heaven above contains no charm for thee,
The day of sacred rest no rest will be ;
But if thy hope, thy heart, thy soul be there,
The sabbath is a day thou canst not spare.

CHEER UP! PILGRIM.

WHAT, pilgrim! art thou faint and weary in thy way to Zion? Is thy load heavier than thou canst bear? Well, then, "cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee: he shall never suffer the righteous to be moved," Psa. lv. 22.

Is the stormy wind and tempest abroad, and seest thou no place of shelter? God is thy refuge. Does thy vigour fail thee, and dost thou faint for very feebleness? God is thy strength. Do afflictions gird thee round as a garment, and is no friend at hand to aid thee? "God is a very present help in trouble," Psa. xlvi. 1.

Be of good courage, and hold thee on thy way. Is the river thou hast to cross deep and rapid? Do thy fiery trials burst into a conflagration? Cheer up! wayfaring pilgrim, and listen to the voice of thy Lord. "When thou passest through the waters, I will be with

thee ; and through the rivers, they shall not overflow thee : when thou walkest through the fire, thou shalt not be burned ; neither shall the flame kindle upon thee. For I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel, thy Saviour," Isa. xliii. 2, 3.

TO
A BEREAVED FRIEND.

MY AFFLICTED FRIEND,

I HEAR that it has pleased God, in his mysterious, but merciful dispensations, to take away from the world, or rather to take unto himself, one that was very dear to you. You were bound together in bonds of affection stronger than links of steel; and taking her from you, was like dividing the joints, yea, separating the body and the soul.

I am not going to afflict you by taking the matter calmly—to tell you not to grieve, and to recommend you to be reconciled to your affliction, for I might as well recommend you to make yourself wings, and fly away: the one thing is as impossible as the other. No! I am more inclined to grieve with you; to clothe myself in sackcloth and ashes; to sit down beside you in the dust of humiliation, and deeply to mourn the loss you have sustained.

Yours has been a heavy trial: the furnace has

been very hot, and the fire exceedingly fierce. She whom you have lost had long been your companion, for you knew her in the days of your childhood. You loved her, and not without reason; she was the wife of your youth, the beloved companion of your maturer manhood, and the prudent director of your domestic affairs. She was also a lowly follower of the Redeemer; a fellow pilgrim to a better land; and, as I humbly believe, one of those whom Jesus redeemed, sanctified, and has now glorified.

You were alarmed at her sickness, even when you could not believe it would be unto death. You watched, and wept, and prayed over her; and when it pleased God to speak more openly his intentions concerning her, your affections rebelled against his righteous decree. The hollow cheek, the sunken eye, the sharpened features, came upon you, agonizing your heart; and the feeble and fluttering pulse, the filmy and glazed eye-ball, the failing breath, and all the humiliating attendants of dissolution, almost overwhelmed you. I know something about these things, and therefore I know that you have had much to endure.

And since then, your heartstrings have been wrung in committing her body to the grave, and you have found the world a wilderness, and

yourself a desolate and broken-hearted mourner. I am grieved for you, for your trouble is no common trouble ; nor am I much surprised, though somewhat distressed, that you have hitherto almost refused to be comforted. It is a hard matter to bless a joy-taking, as well as a joy-giving God.

This is a lesson that we can only learn from a heavenly Instructor.

You have lost for ever, as far as this world is concerned, your best earthly friend, your dearest earthly treasure, the light of your eyes, the desire of your heart ; how, then, can you feel other than desolate ! I could mourn for you in the bitterness of my spirit.

But now, having gone with you, in considering what you have lost, I hope you will go with me, in considering what you have not lost. There is a shiny as well as a shadowy side even to affliction, and yours may not be without consolation.

First, let us ask from whom you have received this bitter stroke. Hath an enemy done this ? Oh no ; but the best, the kindest of friends. He who is "merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy. Like as a father pitieth his children, so the Lord pitieth them that fear him," Psa. ciii. 8. 13.

Why this seems to go to the root of the matter ;

for if a friend has done it, it must have been done with a friendly intention—there is consolation in the very thought.

Again ; though this stroke has brought earthly sorrow upon you, it has given heavenly joy to her whose loss you deplore ; for you have good reason to believe that she lived and “died in the Lord.” What a source of comfort is this ! What a cordial to enable you to endure hardness as a faithful soldier of Christ ; to think that when you are tried, she is at peace ; when you are in danger, she is secure ; when you are sorrowing, she is rejoicing ! There seems to be consolation upon consolation.

Nor ought we to forget how soon we shall again be united to our friends in glory. The season may be very short. If the separation were an eternal one, it would indeed be dreadful ; but no, it is not so ; and if I may, without being irreverent, venture the remark, the departure of our friends for glory not only severs one of the ties which bind us to the world, but adds another charm to heaven.

Let us for matchless mercy Christ adore,
They are not lost, but only gone before !
With glittering crowns, and golden harps they stand,
To bid us welcome to that heavenly land.

It may be that this trial was necessary ; it may

be medicine, prescribed by the great Physician, for the health of your immortal soul : nor is this an unreasonable supposition ;

For oftentimes, with erring hearts,
We need affliction's rod,
To drive us from a sinful world,
And draw us near to God.

Under God's guidance, the light afflictions of his people work out for them "a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17.

Now, do not you begin to see and to feel that this providence of God may be meant as a gracious gift, as well as an afflictive dispensation? It has been good for her who is in heaven, and it is likely to prove good to you who are following her there. I might enlarge on this subject, and on others also, but let me not weary you. Take my poor thoughts as prompted by affection, and bow to the will of God.

On the whole, looking at this trial in all its bearings, it is mingled with much mercy. This, even with our dim-sightedness, may be seen, and would be, no doubt, much clearer, if our spiritual discernment were more perfect. As your sufferings abound, may your consolations in Jesus Christ abound also, and those all-sustaining promises be blessed to your soul—"My grace is sufficient for

thee," 2 Cor. xii. 9. "As thy days, so shall thy strength be," Deut. xxxiii. 25.

I have written you a long letter, and my remarks may not appear to you so kind as I intended them to be ; but my object has not been to offer comfort without pointing out the reasonableness of the consolation afforded. I feel my infirmity in attempting to comfort you.

I sympathize heartily with you in your trouble ; but, when we speak of suffering, we should never lose sight of the sufferings of the Saviour. This will make our own afflictions light. When we enumerate our mercies also, the crowning mercy of the gift of Jesus Christ should be ever had in remembrance ; this should fill our mouths and our hearts with praise.

Unsanctified sorrow is ever selfish ; it opens our eyes wide to our afflictions, and closes them to God's mercy and pitiful compassion. I humbly trust that your sorrow will not be of this sort, but that, as your heavenly Father's goodness, and the healing hand of time, bind up your wounds, you will be led, step by step, to bow to the will of God ; to admire him for his wisdom, to adore him for his faithfulness, and to thank, and bless, and praise him for his infinite compassion and love. He will do all that is right concerning us, for " He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up

for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?" Rom. viii. 32. Lift up your eyes to the hills whence cometh your help, for "thy God whom thou servest continually, he will deliver thee," Dan. vi. 16.

In the bonds of Christian love and affectionate sympathy,

I am, your friend,

HUMPHREY.

CHRISTMAS TIME.

“ Whoso hath this world’s good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him ?” 1 John iii. 17.

FEW things are more common among us, than to hear exulting expressions in praise of “ good old Christmas.” Open-hearted hospitality and social mirth are commended in high terms, and “ keeping up old times” is regarded as a virtue ; without considering, that, in too many cases, nothing more is meant by it than selfish banqueting and intemperate indulgence. The Christmas of “ olden time” was distinguished by great attention to religious services, unsparing charity, and general hospitality. The latter was of a reckless character, as it is too often at the present day. The cry, however, in favour of keeping up Christmas now, is principally confined to the convivial part of it ; the religious services and the charity are too often but secondary considerations. This remark is not made in a

cynical, ill-natured spirit, but rather with a view of calling forth the sympathies of the kind-hearted ; that while the severities of winter are pinching the ill-fed, ill-clad, and aged poor, the stream of benevolence may more freely flow, and the jubilee of Christmas be more generally enjoyed.

Christmas is a time of hospitality, of joy, and merriment, to thousands whose wants are well supplied ; but often it is a time of anxiety and suffering to the poor. The fangs of penury and want pinch doubly hard in winter ; and he, or she, who has but little fuel, a scanty supply of food, and whose body is barely covered, is entitled to our pity.

Who can see the passing coaches, piled up, as they are, with packages, and heavy-laden with hampers, well stored with Christmas fare, without thinking to himself, " How few of these will find their way to the dwelling-places of the poor ! " In these things, we give to those who have them, and withhold from those who have them not. Many a man is even now preparing to make a great supper ; but it is not likely that one will be found anxious to compel the poor to come in, and partake of it.

Consider for a moment, if you cannot give something away at this season, in the shape of

food, that will light up the eye of the deserving aged poor, make the fatherless clap his hands, and the heart of the widow to sing for joy.

Look around you with a pitiful eye, and a merciful heart, and you will discern faces in abundance that proclaim, too plainly, their acquaintance with penury and scanty fare.

How often do I see at the butcher's shop, the threadbare-coated, broken down housekeeper, whose better days are passed, and the spendthrift, whose poverty has come upon him as an armed man! How often do I see them linger wishfully, to look at the joint that they cannot buy!

The aged matron, too, still retaining a decency and respectability of which penury has not robbed her, comes and goes, and goes and comes again, handling the commonest piece of meat at the stall, and reckoning up in her mind what it will cost. See! she weighs it in her mind, apparently to the ounce, then hesitates, shakes her head mournfully, and walks away empty-handed.

In the every-day pathways of life, instances of this kind occur, enough to make our hearts ache; those who look for them will be sure to find them. It was but yesterday that a poor weaver called upon me, who for some months past has been out of employ; he has now got a little work, and he called for money to enable him to

buy a new shuttle and a pair of shears. Now, to such an old, inoffensive creature as he appears to be, it would delight me to give a pound. Do you not know such a man as this? Come, come, look around you.

The clock has not struck, since, passing along the streets, my attention was drawn to a young chimney-sweep — one of those poor, shivering wretches, who, on a winter's morning, creep along with a bag across their shoulders, and a brush under their arm, bending their knees as they walk, dragging along the ground, with their naked feet, shoes that would be too big for their grandfathers.

You may tell me that young chimney-sweeps are hearty young rogues, as full of life and fun as an egg is full of meat; and I often see such myself; but they are not all so. The one of whom I speak was not of this description.

There stood the hungry, sharp-set, shivering climber, sometimes standing on one cold foot, and sometimes on the other, at the window of a cook-shop, whose prodigality poured forth a savoury steam, almost enough to provoke the full to eat another dinner. How the poor lad got so much money I know not; but he had evidently laid out a penny in pudding. It was too hot to hold, much less to bite with comfort; but he

contrived both to hold and to eat it, shifting it quickly from one hand to another.

All this time his eager eye was fixed on the smoking pudding in the shop window, anticipating, no doubt, the sorrowful moment when his own morsel would have disappeared. You should have seen the expression of his sore eyes, and his soot-begrimed face, when I gave him a penny for another pennyworth! I would not part with the remembrance of that look of delight for a crown-piece.

In the spirit of kind entreaty, let me ask, whether, in the midst of the visits you mean to pay this Christmas, you mean to visit any poor neighbour? Whether, while partaking of the good cheer of others, you intend to supply the hungry with a single good dinner?

It was a custom with my grandfather to entertain twelve poor aged women at his table on Christmas day, with Christmas fare. After which, he handed to each of them a glass of wine, and a shilling, with an exhortation to a thankful remembrance of the goodness of God. Well do I know, that

“Those who on virtuous ancestors enlarge,
Produce their debt instead of their discharge;”

and instead of being proud, as we too often are,

of what others have done, we have reason to be humbled for what we ourselves have omitted.

Let me give you one trait from the character of my mother, a personification of benevolence, especially at Christmas. In all appeals of a charitable nature, she acted under the influence of the moment. As the winding up of a watch sets the wheels in motion, so, at the recital of a tale of woe, her hand mechanically moved into her pocket. I well remember one veteran pensioner on her bounty replying, when taxed with having troubled her for twenty years, "No, no! madam, indeed you make a mistake; it is but fifteen."

It is true that she did not fail to lecture those who appealed too frequently to her benevolence; but it was done in such a way, that any one, with half an eye, could see that it did not arise from the displeasure of her heart. The rebuke she offered with her tongue, was more than half drowned by the jingle of the money in her pocket, which she was preparing to bestow.

I know very well, that this is but a homely tale, but let its truth atone for its homeliness; let the spirit of benevolence it exhibits make amends for the language in which it is conveyed. I do not want you to give as my mother gave; for she often and inconsiderately relieved the

unworthy with the worthy; the impostor with the real object of distress; but I want you to imitate my benevolent parent in this, that when a real case of distress is brought before you, you may not be a grumbler, without being a fumbler at the same time. Yes, fumble in your pockets, and be not too severe to mark the errors of the pale-faced, hollow-eyed suppliants for your bounty.

There are many impostors abroad, taking the bread out of better mouths than their own. I am ashamed of them; but I feel ashamed, also, of the lynx-eyed, keen, cutting shrewdness, which enables some, not only to detect imposture, but to see indiscretion much plainer than they see want and misery. Is it not better, think you, in a doubtful case, to be cheated of a penny, than to risk the possibility of withholding a penny roll from the hungry, when the cold, searching, freezing wind is whistling through their ragged raiment? Is it not laying out a half-crown well, to put a joint in the pot of a poor widow on a Christmas day, even if we do run some little risk of adding to the comforts of one who may not be, in all respects, what we would have her be?

It would do us good, as well in regard to charity, as in regard to other things, more frequently to turn over the pages of sacred writ.—
“He that hath pity upon the poor lendeth unto

the Lord; and that which he hath given will he pay him again." "Bear ye one another's burdens, and so fulfil the law of Christ." And to remember that this precept is personal; it is to ourselves.

How enlarged were the hospitality and charity of former times! How simple, how beautiful, how touching are the observations of Job! chap. xxxi. 16, 17. 22. 32. I am afraid there are almost as few Jobs among us in regard to charity, as there are in respect of patience.

Are there none in your neighbourhood struggling with adversity? Do you know none who cannot dig, and who to beg would be ashamed, to whom a joint of meat would be a treasure? No doubt you do; and I could even now fancy that I see the messenger of your bounty setting off with a leg of pork, or a neck of mutton, or, it may be, a piece of beef, red as a cherry, with suet white as snow, wrapped up in a clean cloth, or placed in a clean dish. I can see the unexpected boon received as a gift from above, with outstretched hands, an eye brightening with exultation, and a heart beating with thankfulness; and I can hear distinctly the fervent blessing, that a voice, faltering with grateful emotion, is imploring on your head.

Be persuaded to make some one happy this

Christmas, and you will be the happier yourself for the charitable deed. Visit the poor ; go and see what their wants are ; judge for yourselves.

By the mercies you have received from the Father of mercies, by your expectation of future blessings, and by your Christian profession, I entreat you to receive and act on the admonition, "He that oppresseth the poor reproacheth his Maker : but he that honoureth him, hath mercy on the poor," Prov. xiv. 31.

A WARNING.

YES! tell me that I am homely, and abrupt, and rude in speech. I know it well, and why should it be otherwise? Why should I not be abrupt, if I cannot otherwise secure your attention? Is not the sun setting before your eyes, the ground crumbling from beneath your feet, and your latter end stealing upon you unawares? I will be abrupt enough to break my neighbour's slumber, if his house be on fire. I will be rude enough to seize him by the hair of his head, if I see him drowning. I will restrain, bind, and chain him, if his hand be raised against his own life. And why should I be silent, when a mightier voice than mine is needed as a warning?

To the *young*, I cry aloud, Is not the early bud often nipped by the frost? To the *mature*, Are not the full-blown blossoms frequently scattered by the storm? To the *aged*, Does not the mere breeze shake the ripe fruit from the tree?

Art thou young? Dost thou bloom as the rose?

Hast thou number'd the years of a man?

Art thou aged in years and in woes?

Remember, thy life is a span!

I must, I will direct you to the clock of existence. The yearly pendulum has given another swing; the youngest and the strongest have but fourscore strokes to come, and thousands have not one. The wheels of life are moving fast; the weights of health and strength, with some of us, are almost down; the fingers of time are pointing to futurity; and the voice of the Eternal will proclaim the hour of death.

Happy those who are united to Christ! for he holds in his hand the key of death; he openeth, and no man shutteth; he shutteth, and no man openeth, Rev. i. 18; iii. 7.

PRESENTS.

It will save you many a penny, ay, and many a stinging reflection, too, if you will bear in mind, that of all dear things, those may be the dearest which are given you for nothing.

He who pays too high a price at market for his articles, or loses by a bad bargain in business, or is cheated in a purchase he may happen to make, generally knows the worst of it, or the end of it, at once; but if you seek for favours, if you lie in wait for unnecessary kindnesses, you may never know the worst of it, nor the end of it, for years to come. Think not that Old Humphrey means to be proud; he knows very well that all human beings are poor, weak, and unworthy creatures, not only constantly dependent on a God of grace and mercy, but more or less dependent, also, on the kind and Christian offices of those around them; still this is no reason why we should load ourselves with a burden of needless favours. That man is to be pitied, who is too proud to accept the services

of the poorest being on earth, when necessary : but he is to be pitied more, who stoops to solicit obligations from the proudest, when he can do without them.

Again I say, those things may be the dearest that are given us for nothing ; and I could give you twenty illustrations of the fact, but will content myself with narrating one.

My aunt Barbara, from London, paid me a visit when I lived in the country : and one day, after she had been talking for half an hour about the beautiful cod-fish, and oysters, that were to be had for little or nothing at Billingsgate, I foolishly said, " If that be the case, you may as well send me a fish as not." In a little time after she returned home, a fish came by the coach, sure enough, and a barrel of oysters with it ; but, by some neglect or other, they were not delivered so soon as they ought to have been : the oysters were, of course, not fresh, but the cod-fish was good for nothing. I paid three shillings and fourpence for the carriage, and gave twopence to the porter.

" Well," thought I, " another time, if I want fish, I will buy it, and not beg it, for one bought fish is worth two begged ones any day of the week." It was absolutely necessary to write a letter, and pay the postage too, to acknowledge the great kindness of my aunt Barbara ; but

before my letter reached her, she had gone, for a few days, to a distant neighbourhood, thirty or forty miles from home, from which place, fidget as she was, she wrote me an unpaid letter, full of fears and anxieties, lest I should not have received "a beautiful large cod-fish, and a barrel of fine oysters," sent me by the coach, and requiring an answer by return of post. Once more I sat down to thank my aunt for her oysters, and, once more, I paid the postage of my letter, not a little ruffled in my temper.

In the course of the day, a cousin of mine came to see me, having walked five miles to tell me of a letter she had received from my aunt, who had requested her to make immediate inquiry whether or not I had received some fish and oysters by the coach?

"Oysters!" said I, hastily; "I am sick of oysters, and have already written two letters to thank my fidgetty aunt for them."

Well, I had got into a scrape, and wanted sadly to get out of it again; for, thought I, if I remain under this obligation, every relation I have in the world will be told about it.

The first opportunity, I despatched, very carefully, carriage paid, a good thumping sucking-pig to my aunt, as a return for her kindness, and felt as though a heavy weight had been taken from

my shoulders. "Bad as the affair of the fish has been," thought I, "it is a good thing that it is all done with now." But I little knew my aunt Barbara.

Another unpaid letter from her thanked me coldly for my pig, but added, "she thought I knew that she did not like pork; a turkey would have suited her much better." Here was a pretty piece of business! it seemed as though there was to be no end to those unlucky oysters.

I sent off a carriage-paid turkey to my aunt Barbara, in a sad unchristian spirit, for I could not help remembering, that though she could not eat sucking-pig in London, she ate it heartily enough in the country. She never paid the postage of her letter which acknowledged the receipt of it: no, nor would she, had I sent her fifty turkeys.

Some time after, when I thought the affair of the fish was dead and buried, I called in at my sister Sarah's.

"So, Humphrey," said she, "you have had a fine catch of it; my aunt tells me, in a letter just received from her, that she never remembers having seen so fine a cod-fish in her life, as that she sent to you, with a barrel of oysters."

"And does she say anything about pigs, and turkeys, and carriage, and postage of letters?"

said I, peevishly. "Here have I paid over and over again for her present of good-for-nothing fish; and yet must have it ding'd dong'd in my ears continually." I was sadly vexed at my aunt, and still more at myself for my folly.

It was long before I again heard from my aunt Barbara; when she did write, one line of her letter ran thus:— "How rapidly time flies! Do you remember that on this very day twelve months ago, I sent you, by the coach, a fine large cod-fish and oysters?"

"Remember it!" thought I, "ay, that I do; and if you never send me another till I ask you for it, it will be some time to come."

Dearly have I paid for presents, and dearly will you pay for yours, if you needlessly put yourself in the way of receiving them. Better is a crust of your own, than a haunch of venison given by another; therefore, "be content with such things as ye have," and "provide things honest in the sight of all men," rather than depend on the favours of others. The less you ask of your fellow creatures the better, lest their precious oils should break your head; but ask freely of God, for he "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not," James i. 5.

HUMILITY.

I HAVE observed, in passing through life, and I dare say that you have observed the same thing, not only among men of the world, but also among Christians, that where one man has been disposed to practise humility, twenty have been ready to defend their own dignity.

If you offend a man, ay, and a good man too, such is human infirmity, it is ten to one but he thinks more about the respect that is due to him, and the enormity of your offence, than he does of the opportunity of showing his humility, and of exercising forgiveness. Now, I often read in Scripture, that we should be "clothed with humility," and forgive our enemies, even those who trespass against us seven times a day, and repent; but in no one part of the Bible have I yet found, that we are exhorted to stand up in defence of our dignity.

Think not, my friends, that I am making these observations to you more than to myself. No! no! Old Humphrey has as proud a heart as any one

among you, and requires to be reminded of it as often as you do : a little humility is of more value than a great deal of dignity ; and what is the use of bristling up like a hedgehog at every trifling injury we receive ? He that punishes an enemy, has a momentary pleasure ; but he that forgives one, has an abiding satisfaction. Pride is an unchristian quality, yet how many Christians appear proud ! Humility is a Christian grace, yet how few Christians are truly humble ! Shame betide us when we are proud ! There is a rod in pickle for our high-mindedness ; for “who-soever exalteth himself shall be abased.” Let us be humble, for “he that humbleth himself shall be exalted.” One clear view of the cross of Christ will do more towards killing pride, than a hundred proud resolutions to be humble.

THE FIRE-SIDE.

IF I could whisper in your ears one piece of advice, which at the moment appears to me to be of more value than another, it should be this, *Make the most of your common mercies.* If we always did this, the world would not be such a dreary waste as we sometimes make it, but, on the contrary, "the wilderness and the solitary place" would be glad, and the desert would "rejoice, and blossom as the rose," Isa. xxxv. 1.

True it is, that in the world we must have trouble; but there is a difference between the troubles which God sends, and the troubles which we bring on ourselves. The Father of mercies afflicts his people for their good, but he does it with tenderness: a flower blooms on the brier that he puts in their path; and in the thirstiest desert he compels them to pass through, they can drink of the brook by the way, and hold up their heads.

The schoolboy makes the most of his hours of recreation. It is the time for play, and play he

will; and why should he not be happy? He mingles with his favourite companions, runs to his favourite haunts, and chooses his favourite games, not losing a moment of his enjoyment, till the school-bell rings in his ears, and calls him to his books. Let us do as he does; let us make the most of those seasons of innocent enjoyment which fall to our share.

Pleasant is the breakfast hour, and cheerful is the meeting, when, refreshed by peaceful slumber, and tranquillized by morning prayer, the different members of a family assemble round the table to take their tea or coffee. At other meals the family may be divided, but here all are generally assembled. The busy cares, the various turmoils of the day have not disturbed the spirit; all is peace, cheerfulness, and joy. Have you never felt this? We ought to feel it every morning.

But pleasant as the breakfast table is, there is another point of attraction still more so. Cheerful as the breakfast group may be, there is another more interesting—the group of happy beings collected at the evening fire-side.

The fire-side! where is there a heart that does not glow at the very name? Where is there a spirit that does not spring forward, to join the fire-side party?

At the breakfast table, when the sun is mount-

ing the skies, the table bounteously spread, and the cup running over, with health visible in the cheek, and animation in the eye, there ought to be a warm gush of grateful emotion to the Giver of all good; but still a warmer gush will be wanted, suitably to acknowledge the more social, the more comfortable, the more delightful enjoyment of a domestic fire-side.

Come, reader, you can scarcely be a stranger to these things: come with me, and let us sit down by the fire-side together. Whatever may have been your occupation or your cares, however tried with disappointment, and ruffled with unexpected evils, it is all over now, for the day, at least. The sun has gone down; the shadows of night prevail. The winds are blowing without, but the fire is sparkling within. The shutters are closed, the curtains are drawn, there is yet an hour that may be passed peacefully and pleasantly; let it be passed by the fire-side.

Have you been accustomed to the splendour of a luxurious drawing-room, sumptuously furnished? Have the chairs and tables been highly wrought? is the carpet costly? are the curtains and sofa of crimson damask, the chandeliers of curiously-cut glass, and the chimney-piece of purest marble? Never mind! for once take up with a humbler

abode ; the prince and the peasant are alike to be pitied, if they have not the disposition to enjoy a domestic fire-side.

