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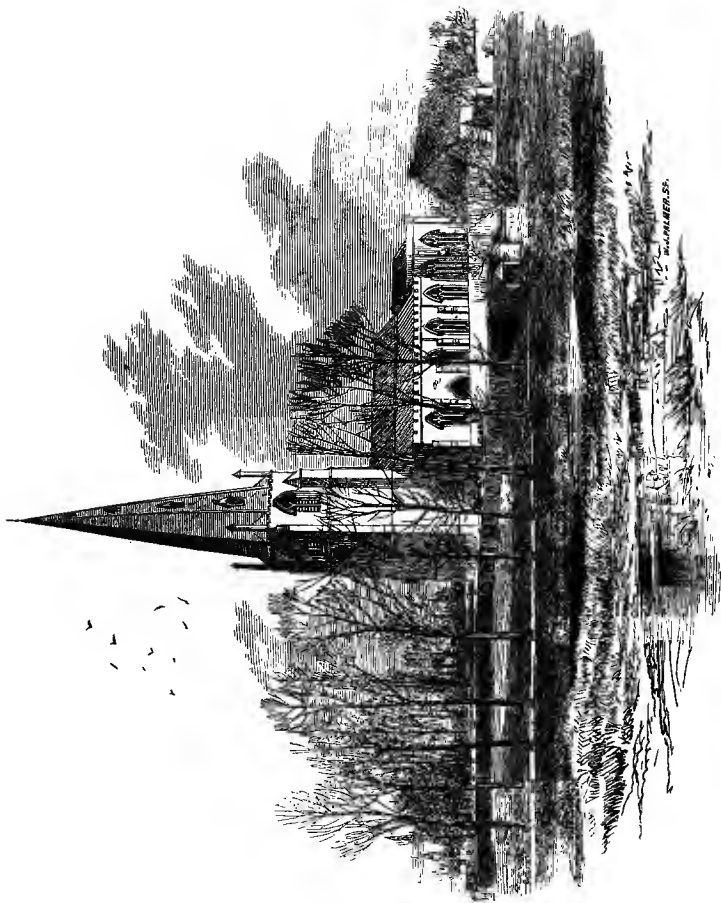


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Olney,

and

The Lace-Makers.

London :

William Macintosh, Paternoster Row.

—
1864.

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“ A LITTLE spring had lost its way,
Amid the graas and fern ;
A passing stranger scooped a well
Where weary men might turn.
He walled it in, and hung with care
A ladle at the brink—
He thought not of the deed he did,
But judged that toil might drink.
He passed again, and lo ! the well,
By summers never dried,
Had cooled ten thousand parching tongues,
And saved a life beside.

A dreamer dropped a random thought—
'Twas old, and yet 'twas new—
A simple fancy of the brain,
But strong in being true ;
It shone upon a genial mind,
And lo ! its light became
A lamp of life—a beacon-ray—
A monitory flame.
The thought was small, its issue great ;
A watch-fire on the hill,
It shed its radiance far adown,
And cheers the valley still.”

I.

OLNEY—BEDFORD—BUNYAN—TURVEY—THE REV.
LEGH RICHMOND—THE DUKE OF KENT.

IN olden time our forefathers attached great importance to certain localities, rendered famous by the lives or deaths of certain men who were esteemed to be in some way serviceable to the interests of the Church; and periodically made pilgrimages to their shrines, expecting thereby to secure to themselves some corporeal or spiritual benefit. Chaucer, in his "Canterbury Tales," supposed to be told during a pilgrimage to the shrine of Thomas A'Becket, has very graphically portrayed the abuses attending these peregrinations; which so bedimmed the illustrious memory of even very good men, that our forefathers of the Reformation were only too glad to rid them-

selves of customs, out of which, when the spirit had departed, evil only seemed to arise.

And so perhaps we have gone sometimes to the opposite extreme, and have not sufficiently put ourselves in sympathy with the wisdom of the really Good and Great who have gone before, by the light of whose labours we see our way more clearly than many generations preceding us.

Indeed, many seem to have no time to think of the past at all; and as little to penetrate into our own country, very far remote from the railway stations, cab-stands, or telegraph offices,—artificialities of life which have become so necessary to our comfort, that it requires a very considerable effort for town-bred people to think of being without them; although mind and body would be alike refreshed by a sojourn where they have not intruded. We live in an age of such

excitement and bustle, that to make the least impression on our minds, everything must be new and startling, or—to use a very expressive word of recent coinage—decidedly “Sensational.” We have good reason to be thankful that we live in this age of railways, telegraphs, and newspapers, when the active virtues are better appreciated than they were sixty or seventy years ago: but we have trials of our own from which our great grandfathers were exempt; and there are few even of those who have been long and earnestly engaged in the luxury of doing good, who do not sometimes feel gradually stealing over them, a craving for a temporary rest in some quiet old place, remote from the noise and turmoil of modern town life.

Just such a place is OLNEY: it remains very much as it was eighty years ago, and *then* it was considered old-fashioned. Perhaps one reason why, with its literary

associations, it should have remained stationary, is its distance from a railway station; for it stands nearly in the centre of a quadrangle, formed by the North-Western, the Great Northern, the Midland, and the Northampton and Peterborough Railways, being eight or nine miles distant from any station.

In childhood I had learned to love many of the "Olney Hymns;" and at school, Cowper's descriptions had delighted me; so when the opportunity came, I was only too glad to visit Olney.

"Going to OLNEY," exclaimed a friend;—"Where is that? Oh yes! the 'Olney Hymns,'—and Cowper lived there, did he not? Well, really I never thought of that being a place one could go to now-a-days."

And it did seem more like a dream than a reality, the idea of being wafted into a region so poetic to Cowper's eye, that its sweetness, embalmed in his

beautiful word-pictures, has rarely failed to bring soul refreshment to sick and weary hearts; and has opened the eyes of many a mind to the appreciation of common beauties and homely virtues.

Most of us are familiar enough with the name,—for as long as we can remember, we have seen “Olney Hymns” on the top shelf in the book-case, standing beside the “Pilgrim’s Progress,” “Boston’s Fourfold State,” “Richmond’s Annals of the Poor,” “Scott’s Life,” “Cowper’s Poems,” and many others well known to the last generation, when interesting Sunday books were scarce:—but farther than this, we of the present time know less what or where Olney is, than too many of us care to confess.

OLNEY, then, is a very small town in the north of Buckinghamshire, about ten miles from Northampton. The inhabitants number about 2,400, having remained much the same for the last cen-

tury. They are generally very poor, and occupied in Agriculture, Lace and Shoe making; but the residence and labours among them of good and great men have helped to raise the minds of many above the poverty of their circumstances, who evidence by their lives that "Godliness with contentment is great gain." The average estimate for each poor person's living, or rather vegetating there, is three shillings a week, though very many have to live on much less. They seldom taste meat of any kind; and drag out a mere existence on bread and tea, which many sometimes find difficulty in procuring. Were it not for the Ladies' Clothing Society, they often could not get any clothes; yet by their example they might teach, what many persons need to learn—gratitude for the mercies they possess.

Having had great enjoyment in visiting OLNEY, I have a great desire to share it with you, dear reader, that you may

likewise have the pleasure of taking an interest in the people as well as the old associations of that little known, yet world-famous town and neighbourhood.

Perhaps the most profitable hour I ever spent was at a meeting, where silence reigned for nearly an hour; and although the immediate change from the busy world outside, to perfect stillness within, was strange,—it may have been that the transition from worldly thoughts and surroundings to the silent companionship of those whose communings were supposed to be with the Highest, acted sympathetically; but certainly both myself and companion realized that it was good to be there.

With somewhat similar feelings, I suppose, I anticipated my visit to Olney:—nor was I disappointed. Having gladly left behind me the multitudinous sights and sounds of London, I stopped one beautiful July day at the Sharnbrook Station of

the Great Northern Railway. Waves of sorrow surging even then, have since rolled over my heart, but the soft shimmer of the leaves, the velvety look of the emerald turf bordering the road-side, and the hedge-rows wreathed with sweet wild flowers, remain clearly photographed in my memory of that nine miles' drive, and give daily a deeper sympathy with the Poet's verdict:—

“God made the country:—man the town.”

For those to whom saving of expense and time are no objects of consideration, the most decidedly pleasant route is by Bedford, on the Midland Railway, from King's Cross; as thus there is the opportunity of visiting Bedford, in the Jail of which Bunyan produced that charm of our childhood, “The Pilgrim's Progress,” one of the instances of how God can overrule the afflictions of His people for His own glory, and the good of man.

On the way to OLNEY, from Bedford, the tourist passes through Turvey, the various institutions of which, through the fostering care of the resident proprietor, retain the impress of the large-hearted, clear-headed, planning, teaching, training, and management of the late Rev. Legh Richmond, for twenty-two years the Rector of Turvey, though perhaps better known to the world as the Author of "The Dairyman's Daughter," "The Young Cottager," and "The Negro Servant," the production of which gave the first impulse to the Tract Society. There is a singular agreement between the account in Mr. Grimshawe's Memoirs, published more than thirty-five years ago, and the present state of Turvey; doubtless much owing to the constant care of Mr. Higgins, who has spent many thousands of pounds in restoring the Church, building Schools, a Working Men's Institute, Cottage Improvements,

and everything that money can procure for the happiness or welfare of the community. There is something truly great in the thought of a man thus practically recognizing the duties of landed property, and making them his life business.

