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OLD HUMPHREY
OLD HUMPHREY'S
OBSERVATIONS
[ca. 1845?]



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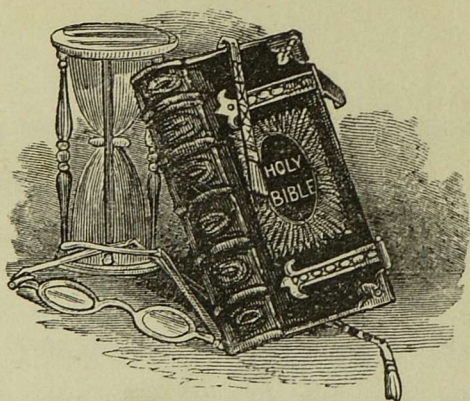
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OLD HUMPHREY'S
OBSERVATIONS.

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LONDON:
THE RELIGIOUS TRACT SOCIETY;

Instituted 1799.

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PAUL'S CHURCHYARD, AND 164, PICCADILLY; AND BY THE
BOOKSELLERS.

INTRODUCTION.

WHEN a work is acceptable, an extended preface is unnecessary; and when a book is a bad one, a lengthy introduction will not make it better.

I want you, reader, to accept my *Observations* as the remarks of a friendly old man, who has some affection in his heart for every human being under the canopy of the skies.

While perusing the following pages, they may possibly remind you that age has its infirmities; and that among them may be reckoned the disposition to talk faster, and to dwell longer, on past occurrences than is agreeable to some

hearers ; but when you put my errors into one scale, forget not to put my friendly intentions into the other.

You may have observed, for I have observed it myself, a proneness in age to suppose that wisdom and grey hairs, almost of necessity, go together. A consciousness of my own want of knowledge convinces me this is an error. Old Humphrey is "feelingly persuaded," that if he lived a hundred years, no one would mistake him for a Solon or a Socrates ; and could he deceive himself into a contrary belief, it is not likely that he could persuade you to adopt his opinion. He lays no claim to your attention on the score of unusual discernment and intelligence.

But a man, without being wiser than his neighbours, may do some little good in his generation, by noting down singular occurrences and useful observations and reflections. It is barely possible for any one, with furrows on his brow, to have passed his days without having

seen something of a striking kind that another has not seen; without having heard something of an impressive character which others have not heard. Surely these things may be made both interesting and instructive.

From the time of my early boyhood I have had the habit of keeping my eyes and my ears wide open to the busy world about me; and for many years it has been my custom to keep a commonplace book of passing thoughts and occurrences. Oh what a strange medley of matter does it contain! Sometimes my remarks have been made hastily, as sudden impulses have called them forth: at other times, they have been written down with greater reflection and care. A selection from these diversified materials, and a sprinkling of other matter, constitute the following pages. Many of my observations have already appeared in "THE VISITOR," and been received with a degree of indulgence that has laid me under a grateful obligation.

When the heart is full of kindness to our fellow creatures, a little thing will make it overflow: I hope it will be found that mine has often been in this situation; and when the heart is filled with gratitude to God, an elephant or an ant, a sunbeam or a butterfly, the visible things of God's glorious creation, and especially the revelations of his blessed word, will dispose it to "rejoice alway," and to "sing of mercy:" I trust that mine has not unfrequently been in this exulting attitude. But enough. I begin to trespass on your forbearance, and hasten, therefore, to subscribe myself, in the bonds of Christian fellowship,

Your friend,

OLD HUMPHREY.

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OLD HUMPHREY'S

OBSERVATIONS.

ON THE PRICE OF THINGS.

WHENEVER I want any thing, I always ask the price of it, whether it be a new coat, or a shoulder of mutton, a pound of tea, or a ball of pack-string. If it appears to be worth the money, I buy it, that is, if I can afford it; but if not, I let it alone; for he is no wise man who pays for a thing more than it is worth.

But not only in the comforts of food and clothing, but in all other things, I ask the same question; for there is a price fixed to a day's enjoyment, as well as to an article of dress; to an excursion for pleasure, as well as to a joint of butcher's meat. Old Humphrey has now lived some summers and winters in the world, and it would be odd indeed if he had passed through them all, without picking up a little wisdom from

his experience. Now, if you will adopt my plan, you will reap much advantage; but if you will not, you will pay too dearly for the things you obtain.

The spendthrift sets his heart on expensive baubles, but he does not ask their price; he is, therefore, obliged to give for them his houses, his lands, and his friends; and these are fifty times more than they are worth. The drunkard is determined to have his brandy, his gin, and his strong ale; and as he never makes the price an object, so he pays for them with his substance, his health, his character, and his peace—and a sad bargain he makes of it! It is the same with others. The gamester will be rich at once: but riches may be bought too dear; for he who in getting money gets also the habit of risking it on the turn of a card, or the throw of the dice, will soon bring his noble to ninepence. The gamester pays for his riches with his rest, his reputation, and his happiness.

Do you think if the highwayman asked the price of ungodly gain, that he could ever commit robbery? No, never! But he does not ask the price, and foolishly gives for it his liberty and his happiness.

Old Humphrey has little more to say; for if a few words will not help to make you wise, many

will not do so. Ask the price of what you would possess, and make a good bargain. A little prudence will secure you a great deal of peace. But if, after all, you will have the pleasures of sin, I pray you, consider the price you must pay for them.

Yes, thine may be the joys of vice,
And thine without control :
But ah ! at what a fearful price !—
The price will be—thy soul !

“What is a man profited, if he shall gain the whole world, and lose his own soul?” Matt. xvi. 26.

ON EXCELLENT IDEAS.

It was in the summer, that I was sitting at a table by myself, in the corner of a public coffee-room, pondering on the pages of a book which an old friend had just lent me, now and then taking a sip of coffee, and occasionally casting a glance at the flickering gas-light, which flared within a few feet of the table.

There were several well-dressed young men at the opposite end of the room, engaged in conversation; but so deeply occupied was I with my book, and my own speculations, that most likely not a word of all they said would have distinctly reached me, had it not been for an exclamation, in which one of them frequently indulged. Scarcely five minutes elapsed without his crying out, "That's an excellent idea!"

After hearing this several times, I directed my eyes towards the speaker, who was gaily dressed, with a gold chain across his bosom, and a showy ring on the little finger of each hand. "That's an excellent idea!" said he again, just at the moment that I lifted up my head; and I then felt a desire to catch one or two of the many "excellent ideas" that were falling around me.

What a poor, perishing world is this, whether we consider it as an abiding place, or with respect to the fulfilment of those hopes which are continually rising in our restless hearts! Every day presents us with proofs that this is not "our rest," and every hour brings forth enough to convince us, that our earthly hopes, like bubbles on the running stream, only glitter one moment, to burst into empty nothingness the next. How often are we expecting much, from sources that yield but little!

There may or may not be wisdom in thus indulging in a passing reflection, when relating a common-place occurrence; but it is a habit of mine; and Old Humphrey cannot see, hear, read, write, or converse, without now and then throwing in a passing reflection.

Well, as I said, I was on the look-out for "excellent ideas." These are not, certainly, very often to be met with, and you may as well expect to see pine-apples on blackberry bushes, as to hear "excellent ideas" from the thoughtless and the vain: but the old proverb says, "It never rains but it pours;" and however scarce "excellent ideas" may be in general, yet if I might judge by the exclamations that reached me, I was in a fair way of falling in with a profusion of them, and I therefore kept my ears wide

open to what was going on at the other end of the room.

The conversation was on the subject of cigars, and one of the party thought it would be no bad thing to take one to church with him the next time he went there.

“That’s an excellent idea!” exclaimed the one in the gold chain.

The excellency of this idea did not at all strike me; on the contrary, it seemed to me to be thoughtless, silly, and profane. I, however, still kept my ears open.

“Tom,” said one of them, soon after, “what do you think? in passing by the blind Scotchman in the Regent’s Park, I dropped a pebble stone into his hat; ‘Thank you,’ said the old fellow, who thought he had got a capital catch.”

“An excellent idea!” again cried out the one with the gold chain.

I was quite as blind to the excellency of this idea as to that of the former one. I thought both the idea and the act were mean, wanton, and cruel; but the conversation changed.

“How did you manage, Ned, with your watch?” asked one.

“Oh,” replied he who was addressed, “I persuaded the watchmaker that it had a gold key to it when I left it with him, a keepsake, that I

would not have parted with for double its value ; and so he was glad enough to get off without charging me any thing for the new spring."

"An excellent idea!" once more exclaimed the ornamented admirer of this fraudulent ingenuity.

Now, excellent as this was pronounced to be, it was nothing less than impudence, deceit, and dishonesty.

"Well," thinks I, "Old Humphrey has had quite enough 'excellent ideas' for one day;" so, drinking up the last drop that was left at the bottom of my coffee-cup, I closed my book, and walked away, musing on the weakness, the folly, the heartlessness, and immorality of the world.

When a man picks up stones in good earnest to throw at his neighbours' windows, he may very soon break a great many panes ; and, in like manner, when he sets about finding fault with those around him, he is never at a loss for something to find fault with. I soon made out a long catalogue, not of "ideas" only, but of plans and undertakings, which, though considered "excellent" by thousands of people, are weak, worthless, and wicked. It was truly astonishing how clearly I saw the errors of others, how sagely I reflected on the matter, and how eloquently I reprov'd the follies and frailties of mankind.

At last it occurred to me, that it might not be amiss, after going abroad so much, to come a little nearer home; for, perhaps, I might find in my own head some "excellent ideas," and admirable undertakings, not a whit more valuable than those of my neighbours.

What an ignorant, vain, presumptuous, and inconsistent being is man! How much he knows of others, how little of himself! How quick is he to condemn the faults of his fellow sinners, and how slow to amend his own! I had worked myself up to a pitch of indignation; I had arraigned others of manifold misdemeanours, and performed the offices of judge and jury to my own satisfaction, disposing of every case to which I had listened as I thought proper. You may be sure that I felt a little high-minded; but when I brought up Old Humphrey himself to the bar, I was soon humbled, even to the dust.

"It is bad enough," said I, "when the young act a foolish part, putting 'darkness for light, and light for darkness:' but what excuse has he whose hairs are grey, who has had the experience of a lengthened life to assist him, and who has long taken upon him to instruct others in the way they should go? What excuse has such a one as Old Humphrey to offer, when the light, hollow, frothy things of time are estimated by

him as 'very excellent,' and pursued with more ardour than the things of eternity?"

Of all ploughing and harrowing, the ploughing and harrowing of our own hearts are the hardest work, and I think I may add, it prepares for the richest harvest. I felt determined to give myself no quarter. I had been fierce as a lion in my attack, but was tame as a lamb when obliged to defend myself; and after half an hour's rigid examination of my own heart, you might have trodden on the toes of Old Humphrey without his reproaching you; so much was he humbled in his own estimation.

It may be that you, also, have been pluming yourself on some "excellent ideas," which will no more bear the test of Christian consideration than some of mine. If it be so, try, at least, to avoid bitterness, and to manifest a forbearing spirit towards an offending brother. If we have both erred, let us both try to amend together; for however "excellent" our "ideas" may be, one practical illustration of the Christian principle of forbearance and charity will be worth them all.

VISIT TO A
CHURCH AND CHURCHYARD.

ONE way I have is, to talk of the thing that comes uppermost in my mind, to pour out my thoughts, such as they may be, on whatever subject at the moment is interesting to me. I have thought, such is my taste for musty manuscripts, ancient sculpture, stained glass, and olden relics, that had I lived four hundred years ago, I should have been strongly tempted to have treasured up a fragment of "the true cross," or to have gazed, with awe-struck admiration, on the nail-pairings of St. Peter. What a mercy, then, that I live in the days of scriptural light!

Though no Papist, few men have a keener pleasure than I in examining the costly workmanship still remaining in crypts and cloisters, abbeys and cathedrals. I love to muse over an ancient monument; and it suits me still better, when the light that makes it visible straggles through a gothic window of painted glass.

But though I thus speak, think not, when Old Humphrey visits the resting-places of the dead,

that his thoughts dwell only on the sculptured stones. Oh, no! "The spirit is not there!"

Let me describe a visit that I lately made to a church and churchyard.

The venerable pile, standing in a solitary spot, had been the burial place of many a noble family, and I had passed through its gothic portal with mingled thoughts of the present, the past, and the future.

The aisles felt damp and cold—for I get a little more susceptible than I used to be—and as I paced along the broad, flat, grey stones, the sound of my foot-fall was echoed back by the wall of the chancel. The grey-headed sexton, who had entered the church with me, had turned to the right, and the heavy clamp of his hob-nailed shoes, mounting the stairs to the singing-loft, sounded harshly in my ears.

By the time that I had reached the monuments, with my hat in my hand, all was still; the chilliness of the pavement gradually crept through my frame, while the memorials of the dead awed my spirit with a sense of deep solemnity. After buttoning my coat up a little higher, and tying my pocket handkerchief round my neck, I began to look about me.

On the right hand and on the left, crosiers and mitres, banners and spears, shields, helmets,

and habergeons, were profusely mingled. Here knelt, in his thick doublet and trunk-hose, the ancient lord of the neighbouring castle, and his charitable dame, opposite each other; and there lay, at full length, the cross-legged effigy of the armed knight who fought in the crusades.

The lettered pavement on which I stood, was a floor of tombstones, scored and sculptured, and inlaid with brass; and the equestrian figure before me, in the attitude of cutting down a Turkish officer, was admirably wrought.

The painted window, too, was excellent. Moses holding the tablets of stone, and Aaron with his budding rod and costly breastplate, were finely drawn. Many of the colours were bright, even to intensity; and the streaming hues of vivid green and blue, and glowing red and orange, fell upon many a sable hatchment, and snowy slab of veinless marble.

But though here lay the illustrious dead, their deeds magnificently blazoned forth by the gorgeous monuments erected to their memory, in vain I looked for one single inscription setting forth a simple hope of everlasting life, grounded on the Saviour's sacrifice.

Some of those whose dust was mouldering in the vaults below, had filled important stations in the state; some had founded churches, schools,

and alms-houses; and some had obtained great victories over England's enemies; and, judging by the honours they had attained, and the splendour of their costly tombs, "verily they had obtained their reward:" but again I say, though many a gilded inscription spoke of a "future reward," and a "life of immortal glory," yet these were rather to be enjoyed as the recompense of human virtue, than as the free gift of God through faith in the Redeemer.

The interest with which we gaze on the tombs of other times may be great, but how little of hope, peace, and joy, is imparted by the sculptured monuments of departed greatness! Whether slab or column, "storied urn or animated bust," all is "dull, cold marble." The sculptor's chisel, and the gilder's tinsel, give not a sound to silence, life to death, buoyant freshness to cheerless desolation. To commemorate what has been, and what cannot again be, is only mocking the heart, unless associated with the hope of future good.

The goodliest statue that was ever carved into comeliness, only says this—"Cold, speechless, motionless, inanimate matter that I am, earth has no better resemblance of the worth I commemorate!"