And if your lot be a lowly one, if your home be ever so homely, where the fagot crackles on the hearth, and your accustomed seat is the oaken chest in the corner : come along, for I am not in a mood to idolize the rich, or to despise the poor. I disdain not your condition : if you have a heart that glows with gratitude to God, and a pulse that beats in unison with the welfare of mankind, you must be my companion. Let us make the most of our common mercies ; let us heartily enjoy the fire-side together.

But it may be that your heart is ill at ease ; you may not be at peace with yourself. Some offence which you have committed may not be pardoned ; some good you have bestowed may have been forgotten ; or some injury done towards yourself by another may be too keenly remembered. Come ! come ! There are thorns in every hedge, and cares in every heart : I have some in my own : but let us both, for a season, pass them by, and now seat ourselves by the fire-side.

Often, in the years of infancy, have I lain in my mother's lap, by the fire-side, or nestled in her bosom. There was I undressed at bed-time, and

prepared for my little crib ; and there my mother lifted and held up my infant hands, teaching me to lisp the name of Jesus.

In the days of my boyhood, often have I sat by the fire-side, with half a dozen rosy-faced companions. We have read our books ; played at the games that young people delight in ; roasted our apples ; told long stories ; and laughed till the room rang again, for our hearts were as light as though there was no such a thing as care in the world. The future hour, and the future year, were always bright ; we feared nothing, and hoped every thing, for we knew, or thought we knew, that as we grew older we should be sure to be happier.

When manhood drew nigh, the fire-side was still a favourite place ; there were the events of the day, and the plans for to-morrow, talked over. There my aged grandmother, in her arm-chair, deplored the changes for the worse which had taken place since she finished her last sampler, and was allowed to be the first scholar in the school. "Farmers' wives," she said, "jogged to market on horseback then, and butter was four-pence a pound !"

There my parents recounted the history of their earlier years ; the trials they had endured ; the difficulties they had overcome ; the objects they had obtained.

There have I mingled with cheerful friends, and sat alone in solitary hours, gazing on the glowing embers till the season of repose; and there have I and those dear to me offered up our evening sacrifice to "the High and Lofty One that inhabiteth eternity," in the prevailing name of the Redeemer.

The fire-side is a chosen spot, a chartered space; endeared by a thousand affectionate recollections. It is so in my case; surely it is the same in yours!

But all earthly things are given to change, and the fire-side of our infancy and youth is rarely that of our manhood and old age. Still, however, it retains an attractive charm; still it has a hold, a strong hold on our affections.

What though we are no longer children; though we no more behold those who watched over us in our by-gone days; though the friends of our youth may be looked for in vain; there are other beings thronging around us, sharing our joys and our sorrows; other interests have grown up in our hearts. The fire-side is yet the home of domestic peace; and if there are in heaven those who draw our thoughts after them, there are also on earth those who call them back again to the world.

Let us make the most of our common mercies;

and if health and strength, if food and fuel, if a home and fire-side be ours, let us see how we can turn them to the best advantage. Some of the pleasantest, some of the happiest hours of my life, have been spent by the fire-side; and you, too, must have had your fire-side enjoyments.

If you have sat there with the partner of your joys and sorrows, while your knees have been besieged by a little band of rosy-faced prattlers, whose animated eyes have made your own sparkle, and whose very tormentings have given you pleasure; if you have ever known the warm rush of emotion that is sometimes felt, while looking round exultingly as a husband and a father, I need not tell you how much pleasure a fire-side has to bestow.

Let us make the most of our common mercies. We paint our houses, whitewash our walls, and weed our gardens; why not, then, improve our fire-sides? Why not make them all what they should be, by banishing from them all that is unlovely, and adorning them with all that is amiable and excellent? When a family party, a fire-side circle, are all of one mind; when their love is without dissimulation; when they abhor that which is evil, and cleave to that which is good; when they are kindly affectioned one to another, with brotherly love, in honour preferring one

another; when they look to the same Saviour unreservedly for salvation, and with one heart and voice sing his praise, they come nearer happiness than any thing on this side heaven.

What the future may be we know not; let us be grateful for the present and the past; for he that can look back to the fire-side of his infancy, his youth, and his manhood, without feeling some kindling glow of friendship and affection, must, indeed, have been unhappy.

If, in the mirthful sports of your childhood, when the fire has blazed cheerfully, your eye has been the brightest of the assembled throng; and if, in after years, you have found your fire-side a fire-side of happiness, when next you sit there, take up the Book of Life, that your joy may be full. If you are looking aright for a more enduring joy than earth can give, the brightest fire-side scene is as nothing compared with what is promised. And if the bitter bread and water of affliction and sorrow have been your sustenance, still take up the book of eternal life, and read what is in store for the sorrowful servants of the Lord:—“He that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them. They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat: for the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne shall feed them, and

shall lead them unto living fountains of waters : and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes," Rev. vii. 15—17.

Again I call upon you to improve your common mercies, and among them not to neglect the improvement of your fire-side, that it may become the dwelling-place of a grateful heart, the home of hospitality, the shrine of friendship, the sanctuary of affection, and the temple of praise.

INFIDELS.

IN moving among mankind, I have now and then met with infidels, who have not only declared their disbelief of the Bible, but endeavoured, also, to destroy the faith of others in that blessed book. The way in which they have always begun their attack, has been to higgle and wriggle about some disputed point of little importance, with as much confidence as if they were on the very point of overturning the whole truth of Scripture by their silly prattle. Just as soon would a poor blind mole tear up from the ground an oak of a hundred years' growth, by burrowing under one of the least of its roots.

If ever you fall in with any of these unhappy beings, do not be drawn in to cavil with them about trifles, but boldly declare your opinion, leaving them to wrangle, if they like, by themselves.

Tell them, that if there be anything good, and pure, and holy, and heavenly in the world, the Bible exhorts us to practise it; and if there be anything that is evil, and base, and vile in the

world, the Bible commands us to avoid it. This will be a poser.

Tell them that the Bible contains more knowledge and wisdom than all the other books that were ever printed put together; and that those who believe its promises, and obey its commandments, have peace, and hope, and joy in the cares of life, and the trying hour of death. This will be a poser too.

Tell them that the Bible has been loved and believed by the wisest and best of men, from generation to generation, as the word of the living God; and that it makes known to a sinner the only way of salvation through the merits and death of a crucified Redeemer. This will be another poser.

And then, ask them, before they pull the book to pieces any more, to produce one that has done a thousandth part as much good, in making men happy on earth, and in guiding them in the way to heaven; and this will be the greatest poser of all.

Depend upon it, this course will be better than wrangling and jangling about sticks and straws, losing your temper, and feeling yourself outwitted, into the bargain, by the borrowed conceits of silly coxcombs, whose hearts and whose heads are equally empty.

I hardly know if I have written this in a Christian temper, and manifested a proper degree of forbearance. The burden carried by the infidel is heavy enough as it is, and, by and by, it will grow heavier; let me, therefore, accost him with kindness.

Repent thee, sinner! act a wiser part,
For sin has sorely burden'd thy poor heart;
Make for the cross, and keep the gospel track;—
Haply thy load will tumble from thy back.

I know well enough that neither my poor prose nor poetry, of itself, can be useful; but if the High and Holy One, the Heavenly Archer, pleases, he can make both the one and the other polished arrows, sending them direct to the heart of the infidel. To his mercy and grace I would humbly leave the matter, with the prayer that all infidels and Jews, and Turks and heathens, may become Christians in heart, in spirit, and in truth, and be made partakers of the glorious inheritance, prepared, through Jesus Christ, for the people of God.

QUACK DOCTORS.

IF you do not know what a quack doctor is, it does not signify, nor would it, indeed, be of any evil consequence if you never should know all the days of your life. But as there is some danger that, at one time or other, you may fall into the hands of quack doctors, if you remain in ignorance of them, so I will, as well as I can, explain what a quack doctor is, that you may be aware of your danger, and guard against him.

A quack doctor, then, is one who undertakes to cure diseases in a way that no other person can, by some particular medicine known only to himself. He prints handbills, and puts puffing accounts in the newspapers, about the many and wonderful cures he has performed, and thus deceives people easy of belief, by his vain boasting persuading them that he is astonishingly learned and clever, while, at the same time, he is often miserably ignorant and unskilful.

If there be one mark plainer than another, by which you may discover a quack doctor from an

able physician or skilful surgeon, it is this, that he often undertakes to cure diseases, totally different from each other, by the same means. Now, this is so barefaced an imposture, that one would wonder that any people could be so simple as not to see through the cheat ; yet so it is, such silly people are to be found, and that in great abundance. As it is my wish that you may not act so unwise a part as these people do, I will endeavour to make it quite plain to you, how very weak and wicked it is to undertake to cure opposite complaints with the same remedy.

Suppose three boys wanted to do three things. One to warm his hands, another to fly his kite, and a third to quench his thirst, and I advised them by all means to get a good fire as soon as they could, that they might all do what they wanted to do. Now, you may see with half an eye, that though the good fire might do capitally to warm the hands of the one, it would not enable the second to fly his kite, nor the third to quench his thirst. Or suppose that, instead of a good fire, I recommend them all to use a ball of packstring ; why they would be no better off than before : for though one might certainly fly his kite with the packstring, the others could neither warm their hands with it, nor quench their thirst. Should I not, then, think you, deserve to be

censured for folly, instead of being praised for wisdom? And so ought every quack doctor in the land to be censured, when he undertakes to cure, except in particular cases, opposite diseases with the same remedy.

Let us suppose, again, that three persons are unwell; one is faint with want and weariness; a second has the rheumatism; a third is afflicted with inward inflammation: and now imagine that I am foolish enough to attempt to cure them all by giving them two or three glasses of wine. Now, the wine, in the first case, might cheer up the fainting spirits of the sinking person; but it would not be at all likely to relieve the rheumatism in the second; while in the third, it might occasion death. Would you, in such a case, honour me for my knowledge and kindness, or despise me for my ignorance and cruelty? But I need not ask: you would set me down as a man that ought to be avoided. Mind, then, that you avoid a quack doctor.

The impudence of quack doctors is unbearable. One professes to cure almost all the diseases to which the body is liable, by a few bottles of a medicine, that, in many cases, will do neither good nor harm; while another boastingly undertakes to do the same thing with a box of pills, which may be altogether injurious to take. This impudence

and folly might be laughed at, if it did not do so much mischief as it does ; but when a quack doctor persuades a poor afflicted being to depend on his useless, if not injurious stuff, instead of applying to a skilful professor of medicine or surgery, he is trifling with the life, and sacrificing the happiness of a fellow creature. And here I would just notice, that almost all the tinctures, elixirs, balms, and other wonderful quack medicines you read about, contain a large quantity of spirits.

If ever you should be afflicted with disease, at any period of your life, never go to a quack doctor : avoid him as you would plague, pestilence, and famine. Go to one whose days have been devoted to the acquirement of knowledge and skill as a doctor, let him have your money, and, with God's blessing on his assistance, you may hope for a cure. Nay, if you have no money to give, do not be down-hearted on that account, for though quack doctors are not fond of giving their advice for nothing, many wise and kind-hearted surgeons and physicians do so continually.

I hate quack doctors, or rather I hate their guilty practices ; for I hold it a fearful thing to tamper with the afflicted bodies of human beings. We are fearfully and wonderfully made ; and he who pretends to understand and to relieve diseases,

when he knows that he is ignorant of them ; yea, when he knows that he is living on the very life-blood of his fellow creatures, has a dreadful account to give of his sinful career.

But though it be, as I said before, a fearful thing to tamper and trifle with men's bodies, it is a still more fearful thing to tamper and trifle with their souls ! And there are thousands who set up as spiritual quack doctors in the world, ever ready to persuade people to take their advice, instead of that of the faithful ministers of Christ, who plainly point out the diseases of our souls, and the proper remedies for our sins.

Every one who lives in the world is liable to some particular bodily disease more than to another ; and it is the very same with the soul ; we each of us have a besetting sin. These spiritual quacks often try to make people believe that the disease of sin is not so general, or not so dangerous, as it really is. Some of these quacks are very ignorant, and others very designing ; be then upon your guard, for "they lie in wait to deceive," Eph. iv. 14. Sooner or later, they will be found out in their evil practices.

It is enough to sink us to the dust, to know that we are all affected with the leprosy of sin ; but it is enough to raise us up with joy, to be assured that there is a great Physician, who cures all

who apply to him. He has a fountain open for all uncleanness ; he heals every disease, and bids the bones that are broken to rejoice. These things he does without fee or reward, without money, and without price.

This great Physician is the Redeemer of the world, even our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. He “died for our sins, and rose again for our justification ;” and now sits on the right hand of God, “able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him,” Heb. vii. 25. I cannot tell you half the wondrous cures he performs by his Almighty power : not only “the blind receive their sight, and the lame walk, the lepers are cleansed, and the deaf hear,” but the very “dead are raised,” Matt. xi. 5 ; and those who once looked forward to eternal death, he makes partakers of everlasting life. Have nothing to do with the quack doctors of the soul, any more than with those of the body. The soul is of too great a value to be trusted in their hands. Go to the great Physician, as you have need of his assistance, for “all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” Rom. iii. 23. “If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us. If we confess our sins, he is faithful and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness,” 1 John i. 8, 9.

SUNSHINE.

A WORD with you about sunshine. When I look at the sun, and call to mind that it is a million times the size of the earth, and ninety-five millions of miles from us, it so oppresses my brain with thoughts of infinity, that I am glad to turn off to something a little better suited to my weak understanding. It is no use grappling with conceptions beyond our power. My head can no more bear to reflect on the magnitude of the sun, than mine eye can endure to gaze upon its brightest noon-day beams.

I would willingly keep within compass, and say, in reference to God's creation, as I would ever wish to say in regard to the hidden things of the Almighty, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither do I exercise myself in great matters, or in things too high for me," Psa. cxxxi. 1.

But I was about to speak of sunshine. Oh, how gloriously it arrays the heavens and the earth with brightness! The scenes are very beautiful

that present themselves to the eye in spring, when the trees put forth their green leaves, and the birds warble the joy that they do not know how to keep to themselves. And not less so in summer, when the blossoms and flowers abound, and the woods are fully clothed. What can be more attractive than autumn, with its fruit and corn, and its trees with coloured leaves! And who is there that will deny that the bare branches of winter's oaks, and elms, and thorn bushes, when sprinkled with snow, or sparkling with hoar frost, are lovely to look upon? and yet to each and to all of these, what a wondrous additional beauty does sunshine give!

Look at sunshine on the snowy cloud, or on the clear blue sky; the green meadow spotted with crocuses; the hay-field, when the country people are at work there; the waving corn, while the reapers cut it, and bind it into sheaves; the broad-breasted mountain, or the sharp-pointed crag. Or, look at it when glittering on the murmuring brook, the weathercock of the village church, or the window panes of a cottage. Oh, it is a glorious thing! But this is only the sunshine of the eye. The eye must discern it, or we cannot enjoy it.

There is another sunshine, and I hope that you are no stranger to it. It is not confined to times

and seasons, to the clearness of the atmosphere, and the state of the weather. *It is not seen, but felt.* It is known by all who humbly, and honestly, and diligently discharge their daily duties; by those who forgive their enemies; deal their bread to the hungry; bring the poor that are cast out to their houses, and clothe the naked. It is felt by the mother, as she presses her smiling babe to her bosom, and commends it to God; by the father, when his children grow up in virtue, and remember their Creator in the days of their youth; and by the Sunday school teacher, when he sees the scholars improve that are committed to his charge. He who visits the fatherless and the widow in their affliction is sure to know it; and individuals and families feel it when they dwell in unity and affection. This is the sunshine of the heart; and those that delight to do good to others, who act justly, kindly, charitably, generously, nobly, will be sure to find its influence in their bosoms. You cannot take away trouble, nor give happiness to another, without feeling this sunshine.

But there is yet another kind of sunshine, which is not dependent on the beams of the created sun, nor on the kindly affections of the human heart. A sunshine that comes direct from One far more glorious than the sun in his

noon-day brightness. It is known when it pleases God to lift up the light of his countenance upon us. At times we feel it, when reading the book of truth; the words come home to us; we see that the Lord is gracious; our souls magnify, and our spirits rejoice in God our Saviour. We feel it, too, in the hour of prayer and praise, when our heavenly Father is pleased to bear witness with our spirit, that our petition is heard, and our sacrifice of praise accepted. We know its influence when the messenger of grace to guilty men proclaims from the pulpit the glad tidings of salvation. We acknowledge its power when Christian men, in Christian institutions, make plain to us the goodness of the Lord in the conversion of the heathen world. This is the sunshine of the soul. It is felt by the penitent, when a sense of forgiveness melts his heart, and sets his tongue at liberty; by the missionary, when he hears the idolater offer up his praise to the Saviour of sinners; and by the aged servant of God, when, ripe for the harvest of eternal glory, he breathes forth his spirit in the words, "Lord, now lettest thou thy servant depart in peace, for mine eyes have seen thy salvation," Luke ii. 29.

The sunshine of the eye you have seen, the sunshine of the heart you have doubtless felt; but if you are yet a stranger to the sunshine of

the soul, seek it with all diligence. The eye will become dim, the kindest, the warmest affections of the heart will subside, their brightest sunshine will be overshadowed; but the sunshine of an immortal soul, a glorified spirit, will be eternal, according to the promise: "The sun shall be no more thy light by day; neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee: but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory," Isa. lx. 19.

SOMEBODY AND NOBODY.

MY present address is of a singular kind. A few days ago, I overheard a modest-looking young woman, seemingly a respectable servant, utter the following words, in giving an account of a lady whom she had known. "She used to take a deal of notice of me, which was very kind of her: why should she notice me at all, for I was nobody?"

Another person might not have thought this remark worthy of attention; but I, who am frequently taken with trifles, was not only struck, but also much pleased with the observation. It was the first time that I had heard the expression, and most likely it will be long before I shall hear it again. Thousands of people try to make themselves appear "somebody," but it is a very rare case to hear any human being acknowledge himself or herself to be "nobody."

It set me thinking, not only of others, but of myself; for I felt conscious that, though the young woman had thought herself "nobody," my proud

and deceitful heart had persuaded me to consider myself "somebody," all my days.

How is it with *you*? Are you "somebody" or "nobody?" Can you say in sincerity to the Searcher of hearts, "Lord, my heart is not haughty, nor mine eyes lofty: neither do I exercise myself in great matters, nor in things too high for me?" Psa. cxxxi. 1.

It is said that the trees and plants of the earth are continually striving for air and light; that they are constantly trying to get above one another. Do you not think it is the same with mankind? Do you not think that this is the case with us all? If you feel guiltless of this, so does not Old Humphrey. He can call to mind many instances wherein he has tried to pass himself off for "somebody," but he cannot remember one in which he has willingly represented himself as "nobody."

"I am as good as he is, any day;" "She shall not hold up her head above me;" and, "We are company for your betters," are expressions common enough: but I question, if we were to travel through all England, from Newcastle to the Isle of Wight, and from the South Foreland to the Land's End, whether we should hear one single human being advisedly confess that he was "nobody."

Pride is the ruin of one half of mankind. Even children, when they get together, boast of their

fathers and mothers; and old men, with hoary hairs, speak with pride of the great things they have done, and the great people they have known: so that young and old wish to be thought "somebody."

There are in God's word a great number of precious promises to the humble, and a great number of awful threatenings to the proud. I will give you one of a sort, by way of sample. "Humble yourselves in the sight of the Lord, and he shall lift you up," James iv. 10.—"Every one that is proud in heart is an abomination to the Lord; though hand join in hand, he shall not be unpunished," Prov. xvi. 5. Now, the promises are made to the "nobodies," and the threatenings to the "somebodies" of the world: have a care then, to which class you belong.

No doubt you remember reading of Haman, who was as proud a "somebody" as ever lived. He was determined to get up above his neighbours, till, at last, he got fifty cubits higher than he himself desired, being hoisted upon a gallows; but when this proud "somebody" came down to the dunghill, Mordecai, whom he had treated as a "nobody," was raised up to sit among princes. "Be not high-minded, but fear," Rom. xi. 20.

You have heard the parable of the rich man, who was so fond of fine clothes and good living: no doubt he thought himself "somebody," and

made other people think so too: but what did it all come to? You have heard, too, of Lazarus, who was a "nobody," for he asked only the crumbs which fell from the rich man's table, and yet you know what became of him. It happened to them both exactly according to the texts that I have given you: the proud "somebody" was brought low, and punished "where the worm dieth not, and the fire is not quenched;" while the humble "nobody" was lifted up, even to heaven.

Though the giant oaks and lofty cedars of the earth are laid low, yet do we lift up our heads like them, defying the storm. What a world of trouble, what a number of losses and crosses, what a succession of afflictions is necessary to convince us that we are "nobodies!" Indeed, Divine grace alone can effectually teach us true Christian humility.

David was taught this lesson, when reflecting on the vast and mighty works of creation. "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained; what is man, that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man, that thou visitest him?" Psa. viii. 3. If David was a "nobody" when he reflected on God's creation, surely you and I ought to be "nobodies" when reflecting on his grace.

MORNING WALKS.

IF you are sluggards, my address will give you but little satisfaction.

When the body is in health, and the mind at ease, a morning walk before breakfast is a very delightful thing; but if, in addition to this, the morning be a fine May morning, the scene a pleasant one, and the heart in a happy frame, then it is indescribably delightful. It is said that those who rise early only now and then, love to talk of early rising all through the day, while those who are accustomed to it, enjoy it heartily, as a thing of course, without prating about it. You must not, however, because I speak in praise of early rising, look on Old Humphrey as a lie-a-bed.

There are times when things which have been common to us, suddenly appear to greater advantage. It was thus with me the other morning, when walking abroad before the hum of the busy world had broken on my ear. The clear

bright blue sky set me thinking of heaven and angels. If the underside of heaven be so beautiful, what must the upper be! If the very floor of our heavenly Father's abode so delight the eye, how will his mansions of eternal glory fill us with delight and surprise!

The balmy breath of the morning, in the neighbourhood of a nursery-ground that I passed, was sweet indeed; and the herbs and flowers, and rows of fresh-springing peas and beans, and strawberry plants, and the fresh ruddy shoots of the hawthorn, and the bulby clusters of young leaves on the top of the sycamore, about to burst into form and beauty, all spoke of hope and cheerfulness to the heart. At last I came to a spot so truly beautiful to the eye; a spot where wood and water, heightened by the jubilee of the rejoicing birds, so affected me, that I gazed upon it, and thought that if sin, and sorrow, and death could be banished from the world, earth would then become a kind of heaven.

For a moment, I was half inclined to doubt whether aught in the heavenly world could exceed in beauty the earthly one: but this was only for a moment, for the thought occurred to me, If God has so clothed the grass of the field, so adorned with beauty the dwelling-place of sinners, how much more will he adorn the dwelling-place

of saints! If the footstool of the Eternal be thus unutterably lovely, what will be the splendour of his everlasting throne!

The heavens to which believers in Christ are journeying, will, doubtless, as much exceed the earth we inhabit, as spiritual things exceed temporal things. Here we can see, and hear, and conceive, what God has spread around us; but says John, "Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that, when he shall appear, we shall be like him; for we shall see him as he is,"
1 John iii. 2.

On my return, when the sun was higher in the heavens, I passed by a pleasant house with a stone front. The windows were open, and the clean table-cloth was seen spread, with the coffee-pot standing on the table. The tones of a piano-forte were heard, while a low, but melodious voice chanted forth the morning hymn. The garden was in full bloom; the shrubs were green as the very grass; the flowers under the verandah were beautiful; even the cat, sunning herself on the stone step, looked comfortable; and Old Humphrey stepped along with so light a foot, and so happy a heart, that he felt more like a young man than an old one.

If you are early risers, if you are walkers

abroad while the east is glowing with the beams of the golden sun, you know something about these things ; but if you are not, you are robbing yourselves of health and of happiness. If you will rise betimes, you will enjoy more of God's creation than you do ; you will improve your health, temper, and tone of mind ; the day will pass more pleasantly with you ; and, when night comes, you will, with a more fervent spirit, thank the Father of mercies for his abundant blessings, and sink into a sounder slumber.

WHOSE SERVANT WILL YOU BE?

WHOSE servant will you be? Tell me, Whose servant will you be? Do not be offended at the question, whether you are rich, or whether you are poor, for we must all be servants, give ourselves what airs we may. We must be the servants of Satan, or the servants of God.

A very important affair this. Let us look at it a little closer; let us see what are the terms of our servitude, on one side, and on the other; and, first, let us inquire into the servitude of Satan.

The servant of Satan will have fair prospects set before him; he will dance, and sing, and laugh at coming care. The pleasures of sin will be his for a season. This, you will say, is something like sunshine; but let us go on.

He who serves Satan, must wear Satan's livery, which is black, turned up with black; black within, and black without. On special occasions, he will wear a white suit, lined with black; but whether the servant of Satan dresses

in his proper livery, or appears as an angel of light, he is bound always to carry about with him a black heart, black desires, and black designs. What think ye of this?

The servant of Satan must always be the servile drudge, the cringing slave of his master. He must be a bondsman to the power of sin, the love of sin, the desire of sin, the commission of sin, and the punishment of sin. This is bad enough, and too bad.