It is pleasant also to know that a man possessing so much influence upon the community at large, both by speech and pen, did the work of his own little parish faithfully and wisely; and that so far as man was concerned, it did not go unrewarded. "Seest thou a man diligent in his business?" said the wise man; "he shall stand before kings;" was true in the case of Legh Richmond, for he was many years Chaplain to our beloved Queen's father, and followed him to the grave. This beautiful tribute to the Duke's memory is from Mr. Grimshawe's Memoirs:—"Charity in him lost its patron; the cause of God its firm and unshaken supporter; and illus-

trious rank its ornament and example. Testimonies like these are instructive to the living, while they are honourable to the dead. They prove that in this country, whenever exalted station is adorned with corresponding virtues, and consecrated to high and noble ends, it never fails to obtain the best of all kinds of homage—the homage of the heart.”

The *least* expensive way to reach Olney is by the third class afternoon Train from Euston Square, which stops at the Wolverton Station, whence the omnibus goes every evening to Olney.

“ I was a stricken deer, that left the herd
Long since. With many an arrow deep infixed
My panting side was charged, when I withdrew
To seek a tranquil death in distant shades.
There was I found by One who had Himself
Been hurt by archers. In His side He bore,
And in His hands and feet, the cruel scars.
With gentle force soliciting the darts,
He drew them forth, and healed, and bade me live.”

THE TASK.

“ God has a definite LIFE-PLAN for every human person,
guiding him and her, visibly or invisibly, towards
some exact thing, which it will be the true signifi-
cance and glory of their lives to have accomplished.”

II.

A WALK THROUGH OLNEY—COWPER'S HOUSE—THE
SUMMER HOUSE—THE CHURCH—REV. JOHN NEW-
TON—REV. T. SCOTT—REV. H. GAUNTLETT.

OLNEY consists principally of one long wide street, with various odds and ends of out-of-the-way places. Many of the houses have gable ends towards the street, and are very old and rough looking; but substantial and clean in appearance, owing to their being built of a kind of freestone which does not gather much moss. One bears the date A.D. 1570.

The centre of the village widens into a kind of triangle, called the Market-place; one of the outlets of which is Silver End, the St. Giles's of Olney. On the south of this Market-place is the old house where Cowper resided for nearly twenty years with Mrs. Unwin. It now

belongs to Mr. W. Collingridge, who has let it to several tenants.

Two or three doors off I used to visit an old lady who recollected sitting on Cowper's knee, and was very proud of stirring her fire with the Poet's poker, which seemed rather the worse for wear. She was one of the few remaining links between the present and a bygone age; which are quickly passing away. When I saw her last winter, she was failing very gradually, and has since died.

Cowper's Summer-house, from which he dates one of his letters, describing it as not much bigger than a sedan chair, is built of wood and plaster, with a red tile roof, and is in excellent preservation. As the garden is now let separately from the house, let us go round this corner to the left, to ask for the key at the door of Mr. Anthony Morris, in whose possession it is, and who always seems so pleased to be asked for it, that we almost feel on better

terms with ourselves for having given him the opportunity of conferring the favour. Here we are, seated in a veritable Poet's corner. Poor common-place humanity has been trying to make a niche for itself in the Temple of Fame, the walls, door and ceiling, being one mass of scribble of visitors' names, many having come immense distances for the purpose of seeing it.

There are lace makers sitting at their work, singing at the doors of those very same cottages, just as they did when they so sweetly soothed Cowper's mind by singing his own beautiful hymn—

“Oh, for a closer walk with God!”

And *here* is the gate which Cowper had put up for his own use, that so he might, without the trouble of going round the street, visit his friend the Rev. John Newton, when they were composing the “Olney Hymns” together. In imagination, for the hinges have long since grown too rusty, we pass through it into the

Vicarage garden and house, and find ourselves near the Church. It is in the early English style; and the spire, which is 180 feet high, makes a fine appearance in the landscape. It has a beautiful peal of bells, and an excellent clock which chimes several tunes.*

The clergymen of Olney have frequently been in advance of their generation. Doctrines and duties which in them were singular, are now commonly acknowledged.

I have somewhere heard or read, that down from the Reformation, even in the darkest times, here the Gospel has been faithfully preached; and that passage comes home to the mind with peculiar force, "The righteous shall be in everlasting remembrance;" for the names of

* At present there are four Sunday services; but owing to the pressure of local circumstances, it is much feared that the number will have to be reduced—to the sorrow of many.

these good and holy ministers have been as household words. Moses Browne, John Newton, Thomas Scott, Melville Horne, Christopher Stephenson, and others, have left the impress of their minds upon the people's hearts and lives.

HE whose name we are most accustomed to associate with that of Olney, as being the chosen friend of Cowper, requires our first attention. A famous man used to say that everybody some time or other would be the better or the worse for having but spoken to a good or a bad man. Few could speak to John Newton without being the better for it.

Like most men, who have done much to help their fellow creatures, he had a good, loving mother, who took such an interest in his education, that though she died before he had reached his seventh year, she had given him a taste for reading, and had stored his memory with many valuable things, besides portions of

Scripture, Catechisms, Hymns and Poems. The remembrance of his dedication to the ministry by her prayers previous to his sixth year, restrained him from many sins into which he would otherwise have fallen, and after a lapse of nearly thirty years decided him to enter the Church.

He seems to have been remarkably susceptible of good female influence, and is one of the many instances of the value and power of attachment in guiding youths aright at a time when all else seems to have lost much apparent power of control. When about seventeen, he first saw his future wife, then a little girl of fourteen, who, till he found his Saviour, seems to have been his guiding star, and afterwards his best earthly blessing. Soon after, he was, through his own carelessness, impressed on board a man-of-war, made a midshipman, deserted, and was flogged. In his rage at his consequent hardships and indignities,

he formed the design of murdering the captain, but desisted, because he could not bear that she should think ill of him. The ship into which he exchanged was engaged in the slave trade, and he preferred remaining a slave at Sierra Leone to returning with the mate of the vessel, and was for three years shamefully treated by his master's wife, herself a slave.

By the intervention of a friend of his father's, he was rescued. It is remarkable that during all this time his only comfort was the study of Euclid, which he completely mastered. He had seen, suffered, and done much evil; but he had a strong will, which, when turned in the right direction, made him a means of great blessing. He had received no literary instruction whatever after he was ten years old; but by dint of an inflexible purpose, and an excellent understanding, he became during his voyages a proficient in Latin, learnt the rudiments

of Mathematics and French; and later, when on land, acquired a fair knowledge of Greek, Hebrew and Syriac. Desperate as he had been in wickedness, defying both God and man, a feminine tenderness seems to have lurked in his nature. "He could live," says his biographer, Mr. Cecil, "no longer than he could love."

"I see in this world," he once remarked, "two heaps, human happiness and human misery. If I can take but the smallest bit from one heap and add to the other, I carry a point. If a child has dropped a halfpenny, and by giving it another I can wipe away its tears, I feel I have done something. I should be glad indeed to do greater things, but I will not neglect this." No words could convey a more forcible impression of the importance of not deeming any sorrow too insignificant for interposition, or show in stronger colours the tenderness of his own disposition.

Though his principles and conduct had long been fixed, he was not ordained to the Curacy of Olney till he was nearly thirty-nine years of age. He filled it for nearly twenty-two years ; after which, by the kindness of his friend Mr. Thornton, he was transferred to the more congenial sphere of St. Mary Woolnoth, London, where he preached till after his eightieth year, and which for many years was the rallying point of those who at that time had most interest in the promotion of living practical religion.

His house was open to Christians of all ranks and denominations, where, like a father among his children, he used to entertain, encourage, and instruct his friends, especially younger ministers, or candidates for the ministry ; where also the poor, the afflicted, and the tempted, found an asylum and a sympathy, which they could scarcely find, in an equal degree, anywhere besides.

His preaching and conversation were characterised by very quaint common sense, such as—

“True religion is an habitual recollection of God and intention to serve Him, and this turns every thing to gold. We are apt to suppose that we need something splendid to evince our devotion; but true devotion equalizes things:—washing plates and cleaning shoes is a high office, if performed in a right spirit.”

“My principal method of defeating heresy is by establishing truth. One proposes to fill a bushel with tares; now if I can fill it first with wheat, I shall defy his attempts.”

“Candour forbids us to estimate a character from its accidental blots.”

“The Lord has intentions far beyond our ken, for opening a wide door, while He stops the mouth of a useful preacher. John Bunyan would not have done half the good he did, if he had remained preaching in Bedford, instead of being shut up in Bedford prison.”