But write underneath the statue the words—
"I know that my Redeemer liveth, and though

worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God," with the conviction that they expressed the faith of the departed, then you impart a living principle to the lifeless effigy; you cast a sun-beam on the cold statue, that warms the heart of the Christian spectator, and is calculated to impress the unbeliever; for you may quote, with holy exultation, the Saviour's declaration—"He that believeth in me, though he were dead, yet shall he live; and whosoever liveth and believeth in me shall never die."

I suppose the sexton, too much accustomed to the monuments of the place to feel any interest in gazing upon them, was weary of waiting for me; for a clink of his keys within a very few yards of me, told me that he was quite ready to lock the door. It would not be like Old Humphrey to go away without exchanging a word with the grey-headed man; but I soon found that he entertained very little doubt that the man must be in heaven who could cut down a Turk in the way in which the warrior had done, whose monument was then before me.

It was a sorry sight to gaze on a grey-headed man, who had no "golden hope" within him, no yearning after immortality, no heavenly home in prospect! I gave him some silver, with a few suitable tracts, and we parted. Having seen the

monuments in the church, I walked among the tombstones in the churchyard.

It was in a neglected corner, where no pathway crossed, and where the uncropped nettles grew abundantly, that I found a low stone bearing this inscription, under the name of one who had fallen asleep at a goodly old age — “If thou, Lord, shouldest mark iniquities, O Lord, who shall stand? But there is forgiveness with thee, that thou mayest be feared.” And on another stone, bearing the same name, and probably belonging to the same family, were graven the words — “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners, of whom I am chief.”

Such texts as these are not wont to be strewn over the resting-places of worldly-minded men, and I hoped that I was standing over the mouldering bones of two of Zion’s pilgrims, who, in journeying to the heavenly city, had borne testimony of the hope that was in them.

Old Humphrey’s eyes might rest upon the sod, and the nettles, and the lowly gravestones, but the thoughts of his heart were fixed on the starry pavement of the skies, the glowing gates of the holy city, the golden throne, and Him who sitteth thereon! the palm-branches! the white raiment! the new song! and the glittering crown! and in

spite of his predilection for crypts and cloisters, abbeys and cathedrals, relics and carvings, gildings and painted glass, he felt in, his very soul, that a greater glory rests on the lowly grave of a true believer in Christ, than on the sculptured monument of a worldly-minded statesman, or the statue of a conquering hero.

THE BLACKBERRIES.

DEPEND upon it, there is nothing like making the best of the little trifling annoyances which, at the most, only inflict a temporary inconvenience. One day in the autumn, I was in the country, when it rained very fast. I had a few miles to walk to the house of a kind and hospitable friend, and set off with a thin pair of shoes on my feet. It rained very fast, to be sure, but I hoped and trusted it would soon get finer. It was wet enough over head, and still wetter under feet; but on I trudged along the dirty lanes, holding up my umbrella. My thin shoes were a poor defence against the mud and rain. "Well, well," said I, they will not all be dirty lanes: I shall soon come to the fields." To the fields I came, but they were no improvement on the road, for the long grass made me miserably wet. "Well, well," said I, "the fields will not be all grass." I soon came to a piece of clover; and the round, bossy clover blossoms, saturated with rain, kept bobbing against my legs, and made me wetter than before. "Well, well," said I, "the fields will not all be clover." The next was a potato

field; and if the grass was bad, and the clover worse, the potato field was worst of all: for the broad leaves of the potatoes were so many reservoirs of water, which emptied themselves upon me every time my toe caught the straggling stem of a potato. "Well, well," said I, "they will not, they cannot be all potato fields;" so on I went, till I came into a snug lane, where the brambles, hanging in festoons from the hedges, were covered with blackberries, a fruit of which I am uncommonly fond. The storm abated; the road got drier; the sun shone in the skies; and Old Humphrey banqueted on the blackberries.

Now, when you meet with any common-place vexation, even if it be a little more trying than usual, nay, though it require double patience to endure it, be not discouraged about the matter, think of Old Humphrey and his blackberries, and, by and by, you will not only forget your trouble, but find yourself, with a grateful heart, "singing of mercy."

CHURLISHNESS.

OF all the churls I ever met with, farmer Grumley was the very worst. A kind-hearted, gentle, and forbearing disposition is one of the sweetest cordials of domestic happiness; and a churlish, overbearing spirit is one of the bitterest ingredients in the cup of worldly care. In carrying on our intercourse with the world, we are apt to fancy ourselves called upon to exercise a shrewdness, a suspicion, a tartness, to defend ourselves from the selfish designs of those with whom we have to do; and we sometimes fall back for justification on the text of Scripture which says, "Be ye, therefore, wise as serpents, and harmless as doves;" but, too often, we attach to the former part of the text a meaning which does not belong to it, and lose sight of the latter part altogether, because the practice of it would be inconvenient. But whatever we may say to justify shrewdness abroad, it can never sanction churlishness at home. In domestic life, churlishness is a deadly poison, to which happiness is sure to fall a victim.

Now, it was in his own house, in the bosom of

his own family, that farmer Grumley was the greatest churl; and against his wife, who had the strongest claim to his kindness and affection, his churlishness appeared particularly to be directed. Never, sure, did any man manifest a more captious disposition. He was a bunch of stinging nettles, a bundle of thorns, a moving furze-bush, in his own habitation.

Such was farmer Grumley in health; how then shall I describe him when his temper was soured by sickness!

I visited him one night when confined to his bed, and from the next room heard the following dialogue between him and Mrs. Grumley, who was a tender-hearted, affectionate creature.

Mrs. Grumley. And how do you feel now, love?

Farmer. Never mind how I feel!

Mrs. Grumley. Let me shake up your pillow, and put your head a little higher.

Farmer. Let the pillow alone, and be off with yourself; I don't want you here.

Mrs. Grumley. It is time to take your medicine, my dear; shall I pour it out for you?

Farmer. I won't take my medicine, and you shan't pour it out. I wish you and the medicine were a hundred miles off, plaguing me for ever-lasting.

Mrs. Grumley. Well, my love, then I will not pour out the medicine. Will you take a little of the calves'-foot jelly?

Farmer. No, I won't; I hate calves'-foot jelly, and should like to see it thrown out of the window, and you after it.

Mrs. Grumley. Will you try the soothing syrup? I will put a little in the spoon.

Farmer. I wish the spoon was stuck in your throat! I won't touch one of your messes, you torment, you!

Mrs. Grumley. Don't put yourself in a passion, love; you will only make yourself worse.

Farmer. I will put myself in a passion, whether I am worse or not. You are enough to drive a man out of his senses. Chatter, chatter, chatter, all the day long, and no peace from morning to night. Get away, or I'll throw the candlestick at your head, I will.

Mrs. Grumley left the room, seeing that her husband was so agitated; and in a short time the farmer took his medicine himself, ate a large portion of calves'-foot jelly, and asked me, when I joined him, to pour him out a spoonful of soothing syrup.

Now, farmer Grumley manifested this churlishness of disposition towards his wife for more than twenty years, and the more tractably and affec-

tionately she behaved, the more brutal and overbearing he became. The wild boar of the woods was never more ready to rend his enemy, nor the wolf to rush upon the helpless lamb, than he was to upbraid and afflict his unoffending wife. His remains now lie under the churchyard sod, where I saw them deposited, but his wife is living still.

Oh, what discomfort, uneasiness, and unhappiness, does churlishness produce! and yet how many farmer Grumleys are there to be found, who, instead of obeying the Divine injunction, "Husbands, love your wives," Eph. v. 25, are ruling them with an iron rod, and going through the world grumbling, growling, and spreading discord around, instead of increasing in affection, and dwelling in domestic joy!

ON FITS.

THOUGH no doctor, I have by me some excellent prescriptions ; and as I shall charge you nothing for them, you cannot grumble at the price. We are most of us subject to fits ; I am visited with them myself, and I dare say that you are also : now then for my prescriptions.

For a fit of passion, walk out in the open air ; you may speak your mind to the winds, without hurting any one, or proclaiming yourself to be a simpleton. “Be not hasty in thy spirit to be angry ; for anger resteth in the bosom of fools,” Eccles. vii. 9.

For a fit of idleness, count the tickings of a clock. Do this for one hour, and you will be glad to pull off your coat the next, and work like a negro. “Slothfulness casteth into a deep sleep ; and an idle soul shall suffer hunger,” Prov. xix. 15.

For a fit of extravagance or folly, go to the workhouse, or speak with the ragged and wretched inmates of a jail ; and you will be convinced,

“Who makes his bed of brier and thorn,
Must be content to lie forlorn.”

“Wherefore do ye spend money for that which is not bread? and your labour for that which satisfieth not?” Isa. lv. 2.

For a fit of ambition, go into the churchyard, and read the gravestones. They will tell you the end of man at his best estate. “For what is your life? It is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away,” Jas. iv. 14. “Pride goeth before destruction, and a haughty spirit before a fall,” Prov. xvi. 18.

For a fit of repining, look about for the halt, and the blind, and visit the bedridden, the afflicted, and the deranged, and they will make you ashamed of complaining of your lighter afflictions. “Wherefore doth a living man complain?” Lam. iii. 39.

For a fit of envy, go to Brighton, Cheltenham, or some other place of the kind, and see how many who keep their carriages are afflicted with rheumatism, gout, and dropsy; how many walk abroad on crutches, or stay at home wrapped up in flannel; and how many are subject to epilepsy and apoplexy. “A sound heart is the life of the flesh: envy is the rottenness of the bones,” Prov. xiv. 30.

For a fit of despondency, look on the good things which God has given you in this world, and at those which he has promised to his fol-

lowers in the next. He who goes into his garden to look for cobwebs and spiders, no doubt will find them ; while he who looks for a flower, may return into his house with one blooming in his bosom. “ Why art thou cast down, O my soul ? and why art thou disquieted within me ? hope thou in God : for I shall yet praise him, who is the health of my countenance, and my God,” Psa. xlii. 11.

For all fits of doubt, perplexity, and fear, whether they respect the body or the mind, whether they are a load to the shoulders, the head, or the heart, the following is a radical cure which may be relied on, for I had it from the Great Physician : “ Cast thy burden upon the Lord, and he shall sustain thee,” Psa. lv. 22.

BRIEF NOTES

OF

OLD HUMPHREY.

OUR frail bodies are tottering habitations ; every beat of the heart is a rap at the door, to tell us of our danger.

Do you want to know the man against whom you have most reason to guard yourself? your looking-glass will give you a very fair likeness of his face.

Whether we go backwards, or forwards, to the right hand, or to the left, every step we take is a step towards the grave.

When I put my finger on my pulse, it tells me, at the same moment, that I am a living and a dying man.

True wisdom is to know what is best worth knowing, and to do what is best worth doing.

When the infidel would persuade you to abandon your Bible, tell him you will do so when he brings you a better book.

A man should always look upwards for comfort ; for when the heaven above our heads is dark, the earth under our feet is sure to be darker.

When we start back with unusual surprise at the wickedness of others, may it not be a proof that we are not sufficiently acquainted with our own hearts?

If death be solemn with the hope of eternal joy, how terrible must it be with the fear of eternal woe!

The friend that lightly flatters thee is an enemy; the enemy that justly reproves thee is a friend.

As the lark sings at the dawn of day, and the nightingale at even, so should we show forth the loving-kindness of the Lord every morning, and his faithfulness every night.

He who neglects religion, prepares for himself a bitter draught, and a meal of wormwood; a nightcap of thorns, and a bed of briars; a life of vexation, a death of sorrow, and an eternity of woe.

Pride is an unchristian quality, yet how many who call themselves Christians are proud! Humility is a Christian grace, yet how few who call themselves Christians are truly humble!

If you meet with one, very vain or very ambitious, do not envy him, but think thus to yourself: "My fine fellow! the grave will soon be your bedchamber; the earth your pillow; corruption your father; and the worm your mother and your sister."

If you want to get a spiritual appetite, walk often in the green pastures and by the still waters of God's promises to his people.

If the world knew what passes in my heart, what would it think of me? I do know it, what then do I think of myself?

The most unreasonable, the most ungrateful, and the most deceitful of all things, is the human heart.

THE WILD CONVULVULUS.

It is a rare thing for Old Humphrey to find himself in a situation where he can derive no pleasure from surrounding objects. In the crowded city, and the solitary common, he is, perhaps, equally at home; for if there be interesting characters in the one, there are both flowers and blossoming furze-bushes in the other.

It did, however, happen the other day, that I found myself in a very unpromising place. I looked about me, but the road was even and straight. There were no green trees towering in the air; no neat-looking cottages by the wayside; and not even a shaggy donkey browsing on a thistle, or whisking away the flies with his tail.

By the side of my path lay a muddy, slimy ditch; one of those disagreeable ditches which are always to be seen in the neighbourhood of a town, where you are sure to be annoyed with an unpleasant smell, and equally sure to see, at full length, a dead cat, and an old tin kettle.

I walked quickly along by the side of the filth-conducting canal, till it seemed to get deeper and more disagreeable. The nettles were rank, the

long grass had no variety, and the unsightly assemblage of weeds, apparently choking up the course of the stagnant and offensive puddle, was truly not a little repulsive.

I was about to step from the footpath to the broad road, to avoid so unpleasing an object, when suddenly my eyes fell on a constellation of flowers of the most exquisite beauty. A plant of the wild convolvulus had stretched itself along the bank of that offensive puddle, wreathing it with flowers of the most lovely kind.

Had the purest white wax, or snow from the very crest of Mont Blanc, been formed into flowers, and been flung carelessly upon the spot, scarcely would they have exceeded in pure and snowy whiteness the fair flowerets that were lying before me.

I lifted up my hands with emotion at the wondrous beauty of the wild convolvulus, set off as it was to advantage by the forbidding black puddle over which it was bending; and I felt grateful to Him, who, sitting upon the throne of heaven, profusely adorns the earth with beauty and glory. There is no place too dark to be gilded with his beams, no spot too forbidding to be rendered attractive by his gifts. He does, indeed, make the wilderness to be glad, and the desert place to rejoice and blossom as the rose.

And think not that his goodness is bounded to the works of creation. In the habitations of the poor; in the dark seasons of poverty and trial; and in the sickening humiliations of the chamber of disease, he can bestow his gifts and his graces. His providence is always over us, and oftentimes, where we least expect to find them, his special interpositions burst upon us, and call forth our wonder and our praise.

Fellow Christian, however irksome may be the pathway thou art treading, and unpromising the prospect around thee, be of good courage! He who has given his own Son for thee, will not forsake thee. Blind though thou art to many of his gifts, he will open thine eyes to behold his goodness; dumb though thou mayest be in acknowledging his mercy, he will put a new song in thy mouth, and compel thee to praise him.

I feel the poverty of my words to set forth my thoughts; but, my reader, if thou wilt ponder them in a friendly spirit, the wild convulvulus that gladdened the spirit of Old Humphrey, may haply lighten thine.

ON AN
AGED SAINT'S DEPARTURE
TO GLORY.

ANOTHER harp is heard in heaven! Another shout of thanksgiving has resounded above the starry pavement of the skies! Another burst of hallelujahs has welcomed an aged servant of the Redeemer to the mansions of the blessed!

