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CHAPTERS ON FLOWERS.

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S. W. L. I. A. M. S.

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Chapters on Flowers.

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CHAPTERS ON FLOWERS.

CHAPTER I.

THE SNOW-DROP.

BOTANY is doubtless a very delightful study ; but a botanical treatise is one of the last things that I should be found engaged in. Truth shall be told : my love of flowers—for each particular petal—is such, that no thirst after scientific knowledge could ever prevail with me to tear the beautiful objects in pieces. I love to see the bud bursting into maturity ; I love to mark the deepening tints with which the beams of heaven paint the expanded flower ; nay, with a melancholy sort of pleasure, I love to watch that progress towards decay, so endearingly bespeaking a fellowship in man's transient glory, which, even at its height, is but as

‘the flower of grass.’ I love to gaze upon these vegetable gems—to marvel and adore, that such relics of paradise are yet permitted to brighten a path where the iniquity of rebellious sinners has sown the thorn and the thistle, under the blighting curse of an offended God. Next after the blessed bible, a flower-garden is to me the most eloquent of books—a volume teeming with instruction, consolation, and reproof.

But there is yet another, and somewhat fanciful view, that I delight to take of these fair things. My course has lain through a busy and a chequered path; I have been subjected to many changes of place, and have encountered a great variety of characters, who have passed before me like visions of the night, leaving but the remembrance of what they were. I have frequently, in my lonely rambles among the flowers, assimilated one and another of them to those unforgotten individuals, until they become almost identified; and my garden bears a nomenclature which no eye but mine can decypher. Yet if the reader be pleased to accompany me into this parterre, I will exhibit a specimen or two of what I am tempted to call *floral biography*; humbly trusting that He who commended to our consideration the growth of the lilies, will be with us, to impart that blessing without which our walks, and words, and thoughts, must be alike unprofitably—sinfully vain.

In glancing around the denuded garden, at this

chilling season, we can scarcely fail to fix our regards upon the SNOW-DROP, which bows its trembling head beneath the blast. Every body loves the delicate snow-drop ; I will not stop to repeat what has been often said and sung concerning it, but proceed to that of which it is a characteristic momento. Merely premising that in this, and every subsequent sketch, I shall adhere most strictly to simple, unadorned truth. The characters will be real, every incident a fact ; and nothing but the names withheld.

It was in dear Ireland, some years ago, that a pious clergyman, in reading a letter from a military correspondent, pronounced a name familiar to me—it was that of one who had been a beloved playmate in my earliest years, of whom I had long lost all trace, and who was there represented as having died rejoicing in the Lord. A few questions elicited the fact of his having entered the army ; that he had been stationed in Ireland ; had married an engaging young lady, and taken her to India ; and now, had died in the faith. I soon after learnt that the youthful widow was expected, with her mother, to settle in that very town, where they had no connexions, nor could any one assign a reason for their choice.

Months passed away, and I could not ascertain that they were arrived ; but one Sunday, long afterwards, on taking my accustomed place at church, I found a stranger beside me in the pew, whose deep weeds,

pallid countenance, and bending figure, with the addition of a most distressing cough, increased the interest excited by the lowly humility of her deportment during prayers and the earnestness of her attention to the preacher. After quitting the church, I asked a friend if he knew who she was; he replied, 'The widow of Captain——, concerning whom you have so often inquired.' The next day I went in quest of her, introduced myself as the early friend of her departed husband, and from that time it seemed as though her only earthly enjoyment was to be found in my little study.

Her story was this: she had married while both parties were in total ignorance of the gospel; their mutual attachment was excessive,—on her part extravagant. She left the parental roof, and felt no grief at quitting it: she accompanied the regiment, and found every change agreeable; for still it was her privilege to brighten the home of her beloved and affectionate husband. He was an amiable young man, moral and honourable; and while quartered in that town, he had attended the preaching of the gospel, little imagining that the warnings addressed to unawakened sinners could affect one so upright as himself. Yet the word was not lost upon him; the good seed sunk into his heart: and soon afterwards it sprang up, beginning to bear fruit to the glory of God.

Theresa's affection was of that kind which is con-

tent to do, and to be, whatever will best please its object. With the same willing and happy acquiescence that had before led her into the revelries of the ball-room, did she sit down to read with her husband the word of God, or kneel beside him in prayer. 'The world,' she said, 'was pleasant to me while he loved it; and when he forsook it, so did I: but with this awful difference, Frederick left the world, because he found its friendship was enmity with God: I turned from it because my world was centered in him.' Her husband saw this, and earnestly strove to lead her into acquaintance with herself, as the necessary prelude to her seeking the knowledge of the Lord: but in vain—his opinions were hers, in all matters, and therefore in religion; but her heart was totally unchanged.

And here I would pause to impress upon my readers, particularly the younger portion of them, the necessity for self-examination—constant and close—on this momentous point. Too frequently is the force of human attachment, the power of human influence, mistaken for the effectual working of a divine energy in the soul. A favorite preacher will sometimes lead captive the imagination, or the paramount influence of a beloved object seemingly draw the affections, into that tract whereon none can truly enter, much less consistently walk, but by the guidance of the Holy Spirit: and what a catalogue of

woes, not always to end with the present state of existence, might be exhibited as resulting from this specious self-deception ! “ We know,” saith the apostle, “ that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren.” The test, when rightly applied, is a sure one : but we cannot guard too vigilantly against that perversion of it to which our deceitful hearts are perpetually prompting us. To love Christ *in* his people, is an evidence of spiritual life : to love Christ *for* his people, is a delusion, by means of which the father of lies seals many to eternal death.

After a few removals, the regiment was ordered to India ; and with bitter anguish has my poor friend dwelt on the recollection of that year’s event. The family of her husband being people of rank, and wealthy, his outfit was rendered, by his father’s generosity, a very superior one. Valuable plate, and every thing that taste could devise for affluence to accomplish, was lavished on the young couple ; and as Theresa’s fondness, in alliance with the pride that was her natural characteristic, pleaded for the display of all that could make her Frederick an object of such respect as this world’s envy can bestow, she exerted all her influence to draw him into society which he felt to be most deadening to his spiritual energies, and destructive of the peace which he most coveted. Still his affection for her was so great as to render her persuasions irresistible : and, while the

fading of his healthful cheek, and increasing pensiveness of his eye, bespoke the internal conflict, he yielded to the snare so far as to devote many precious hours which might have been profitably spent among God's people, to associates, moral and respectable indeed, but very far removed from the ways of godliness.

Frederick concealed from his wife the extent of his sufferings, while she thus encouraged the flesh to lust against the Spirit ; but she could not be ignorant of it ; and that knowledge, as she described it, only added strength to her endeavours. She was conscious of a sort of jealousy, the recollection of which, overwhelmed her with horror : in the selfish indulgence of an inordinate attachment, she felt it as a wrong that her husband could love God better than he loved her—she sought to rival the Lord, to win from Him the allegiance of a soul that He had betrothed unto himself : and when, in the fiery furnace into which she was shortly afterwards put, all these things were called to mind—set in order before her—how fearful were the agonies of her remorseful spirit ! If I could display its writhings as she described them to me, the warning might be salutary to some who are, in like manner, provoking the Lord to jealousy, endangering a brother's safety, and braving the storm of divine indignation.

After some months passed in the manner above stated, while Frederick perceptibly drooped more and

more, under the struggle that divine grace enabled him to maintain against temptations, too frequently successful, to compromise his Christian simplicity of walk and conversation, he appeared one day to his anxious wife, radiant with joy and holy exultation. 'Oh, Theresa,' he said, 'what can I render unto the Lord for his great benefits?' I have long been a wretched, prayerless outcast, unable to pour out my soul to him. I have pined under the sense of banishment—of deserved exile from his presence. I have been forsaking him : and he almost forsook me. But on this happy morning, I have been once more admitted to my Father's throne : I have had such enlargement of spirit, such freedom in prayer, such a blessed assurance of his unchangeable love, that surely, surely, he will not let me wander any more !' She told me that his look and manner quite overpowered her selfish feelings : she was conscious of the deep cruelty of her conduct, in depriving him of such peace, such joy : she even prayed to be kept from a repetition of the offence. Her impressions were, however, then too weak and transient to have endured a trial—the Lord wrought, in a way that neither of them had anticipated : and on the very next day she saw her Frederick laid on the bed of dangerous sickness.

He recovered speedily, so far as to appear out of immediate danger ; but the medical men pronounced it indispensably necessary that he should return to his

native England without delay ; and, two years' leave of absence being granted, they embarked ; her fond bosom cherishing the confident expectation of his perfect re-establishment. At the Cape they made a short stay ; and Frederick appeared so perfectly convalescent, that he seemed beyond the reach of a relapse. Alas ! on the very day of their quitting that shore, his malady returned with such overwhelming violence, that before they had made many leagues of the long homeward voyage, not a hope remained of his reaching England alive.

It was dreadful to see the effort with which that broken-hearted creature nerved herself to tell me the sequel. Her feet placed on the fender for support, kness crushed together, lips strongly compressed, brows—such beautiful brows!—bent into an expression of sternness, and even the hectic of her cheeks fading into ghastly white—all bespoke such mental suffering, that I implored her to spare herself the recital : but in vain.

It appeared that, while Frederick, full of joy, lay dying in his cabin, the fiery darts of Satan were almost all shot into the soul of his distracted wife. She told me that she never suffered him to suspect it—that she wore an aspect of even cheerful resignation—and by so doing, increased his happiness. But whenever withdrawn from his sight, the tempest would break forth with such maddening violence, that it

was astonishing how she could survive the paroxysms. Thoughts of blasphemy, the most appalling, were continually infused into her mind : every creature that enjoyed health and cheerfulness was to her an object of such bitter envy, that she desired their death. And while contrasting the rude hilarity of some men upon the deck, who lived in open scorn of every divine law, only using the name of the Most High in jests or curses, with the wasting anguish that was dissolving the frame of her angelic sufferer in the cabin below—then, impious thoughts, wild charges against the mercy, and even the justice of the Most High, would shoot through her brain, until, loathing them as she did, while totally unable to repress them, she was many a time on the point of flinging herself into the roaring surge beneath. ‘And then, to dress my face in smiles, to go back to him, and take his hand, and tell him that the air had refreshed me—to read the word of that God whom I felt that I was defying—to kneel in prayer, seemingly a sharer in his beautiful aspirations of hope and peace, and joy and thankfulness—you know it not—oh, may you never know it !’

The closing scene was at hand ; and while she hung in quiet despair over his pillow, he told her, with a look of sweet sympathy, that the Lord would soon bring her to Himself ; but that he saw it needful first to remove the object of her exclusive attachment.

‘My death will be the means of bringing you to Christ ; and Christ’s death has opened for us both the way to God. Fear not, my beloved Theresa—only believe.—We shall sing a new song together before the throne of the Lamb.’

Poor, poor Theresa ! A few days more would have brought them to anchor in the English port ; and at least she would have been spared the awful solitariness that surrounded her, when, without one outward solace, she sat watching that lifeless clay, extended before her in the calm still beauty of death. She described herself as having undergone the most extraordinary change, from the moment of his decease. The smothered tempest under the outbreakings of which she had expected, and even hoped to die, passed away without a single burst. A cold, dull, quiet endurance succeeded : not unmixed with transient gleams of hope, as his parting words again and again passed through her unresisting mind. Yet she was roused, by what I can well suppose must be one of the most heart-rending sounds pertaining to this world of woe—the *plash* that told her when that form, so long and fondly loved, was indeed descending into its watery grave—and the ship rolled on—and even the eye of such love as Theresa’s might never, never catch a trace whereby to discern the spot of his obsequies. Ocean was his tomb : and who should reveal in what chamber of the mighty mausoleum those

cherished relics had found rest, until that day when the sea shall give up its dead!

As yet, no real peace had visited the soul of the mourner : the enemy was restrained, that he should no longer inflict on her the torture of his blasphemous suggestions : but grief, corroding grief, ate into the vital principle. She was desolate, and a widow, moving to and fro : looking for some manifestation of that divine love, of which the first breathings were yet hardly perceptible in her soul ; yet without any energy of prayer, any confident hope, or such a measure of faith as might enable her to lay hold on one of those promises, whereof she was very certain that her dear husband was enjoying the glorious fulfilment in heaven.

In this wretched state, Theresa returned to the home of her widowed mother ; but there she could not remain. She pined for the ministry under which her departed husband had first received a blessing, and gave her mother no rest, until she consented to remove to that place, where, on the first Sunday after their arrival, we were brought together in the house of prayer.

Theresa had taken the infection, while tending the death-bed of her husband. Consumption, lingering, but confirmed, had shewn itself before I saw her ; grief had bowed her once elegant figure, and I cannot look at a snow-drop without recognizing her very

aspect,—every lock of hair concealed beneath the widow's cap, which scarcely surpassed in deadly whiteness the countenance that drooped beneath it.

But let me render thanks to God, that, speedily as the outward form decayed, the growth of spiritual life within was far more rapid. She had found mercy, and I never beheld such intense application of every faculty to the one great work of searching the scriptures ; such fervent importunity for divine teaching ; such watchful discrimination in securing the wheat and rejecting the chaff, while listening to the various instructors who proffered their aid to this interesting inquirer. In trembling humility and self-distrust, she no less resembled the snow-drop, which looks as though the lightest zephyr would rend it from its stem : but, strong in the Lord and in the power of his might, rooted and grounded in faith, she still, like the snow-drop, maintained her assigned place, unmoved by storms that carried devastation to loftier plants around. Popery, infidelity, antinomianism, were casting down many wounded in her path ; but God had indeed revealed to her the pure doctrines of gospel truth, and beautifully did her growing conformity to Christ evidence that the clearness of her views was not merely an operation of the mind—it was an illumination of the soul.

Yet though enabled to rejoice in spirit, sometimes with joy unspeakable and full of glory, her earthly

sorrow pressed heavily on the heart so early bereft of its idolized treasure. To me alone was the privilege allowed of numbering over with her the little relics of by-gone hours ; and of gazing on his miniature ; where the beautiful features, that never seemed to have lost the noble simplicity of expression that characterized his childhood, recalled many endearing little incidents to my mind, on the recital of which she dwelt with sad delight. One occasion I well remember, when the depth of her feelings was displayed in a singular manner ; and this I often think upon, when revelling in the contemplation of my flower garden at the height of its glory.

She came to me one morning, and found me still in my bed, suffering from a sore throat. A basket of flowers had just arrived from a distant friend, which, moistened by a shower of rain, I dared not then unpack. When she entered, I called out, ‘Theresa, you are just the person I wanted. I can trust precious flowers in your careful little hands ; and you shall arrange them with all the taste that you are mistress of.’ She threw a hasty glance on my blooming store, smiled very faintly, then, seating herself beside me, entered in conversation. After a while, I reminded her of the flowers : ‘Presently,’ was the answer ; and she then commenced a long history of her childhood, which was indeed one of extraordinary interest. Hours passed away ; and I, seeing the flowers

begin to droop, once more asked her if she intended to let them die? She rose, with a long sigh; and kneeling down beside a chair, slowly commenced arranging the rich variety before her. I thought she had never looked so touchingly forlorn, as when, with her black garments spreading around, and her pale sorrowful face bent over the glowing heaps of roses, carnations, and every brilliant child of June, she pursued her task, filling several vases with the bouquets thus formed.'

She brought me my dinner, and then dressed, and conducted me into my study, where she had placed the flowers with such exquisite taste, that I cried out in delight, 'Oh Theresa, you shall be my florist in ordinary: what a beautiful display you have made!' She seated herself by my side on the sofa, kissed me, and said, 'Now, after this, you are never to doubt that I love you.'

'Doubt it, my dear friend! I could not if I tried: but you have given me stronger proofs of it than this, much as your taste and ingenuity are now displayed on my behalf.'

'No—I never gave you such a proof before!'

She then burst into tears, and told me that her passion for flowers was as great as even mine: that it was Frederick's daily task, when in India, to go out every morning and cull the most splendid blossoms of that glowing clime, which he always arranged in

her boudoir, and upon her beloved piano, with as much care as he bestowed on his military duties. The long voyage had separated her from the world of flowers during his illness : and when, after leaving him in the depths of ocean, she first beheld those smiling remembrances, such a horror took possession of her poor lacerated mind, that, as she solemnly assured me, she would rather have taken the most noisome reptile into her hand than a rose. Voluntarily, she never entered a garden ; because of the almost unconquerable desire that she felt to trample every flower into the earth. She had struggled and prayed against this ; it was a species of delirium over which time seemed to have no power ; and it was to avoid a task so torturing that she had engaged my attention for hours, in the hope of my forgetting it until after her departure. ‘When I kneeled down before the chair,’ said the sweet mourner, ‘I prayed that the sense of all your love toward me might prevail over my dreadful reluctance ; and it did.’ Then, after a pause she added, with another burst of tears, ‘I dont think I could have done it, if you had not loved Frederick !’

Not long after this, I was surprised by seeing in her own apartment a single, soft white rose in a glass. She pointed it out to me, saying, ‘I am following up my, or rather your conquest ; it is too ungrateful, that because God has seen fit to resume the dearest

of all his gifts, I should spurn from me what he yet leaves in my path !' I understood the nature of her struggle ; and, trivial as it may appear to those whose minds are differently constituted, I could appreciate the honesty of her efforts to overcome what too many would have delighted to indulge, as the offspring of feelings that could not perhaps have existed but in a remarkably sensitive and imaginative character. She laboured to bring all into the captivity of willing obedience to Christ : thus yielding strong evidence of a growth in the grace that was preparing her for glory. I watched, for twelve months, her progress towards heaven ; and greatly did she desire to die, where alone she had truly begun to live ; but duty called her elsewhere, to the fulfilment of a painful, though sacred task. She applied her remaining strength to the work, and then lay down in peace. Her death-bed was described by a pious minister as presenting a foretaste of heavenly triumph. Her ashes repose beneath the green shamrocks of her native isle ; her spirit rejoices in the presence of her redeeming God.

CHAPTER II.

THE FURZE-BUSH.

‘ NOTHING venture, nothing have,’ is one of the homely sayings against which sentence of banishment has been pronounced from the high places of what we are pleased to call refined society. When I scrawled the adage in my first copy-book, I thought it exceedingly wise ; and reduced it to practice a few evenings afterwards, in a merry holiday party, where the old game of snap-dragon was played. I had rarely borne off a single plum, from the midst of those pale blue flames that appeared in my eyes most terrific ; indeed all my prizes had been made under circumstances that called only the best part of valour into exercise ; for I watched when some more adventurous wight, who had boldly seized them, was induced, either by alarm or burnt fingers, to let the trophy fall, which I quietly picked out, and conveyed into my mouth.

The proverb, however, seemed to have inspired me with somewhat of a more enterprising character ; for, on the evening in question, I elbowed my way through the laughing, screaming little folks, and secretly ejaculating, ‘ Nothing venture, nothing have,’ I bravely plunged my hand into the dish, and bore off a noble plum, enveloped in those alarming flames, which I blew out ; and certainly I thought the morsel that my own chivalrous exploit had secured, infinitely superior in flavour to any of the more ignoble spoil of former times.

How far this successful application of an old saw might influence my after life, I know not : but certain it is, that I have done many things which wiser people call rash, and imprudent in the highest degree, under an impulse very similar to the foregoing. Not that, in the darkest days of my ignorance, I ever looked to what is call chance, or luck : even in childhood, I regarded with inexpressible contempt what the grace of God subsequently taught me to reject as decidedly sinful. I was taken to church every Sunday, even before I could read the bible ; and when sufficiently advanced in learning to do so, I was told to receive every word that I read in it, as the declaration of God himself. This I did : and I believe that a reverential reception of our Lord’s plain assurance, that the very hairs of our head are all numbered, and that not a sparrow could fall to the ground without

our Father, proved sufficient to arm me against the whole theory of luck. I notice this with gratitude; and as an encouragement to parents to bring that blessed book within the reach of their little ones, from the first dawning of their infant faculties.

It was not, therefore, in a gambling spirit that I applied the adage :—to venture something, where the object was to be gained according to the turning up of a card, or the random decision of a lot, I felt to be foolish, before I knew it to be wicked; but when any desirable thing was placed within my grasp, the attainment of which I might honestly compass, at the expence of some loss, or perhaps suffering to myself, I have rarely shrunk back from the enterprise. It has pleased God, in his great mercy, so far to sanctify this feature of my natural character, that I am able, through prayer, to attempt things, where his glory alone is concerned, that some who are far superior to me in every spiritual gift and grace would pause at: and I have a criterion whereby to judge when it is through the help of my God that I overleap any wall. Accomplishing it in my own strength, and for my own gratification, I am sure to carry off either broken bones, or some severe sprain or contusion; obliging me to limp for a long while after: but when the power of faith has alone wrought the achievement, I alight unharmed, and go on my way rejoicing.

‘ Nothing venture, nothing have,’ was my mental, reflection, as I inserted my hand, the other day, within the strong fence-work of a hardy furze-bush to possess myself of the fragrant flower that reposed its golden bosom where few would have cared to invade its retreat. But the plant was an old, an endeared associate, having formed a distinguishing feature of the wild, sweet scenery, amid which I passed many a happy day. A type, too, it was of those days: for as the bright and beautiful furze-blossom throws its sunny gleams over the withering herbage that lies frozen around,—shedding lustre and breathing fragrance on its own thorny tree,—so did the transient loveliness of that short season to which I refer, ameliorate the dreariness of a wintry doom, and sweeten many thorns, planted around me by the hand of unerring wisdom. The furze-bush from whence I had last plucked a flower, is located indeed, in a region as dissimilar from that which my memory enshrines, as are the feelings excited by a glance at the present, contrasted with the retrospection of what is for ever past: but its tints are as mellow, its foliage as green, and its aspect altogether the same. I knew that if I secured a cluster of its soft petals, they would breathe alike fragrance; and I was content to venture a scratched finger, for the indulgence of a sweet, though melancholy, gratification.

There was yet another inducement to gather these

buds of furze: I was about to pass a spot singularly interesting to me—a grave, over which I have often bent with sensations of exquisite delight. The silent tenant of that dark and narrow house, in the few months of our intimate acquaintance, furnished me with an opportunity of bringing into action all that God was pleased to impart to me of enterprize and perseverance, for the attainment of a trophy more glorious than aught, and all, that can perish. I could not but frequently compare that work with the attempt to gather flowers from the midst of numerous and piercing thorns; and more than once, during its progress, have I stopped to rend a sprig from the forbidding furze, and then divested that sprig of all its individual points, that I might rejoice in the success of an allegorical exploit. To none but to Him who helped me, is it known what I endured before the victory was made manifest which HE, not I, achieved; nor will Christian charity admit the lifting of that veil which I desire to throw over the opposition of some, whose crown of rejoicing it might well have proved to be fellow-helpers in such a work. I gathered the blossom; and thankfully will I leave the thorns out of sight, forgetting those things that are behind, and reaching forward to what is yet before me.

Mary was the name of this departed one, whose memory is precious to me. She was a humble cottager; but remarkable for that intelligence which

frequently, I may say universally, characterizes even the most uneducated class in her native Ireland. Over the earliest period of her life, a cloud hangs ; but it is not the obscurity of darkness—rather it would seem, the outset was a flood of light, suddenly disappearing behind the thick mists which overhung the horizon where her morning sun arose. This I ascertained, but not until long after those mists had begun to disperse, which deeply shrouded her mind at the commencement of our acquaintance ;—that she was the daughter of a converted man, called out of the darkness of Romanism to the marvellous light of the gospel ;—that her father had diligently instructed his household in those truths which he had found to be the power of God unto the salvation of his own soul ; and both in English and Irish, he had read the scriptures, to all who would come within the hearing of them.

I know not how it was, that at the early age of six-years, Mary was removed from the paternal roof, and initiated by those among whom she subsequently dwelt, into all the mysteries of that fatal apostacy from which her father had been rescued. She became in time, the wife of one equally bigotted and equally ignorant with herself ; and crossing the channel, they took up their abode in England, within the reach of a Roman Catholic chapel, the priest of which justly numbered Mary among the most determined adherents

to the tenets of his erroneous faith. Some time elapsed, (above ten years, I believe), before I was led by the hand of Providence to fix my dwelling in the same neighbourhood. Of Mary, I had never heard ; but having become acquainted with several of her poor country people around, and told them how dearly I loved their own green isle, she had felt the yearnings of Irish affection towards one who entertained a preference for poor Erin. Nothing could be more characteristic than our first meeting : I was advancing with a tract, towards the gate of a little cottage, out of which came a respectably-dressed woman with a basket of eggs on her arm, who made me a very nice courtesy, at the same time fixing on me two of the most brilliant eyes I ever beheld, and smiling with unrestrained cordiality. I returned both her greeting and her smile ; on which she immediately said, ‘ You never come down to our place, Ma’am.’ I replied, ‘ Perhaps not, for I don’t know where your place is ; but I am sure you are Irish.’ I am Irish, indeed : and you love our people so well, that I often look out for you to visit me. I live down by’—and she named a retreat, rather out of my usual road. I promised a visit, asked a few questions respecting her native place, and we parted. I observed to my companion what a remarkably intelligent countenance she had ; and was told in reply, that she was one of the most zealous papists in the parish.

We met occasionally in the street, and always spoke ; but I was prevented by other engagements from visiting her. After a long time, I learnt that she had been very near death ; that her new-born infant, like herself, had narrowly escaped it, and that Mary was then sinking into a very painful and dangerous disease—an internal cancer forming, which menaced her life. To this were added distressing testimonies as to the determined manner in which she rejected all religious instruction, not administered by her own priest ; excepting that she listened patiently and respectfully to one pious clergyman, who occasionally visited all the cottages ; and who was so universally beloved among the poor, that no one ever refused him a reverential and affectionate reception.

I was pricked to the heart, when told of the increasing sufferings of poor Mary, whose personal industry had been the main support of her family ; and who began to feel the miseries of abject poverty aggravating her bodily torments. I determined to visit her, and that too for the express purpose of trying whether I could not, as a weak instrument in an Almighty hand, bring her forth from her darling delusions, into the beams of the day-spring from on high. I was told that such an attempt would subject me to insult ; if not from her, from her husband : and that the priest was too unremitting in his attentions,

to be ignorant of an invasion in that quarter, which he would surely repel, by stirring up yet more the bigot zeal of some among his Irish flock, who had shewn a disposition to resent my occasionally interference with their false faith.

‘ Nothing venture, nothing have,’ was here applicable, in its very best and highest sense ; and in the spirit of prayer, I betook myself to the task. Into a bush, of which every leaf was a thorn, I certainly did thrust my hand, to gather out from among them this flower. Opposition I fully expected, from her own strong attachment to the errors of popery : but I found her far more willing to listen than I had dared to hope. Indeed, such was the love wherewith the Lord mercifully taught her to regard me, that she could not quarrel with any word or action of mine : the flower itself offered no thorny resistance. Opposition from her husband was unexpectedly prevented, by the removal of Mary from her home, to a place under parochial management, which also brought her much nearer to my abode. Opposition from the priest, I encountered to the full extent of his power, even to personal resistance, and the exercise of an influence that I did not expect to find so powerful, in far other quarters than the cottages of those who frequented his altar. The great enemy of poor Mary’s soul put in force to the uttermost his crafty wiles, to the strengthening of a cause

that, to all but me, appeared frequently triumphant : and when her bold, decided avowal that she *would* hear the scriptures read, and listen to my instructions, silenced those who had built their predictions on her long hostility to protestantism, the old and more subtle charge of hypocrisy was resorted to. Instances were adducted of her frequent deviation from strict veracity, while yet under the power of that religion which teaches, even in its first catechism, the fearful doctrine that such sins are venial only, and to be readily atoned for by a few forms and penances. The recent change in her expressions was referred to a prudential application of the same convenient, sophistry ; and I was told that the trifle which I occasionally left on her pillow went duly to the priest, in purchase of absolution for the sin of listening to me. This I knew to be utterly false ; but I felt at times those painful misgivings, which were as delicate thorns introduced into the flesh, harassing me, and tending to indispose me for further exertion. Still, by keeping my eye upon the power which alone could accomplish such a work,—the power which, if once brought into operation none could let—I was enabled to go on grasping the flower, and applying every energy to draw it from its adverse concomitants.

It was then struggling against my own unbelief, so cruelly encouraged by the groundless tales of wilful deceivers and willing dupes, that I was unex-

pectedly cheered, by the sudden recurrence of Mary to the scenes of her infancy, her father's home. A text of scripture was brought before her, which he had been in the habit of dwelling upon, when pointing out to his family the sinfulness of creature worship; and a flood of light appeared to break at once upon her mind, presenting a rapid succession of images, long lost in the spiritual darkness of her riper years. It was then that she told me what proved her to have been the child of many prayers—the object of a truly christian father's anxious instruction: and it came, too, at an advanced period of my daily attendance, when she lay in lingering torments on what was sure to be her death-bed. Need I say, that every phantom of mistrust, conjured up by the devil to dishearten and perplex me, vanished, never to return? It was enough—I found that another had long before laboured where I was mercifully commissioned to enter upon the ground, unoccupied as I supposed it to be. In the morning that christian father had sown the seed: in the evening, by God's grace, I withheld not my hand; I know not whether prospered, this or that: but I believe they were alike good. Only the former sprung not up, until the latter was likewise cast in.

Two things made against the apparent reality of dear Mary's conversion; one was, that she long persisted in a falsehood, the tendency of which was to

screen from well-merited odium one who had deeply, cruelly wronged her faithful attachment to him. The other was the unvarying respect that she showed to her priest, who persisted in visiting her. On both these points I was fully satisfied, and indeed confirmed in my estimate of her character : for, on my directing my discourse one day with an especial view to the former of them, the delusion of doing evil that some supposed good might ensue, she burst into tears, acknowledged her offence ; and that she had considered it meritorious to stand between that individual and the disgrace that was his just due ; and, in my presence, she spoke to the same effect to him, warning him of the ruin that awaited him, in time and in eternity, if he forsook not his evil way. With regard to the priest, she had experienced from him much kindness, and frequently had he relieved her necessities, instead of taking aught from her. She knew him to be sincere in his errors ; and she did justice to the benevolence of his conduct : firmly declaring, that as long as she lived she would manifest her grateful sense of his well-intentioned zeal. I was far from discouraging this : I loved her for it, and exhorted her to be frequently in prayer for him ; but others could not enter into my views, because they saw not that wherein I was daily privileged to rejoice. It was a small matter to her, or to me, to be judged of man's judgment. Mary had the witness in herself,

and she died in perfect peace—a peace that had possessed her soul for many weeks, previous to its happy enfranchisement from the perishing clay. I too, had a witness, in the signal answers to prayer, whereby my path was daily opened to the chamber of my beloved charge, notwithstanding an almost unprecedented stretch, both of influence and authority to bar it against me. I had another witness, in the unwonted patience that possessed my intemperate spirit, under many indignities; and the faith that led my steps continually to the scene of opposition. That God himself had set before me an open door, was manifested in this—no man COULD shut it.

Well, the scratches were soon healed, that those ungracious thorns inflicted; and the certainty that I did indeed behold the flower removed to a fair garden where no thorns can enter, renders me joyfully willing to encounter as much, and more, wherever the Lord points a way. I should be well pleased so to connect the memory of my interesting Mary with the bright-blossomed furze, that every survey of its golden treasures, scattered over our heaths and glens, might suggest a theme of cheerful encouragement to all who desire to labour in the Lord's cause, among the bondslaves of Satan. Let them always remember, that opposition ought to be a spur, overruled to quicken them in their course. Satan is an experienced general, who does not enter the field against imagi-

nary foes, nor man his walls when there is no peril. Whenever he bestirs himself to an active resistance, depend upon it, he sees that One mightier than he is taking the field. You cannot see your leader ; Satan does. When therefore, you find unlooked-for obstacles thickening before you, be sure that the adversary is alarmed, and GO FORWARD ; for He who never rides forth but to conquer is with you in the field.

With a gladsome heart I look upon Mary's humble grave : for with sparkling eyes she used to tell me that, whereas it had been, all her life long, a prospect of unutterable horror and dismay to her, she could look forward to it as a pleasant resting-place for her poor body, while her soul, in the hands of her dear Redeemer, waited for the time appointed to reunite itself with its former companion. She dwelt upon the glorious change, from corruptible to incorruption, from mortal to immortality ; and she dwelt upon it as the achievement of Christ alone, on her behalf. This was a hope that maketh not ashamed ; and well does the gay sweet blossom of the threatening furze accord with my bosom's joy, while contemplating the work of redeeming love, in rescuing her soul from all the hosts that encompassed it. The work was the Lord's—to Him be the thanksgiving and the praise !

CHAPTER III.

THE SHAMROCK.

SHOULD any of my readers have amused themselves by conjecturing which, among the increasing variety of floral gems that herald the spring, would be brought forward as appropriate to the month of March, they will probably be disappointed. The delicate primrose may look forth from its crisp leaves ; the fragrant violet may volunteer, in its natural and emblematical beauty, to furnish a grateful type ; but the parterre, with all its attraction, must be passed by ; for, among the long grass at the bottom of the garden, in the most uncultivated, neglected spot, lurks the object of which we are now in quest :—invisible, as yet ; unless prematurely unfolded by the influence of more genial weather than we can reasonably anticipate at this blustering season : but sure to lift up its simple head, in the freshness of healthful vegetation, before

three weeks have passed away. Yes, the SHAMROCK must occupy the station of a flower for once, and why should it not? England displays, as her symbol, the glowing rose,—Scotland, the lilac tuft of her hardy and gigantic thistle,—and alas! poor Erin's green shamrock has too often outblushed them both, as the life-blood of many a victim oozed forth upon the sod, under the iron reign of spiritual tyranny, which still sharpens, for its own dark purposes, the weapons of civil discord; wading onward, through rivers of blood, to the gaol of its insatiable ambition.

But I must not identify the gentle shamrock with themes so revolting; I have pleasanter combinations in view, and long to introduce to my readers the companion with whom, for seven successive years, I sought out the symbol so dear to his patriotic heart, and watched the prayerful expression of his countenance, while he gazed upon it. He was dumb; no articulate sound had ever passed his lips, no note of melody had ever penetrated his closed ear, but the 'Ephphatha' had reached his heart; and, oh! how full, how rich, how sweet, how abiding was the communion which he held with his adored Redeemer!

The Irish have a tradition, that when St. Patrick first proclaimed among their fathers the glad tidings of salvation, making known to them the existence of the tri-une Jehovah, the greatness of that mystery perplexed and staggered his disciples. They urged

those cavils wherewith poor natural reason loves to oppose the revelations of infinite wisdom. ‘How, they asked, ‘can three be one? how can one be three?’ The missionary stooped to gather a shamrock leaf, which grew at his feet; telling them, that God had carpetted their beautiful island with an illustration of what they considered so incomprehensible: and thenceforth, say the legends, the shamrock was adopted as a symbol of the faith embraced by christianized Ireland. This, I know, that, with a shamrock in my hand, I have gained access to many an Irish heart, while my auditors eagerly listened to whatever I might preach, upon the text of St. Patrick.

The dumb boy fully understood all this: he frequently alluded to it: and sweet it is to reflect, that he whose tongue was silent on earth, is singing a new and glorious song before the throne of that Incomprehensible ONE, whom he knew and adored—as Creator, Redeemer, and Sanctifier—while seeing through a glass more dark, perhaps, than that which we are privileged to use: whom he now knows, even as he is known: whom he now adores, with energies set free from the deadening weight of sinful flesh, perfected even into the image of his Saviour’s glory.

Before nineteen years had rolled over him, Jack was summoned to enter into this enjoyment; and

I do not hesitate to affirm, that the broadest, deepest, most unequivocal seal of adoption into God's family was visibly impressed upon him, during the last seven years of his gentle and peaceful life. His character shone with a bright, yet calm and unostentatious consistency—he adorned his lowly station with such quiet endurance of the world's lifted heel, and stood so unharmed in the midst of its pollutions, evermore revived by the dews of divine grace, and exhibiting so attractive, though imperfect an image of Him, who formed him to shew forth his praise, that I could find no type so expressive of him, as his own native shamrock; even had not the fervency of his patriotism, which was really enthusiastic, crowned the resemblance.

But another circumstance, never to be erased from my fondest recollection, has inseparably combined that boy's image with the shamrock leaf. I had taken him from his parents, at the age of eleven: and it will readily be believed, that the grateful love which he bore to me, as his only instructor and friend, extended itself to those who were dear to me. There was one, round whom all the strings of my heart had entwined from the cradle. Jack appeared to understand, better than any one else ever did, the depth of my affection for this precious relative, and most ardently did the boy love him. He went to Ireland; and Jack remained in England, with me.

Many weeks had not passed, before our hearts were wrung by the intelligence, that this beloved object had been snatched away, by a sudden and violent death. The shock, the grief, that preyed upon the boy's affectionate heart, while witnessing what I endured, proved too much for him, and led to the lingering decline which, after years of suffering, terminated his mortal existence.

It was some months after my family bereavement, that, on the dawn of Patrick's day, I summoned Jack to sally forth, and gather shamrocks. To my surprise, he declined putting one in his hat ; and when I rallied, remonstrated, and at last almost scolded him, he only repeated the gentle movement of the hand, which implied rejection, sometimes spelling, no,—no. I was puzzled at this ; especially as a deep shade of pensiveness overcast a countenance that always was dressed in smiles on Patrick's day. I was also vexed at his want of sympathy, on a subject on which we had always agreed so well—love for dear Ireland. In the middle of the day, I took him out with me, and again tendered the shamrock : but could not persuade him to mount it higher than his bosom. Seeing an Irish youth pass, with the national crest, I pointed to him, saying, ' That good boy loves Ireland : bad Jack does not love it. This touched him nearly : he answered, sorrowfully, ' Yes, Jack *very* much loves poor Ireland.' I shook my

head pointing to his hat ; and, unable to bear the reproach, he reluctantly told me, while his eyes swam in tears, that he could not wear it in his hat, for shamrocks *now* grew on —————'s grave.

I will not attempt to express what I felt, at this trait of exquisite tenderness and delicacy in a poor peasant boy : but I told him that the little shamrocks were far dearer to me, because they made that spot look green and lovely. He instantly kissed the leaves, and put them in his hat ; and when, after two years, I saw his own lowly grave actually covered with shamrocks, I felt that, in this world, I must not look for such another character. That child of God was commissioned to cross my path, that he might shed over it that pure and tranquillizing light of his eminently holy and happy spirit, during the darkest, and most troubled season of my past pilgrimage. The Lord has choice cordials to bestow, but he keeps them for special occasions, to strengthen the weak hands, and confirm the feeble knees, of his fainting people. Such was my experience, while the boy was with me, whose whole discourse, his every thought by day, and dream by night, was of the love and the power of Jesus Christ. He saw God in every thing : the lightning, he called ' God's eye,' and the rainbow, ' God's smile.' Two objects his soul abhorred—Satan, and Popery. Of Satan's power and malice he seemed to have a singularly experimental

knowledge : yet always described him as a conquered foe. He once told me that the devil was like the candle before him ; and advancing his hand to the flame, suddenly withdrew it, as if burnt : then, after a moment's thought, exultingly added, that *God was the wind which could put the candle out* : illustrating the assertion by extinguishing it with a most energetic puff. I often remarked in him such a realization of the constant presence of this great enemy, as kept him perpetually on his guard ; and when it is remembered that Jack never knew enough of language to enable him to read the bible, this will be felt to have been a striking proof of divine teaching. Jack knew many words, but they were principally nouns—he mastered substantives readily, and some of the most common adjectives, with a few adverbs, but the pronouns I never could make him attend to ; the verbs he would generally express by signs. His language was a mere skeleton, rendered intelligible by his looks and gestures, both of which were remarkably eloquent. I have seen him transcribe from the bible or prayer-book, as he was very fond of the pen ; but when he has unintentionally turned over two leaves, or missed a line, he has not been sensible of the error : a proof that he wrote as he drew, merely to copy the forms of what he saw. He once got hold of the verse, “ Behold the Lamb of God, which taketh away the sins of the world,” and asked me

to explain it. I did : and he would write it out twenty times, with great delight : but still preferred the symbol of the red hand. It may be asked why I did not advance him farther in language ? There was a reluctance on his part which I could not surmount, and which he in some measure accounted for, by saying that he liked to talk to me, but not to others. He used the word " brother," to explain the sensation occasioned by any effort in the way of acquiring grammatical learning, and went off to his pencils with such glee, that, as he was a good deal employed about the house and garden, and evidently drooped when much confined to sedentary occupation, I yielded to his choice, determined to settle him, after a while, to his studies ; and conscious that he was right in the remark which he made to me, that his not being able to talk better kept him out of the way of many bad things. His sister, who came over to me five months before his death, could not read ; consequently they had no communication but by signs ; and often have I been amazed to witness the strong argumentative discussions that went forward between them, on the grand question of religion. She looked on Jack as an apostate ; while his whole soul was engaged in earnest prayer, that she also might come out from her idolatrous church.