The servant of Satan must always be in dread of the law of God, the justice of God, and the judgments of God. This is worse still. Do you not think so?

I said that the servant of Satan will be allowed some short-lived pleasures; but every rose he plucks will have a thousand thorns, every blissful cup he drinks will be dashed with wormwood. Peace will be banished from his pillow; hatred, bitterness, remorse, and fear, will be his companions. The heavens over his head will be brass, and the earth under his feet will be iron.

Behind him will be an accusing conscience; and before him death, judgment, and everlasting destruction. This is worst of all. Let us now look on the other side.

The servant of God will have tribulations and tears. He will be tried by the world, tried by the

flesh, and tried by the devil. You will say this is a bad beginning; so it appears, but let us see a little further.

The servant of God will not be left alone in his troubles; his afflictions will be sanctified; he will be strengthened in weakness, guarded in danger, guided in difficulty, and comforted in despondency. This is somewhat better.

The servant of God will find his service perfect freedom. Neither the power, the love, the desire, nor the punishment of sin, will be permitted to subdue him. Over these he will come off more than conqueror, through Christ, that loveth him, and hath given himself for him. Why this is even better than the other. Life, and death, things present, and things to come, yea, all things, shall work together for his good. The Friend of sinners will be his friend; the God of grace will be his God; he will be guided by his counsel, and after that received into glory. Why this is better than all.

But, in a word, let us sum up the wages of the servant of Satan, and the wages of the servant of God. "The wages of sin is death," (eternal death;) "but the gift of God is eternal life, through Jesus Christ our Lord," Rom. vi. 23. Need I again ask the question, Whose servant will you be?

TO ONE
COMING SUDDENLY INTO
POSSESSION OF PROPERTY.

DEAR GERARD,

IT may be that you expect a letter from me ; a line or two to tell you how glad I am to hear of your newly acquired property ; but really, really, after turning the affair over in my mind in every way, I see but very little reason for congratulation.

The injunction of the apostle is, " Having food and raiment, let us be therewith content," 1 Tim. vi. 8 : and though few of us would be satisfied with so moderate a competency, yet, after all, I question much if the temptations and dangers of suddenly acquired wealth are not much greater than its supposed advantages. So many are the cautions respecting riches in God's holy word ; so many have been ensnared by abundance, and ruined by riches, that I am quite inclined to apply the apostle's exhortation to Timothy, to

your case. "Charge them that are rich in this world, that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God, who giveth us richly all things to enjoy; that they do good, that they be rich in good works, ready to distribute, willing to communicate," 1 Tim. vi. 17, 18.

I look at the affair in this way. That which draws us nearer to God, and helps us on our way to heaven, however disagreeable it may be, must be a good thing; and that which separates us from God, and hinders our heavenly progress, however pleasant it may be, must be a bad thing. You had enough of this world's goods before, to satisfy a moderate man; and now all this coming in addition, alarms me, more than it gives me pleasure. I cannot choose but deal in cautionary remarks, rather than in congratulations.

Have a care, Gerard, for you are in jeopardy; you stand in a very exposed situation, and have to walk in slippery places. "Take heed, and beware of covetousness: for a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things which he possesseth," Luke xii. 15. That I am not treating the matter too seriously will at once be seen, by reading over that arresting text in the 16th of Matthew: "What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?"

Riches are not always gains. A rich man presents a wider target than a poor man, for the arrows of envy, malevolence, and misfortune. Did you never hear of a man being mortally bitten by a viper, on his own estate? Nor of others being gored to death by their own cattle, kicked by their own hunters, or robbed by their own servants?

Did you never hear of a rich poor man, and a poor rich man? Did no instance ever reach you of a rich man being poor in health, poor in earthly ease, and poor in heavenly expectation? Nor of a labouring man rich in health of body, rich in peace of mind, and rich in heavenly hope? Surely you must have met with instances of this kind, for they are by no means rare.

To speak the truth, I am in a great strait; for though I would not undervalue God's providence in any shape, yet I know not whether I have most to hope or to fear on your account. Much riches require much grace, because they subject us to much temptation. If it were not so, never would the Redeemer have spoken the words, "Again I say unto you, It is easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle, than for a rich man to enter into the kingdom of God," Matt. xix. 24. Have a care, Gerard! have a care!

If you are saying to yourself, "How shall I render my riches available to extend the Redeemer's kingdom, and the welfare of my fellow sinners?" or, what will be still better, if you are saying, with sincerity, to the Lord of life and glory, "Teach me how to use these thy gifts for thy glory, for the good of my own soul, and the temporal and spiritual benefit of all around me;" then I can and do congratulate you. But if you are only looking forward to a larger establishment, more sumptuous dainties, and more costly apparel, exultingly planning how you will pull down your barns and build greater, and secretly whispering within yourself, "Soul! soul! thou hast much goods laid up for many years, take thine ease, eat, drink, and be merry;" why then, all that I can do is, to mourn for the calamity that has befallen you, and to urge you, as riches have increased, not to set your heart upon them.

Will riches add to your health? give you an appetite? assist your digestion? afford you peaceful slumber? Will they cure the pains of the head, or the heart? or contribute to the peace of your mind? or add to the number of your days? Will they make you wiser or better than you were before? Will they smooth the bed of death, afford you "peace at the last," and brighten your hope of heaven? If they will do none of

these things, Gerard, they are not quite so desirable as we often take them to be.

There is a wise saying, "It is a mercy to have that taken from us which takes us from God;" and by the same rule, it must be an affliction to have that given us which produces the same effect. Riches oftentimes beget pride; they persuade a man to think more highly of himself than he ought to think; they tie him faster to a world which he very soon must leave; they lay snares in his path, and engross those affections which ought to be set on high and on holy objects. These are evils which the Father of mercies alone can prevent or remove.

Remember, Gerard, it was the death of a relation that brought you into the possession of your newly acquired inheritance, and this very circumstance should put you on your guard. You see the slender tenure, the spider's thread, on which your riches hang—the breath of life! It may be for a few years, or a few hours, for a month, or a moment, that you may enjoy them. "This night thy soul may be required of thee!"

Gold may glitter, and silver may shine brightly in our eyes, but true riches are the fear of the Lord, and "in the house of the righteous is much treasure," Prov. xv. 6. A bag of gold may look

well in a man's coffer, but how would it look in his coffin? A rich man ought to think much of a sick-bed, a shroud, a grave, and a tombstone.

You have been taught to set and to keep your face Zionward; now, there is no royal road to the mansions of the blessed. If the rich man enters heaven, he must go through the same gate as the poor man. Riches may buy many things, but they cannot buy a seat above the starry pavement of the skies. The way of salvation is free to all, and alike to all. Jesus Christ is "the way, the truth, and the life." He only can forgive sins; he only can save a sinner. It is a hard thing for a rich man to take up his cross; yet this he must do, if he will be saved.

You are a pilgrim, Gerard, and, take my word for it, that gold is one of the heaviest things a pilgrim can carry. You have henceforth to travel a boggy road, full of quagmires, with a weightier load than ordinary on your back; besides which, you have weightier duties to perform, and a weightier responsibility to sustain. This is, I know, the shadowy side of riches: but the bright side, most likely, will be dwelt upon by other of your friends. For myself, I desire to be guided in all things, but I feel persuaded that great riches would to me be anything rather than a blessing. With Agur of old, I would put

up my prayer, "Remove far from me vanity and lies : give me neither poverty nor riches ; feed me with food convenient for me : lest I be full, and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord ? or lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain," Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

In one word, Gerard, riches will be a bane or a blessing to you, according as you use them ; but you have need to be more watchful and prayerful than ever.

Art thou a pilgrim ? dost thou travel straight
 Ey Calvary's cross, to find the narrow gate ?
 Is Christ thy hope, thy trust ? yea, day by day,
 Thy guide, thy staff, thy lantern, and thy way ?
 Canst thou for him renounce thy worldly pride ?
 Is he thy riches ? is all dross beside ?
 Is he thy sword and shield in peril's hour,
 Thy rock, thy refuge, thine abiding tower ?
 If, with thy wealth around thee, thou canst bend,
 And seek with all thy soul the sinner's Friend,
 A beggar still at mercy's opened door,
 Then art thou rich indeed—if not, then art thou poor.

That your spiritual riches may increase, is the desire and prayer of

Your friend,

HUMPHREY.

SHOES.

AND is winter really come again? sharp, frosty, bleak-blowing winter? Yes, indeed, it is true. I once urged those who abounded in earthly comforts, to give a blanket to the destitute and shivering beings who knew not the luxury of a warm and comfortable bed. And now again, while the raw, keen air, the descending snow, the sudden thaw, the wet, slippery, sloppy pathway, await the sons and daughters of poverty and affliction, I will again raise my voice on behalf of the needy and destitute.

Perhaps, reader, it may be your custom at winter time,

“To do some gentle deed of charity.”

You may have given a blanket to some one who wanted it, thereby expending a few shillings in the luxury of doing good; have you slept the less warm for it, or been made poorer by the deed? You know that you have not; and, mos

likely, since then, you have expended ten times the amount in indulgences which yield not half the gratification that a deed of benevolence produces.

Think not that your gift already bestowed, should withhold your hand from bestowing another. Oh, no! God, in his mercy, has not kept back his bounty from you; neither should you withhold your hand from doing good. Strengthen then the weak, bind up the bruised, encourage the broken-hearted, relieve the poor, and give a pair of shoes to some poverty-stricken being, who cannot afford to buy them. You may think me a bold beggar, but I am not begging for myself, and it is very cold.

If, accustomed to be well shod during the winter, you have a good stock of shoes and boots to defend your feet from the searching influence of the dissolving snow, you can hardly imagine what is endured by those who have wet feet from morning to night. Many a hapless fellow creature, brought up with care, and once watched over with tenderness, is reduced so low, that the possession of a good pair of shoes would be considered a luxury, a positive blessing. Think of your own comforts, and of others' privations, and shut not up your heart to the wants of the destitute, but give a pair of shoes, or something

towards enabling some poor creature, who stands in need of them, to obtain such a comfort.

Read the words of Scripture: "Whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels of compassion from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him?" 1 John iii. 17; and then say, can any one go guiltlessly through the world, treading on comfortable carpets within doors, and well defended from inclemency without, while he sees, and attempts not to relieve, the wretchedness of those who suffer from the want of shoes?

How many hours of discomfort, how many days of affliction, yea, how many years of disease and pain have been brought on by persons getting wet in their feet! and will you let those who have fireless habitations, and blanketless beds, go almost shoeless through their splashy pathways, while, perhaps, lambswool stockings and strong well-made boots defend your feet from the least inconvenience? If you have humanity, you will not, and if you have Christian charity, you cannot refuse your aid; but, as you have ability and opportunity, you will "do good unto all men, especially unto them who are of the household of faith," Gal. vi. 10.

If your eye be quick to discern, and your heart prompt to feel the distresses of others, you

will not long lack opportunities to relieve them. Look around at the throngs that continually crowd the populous city or town ; regard not only their faces, but their feet ; not only their clothes, but their shoes also, and you will be surprised at the wretched shifts to which many of them are driven. It is enough to make the heart ache, to see the miserable plight in which hundreds pursue their daily calling. Here is a ragged lad dragging along through the miry street, with a pair of old shoes big enough for his father. There is a poor girl, who has contrived to tie on her feet, with pack-string, another pair, already worn out by her mother ; and yonder is a bare-legged and bare-footed being, between whose defenceless toes the mud oozes, as he paddles onward through the descending rain.

Look towards the chandler's shop at the corner. Mark that meagre and tattered mother, with a child in her arms, wending her way there for a rushlight, splashing through the snowy puddle, with an old pair of thin-soled shoes on her feet, which cost only one and ninepence when they were new. Do not talk about her imprudence and her improvidence ; who is there in this wide world that has not been imprudent and improvident ? David, perhaps, you will admit, was as faithful a servant of God as you are, and he says,

“If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand?” Psa. cxxx. 3. Does it become us, then, to be severe on our fellow sinners in such an inclement season, when we have been visited with unmerited mercy? Cast another glance at the poor wretch, as she stoops to adjust her brown paper sock, and to pull up the trodden-down heel of her saturated shoe, and say whether the heart is to be envied that does not yearn to lessen her wretchedness, and to increase her comforts? You may not know whether she has always acted with discretion, but you do know that she is walking in a miserable puddle, and that she has a wretched pair of shoes on her feet.

Neither must you say that this picture is overdrawn; on the contrary, it is sketched from the life; it is unmingled, unembellished truth, which you have only to look for to behold.

These are sights which every one may see, and trials that every one, possessing the ability, ought to endeavour to relieve; but we are too apt, in such cases, to call upon others to act, and to excuse ourselves. We can cry loud enough,

“Take physic, Pomp,
Expose thyself to feel what wretches feel,”

with affected virtuous indignation against hard-

heartedness, and yet be content to remain inactive, like the Pharisees of times gone by, who bound heavy burdens on men's shoulders, while they themselves moved them not with one of their fingers.

If, selfishly regardless of others' wants, we are liberally providing for our own comforts; if, casting aside shoes but half worn out, which so many people would thankfully receive, we are ordering new ones to gratify our pride, we deserve, indeed, to be visited with calamity. Wonderfully quick-sighted is a lame man in observing all who walk on crutches; benevolently susceptible are we, after a fit of the toothache, to the pains of all visited with a like calamity; and were we compelled, for a single day, to wade through the miry streets without shoes, or with such only on our feet as freely let in the water, such an appeal as the present would be useless, for gladly should we contribute to the removal of trials which now, perhaps, we pass without pity.

To a poor person, a strong, well-made pair of shoes is, at all times, a valuable present, but doubly so in the inclement season of winter. Be persuaded, then, to assist some one, who has a claim on your kindness, in attaining so desirable a benefit. Give not to those who frequent the pawnbroker's and gin-shop, for though you may

deplore their misery, you cannot relieve it. Your bounty would only afford them a short-lived and guilty respite from their increasing cares. Give to those who are struggling hard to procure comforts, which, when attained, will be highly valued, and carefully preserved; and when the snows are abroad, and the rains descend, when the wintry winds whistle around your cheerful habitation, you will not regret having contributed to the relief of the destitute. All the kindly feelings you may indulge in towards the poor, are not equal to the gift of a single pair of shoes: but while I mention this gift in particular, I would exhort you to all deeds of kindness. "Blessed is he that considereth the poor: the Lord will deliver him in time of trouble," Psa. xli. 1.

THE DAY'S SORROW.

WHEN a physician is called in, the first duty he has to perform is to make himself thoroughly acquainted with the malady of the invalid ; he is thus enabled to direct his skill and judgment to a particular point ; but if he were required to write his prescription without seeing his patient, or without a definite knowledge of his malady, the probability of his effecting a cure would be much decreased.

Now, a writer, when he addresses his readers generally, is just in this latter case. Like the physician, he may have a general knowledge of human nature, and be acquainted with the most common infirmities of his fellow creatures ; but unless his remarks are definitely directed to amend some particular evil, or effect some particular good, his success will, at best, be but partial. He may mean well, but, like an archer shooting with a bow at a venture, he knows not where, nor with what effect, the point of his observations will fall.

My present address is a general one, and of necessity attended with the disadvantage already glanced at; yet am I not without hope that it will pour oil and balm into some wounded bosom. Though the subject be that of sorrow, it may bid some desponding heart be glad, and gild with a smile some face now beclouded with care. It may be that some will not understand the meaning of "the day's sorrow;" and Old Humphrey would be well satisfied with the dispensations of Providence, were he to be unintelligible to all his readers; but this he cannot expect. No! no! there are many who will understand, and feel too, the meaning of "the day's sorrow."

The language of Scripture is, "Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof," Matt. vi. 34; and when the heart knows its own bitterness, that bitterness is none the less on account of its being unknown to the rest of the world.

If you are among those who rise in the morning strangers to the toothache, the headache, and the heartache, you will act wisely to offer up your hearty acknowledgments to the Father of mercies for his goodness: but you will act very foolishly if you do not also fervently pray that you may be prepared for a different state of things.

"In the world ye shall have tribulation," John

xvi. 33, are the words of One who spoke as never man spake, and you will do well to bear them in continual remembrance.

It often occurs, that Old Humphrey's first ejaculatory prayer, on opening his eyes after a night's slumber, is, "Prepare and strengthen me for this day's sorrow!" Perhaps it ought not to be so; perhaps we ought always to be more ready to thank God for mercies received, than to supplicate for more; but the truth is the truth, and we are continually leaving undone what we ought to do, and doing what we ought not to do.

It may be thought that Old Humphrey too often introduces himself and his views when speaking to others: perhaps he does: but if this be an error, he, at least, commits it with an upright intention; he believes that he can best appeal to others' hearts by a faithful examination of his own: for "as in water face answereth to face, so the heart of man to man," Prov. xxvii. 19.

Do you know what it is, when you awake, to feel the heart burdened? to know that there is a something to contend with, even before you are sufficiently yourself to be aware of what it is? I dare say you do, for few people are altogether ignorant of it.

And do you know what it is, after a few moments' pause, for the full knowledge of the

trouble to come over you, like the shadow of a cloud on a sunshiny day? No doubt you do; and if so, there is but little danger of my being misunderstood, when I speak of "the day's sorrow."

There are some subjects that more immediately concern God's people, and some that relate more particularly to the people of the world. The day's sorrow, however, will apply equally to the friends and the enemies of the Redeemer; for "whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth," and "there is no peace unto the wicked."

Shall I beat about the bush, and talk of trouble and sorrow in general? or shall I come to the point at once, and ask you what is your day's sorrow?

This latter course seems the best, and also the best adapted to my disposition. Come, then, let me inquire what is the sorrow of the day?

Have you had a loss, or do you fear that you shall have one? Losses are trying things. Have you met with an unexpected disappointment in money matters? Trials of this kind sometimes sadly perplex and distress us. Is there a bill to pay that you are not provided for, and must you put yourself under an obligation that makes your spirit groan again? No wonder that you are ill at ease. These landlords, and tax-gatherers, and

tailors, and butchers, and bakers, seem, somehow or other, to know just the times when people cannot pay them, and then they call. How important, then, the literal injunction of Holy Writ, "Owe no man any thing, but to love one another!" Rom. xiii. 8.

Now, if your "day's sorrow" proceeds from all or from any of these sources, you have quite enough to becloud your spirit; but if you are one of God's people, take courage: for though perplexed, you shall not be in despair; though cast down, you shall not be destroyed. You may be weary and heavy laden, but comfort is at hand. "Come unto me, all ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest," Matt. xi. 28, is the promise of Him who is no promise-breaker. Be industrious, be prudent, be strictly honest, and be patient, keeping your mind at ease, for the time being, by casting your burdens on Him who has promised to sustain them, and all will yet be well.

But perhaps you have some sickness, some bodily pain, some infirmity come upon you, the consequences of which are unknown to you, and alarm you. How many a dreary day and weary night are caused by such a day's sorrow as this! But consider, you are in the hands of a merciful and compassionate God, a faithful Creator and

Redeemer, who knows your frame, and remembers that you are but dust. He can speak the word, and his servant will be healed; or he can so sanctify the affliction as to make it the choicest of his blessings. Cheer up, fainting spirit! think not thyself undone: even now thy Father comforteth thee: "I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee," Heb. xiii. 5: thy chastisements may be a means of bringing forth the "peaceable fruits of righteousness."

It may be that you are sorrowing for sin, or mourning for the loss of the light of God's countenance; hanging down your head as the bulrush, and watering your couch with your tears. If this be your day's sorrow, you need nothing in addition to it. To live in fear of temporal trouble is to wear a sad millstone round the neck, but the apprehension of God's wrath is almost more than humanity can endure.

But perhaps you mistake your case. If you are sorrowing for the punishment of sin only, it will be a mercy if that be followed by sorrow for sin itself, and then there will be comfort enough for you in God's word. A godly sorrow for sin is unspeakably better than an ungodly rejoicing in sin; therefore, if you are enduring that "day's sorrow," once more I say, Cheer up! So sure as you approach the cross of Christ, like Bunyan's

pilgrim, so sure will the load fall from your back, and the burden from your heart. Whether your day's sorrow has to do with your mind, your body, or your possessions, I would, if I could, turn your mourning into joy; but seeing that I cannot do this, I must commit you to Him who can.

Oftentimes have I been sadly puzzled, while pondering on the sins and sorrows of the world; and much wiser heads than mine have been puzzled too at the same employment. It is said that a great man of olden time cut asunder, with his sword, a knot that no one could untie. Now, a text of Scripture has often done the same thing for Old Humphrey: it has done away with many a difficulty; why should it not do the same thing for you?

Whatever may be "the day's sorrow," look for a moment on the book of eternal truth; for if you are a godly seeker after salvation, a lowly follower of the Redeemer, you must receive consolation from the heart-reviving text, "Our light affliction, which is but for a moment, worketh for us a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory," 2 Cor. iv. 17.

WHO CAN BEAR TO BE TOLD OF HIS FAULTS?

WHAT a world of vanity and infirmity do we live in! How much of chastisement do we need; how little can we patiently endure! Does your experience respond to these ejaculations?

Were the question to be proposed to youth, maturity, or old age, "Who can bear to be told of his faults?" a thousand tongues might be ready to reply, "I can;" but though the thousands were to be multiplied by ten thousand, it would not alter the truth of the remark, that it is a very rare thing to meet with any one who can bear to be told of his faults.

In my younger days, I proposed to a few of my acquaintances, an occasional meeting for the express object of pointing out, in a friendly way, the failings which we might, from time to time, discover in each other; when one of my friends, knowing more of human nature than myself dis-

concerted me by proposing that we should meet in a nut-shell, being very confident that, with the exception of myself, all the members I should succeed in assembling together, might easily be contained in that limited receptacle.

“Confess your faults one to another,” James v. 16, is an injunction not difficult to be complied with, when our self-love is not wounded—when we have some advantage to gain, or some punishment to avoid; but these cases do not prove that we can bear to be told of our faults.

There are some who appear patiently to endure a reproof; others who will thank you for having administered it; and a third description will even make the request, that their faults may be faithfully pointed out to them. But, speaking from an experience not very limited, I venture the observation, that in all these cases there is a reservation of disquietude, if not of actual displeasure, and that the remark is strictly true, in a general sense, that we cannot bear to be told of our faults.

As an exemplification of this fact, I will instance some results of my own observations. Being fond of paintings, drawings, albums, and poesy; having a sort of vagrant taste for the fine arts, I make it a custom, when mingling with my young friends in their leisure hours, to inspect their recent

productions. Dearly do I love to see a performance well executed ; and a corresponding dissatisfaction awaits me when a careless piece of work is submitted to me. I cannot look on a well-drawn figure, or read a spirited composition, without speaking in its praise ; nor regard a daub of a rose, with green leaves growing from every part of the flower, as well as the stem, thick as blackberries ; or a bird of paradise, standing on the tips of its talons on the petals of a passion flower, without mildly suggesting, that, in some respects, they might have been more correctly represented. Now, this latter infirmity, if such it may be called, has ruined me with many of my young friends, who would more willingly submit a performance to the whole of their acquaintance than to me. When I have endeavoured to make my suggestion of an amendment as light to them as a feathery flake of descending snow, it has appeared to fall as neavily as a lump of pig iron on my displeased auditors, who, though they give me credit for some judgment, more than suspect me of envy and ill-nature. It is in vain that I make it a rule to convince them that my remarks are correct, for this only increases their displeasure, which, in spite of all attempts to disguise it, is oftentimes so apparent, that I have almost determined to allow houses declining forty-five degrees

from the perpendicular, figures with the eyes fixed in the top of their foreheads, birds with one leg, and thumping red roses, growing from the slender stems of the harebell, to pass in review before me, without dropping a single hint that they are not specimens of perfection.

Some time ago, being detained at a house where a young lady was seated at her piano, I requested her to play "The Battle of Prague." She went on thumping away, with almost as much violence and monotony as a dairy-maid churning butter. A pause, at last, occurred, by which I concluded that the piece must have been performed without my having identified it as "The Battle of Prague." Unluckily, I pointed to her music-book, asking her if she had not passed over one part a little too hastily. In as short a time as any attention to decency would permit, the book was closed, the instrument shut up, and the music-stool abandoned by the young lady; while, in the same space of time, my mind was made up never again to rebuke her—no, not if she should play Handel's "Water-piece" to the words of "I'd be a butterfly," or his grand "Hallelujah Chorus" to the time of "Tink a tink;" for she could not bear to be told of her errors.

A friend of mine, possessing some talents as a

painter, occasionally exhibits a picture or two at the Exhibition of the Royal Academy. A week ago, he showed me a representation, nearly finished, of the interior of a cottage ; and, to do him justice, it was a beautiful performance ; but, by one of those unaccountable oversights, which sometimes the cleverest men make, he had so painted a water-tub, that the top and the bottom of it were seen at the same time. This was an error which a stroke or two of his brush would have soon corrected ; and had he himself made the discovery, all had been well ; but the mischief of it was, the fault was pointed out by another. It was in vain that I praised the painting generally, as a happy union of able design and skilful execution. The unfortunate water-tub was evidently uppermost in his mind, and I left him, determined to allow him in future to put as many tops and bottoms to his water-tubs as he pleased, without annoying him with my officious observations. He could not bear to be told of his faults.