It is written, "The days of our years are threescore years and ten; and if by reason of strength they be fourscore years, yet is their strength labour and sorrow." But the aged pilgrim who has just entered into "that rest that remaineth for the people of God," was nearly ninety-two years of age. Her humility, her faith, her patience, were long remarkable; and it now remains to notice her latter days, and her entrance into life eternal. How truly do the Scriptures say, "The path of the just is as the shining light, that shineth more and more unto the perfect day!"

It was my privilege occasionally to call on this aged saint; and it seems but as yesterday that

I was taking especial notice of her humble habitation in the season of summer. I recall to mind the little garden before her door; the avenue—not of wide-spreading oaks and goodly elms—but of beans, which, clinging to the strings placed to support them, adorned the place with their green leaves and scarlet flowers.

The staircase was steep and narrow, and the chamber small. Through the glass doors of a cupboard might be seen old china ranged with inferior ware. An oval, white-ground tea-tray, with a landscape painted in the centre, stood on a chest of drawers. The chimney-piece was decorated with a few ornaments, over which hung some scriptural pictures, glazed, in plain black frames, and the portraits of several godly ministers gone to glory.

Here stood the old arm-chair on which sat “a king’s daughter,” and there the bed where nightly reposed an “heir of immortality.” The chamber contained a glory beyond that of the sun, and moon, and stars, the glory of the presence of the Lord, animating the heart of that aged pilgrim with holy ardour, and blessing it with sacred peace.

In the window stood a geranium: it had but one blossom upon it, but that was a bright one. On the small round table lay the well-thumbed

Bible, every chapter and verse of which had been in requisition for many a year. Around it were piled Baxter's "Saints' Rest," Boston's "Crook in the Lot," Doddridge's "Rise and Progress," and a number of tracts and "Tract Magazines." A large eye-glass, in a horn case, was near at hand, but not absolutely necessary to enable its owner to read the word of God; for, though more than ninety summer suns had beamed upon her, she could yet read her Bible without glasses.

Never had I known one whose hope was brighter, and whose faith was stronger. Some Christians go mourning through the world, others go rejoicing; she was among the latter, and was ever ready to "sing of mercy." She had been taught in the school of Christ by more than an earthly teacher; and He, whose heavenly hand had humbled her in the dust on account of her utter unworthiness, had raised her with a sense of his grace, so that in very deed, notwithstanding her afflictions, her soul magnified the Lord, and her spirit rejoiced in God her Saviour. Her heart was tender, and the law of Christian kindness prompted her not only to devise, but to do good according to her ability. No one could approach her without the consciousness of being in the presence of a devoted servant of the Lord. Never was any one more grateful for trifling at-

tentions. She was no mere Sunday Christian, but every day and every hour was ready to show forth the Redeemer's praise.

The late Rev. W. Howells, of Long Acre Chapel, called upon her; and, among other things, told her that the Lord had afflicted her for good. She often spoke of this visit, while tears of joy trickled down her cheeks: she considered it as a visit of mercy: she believed the message was sent her from above.

As she drew nearer her latter end, her confidence in the promises of God abounded; the lamp of life flickered, but the lamp of faith burned with a steady light, and never wavered. Though wise in the Scriptures, she was humble enough to receive information from any one. "I am more than ninety years of age," said she to me, "yet never knew the meaning of the word *Selah*: I find it in the Psalms; tell me what it means." I explained the word to her, and suppose this was the last information she sought relative to God's word.

It was, perhaps, one of the desires most dear to her heart, that her relatives might be among the saints of the Lord. "My father," said she, "charged his children in his latter moments, to meet him at the throne of God; and why should not I follow his example?"

As her infirmities increased, her desire to depart increased also; but when any impatient ejaculation escaped her on this subject, she reproved herself. "If the Lord will," and, "In his own good time," were expressions frequently on her lips. "God has been very good to me," said she, one day, "in hiding my transgressions from my fellow sinners; he has dealt gently with me, and goodness and mercy have followed me all the days of my life."

A difficulty in breathing, and an almost total loss of appetite, sadly tried and reduced her; but the Lord made all her bed in her sickness, and comforted her upon the bed of languishing; and while she could draw her breath, she was ready to breathe it forth again in his praise. Often have I read the words, and often have I heard them repeated—

"When languor and disease invade
This trembling house of clay,
'Tis sweet to look beyond our cage,
And long to fly away:"

but never did they so thrill through my heart as when they fell from the pallid lips of that aged and suffering servant of the Lord, full of hope, and faith, and joy.

A day or two before her death, when I called, she was very restless, almost speechless, and very

desirous to enter into her heavenly inheritance. "The last time I saw you," said I, "though in the deep waters, you could say, 'Bless the Lord!' can you say so now?" Lifting up her hands, and gathering up her remaining strength, she exclaimed, in a clear voice, "Bless the Lord, O my soul, and——:" her strength failed her, and I finished the sentence she was too weak to complete. These were the last words that I heard her utter.

On the day of her death I said to her, "Bear up a little longer; you are almost at your journey's end: think on the merciful promise, 'I will never leave thee, nor forsake thee.'" Speak she could not, but pressing my hand to her lips, she held it there till her strength failed her, and she sank down on her pillow. This was on Saturday, the 27th of December: I called again at night to see her, but she tarried not till I came, for the King of kings had summoned her into his presence. "The King's commandment was urgent," and she departed to spend the sabbath with him in glory. Perceiving a change, her daughter told her she believed she would soon be in heaven. Her strength was too far spent to speak, but lifting up her hands, she clapped them three times together. For an hour or more she lay in a state of quietude, and then gently

breathed her spirit into the hands of her gracious Redeemer.

During her affliction, the conflict was sharp ; but sharp as it was, she had strength given her from above to come off more than conqueror, through Him who loved her, and whom she unfeignedly loved. Not the remotest doubt as to her acceptance in the Beloved, not the slightest hint of hesitation, as to the certainty of her heavenly happiness ever escaped her lips. When flesh and heart failed her, with a hope undimmed, and a faith unimpaired, she found God the strength of her heart, and He is now her portion for ever. Another harp is heard in heaven !

Reader ! if to such a servant of God, with an unclouded hope and unbroken faith, death be a time of severe trial, what must it be to the thoughtless sinner who has lived without God in the world ? If, with the promise of eternal life, and the presence of the Redeemer, she felt the bitterness of death, what must be endured by the impenitent transgressor, who, without faith and without hope, enters the dark valley alone, overwhelmed with the fears of an eternal death ?

Is there an aged servant of God, who, during the week-day, or haply in the afternoon or evening of the Lord's day, shall take up this account to read, and is such a one looking for comfort ?

Fellow pilgrim through this vale of tears, lift up thy head and heart with joy. Another instance is here given thee of the faithfulness and mercy of thy covenant God, in being a rod and staff in the valley of the shadow of death to her who is gone before thee to a world of glory. Art thou poor? So was she. Art thou well stricken in years? She was much older than thou. Art thou afflicted? Her afflictions were as heavy as thine. Yet poor, and aged, and afflicted as she was, she was strengthened to meet her last enemy without fear, and is now entered into the joy of her Lord.

Take courage, then: neither thy poverty, thy age, nor thy afflictions—neither thy sorrows, nor thy sins, shall separate thee from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus thy Lord.

THE TRUMPERY BAG.

THERE are many things in the world that appear too bad to keep, and too good to throw away. You must know that I am very fond, in a leisure moment, of sketching with my pen on paper, any thing that comes into my head. At one time it is a man ; at another, a house ; sometimes it is a tree, and sometimes a tiger. It amuses me, it relieves my mind ; it is like unstringing the bow, and thereby rendering it the more serviceable when strung again. Now, these sketches, or etchings, or whatever they may be called, are often of the character just spoken of—too bad to set any value on them, and too good to destroy. I have, therefore, set up what I call a “trumpery bag,” and into this bag I put such things as I have described.

You may smile at the thought of Old Humphrey being employed in so trifling an occupation as that of scrawling and scratching with his pen on paper ; but remember, this is only done in his moments of leisure, when he is weary with important pursuits, and needs a change of em-

ployment. There are worse occupations in hours of weariness than sketching with a pen.

It is astonishing how much a little, added to a little, for a length of time, will amount to. My bag at one time contained but very little, but it is now full: so full, that there is a difficulty in putting any more into it. There are rude sketches of heads, flowers, ships, and wild beasts; old houses, prisons, birds, coaches, and outlines of such odd and singular characters as I may have met from time to time, with pillars of different orders of architecture, household furniture, and a multitude of other things; so that the bag is deemed by some a pleasant source of amusement.

But it is not on account of what the bag contains, nor of the amusement it may supply, that I speak of it. No; it is to set in a clear light a lesson that I want to impress upon your minds.

The lesson is this—that if by adding little to little, in course of time, such a great heap of trumpery has been obtained, by adding little to little of better things, a great deal of what is valuable may be obtained. Now, if you will act upon this principle, depend upon it, you will be a great gainer. There is but little to be got in heaping up waste paper, but much may be got in heaping up treasures worth preserving.

Where was it that I read of two little girls in South America, who went out one morning, each with a little basket on her arm? The one amused herself with picking up pretty little stones, but the other was more particular; she put into her basket nothing but diamonds, and of course had but few. When they returned home, the one had a full basket, but then it was only a basket full of trumpery, not worth a tenth part so much as the smallest diamond the other had obtained. Grown-up people may learn something from these children. If I had acted like the prudent little South American, I should now have something in my bag better worth looking at, instead of a heap of such miscellaneous things.

You may not be fond of sketching with your pen, but that does not matter; whatever you do, do it well, and then it will not be trumpery. You may never live in South America; never mind that, for there are diamonds to be had here, as well as there.

Some people add to the number of their books by little and little, until the heap is a great one; but if you give yourself the trouble to examine them, they are generally of a bad quality, they are good for little or nothing. Now, a good book is a diamond; get a good book then, when

you can, whether you are seven years old, or seventy; for its contents may be very valuable to you, when diamonds shall be as dust in your estimation.

Try, also, to lay up good principles in your heart, as well as good books on your shelves; principles that will preserve you through time, and prepare you for eternity. What is all the trumpery in the world to be compared with them?

Lastly, add to your wisdom; for laying up folly will be laying up trumpery indeed. Get a knowledge of your own hearts, and learn to know Him, whom to know is life eternal. "The fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom; a good understanding have all they that keep his commandments. Wisdom is the principal thing; therefore get wisdom: and with all thy getting, get understanding."

Now, I cannot but hope that you have learned a little from the trumpery bag of Old Humphrey.

It may not be very wise in me to let you know any of my weaknesses, and perhaps it might have been as well to have kept this affair of the trumpery bag all to myself; but it cannot be helped now; and surely it will be the lesser evil for me to be laughed at for my whimsicalities, than that

you should lose the benefit of a lesson of instruction. At any time that you should be passing my way, willingly will I show you my trumpery bag, on condition that you will give over laying up trumpery yourselves.

A REFRESHER.

How delightful it is, when oppressed with toil and heat, to get under the wide-spreading branches of some sheltering tree; or to dip one's hand into the clear fountain by the way-side, and slake one's burning thirst! Nor less pleasant it is when, journeying on our daily course, we fall in with some act of God's providence of a heart-melting kind; some fresh proof of his tenderness for saints, or of his love for poor rebellious sinners! If we look for such sources of comfort, we shall find them, for they are scattered thickly around us.

I have just had the following lines put into my hands; the production of one, who, a few years ago, made the heart of England thrill again with the boldness, the utter recklessness of his impiety. They are said to have been penned in his Bible on his birthday, and run thus:—

“ The proudest heart that ever beat,
Hath been subdued in me;
The wildest will that ever rose,
To scorn thy cause, and aid thy foes,
Is quell'd, my God, by Thee.

“Thy will, and not my will, be done ;
My heart be ever Thine :
Confessing Thee, the mighty Word !
My Saviour Christ ! my God ! my Lord !
Thy cross shall be my sign.”

Now, had these lines been written by one, who, from his youth up, had been a meek disciple of the Redeemer, I should have read them with pleasure ; but as it is, I could all but weep with emotion.

When the strong become weak, and the proud humble ; when the standard-bearers of the Amalekites, and the Goliaths of the Philistines, fall ; when the stiff neck of the wild bull is slackened, and the lion thus lies down with the lamb, I could raise a shout for joy. Talk of taming the untameable hyena, what is that to the taming of the turbulent heart, hot and headstrong in its mad and unholy career of infidelity ! It is well to store up in our memory such refreshing providences, for each of them is a new confirmation of the text, “Who is a God like unto thee, that pardoneth iniquity, and passeth by the transgression of the remnant of his heritage ? he retaineth not his anger for ever, because he delighteth in mercy,” Micah vii. 18. “Oh the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and knowledge of God ! how unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past finding out !” Rom. xi. 33.

ON

HEDGES AND DITCHES.

GIVE me thy ear, reader, and give me thy heart too, for a little space—I want, if I can, to call forth thy kindly feelings. We cannot pluck thorns out of others' bosoms without placing roses in our own.

I love to point out a source of profitable pleasure to the poor. The rich have their dainty fare and their goodly apparel; their lordly mansions, their paintings, and their statues; their carriages, their gay equipage, and their fine horses; their parks and their pleasure-grounds; and I do not begrudge them their possessions. Willingly would I increase their joys; but I had rather, much rather, cast a beam of sunshine on a poor man's brow.

And when I speak of a poor man, think not that I mean to pass by a poor woman. Oh no! I have found many of those of whom the world is not worthy, habited in the garb of poverty, walking abroad in an old red or brown cloak; or pondering the Bible at home, with an old blue or

yellow handkerchief over their shoulders. Old Humphrey has had many a kindly gossip with humble-hearted old women, servants of the Lord, and been both comforted and edified by their Christian conversation.

I want to point out to the poor the enjoyments within their reach. It is of no use talking to them of distant and expensive pleasures, for these they cannot obtain. I want them to regard common things with interest, and to get even from hedges and ditches an addition to their joys.

Whether it be that I am more happy than my neighbours in stumbling upon pleasant objects, I cannot tell; but hardly ever do I see a hedge, in spring, summer, autumn, or winter, but I could gaze upon it with great pleasure. At one time the quickset is budding out with fresh green leaves; at another, the hawthorn is in flower, or hung with innumerable berries; at the fall of the leaf, the young plum trees are rich in their bleached, and sere, and variegated foliage; and in winter, the frost-work on every bush fills me with admiration and delight.

Now, these things are within the reach of all. Come, then, ye poor, regard more attentively these proofs of your heavenly Father's wisdom, and you will think yet more highly of his goodness and his grace.

But it is not the hedges alone, but the ditches also, that exhibit specimens, pleasing specimens, of the workmanship of the great Creator. At this present time I know a ditch so full of nettles, with their fine purple bloom; large dock leaves, with holes here and there in them, and turning a little brown; high, long, quaking grass, that trembles at the touch; and flowery thistles, prickly burdocks, silvery coltsfoot, and straggling blackberry brambles, that it is in itself quite a picture.

The bee is often humming there, and the slender-loined wasp, and the big blue-fly, and another of shining green, move about from plant to plant. I could almost persuade myself that a butterfly settles on a flower that I may admire him, and that the dragon-fly knows of my coming. That ditch is a goodly garden in my eyes, and teems with God's winged creatures, rejoicing in the beams of the glowing sun.