But to resume the subject of that spiritual teaching : knowing as I did, how ignorant the boy was

of the letter of scripture, I beheld with astonishment the bible written, as it were, on his heart and brain. Not only his ideas, but his expressions, as far as they went, were those of scripture ; and none who conversed with him could believe without close investigation that he was so unacquainted with the written word. When tempted to any thing covetous or mercenary, he would fight against the feeling, saying, ‘ No, no : Judas love money—devil loves money—Jesus Christ not love money—Jack know, money bad.’ I had of course brought him intimately acquainted with all the history of our blessed Lord ; but it was God who made the spiritual application.

It was a sweet season when first the dumb boy commemorated, at the Lord’s table, that dying love which continually occupied his thoughts. A season never to be forgotten. A young countryman of his for whom he was deeply interested, had after a long conflict, renounced popery ; and earnestly desired to partake with us the blessed ordinance. Consumption had been preying on Jack for many months, though he lived a year longer, and his pale face, and slender delicate figure, formed a touching contrast to the stout ruddy young soldier who knelt beside him. The latter evinced much emotion ; but there was all the serenity, all the smiling loveliness of a clear summer sky on the countenance of Jack. I asked him afterwards how he felt at the

time : his reply was concise, but how comprehensive, ' Jack knows Jesus Christ love poor Jack—Jack very *very* much love Jesus Christ—Jack *very very very* much hate devil—Go, devil!' and with a look of lofty, solemn triumph, he waved for him to depart, as one who had no power to molest him. There was a galaxy of scripture in these few words, with their accompanying looks. Jesus had made himself known in the breaking of bread—" We love him, because he first loved us." " Get thee behind me, Satan." " They overcame him through the blood of the Lamb." " The God of all peace shall bruise Satan under your feet shortly." Jack had the most clear perception of the nature and end of that ordinance, more so, I believe, than many who with every advantage in the way of instruction, attend it from year to year. Dearly he loved the altar of the Lord ; and near it he is now laid to rest, just beneath the eastern window of that house where, indeed, he would far rather have been the humblest door-keeper, than have dwelt in the most gorgeous palaces of an ungodly world.

I have alluded to the strength of the boy's patriotism , this always appeared extraordinary to me. Of geography he had not the slightest idea, neither could any peculiarity of language (for the Irish is much spoken in his native place) or difference of accent, affect him. He showed not the slightest

science, without fear of man, was a principal ground of this tender compassionate love towards Ireland, and was the means of stirring him up to that constant prayer, in which I know that he earnestly wrestled with God, for his brethren according to the flesh. The language of his heart was, "O that mine head were waters, and mine eyes a fountain of tears, that I might weep day and night for the slain of the daughter of my people!"

I well remember finding him one morning in the garden, leaning on his spade, with tears trickling down his cheeks. On my approaching him with a look of inquiry, he took up a handful of earth, and showed me that it was so dry he could scarcely dig: then proceeded to tell me, that, because of the drought, he feared potatoes would not grow well in Ireland; and poor Irish would be all bone, and would be sick and die, before they had learned to pray to Jesus Christ. He dwelt on this for a long

while ; and most pathetically entreated me to pray to God for poor Ireland. All that day he continued very sad ; and on bidding me good night, he gave a significant nod to one side, and joined his hands, signifying his intention to have a ‘long pray,’ as he used to call it. The next morning I went to the garden ; and most vehemently did he beckon for me to run till I came to where he stood ; when, with a face flushed with joy, he turned rapidly over the well-moistened earth, then stuck his spade exultingly into it, and told me that he prayed a long while before he went to bed—got up soon after, to pray again—and, on returning to his little couch, slept till morning :—that while Jack was asleep, God who had looked at his prayer, made a large cloud, and sent much rain : and now potatoes would grow, poor Irish would be fat and strong ; and God, who sent the rain, would send them bibles. He then lifted up his face to heaven, and with a look of unbounded love—so reverential, yet so sweetly confiding—such as I never beheld on any other countenance, he said, “ Good, good Jesus Christ ! ” Often when my heart is particularly heavy, for the wants and woes of Ireland, do I recal that triumphant faith in which the boy pleaded for it, day by day, for seven years ; and it gives me comfort more solid than can well be imagined.

His expression, that God looked at, or saw his

prayer, reminds me of another beautiful idea that he communicated to me. Observing that he could not speak to be heard, he made me open my watch ; and then explained that as I, by so doing, could perceive all the movements of the wheels, so, but without opening it, God could discern what passed in his head. A servant going to fetch something out of his room one night, when he was supposed to have been asleep a long while, saw him at the low window on his knees, his joined hands raised up, and his eyes fixed on the stars, with a smile of joy and love like nothing, she said, that ever she had seen or fancied. There was no light but from that spangled sky ; and she left him there undisturbed. He told me that he liked to go to the window, and kneel down, that God might look through the stars into his head, to see how he loved Jesus Christ. Alas ! how few among us but would shrink from such a scrutiny !

I once asked him a strange question, but I did it not lightly. He was expressing the most unbounded anxiety for the salvation of every one. He spoke with joy and delight of the angels and glorified spirits : he wept for those who had died unreconciled through the red hand ; and urged me to pray very much for all alive, that they might be saved. When he lamented so feelingly the lost estate of the condemned, I ventured to ask him if he was not sorry for Satan ? In a moment his look changed from

the softest compassion to the most indignant severity : and he replied, with great spirit, ‘ No ! Devil hate Jesus Christ—Jack *hate* Devil : ’ and went on in a strain of lofty exultation, in the prospect of seeing the great enemy chained for ever in a lake of fire. He did not excuse those who perished in unbelief and enmity : he seemed to mourn for them in the exact spirit of his Saviour, who, as man, wept over the sinners whom he nevertheless, as God, scaled up in just condemnation. When I asked him if he ever prayed for those who were dead, he answered, in some surprise, ‘ No,’ and inquired whether I did. I replied in the negative. He said, “ Good ; ” and added, that the red hand was not put on the book after people were dead, but while they were on the earth, and praying. Yet the idea of the soul slumbering was to him perfectly ridiculous—he quite laughed at it. The day before his death, he asked me, with a very sweet and composed look, what message I wished him to deliver to my brother, when he should see him : I desired him, in the same quiet way, to tell him that I was trying to teach his little boy to love Jesus Christ ; and that I hoped we should all go to him by-and-by. Jack gave a satisfied nod, and told me he would remember it. Accustomed as I was to his amazing realization of things unseen, I felt actually startled at such an instance of calm, sober, considerate anticipation of a change

from which human nature shrinks with dismay. At the same time, it furnished me with a support under the trial, not to be recalled without admiring gratitude to Him who wrought thus wondrously.

And oh that we were all such Protestants as Jack was! Popery he regarded as the destroyer of his beloved country : its priestly domination, its mechanical devotions, were, in his mind, inseparably linked with the moral evils of which he had been, from infancy, a grieved and wonderous spectator—drunkenness and discord, especially. After he was spiritually enlightened, his view of the ‘mystery of iniquity,’ as opposed to Christ and his gospel, became most overpowering ! it was ever present to him ; and when actually dying, he gathered up all his failing energies into an awfully vehement protest against it : sternly frowning, while he denounced it as ‘A LIE !’ This was followed by an act of beautiful surrender of himself into the ‘bleeding hand’ of his ‘ONE Jesus Christ,’ as he loved to call him in contradistinction to the many saviours of unhappy Rome—and a pathetic entreaty to me, to pray, and to work for ‘Jack’s Poor Ireland.’

I will do so, God helping me ; and happy shall I be, if some among my readers, when the little trefoil spreads its green mantle in their path, will remember the dumb boy, and fulfil his dying wish, by seeking occasion to promote the cause of Jesus Christ among the darkened population of ‘Jack’s poor Ireland.’

CHAPTER IV.

THE HEART'S-EASE.

THE winter of 1833-4—by courtesy a winter—will long be remembered by florists, as having afforded them an unlooked-for feast. Its approach was heralded by such awful prognostications, founded like those of old, on the flight of birds, and other omens alike infallible and innumerable, interpreted by the most experienced seers—all tending to establish the interesting fact that an early, long-continued winter of the keenest severity was about to commence its reign over us—that we begin instinctively to examine our coal-cellars, number our blankets, and canvas the merits of rival furriers. Not being accustomed to place implicit confidence in that peculiar gift called weather-wisdom, I was exposed to many rebukes, by my temerity in not removing some tender plants, which were doomed to hopeless annihilation, by the

aforesaid prognosticators, if left to brave the coming season, in its unparalleled intensity. December came and went, leaving us many a bright rose-bud, intermixed with our holly-boughs ; January laid no very severe finger on them, though some rough easterly blasts scattered a few of their opening petals ; but gave with the accustomed snow-drop, fair primroses, and fragrant violets, to laugh audacious defiance of the menaced blights. February blazed upon us in a flood of unwonted brightness, showering in our path such blossoms as rarely peep forth till late in Spring. Preparations were in forwardness for sending northward in quest of ice ; but they were suspended, in the anxious hope that such an unnatural state of things would soon give place to weather less portentous, less fraught with disappointment to the gourmand. Alas for the packers of fish, and coolers of wine and congealers of cream ! February went smiling out, and March, blustering March, came laughing in, arrayed in such a chaplet as he had scarcely ever before stolen. My garden is of moderate size ; in the articles of sun and shade enjoying no peculiar advantages above its neighbours ; nor enriched by a higher degree of cultivation ; yet within a small space of this garden, I counted, on the 6th of March, eighteen varieties of flowers in full beauty, while the fruit-trees put forth their buds in rich profusion, and the birds proclaimed a very different story from that

which had emanated from the weather office, in the prospective wisdom of its sundry clerks. My mignonne, my stocks, and wall-flowers, and vivid marigolds, had never quailed throughout the preceding months ; they continued blowing without intermission, yielding constant bouquets, with scarcely a perceptible diminution of their beautiful abundance ; and never had I been disappointed when looking for the smiling features of my loveliest charge—the small, but magnificent HEART'S-EASE. Two roots in particular, the one intermixing its gold with purple, the other with pure white, appeared to derive fresh brilliancy from the season, abundantly recompensing my daily visits.

Sweet flower ! Tranquillity makes its lowly rest upon its dark green couch , and cheerfulness is legibly written on every clear tint of its glossy petals. As a child, I loved that humble blossom ; and when childhood's happy days had long been flown, I loved it better than before. Yet it was not until within a comparatively short period that I found a human being altogether assimilating to it ; and since his transplantation to the garden of glorified spirits, nearly two years ago, I have pondered on the exquisite traits of his singular character, with a growing certainty that to me, and to many, he came as a warning voice to chide our sluggishness in that race wherein he strove, not as uncertainly,—wherein he ran, not as

one that beateth the air,—wherein he struggled with all the energies of mind and body and spirit, to rend away every weight, to overthrow every obstacle, that could hinder him in pressing on towards the mark, for the prize of his high calling in Christ Jesus.

Many will recognize, even in such brief sketch as I can give, the friend who lived in their hearts' deepest recesses. It was his to be understood and appreciated, in an extraordinary degree, by all who surrounded him; and though his death drew tears of poignant grief from every one who had known him, yet such had been his life, that we felt it almost criminal to mourn his entrance into immortality.

“To him that overcometh,” the promises are given, and what is it that man chiefly has to overcome? Self, unquestionably. The world, the flesh, and the devil, are powerful enemies, but only through the medium of self can they assail us. D——knew this, and his whole conduct was one beautiful, consistent evidence of a successful contest with the selfish principle, so that, in all pertaining to outward things, he lived for others, but always to the glory of God. Engaged in professional occupation, which only gave him the early morning, an hour at mid-day, and the evening, for his own disposal, he invariably devoted the latter to the service of others, yet found no lack of time for abundant reading, meditation, and secret prayer.

On one occasion, when I admired the expertness

with which he kindled a fire that had gone out, he said, 'It is practice; I always light my own fire.'

'Why not employ the woman who attends your chambers?'

'For two reasons; I want it much earlier than she could conveniently come; and my thoughts flow on more evenly, when unbroken by the sight or the sound of another.'

The time that he thus redeemed from slumber, was exclusively devoted to the nourishment of his own soul. He frequently recommended the practice to others; enforcing it by the striking remark of Newton, that if the sack be filled at once with wheat, there will be no room for chaff. 'I fill my sack as early and as full as I can, at the footstool of the Lord,' said D—— 'or the devil would get in a bushel of chaff before breakfast.' Three hours at least were thus devoted, in the stillness of his chamber; and then, after a frugal repast, he sallied forth—so fresh, so cheerful, so full of bright and energetic life, that it was even as a beam of sunshine when he crossed our early path, with his joyous smile. Yes, he did then resemble the flower, vigorous from its bath of morning dew, spreading its fairest tints to the returning beam, and breathing pure fragrance around it.

The mid-day hour was devoted to a meal as frugal as his breakfast. 'Those late dinners,' he once said, 'are thieves. They steal away one's time, and energy,

and usefulness. I am naturally luxurious ; and should be the laziest dog on earth, if I treated myself to a full meal at thath our.' Accordingly, when others repaired to the dinner table, D—— was on foot for some expedition fraught with usefulness ; most happy when, on those evenings devoted to public worship he could win some thoughtless youth to sit with him, beneath the ministry of his beloved pastor—the pastor who had for five years been building him up on his most holy faith, while he himself drew many rich streams of spiritual thought from D——, in the intercourse of that friendship which linked them in the closest brotherhood. Very lovely and pleasant were those kindred spirits in their lives, and in death they were scarcely divided. A few months only intervened, ere Howels followed his beloved companion, to join in his new song before the throne of the Lamb.

In his perpetual renunciation of self, there was a singular judgment, a striking discrimination in D——'s method of laying himself out for the benefit of others. To please was his delight ; but never did he lose sight of that neglected rule of "pleasing his neighbour to edification." His spirits were light, and his temper joyous in the extreme. The frank cordiality of his address bore down all the frost-work of hearts, even the most unlike his own. His manly sense won the respect of many who were blind to the more spiritual gifts ; and frequently did it pioneer his way, with

such characters, when bringing forward—as he invariably did—the grand topic of Christian faith and practice. Assuredly God gave him this favour in the sight of men, to render his short, but bright career more extensively useful.

And where, does my reader think, where did D——, thus accomplished, thus fitted to shine, and to captivate, to win, and convince—especially love to exercise his gifts for his dear Master's glory? Those who know not the metropolis of England cannot estimate the force of my reply. In the dark recesses of St. Giles'. Totally unconnected with Ireland, never having even beheld her green shores, he devoted himself to the cause of her outcast children, with a zeal and a fervency, and a perseverance, that I never understood until I saw some of those poor creatures looking down into his open grave. Then I comprehended how God had put it into his heart so to work, while yet it is called to-day, as the night was suddenly to close upon the scene of his mortality when he should work no longer.

It is one characteristic of the heart's-ease, to spring up in corners where no other flower, perhaps, is found : to plant its flexile roots among heaps of rubbish ; to peep out from tufts of grass, and even to spread its little lovely coat of many colours on the walk of stony gravel. We wonder to see it there ; but never wish it away. And thus, go where you

would, into the haunts of utter destitution, of lowest debasement, of most hardened depravity, there, ever engaged in his work of mercy, you were likely to meet D——. Those natural characteristics of which I have spoken, more particularly the frank hilarity of his address, endeared him to the open-hearted Irish; and he hailed their evident partiality as a token that the Lord had willed him to work in that most desolate corner of His vineyard. But D—— did nothing by fits and starts: all was, with him, first planned, then executed; and what, he once undertook, in the spirit of faith and of prayer, he never abandoned.

In one of the streets of that wretched district is a blessed institution, known by the name of St. Giles' Irish Free Schools. Such a collection of little ragged, dirty, squalid beings as assemble in it, can hardly be paralleled in London: and here, on the very top of the unseemly heap, did this spiritual heart's-ease plant himself. No! here the Lord planted him, and here he delighted to abide. From sabbath to sabbath he was found at his post, directing, controlling, encouraging, leading the exercises of prayer and praise, as one whose soul was engaged in wrestling with God, for the wild and wayward creatures around him. I am not writing fiction: many a tear will bear witness that I am not, when this page meets the eye of those who laboured with him. Have we not seen the smile of triumphant anticipation, against hope be-

lieving in hope, while, with one hand resting on a slender pillar, and his eye taking in the whole group, he led the children in their favourite hymn—

‘ Jesus shall reign where'er the sun,' &c.

Oh! how did his tender and compassionate heart yearn over those little perishing creatures! How ardently did he, on their behalf, supplicate for that display of healing power, under which

‘ The weary find eternal rest
And all the sons of want are blest.’

That School was the dearest object of D——'s solici- tude ; it flourished under his hand—it drooped at his departure ; it is struggling on, in a precarious existence now ; for who like D—— can plead and work for it.

In the month of April, 1832, a dreadful fever was raging in our unhappy Irish district ; and many perished, for want of attentions which it was impos- sible to procure. Much was done by compassionate Christians, but few suspected the extent to which D—— carried his self-devotion. It was a time of much professional business, and he could rarely leave his desk until late in the evening : when—at midnight—he has gone to the dying poor, in the cellars of St. Giles', with such supplies as he could collect ; and fed them, and prayed with them, and smoothed down their wretched couches of straw and rags. Unable to meet the demands on his bounty, he nearly starved

himself, to hoard up every possible supply for his famishing nurslings. The last time that he visited me, I enquired concerning a poor Irish family for whom I was interested.

‘They are all in the fever,’ replied D., ‘one sweet little boy lying dead; the father will follow next.’

‘But if all are ill, who nurses them?’

‘Dont be uneasy; the Lord careth for the poor. By his grace, I nurse them when I can. Last night I took a supply of arrow-root, and fed them all round; not one was able to lift a spoon—parents and children helpless alike.’

I trembled, well knowing the extreme peril to which he must be exposed, but he turned the discourse to the evident opening of the father’s mind, and the happy confidence which he felt concerning the dead child: expatiating on the glories of heaven, as one whose heart was already there. Twenty-one days afterward, the three survivors of that family, so tenderly nursed, crawled out to see their benefactor buried. He had closed the eyes of the father, who departed, rejoicing in the full assurance of that hope which D. had first set before him; and then he sunk under the fever, and died of it.

I saw him in his coffin: he was withered and changed by the devastating violence of that malignant fever—changed as completely, almost as rapidly, as the flower whose petals are defaced, and marred,

and rolled together, never more to expand. Yet amidst all, there lingered an expression belonging not to the children of this world. It spoke a conflict, but it also told of a victory, such as man unassisted can never achieve. I knew not until afterwards, what words had expressed the dying experience of that glorified saint. At the very last, at the threshold of immortality, he had slowly and solemnly uttered them :—‘ Mighty power of Christ ! to give a poor sinner the victory, even in death ! ’

Yes ; though death had laid upon him a hand that might not be resisted, though every mortal energy was prostrated, and icy chains fast wrapped around his suffering body,—though crushed into the dust, and speedily to crumble beneath it, he grasped the victory, he felt it in his grasp ; and the glorious truth which in its height, and length, and depth, and breadth, he had appeared remarkably to realize in his life-time, shed splendour unutterable on his dying hour.—“ Nevertheless I live : yet not I, but Christ liveth in me.”

With D——, religion was altogether a substance : nothing shadowy, nothing theoretical or speculative had any place in him. He coveted clear views, that by them he might lay hold on right principles ; not to gather their flowers in a showy bouquet, but to get their deepest roots fast planted in his soul. I never saw one, who seemed so totally to forget the

things which were behind, while reaching forth to those which were before. The only subject on which I ever knew him to express impatience, was the slowness, as he considered it, of his growth in grace. Of this he spoke even bitterly, often taxing me with indifference to his spiritual welfare, because I did not urge him onward, when, perhaps, I was contemplating with secret dismay, the immeasurable distance at which he left us all in the race. 'If you make no better progress than I do,' he once said, 'it is an awful sign of a sluggish spirit. Yet proceed warily—make sure of every step; for many in this day are running fast and far, they know not whither.'

The shining heart's-ease will continue to expand throughout the year: the memory of D—— will be written on every successive blossom: and I cannot promise that in some future month, if God spares me, I may not resume the subject of this chapter. When gayer flowers have enjoyed their summer day, our heart's-ease will survive many painted wrecks; and then it may come forth again, to speak of one who never spoke to me but for the glory of his God, and the spiritual welfare of his friend: who dearly loved to follow the wonder-working hand of creative power in its glorious displays throughout the visible world, and to trace the beautiful analogy subsisting between the providential government without, and the rule of grace within us. He understood the privilege of

giving, as it were, a tongue to every object, that all might unite in one harmonious song of praise. This formed a conspicuous tie among the many that appeared to bind the spirit of D—— with that of my dumb boy, in such perfect fellowship ; perfect indeed beyond what poor mortality may conceive.

CHAPTER V.

THE HAWTHORN.

THE changeableness of earthly things has been always a favourite and a fruitful theme, alike with the worldly moralist and the more spiritual instructor. The mutations of vegetable life, in particular appear to have presented an obvious lesson, known and read of all men. The pagan Homer could tell us—

Like leaves on trees the race of man is found,
Now green in youth, now withering on the ground.

Holy scripture abounds with sublime and touching allusions to the same affecting memento of life's transitory bloom. Who has not felt the thrilling power of those words, so appropriately introduced in our funeral service,—“Man that is born of a woman is of few days, and full of trouble : *he cometh forth and is cut down like a flower.*” The pride

of my little stand, last winter, was a white *Camelia Japonica*, gracefully towering above its companions, terminating in one of the richest floral gems that I ever beheld. Summoning, one day, some young friends to admire it, I was startled to find the stalk bare ; and, looking down, I saw the petals, not scattered about, but fallen into a half-empty flower-pot, upon the lowest round, where they laid in such a snowy mass of death-like beauty, as perfectly embodied that vague idea—the corpse of a flower.

Yet, in general, the evanescence of these bright and beautiful creations affects me far less than their unchangeableness. Individually, the florets may perish in a day ; but succeeding families appear, formed, and pencilled, and tinted with such undeviating fidelity, as to bewilder the imagination ; leading it back, step by step, through seasons that have been crowned with the same unfailing wreaths. The flowers of this year come not to me as strangers, never seen before ; I can select and group the different species, as of old, and gaze upon them with the eye and the heart of delighted welcome : for surely these are loved companions, revisiting my home, to awaken recollections of the many hours that we have passed together—hours of joy, rendered more joyous by their gladdening smiles ; hours of sorrow, when, in silent sympathy, they seemed to droop and to die, because my spirit was wounded,

and my visions of worldly bliss fading into hopeless gloom.

May bears many flowers ; but that to which it gives its own bright name—the simple blossom of the common HAWTHORN—is the flower that I take to my bosom, and water with my tears ; and would fain bid it linger through every changeful season. I cannot even remember the date of the identification which invests this blossom with a character of such fond and sacred endearment : it is coeval with my early infancy. The month of May gave me a beautiful little brother, when I was myself yet but a babe : and it was natural that a thing so sweet, and soft, and fair, should be compared to the lovely bud which usually shed its first fragrance about the very day of his birth, in the middle of the month. I have no earlier recollection, nor any more vivid, than that of standing with my sweet companion under the hedge-row, to us of inaccessible height, eagerly watching the movement of our father's arm, while he bent the lofty branches downward, that we might with our own hands gather the pearly clusters selected to adorn our little flower jars. A bough of larger dimensions was selected, and carefully severed with his pocket-knife, to overspread the hearth, where, planted in a vase, it completely hid the parlour grate, delighting us with its beauty ; which we then verily believed to be bestowed for the express purpose of honouring our domestic *fête*.

Years rolled over us : to others they were years of mingled cloud and sunshine, but to us thy brought no sorrow, for we were not parted. Sheltered in the house of our birth, never transplanted to unlearn in other habitations the sweet lesson of mutual love and confidence, the early link was not broken ; other companionship was unsought, undesired. Early associations lost none of their endearing power ; and the hawthorn hedge, perfectly accessible to the tall lad and active lass, was visited by them as punctually on the morning of their pleasantest anniversary, as it had been by the lisping babes of three or four short summers.

I never went alone to gather the May-blossoms, until my companion had crossed the sea, and drawn the sword in battle-fields. I did indeed then go there alone, for this world contained not one who could supply his place to me ; and beyond this world I had not learned to look. I was solitary, in the fullest sense of the word, and very sad at heart ; but deeply imbued with the same chivalrous spirit which had led my brother from his happy home, to scenes of deadly strife : I strove, by the false glare of imagined glory—that glory which is indeed as a flower of the field—to dazzle my tearful eyes. I intermixed my hawthorn blossoms with boughs of laurel, and soothed my agitated feelings with the dreams of martial renown : yet, even then, the voice had spoken

to my inmost soul, that vanity of vanities was written on the best of my choice things. I felt, but understood not, and stifled the whisper ; and when again the sunburnt soldier, smiling at my pertinacious adherence to the childish commemoration, playfully showered the May-blossoms on my head, I felt as though my home was certainly on earth, and my dwelling-place should abide there for ever.

But my heavenly Father had other views for me, and I was put to school. Very hard to a proud heart and carnal mind was the lesson that I had to learn ; but my Teacher was omnipotent, he subdued my will, and brought me—poor blind rebel ! by a way which I knew not. Upon the darkness that overshadowed my painful path he poured light, and opened to my eyes the gates of life and immortality. Then I went on my way rejoicing ; but one thing was wanting, and that one of the dearest of all created things. I was alone : the beloved companion of infancy and childhood was far away under a foreign sky ; earthly ties multiplying around him, and not a voice to proclaim the solemn admonition, ‘ This is not your rest : it is polluted.’

Sweet blossoms of May ! year after year I marked them unfolding, and every opening bud told me a tale of hope and confidence. Returning still in their appointed season, they were never sought in vain. Why ? “ For that He is strong in power, not one

faileth." Day and night, summer and winter, seed-time and harvest, came and went. Their quiet rotation none might interrupt: they were ordained as tokens of a covenant between God the Creator and his creature man; and this again was the type of a better covenant between God the Redeemer and his ransomed family. I had no express promise that such or such a soul should be saved at my request: but I had in myself a token for good;—the spirit of earnest, persevering, importunate prayer, for one who was to me as a second self. I had waited and prayed through eight successive years,—still reading upon the simple hawthorn flower, an admonition to pray and to wait,—before a gleam of actual gladness broke upon me. On the ninth anniversary, from the period whence I ventured to date my own deliverance from spiritual darkness, I was privileged to deck my brother's hearth with the snowy flower; and while his little ones aided in the task, I could send up a secret thanksgiving, that at length the means of grace were vouchsafed—at length the glorious gospel was weekly proclaimed to him; and while I numbered the buds, I numbered the promises too: for that He is strong in power, not one had yet failed.

The day returned—it was a late cold spring, and only a few half-opened blossoms rewarded my anxious search. I was well-pleased, for the tree furnished a type of him for whom my soul wrestled hourly with

my God. There were graces in the bud, giving promise, but as yet no more : lying concealed, too, except from the watchful eye of solicitous love. I placed the little round pearly things, hardly peeping from their green inclosures, upon his study table ; mentally anticipating a far richer development both of flowers and Christian graces, when another year should have passed away. It did pass, and a brilliant season brought the next May flowers to early perfection ; whether the type held good, I know not—he was far from me—but never can I forget the eagerness of supplication into which my spirit was wrought at that period. I had no assignable reason for it ; yet I called on friends to make continual intercession on his behalf. I thought it long to wait, and impatiently asked, How often shall the returning seasons speak only of hope ? When shall they bid me rejoice ?

“ My thoughts are not your thoughts, neither are your ways my ways, saith the Lord.” I have pondered on those words, when I saw the glory of creation withering, and its loveliness fading away beneath the first chills of winter. I have dwelt more deeply upon them, when my best purposes were crossed, my fairest anticipations blighted, and my attempts at usefulness repelled by unforeseen, insurmountable obstacles. But if ever those words sank with abiding power into my heart, it was when I went to gather a solitary blossom of May, and hid

it in the folds of my sable weeds, while imagination travelled to the distant spot where the wind was scattering such tiny petals over a grave, which man's thoughts would call most untimely :—a grave dug where the grass had scarcely recovered from the pressure of his firm, yet buoyant step :—a grave, into which he went down, without a moment's warning : yes, as, a flower of the field, so *he* flourished. In the morning he was as bright, as beautiful, as joyous, as any creature basking in the light of that summer day, —in the evening he was cut down and withered. He, around whom the deadliest weapons of war had often flashed in vain, who had seen a thousand fall beside him, while not a hair of his head was touched —who had encountered storm and shipwreck, pestilence and famine, and almost every description of peril, with perfect immunity from all that overwhelmed others,—he was reserved to die in the midst of life, and health, and peace, and sunshine, and prosperity.

“ As the heavens are higher than the earth, so are my ways higher than your ways, and my thoughts than your thoughts.” It is the Christian's privilege no less than his duty, to walk by faith, not by sight, and this we readily admit ; but let the lesson be brought home to our bosoms, and what wretched learners are we ! We sow the grain, and fully expect to reap our fields in the appointed weeks of harvest ; ask the natural man whence his confident anticipa-

tion of such an issue to his husbandry—he will tell you that he trusts to nature, because her operations are uniform, and have never, in the ordinary course of events, been known to fail. Are those two immutable things, the promise and the oath of Him who is the Author of nature, less trust-worthy than April showers, and summer beams? Alas we must answer in the affirmative, if we square our words to our thoughts and actions; for notwithstanding the unutterably rich profusion of promises studding the whole book of God, as thickly as the stars bestud the evening sky, we bring our unbelief in desperate resistance to the fulfilment of our prayer, mentally crying, Let Him hasten his work that we may SEE it. Except I see, I will not believe. Had I been left, to this day, in ignorance of the spiritual state of that dear brother—as I was, until long after his departure,—I could not sorrow as one without hope, remembering the many encouragements given to persevere even unto the end, after the example of the Canaanitish woman; but the trial, though severe, was not long; and solid grounds were afforded of a delightful assurance, that even in the sight of men, that work was begun in him, which God never commences to leave unfinished; though sometimes drawing a veil, and from its obscurity breathing into our souls the memorable word, “Only believe, and thou shalt see the glory of God.”

I could murmur that the hawthorn blossom has this year unfolded prematurely beneath the unwonted softness of the season ; but ever welcome be the endeared type ! shall we quarrel with the rapidity of God's mercies, and lament the untimely perfecting of a glorified spirit ? If the flowers be withered, the fruit will tell that they have verily bloomed, and left an endearing record of their existence ; but some lingering blossom I shall find to speak of what needs no memento. It was once my lot to pass a spring in a distant country: so bleak and barren that, throughout the whole territory, only one attempt at cultivating the hawthorn had succeeded, and that consisted of a few yards of hedging close to my abode. How sweet was the smile with which its white flowers seemed to look out upon the poor stranger, speaking not merely of home, but of all that had made home pleasant to my happy childhood ! The colonists prized their hawthorn hedge, and pointed it out with pride, to their curious children, descanting on the beauties of English landscape ; but who among them could love it as I did ?

The character of him who forms the subject of these reminiscences, was in perfect unison with the flower. He was singularly beautiful in person, in temper most joyous, and of a disposition that diffused sunshine around him. The most superficial observer could not pass him by unremarked ; the deepest investi-

gator found abundance to repay his close inspection. Many a delicate trait invited the latter ; while the former could not but recognize a union of attractiveness and worth not often meeting in one individual. To me he was a fence as pleasant and as precious as Jonah's gourd, sheltering me from the vehement wind. But though so many sad thoughts are now written on the fair blossom of May, it likewise presents a sacred Eben-czer of unnumbered mercies, which have followed me all the days of my life ; and which follow me yet, as surely as the leaves re-appear to clothe the stems that winter had denuded. " For that he is strong in power, not one faileth."

And here I had intended to close this paper, but I cannot. A circumstance most unexpected has occurred, even while I was in the very act of preparing to send these pages to the press ; and I must not withhold the ascription of praise to Him who now, at the end of several years, has given me to see a cluster of fruit from the sweet blossom of Christian promise, that seemed so suddenly to fall and die. I was yet pondering with tearful eyes on this poor record of departed gladness, when a letter reached me from one who labours in his Master's cause among the deluded people of Ireland. He asked me to plead for an estimable society, established in the diocese of Tuam, for the education of poor children ; and subjoins, '*one of our best schools was instituted*

by your late lamented brother.' Now, to the glory of God's grace be it spoken, He never yet left me without some token for good, when my mind had been strongly exercised on the glorious subject of his faithfulness and truth. I had even questioned whether it would be expedient to send forth this story of hopes and prayers, where many might doubt whether they had been fulfilled : and I do not envy the faith or the feeling of that person who should chide me, for recognizing in this case a distinct message of encouragement from Him whom I have dared to trust.

I knew long since that my dear brother, shortly before his death had discovered a little hedge-school in a remote part of that country, which he only visited to find a grave beneath its sod. I knew that he had compassionated its destitute case, and obtained for the children a small supply of religious books : but I never knew, never suspected, that the Lord had put such honour upon his work, as to bid it grow up into an important establishment of truly spiritual instruction, and to stand forth among a little cluster, appointed to shed abroad the light of life and immortality over those regions of darkness and the shadow of death. I cannot communicate to my readers my own peculiar feelings, but fain would I speak of hope and joy, to those who go in heaviness for souls not yet brought under the power of divine truth ; fain would I urge them always to pray, and

never to faint ; fain would I persuade them, when looking abroad on the bursting buds, the unfolding leaves, the embryo fruits of May, to read on every petal, every pod, the soul-cheering invitation, “ Lift up your eyes on high, and behold ! who hath created these things, that bringeth out their host by number : he calleth them all by names, by the greatness of his might, for that he is strong in power, “ NOT ONE FAILETH.”

CHAPTER VI.

THE WHITE ROSE.

BRILLIANT month of June! What an accumulation of treasures are scattered over the face of the florist's domain by thy liberal hand, Or rather, since those figurative expressions steal away the ascriptions of praise from him to whom they should ever ascend, and scatter them among the clouds of pagan imaginations, rather let me say, how richly has the Lord our God dealt forth his unmerited bounties; on how many fair pages, of ever-varying beauty and grace, has he written the story of his compassionate love to man—the memorial of that blessedness which they alone enjoy who seek his face. That the flower-garden is a type, the most cursory glance ought to convince us—the outline cannot be mistaken, by one who considers it with that reference to spiritual

things which the Christian should not—cannot lose sight of: but there is, in the ample detail of all its delicate filling-up, such a perfect correspondence, that the more we study it, the fuller will be our appreciation of that expressive promise to the church, “Thou shalt be like a watered garden.”

Watered by the soft dews and cooling rain of spring, we have seen the plants arise from their dark chambers, and shake off the dust, and unfold their bright bosoms to the sun. Always to the sun. Called into existence by his vivifying power, and ripened in its pod by his steady rays, the seed, in its earliest state and most shrouded form, was altogether his work. It never would have been independent of his influence, and under that influence it was preserved, until, having been placed where it should become fruitful, the germinating process had brought it forth into open day, no longer a seed, but a plant. And when its beautiful garments are put on, when it stands so clothed that Solomon in all his glory could not compare with it, what does the flower, in this watered garden? It turns to him whose creative power and preserving care have led it to its new state of being—it turns to bask in the full glow of transforming LOVE; it looks upward; and upward it sends that rich fragrance which never dwelt in the original seed, or in the mass of polluted earth where its first habitation was fixed; a fragrance that

belongs only to its expanded state. Thomson has very elegantly expressed this :

‘ Soft roll your incense, herbs, and fruits, and flowers,
In mingled clouds to him whose sun exalts,
Whose breath perfumes you, and whose pencil paints.’

Yet Thompson only saw with the perception of taste, and by the exercise of natural reason argued from the things that are seen to the invisible First Cause. Alas ! that many who have been deeply taught of the Holy Spirit to view all in Christ, and Christ in all, should often come so very far short of even this ascription, when looking upon their watered gardens of perishing flowers !

I am shamed by every weed that grows, when I bring myself to this test—when I compare the diligence with which each tiny blossom seeks the beams of the summer sun, with my sad unheedfulness in striving to catch the far brighter beams of that eternal Sun, without whose life-giving light my soul cannot be sustained. The favourite edging of my flower-beds is singularly eloquent on this point, Heart’s-ease composes it : and while the border that faces the south exhibits its beautiful little flowers on short stems, basking tranquilly in the ray, displaying a broad uniform sheet of gold, and silver, and purple,—the strips that run from south to north ; appear as with their heads turned, by an effort, out

of the natural posture, that they too may gaze, and shine. To complete the picture, where a little hedge throws its shadow over another bank of my hearts-ease, I see them rising on stems, thrice the length of their opposite neighbours', perfectly erect, and stretching upwards as if to overtop the barrier, that they too may rejoice in the sunshine which gladdens the earth.

Beautiful at all times, when are flowers *most* beautiful? To this question each will reply, according to his peculiar tastes and preferences. For myself, I must declare that they never look so lovely in my sight, as when brought to wither gently on the bed of death.

It was in the land of warm deep feelings—the country which I must needs be continually bringing before my readers, if my hand be prompted by the abundance of my heart—It was in Ireland that I made this discovery. It is well known how revolting are the scenes of riot and debauchery usually presented at an Irish wake: the very name is an abhorrence to those who comprehend its character, as practised in the south of Ireland, among the Roman Catholic population. Yet a wake, kept by some humble Roman Catholics in the South of Ireland, is one of the spectacles to which my memory often reverts with delight; associating with it all that is most touchingly lovely in the world of flowers.

The boy was not two years old, who lay stretched on a little couch, over which the hand of affection had festooned a drapery of delicate white muslin, confined here and there with bows of white satin ribbon, while a dress of the same materials enfolded the corpse: his little cap just shading the soft bright locks that alone varied the snow-like appearance of the whole object, until the last finish was given to the careful arrangement, by disposing small bunches of delicate flowers, and young green leaves upon the pillow, the coverlet, and the surrounding drapery. The child was very beautiful when living; in death, surpassingly so. If real grandeur is any where on earth to be found, it dwells on the broad open brow of infantine beauty, ere the consciousness of wilful sin has marred its native majesty. Often have I quailed before the steadfast gaze of a very young child; almost forgetting that the little creature who looked so bold in comparative innocence, was already a condemned sinner:—that, though of such is the kingdom of heaven, it is only by the atoning blood of the cross that a being so polluted can enter there. But infancy in death—infancy snatched from an evil world, ere the taint can overspread its unfolding mind—infancy redeemed, and rescued, and exalted to behold always the face of God in heaven—is indeed a glorious spectacle. Where is the Christian parent, whose bitterest tears have been unmingled with the

sweetness of assured hope, when contemplating the bereavement of a babe, not lost, but gone before?—gone to HIM whose compassionate bosom is ever open to receive his lambs ; his hand always extended to wipe the tear-drops—the few and transient tear-drops of infancy—for ever from their eyes.