Some years ago, a friend, justly esteemed as a scholar and a Christian, who was then, and probably is now also, engaged in giving instruction in the higher branches of the mathematics and the classics, communicated to me the following singular fact :—

A gentleman applied to him to receive lessons, who evinced a more than ordinary degree of information and ability, but who, it afterwards appeared, was affected in his intellects. One day, when at his studies, this gentleman suddenly undertook to make known to his instructor a plan which he had formed, to render the British army the finest in the world. He had, he said, after much observation and study, discovered that the deficiency of grenadiers among British troops was the only defect necessary to be remedied to render England the first among warlike nations. His plan was to have the troops of the line made taller, and for this purpose he had constructed an apparatus, which would gradually raise the heads of the soldiers, by elongating their necks a little at a time.

My friend could not refrain from suggesting the danger which a separation of the vertebræ of the neck and back would inevitably occasion, when the gentleman expressed, in unmeasured language, his indignation, that it should be supposed, for a moment, that any possible contingency could take place in his plan, for which he was not fully prepared.

Even under the aberration of reason, he partook of the general impatience of mankind, when their

errors are made known. He could not bear to be told of the fault of his plan, and my friend found it necessary to manifest more caution in his future remarks.

I once borrowed, from a conscientious clergyman, the manuscript of a sermon which I had heard him deliver. It had struck me as a most impressive discourse, and the reading it over again only strengthened me in the opinion I entertained. On returning it, I drew his attention to a passage that he had quoted as a text of Holy Scripture, but which, in reality, was taken from the Apocrypha, although it was very similar in expression to one in the inspired volume. The best of men have infirmities, and this conscientious minister of the gospel had his, for he was evidently mortified by the detection of his error. It was too late to offer any explanation, or to soften the matter, for I read in his countenance very plainly that any attempt to borrow another manuscript would be in vain. He was a good man, but he could not bear to be told of his faults.

This very day I was put sadly out of temper myself, when I ought not to have been so. It happened that I had promised to bring home a humming-top for a young relation; but it rained

when I passed near the toy-shop, and it was troublesome to put down my umbrella, so I went on, and did not buy the humming-top. When I got home, the first cry was, "Have you brought me my humming-top?" and when I said "No," Harry walked rather sullenly into the kitchen, where I heard him say to Betty the housemaid, "Mr. Humphrey tells us we must not break our promises, but he does not mind breaking them himself: he has never brought home my humming-top, though he promised it so faithfully." I could have taken the young rebel, and shaken him, so angry did I feel at his thus proclaiming my error; but a few moments' reflection satisfied me that I, and not he, was to blame. Like the rest of the world, I had been impatient when I should have been patient: I could not bear to hear of my faults.

It is very likely that both you and I have many faults, of which we would not willingly be reminded. Whence does this evil arise? Does not conscience reply, It is because we possess so little of that self-knowledge and humility, which are enjoined in the sacred Scriptures? Surely he that convinces us of one fault is a better friend than he who flatters us for many excellences. "Faithful are the wounds of a friend; but the

kisses of an enemy" (or an unfaithful friend) "are deceitful," Prov. xxvii. 6.

Let us seek the humble disposition of the psalmist, who could sincerely say, "Let the righteous smite me; it shall be a kindness: and let him reprove me; it shall be an excellent oil, which shall not break my head," Psa. cxli. 5.

TO

A NEW-MARRIED COUPLE.

I HAVE a message for you, a high and holy message, coming from a high and holy source; one that concerns your peace, your comfort, and your enjoyment. An attention to it will shield you from many sorrows; a neglect of it will burden you with many calamities. Now, mind that you receive it in a friendly, kind-hearted way.

The psalmist cried out, "Behold, how good and how pleasant it is for brethren to dwell together in unity!" Psa. cxxxiii. 1. And if it be goodly and pleasant for brethren to do this, surely it must be still more so for husbands and wives. Receive, then, the message with affection, "Bear ye one another's burdens," Gal. vi. 2.

Did you ever find your hearts fill with joy, when you beheld a married couple surrounded

with comforts, animated with the same hope, journeying on together towards the same heaven, affectionately loving and highly honouring each other; and, in addition to all this, bearing each other's burdens? Oh, it is a lovely, a glorious thing, in this world of affliction, to find hearts knit together, in sorrow and in joy, sharing with equal willingness the shine and the shade!

And have you never looked with pain upon an ill-matched pair, reminding you of snarling dogs chained together, pulling different ways? Have you seen the eye inflamed with wrath, whilst the tongue was venomed with bitterness, and discomfort, clamour, and confusion reigned around?

Oh, it is a bitter and evil thing for those who are in wedded life to dwell in hatred, not in love; increasing, instead of bearing each other's burdens.

I know not how it may have been with you, but my experience has taught me, that troubles will come without being sought after; and that there are thorns and briers enough in the world without our gathering them, and planting them in each other's bosoms.

You have just entered on a new life, and God of his mercy grant that it may be a happy one! But as it was of olden time, so it is now, weeds spring up in the fairest gardens. Such is the evil of our nature, that the cockle will grow with

the wheat, and the thistle with the barley ; and so long as the human heart is not wholly sanctified with God's grace, so long will its infirmities, ever and anon, get the upper hand, setting at variance those whose heartstrings should be twined together : bear, then, with a few remarks from Old Humphrey.

Perhaps you have known each other from the days of youth, and succeeding years may have strengthened your affection. You were, perhaps, so well acquainted with each other's dispositions and qualities, that marriage has not made manifest a single infirmity that you did not know before. If so, happy are ye.

But if, on the contrary, when you entered into wedded life, you were but half acquainted with each other ; if circumstances were not favourable to that thorough knowledge which beings, eating of the same bread, and drinking of the same cup, and sharing the sweets and bitters that fall to the lot of humanity, ought to possess, why, then, make amends for this disadvantage as far as you can, by bearing each other's burdens.

It is an easy thing to love what is lovely in each other, to smile when the sun shines, and to be kind and good-tempered when your partner is kind and good-tempered too ; but this is no proof of real affection.

Can you put up with each other's infirmities, bear with each other's waywardness, and forgive each other's errors? This is proving your affection; this is, indeed, bearing one another's burdens. Old Humphrey is in the habit of putting some searching questions; questions that at times go right to his own heart, while he means them to go to the hearts of others; he feels his infirmities, and smarts under his own correction, so much, as to be half disposed to blot out the observations he has made: but he will be faithful in spite of his infirmities; he will speak plain truths, ask plain questions, and make plain remarks, whoever may be affected by them.

It is a clear case, that "two cannot walk together unless they are agreed;" but if they are agreed, they get on wonderfully well. The one may be stronger or weaker, bolder or more timid than the other, but that will not signify. The one may be a good walker, and the other a very bad one; there may be some lameness or weakness in the one, and not in the other; but still they will so accommodate themselves to each other's infirmities, that they will go forward in comfort and peace; if this be true of any people in the world, it is particularly so of married people.

The path may be stony,
The hill may be steep,
The hedge thick and thorny,
The stream strong and deep ;

but all will be overcome by helping each other along, by encouraging each other, and by bearing each other's burden.

I trust that your hope of earthly happiness does not rest on the mere attraction of each other's persons. A handsome face, and agreeable behaviour, are but a poor stock of comforts wherewith to begin housekeeping. You have something better than these ; but have a care how you begin, for a good beginning is the best preparation for a good ending. You are now at ease ; but as the fairest summer has its thunder-cloud, so surely will the smoothest life have its cares. Are you ready to meet with disappointment and anxiety ? Are you ready to bear each other's burdens ?

Your wants appear to be well supplied. In Scripture language, your heads appear anointed with oil, and your cups run over ; but it may not always be so, for gold and silver make to themselves wings, and fly away. What if want should take the place of plenty ? Will you then look kindly on each other ? Will you then bear each other's burdens ?

You are in health, but you cannot reasonably

expect to remain so long; the tooth-ache, the head-ache, the heart-ache, and a hundred other ails, are known by others, and are likely enough to be felt by you, and they may try you sorely; and if care, want, and sickness should meet together in your habitation, you will have need of all your affection, ay, and of God's grace, also, to enable you to remain kindly affectionate one to another, and to bear one another's burdens.

If you cannot travel together with affection, you will find hatred and unkindness but sorry companions. If helping each other will not do, hindering one another will do worse. If bearing one another's burdens will not enable you to trudge along with tolerable comfort, you will make but a sad business of it, by adding to each other's load. Therefore, "bear ye one another's burdens," Gal. vi. 2.

If you have made your calculation for fine weather only, go and bespeak an umbrella, for be sure you will have need of it. If you think to look at each other always with the same fond and affectionate regard that you have yet done, you may be mistaken. I tell you, in spite of your fairy dreams of unabated love, that if you go through the first year of your married life without a single heart-burning, you will deserve to have your pictures framed and glazed, and hung up in

the market-hall for universal admiration. No! no! I will tell you the truth; however you try to flatter and deceive one another, you are a pair of poor, weak, erring, sinful creatures, requiring Divine aid every moment of your lives, to keep you from inattention, from wanderings of heart, from selfishness, from bitterness, and from hatred.

If you really wish to love one another always, you must love God always: for none but God can preserve your affection, and enable you to bear each other's burdens.

And, mark me, when the time comes, as come it will, when you feel yourselves to be overtaken in a fault, when you have been angry one with another, be faithful in questioning your own hearts. Say to yourselves in private, "Am I sure the fault is not mine? Have I not been thoughtless, unreasonable, selfish, hasty, or bitter? If in the wrong, have I made acknowledgment of it, and am I anxious to avoid my error in future? And if in the right, am I desirous to manifest more forbearance to my erring partner?" These are questions which most of us are shy in putting to ourselves; but they are precious medicine, and if taken with a dependence on God's blessing, will do us great good. It will render us more humble, cautious, and forbearing; it will increase our affection, and it will do much towards

influencing us to bear each other's burdens. Why cannot we always dwell in affection, and bear each other's burdens? Why should an aggravating or an angry feeling ever rise in our bosoms? It is because we have an enemy in the camp; a deceitful heart, influencing us to believe that we are always right, and that others are always wrong; teaching us to call things by wrong names, and persuading us that aggravation is merely thoughtlessness; selfishness, nothing more than prudence; and bitterness of heart, a virtuous indignation.

In short, my opinion is this, that we are all so bad, that God alone can amend us; and that the only way to dwell in continual affection, bearing each other's burdens, is always to live dependent on God, seeking the influence of the Holy Spirit continually, taking the blessed gospel of his beloved Son, our Saviour, for our guide, and seeking fervently, at the throne of mercy, for those heavenly supplies that our earthly infirmities require.

Had my object been to please you, I might have spoken more pleasantly; but I wish to do you good, even though it be against your will. Let not your affection, then, be a flower that opens and shuts in a day, but a tree whose deep-struck roots will bear the rocking of the wintry

storm. You do not half love one another, if you wish not to love one another through eternity; and if you wish to love each other through eternity, you will desire through time to dwell in affection, and to bear each other's burdens.

MY MOTHER.

WHETHER you have, or have not a mother, my present address will not be unsuitable.

With whatever respect and admiration a child may regard a father, whose example has called forth his energies, and animated him in his various pursuits, he turns with greater affection, and intenser love, to a kind-hearted mother. The same emotion follows him through life; and when the changing vicissitudes of after years have removed his parents from him, seldom does the remembrance of his mother occur to his mind, unaccompanied by the most affectionate recollections.

Show me a man, though his brow be furrowed, and his hair grey, who has forgotten his mother, and I shall suspect that something is going on wrong within him; either his memory is impaired, or a hard heart is beating in his bosom. "My Mother," is an expression of music and melody, that takes us back again to the days of our childhood, and places us once more in the soft lap of

a tender parent, where we used to kneel, and to lift up our little hands in morning and evening prayer.

For my own part, I never think of my mother, without recalling at the same time unnumbered kindnesses, exercised not towards me only, but to all around her. From my earliest years, I can remember that the moment she saw a beggar, her hand fumbled in her pocket. No shoeless and stockingless Irishwoman, with her cluster of dirty children, could pass unnoticed by her; and no weary and wayworn traveller could rest on the milestone opposite our habitation, without being beckoned across to satisfy his hunger and his thirst. No doubt she assisted many who were unworthy, for she relieved all within her influence.

“Careless their merits or their faults to scan,
Her pity gave ere charity began.”

Had her kindness, like that of many, been confined to good counsel, or the mere act of giving what she had to bestow, it would not have been that charity which “beareth all things, believeth all things, hopeth all things, endureth all things,” 1 Cor. xiii. 7. Her benevolence was uniform and unceasing; it was a part of her character. In benefiting another, difficulty only increased

her desire and determination to be useful. She was one who "searched out" the cause that she knew not: her pen addressed the peer, and her feet trod the threshold of the pauper, with equal alacrity in the cause of charity. To be occupied in relieving the poor, and pleading the cause of the friendless, was medicine to her body and mind.

No child could cry, no accident take place, no sickness occur, without my mother hastening off to render assistance. She had her piques and her prejudices; she never pretended to love those whom she did not like; and she remembered, perhaps too keenly, an act of unkindness; but kindness was the reigning emotion of her heart.

Reader, if you think that I have said enough, bear with me; remember, I am speaking of my mother.

Among the many sons and daughters of affliction, whose hearts were made glad by her benevolence, was a poor widow of the name of Winn, who resided in an almshouse. My mother had known her in her childhood. Often have I gazed on the aged woman, as she shaped her tottering steps, leaning on a stick, towards our dwelling. A small allowance, a kind welcome, and a good dinner, once a week, were hers to the close of her life. She had a grateful heart, and the

blessing of her who was "ready to perish," literally rested on my mother.

I could weary you with instances of my mother's kindness of heart: one more, and I have done.

With her trowel in her hand, my mother was busily engaged, one day, among the shrubs and flowers of her little garden, and listening with pleasure to the sounds of a band of music, which poured around a cheerful air from a neighbouring barrack-yard, where a troop or two of soldiers were quartered; when a neighbour stepped into the garden to tell her, that a soldier was then being flogged, and that the band only played to drown the cries of the suffering offender. Not a word was spoken by my agitated parent; down dropped her trowel on the ground, and away she ran into the house, bursting into tears, and shutting herself up. The garden was forgotten, the pleasure had vanished, and music had turned into mourning in the bosom of my mother.

Reader! have you a mother? If you have, call to mind her forbearance, her kindness, her love. Try also to return them by acts of affection, that when the future years shall arrive, when the green sod shall be springing over the resting-place of a kind-hearted parent, you may feel no accusing pang when you hear the endearing expression, My Mother!

THE MISSIONARY CAUSE.

As I hold the highest title on earth to be that of a servant of God, and the most important employment that of making known to sinners the salvation that God has wrought for them through his Son Jesus Christ, so I cannot but estimate very highly the character of an humble-minded, zealous, conscientious missionary. Men undertake, endure, and achieve much, when riches, and honours, and reputation are to be attained; but where is the worldly reputation of him who goes with his life in his hand, to make known to barbarous lands the glad tidings of salvation? Where are the honours and the money-bags of the missionary? In many cases, toil and anxiety, hunger and thirst, reviling and violence, danger and death await him; but where is his earthly reward? I want you to ply yourselves with these questions, and then I will ask you if you have ever done any thing for the missionary cause?

We will not quarrel about which of the mis-

sionary institutions is most entitled to support. Let your own conscience decide that question for you. Support them all if God has blessed you with the ability; but, at least, neglect not to do something for one of them, lest you should be held guilty of overlooking the ignorance and darkness of those who live without God in the world, knowing nothing of the grace of the Redeemer.

Are you rich? If so, have a care; for where much is given, much will be required. Riches have not only their power, but their responsibility also. You have read how hard it is for a rich man to enter the kingdom of heaven. You have heard the injunction, "Make to yourselves friends of the mammon of unrighteousness; that, when ye fail, they may receive you into everlasting habitations," Luke xvi. 9. Come, come! let Old Humphrey do you a kindness, by persuading you to be liberal to the missionary cause. Never is a man more successfully employed in promoting the welfare of his own soul, than when engaged in doing good to the souls of others.

Are you poor? Never mind that; you must be poor indeed if you have not a prayer in your heart for the heathen; and if you have a prayer for them in your heart, you will soon have a penny for them in your hand. I have just been

reading of an old woman who was so very poor, that she could not spare even a penny to assist the missionaries, though her heart was in the cause; but mind ye, "where there is a will, there is a way." She was a spinner of yarn, and, knowing no better plan, she determined to spin an extra hank of yarn every week, and thus contribute her penny to the good cause. Come, come! let us imitate the old woman in her labour of love; let us spin another hank of yarn, and give another penny to the missionary cause.

There are hundreds who, when invited to make themselves useful, when required to put their shoulder to the wheel, their hand to the plough, or their fingers into their purses, begin "with one consent to make excuse." They really have so many things to attend to, and already give so much away, that it is not in their power to do or bestow more for the glory of God, and the welfare of their fellow men. Now, if it be really the case with you, that you go to the extent of your means, Old Humphrey has not another word to say about the matter; but if you talk thus merely to excuse yourselves, if you cavil at the cause you are urged to support, merely to prevent the parting with a small portion of your abundance, look to yourselves, for you stand in slippery places.

Bear in mind that the missionary work will go

on whether you assist or forbear. Impediments there are, but they will be overcome, for the heathen will be a portion of the inheritance of the Redeemer, and "the uttermost parts of the earth his possession." As one has well asked, "Will the stream of the water of life, pouring forth its healing influences in the east and the west, the north and the south, stop, because of a few jutting crags? Will the triumphant chariot of the gospel stand still, because a few pebbles are in its way?" No! the missionary cause cannot be arrested; you cannot weaken by your backwardness, though you may strengthen it by your aid.

Over and over again have I observed, that those who are the first to tell the aged beggar to go to his parish, are the last to pay the parish rates; and that those who are forward to condemn the missionary cause abroad, saying, "Charity begins at home," are the most backward to assist in spreading the gospel, or in opening their purses for the benefit of the poor of their own neighbourhood. Depend upon it, you will never have your sick bed nor your dying hour embittered by the thought, that you have done your part to send the missionary, and the Bible, to the heathen world; but may not the consciousness of having neglected to do so create a parting pang?

Many have I known who have done too much

for their own selfish gratifications ; but never have I met with one who had done too much for God's glory. Show me a man that loves his Bible, and I will show you one that would delight to spread Bibles all over the world. Show me a man whose soul magnifies the Lord, and whose spirit rejoices in God his Saviour, and I will show you one whose heart will leap within him to lend a helping hand to the missionary, that he may go forth, and proclaim glad tidings of great joy to all the people on the face of the earth. If, then, you have any pity for the sinner, and love for the Saviour, promote the missionary cause.

It is a noble sight when a merchantman is under weigh, her sails filled with the breeze, and her colours flying in the winds of heaven. She goes not forth to carry the thunder and lightning of desolating war, but to bear abroad the blessings of peace. Her cargo is to benefit the bodies and souls of men : for our merchandize and our missionaries may go together. Here may be seen on board the same ship, a wrapper of flannel and a bundle of religious tracts : there a bale of cloth, and yonder a box full of Bibles !

Old Humphrey cannot help urging you to join hand and heart in the missionary cause. Shall the negro lift up his emancipated hands in prayer, and the Hottentot and the Caffre unite in praise ;

—shall the Hindoo and the Cingalese forsake their idolatry, and the inhabitants of the southern sea rejoice in the hope of eternal life, and you have no share in the effort to lead them to the Saviour? Will you not aid them, and multitudes who are perishing, by your benevolence, and tell them that you are men and brethren, by your exertions in their favour? Yes, yes! you may never be moved by the feeble voice of Old Humphrey; but you will not, you must not, you cannot resist the appeal of millions of fellow beings from across the heaving ocean, who are destitute of the means of grace, and the hope of glory.

NO QUACKERY.

COME, listen to me, my poorer neighbours, for I am neither going to rail against you for any thing wrong that you have done, nor to wheedle and cajole you for my own advantage. The end I have in view is your good ; listen, then, to reason. When a quack doctor sells his prescription, however much he may puff it, and praise it, he may think more of getting your money, than of doing you good ; but how a doctor can get anything, who makes no charge for his advice, and prescribes physic that may be had for nothing, it will be no easy thing to make out.

It may be that you have good health, and have no need, according to your own opinion, of my advice ; but good health is worth keeping, and the medicine I recommend, is as useful in preserving as in restoring health. Try a dose or two, and if

you do not find yourself the better for it, tell me that I am an ignorant impostor.

Perhaps you may ask me what cures my medicine has wrought; and if you do, I have an answer ready. It has given to thousands, whose bodies were weakly, and whose faces were almost as pale as a white-washed wall—it has given them, I say, strength, a firm step, and a ruddy cheek: if this does not satisfy you, I know not what will.

If you like either to remain as you are, or unnecessarily to spend your money in being made better, the fault will be your own: you may be made better if you are ill, and kept in health if well, without the expense of a single farthing.

I am not speaking to those who have broken limbs, fever, and other heavy afflictions, but to such as are capable of moving from one place to another, and to them I say, *Take fresh air.*

You may smile, if you will, at my prescription, but fresh air is one of the most precious gifts of the Almighty, the merciful Giver of unnumbered blessings; it costs nothing, and it is by far the best medicine in the world.

Listen to me, neighbours, and I will tell you what will do you no harm to hear. In a little garret, in a small house, in a narrow street, worked a tailor. His shop-board and his bed

almost filled the room, and yet there were four or five flower-pots close to the window, a canary in a cage hanging from the ceiling, and a rabbit in a pen against the wall.

The tailor rose early, and took late rest, eating the bread of carefulness, but could hardly make both ends meet; for he was sickly, weakly, and qualmy, as well he might be, and could not get on at his work; he seemed to have no spirit. When I called upon him, I did not wonder at his being sickly, and weakly, and qualmy: I should have wondered very much had it been otherwise, for what with the room being so small, and what with the bed, the shop-board, the flower-pots, the bird-cage, the rabbit-pen, and the clothes and remnants, and shreds and patches, it seemed wonderful to me how he was able to work at all; for he seldom left his garret, rarely opened his window, and breathed the same tainted air day and night.

To make short of a long story, I undertook to cure him, or rather, I undertook to give him advice, for none but the Creator and Preserver of men can establish our health, or add to the number of our days.

Sickly, and pale, and panting for breath, as the tailor was, I made him change his lodging to an airy situation. No flower-pot, bird-cage, or rab-

bit-pen, did I allow in his chamber ; his window was almost always kept open, and an hour every day he breathed the fresh air of heaven in walking abroad. He is now as hearty a man as ever used a needle ; enjoys more health, works fewer hours, and gets more money, than ever he did before in his life ; and, what is better than all, finds time to read his Bible, thanking God heartily for his manifold mercies, and among them for the benefit and blessing of fresh air.

Neighbours, be advised ; open your doors and your windows, get out of your houses, walk about, and take fresh air.

A hard-working cobbler, who was heard thumping away at his lapstone before his neighbours were up in the morning, and seen stitching away with his awl and wax-ends after they were gone to bed at night, found himself just in the same plight as the poor tailor, low and languishing, just dragging along as though he had no heart and soul in him. His room was small enough of all conscience, if he had had it all to himself ; but this was not the case : for, besides the space taken up by his working bench and bed, he had with him a wife and four children, a black terrier, and a jackdaw in a wicker cage.

Neighbours, I cannot tell you one half of the wretchedness of that wretched room, when I

stepped into it : scraps of leather, old rags, bones, and filth, were seen in all directions ; the dog barked, the jackdaw chattered, the children cried, the wife scolded, and the poor, patient, half-worn-out cobbler could hardly pull his wax-end through the holes his awl had made. To finish the picture, a gin bottle stood in the corner, a dozen pawn tickets were wrapped up in a piece of dirty flannel, in the little cupboard, the window was close shut, and the stench of the room was intolerable. Neighbours, you may think this was a hopeless case, but I thought otherwise, and went to work at once.

No peace did I let the old cobbler have till I had fairly ransacked and routed every thing out of his miserable dwelling, where for many a weary day and night he had gasped for breath, parboiled and smoke-dried by turns, till his flesh looked just the colour of dirty dough. I took him to the tailor, who told him a story that made him lift up his eyes with surprise. The cobbler's bed was removed into an airy garret, his working-room thoroughly swept and whitewashed, the window set open, the black terrier and the jackdaw sent away, the children put to a day-school, the wife employed up stairs, the gin bottle used to contain vinegar, and the pawn tickets exchanged for the articles written upon them.

Nor was this all; for the cobbler was not allowed to sit down to his bench for a single moment, till he had walked to the finger-post on the common, a distance of a mile and a half across the fields.

Neighbours, the cobbler is another man: he drinks no gin, he pawns no clothes, he keeps no terrier dog nor jackdaw, but breathes freely, works blithely, while he sings a hymn or a psalm, pays his rent like a man, reads his Bible every day of his life, and looks as fresh as a daisy.

Now, what has done all this for him? Nothing in the world but fresh air. This, with God's blessing, has been the making of him; and why should it not be the making of you? Rout out your cupboards and closets, sweep out your floors, whitewash your walls, and open your windows; but, above all, get into the fields, and breathe the fresh air.

Are you so fond of weakly frames and pale faces? Do you like to see pill-boxes and phials and gallipots? Is it pleasant to swallow salts, and rhubarb, and ipecacuanha, and to pay doctor's bills? If it is, heed not what I say; but if it is not, take my advice; take my prescription—take fresh air.