“Sometimes I compare the troubles which we have to undergo in the course of the year to a great bundle of fagots, far too large for us to lift. But God does not require us to carry the whole at once; He mercifully unties the bundle, and gives us first one stick, which we are to carry to-day, and then another, which we are to carry

to-morrow, and so on. This we might easily manage, if we would only take the burden appointed for us each day ; but we choose to increase our troubles by carrying yesterday's stick over again to-day, and adding to-morrow's burden to our load, before we are required to bear it."

In his singular personal experience and mental characteristics, we see much whereby we might account for many of his religious views ; and partly the reason why these when grafted on to less genial dispositions, produced sometimes a less satisfactory result than was expected by those with whom they were considered all powerful. The doctrine, that God, out of His own full and free love, had purchased *him* personally by the precious blood of His own dear Son from the consequences of a broken law, was to his mind an incentive to, rather than an immunity from its requirements, requiring from him a life devotion of grateful service to those most needing it for *his* Saviour's sake.

We grievously err if we suppose his to have been a cold, narrow-minded, heaven-circumscribing creed. No man ever cultivated more earnestly the love of his fellow Christians, or made greater efforts to bring others lovingly within the fold of the Good Shepherd. But men seem to have varying spiritual gifts, fitting them for different spheres of usefulness. His were eminently calculated to build up believers in their most holy faith.

Now the Rev. Thomas Scott, who after a short interregnum succeeded Mr. Newton at Olney, was if possible a still more remarkable man, though not in the same way. He was not so generally attractive as a preacher; yet his acquaintance with Scripture was so minute and comprehensive, his general knowledge so extensive, and his power of reasoning so acute and logical, that he seemed almost like an intellectual giant among children; and

those who heard him benefited exceedingly. He was a man calculated to give an impression to his age rather than take one from it. In reading the memoirs written by his son, one cannot help admiring his stalwart, brave and honest character, in the progress of his search after truth, and the almost instantaneous adaptation thereto of his life, as he gradually reached one stage after the other. He had for many years previously been Curate at Stoke, Ravenstone, and Weston, all within a short distance of Olney, and had derived great benefit from the friendship and example of Mr. Newton. He was a man of most extraordinary ability, and his maxim was, whatever he did, to do it with all his might. Naturally, he had a proud and rugged temper; but from the time he first subjected his mind to the teaching of the Gospel, he so set himself to the study of self-control, that he became especially eminent for the very qualities

of which he had previously been deficient. He was always at work, always busy, always redeeming time; yet never in a hurry. His very relaxations were often equal to the diligence of others. But it was not merely incessant labour which distinguished him: for his attention was always occupied by his proper work. He was not merely studious, but studious of what was immediately useful. From an early age he was almost entirely self-taught; the only education he received having been at a Grammar school, from the age of ten to fifteen. He had no aid afterwards from masters, small means for the purchase of books, little sympathy or assistance from friends, and scarcely any access to great collections. A few first-rate works formed his library, and these he thoroughly mastered; yet he produced a Commentary, which since its first issue has been universally acknowledged as a standard Work. He never remitted his

exertions in improving his works; and after thirty-three years bestowed on his Commentary, was as assiduous in revising, as he had originally been in composing it. The marginal references alone cost him seven years of labour.

The lesson of his life is almost sublime in its simple grandeur: that of a young man entering his life business on a definite plan, with the clearly defined object of thoroughly mastering every department of it, going on with it, never growing hopelessly weary, completing it, and only ending the fifth revision with his death.

As in the case of most Biblical Commentators on a large scale, the business part gave him great trouble and anxiety for many years, but God vindicated the honour of His servant, and never allowed him to be put to shame: "Not one thing that he feared came upon him, but every hope was realized or exceeded."

He was for some time Chaplain at the

Lock Hospital, and held some other Lectureships in London.

For many years, at Aston Sandford, he trained the first Church Missionary Students; and at the age of sixty-one commenced the study of Susoo and Arabic, for the purpose of reading with them.

Some of his notions were almost erratic, or at least inconsistent with what many would consider common worldly prudence. Some of his maxims were—"Serve God *by the day*, and trust him *by the day*." "Never flinch a service because nothing is paid for it: when you want it in reality, you or yours, He will pay it." "*Trust in the Lord, and do good; dwell in the land, and verily thou shalt be fed.*" "You cannot do a better service to the world, than by bequeathing to it a *well educated* family. Let this be *your* care, the rest will be the Lord's."

He was singularly successful in train-

ing his own family. They all turned out well, and if I mistake not, the Rev. T. Scott, Chaplain of the London Hospital, is one of his grandsons.

He had a considerable amount of medical skill, by which, about the time he first went to Olney, he saved many lives from the effects of the Small Pox, which at that time was rife in the neighbourhood; although he seems to have roused the ire of the people by the vigorous perseverance of his remedial measures, which ran counter to their prejudices against fresh air and thorough cleanliness. The expense to which he subjected himself on this occasion was remarkably met, by a person from whom he neither before nor after received money, sending him £15. 5s., which covered it.

He was also very fond of gardening. On his death-bed, he sent for his son, for the purpose of mentioning "something

of a worldly nature." He says, "I expected, of course, that he had some communication to make respecting the arrangement of his affairs. But to my no small surprise, he said it was time for planting his usual crop of potatoes for the poor; and he begged that I and my brother would take steps for doing it, in a manner best calculated to secure the benefit to those for whom it was intended after his decease." A remarkable instance of "the ruling passion strong in death."

He was the "London clergyman" whom Mr. Charles, of Bala, mentioned as having given him such encouragement in his desire to supply the Welsh people with Bibles in their own language, his efforts in London ultimately leading to the establishment of the Bible Society.

With very limited personal means, he yet always managed to be helping some one forward; and very few of his relations were not, some time or other,

obliged to that very brother whom they had formerly almost despised.

THE REV. HENRY GAUNTLETT, the father of "the Gathered Lily," (published by the Tract Society,) is remembered with especial reverence by many of the present generation: it may have been the efficient aid which he received from his large family, and his sympathy with them, had given him general influence with young people. He took much interest in Missions, and trained some of the Church Missionary Students at Olney, previous to the establishment of the Institution at Islington.

After a long course of usefulness, as well as much trial, he died suddenly, though not without that kind of intimation which God's servants sometimes receive, that their earthly labours are about to end. On the evening previous to that of his death, he had been writing his Easter Sermon, and had finished the

following beautiful paragraph, which in the circumstances is so remarkable, that I quote it. The subject was 1 Cor. xv. 20, "Now is Christ risen from the dead," and it ends thus:—

If, beloved brethren, you are risen with Christ, you have no reason to dread the approach of death. Your final and bodily resurrection cannot indeed take place till you have passed through the grave. It is appointed unto you once to die: but your Redeemer has taken away the sting of death. Is death dreaded by you because it is the wages of sin? But Christ has procured the forgiveness of sins by His death, and has declared the justification of every believer by rising from the dead. Are you afraid of the pains of death? But Christ has gone before, and smoothed and sanctified the way; and He has promised to accompany you, when you are called to pass through it. You may therefore say with the Psalmist, "Though I walk through the valley of the shadow of death, I will fear no evil, for Thou art with me; Thy rod and Thy staff they comfort me." Fear not, then, Christian; you need not be afraid of its consequences. To die will be to you everlasting gain. You are united to Christ by His Spirit; immediately after death your soul will be still more closely united to Him, though your body will be consigned to the

tomb; and when the glorious morning of the resurrection shall arrive, then the perfect union shall take place, when by His mighty power He shall raise you from your bed of death, and make you like Himself. "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." The body is sown in corruption; but it will be raised in incorruption: it is sown in dishonour; it will be raised in glory: it is sown a natural body; it will be raised a spiritual body. The resurrection will give you beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, and the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness. Then God Himself shall "wipe away all tears from all eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain; for the former things are passed away: and He that sat upon the throne said, Behold, I make all things new. And there shall be no more curse; but the throne of God, and of the Lamb shall be in it, and His servants shall serve Him. And they shall see His face; and His name shall be in their foreheads. And there shall be no night there, and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever."

Newton, Scott, and Gauntlett, are good
representatives of the life-influence of

some of the phases of religious thought to which the Church has been successively awakening, viz.:—The necessity of personal heart conversion, resulting in life devotion and assurance of God's love:—The privilege of God's children in being allowed to work with and for their Father, leading to an accurate and earnest study of His Word, that so they might better know and do His will:—And the living interest with which the study of ancient prophecy has invested the acknowledged representatives of His people Israel, with whose future are bound up the destinies of the human race. Another wave of thought has evolved the practical results of our realization that He has kept His Word to a thousand generations. And now

“It is with words respecting the coming kingdom, that we are to comfort one another, and well we may: for thence bursts forth a glory that illuminates our darkness; which throws a light upon the whole Word of God; and all the way in

which He is leading us. It is full of joy, and ought to be no less practical in its influence. It lets us see that service is our glory. Now we shall have our penny-a-day, our daily provision, received in the evening, in the time of trial, or of darkness; and this we shall have whether we have wrought long or short in the vineyard. So much all that labour receive; none are promised more in this life; and none will receive less. All who labour for God shall have, now in this present life, all that is absolutely necessary for them.