But I must return to the Irish baby, who lay in state, not after the fashion of this world's great ones, but to indulge the fond and superstitious feelings of his family ; three generations of whom had assisted to adorn him for this customary display. Glancing around me, I beheld with surprise four large candles burning, though scarcely visible in the glowing sunbeams that fell upon them from a western window. Behind these superfluous lights, a large crucifix was fastened to the wall, terminating in a bowl well-filled with holy water. On a table, together with the good cheer inseparable from a wake, were displayed other symbols of a worship clearly idolatrous : while whispered invocations, addressed to the helpless mediators on whom the church of Rome instructs her deluded people to call, completed a scene that filled my heart with sadness when I looked upon the living, and my soul with rejoicing, as again I turned to contemplate the dead.

It is impossible to describe the force of the contrast. The paraphernalia of a worship at once sensual and senseless, mingled with the gross aliment of the

body, with the coarse luxuries of tobacco, and snuff, bottles of whiskey and jugs of beer, all confused in the red, smoky atmosphere of dim candles : these were on my left hand. I turned to the right, and beheld the fair casket of a jewel lately rescued from the evil grasp—the calm and majestic countenance of a creature, originally formed in the image of God, and by the sacrifice of God's dear Son, made near once more, and for ever. Over this beautiful object stole the purest beams of a setting sun, bathing it in soft brilliancy ; while the flowers, the innocent smiling flowers that reposed above, and beside, and around him—not in profusion, but at such intervals as gave the full effect to each individual blossom—these appeared to claim, as their sweet companion, the little body so like themselves, in its short, sunshiny existence, its peaceful decay, its future uprising from the dust of the earth, to light, and life, and glory.

Happy spirit! Like a bird out of the snare of the fowler, he had escaped the chains that superstition was forging to hold him back from God. Before that idol crucifix he had never bent ; to the water beneath it he had never looked for sanctifying influences. He had not dishonoured the most high God his Saviour, by giving glory to other names : nor had he sought unto man for the pardon which cometh from God alone. Too young to sin “ after the similitude of Adam's transgression ” by voluntary disobedience,

he was by natural inheritance an heir of wrath, an alien from God: too young to exercise faith on Christ, how precious as I looked on him, was the assurance, that the blood shed as a propitiation for the sins of the whole world, embraced his case, and opened to him the heavenly kingdom. My mind was engrossed by the deep and clear argument of the apostle, in the fifth chapter of the epistle to the Romans, which to me brings perfect conviction as to the eternal safety of *all* who die in infancy. Like the early dew, they just visit our earth, and once brought within the influence of the Sun of righteousness, 'they sparkle, are exhaled, and go to heaven.'

There are many flowers that speak to me of early happy death. The lily of the valley is one: but the fairest is the white moss-rose. I have never yet attached it to any individual character: but behold in its faint blush, scarcely perceptible, the last delicate hue of animation quietly fading from a young face when the pulses throb no longer. The usual plan, as I have seen it adopted among the poor Irish, is to lay out the body of the dead on an elevated couch, or table in the corner of a room; one wall forming the head, another the side, of the temporary bed. Against these walls they suspend a white sheet, pinning bouquets here and there; and as the flowers begin to droop, bending their heads downward, it requires no very great power of imagination to read the type—

they seem to gaze upon the corpse, repeating the humiliating doom, alike applicable to both—dust we are, and unto dust shall we return. I could not look on such a spectacle without beholding the garden of Eden, by man's transgression rendered desolate, and perishing, alas! in man's destruction—the creatures, the innocent and beautiful creatures of God's hand made subject to vanity through our sinfulness ; fading and falling into one common grave. The pall may spread its velvet folds, and the sable plumes bow in stately gloom over the dead ; but a single white rose, drooping amid its dark foliage, tells the story more touchingly, and with more eloquent sympathy, than all that the heart of man may contrive, to invest sorrow in a deeper shade of woe.

“ Thou shalt be like a watered garden,” says the Lord to the believing soul, whose graces shall spring up and flourish, and be fruitful to the praise of the glory of his grace, who visits it with the small, quiet rain of his life-giving Spirit. “ Thou shalt be like a watered garden,” he says to his church, as one sleeper after another awakes, and arises from spiritual death, and receives light from Christ growing up among the trees of his planting that he may be glorified in the abundant accession to his vineyard on its very fruitful hill. “ Thou shalt be like a watered garden,” the Lord says to this wide earth, destined in the appointed day to see her dead men live—they

that dwell in the dust of many ages, awake and sing—a dew as the dew of herbs falling upon her graves, and the bodies of the saints that sleep issuing forth in the brilliancy of celestial beauty. Then that which was sown in corruption shall be raised in incorruption: that which was sown in dishonour shall be raised in glory: that which was sown in weakness shall be raised in power: that which was sown a poor, vile, natural body, shall be raised a spiritual body, like to the glorious body of Christ according to the mighty working whereby he is able to subdue all things—yea, even death, and the grave, and destruction—unto himself. Has he not given us an earnest of this, in the vivid forms that spring on every hand, as we tread the garden and the grove? Shall we look upon this annual resurrection, and not give thanks unto him for his great power? Shall we disdain to acknowledge the benevolence of that divine skill which has taken of the common elements, and spread them out into such lovely forms, and tinted them with such resplendent hues, and finished the delicate pencilling with such exquisite art, and planted them in our daily, hourly path, breathing delicious fragrance; and, to crown all, bade us consider them how they grow, as an earnest of the tender care that he is pledged to take of us, his obdurate, unthankful children!

Lord of all power and might ! all thy other works do naturally praise thee ; but such is the darkness of man's heart, that it is only by the application of that spiritual gift which was purchased by the blood of Christ, that even thy saints can be impelled to give due thanks unto thee for thy great love, while thou clothest the grass that makes pleasant their footpath over this magnificent wreck of a glorious world !

CHAPTER VII.

THE CARNATION.

THERE are many disadvantages in writing periodically on a given subject. Other engagements, combined with a treacherous spirit of procrastination, will lead us to defer the work, until the consciousness of a waiting press throws a feeling of hurry and anxiety upon the mind, which is sure to fetter its operations, just as they need to be most vigorously performed. It was under such a consciousness, that I strolled forth this morning to look upon the languid flowers. A long drought had sadly changed the aspect of my usually soft and verdant grass plat; the trees that cluster around it presenting quite an autumnal tint, from the number of faded leaves; while, on the border open to the south, such an array of shrivelled petals and withering buds disfigured the tall rose-trees that expand upon the wall, that while I gazed,

my spirit drooped in sullen sympathy ; and having bound some straggling CARNATIONS to the sticks which I could scarcely drive into the baked soil, I returned to my study, with as little inclination to write about flowers, as a sick person usually has to partake of a substantial meal.

On a sudden, and most unexpectedly, a dark cloud which had rapidly overspread the sky, burst, in one of those downright soaking rains that bid fair to penetrate even to the roots of the earth. This was accompanied by a breeze, so rough as to bend low the lighter trees, and to toss with some violence the branches of the more stable. Thus, while the rain freshened all that retained life, the wind separated what was dead, bearing it far away, and leaving the exhilarated scene to sparkle in its summer beauty. Who could look on this, and fail to apply the expressive acknowledgment—"Thou, O Lord, sentest a gracious rain upon thine inheritance, and refreshedst when it was weary."

I can now augur well for my carnations, planted rather unadvisedly, I confess, in that unshaded south border. Some will wonder that I should suffer them to droop for lack of moisture, while the simple contrivance of a watering pot is within reach. But though I do occasionally give the garden such artificial refreshment, I find that the hard spring water which alone is at hand, affords a very insufficient

substitute for the distillations of the sky. This, too, is good for me—it teaches me to look up and to acknowledge my soul's continual dependance on that which man cannot supply. The garden of Eden was Adam's only Bible, and sweetly, no doubt, did he meditate upon the living page ; a book more precious meets our far deeper wants ; but the first volume, with all its sin-wrought blemishes, when interpreted by the second, is a study that I would not forego for any work of human wisdom.

I must not, however, lose sight of my carnations : they have reference to some reminiscences in which I must indulge. Not that the character which I connect with them, bears any resemblance to the flower ; but those delicate flowers grew in great profusion round the lowly cottage of old Dame C., and, as the sole acknowledgement that poverty could make, I was invariably presented with the choicest of that elegant store, when I commenced visiting her : until I came so to identify them, that, if I had been more than a day or two absent, the sight of a carnation would send me off, conscience-stricken, to my instructive post.

Dame C. could find no gratification in the flower-garden : for twelve years she had been totally blind ; and when I first saw her, she had lain for full two years on a bed, where rheumatic affection of the limbs forbade her even the luxury of changing her

position, without an effort quite agonizing to her crippled frame. I want to pourtray the family as I found them ; and shall endeavour so to do.

A beloved friend, whose faithful labours in the ministry had shed the light of Goshen within many a detached cottage, where all besides was darkness—yea, darkness that might be felt—was removed from among us. At his departure, I was told of Dame C., as one who would surely feel the loss, and requested to look in upon her occasionally. It was not long before I visited the cottage ; and certainly a less attractive scene I could hardly have encountered.

On entering the little kitchen, the first object that presented itself was the countenance of a boy, in the very lowest state of confirmed idiocy ; his open mouth distorted into a wild laugh, and disfigured by a frightful scar, occasioned by his falling upon the wood fire. This deplorable being sat in a little chair ; his long mis-shapen legs and arms were alike powerless : and altogether the first sight of him was enough to check my wish for farther acquaintance with the cottagers. However, I proceeded, and saw a very old man sitting near the fire ; while a middle aged woman, of a very serious and even sad countenance, respectfully welcomed her visitor.

‘Is this your little boy?’ said I, trying to reconcile myself to the spectacle.

‘No, madam, he is a friendless child,’ cast by the Lord on such poor help as we can give him.’

‘Where is Dame C.?’

‘I will take you to her:’ and then, with great tenderness lifting the boy in her arms, who at eight years old, had the length (not height, for he could not stand) of ten or twelve, she preceded us into the adjoining room; which was in so dilapidated a state that light penetrated the roof in many places, where the covering of turf had sunk in between the open rafters, presenting an aspect of great poverty, and accounting for the rheumatic pains to which the inmate was subject.

The dame lay on her very humble but clean bed; and again I shrunk back. Her face was drawn into innumerable wrinkles, its expression indicating great suffering, and something about the eyelids that gave a vague idea of the forcible extinction of sight. She seemed a personification of misery, and there was a heavy vacant look that almost discouraged me from speaking to her. Still I strove against the repugnant feeling, and spoke gently and kindly, inquiring how she felt herself.

‘Very poorly, indeed, lady,’ she answered without any movement; ‘my poor bones ache so, that I can get no rest.’

‘But your soul rests—does it not?—in the love of the Lord Jesus.’

‘It does—blessed be my gracious Lord?’

‘Well, I am come, at the request of our dear Mr. H. and his sister, to see you.’

In a moment her hands were raised to grasp a cord that hung loosely across the head of her bed, and by means of which, with a forcible effort, she turned herself to the side where I sat, exclaiming with a blaze of animation, ‘Oh, do tell me something of *them!* And did *they* send you to me?’

I told her much of those precious friends : and then we talked of the Master whom they served : and then I read a portion of God’s word, astonished and instructed by the deep observations that she continually made. I found her, in fact, one of the most experimental Christians that I had ever met with ; and before I left her, every object had become lovely in my sight : so manifestly did the glory of the Lord rest on all around me. Many an after hour did I pass, holding her poor withered hand in mine, while we discoursed upon the love of God in Christ ; and many a Christian friend, including ministers and missionaries, did I take to learn of my blind old dame such heights, and depths, and breadths of that redeeming, enlightening, sanctifying love, as few of them had ever attained to.

On my second visit, I took my dumb boy : he was deeply affected, and after gazing intently on her countenance whilst I read the scriptures to her, though

not comprehending a word that passed, he said to me, with tears in his eyes, 'Poor blind woman loves Jesus Christ.' I then told her of his presence and his state; and very lovely it was to see the trembling hand of the blind old saint pressed on the head of the deaf and dumb youth, while she invoked the richest blessings of covenant grace on his path—already, and evidently, tending to an early grave.

One peculiar characteristic marked that singular dwelling: it was the zeal of both mother and daughter for the soul of the idiot boy: his story was very touching. His mother, led astray and abandoned, had sought shelter there—had given him birth—and died with every appearance of having been led to Christ during her short but bitter trial. The only connexion of either parent who could do any thing for the babe, was asked where he should be sent: 'Toss him behind the fire!' was the savage reply; and from that hour he was cherished in the poverty-stricken abode of faith and love; receiving a most scanty dole from the parish towards his support, with a weekly threat of its withdrawal. 'And if they do,' said the dame's estimable daughter, 'we can but trust to the Lord, and go on. I am sure he has a soul, and at times I see little gleams of sense in him; and I am sure that, poor sinful child of a sinful race though he be, the blood of Jesus Christ can save him too.' And then she clasped her arms round him, and

earnestly talked to him of the love of Christ ; observing, ‘ How do I know but that he understands more than he can express ! ’

It will readily be believed that my heart became knit to this family ; and after my poor boy was confined to his home, I went continually to give and receive supplies of strengthening hope, in conversing with Dame C. Never was gratitude so overpowering as that wherewith our little offices of kindness were received : never were spiritual things more abundantly reaped, in return for such poor services in carnal things.

I was often deeply humbled to perceive in how fierce a furnace the Lord still kept what to man appeared gold fully refined. The dame’s trials were dreadful. One part of her malady was the nightly, and often daily, appearance of the most horrible shapes and countenances, menacing and rushing at her, as if commissioned to tear her in pieces. Not being able to account for this, she naturally supposed them to be evil spirits ; and most heart-rending were her cries to the Lord, for help and defence against them. A medical friend explained to me the origin of these optical illusions ; and I was able to convince her that they sprang altogether from her disease. It was joyful news to her harassed mind : but in the beautiful simplicity of her faith she said, ‘ When I thought them devils, I did not really fear

them : it was sad to have devils for company, and they are very frightful too : but since neither angels, nor principalities, nor powers can separate me from the love of God in Christ Jesus my Lord, I felt that they could do me no harm.'

The dame found out my love of flowers, and often charged her daughter to pick the best for me. The little garden was as rich in them as tasteful industry could make it ; and, by careful cultivation, the family of pinks and carnations had overspread the borders in splendid profusion. I have no floral association more distinct, than that of these lovely specimens with the cottage of Dame C.

When, after a period of most agonizing suffering, my dumb boy underwent what the country people call the "change for death," about a week before his actual departure, I went to seek comfort from my dame, and was greeted with the tidings that a change exactly similar had passed on her. I could not then bear to see her ; but, five days after, I went and beheld her laid out, in the perfect semblance of death. No perception of any kind seemed to exist, her respiration only, now and then rising to a groan, indicated that life still lingered. 'She will never speak nor move again,' said her daughter, 'thus she will breathe her last.' But she was mistaken ; another day and night passed by, and every moment appeared likely to be the final one. At seven o'clock

in the morning of the ensuing day, to the amazement of her watchful nurses, the old woman lifted up her hands, and in a loud clear voice exclaimed, 'When you hear the bell toll for me, then rejoice—rejoice—rejoice; for I shall be in glory.' The word 'rejoice' was each time accompanied with a clap of the hands—the word 'glory' was uttered in a tone of rapturous exultation—and then the hands fell, and the soul was gone in a moment.

Thus she entered into the joy of her Lord, at the age, as she used to say, of twenty-eight. 'For though it is eighty-six years since I came into the world, you know I was dead till the voice came, "Awake! thou that sleepest, arise from the dead, and Christ shall give thee light." Yes, I was dead in trespasses and sins, and I will only number my days from that whercon He quickened me.

I had anticipated much solace from discoursing with her of my dumb boy's state, when he should be taken away; she died fourteen hours before him; and he called her, playfully, 'Bad blind woman, for not waiting for him. I stifled the selfish feeling of disappointment, and feasted on the assurance of their glorious meeting, when the eyes of the blind are indeed opened, and the ears of the deaf unstopped, and the tongue of the dumb makes melody in heaven. It is so *realizing* to witness the short and sprightly step wherewith some of God's children

spring from time into eternity! The bursting of a bud into sudden expansion typifies it sweetly; but I must not anticipate the Evening Primrose. For this month it will suffice me to bend over the gracefully-drooping carnation, and send out my heart's warmest affections towards the poor of this world, rich in faith, whom God hath chosen to be heirs of his kingdom, in glory that shall never fade away.

CHAPTER VIII.

THE EVENING PRIMROSE.

'THE pale primrose' of early spring has found a laureate in the bard of every age, of every grade. The vernal landscape pictured to our mind's eye, would be incomplete without it. Who can fancy a green bank, beginning to shoot forth its tender blade after shaking off the feathery tufts of snow, without including in the ideal sketch that delicate flower which rises on its slender stalk to grace the slant, and peer into the narrow channel beneath, as if watching the gradual withdrawal of winter's now liquified mantle!

But the primrose of spring has a younger sister appearing later in the year; one who wears her tint, and borrows her name, and inherits her sweet humility, though towering in stature far above the lowly prototype. The primrose of evening comes not forth

to share in the general competition of her many tinted neighbours : she keeps her beautiful petals wrapped closely in their mantle through the day, nor unfolds them until other flowers have shrank from the dewy chill : and then it is astonishing how rapidly the blossoms burst their cerements, expanding in quick succession, while we can scarcely persuade ourselves that the change before us is the work of half an hour.

It was in the haunt of my childhood, the garden of my paternal home, that I learnt to love this primrose. My father had so great a predilection for it, that he scarcely allowed its progress to be checked, even when the increase threatened to overrun the parterre. I knew the reason of this—he had heard me say that I liked nothing so well as, after gazing on the brilliant colours of the western sky, to turn and look upon the cool sweet buds that awoke while all others were at rest. I scarcely dare to call up the images connected with that period of my life : intentionally I never do so, because the scenery on which one ray of gospel light never broke, will not endure the retrospective gaze, without inflicting a pang most trying to poor rebellious nature. Yet that their memory lives in the deep recesses of my heart, I am made to feel, whenever I look upon the plant : and that, with all its sorrowful combinations, the theme is most dear to me, I know by the thrill

of secret delight that welcomes its appearance, far beyond that of every bright flower around it.

Not long ago, I was trying to trace to its first origin the character of deep sympathy, wherewith I am conscious of having invested this particular flower, from my very childhood. To me, the evening primrose does not so much represent an individual, as a sentiment : but this assuredly took its rise from its association with my father's image, who, in all that concerned me, presented the most complete personification of delicate sympathy that I have ever witnessed among men. This was the more remarkable, as his mind was particularly masculine : his every taste and pursuit far removed from what was frivolous or idle. Yet was his soaring intellect perpetually bowed, his mighty faculties continually brought down, to reach the level of a weak and wayward child, so as to render his companionship the main ingredient of my happiness ; while others, far my superiors in age and understanding, stood aloof and wondered at my delighting in what they regarded with no little awe. Certain I am, that at no period of my life have I met, in any human being, with a sympathy so full, so tender, so unfailling, as that of him who left me early to buffet with the storms of life ; and the evening primrose always is, always will be, a memento of what I shall no more enjoy on earth.

The flower too, is an apt emblem of what I would

describe. It comes, when the fellowship of many sunshiny friends is withdrawn. The gayest have disappeared from my garden before it is ripe for blossoming; and those of its contemporaries who smile on me through the day, will close the eye, and avert the head, at the cool hour when I am tempted forth to muse among them. A feeling of desertion steals on my spirit, when I look around upon the folded petals, that laughed back my noontide greeting; and then, as if partaking in my thought, the delicate buds of the evening primrose throw wide their silken leaves with a haste that seems to bespeak no slight impulse of benevolent sympathy. The lapse of every year gives additional emphasis of meaning in this contemplation: for each returning summer bears witness to some additional bereavement, while companions long-loved have gone down into the grave, or faces that beamed lovingly on me have become averted in coldness, or estranged by protracted absence. The flower is then a precious remembrancer to tell me of one who changes not—whose unseen hand upheld my unsteady steps when gambolling in infancy among the blossoms—guided me through the mazes of a perplexing pilgrimage—and is still upon me for good, with the cheering promise, “I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.” The sudden bursting of a bud of the evening primrose has power to recall my thoughts, in the moment of

inconsiderate levity, with an influence most subduing; and when despondency or discontent pervade the spirit, that little incident will sooth and cheer me like the words of a tender and sympathising friend.

How wonderful is the influence that sympathy can exercise over some minds! And yet it is difficult to define its precise character; for it may exist unseen, where a cold exterior veils its operations; or it may be so counterfeited as to delude us into a belief of its abiding, where, in reality, it was never known. Besides, different ideas are attached to the word, according to the feelings of individuals; and men will call that sympathy, which merely conforms itself to their prevailing humours, taking care not to cross the grain of their inclinations, however wrong or dangerous they may be. An invalid may have a particular liking for something expressly forbidden by the physician: and then *he* is the sympathising friend, who will smuggle the prohibited delicacy to the sick patient, or overrule the opposition of more conscientious advisers. Again, a Christian may be—and alas! few Christians are not—under the influence of some besetting sin, which he conceives to be merely a harmless characteristic of his natural disposition, while, to all others, it may evidently appear most unlovely—unseemly—and inconsistent with his profession. To him, that friend will seem the most sweetly sympathizing, who affects not to perceive, or

helps him to frame excuses for, the reigning corruption. But that in either of these cases, the seeming kindness is real cruelty, we need not be told. True Christian sympathy places its soul in the soul's stead, with which it has to deal, and proceeds as, in such a case, it would desire to be dealt with; constantly keeping in view the momentous interests of eternity. At the same time, it will infuse all imaginable tenderness into the faithful dealing which conscience dictates; and herein is its peculiar character most brightly developed, that it will stoop to the weaknesses of the most feeble-minded; studying the very prejudices of its object, in order to avoid any needless infliction.

There are some minds so constituted, that they appear, intuitively, to fall into the very circumstances of those with whom they have to do; inso-much that the pain or embarrassment of another will affect them as personal troubles:—the gratifications of others yield them a positive pleasure. Of this sensitive class was Cowper, whose universal tenderness of feeling took into its grasp the very brute creation. And if such characters were numerous among men, we should find the world very different from what we now experience it to be. Sweet and refreshing it is, to meet with individuals so constituted: and where divine grace has given a higher impulse and a nobler aim to their benevolence—

when, not merely the temporal but also the spiritual benefit of their fellow creatures becomes an object of their deep concern—they are as palm-trees in the desert of our pilgrimage, extending alike to every weary traveller the shadow so welcome.

This habit of placing ourselves in the situation of another, will also be found to prevail wherever a strong individual attachment subsists. Warm affection *will* seek the happiness of its object, and that is only to be done by studying the disposition of the person beloved, with a steady self-devotion—a co-partnership in every joy and sorrow—a moulding of our own will and habits to those of the cherished object. Here, again, is sympathy; and to this manifestation of it I can bear witness, and remember how my every taste and inclination were watched, that they might be gratified; how light was every sacrifice accounted, that a fond father could make to promote the welfare of an afflicted child. The sacredness of the tie, the immensity of the obligation, the total removal of him who conferred it out of the reach of all grateful return, and the cheering brightness that seems to hang over the remote retrospection of those by-gone years—all tend to melt my spirit into sad, yet soothing emotion, when I behold the flower on which is engraven that record of indulged childhood—of sympathy more perfect than I can ever again look for upon earth.

There is yet another demonstration of this benevolence, which we are warranted to expect among all who bear the name of Christ ; and this is expressed by the injunction, " Bear ye one another's burdens." Without possessing the exquisite tenderness of the class first alluded to, without entertaining any especial degree of partiality for the individual, we are imperatively called upon to make both allowances and sacrifices, for the sake of those around us. Good breeding ensures this, among people who are held together by the bonds of civil society ; but something more must interpose to induce its continuance, where intimacy has removed many restraints. It is not to be computed how much of domestic and social happiness is lost, by neglecting to cultivate this branch of Christian duty. It is lovely to see the strong bearing the infirmities of the weak, and descending to trifles, beneath the level of their more powerful minds, in order to avoid too rough a collision with spirits rendered over-sensitive by afflictions, by sickness, or by natural temperament. Nor is forbearance to be confined to the more energetic party : the weak are bound to remember that others, differently constituted, cannot so enter into all the minutiae of their feelings, as to escape every appearance of insensibility to their complaints. Still, if the gospel rule be followed, in prayerful solicitude to possess and to manifest the mind which was in Christ Jesus,

many a cup, now of almost unmingled bitterness as respects this world, may be sweetly ameliorated by the hand of forbearing kindness; while gleams of gladness are rendered brighter, by the smiling participation of those who are taught of God to rejoice with them that do rejoice.

I think the whole bible does not afford us so affecting a lesson as that contained in two words in St. John's gospel—"*Jesus wept.*" It is not merely the act of his weeping, but the occasion, that presents so exquisite an instance of the sympathy dear to the afflicted man. Our Lord was on the point of turning the grief of his friends into unbounded joy, and very few among us with such anticipation close at hand, would be able to find a tear for the mourners—our minds would be too much occupied with their approaching, and most overwhelming delight. But the holy Jesus, touched with the feeling of *all* our infirmities, looked on the present anguish, and wept with the heart-broken sisters. Oh! how unlike that cold, unsympathising spirit, that seeks to force on the writhing sufferer its own superficial view of the passing calamity; that chides the gushing tear, and preaches a lesson of indifference to a mind stretched on the rack of torture! Yet this is often done, with the best and kindest intention, through forgetfulness of the great and precious example of Him who could not err! I have experienced this injudicious treat-

ment when every feeling of my heart was lacerated and torn by a loss no less bitter—far more sudden and terrible than that of Martha and Mary. I have then been told, that what was past could not be recalled, and therefore I must not allow my mind to dwell upon it. Miserable comfort it was, and utterly hateful to my soul: but I turned to the sacred volume, and in those two words, "*Jesus wept,*" I read the character of one to whom I could bring my sorrows who would suffer me to weep before him, and forgive the reproachful thought, that said "Lord, if thou hadst been here, my brother had not died."

And how beautifully does the bud of my gentle Evening Primrose typify the change that passes on the children of God, when he summons them to burst the fetters of flesh! It is true that, when the spirit enters into glory, it disappears altogether from our ken, while the glory of the flower is to expand and shine before us. Still the rapidity, the beauty of the transition, occurring too, as it does, at the quiet, solemn hour of closing eve, will force upon the mind a resemblance very sweet to contemplate, and gives, at least to me, the idea of happy spirits silently encompassing my path, while I meditate on the endearing theme. I sometimes gather the buds, and watch their expansion in my hand, delighting almost as a mother does in the unclosing eye of her slum-

bering babe. The petals of this flower are very beautiful, and wear a character of refreshing coolness, and durability too, when they open to the pleasant breeze of evening: but all is frail and transitory, destined to endure no longer than while the sun is absent from our hemisphere. Vanity is written upon all that fixes its root in this perishing earth; and man, especially, walketh in a vain shadow, disquieting himself in vain. The best, the dearest, the holiest of our privileges, as regards our fellow-beings, hangs but upon a breath; and that perhaps the breath of Satan, or of most evil-minded men, permitted by Him who suffered the inmates of Bethany to drink the bitter cup of bereavement, in tears and anguish of soul: but only that he might, after exercising their faith and submission, prove the omnipotence of his arm to wrest back the prey, and confound the opposers of his sovereignty, and shame the doubters of his everlasting love. Against his faithful servants, the hand of violence and wrong can do nothing, but pave the way for brighter manifestations of his glory, he whom Jesus loves may be sick—he whom Jesus loves may be persecuted,—but his prospect is sure; and, however foes may triumph for a season, he shall yet be more than conqueror, through Him who has so loved him.

CHAPTER IX.

THE VINE.

AFTER a long struggle against the prevailing inclination, I have resolved to gratify it, even at the hazard of being brought in guilty of a flagrant departure from the verity of my title. Fruit does not legitimately come under the head of flowers ;—true, but flowers that herald not some species of fruit are comparatively of little worth. In short, I would rather, for once, plead guilty to the charge of inconsistency, than deprive myself of the delight with which I constantly dwell on an image so *nationally* precious, that the reader who falls out with me for bringing it before her, must seek her place beyond the circle of, at least, English Christian ladies.

The VINE, the fruitful Vine, that spreads its luxuriant foliage, and throws out its wiry tendrils, and hangs forth its clusters to the mellowing sunbeams,

will not be passed by, at this season of sweet recollections. It brings before me in the most vivid portraiture, a scene never to be forgotten ; nor ever to be recalled without a glow of heart, which, to be sure, I cannot hope to communicate to my readers ; though most of them will be able to conceive how little peril I am in of overstating the matter, when they have the particulars, which I will faithfully relate.

It was on a very bright and gladsome morning that I set out, accompanied by my own, my precious brother, and his little girl, and my dumb boy, on an excursion fraught with very delightful anticipations. We reached the end of our journey, and were ushered into a room well furnished with books, adorned with tasteful prints, and wearing the aspect, yea, breathing the very soul of elegant retirement, hallowed into something far beyond the reach of this world's elegancies. At the further end of the apartment was a recess, almost of sufficient size to be called an additional room, thrown boldly forward beyond the line of the building, and forming in four compartments, one large semi-circular window, scarcely a pane of which was unadorned by some stray leaf or tendril of the vine that rested its swelling bunches in profusion against the glass. Beyond, the eye might find much of sylvan beauty whereon to rest : but to me, no attraction lay *beyond* it ; for, in the light and cheerful little sanctuary, there sate

a lady, whose snow-white locks—"a crown of glory"—shaded, or rather brightened, a countenance so beaming with love, that the sentiment of reverential humility was at once absorbed in that of endeared fellowship with one who evidently sought no homage, nor claimed superiority over the lowliest of her Saviour's followers.

That lady was Hannah More.

My heart often melts within me, at the recollection of the tenderness that marked her first greeting. There was that in my own circumstances, which could not fail to engage her sympathising compassion; there was that, in the cases of my companions, which powerfully awakened her most serious interest. I had long shared the benevolence of her love, long reaped the benefit of her devout prayers, and received many a message of affectionate solicitude, during a preceding period of no common tribulation. She saw me then, rejoicing in the presence of a long-lost friend, yet filled with keenest anxiety for his spiritual welfare. I can readily believe that the occasion called forth into conspicuous display the loveliest features of her beautiful character; and, assuredly, I never have beheld a countenance so expressive of all that can sweeten mortality.

How quick, how perfect is the communion of spirit between those who, having often met at the throne of grace, while yet far absent in body, are at

length brought eye to eye, beholding one another's faces in the flesh, which heretofore had been but dimly pourtrayed by uncertain imaginations! Our converse was unavoidably restrained, by the presence of those whose absence neither of us could have desired: but every time that her sweet, quiet, yet animated eye met mine, it told me that she read my thoughts, that her soul ascended in prayer for the attainment of that which mine so fervently longed after: and it spoke, in the smiling encouragement of her cheerful aspect, "fear not: only believe, and thou shalt see the glory of God."

It was, to me, a clear token for good, that her very heart seemed drawn out towards my brother, who having long sojourned in a land of gross darkness—such as might be felt—had recently returned, not only ignorant of the truth as it is in Jesus, but impressed with the most absurd prejudices against those whose spiritual earnestness he had been taught to consider as paroxysms of fanatical derangement. He had never been brought into contact with an open professor of serious religion, and very terrible to his joyous spirit was the phantom of melancholy moroseness, conjured up by the enemy of his soul, to deter him from entering into such society. His love for me, the delight that he had ever found in promoting my gratification impelled him to venture into what he expected to find the counterpart of La Trappe.

This he had expressed to me on the road, remarking that he had no great fancy for visiting "the queen of the Methodists;" and a lurking expression of suspicious dislike clouded his bright countenance, until he had taken a deliberate view of his new acquaintance; who, being on her part fully aware of his prejudices, was peculiarly solicitous to remove them.

It was no difficult task; for the Lord had willed it; and oh how sweet it was to me, who could read every turn of those expressive features, to see the mist rolling away, and the brightest sunshine of delight overspreading them, as he listened to her interesting converse, and repaid her judicious inquiries with a mass of valuable information, on the topics most engaging to a soldier just returned from the scene of his victories. The usual period allowed to visitors passed too fleetly, and he appeared no less gratified than I was, when she told us that after taking some refreshment, and strolling through the grounds, we must again return to her alcove, and renew our conversation.

During this interview, Jack, the dumb boy, had been standing behind a chair, his eyes roving with strange delight from one to the other, fully comprehending the character of each, and bestowing on me many significant nods, accompanied with the words "Beautiful—— loves Hannah More: Good Hannah More loves beautiful——," while he and the won-

derful manifestation of divine grace in his soul, furnished her with many appropriate remarks, calculated to awaken my dear brother's interest on subjects quite new to him.

Sweet shades of Barley Wood! how lovely they looked to my gladdened eye, as we strolled among them—how delicious to my soul were the remarks made by my companion on their blessed owner—and with what pleasure did I observe the mutual cordiality of their greeting, when he again seated himself opposite to her, leaning over her little table, and perusing the venerable countenance which really shone with maternal love towards him. I would record it among the many instances of her Christian spirit, that she endured, even to serious inconvenience, the fatigue of a most prolonged interview, for the sake of following up a manifest advantage with one in whose sight the Lord had given her unlooked-for favour; and I trust that is enrolled among her abundant labours in her Master's cause.

But the vine? Well, I was seated just opposite the window, and counted as grapes of Eschol, the clusters before me: for I thought that my brother was now obtaining a glimpse of the product of that good land, concerning which unfaithful spies had brought him an evil report. Neither did I overlook the typical fitness of the plant to grace Hannah More's favorite corner: for truly she, among women,

was as that vine among the shrubs of her garden. Who has not attached the distinction of exquisite gracefulness, combined with noble simplicity, to the vine? Who has not acknowledged its beauty, its full, overspreading growth, its rich abundance of delicious fruit? Painters will tell us, that, to study the perfection of form, colour, light and shade, united in one object, we must place before us a bunch of grapes. Scripture refers us to their juice, as "wine which maketh glad the heart of man," selecting it also as an emblem of that choice blessing, a loving, faithful wife. Now, in Hannah More's renewed and ripened character, those who know her best will be the most eager to assert that all these qualities were clearly perceptible; to me, who had not much personal intercourse with her, the trait of grateful simplicity, evidently emanating from an humble, peaceful mind, shone paramount, as it does in the beautiful tree. There was an exquisite modesty, deprecating in every look the homage that all were prepared to render. There was something that shrank from admiration, while it courted the love, I could almost say the countenance and encouragement, of those who could only have thought of raising her to the eye of reverential observance. Yet, amid all this humbleness of mind, that asked a prop from what, in comparison, was but a bundle of dry sticks, rich clusters were perpetually looking out—thoughts that drew

their being from the sap of the True Vine, clothed in the fairest diction, arranged with tasteful skill, and touched with the peculiar grace of originality : while the unction that cometh from above, rested with freshening effect upon this fruit of the lips of a true mother in Israel.

We are, alas ! such selfish creatures, that I have often questioned whether Hannah More would have left such a delightful impression on my mind, had I seen her under circumstances less endearing to my own fond heart, than those narrated above. So very precious her remembrance would not be ; but that she was altogether equally engaging as valuable, I had the testimony of my brother, whose previous expectations had been extremely unfavourable. He remarked in his usual playful manner, referring to the title that he had given her, ‘The methodists cannot be like their queen : they are poor melancholy souls, but she is the nicest, liveliest, sweetest old lady I have ever met with.’ I well remember that, on our return to the study, on hearing us expatiate on the beauties of her luxurious plantation, she told us she had put down every tree and shrub with her own hand ; neglecting for that employment, the more important one to which the Lord had called her : adding that she had been severely rebuked for it, by being long disabled in the right hand. ‘This evil hand,’ she said, slapping it with the other, ‘which

left its Master's work so long undone ! Well might he have caused it, like Jeroboam's, to wither and be dried up : but after a season he mercifully restored it.'

One of the last efforts of my dumb boy, with his pencil, was to complete a copy that he had commenced from a print of Barley Wood. He left it, after all, unfinished ; but the window is distinctly portrayed : and the distant church, where now repose the mortal remains of Hannah More. She lived to shed many a tear for me, when the sudden stroke that removed my brother made every preceding trial appear as nothing : and she lived to render praise for the slow yet glorious translation of the dumb boy into the eternity after which he panted. He retained the fondest recollection of her ; and, when dying, requested me to fix a little sketch of her likeness where he could constantly behold it—saying, in his broken language, ' Jack die young : good Hannah More very old, soon come to Jesus Christ in heaven.' Yes, I trust indeed that they were all branches, living branches of the True Vine. In one of them the Father was glorified, by her bearing much fruit, through a long succession of plentiful years : another, according to his shorter season, yielded many a cluster, precious in the sight of the great Husbandman, who willed his early transplantation into a better soil : and the third—oh, he was taken from the wild vine, and grafted into the tree, and had received of its ful-

ness, and began to put forth the delicate bud of promise—the blossom of hope that maketh not ashamed. What could we do without that blessed assurance that it is the Father's good pleasure to give the kingdom to *all* his little flock? The lamb, so newly dropt that it cannot yet find a firm footing, but totters and sinks before the lightest breeze—that lamb is, notwithstanding, of the flock. Once born of God the soul never dies; once admitted into his family, it is no more cast out. Weak faith is ever staggering at the promise, and asking for evidences which the nature of the case puts beyond our reach: it cannot trace this simple analogy between things natural and things spiritual. It is content, as regards the veterans of the fold; but the little new-born lambs, how could *they* tread the difficult path to heaven? Why, they could not tread it at all—and what then? The Shepherd gathered them in his arms, and carried them in his bosom, and they reached it no less surely, safely, speedily, than the sturdy ancients who travelled onward in matured strength. Verily, our unbelief strips God of half his glory, to put it on the creature.

It is a hard saying for human pride to hear, that the babe which gives one gasp and dies, enters heaven under as exceeding and eternal a weight of glory, as the matured, the tempted, the victorious Christian. But if it be of grace, and not of works,

such is the undeniable inference. We are constrained to believe ; but how hard to apply it ! The infant martyrs of Bethlehem, who laughed with unconscious glee at the glittering of murderous blades, just poised to impale them—wherein is their crown less bright than that of our confessors, who voluntarily mounted the pile, and fixed the chain, and welcomed the torturing fires of popish persecution ? There is, surely, no difference in the recompence of CHRIST'S sufferings, bestowed alike on each : but very sweet, and surpassingly dear, must be the retrospection of those who had forsaken all to follow him, after counting the cost, and fully comprehending what lay before them. The act of renewing a sinful nature, must needs furnish a song of praise for eternity : a long catalogue of wilful transgressions, also blotted out by the blood of the cross, may well raise the stone of ecstasy much higher. But it will be as with the manna in the wilderness, where he who gathered little did not lack, and he who gathered much had nothing over. This is never the case with aught of man's providing ; but when God furnishes the table, it cannot be otherwise.

When the eye rests upon the pleasant green foliage of a favorite tree, how smoothly can the billows of thought roll on, in the untroubled mind, each insensibly disappearing before its successor. To dream away life, would accord with most disposi-

tions ; and to ponder on the works of others, often appears somewhat of a meritorious work in ourselves. I find this snare in my garden, loving better to trace characters in flowers, than to bestir myself to the needful operation of uprooting weeds. May the Lord, who has given me many sweet and soothing thoughts, while contemplating the vine that his bounty has enriched with precious clusters, cause the warning word to sink deep into my heart, which declares, "every branch in me that beareth not fruit, he taketh away!"

CHAPTER X.

THE HEART'S-EASE.

WHEN viewed upon a grand scale, and from a commanding station, how beautiful are the tints of Autumn! We look abroad, over hill and plain, interspread with grove and shrubbery, and the hedge-row that forms so remarkable a characteristic in our national scenery, and endless appears the diversity of rich and mellow tint, which by its loveliness half reconciles us to the legible symptom of speedy desolation. He who has willed the frequent changes that bereave us of our choicest possessions, has not failed to soften that bereavement with many tender touches of a hand that loves to pour balm into every wound it sees needful to make. Even in the material world, we trace the workings of this divine compassion; and while shrinking from that dreary winter of which they are the infallible precursors, we still are com-

pelled to greet the dying hues of autumn as among the most welcome spectacles that can gratify the eye of taste.