Do you know of no ditch of this kind? Surely you must be short-sighted if you do not, for they are every where to be found. They are passed by daily without being duly regarded; but to enjoy them, you must see them with your hearts, as well as with your eyes, and view them not in reference merely to your own use, but as the works of your adorable Creator.

When you next walk abroad, look around you with more attention; every plant and every insect is worthy of your regard; the speckled lady-bird on the nettle leaf, the crawling caterpillar on the hawthorn spray, and the industrious spider weaving his web across the thorny furze, will reward your closest inspection.

I might direct your attention to the beauties of nature on a broader scale; but my present object is to show, that even the hedges and ditches have enough in them to make you pause with interest and admiration. The more we think of God's goodness, power, and wisdom, in his works, the more highly shall we, if taught by the Holy Spirit, adore his matchless mercy in Jesus Christ our Lord.

ON DUELLING.

THERE are some things so weak and so wicked, so bad, and so base, that it is hardly possible to speak of them with temper. Among these may be mentioned the practice of duelling. If there be one custom tolerated by the world that savours of folly, crime, and insanity more than another, this is the one.

You may think duelling is rather an odd subject for me to speak upon. You will suppose it is not a very likely thing that Old Humphrey will ever fight a duel, and I trust it is quite as unlikely that any of his friends will; but, for all that, as the words of an old man are sometimes weighty, they may possibly prove useful, though I know not to whom.

The custom of duelling consists in this—that persons, for some real or supposed injury, meet each other with deadly weapons, with the deliberate intention of taking each other's lives. Sometimes the weapons used are swords, but more commonly pistols loaded with ball: the parties

usually stand within a dozen paces from each other, and fire once, or several times, till their friends, acting the part of seconds, consider the affair honourably disposed of.

Duels, for the most part, are confined to the higher classes, to those who, having had a superior education, are supposed to be wiser and better behaved than other people; to those, in short, whose duty it is to set an example worthy of imitation; and yet I greatly question if there be many customs more absurd and inhuman among the ignorant Hindoos, and untutored Indians, and wild Caffres. Absurd and inhuman, however, as it is, there are plenty of people who make for it every apology in their power.

“It certainly is a bad custom,” say they; “but we hardly know, if it were done away with, how gentlemen would be able to protect themselves from insult.”

And so, because gentlemen find it difficult to put up with insults from their fellow creatures, they think it well to run the risk of appearing before God in the character of an unrepentant murderer, notwithstanding the tremendous text, “Murderers shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone,” Rev. xxi. 8.

Duelling is an ungodly practice, that a heathen might be ashamed of; and Old Humphrey must

be excused, if he tries to brand it on the forehead.

A lawless libertine leads a young female astray from virtue into the paths of sin, shame, remorse, beggary, and despair, and offers to make reparation by blowing out the brains of her brother or her father. This is duelling.

A free-living gentleman quarrels over the bottle with his most intimate, his dearest friend; hasty words are spoken by both, but neither will acknowledge his error. These intimate acquaintances, these dear friends, meet to give each other satisfaction, by sending a bullet through each other's hearts. This is duelling.

Is duelling consistent with justice? No! for justice requires that the guilty should be punished, and the injured be recompensed; but in duelling, the offender, the systematic duellist, is the most likely to escape, on account of his superior skill in such matters, while the injured party is in danger of losing his life.

Is duelling consistent with mercy? Mercy! No! The duellist is savagely merciless; for he spares neither foes nor friends. Though the offence may have been a trifle, yet, according to his notions, it can only be atoned for with blood.

But if duelling have neither mercy nor justice on its side, is it consistent with courage?

Courage! No! for true courage takes no unmanly advantage of another; whereas the duellist, who can "split a hair," as the phrase is, with his bullet, is not ashamed (though he ought to be) to fight with one who never before pulled a trigger. Is not this dastardly?

"Well," say you, "but it is consistent with the laws of honour." The laws of honour! say rather, The laws of sin and Satan: for all the honourables and right honourables that ever yet made the laws of honour their creed, cannot blot out the handwriting of the Holy One that is against them; "Thou shalt do no murder:" for duelling, do with it what you may, and disguise it as you will, is nothing more nor less than deliberate murder.

No man in the world knows better than Old Humphrey how hard it is to subdue a hasty temper; and when he is severe on this failing, he knows that he is condemning himself; but in duelling there is time to cool, and this reveals the darkest part of the picture.

It is after retiring for a night's rest; after the evening and morning prayer have been, or ought to have been, put up to the Father of mercies, that this merciless deed is committed. You may tell me, if you will, that duellists never pray; but if you do, that only makes the matter worse.

They have much to pray for ; and one of their prayers should be, " Deliver me from blood-guiltiness, O God."

Old Humphrey does not like to deal out hard words ; he had rather praise than blame ; much rather would he treat of peace and mercy than of discord and violence ; but he has no soft words for duels and duellists.

Talk of robbers ! Old Humphrey would willingly, if he could, make the words tingle in the ears of the most gentlemanly duellist that ever sent a bullet through the head of a friend.

The sturdiest villains who are wont to stray
The public roads, and pillage all their prey,
At thoughts of murder tremble with affright,
And perpetrate the cursed deed by night ;
But thou ! more fell, and fiercer far than they,
Canst rob and murder in the face of day.

Is there any robbery like robbing a wife of her husband ? or a family of children of a father ? The duellist is a robber ! Is there any murder like the murder of a friend for a misplaced or angry word ? The duellist is a premeditated murderer.

I was once at an inn, where a military officer, who had taken more wine than he ought to have taken, was quarrelling with all around him. He was a duellist, and, the first opportunity that

occurred, he gave a challenge. Not a word would he hear of delay, the duel was to take place on the spot, his servant was despatched for pistols, a brother officer sent for to act as his second, and I was invited to be "*in at the dropping!*"

With some difficulty, this madman was persuaded to put off the duel; and if he had been held under the pump for ten minutes or so, it might have been of some service to his proud and peppery spirit.

Now, do not suppose Old Humphrey is ignorant that there are insults difficult to bear; injuries that wring the very heart-strings of a man, wherein all that is in him cries out with a mighty voice against oppression. I know this, and I believe that many a man has been goaded, by the maddening influence of injustice, to fight a duel, persuading himself that, because the law could not redress his wrongs, he was justified in pursuing his oppressor. There is a wide difference between such a one, and the systematic, cold-blooded duellist: but the words are not the words of a man which say, "Vengeance is mine; I will repay, saith the Lord," Rom. xii. 19. "No murderer hath eternal life abiding in him," 1 John iii. 15.

"It is a fearful thing," says one, "to injure the image of the Almighty, however base may be

the metal which it is stamped upon." Whatever may be our wrongs, they will not be righted by taking another's life, or rushing with bloody hands into the presence of the Eternal.

If these remarks should meet the eye of a repentant duellist—of one whose guilty hand the green ocean cannot cleanse from blood—to him I say, "Thy crime is great! thy sin is a heavy sin!" one for which no atonement is equal, but that made by the Saviour of sinners on the cross.

"Repent and pray,
In dust thy infamy deplore;
There yet is mercy :—go thy way,
And sin no more!"

If the following text of Holy Scripture was graven on every man's memory, heart, and conscience, no one would dare to be a duellist :—“ If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive you : but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses,” Matt. vi. 14, 15.

ON A SCOFFER.

THE other day, I could not help stopping a moment while a boy was striking fire with flint and steel. "Ay," thought I, "that steel and flint are an apt emblem of the hasty heart of Old Humphrey." How often, instead of patiently making my observations on the things around me, am I put out of temper by passing events! Only an hour ago, my heart was set beating, and my pulse playing, half as fast again as they ought to move. It was a young man that vexed me.

There he sat, in a light-coloured coat, his comely black hair frizzed on each side of his temples, a ring on his finger, and his gold watch-chain thrown across his breast, attempting to prove to his companions that the Bible had not a word of truth in it, from one end to the other.

"What!" thought I, "does he suppose, after prophets have prophesied, martyrs have bled, and reverend elders pondered, prayed, and wept over the Bible, that such a pigmy as he can pull down the high edifice of their hope, having for its everlasting foundations the 'Rock of Ages!' "

My heart grew angry, and the colour came into my cheeks; but when I thought what a penalty must, by and by, be paid by the unrepenting infidel, I grew sorrowful, my passion gave way to my pity, and my pity led me to pray for all unbelievers.

Oh that, in hating and reproving sin, we all showed more of the spirit of Him who wept over Jerusalem!

ON MONEY.

OH what mirth and what misery does money make in the world!

Look at the hubbub among the crowd! what bustling to and fro, what rising early, and late taking rest! what compassing of sea and land! What is the meaning of it? what is it all about? Nothing more than this, that mankind are all actuated by one prevailing desire, and that is, the desire to get money.

One person is mounting up into the air in a balloon, another is descending into the bowels of the earth; some are roaming abroad, others are remaining at home; hundreds are labouring hard with their heads, and thousands with their hands: but the object is the same with them all; they are all trying to get money.

There are those who profess to love money, and there are those who affect to despise it; but all strive to get it. He who has a little would have much, and he who has much is equally anxious to have more. Some use it with discretion, and it tends to their comfort; others abuse it without restraint, and it renders them miser-

able. Oh what mirth and what misery does money make in the world! What good and what evil is it the means of producing!

Without money we could hardly preserve peace, nor could war be carried on without its assistance. Fleets are built and armies organized by it. It keeps the bailiff from the cottage, and preserves the palace from danger. It enables the bad to do mischief, and the good to scatter blessings abroad; want is relieved, ignorance is enlightened, and good and glorious institutions are supported by money.

Its influence is felt at the same time in the east and the west, the north and the south; but in private life it mingles with the concerns of every day, and almost of every hour. The house we live in, the company we keep, the food we eat, the clothes we wear, the time we labour, and the leisure we enjoy, all appear dependent on the money we possess.

What comings and goings, what planning and contriving, does money, and the want of it, occasion! Some lay out thousands, some expend money on a smaller scale, and others learn how to divide a shilling into a great many parts. Other subjects occasionally engage our attention, but to get money seems to be too often made the business of our lives.

The rich man is so accustomed to possess money, that he looks upon it as his own, forgetting that it is only lent him for a season by Him who has said, "The silver is mine, and the gold is mine," and who alone can render it a blessing.

The poor man, feeling the evils to which the want of money subjects him, foolishly concludes that the possession of money would render him happy. Fatal mistake! By some unexpected event, he is suddenly put in possession of wealth. Overjoyed by his unlooked-for property, he plunges into a giddy round of dissipation, his feeble brain is excited, delirium follows, his mirth is turned into madness; and that money which he had regarded as the chief means of obtaining happiness, becomes the source of his irremediable misery.

Look at the mercer drawing the cloth over his nail, and assuring his customer with a smile that it is what he can recommend, that it is of excellent quality. Observe the Jew examining those old clothes, shaking his head, and declaring that he has already bidden more than they are worth. Listen to the quarrel of yonder cab-drivers, who are disputing about a fare. Hearken to the blithe carol of that light-hearted cobbler, who, cooped up in his stall four feet long, and

three feet wide, is girding away at his waxen thread, and singing in the carelessness of his spirit. The smiling mercer, the frowning Jew, the quarrelling cab-men, and the singing cobbler, are only employing different means to gain the same end ; they are all striving to get money.

What throngs find a dwelling-place in jails, what numbers are banished to a distant clime, and how often has the gallows been erected at the stern command of justice ! Alas ! money has too much to do with all these. The prisoner has incurred a debt which he cannot discharge ; the thief has stolen the gold of another ; and the felon has demanded the money of the victim whom his murderous hands have destroyed.

What pride, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness have been exhibited in the heart by money ! What bitterness has been indulged in ! what law-suits have been engaged in ! what friendships have been broken ! what affections have been estranged by money considerations !

O money ! money ! money ! how hast thou smoothed the path of crime to thousands ! and how many noble minds have the want of thee, and the temptations that accompany poverty, dragged down from heights of honourable feeling and upright intention, to endure humiliations, to practise meannesses, and to commit sins, that

they have abhorred! It was not worldly, but heavenly wisdom that prompted the prayer, "Give me neither poverty nor riches: feed me with food convenient for me; lest I be full and deny thee, and say, Who is the Lord? or, lest I be poor, and steal, and take the name of my God in vain," Prov. xxx. 8, 9.

Make it known that you have money, and you hoist a signal which friends will be prompt to obey; they will flock around you as thick as rooks in a rookery. Make it known that your money is gone, the signal will be understood, and your friends will leave you as much to your own company as an anchorite could desire. "The poor is hated even of his own neighbour, but the rich hath many friends," Prov. xiv. 20.

The monosyllables of the rich man are honoured, while the sentences of the poor man are despised; we rail at the homage that money receives, yet are ever ready to render it ourselves.

The high and the low, the proud and the humble, the wise and the ignorant, the virtuous and the vicious, are all influenced by the possession of money.

The poet seizes his pen in a paroxysm of virtuous indignation against the sordid, grasping, mercenary meanness of mankind, and bursts into a strain of elevated thought, to show how much

he despises the mammon that is coveted by inferior mortals. "Away," says he, "with money-getting pleasures.

"Let me a purer joy behold ;
I scorn the sordid worldling's lore ;
And spurn beneath my feet the gold—
The glittering dust that men adore."

But no sooner has he indulged in his highminded aspirations, and written down his disinterested emotions, than he sets about to count the number of his lines, that he may ascertain how much money they will bring him.

The man of science becomes absorbed in abstruse inquiries and intricate calculations ; he solves the varied problems of earth, and soars amid the stars. Alas ! he must descend once more to the regions of mortality. Already is the shrill, querulous voice of his wife heard on the stair-case ; and now she has invaded the chamber of science with the unwelcome intelligence that a creditor is at the door, and that she wants some money.

O money ! money ! were it not for thee, the poet might ride his winged Pegasus through the air, and the man of science pursue his revolutions around the sun unmolested and unrestrained ; but thy bidding must be obeyed, the bits and

drops that support poor humanity must be provided, and this cannot be without money.

Let not the love of wealth be encouraged, for the possession of money has a sad tendency to harden the heart. The reckless spendthrift consumes in his pleasures what would clothe the naked and feed the hungry. The rich landlord orders out his carriage for a drive of pleasure in the park, while the widow and the orphan walk to a jail for debt; and the miser grasps his bags and clutches his bank-notes even in death, while his poor relations require the necessaries of life.

There are advantages and disadvantages in the possession of money.

Money, if rightly employed, will greatly increase our comforts; preserve us from many temptations; enable us to bind up the wounds of the afflicted, and to spread abroad the glad tidings of salvation; but, though money may do much, there are many things which it never will do. It will never convince us of sin, nor lead us to the Saviour. It will never overcome our infirmities, nor subdue our passions: it will never bring us peace at the last, nor procure us a seat in the realms of glory.

Money is one of God's creatures, which we must use, not abuse; the proper use of it may

render a great good to us, but the inordinate love of it will prove "the root of all evil."

A time is drawing near when the rich and the poor must lie down in the dust together; when all distinctions will subside, and money itself will be worthless. Let us bear, then, in mind the words, "Lay not up for yourselves treasures on earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: but lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal. For where your treasure is there will your heart be also," Matt. vi. 19—21.