“The reward is different in the morning of the resurrection. Then, when they are able to bear it, shall they that have made much for God in this stewardship, be more exalted in the kingdom, and be intrusted with a larger distribution of Divine goodness. Let us then labour truly and fully for God; and verily we shall be fed. Let us liberally give ourselves, and all that we have unto God; and verily we shall in no wise lose our reward. O may the Bride now arise from the dust, disentangle herself from all the bands with which her enemies, and still more her false friends, have bound her; and let her indeed make herself ready: The Lord is at hand!”—“*World to Come.*”—*Wilson.*

III.

“It is not only large Associations and wealthy Societies, with vast machinery, that have won great things for the Church of God. How much has been accomplished by means of solitary individuals, single minds and single hearts, bringing to bear upon others the power of that special gift with which God has endowed them for His service ! Of these latter, also, it may be said, it is not so much by what they have themselves performed, as by the activity they have infused into other minds. Vaughan says of Schleiermacher, ‘He did not so much desire to found a school, as to stimulate individualities.’”

III.

TEACHING OF MR. NEWTON AND MR. SCOTT NOT ALL
LOST—INEQUALITY BETWEEN THE WORK TO BE
DONE, AND THE PROVIDED MEANS—SUGGESTIONS BY
THE RURAL DEAN OF FORDHAM, CAMBRIDGESHIRE.

Doubtless at Olney, as elsewhere, many might have more fully availed themselves of their great religious privileges: yet among the poor there are to be met some of the clearest thinking and most contented Christians; and the clergymen preach as if they expected to be understood.

It has been said by persons of quite opposite opinions, that Newton and Scott both saw at Olney the inefficacy of their style of preaching in producing moral reformation; but they are not the only true-hearted men who have been dis-

couraged at their own seeming want of success. Does not God in His Word tell His servants to sow in faith, promising that the fruit shall appear, though it may be, as in the present case, after many days? But Mr. Scott himself said, six years after he left Olney, that he found he had done more good than he thought.

True, opinion may vary as to the desirability of preaching a one-sided view of truth anywhere: but we must all agree that where the memory of departed excellence lives in the hearts of a people, enabling them, amidst much trial and discouragement, to persevere contentedly in doing what is right and kind, their Pastors' labours have not been in vain in the Lord.

We should endeavour to judge fairly of the past, by remembering that to such men we owe a great deal of that remarkable awakening to *practical* Christianity now distinguishing the Church, but in

which she has been growing for the last eighty or ninety years.

The living of Olney is valued at £124 a year—a noteworthy example of the need there is of greater consideration with regard to the necessities of a neighbourhood in the appropriation of the Church funds.

Judging by the poverty of the people and the work to be done, one would think the clergy here should certainly have larger means at their disposal than they have in the smaller villages round. With no resident landed proprietor on whom would naturally devolve the honor of taking the lead in forwarding their efforts to help these poor but industrious people, and hampered at every turn for lack of the temporal means necessary for the vigorous performance of almost any efficient parish work, little need we wonder if sometimes the clergy should grow faint and weary at the sight of so

much physical want and suffering, which might, with the aid of a little money and thought, be so easily alleviated.

We have already, in passing through Turvey, seen what may be done by the combined employment of head, heart, and wealth. For want of the latter, Olney languishes; although during the recent Cotton distress the inhabitants sent £70 to Lancashire, the poorest contributing gladly their halfpence to help those they considered worse off than themselves.

In John Newton's time, Mr. Henry Thornton made him his Almoner to the extent of some hundreds annually; but no one thinks of doing anything of the kind now, although the poor are just as numerous and as needy as they were then.

One cannot help wishing that the suggestions lately thrown out by the Rural Dean of Fordham, Cambridgeshire, were generally acted upon. Speaking of

the want of funds to carry out certain advisable measures, he said:—

Firstly. I think it only right that we should bring such a subject before the landed proprietors of the several parishes. I know in many instances they are non-resident; nevertheless, I believe they are much more willing to respond to any reasonable appeal that may be made to them, than we might think.

Secondly. The parishes in this Deanery vary in many respects. Some are comparatively rich, and others poor. Why not apply to the richer parishes throughout the Deanery to assist the poorer, by Sermons and Collections?

Why not, indeed?

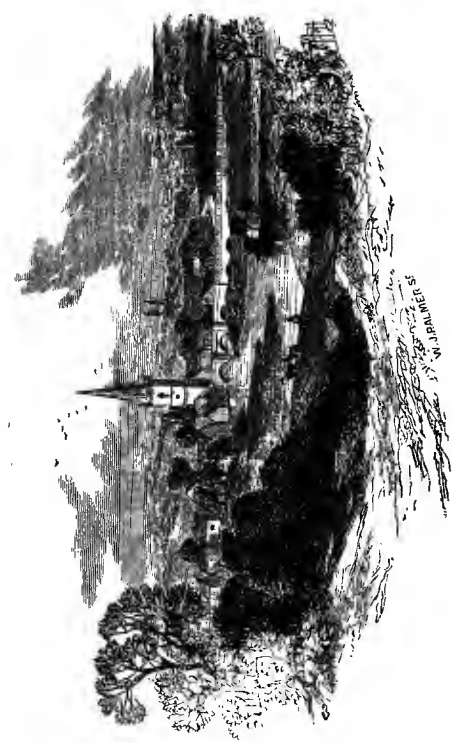
At many of our watering places, such as Brighton, Bath, Cheltenham, Hastings, Leamington, Malvern, Torquay, as well as in Town, there are whole congregations of comparatively rich people, many of whom are without any parochial ties whatever of a pecuniary nature. Could not their clergy bring the subject before them of any particular parish, the wants of which they might themselves

know, or which with a little trouble they could easily find out; and thus be the happy means of opening up new channels, whereby this and other forgotten corners of the Master's vineyard might be irrigated and nourished, blessing both giver and receiver with the means which are now wasted, often with great personal and relative injury.

Stewardship involves responsibility. In these places there are also many more residing who derive their wealth from rents and manufactures; but who for health or pleasure have sometimes virtually abandoned the duties which property entails. To such persons certainly, their temporary ministers owe the duty of setting forth plainly what is due to those whom God has entrusted to their care.

IV.

“ We have gained some knowledge worth having, in the day when we have read for ourselves any fresh page of human life, and reflected upon it. We must do this before we can understand how to help the sorrowful and aid the deserving. The relief bestowed by first impulse does them very little good, but every method of helping them effectually to help themselves, is worth all the study and prayer bestowed upon it.”—LIFE WORK.



W. J. PALMER SC.

IV.

THE BRIDGE—BEAU AND THE WATER LILY—THE
SCHOOLS—THE LAME BOY AND HIS MOTHER.

Near the Church is the Bridge, which is long in proportion to the width of the river, on account of the swampy nature of its banks. Cowper has made its predecessor famous in his opening lines of the fourth book of "The Task."

"Hark! 'tis the twanging horn o'er yonder
bridge,
That with its wearisome but needful length
Bestrides the flood, in which the moon
Sees her unwrinkled face reflected bright."

The river Ouse, which plays so important a part in "The Task," has an equal share in the amusements of the neighbourhood. In winter, when, owing to its extremely weedy state, it overflows its

banks, if sufficiently frozen, the boys skate very securely upon the meadows: in summer they bathe and fish in it. Pic-nics also are held on some of its numerous beautiful islets. On one occasion our craft was so often hindered by the rushes and flags, that a proposal was gravely made by one of the party to land, and take turns at playing the Ancient Briton, with his coracle on his back, till we should find clearer water. In some places the surface of the river was half covered with water lilies, perhaps growing from the same roots as those from which Cowper's dog *Beau* plucked his, when thus he drew forth the Poet's eulogium:—

“ The noon was shady, and soft airs
Swept Ouse's silent tide,
When 'scaped from literary cares,
I wandered on his side.

My spaniel, prettiest of his race,
And high in pedigree,
(Two nymphs adorned with every grace
That spaniel found for me,)

Now wantoned lost in flags and reeds,
Now starting into sight,
Pursued the swallow o'er the meads
With scarce a slower flight.

It was the time when Ouse displayed
His lilies newly blown ;
Their beauties I intent surveyed
And one I wished my own.

With cane extended far I sought
To steer it close to land ;
But still the prize, though nearly caught,
Escaped my eager hand.

Beau marked my unsuccessful pains
With fixed considerate face,
And puzzling set his puppy brains
To comprehend the case.

But with a cherup clear and strong,
Dispersing all his dream,
I thence withdrew, and followed long
The windings of the stream.

My ramble ended, I returned ;
Beau trotting far before,
The floating wreath again discerned,
And plunging left the shore.

I saw him with that lily cropped
Impatient swim to meet
My quick approach, and soon he dropped
The treasure at my feet.

Charmed with the sight, The world, I cried,
Shall hear of this thy deed :
My dog shall mortify the pride
Of man's superior breed.

But chief myself I will enjoin :
Awake at duty's call,
To show a love as prompt as thine
To Him who gives me all !”