Yet it is when we are somewhat removed, and able to take a general view of the landscape, that such loveliness is rightly appreciated. Walking under the shade of our own withering bowers, where the damp, fallen leaves impede our path, and mar the lingering beauty of our borders, it is by no means so pleasant. The visitation touches us too nearly, our individual comforts are too closely trenced upon : and gladly would we bargain that, after going forth to look upon the beauty of neighbouring plantations in their progress towards utter decay, we might return to our especial garden, finding it exempt from the universal doom—as thickly clustering with green leaves as when summer first put on her finished livery.

I have thought of this, as illustrating in some degree my feeling, when I meet with narratives of interesting characters, whose passage from mortal to immortal life is arrayed in new glories, like the fading woods of autumn. I gaze and admire and rejoice on behalf of the privileged saints, whose hour of approaching departure is the loveliest period of their visible sojourn here : but when it is upon mine own familiar friend that the visitation comes—when the tree that shelters *me* is to be stripped, when the ver-

dure that gladdens *my* retreat is to fade away,—how different are the feelings excited! To the eye of a more remote spectator, the withering of my bowers may form, perchance, the most beautiful spot in a widely variegated landscape: to me it is a source of comfortless repining, excepting only as faith looks confidently onward to the outbursting of a future, and a brighter vegetation.

By daily care, the fallen honours of the nut, the lilac, the ash, and the accacia, are removed from my sheltered border, where still the dear little HEART'S EASE, now revived by autumnal damps, retains its smiling aspect. During a drougthy summer, the flowers lost much of their beauty, diminishing in size, and changing their colours for shades less bright; but now they stand arrayed as gorgeously as ever, telling again the familiar tale of him who, in far brighter apparel, is adorning the bowers of heaven. It was always my purpose to return to this subject; but I reserved it until my garden should begin to look sad: because in the retrospection of what God showed me, while privileged to contemplate the character of D., I find a cordial for fainting hours.

I have frequently wished to classify the beautiful features of that gifted mind; but I could never succeed in it. Like my border of heart's-ease, it was full of variety; and perfect, harmonious order reigned throughout the abundant distribution: but so many

excellences shone forth at once upon the view, that it was hardly possible to take them in succession, to confine the gaze to a single tint, or to a single combination of tints ; unless when, in the actual scene of some passing day, circumstances called forth a separate, a peculiar manifestation of the grace most needed at the time. It was as when I cull one flower from the many, and bear it away, to ponder on its individual beauties.

I have spoken of gifts : now one remarkable trait in D. was the tenacity with which he clung to the principle, that *all* in him, not hateful and repulsive, was a special gift, purchased by the blood of the cross. The usual close of his letters ran in these words, 'yours, by the grace of God, most affectionately.' I once asked him why he used this expression ; his answer was, 'Because, by nature, I am so vilely selfish, that sovereign grace alone can implant in my spirit one right impulse of disinterested affection. "Hateful, and hating one another," is the description of such as me ; and I could not honestly love you, if the constraining love of Christ did not compel me to it.' Many can use such depreciating language concerning themselves, and, doubtless, many do so with sincerity : but there was a sorrowful earnestness in his remarks on the inward depravity, that always left me without power to reply.

On one occasion, when several of us were assem-

bled, the conversation turned on passing events, scenes, and persons. D. bore his part in it with his accustomed sprightliness; but presently leaned back in his chair, with a look of pained abstraction. I addressed him, and his reply was, 'These are all material things, they engross our thoughts, and devour our time. Shall we never rise above sensible objects? I often strive to do so, but I am pulled back, and fettered down, by the mass of matter. I am oppressed by it: why do you not help me to throw off the weight? why is not our conversation more in heaven?' This was spoken with a feeling that approached irritation; but he followed it up immediately, by sweetly leading the way in an interesting inquiry into what he used to call the progress of prayer. I could not but think of the expression "we that are in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened"—and when, just three months after, I saw him reposing in his coffin, in that very room, how sweet was the recollection of his secret groaning after what he now so fully enjoys, clothed upon with his house from heaven: and his mortality swallowed up in life!

About that time, he made a remark that impressed me deeply, and, I hope, abidingly. We attended the ministry of his beloved friend H. and on one occasion, adverting to certain criticisms that had been passed on his discourses by some who seemed to sit

in judgment on their teacher, I asked him, 'How is it, that while they call one of his sermons fine, and another dry, and so forth, I find them all so profitable, and always come away well fed?' With animated quickness he replied, 'I'll tell you how it is : you pray for him.' 'Indeed I do : and that he may be taught to teach me.' 'Aye, there it is : and your prayer is answered. Now mark me ; the preacher and the flock either feed or starve one another : what they withhold from him in prayers, they lose in doctrine. Those who merely listen to cavil, or to admire, come away empty of spiritual food. Those who give liberally to their minister in secret prayer for him, have their souls made fat by the very same doctrine that falls unblessed upon others.' He added, with emotion, 'Bear dear H. more and more upon your heart before your Father's throne, and you will feast more largely upon the banquet that he spreads.' I have to be thankful that my friend's counsel was not lost on me : from that shepherd, indeed, I was soon removed ; and very soon he followed D. to glory : but I had already carried the lesson into another pasture ; where, richly and abundantly as all were fed, mine always appeared a Benjamin's mess ; for I had learned the secret of the profitable barter which I would commend to every Christian hearer : instant affectionate, individual intercession for the teacher in the spirit of faith : then may we sit, contented

and humbly confident to receive the assured answer, in the portion which he is commissioned to divide.

It was the delight of D. by every means, to draw closer the bond of union between the pastor and his flock : and that was a blessed work. Woe to the hand that wantonly severs them ! It is the LORD'S prerogative to visit a people by removing their most gifted teachers into a corner, even as it was also his to render the scattering of his church, by means of fiery persecution, available for the spread of sound doctrine through Phenice, and Cyprus, and Antioch ; but not the less sacrilegious is the blow that snaps asunder a tie which the Lord hath blessed : and I was left to appreciate the full beauty of that feature in D.'s spiritual character, long after he was taken from mortal view : as the balmy warmth of life-breathing Spring is doubly endeared to our remembrance, when we shiver before the rough blasts of a surly, devastating November.

Well! the Lord God Omnipotent reigneth, and man cannot dethrone him ! He worketh all things after the council of his will, and man cannot thwart his purposes. Nay, when most thoroughly set to do mischief, man is but blindly forwarding the work of eternal love and truth, even towards those whose welfare is the farthest from his wish. My little heart's-ease tells me this, in its own quiet language, as it looks up from under the heap of unsightly

leaves that, by falling thickly upon it, have sheltered it from the evening frost, and left it sparkling with salubrious moisture, when I take them away and give entrance to the sunbeams. Often, very often, has D. expatiated on the same sweet truth, representing the many ways in which my abounding trials were working together for good, already perceptible. I remember the lesson, and cherish it in my heart; but sorely do I miss the cheerful look, the encouraging smile, that were wont to accompany it. D. was utterly incapable of that cheap generosity which bestows on the sufferer a scrap of advice, perchance a text of scripture, and thinks it has done the part of a Christian comforter. He first placed himself so fully in the situation of the person afflicted, by the exercise of that beautiful consideration wherewith God had gifted him; and made so many allowances for the peculiarity of individual feeling and circumstance, that his language assumed rather the character of consoling thoughts, inwardly suggested to the mourner, than of another man's ideas, verbally communicated. Surely if there be one gift more to be coveted than another, in the social intercourse of poor pilgrims through a valley of Baca, it is this. It is easy to lecture a complaining brother: it is easy to shew him how lightly *you* regard his present affliction; and thus to silence the rising murmur, bidding it retire and rankle in the heart which

knoweth its own bitterness ; but oh, how wise, how tender, how Christ-like, is the love that voluntarily places itself under his cross, poises its weight and speaks the language not of one who merely sees, but of one who has felt it!

To rejoice with them that did rejoice was a duty rendered easy indeed, by the extraordinary cheerfulness of D's mind. Looks, words, gestures, were all put in requisition to express the delight of his soul, when he saw his companions happy. So joyous was the spirit of his religion, that it grieved him to witness a sombre cast on the countenances of those engaged in devotional exercises. Calm, subdued, collected, and intent, he always appeared at such times, but never, to use his own expression, 'pulled a long face,' for the worship of God. Approaching a reconciled Father through Christ Jesus, he could not conceive why the delight that animates the heart, and beams in the looks of an affectionate grateful child, should be banished from his. Let those who remember D. in his constant place, beside the pillar at L. A., acknowledge that a countenance more brightly irradiated with love and joy never shone among that privileged flock. Heart's-ease all over, D. looked up and smiled : you could not gaze on him and be melancholy. This, too, is a gift to be coveted : a happy look bears eloquent testimony that "the peace which passeth all understanding" is no

chimera ; and that godliness *hath* the promise of this life, as well as of that which is to come.

Yet the word is sure : “ In the world ye *shall* have tribulation ;” and D. experienced it, in a degree little suspected by those who watched the expression of his happy countenance. There are insects that, in the darkness of the night, steal forth to prey upon the gentle flower that typifies D. ; but though they sometimes rend its petals, they cannot mar the lovely bloom of what remains : and thus had he his undiscovered enemies—cares that he revealed to none but his heavenly Father, and disappointments blighting the dearest projects of an affectionate heart. He felt their gnawing progress, but he knew the wise purpose for which they were sent ; and though, in thoughts and visions of the night, his spirit was often sorely harassed, yet the morning sun beheld him bright and cheerful as ever, through the freshening of that early dew that never failed to visit his prayerful chamber. Occasionally he has admitted to me that so it was ; for he well knew that a fellowship in suffering would add power to his ready consolations ; and when he found me too much absorbed in my own griefs, then—only then—it was that he would impart to me a portion of his secret sorrow, just sufficient to rouse my interest, to excite my sympathy that he might immediately turn the discourse to the sweet solacings of the Divine Comforter, which he

described as being so effectual, so rich, as to make him, '*through the grace of God*, more thankful for a little tribulation than he should have been for a vast abundance of prosperity.' And thus delicately would he insinuate the comfort which my fretful spirit was unwilling to receive in a more direct way.

The last Christmas that D. celebrated with the militant church on earth, will long be remembered by those who passed it with him. It fell on a Sunday : and he had busied himself much on behalf of his poor children, the wild little Irish who attended our dear schools. It is customary, on the Sabbath, to give each child, on leaving the school, a thick slice of bread and butter, except in cases of flagrant misconduct, when the culprits must march past the tempting board empty-handed. The importance of this boon cannot be appreciated, but by those who know something of the squallid misery that pervades St. Giles,' and that very few of our children tasted any thing better than half a meal of potatoes on any day throughout the week. A good piece of well buttered bread is a prodigious feast to them. However on the day in question, D., as if conscious that it was his last time of celebrating the happy season among them, provided, for the afternoon, a more luxurious entertainment. He filled his blue bag with excellent plum-cake, and merrily remarked to me, that for once all his clients would be satisfied

with its contents. To this he added the more durable gift of some small books and tracts; and very delightful it was to us, the teachers, as we stood about him, to witness the reciprocal looks of love between the donor, and the gleeful recipients of those gifts. Gravity was, of course, out of the question. I should pity the person who tried to look solemn among our dear Irish children, when the work of the school is over. Neither fluttering rags, ill-suited to repel the season's cold, nor naked feet, cut and bruised by the filthy pavement of St. Giles, nor famished forms that bespoke the weekly fast, could counterbalance the mirthful aspect wherewith they approached the pile of cake, and the delighted grin of each farewell obeisance. My poor dear Irish children! Why do so few among the wealthy ones of London take thought for that swarming hive of ever active beings, who by a little devotion of time, a little sacrifice of the unrighteous mammon, might be trained to industry, and piety, and peace! Alas! even of those who partook of D.'s parting feast, are not there now many to be found in the dens of profligacy, or the dungeons of detected crime? It is the shame, and will prove the curse of Christian England, that the very heart and centre of her gorgeous metropolis should form a throne on which Satan is permitted to hold an almost unquestioned reign over the subjects of her empire. Many a missionary is girding himself to the work of

the Lord in foreign lands : but few are the missionaries who will step fifty yards out of their daily path to carry the light of the gospel among the dark abodes of wretched St. Giles'.

D. worked diligently ; so that when his sun went down at noon, he had accomplished more than would be deemed, by the bulk of those in his sphere, a full day's labour. He has entered into his rest, to shine as the sun, and as the stars, for ever and ever, in the kingdom of his Father. Is the prize that he has grasped, worth striving after? Go to St. Giles's, and do likewise. Is the work that he has wrought, meet to be copied? Go, and gather the desolate little ones, whom he loved to lead to Christ. I cannot resume the subject of a flower, while my soul is oppressed with the sorrows of thousands of perishing souls, enclosed in bodies that also are perishing in want, and vice, and all the fearful train of consequences attendant thereon. If I begin with D. I shall be constrained to end my paper, as he ended his life—in pleading with the favoured children of God, for pity on the poor, the destitute children of Erin.

CHAPTER XI.

THE LAURISTINUS.

“The memory of the just is blessed.” Happy are they who comprehend how sinful mortal man may be just with God—who, in taking up the happy boast “He is near that justifieth, who shall condemn me?” can discern as their sole claim to this glorious immunity, the justifying righteousness of the Lord Jesus Christ, in virtue of which their iniquity is forgiven and their sin is covered; their persons are accepted and their souls are saved.

I knew an aged man, who lived through many long years in the delighted contemplation of this mystery; who realized in its fullest extent the application thereof to himself; who, taught daily to comprehend more of the love of Christ which passeth knowledge, had a well-spring of love flowing from the depths of his renewed heart, towards every child of Adam.

When I saw him last, he was green and flourishing ; in the seventy-sixth year of his pilgrimage—aye, and blossoming too in all the rich, vigorous life that distinguishes my beautiful LAURISTINUS, now spreading its wide arms over the border, and supplying the vacant places of many withered flowers. Very lately, I asked of a dear friend, from the remote corner where this aged servant of God had been stationed, how our valued brother was prospering? The reply was startling, because unexpected : it elicited some tears, but they were not those of grief,—‘ Six months ago he departed to his Lord.’

I have been a sad egotist throughout these papers ; and much am I tempted to mix a deal of self in this. But with such a subject before me, I must forbear ; only stating, that it was the privilege of this gracious old man to water the good seed, sown by another beloved hand, in the heart of my brother ; that it was his to remove all my doubts and fears on the subject : and that the most trying event of my whole life became the means of bringing me acquainted with one whose conversation was more peculiarly in heaven, and his spirit more tinged with the joy of him who knows the blessedness of his future mansion, than that of almost any one whom I have met with.

The sphere of his labour was in a remote part of Ireland. And here I must beg my reader to remark

something which I find it very difficult to establish,—that I am not a native of Ireland. English by birth and education, and doubly English by deeply-rooted prejudice, I first visited Ireland, long after my habits and tastes had become fixed, with a most inveterate determination not to like it—in plain terms, to hate the country, and to despise the people. This resolution, by no means a singular one I fear, I was enabled by hard struggling to maintain, for nearly a whole day : but every particle of frost-work melted at last beneath the fervent beams of that warm and smiling welcome, which will win its way to the heart of every one who has a heart to be reached. Subsequently, the glorious and far brighter beams of divine truth burst upon my view, beneath the sky of that beloved island ; and there my spiritual infancy was cradled, there the hand of Christian brotherhood was stretched forth, to uphold and to guide my tottering steps in the new and narrow path ; there I was built up on this most holy faith, and taught to wield, however feebly, the weapons that are not carnal. I left the country, as an exile leaves his home ; I pined and drooped, and still does my heart yearn towards its beloved shores. But I am no otherwise Irish ; and I have said so much, because the frequent recurrence to scenes and subjects connected with that country, in these periodical pages, might appear to be the natural effect of patriotic feeling, in one born on its

green carpet. In me, it is the offspring, not only of deep and grateful love, but of a most solemn conviction that we are verily guilty, in a heinous degree, concerning our brethren in that most interesting portion of the British dominions.

It was, as I have said, in a remote corner of the emerald isle, that the Lord planted this flourishing tree of righteousness, within the sanctuary of His church. He was, indeed, a faithful pastor, burning with zeal, overflowing with love, and singularly gifted for the peculiar work to which he was called. There was an exuberance of animal spirits, a fund of rich humour, a perpetual flashing of original wit, that would perhaps have been unsuitable to his high and holy office, and which, therefore, the Lord might have seen fit to subdue, had he not been stationed where such qualifications exactly fitted him to win the attention of those around, and so to lead them to give audience, even where they had been instructed to repel, with brutal force, every attempt to fill their ears with sound doctrine. Of all characters, I know none more disgusting than a clerical buffon: but far from the slightest approximation to such an anomaly was our dear brother S. Even the sparkles of his wit were bright with fire from the altar of God, and the quaint expressions that extorted a smile from every hearer, were never culled for effect:—it was the natural eloquence of a mind full of noble sim-

plicity, and venting the abundance of its treasures too eagerly to pause over the medium by which they were conveyed. To set forth Christ crucified, as the alone and all-sufficient refuge for sinners, was the single object of his life ; and to effect it he cared not how homely, how strangely unique, or how classically elegant, was the language or the metaphor employed. Intimately acquainted with the vernacular tongue of the native Irish, it was the ruling desire of his heart to see it adopted, and cherished, and consecrated to the service of God, by his fellow-labourers. In the month of April, 1830, this aged Christian first, as he expressed it, stepped off the edge of his own green carpet, to accompany a deputation to London for this very purpose. He appeared on the platform in Freemason's Hall, and in a strain of original humour, combined with deep pathos, he placed us, as it were, in the very midst of his desolate countrymen, portraying the waywardness of their minds, and the destitution of their souls, in language the most thrilling. Then, by a sudden transition, he led all our awakened sympathies into a scene close by : he showed us that portion of poor Irish outcasts congregated in the heart of our metropolis ; and, clasping his hands, with almost a cry of passionate appeal, give but one bread-shop for my starving people ! open but one room, in wretched St. Giles', where they may find the food of life in their own language ! You English

Christians, rich in your many privileges, will you let the starving souls of my countrymen cry against you at the day of judgment? One little bread-shop—give us but that, and thousands unborn shall call you blessed !’

God be praised, the plea was successful ; and he has met, before the throne of the Lamb, some whose polluted garments were washed clean in His blood, through the ministrations of a blessed ‘bread-shop,’ established by English Christians, before that year had closed on the wretched population of St. Giles.

In 1833, he came again on his mission of love, to rejoice over the work, and to stimulate us anew. He then appeared as hale and hearty, in his green old age, as before : but he had a witness within, that the earthly tabernacle was beginning to fall. He said to a dear brother, ‘I am looking for preferment ;’ and the upward glance, the finger pointed towards heaven, the joyous smile that spoke not of this world’s transitory possessions, all indicated his meaning. How and where he put off this mortal coil, I know not : but this I know—that he had so put on Christ in the days of healthful vigour, and so served Christ in his generation here, as to leave no shadow of doubt or solicitude as to his beatic realization of all that his soul longed after, in the presence of God.

It is in my garden that I especially delight to dwell on the memory of this endeared old man ;

recalling many of his beautiful adaptations, in tracing the constant analogy between the visible works of God and those which are imperceptible to outward sense. I have two precious letters of his, from which I must extract a few passages, to illustrate my meaning. The reader will easily surmise that they referred to the trying event which introduced me to his sympathizing regard.

‘I cannot describe to you the great and universal concern and grief with which the account of your dear brother’s sudden and unexpected removal from a world of trials and tribulations was received at C——. It seemed as if “all faces were turned into paleness,” and all tongues cried out, “Alas! my brother.” But there is a needs-be for every thing of this kind that occurs: what our Lord is pleased to do we know not now, but we shall know hereafter. There is one *precious* knowledge, however, and that is, that “ALL things work together for good to them that love God: to them that are the called,” &c. This sweet drop of gospel honey has often rendered palatable to me the bitterest infusions that ever were mixed in my cup of life. But why should I talk of *one* drop alone—is not our *hive* (our bible) full of honey? full of consolations, full of promises, and privileges, and prospects, and assurances, that render the sufferings of this transitory life, in the eye of a Christian philosopher, of as little consequence as the buz-

zing of the summer flies? You are tried, my sister beloved, and I condole with you from the very bottom of my heart; but do suffer a 'Paul the aged,' to remind you of what I *know* the Spirit and word of God has already taught you, that it is good for you to be afflicted; that it is through trials and tribulations we enter (or make advances into) the kingdom of heaven; that when you are thrown into the furnace of affliction, Christ stands by the fire; and that sanctified afflictions are spiritual promotions. The darker the cloud, my dear co-heiress, the more vivid the lightning: and the more we suffer in the flesh, the more (very often) we rejoice in the Spirit. The rainbow always appears most bright in the most broken weather; and He, of whom it is an emblem, manifests himself most clearly to the mourning, the afflicted, the penitent, the broken heart. May the oil and wine of the gospel be plentifully poured into your bleeding wounds, by the Good Samaritan whom we love and serve!'

On this last sentence a tear fell, from the compassionate old man; and no words can do justice to the feelings with which I look upon the little blot, now that God himself has wiped away all tears from those eyes, and given him to see how acceptable in His sight was this cup of consolation, bestowed on one of the least and most unworthy of those whom he vouchsafes to call His.

The following extract, from a subsequent letter, very sweetly now applies to the writer, who is, as I humbly and confidently trust, rejoicing with him who was its original subject. ‘Yes, with him the bitterness of death is past: the ministration of mortality is broken, and the liberated, the disembodied spirit is with God, who gave it. Of what consequence is it, my loved, my respected sister and friend, *how* or *when* the earthly house of the tabernacle we now inhabit is torn down, or dissolved, when *we know* that we have a “building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens,” to remove to and occupy? There is a precatory, or optative expression in the Romish Missal (service for the dead) with respect to a person removed from time into eternity, which is not as comfortable as the scriptural declarations are on that important subject, ‘requiescat in pace,—may he rest in peace! This does not pour into the bleeding, the grieving heart of a surviving friend, the sweet, the refreshing, the sanative wine and oil that is conveyed to a Christian’s afflicted soul, by that heavenly voice heard by John, which pronounced the dead to be blessed who died in the Lord, “*from henceforth*”—~~from~~ the instant of their dissolution—enjoying, not wishing, waiting for, or expecting, that “rest that remaineth for the people of God.” *Knowing* then, and being fully and satisfactorily assured of this consolatory truth, that the dead

in Christ are blessed, that they are not lost, but gone before; that our adored Redeemer, in the capacious mansions of his Father's house *has prepared* a place for all our dear departed Christian friends, and *is preparing* a place for ourselves, "let not our hearts be" over anxiously, immoderately, unreasonably, or irreligiously, "troubled." Let us, in the present lamented instance, say, and be thankful that we can say it, '*requiescit in pace*'—he RESTS in peace. And as it was the Lord who gave him for a time to his relatives and friends, and it is the same Lord who has been pleased to take him away, let us all say, "Blessed be the name of the Lord!"

There is an exquisite delicacy in the manner of conveying these rich consolations to a bereaved spirit. A tender caution not to grate upon the sense, by seeming to make light of that affliction which it professes to soothe, is the most important requisite, where real sympathy would display itself. My revered friend may, in these extracts, speak comfort even now to some wounded heart, and furnish a valuable model to those whose privilege it is to administer comfort to others. I have identified the Lauristinus with this departed teacher; and I desire to profit by the recollection, whenever I glance upon that luxuriant shrub; the white flowers of which bear a distant resemblance to the fair blossoms of May. These usher in the many-coloured attendants

of blooming Spring, the others smile upon the scene, when deserted even by the last lingering relics of sober Autumn. The lauristinus loves to overtop a lofty wall, and to look out beyond its native garden, upon scenes unadorned by such embellishments. It will cast its spreading branches over the fence, as if eager to beautify an uncultivated region, and to smile where all was dull, and barren, and uninviting, High and stubborn indeed is the barrier which separates the watered garden of the Lord's church from those who are not only alienated by a false and idolatrous religion, but rendered more inaccessible by dissimilarity of language, which few, very few, will trouble themselves to overleap. Herein the Lauristinus beautifully typifies the venerable S—, who surmounted the barrier, and spread abroad the gospel invitation, where, otherwise, it could not have come. His vigorous growth shewed how rich was the soil that bore him ; his healthful abundance proved how careful the hand that trained him : and while his aspect invited a farther acquaintance with both, his example proved that no obstacle, really insurmountable, existed to prevent the external desert from becoming a garden—the waste wilderness from blossoming as the rose.

In his own beloved, poor country, he was indeed a prophet : I know not where his mantle has fallen — what favoured lips shall exercise the precious gift,

so available to the souls of his Irish-speaking neighbours : but, last spring, a young sucker from the ancient Lauristinus was transplanted to another part of my garden, to replace a stunted holly that would neither grow nor die. I passed it to-day, and most richly had it spread abroad, while bursting buds tufted every sprig that shot from among the dark glossy leaves in youthful luxuriance. It was a cheering sight: my heart bade it go on to grow and prosper, and beautify its new station, while I secretly traced out a parallel for it, on the far western coast of my beloved isle, and confidently trusted that, from the parent tree—now removed to a brighter garden—would some be found to have sprung who shall cause the desert to rejoice, and make glad the solitary places with tidings of everlasting salvation.

CHAPTER XII.

THE HOLLY-BUSH.

How cheerless an aspect would our gardens wear, in this dreary month of December, had not some plants been endued with hardihood to retain their leaves, when the greater proportion was stripped bare by chilling frosts and blighting winds. It is a point of wisdom, plentifully to intersperse our evergreens among the brighter, but more transitory children of summer; and now that the dead leaves are finally swept off, and my garden looks once more perfectly tidy, I can appreciate the taste that, in first laying it out—long before I had ever seen it—allotted no small space to plants that would defy the season's severity. Of grass there is abundance; but that being easily buried under a light fall of snow, I will not glory in it. There is a full proportion of classic laurel, the slender Alexandrine, the towering Portu-

guese, and our more common species, distinguished by the glossy polish of its leaves. The fir, the cypress, and the yew, present their varied, yet not dissimilar foliage: and, in a conspicuous place stands the spreading rhododendron, prepared to unfold its exquisite blossoms to the first warm breath of spring. An arbutus of large growth displays its mimic strawberries, pendant among the leaves, where lately shone those elegant white clusters that so remarkably attract the roving butterfly, and the diligent bee. This tree I reckon among the gems of the garden. Farther on, where my rose bushes have well nigh perished from the antique wall, a profusion of ivy flings its straggling shoots downwards from the summit, as if solicitous to occupy the vacant space. There too, the lauristinus flourishes, in full vigour and beauty; while the dwarf box, well trimmed, edges my flower beds, and trained into shrubs, affords a pleasant variety, where the china rose retains its pale green leaf, with firm, upright buds, ready to expand in succession throughout the year. The variegated Bay occupies a conspicuous post; and, last not least, the Holly-Bush abounds, valuable as a fence, beautiful in the lustre of its highly polished leaves, sprinkled with berries of vivid red; and endeared by the sweetest, the purest, the most sacred associations that can interest the mind, and elevate the soul.

I wish, with all my heart, that the grandsires and

granddames of this generation would do something to stem that sweeping tide of oblivious folly, yclept the march of intellect—the progress of refinement. It is now intolerably vulgar, insupportably childish, and popishly superstitious, to deck our houses at Christmas-tide with the shining holly, the absence of which was almost unknown among some who may yet be proved to have excelled in true wisdom this our vaunted age of reason. I have fought many battles with my pious friends, in defence of my pertinacious adherence to this good old custom. Sorry should I be, to leave the holly uncropped, or the house unadorned with its bright honours, on that most blessed anniversary. Roast beef and plum-pudding, home-brewed ale, and Christmas berries, have certainly, no necessary connection with the spiritual aspirations required of us; and which the renewed heart will delight in breathing forth, while reminded, in the beautiful services of our scriptural church, that on the occasion commemorated, a great multitude of the heavenly host disdained not to take the lead in songs that were made for poor sinners of the dust, “Glory to God in the highest, on earth peace, good-will towards men.” But this I will maintain, that our non-observance of ancient usages is any thing but a proof of growing spirituality of feeling; and I very much question whether those who contemn the sprigs of ‘Christmas’ stuck over

my mantle-piece in honour of this precious festival, are wiser than the disciples of old, who cut down branches of palm trees, and strewed them in the way.

Four years since, when the dumb boy was fast sinking under the fatal disease that, in a few weeks, was to terminate his mortal career, we went out, on Christmas eve, by his desire, to bring him some holly. One of our party, who to say truth, was then still under the dominion of popery, carried her zeal so far, that almost a forest was brought into Jack's sitting-room; and I was remonstrating, when he interrupted me with 'Good, good!' An expression of the most divine sweetness overspread his countenance, while, raising his meek eyes to me, he took a small sprig of the holly, pricking the back of his hand with its pointed leaf, and shewed me the little scars left by it. Then, selecting a long shoot, he made a sign to twist it about his head, described the pain that it would give him to do so: and with starting tears said, 'Jesus Christ.' Who could fail to read in those eloquent looks and actions, his vivid recollection of the crown of thorns? He then pointed to the berries, thinly scattered on the holly-bough: and told me God put them there to remind him of the drops of blood that stained his Saviour's brow, when so crowned. I stood before the boy, filled with conscious shame for that I had never

traced the touching symbol : while the piteous expression of his pale countenance bespoke that exquisite realization of the scene, to which I never could attain. How cold and hard did I feel my own heart to be, when I might even see the melting of that poor boy's, under the sense of what his Redeemer had suffered for him! *For him*, indeed : such an undoubting appropriation of the work to his own eternal gain, few are privileged to witness—fewer to experience.

After this, he requested us to surround the room on all sides with the holly, until he sat as in a bower ; and then endeavoured to instruct his sister on the great difference between loving the symbol and regarding it superstitiously. He adverted with grief and indignation to the popish chapels, where at this season, a more abundant measure of adoration is offered at the idol shrines : and strongly insisted that all honours should be paid to the living God alone.

Attached as I always was to the old custom of decorating our houses and churches with the holly-bough, it may be believed that the scene just sketched left an impression not calculated to decrease my partiality for these usages of other days. From that evening, the holly has been to me a consecrated plant : and every sprig that I have gathered has furnished me with a text, for long and touching medita-

tion on the subject of our redemption,—on the character of Him who achieved it.

When commencing these sketches, I promised that they should embrace none but individuals who were *known* to me,—how solemn is the question that presents itself! have *I* known *Jesus Christ*? Him to know is life eternal. Well I know my need of him: my total, and everlasting ruin without him: I know his power and willingness to save, even to the uttermost, the very chief of sinners who come to God by him—but to say that I know him as the dumb boy knew him, that I can with so steady a hand lay hold on Christ, as being made of God unto *me*, wisdom, and righteousness, and sanctification, and redemption—and that, too, to the utmost bound of my necessities—thus to believe, and believing to rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory—no, I dare not yet say it. Often have I asked the boy, Does Jack love Jesus Christ? The reply has always been, with a bright and placid smile ‘Yes, Jack *very* much loves Jesus Christ—Jesus Christ loves poor Jack.’ But if I ask myself, Do I love him? I can but tremble, and say, ‘I desire so to do.’ Yet I have the full conviction that he has loved me, and given himself for me; and if I could unlearn enough to become as wise as Jack, I might attain to his blessed assurance.

Taking the holly as Jack viewed it,—as a type of

that which is salvation to all who believe,—how many interesting points of resemblance may be traced! Passing through the highways, where every foot is free to tread, we mark the shining evergreen, with its bright berries, conspicuous by the road-side, inviting us to make the prize our own, to bear it away, that our hearths may be gladdened by its verdure, more rich and durable in midwinter than is the foliage of summer roses. Even so, salvation is found of them that seek it not; freely, abundantly offered to all whose ear the glad tidings reach; and when by the hand of faith appropriated, who shall dispute the possession? Which of this world's fleeting glories can so gladden the heart, and beautify the home of its proprietor, as does the unwithering leaf of him who is rooted and grounded in the hope of the gospel?

We cannot, indeed, divest the holly of its numerous thorns; neither can we separate the Christian from his cross, or the promised heaven from the "much tribulation" through which it is appointed us to attain it; but a more touching character is imparted to those thorns, by adopting the idea of the dumb boy: every blessing that we reap from the grand work of redemption, is a memento of the sufferings of Him, upon whom the chastisement of our peace was laid.

And, in those uncultivated spots where the holly grows wild and free, by what a scene is it generally

surrounded, at this season ! The oak that soars above, in the pride of vegetable empire, the elm, and the hazle, the hawthorn and the wild brier, look dark and chilling in their leafless guise : no verdant neighbour sympathizes with the holly, or spreads its green mantle in cheerful companionship. No gaudy butterfly sports around it, nor does the bee come forth to ply her busy trade among its branches. The snow-drift alone lodges there ; and every howling wind vents upon it a passing murmur. Yet, calm and contented, the beautiful plant uprears its head, well-pleased to put honour upon a season that few of the gay ones of the earth care to adorn. I should be sorry to overlook this ; for it tells me of Him who came into this dark and stormy world, to suffer and to do what nothing but Almighty love could have supported or achieved ; who looked for some to take pity, but there was none ; and for comforters, but found no man :—who not only bore the scorn, the rebuke, and the rejection of those in whose likeness he vouchsafed to appear, but endured the storms of divine wrath, the blasting of the breath of that displeasure which had waxed hot against the inhabitants of the earth, and to which he presented himself, an innocent and a willing mark.

Then the berries : what a tongue is their's, while they represent to my eye that which speaketh better things than the blood of Abel. Wrung forth in slow

droppings from the agonized body, which sweated blood through the pressure of mental anguish, before the scourge, the thorn, and the nail had pierced the sinless flesh of their victim,—how precious was that coin which was given to ransom a world of lost sinners! Who can hold back, when invited to wash and be clean, in the purifying fountain? And who shall dare to exclude himself, or his fellow, from this sphere of an unlimited invitation?

Perchance there may be some, who will trace, in my fondness for this type, an approximation to the popish doctrine of image-worship. We all know that this abominable idolatry originated in the specious contrivance of exhibiting pictures and images in the churches, that, by visible objects, the gazers might be stirred up to a more perfect realization of what was taught from the pulpit. I should be sorry to incur such suspicion; but, as the introduction of holly-boughs into our temples, or the placing of a few sprigs over our fire-places, has never yet issued in any thing heterodox, as far as I can discover, I must still plead for the dear old custom; still wreath the holly with the misletoe, in grateful acknowledgment of the mercy that rescued my country from the darkness of heathenism—from the sanguinary rites that once polluted the shadow of her majestic oaks. That kingly tree, himself denuded by the hand of winter, can yield no foliage to honour our sacred festival; but

sends the little misletoe, his foster-child, to do homage in his stead. Alas, for England when she shall discontinue the observances of her pious reformers, her martyrs, and apostles of a brighter day! I grant that these are only shadows; yet, when the sun shines brightly, what body is without one? It may be our pride to cast away such shades; but when I can no longer trace them, I am inclined to apprehend, either that the substance has melted away, or that the sun-beam falls not so clearly as it was wont to do.

Yet not alone to the sufferings of a crucified Saviour do I hold the holly sacred. I know that He who once came to visit us in great humility shall yet come again in his glorious majesty, to judge both the quick and dead. I know that he will appear, in the splendours of immortality, in the grandeur of his Almighty power, while the wrecks of all that this world cherishes, of pomp, and pride, and greatness, shall crumble beneath his feet, and pass away like the last fragments of November's shrivelled leaves before the whirlwind. Then every eye shall see him, and they also which pierced him, and all the kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him. No longer stained with the crimson drops of his own life stream, his vesture shall then be dipped in the blood of his enemies. He, who, with tears and groans, achieved, unassisted, the work of our redemption, shall then alone tread the great wine-press of the wrath of God.

Then his enemies shall feel his hand : for he will tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury, and their blood shall be sprinkled upon his garments. Lovely and precious indeed is the accepted Saviour, to the souls who have made him their refuge : terrible, beyond what heart can conceive, will be the slighted, the rejected, Saviour, to those who, going on frowardly in the way of their own hearts, make light of his offered salvation, and treasure up for themselves the most dreadful of all inflictions—the *wrath* of the *Lamb*.

I am deeply convinced, that an apprehension of being led into the unscriptural lengths to which some have carried their speculations on unfulfilled prophecy, drives many into the opposite extreme of shrinking from the contemplation of that which is clearly revealed. Our Lord has given us a solemn, a reiterated injunction to watch for those things that, in the fulness of time, shall come to pass : he has made his warnings profitable to every intermediate period of the church ; but, inasmuch as it is not his will to add another revelation to what is already perfect, he has laid down marks and signs whereby his people may safely judge when the events predicted are about to take place. Around us, in this our day, every sign is rapidly accumulating,—and shall we close our eyes to the awful fact?—shall we refuse to watch, and to expect the fulfilment to which God

himself vouchsafes to direct our attention?—shall we arraign his wisdom, in preparing us for those things that are beginning to come upon the earth? Long has Satan triumphed over all that was created so beautiful and good, crushing it into a scene of wintry devastation, and sending across it many a storm, originating in the perverted elements of depraved humanity; and surely it is a glorious hope that spreads before us a speedy termination to this satanic reign—that gives promise of another and a brighter spring; when the Sun of Righteousness shall arise and shine, throughout the wide range of our beautiful sphere, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdom of our God, and of his Christ.

CHAPTER XIII.

THE CHRISTMAS ROSE.

'A HAPPY new year.'—From how many thousands of voices is that greeting heard! I love to receive it, even when friendships are so young, that it is the first occasion offered of exchanging the kindly salutation; but there is a feeling that does not display itself; an under-current, deep and strong, rolling over the graves of by-gone years, and sounding in secret a knell that is not heard amid the cheerful tones of the upper world. True, by the mercy of God, a happy new year may be mine; truly happy, if his grace render it a year of spiritual improvement, of perceptible progress towards the consummation of all real bliss: but flesh is very slow to receive such interpretation of a term long applied to the pleasant things of time and sense, and instead of being rejoiced at having learned the truest meaning of an

abused term,—of being brought to understand the right appropriation of the emphatic words ‘Happy are ye,’—how prone are we to look back upon the worldly substance—or worldly shadows—that we have bartered ; while the pearl of great price, though perhaps acknowledged to be our own, may lie before us almost unheeded—certainly undervalued—as the regretful sigh escapes.

This, at least, is my case : knowing and closing with the announcement, that we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of heaven ; and being well assured, that He who spake the word, “In the world ye *shall* have tribulation,” hath in him no variableness, neither shadow of turning ; how wonderful it is that every light affliction, sent to wean me from earth, should be regarded as a strange thing ; and a sort of careful account-book kept from year to year, of what has been done against my will, though in answer to my prayers : as I number successive bereavements, and secretly ask, “was there ever any sorrow like my sorrow, wherewith the Lord hath afflicted me ?” I meet a funeral party, perhaps in my daily walk, and compassionate thoughts may follow the weeping mourners, as they hold their sad, slow progress towards the grave : but the emotion is very transient, and the scene soon fades into forgetfulness ; but when I betake myself to the numbering over of *my* past funerals, when I contemplate some

dreary blank left in my bosom by the removal of a cherished object, it will almost seem that all other griefs are common and poor—mine only deserving to be chronicled in those fleshly tables of the heart which God has prepared for the reception of his own laws—the manifold tokens of his unchangeable and everlasting love.

All this, or something resembling it, has doubtless been said or sung, on a topic, as old, nearly, as the globe which we inhabit. Nevertheless, I have repeated it, in order to account for my peculiar taste in new-years' salutations. I love the old custom, and cannot dispense with it among friends ; but my special delight is to exchange greetings with some little flower that may have outlived the prefatory blasts of mid-winter, and lingered to welcome another year. In seasons of severity, when intense frost has cut down, or deep snow overlaid the tender blossoms, I am driven to my in-door collection ; but far better do I love to search the garden, the hedge-row, and the field ; if perchance some native production may reward my diligent scrutiny.