Neighbours, I am no quack, but a plain-dealing man, gratefully enjoying the blessing of health,

and anxious that all of you may enjoy it too. Fresh air will not only improve the health, but the temper also; so that a man will laugh at the little troubles that before made him fume and fret like a madman. The good that is done, and the evil that is prevented by fresh air, are beyond calculation.

Doctors usually recommend fresh air, even when all their skill and all their medicines have failed, and this is a proof how highly they think of it.

Let this open your eyes, neighbours; doctors know what they are about, and you ought to know what you are about too. If you prefer to call in a doctor, and to pay him for advising you to take fresh air, I can have no possible objection, neither will the doctor blame you for this course; but whether it will be wise in you to buy that which I give you for nothing, is a point worth a moment's consideration.

Take my word for it, or rather do not take my word for it, but prove it, fresh air is the best medicine in the world. If I were called upon to write a prescription to cure three-fourths of this world's ails, it should be this—*Plain food, temperance in eating and drinking, exercise, fresh air, a clean skin, a contented mind, and a clear conscience.*

There, neighbours! there is advice without quackery; take it, make the best of it, and may the blessing of good health be enjoyed by you all, and the Great Author of your mercies be ever loved, and ever praised!

MOUNTEBANKS.

IF you happen to have a few spare minutes at your disposal, listen to the remarks of an old man.

It was in the days of my youth, that I went, for the first time, to see a mountebank.

Let me see: it must be many a long year since then. I was at school, and have reason to remember it, being sent to bed supperless for venturing out of bounds; the only time in my life that I ever ate a raw potato.

Well, I saw the mountebank's stage, and his bottles of physic, and his full boxes, and heard him say that he could feed a man fat, or peel the flesh off his bones, which he pleased, in half an hour.

Thinks I, he had better begin with himself, for he has more flesh upon him than any three of us. Such a ton of a man, in a fiery red waistcoat, I never had seen before; he was fit to be put into a show.

All of a sudden he stripped off his coat, and pulled off his red waistcoat too, but he looked almost as fine as before, for he had a yellow waistcoat under it. Off came the yellow one, and then he had a blue one, and a green one, and an orange one, and a purple one, till I almost thought that he was made of waistcoats.

He went on in this way for a quarter of an hour, pulling off waistcoats enough for twenty or thirty people, till he began to look, as we say, as thin as a herring. The folks laughed very heartily, but I hardly knew what to make of it. Well, thinks I, he has come to the last now, surely; but no, he still went on, till he seemed more like a skeleton than a fat man. Nothing was left of the fat fellow we had seen save a shrivelled, pale-faced, weasel-bodied, thread-paper of a man, with a heap of gaudy rags lying beside him.

I did not know then, though I have since found it out, that men play the mountebank, not on a stage alone, but in all situations of life, and most likely you have seen the same thing. What a mercy it is, when we are enabled to set aside our follies and our foolishnesses, and juggling of all kinds, and are content, as simple-minded men, to be guided by God's word, rather than by our own wayward will!

Perhaps you may know a proud man, thinking

more highly of himself than he ought to think ; puffed up beyond his natural size with notions of his own importance. Why, what a mountebank he must be ! He may strut about for a little while, and set people gaping, but, by and by, he will be stripped of his gaudy waistcoating. He will fall into trouble, and be but the shadow of what he is now.

You may, haply, know a strong man too, exulting in his own strength, as though God had had nothing to do with forming him from the dust. For a season he may be as a giant among his fellows ; but when God puts forth his hand, and touches him, like Samson, he will lose his strength, and become as another man. He has played the mountebank, and must be stripped in his turn.

The rich man often eats and drinks so freely and clothes himself so profusely, that he cuts an imposing figure ; he becomes high and mighty, taking up more room than his neighbours ; but by and by, his riches will make to themselves wings and fly away, or he will fly away from them. He has acted the mountebank long enough, and must shrink to his natural dimensions.

The mountebank on the stage only puffed himself up for the passing hour, to set folks laughing ;

but the characters I have described puff themselves up for their whole lives. Death is a remorseless stripper; he will not leave a waistcoat upon any of them.

But there is a mountebank worse than these. The hypocrite, whose hope shall perish, and be cut off like a spider's web. The self-righteous Pharisee, who decorates himself with the rags of his own affected holiness, and passes with others for what he is not. He covers the leanness of his soul with pretended devotion and heartless observances, to impose upon his fellow sinners; but there is a stripping time coming for him also.

I am a man of peace, yet I say, Fight sword in hand against pride and vanity, and especially against hypocrisy. A mountebank in holy things must be a guilty and wretched mountebank indeed. Deceive not yourself by deceiving others. Remember you cannot deceive God. Say not, either temporally or spiritually, "I am rich and increased with goods, and have need of nothing," lest you should be stripped suddenly, and found to be "wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked."

VISITING.

IT may be that you are fond of visiting; and visits not made too frequently are good things, for we are all social creatures, and cannot be happy alone; but, whom do you visit? If you visit the wise you will "become wiser;" and "wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom; and with all thy getting, get understanding." If you visit the foolish you will be sure to increase in folly, for "he that walketh with wise men shall be wise: but a companion of fools shall be destroyed," Prov. xiii. 20. Perhaps you may visit the rich; but if so, have a care, for you are treading in "slippery places;" if you do not keep pace with them in expenses, they will despise you; and if you do, you will soon have reason to despise yourself. If you must visit the rich, let your visits be "few and far between;" and if a proper opportunity occur, in a respectful manner and kind-hearted spirit, "charge them that are rich in this world that they be not high-minded, nor trust in uncertain riches, but in the living God,

who giveth us richly all things to enjoy," 1 Tim. vi. 17.

Perhaps you visit the gay ; but here, again, you must be careful, for gaiety is as catching as the plague, and it may unfit you for the more sober duties of common life. If I were to ask whether you spent as much time on your knees in communion with God, as you do before the glass in preparation to meet your fellow creatures, you might not like to answer the question ; but remember, that God knows how the matter stands with you in this and all other respects.

But whether you visit the wise, the foolish, the rich, or the gay, I do hope that you "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction," James i. 27 ; that you tenderly pity and relieve them as far as you can. "It is better to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting," Eccles. vii. 2. In our visiting, we should not only bear in mind our present pleasure, but our future profit ; and especially should we act as those who will hereafter be addressed by Christ ; "Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world ; for I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat ; I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink ; I was a stranger, and ye took me in ; naked, and ye clothed me ; I was sick, and ye visited me ; I

was in prison, and ye came unto me ;” for “ inas-
much as ye have done it unto one of the least
of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me,”
Matt. xxv. 34—40.

But, having asked you whom you visit, let me
now ask, Who visits you ? for if care be required
in visiting others, the same care is requisite in
being visited by them ; therefore, again I ask,
Who visits you ?

It cannot be desirable to be visited by the
foolish ; and it is better to be visited by the wise,
than by the rich or gay ; for the former will leave
something behind them worth possessing, while
the latter, if they deprive you of nothing else,
will be sure to take away a portion of your time
and your means.

If the aged visit you, they may benefit you by
their experience ; and if the young visit you, you
may benefit them with yours. Let your visitors
be such as are likely to do you good, or such as
are likely to receive good from you.

No doubt you have unwelcome visitors, such
as your landlord on quarter-day, if you are not
ready for him ; the taxgatherer, when you are in
arrears with him ; and perhaps a neighbour, to
solicit a trifle for some one in distress ; but you
must make the best of these visitors, for your
landlord has a right to his rent ; you ought to pay

your fair share of the taxes ; and charity is a virtue that no Christian should live without exercising.

You are visited, too, at times, no doubt, with afflictions, losses, vexations, disappointments, and bereavements ; but if you enjoy the advantages that others enjoy, is it hard that you should endure the afflictions that others endure ? Earthly trouble is not easily borne without heavenly assistance ; but if we could discern invisible things, every true believer would see the hand of his heavenly Father weighing out to him, even to the scruple, the joys and sorrows that he requires, and cannot do without.

Among your visitors do you reckon profitable and religious publications ? and if so, do you derive any advantage from them ? Does their tone suit you, their science instruct you, their information interest you, their morality do you good, and their piety draw you to the consideration of heavenly things ? If not, there must be something wrong in them or in you. But, lastly, have you been visited with His presence, compared with whom earthly things are as dust and dross ? Has "the day-spring from on high," Luke i. 78, visited you ? and can it be said by you and your household, "The Lord of hosts hath visited his flock," verily, "God hath visited his people ?"

PERHAPS YOU WILL THINK OF IT.

WHILE eating my mid-day meal, a sudden feeling of thankfulness came upon me, as I called to mind the unceasing regularity with which my wants were supplied. In the frozen climes of the north, the half-famished Indian had, doubtless, wandered far for food; in the sultry regions of the east, the Arab must have roamed over spacious tracts in quest of water; while bread had constantly been given me, and water had been sure. It was a customary thing to have a table spread before me, but it was an unusual thing for me to feel truly thankful. Do you ever pass days, weeks, and months, without feeling your heart glow with gratitude for your daily food? What if the Father of mercies were to send a constant dearth, wherein there should never be sufficient earing and harvest again for ever! He might do this: the very thought is enough to make us value our bits and drops. *Perhaps you will think of it.*

It was during one of the last cold, misty, and miserable days, that I was far from my home without my great coat. I mounted a coach to ride home, with the rain and sharp wind full in my teeth, so that I absolutely shivered with cold. A hundred times have I put on my great coat without any grateful emotion for the comfort of clothes; and perhaps you have done the same thing. What if the Giver of all good should cut off every means of supplying ourselves with clothing, by destroying the flocks, and blighting vegetation! The thought is enough to make us bless God, with the liveliest ardour, for our raiment. *Perhaps you will think of it.*

It may be that you were out in the open air the severest day of the frost. It was intensely cold, and seemed to freeze, not only one's breath, but almost one's very thoughts. Few days are more pleasant to those who have health and spirits, and who can move about with alacrity, than a fine frosty day; but for all that, when night comes on, and the tea-kettle begins to sing, it is doubly pleasant to draw near a cheerful, spirit-stirring fire. I found it so, and gratefully rejoiced in the delightful glow that spread throughout my frame. How many times have I warmed myself at the cheerful hearth without thankfulness! Has this been the case with you? What,

if the great Governor of the universe should command the supply of coal to fail, so that fuel should never again be abundant for ever! The thought almost makes me quake with cold, and should render us more thankful for the blessing of fire. *Perhaps you will think of it.*

The other day I looked at my Bible as it lay on the sideboard, and thought to myself how much I neglected it. What is a chapter or two in the morning, and another at night? said I: why if I looked upon it as the gift of God, given to warn me from evil, to console me in trouble, to direct me in difficulty, and to guide me to glory, I should prize it as a treasure, and commune with it continually as with a friend. Do you ever neglect your Bible? What a punishment it would be to us both, if an angel were sent down from heaven to close the leaves of the Bible for ever from our view! The thought is enough to make us value the Bible. *Perhaps you will think of it.*

My thoughts sadly wandered yesterday morning, as I sat in the house of the Most High, while the minister was preaching his sermon. Do your thoughts ever wander under the sound of the gospel? What if the messenger of the Most High were sent down to close God's house, and to seal up the mouth of his faithful ministers for ever! This is a solemn thought; is it not enough to

make us anxiously attentive to every word spoken by a faithful minister? *Perhaps you will think of it.*

A short time ago, I kneeled down in a hurried manner, to offer up my morning praises and petitions at a throne of grace, and, after a few words, hastily rose to pursue some worldly object which absorbed my attention; but my conscience smote me, and told me that I had offered an affront to the Lord of heaven. Do you ever hurry over your prayers? What, if the high and holy One should issue forth his unchangeable mandate, "There shall no more prayer and supplication find favour at the mercy-seat henceforth for ever?" What an overwhelming thought! how precious it seems to make a throne of grace! *Perhaps you will think of it.*

How rare a circumstance it is for us to realize, even for a moment, in our thoughts, that eternal state of glory to which all true Christians are hastening. Not an hour ago I had a delightful anticipation of the heavenly Jerusalem. The city with the golden gates, the innumerable multitude that no man can number, the saints with their crowns of gold, were all before me, as well as the Lamb that was slain, seated on his eternal throne; the golden harps resounded with celestial harmony, and the heavenly hallelujahs rose in one grand

chorus of thanksgiving and praise. How much do we think of earth, and how little do we encourage thoughts of heaven! At least it is so with me. How is it with you? What if the Lord of life and glory were to proclaim, with a voice of thunder, the announcement, "None shall behold my glory in heaven who rejoice not in the expectation of sharing it, while yet they are on the earth." The thought should awaken the most sluggish souls to heavenly anticipation. *Perhaps you will think of it.*

We are too unmindful of what we owe the Father of mercies for the common blessings of food, raiment, and fire. We are too backward to improve the means of grace his goodness has provided for us, and too worldly to encourage the hope of eternal glory. If you are of opinion that this observation is just, *Perhaps you will think of it.*

IDLENESS.

UP and be doing, my friends! up and be doing! I have just been with an idle man, yet, idle as he is, he professes to be a seeker after Divine truth. Idleness is a sad thing. What! have we feet, and shall we not walk? Have we hands, and shall we not work? We have more to do than we shall ever accomplish if we are industrious; how, then, shall we get through it if we are idle? Every magpie building her nest, every spider weaving her web, every ant laying up for the winter, is a reproach to an idle man.

Up and be doing, I say; and do not expect the pot to boil while you let the fire go out. We must climb the hill to view the prospect; we must sow the seed to reap the harvest; we must crack the nut to get at the kernel; we must be diligent in spiritual things, if we wish to obtain spiritual blessings.

One day, I called on an old woman, who had pared a few apples, and was making a little dough;

but she was one of those who, because God can do all things, foolishly think that we have nothing to perform. “Goody! Goody!” said I, “it is in eternal as in temporal things, we are not to despise the means with which Divine mercy has favoured us. There are the apples, and there is the dough; but if you do not put them together, ay, and pop them into the pot, too, you will have no dumpling for your dinner.”

I cannot bear your tattling, talking, interfering, busy bodies, attending to the affairs of others and leaving their own duties undone; but yet, it is a sad failing to go to sleep when we ought to be wide awake; to be creeping and crawling like snails, when we ought to be bounding forward like greyhounds. It is a sad thing, I say, and we ought to be ashamed of it. I have known blind men and lame men, who, without an eye to see with, or a foot to stand upon, have done more for God's glory, and the good of their neighbours, than many of us who have the use of all our faculties.

Up and be doing in temporal and spiritual things, and let not the grass grow under your feet! Though the flesh be weak, if the spirit be willing, you will not be happy in standing still. If you cannot hew wood, you may draw water. If you cannot preach in public, you can pray in private,

and be striving to enter in, rather than waiting to be carried through, the strait gate that leadeth unto life.

We can do nothing of ourselves, but all things with the sustaining strength and grace of the Redeemer. Let us not complain of poverty with a mine of gold under our feet; let us not die of thirst, with a fountain of living waters within our reach. If we have health and strength, let us work for the bread that perishes; and having the means of grace, let us be diligent to obtain that bread that is eternal.

LINES IN THE ALBUM OF A SEEKER AFTER TRUTH.

THEY tell me that you want a line under Old Humphrey's hand, written with his very own pen; you shall have it, and if the warm wishes of his heart for your welfare will make it the more acceptable, you shall have them too.

I am but a poor archer. I cannot, like Robin Hood of old, split a willow-wand at the distance of a hundred paces, yet, for all this, often have I taken aim at the human heart, and struck it in the very centre. Come! stand fair! let me see if I cannot strike yours.

If I knew your good qualities, I would commend them, and encourage you to practise them more and more: if I knew your bad ones—and if you have not a great many of these you are not like Old Humphrey—I would reprove them with kindness, being too faulty myself to be justified in using severity.

But what sort of a heart is this of yours, that I am now taking aim at? Is it in your view a perfectly good heart? an entirely pure heart? a constantly holy heart? If so, there is but little chance of my hitting it, having never taken aim at such a thing before; but if it be a proud heart, a deceitful heart, a wicked heart, such a one as is described in Scripture, and such a one as I feel that I have by nature, I shall manage the matter a little better.

Who am I, a creature of infirmity, sinful dust and ashes, that I should take upon me to talk thus, and to point out to others the way they should go? Rather ought I to be seeking that my own eyes might have more light, and my own feet be kept from stumbling; however, let me proceed. I will try the effect of half-a-dozen arrows, and if no one of them should strike you, my archery will be at an end.

Are you not *proud*? I think you are. Not that you wish to dress above your station, to hold up your head above your neighbours, or to plume yourself on account of your attainments: that is not what I mean: but are you not proud in this respect, that you do not humble yourself to the dust before God, confessing yourself to be altogether an unprofitable servant; adopting as your own the language of the royal psalmist, "I

acknowledge my transgressions, and my sin is ever before me?" Some undefined notion that you can do something to merit eternal glory, now and then creeps into your mind, making you feel reluctant to be saved entirely by unmerited mercy, and the "exceeding riches" of the grace of God. If you are not proud, to my reproach be it spoken, I am.

Are you not *wasteful*? Not of the food you eat, and the clothes you wear, but of time, which is more precious than diamond-dust; and of your Christian privileges, which are far above the most costly rubies in value? If you are not wasteful, I am.

Are you not *selfish*? Not that you covetously desire what belongs to your neighbour, or that you would willingly add to your own happiness at the expense of that of others; but does not your own supposed good take precedence of God's glory? Are not nine-tenths of your thoughts, your words, and your deeds, devoted to the furtherance of your worldly interest? and is it not a mere fragment of these things that you consecrate to the hallowed object of serving God, and extending the kingdom of the Redeemer? If you are not selfish, I am.

Are you not *impatient*? Not towards your fellow sinners, but towards your heavenly Father? Do you not often rashly repine at his mysterious

dispensations? Are you not more desirous to change, to lessen, and remove the trials allotted to you by Divine wisdom, than you are to reap from them that lasting benefit which the sanctified chastisements of our heavenly Father invariably impart? If you are not impatient, I am.

Are you not *idolatrous*? Not absolutely bowing down to stocks and stones: you are neither accused nor suspected of this, neither do I believe that you bend your knee to a crucifix; but is there no person or thing possessed or hoped for by you, that is set up, like a golden image in your heart, receiving more homage than should be given to created things, and robbing the Lord of the glory due to his name? If you are not idolatrous, to my shame, I am.

Are you not *ungrateful*? Not to your earthly benefactors and friends, but to your heavenly Friend and Benefactor, who has not only given you every comfort you possess, but also his only Son, Jesus Christ, even to die on the cross for sinners? What have you done for Him who has done all for you? With a pinching parsimony, you may have, now and then, offered your tribute to the Lord for his goodness, but you have not given up what is due to him—your body, soul, and spirit. If you are not ungrateful, I feel that I am.

I have drawn my bow at a venture, and shot my arrows of accusation, but not in an unfriendly spirit : there may be a pleasure in pulling down a proud heart, but there is more pleasure in raising one that is humble, and binding up one that is bruised and broken.

There! you have now what you wanted, a line under Old Humphrey's hand, written with his very own pen. In return for his good wishes, give him your own. And now, whether his arrows have struck you, or altogether missed the mark, give him credit for a kind intention. May goodness and mercy follow you all the days of your life, and may you dwell in the house of the Lord for ever!

THE DUTY OF MAKING A WILL.*

WHEN a prudent merchant sends his ship to a distant port, he is mindful of the dangers it has to encounter, and accordingly, by means of an insurance, he seeks to protect himself from loss. And is the voyage of life less dangerous than a voyage over the deep? Is an immortal soul of less value than hogsheads of hardware, and bales of broad cloth? Surely, as tempest-tossed mariners, we

* The new law respecting wills, which is now in force, requires—

1. The will or codicil to be signed at the foot or end thereof by the testator.
2. If he does not sign, it must be signed by some other person in his presence, and by his direction.
3. The signature must be made or acknowledged by the testator, in the presence of two or more witnesses present at the same time.
4. The witnesses must attest and subscribe the will or codicil in the presence of the testator.

ought, first, to secure ourselves from loss, by seeking a well-grounded hope of eternal life through Jesus Christ : and, secondly, to protect those dear to us from sustaining injury by our death, by making a timely and prudent arrangement of our affairs.

You may say that this, or something like it, has been said a hundred times over ; and no doubt it has, and likely enough it is to be repeated a hundred times more ; but if I am not to speak till I say something absolutely new, I must become dumb. If I write no more till I can produce some striking novelty, my pen need no more be dipped into my inkstand. Experience will bear me out in the remark, that wisdom consists much more in impressing the minds of others with well-known truths, than in the production of novel opinions. They may be presented in a different way, yet are they essentially old. Though by shaking the kaleidoscope you obtain a new form, yet the materials which compose it are always the same.

But though my present observations may not be entirely new, I feel such a warmth gathering round my heart while I write them, that I do verily persuade myself that my remarks will meet the eyes of those who will not despise them ; nay, more, that there are some who will regard

them with favour, read them with respect, ponder over them with attention, and practise what they recommend.

Do I speak proudly? No! no! Proud I am, to my reproach, but not at this moment. High-minded I may be, but not now. If I can see my own heart through its manifold infirmities, its present object is simply and singly to drop a seasonable word, which, with God's blessing, may take away from a death-bed anxiety and confusion, and add something to the comforts of the widow and the fatherless.

I have been reading over again, for the fourth or fifth time, a little book called "Testamentary Counsels," and much of what I have to say has been taken from that volume, or been suggested by it. Old Humphrey is under great obligations to wiser and better men than himself, whose writings have often come home to his heart, sometimes pouring a cordial into it that it greatly needed, and sometimes planting an arrow there that was needed still more. On such occasions, he has felt drawn towards the writer with cords of affection, and longed to shake him by the hand, especially if his spirit appeared influenced by kindness, rather than by severity. It may be that you have felt a little of this drawing towards me; you have not pictured me with a frowning brow, and a churlish

heart, but rather as one who, being feelingly persuaded of his own infirmities, looks on his fellow sinners with tenderness and affection: in this instance, at least, you are not wrong in your conjectures!

I have before me a very important object, and as a man can hardly be expected to do a thing in a tolerable manner, unless he go about it in his own way, I want you to bear with me a little, and to be somewhat indulgent to me. Let an old man have his old fashions.

I shall not beat about the bush, but ask you a plain question at once, in my customary downright way. I am not about to say that I hope you have done this, and I trust you have done that and the other: my question is, Have you made your will? If you have, and if you have made it conscientiously and prudently, my inquiry will not annoy you; but if you have not, I wish it to stick to you like a leech, and to sting you like a nettle.

You may be among the many who habitually put off till to-morrow what ought to be done to-day, and if so, no doubt you will have plenty of reasons to assign for procrastination. Making a will, you may say, is an important thing, and requires much reflection: you have a friend to consult: you quite agree that it is necessary,

and, indeed, you have been thinking of it for some time; it is, really, your intention to be in earnest about the matter. But all this is very like shuffling. These lame attempts to excuse the non-performance of an imperative duty will not parry my home-thrust—Have you made your will?

I wish my words to go to your very heart; yet, far be it from me to bluster and call you names, even if you have never thought of making your will. It would but ill become one whose infirmities cling to him as a garment, and who sensibly feels his own backwardness in the discharge of manifold duties, to indulge in bitterness against a procrastinating brother. Rather would I, in an affectionate spirit, point out how cruelly you are acting to yourself in thus gathering thorns for your dying pillow.

If you have a wife and children, and relations and friends, I suppose that you bear them some affection; and if so, surely you had rather they should dwell in peace than in discord, and that if they should outlive you, they should love rather than hate your memory. By making a will, you will prove that their welfare is an object of your desire: by neglecting to do so, you will show that their happiness is with you an object of very little consideration.

Many, very many, tremble at the very thought of making a will. Some time ago, a worthy woman was bereaved of her husband; he was taken suddenly away, as many are. The widow was anxious that what property she had should be enjoyed after her decease by two nieces, to whom she was much attached; but this was not likely to happen unless she made her will, and to this she had a strong objection. It was in vain that her professional adviser urged her to bequeath her property, and pointed out that if she neglected to do so, it would go to one who was unworthy to enjoy it; still she could not bear the thought of making a will. While in the office of her professional friend, she trembled from head to foot with apprehension; and when the will was sent home to her, terror again prevented her from signing her name to it. Superstitious fears bind many in iron chains; the widow thought signing her will was like signing her death-warrant; and even though her life was soon afterwards placed in jeopardy by a sudden fire, which burst out where she lived, her last will and testament was unattended to: neither her danger nor her merciful preservation influenced her to sign her will.

You will not die sooner for having made your will, though the distraction arising in a season of

sickness from not having made it, may fever your mind and your body, and hurry you off to your grave. I speak with reverence, and under submission to the Divine will. *Now* you may bear my inquiry; but if it should only be whispered by your doctor into your dying ear, it may fall like a thunder-clap on your aching head at a season when you would give the world to do what you may be incapable to perform.

Think, for a moment, on his situation, who, having for years added house to house, and field to field, and laid up large stores for earthly enjoyment, without a thought of dissolution, is suddenly called upon hurriedly to divide his possessions! Not an hour can he purchase at any price. The fever is upon him, his blood-shot eye looks fearful; he draws his breath with difficulty; his pulse is at a hundred and twenty; he cries out for water, and turns to his physician for comfort; but, as he strains his aching eyeballs in an attempt to catch a word of consolation, he meets the inquiry, "Have you made your will?" The very words are as the icy wind of death; they chill and curdle the life-current of his heart; they pronounce his doom. Oh! had he made his will, it would have been some consolation; it might have prevented his present paroxysm; but, no! he neglected it, and now it is too late.