ON GLAD TIDINGS.

WERE the philosopher to have some new principle communicated to him, which removed the mysteries of science, how prompt would he be to apply it, how absorbed would his mind be in his newly acquired knowledge!

Were the merchant to be told of a new and profitable market for his merchandise, with what ardour would he freight his vessels, that the winds of heaven might waft them across the mighty deep! Were the tradesman to have imparted to him a new mode of manufacturing his goods at half the cost, and with double his accustomed despatch, how industriously would he pursue his calling! Were the poor man to be informed how he might become rich; the sick how he might be healed; and the dying how he might prolong his life, how gladly would they avail themselves of such unexpected good news!

And yet the information thus given to the philosopher, the merchant, the tradesman, the poor man, the sick, and the dying would be valueless, when compared with the good news, the glad tidings of great joy contained in the gospel of

Jesus Christ. "God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life," John iii. 16. What are all other glad tidings when compared with these! When we are mercifully enabled to apply them to ourselves, then can we indeed "rejoice with joy unspeakable and full of glory."

ON EVERY ONE
MINDING HIS OWN BUSINESS.

“MIND your own business,” is an expression very often in use, and not unfrequently it would be as properly applied to the speaker as to the person to whom it is addressed.

Sometimes it is spoken very opportunely, and sometimes it had much better be withheld; for those who neglect their own business are not the proper persons to correct others for disregarding theirs. Yet still, without reflecting whether we are faulty in this respect or not, we are all too ready to cry out to those who intrude upon, or among us, “Mind your own business;” for true it is, that we see a small hole in our neighbour’s coat plainer than we do a large one in our own.

We are, indeed, most of us a great deal disposed to neglect our own business, as well as to intermeddle in the business of others.

Whenever we spread an evil report, the truth of which is doubtful, but which must by its publicity do some one an injury, we are travelling out of our way to do mischief.

“Believe not each aspersing tongue,
As some weak people do ;
But ever hope that story wrong,
Which ought not to be true.”

It would be a better deed to hide a fault than to publish it. It would be better to correct failings of our own than to make known those of our neighbours ; therefore, by spreading an evil report, we are not minding our own business.

Whenever we engage in quarrels, undertake to settle differences without being asked, or waste our time in pursuing idle and visionary projects ; in each and all these cases, we are not minding our own business.

Every one has business of some kind or other, which he ought to attend to ; and whether it be a family, a town, a county, or a kingdom, it is sure to be under better management when every member of it minds his own business.

When is it that we are dissatisfied with ourselves ? that our affairs get into confusion ? that we are behind-hand in what we have undertaken to do ? Why, when we have been idle, thoughtless, or foolish ; when, in short, we have not minded our own business.

Look at the world around you ; there are, doubtless, many instances wherein sickness, accident, and misfortune, have brought down the

richest, the wisest, and the most industrious members of the community to poverty : but if all those who are in circumstances of comfort were to be placed on one side, and all those who have been reduced to rags, want, and misery, on the other, the greater part of the distresses of the latter, were they inquired into, would be found owing to this—that they have not minded their own business.

Depend upon it, it is an excellent thing to mind your own business ; by doing this, you may be more respected, more useful, more benevolent, and ten times more happy. Do this, and things will go on right ; neglect it, and every thing will go on wrong. If you have any love to your neighbour, or any respect for yourself, mind your own business.

Drunkards, and gamesters, and libertines, are sure, one day or other, to be overtaken by the dreadful effects of their folly, intemperance, and wickedness ; but is this to be wondered at ? No ; it is the natural consequence of not minding their own business.

How is it likely that if we do not mind our own business, any one will mind it for us ? If neither we nor other people attend to our affairs, disorder and ruin will soon be written legibly upon them ; and, whether we read it or not, dis-

order and ruin will inevitably follow. Show me a man who does not mind his own business, and I will show you one who will soon be in trouble.

But do you ask me if it be wrong to do a kindness to another? to bear the burden of the weak? to watch by the bedside of a sick neighbour? to relieve the destitute? to instruct the ignorant? to warn the careless? and to read the word of God to the blind and unlearned? I reply, that it is a part of your business to do these things according to your ability; for it is the business of every one to do what he can for the glory of God, and for the welfare of mankind; therefore, in doing these things you are really minding your own business.

It ought to be considered by every man to be a part of his business to make others happy. "A man that hath friends must show himself friendly," Prov. xviii. 24; and a Christian man cannot but feel interested in the temporal and spiritual prosperity of his neighbours. You may reprove your neighbour, encourage him, serve him, and love him, and yet mind your own business.

Fail not, then, to follow His bright example, who when he was on earth "went about doing good," Acts x. 38; remembering that it is your business on earth to prepare for heaven. Employ every talent you possess usefully; pray in

the Saviour's name fervently; read the word of God frequently, and confide in its promises firmly. Do these things, and you shall not fail to find in life and death, in time and eternity, the advantages of having minded your own business.

ON

A PLUM PUDDING.

LAST Christmas day, I was promised a plum pudding by a stranger. You *may* smile, and I dare say you *will* smile, at my simplicity, when I tell you that the thought of receiving a plum pudding from one whom I had never known or seen, pleased me much. It was not so much the pudding, because a quarter of a pound of raisins, a few currants, a spoonful or two of flour, a couple of eggs, a little lemon-peel, and a sprinkling of sugar, nutmeg, and all-spice, would make a plum pudding big enough and good enough for me, any day in the year. And then again, thanks to the Father of mercies, a plum pudding always smokes on my table on a Christmas day; I could hardly fancy that it was Christmas day without it: but the pleasure of receiving such a gift from a stranger, as I said before, pleased me much.

I hardly think there can be a man in the world who values even an intended kindness more than I do. I have a habit of musing on such things,

and therefore you will not wonder that I mused not unfrequently on my expected pudding.

A cup of cold water given with kindness, is sweeter and better than champagne, if the latter be presented with a churlish spirit; and a plum pudding, the gift of a kind-hearted stranger, outweighs, with me, an invitation to dine at the Mansion House with the lord mayor of London. I thought much, indeed too much, of my promised pudding.

October went away, and November came; the winds whistled loud, the leaves fell from the trees, and the nights and mornings began to pinch me. At last came December, and then I began to talk to myself about my pudding. "Well, it is very kind of my unknown friend. Wonderful what strong sympathies rise at times in our minds towards writers whom we have never seen, and never shall see, till this mortal puts on immortality. There are beings who entered eternity before I was born, towards whom I feel so much respect and affection, that I could hug them in my arms. I should much like to know what it was that excited an interest in my favour, but perhaps I shall know more about it by and by.

"I wonder what sort of a pudding it will be! A very common pudding would hardly be sent to me; and if it be too rich, it will not suit an

old man of my plain habits. I must leave the matter till the pudding comes, and then I shall know all about it.

“I dare say it will not be very small; for if so, the carriage will come to more than the pudding, whether I have to pay it or not; and if it be very large, it will be a tax upon the sender, and that I shall be sorry for.

“Let me see! I should think that it would come by the coach about the 22nd or 23rd, or perhaps it will not be here till the 24th; but no matter when, for if it were to come to-night, I should not think about touching it till Christmas day.

“All that I hope is, that while I am eating the pudding with a thankful heart, the giver of it may be as happily employed, and that the day may afford a rich repast of spiritual as well as temporal mercies to us both. It is a poor friendship that seeks not the welfare of the soul, as well as of the body.”

In this way I soliloquized the matter over to myself, earnestly desiring all manner of good things, in basket and in store, in going out and in coming in, to my unknown, kind-hearted friend.

The 22nd day of the month came, but it brought no pudding. The 23rd arrived, but no

loaded porter rapped at the door ; and the 24th, even Christmas eve itself, came equally empty-handed.

It was clear that some mistake had taken place, so that it was necessary for me to have a pudding prepared, unless I could make up my mind to dine puddingless. To make short of the matter, I sat down on Christmas day to my own plum pudding.

It was a disappointment, and I felt it, foolishly felt it ; for I seemed not to have lost my pudding only, but the kindly feelings of my friend : however, there the affair ended, for from that day to this, I have heard no more of my plum pudding.

Now, why have I given you this account of my poor pudding ? Do you think it is that I may complain of my unknown friend, and speak bitter things of this promise-breaking world ? No, indeed, it is not ; for I do verily believe that the desire to show me respect and to oblige me was sincere and ardent ; and I should be unworthy of a deed of kindness, if I did not feel grateful for the friendly and warm-hearted intention ; but I want to make the affair useful, by pointing out to you how little to be relied on are our best earthly friends. And then I would wish you to think how worthy of your trust is the Friend that sticketh closer than a brother.

Are you looking for kindly deeds from your fellow beings? for guidance in difficulty? for consolation in affliction, and assistance in distress? If so, I hope you will find all you look for; but be prepared for disappointment.

This is an uncertain world; human resolutions are easily broken, friendly intentions are unaccountably frustrated; therefore be persuaded by me, lose not your time by looking on the right hand and on the left for creature comforts, but look straight forward to Him with whom gold is dross, and diadems are but dust. He has earth and heaven at his disposal; as a sinner, seek him in the Saviour's name, and so sure as time is succeeded by eternity, will you find him ready to do for you exceeding abundantly above all you can ask or think.

ON ERRAND SENDING.

It is wonderful how much inconvenience is brought about by an inattention to the proper means to prevent it. If a man cannot fasten his door, because the lock and the bolt want a little oil, or if he tear his coat against a nail stuck in a wall which he is in the habit of passing, these inconveniences may be speedily remedied by oiling the lock and bolt of his door, and by drawing out the nail from the wall; but if he neglect to do these things, he ought not to wonder if he should again tear his coat, and be still unable to fasten his door.

This is so plain a case, that he must be wilfully set against reason, who does not understand and acknowledge it; but there are many inconveniences in the world, brought about by other means than neglect in oiling a lock and bolt, and drawing a nail.

Most of us have occasion, at times, to send messages, by different persons, to different places, and some are doing this continually; therefore very few can be ignorant of the inconvenience that is brought about by the messenger making a mistake in his errand. At one time, a note is

taken to the wrong person ; at another, a parcel is left at the wrong place ; and at a third, the message sent is altogether misunderstood : yet, in spite of all the mischief that has been done, and the disappointment which has been endured, in very few cases are precautions taken to prevent their occurring again and again, a hundred times over.

That messengers are, at times, very careless, is certain ; but very frequently we are as much to blame who send them, in not making ourselves understood, as they are in carelessly mistaking their errand. Many a poor lad gets a blow from his master, and many a servant an angry reprimand, which they have not deserved, merely because the errand on which they were sent was not made sufficiently plain to their understandings. In half the cases of error that occur, the error would be avoided by the simple plan of asking the messenger before he went on his errand, "Where are you going?" and, "What are you going for?"

"Here, my lad!" says the druggist to his shop-boy, "run with this bottle to Mr. Perkins." Away goes the lad and before he returns, the druggist calls to the errand man, "John, take this packet to Mr. Perkins."

Now, it happens that he has two customers

of the name of Perkins : one has a child very ill, and the other has a horse which is out of order. The lad takes the bottle meant for the child to the owner of the horse ; and the man takes the packet intended for the horse to the father of the child, both being labelled, "To be taken directly." The consequence is, that the horse gets no good from the contents of the bottle, and the child is half poisoned by the powder in the packet. The owner of the horse complains ; the father of the child is half wild with grief and rage ; and the druggist pulls his lad by the ear, and calls his errand man a "stupid fool," for making such a blunder.

Now, in this case, the error is certainly made by the druggist, who ought to have made the matter clear. He should have told the lad to go to Mr. Perkins, the grocer, in West-street, and directed the man to go to Mr. Perkins, the innkeeper, in Broad-street.

If the druggist, in such a case, had put the question, "Where are you going?" the lad would have said, "To Mr. Perkins, the innkeeper, in Broad-street," and then he would have been set right : and if it had been put to the man, he would have replied, "To Mr. Perkins, the grocer, in West-street," when he would have been corrected also.

“Joseph,” cries out the attorney, “take this paper to Mr. Reynolds, and tell him, with my compliments, that I cannot call upon him this afternoon.” Joseph is no sooner gone, than the attorney calls out, “Thomas, let Mr. Stubbs have this packet, and tell him that I will be with him at four o’clock.”

At four o’clock the attorney goes to Mr. Stubbs, and is surprised to find that he is not at home. When he returns home at night, he hears that Mr. Stubbs has called on him, and receives an angry note from Mr. Reynolds, to say that he has remained at home all the afternoon, expecting him to keep his appointment. It then turns out, that Joseph, instead of telling Mr. Reynolds that his master could *not* call upon him, told him that he *would* call; and that Thomas, instead of telling Mr. Stubbs that his master would be with him at four o’clock, told him that he must please to be with his master at that hour.

Now in this case, the fault is that of the servants: but how easily would it have been avoided by putting the question, “What are you going for?” Joseph would have replied, “To deliver this paper to Mr. Reynolds, and to say that you will call on him in the afternoon;” and Thomas would have answered, “To give this packet to

Mr. Stubbs, and to say that he must be with you by four o'clock;" when both these errors would have been amended, and no evil consequences would have ensued.

These examples certainly render it clear, that though sometimes the master may be in fault, and sometimes the servant, yet in both cases the questions, "Where are you going?" and "What are you going for?" are equally useful.

If the practice were generally adopted or putting these questions, the amount of anger, disappointment, and confusion, which would thereby be prevented, would be great, and a corresponding degree of order, peace, and satisfaction attained.

But, though this may be made very clear on paper, and the judgment of the reader may be convinced of the evil to be avoided, and the good to be obtained, no advantage will result from these remarks, unless the plan recommended is adopted. If you, whose eyes may be cast over these remarks, have ever found inconvenience and disquietude from having your errands improperly delivered, and after reading these comments should neglect to put in practice the plan here presented to you, then blame yourselves whenever a future cause of disquietude shall occur. The plan is simple and practicable; and,

it may be added, praiseworthy; because it will not only afford you comfort, but also preserve others from blame.

Remember, then, the very first time you send a messenger on an errand, that you propose to him the questions, "Where are you going?" and "What are you going for?"

Now, it does appear to me, that I have been unusually clear in this matter, and that if no good should be done, the fault must be laid at your door: but one word at parting. Let me ask you a pithy question as to your eternal destination.

Where others go may well be worth your knowing,
But think, O reader, which way thou art going.

I ask, then, in my plain, homely way, "Where are you going?" and "What are you going for?" Are you going along the broad road that leads to destruction, or along the narrow way that leads to eternal life? Are you going to hear the joyous welcome, "Well done, thou good and faithful servant: enter thou into the joy of thy Lord?" Matt. xxv. 21. Or the fearful denunciation, "Cast ye the unprofitable servant into outer darkness?" Matt. xxv. 30.

OLD HUMPHREY REPROVED.

It is possible that you may sometimes think me more fond of reproofing others than I ought to be; but let me tell you that, now and then, I am brought to book pretty sharply myself. My old friend, Gideon Hawkes—with whom I have entered into a friendly compact, that we should faithfully and freely make known our faults to each other—my old friend Gideon occasionally hits me some very hard raps on the knuckles.