There is one, not uncommon at this season ; the Christmas rose. It is the saddest, in aspect, of the numerous family that bear that distinguished name : but the scene where I first remember to have met with it was characterized by any thing rather than sadness.

It was a new-year's party of youthful guests, many being accompanied by their elder connexions, at the house of an opulent and most hospitable family, in my native place. The noble sirloin, with his attendant turkey, not then considered intrusive even at three o'clock, having led the van of a most substantial dinner, a body of much lighter auxiliaries brought up the rear. As a finale, after my plumb-pudding, I received a portion of sweet jelly: and with it one of the Christmas roses that, mingled with sprigs of myrtle and geranium, had graced the epergne. I was then about nine years old, and have a distinct recollection of sitting, with my eyes cast down on the flower,—which I retained to the close of the feast,—while innumerable thoughts arose, forming a link hardly broken at this distant day, between my then habits and enjoyments, and that world of flowers of which a few fragments were scattered before me.

I know that, when our glasses were replenished with orange wine, to drink a happy new-year all round, the Christmas rose which I held in my hand formed a portion of my new year's happiness, by no means inconsiderable: and strange is the vision that flits before my mind's eye, when, under similar circumstances, I now meet one of that unpretending race. I can better bear to go back so far, than to let my thoughts rest half-way between that early period and the present. I cannot wish myself a child again,

even in my saddest moments : for who that has trod so far on a thorny path would desire to retrace the whole road? But the new year's salutations that ensued, when childhood had ripened into youth, and yet more, those which gladdened seasons of longer experience—oh, it is hard to feel that they must never again be mine!

The happiest part of the happiest new year, was that, when I could reiterate the warmest wishes of the season to one on whom I might look with the sweet retrospections, combined with recent fears and present security, so beautifully expressed in those simple lines.

‘ We twa ha’e rin about the braes,
 And pu’d the gowans fine,
 But we’ve wander’d mony a weary foot
 Sin’ auld lang syne,
 We twa ha’e paidlet i’ the burn
 Frae mornin’s sun till dine,
 But seas between us braid ha’e roared
 Sin’ auld lang syne.’

No: this world can afford us nothing, fully to occupy the chasm that remains, after the removal of an object endeared by first and fondest associations. Some, I know, have not their warm affections fully drawn out until, beyond the circle of their home, they meet with one capable of attracting them: and no doubt, the feeling is then more intense, and absorbing; but as deep it cannot be: because it can-

not carry its associations so far back, into early years: nor trace the happy tie entwined even amid the scenes and sensations of childhood, to which no human being can avoid sometimes recurring with fond recollection. But, whatever may have been the duration of such endearing attachments, that chasm of which I speak can never be filled up. It is as when a mould is delicately taken from a peculiar countenance; with which no other features will be found exactly to correspond. The many millions of earth's inhabitants may be numbered over in vain, to discover a face upon which that mould shall fit: resemblances there are, and strong ones; but a counterpart the world cannot furnish—the mould will remain, an unappropriated memento of what we can no more recall. It may multiply by thousands the lifeless images of what once was; but the reality is gone for ever.

What then remains? Something which is not in the world's gift. We have a better and more enduring substance, capable of so filling every vacancy, that we should have nothing to repine at, if we would avail ourselves of it. "A shadow that departeth," is legibly written on every created thing around us: this we know; and is it not strange that, having seen the most precious of these shadowy possessions elude our eager hold, and vanish away, we should rather love to look about for something equally in-

secure, whereon to lavish our disappointed affections, than turn at once to that which, whether in time or in eternity, fadeth not away? It is the weightiest part of the curse that so presses our souls into the dust, inclining us to lade ourselves with thick clay, in the face of the acknowledged fact, that it *must* crumble and fall off. I task myself continually with the difficult work of applying this lesson, so easily learnt in word; so hard to reduce to practice: but while I treasure up with jealous care the fragments of every broken tie, and would not relinquish one of them, nor forget how the bursting of it rent my inmost heart, I am ever ready to the unwise occupation of forming new ones, to be in like manner severed, and to plant an additional pang. It is partly a consciousness of this that sends me to the flowers for my new year's greeting: they are not individualized, like the loved ones of my own race. I can take a Christmas rose, and, in every point, identify it with the first that attracted my childish notice. It seems to be an actual relic of the scene so gay in lengthened distance: it has, I know not how, outlived the bloom of all, the mortal existence of many, whose laughing countenances shone round me that day. By being the representative of a whole assemblage, some of whom are now on their way rejoicing, together with me, that they have been led to seek a city which hath foundations, the sigh of

regret is softened as I gaze on the flower, and I feel an acquiescence in the common lot of my species ; a thankfulness for mercies past ; a cheerful trust in the word of those good promises yet to be fulfilled, and a readiness to go forward, after marking the Eben-czers that I have been constrained to set up at the close of every fleeting year.

‘ But this is not a chapter on flowers—it is a chapter on new years, very barren of incidents, and too vague to be classed with your floral biography.’ Have patience, dear reader ; I will not leave you without singling one from the many cheerful assemblages that the Christmas rose has graced, from time to time, before or since it attracted my especial notice.

Even prior to the period alluded to, while I was yet but a very little girl, I had often been the favorite playfellow of one who had a nearer claim than the tie of mere acquaintanceship. His story is touching ; and I will give it briefly. He was born in a distant country, and came among us to be educated : many years older than myself, I can but remember him as a tall youth, when I was a child : but many little recollections combine to make his image familiar to my mind’s eye. Having completed his studies in England, he left our shores, highly accomplished, and returned to the bosom of a family whose pride he was. Not long after, he was unhappily led, by the

influence of some who knew how to work on his chivalric character, to accept a distinguished rank in a wild romantic expedition, planned by some enthusiastic military men, to effect a landing, and to excite a revolution, in the South American territories of Spain.

The result was disastrous : the landing took place ; but in an action with the colonists, a great number of the invading party were killed, some saved themselves by precipitate flight, and the remainder were made captive. Among the latter, was my old playmate and kinsman ; and the intelligence soon reached his distracted parents, that their beloved son was condemned to labour for life, in the mines of Peru !

His father, who possessed high claims on the confidence and consideration of the British government, hastened to make known his afflictive case ; and letters were given to him from various members of the Royal Family, and from distinguished official men, to the court of Spain. Thither sped the anxious father ; and by persevering importunity, obtained, though with great difficulty, the precious boon—an order for his son's immediate release—with this he again crossed the Atlantic, and had the unspeakable delight of delivering the poor captive, and conducting him once more to the arms of a rejoicing mother, a fond circle of brothers and sisters, to whom he appeared as one alive from the dead. Very sweet is my

recollection of the jubilee among us, when those glad tidings reached his English friends : and our joy was increased, when informed that he considered his happiness incomplete, until he should have received in person the congratulations of those by whom he had been so long regarded as a son and a brother.

With this object in view, he repaired to one of the West Indian Isles ; from whence a vessel was about to sail for our shores. She was very unfit, in the judgment of many, for a long voyage : but our young friend's ardent character prevailed over prudential considerations—he would not brook delay. He sailed—and we received tidings of the day and hour when he left the port : but other tidings never, never came, of the vessel or her freight.

Often have we sat round the fire-side of the venerable and venerated individual, who, with maternal fondness looked upon three generations of her numerous progeny : and while the tale of her darling grandson was again and again recounted, we have talked of pirates, and of shipwrecks on desolate places, whence after a long lapse of years the objects who were mourned as dead, have returned to overwhelm their sorrowing friends with unlooked-for joy. We have talked, until a knock at the hall-door, or the sound of a man's voice from without, has sent the thrill of undefined expectation through many a bosom ; to be succeeded by the starting tear, and

half-uttered whisper of, 'His poor Mother! what must *she* feel?' It is true that the outline alone of this sad story is impressed on my mind; but it is strongly engraven there: and from it I have drawn lessons of thankfulness under all my most trying afflictions. In every case, I had at least a melancholy certainty: I have not been left to endure the long torture of mocking hope—of that wild, obstinate clinging to bare and meagre possibility that the sorrow of my soul might be suddenly turned into unspeakable, worldly, joy. We do not half consider the measure of mercy that is given to sooth our bitterest grief. We do not, as we might, take a survey of what others have had to encounter, when wormwood has been added to their gall. There are some who would barter all the comforts left in their lot, for that which may be our deepest grief—the sight of a quiet grave, where the heart's most cherished treasure peacefully moulders beneath. They could be resigned, if they assuredly knew that all was indeed over: but that cruel phantom of hope for ever flits before their eyes; and the spirit cannot rest—cannot turn away from the pictures that imagination is constantly portraying, of what may be reserved of future discovery, and reunion here. In ordinary cases, the vacated seat is again occupied: and the heart can struggle into acquiescence that so it should be: but alas for those, to whose sight a

vacancy ever appears, which they cannot but feel may yet again be filled by the loved object to whom it was appropriated ! There is balm, indeed, for the Christian thus circumstanced : his faith is put into a more trying furnace : and a higher exercise of it demanded : but as his day, so shall his strength be. God doth not willingly afflict ; this cross, and none other, was prepared for the individual, with a purpose of mercy for which he shall here glorify God in the fires of tribulation, and hereafter in the felicity of his eternal kingdom. Living or dead, the eye of the Father is upon all : and the sorrowful, the conditional prayer, with its heart-breaking clause, ‘if yet he liveth,’ may be receiving an answer little understood by the tearful supplicant ; or, should the subject of it have indeed passed beyond this mortal scene, and thus be moved out of the reach of our intercession, such prayer may return to the bosom that breathes it, with a blessing beyond his hopes.

Over his providential dealings, the Lord sometimes draws a thick veil ; and upon its surface we discern only these words. “Trust in Him at all times.” May He enable the afflicted soul to respond, “Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him.”

CHAPTER XIV.

THE PURPLE CROCUS.

To those who admit—and who can deny it?—that flowers are a special and most unmerited gift to brighten the path which man's transgressions have darkened with sadness, and strewn with thorns, it is a touching circumstance that, be the seasons what they may, there is no month in the twelve without its attendant blossoms. If the human eye possessed a microscopic power, what a spectacle of beauty would burst upon it, and that too in wintry time, among the family of mosses alone! But such not being the extent of the visual organ entrusted to us, we are not left to go groping about with glasses. Enough is given to common ken to prompt a song of praise, "Wonderful are thy works, Lord God Almighty!"

It is a peculiar feature in this part of those won-

derful works, that, although we lack not tall shrubs, even trees, that win the upturned eye to explore the abundance of their beautiful tints, still the far greater portion of our most valued flowers draw the gaze downwards, by their lowly stature ; while their own faces, raised to heaven, set us the example of looking thitherward. It is remarkable that the blossoms of lofty plants are most frequently pendulous : those of the dwarf family the reverse. The golden clusters of the beautiful laburnum, and the shining silver of the yet lovelier acacia—how gracefully they bend and fall, as though ashamed of being placed so high ; while the innocent daisy, made to be trampled on, and her neighbour, the spruce little butter-cup, lift up their broad bright eye, in unreserved freedom. Thus the great one of the earth, when touched by divine grace, rejoices to be brought down, and the brother of low degree can also rejoice in that he is exalted into a greatness that the world knows not of.

This is a dreary season ; bleak winds are abroad and the frequent snow-drift oppresses every bough. The holly's bright berry peeps out here and there ; but for flowers I may search in vain among the branches. I must look lower, and there they are—the regiments of soldiers, as my childish fancy termed them, that fail not to start up, keeping their appointed ranks in resolute defiance of all the artillery of winter. Far less elegant than the snow-drop, the CROCUS

yet possesses a sprightly grace peculiar to itself. The former seems to endure adversity ; the latter to laugh at it. I allude to the bright yellow species, shedding a mimic sunshine upon beds of snow : there are others of the family more sober in aspect ; looking tranquilly content in the spot where they have been placed ; and, under all attendant circumstances, placidly cheerful. They seem to say, ‘ It is but for a little while ;

The storms of wintry time shall quickly pass.

and we will not murmur that we at present feel their severity.’

The yellow crocus was my favorite in very early years ; but a small portion of experience sufficed to transfer my preference to its purple brother : and to it is attached a particular train of thought, now connecting in my mind its lowly station, and its quiet hue, with the memory of a humble, yet most vigorous and happy Christian, who, just as the earliest crocus was peeping forth in my garden, received his summons to depart and be with Christ.

He was an aged man ; the inmate of an almshouse ; situated, happily for him, on the confines of a churchyard. When first I knew him, he was drawing spiritual nourishment from the ministrations of a pastor whom he most dearly loved ; and who seemed to have been commissioned to hold a temporary

charge in that parish, for the purpose, among many others, of more brightly trimming the lamp of old B. At our frequent meetings in the spacious school-room, just by his cottage, how rejoicingly did the venerable believer listen to his pastor's exhortation—how devoutly did he fall down before the Lord, in fervent prayer—and what a privilege was it reckoned, among the Christians near his usual seat, to assist his trembling hands in turning over the leaves of the hymn-book; or to hold a candle near the page, assisting his dim sight, while his low, but distinct accents swelled the song of praise! Often had I the delight of thus assisting him: and never shall I lose the remembrance of his bending figure and striking countenance. There was a singularly intellectual character about the latter: his broad, full, lofty brow, and the fine expansion of his bald head, added to a really pleasing cast of features, never failed to arrest an observant eye: and I have rarely noticed a manner so marked by perfect propriety, among those of his humble rank, who have been hailed as brethren beloved by men very much their superiors in worldly station. Old B. never aspired to rise above the level of a poor man in an almshouse; nor did he ever sink below that of the conscious heir to an everlasting and glorious kingdom.

After observing him at the prayer-meetings and the church, and ascertaining that my very favorable

impressions were rather below than above what his character would justify, I one day met him in a little rural lane, carrying in his blue handkerchief some portion that had been given him from the larder of a richer person ; and kindly saluting him by name, I asked, 'Are you travelling the safe and pleasant road, with the Lord Jesus Christ for company?' He looked at me, the tremor of his frame increasing greatly from emotion, and quietly answered, 'I hope I am, lady, I hope I am : and so are you ;' and then, after a short pause, he rather abruptly resumed, 'I have been thinking that we don't pray enough ; we should pray for all—especially for the Lord's people. We should pray particularly for those God loves—don't you think so?' I readily assented, and he continued. 'And for the wicked : there would not be so much wickedness in the world, if we prayed as we ought. God hears prayer : he hears my prayers—and if I do not pray, I sin against him. But particularly for the Lord's people—for praying people,'—and with a respectful bow he went on, evidently pursuing the same train of thought, which had not been interrupted by my unexpected address.

After this, we never met without a cordial greeting ; and on one occasion I saw him, when returning from a scene to me most precious. A poor Romanist who had, under the power of the gospel, declared in his own native Irish, renounced all his fearful errors,

and become a simple believer in Christ, was soon afterwards called away to 'see whom unseen he adored.' It was quite a relief to my full heart to descry old B. feebly advancing along my road : I flew to him, and told him the glad tidings, that the poor man had died most happy in his Saviour. He lifted his hands and eyes in solemn fervour, ejaculating ; ' How gracious He is ! a soul is precious : ' and went on his way rejoicing, in broken phrases, with a joy so calm and beautiful that it redoubled the gladness of my heart.

But a trial was in store for old B. which had this alleviation, that every Christian in the place largely participated in his sorrow. The Pastor so dear to him and to us was about to leave a sphere of labour where God had most signally blessed his work : and I never, during the sad weeks that intervened between the announcement of this event and its occurrence, met old B. that he did not lay hold on my wrist to support him under excessive tremor, and weep, while he uttered his lamentations. The flock over whom our pastor had presided, presented him with an elegant and costly token of their grateful affections : it was altogether spontaneous ; and meant to be confined to the more affluent : but there was no resisting the tears of the poor, as they proffered their shillings or sixpences ; and old B. was among the first to lay down his offering. It was beautiful to witness the

strength of his attachment ; esteeming very highly in love for his work's sake the ambassador of Christ, who had delivered many a sweetly encouraging message to his soul : yet it was the Lord's will to permit the afflictive loss, and he strove after submission. But never, from that period, did he meet me without grasping my arm, and sorrowfully adverting to our bereavement.

But the summons came at last ; and after a few days of suffering, I was told that his end drew nigh. Wishing once more to receive his patriarchial blessing, I repaired to his alms-house, accompanied by the same valued pastor,—who had never relinquished the intercourse of Christian brotherhood with this endeared member of his former flock—and also by one whose hoary head being found in the way of righteousness, wore a far brighter crown of glory than the coronet that told of his rank among the nobles of the land. Oh, how beautiful it was to see the peer and the pauper, both of very advanced age, looking together into an eternity that was to irradiate both with light and joy ! One, sweetly sinking into the grave, like a shock of corn fully ripe for the garner, and the other, with a heavier weight of years and an added weight of worldly wealth and honours to oppress him, alert, hale, vigorous, and running with patience and joy the race set before him ! As the snowy locks of one drooped over the humble form of his expiring

brother, what could I compare him to, but the towering acacia, bending its flowering branches, more graceful in humility from their natural elevation: and while the lowly man, from his poor but clean pillow looked up to the countenance of his beloved pastor, catching every sound that issued from his lips, as a gracious message from the Lord his God—then turned his dim eyes to acknowledge the gentle words of encouragement added by the unknown, but noble and venerable stranger, who cheered him with the breathings of his own spirit in the same delightful theme—what was old B. but the antetype of my purple crocus, looking forth from its unadorned resting-place through the cloudy dispensations of a winter's day, to catch the sunbeam from afar, and to prove to every beholder that, in spite of adverse seasons, or any combination of untoward circumstances, God's tender mercies *are* over *all* his works.

I received the old man's blessing, and left his peaceful abode, to ramble wide and long amid the chastened beauties of a shining winter's day. My thoughts were very sad: I knew that, notwithstanding the frequent benefactions of those around him, old B. had suffered much from poverty. His little room contained a box well stored with money, collected by him for the missionary work; but his own possessions were scanty indeed. He was not without claims of kindred, which, with his tender and loving

spirit, induced a course of strict self-denial, that he might minister to the temporal wants of others. Many a little gift, both of money and clothing, only came into his possession to be immediately transferred to those who occupied his anxious thoughts. Living in an alms-house, he was rich in alms-deeds. Himself supported by charity, his charitable works to others had no bounds but those of his limited means. I knew that he often shivered in the wintry blast, after having assisted to clothe those who could not help themselves : and I felt a pang, that was only to be soothed by stedfastly looking to the inheritance upon which I knew he was soon to enter : had I known that he would be with his Lord in so few hours as actually did intervene, I should have experienced more unmingled joy.

I could not but feel greatly depressed, in comparing my own opportunities, and the use made of them, with those of the aged pauper. I longed for a portion of his self-denying zeal, in every good work : and I realized, in a peculiar manner, the sanctifying power of the Holy Ghost, as manifested in the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom. In them, it shines out with a lustre not to be mistaken—they are epistles of Christ, known and read of all men. “Blessed are ye, poor,” was continually in my mind ; and happy it is, thought I, as I looked on my two companions, happy it is that the blessed-

ness embraces the poor in spirit also—that though not many, yet some rich, some wise, some noble are called, and made partakers of the like precious faith. External things never appeared to me so valueless, nor eternal things more important. Who would not inhabit the pauper's dwelling, subsist by labour, or on charity, through life, and owe at last a coffin and a grave to the hand of casual bounty, so that he might but 'read his title clear, to mansions in the skies.' Who would be trusted with wealth, or be surrounded by pleasureable allurements, calculated to steal away his heart from God? Oh, it is a mighty power put forth by Omnipotence itself, that raises the base, and brings down the lofty to the same safe level! The work is marvellous, worthy to be had in daily and hourly remembrance, that takes away the stony heart out of our flesh, and gives us a heart of flesh. Behold a mixed multitude, in any given place, not set apart for uses decidedly sinful or exclusively spiritual, but where the denizens of the district are thrown together, and consider the awful line of demarcation which separates them into two companies,—however in man's sight they are blended in one—distinct as heaven and hell. A full acquaintance with the private history and experience of each, would show that the operations of sovereign grace are totally irrespective of every natural or incidental distinction. It would prove, beyond controversy, that those who

are lost perish by their own wilful act ; while such as are saved escape the same fearful doom by an act of unsought mercy—free and as unsearchable as that which brings the crocus from the frozen ground, and bids it bloom, in vigorous life, amid the dark, cold world of leafless trees, and the torpor of suspended vegetation.

CHAPTER XV.

THE HYACINTH.

HAS any person ever seen a vulgar-looking flower? It is customary, I know, to call weeds vulgar; but that is an idle distinction, not admissible by any florist, to say nothing of botanists; because some of the most exquisitely elegant of the race are trodden under our feet on the heaths, and plucked by children from the way-side hedge row. Is the daisy vulgar? no, that "wee, modest, crimson-tipped flower" has been sung into importance. Is the poppy? Why, if the common single species, that waves its loose petals among our corn, were introduced as a rare exotic, crowds would press to examine and to eulogize the depth of its splendid tint, with the singular mixture of jet black, so rare among the flowers. The dandelion, scornfully expelled from our gardens, is a miniature sun, with its radiating petals of bright gold: and

thus through every family of every tribe may be traced the workings of a skill that *cannot* be ungraceful.

However, I willingly admit that some flowers are pre-eminent in elegance of structure, casting many others into comparative shade; and if I prefer, on a very uncongenial day in February, to remain within doors, and solace myself with a small garden that my stand exhibits, and what I have forced into bloom before they could have reared their heads above the surface of the frozen ground, I have a proof before me, that, among the native productions of our soil (and I deal with no other in these pages,) there are some that, for beauty of form and colouring, and richness of perfume, may vie with the proudest offspring of warmer latitudes. Behold the glass that adorns my mantle-piece, and tell me where to look for a lovelier flowret than the tall, rich, double hyacinth that shoots from it in a living plume? I have watched its progress, from the first putting forth of those delicate suckers, whereby the watery nutriment is drawn up to the roots, until every white petal had unfolded, streaked with a warmer tint of rose-colour: and the whole flower stood arrayed in the majestic grace which now clothes it.

There are few positions more favourable to a prolonged reverie than that which I rarely indulge in—a seat just opposite the fire, when a cloudy day is about to close, and prudence recommends a short

season of perfect idleness after an early dinner, to avoid the head-ache, that might, by too sudden a return to study, be induced : verifying the homely saying, ‘more haste than good speed.’ My morning’s reading, too, has been of a character that requires digestion : that paragon of memorialists, John Foxe, has spread its mighty folio to my gaze : and in the fire that burns before me, I can fancy the forms of heroic sufferers, chained to the stake, and mouldering away amid devouring flames. I loved John Foxe dearly, before I could well support one of his ponderous volumes : and many a time my little heart has throbbed almost to bursting, when, having deposited the book in a chair, and opened its venerable leaves, I leant upon the page, to pour over the narrative of some godly martyr. Especially did I love to read of Latimer and Ridley—those twins, born into the kingdom of glory together. At the age of seven years I made acquaintance with the beloved martyrologist ; and great cause have I to be thankful for the impressions then left upon my infant mind. Facts are stubborn things ; and I have found the record of those facts a valuable safeguard against attempts that were made to undermine my protestantism, before I was sufficiently grounded in the faith of the gospel to oppose them with the invincible shield.

‘ But why dwell on such themes now ? The days of

martyrdom have long since passed away. In England at least, we know nothing of the kind.'

True, so far as regards the open violence that could take away a man's life, under the sanctions of civil and ecclesiastical law : but do you believe that the spirit of popery is, in our day, one whit changed from what it was, when Smithfield kindled her faggots, to send the souls of God's people in fiery chariots to heaven? No! it is the deep device of the papacy to wrap its thunders in a cloud that none can penetrate—watching for a season that, by the infinite mercy of God, is yet retarded, when they may again be hurled, with blighting fury, upon the land that shall lie exposed to their bolts.

I have been marvelling at the rapid change wrought since I placed that root in the glass ; a shapeless, unpromising thing, now arrayed in resplendent loveliness, rewarding a thousand-fold the care bestowed upon its culture. I can find a parallel most touchingly true ; and I will narrate the story, with the strictest adherence to simple, unadorned fact : not disguising time, or place. May the tale sink deep into the hearts of my readers.

It is pretty generally known that, in the year 1830, through the blessing of God on the efforts of a few Christian friends, a chapel was opened at Seven Dials, in London, where the Liturgy of our Church is used, and the pure gospel is preached in the Irish

language. Such an assault upon the enemy, in the very heart of one of his strongest holds, could not but lead to great excitement ; persecution, carried to the utmost extent short of murder, was the certain lot of those poor victims of popery who dared to inquire what they should do to be saved, and join the congregation of the zealous servant of God, who had left some comfortable preferment in his native land, to assume the office of a missionary among his wretched countrymen here. Many were, however, found to encounter the worst that man could do, rather than forego the word, the sweetness of which they had once been brought to taste : and to this hour, a little flock is regularly assembling, who having cast away the trammels of popish delusion, are able, even in the extremity of wretchedness and want, to rejoice in Christ as their only and all-sufficient Saviour.

It was in the spring of 1831, that a Scripture-reader, attached to the Irish church and school, was visited one evening by a young countryman, who requested his assistance in penning a memorial or petition, by which he hoped to obtain some employment. It appeared that he was a most extravagant and dissipated character, who had, through his own vicious conduct, forfeited every advantage that he acquired. Still being '*a good Catholic,*' all was right with him ; and the sins for which, with sixpence, he could any day purchase absolution, never gave him a moment's concern.

The Reader willingly wrote out his petition, for Doghery was a better scholar in his native Irish than in the English tongue ; and while he was so employed, the young man took up the book which the other had been reading—a book that I had given him, containing some controversial tracts on the leading errors of Popery.

When the letter was completed. Doghery exclaimed, ‘ This book must be false, for it contradicts my church? here is the presence of Christ in the sacrament of the mass denied. Why do you read such books?’

‘ Because answered the other, ‘ they shew me the errors of the church to which I also once belonged.’

A very animated discussion ensued, which lasted till after midnight ; while Doghery contended for the orthodoxy of his church, with equal spirit and ingenuity. The next day he returned with an anxious countenance: and on the Reader inquiring the fate of his petition, he replied, he did not come about that ; but to renew their discourse concerning the book. ‘ For,’ said he, ‘ you deny the power of my church to forgive sins ; and if that be the case I am in a bad way.’ Again was the point brought to the test of Scripture ; and Doghery went away, deeply impressed, to return on the following day, more troubled than before, while he frankly acknowledged that he could no longer place any confidence in that which had always appeared to him an infallible guide to heaven.

‘What am I to do?’ was his anxious inquiry. The reader told him, that if he would accompany him to the Irish Church, where service was performed on the Wednesday evening, he might hear something in his own tongue that should give him more light.

Unacquainted with the circumstances, the pastor addressed his little flock on the parable of the prodigal son, expounding it as he proceeded. On arriving at the passage—“Put a ring on his finger, and shoes on his feet,” he explained the latter by a reference to Eph. vi. “having your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace,” and dwelt on the difficulties that the christian must surmount, or pass over, which required, at every step, such defence as Christ alone can furnish to the feet of his saints. At this period of the discourse, Doghery trembled exceedingly, and looked down at his feet. The reader asked the reason of his emotion: ‘Look,’ he replied, ‘at my broken shoes—I could never travel a stony road in them: my soul is in a worse condition than my shoes: how then can I travel that difficult path to heaven? And see, my shoes are so far gone, that nobody can ever make them good for any thing now: my soul is worse—Oh, who shall mend that!’ The reader was so struck by this singular application of the subject to his own case, that he took him to the vestry, and introduced him to the zealous preacher,

who spoke very impressively to him, and gave him a bible.

On that very evening, the minister of the Irish church repeated this to me: and Doghery became the subject of our especial prayers.

From the time of receiving the bible, he studied it daily—hourly. A change most striking came over his whole aspect and character. His memorable petition had succeeded, so that he got a place as porter in an apothecary's establishment: and he who never before could remain sober for two or three days, and was sure to lose every situation within a week, was now so temperate, so faithful, so diligent, so steady, that he won the perfect confidence of his employers. Still, being an out-door servant, and having a little motherless girl to support, at nurse, he was unable to afford himself the means to remove from his wretched lodging to one less miserable. He occupied a corner in a densely inhabited court, near Covent-Garden, surrounded by the most bigotted of his unhappy countrymen, who made Doghery and his heretic bible the objects of their fiercest animosity. However, the Lord helped him to make a good confession, in meekness and love, even here: and after a proper season of probation, Doghery was admitted a communicant at the Lord's table in the beloved Irish church. There, the cup of blessing, which his crafty priests withheld from him, was put into his

hand; and with what effect may be gathered from an incident that his dear pastor repeated to me. He went to visit a poor sick Irishman, in one of the dens of St. Giles', and found Doghery seated by his bedside, reading the word of God to him. Mr. B. said 'I rejoice to find you sensible of the preciousness of that sacred book.' Doghery replied, 'I hope I am, sir; I feel much when I read the scriptures here; I feel much when you preach to me in the church; but when you gave me the bread of life, in the holy sacrament, I felt, oh, then I *did* feel, indeed!'—'How did you feel, my poor fellow?' He looked up, with eyes that sparkled brightly, and answered, with great energy, 'Sir, I felt that it was the marriage ceremony, which united my soul to my Saviour for ever.'

On the Saturday following this, he went to his old friend the reader, and said, 'I have many trials at home: they never allow me to sleep, for cursing me and blaspheming. They insist on my giving up my bible, or else they will have my blood. My blood they may have,' he added, with earnestness, 'but this book none shall take from me. It is more precious than my life.' He then related how he was accustomed to answer their menaces and revilings, by reading or repeating to them the blessed truths by which he was made wise unto salvation. He told the reader, that he must go on the morrow to see his child, at Finchley common; and, therefore, could

not attend church till the evening, and he continued searching the scriptures with him until a very late hour, expressing the joy and peace he felt in believing.

At seven o'clock the next morning he was obliged to go out, with medicines, to his master's patients; between nine and ten, he went to eat his breakfast in his comfortless home. Here he was most fiercely assailed, on the two points that they constantly insisted on—to give up his bible, and to go to mass. Doghery refused: they attacked him, and struck him, but he only entreated their forbearance: he raised not his hand, except to ward off some of their blows—in ten minutes he was pitched out into the street, a mangled corpse—his head and side both laid open by blows from a plasterer's shovel; one arm and several ribs broken: and all the upper part of his body black with bruises. The poor Irishman had sealed with his blood the testimony of that truth which he held: he had joined the noble army of martyrs, and entered into the joy of his Lord.

Many a tear have I shed over the leaves of Doghery's little bible, as I marked the print of his soiled fingers in those pages which he loved to ponder upon. The Gospel and Epistles of St. John, and that of St. Paul to the Hebrews, bore evident traces of frequent and protracted study: there he had found encouragement to pursue his new and blessed path, until, through the blood of Christ, he had grace given

him to shed his own. He was faithful unto death : and the Lord delayed not to give him a crown of life.

It may be said, this was the act of a savage mob, and ought not to be charged upon the religion that they so ignorantly profess : but, a very short time afterwards, a clergyman connected with the friends who support the Irish chapel, was met by the regular, the educated, the recognized Roman Catholic parish priest, of a populous district, in another part of London, who, adverting to the murder, coolly said, *there would be more of them*, if the Irish preaching and scripture reading was not discontinued : while placards were fixed opposite the chapel, menacing those who attended it with Doghery's fate.

What shall we say to these things? shall we permit our souls to be blinded, and our hearts hardened, against the dreadful evils of this unholy system? It is the device of popery to keep her votaries in perfect subjection, by the same arts that she uses to lull their souls in the most profound repose of secure iniquity. By means of her priestly absolution, she affects to wipe off the old score of sins, committed since last the nominal penitent knelt at the confessional ; and sends him forth to commence a new arrear, with perfect assurance that by the same process that too shall be made to pass away. Thus is the conscience seared, and the sinner deluded ; as

was poor Doghery, until, through the faithful testimony borne without reserve against his darling errors, he was led to feel his dreadful peril, while walking along a bridge of straw, over a gulph of ascending flames. And this is the case with every member of the church of Rome, high and low, rich and poor. Thus are we guilty concerning our brethren, if we fail to set before them the peril in which they stand. The wild fanatics who murdered Doghery were less guilty than we, if we hold our peace, when opportunity is given to plead with a member of that anti-Christian church. They acted up to the spirit of the religion that they professed ; we do not. They killed his body ; but in so doing sent his soul to glory : we study the ease of our own bodies, and to retain the mistaken good-will of our neighbours, at the fearful price of accelerating their pace to everlasting destruction. I say accelerating ; for if we, calling ourselves Protestants, withhold the PROTEST, which by that very name, we are pledged to make, what must their inference be, but that we are not of the same mind with our fathers, who yielded their bodies to the flames, rather than even feign a tacit acquiescence in the fearful delusions of others ? They see us banding for the zealous promotion of missionary labours, of which the avowed object is to put down the idolatry of heathen lands ; and can they believe that we really consider *them* idolators, while, with every facility of

daily intercourse, we speak not a warning word to save *their* souls?

Alas for the desolation of popery, that is rapidly spreading over our country! We despise the little cloud, no larger than a man's hand, nor believe that ere long the heavens shall be black, and the earth deluged, with the abundance of that plague which we care not to arrest in its early progress. Far different is the view taken by the promoters of Rome's deadly apostacy: *they* know the value of every foot of land that their multiplying temples over-shadow, and of every deluded soul that they ensnare with the net which is now spread in almost all our English villages. The land, which is as the garden of Eden before them, they will convert to a howling wilderness, if the Lord revive not in us somewhat of the spirit that dwelt in his confessors of old.

How awful are the descriptions given in the word of God of this predicted apostacy—how fearful the denunciations thundered forth on its upholders! Can we read them, and not desire to become instrumental in the work of delivering our fellow-sinners from such a snare? Never in the annals of creation did a power so fierce, so pitiless, so sanguinary as that of popery, appear to deface the beauty of God's works: none stand exposed to visitations so tremendous as He has denounced against it. We must turn to the martyrology of the Piedmontese Valleys, and to our

army, in the days of Mary, to nerve us for the perusal of those vivid descriptions in the book of Revelation, where the smoke of the eternal torment of great Babylon, ascending to heaven, is said to call forth new songs of praise and triumph from the spirits in glory. We must explore the records of Spanish atrocity in the newly discovered western hemisphere, and dive into the dungeons of the eastern inquisition ; we must open the blood-stained page of a Parisian St. Bartholomew, and then turn a steadfast eye to the green shores of poor Ireland, tracing to their true source the wretchedness, the recklessness, the crimes of her priest-ridden peasantry. We must consider how the Lord is insulted, His truth blasphemed, His word anathematized, His great name prostituted to the upholding of that which he declares an abomination, while His glory is given to another, and his praise to molten images. Yes, we must survey the curse, in its height, and depth, and length, and breadth, in its various manifestations through twelve hundred years of violence and wrong, in order to impress our minds with the duty that we owe to our wretched fellow-creatures yet lying under the condemnation of this idolatrous iniquity.

It was predicted of our blessed Lord, that he should "grow up as a tender plant," and as he was, so are his people in this world. To be born under a dis-

penetration of pure gospel light, and unclouded truth, to sit every one under his own vine, and his own fig-tree, with none to make us afraid—oh, we do not properly estimate the value of such distinguishing privileges. *Our* sons grow up like young plants indeed ; but it is out of a rich, a watered, a well-tempered soil, where morning sunbeams play, and evening dews bring gentle refreshment ; where the hand of culture directs their growth ; and the guarded fence repels every prowling foe. How different is the case of him who, having been reared in the hot-bed of superstition, is taken thence, and received into the shelter of the true church of Christ, while the storms of vindictive rage howl around, longing to blight the early promise of his growth, and to visit him with swift destruction.

I should sorrow to see my beautiful hyacinth taken from its warm station, and placed abroad, on this chilly evening, to shrink before the biting frost, to bend beneath the blustering wind, and to break under a load of drifted snow. If the flower could reason, might it not well reproach me, under the circumstances, for hastening its birth into such a wintry world ? Yet, alas ; poor Doghery, and many a poor creature like him, could tell a tale of similar desolation, ending in the destruction of the body. The fault rests not with those who take compassion on the perishing victims of popery. We must often say

with the apostle, "Silver and gold have I none," but shall we not proceed to add, "such as I have, give I thee:" and while we behold the immortal spirit lying helpless under the deadening influence of his paralyzing disease, are we to refrain from the sequel, "In the name of Jesus of Nazareth arise and walk," because the alms that depended on the continuance of his infirmity may then fail; and we may be unable to provide him with an immediate subsistence? Even in a temporal visitation, this would be cruel policy; how then can we dare to act upon it in spiritual cases? No; we must proclaim deliverance to the captives, though, from lack of service on the part of those who gave the means, we thereby expose them to starvation, if they escape a more immediate and more violent end.

It is certain, that when one of the poor of this world becomes so rich in faith as to be enabled to sacrifice all for Christ, by openly separating from the communion of idolatrous Rome, the means of daily subsistence will fail, so long as he continues among the people whom his poverty precludes him from leaving. The great mass of Irish poor, in St. Giles' and the other districts, are composed of bricklayers' labourers; and it is a fact, that when one of the number forsakes his false religion, he cannot mount a scaffolding but at the imminent peril of his life; for his comrades threaten to hurl him head-

long if he comes among them. Thus he is driven from his daily labour ; and is, moreover, followed through the streets with yells and execrations, accompanied, generally, with some actual violence. I speak from personal observation—I testify what I have seen from day to day ; and I cannot but ask, is the Protestantism of our favoured land fallen so low that we cannot provide means of employment to those who, for Christ's sake and the gospel's, relinquish the daily pittance that was wont to furnish them with a meal of potatoes ? When our adored Redeemer spoke the words of life to thousands of perishing souls, how sweetly did he express the tender feeling of their bodily infirmities wherewith he was touched—" I have compassion on the multitude ; . . .if I send them away fasting, they will faint by the way."

Well, Doghery hungers no more, neither thirsts any more , he has joined the glorious host of martyrs, and his blood has truly been a seed in our Irish church, emboldening many to come out openly from the shambles of Great Babylon into the pastures of Christ's fold. Oh ! when shall arrive that predicted day of divine retribution, that will break " the hammer of the whole earth ! When the Alvas, and the Dominicks, the Bonners, the Gardiners, with all the host of sanguinary tyrants who have trafficked in the souls of men, shall receive at the Lord's hand the

cup of retribution, and perish, with that desperate delusion, that offspring of Satan, which the Holy Ghost has denounced as the mother of abominations—the woman drunk with the blood of the saints and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus! This is not the language of uncharitableness—no: the farthest possible from true charity is that ungodly liberalism which will close its eyes to the plainest declarations of holy writ, and leave men's souls to perish, rather than shock their prejudices. God will not alter the thing that is gone out of his lips; and unless we can expunge from the thirteenth to the twentieth chapter of Revelation, or close our eyes to the clear and indubitable exposition which history supplies, of its actual reference to the papacy, we stand guilty of wilful mutilation of God's word, while withholding those awful appeals from our deluded fellow-creatures of the Romish persuasion, and neglecting to address to them the warning cry, "COME OUT OF HER, my people: be ye not partakers of her sins, that ye receive not of her plagues."

CHAPTER XVI.

THE HEART'S EASE.

THERE are some objects that all the world is agreed in admiring, or professing to admire. Those who have taste and feeling, experience exquisite delight in surveying such objects ; and people who have neither, would not expose their deficiency by acknowledging that these things have no charm for them. Thus, an April sky, with its flitting clouds, and glancing sunbeams, and evanescent rainbows, is, by common consent, most lovely. Some, to be sure, there are, who consider all the enjoyment derivable from the contemplation, to be a very poor equivalent for the spoiling of a riband, or the splashing of a gown ; but they rarely venture to proclaim their dissent from the general agreement. This being the case, all descriptive, all sentimental writers, and indeed all who handle any other than the driest matter-of-fact

subjects, are to be found tendering their quota of admiration, in every variety of style and phrase. To elicit any thing new, on such a hackneyed topic, is, perhaps impossible : but as I do not aim at originality—merely wishing to indulge in the pursuit of a few thoughts that form the rainbow of *my* rather cloudy sky—I shall continue to think upon paper; unshackled by any apprehension of the censure that is, doubtless, often provoked by my lucubrations—‘How very common-place!’