I hope that you will not be ranked among those

“Who toil for heirs, they know not who,
And straight are seen no more.”

“Beware of covetousness!” Hoard not up guilty riches to your condemnation. Let not your growing possessions be witnesses against you at the final hour. A coffin-full, yea, a grave-full of gold will not gain you admittance at the gate of heaven. Whether you think so or not, you are but a steward over your earthly possessions; your stewardship extends to the proper use of wealth during your life, and the just distribution of it at the time of your decease. Be not an unjust steward; whether you have ten talents or five committed to your care, use them profitably, and make your will, that your property may be rightly distributed after your death.

Perhaps you will be turning round to me to inquire if I have made my will, and if you do, a plain answer shall be given. It would be a little out of character in me to talk of freeholds and funded property, of Scotch and Irish estates, of shares in the mining, dock, and rail-road companies. I need no steward to manage my affairs. The largest park I have will not occupy me long in riding round it, and my habitation is not at all likely to be mistaken for Apsley House, or the

mansion of the Duke of Sutherland ; but the small portion of this world's gear that I may call my own, is conscientiously allotted in case of my departure. Sometimes I am foolish enough to wish for wealth, for there are many ends I desire to compass, duties that I would discharge, acts of friendship that I would requite, and feelings of affection that I would willingly embody in actions ; but, as a Scottish writer has well expressed himself, " God kens what is good for us better than we ken ourselves."

To say nothing of other things, Old Humphrey has received so many acts of individual kindness, that he would much rather devote a dozen skins of parchment to their acknowledgment and return, than that his will should be cribbed up into the contracted space that it now occupies.

You know as well as I do, that our life is but " a vapour ;" you know that what with natural decay, accidents, and the " thousand ills that flesh is heir to," there is " but a step between us and death." If, then, the message should suddenly be brought to you, " This night thy soul shall be required of thee," should you be satisfied to leave what property you have, be it little or much, without any arrangement as to its distribution ? Now, be honest to yourself ; put the question to your own heart, and give an upright answer. If

you can add to the comfort and peace of your wife and children, by doing what you have hitherto delayed, set about it. It will break none of your bones to make your will; it will not disturb your night's slumber, but, on the contrary, minister to your repose.

If you have a wife whom you love, make your will, lest she fall into the hands of those who may treat her harshly. If you have children whom you love, make your will, that they may know the portion that falls to them. If you have poor relations, make your will, that you may not, in shutting up your bowels of compassion against them, and neglecting them, do an act of injustice; and if you have faithful servants, who are not only worthy of their hire, but of your respect, make your will, that they may know you have not been unmindful of their fidelity.

It may be that God has blessed you abundantly in worldly goods; and if so, it will especially become you, living and dying, to remember his cause, and to promote his glory. There are religious institutions almost without number, that require assistance, and benevolent societies almost standing still for want of aid. I will not tell you that your money, give of it what you may, and in what manner you choose, will convert a soul, or restore a languishing body from a couch of sickness, but

I say that you ought gladly to give ; and highly honoured will you be, if God, of his graciousness and condescending mercy, shall be pleased to accompany your gift with his blessing to the souls and bodies of his creatures.

It is not my object to tell you *how* you should make your will, but only to convince you that you *ought* to make it ; for the former purpose, the little book of which I have already spoken will give you excellent counsel.

I hardly know whether I should succeed if I were to attempt to pass myself off as being very learned in the law. I might begin by telling you that "wills are of very high antiquity," that they were "in use among the ancient Hebrews," that "Jacob bequeathed to his son Joseph a portion of his inheritance double to that of his brethren," and that "Solon was the first legislator who introduced wills into Athens, though in other parts of Greece, and in different countries, they were totally discountenanced ;" but you would soon begin to suspect the truth, that Old Humphrey was building on another man's foundation, and affecting to be wise with the knowledge he had filched from another.

The only rule that I will venture to give you, in making your will, is this ; after fervent supplication at the throne of grace for Divine guidance,

make it conscientiously, with an eye to futurity, so that if you knew that all your connexions were to meet you at the throne of the Eternal in an hour after your signing, sealing, and delivery, you would not wish it altered.

Great mistakes have been made by many in believing unfavourable reports of their relatives and friends, and allowing prejudices and resentments to influence them in the bequeathment of their property. If you are in a proper spirit for making your will, you will look with a forbearing and merciful eye on all who have a reasonable claim on your remembrance.

Our earthly comfort is greatly promoted by the good conduct of faithful domestics. If you know the value of good servants, you will not be unmindful of them in your will, admitting that, consistently with prior claims, you have the ability to do them a kindness.

“A worthy man had served a country shop-keeper and his son for nearly forty years. He was the tried servant, and esteemed by all the family. ‘You shall never want,’ was the frequent language of the master. The servant was comforted by the thought ‘that when he was old and grey-headed, he should not be forgotten.’ His master died, leaving considerable property; but the name of the servant was not found in the will;

he was left without provision. Was this equitable, when the master had power to provide for his servant? A small weekly sum would have filled the heart of the old man with joy."

Now, do not fall into the error of supposing, that a small sum will be of little importance to a faithful domestic. There are times when a single shilling is very valuable to a person slenderly provided for, and to such a one five or ten pounds would be a treasure.

"A woman was once seen weeping at the grave of a worthy female. No one present appeared more deeply affected. 'Have you lost a friend in the deceased?' inquired a person present: 'Yes,' replied the afflicted woman, 'the dear lady was very kind to me; she used to allow me sixpence a week, which procured me many comforts.'"

My poor pen has run on strangely, and yet I appear to have written but a small part of what I intended to lay before you. It may be that after a while I may be permitted to return to this subject again, for it is an important one. In the mean time, if you have a wife and children, be not unmindful of my imperfect suggestions. If you have poor relations, "be ye merciful, even as your Father in heaven is merciful," and leave them not without some token of your remembrance. If you have faithful servants, give them reason to

bless your memory, and let the kindness of your friends be acknowledged.

If Old Humphrey, in addition to what he has said, should intimate that a faithful minister of Christ, and a conscientious doctor, are entitled to estimation, you will not gainsay his opinion, nor deny that those who minister to the peace and repose of soul and body, have a claim on our best regard. If, however, we cannot follow out all our affectionate sympathies, let us, at least, not on this account neglect our positive duties.

INSANITY.

THE by-ways, as well as the highways of life, must be trodden—the house of mourning as well as the house of feasting, must be entered by him who would see human nature as it is, and draw from mankind at large such lessons of instruction as may be profitable to his own heart, and the hearts of others. With a spirit that sympathises with the unhappy, I have visited the home of humiliation—the domestic circle of sorrow; I have been to a lunatic asylum. Shall I draw the picture from the life? No! for though I might thereby call forth much of human sympathy and Christian kindness for a peculiar class of my fellow beings, yet might I, also, wound those into whose bosoms I would rather pour the balm of peace, and the oil of gladness.

To the friends of those whose intellects are beclouded, I would say, Encourage not gloomy impressions respecting those you lament. We know that in the natural creation darkness is as necessary as daylight; and who shall say that in the most mysterious visitations of the Almighty,

mercy is not the principal ingredient? We see our afflictions, but we know not from what evils they preserve us; nor do we discern the advantages which others may derive from them. Many of God's providences are painful; they are intended to be so; but the end is not yet:—it remains for another state of existence to unravel and enlighten much that is now intricate and obscure.

But a word, reader, with you. There can be no doubt that you pity from your heart all those whose reason has gone astray; but let me tell you, that if you cannot answer affirmatively the question I am about to propose, you stand yourself in more need of pity than even the unhappy objects of your commiseration. I take it for granted that you read your Bible, acknowledging it to be the word of God; and that you are fully aware mankind are not only born in sin, and conceived in iniquity, but are also under the curse of the law for actual transgression. You are, doubtless, well aware that your life, compared to eternity, is but as a moment, and that there is but a step between you and death. Seeing, then, that if you die in your sins, the Holy Scriptures hold out no hope of escape from eternal woe; and that there is but one way in which a sinner can be reconciled to God, and saved from everlasting death, the question I have to propose to

you is this—Are you seeking, before every thing else in the world, to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ?

Such language as this may not seem very suitable to your case. That there are sinners in the world, who need to be reconciled to God, you will not gainsay : but you may be a thoughtless young man, with many accomplishments, and very well thought of and respected by your friends and acquaintance. Or, you may be a lively young lady, well educated, and amiable, the very life and joy, perhaps, of all your relations and friends. Or, perhaps, you are the father of a family, a man of business, industrious, provident, hospitable, and respected by all the country round ; or, a kind and careful wife, rising up early and looking well to the ways of your household, praised and beloved by all who know you ; or, an old man or woman, with grey hairs on your head, and wrinkles in your forehead, yet blithely and smilingly sailing down the stream of time, and heedless of the coming crisis ; or, if a shadowy thought arise, looking back upon a long life, and seeking comfort from the vain boast that you have never done your neighbour any harm.

Now, in any of these cases, such language as this may seem very unsuitable to you ; but, reader, consider your not feeling yourself a sinner

makes no difference as to the fearful truth that you are one. If you have not experienced the application of "the blood of sprinkling" to your conscience, the purging away of "the old man," and the renewing of your heart and life by the working of the Holy Spirit, it is certain, from the word of God, that you belong to the generation that is "pure in their own eyes, and yet is not washed from their filthiness." You may not feel yourself a sinner now, but you must feel it one day, either clinging to the cross of Christ, or calling to the rocks and mountains to fall on you, and hide you from the wrath of God.

"The day cometh that shall burn as an oven; and all the proud, and all that do wickedly," (now all are proud in heart naturally, and all have done wickedly, therefore all who are not reconciled to God,) "shall be as stubble, and the day that cometh shall burn them up, saith the Lord of hosts," Mal. iv. 1.

Take it not for granted that you are reconciled to God, because you are in a country that is called Christian; because you attend God's house and read your Bible, and say your prayers. If you are not humbled to feel yourself a lost and helpless sinner, if you are not looking solely to the Lord Jesus Christ, as your only ground of acceptance, and hope of salvation, trusting entirely

to his merits and his mercy, your "heart is not right in the sight of God," you are yet "in the gall of bitterness, and in the bond of iniquity."

"The day cometh that shall burn as an oven." O reader, there is not a moment to lose! Consider your riches as dust in comparison with Divine grace; seek to be reconciled to God. Are you poor? Forget the bread that perisheth, and seek to be reconciled to God. Are you high? Bow down to the earth, and seek to be reconciled to God. Are you lowly? Rise up from the dust, and seek to be reconciled to God. Sleep not, rest not, day nor night, till you have sought to be reconciled to God through Jesus Christ.

"The day cometh that shall burn as an oven." What shall it profit you in that day, that your name was extolled from the north to the south, and inscribed on marble and on brass, if it be not found in the Lamb's book of life? What shall it profit you in that day, that the whole universe consisted of your friends, if God be found to be your enemy? If God be against you, who shall be for you? And if you die before you are reconciled to Him, in that day he will be against you.

Though you live to the age of Methuselah, life soon passeth away; and "what shall it profit a man, if he gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?" If you do with all your heart and life

seek reconciliation with God in the prevailing name of his Son, pardon is yours, Christ is yours, heaven is yours ; but, if you will not be reconciled to God in time, he will justly punish you to all eternity ; it will assuredly be said to you, " Depart from me, ye cursed, into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels." I would press this subject home to you ; for again I say, the maniac is not more an object of pity than you, if you can go on from day to day, without seeking to be reconciled to God through the atonement of Christ.

There are many kinds of madness in the world ; but no madness can be greater than yours, if, with heaven and hell before you, you are not seeking reconciliation with God.

" The day cometh that shall burn as an oven." Make haste, there is not a moment to lose ; for a moment may call you out of this world ! Go ; and, before you seek bread to eat, seek to be accepted with God, through his Son Jesus Christ. His own word is an all-sufficient encouragement. " Him that cometh to me, I will in no wise cast out," John vi. 37.

If you are seeking this great salvation, the wisest philosopher excels you not in true wisdom ; if you are neglecting to seek this, the wildest maniac surpasses you not in madness and folly.

HEART SEARCHING.

I DO not know whether the path you have trodden through life has most resembled a bog or a grass-plot ; a furzy heath, or a well-rolled gravel-walk ; but as the Father of mercies has appointed for our present and eternal good, that sunshine and shade, pleasure and pain, should be mingled ; inasmuch as it hath pleased Him, I say, that men should be born to trouble as the sparks fly upward, so, I suppose, of trouble you have had your share.

Not that it very much matters whether we journey through the sultry desert, or lie down in green pastures, gently strolling beside the still waters, so that we have the presence of God with us. Bound as Shadrach, Meshech, and Abednego were, and unwonted as the heat of the fiery furnace was, into which they were cast, they had neither cause nor inclination to complain ; for there was One seen walking with them in the midst of the fire, in form like unto the Son of

God. If you have been walking in the same company, whether your face has been bright with smiles, or clouded with tears, no matter.

I want to search your hearts a little, on the present occasion; for now and then a little heart searching is a good thing—not a pleasant thing, but a good thing—seeing that it administers to the health of the mind.

It has been my lot to witness many scenes of affliction and human sufferance, in sick beds, and asylums, and workhouses, and hospitals. I have been with the surgeon when his knife has been at work; when the nerve, the vein, and the artery, have been laid bare, and the offending limb has been amputated. I have attended the dissecting board, and witnessed the breathless body of a fellow being in its humiliation. Something too much of all these things have I known; and, if you have known them too, you will comprehend at once the significance of the term “laying the heart bare.”

You need not be frightened at me, for I am no surgeon: the pen is my weapon, nor can I use even that so skilfully as I would; how, then, I shall succeed in laying your hearts “bare,” is a matter involved in some uncertainty.

It much struck me, some time ago, when I heard an eminently humble and pious follower of

the Redeemer say, that the Lord had dealt very mercifully with her, in "hiding her transgressions." The thought has occurred to me again and again, how sad the situation of God's people would be in the world; what a spectacle to be gazed on with wonder, if God, in his matchless and manifold mercies, had not hid their transgressions!

How is it with you in this respect? Are you fair and quite upright in all things? Are you exactly what the world around considers you to be, or are you indulging some secret sin, which the eye of God beholds, though you conceal it from human gaze?

I speak to the rich as well as to the poor; and, hark you! if you are rich, I shall not spare you on that account. Whether you are a peer or a pauper, it matters not to Old Humphrey. Those around you, who fear you, or hope to obtain something at your hands, are not likely to tell you plain truths; but, as I neither fear your ill humour, supposing you sometimes indulge in it, nor hope to gain any part of your wealth, the plain truth shall be spoken.

It may be that you and the world are on tolerably good terms; your reputation stands pretty fair; you have no particular "blot on your escutcheon:" but let me ask you a plain question:

Is this because you are really spotless, or because your character and conduct are not fully known to others?

Judging by outward appearance, worldly men, no doubt, call you "a fortunate man." Your humbler neighbours, your tenants, and your poor relations, think you are "a great man;" and those who worship with you on the sabbath, conclude that your "lines are fallen in pleasant places," and that you possess "a goodly heritage."

It may be that you keep a carriage; that you have a large balance in your banker's hands; that your property in the funds is considerable; and that your estates are altogether free from mortgage. You are, perhaps, looked up to with respect, as a man of property, probity, and piety; and held in high estimation by your friends. It is not my wish, for a moment, to diminish aught of these things; rather would I increase them, had I the ability, if so doing would add to your earthly happiness and your heavenly hopes; but I want to send you home to your own bosom, to lay your heart bare. Never mind, just for the moment, what other people think of you; they know nothing at all about the matter; but I ask, What do you think of yourself?

Are you just in all your dealings; doing to others as you would they should do to you, were

you to exchange positions with them? Do you behave well to your servants? Are you as free from pride as you wish people to suppose? Are you as kind to your poor relations as you would reasonably wish them to be to you, were you poor, and they rich? Do you give to the needy as much as you ought? Is your almsgiving unmingled with ostentation? I know that I am trying you rather hardly: I am going a long way; but I must go yet a little farther; so let me beg you to stand up fairly, like a man. Is there no act of justice which you know you ought to do, that you are delaying? No secret sin in which you are indulging? Are you a sincere and humble follower of Jesus Christ? Are you grateful to God for the gifts with which he has entrusted you? Do you consider yourself as his steward, bound to use them to his glory; and are you ready, whenever he shall require it, to give an account of your stewardship? After you have put these questions to your heart, and replied to them with sincerity, let me again ask, whether, in your own opinion, you are not, for your present character and reputation, as much indebted to the circumstance of your demerits being unknown as to that of your deserts being known?

Let me now move on to the middle class of mankind, which is much larger than that which

contains the rich alone. In this class may be reckoned the generality of those who follow a trade, as well as persons filling situations as clerks, and those who, by their own exertions, are fully able to provide necessaries and comforts without feeling the evils of poverty. Are you in this class? If so, I have a word or two to whisper in your ear.

Remember, I am not going to accuse you. I am only about to ask a few questions; answer them to yourself, in godly sincerity.

I need not tell you of the trickery and dishonesty that are often practised in trade. I need not tell you that the necessaries of life are too often adulterated; that short weights are sometimes used; that the little finger, now and then, touches the scalebeam; and that the cloth is cut, occasionally, on the wrong side of the thumb. I am afraid these things are too common for many persons to be ignorant of them. Oh, how miserably we deceive ourselves when we deceive others! How blind we are, when we do wrong in secret, and say, "The Lord shall not see, neither shall the God of Jacob regard it!" "The eyes of the Lord are in every place, beholding the evil and the good." O Lord, "the darkness hideth not from thee; but the night shineth as the day: the darkness and the light are both alike to thee," Psa. cxxxix. 12.

If you hold any situation, I will not suppose that you systematically injure your employers, or recklessly waste their time and your own. If you are in trade, I will not suppose for a moment that you are one of those who think it lawful to get rich at all hazards ; that you consider it no crime to oppress your workmen, and impose upon your customers ; but, on the contrary, give you credit for being what the world would call an upright tradesman : but, now, do not shrink from my question. Are you, in your own estimation, as upright as you are in the opinion of others ? If, instead of being judged by man, who knows you not, you were to be judged by Almighty God, who knows you, do you think you would stand so fair with your neighbours as you now do ? or are you conscious that you are what you are in the eyes of the world, because men know not the "whole truth" as to your life and character ?

I know these are heart searching inquiries, and not such as we are in the habit of putting to one another every day in the week ; but, for all this, they may not be unnecessary. It is a grievous thing for any one to act unfaithfully to those above him, or to oppress, in any way, those below him : whether, then, you are a master or a servant, your catechising yourself, as I have catechised you, will do you no harm.

And now, shall I leave off without a word to the poorer classes? Oh no, he is no friend to the poor, who is not willing to correct their errors, as well as to increase their comforts: to speak the truth, I more frequently have a poor man, or a poor woman, than a rich one, in my eye, when I dip my pen into my inkstand. Willingly, had I the power, would I plant a grape-vine against every poor man's cottage, place a Bible on his side-table, and be the instrument of imparting the consolations of that blessed book to his heart.

Well, then, let me suppose that you are poor, and that you have the character of being honest, sober, and industrious. It may be, too, that God, of his great mercy, has made you tolerably contented in your situation. Perhaps you know that riches will not make a man happy, nor the absence of them render him miserable, and you may sometimes repeat the texts, "The sleep of a labouring man is sweet, whether he eat little or much; but the abundance of the rich will not suffer him to sleep," Eccles. v. 12.—"Better is little with the fear of the Lord, than great treasure and trouble therewith," Prov. xv. 16. Let me then ask you, as I have asked others, if you were called upon at the hour of midnight, when no eye save that of the Almighty is upon you, to give a true character of yourself, what would that character be?

I do not want to be referred to your master, or to your neighbour, or to your friends, for your character ; for you may think, and say, and do, a thousand things that they know nothing of. Put the question to yourself, calling to mind your idle words and evil deeds ; and then, perhaps, you will see that you have no cause for boasting, but much for using the publican's prayer, with smitings on your breast, " God be merciful to me, a sinner," Luke xviii. 13.

And now, let the heart searching inquiry be directed to my own bosom ; let me, as I have catechised others, catechise myself. I may not intentionally have wronged my neighbour ; I may not willingly have injured the widow and the fatherless ; oppressed the weak, or ground the face of the poor ; but the question is, Do I know that I am, in integrity and godly sincerity, in all respects the man I am taken to be, by those around me ? To this I answer, " To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him." " It is of the Lord's mercies that we are not consumed, because his compassions fail not." " Hide thy face from my sins, and blot out all mine iniquities." Blessed be God, that " the blood of Jesus Christ, his Son, cleanseth from all sin," 1 John i. 7.

LIFE INSURANCE.

IF I could find one solitary being who had never lost a parent, child, relation, or friend; if I could find one who had no interest in the life or death of any human being, I should conclude, at once, that he would never trouble his head with any thing that might be said on the subject of "life insurance." But this is not a likely case. Death is too well known among us: the churchyard proclaims his victories; and the mourning weeds that are worn in remembrance of the dead, seem fearfully to increase.

Old Humphrey likes chiefly to talk of things that come home to the bosoms and business of his fellow men. The common-place occurrences of life suit him; the every-day causes of joy and sorrow he loves to dwell upon; and rather would he take a thorn from the finger, or a care from the heart, of one fellow pilgrim, than tickle the ears of a thousand by a poor attempt to be eloquent. Those who listen to Old Humphrey, must be content with homely subjects, and very homely observations.

The subject of "life insurance" is well worth the consideration of all who would willingly, when they quit this world of sorrows, secure the comfort of those who are dear to them. I am as likely as my neighbours to err in my judgment on this subject; but if I do err, it is the head, and not the heart, that is the offender. It is a most important subject: others have said much upon it; and "I also will show mine opinion."

There are a few among my Christian friends who feel a strong objection against "life insurances." They think that insuring a life is something like impiously opposing the will of God; making calculations on days that the High and Lofty One in his wisdom alone can number. Now, I think they are wrong in this prejudice; though I never intend to treat lightly the scruples of any one, especially of those whom, for their Christian consistency and integrity, I highly value. Still I think they are wrong. Not that I like the term "life insurance;" for I do not think it a proper one. A perishing, mortal man cannot calculate as to the remnant of his days; he cannot insure or be insured; but the term, "life insurance," merely means the act of making a prudent provision for those dear to us, when we shall be removed from the world.

But then, again, my friends say, "This is

another reason why we object to it ; for what right have we to mistrust God's providence and faithfulness? Ought we not to commit those dear to us to God, instead of showing that we lack confidence in his fatherly protection, by taking the affair out of his hands, and making a provision ourselves?"

My answer is—That it argues no mistrust of our heavenly Father's goodness and faithfulness, to use the gifts he has bestowed on us for our own welfare, and the welfare of others.

Do we doubt God's fatherly care, because we plough the ground, and sow the seed that is to supply us with bread? Surely not. He could feed us, as he did his people of old, with manna ; nay, he could make the grain to spring up without our assistance ; but it is his good pleasure not to do this, but rather to use his creatures as a means in his hands, to minister to their own wants.

I think that I am clear on this point ; and regret that any servant of the Redeemer should be hampered by scruples which I believe are ill-founded.

Let us put this matter in the plainest point of view, and show that we sin not in defending ourselves and others from the common evils to which we are liable.

Do we oppose God in pulling up the weeds

that he has made to grow in our gardens? or act disobediently in closing our eyes when his lightning flashes around us?

If God sends the rain, must I not hold up an umbrella to defend myself from the drenching storm? If God sends the plague, must I not use means to protect me from the fearful pest? Oh yes! for our heavenly Father often visits us with afflictions, to call forth those qualities, energies, and resources, with which he has mercifully endued us. When God causes the sultry sun to shine on the earth, we dress in light clothing; but when he seals up the waters with frost, when he giveth "snow and vapours, stormy winds fulfilling his word;" when he "casteth forth his ice like morsels," who can stand before his cold, without warmer garments? Is it unlawful, then, with a dependent and grateful spirit, to use the comforts his bounty has placed within our reach? No! no! it cannot be. It is our duty, as it should be our delight, to live to his glory, and, as far as lies in our power, to provide for the wants and extend the comforts of those dependent upon us, not only during our lives, but after our death. The same Holy Scriptures that rebuke unnecessary and sinful anxiety, by the injunction, "Take, therefore, no thought for the morrow," Matt. vi. 34, reprove also an idle, careless, improvident disposition, by the command, "Provide things honest in the

sight of all men," Rom. xii. 17; and by the declaration, "But if any provide not for his own, and specially for those of his own house, he hath denied the faith, and is worse than an infidel," 1 Tim. v. 8. I cannot believe then, that I am acting an unfriendly part, in advising all who have the means, from an uncertain income, or one which continues only for their lives, to make a reasonable provision for their families, by effecting what is called a "life insurance."

Thus far have I spoken to such as may not at present have been convinced of the great advantage of paying a small sum every year, that their wives, or their children, or their poorer relations, may, after a while, be benefited by it. I have now a word to say to a different class of people, even to the directors or managers of "life insurance" establishments themselves; and with great plainness of speech will I address them.