It is much to be regretted, that some decided measures are not taken to clear the bed of the river ; as doubtless thereby much of the ague, rheumatism, low fever, and consumption, to which old and young are liable, might be prevented. In wet seasons, when the river is swollen, many of the houses are flooded.

But we have only been looking at the river from the bridge, so we shall turn back, and peep in at the National

Schools. As in most agricultural districts, there are very few boys above the age of ten at school, but here is one much older, with an intelligent face—the schoolmaster will tell you more about him. He is very lame, although much stronger than he used to be, the result of a sojourn at the Orthopædic Hospital. At one time he was left-handed, but some ladies kindly took a great deal of trouble, and taught him to use his right hand for writing. He hopes one day to be able to earn his living in some way, and he would like that this should be as seeking first the kingdom of God and His righteousness.

His widowed mother has been confined to bed for years with an internal disease, which sorely tries her faith and patience, but has been made a means of blessing to the parish: her sufferings and need giving opportunity for many thoughts and deeds of love, while her thankful-

ness for little services is almost overwhelming. The friends who have so kindly contributed to her comforts during the past year, are gratefully remembered in her prayers.

V.

“A thriftless, slatternly *woman* makes a disorderly *house*, in which there can be no ‘joy.’ She understands not the duties of a ‘*wife*,’ and she knows not how to turn it into a ‘*home*.’ She drives her husband to drink, and meets with ill-treatment from him when drunken ; and, having none to sympathise with her, she grows reckless and drunken also, to drown her despair. This is the history of two-thirds of the women of every low street of a large city, and of those in many a town, and even village likewise.”—LIFE WORK.



V.

THE LACE-MAKERS—HOW TO HELP THEM—ADVANTAGES OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION—“LACE TELLINGS.”

As I said before, the inhabitants of Olney are much engaged in lace-making ; and as the little girls are “put to the pillow” as early as six or seven years of age, they are taken away from the National Schools very young. The ladies try to make up for the loss by Evening Classes, and extra effort on Sundays, when school is open three times a day. But it seems to be a very reasonable question, whether when the lace-making is so miserably paid, it would not be better to discountenance the practice of bringing so many girls up to this kind of manufacture. At the highest price they have been able

to secure for a long time, they can only earn a very scanty subsistence, the best workers seldom getting more than four shillings a week. Ladies might do the poor people a service by purchasing their best specimens of work at REMUNERATIVE prices. It is little known as English manufacture, and generally passes for Maltese, to which it is frequently superior. Some of the collars and cuffs are beautifully even and delicate in their texture, and the coiffures, lappets, parasol covers, and the black and white laces, sold by the yard, are very handsome; and as being the work of our own poor, should certainly not be held in less esteem than that of foreigners. For years past, to procure the bare necessaries of existence, they have been obliged from infancy to labour so constantly as to be unable to give much attention to ordinary household affairs; but of course this may be remedied by paying them better for their

work, that they may not require to sit so many hours at the pillow.

As it is, many, when they become wives and mothers, are so ill prepared for their duties, that they do not know how to put on the simplest patch; and I am told that several women eke out a living by mending for the others; which is certainly better than wearing their clothes till they drop to pieces, but not the most economical way for poor people. There is also a great dearth of domestic service, which is more respectable, and a better preparation for the home duties of married life. Dr. Langley, the father and predecessor of the present esteemed Vicar, made an effort to establish a Training School for servants. Would it not be well to endeavour to revive this? Very many families, doubtless, would like to be supplied with servants from such a place as Olney, trained so as to be given health and activity in the perfect performance of

all domestic duties ; having an intelligent acquaintance with the Truth of God, and an earnest desire to recommend it by the cheerful performance of all relative duty. Surely the women of Olney have now sufficiently had experience of what is to be gained by sacrificing personal health, domestic comfort, social usefulness, and their share in the great mission of England—to the cramping, bleaching, poverty-stricken manufacture of Lace-Making ; for the women and girls have a kind of bleached appearance ; and although intelligent, seem to have almost as little idea of their circumstances being improved as the Irish, not a great many years ago, generally had. Extremely low diet, and continual sedentary occupation, may have something to do with their seeming want of hope. Weak health is also much too common. And yet some, even of the poorest, have a keener appreciation of the

beautiful in Nature and Literature, with more general knowledge, than is usual in the same class of life in England. Possibly the foundation of this has been in their religious education and poetical associations. You remember Cowper's lines:—

“Yon Cottager, who weaves at her own door,
 Pillow and bobbins all her little store,
 Content, though mean, and cheerful if not
 gay,
 Shuffling her threads about the live-long day;
 Just earns a scanty pittance, and at night
 Lies down secure, her heart and pocket light;
 She, for her humble sphere by nature fit,
 Has little understanding and no wit;
 Receives no praise; but though her lot be
 such,
 (Toilsome and indigent) she renders much;
 Just knows, and knows no more, her Bible
 true—
 A truth the brilliant Frenchman* never knew
 And in that charter reads with sparkling
 eyes
 Her title to a treasure in the skies.

* Voltaire.

Oh, happy peasant! Oh, unhappy bard!
 His the mere tinsel, her's the rich reward:
 He praised perhaps for ages yet to come,
 She never heard of half a mile from home:
 He lost in errors his own heart prefers,
 She safe in the simplicity of hers."

More than fifty years ago, Mr. Gauntlett wrote:—

"I have occasionally visited some of the lace rooms in Olney, of about six or seven feet square, and sat down with three or four females, who probably had never been ten miles distant from home, working at their pillows, or as a stranger would suppose, playing with their lace bobbins. While their fingers have been moving, with the rapidity of those of a lady performing a concerto on the piano-forte, I have been instructed, edified, and surprised at their conversation. I have on several occasions sat, with astonishment, to hear specimens of natural eloquence. I have mentally criticised the language and the sentiments of my humble and intelligent companions. I have sometimes said to myself, You have delivered sentiments which would do honour to a lady of superior education, in language which would not disgrace her.

"I have proceeded in my reflections: Well, you have, from your childhood, sat under the ministry

of Newton, Scott, Bean, Horne, and Stephenson. They have visited you in your cottages. You have constantly read your Bible, and other useful religious books. God has given you good natural talents, and you have not laid them up in a napkin. After reflections of this kind, my *primd facie* astonishment has subsided, and been lost in admiration at the effect of religious information and principles."

Upon inquiry, a friend residing at Olney has supplied me with the following particulars respecting the songs of "the Lace-Makers."

"The children learn to make lace, not so much at home with their mothers, as at lace schools kept by dames. When the lace trade was better, most boys used to learn as well as the girls; and even men used to make lace, as they could earn more at 'the pillow' than at agricultural labour. I have seen old men who made good wages at the beginning of this century."

"The 'Songs of the Lace-Makers' were

of the same class as the Nursery rhymes,

‘Hush-a-bye baby, on the tree top,’ &c.,

and were sung by the children while at work. The proficiency of the children was estimated by the number of pins they could stick in an hour. They were set so many score of pins, and counted as they went on. The singing, or rather chanting, assisted them in the counting, and also kept them together in their work. I am told that we cannot imagine either the effect of thirty or forty children’s voices uniting in this ‘sing-song,’ nor yet the aid it was to them.

“These ‘Lace Tellings,’ as they were called, were repeated over and over, the number at the beginning lessening as the task appointed neared its conclusion, as—

‘Nineteen miles have I got to go.’

‘Eighteen miles have I got to go.’

‘Seventeen miles have I got to go.’

“ It is only the very old people who remember anything about these ‘Lace Tellings,’ as they have not been used in the schools about Olney for many years. Latterly they have sung hymns, or some of the current songs of the day.

“ From the specimens we have been able to collect from the memories of the old Lace-Maker in the portrait, and one of her friends, few will be disposed to regret that the old ‘Tellings’ have become obsolete. These that follow are evidently the ‘Songs of the Lace-Makers,’ mentioned in the Northamptonshire Glossary, as assisting ‘the young worker;’ and are thrown aside with other childish things on leaving the Lace school. The ‘old and plain songs’ of Shakespeare seem rather to be the songs of grown up young women.”

“LACE TELLINGS.”

I.

“NINETEEN miles have I got to go,
Be the roads ever so dirty,
And never a penny in my purse,
But farthings five and thirty.

Ten to buy oatmeal—ten to buy salt,
Ten to buy pins and laces,
Other odd five to buy nicknacks
To please my country lasses.

II.

I'll tell my mother when I get home
What a sad thing my father's done;
He earned a penny, and spent a groat,
Burned a hole in his holiday coat.

III.

NINETEEN miles to Spangle Church,
NINETEEN miles to the green tree;
NINETEEN miles to my lady's white house,
And there you may have your tea.

IV.

Up the street, and down the street,
With windows made of glass,
Call at 'Mary Muskett's'* door
There's a pretty lass.

* The name of any girl present was inserted here.

With rosy in her bosom,
 With a dimple in her chin,
 Come all you lads and lasses
 Let this fair maid walk in.

v.