I sally forth into the garden, on a very unpromising morning. The whole concave is overcast with clouds: they hang low, portending a dark and cheerless day. I see not even a probability of rain, which might clear the expanse, and give us the desired prospect of an azure heaven beyond; but there is every sign of continued gloom—clouds that appear disposed neither to pass on nor to fall, maintaining a position of sullen quiescence, the most discouraging: while the little flowers beneath, look as grave and as cheerless as flowers *can* look, and the general effect on my mind is that of chilled and saddening feeling. Presently, there is a perceptible movement of the dull mass—a thinning of the cloud in some particular spot, as though it was drawn upwards, and comparative transparency ensues. I watch, until an opening is affected, and a little,—a very little speck of clear blue sky becomes visible beyond the separating edges.

A gladdening sight! for, then, I confidently anticipate, that, in another quarter, the same process will, ere long, afford a farther glimpse of what I desire to see. Another does appear, and another; the whole company of congregated vapours is breaking up, not borne alone in a body, leaving all bright behind their course, but dispersing gradually, here and there, until the several patches of soft blue seem to enlarge, and combine to establish the reign of light over darkness. And, lo! the sun breaks forth, the shadows flee away, the flowers look up in laughing gladness, and every little bird contributes his individual chirp of gratulating joy.

What, on earth, have we to resemble this! Something, whereof I consider it a most beautiful type. I have seen families as destitute of gospel light, as closely wrapped in spiritual gloom, ay, and as contentedly immoveable, in their darkness, as the discouraging morning that I have endeavoured to pour-tray. I have gone forth and looked upon them, as Ezekiel upon the dry bones in the valley, obliged to confess indeed, that the Lord could work among them, but beholding no token that such was as yet his will. Then, shaming my unbelief, the light has shined upon a solitary individual, opening, as it were one speck in the clouded sky; and then I have looked, and longed, and confidently trusted, that farther manifestations would appear. Another of the

household has yielded to divine influence ; perchance a third : and these, with united supplication, walking together as children of light, have been enabled to wage a powerful, though comparatively silent war, upon the remaining darkness. The work goes on ; reflected brightness shines upon the rest ; and at last the Lord puts on his glorious apparel, takes unto himself his great power, breaks forth in the dazzling brilliancy of acknowledged glory, and reigns over a household of willing conquests.

How lovely is the sympathy displayed by the expanded world beneath, when this fair work is accomplished in the brightening atmosphere above ? Not a shrub, not a blossom, or a leaf, but seems to rejoice, when the liberated day-beam shines upon it ; and gladness yet more intelligibly expressed, fills the animal creation. It is not long since, looking around for some particular flower, whereon to mark the vivifying effects of these outbursting rays, I was struck to perceive on the bank beside me, only one flower in bloom ; and that was a single solitary child of my prolific family the Heartsease. ‘ No,’ thought I, as I turned reluctantly away, ‘ no, I must **not** bring you a third time into my chapters.’ But when I stole another glance, and saw the little cheerful blossom uplifting its modest face to rejoice in the sunshine, I could not forego the almost inexhaustible source of pure delight afforded me in the retrospec-

tion. With such a train of thought awakened in my mind, it seemed that none could so meetly claim the notice I was prepared to bestow ; and that peculiar characteristic of D., which shewed him altogether identified, as it were, with those engaged in spiritual conflict, or crowned with spiritual victory, exactly answers to the picture that my imagination had drawn of perfect sympathy with the effect produced by the day beam on that cheerless sky—cheerless no longer.

It is, no doubt, a delicate and a difficult subject ; the manner in which the Lord works in families. Some, who are not strongly opposed to divine truth, while their hearts remain untouched by converting grace, do unquestionably build a treacherous hope for themselves, founded on the religion of others. They regard their pious connexion in the light of mediators, calculating on their prayers to help them out in the last extremity ; and believing that, for the sake of such, his faithful servants, God will have mercy on them also. I am often afraid, by saying too much on the blessedness of beholding the good leaven even partially introduced, to foster this perilous error : but so innumerable are the cases where I witness the rapid extension of divine knowledge, in families where but one has been first enlightened, that I cannot refrain from trying to speak words of cheer to those who are praying and watching for the souls of their dearest connections. Our views of God's

mercy, his power, and willingness to save, are most wretchedly, most insultingly low; and where that awful doctrine which represents him as having fore-ordained the condemnation of some souls, creeps in, to paralyze the mighty arm of energetic faith, and to cripple the strong pinion of soaring hope, we are tempted to do bitter wrong to the souls of our brethren, no less than the faithfulness of our unchangeable God. Many an earnest and solemn discourse have I had with D. upon these points: and I cannot forget the patient endurance, the affectionate anxiety, with which I have seen him for hours engaged in combatting the delusions of one who had imbibed such notions. It gave him pain, even to hear it urged, that an actual decree had gone forth, willing, from all eternity, the everlasting perdition of individuals hereafter to be born into the world. It grieved him, even to the suffusion of his eyes with tears, that such a charge should be brought against his God, whose tender mercies he well knew to be over all his works; and whose own immutable word assured him that he willeth not the death of a sinner. He dearly loved, by bright displays of inviting mercy, to set forth the freeness of pardoning grace, for the encouragement of such as are labouring to bring souls to God; and more especially those of their own household. He believed what he spoke: he acted on his belief: and never did I witness a more sustained, preserving series of efforts, than I

saw in him, on behalf of a young and endeared relation. That man, of his own free will, could turn to God, and repent and believe, he spared not to denounce as most unscripturally false : that any mortal could achieve for another that mighty work, was equally far from his thought : but that God had barred the door of mercy against a single soul of all Adam's race, he knew to be irreconcilable with the distinct declarations of him who cannot lie. Hence he drew the sweetest encouragement for himself and others ; and hence would I gladly suggest a redoubling of prayerful exertion, on the part of those who may be faint, indeed, yet pursuing, in the cause of their unconverted friends.

But there is a case, not unfrequently occurring, where individuals who have themselves been brought to Christ, see their hope, as respects some beloved connexion, apparently cut off, by a stroke that removes its object too suddenly to give time for that investigation which his doubtful state rendered particularly desirable. Oh, how bitter is the tear that flows over the coffin of a darling friend, concerning whom, there is, alas, but a 'peradventure' to lay hold on! Yet I have found such a visitation most profitable, in leading the mind to a review of past prayers, on behalf of that object, to an anxious scrutiny of answers to those prayers, which we, in our habitual disregard of the 'day of small things,' had before over-

looked ; and to the exercise of keen self-condemnation, of deep and truly humbling penitence for the wanton neglect of many an appointed means, the careless disregard of many precious opportunities which if rightly used by us, might materially have helped forward the work. Such remorseful regret, however vain in the particular case which is for ever beyond our reach, will lead, if it be indeed a godly sorrow, to the diligent use of similar advantages, in regard to those who remain. This was a favourite topic with D., whose office it appeared to be to extract wisdom and instruction from every past occurrence, as a guide in present difficulty and a valuable store laid up for time to come.

Never did I behold a more consistent, steady zeal, than he displayed for the extension of Christ's kingdom—first, in his own heart ; then in his own family, among his immediate associates, and the poor who were brought within his reach. It seemed to be his maxim, that our missionary efforts, like the widening circles of disturbed waters, should extend with gradual evenness, not only of purpose, but of operation. ' Let us,' he would say, ' evangelize, as far as we can, the space immediately surrounding us ; and there will be no lack of missionaries to work in foreign lands.' No one listened with smiles of brighter joy than D. to the recital of achievements abroad, where the banner of the cross was borne into

the dominions of Paganism, and souls were won to his beloved Master. None with more prayerful fervency bade God-speed to the departing warriors who were about to wield their spiritual sword in distant climes: none rendered them higher honour, or more triumphantly dwelt on the glories of what he firmly believed to be the crown of genuine martyrdom, when they yielded their lives beneath the pressure of their sacred burden; but he deprecated in himself, and detected in others, that excitement of feeling which too often takes the name of missionary zeal, when wrought upon by touching descriptions of spiritual darkness and mortal degradation among the dwellers in far off lands, while carelessly passing the abodes of our own countrymen, as completely prostrated beneath the power of Satan, as are the savages of foreign woods. I never beheld a person so anxious to strip religion of all encumbering romance; and to bring its divine energies into unfettered action *in the streets of London*. And why there particularly? Because his calling was there: because in his daily walks from one office to another, he passed through lanes and alleys, "where Satan's seat is," and being possessed of but limited means as to time and money, he considered himself bound to use them where God had seen fit to open a field.

The little Heartsease looks and breathes of blue skies, and verdant fields, and fragrance-fraught par-

terres ; but to me it pourtrays a different scene, bringing before me the densely peopled courts and passages of Gray's Inn Lane ; the nests of vice, and dens of misery that display the corruption of our great metropolitan cancer, St. Giles'. Oh, when will those cloudy regions become bright beneath the beam of gospel truth ? When shall we take care, and provide for those of our own national household—When shall the gorgeous gin-palace, glittering in our own streets, move us to pitying exertion, like the distant temple of Juggernaut pourtrayed in an album—or the thousands of suicidal, of infanticidal deeds, hourly perpetrated by the wretched females of our own neighbourhood, through the unrestrained use of intoxicating drugs,—touch that chord of sympathy in the bosom of Christian ladies, which vibrates to the tale of a suttee, or the description of a Hindoo babe, immolated by its heathen parents ?

April skies are lovely indeed ; but on what spectacles do they look down !—and He who dwelleth above those heavens, He beholds them too, and will require at our hands the blood of the souls of them who perish. Neither may we, if our lot, dear reader, be cast far from the scenes where D. worked while it was day to him, and where his dust now reposes, to cry, as it were, from the ground, and chide the flagging zeal of his survivors—neither may we put the lesson from us on the plea that no gin-palace rears

its hateful front in *our* daily path. Satan has a seat in every village, a throne in every natural heart. Be it ours, as children of light, to war against the kingdom of darkness, wherever we behold its ensigns displayed ; and let our efforts go forth, wide as the glorious command, “into all the world,” “unto every creature,” as our means may enable us, after doing *this* work at our own doors—not to leave the other undone.

As in families, so in cities : as in cities, so in empires. When the day-spring begins to shine, it will brighten more and more unto the perfect day. When the tide commences its majestic approach, it will overflow, and pass on, and cover the whole earth with the knowledge of the glory of the Lord. You cannot look up, and survey the clouds darkening over your head, you cannot look down, and see the little Heartsease smiling at your feet, without feeling conscious that a book of remembrance is before you. I would rather forego, to the last hour of my existence, the dear delights of my own sweet garden, than think that I wrote to minister a transient gratification to your idle hours, and leave you unimpressed with the awful fact, that another portion of the very little span of time appointed you to work in, has passed away—eluded your grasp for ever, while you turned over these pages—leaving you only a solemn admonition to rise up, and be doing, and redeem the moments that remain.

CHAPTER XVII.

THE RANUNCULUS.

‘ You have been plundering from Hervey,’ said a friend good-humouredly the other day, who traced, as he thought, a resemblance between these chapters and Hervey’s Meditations, strong enough to warrant the charge. My reply was, simply and truly, that I never had read the book. Indeed, I remembered having seen it in my father’s possession, when a child : but had not perused it. However, I resolved to write no more on the subject, until I should have made myself acquainted with a production that every one is supposed to have read : and a rich treat it afforded me. Still I do not see that my poor little chapters have arrived within any degree of comparison with this beautiful work : nor do I detect a closer approximation of thought than what is founded on the language of that blessed book, by which Hervey

interpreted the great volume of creation. It is *there* that Christ is set forth as the SUN of Righteousness, leading every reflective mind to follow up the points of the brilliant type : it is there that our attention is directed to the lillies of the field, with a special reference to their beautiful attire, as the providential allotment of God. There it is, that the flower is set forth, as a touching emblem alike of man's godliness and his decay, while the heavens are made to declare the glory of God, and every element to furnish some vivid illustration of His power and love. In fact, when two people come to investigate the same subject, under the same teacher, and with feelings just similar, even though they hold no previous communication one with another, still they can hardly do otherwise than fall occasionally into the same train of thought ; and in the paucity of words to convey the multitude of ideas, to use expressions very similar, I never aspired to originality, because I should be unwilling to think that none had trodden the path of flowers with feelings as delicious as are mine, when revelling in the garden sweets : but, as another friend to whom I repeated the remark of the former, told me she had heard it made by many, I take this method of assuring all my kind readers, upon my honest word, that I never read Hervey's work until this very day ; consequently, I am not a plunderer.

But, had not the good-humoured hint of my friend

left me to examine Hervey, I should have committed myself, irremediably, in the opinion of all suspicious readers : for I had a tale in reserve, a most touching story, concerning one whom I must have identified with the Passion-flower ; as I have done so for years, owing to an incident where that flower led to singular results. I find that Hervey has expatiated upon it too largely, to leave me any thing to say : and in another instance, where the Sensitive plant was the type, I read with surprise, almost consternation, what I had supposed to be my own exclusive cogitations, as yet uncommitted to paper. This has straitened me a little, in my floral biography : but I am not daunted ; and the slight mortification arising from being denounced as a plagiarist, is most abundantly overpaid by the acquisition of so sweet a companion for my flower garden, as I have discovered in Hervey.

Gaily, indeed, is that spot now decked with the bright children of May : but I am inclined, before proceeding in the survey, to enlarge on an event which occurred when I was quite a little girl, and which left a lasting impression on my mind. I was straying in the garden, searching for some polyanthus, and other dwarf flowers, to select a small bouquet ; when, in the midst of my operations, I found myself suddenly attacked, in a most extraordinary manner. The bed where I was groping for flowers had, from neglect, become much encumbered by weeds, and in

reaching at a fragrant *Ranunculus*, I came in contact with a flourishing cluster of nettles. The result was, of course, very distressing: my hand swelled, and became extremely painful, and, in the irritation of the moment, my childish resentment prompted me to lay hold on the unprovoked aggressors, to tear them up, and fling them beyond the garden pales. This desire gave way, however, to a more prudential feeling, knowing that there was no defence for an unarmed hand, against their thousand invisible stings. I therefore contented myself with determining to point them out to the gardener, and walked away, in quest of some cooling dock-leaves to soften the smart.

Returning shortly after, I beheld a bee most busily plying her trade among the blossoms of similar weeds; and, perceiving that they evidently contained no small store of honey, I cautiously drew a flower from its cup, put it to my lips, and was delighted with the sweetness that rewarded my enterprize. I made a feast, when I had been severely wounded; and retired, congratulating myself on the exercise of that forbearance, which had issued in far more pleasing results than would have followed a hostile attack on the unequal foe.

Now, I am not going to identify the nettles as individuals; but, as a class, how aptly do they typify too many who are scattered throughout the profess-

ing Church of Christ! Mingled among the flowery shrubs, and fruitful blossoms, of the Lord's garden, they deceive the unsuspecting stranger, who, forgetting that tares will grow with wheat, and weeds with flowers, fears no ill where the Lord is acknowledged as rightful possessor of the soil. The out-stretched hand is met by a stab; and drawn back in wondering incredulity that, from the fair green foliage, adorned with clustering flowers, and holding its place among the choicest of the parterre, such darts should have been projected, such venom have oozed forth. But the fact is beyond dispute, and the deed proclaims an alien unfit to mingle with the fragrant offspring of an enclosed garden. It seems almost a point of duty to draw the traitor forth, exposed to public reprobation, and banished from the sacred spot; but the Lord hath spoken: "Avenge not yourselves," "Vengeance is mine; I will repay." And faith commits her cause to that unerring hand, leaving the enemy unmolested, to seek a balsam for the smart—and singular it is, that where nettles abound, the spreading dock is never far off. The emissaries of Satan have permission to wound; but the Healer is always nigh, and needs but to be sought in the hour of suffering. There is that which will soothe the throbbing anguish of a thousand stings; and cool the fever of a spirit, where fiery darts have exhausted all their burning venom.

Nor does it end here: whatever be the rod, the chastisement is ordered and over-ruled by a loving Father, that it may yield to his children who are exercised thereby, the peaceable fruit of righteousness. To overlook the rod as a mere instrument, in itself utterly contemptible, and from the permitted chastening to draw sweets, is a very delightful privilege. Thus it is that the wrath of man is made to praise the Lord, beyond whose permission it cannot extend—no, not to the fraction of a hair's breadth. The remainder of wrath he restrains; where malice purposed to pour down an overwhelming torrent, to drown its devoted object, God suffers a few drops to fall, sufficient only to refresh and fertilize; and then, with his mighty breath, drives off the swelling cloud to vent its rage beyond the precincts of His garden. "Ye shall have tribulation ten days," is Jehovah's award, to those whom Satan marked out for utter destruction; and surely these ten days should be days of rejoicing, to the souls who hear not only the rod, but him who hath appointed it. How sweet are those lines!

Man may trouble and distress me,
'Twill but drive me to thy breast;
Life with trials hard may press me,
Heaven will give me sweeter rest.

Dear Reader, have *you* ever yet come into contact with nettles, concealed among the rose-bushes? then probably, you can, through grace, bear testimony

that my experience is no chimera. You have surely sought the healing leaf; and if so, unquestionably you have obtained it. You have extracted the honey from your nettle, as Sampson from his lion, and you may be well content to leave it where you found it, knowing that there shall be "a gathering out of all things that offend" without your putting yourself forward in the work of judgment. Rather bear in mind the humbling truth, that such a nettle once were you; stinging, by your vile aggressions, the hand that was stretched out on the cross to save you: and if the mighty working of unlimited power has changed your nature, why despair of its operation upon others? Point out your enemy to the Lord, but as an object for converting and sanctifying grace, remembering that Saul of Tarsus was the first fruits of Stephen's dying prayer.

I have mentioned the *Ranunculus*, as the prize in pursuit of which I made my first acquaintance with the stinging nettle. That flower has been a choice favourite from my very early years. I remember accompanying a party to a horticultural exhibition on a small scale, where a country gardener had made the most of his ground, for a display of flowers. He had retarded his hyacinths, and hastened his tulips; and disposed as they were, on distinct beds, in masses, the effect was splendid. I recollect that our connoisseurs were learnedly expatiating on the rarity

and consequent value, of certain magnificent tulips ; while amateurs were bending with delight over the hyacinth bed, inhaling its delicious fragrance, and reposing the eye on those exquisite hues, which, in that species of flower, never lack a refreshing coolness. I was strongly tempted to enroll myself among the hyacinth devotees : but there was something in the neighbouring family of the Ranunculus, that struck my childish fancy above all the rest. There appeared a toy-like prettiness in the many-coloured balls, that was not to be rivalled by any other ; and when a light breeze suddenly swept over the garden too faint to disturb the more substantial stems of their neighbours, my Ranunculus' were all in motion, nodding their innocent heads, as it would seem, at me and at each other, with such lively, infantine restlessness, that I was rivetted to the spot, indifferent to any other attraction, while the party continued in the garden.

This was a point in my opening character that I cannot trace to any origin ; but it cleaves to me yet and always will do so—a strange faculty of forming as it were, acquaintance with inanimate objects, until a sympathetic feeling seemed to exist between us, and I found a more interesting companionship in a tree, a flower, or a rivulet, than among the greater number of my own species. I am now fully convinced that, out of this comparatively most innocent

enjoyment, Satan wove a powerful snare for my after-life. Imagination took the rein, and carried me out, far beyond the boundaries of reality and sober thought. A world that I could people entirely after my own unfettered fancy, was doubly attractive when I began to experience the hollowness and instability of sublunary things. My heart was never cold; neither, as regards my fellow-creatures, was it ever treacherous. A very little kindness, the mere semblance of love in others, drew forth an abundant return of unfeigned affection: and this, of course, exposed me, even in childhood, to frequent disappointments, on the discovery that I was receiving only base coin in exchange for my best gold. One would suppose that the affections of an immortal creature, repulsed on earth, would naturally rise with greater vigour heavenward;—that when thus checked in their tendency to shoot, as it were, horizontally, they would assume the perpendicular, and rise towards God. But, alas! corrupt nature has no desire after that which alone is worthy to be desired; and I transferred every slighted affection to that ideal region which my own fancy had created, by combining the images of whatsoever was lovely and loveable in this dying world—thus using the gifts of my Creator as so many implements wherewith to effect the robbery of what was doubly His—my own heart, and the faculties of mind and body, implanted by His

hand, that they might yield him a reasonable increase.

Thomson's beautiful hymn on the seasons, albeit that it rises no higher than deism, was the first thing that compelled me to see God in his works; and even this greatly sobered my wild imagination; but it was not a humbling truth, as I viewed it. Looking around upon a universe of mute worshippers; taught to consider myself as one of those

Chief, for whom the whole creation smiles,
At once the head, the heart, the tongue of all;

without any knowledge of my own lost and exceedingly sinful state, any consciousness of that guilty perversion of imparted powers, which sank me far below the level of those things that implicitly follow the first law of their existence, even "the wind and storm, fulfilling his word,"—what benefit could I derive in offering vain oblations of praise, from an unsanctified, unhumbled heart? But, blessed be God for Jesus Christ! the gospel came, not to divorce me from the contemplation of what was so lovely and so soothing when viewed aright, but to render that contemplation profitable—to print a gentle rebuke on every page of the great book, wherein I used to read only the lessons of pride, and slothful indulgence; and to tell me that, while every inferior creature of God is filling its station, performing its office, and ministering to the accomplishment of one vast end, I, who am bought with a mighty price, must not

cumber the ground, in a life of unfruitful idleness and visionary speculations. I, too, must be doing ; and that as being well assured that my time is short at the longest, precarious in its best estate, and frail as the flower which bends before a zephyr's sigh.

Thus the *Ranunculus* leads me back to a period now distant, and shewing me the long, the guilty waste of precious days and years, waves not its beautiful head in vain. From a fascinating toy, it has become a serious monitor ; but even now I cannot look upon a cluster of those flowers without experiencing somewhat of the buoyancy of spirit that seems to dance within their variegated little world. It is my deliberate opinion that, whether in form or in colour, the full double *Ranunculus* may challenge any flower that blows ; while the remarkably delicate fragrance, that scarcely breathes, unless invited, from its rose-fashioned petals, is in beautiful keeping with the whole character of the elegant plant.

It may readily be supposed that no person of ordinary appearance, or of common mind, would bear a comparison with this favourite flower. I believe it was one of the very first that I linked to a living antitype—always excepting my own sweet May-blossom, the fondly-cherished emblem of what, among earthly things, is the most sacredly dear to my heart—but in childhood I have delighted to lead, with careful hand, among my flower-beds, one whose fair

head hung languidly down, and whose attenuated form appeared to tremble, if touched by a breeze that would wave the Ranunculus. I remember her well—she was most lovely : and to gratify her little companion, she would be as playful as she was sweet. The child of a fond father, the image of one in whom all his affection had centered ; whom he had watched over, while she slowly pined and withered under the blighting hand of consumption, and in whose grave was buried all that had sweetened his life, save only this fair girl, in whose transparent complexion, and in the glitter of her full blue eye, he read the presage of hovering decay. The blight that struck her mother down, had indeed passed upon her ; and my first recollection of her is what I have alluded to—my conducting her, in the cool of a soft summer evening, through the little mazy walks of my especial garden, pointing out to her notice, now the tint of a flower, now the corresponding hues of a glorious western sky ; and anon that exquisite object, Hesperus, sparkling in a flood of liquified gold. I looked up in her sweet face, and the smile that beamed there spoke cheer to me ; yet I felt that she was like one of my withering Ranunculus', ready to sink before the next rude breath of air.

At the window of our rural parlour, sat the fond parent of this fading blossom ; and as I marked the watchful gaze of an eye suffused in tears, following

every step of his child, I felt more than ever that something must be wrong ; and my heart grew sad to think that a creature as lovely as my flowers, should be equally transient in her bloom. Our abode was in a very open, yet retired spot ; and its air was considered very salubrious for the sinking Laretta. Frequently did her father drive up to our gate in his pony-chaise ; and being himself too much afflicted by some rheumatic complaint, to walk, he took his post at that pleasant window, fronting the western sky : while I led his feeble charge to inhale the breath of flowers, and to bask in the slanting rays of an orb that was soon to set for ever, to her. She went to the tomb before that summer had shed its latest glow ; and her father survived her but a short time. Their forms soon melted away in the undefined vagueness of days long since past : but on a sweet evening, when the retiring sun-beams glance on a bed of Ranunculus, I often behold the vision of Laretta and her father, surrounded by the scenes that memory will then call up, in all the vivid reality that makes the present appear as a dream.

I know not—I have no means of knowing—whether the path of that dying girl was lightened by the beams of a far brighter Sun than I could point out to her ; whether the bereavements of her widowed father, even then, in anticipation, childless too, were blessed to his soul's peace, by leading him to seek the Lord,

who had both given and taken away. That cloud of doubt hangs over the greater number of those whose images people the haunts of my infancy ; the Baal of worldliness appeared to reign supreme ; yet surely among them the Lord had reserved to himself a remnant, whose knee had not bowed to the idol, nor their mouth kissed him. In many respects, there are shadows resting on the past, impervious to the anxious eye, as those that veil the future ; but the present is our own , and as we use it, so we are—flowers to grace the garden of our Lord, imparting to others of the fragrance of his gifts, and adorning the spot wherein he delights to dwell—or weeds, to offend the little ones of his flock ; intruders, whose desert is to be rooted out, and whose end is to be burned.

CHAPTER XVIII.

THE GARDEN.

BEAUTIFUL at all times, and always refreshing, there are seasons when the garden wears a countenance of enchanted beauty, and wafts to the spirit a refreshment more welcome than at others. Such is the case, when, after a short period, perchance a day or two, passed in the crowded metropolis, we return to the bosom of domestic repose, and wander through the maze of flowers, all fresh and sparkling from the pure moisture of an untainted atmosphere. Balmy, indeed, are the breathings of my lovely companions after such an absence; and most intelligible is the welcome that their smile bespeaks. At all times I feel it; but now more truly than at other seasons: for a short excursion to the mighty capital has filled my mind with images more touchingly tender than I can well bear to contemplate, save in the society of these beloved mementos of all that my heart has

learnt to cherish, through a varied and painful course. I could not afford to lose this picture-gallery ; at least, I should need a large portion of all-sufficient grace, cheerfully to submit to that privation, to which multitudes of my fellow-creatures are subjected. The sense of sight is a blessing that we do not rightly appreciate : and I am conscious of much guilty omission in that I do not oftener render thanks to God for such enjoyment. Is there no echo to this acknowledgment in the bosom of my reader ?

I bless the Father of mercies for the delight that he has given me in the works of his hand ; and I desire to find in them an ever active stimulus in the path of willing obedience. Shall I rebel, when, from the majestic oak, that even now is putting forth his multitudinous leaves, each in its appointed place, down to the butter-cup that holds forth its tiny receptacle, to catch the falling rain-drop, all, all are implicitly following His law, from the third day of creation, even to the present hour ? Shall I move laggingly on, in my assigned course, like a fettered slave forced to his task-work, while each little blade of grass springs up with joyous elasticity, even though my footstep again and again presses it down to earth ? No, there is a lesson to be learned here, and I will con it, so long as the Lord, by his aiding grace, enables me to study his will in his works, even as his word hath commanded me to do.

But my picture gallery—what has now endeared it beyond its common value? I have been where every chord of my heart was compelled to vibrate, and every form and colour of by-gone scenes most vividly represented to my tearful gaze. I found myself in an assemblage, including many whose looks of love are still permitted to gladden me; and, alas! presenting many vacancies where others, most deeply endeared, had passed away—some to the world of spirits, and some into distance almost as remote. The May-blossom, that in fond, annual commemoration of the day, I had hidden in my bosom, bore a thorn which I had not the heart to break off; for why should I not feel, even bodily, the piercings of what had been to me a broken reed, so far as this world's comfort is concerned? The very thorn of that withered May-flower was more precious to me than all the living garlands of the present spring. There are many who will question the truth of this; but some there are, who, without knowing any thing of me or mine, will, from individual experience, acknowledge it to be unquestionable.

The object of the meeting before me, was one inexpressibly dear to my heart—the promotion of poor Erin's spiritual good, through the divinely-appointed medium of her native tongue. I say divinely-appointed: for God has declared it to be so, not only in word, but by confirming signs and wonders, which none might gainsay.

Who that contemplates the day of Pentecost can deny this? Could not the same Omnipotence have rendered one dialect intelligible to all hearers, at no greater expence of miraculous power, than was required to pour at once the eloquence of more than fifty various languages from the lips of twelve unlettered men! It was the divine will that, each should hear them speak *in his own tongue*, the wonderful works of God: and shall our own poor sister sit desolate upon her green mountains, excluded through our iniquitous neglect, from sharing the privilege that was extended to the swarthy Egyptian, and the dweller of the distant desert—that is now carried out alike to the inhabitant of polar regions, and to the South-sea islander, to the wild hunter in his western forest, to the Brahmin, in his eastern fane, and which in his own uncouth dialect, speaks words of peace in the Hottentot's kraal? It is a foul spot in our feasts of excursive charity, to have those of our own household sit famishing at the portal: it is a denying of the faith—it is an aggravation of something worse than infidelity. But, blessed be God! the odious stain is in the hands of the scourer; and fuller's soap will, ere long, whiten this defiled garment of ours. It must be so: for the Lord puts such persuasive words into the mouths of those who plead for our poor sister, that many were, on that day, constrained to lay down for a while the telescopes so

curiously pointed towards the remote corners of the globe, and shed a tear over the mourner, who has so long sat neglected at their feet. God puts such tears into his bottle : yet, not by weeping shall we help Ireland, unless we join thereto the fervent supplication of interceding spirits ; and when that is accomplished, we have done but the preliminary work. Our tears and prayers are to the Lord, that he would send help : he answers, “ Who shall I send, or who will go for us ? ” Here is the test : are we ready to reply, “ Here am I, send me ? ” Perhaps not literally, for no miraculous power is now put forth, to fit us for the task of speaking in other tongues ; and we cannot all become learners of a new dialect : but let it be remembered that there are hundreds, yea, thousands, competent to engage in the sacred labour, and under the greatest advantages that local knowledge and attachment can afford, awaiting only the means which you hold within your purse-strings, to set them at work. This fact is unquestionable ; and a most astounding fact it is, —two shillings will buy an Irish Testament ; eight shillings the whole word of God in that language ; and three pounds eleven shillings and three-pence, will afford a salary on which a native Irishman can be found, to spread its contents, for a year, amid the habitations of his darkened countrymen. And oh, how beautiful on the mountains of Erin are the feet

of those who publish peace, where war—intestine war, goaded by bigotry—has for ages past defiled the land with blood! I look around me on the peaceable possessions of an English garden: I recal a long sojourn in the sister isle, yet more brilliantly clad in the profusion of vegetable beauty, and again does my heart bleed over a scene most unexpectedly placed before my mind's eye, in the very assemblage to which I have alluded.

There stood forth one, who came to plead for his poor country: and he told a simple tale of what his own eyes had seen, his own experience verified, within a short space of time. He spoke of a mansion where peace had dwelt: where the pastor of a parish had long abode, and from whence he was driven by the blood-thirsty rage of a multitude, whose menaces compelled him to flee for his life. He told of the wretched contrast that ensued—of the glebe-house transformed to a barrack—of peaceful chambers garrisoned by armed men—of the bugle note echoing where, from a family altar, had ascended the quiet tones of prayer and praise. Tears from many eyes bore witness to the sympathy of his hearers; but none flowed from a source so deep as mine. That pastor was my friend; that glebe-house was the pleasant home where I learnt the meaning of those otherwise inexplicable words, Irish hospitality! In those light and airy chambers, I had, many a night, sunk into

pleasant repose ; awakened by the morning beam, to rove through a wilderness of the choicest sweets, and then to kneel amidst the household band, uniting my devotions at that family altar. There was no fiction in it : nothing for imagination to fill up ; all was reality, deep-felt, agonizing truth : and though, I bless my God, I do love Ireland, and mourn for her, and have tried to serve her, even from that very time, yet I never so loved, I never so grieved I never so burned to spend and be spent for her, as when that appalling description was given, of scenes where my bosom's warmest affections had been drawn out, and where the victims of popish persecution were my friends, my endeared, my hospitable Christian friends ; and the wretched instruments of destruction were the smiling peasants, whose cabins I had visited, whose children I had fondled, and from whose scanty meal of potatoes I had often accepted the choicest morsel, rather than hurt their generous feelings, by declining that which they could ill afford to give. My poor, warm-hearted, impetuous, deluded Irish ! What can I do for them ? What, but pray and plead for their immortal souls, dragged into perdition by means of chains, that you, reader, might well assist to break.

The dear young pastor who related this touching story, gave a singular instance of the efficacy of those means. He told of the funeral of a policeman, whose mangled remains he buried amid menacing thousands

of those whose hands had shed his blood, or whose hearts applauded the deed. They pressed on the heretic minister, with thoughts of similar violence ; but the Lord put it into his heart to use his knowledge of the vernacular tongue for their benefit : he continued the beautiful service in Irish ; and the effect was wonderful. They listened, they joined in it ; and at the close they opened a passage for him with uncovered heads pronouncing a blessing on him in the tongue that they loved : and such was the influence that its use had given him over them, that, when frankly declaring their purpose of not leaving a Protestant alive in the parish, they told him his blood would be the last that they should shed !

I cannot forget the thrilling reality of all this : neither could I, nor would I, forget that he who so feelingly, so tenderly, interceded for his deluded countrymen, had, within a few short weeks, beheld the grey hairs of his own beloved father, brought down in blood to the grave, by the murderous hands of such as he was pleading for. He alluded not to this : but surely the blessing of him who prayed for His murderers, could not but sanctify the effort made : and surely a portion of that blessing will accompany even my poor record of it, to reach the heart of some on behalf of Ireland's guilty Papists, and her wronged, her persecuting, her forgiving Christian Protestants.

I am not going to select a flower, and an individual for this chapter. I take the whole garden for my type, and Ireland for my departed friend. Alas ! she lies among the dead : but the spirit of life will re-enter, and she shall cast forth her grave clothes, despite of Satan and of Rome. I remember, many years ago, passing some hours in a garden, that might serve as the very personification of Ireland. It belonged to a noble mansion, the titled owner of which had not for years inhabited it. The dwelling was closed, but in no manner decayed ; and the garden was deserted, not destroyed. There were winding walks, bordered with exquisite shrubs ; but the latter had attained a growth that stretched their branches across the path ! and weeds of enormous magnitude seemed to compete, on equal terms, the possession of the soil. In one place, my foot was caught by the tangled meshes of a moss-rose-tree, straggling quite over the gravel walk, and actually throwing me down in my attempt to pass ; nor did I escape without scratched hands and a torn dress. In another, I had to rend my way, though reluctantly, by destroying whole masses of honey-suckle ; and such was the difficulty of proceeding, that only one of the party would accompany me in my determined efforts to explore the whole scene. It must not be supposed that overgrown rose-trees, and rampant honeysuckles were the only obstacles we encoun-

tered. Many a nettle thrust its aspiring shoots into our very faces ; and not a few sturdy thistles poignarded our ancles. A more annoying, vexatious, perplexing task could hardly be imagined ; only that at every step, we were compelled to cry out, " If it were but weeded, and pruned, and dressed, what a paradise it would be ! "

I well recollect, too, the unexpected termination of this strange ramble. We 'arrived at a spot where the luxuriant growth of all descriptions of garden trees, laburnum, lilac, arbutus, laurel, and an endless etcetra, no longer shut out the sky from our view, but opened to us a little grassy knoll, surmounted by an ancient yew of beautiful form, round the trunk of which was the wreck of a rural seat. We ascended the gentle slope, and attempted to pass round the tree ; but ah, what a start did I give on accomplishing the half of my purpose ! Beyond that tree, not a leaf of vegetation was to be perceived, excepting the grass and hawthorn shoots that clad a precipitous descent, of a few yards, beyond which lay a strip of bright yellow sand, and then the ocean, the grand, the glorious German ocean, stretching away to the horizon, in the deep blue of unbroken repose ; save where the thousands of little silvery billows, gemmed into unspeakable beauty, by the slanting rays of the western sun, came rippling along the edge of the coast, and sported over the sands. The

contrast was inconceivably fine : never did ocean appear so mighty, nor 'all the grand magnificence of heaven' so imposingly sublime, as when I had just emerged from that labyrinth of neglected flowers and permitted weeds. Yet it was all in keeping : sea and sky most beautifully harmonized with the wide range of tall green shrubs, on which I could look back, or rather down, from the eminence : and the many-tinted clouds of sunset appeared as the very pallet from whence the flowers had stolen their corresponding hues. I was then a wild young girl, and my feelings were kindled to the highest pitch of enthusiasm by the scene ; but I little thought that a deserted garden on England's eastern coast, was, in after years, to furnish a type for the lovely western isle, concerning which, I of course, knew less than I did of Peru or Kamtchatka. I say of course, because it seems to be a general rule among us, that young people should know no more of Ireland than they can learn by committing to memory the names of its four provinces and thirty-two counties ; and old people only what they can glean from the newspapers : in proof whereof I will just mention that four years ago, wanting to refer to an authentic history of Ireland, I went to borrow it from the library of a first rate military public institution, which salaries a professor of history—there was none ! I then sent to all the private collections within ten miles, and

some much farther, but no such book as a history of Ireland was to be found in any of them. I applied to a quarter in London, where I was sure of success :—any other history was at my service ; but not a line of Irish history had they. Poor as I was, I could not endure the stigma to rest on *all* the English ; so I bought Leland, in three good volumes ; and I positively declare that, of all the English friends who have noticed it in my precious cabinet of Irish bog-yew, not one had read the book. Now, if this be not the devil's doing, to blind our eyes, and harden our hearts against the claims of our dear brethren—whose is it ? Yet there is a work I would rather see than Leland's, in the possession of my friends. Christopher Anderson's Historical Sketches of the native Irish, is a gem such as six shillings will not often buy.

I have rambled from my garden, but not from my point. Ireland is such a spot as I have faithfully described ; for what I have written is unadorned fact. Ireland is a garden, where what was originally good, has run to rampant mischief, only bearing abundant token that it needs but to be pruned and trained, to become again most innocently lovely. Ireland is a garden, where what is radically bad, has, through our wicked neglect, taken root, and well nigh usurped the soil, to the extirpation of many a delicate plant, that was thrust out to make way

for its noxious growth. Ireland is a garden, where he who only lounges for his amusement, or dwells for his convenience, will be—ought to be—scratched, and stung, and tripped up, and bemauled : but where he who, with axe and pruning-hook, assails the bad root, and dresses the good tree, who gathers up, and binds together, and weeds, and plants, and waters, looking to God for the increase, may, and will, behold his share of the desert transformed into a blooming Eden—the wilderness into the garden of the Lord. Furthermore, he shall find, when his work is ended, a resting-place, where the ocean of eternity shall lie before him in all the unruffled majesty of bright repose, while the winds are held fast in the hollow of God's hand, and the sun shines forth, even the Sun of Righteousness, to beautify with celestial splendour the interminable prospect of delight. “Not of works,” God forbid! No, but of that grace which alone, in the face of Satan and all his hosts, can gird us to the mighty deed of hurling great Babylon from her usurped seat : and which does not choose and sanctify an instrument here, to be cast into the fire when the work is accomplished.

CHAPTER XIX.

THE JESSAMINE.