When we want the arrow to go right home to its mark, there is nothing like taking a single aim. This is what a good friend of mine calls using a rifle-barrel, instead of a scattering blunderbuss. In place, therefore, of speaking to "life insurance" managers generally, I will speak to one only, in the hope that every manager who reads my homely observations will apply them to himself.

I will suppose, then, that you are a manager of

a "life insurance" establishment ; and, if you are a friendly man, you will not quarrel with Old Humphrey because he steps out of his pathway for a moment to take you by the hand. He hopes you are prospering in your undertaking, and the more so, because he thinks it a useful and a praiseworthy one.

It is not unlikely that we entertain different opinions on many points ; but let us not think the worse of each other on this account. I am often in the wrong, whether you are or not ; but do we agree in two things ?—first, that there is one great and good and merciful Being, who made us, and all things ; infinite in wisdom and in power ? and secondly, that the Holy Scriptures are his word and will ? We ought not to doubt the first, because the sun, moon, and stars, that have been proclaiming it in heaven for nearly six thousand years, declare it still ; because spring, summer, autumn, and winter, continually repeat the same truth ; while the teeming earth, and the heaving ocean, bear their testimony to the same undeniable verity.

We ought not to call in question the second, because the Bible has been handed down to us with the most scrupulous care by God's own peculiar people, and its truth has been confirmed by the testimony of its very enemies as well as

by the fulfilment of its prophecies. Its holy and faithful reproofs have convinced multitudes of their sins, and its merciful promises gladdened ten thousand times ten thousand hearts.

If, then, we are agreed in these respects, both of us believing in the gospel of Jesus Christ, you must not be out of temper if I ask you this plain question, Have you insured your life? You see the reasonableness of others insuring, and you think that my arguments are what they ought to be in persuading them to do so; but bring the matter home to yourself—Have you insured your own life?

There is an office more safe, more liberal and more advantageous, than yours; and it has a Director infinitely more wise than you are. Is your name among the names of those who have insured there?

You perceive that I am not now talking of an earthly establishment, but of a heavenly one. You are not asked whether your name appears in your own books, but is it written in the book of eternal life?

You seem to see clearly, by the undertaking you have embarked in, that all men must die; do you see equally clear that all must be brought to judgment? You seem to understand that all will die a natural death; do you understand also that all

who are dead in trespasses and sins will die an eternal death, if they do not obtain pardon ?

It may be, that this matter may have escaped you ; that you have not given it due attention : let me press it upon you urgently and affectionately.

It may be, that you have been so much taken up in insuring the lives of your fellow men in this world, that you have thought very little of Him, who alone can insure your own life in another.

Men commit strange mistakes ; and you may have been calculating on the length of human existence, as if it depended entirely upon man, without bearing in mind that God alone is the Author of your existence and preservation ; that he only can loose the silver cord, and that he alone can stop life's pendulum. Till the almighty decree goes forth, no man will die. Then, and not till then, "shall the dust return to the earth as it was, and the spirit shall return unto God who gave it."

And shall I, believing it possible that you are under such a sad mistake, smile and speak pleasant things to you, and allow you to go unmolested down the slippery pathway that leads to so fearful a precipice ? No ; rather would I seize you by the arm, and compel you to listen to my remonstrance.

Did you never read the words, "All have sin-

ned, and come short of the glory of God?" Rom. iii. 23. "The soul that sinneth it shall die?" Ezek. xviii. 4. "Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish?" Luke xiii. 3. These are not the words of a fellow sinner; a poor, unworthy, mutable, dying worm of the earth; but the words of the living God; and so sure as we shall lie down and moulder in the dust, so sure as the high and lofty One sits on the throne of heaven, his threatenings and his promises will both be fulfilled. I ask you, then—Have you insured your life?

Surely you will never urge another to buckle on his armour, to brave the temporary evils of time, and go yourself unarmed to encounter never-ending evils in eternity! This, if done without reflection, would be thoughtlessness; but with reflection, folly and madness. Again, then, I urge the question, Have you insured your life? If not, hasten to the Author and Giver of life present and eternal, with the inquiry, "What shall I do that I may have eternal life?" Matt. xix. 16. And the liberality of the terms will surprise you. "Hear, and your soul shall live. To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him," Isa. lv. 3. "This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners," 1 Tim. i. 15.

“Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” Acts xvi. 31.

The words of a weak, erring old man may be disregarded, however affectionately they may be spoken; and therefore, Old Humphrey will not calculate on doing you all the good he willingly would do; but, if his weak words should be attended with a Divine influence, they will be powerful enough to dispose you to reflection. At all events, refuse not an old man's blessing, who desires with his heart and soul, that, when you cease to be a director of a life insurance office on earth, your name may be found written in the Lamb's book of eternal life, and your voice be heard among the triumphant throng, saying, “Blessing, and glory, and wisdom, and thanksgiving, and honour, and power, and might, be unto our God, for ever and ever,” Rev. vii. 12.

USING AND NOT ABUSING

THE

THINGS OF THE WORLD.

It sometimes happens, that, in reading the word of God, I meet with a text that seems exactly to suit the case of some neighbour or friend. It reproves an error or consoles an affliction, that wanted just such correction or consolation ; and then I am quick to apply it. If the text be a rebuke, I take it up, and apply it to others. If it be a cordial, I pour it out with a willing hand and heart. This is an occurrence that not unfrequently takes place.

It happens, too, at times, and, perhaps, as often as the other case, that I meet with a text that seems written on purpose for myself. It comes like a sharp arrow, aimed at one of my own numberless faults ; or, like the voice of a faithful friend and counsellor, to direct me in a season of difficulty. I have just been reading a chapter in the Epistle

to the Corinthians, wherein are the words, "And they that use this world, as not abusing it: for the fashion of this world passeth away," 1 Cor. vii. 31. Now, who is he that uses the things of this world without abusing them? Whoever he may be, I feel at this moment that I am not the man. The words, therefore, come home to me; and as it is possible they may come home to you likewise, let us give them a little consideration.

We need not trouble our heads about the unlawful things of the world, because we are not permitted to use them at all without disobedience and sin. When we meddle with them, it is all abuse—when we touch them, it is all defilement. The lawful things of the world are those which we will consider.

We may venture to lay it down as a rule, that when our earthly desires darken our heavenly hopes; that whenever the love of any created thing lessens our love to God and to his Son Jesus Christ, we are not merely using, but also abusing, the things of the world. And now, then, to this standard let us bring ourselves.

Dear as our relations and friends may be, they are too dear when they draw our hearts from God. How is it with you? Do you see these good things without abusing them? Is there no wife, no husband, no child, no friend, that has an

undue portion of your affection? Do none of these idols interfere with the supreme, unmingled devotion of your hearts to the King of kings and Lord of lords? This is a home question; but it shall be put as plainly to myself as to you.

How is it with you as to your worldly possessions? Can you commit yourselves and all belonging to you, without anxiety, to Him whose are "the silver and the gold, and the cattle on a thousand hills?" or are you labouring unduly to add shilling to shilling, pound to pound, field to field, and house to house? Does the love of money, and what money will obtain, never enter into your heart, and render you for a season more desirous to get the gold that perishes here, than the treasure that will endure for ever?

Are you quite sure that you are using what you possess of this world's wealth, and not abusing it? This question ought to be answered honestly, and faithfully, not only by you, but by Old Humphrey.

To what use are you putting your health and strength, your reputation and influence in the world? for these ought not to be abused. Are you employing them for mean and selfish ends, or devoting them to high and holy objects? The fashion of this world passeth away, and you are passing away too, and should, therefore, while

you possess them, promote glory to God in the highest, and goodwill among mankind. Is this, then, the case? I ask you, and I also ask Old Humphrey.

It is a much easier thing to ask such questions, than to reply to them; and yet the reply is as necessary as the question. The sun, the moon, and the stars, that so gloriously adorn the heavens; the mountains and valleys, the fields and the foliage, the fruits and flowers, that beautify the earth, are grateful to look upon, and the Father of mercies has given us intellect to enjoy them; but are we using or abusing this intellect? Do we regard these created things as the express workmanship of God, and seek, through a knowledge of them, to glorify Him more, whose goodness and whose mercy endureth for ever? or do we merely regard them as beautiful objects of the creation, calculated to afford us pleasure? What is your reply, and what is the reply of Old Humphrey?

How are we using our time? Not our years, our months, our weeks, and our days, only; but our hours, our minutes, and our moments: for moments are more precious than diamonds. How are we using our time? What is called a long life soon runs away; and a short one is short indeed. You may not have so many grey hairs on

your head as I have ; but your lives are equally uncertain as mine. However profitably we may appear to be using our time, we are abusing it, and spending it unprofitably, if therein we are not preparing for eternity. Let the question be repeated, then, till it tingles in our ears, How do you use your time ?

How do we use the losses and crosses, the trials and afflictions of the world ? for these are among the good things that we ought not to abuse. Do we allow them to sour our temper, to make us despond and repine ? Do we complain that God deals hardly with us ? or do these things render us more humble, dependent, prayerful, and thankful ? Can we, and do we, thank God that we have been afflicted ? If we can, we are using, but if we cannot, we are abusing, what ought to be a blessing to us. Let us, at least, be close and honest in putting the inquiry to our hearts.

If "the fashion of this world passeth away," there is the greater need to be preparing for another. How are we using our sabbaths, and our sabbath sermons ? How are we using our hours of reflection, and seasons of devotion ? Are we using them as special mercies, vouchsafed to us for special purposes ? or abusing them by a worldly, cold-hearted, and selfish participation of the benefits they afford ? If we

could answer this inquiry in a satisfactory way, it would be well for you, and equally well for Old Humphrey.

To sum up the whole matter : Is every faculty of our bodies and our souls devoted to God ? Is every thing we possess considered as His, and not as our own ? Do our gains and losses, our pleasures and our pains, unite us more closely to him ? In one word, do we use the things of this world, by regarding them as helps to heaven ? or abuse them by allowing them to enchain our hearts and affections to the earth ? No questions can be put plainer than these have been put to you, and they have not been put plainer to you than to the heart of Old Humphrey.

ATTENDING THE SICK.

My good friends, had I my will, every man and woman, ay, every child too, above seven years old, in Great Britain, should be, in some measure, qualified to wait upon the sick. But why should I limit my good wishes to Great Britain? I would extend them to the wide world; for the sick in one country require alleviation and comfort as well as in another.

The proper end of education is to give us a knowledge of our duty to God and man, and to make us useful in our generation. Let us, then, seek to be useful at the couch of sickness and pain.

It is not my wish that every one should become a nurse, and understand the whole mystery of gruel-making and saucepanry: all that I desire is, that every one should be moderately endowed with the most necessary qualifications to alleviate and comfort the sick.

Show me one who has never received the assistance of others when in sickness, one who has

neither father, mother, sister, brother, nor friend on the face of the earth, and I will excuse him from being over anxious about this matter: but all who have kindred, or have received kindness, are bound, according to their ability, to qualify themselves to be useful to others. Must not he have a hollow heart who helps a friend only while he can swim, and neglects him when he is drowning? And is it not a little like this, to behave kindly to others in health, when they can do without our kindness, and forsake them in sickness, when they require assistance?

A cup of cold water to the weary and thirsty traveller is welcome indeed: and the most trifling attention to the sick is oftentimes a cordial to the fainting spirit. When the strength fails; when the grasshopper is a burden; when the silver cord is about to be loosed; when the golden bowl, and the pitcher at the fountain, and the wheel at the cistern, are near being broken; when the dust appears ready to go to the earth, and the spirit to return unto God who gave it,—it is then meet that every kindness should be shown to the sufferer.

We are all liable to be dependent on the kind attentions of others; and we should all, therefore, be qualified to attend to others. Those who in sickness have felt the relief of a well-timed cup of

tea, or basin of well-made gruel, wine-whey, or barley-water, will not laugh at Old Humphrey for talking about such things ; and, if they should do so, be would, notwithstanding, gladly make them a cup or basin of any of these comforts, should their situation require it.

How many hundreds of people are there in the world, who would not know how to make these common-place comforts, however urgent might be the necessity that required them at their hands !

Is it difficult to teach even a child to put a little tea into a pot, and pour boiling water over it ; to let it stand a few minutes, and then pouring it off, to add to it a little sugar and milk ? Certainly not ; yet how few children are taught to do this properly !

Nor is it more difficult to boil half a pint or a pint of milk in a saucepan, and then to pour into it a wine-glass full of white wine ; thus making that wine-whey, which only requires to be strained from the curd, to be ready for an invalid. How many grown-up persons would not know how to set about this !

I know twenty people, as old as I am, who could not, without some instruction, make a decent basin of gruel ; and yet how easily is this performed ! While water is boiling in a saucepan, a large spoonful of oatmeal is mixed up in a

basin with a little cold water; the hot water is then poured into this, when it is left to settle; it is afterwards poured, leaving the husks at the bottom behind, into the saucepan, and boiled slowly, while being stirred round with a spoon. Or, where groats can be obtained, gruel may be made much easier, by pouring boiling water on the groats, and letting them simmer over the fire till the fluid is of the degree of thickness which is desired. This is gruel; and, when sweetened with a little sugar, or seasoned with salt, is an excellent food for a sick person. How is it that every one is not capable of rendering such a service in an extremity, when it may be done with so little trouble? There are many other little comforts that are provided as easily as these are; but surely a knowledge of what I have mentioned is not too much to be required of any one. If you have the right sort of affection for those who are dear to you, you would not willingly let them lack, in a season of affliction, any service you could render them.

I would make a few remarks that may help you, if you are disposed to add to your qualifications, to soothe the afflicted. If ever you are called to attend a sick-bed, be sure to manifest *kindness*; without this quality, others will lose much of their value. Be *tender*, not only with

your hands, but with your tongue: tenderness of heart is quite necessary. Be sure to exercise *patience*: if you cannot do this, you are not fit to attend the sick. *Forbearance*, too, is a great virtue. Sick people are often fretful and trying, and require to be borne with. *Cleanliness* is essential: a dirty cup, a bit of coal on the toast, or a hand begrimed with dirt, is enough to turn the stomach of an invalid. *Expertness* and *promptitude* are of great value, that the wants of the invalid may be supplied without delay. *Thoughtfulness* must be practised, that you may anticipate what will be required; and *watchfulness*, that you may know when to be of service. Be *sober*, as beseemeth an attendant on the sick; but be also cheerful. *Cheerfulness* is as good as medicine to the afflicted. *Firmness* and *prudence* are qualities that may at times be put to good account; and if, in addition to those I have mentioned, you have *sincere and lively piety*, ever desiring to keep the eye, the heart, and the hope of the sufferer, fixed on the great Physician, the Healer of the soul's leprosy, as well as of the body's ailments, why then your attentions may indeed do good; they may be the means of benefiting both body and soul.

And think not that you can benefit the sick without doing a service to yourself. You may

learn many a lesson in a sick-chamber, that would never have been taught you in other places. "It is better," on many accounts, "to go to the house of mourning, than to go to the house of feasting." We learn more of this world's hollowness in an hour under the roof of sorrow, than in a life spent in the habitation of joy.

To witness sanctified affliction, is a high privilege ; for we then see that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord."

Old Humphrey has attended the sick, both in the noontide and the midnight hour. The desponding sigh, the weary moan, and the groan of agony, are familiar to him. He has marked the changes from the first attack of sickness to the death gasp that ended the mortal strife ; the declining strength ; the labouring pulse ; the glazed eye ; the throat-rattle, and the fallen jaw. He has closed the eyelids of youth and of age ; and, having felt, painfully felt, his own deficiencies as an attendant on the sick, he the more anxiously urges on others the duty of qualifying themselves to soothe the sorrows of the afflicted, and to smooth the bed of death.

ADVICE

TO BE PONDERED IN HEALTH, AND PRACTISED IN SICKNESS.

It sometimes happens, that I am requested by correspondents to write on particular subjects : when I fail to do so, I hope that a kind interpretation is put upon the omission. Happy is he whose hands can execute one half of his heart's undertakings.

I have already said something for the consideration of those who may be called on to attend the sick ; and I now have a word or two that may be suitable to the sick themselves.

Do not imagine me to be so unreasonable as to expect the sick will read my remarks. I neither expect nor desire them to do so. The afflicted, if they can read at all, ought to read, mark, learn, and inwardly digest, far better words than the words of Old Humphrey. What I want is, that my observations, poor and imperfect as they are,

may be attended to by those who are well ; that, in case they should be laid on a bed of sickness, they may profit by the friendly advice that I venture to offer them.

It may seem an odd conceit, to sow in health, and to reap in sickness ; but for all this, it will be a profitable kind of husbandry. The ant and the honey-bee lay up for a dark and wintry season ; and why should not the Christian ? You may feel strong while you read these lines, but, alas ! a time is coming, with hasty strides, when "the keepers of the house shall tremble, and the strong men shall bow themselves."

We are not half thankful enough for the blessing of health. We can give with alacrity a piece of gold to an earthly physician, and feel thankful if he can moderate our pains for a day, or even an hour ; but are we equally grateful to our heavenly Physician for months and years of uninterrupted health ? Now, answer this question before you go on any further.

To a sick person it is a great comfort when attendants perform their kind offices with willingness, for an unwilling attendant is oftentimes a sad trouble to an invalid. Now sick persons may do much to make their attendants either willing or unwilling in the office they have undertaken. In sickness, such is our infirmity, that selfishness

is almost sure to increase, and a due consideration of others to diminish. It therefore becomes the more necessary, that while we are well, we should know how, when we come to be afflicted, to avoid the error of driving from us our kindest friends, or of drawing down upon us the negligence and churlishness of our common attendants.

If in sickness you have ever had your pillow smoothed, and your gruel presented, by a kind hand; or if your nauseous medicine has been made doubly nauseous by the rude remark of an unkind, unfeeling, dirty, and negligent nurse, you will think this a point of some importance. I may not succeed in the object that I have in view, but, at least, I will pursue it with earnestness, with kindness, and with integrity. The subject requires to be treated with fidelity and tenderness.

Sick persons in their afflictions are apt to forget that, from necessity, it cannot be so pleasant, even to their dearest friends, to approach them, as when they were in health. Disease, wounds, sickness, ejaculations of pain, tainted breath, and perspirations, are of themselves forbidding; and, though affection and kindness will gladly endure, and seek to relieve them, yet the invalid should remember that these things are trials to their attendants.

I have seen a sick father press his fevered and

tainted lips to the pale face of his attendant daughter, when consideration and judgment would have prevented such an ill-timed and dangerous proof of affection. I have known a sick mother grasp an affectionate son with her clammy hand, holding him over her till he has been compelled to draw back. A momentary pressure of the hand would have been better. Am I unfeeling in my remarks? I ought not to be so, for I have been borne with when the yearnings of affection, tugging at my heart-strings, have made me somewhat unreasonable; but, surely, if we love or respect those who minister to us in our afflictions, we should be as little burdensome to them as possible. Consider, for a moment, the difference between one who springs forward with alacrity to serve you in sickness, and another whom you have discouraged, and wearied, and estranged, by selfish waywardness and want of consideration.

Sick persons have usually an inclination to dwell on the subject of their infirmities, till the ear of affection itself becomes weary: they seem to say, "I will not refrain my mouth; I will speak in the anguish of my spirit; I will complain in the bitterness of my soul."

The remark, "I never had so wretched a night," or, "I thought I should have died," may be listened to with sympathy, if only occasionally used;

but if it become the regular, daily, and hourly complaint, attended with a particular account of distressing feelings and visionary fears, it afflicts the ear, without exciting the pity of the heart. This is an error too common to have escaped your observation.

Sick persons, especially if they are timid and fearful in their disposition, often give way to the expression of what they feel under slight attacks, as freely as they do under more trying afflictions; thus they not only defeat their own object of exciting sympathy, but also render the hearts of their attendants callous when they are visited with heavy calamity.

Sick persons are often rendered hasty and peevish by their painful maladies, and then they are unreasonable in their expectations, and severe and unjust in their rebukes. If the sick were conscious of these infirmities, they would more frequently correct them. "What a time you have been!" is discouraging to a prompt nurse. "You are weary of me, and want me gone!" will drive away a domestic that is not patient; while, "You are very kind," or, "Bear with my hasty temper a little longer, for I am heavily afflicted," will draw that domestic to the couch of the sufferer.

Sick persons of fearful dispositions are fond of sending for the doctor more frequently than ne-

cessary, without considering that if a medical man have his daily arrangements or his nightly rest broken without cause, he may be backward to attend when his services are really necessary.

These are a few of the many observations that might be made, and such as are in the habit of visiting the sick will not consider them undeserving of attention. Whether we are ill or whether we are well, we should not be forgetful of the comfort of those around us ; but, on the contrary, we should ever remember to do to others as we would they should do unto us.

Who is there that has not sickness in prospect ? and who would not wish, when sick, to secure the willing attentions of his kindest friends ?

Persons who have any one to love, and any thing to leave, will save themselves much anxiety in sickness by making their wills while they are in health. Many foolishly neglect to do this from different motives ; but I have already noticed this subject.

Though I have confined myself to observations on temporal matters, I am not unmindful how closely the subject of sickness is connected with spiritual concerns. "We must needs die, and are as water spilt on the ground, which cannot be gathered up again ;" and all who are subject to death should now seek, through the Saviour of

sinner, that eternal life which is only to be found in Him.

If you have been visited with sickness, you know, and if you have not, you will know by and by, how much sickness disqualifies us from attending to any thing requiring calmness and consideration. If it be difficult to lift a weight in health, it is not likely to be an easy affair in sickness. Eternal things are weighty considerations, and they should be attended to while we have health, with all our hearts, our minds, our souls, and our strength.

How calm would our sick-beds be, if we had nothing else to do than to cast our burdens on Him who has promised to sustain them ; nothing else to say than, " Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits : who forgiveth all thine iniquities ; who healeth all thy diseases ; who redeemeth thy life from destruction ; who crowneth thee with lovingkindness and tender mercies ! " " I know, O Lord, that thy judgments are right, and that thou in faithfulness hast afflicted me. " " Thou shalt guide me with thy counsel, and afterward receive me to glory. "

WAR.

SOME people may think that I am a very improper person to speak on the subject of war, seeing that I have, as the phrase is, "never smelt gunpowder;" or, in other words, never seen service. To this I reply, If it be necessary to see men shot, and their bodies wounded and bleeding, to enable me properly to speak on the subject, may I ever remain unqualified.

Again, it may be thought, that however capable I might be to speak about war, it would not be over wise to do so in a time of peace. But if a state of warfare be the only opportunity which can be afforded me to express my opinion, fervently do I desire, so far as this subject is concerned, to be for ever silent.

My good friends, let me tell you, that when a man feels strongly moved to speak on any subject, he is not easily persuaded of his incapacity. Now, I feel at the present moment like a strong man; I seem to have something pent up in my

heart that must come forth : listen to my observations, and judge me accordingly.

A time of peace is not an unfit season to speak of war ; for He only, who knows all things, knows how long or how short a time the blessing of peace may be continued to us.

So long as public opinion is opposed to war, so long will it be difficult to engage in it ; but remember that public opinion is made up of the private opinions of individuals, and therefore it cannot be wrong to set forth war, in all its horrors, its injustice, and its iniquity.

It may be said that many wars have been inevitable. To this I answer, From the creation of the world till now, so far as we can judge by the knowledge that has come down to us, where one war has been undertaken with a virtuous end in view, hundreds have been engaged in through envy, covetousness, pride, ambition, and revenge. " Whence come wars and fightings among you ? Come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members ? " James iv. 1. These are weighty words, and they come from the highest authority.

How often have I heard men, who looked upon themselves, and were regarded by others, as Christian men, standing high among their professing brethren, advocating war, as though it were a

light thing with them that ten thousand bodies should be hacked to pieces, and ten thousand souls sent in an unprepared state into eternity!

Should such things be? Ought not war to be regarded as a curse? Yes. Even when clothed with scarlet, accompanied with the flourish of trumpets, and adorned with the trophies of victory, war is the foulest offspring of sin; and that it can be loved without sin reigning in the heart is impossible.

Though I cannot tell, in many cases, how war is to be avoided, I feel that my foot is on a rock when I condemn all unnecessary hostility. If war be entered into with lightness of heart, with love of gain, or lust of power and reputation, it is an ungodly enterprise. The bravest chief who willingly draws his sword in an unnecessary war, has blood-guiltiness to answer for; his stars, and his garters, and his glittering emblems of honour, are only badges that proclaim him one of those whom God shall judge; for "the Lord hateth hands that shed innocent blood." Had I the power, I would utter a mighty cry, that should pierce the hearts of all that delight in war; I would proclaim aloud in all the palaces and the peasants' cots of the world, that when a king, by an unnecessary war, forgets that he is a man, he deserves no longer to be a king: and when a man

forgets that he is a brother, he renders himself unworthy the name of a man.

You may think that I am growing warm ; and, to own the truth, I feel that this is the case. The fact is, I have been talking for an hour with an officer, who was engaged in the sanguinary conflict lately reigning in Spain ; and the account he has given me of the wanton, cold-blooded cruelties practised by both parties, has much excited me ; but I will try to be more watchful over myself, and consider the matter more calmly.

I am a man of peace, and willingly would I have the whole world dwell in peace, and live in the knowledge and fear of God.