It was but the other day, that we had a sharp tustle on the subject of a Christian man standing forward in a prominent situation. Gideon is a Boanerges in his way, and if God's grace had not greatly subdued his natural passions, he would have been as proud as Lucifer, and as overbearing and oppressive as Pharaoh was to the children of Israel in captivity. As it is, he is a zealous servant of Christ, expecting every Christian and friend to be as warm-hearted as himself. He must be "up and be doing;" he must come "to the help of the Lord against the mighty;" he cannot be content to remain quiet in his tent,

he must join the camp, and blow the trumpet, and cry aloud.

I hope that I have not sketched the character of my old friend too roughly, for I love him with true affection. I hardly know whether he has most zeal or kindness in his bosom : ardent and hasty, and almost turbulent as he is, yet when his heart has been melted, I have known him weep with all the tenderness of a child. Perhaps he comes nearer to the glowing zeal and ardent affection of the apostle Peter than any man that I know.

Well, my friend Gideon did not spare me, but, on the contrary, gave me as sharp a lecture with his tongue as I have ever given with my pen. The nature of his observations you will easily gather from the following remarks, which form part of a letter that I sent him the day after.

“ You seem to be in earnest, Gideon, when you reprove me for my levity, telling me that we are in a dying world, and that a man is not acting wisely in playing the part of a jester on his way to the grave. Your words are sharp on this head, when you say, ‘ A Christian man never looks well in a harlequin’s jacket.’

“ Now, though I more than half agree with your opinions, yet I cannot but think that allowance should be made for natural disposition.

Some are more lively than others, and have a much stronger temptation to jocularity than their neighbours. However, I thank you for your reproof, and will try to profit by it. Old Humphrey ought not certainly to be a harlequin, nor is he ambitious to establish a character as a jester; though, now and then, you might as well try to prevent water gushing from a fountain, as a lively remark from his pen.

“When you observe that a vain old man is but a pitiable spectacle, and intimate that often the reproofs I give to others on the subject of pride are excellently adapted to my own case, I heartily agree with you. Yes, Gideon, fully and freely do I acknowledge my faults. The foolish pride of my heart is a trouble to me, and it often takes me unawares, when I wish to be more than commonly humble. It is a law in my members warring against the law of my mind, bringing me into captivity, so that ‘when I would do good, evil is present with me.’ You cannot be too severe upon me, in this respect: I bow to your correction, and kiss the rod of your rebukes with thankfulness. Alas! how much it takes to humble a proud heart!

“You give me to understand, that whatever I may persuade myself to the contrary, in the matter of my remarks being favourably received by the

public, I am under much greater obligation to my readers for forbearance, than they are to me for talent and discretion. To this I answer, that though too often the natural vanity of my heart gets uppermost, yet there are seasons when I take just the same view of the matter that you do—seasons when I am ashamed at my own deficiencies, and amazed at the degree of indulgence awarded me. I will try to call this subject to mind more frequently : who can tell, Gideon, but your friendly comments may be made useful to me? ‘He that refuseth instruction despiseth his own soul : but he that heareth reproof getteth understanding,’ Prov. xv. 32.

“You tell me that I avoid controversy, and fight shy in the expression of my Christian views ; that my creed is not clearly enough set forth ; and that, for any thing my friends know to the contrary, I may possibly be holding dangerous octrines, looking forward as though heaven could be gained by my own deeds.

“Now herein, Gideon, I think you bear hard upon me ; I am no wrangler, no splitter of hairs in doctrine, and leave disputed points to those who are qualified by education, calling, and inclination, to adjust them. I wish to go quietly through the world, in peace with every man, and have more joy in raising up the humble, than in

attempting to push down the proud ; but, for all this, 'I am not ashamed of the gospel of Christ : for it is the power of God unto salvation to every one that believeth,' Rom. i. 16.

"My creed, Gideon, is the Apostles' Creed, in which I am a humble though unworthy believer ; and as to gaining heaven by my own deeds, I should almost as soon think of gaining it by my misdeeds ; for what deeds have I performed of myself, that were not begun, carried on, and completed in infirmity and sin ? You are hard upon me, Gideon, indeed you are !

"I know and feel and confess myself to be a sinner, altogether dependent on Divine mercy. I hold that every faculty of my soul and body is the gift of an almighty and gracious God ; that every emotion of my mind, every desire of my soul to know him, to love him, to honour him, and to obey him, is a manifestation not of my own deserts, but of his condescending goodness and grace. I hold, also, that in the work of my redemption, I am wholly and unreservedly indebted to the merits and all-atoning sacrifice of Jesus Christ ; and that I have no more to do with it, no more part and lot in the matter, in the way of merit, than I have in the forming of the sun, moon, and stars, and setting up the throne of the Eternal in the highest heaven.

“In one word, Gideon, in the midst of my manifold infirmities, I am clear on this point; for, without reservation, I renounce all other hope, and look to the Saviour, and to the Saviour alone, for salvation. That Christ has died for me, is my hope and my joy, the rock on which I stand, the boat in which I hope to pass the swellings of Jordan. I have no other plea than this for justification at the judgment day, and no other claim to enter the kingdom of glory.”

A TONER FOR THE DAY.

I QUESTION much, if you were to look into the dictionary, whether you would find the word "toner" there; but never mind that, it suits my purpose, and better men than I have been allowed to make words, and to pass them too, as currently as half-crowns are passed, without being taken up for coining.

No doubt you have seen and heard, before now, an orchestra of musicians tuning their instruments before they burst off into some glorious composition. Without that tuning, or toning, they would make but a bad piece of business of it; but with it, how delightfully they perform!

Now, the parts we have to perform in the world are quite as important as those of musicians, and our hearts and souls require quite as much toning. Dr. Watts felt this when he said,

"Oh! may my heart in tune be found,
Like David's harp of solemn sound!"

Prayer, and praise, and reading God's holy word are capital toners; so also are meditation and self-examination. I want you to resort to

the same practice ; and that you may do so, I will furnish you with a toner that is likely enough to suit you : it is this question, "What am I?" I sadly want toning myself just at this moment, let me put the question first to myself.

What am I? What? Why a weak and unworthy worm! An unprofitable servant! A guilty sinner! If this be true, and true it is, how lowly, how humble, how contrite, how watchful, how prayerful I ought to be! Lord, let not my heart be haughty, nor mine eyes lofty; neither let me exercise myself in great matters, in things too high for me, Psa. cxxxi. 1.

But, again; what am I? What? Why the handiwork of God. "And God formed man of the dust of the ground," Gen. ii. 7. The temple of the Holy Ghost. "Know ye not that your body is the temple of the Holy Ghost?" 1 Cor. vi. 19. An heir of eternal glory. Ye are "heirs according to the promise," Gal. iii. 29. Did God really make me? Is the Holy Spirit within me? And am I with Jesus Christ a joint heir of glory? How pure, then, how exalted, how holy, and how heavenly, ought my thoughts, my words, and my deeds to be! "Let the words of my mouth, and the meditation of my heart, be acceptable in thy sight, O Lord, my strength, and my Redeemer!" Psa. xix. 14.

Thus toned, let me go forth, an example of humility, and a pattern of that purity, that faithfulness, that zeal, and that heavenly-mindedness which become God's people.

ON FLOWERS.

How many gratifications do we daily enjoy ! and how disproportionate is our gratitude to the Father of mercies, when compared with the number and magnitude of his favours. The skies above our heads, and the earth beneath our feet, are beautifully adorned by heavenly hands. The balmy gale breathes health around us ; the brook and the crystal spring pour forth their refreshing and invigorating streams. By day, the glorious sun gilds the creation with his beams ; and by night, the silvery moon and the glittering stars shed their grateful lustre.

There are many things which give pleasure to age, but impart no enjoyment to youth ; and others which afford a gratification to the young, which the aged cannot share. The rich can procure pleasures which the poor cannot obtain ; and the poor man enjoys advantages that the rich cannot purchase : but some things appear equally to delight the old and the young, the rich and the poor ; and among these may be mentioned flowers. Yes, whether flowers flourish in the garden or bloom in the green-house, whether

they are scattered on the pathway, sprinkled on the verdant banks, or widely strewn over the mountains and the valleys, they never fail to please; they impregnate the air with their sweetness, and delight the eye with their exquisite beauty.

Think of the flowers that you have gathered, smelt, and gazed on; and then ask yourself if you have been sufficiently grateful for the pleasure they have afforded you.

Sweet it is to enter the green-house, filled with elegant flowers, where the night-blowing ceres, the scarlet geranium, the fuchsia, the lobelia, the japonica, the arum, and the china rose, are mingled with a thousand other beautiful flowers! And sweeter still to walk in the garden, where, in their appropriate seasons, we may see the lovely rose, the gaudy tulip, the stately hollyhock, the magnificent tiger-flower, the gorgeous piony, the anemonies, dahlias, carnations, rockets, stocks, and marigolds!

And still sweeter than all, to roam at liberty in the sunlit fields and sequestered dells, where the modest primrose, the golden buttercup, the splendid foxglove, the dancing daffodil, and the sweet-scented violet, are profusely scattered! Did you ever lie at your length, at mid-day, on the side of the broad-breasted mountain, decked

with heath flower, entranced with silent ecstasy? or sit on a shady bank, gazing on the earliest primrose of the year, with admiring wonder? or bend, in a retired nook, with intensity of interest, over the minute blue flower of the forget-me-not? If you have not done these things, you know not the pleasure, the joy, the delight, that may be excited by a flower.

Were the flowers of the world to be taken away, they would leave a blank in the creation. Imagination cannot suggest a substitute for them. Be grateful for the gift of flowers.

Look at the stateliest room in the stateliest mansion; see it decorated with carvings and gilding, with paintings and sculpture, with china vases, ornaments, and costly drapery; fair though they be, the flowers in the light wicker basket, on the stand, are fairer still.

Though all around be rich and rare,
The flowers are fairest of the fair:
And, voiceless as they are, impart
Sweet music to the eye and heart.

The blushing maiden, elegantly dressed, who trips along yonder, with a light heart, and a sparkling eye, steals, ever and anon, a glance at the moss rosebud blooming at her breast. We will not inquire who gathered and placed it there; though, while his hand was employed, his

heart breathed the prayer, that he never might plant any thorn in her bosom. She could tell you, if she would; nay, look at her happy face, and you may know, without her telling you, how much of calm delight and peaceful pleasure may be crowded into the petals of a flower.

The poor aged widow in the almshouse must also have her flower. Old, and poor, and lonely as she is, she has not forgotten the time when she had a garden of her own; and now she sticks a bunch of gilliflowers in her broken blue jug, and placing it in the window, looks upon it with satisfaction. And why should she not? May her flowers bloom, and her hopes of heaven brighten!

The aged labourer, too, who held the plough in his boyhood, and who now has near fourscore years on his forehead, when his blue Sunday coat, with the broad skirts and big buttons, is taken out of the oaken coffer, cannot wear it in peace at the house of God, unless it has a sweet-william or pink in the button-hole. Gentle and simple both delight in flowers.

The new-made grave in the country churchyard, that is filled up in the morning, is in the afternoon stuck over with flowers, that manifest the respect and affection of the living for the dead; there they bloom awhile, and there they

wither. And now shall we try to dismiss the subject of flowers, with some new and striking application? No; for we all rather want old admonitions to be revived in our hearts, than new notions to be imparted to our heads. The beauty of a flower ought to make us glad and grateful, and its frailty ought to excite reflection. We should never gaze on a withered rose, or fading lily, without the sad, yet salutary remembrance, that, "as for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone; and the place thereof shall know it no more," Psa. ciii. 15, 16. Yet though our bodies be frail as the frailest flower, though they perish, yet again shall they arise from the dust. The ransomed soul, triumphing in the grace of the Redeemer, will claim its earthly companion. This corruptible shall put on incorruption, this mortal shall put on immortality, this body shall rise from the grave, and death be swallowed up in victory.

THE
LETTER *I* BY ITSELF *I*.

IF the letter *I* by itself *I* be not the tallest letter in the alphabet, sure I am that no letter lifts its head above it. It occupies the least space, I will admit, of all capital letters; but take it for its fair proportions, enlarged significations, and great pretensions altogether, and you will find it to be, by far, the most important of the whole six and twenty.

There is hardly any other single letter that is clothed with the dignity of a word. We sometimes exclaim O! either when in pain, or affected with sudden surprise; but what are the poverty-stricken significations of the letter O, even when inflated into a word, when compared to those of *I* by itself *I*?

When it is considered how universally mankind allow this letter to take the lead of all others, both in writing and speaking, one almost wonders why it was not made a little bigger than the rest. It is unquestionably the proudest letter of the alphabet, and no marvel that it should be so,

while we all treat the coxcomb with such deference and respect.

When an author takes up his pen, his dear darling, *I* by itself *I*, is directly introduced to the reader. "*I* have long thought such a work wanted:" "*I* felt determined to supply the deficiency:" "*I* trust that *I* have done my part in introducing this volume to the public." And when a speaker rises to address an assembly, it is very often *I* by myself *I* from beginning to end. "*I* did this:" "*I* agreed to that:" and, "*I* felt resolved to prevent the other."

It is not in the alphabet only, and printed books, and public and private speeches, that *I* by itself *I* is to be found. No; it is to be seen living and moving in all ranks and stations of life, from the monarch to the mountebank.

It is an every-day error, when speaking or thinking of vanity and pride, for us to look towards the great folks of the earth, as though pride and vanity had taken up their abode with them alone; while, in fact, they dwell with the low as well as with the high, and sometimes puff up the heart of a cobbler as much as that of a king.

A writer, *I* have said, is almost always an *I* by itself *I*. He plumes himself on giving information to his readers, and imagines that he has outdone

those who have written on the same subject. Then, when his book comes out, with what vanity does he regard it! He persuades himself that it will be very popular, and that hundreds, and perhaps thousands, will admire the taste and the talent that he has displayed.

Oftentimes, too, the reader is as much an *I* by itself *I*, as the writer; for he sits in judgment on the book, points out its manifold defects, suggests numberless improvements, and thinks how much better the work would have been executed, had he taken the pen in hand, or benefited the writer with his valuable observations.

It was but yesterday, that I stopped to exchange a word with some bricklayers who were building a wall near some large houses. In a short time, a good-looking, broad-shouldered man, whose bones were well covered with flesh, and whose flesh was well covered with a good suit of clothes, came up, and gave directions to the workmen. There was an elevation of the eye, and a consciousness of power, visibly stereotyped in his features. He pointed with his cane as he spoke, and raised his voice as one having authority; as one whose word was law, and whose law was no more to be disputed than that of the Medes and Persians. Old Humphrey

saw at a glance, that he was an *I* by itself *I*, and found, on inquiry, that he was the wealthy landlord of all the houses around.

It was not more than half an hour after, that I met a thin stripling of a young fellow, whom I knew to be a draper's apprentice. He had a ring on his finger, a chain across his breast, and a sparkling pin stuck in his bosom. The way in which he walked, with his hat a little on one side, amused me; for the springing up of his heel, and the lifting up of his elbow, told me that, whatever he might be in the opinion of others, he was an *I* by itself *I* in his own.