NINETEEN long lines hang over my door,
 The harder I work the shorter my score ;
 The more I do play, it sticks at a stay—
 So come, little fingers, let's twink away.

There's twinkum and twankum, and five to
 your four ;
 Them as are done first, they may give o'er :
 My shoes are to borrow, my true love's to
 seek,
 I cannot get married till after next week.

The plums are so scarce, the flour so dear,
 I cannot get married till after next year ;
 The pitcher is broken, how can it be mended :
 My work is to do, and cannot be ended."

How sadly, and yet how curiously, the consciousness of habitual poverty must have burnt itself into the people's thoughts, ere it thus found expression in earliest childhood. *Their* poverty has been our gain: the active sympathy of

Newton and Cowper with their trials, has given to "the Olney Hymns" an undying *verve*—an inexhaustible fragrance and adaptation to the expression of the wants of those who are in the Training School of Affliction.

"O *happy* they who know the Lord,
With whom He deigns to dwell;
He feeds and cheers them by His Word,
His arm supports them well.

To them in each distressing hour,
His throne of grace is near;
And when they plead His love and power,
He stands engaged to hear.

His presence sweetens all our cares,
And makes our burdens light;
A word from Him dispels our fears,
And gilds the gloom of night.

Let us enjoy, and highly prize,
These tokens of Thy love;
Till Thou shalt bid our spirits rise,
To worship Thee above."

NEWTON.

VI.

“A GREAT sorrow recasts a soul : it either draws it nearer to the Friend whose intimacy must elevate it ; or drives it into the far cold space of rebellion and despair.”—LIFE WORK.

VI.

WESTON—LADY HESKETH—OLERGYMEN'S FAMILIES
—THE SORROWS OF GENIUS.

Of course Olney has likewise had its share of social disadvantages. As in most small places, if everybody has had the pleasure of knowing almost everybody else, everybody likewise might have been acquainted with everybody else's business long before the person most concerned knew it himself, and a great deal better. The public interest in his affairs was so painful to Cowper, that he gladly escaped to the quiet little village of Weston, up this road to the left. As the distance is only a mile or so, let us follow him.

Weston is very prettily situated on the rising ground overlooking the Valley of

the Ouse. And as we ascend the hill, our thoughts filled with the remembrance of the afflicted Poet, an overwhelming realization of God's love in the gift of Jesus to us, rises within our hearts when we call to mind the influence it had upon his sorrowful life ; for although (through his mental affliction) he believed himself to have no share in the blessings purchased by Jesus, he lived to bless others with that knowledge which he thought was his own condemnation, and to make them happy in the loving companionship of that Saviour, who, as he feared, had cast him out.

And we feel grateful to his friend, who gave him such free access to these beautiful woods, where

“ The calm retreat, the silent shade,
With prayer and praise agree ;
And seem by Thy sweet Spirit made
For those who follow Thee.”

There stands the cheerful, old-fashioned house where the Poet lived with his good

cousin, Lady Hesketh, while he translated Homer ; and our hearts warm at the remembrance of her example of true hearted, judicious, sisterly devotion, to which we owe so much of the development of Cowper's genius.

It was this same house which Mr. B. Higgins nominally let to Mr. Scott at half its rent, but in reality never took any money, the only acknowledgment he ever permitted being a hamper of pears from a particular tree in the garden, for which he sent a regular receipt. And a sweet little cabinet picture arises before our imaginations, as we think of him afterwards, under less favourable auspices, as Curate of Olney, correcting the proof of his sermon on Repentance, or gathering in the materials for his Commentary, with the baby on his knee, or his foot rocking the cradle, his wife working beside him ; the one room serving for study and nursery, because they could not afford

separate fire and candle, and be at the same time kind to the poor. And filled with these remembrances, we endeavour to solve that very difficult problem, gravely suggested by one of his biographers, as to how far a young clergyman, with no fortune, is justified in burdening himself with the care of a family on only £80 a year. And the circumstances being favourable to reflection, other questions suggest themselves; such as—In such a state of things, whether, after all, as in the Church of Rome, a clergyman may not really be better fitted for training his people to the practice of family religion, as being himself shut out from the various troublous experiences of trying to bring up a gentleman's family on the income of a moderately paid mechanic? But hush! what are we thinking of? All this was settled for us long ago, when our fathers protested against that notion, "Forbidding to marry," as being one of

the marks of Antichrist. Besides, is there really any necessity for such a state of things? Is anybody to blame? Who is it? Might not those who have this world's goods sometimes make things pleasant, by shewing a little more liberality to "those who preach the Gospel;" and at least save them from being obliged to deny themselves to the genial influences of family affection?

Some of us can recall how we felt in childhood, that the clergyman who had children of his own was so much more nicely kind; and long before we could appreciate his teaching, won our love to what was best for us.

We lovingly remember the bright eyes and busy hands of many clergymen's daughters, whose lives have been a daily blessing, and who were a constant sunshine where most needed in their fathers' districts—their most efficient Visitors and Sunday School Teachers.

And we have also known her whose life has been the embodiment of all wifely, motherly, and friendly duty; whose presence seemed to bring with it moral strength and healing power; her husband's most faithful coadjutor, supplement and rest. And now, when the profession of faith in Christ is beginning to be regarded less as a mere death-bed viaticum, than as a life-confession of gratitude—when children may give their hearts to Jesus, and yet expect and hope to enjoy a long life devoted to His service—when women are allowed to find their sphere of labour in preparing the way for the world's regeneration—when the clergyman's "duty" is no longer fulfilled by so many rounds of Church Services for the benefit of the few grown-up idle people, who are glad of anything to save themselves from the miseries of *ennui*—it is only fair that he should have all the HOME-HELP he can. This cannot well be

the case, if he remain unmarried, or if his own and his wife's mind and time be constantly harassed with the small cares attendant on bringing up a family, with the stinted means of a merely vegetating existence; and if his children have gradually to learn that their first and last duty in life is to look out for themselves. Instead of having some little stock of their own from which they may, as is expected of them, minister to the wants of others, through the privations of their infancy and youth, too many clergymen's families become permanently enfeebled. He should be an illustration of the efficacy of believing prayer, and an encouragement thereto. The prayer of the righteous is, "Give me neither poverty nor riches; feed me with food convenient for me;" and his Master's stewards should see that his prayer does not go unanswered.

Here is the usual entrance to Weston

Park, the scene of "The Winter's Walk at Noon," where we can easily verify the truthfulness of Cowper's word-painting: for, with the exception of changes wrought by time, every spot may be identified, even to the ascent, where

"Ancle deep in moss and flowery thyme,
We mount again, and feel at every step
Our foot half sunk in hillocks green and soft,
Raised by the mole, the miner of the soil."

One can scarcely conceive how it brings out the beauties of the poetry, and even enhances the interest, to read it under the same auspices as those by which it was inspired.

The ability to recognise and appreciate the efforts of a Great Genius, in endeavouring to make his conceptions intelligible and useful to common minds, has been placed next to that of being one's self a Genius. Excellence in almost any pursuit, usually has the effect of isolating him who aims at it, from ordinary sym-

pathy and companionship. Few, if any, of those among whom his lot is cast can understand, and still less enter into, the intensity of either his sorrows or his joys. The utmost he need expect from those nearest, is toleration of his seemingly idle vagaries, until they have either won golden opinions, or the stamp of public approbation has given currency to perhaps the least valuable of his thoughts. When fortune smiles upon his efforts, so do his friends ; but the first of her rewards generally comes too late for him to do much good with it ; and the other, when those have passed away for whose sake alone fame was ever of any value.

A great and good man has well said, " All great and good thoughts are truthful and practical, and true poetry itself is so. But when poetry is realized, slow and shallow minds lose sight of the poetry, as if it were not in the facts before them.

They look at the outside of the materials, and forget to look for what is in them. They admire the carved foliage of the chapiters, but see not the shechinah ; they are dazzled at the blazing brilliance of the gems upon the high priest's breast-plate, but discern no divine meaning in their renderings of light ; they handle the wires of the electro-telegraph, but perceive not the tractable lightning, and feel not the grandeur of the thought, that man has made the glittering arrows of the Almighty the medium between soul and soul hundreds of miles apart. They acknowledge that the prophet's words are poetical when he says, that for stones they shall have iron ; but they see nothing of this truth in thousands of miles of railway, and the means of bringing this broad fair world of minds into one compact and sensitive community. The poetry of truth is nothing to those whose business is only *a trade* ; and knowledge is valued

only as a saleable commodity, by those whose souls live in the market." *

And another, in true sympathy with Columbus, when working out his ideal search for a new continent, has educed this very practical suggestion :—

“ Still on our way, with careworn face,
Abstracted eye, and sauntering pace,
 May pass one such as he ;
Whose mind heaves with a secret force,
That shall be felt along the course
 Of dim Futurity.

Call him not fanatic or fool, *
Thou stoic of the modern school ;
 Columbus-like, his aim
Points forward with a true presage,
And nations of a later age
 May rise to bless his name.”