THAT dear little modest flower, the Jessamine, with its milk-white blossoms half hid in the masses of cool refreshing green, used to adorn the most limited spot, in the shape of a garden, that ever I was confined to, as a promenade. It was, in fact, merely a gravelled walk, raised to the height of a couple of steps above the level of the paved court, which formed the rear of some premises where I was an inmate. The further side, and the extremities of this walk, were bounded by an exceedingly high wall; and nothing could have been more ruefully sombre, or more widely removed from any approach to the picturesque, had not the old wall possessed a mantle of Jessamine, the most luxuriant that I remember ever to have seen. The slender branches had mounted nearly to its summit; then finding no farther arti-

ficial support, through neglect, which shall presently be accounted for, they bent downward, shooting out in unchecked profusion, until the whole space might with strict propriety be called a bower. The upper part of the wall was more gaudily attired, in all the variations of green moss, yellow and blue creepers, and the dark red of the wall flower. Beyond these nothing appeared but a stripe of sky. At the foot of the rampart some thrifty hand had arranged a narrow plantation of balm, sage, parsley, and thyme, so close that the introduction of any other shrub was impossible : of course, the old wall possessed the sole claim to the designation of a flower-garden ; and, circumstanced as I then was, I learnt to be thankful for any medium that led my eye to the brighter world above ; for, in truth, all sublunary things were exceedingly dark around me.

It was impossible, at least to me, to avoid identifying the Jessamine with her who owned that narrow spot, and who was peacefully journeying on, to take up her last earthly abode in one still narrower. Disease had blanched her cheek to the whiteness of the flower, and bowed her frame like its declining branches ; while the nature of her malady forbade the continuance of her once favourite occupation of training and propping the Jessamine. Cancer, in its worst and most excruciating form, had seized upon her ; and, at the time whereof I speak, it had spread

from the side to the arm, reducing her to a state of suffering not to be conceived but by those who have closely watched the progress of that deadly complaint, devouring its victim piecemeal.

Often have I gone out from the presence of the dear sufferer, to meditate upon the amazing power of divine grace, which she abundantly possessed ; a rich treasure, in an earthen vessel so deplorably marred as to make it doubly apparent that all the excellency of that power was of God. I found it hard, in an early stage of my Christian experience, to reconcile the acuteness of her bodily anguish with those promises of holy writ which describe the believer as possessed of all things—godliness as having the promise of this life, as well as that which is to come—and the Lord as withholding no good thing from them that walk uprightly. I could not comprehend how such exquisite patience should be visited with tribulation so severe ; for I had still to learn, that the tribulation wrought the patience. Hundreds of times have I paced up and down that confined path, murmuring against the cross that my friend so cheerfully bore ; and questioning the love that so grievously afflicted her. Sometimes the dumb boy, then in the first steps of instruction, would come to me, increasing my perplexity by showing that the same thoughts occupied his mind. In his imperfect phraseology, he would again and again say, ‘ Poor

Mrs. C. much hurt. What? God love Mrs. C.? God hurt Mrs. C. What? The word, what! interrogatively repeated, with an impatient shake of the head, signified a desire for information. In this case I could only reply, 'Yes, God loves Mrs. C. Poor Mrs. C. soon go to heaven.' Jack, who realized heavenly things in a way that few of us attain to, was content with this assurance, under the expectation of her immediate removal to glory : but I knew that she had, probably, many a long month to linger yet ; and as weeks passed away, Jack would come out with his embarrassing 'What? Mrs. C. very long pain! What, God love Mrs. C. ?'

I found her one day, in her nice parlour, dressed as usual, with exquisite neatness, her poor arm supported in a sling of white muslin, and her pale cheek wearing the sorrowful smile that rarely left it. 'Have you had a tolerable night, dear friend?' I asked. She replied, 'I had no sleep at all ; the doctor dared not give me an anodyne, and the pain was so excessive, that I could not help weeping. However, a thought came into my mind that comforted me. It occurred to me, that I might have been brought up a Socinian ; and oh, dear lady, how dreadful it would have been, to acknowledge Jesus Christ as something less than God! When I thought of the mercy that taught me from my early youth to confess Him as God ; and the sovereign grace that has more lately

enabled me to see Him as *my* God, bearing my sins in His own body on the tree, oh, then my tears fell much faster ; but they were full of joy ; and I learnt the value of the pain that kept me awake to recall this mercy to mind, and to meditate on the great love of my Saviour.'

While she said this, her tears again stole forth ; but her countenance wore an aspect so heavenly, that I soon betook myself to the Jessamine walk to wonder why I had never thanked God for not allowing *me* to be born among the Socinians.

A whole year, I think, this blessed woman lingered in tortures indescribable ; and latterly she would not admit into her room any but those who were obliged to enter it ; so great was the delicacy of her feelings for others. She, however, used to speak from her bed to those in an adjoining apartment, the door being placed ajar, and very sweet was her conversation. One day, after a week of dreadful agony, she asked her maid to lift her from her bed, to try if a change of position would bring any relief: she was accordingly, seated on a low chair : and, laying her head on the girl's shoulder, in a very soft, but animated voice, she murmured, ' Mary——Heaven !' and instantly departed thither.

I placed some delicate Jessamine flowers in her coffin : and most delicious it was to gaze upon her placid countenance, with a vivid recollection of her

bitter sufferings, and an equally vivid assurance of her present bliss. Never did the beautiful hymn, commencing, ' Ah, lovely appearance of death,' seem so appropriate, as when I repeated it beside her corpse: never did the high wall of the dark little garden, studded with shining white stars, afford so sweet a meditation as on the close of that summer-eve. Three or four days after, Jack and I arose very early to see her remains committed to the ground, while the dew-drops were still upon the grass. His smile was triumphantly joyous, though tears stole down his cheeks, as he said, ' Yes, God loves Mrs. C. Good Mrs. C. gone to heaven. Yes, Jesus Christ loves Mrs. C.'

I have frequently been led to consider the assertions of some Christians, that bodily suffering is not an evil: that, when in severe pain, they could desire still greater, as enabling them the more to glorify God; and also that such inflictions are sent altogether as marks of distinguishing favour, not in punishment. I do not think that such was the view taken by my friend; she appeared to regard the sufferings of her body as a chastisement, not joyous but grievous; but being to her, through divine grace, made an exercise of faith, patience, and love, it yielded most peaceable and beautiful fruits. I have been startled, many a time, by the rash and presumptuous complaints of those in prosperity, lamenting that

they had no cross laid upon them, and envying the lot of their afflicted friends ; as though tribulation and anguish were the determined portion of all God's children. I grant that the apostle assures us we must through much tribulation enter the kingdom of heaven ; and that all who live godly in Christ Jesus shall suffer persecution ; but I cannot see that it necessarily follows that we are to doubt our adoption, when the Lord, giving us liberally all things to enjoy, fills our hearts with food and gladness. Ease and prosperity, are, in themselves, very trying to the Christian ; and he is apt enough, when so tried, finding his corruptions strong, and sin struggling for the dominion, to prescribe for himself a course of temporal calamities, as the only effectual remedy ; instead of applying to the sanctifying aid of the Holy Spirit, who taught Paul no less how to abound, than how to suffer need. I have often admired the levelling simplicity of that concise portion of our beautiful litany, which bids us pray " In all time of our wealth, in all time of our tribulation, good Lord deliver us." One state is not a whit more secure than the other : we are just as prone to make a popish purgatory of our afflictions, as we are to make a fool's paradise of our joys ; and sinful as it is to repine under the chastening rod, it appears even more inexcusable to grumble at the profusion of our temporal mercies. On the other hand, unless

in some very peculiar cases, it seems to me quite as unbecoming to make a boast of our calamities, as to glory in our worldly possessions: for what is it, in fact, but a covert vaunt of our patience and faith? I have seen some dear sufferers, writhing under the most excruciating torments of acute disease, or pining in lengthened confinement to a sick room, or weeping, in the bitterness of their souls, a sudden bereavement, which has left them comparatively alone upon earth:—I have seen them compelled to listen, while others, in the full enjoyment of health and prosperity, lectured them upon the enviableness of their lot: and required of them songs of mirth in their heaviness. God can, and does, give songs in the night of sorrow, heard by himself alone; and undoubtedly, he also enables his people to rejoice, even outwardly, at the abundant consolations with which he outnumbered their light and momentary afflictions; but I do not love to see a wounded spirit, lodged in a weak body, crammed, as it were, with the crude notions of others, who but know theoretically what their friend is sensibly experiencing.

I am very sure that Mrs. C. was one of the most heavenly-minded persons I ever met with. Her rank in life did not bring her into what is called polite society, except among those who recognized the tie of membership under one glorious Head. Her education had not been of a superior order;

but alike in mind, manners and conversation, the indwelling Spirit shed a lustre around her, which commanded respect from every one. There was an humble dignity in her deportment, that could awe the most reckless into submission to her calm and mild rebuke : and her sympathizing pastors came to her less to impart than to receive consolation, encouragement, and spiritual profit : while she, in the spirit of a little child, desired but to sit at their feet and learn. Now, I would sooner take the feelings of such a person for a rule whereby to judge, than the laboured conclusions of profound thinkers, on a point which, after all, they could but *think* upon : and I am sure that Mrs. C. regarded pain as a positive evil, the bitter and humiliating fruit of sin, judicially inflicted, to rebuke and chasten ; and by no means to be gloried in, as an especial privilege, even by God's children. I have seen the tears stand in her eyes, while her look expressed somewhat of Job's mournful reproof, to the injudicious friends, who undertook to prove that her bodily torments were so many calls for exultation and delight : but, when left to draw her own deductions from the Lord's dealings with her, as explained by his word, and applied by the Spirit, she would sweetly acknowledge, as in the instance of that sleepless night, how much of mercy her severest trials were made the means of conveying to her soul.

Had recovery been possible, I make no doubt that she would gladly have used every means to throw off her dreadful malady ; and most touching was the fervency of her thankfulness to the Father of mercies, when a few hours of sleep had been permitted to refresh her wearied body. Yet she desired to depart, and to be with Christ, knowing it to be far better than a lengthened sojourn upon earth ; and since the Lord had appointed that lingering and agonizing disease, as her path to the grave, she was content. To say that, if left to her own choice, she would not have preferred a less torturing disease, would be more than I should feel justified in asserting : but I am sure that she believed *that* to be best for her which the Lord had chosen ; and that she never desired it to be otherwise than as He willed it.

The Jessamine, at all times and in all places, is lovely : but that on the antique wall, breathing fragrance on my evening promenade, was certainly the richest and the sweetest that I ever met with. No flower can be more simply elegant in form, more untainted in the purity of its perfect whiteness, or more refreshingly odoriferous in its delicate scent. There is, besides, something in its utter inability to sustain itself, that farther illustrates the Christian character. The Jessamine will aspire and grow to a considerable height, but it must be upheld through-

out, or it sinks downward, and defiles in the dust of earth those beauties which were formed to expand towards heaven. Let but a single shoot break loose from its support, and you see it straggling far away, with an earthward tendency, the sport of every wind. Is not the type obvious? I once remarked a straying branch of the Jessamine, crossed in its way by the shoot of a neighbouring ivy, and firmly fixed to the wall by the steady progress of its more adhesive companion. Here, the strong bore the infirmities of the weak, by love serving another, and becoming a fellow-helper in the faith to a less stable believer. It was beautiful to see how, from this point, the Jessamine shot upwards, bearing to a great height the fragrant blossoms that would otherwise have been trampled under foot: and the inference was cheering too. I have often thought that I must write a chapter on the ivy, which is really the most patronising of plants; though like the patrons of this world, it sometimes destroys its protege. But to return to the Jessamine. It is long since I gazed upon the old wall of dear Mrs. C.'s humble garden, and many an experimental lesson have I since been made to learn, of the necessity both for prop and pruning-knife, among the Lord's weak straggling plants. But there is something so sweet in the recollection of my lonely walks, where indeed there was scarcely room for two to pace the garden,

that I rank the Jessamine, with its pointed leaves and starry flowers, among the most precious of my store: and if ever I possess a cottage of my own, it shall clothe the walls, and peep into the casements, with its well-remembered story of patience, piety, and peace.

CHAPTER XX.

THE PASSION-FLOWER.

I HAVE already mentioned that I was nearly deterred from taking up two or three subjects, by finding that Hervey had left me nothing to say respecting the particular flowers connected with them. I shall however, venture to pursue the original plan, at least with regard to one of these, especially as I have very little to say of the type; and a great deal of that to which I have attached it, as a memento.

I never could look upon the Passion-flower so enthusiastically as some do, nor find much gratification in following up the imaginary resemblance to that whence its name is derived: and, strange as it may appear, although peculiarly fond of graphic representations, I have rather an aversion, as well to

those which assume to pourtray the awful scene of Calvary, as to the incongruous host of Madonnas and holy families ; which, from their utter dissimilarity one to another, irresistibly impress my mind with the idea of gross fiction, and rather cloud than assist the mental perception of what is so simply and sweetly set forth in the written word. Perhaps a consciousness of the idolatrous purpose to which such pictures have been perverted, may have contributed to produce this effect.

The Passion-flower was not placed on my list of favourites, until I met with it—can any reader guess where?—growing against the walls of a Roman Catholic chapel. It then became endeared to me indeed ; and holds, to this day, a high place among the most touching of my lovely remembrancers. I was dwelling in Ireland, not far from a flourishing nunnery, which it was the fashion for strangers, to visit : but I had never felt any inclination so to do, until a friend mentioned to me that, among the children of the convent school, there was a deaf mute, whom they could by no means teach. My interest was excited : and, as I knew something of the mode of instructing such, I readily accompanied my friend to the convent, to proffer my help. As we passed along, she laughingly remarked, ‘ I did not think anything would have tempted *you* to visit such a place.’ I replied. ‘ Where God is

pleased to point out a path of duty, I care not in what direction it may lie. As a matter of idle curiosity, you would not have prevailed on me to go there.'

It was with some trepidation that I entered, for the first time, a building to which the light reading of former days had attached many romantic ideas ; while the better instruction of a later period had taught me to view it in its real character, as a stronghold of superstition and self-righteous delusion. The nun, who had especially taken an interest in the little dumb girl, was presently introduced to me ; and never did I behold a more engaging creature. Tall, graceful, and bearing about her the manners of polished society, her aspect was that of the most winning sweetness, the most unaffected humility : and when, by a very short process, I convinced her that every difficulty might be overcome, and the child instructed to spell and write, the sparkling animation of her looks, the eager delight with which she listened to my directions, and the fervency of her eloquent thanks, while, with glistening eyes she caressed the child whose welfare she was planning, all attracted me irresistibly. I do not know how far the picturesque effect of her habit, which I never before had seen—the loose folds of a long black robe gathered into a broad belt, with its depending rosary. and the graceful veil which, falling back from her

beautiful brow, nearly swept the ground,—might tend to deepen the impression ; but certainly I believed her to be, without exception, the most fascinating creature I had ever seen ; and when she asked me to walk around the garden with her, I readily agreed, glad of any excuse to prolong the interview.

She showed me her plants, and brought me to the entrance of a building, which I supposed might be a school-house, where a handsome flight of stairs led to two large folding doors. These she pushed open, and I entered : but to my real dismay, I found myself opposite a splendid altar, profusely decorated with images, covered with gilding, and variously ornamented : above all, was elevated the crucifix ; and, on turning to look for my companion, I saw her nearly prostrate in the door-way, her arms crossed on her bosom, and her head almost touching the ground, in profound adoration of that idolatrous image. The impulse of my feelings was to make a precipitate retreat ; but the nun arose, and taking my arm, led me onwards. The chapel was very magnificent, but I shrunk from the contemplation, and confined my remarks to the beautiful prospect, from its window, of the garden beneath ; and hastened our return. The nun retreated slowly backwards with many genuflexions ; and I almost ran out, rejoicing when the richly carved doors once more closed upon a scene so indescribably painful to me.

My gentle conductress redoubled her attentions to cheer me : for the sudden depression of my spirits could not but be visible to her : and as we left the building, she gathered a Passion-flower from a luxuriant plant, that mantled its walls, presenting it with a graceful expression of her gratitude, and saying it was in itself a poor token, but rich in the sacred resemblance which it bore to what we both held most holy.

I took an affectionate leave of her : and on shewing the flower to a friend, with an account of its fair donor, she replied, ‘ Poor E—— ! It could be no other, for she is all that you describe, and there is not one like her in the place.’ She then proceeded to tell me, that my nun was a young lady, educated in the Protestant faith ; but led to apostatize under strange circumstances. What these were, she could not inform me : but several years after I learnt her story. It was briefly this : her father, a Romanist, had married a Protestant, with the customary iniquitous agreement, that the sons should be brought up in his religion—the daughters in hers. Daughters only were born, and they were educated in the Protestant faith : but, on their father’s death, a number of priests assembled, to perform offices for the departed soul, during the time that the corpse lay in the house, and so well did they improve their opportunity, that the widow and all her daughters re-

nounced Protestantism shortly after the funeral, with the exception of E——.

To overcome her conscientious repugnance, the most nefarious means were resorted to : a pretended miracle, performed by some relic, failed to convert, though it staggered her ; and they then had recourse to one of the foul stratagems, so common in gaining proselytes from among the young and imaginative. They contrived that, in the dead of night, a figure resembling her deceased father, of whom she was very fond, should appear to her, stating that he had obtained permission to re-visit the earth, for the sacred purpose of solemnly assuring her, that the faith in which he died, was the only passport to heaven. This succeeded—she never recovered from the shock, but she renounced her religion, and took the veil.

Had I known this at the time, I cannot say to what lengths my indignation might have carried me : but the bare fact of her having apostatized was sufficient to rouse my zeal. I soon repeated my visit ; and faithfully told her how very far I was from agreeing in her views ; while the good nuns, on their part, had, as I found, already engaged the help of a seminary of Jesuits, not far off, to proselytize ME ; and poor E. was permitted to follow her affectionate inclination for my society, under the charitable hope that she might save my soul. I look back with emotions of trembling thankfulness to that time : for

I was very young indeed in the faith, and totally ignorant of controversy. I knew that popery was idolatry : and I knew that idolatry was a damnable sin : but beyond this, I had not examined the subject. The mode pursued with me was to extort a promise that I would carefully study whatever books the nun should lend me ; and I gave it, on condition that I might write out, and that she would read, my opinions on them. A parcel was presently sent, selected by the Jesuits : and I sat down to examine one of the most specious and dangerous works ever penned ; (Milner's 'End of Controversy') I adhered to my engagement, and thanks be to God for his unspeakable mercy in guarding me as he did ! I could not unravel the artful web of deep and diabolical sophistry : but I saw and felt that it was essentially opposed to the truth of Scripture. I wept over the book, in grief and perplexity, but the Lord led me to pray, and then, as by a bright beam breaking forth, I saw the mystery of iniquity in all its deceivableness of unrighteousness. Prayer had cut the knot which reason could not disentangle, and I was enabled to set forth the truth, in a letter, to the poor nun, so as to exhibit the contrasting error in a forcible point of view. Other books were sent and read, and commented on ; and the Lord overruled my peridious course of study to bringing me acquainted with the depths of this fearful delusion ; but, at length, the dear nun, who

had been carefully guarded from any private interviews with me, after they commenced operations, managed to let me know, in writing, that she was not allowed to see a line of my comments on the books : all being committed, by her superior, to their spiritual advisers. She justified this proceeding, it is true ; but I have reason to think it produced a strong effect on her naturally ingenuous and honourable mind.

Many a time did we try to see one another alone ; and so anxious was I, that I once asked her to go to the chapel with me, and talk there : but an old nun was beforehand with us, and was seated in a stall, conning her book when we entered. E. glanced towards her, made a sign to me, and proceeded to talk of gardening. Shortly after this, they resolved to try what effect an imposing ceremony would have on me. I had of course, refused to be present at the celebration of mass : but now, two nuns were to profess, and take the veil ; and so resolved were they to have me, that not only were two front seats reserved, but the whole service was fairly written out by the hand of E., with a full explanation of the ceremonies, and sent to me with tickets for my mother and myself : while all that affection could dictate, or flattery prompt, or animated description pourtray to excite curiosity, was said in the accompanying letter. I felt grieved to appear un-

grateful for such kindness ; I gave them credit for the most obliging intentions, and perhaps, for a moment, I almost wished to overcome my scruples, on so interesting an occasion : but in proportion as I became acquainted with the fearful character of a religion clearly opposed to the gospel of Christ, and convinced of the rank idolatry perpetrated in its stated devotions, I felt the wickedness, the ingratitude, the dishonesty of sanctioning in any way, what ever, those grievous insults offered to my redeeming God. I felt that every Protestant who complacently looks on, becomes a participator in those rites ; and I really *dared* not go into a place where I had no warrant whatever for believing that God would go with me, under the presumptuous expectation that He would wait for me at the door, again to enter into what he had deigned to make His temple, after its wanton and un-called-for agreement with idols.

Accordingly I wrote as delicate and grateful a refusal as I could : and my heart danced so lightly in my bosom after it, that I trust there is no danger of my ever trying what sort of sensation a contrary line of conduct would produce.

My poor nun, meanwhile, was very rapidly sinking : her health had never been good, from the period of her apostacy, and she was now, at least so I was told, confined to her apartment. I made many visits to the convent, vainly desiring to see

her ; until very shortly before I left the neighbourhood, I called, rather as an act of civility than with any hope of finding poor E. ; but while sitting in the parlour, I was startled by her bursting into the room, so changed in appearance that I scarcely recognized her ; and in great agitation. She sat down by me, and throwing her arm round my neck said, 'I was resolved to see you once more.' Before another word could be spoken, three elderly nuns entered ; and with looks that expressed both alarm and anger actually forced her away, one of them saying, that Sister—— was not well enough to be spoken to and ought not to have quitted her room. The impression left on my mind by this strange interview was painful in one sense—in another joyous. That the interesting nun was under actual constraint, and severely dealt with, I could not doubt : that her mind was awakened to the fearful peril of her apostate state, I had strong reason to believe : and well I knew that if the Lord was working, none could let it. Often and bitterly have I reproached myself, that I did not more boldly and more unequivocally, during our first interviews, bear a distinct testimony against her dreadful delusion ; but I relied on her performance of the promise, which she certainly intended to fulfil, of reading my remarks on the books that were lent to me. As it was, a consciousness of having failed in using the means, threw me

in deeper humility at the footstool of the Lord, in fervent intercession for my friend. I continued thus to pray, for about a year; and was much struck when nearly four years afterwards, I learnt that her death had taken place at the end of that time; and, from the same source, I also gleaned the particulars already related, respecting the means of her perversion from the truth—or rather from nominal protestantism, for she was not then in any degree spiritually enlightened—and I rejoiced in the sweet hope, that in the struggle so apparent at our last meeting, and in which she probably lost her life, she had overcome by the blood of the Lamb; renouncing the idolatrous faith into which she had been so foully entrapped. The secrets of her dying chamber, none can tell. Many a recantation openly made, is nowhere registered but in heaven, and in the dark bosoms of those who suppress the tale. Beloved E! I cannot look upon the Passion-flower, spreading wide upon the garden wall, or climbing the trellis before me, but I think I see the soft white hand of my pensive nun reaching among its branches, and behold her graceful figure, with its bend of unaffected humility, as she gave me the memento; her eloquent eyes bespeaking more than either action or words could express.

I remember, also, the disgust with which I once witnessed the grossly familiar manners of some

bulky priests, who came to the door of the room unaware of my being in it—manners evidently most unpleasing to E., who, nevertheless, was constrained to wear an aspect of submission, when her hand was warmly seized by those spiritual pastors. I can likewise remember, that the countenance of the foremost became most portentously overcast, when his eye fell on me; and that it was the last time of my ever being permitted to converse freely with the nun. In those days the theological treasures of DENs had not been communicated to the laity; but their recent disclosure has furnished me with a key to many puzzling recollections.

Oh that I could so speak as to reach the hearts and consciences of those parents who, while professing the Protestant faith, can be so awfully blinded to their sacred obligations, as to trust their children within the blighting atmosphere of popish lands and popish seminaries! They know not, because they will not investigate, the perils of such a situation: the vain and hollow acquisition of accomplishments, which, when gained, only prove so many ties to bind those youthful spirits more fast to an ungodly world, becomes, through Satan's devices, such a bait to them, that even the life of the soul is overlooked in the computation, and heaven itself cannot outweigh the importance of artificial manners, and the fluent pronunciation of a foreign tongue. The direst curse of

old Babel seems to be reserved for this generation, delivering over our young men and maidens to the fatal wiles of modern Babylon. The division of languages thus leads to dividing many a soul from its God; and this indulgence of the "pride of life," this fulfilling of "the desires of the mind," will furnish a theme for endless lamentation to many who, in their greedy pursuit of outward distinction, close their eyes to the scriptural warnings which God has not given in vain, however little we may regard them.

This chapter is sombre—its subject and its type are equally so. No external brightness rests upon the Passion-flower; but that from which it takes its name contains even the brightness of the glory of God. Dark, sad, and comfortless was all that met my view, in the brief and clouded course of my poor E., but the eye of faith, brightened by the recollection of many a fervent prayer sent up on her behalf, can discern a glorious beam, emanating from the land that is very far off, with the figure of the nun, among a multitude of "backsliding children," whom the Lord has reclaimed, rejoicing in the splendors that surround the throne of the Lamb.

CHAPTER XXI.

THE LEMON-PLANT.

WHILE engaged in writing these simple memorials, I have often been led to think on a friend, before whose eye the pages must frequently have brought scenes and characters no less familiar to her than to myself. Circumstances had parted us, many years ago ; and under the pressure of our respective cares, amid the multiplying demands on our attention, the correspondence had died away : but many a sweet anticipation has gladdened my thoughts, as they dwelt on a future re-union, either in her own green isle, or wheresoever the Lord might permit us to renew the intercourse which, for three years, subsisted, to our mutual delight, almost without a day's separation. Together we watched the fading of the interesting snow-drop—poor Theresa ! and our tears were mingled over the tidings of her blessed tran-

sition to the world of happy spirits : together we rejoiced over the first manifestations of divine grace in the little dumb boy, who was devotedly attached to her. Her hand supplied the flowers that adorned the cradle of the Irish baby ; and often did she hasten to present me with the first and freshest buds of May, assuring me of her fervent prayers on behalf of the dear, though distant, and to her unknown, antitype of those fragrant blossoms. To her I took the Passion-flower ; and the nun, whom she personally knew, formed the theme of numberless conversations between us ; while there also, I had the help of her persevering prayers. So intimately was she acquainted with all most interesting to me, that I have almost marvelled she should not have broken through the lengthened silence, won to renew the correspondence by the touching of a chord in her sensitive bosom, that never failed to respond. Alas ! I little thought that she had gone to rejoice with those who had awakened so intense an interest in us : and that the Lemon-plant, or Verbena, a sweet shrub which I had, from the first day of our acquaintance, held in a manner sacred to her, was soon to be placed among the mementos of the dead.

As I have before remarked, my floral associations are very arbitrary. They are sometimes founded on a resemblance, traced between the individual and the flower ; but more frequently upon some incident that

has connected them : and then I love to follow up the union, by making out some actual point of likeness. Not a few of my best-loved friends, thus fancifully identified, are still bright and blooming as their gentle representatives ; and very delightful it is to behold them together ; more particularly if the friend and the flower unexpectedly meet, the first after a prolonged absence, the other in the earliest beauty of its annual re-appearance. The May-flower has greeted me thus ; and others not unconnected with the blossom of May ; and my heart has bounded with a joy that few can realize—with a fond anticipation of future re-appearances, even on earth ; and the more sober, but far more satisfying prospect of eternal reunion in that better land where the flowers fade not and friends can part no more.

But I am wandering from the Lemon-plant, and from her whose memory is like it, fragrant and evergreen. Before we met, I had heard so much of her extraordinary attainments and acknowledged superiority in all that is both brilliant and valuable, that I rather expected something more to be admired than loved : and froze myself as hard as people *can* freeze, amid the sun-shine of Irish society, under the impression that if I took a fancy to Marie, she would prove too abstracted a person to reciprocate it. How much was I mistaken ! Never in my life, did I behold a softer personification of all that is modest in the truly

feminine character ; arrayed too, in the meek and quiet spirit wherewith God loves to adorn his dearest children.

Her dress, her manner, every feature of her intelligent and pensive countenance, bespoke the unassuming disciple of a lowly Master. Elegant, she could not but be, fashionable she had been, and, as she told me, proud and overbearing. I was forced to believe it, for Marie was infinitely superior to the affectation of self-condemning humility ; but years of close observation did not enable me to detect a vestige of such characteristics. It often astonished me that she, who so dearly prized in others the gifts of intellect and superior information, should be so utterly insensible of her own elevated scale in both respects : but I believe it to have been that having long traded in goodly pearls, she so justly appreciated the one pearl of great price, which she had happily found, that her former collection faded into absolute nothingness in the comparison.

One hour passed in her society sufficed to rivet my regard ; for, interested by some painful circumstances that she had previously heard, as connected with my situation, she laid aside her habitual reserve, and bestowed on me such sweet attentions as would have won a much colder heart. It was on that occasion that she gave me half of a sprig of the Lemon-plant from her bosom ; and finding that it was a favourite

shrub with me, she reared one from a cutting, to perfume my little study. The growth of our friendship, however, outstripped that of the plant, so that before the slip had taken root, Marie and I were daily companions.

Our earliest walks were beside a river, the banks of which were fringed with tall trees ; or along a road, where the lofty mountain of Slieve-na-man towered, many a mile to the right, while in nearer prospect, across the river, was one of the proudest and most ancient of Ireland's embattled castles. After a while, we became so enamoured of the precincts within that castle's walls, that our more extended rambles were given up, for the delightful privilege of sauntering beneath the rich foliage of its venerable trees, and talking over tales of the olden time, dear to the children of Erin. The noble proprietors, on leaving the country for a time had given me the privilege of free entrance at all hours, by a private door, into the grounds ; with permission to extend my rambles into every room of the castle. Often have we availed ourselves of this indulgence to gaze on the antique tapestry, to examine the curious reliques of other days, when one of the purest patriots that ever drew Irish breath, held vice-regal state beneath those battlements : or to promenade the long saloon, enriched by the portraits of many generations, and terminating in a projecting

window, that from an almost incredible height, looked commandingly down upon the slow deep river which guarded the foot of that impregnable fortress. My beloved companion had not, in becoming spiritual, lost a whit of her patriotism—would that none ever did so!—and she was proud of the castle, and looked on the waving honours of its surrounding trees, with a depth of feeling truly Irish. Indeed, under their shadow I seemed to become Irish also; for it is from that spot, and from that period, I date my fervent devotion to dear Ireland and her cause,—a devotion which, I hope and trust, will abide in the veins of my heart, till they cease to throb with life.

But there were traits in Marie's character more endearing than even her nationality. She was a truly consistent Christian; her views of divine things were uncommonly deep and clear; and the powers of her fine mind were unreservedly consecrated to His service who had so richly gifted it. She was slow in asserting an opinion, because she always made sure of her ground; and rarely, if ever had she occasion to retract it. Great decision of character was tempered with such softness of manner, and powerful arguments were so modestly put forth, that even a child might feel as if on an equal footing with her, while imbibing the lessons of wisdom. How tender she was in this respect, a little instance

may shew : I never could forget the circumstance, nor think of it without emotion.

We once, when setting out on a long walk beside the river, started a subject on which our opinions considerably differed : it was something connected with the grand doctrine of redemption. My notions were very crude, but I was abundantly dogmatical in proclaiming them. Marie had the better of the argument throughout ; and not a word was spoken on either side, approaching to intemperance of feeling.

We had not quite concluded when we reached my door, and stood awhile to finish the discussion, as the dinner-hour forbade a longer interview. It ended by my conceding to her the palm of orthodoxy, which I did, I believe, with a good grace ; and we parted most affectionately, agreeing to meet on the morrow, at noon. The following morning, before I was well awake, a billet was brought to my bedside, the contents of which amazed me. It was from Marie, written at three o'clock in the morning, under the most extreme depression of spirits, occasioned by an apprehension which had seized her that she might, in the earnestness of our discussion, have said, or looked, something calculated to pain me : and the idea was, she said, intolerable, that she perhaps had added a mental pang to the many I was called on to endure, by some seemingly unkind remark, or overbearing assumption. She had wept at the thought,

had prayed over it, had acknowledged it to her mother, and now took the pen to implore my forgiveness, if such should have been the case. A more simple touching effusion I never perused ; and when I had written my assurance that nothing of the kind, nothing even remotely approaching it, had occurred, I sat down to meditate on the immense distance to which the once proud Marie had advanced on the heavenly road, beyond me, who said a thousand peevish things almost daily to my most indulgent friends, and rarely repented of them.

Another distinguishing feature in her sweet character, was the perfect absence of egotism. With feelings exquisitely refined, she struggled to conceal their delicate sensitiveness, lest minds of a rougher mould might feel ill at ease in her company. This species of self-denial I have scarcely ever seen practised, except by my beloved Marie ; but in her I have marked it constantly developed. On the same high and generous principle, she concealed her extraordinary attainments in science : she was deeply versed in even very abstruse philosophy, and her acquaintance with learned languages was at once extensive and solid. She had books that would have graced the library of a university professor, and used them too, but they were never seen on her table, or her shelves ; nor did a hint of capability for, or delight in such studies ever escape her, even to me. I verily

believe that, to the day of our separation, she did not know I was acquainted with the number or nature of her accomplishments : yet she had no friend so intimate as I was.

I recollect that one day she was showing me a little circular flower-stand, where she had arranged her choice plants, just before the window of her favourite boudoir. I looked around me : the room was not large, but delightfully fitted up. There was her piano on one side, and her harp in the corner ; her book-shelves elegantly arranged, with drawings hung round, every one of which, she said, was a memento of something dear to her heart. The love of a mother, who perfectly appreciated, and almost idolized this one survivor of her domestic circle, had contrived many little useful and ornamental appendages ; while the flower-stand, loaded with odiferous plants, basked in the pleasant light of a window which overlooked her little garden, where her two pet families of rare carnations and splendid tiger-lilies flourished to her heart's content. I remember thus addressing her, ' Marie, you perplex and almost make me discontented. You are a child of God, yet have no cross.' She looked at me, with a short laugh of surprize, then, while her aspect softened into deep humility, she answered, ' I am, by divine grace, a child of God, loaded with innumerable blessings by my heavenly Father ; every want supplied, every

wish gratified. But don't doubt that, when he sees fit, he will find a cross for me. She presently after brought a miniature, and laid it before me, asking if I knew who it represented. I replied, I had seen some one like it, but could not tell where. Her mother, who had joined us, said, 'Five years before you met, that was a most striking likeness of Marie.'

I gazed in astonishment, comparing the lofty and spirited mein, the brilliant glow of youthful beauty, and deep rich auburn tint of a profuse head of hair, as represented in the miniature, with the meek quiet aspect, the faded complexion, and the very thin locks of pale yellow, that marked my friend. She sat quite still during the scrutiny, then said, 'It really was a surprising likeness, taken just before I lost my darling brother.' Her tears flowed, and, smiling through them, she added, while closing the miniature, 'You must not suppose that I had no troubles to bring me to the cross.'

This was the only allusion that she ever made to former trials; but the incident sunk deep into my mind, showing me the Lord's mercy to his dear child, in giving her a season of calm enjoyment after severe tossings on a stormy sea. Dear, gentle Marie! it was not the combination of external things, that, gratifying her taste, produced such an atmosphere of tranquil happiness around her: it was the calm and holy frame of a spirit subdued, a heart attuned,

under the hand of sanctifying grace. She was eminently devout, and had a method in all her exercises; a methodical arrangement of her time, which conduces, beyond any other mere means, to the consistency, the usefulness, the self-possession of a child of God. A perfect knowledge of herself gave her infinite advantages over those who had more superficially, or more partially investigated their own characters. Beholding continually her original and actual sinfulness, her failures in attempting to follow the steps of a perfect Guide, and all the secret iniquity of a heart naturally most proudly averse from godliness; beholding these things in the sight of the Omniscient, she was kept from the fatal snare of thinking of herself more highly than she ought to think; and thus no slight, no rudeness, no severity of remark, could ruffle even the surface of her patient temper. With all this she was exceeding cheerful, and by her frequent flashes of genuine humour often won a smile, when no one else could have extorted it.

In many points, Marie resembled D. Like him she owed all to the sanctifying influence of the divine Teacher; and the fruits of the Spirit were very similarly manifested in them. He knew her not; but I have often, in conversing with D. dwelt on her character to an interested listener. He said he should much like to meet with her:—and they have met! It is an overpowering thought, what a nume-

rous company are now assembled in heaven, from among those whom I loved on earth. Oh, that it might quicken me more in following them, who, through faith and patience, inherit the promises! In no instance do I, knowingly, embellish the portraits that I sketch in these chapters; and when comparing myself with them, the immeasurable distance at which they left me in the race, is not only humbling, but alarming. We are too indolent: too ready to regard with complacency our acknowledged deficiencies, and to rest in that knowledge, as though the consciousness of standing still would serve us as well as pressing forward in the race. Unless we admit the Popish doctrine of supererogatory merit—from which may the Lord deliver us!—and consider these dear children of God as having done more than was required of them, we must needs be startled to find ourselves doing so much less. Neither is this a legal view: not one of those chronicled in these pages, held any other doctrine than that of salvation by faith alone, through grace alone, as the free sovereign, unmerited gift of God; but those who adhered to it the most tenaciously, were invariably the most zealous of good works, the most diligent in business, and the most eager in following after perfectness.

It has struck me as remarkable, that, from the time of dear Marie rearing a lemon-plant for me, I have never been without one, until within the last year.

That which I had long nursed, died ; and I kept the dry unsightly stalk among my flourishing plants, more than half a year, in the vague hope that it might sprout again ; or under a fond feeling of reluctance quite to lose the memento. I plucked it up only a few days before I learnt the fact of Marie's departure to a better place ; and now the sweet shrub must resume its station, a cherished memento of what I can no more see on earth. The peculiarly healthful fragrance of those slender leaves, their rapid growth, and the delicacy of their pale verdure, all are in keeping with the traits of Marie's character, most vividly impressed on my mind—traits that led me, from the commencement of our intercourse, to place her first and highest on my list of female acquaintance, nor do I expect to meet with her equal among women. Yet what was, what is she ? A wretched, guilty sinner ; saved, washed, justified, and sanctified, in the name of the Lord Jesus, and by the Spirit of our God. Those accomplishments, to the attainment of which so many valuable hours were sacrificed, what were they, to an immortal being, sent into this world to fight her way through hosts of infernal foes, encompassing and inhabiting a body of sin and death ? Nothing ! less than nothing and vanity !

The details connected with my beloved Marie's history, would far surpass, in touching and heart-thrilling interest, those of any individual to whom I

have yet alluded ; but her character needed not the aid of such contingent circumstances to render it engaging in the eyes of those who knew her ; nor does it require that aid to make it attractive to those who love to see a cotemporary, adorned in like manner as the holy women of old adorned themselves. I could have made my readers weep with me : but I would rather lead them to reflect and to pray, encouraged by the exhibition of what God wrought in my Marie, and what he is equally able, equally willing to work in them also.

CHAPTER XXII.

THE PALE BELL OF THE HEATH.

AMONG the most interesting of the many deep mysteries that invite inquiry, above, around, and within us, one, not the least attractive to me, has long been the communion, that an infant soul, or rather the soul of an infant, holds with its God. To deny the existence of such communion would be rash—to substantiate such denial, I think, would be impossible. Even those who limit infant salvation to the seed of believers, and to the baptized, which I do not, must own that the disembodied spirit of an infant can become a participator in the joys of heaven, however early it may be called away ; and surely, in an earthly creature, shapen in wickedness, conceived in sin, and born under the curse, with the latent seeds of every evil inherent in its nature, there must be a work wrought, to fit it for the habitations of unsullied

purity and everlasting joy. That a soul must be regenerate by the power of the Holy Ghost, before it can enter the kingdom of heaven, is readily admitted : and that God can so regenerate a child, even before its eyes have opened to behold the light of day, we have distinct proof in Scripture. His work accomplished, will any one venture to assert, that, because the undeveloped state of the mental faculties, and feebleness of the bodily organs, preclude the manifestation *to us* of what is passing between the soul and its God, therefore nothing does pass? I cannot believe it. I remember an instance of a confirmed idiot, whose faculties up to the age of thirty or forty, had acquired no greater degree of expansion than was seen in the cradle ; but who, during her last illness, at that age, gave most incontestible proofs of a glorious work wrought in her soul, by the power of divine grace which she seemed enabled to communicate to those about her, for their special encouragement in tasks so apparently hopeless : for, in other things, she was an idiot to the last. Now, of all cases, the infant and the idiot most nearly assimilate—I speak, of course, of extremely young infants—and I am assured that God can—that he does—work in the soul, without the customary medium of the bodily and mental faculties. Who, by searching, can here trace his steps? No one : but it is a very sweet thought to engage us over the cradle of a baby ; sweeter still, when we look upon its coffin.