There is a neighbour of mine who is the leader of a concert, and I am told that when he presides, he has an air of as much importance as though the welfare of the four quarters of the world depended, solely, on the sounds that he produces from his fiddle-strings. Next door to him lives one skilled in the mathematics, who utterly despises the musician, and laments that a man having a head on his shoulders, should be content with fiddling his way through the world. Nothing like mathematical knowledge in his estimation. I overheard him, the other day, say to a friend of his, "Some people take our neighbour Old Humphrey to be a wise man; but, poor creature, he knows no more of mathe-

matics than I do of astrology." The musician undervalues the mathematician in his turn, and says, "If there be a proof of a man's being a simpleton, it is when he has no ear for music; but when he bothers his brains in useless calculations, there is no hope for him." Each of these is an *I* by itself *I*.

Vanity assumes strange shapes, and wears strange disguises, but is pretty sure to manifest itself at last. It is bad enough to see any man, in any place, influenced by it; but there is one place where the shadow of it should never appear. An *I* by itself *I* in the pulpit is terrible. When a minister forgets God, and remembers himself; when he indulges in exhibitions of his own talents, playing his brilliant parts before their eyes, whose souls are hungering for the bread of life, it is sad indeed! Oh, the blessing of a simple-minded, faithful, and affectionate minister of the gospel! one who considers himself a round O, rather than an *I* by itself *I*; one who is mainly anxious to watch over and gain the souls of men, and willing to be nothing, that his heavenly Master may be all in all.

In looking abroad, I sometimes fancy that there are many more *I* by itself *I*'s than there are other letters among mankind; for vanity, more or less, at particular seasons, seems to lift up every head,

and to puff up every heart. Some are vain always, some generally, and others only occasionally; but to find one person perfectly free from vanity and selfishness would be a hard day's work.

If you wish to see an *I* by itself *I* in common life, you may soon have your desire. A girl is an *I* by itself *I*, when her first waxen doll is given her; a boy, when first put into buttoned clothes; an apprentice, the day he is out of his time; a servant-girl, in her new bonnet and blue ribands; and a churchwarden, the first time he enters his great pew.

I might give you a score more illustrations; but, to tell you an honest truth, I hardly know a more confirmed *I* by itself *I* than Old Hamphrey. Oh, what pride and vanity, at times, gather round an old man's heart! He is shrewd enough in observing others' failings, but it costs him much to keep under his own; he values himself on the very wisdom he has gained from others, and feels proud even of his humility when acknowledging his own infirmities. Surely it becomes him, if it becomes any man on earth, to exercise charity and forbearance!—

To gaze with pity on the throng,
To failings somewhat blind;
To praise the right, forgive the wrong
And feel for all mankind.

ON EPITAPHS.

WHEN I was only a child, I was fond of rambling in the churchyard. The broad flat stone on which I sat; the monument with the coat of arms on it, surrounded with iron palisades, inside of which the nettles grew abundantly; the mouldering old tablet against the wall, from which time had peeled away the inscription in slips, just as a boy would peel an orange; and the old tumble-down head-stone, with a death's-head and cross-bones at the top, and part of a verse yet readable at the bottom; all these had excited my interest; and even the green hillock, in the shady corner, that had no tombstone, and nothing but weeds around it, was visited by me with a strange kind of pleasure; and some of the quaint old sayings, and striking texts of Scripture, that I used to read there, have never been effaced from my memory to this day.

As I grew older, this interest in a churchyard rather increased than diminished. I have stood gazing on the tablet erected against the east end of the church, to the memory of my grandfather, till my tears have nearly blinded me. He feared

God, and charged his children and his children's children, before his death, to meet him at the throne of Christ in a better world. That charge has sunk deep into my heart and soul.

And now that I am an old man, my inclination to visit a churchyard is stronger than ever. Oh, there is a keeping, a sort of harmony, between the long grass, the mouldering stone, the decayed monument, and an old man! They tell strange tales of the nothingness of the world; tales that we know to be true when we think of them, and that we feel to be true when we sit reflecting in a churchyard.

In our morning and evening prayers, in reading the word of God, in our daily meditations, we are aware that life "is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away," James iv. 14; but in a churchyard, with the memorials of mortality around us, the knowledge comes more home to our hearts; we are taught, that we must all die, and that "the time is short;" that as the Lord liveth, and as our souls live, there is but a step between us and death.

I have sat on a tombstone in the grey of the morning, ere yet the rising sun had gilded the weathercock on the spire; I have mused on the shadowy side of the chancel at mid-day; I have

peeped at the marble knights on the old monuments in the church, through the windows, when the glittering glass seemed on fire with the beams of the setting sun; and I have silently paced along the narrow path from the little white gate towards the belfry, at the midnight hour, when my footfall was the only sound that met my ear: and in all these seasons have felt an awful interest—a strange delight. I know not whether I make myself intelligible: that which yields pleasure to one often gives pain to another; but if you are fond of walking in a churchyard, you will understand me. The grave is an awful thing to us all, especially when we cannot look beyond it; but when we can, its gloom is soon lighted up with glory.

The inscriptions that are scattered about on the different tombstones appear to be clothed with more meaning and power than in any other place: we read the same text with unconcern in the Scriptures, that strikes our heart with sudden emotion when pondering on it over the grave. Never shall I forget once in a churchyard coming up to an old gravestone, at a time when my heart was almost fainting within me about a duty to which I was called. The words that were written there, seemed as if they had been just graven by the hand of the High and Holy One,

and sent down from heaven to catch the eye, and strengthen the heart of Old Humphrey. They were from the first chapter of the book of Joshua, and acted as a cordial to my mind:—"Have not I commanded thee? Be strong and of a good courage; be not afraid, neither be thou dismayed: for the Lord thy God is with thee whithersoever thou goest."

I love to read the epitaphs of older and better men than myself, who have passed before me along the thorny pathway of this world's pilgrimage, who have finished their course with joy, and found the end to be eternal life; for often in such seasons I find, before I am aware, that my tongue has begun to speak the desires of my heart:—"Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his."

Have you never sat under the hollow yew-tree in a churchyard; nor stood leaning against the old time-worn sun-dial; nor mused on the new brier-bound grave? If you have never done these things, I am afraid that my words will pass by you like the "idle wind that you regard not."

Sometimes the dead are sadly bespattered with praise; and this is to be regretted: for if God, in his mercy, has taught us any thing of our own hearts, we know that our sinful nature has nothing to boast of; and if he has taught us, in

addition, anything of his grace, we shall be ready to say, "Not unto us, O Lord, not unto us, but unto thy name be the glory."

It seems out of character to write words of flattery over the resting-place of sinful dust and ashes: but let us not be severe, let us make allowances; sorrow has more affection than judgment, and we all set a high value on the friends we have lost.

Many a beautiful epitaph have I read, as well as many an absurd one, both in verse and in prose; but it has ever appeared to me, that texts from the Scriptures are the most suitable inscriptions for the monuments of the dead. If there be any thing in the character of a fellow sinner, whose dust has been laid in the grave, likely to do good by way of example, it may be well to record it in a simple manner; but I like to see a text on a tombstone; and though I have read inscribed there a hundred times over, "Blessed are the dead that die in the Lord," Rev. xiv. 13, yet the words affect my mind more profitably, and send me away with a deeper and more abiding sense of the realities of an eternal world, than many a fine inscription on a fair monument in Westminster Abbey.

I once read on a tablet raised over the remains of a faithful minister of the gospel, a glorious

epitaph. It described the man to the life, and the sanctified effect of his labours, in the following words, taken from the eleventh chapter of the Acts of the Apostles:—"He was a good man, and full of the Holy Ghost, and of faith: and much people was added unto the Lord."

Enough has now been said about epitaphs; for perhaps you may not be so fond of gazing on churchyards and tombstones as I am: however this may be, we shall each of us do well to put up the prayer, "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is; that I may know how frail I am. Behold, thou hast made my days as an handbreadth; and mine age is as nothing before thee: verily every man at his best state is altogether vanity," Psa. xxxix. 4, 5.

ON QUIET CHRISTIANS

OH, how I love a quiet Christian! There must be men of energy and ardour; men zealous enough to undertake and carry on what more timid and retired spirits are unequal to, but there is something very pleasant and wondrously influential in a quiet Christian.

Do you ever meet with disciples of Christ of this kind, who make no bustle about their profession, but set it forth in their daily walk and behaviour? Men, whose very appearance is a text, and whose lives are profitable sermons. My old friend Nathaniel is one of this kind; you never find him making a speech at a public meeting, nor hurrying along, neck or nothing, to attend a popular preacher. You never see his name at the head of a subscription list, nor hear his voice in a controversy. These things are out of his way; and yet if I were called upon to point out a truly God-fearing man, a devoted servant of Christ, I would put my hand on his shoulder, and say reverently, in the words used by our blessed Saviour, "Behold an Israelite indeed, in whom is no guile!"

Nathaniel is a man slow to promise, and prompt to perform. Oh, what a fuss have I known a man who has plenty to spare make before now with a subscription for a poor widow! running from one to another, quoting texts of Scripture in commendation of charity, and advocating the widow's cause with a loud voice; wiping the perspiration from his face with his handkerchief, having a world to do, and a world to say, about the affair, while all the time his name was put down for only five shillings. Nathaniel is one that, in such a case, quietly inquires into the character and circumstances of the party, and slips a ten-pound note into the widow's hand, when no other eyes are on him than the eyes of the Eternal.

Often and often have I sat with Nathaniel by the hour together, without his uttering so much as a single word, for he says little, and thinks much. The peaceful repose of his countenance, when reading his Bible, is a study; and the placid smile that now and then spreads over his features, tells you that he is banqueting on heavenly food.

There is more influence over my affections in the very thought of such a man as this, than in the presence of half a dozen hot, vehement, hurly-burly Christians; and Christians there are of this kind. The other day I was with my quiet

friend Nathaniel, and my warm-hearted friend Gideon, when a young man, a seeker after truth, was present. The zeal of Gideon, as usual, waxed warm, while he spoke thus:—

“You are a descendant of fallen Adam, and there is no good thing within you. You are lost, without hope, unless Christ be your Saviour. There must be a death unto sin, and a new birth unto righteousness in your soul. You must have a broken and contrite heart for sin, and a lively faith in God’s promises. You must heartily believe in Christ’s righteousness, atonement, and mediation. You cannot enter heaven, till you are made meet to be a partaker of what God has prepared for his people; ‘Heaven is a prepared place for a prepared people.’ You must strive to enter in at the strait gate, seeking, in godly sincerity, the washing of regeneration, and renewing of the Holy Ghost, which is shed abroad in the heart through our Lord Jesus Christ.

“Again I say, that these things must be sought after, faithfully and fervently, earnestly and perseveringly, until the blessing be obtained.

“Your sins are numberless, but a ransom has been found. ‘The Spirit and the bride say, Come.’ Here is the cross! come to it. Here is the Saviour! flee to his arms. You have light, and love, and mercy. ‘Now is the accepted

time, and now is the day of salvation.' To-morrow, light, and love, and mercy may pass away, and that which to-day the gospel offers may be withdrawn. How shall you escape, if you neglect so great salvation? The bottomless pit is dark, and the wrath of the Eternal hard to endure: 'It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.'"

These words, and many more of a like kind, with scarcely a pause, were ardently uttered by the lips of Gideon, whose tongue, when once set going in holy things, is as "the pen of a ready writer." All this time Nathaniel spoke not a word, but sat turning over the leaves of his Bible, and now and then putting down the chapter and verse of some text that struck him. As the young man went away, Nathaniel quietly put a slip of paper into his hand, without speaking so much as a word.

I got a sight of this paper afterwards; it contained chapter and verse for the following texts, and seemed intended to serve for a complete Scripture statement of the way of salvation through a crucified Redeemer. I mention the circumstance, to show in what different ways good men of different dispositions try to bring about the same end. The texts were these:—

“All have sinned, and come short of the glory of God,” Rom. iii. 23. “The wicked shall be turned into hell, and all the nations that forget God,” Psa. ix. 17. “The Son of man is come to save that which was lost,” Matt. xviii. 11. “This is a faithful saying, and worthy of all acceptation, that Christ Jesus came into the world to save sinners,” 1 Tim. i. 15. “Except ye repent, ye shall all likewise perish,” Luke xiii. 3. “Seek ye the Lord while he may be found, call ye upon him while he is near: let the wicked forsake his way, and the unrighteous man his thoughts; and let him return unto the Lord, and he will have mercy upon him; and to our God, for he will abundantly pardon,” Isa. lv. 6, 7. “The blood of Jesus Christ his Son cleanseth us from all sin,” 1 John i. 7. “Except a man be born again, he cannot see the kingdom of God,” John iii. 3. “If any man be in Christ, he is a new creature,” 2 Cor. v. 17. “Ye shall be baptized with the Holy Ghost,” Acts xi. 16. “God so loved the world, that he gave his only begotten Son, that whosoever believeth in him should not perish, but have everlasting life,” John iii. 16. “Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved,” Acts xvi. 1. “By grace are ye saved through faith; and that not

of yourselves: it is the gift of God," Eph. ii. 8.
"Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us," Gal. iii. 13.
"He is able to save them to the uttermost that come unto God by him, seeing he ever liveth to make intercession for them," Heb. vii. 25.
"Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever," Rev. v. 12, 13.

WHO IS ON THE LORD'S SIDE ?

I NEVER like, unnecessarily, to alter a word, a letter, or a single stop in the word of God. I like to take the Holy Scripture just as I find it; and many a shrewd-spirited, hair-splitting disputant, for this very reason, would think me a very great simpleton. No matter. Till I can find some better new plan, I shall not give up the old one.

But though I like not to alter the words of Holy Writ, yet I frequently adapt them to particular occasions. It is not every text of Holy Scripture which says, "Thou art the man;" and I am continually wanting texts to say this, not only to my fellow sinners, but to my own soul.

Now there is a text—you will find it, if you take the trouble to look for it, in the 32nd chapter of Exodus, 26th verse—which says, "Who is on the Lord's side?"

This question is a heart-searcher. Were our friends to answer it for us, we might get off pretty well; but that will not do, we must reply to it

ourselves. Taking all things together, then—my faculties and my infirmities, my helps and my hindrances—can I with godly sincerity say, looking on the world as divided into two parts, the one those who are for God, and the other those who are against him—can I say with uprightness and integrity, I am on the Lord's side? Let this question be put to your hearts, yea, to your very souls.

If God has showed such love for the world as to give his own Son to die for sinners, in what way have you as a sinner manifested your love to God? This is a fit question for you and for me to put, not only every day of the year, but also every hour of the day: "Am I on the Lord's side?"

ON
THE ABUSE OF RICHES.