The Poet's laurels need not be envied, for they are won with difficulty. Like the flowery thyme on the mossy bank which we have just been climbing, it is

* Dr. Moore's "Man and his Motives."

generally under some crushing sorrow that the soul's sweetest fragrance is expressed.

Our walk is ended:—to follow Cowper through his, would be to copy his poem, and prevent you from deriving the full benefit of this sketch, which has been to induce you to go a little out of the beaten track, to retrace paths, in memory of the sainted dead who have long since rested from their labours, but whose work on human hearts still lives.

In either summer or winter, more delightful walks scarcely can be taken than may be found in the neighbourhood of Olney. Yardley Chase belongs to the Marquis of Northampton, and is not too far for a good pedestrian. There may be seen some enormous oak-trees, which, from appearance, might be cotemporaries of the cedars of Lebanon. One feels awed in the hoary presence of these forest giants, representatives of

bygone ages. We wonder when and what must have been their prime, when their age is so majestic.

“Cowper’s Oak,” *par excellence*, is thirteen yards in girth. I suppose he was sitting in its decayed hollow, when he thus apostrophised it:—

‘Thou wast a bauble once; a cup and ball,
Which babes might play with; and the thievish jay,
Seeking her food, with ease might have purloined
The auburn nut that held thee, swallowing down
Thy yet close folded latitude of boughs,
And all thy embryo vastness at a gulp.
Time made thee what thou wast—king of the
 woods;
And time hath made thee what thou art—a cave
For owls to roost in.’”

Seldom have we the same harmonious blending of outward beauty with ennobling, heart enriching, practical thought, no less than poetical association, such as is suggested by a sojourn in the neighbourhood of Olney. Other scenery may

be more bold or romantic; but you will agree with Cowper, that

“Scenes must be beautiful, which daily viewed
Please daily, and where novelty survives
Long knowledge, and the scrutiny of years:
Praise justly due to those which I describe.”

And to his mind they were suggestive
of other

....“Scenes surpassing fable and yet true,
Scenes of accomplished bliss! which who can see
Though but in distant prospect, and not feel
His soul refreshed with foretaste of the joy?
Rivers of gladness water all the earth,
And clothe all climes with beauty; the reproach
Of barrenness is past. The fruitful field
Laughs with abundance; and the land, once lean,
Or fertile only in its own disgrace,
Exults to see its thistly curse repealed.”

VII.

“God’s love hath in us wealth upheaped,—
Only by giving is it reaped ;
The body withers, and the mind,
If pent in by a selfish rind.
Give strength, give thought, give deeds, give pelf,
Give love, give tears, and give thyself.
Give, give, be always giving ;
Who gives not is not living !
The more we give
The more we live.’”

VII.

THE OLNEY HYMNS—JOHN NEWTON AS A POET—HOW
TO SHEW OUR GRATITUDE—CONCLUSION.

The Olney Hymns were the joint production of Cowper, and his friend the Rev. John Newton.

A distinguishing mark of Genius is modesty. John Newton's self estimate is characteristic: "If the Lord whom I serve, has been pleased to favour me with that mediocrity of talent, which may qualify me for usefulness to the weak and the poor of His flock, without quite disgusting persons of superior discernment, I have reason to be satisfied."

Many of the Olney Hymns are very beautiful. If you have ever known what it is to be wearied and fretted with mul-

tipling cares, which could neither be controlled nor dismissed, how the thought of this hymn, like a breeze of balmy air across the heath-clad upland, might have cooled your fevered brow !

“ Quiet, Lord, my froward heart,
 Make me teachable and mild,
 Upright, simple, free from art,
 Make me as a weaned child :
 From distrust and envy free,
 Pleased with all that pleases Thee.

What Thou shalt to-day provide,
 Let me as a child receive ;
 What to-morrow may betide,
 Calmly to Thy wisdom leave :
 'Tis enough that Thou dost care,
 Why should I the burden bear ?

As a little child relies
 On a care beyond its own ;
 Knows 'tis neither strong nor wise,
 Fears to stir one step alone :
 May I thus with Thee abide
 As my Father, Guard and Guide !”

Many who have known the weariness of privation and perplexity, have felt their

strength renewed as the eagle's while
singing—

“ Begone, unbelief, my Saviour is near,
And for my relief will surely appear :
By prayer let me wrestle, and He will perform,
With Christ in the vessel, I smile at the storm.

Though dark be my way, since He is my
guide,
'Tis mine to obey, 'tis His to provide ;
Though cisterns be broken, and creatures all
fail,
The word He has spoken shall surely prevail.

His love in time past forbids me to think
He'll leave me at last in trouble to sink ;
Each sweet Ebenezer I have in review,
Confirms His good pleasure to help me quite
through.

How bitter that cup, no heart can conceive,
Which He drank quite up, that sinners might
live !
His way was much rougher, and darker than
mine ;
Did Jesus thus suffer, and shall I repine ?

Since all that I meet shall work for my good,
The bitter is sweet, the medicine is food ;

Though painful at present, 'twill cease before
long
And then, oh how pleasant the conqueror's
song !”

And where, out of the Bible, shall we
find the love of Jesus more simply told
than thus ?

“ One there is above all others
Well deserves the name of Friend ;
His is love beyond a brother's,
Costly, free, and knows no end :
They who once His kindness prove,
Find it everlasting love !

Which of all our friends to save us,
Could or would have shed his blood ?
But our Jesus died to have us
Reconciled in Him to God :
This was boundless love indeed !
Jesus is a Friend in need.

When He lived on earth abased,
Friend of sinners was His name ;
Now above all glory raised,
He rejoices in the same :
Still He calls them brethren, friends,
And to all their wants attends.

Could we bear from one another,
 What He daily bears from us ?
 Yet this Glorious Friend and Brother,
 Loves us though we treat Him thus :
 Though for good we render ill,
 He accounts us brethren still."

And what a gladsomeness the Christian
 pilgrim realizes in this :—

" Sometimes a light surprises
 The Christian as he sings ;
 It is the Lord who rises
 With healing in His wings :
 When comforts are declining,
 He grants the soul again,
 A season of clear shining,
 To cheer it after rain.

In holy contemplation,
 We sweetly then pursue
 The theme of God's salvation,
 And find it ever new :
 Set free from present sorrow,
 We cheerfully can say,
 E'en let the unknown morrow
 Bring with it what it may :—

It can bring with it nothing
 But He will bear us through ;

Who gives the lilies clothing
Will clothe His people too :
Beneath the spreading heavens,
No creature but is fed ;
And He who feeds the ravens,
Will give His children bread.

Though vine nor fig tree neither
Their wonted fruit should bear,
Though all the fields should wither,
Nor flock nor herds be there :
Yet God the same abiding,
His praise shall tune my voice ;
For while in Him confiding,
I cannot but rejoice."

No wonder the Olney poor bear their poverty so patiently, with these holy thoughts embodied in their birthright Cradle Hymns.

We owe a long standing debt of gratitude to the Olney Poets, as well as to others to whom these people were dear. HE whose Life has been nourished in our hearts by their labours, is looking for fruit, and has said, "Ye have the poor always with you, but Me ye have not

always:" may He also have the joy of saying, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto Me."

Many of the aged and sick in Olney suffer great privations; that which gives them the most pain, sometimes seeming to be, that they should not be able to help others worse off than themselves. And some persons who may have been most interested, may not be able soon personally to visit Olney, and yet have the ability and desire to contribute to the comforts of these poor people through the ensuing winter. This they may very easily do through the Vicar, the Rev. J. P. LANGLEY.

The following extracts give a fair sample of the state of the Olney poor. A kind friend had sent Five Guineas for their relief; and in the first, the writer is accounting for his stewardship. One cannot help hoping he may have much more of the same kind of pleasure:—

“And now I must tell you something about our doings for the poor with the money God has sent me through you.

“Our poor are *very* different from the Irish and the London poor. You visit, and become well acquainted with people here, and they make no complaints; you have to drag their circumstances from them, to know how they are off for what we count absolute necessaries of life; and they are so grateful for the least thing done for them. Of course here, as elsewhere, there are exceptions; there are black sheep whom you cannot help, as they will not help themselves.

“When Mrs. K.’s kind donation came to hand, I began to inquire among steady people with large young families, to see what was most needed. I found that very few had more than one blanket to each bed, very commonly two blankets to three beds; and in one instance the woman had to make up four beds, and had only one blanket.

“The poor seem to start with a pair of blankets when they marry. When their family increases, so as to require a second bed, they cannot buy new blankets;* so the parents spare one blanket, and make up with their day clothes, (in winter often damp and wet.) When a *third* bed is needed, they too often have to make shift with a sheet, the patchwork quilt, and day clothes.

* A labourer’s wages are only 10s. a week; and the lace-makers’ earnings rarely exceed a halfpenny an hour.

“ 1.—E. and A. K.—Husband, wife, and five children under nine : eldest boy eight years old, learning shoe-work. Girl six years old, learning lace, but neither yet earning. Husband, shoemaker; wages 12*s.* a week when in full work, which is not always the case. Rent 1*s.* 1*d.* a week. They make up three beds, but have only three pairs of sheets and two blankets. I gave them a new blanket, to their great comfort.