When the Lord has willed it, that some tender babe should be carried to his bosom, before it has tasted the cup of mental or spiritual distress, this work goes on. Those who choose, may limit it to a particular class: I firmly believe it of every child of Adam, whose days are numbered and ended before "they by reason of use, have their senses exercised to discern both good and evil." I do not suppose that an early death brings them necessarily within the bonds of the covenant: but I do believe that, having been chosen in Christ, along with others, before the foundation of the world, these infants are mercifully spared the stern conflict awaiting those who are brought up for the church militant; they are caught away to swell the countless multitude of the church triumphant. In this contemplation, I see, as it were unnumbered victims continually rescued from the grasp of Satan, in those regions of the earth whose inhabitants sit in darkness and in the shadow of death: and I rejoice, that in no quarter of this magnificent globe is his empire perfect; his power unresisted; or the prey safe within his iron grasp. Such views must be, in a measure, speculative; but their foundation is the sure word of God, from which this sweet and soothing doctrine can very fairly be educated. My own mind is not troubled with a doubt upon the subject; and very few things does this visible world afford that draw from my heart such a

full and fervent Hallelujah, as the tiny coffin, with its little white pall, carried perhaps, under the arm of a sorrowful father, while the mother or sister steps behind, in tears of natural grief. I can weep with them, for it is a sore trial to a parent's heart : but over the baby I do and must rejoice, with joy unspeakable and full of glory.

There is a little flower of exquisite delicacy, which springs up among the heath and rough grass, in uncultivated spots. Its form is that of a single bell, closely resembling the Canterbury bell of our gardens, and its texture transparently fine. The stem rises perhaps two inches from the ground, and there, in the attitude of a snow-drop, depends this soft little cup, dissimilar in many respects from the well-known blue-bell of the heaths, and wearing the grey tint of its kindred autumnal sky, rather than the sprightly azure of summer. The aspect of this wild-flower is so infantine, so fragile, so ethereal, that we wonder to recognize it among the hardy heather, and the rugged grasses where it usually dwells. We see it in our path one day ; the next it is gone, leaving no perceptible vacancy among its thickly-spread neighbours, except to the eye of those who marked its lovely form unfolding to the bleak winds, and anticipated how short a sojourn such a thing of gossamer would make in such a clime.

I have loved this little flower from childhood, and

have often stepped aside to avoid placing my foot upon its innocent-looking head : but I never connected it, until very recently, with a living object. That association has, however, been formed ; and fondly shall I henceforth welcome the pale, solitary blue bell of the hills—it now typifies one of the loveliest and most touching links that connect this dark, rough world with the pure and shining habitations above.

They say that all babies are alike ; it is not true : for, to one who observes them with the intense interest that they merit, there is, even among the newly-born, an endless, boundless variety. There is a trait of grandeur, proper to the offspring of man's majestic race, while yet unconscious of the working of inbred sin, that throws over them a general aspect peculiar to that privileged age ; but it is like the sunbeam upon a garden of dewy flowers—a general brilliancy sparkling over all, and by no means affecting their individuality of character. None of them have yet put on the external livery of Satan, though all are born in bondage to his yoke : but some have received the secret seal of adoption, and are passing onward to the kingdom of glory, never to know the defiling touch of the wicked one. Elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, destined for an early entrance into the inheritance of the saints in light, born into visible

existence, washed, sanctified, justified, by a process equally rapid, mysterious, and sublime, they pass before our eyes, and glide away to the bosom of their God. Most happy, most privileged of all created beings, save only the angels who, having never fallen under the condemnation of disobedience, know not the drop of bitterness that extorts a cry from the new-born babe.

When I first saw the little one, who is now vividly present to my mind, she was closely nestled in her pillow, and I hardly caught a glimpse of the features on which day-light had shone only for three weeks. From time to time, I was told of her singular loveliness, but she had numbered five months before I was able to repeat my visit. Never shall I forget the feelings that arose as I gazed upon that child. The aspect of perfect health, combined with strength and sprightliness even beyond her age, seemed fully to justify the sanguine anticipations of a devoted mother, that she should successfully rear the babe; but every look that I cast upon it, brought closer to my heart a conviction, such as I had never felt before, respecting any infant, that it *could* not be formed for earth. It was not the exquisite loveliness of the child, the perfection of its features, the transparent brilliancy of its beautiful complexion, and the singular mouldings of its delicate limbs, which any sculptor might have coveted to perpetuate

in alabaster of kindred purity ; it was not even the tranquil expression of its placid brow, not the soft smile that gently dimpled its little budding mouth, nor the assurance of its delighted mother, that so sweet and calm a temper she had never traced in any infant : No : it was a character spread over the babe, of somethng so pure, so holy, so far removed from weak and wayward mortality, that while I gazed on her, my tears burst forth, partly from the irresistible conviction that I was looking upon a thing of heaven, and partly from the unavoidable association of those thoughts with a coming scene of maternal lamentation and woe.

Does any reader deem this a fanciful impression ? then I will relate the simple fact, that subsequent to the realization of my forebodings, I met a dear Christian friend, who told me that, having about the same time seen the infant, she was so deeply struck by what I am vainly trying to describe, that she remarked to her husband, on leaving the house, how strong was her conviction, that the stamp of heaven was upon it, and that it would be very early removed to its home. In reply, he expressed his surprise that her secret thoughts should have so exactly corresponded with his own.

It may be asked, if in one case, the image of heavenly things be visible on an infant about to be received into glory, why not in many—in all ?

I would reply, that among those who are taken home after a more lengthened pilgrimage, we sometimes behold extraordinary foretastes of the joy set before them, which they are able to communicate to surrounding friends, who doubtless, with the church at large, experience much comfort and encouragement therefrom. They seem, indeed, to be granted for that purpose ; and why should not a peculiar demonstration of indwelling grace be occasionally afforded to the watchful eye of a tender mother, whose infant is about to be taken from her bosom ; and to cheer, as it surely is calculated to do, the hearts of many mourning parents, who maybe longing to accumulate proofs as to the actual manifestation of Christ's love to little babes, even in the flesh ?

In this case, the Lord had emphatically *lent* the infant heirs of glory to parental care, and very early received them to his own kingdom. Is it too much to believe of him whose name is "Love," and whose nature is "very pitiful," that under a reiterated blow upon the shrinking heart of a most fond young mother, he should vouchsafe an especial cordial ? was it not a sharp trial to see five little coffins successively born away from her door, leaving but two of her household flock over whom to watch and to tremble ? Mothers, perhaps, can rightly answer this question. We do, most shamefully, limit the Holy One of Israel ; and to him alone is it known how many cups

of heavenly consolation are dashed from our lips, because blind unbelief cannot discern them.

One trait that I remarked in the beautiful babe, was a peculiarly pensive softness, that it was impossible to regard otherwise than as the meek and patient yearning of the soul after something that was not found in objects presented to the outward sense, I traced it, during the several opportunities that I had of observing her, and could not believe myself mistaken. The impression was, that some glorious things had been revealed, as in visions of the night, to the baby, around whom we at least assuredly know that those angels were busy, who are "ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them that shall be heirs of salvation." And who will deny that an immortal and ransomed soul, unpolluted by actual sin, and on the point of crossing the threshold of heaven, may have perceptions, and enjoy revelations, quite inconceivable to us, in our depraved and darkened stage of perpetually out-breaking iniquity? How foolish is the wisdom of the wise, when brought to bear upon a point of which neither they nor I can know anything! We cannot refer to our own fancy, because—even if memory could, under any circumstances, wander so far back as to our cradles—we were not of the number of those to whom exclusively these marks apply—infants chosen to early glory, before the world could put in its plea for a share of them.

The tiny bell will yet spring up among the heather, distinguished by its soft tint from the rougher and more abiding plants around it. Not formed, like them, to sustain the rude crush of careless footsteps, we anticipate its early doom in the fragile tenderness of its aspect. It was not so with the lovely antitype : she bore the impress of health and longevity ; and the blight that laid her low, ere six months had passed over her, was no constitutional malady. I should rather trace the resemblance in this that both bore too much the hue of heaven to abide long on earth. What I mean by the hue of heaven, as regards the babe, was that singular expression to which I have before alluded. Her beautiful brow was thoughtful, even to a careless eye ; and the grace that reigned in every movement of her head and limbs, was truly majestic. You could not study her countenance without fancying that she communed with a brighter world ; and that something of a calm sadness hung over her view of sensible things. I was struck by the manner in which she would take hold of her young brother, steadying the boy's face between her delicate hands, and gazing upon it with a kind of perplexed earnestness, as if other images were floating in her mind. Be it as it may, this we joyously know, that no sooner had the soft lid fallen for the last time over the clear, intelligent eye, than the spirit gained an accession of knowledge, to which the proudest

attainments of reasoning man in his full maturity, are as the winding of the earth-worm through his dark and slimy crevices, compared with the loftiest flight of the eagle towards the morning sun. It is no questionable speculation : " I say unto you," said the LORD JESUS CHRIST, " that in heaven, their angels do always behold the face of my Father, which is in heaven." Oh, it is delicious to think of the rapture that is experienced by the glorified soul of such a one, when, mounting to the innumerable company of angels, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, it sings the song of the redeemed, at the moment of becoming acquainted with the mystery of redemption ! " Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood," is the sound first heard, on entering the everlasting gates ; and then to learn the story of Christ's cross at the foot of Christ's throne ! to gaze on the Lamb that had been slain while the tale of that propitiatory slaughter is drunk in amid the songs of heaven ! To look back upon the world, while its snares are first unfolded, and know that it is fully, and for ever escaped ! Oh, ye weeping mothers ! bring such thoughts as these to the death-beds, the coffins, the graves of your happy, happy little ones, and you will feel that God does give you wages for nursing, through a few short tearful days, those children for Him.

I shall not again see the sweet infant bell of the

heath rise up, without a tear for the gentle babe,
through whose blue veins flowed blood not alien to
me and mine, and whose lovely aspect frequently
comes before me, in the silent hour, to melt my heart
into sympathy with those who owned a much nearer
tie : but I will look up, and rejoice ; for precious is
her lot, and her rest is very glorious.

‘ Beautiful baby ! art thou sleeping
Ne’er to unclose that beaming eye ?
Deaf to the voice of a mother’s weeping,
All unmoved by a father’s sigh !

Wilt thou forsake the breast that bore thee,
Seeking alone, a distant spot,
To bid the cold, damp sod close o’er thee,
Amid the slumb’ers who waken not !”

Mother, loved mother, I am not sleeping.
Father, look up to the soft blue sky :
Where the glittering stars bright watch are keeping
Singing and shining, there am I.

Warm was the tender breast that bore me ;
’Twas sweet, my mother, to rest with thee :
But I was chosen—thou must restore me
To the fonder bosom that bled for me.

I lingered below, till just discerning
My father's voice, and my mother's smile,
Love's infant lesson my heart was learning,
But oft my spirit was sad the while.

Hast thou ne'er marked thy baby dreaming?
Sawest thou no radiance o'er her spread?
Oh, rich and pure were the bright rays streaming,
The songs of heaven were round my bed.

And when I waked, though thou wast bending
With looks almost like my sunny dreams,
My soul to that softer world was tending,
My home was still with the songs and beams.

My brothers—my heart grew daily fonder,
When gazing on each young smiling face,
But I yearned for the brothers, who, sparkling yonder,
Had sung to me oft, from their beauteous place.

Oh; many a lonely hour of weeping
Thou hast past by their forsaken bed;
But sorrow no more, they are not sleeping,
They linger not with the silent dead.

Could I show thee mine, and my brothers' dwelling,
Could I sing thee the songs we are singing here,
Could I tell thee the tales that we are telling,
Oh where, my mother, would be thy tear!

For we on milk-white wings are sailing,
Where rainbow tints surround the throne,
And while bright seraphs their eyes are veiling
We see the face of the HOLY ONE.

And we, when heaven's high arch rejoices
With thundering notes of raptured praise,
We, thine own babes, with loud sweet voices,
The frequent hallelujah raise.

And we, oh, we are closely pressing
Where stands the Lamb for sinners slain :—
Hark ! “ Glory, honour, power and blessing,”
Away ! we are called to swell the strain.

Mother, loved Mother, we are not sleeping ;
Father, look up where the bright stars be ;
Where all the planets their watch are keeping,
Singing and shining there are we !

CHAPTER XXIII.

THE GUERNSEY LILY.

THE Guernsey Lily may not be known to all my readers : but those who have seen it will admit its claim to rank with the most beautiful of that elegant family. Rising in a slender stem of reddish hue, without the slightest appearance of any thing resembling a leaf, it shoots up, exhibiting a dull looking sort of blossom, from which, in time, escape as from a cell, numerous other buds, all wearing the same dusky aspect. So far, all is unpromising enough ; but on a sudden, out bursts such a display of beauty, as the eye cannot soon weary of. From the top of the single stem, flower-stalks branch off, to the number of eight, each bearing a lily of the most glowing rose-colour, and rivalling in form any production that our parterre or conservatory can bring to compete the prize of elegance. Each flower would be a star with

six points, did not the graceful curl of the petals bending backwards, change its character ; and when I contrast the splendid magnificence of the expanded cluster with its embryo appearance, I am lost in admiration.

This beautiful Lily had long been a favorite, but for years past I had not possessed one. A dear friend in the Lord, though personally a stranger, inhabiting one of the lovely isles where the flower is naturalized, was tempted by the tale of my lost verbena, to send me one of her own rearing, across the sea ; while another sister, both loved and known, added half a dozen roots of the Lily, just on the point of throwing out their flower-stalks. I potted the little treasures in a mass, and soon after left home for a few days. Returning, I was delighted to find my Lilies in full expansion : and as I gazed upon the clusters glowing in beauty and grace, I could not but exclaim, “ No ; Solomon in all his glory was *not* arrayed like one of these.”

The transition is so easy and natural, as to be in my mind almost inevitable, from the contemplation of a folded and dusky blossom thus suddenly assuming its station among other plants, a bright and perfect flower, to that of a spirit bursting its mortal enclosure, and standing, arrayed in celestial glory, among the redeemed ones who encircle the throne of the most High. Proportioned to the sharpness of

their trials, and the gloom of their earthly lot, is the delight that accompanies this consideration ; and if the flower be like my Guernsey Lily, of a very uninviting aspect, until it becomes exquisitely beautiful, the mind will revert to some of the abject poor of this world, rich in faith, who were heirs, and are now occupants of the kingdom of heaven. Such a case is forcibly brought to my recollection at this moment ; and I will not withhold it.

About four years and a half ago, I was invited by a young friend of noble family to accompany him into his favourite haunt—St. Giles's. The transition was certainly calculated to strike any mind with double effect ; for we left a splendid mansion, in one of the great squares of the extreme west, where all was princely within, and a bright sunshine flashing as we passed into the street from the gay equipages that rolled along, and walked towards Bloomsbury beneath gathering clouds, which, just as we approached the confines of the Irish district, descended on us in a drizzling rain, more uncomfortable than a smart shower would have been. Those, and those alone, who have trod the mazes of St. Giles's, can conceive the effect produced on my feelings, when I found myself within its narrow streets, bordered with their dreary-looking tenements ; every fourth or fifth step bringing me on the verge of an abrupt flight of almost perpendicular stairs, terminating in a low-

roofed cellar, the abode of as many squalid outcasts as could congregate within its walls; while above wretchedness, vice, and desperation looked out, in all their forms, from windows, or rather window frames, where the little glass that remained seemed but a receptacle for all the filth that could accumulate upon it. There is, at this day, in some of those streets, what may be called an improvement, compared with their aspect four years ago: but strong must be the nerves, or most obdurate the feelings of him who, even now, could pace those dreadful haunts of misery and crime without a shuddering wish to be again beyond their boundary. To me, the scene was not new; but I had rarely ventured far into it; and it was with a heavy depression of spirits that I followed closely the steps of my conductor, where two could not find space to walk abreast. The state of the pavement, even in fine weather, defies the most circumspect to escape defilement from the mixture of every thing that can render it unclean; and the effect of a shower is any thing but purifying in those regions. St. Giles's enveloped in a drizzling mist, immediately after B——— Square in the sunshine! Who can describe it?

At length my friend paused, and to my no small dismay, conducted me into what was evidently a dram-shop of the lowest character. Before the door were assembled some half-dozen of ragged wild-look-

ing young men, engaged in a gambling speculation at pitch-and-toss, evidently with excited passions, which found vent in imprecations, uttered in Irish, with an occasional kick or blow. The faces that laughed upon me, from within the low, wide, well-glazed windows, were yet more appalling to my sight ; but I was ashamed to draw back—M. had told me that we were to convey relief to a suffering child of God ; and on such a mission to a sick, persecuted convert from popery too, we might reckon on what ever discouragement the enemy was permitted to cast across our path. We walked hastily through a long passage, leaving the tap-room on our left, and mounted some wide stairs ; then turned to a narrower fight half-way up which, all being dark, M. tapped at a side-door. It was opened by a woman of no very prepossessing countenance, although her manner displayed the excess of servility and adulation. M. passed her, advancing to a low bedstead, where lay an old man, whose noble expansion of forehead, and singularly fine countenance attracted me at once ; but when he put forth his hands, to clasp that of his benefactor, I drew back with horror from a spectacle such as I never before or since beheld. The old man had suffered from rheumatism in so dreadful a degree that the last joint of each finger was reversed, or bent backward, so as to make the ends stand out in a most frightful manner, the second or middle joint being as

firmly fixed in a crooked position, as though the fingers were made of metal : the thumbs also turned back. A pair of large bony hands thus formed, or rather deformed, and stretched out to seize between them the hand of another person, was really a terrific spectacle to one who had never beheld such a thing, and I became so nervous, that M. covered them with a portion of the scanty bed-clothes, and gently requested O'Neil not to let me see them again. His feet were, I was told, in a more painful state of distortion.

The room was perfectly bare, save an old chest, a broken chair, and a stool ; an iron pot for potatoes, and a basin, and a plate. It was perfectly clean, nevertheless, and recently white-washed, which gave it a more comfortable appearance than most of the abodes in that place. My attention, however, was soon so completely engrossed by O'Neil's discourse, that I had little leisure for other remarks. He was aged ; but when raised in his bed, I thought I never had beheld a more imposing countenance and manner : there was much of genuine dignity, and consciousness of former respectability in station, and superior mental endowment ; much information ; a flow of well-chosen language, and sometimes a touching allusion to his destitute state, as having proceeded from the death of an only and affectionate son, who had contributed largely to his support. But the one object

on which O'Neil shone out with striking lustre was the finished work of the Lord Jesus Christ. It was not the studied language of a man who can speak well on a subject where he has thought much—it was the overflow of a full heart, which had felt much. His utter abhorrence of himself, as a lost sinner, his unqualified and shuddering renunciation of all the merit-mongering work of popery ; his fervent, passionate appeals, with uplifted eyes and streaming tears, for more of the Holy Spirit's teaching ; and his torrents of adoring thanksgiving for the redeeming love which had paid so costly a price for the ransom of his soul, when no help was to be found save in that atonement—all spoke the humbled, convinced, seeking, rejoicing believer in Christ Jesus. He was energetic, to a degree that would have been deemed too vehement in an Englishman ; but O'Neil was thoroughly Irish, as I soon found, when, on my subsequent visits, I took an Irish reader to him. He was indeed quite a scholar in that tongue : and it was most affecting to behold his crippled, distorted, fingers contriving to retain within their grasp the blessed Book, and to turn over its pages.

I soon found that O'Neil's wife had a sad propensity for strong drink : and that the donations bestowed, in money or linen, on this interesting character, too generally found their way to the tap-room below. The noble lady, whose mansion I

had just left, had placed in my hands a sum of money, for the use of her poor countrymen in St. Gile's : and I resolved that out of this I would regularly supply O'Neil with nutriment proper for his weak state. I thank God, I was able, from one source or another, to continue it up to the time of his death more than two years after. My dislike of his poor crooked fingers soon vanished ; and many, oh many a day have I run up the long passage, and mounted the stairs, and placed myself on the old box, with one of those formidable hands clasping mine, while I read or talked to the dear old saint about his glorious Redeemer. The daily pittance of soup, or milk, with bread, soon nourished him into better health ; and the little service of being the medium through which the bounty of others reached him, won for me such a warm niche in his Irish heart, that it almost amounted to idolatry.

To such a place I could not, of course, go alone ; but the privilege of visiting O'Neil was sought for by so many, that I never lacked a companion. The dear Pastor of the Irish Church in that place delighted in him ; and unbounded was O'Neil's affection for Mr. B. But though he was exposed to so much notice as might try the Christian humility of any man, O'Neil lay quiet at the foot of the cross, glorying in that alone. He had some habits that gave offence to persons of various characters ; but I

liked them all. One was what is irreverently called *craw-thumping*. Every one knows that the poor Romanist, at confession, is instructed to strike hard upon his breast with the right fist, as a sign of contrition: and this practice O'Neil never laid aside. His self-condemnation, and his prayers for divine teaching, were accompanied with so many blows from his poor hand, that I have seen some of the Irish readers in no small commotion about it—disposed to question the reality of his conversion, while so shockingly popish a habit was retained. To me it bespoke the sincerity of the man, far more clearly than its abandonment could have done. Another foible was his extreme politeness: when friends entered, he would, raising himself in the bed, call to his wife to place the box here, and the chair there, and the stool beside it, and, waving his hand with the most ceremonious and courteous gesture, he would direct the process of seating the company; then, from beneath his pillow, draw forth an antique horn snuff-box, and pass it round with an air wholly inimitable. More than one good person has said to me, in this stage of the business, 'The man is all artificial: what has a beggar to do with such absurd forms?' To which I have replied, 'O'Neil is not going to beg of *you*; so be quiet, and take a lesson in good manners.' I never knew any one leave him under other impression than that he was simple sincerity personified.

It pleased God to let me labour among those dear outcasts for months together; but after a time my residence was changed, and I made few visits there. Still, so far as my charity purse served, through the help of richer friends, my pensioners were regularly attended to; and D., beloved D., was the overseer of the work. The cholera came, and swept away many an Irish beggar out of wretched St. Giles's, and the malignant fever carried away many more. D. fell beneath the latter. I followed his remains to the grave; and seeing some of my poor people bending over it in an agony of unrestrained sorrow, my heart was stirred up to visit them during the few hours of my stay in town. I took a clerical friend with me, and plunged at once into the doubly desolate scenes that I had too long been estranged from.

With some difficulty, in a most wretched garret, immeasurably inferior to his former lodging, I found O'Neil. He lay almost on the bare ground, without a vestige of any earthly comfort. Even the cleanliness that had always marked his appearance, was gone. He could not lift his head from the pillow of rags; but when I spoke, he clasped my hand within his trembling, crooked fingers, and sobbed his blessings for the daily pittance of milk and bread. He then told us that, during the illness of D. he had been attacked by cholera, had been in the hospital, as a most desperate case, had been brought

through it, and returned to his garret to linger out as before. It did indeed appear most wonderful that such an object could have survived the attack; and unbelief almost repined at it. I mean *my* unbelief: for O'Neil, though with scarcely power to strike his withered hand upon his breast, was as low in self-abasement, as energetic in the faith that is in Christ Jesus, as ever: and no less willing to stay than prepared to go.

My companion was much struck with the old man; he talked long, and then prayed with him: and afterwards added his most unequivocal testimony to that of the many who had formerly visited him. It was my last interview with O'Neil; but I had the comfort of knowing that he enjoyed the daily portion of nourishment, and the pastoral cares of his beloved minister. It was a welcome communication which told me, twelve months afterwards, that he had departed in a state of unspeakable rejoicing, to be with Christ for ever. His death was remarkable for the vivid realization that he enjoyed of future glory, strikingly contrasted with the humility and self-suspicion that had formerly characterized him. I remember once taking a Christian divine to visit him, who preached up personal assurance as an indispensable evidence of saving faith; but all his expositions could not retort from O'Neil a stronger word than 'I hope,' as regarded his eternal inherit-

ance,' ' Are you going to heaven, O'Neil ?' ' I hope, through the precious blood of my Redeemer, that I am, sir.' ' That is not enough : you must be sure of it.' ' I am sure, sir, that Christ came to save such sinners as me ; and I am sure I desire to be saved by Him ; and I hope He will save me, sir.' ' Why, have you not the earnest of the Spirit ?' ' I hope I have, sir.' At last my friend plainly told him that his state was far from satisfactory ; the tears streamed from the poor old man's eyes, and repeatedly he struck his breast ; but all that he would utter was the ejaculation :—' I hope—I hope He will save me !' I took care to run back to his bed-side, when the others were departing, and to tell him that his hope would never make him ashamed ; and that though assurance might be a privilege, it was no test of saving faith. Dear O'Neil enjoyed it at last, though if his latest breath had been but an ' I hope,' I should be just as well satisfied concerning him.

My beautiful Guernsey Lilies—what is their exquisite dress to that in which old Patrick O'Neil, the Irish beggar of St. Giles's, now shines ! " Solomon in all *his* glory was not arrayed like one of these ;" but all the glory of this gorgeous creation affords not a type for that in which the redeemed soul stands complete before God. I know not the exact spot where the distorted joints of the old Irishman now moulder into dust ; but well I know that thence

shall arise a being fashioned like unto Christ's glorious body. The form that wears the white robe, bleached in the blood of the Lamb, will not bend under the burden of disease ; the hand that tunes a celestial harp will be pained and crippled no more ; neither smite upon the breast in the anguish of self-accusing compunction. My poor O'Neil, now rich with inexhaustible treasures, has already changed ' I believe ' into ' I see,' and ' I hope ' into ' I possess.' The bountiful lady whose alms first enabled me to nourish him, is with him there : and D. who ministered like a comforting angel unto him in the dark dungeons of St. Giles's, is likewise " made equal unto the angels," and joining their hallelujahs in the courts of heaven. Howels, whose energetic plea from the pulpit once poured upwards of fifty pounds into my St. Giles's purse, is there too ; ' an in-door servant,' according to his own beautiful, dying thought, rejoicing among the souls which he helped to gather in. And now what matters it, whether like that titled lady they lived in princely halls, faring sumptuously every day, or like O'Neil, received at the hand of charity a daily dole in a garret : whether like Howels they formed the centre and chief of an admiring congregation, " known and read of all men," or like D. paced the darkened streets, and obscure alleys, to do good by stealth, concealing from the left hand the works of the right ! All were the Lord's dear chil-

dren ; all glorified Him where he had seen good to place them. Affluence and destitution, beauty and distortion, health and disease, fame and obscurity, all were blessed ; all made a blessing, through the grace of God in Christ Jesus. Go then, dear reader, and give thanks unto the Lord for your lot, whatsoever it be : and pray, like poor O'Neil, for the teaching of the divine Spirit, that your body may become a holy temple unto Him, and that your soul may be saved in the day of the Lord Jesus Christ.

CHAPTER XXIV.

THE IVY.

Two winters of singular mildness had led me so far to forget the general characteristics of that dreary season, that when the customary blight fell, somewhat abruptly, on the vegetable world, it startled me to find my garden metamorphosed into a desert. The tall dahlias stood, full-leaved as before ; but the verdant robe of yesterday had been changed into gloomy blackness, and stems that lately seemed to support some perennial shrub, were indebted only to the stakes to which we had bound them for the upright position they still maintained. The China rose-trees, with which my garden abounds, presented a less forlorn aspect, because their evergreen mantle was proof against the power of frost ; but their numerous buds, lovely and fresh when the setting sun-beam last lingered among them, had drooped their delicate heads

church above, and the afflicted, yet highly privileged body of his own dear brethren the Church of Ireland militant here below !

Militant is the distinguishing epithet of Christ's church, and of each individual belonging unto it until the warfare being accomplished, the good fight fought, and faith kept unto death, the crown of righteousness is awarded, and the happy spirit becomes incorporated with the church triumphant in heaven. The little babe, whose short breathings are oppressed, and its tiny frame faintly struggling through the few days of its sojourn on earth, is militant here below. The strong youth, robust in health, whose eye sparkles in promise of long and active existence, while his heart, renewed by the secret influences of divine grace ; witnesses a conflict hidden from mortal eye, between the law of life written therein and the law of sin warring in his members, is militant here below. The man of full and sobered age, who has numbered, perhaps, more than half the longest probable duration of human life, who looks round, it may be, on a blooming family of loving and dutiful children, while his soul bound down by those delicious ties, cleaves to the dust, when he would have it mount upward to the throne of God—howsoever smooth and blissful his lot may seem, is militant here below. The aged servant of Christ, who has borne in the vineyard the heat

and burden of the day—the faithful veteran, who, in many a contest with his Master's foes, has come off more than conqueror, through him who loved him : and who, tottering now on life's extremest verge, is regarded as most triumphantly secure of his crown, most enviably nearer to heaven—he too has fightings without and fears within ; he too, while the body still detains him, is militant here below.

The universal acknowledgment of all, whether uttered by the lips, or secretly made in the heart's recesses, in that voice of which God alone is cognizant, is ever, “ We, in this tabernacle do groan, being burdened.” I have known some dear self-doubting children of Zion go heavily in perpetual grief, merely because no outward cross was, at that particular time, laid on them. A somewhat closer acquaintance with God and with themselves has never failed, in such cases, to convince them that He, not they, was the best judge when, and how, and of what kind the discipline prepared for them should be. But the very apprehension engendered by such supposed exclusion from the badge of His servants, was in itself, no light cross ; and they, contending against their own misgivings, were equally militant here below.

If such be the general experience of those most highly favoured in external things, what shall we say of such as, like the winter yew, stand exposed to

the fiercest assaults of blight, and blast, and storm, and external desolation, that the elements of earth, directed by the permitted fury of evil spirits, can bring to bear on their unsheltered heads! The condition of those faithful men, who at this moment are doing the work of evangelists in that branch of the Protestant church established in Ireland, will be a matter of history, for future generations to marvel at, when the patient sufferers shall be numbered with the saints in glory everlasting, when every tear shall have been wiped from their faces, and the Lamb be visibly reigning in the midst of them for ever. Yet even these ephemeral pages shall record it too; and while suffering, as indeed I do, continual sorrow and heaviness in my heart for our brethren's sake, I will not refuse the consolations that abound on their behalf, in tracing the beautiful analogy that certainly exists between the natural world, as under the Providential government of its creator, and the spiritual world of regenerate men, as more richly provided for in the covenant of grace.

If I look upon that which is seen, how sad is the wintry state of my poor Ivy! Some lofty trees planted near it have cast a goodly shadow upon it, yielding defence, alike from the burning ray, and the rending gale. I have seen them stand long, like appointed guardians, and if the defence of the Ivy had depended on their fidelity to the trust, alas for it

in this day of calamity ! The trees have withdrawn their shade—they stand in naked helplessness, themselves driven to and fro, whithersoever the prince of the power of the air is pleased to bend their denuded and dishonoured branches. The pelting hail, the heavy snow drift, meet no obstruction from them, in their full career against the unprotected Ivy. It stands exposed, and in itself so weak a thing that the operation of a single blustering day would suffice to rend it piecemeal, only for the unseen support enabling it to smile a calm defiance in the face of every assailant. And could any type be more impressively just, as regards the truly militant church of Ireland at this day ? I shall say nothing about the towering trees ; they have the advantage over sentient and responsible men, in that they never proffered their patronage in summer days, nor consciously withdrew it, when the wintry tempest began to rage. I reproach not the innocent trees of my garden ; but I acknowledge the fitness of their station, and of their mutability, to render the similitude perfect. The Ivy is that wherewith I have to do ; the Ivy in its two-fold character of actual weakness, and imparted strength—of stormy persecution applied from without, and indestructible endurance supplied from within.

The real and acknowledged condition of many, and, in the south, a large majority, of the de-

voted ministers of the Irish church at this day, is such, that I shrink from the picture which I am nevertheless bound to transcribe. They are impoverished beyond the possibility of making such provision as the meanest of our cottagers is accustomed to secure, against the approach of winter. They cannot cloth the shivering limbs of their tender little ones—they cannot supply them with nourishment equivalent to the scantiest allowance of our parochial workhouse—they cannot, in many instances, afford the luxury of a fire, beyond the hour that it is indispensable for cooking their miserable dole of dry potatoes. I have the fact from authority that cannot be questioned, from one who, mercifully provided with the resource of a private income, goes among his brethren to minister to their pressing necessities as far as the claims of his own very large family will allow. I have it from different and distant quarters, from individuals unconnected with each other, and unconscious of the concurrent testimony that they yield. The Ivy on my garden wall is not more destitute of external defence against the biting inclemency of December, than are multitudes of those whose delightful work it has ever been, when they saw the hungry, to feed them, to cover the naked with a garment, and to bring those who were cast out to their own hospitable homes. Their acknowledged right—that, at least, which the government of

the country has appointed to them, and, for generations past, guaranteed its due payment—is withheld in vaunting defiance of that government, which, while meekly acquiescing in the sovereign will of rebellious subjects, offers no substitute for what their loyal ministers are defrauded of: but leaves them to famish, literally *to starve to death*, with their children around them, until the senators of the land shall have enjoyed their accustomed season of repose, and an arrangement shall take place among contending parties, by which the question of tithe may be ultimately adjusted. I venture not on political ground; I have but to state the broad fact that the clergy of Ireland are starving; and that the sole support to which they and their numerous households can look, for the dreary season already set in upon us, is the spontaneous bounty of sympathizing friends in that part of the church which as yet tastes not the cup of external persecution. I know, and I bless God for it, that a stream of Christian liberality is flowing towards their desolated dwellings; but even the extremity of personal want does not end their sufferings. They dwell among those who are confederate against their lives; and who, if the plan of starvation be baffled by our means, may again whet the knife, and aim the bullet, and brandish the heavy stone—weapons that have, each and all, within a short space of time, been crimsoned with the life-blood of Pro-

testant clergymen. These are the storms and the tempests to which my brethren stand exposed in the defencelessness of individual weakness. Their children cry for food ; and that we may provide for them : they shiver beneath the wintry blast, they shrink from the piercing frost ; and we may clothe their limbs and rekindle their fires, from our own comparative abundance—but the parents' heart, though by grace it may be so humbled as not to reject a gift, painful to the educated mind, will yet secretly quake under the anticipated horror of that from which *we* cannot interpose to rescue them. The step of the midnight incendiary, of the sworn assassin, blessed to the deed of butchery by her who has so oft been drunk with the blood of the saints, will be fancied in every breeze that rustles among the branches : and the closer we examine the picture, the darker do its shades become—the more appalling those perils, in the midst of which our brethren are set for the defence of the gospel.

The GOSPEL—precious word ! It is the power of Him who says, “ The Lord hath anointed me to preach good tidings unto the meek ; he hath sent me to bind up the broken-hearted ; to comfort all that mourn ; to appoint unto them that mourn in Zion, to give unto them beauty for ashes, the oil of joy for mourning, the garment of praise for the spirit of heaviness ; that they might be called trees of righteousness,

the planting of the LORD, that HE might be glorified." And glorified he is in them. The fruit which they bear is indeed clad in the hue of affliction, for his poor Church is militant against many foes, and exceedingly pressed above measure, seeming to have the sentence of death in themselves; but he gives them a spirit of patient endurance, inexplicable in some cases, but by the great mystery of faith, whereby, adhering to the Rock that cannot be moved, they derive strength according to their day. They stand, a miracle of supporting grace, "as sorrowful, yet alway rejoicing; as poor, yet making many rich, as having *nothing*, and yet possessing all things."

Many years ago, I planted an Ivy, and watched its growth with childish interest. Having fixed its root firmly in the soil, it speedily put forth shoots; and as these grew, the short stout fibres appeared, grasping the rough particles of an ancient wall, plunging into every little crevice, and securing themselves by a process that excited my wonder beyond any thing that I can remember, at that period of my life. I have pulled away the young branches, endeavouring to refix them a different position, but in vain: the work of adhesion was one that human skill could not accomplish, nor human power compel. The utmost that I could do was to afford an artificial support to the detached branch, until, having conti-

nued its growth, it put out new fingers, as I called them, to take a stronger hold on its bulwark. This might be very aptly illustrated by the past history of a Church, where faith might have become dead, as regarded a race of individuals ; but where, by that aid from without, which may God in his mercy ever dispose the State to extend in the Church ! better days were provided for ; and the visible branch restored to its pristine beauty and strength, through faith newly infused into the members, enabling them to cleave wholly to Christ. But my present business is with the Ivy in its mature state, upheld by the might of its immoveable supporter—with the persecuted men of whom it is a lively type ; who, in the midst of all that renders the present agonizing, and the future terrific, can adopt the language of inspired Paul, “ None of these things move me ; neither count I my life dear unto myself, so that I might finish my course with joy, and the ministry which I have received of the Lord Jesus, to testify the gospel of the grace of God.” Herein lies the mystery of that patient endurance, the deep and general silence of which made the very existence of their distress questionable among us. “ To testify the gospel of the grace of God,” was the object and end of all their labours ; and their willing task it was, after Paul’s example, to learn, in whatsoever state they were, therewith to be content—they would know both how

to be abased, and know how to abound ; everywhere, and in all things, they were instructed, both to be full and to be hungry, both to abound and to suffer need. Yea, they can do all things THROUGH CHRIST WHICH STRENGTHENETH THEM. It is by close communion with Him that his afflicted servants are enabled thus to glorify God in the day of visitation—to glorify him in the fires. He has taught them that he careth for them : and they, unreservedly, cast every care upon him ; yet, like Paul, to the beloved Philippians, they will say unto us, “ Notwithstanding, ye have well done, that ye did communicate with my affliction.” Oh that we could rightly appreciate the value of such an example at our very doors, of suffering according to the will of God ! But all cannot realize the scenes now enacting in poor Ireland ; and few there are whom I could invite to weep with me beneath the storm-beaten Ivy.

But what a spectacle does it present in the sight of that great cloud of witnesses who encompass it ! They, who through faith and patience, have already inherited the promises, how must they rejoice over their militant brethren, marching onward, through much tribulation, to swell the army of that church triumphant ? Bodily anguish, cold, hunger, and the yet more grievous pain of beholding those dependent on them sharing in their privations—mental inquietude, as to the future lot in life of their destitute

little ones, will force itself on their anxious thought—abandonment on the one hand,—on the other, barbarous exultation ; the muttered curse of the vindictive, deluded peasant, the heartless scoff, and ribald jest of the far more degraded, though flattered and pensioned poet—these are the lot of men of whom the world is not worthy, and cruel they are to poor shrinking humanity. But they endure as seeing Him who is invisible ; and though now they prophesy in sackcloth, and by and by they may be slain, still Christ has prepared for them a kingdom, which, after a little while they shall receive, becoming kings and priests unto God.

It is of those who, like the Ivy, cling by living faith unto the Rock of salvation, that I thus speak, I speak not of the Church, nor of her ministry, as though an outward profession, or formal ordination, could knit the soul to Christ. There is dross in the furnace no less than gold. Many suffer compulsorily, who would not endure an hour's affliction for Christ and his' gospel. But the patient servants of God are known unto Him : and they are so many as now to characterize the whole Church. Some straggling shoots disfigure my Ivy, which hang upon it but to be lopped off : yet the plant clings to its supporter, and those unsightly exceptions alter it not. It looks green ; and its polished leaves, dark in themselves, reflect the brightness of day. I know

that the appointed season of winter must endure for a while : but I also know that the spring-tide shall not fail. A time of refreshing shall come from the presence of the Lord, to bid his suffering saints rejoice, “ Then the ransomed of the Lord shall return, and come to Zion with songs, and everlasting joy upon their heads : they shall obtain gladness and joy, and sorrow and sighing shall flee away.”

THE END.

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