Look, my friends, at the whip of scorpions that man has made for man ! Look at the blood-shedding inventions of the human heart ! Bear with me while I hastily turn over a page or two of the dark history of human wars. The book of books, the Bible, tells us that "Cain rose up against Abel his brother, and slew him." It is more than probable that the murderous deed was done with a club ; for weapons formed for the purpose of offence were not then likely to be known. The blood that was shed cried even to heaven, and Cain was accursed of God. When "the wickedness of man was great in the earth," no doubt war and bloodshed abounded ; for "the earth was

filled with violence," though the Scriptures may not tell us of the weapons with which men used to destroy each other.

In after times, men were trained up to war, and then came the sling, and the bow and arrow, the sword and the spear, to attack with ; and the helmet, and the breastplate, and the coat of mail, to defend the body from injury. Strongholds, and fortresses, and walled cities, were built. Battering rams and powerful engines of destruction were used.

It is enough to make the heart sick to go through an armoury, and see the improvements, as they are called, in warlike weapons. The sharp arrow was not fatal enough—it must be poisoned ! The edged blade was not deadly enough—it must be formed angularly, so as to give, if possible, an incurable wound !

The dagger, the two-handed sword, the iron mace, the battle axe, the pike, and the halberd, were but a part of the weapons that were used. But deadly as these were, they could not keep pace with the desire for human destruction. Some swifter, some more wholesale destroyer was required, and gunpowder was invented. The culverin, the cannon and the mortar, the matchlock and the gun, followed each other ; and thousands and tens of thousands were added to the slain.

When war once became a trade, no wonder that it should increase in the earth. Nations rivalled each other in their armies and their navies. Infantry and cavalry, engineers and artillery men, soldiers and sailors, generals and admirals, became abundant. Oh, what blood has been shed, and what unnumbered millions of money have been spent, scattered, wasted, worse than wasted, in ungodly warfare!

When I read of forts and castles, with their parallels and parapets, their outworks, their bastions, their angles, their ramparts, and their citadels; when I read of bomb-boats and fire-ships, and rockets, and red-hot shot, I seem amazed that anything this world possesses can be thought so desirable as to be purchased at so dear, so dreadful a price as that of war.

Even gunpowder, wide wasting as it is, has not satisfied the insatiable desires of war. A still more devastating power has been invented. By the use of steam, a complete stream of bullets and of cannon balls can be poured forth on errands of destruction.

When will men's hearts relent? When will a holy influence fill them with mercy, and charity, and love? When will swords be beat into ploughshares, and spears into pruning-hooks, and men learn war no more?

If we could number the victims that fell in war among the nations of old, it would astonish us; but they are innumerable. If we look at Jerusalem alone, during the last siege by the Romans, a hundred and fifteen thousand dead bodies were carried out at one gate—six hundred thousand in all; and hardly a place remained in the city uncovered with carcasses. Six thousand perished amid the burning cloisters of the temple; ten thousand others were slain. Eleven hundred thousand perished during the siege and the sacking of the city; and when Jerusalem was given up to the devouring flame, every street ran down with blood. Is this a picture that a Christian man, a man of peace, can regard unmoved?

If we give but a moment to the consideration of how many human beings must have fallen in war, during the overthrow of the Chaldeans, the Assyrians, the Persians, the Macedonians, the Grecians, and the Romans, well may we exclaim, Oh, what a slaughter-house has sin made of this fair world!

It is said of Cesar, the greatest of the Roman conquerors, that he fought fifty pitched battles, overturned the liberties of his country, and slew a million one hundred and ninety-two thousand men! Fancy to yourselves that same Cesar when the last “trumpet shall sound, and the dead

be raised incorruptible," when the Searcher of all hearts, the almighty Judge, clothed with "clouds and darkness," and "righteousness and judgment," shall come with ten thousand of his saints to execute judgment upon all—imagine, I say, that same Cesar, entering the presence of the Holy One, with the intolerable, the overwhelming weight of the wantonly-shed blood of a million one hundred and ninety-two thousand of his fellow creatures! Look at the fearful picture, and then ask yourselves if you wish to be Cesar.

Human life is short enough without employing the murderous weapons of war to make it still shorter. We shall get more heart's repose by living in brotherly love, than by shedding each other's blood. Worldly men may love war, but Christian men cannot do so without denying their Leader and their Lord. The gospel forbids and condemns war, and a man under the influence of Christian principles can no more become a wanton advocate for war, than he can become a robber on the highway. Show me one that would willingly encourage war, and I will show you one who is an unchristian character, whatever may be his rank and his profession.

Have I spoken too plainly? It cannot be. The words of the Redeemer are so clear, so intelligible, that it is impossible to mistake them.

“A new commandment I give unto you, That ye love one another ; as I have loved you, that ye also love one another. By this shall all men know that ye are my disciples, if ye have love one to another,” John xiii. 34, 35.

If love to each other be required as a proof of our love to the Redeemer, will not hatred to each other be received as a proof of hatred to him? If the word of God be true, “wisdom is better than weapons of war.” Let us follow after forbearance, and forgiveness, and mercy, and love, and peace ; but let us set our brows as brass, and our face as a flint, against the sin and the sorrow of cruel, relentless, and ungodly war.

War, though arrayed in scarlet, emblazoned with banners, and attended with drums and trumpets, with all its shouts of victory, its extended conquests, and its glittering glory, is still the blackest plague-spot of sin, the ally of Satan. Engendered by the lustful covetousness of the human heart, it spreads its blasting influence and ruthless desolation. Its presence is a curse, its breath is cruelty, and its progress inseparable from sighs and tears, and libations of human blood. “Whence come wars and fightings among you? come they not hence, even of your lusts that war in your members?”

Such is war in its origin and its elements, its

object and its influence. Well, then, may we turn from its turbulent delusions, and heart-sickening enormities ; from the sins it has committed, and the sorrows it has inflicted upon the world, to the healing influences of the gospel of peace. Fallen as sinful man is from the glory of his first creation, how different does he appear, even now, when urged by evil passions, and when restrained by Divine grace ! When, despising the law of his Maker, he breathes persecution and slaughter against his fellow creatures, what a contrast does he present to what he is when, animated by Christian benevolence, the language of his heart is "Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill toward men !"

But though it be well to abhor contention and bloodshed, and to "follow after the things which make for peace;" though it be well to live in peace "one with another," and to seek that "peace of God which passeth all understanding;" yet there is a war in which every true disciple of Christ must engage. This is the crusade against evil, the holy war against sin that must be incessantly pursued. "War to the knife," cried out a warrior, "against the enemies of our country." "War unto death," cries the Christian, "against the enemies of our souls."

"I delight," said the apostle, "in the law of

God after the inward man ; but I see another law in my members, warring against the law of my mind, and bringing me into captivity to the law of sin." This is the contention that we must maintain : every sincere seeker after peace must engage in this war.

This is a war of the members against the mind ; the flesh against the spirit ; darkness against light ; evil against good ; earth against heaven ; Satan against God ! We have every thing to hope or to fear ; all to lose or to gain ; defeat is irrevocable ruin, and victory is never-ending gain.

It must be a fearful thing to cast a glance over the field when the battle is set in array, and opposing armies are ready to rush forward into the sanguinary strife ; and still more fearful to be a gazer when the conflict is begun ; when the trampling of iron hoofs, the clashing of swords, and the roaring of cannon, are mingled with the shouts of the charging hosts, and the dying and the dead lie scattered on the ground.

It is not a battle-plain of this kind on which the Christian warrior is called to contend, yet does his heart at times sink within him when confronted by his manifold foes. He has declared war against sin, and all the powers of sin and darkness have declared war against him. No quarter is to be given on either side ; the Christian

must slay or be slain, conquer or be conquered. He has drawn the sword, and flung the scabbard to the winds. He must fight out the battle; for in this war there is no truce, and no discharge will be granted.

Let us look for a moment on the host that is gathered to oppose him:—the world, the flesh, and the devil. These great captains lead on their countless hosts—their numberless temptations. Covetousness comes at the head of his golden standard. Pride, with all its trappings, advances with his troops; and the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eye, and the pride of life, are joined together as a threefold cord not easily broken.

Then come a crowd of terrors to shake the Christian's soul, a fearful train of coming judgments, a carnal mind, that is ever at enmity with God, and an array of thoughts and imaginations of the heart, that are evil continually.

These, and many more such opponents, without limit to their number, has the Christian to withstand. Art thou affrighted, feeble follower of the Redeemer? Take courage, though thy enemies be countless as the sands; more are they that are for thee than those that be against thee. Thou hast the people of God on thy side, armed with prayers which, through faith, are mighty to pull down the strongholds of the adversary. Thou

hast innumerable saints and angels, a great multitude which no man can number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues. Thou hast the whole army of martyrs, and goodly and precious promises without end, all yea and amen in Christ Jesus. Thou hast the word of the Eternal with thee, flying as a flaming angel to overthrow thy foes and to comfort thy heart. And, lastly, thou hast thy Leader, the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Captain of thy salvation, going before thee in the glorious warfare. His example speaks, his voice animates, his Spirit enters thy heart, to sustain, revive, and encourage thee. He points to "the blood-stained banner of his cross," and promises that thou shalt be more than a conqueror through Him who has loved thee, and lived and died for thee. Take courage, feeble follower of the Redeemer! On — Christian, on! Tread in thy Leader's steps. Be faithful unto death, and a crown of eternal life shall be thine.

SKETCH IN A RETIRED LANE.

DID you ever particularly regard a tree, a shrub, or a flower? This may appear a strange question, and yet again will I repeat it: Did you ever *particularly* regard a tree, a shrub, or a flower?

That you have *seen* these things, and frequently stopped to admire them, I do not question; but that is not regarding them in the sense that I mean. Did you ever look on them with an eye sparkling with wonder and delight; with a keen, unutterable sense of what is beautiful, united with a high and holy reverence for the Almighty, whose wonder-working hand has so profusely adorned the dwelling-place of sinful man with trees, and shrubs, and flowers? If you have not done this, you know not the enjoyment that the works of creation are capable of affording.

Not an hour has elapsed since my return from a morning walk, which led me along a green, retired lane, occasionally branching out into a wider space of broken ground, for the most part

covered with furze bushes. The trees, the shrubs, and the flowers, seen while yet the dew of heaven was upon them, while the morning breeze was blowing, and the glorious sun lit up the skies, gave a thrill of rapture to my heart. Let me describe the scene : it may be that the sketch may impart a higher tone to your thoughts when next you walk abroad on an autumnal morning, and gaze around on the works of creation.

I had been closely pent up for weeks and months, in the neighbourhood of a crowded city, without having once wandered from it so far as I then was. The country, and the country air, were novelties, and I gratefully enjoyed the one and the other.

There was a keen sense of the fair and beautiful in nature, and a warm rush of grateful emotion, that made my uplifted eyes swim again. I could not look on earth or heaven, without being struck with the profusion, the almost prodigality of goodness, manifested by the Father of mercies. The earth was overhung with an azure canopy, and clouds of dazzling white, edged with glittering gold. In my walk mine eye had glanced around on a distant prospect of hills and plains, and woods and water, that gave back the sunbeam ; while around me stood, at different distances, the venerable oak, the towering elm, and the romantic

fir ; but I had now entered the shady lane that I spoke of, where in my pathway, and almost beneath my feet, glowed the yellow-blossomed furze bushes, absolutely dazzling me with their yellow glories.

My very delight became painful to me through its excess ; nor can I hope to impart a sense of my emotions to one altogether a stranger to such feelings. Every object appeared as a picture, not executed by the puny pencil of a mortal being, but painted by the almighty hand of the Eternal.

There I stood, bending over a furze bush, as if I had never gazed on one before. Through its interstices might be seen the brown and faded parts of the shrub, with here and there a ladybird, with its hard red wings, dotted with black, crawling among them ; but on the upper part, its myriads of fresh green thorns were studded with almost an equal number of pure and spotless flowers, spangled with dew-drops. It seemed as if the blooming, beaming, and almost blazing bush had been called into existence and clothed with beauty to give me pleasure ! It was regarded by me as a gift from the Father of mercies, and I stood over it with a heart beating with thankfulness.

A little farther on, the long straggling branches of the blackberry bramble hung down from the

high hedge : the sight was a goodly one, a perfect picture : the fresh green leaves, mingled with others somewhat sere ; the red-coloured stems, with their white pointed thorns, short, hooked, and strong ; the fruit, partly unripe, green, and red ; and partly ripe, rich, juicy, and black as ebony, waiting to be gathered. The melons and pines of the banqueting board could not have surpassed, in my estimation, the bounteous feast that was thus spread before me.

The next object was a hawthorn bush, entangled in whose long spiky thorns grew a wild rose, rich with scarlet hips. The parsley-shaped leaves of the bush, the ten thousand red bright berries that adorned it, together with the wild rose, was another picture glorious to gaze on.

Close to the hawthorn bush sprang up a wild young plum-tree, gorgeous with a profusion of colours ; for the sharp night air and the bleaching winds had changed the verdure of its leaves, so that faded, green, yellow, ash-colour, white, red, and deepest purple vied with each other.

Below the plum-tree, and close against the bank on which the hedge grew, stood a thistle, four feet high. It was a glorious plant : such a one, that, if thistles were not common, would be transported to the gay parterre, tended with care, and exhibited with pride ; yet there it was, with

its pointed leaves and purple flowers, now blooming unnoticed, save by my admiring eyes.

At the very foot of the thistle grew luxuriantly the romantic looking fern-root: divide it as you may, to the very last its fragments bear a resemblance to the whole plant. It gave a character to the spot, for, in my estimation, it is one of the most elegant plants that grow. A spider had woven his filmy web across it, thus imparting to it an additional charm.

I was absolutely bewildered with the amazing freshness and beauty of every object around me. I cast a hurried glance on the furze bush, the bramble, the hawthorn, and the wild rose; the plum-tree, the thistle, and the fern; I looked up to the snowy clouds in the blue sky, and the language of my heart and soul was, "O Lord, open thou my lips, and my mouth shall show forth thy praise," Psa. li. 15.

OLD HOUSES.

AGAIN, my friends, I have got an odd subject for my address. Most people like to look at new houses, especially if they have any thing remarkable about them ; now I like to look at an old one.

It may be said of a new house, that whether it be of brick or stone, lofty or low, the builder himself does not know who will inhabit it. Many a man, who has a broad house built for him, lies in a very narrow one by the time it is completed. No one can say of a new house, whether it will be the mansion of joy, or the habitation of sorrow ; or venture to guess if its inhabitants will walk in the way that leadeth to eternal life, or hurry along the downward road to destruction.

An old house is a text, nay, may prove a profitable sermon to a reflecting old man, on the instability of earthly things. He regards the broken tiles, the tottering chimneys, the cracked window-panes, the mouldering walls, and the shattered

doors, hanging down on their rusty hinges ; and, as his eye wanders over the desolate tenement, his thoughts turn to that crazy habitation, his own body, and he sighs, as he passes on, "In spite of patching and plastering, the old house must come down at last."

What a world of pains are taken to hide the ravages of time ! An old house is often made to look like a new one, but it is an old house, my friends, after all. What if you do paint it with fresh paint, and point it with new-made mortar ; will pointing and painting raise up the stooping walls and strengthen the rotten timbers ? No ! no ! Your plans and contrivances will only answer for a time ; do what you will, the old house must come down at last.

I have heard of sad accidents occurring, when the tenants of old houses have been careless in keeping them in repair, and especially when they have neglected to take warning by the bowing walls and decaying beams, that the building was about to come down altogether. Many have begun repairing too late, and some have been buried in the ruins of their own habitations. It is much the same—no ! it is much worse, when, reckless of our lives, or regardless of our health, we needlessly run into danger, or live in an irregular manner, thereby injuring our health ; but what

fearful consequences follow when an aged and infirm person still calculates on a long life! when the hair turning grey, the furrowed brow, the loss of teeth, the dim eye, the weakly voice, and the faltering step, are all disregarded; till death, like a sweeping tempest, suddenly smites and shakes down the time-worn tenement. My aged friends, do you think of these things? You have had a long lease of it, but, for all that, the old house must come down at last.

These crazy tenements of ours are but ticklish property, for, though they are tenanted by immortal souls, there is no security for their enduring even an hour. We cannot make them proof against fire or water; nor insure them against plague, pestilence, or famine; battle, murder, or sudden death. How easy it is to talk of these things to others, and how hard to bring them home to ourselves! We speak well, and act ill. We pass ourselves off for wise men, when we know that we are very fools. But whether we think or act wisely or weakly, time moves along, and takes us along with it.

Every day I feel more and more that I am an old man, and that, though the time may be delayed a little longer, my remaining strength must pass away. Yes! yes! It is a sure and certain thing, that the old house must come down at last.

When I rise in the morning, my cough at times troubles me. My appetite is not quite what it once was. When I walk abroad, my gait is slower than it used to be; and if I drop my stick, I pick it up gently. When I sit down to read, I am fonder than I used to be of a large print, and my spectacles slide a little further down my nose. I love quietness better than bustle. At night, too, my chamber candlestick is taken up half an hour earlier than it was last year. In short, though I am blessed, on the whole, with good health, and pass for a hale, hearty old man, I do feel, as I said before, getting older every day, and the truth oftener comes into my mind, "Have a care, Humphrey, for you have had many warnings; and so sure as you have had them, the old house will come down at last."

Do not suppose, my old friends, that because I thus speak, I am over anxious for you to lose time in beautifying or repairing your weather-beaten habitations. It is not the tenement, but the tenant, that I wish you to be looking after; and if I begin by drawing your attention to the body, it is only that I may end by leading you to the preservation of the soul.

Not that I purpose to weary you with my reflections. I wish rather to call forth your own, for one of your own reflections on this subject will be

more useful to you than ten of mine. An hour's secret communion with your own heart will do you more good than listening to me for a whole day. I want to wind you up, and set you going, like a watch; and when I have done that, I may safely leave you to yourselves.

Remember, then, that when the old house falls, the tenant has to look out for another habitation. Have you fixed upon yours? Is it built on the sands by the sea shore, or on a rock? When the floods rise, and the rains beat upon it, will it stand or fall? Is it a poor, perishing, earthly abode, that will soon pass away; or "a building not made with hands, eternal in the heavens?"

If you have thought of these things, you have acted wisely; and if you have not, think of them now; consult the wise Master Builder, and then, though the old house must come down at last, you will be received into new and everlasting habitations.

WHO IS OLD HUMPHREY?

THIS question has been asked again and again, and as the old gentleman is rather backward in giving an account of himself, a few observations may prevent a great many mistakes.

If you meet a man with a proud look, who appears to disdain those whom he elbows in the crowd; who, absorbed in his own importance, passes by persons and things without observation; that man is *not* Old Humphrey.

If you observe a man speaking harshly and imperiously to another, visiting a trifling offence with unreasonable severity; muttering bad words to the cab-driver who has splashed the mud over his clean stockings; or kicking the porter who has accidentally knocked off his hat with his burden; you may conclude to a certainty, that, whoever he may be, he is *not* Old Humphrey.

If you notice a fat, comely-looking man, with a red face, dressed in a black coat and white waistcoat, sitting at a city feast, either at the Guild-hall or the Mansion House, though he may be a good sort of a man in the main, you will be wrong if you imagine him to be Old Humphrey.

If you see an old gentleman striding away from a poor woman who has fallen down in a fit; or thrusting a poor country-looking lad from the causeway for walking on the wrong side; or kicking a blind beggar's dog from under his feet, you must have strange notions of human character if you suspect him to be Old Humphrey.

If you find a man over-reaching another in a bargain; pinching and screwing an extra shilling from the wages of a poor workman; circulating an evil report of his neighbour; propagating a slander with industrious ill-nature; or ridiculing the afflicted, that man *cannot* be Old Humphrey.

No! no! The old gentleman has oddities, whimsicalities, and infirmities enough about him; but he is neither inclined to indulge much in luxury, nor to give pain to those around him. If he ever runs the point of his umbrella into the face of the passer-by, or treads on the heel or the toe of a fellow pilgrim in this world of sorrows, depend upon it, it must be by accident. A man may be as like the old gentleman in appearance as one pea is like another, but if he carry a churlish and unkind heart in his bosom, the wolf and the lamb are not more different in their natures, than he and Old Humphrey.

But if you see an elderly, sober-looking man, parting two passionate lads who are fighting;

giving twopence to a poor girl who has by accident broken her jug, to make all right again ; picking up a fallen child out of the dirt ; guiding a blind man carefully across the street ; or hesitating for a moment whether an importunate beggar is an impostor or not, and then deciding in his favour : if you see such a one, so occupied, he is not unlikely to be Old Humphrey.

If in the house of God, either in a retired pew, or standing up among the poor people in the middle aisle, you see a stranger, a man of years, regarding the minister as a friend, listening to the words of eternal life with thankfulness, and gazing with a fixed eye on the preacher, while he describes the sufferings of the Saviour of sinners, many things in this world are more improbable than that he should be Old Humphrey.

If you ever observe a thoughtful person, somewhat stricken in years, after talking with, and putting something into the hands of a weary and meanly dressed traveller, or turning out of the turnpike road, and leaning over a gate to admire the glory of the setting sun ; or gazing on the tall elm trees with an expression of admiration ; or following with his eyes the green-bodied dragon fly, as it lightly skims over the surface of the rippling brook ; or sitting by the side of a ditch, poring, with interest, over a foxglove, a thistle, a

daisy, a sere leaf, a lady-bird, "toad, frog, newt, nettle-top, or dandelion;" if, ever and anon, he looks up, amid his speculations, to the clear bright sky, with an expression of reverence and thankfulness, you have very good grounds for supposing him to be Old Humphrey.

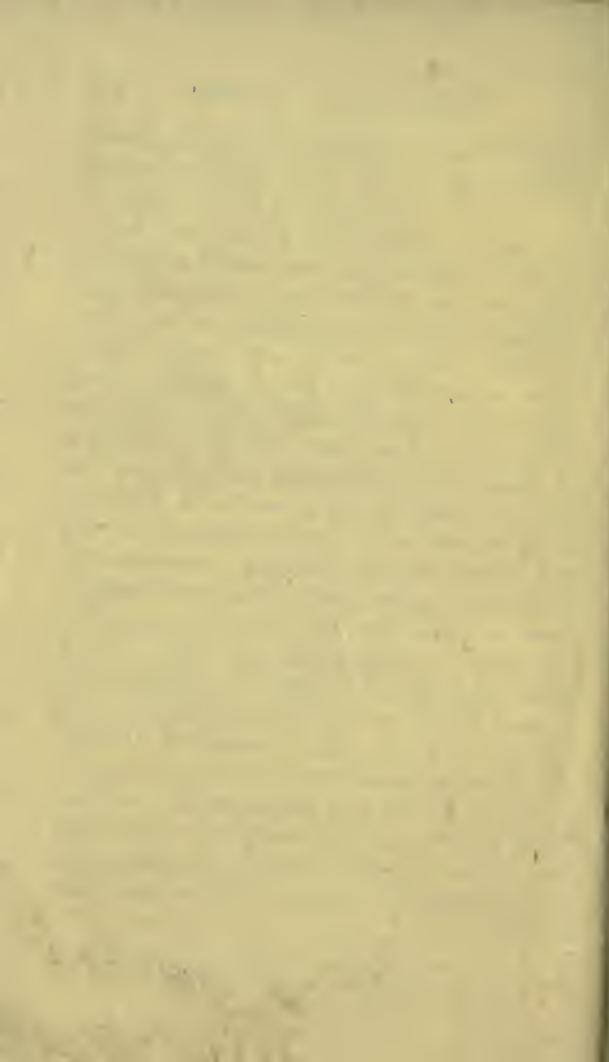
If, in any village churchyard, not more than twelve miles from London, you observe an old gentleman poring over a time-worn gravestone, stocking up the grass with the end of his walking-stick, to get at the date; if he muses over some lowly green hillock in the unfrequented part of the burial-ground, longer than at the beautiful sarcophagus, or the costly mausoleum, with the hatchment sculptured on its side; keep your eyes on him, he is not half so likely to be the lord mayor of London, as he is to be Old Humphrey.

If you meet an ancient man, with a kind-hearted countenance, who, as he passes a throng of playful boys, softly speaks, "Bless ye all, my little merry hearts! may you be as free from sin as you are from sorrow!" or ejaculates, as a pale-faced woman, habited in black, with a crape bonnet on her head, moves on with a dejected air, "May thy Maker be thy husband, and thy mourning be turned into joy!" or who comforts a little orphan boy, patting him on the head, and speaking to him of a heavenly Father, and quoting to him, "When my father and my mother

forsake me, then the Lord will take me up"—follow him up closely, for it is ten to one but he will turn out to be Old Humphrey.

And, lastly, if, in your rambles, you notice a man with a walking-stick under his arm, on whose brow threescore years and ten sit smilingly, whose eye lets nothing pass, and passes nothing without observation; if he be neither tall nor short, wearing a decent black coat on his back, and black gaiters half way up his legs; if he stoops a little in the shoulder, with a lock or two of grey hair straggling from under his hat, rather broad in the brim: if he takes a passing glance at every publisher's window, print shop, and book stall; if he looks round occasionally, like one longing for an opportunity of doing a kind action; if he pulls out an old pocket-book, and smiles while he notes down a sudden thought, or makes a record of something that has engaged his attention; and if, as you pass by, your eye sees on his paper, "No. 56, Paternoster Row," turn round, go up to him at once, hold out your hand, and, while you give him a hearty shake, look him in the face, and tell him, though you never set eyes on him before, that you are quite positive he can be no other person in the world than Old Humphrey.





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