“ 2.—Mrs. L.—Lost her husband a few weeks ago, after a very long illness, (consumption.) The eldest girl has lately become an idiot, and is now in an asylum. There are five boys and one girl at home; of this number two are at the day-school, and four boys are at work, one of whom does not cast his earnings into the common stock, but provides for himself. They make up four beds, with three pairs of sheets and one blanket. I gave them two more.

“ 3.—W. and J. A.—Labourer, earning 10*s.* Six children under twelve years; the eldest earns 6*d.* at lace. Out of this 10*s.* 6*d.* they pay Rent 1 0

Clothing Club.....	0	4
Sick Club.....	0	5

1 9

leaving 8*s.* 9*d.* for food, fire and sundries for eight persons. Two of the children are sent out to sleep with relations. The rest managed with two beds and two blankets. I gave them a bed and

a small pair of blankets. One friend got me the tick at trade price, and *gave* me her work in making it, and another filled it with chaff. The poor woman will still have to get sheets, &c. She was *very* grateful. These people never ask for anything, and would never have told their needs if we had not gone to inquire.

"4.—J. and M. W.—Labourer, earns 9s. 6d. Four children under eleven years old, and delicate. Rent 1s. 6d. Three beds and three blankets, two of them old and thin. I gave them one more. They are very badly off for clothes: two of the boys have one garment between them, and go to Sunday School alternately. I shall probably do something more for them.

"5.—T. D., the poor paralysed man, feels the cold very much, and is only kept warm by hot water bottles. They have no fire-place up stairs; so I have bought a little stove, which I shall lend them as long as he needs. It will certainly be the kindest way of helping them.

"And so you see I try to relieve each particular case in the way that will be most helpful. You would be amused to hear the gratitude of some of the women. Several have said they have not had such a present since they were married, as the blanket. To some we have given warm stockings, to others flannel, &c. I have given already twelve blankets to ten families.

"6.—Man, wife, and six children: five at

home. The man subject to epileptic fits, which occur very frequently; he is seldom a week without them, therefore very often unable to work. The eldest boy earns 4s. per week. A girl aged twelve, generally accompanies her father to his work, or makes lace. The three younger girls are unable to do anything. One has a spinal affection, the back is very much grown out. The mother has taken her to the Infirmary, but is told the child needs good support, and should go to an Infirmary at the sea-side.

“The mother works very hard, takes in washing for the poor who are too old to do it themselves, and makes about 2 6

Boy 4 0

Parish 1 0

7 6

“Father uncertain. Rent 1s. 6d. per week.

“7.—Man, and wife (who has kept her bed for ten years), three daughters and a son.

“The man has earned 10s., but is to have now 9s. a week. The boy is often out of work; when he has it to do, he can earn 9s. The three girls earn about 2s. each, I should think, but they are hindered attending upon their mother.

“We do not consider them so badly off as some of our poor; but it is a sad life for the girls.

“8.—The man aged forty, and wife. Four boys, the eldest twelve years old. The man has been

afflicted for nearly two years with Rheumatism, and is not able to earn anything. Has been to the Infirmary three times, but derived no benefit. The doctor says an abscess is forming.* Before his illness they were tolerably well off, and pay a higher rent than the very poor, (3*s.* per week,) for which he has a comfortable cottage and good sized garden. But a succession of misfortunes has brought them very low. He is in a club, and now on half-pay, from which he gets .. 3 6

Parish	5 6
Boy	1 0
	10 0

"9.—The man, aged sixty-seven, (formerly a labourer,) has been blind for the last nine and a half years. His wife, aged seventy-three, has been lame since she was twelve years old. They are quite unable to earn anything.

"From the Parish they have 5*s.* 4*d.* Rent 1*s.*, which they always pay every week, leaving 4*s.* 4*d.* for everything else."

Early in the commencement of this present year, a dear friend asked the writer to try what could be done to help one of Christ's patiently suffering poor people at Olney, in whom she had long

* The man has died since this was written.

taken an affectionate interest. But it almost seemed as if, in the minds of most persons to whom application was made, Olney was either a myth, or had grown into some curious kind of poetic fossil belonging to the days of Newton and Cowper. There was not a little difficulty in persuading some of them that it is still in existence; although, when they knew that its inhabitants really deserved and needed their sympathy and help, they were willing enough to give both.

Is it possible to be well acquainted with the poetic, religious, and biographic history of Olney and its neighbourhood, and not take a practical and loving interest in its present state? But that our efforts for the good of others may be guided aright, we need high principles and motives for ourselves.

“How delightful when we shall all, with one heart, be disposed fully to follow our Leader,—to ‘follow the Lamb whithersoever He goeth!’

Let us look to Christ crucified : He is both the Crucified One, and the Anointed One. Christ as the Crucified One, or in regard to His humiliation, is to be considered, 1st, in His coming down into our low estate ; 2nd, His obedience therein to the Father, fulfilling the great Law of Love in our behalf, going about doing good ; and 3rd, His suffering and death, in order to atone for our guilt, and procure both our release from punishment, and our promotion to the enjoyment of the rights and privileges of the children of God.

“ Looking unto Jesus thus, we are taught to see how lost we were, when nothing short of so costly a sacrifice could save us. We see something of the extent of the gratitude we owe to God for providing us with so all-sufficient a Saviour ; and we are taught the great lesson of self-sacrifice for the good of others ; exemplified in Him who came into our world, and here lived a life of privation, and died a death the most painful and ignominious, in order to procure pardon for, and repentance in, His enemies. In His patient submission to the will of His Father, and wondrous manifestation of goodwill unto men, He hath truly given us example that we should follow His steps.

“ But we look to Jesus, not merely as the Crucified One ; we regard Him as the very Christ. He arose from the dead ; He ascended up on high, receiving gifts to give unto men ; yea, unto us who were rebellious ! He makes intercession for us,

while waiting our improvement of the blessings bestowed ; not willing that any should perish, but that ALL should come to repentance:—even that the blessed promise, which can scarcely be too often brought to our remembrance, should be fulfilled in us : ‘In the Lord shall ALL the seed of Israel be justified, and shall glory :’ Isa. xlv. 25. By all that He is doing, and will do, as well as by all He did as the Crucified One, He is teaching us His own great lesson of love. Israel cannot be raised up, except as being obedient to that Law of Love which our Saviour lived and died, and which He rose again, and ever liveth to illustrate.

This Law of Life in Christ Jesus requires that the illustration given of it, by our Blessed Redeemer, should be more fully brought out ; especially in regard to the relation in which the rich and poor should stand to each other. Christianity must be seen as providing for more than mere personal salvation ; it must be felt as teaching us that charity which hath been abundantly manifested toward us by our Blessed Redeemer ; both in His humiliation upon earth, and in His exaltation, now that He is at the right hand of the Father in heaven. He, who is one with the Highest in heaven, is also one with the lowest upon earth ; and He regards what is done unto one of the least of these His brethren, as done unto Himself.

“Our talents and influence of any kind we ought not to regard as absolutely our own: we must not think that we may either leave them unemployed, or employ them for merely our own pleasure, or others’ amusement. By the example of Christ, we are taught to seek out the lost, and earnestly endeavour their deliverance from the power of evil. In this work, it is expected of us according to that which we have: this we are faithfully to use, and God will give more. We owe it to ourselves, and to the Author of our being, that we cultivate our powers, to the utmost degree consistent with our own health, and the welfare of those around us. And to our fellow-men, in honour of God our Saviour, we are so to hold ourselves debtors, that we employ all that we are, and all that we have, in the furtherance of their greatest good,—yea, of any good, whereby we may be given an opportunity of saying, not in word only, but in very deed, ‘Thanks be unto God for His unspeakable gift.’

“Not in fragments of time that we cannot otherwise dispose of; not with powers jaded in the service of the world, worn out in the worship of mammon; but with our best, are we to attend to His living temples. We are to see that what we are given wherewith to feed the hungry, clothe the naked, shelter the homeless, teach the ignorant, recover the wandering, and render the society of the saints

and the service of God delightful, is used as the Master hath appointed. We greatly deceive ourselves if we look upon such means, and the improvement we can make of them, as our own. We must awake from this delusion, and in earnest act;—not as seeking praise, or power, or wealth, or ease, or pleasure, for ourselves; but as seeking, with all our hearts, to do good unto all, as we have opportunity. If we have literary ability, or musical talent, or any other power,—the power of teaching babes, or persuading men, or comforting the distressed;—whatever it is, should it be only like the poor widow’s two mites, or be it like the five talents left with the faithful servant, it belongs to the Lord; and He bids us use it for the good of those who need, and whom we have the power of benefiting.”—“*Mission of Elijah.*”—*Wilson.*

“ Work away !
 For the Father’s eye is on us,
 Never off us, still upon us,
 Work away !
 Work and pray !
 Pray ! and work will be completer ;
 Work ! and prayer will be the sweeter ;
 Love ! and prayer and work the fleetier
 Will ascend upon their way ! ”

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