“HE died wickedly rich,” said a good man, in speaking of one who had left the world with great reputation ; and though the words were neither spoken to you nor to me, we may perhaps both find something in them that may suit us. I know not how it may be with you, but my money bags are not so many as to stand in my way, nor to occupy much of my reflection. If you are differently circumstanced, look about you, for the words, “He died wickedly rich,” are well worthy your attention. I think it was John Wesley who said, that if he died worth more than ten or twenty pounds, (I forget which,) he would give the world leave to call him a thief, or something like it ; but I am afraid that, whether we are churchmen or dissenters, the benevolence, the self-denial, the zeal, the perseverance, and the devotedness of heart to God, of that servant of Christ, are beyond what we even hope to attain : happy for us if we attain them in a degree ! But though the John Wesley standard of self-denial be too exalted for most of us to attain to ; though we may not be quite

willing to go so far as he did, in giving up all we possess, except ten or twenty pounds, (nor may it be quite right for us so to do,) yet may it be worth a thought, how far we are at all acting on his principle; how far we shall be quite clear of the charge, when the green sod is springing up over us, of having "died wickedly rich."

Old Humphrey is no meddler; he has no wish to pry into your affairs; and whether you are worth twenty thousand pounds, or have only twenty groats in the world, he will neither think the better nor the worse of you on this account. The question is not, What are you worth? but, How are you using that which you possess? One man may die worth thousands, clear from reproach; and another "die wickedly rich," by leaving ten pounds behind him.

It is the case sometimes, and Old Humphrey fears too often, that people of property persuade themselves, that in leaving money to poor relatives and charitable institutions when they die, they do all that can be reasonably required of them, and that indeed they deserve the reputation of being considerate, kind, and charitable.

But what kindness and charity can there be, in leaving that behind them which they cannot take with them? It would do them no good to have it crammed into their coffins. Whoever has riches,

and neglects to do works of mercy during his lifetime, "dies wickedly rich," even if he leaves every farthing he has in the world to charitable purposes. I do not know the chapter and verse in the Holy Scriptures that particularly directs us to leave our property to do good after our death; but I know plenty of texts that direct us to do deeds of kindness while we are alive. "Pure religion and undefiled before God and the Father," is not to leave money to the widow and the fatherless, when we can no longer keep it ourselves, but, while we are alive, to "visit the fatherless and widows in their affliction, and to keep ourselves unspotted from the world," James i. 27.

Now, do not mistake Old Humphrey. He honours the memory of that man, who closes his life of kindness and Christian charity by a benevolent bequest of his property, giving to Christian institutions liberally; neither neglecting those who have a reasonable claim on his remembrance, nor passing by his poorer relations, friends, and servants. "These things" we ought to do, if we possess the means, and not "to leave the other undone," Matt. xxiii. 23. "Honour the Lord with thy substance, and with the first-fruits of thine increase," Prov. iii. 9; and "Thou shalt not harden thine heart, nor shut up thy hand

from thy poor brother," Deut. xv. 7, are commands that are to be obeyed in our lives, and not to be put off to our deaths.

But if it should happen that you are not rich in money; nay, that you are absolutely poor, do not think on that account that there is no danger of your dying "wickedly rich." One man may be rich in money, another in leisure, a third in health and bodily strength, a fourth in talent, a fifth in influence, and so on. Now, if you have either, all, or any of these kinds of riches, and do no good with them, you are in the same situation as the selfish miser who keeps his gold uselessly locked up in his coffers.

ON TAXES.

As there is much to enjoy in the world, so there is something to endure, and wise are those who enjoy gratefully, and endure patiently. The apostle must have had much Divine discipline and teaching, before he learned in whatsoever state he was to be therewith content. How few have attained to such a state of mind!

I have before now endeavoured to point out, after my poor fashion, that a price is fixed to every earthly enjoyment, and that whether we go to market to supply our common necessities, or in any other way make an addition to our comfort and pleasure, the full price must be paid for the real or imaginary benefit.

Now, it is my intention to pursue this subject in a different form; in other words, to show that whether we build our houses in the city or town, or pitch our tents in the wilderness, the taxes must be paid; while the Christian is on this side heaven, he must put up with earthly trouble.

In bygone days, I knew one who was practical and clever in his business; a man of information beyond his sphere in life. There are men of this

stamp in almost all ranks, who acquire knowledge nobody knows how; it seems rather to go to them, than they to seek after it; and Pearson was one of this kind. It was a pleasant thing to pass an occasional hour with him, for he was sure either to tell me something I did not know, or to amplify and correct that which I did.

Most men have their weak points, and Pearson had many; among them was a strong, inveterate, and unreasonable antipathy to taxes. The very name of taxes had the same effect upon him as a stout stick has on an ants' nest, when turned round and round within it. Or if you can fancy to yourself a demure tabby cat, soft as velvet, sitting and purring in your lap, suddenly putting out her talons, and setting up her back, every hair on an end, at the sight of a strange dog, you will be able to imagine the sudden anger, hatred, and uncharitableness of Pearson at sight of the tax-gatherer: the man with the green book was an absolute scarecrow to him.

Pearson could reason on other subjects, but he could not reason on the subject of taxes. How to avoid paying them, occupied no small part of his reflection and his ingenuity.

The collector called and called again, but Pearson was out, or busy, or at his dinner, or had no

change, or something or other. When these excuses would no longer avail—when, in short, he was compelled to pay, he put off the evil moment till a distress warrant was at the door.

One day, when I called upon him, he was in high glee, telling me he had, at last, got rid of the “Philistines,” the tax-gatherers. He had agreed with his landlord to pay an advance of rent, on condition that the latter paid all the taxes. Taking out my pencil, and comparing the advanced rent with the amount of taxes, I found that Pearson was paying rather more than he had paid before.

Again I say, however we may plan and contrive, the taxes must be paid.

You are not, however, to suppose that by taxes I mean merely the poor-rate, the assessed taxes, and such like things. No, no; what has been said about Pearson is only an illustration. I use the word tax in a more extended sense. All earthly things have a shadowy side; and, as I have said before, where there is much enjoyed, there will always be something to endure.

If you will have a large house, you must pay a high rent; if you will be proud, you must endure mortification; and if you will despise the calls of wisdom, you must suffer from the effects of your

own folly. The high rent, the mortification, and the sufferance, are the taxes which you cannot evade.

Now, if I could but convince you, and more deeply impress my own heart with the truth, that we are mercifully dealt with by a mercy-loving God, and that our very trials are among our choicest blessings, then should we more patiently and more willingly pay those taxes which He, for our good, has laid upon us.

It was not the mighty cry, the threatening malediction of an archangel, that made known to us the words, "In the world ye shall have tribulation;" but the meek, encouraging voice of the Saviour of sinners, which told us, at the same time, where we might find peace.

We make a sad mistake in looking around us, fancying that if we had this, or that, or if we were here, or there, we should be happier than we are, and have fewer taxes to pay. Every state and condition has its cares. Old Humphrey knows but little of kings, but he runs no great risk in concluding, that their costly crowns neither keep their heads nor their hearts from aching.

It may be that the cares of the world, before now, have made you long "for a lodge in some vast wilderness." You may have imagined, as I have done, how sweet and peaceful a lonely log-

house must be, in some of the States of America, with the primeval forests around you, and where there are next to no taxes : but are there no taxes, think you, in getting there, and in remaining there ?

Is it no tax to be blown by the storm out of your course ; to sail the salt sea for days and nights, for weeks, and perhaps months, till your heart is sick at the sight of it ; to drag a thousand miles up the muddy Mississippi, gazing on the floating drift-wood, the monotonous wall of forest trees, and the swampy shore, with here and there an alligator basking in the mud and slime, and myriads of mosquitoes swarming around you ?

Is it no tax to dwell in the depths of solitude, in the back woods of a new country, where the heart yearns in vain for society and friends ; where the sabbath bell is never heard, and the gospel is seldom preached ? And is it not a heavy tax to bend over the couch of sickness, when assistance and sympathy are distant, and to bury your own dead with your own hands in a strange land ? Yes, these things are enough to make a man cry out in his very dreams, “ Old England for ever ! ”

I grant that if it were possible to be set down all at once, with our fresh feelings about us, untired by travel, and unsoured by deprivation, it

would be truly delightful to gaze on the grand and glorious scenes of nature that man has never meddled with : but we are not to have things after our own fashion ; we must take them “for better and for worse,” for the taxes must be paid.

If we desire the good things that others possess, we must be content to have them on the same terms on which others hold them.

“You have no such woods and waterfalls in England as we have in America,” said a transatlantic friend to me. “Why no,” replied I, “we certainly have not : neither have we such dreary swamps, such myriads of mosquitoes, such shaggy bears, bisons, and wild oxen, such sharp-teethed cougars, such poisonous rattle-snakes, such wide-mouthed alligators, such——” It was needless to go on, for my friend had shuffled away, not expecting that I should so suddenly open upon him with a list of the taxes he had to pay for his waterfalls and his woods.

There are too many among us more desirous to obtain what we have not, than to improve what we have ; too many, who, like poor Pearson, strive hard to get rid of one tax, even though it subjects us to the payment of another.

We want to be picking and choosing, without considering the justice of the inquiry, “Shall we

receive good at the hand of God, and shall we not receive evil?" We want the "great treasure," without the "trouble therewith;" and "both hands full," without the "trouble and vexation of spirit." As well may the pilgrim hope to cross the desert without heat and thirst, and the mariner to roam the trackless deep without storm and tempest. We had better be quiet, for all our attempts to make heaven upon earth will certainly end in disappointment.

I have often thought what a world this would be, if we had had the making of it. The wisdom of the Eternal produced order out of chaos: but if we had any hand in the affairs of the universe, we should soon produce chaos out of order. Like paper kites in the air, we do pretty well while checked with a strong string; but cut the string, and let us have our own way, and, like the poor kite, we come tumbling down into the mire.

Oh! it is a happy thing when the Christian gratefully accepts God's blessings, with God's restrictions; God's summer, with God's winter; God's parental encouragements, with God's fatherly chastisements.

Now, think over these kindly-meant observations in a quiet and teachable spirit. If I know my own heart at all, they are meant for your real good.

The taxes laid upon us by the Father of mercies (which we ought gladly to pay) for the enjoyment of his favours, are comparatively very light; but the taxes we bring upon ourselves by our pride, waywardness, follies, and sins, are heavy indeed.

ON
THE UNCOMPROMISING CHARACTER
OF THE
HOLY SCRIPTURES.

I REMEMBER once being sadly annoyed by an old oak tree. A crowd of people were assembled, and I was among them, when a celebrated personage was passing by. Most of the throng saw him, and I should, unquestionably, have seen him too, had it not been for that provoking tree. It was no use my standing on tiptoe, or stretching my neck out on one side, or pressing against the tree. There it stood, and there it would stand, shutting out what I wanted to behold. My fuming and fretting were all in vain, not an inch would it stir.

And thus it oftentimes is with a text of Scripture. Do what we will with it, there it stands. It may reprove us, it may pain us, it may grieve us; but, for all this, it will not alter its significance, it will not abate aught of its uncompromising character.

Let us take an instance. There is that text of Holy Writ which says, "If ye forgive men their trespasses, your heavenly Father will also forgive

you : but if ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses," Matt. vi. 14, 15.

Now, there are some things so very provoking ! Some people who at times use us so very ill, that forgiving them seems to be a thing altogether out of the question. On common occasions we might make an effort, and pass over a great deal, we might forgive those who have offended us ; but when they have deeply injured us, and wrung our very heartstrings with their bitterness and bad conduct, must we forgive them then ? Nay, read the words. "If ye forgive not men their trespasses, neither will your Father forgive your trespasses." Think what you may, do what you will, the words will not alter their meaning. Forgive, or you will not be forgiven !

In such a case, what is to be done ? There is an old saying, "If the mountain will not come to Mohammed, Mohammed must go to the mountain." But we have no need of the saying in this instance, seeing that we have a better one in the Holy Scriptures. "Let us not fight against God," Acts xxiii. 9. "Who hath hardened himself against him, and hath prospered ?" Job ix. 4. It is in vain to expect God's word to bow down to us, and therefore we must bow down to the word of God.

What! did not the Son of God, the Saviour of sinners, forgive, when he offered up himself, the just for the unjust? What were his words, when despised, derided, betrayed, scourged, spat upon, crowned with thorns, and crucified? "Father, forgive them; for they know not what they do," Luke xxiii. 34.

Oh for a kind-hearted, a merciful, a Christian spirit, to follow such a glorious example! Father of mercies, for thy Son's sake forgive us our trespasses! Melt thou our hard and unholy hearts, and teach us to forgive all those who trespass against us!

OLD HUMPHREY IN A HAPPY MOOD.

I WALKED abroad, after reading in the word of God of the grace of the Redeemer. My heart was softened by a sense of his mercy. "He was wounded for our transgressions, he was bruised for our iniquities: the chastisement of our peace was upon him: and with his stripes we are healed," Isa. liii. 5.

The sun was in the sky: in his fiery chariot he flamed along the illumined heavens, flinging in all directions his glorious rays. The firmament above was as burnished gold, and the earth was gilded with his brightness. In an ecstasy I thanked God for the sun, while my eyes were blinded with his beams.

The snow-white clouds, heaped one upon another, sailed calmly along the clear blue sky. They were more than beautiful; I lifted up my heart to the Father of mercies: "These are thy handiworks!" With pleasure, and with unwonted capacity for enjoyment in my soul, I thanked God for the clouds, which had ministered so much to my delight.

The winds came sweeping along the corn fields, changing the yellow grain to a wavy sea of gold, and breathing around odours that gladdened my very spirit. With delight I stood, opening my mouth wide to inhale the grateful, the refreshing, and invigorating air; and with strong emotion I thanked God for the winds, while my heart danced for joy.

The oaks and elms shook their proud heads, and brandished their giant arms; the birch and the poplar turned up their silvery leaves; and the willows bent down, till they touched the very waters of the rippling brook. Their freshness, their variety, and exceeding beauty overcame me; and, with a faltering tongue, I thanked God for the trees which had given me such abundant gratification.

The wild flowers, that in profusion spread their varied hues around, now decking the shrubs, now streaming along the hedge-rows, and now spangling the grassy sod beneath my feet; the foxglove, the thistle, and stinging nettle, that gave a richness to the tangled vegetation of the banks and broken ground, all added to my joy; while the warbling birds, and the joyous myriads of the insect world, filled up the measure of my delight. The tears started to my eyes, while I thanked God for them all. "Praise God," said

I, "in his sanctuary ; praise him in the firmament of his power. Praise him for his mighty acts : praise him according to his excellent greatness. Let every thing that hath breath praise the Lord," Psa. cl. 1, 2, 6.

With delight pressing upon me from all quarters, I again thought of the immeasurable mercy of the Redeemer, who had opened a way, the only way, for fallen man to regain what he had lost by transgression. He who thought it not robbery to be equal with the Father, came down from heaven, and died for sinners upon the cross.

"Amazing grace ! oh love beyond degree !
The offended dies to set the offender free !"

Believe this, cling to this, and trust in this, O my soul, amidst all thy joys and all thy sorrows ! For when the sun shall cease to shine, and the wind to blow ; when the clouds shall be dispersed, and the flowers and the grass withered ; when the feathery songsters and the joyous insects are gone, and there shall be no walking abroad in the earth ; when this chequered world of flowery meads and rugged pathways shall pass away, a more glorious existence shall be known. Mortal pain, and sin, and death, and hell, will no more be feared by the ransomed of the Lord. Oh, what a burst of hallelujahs will they raise in

honour of their Redeemer! and how feeble is earthly joy, compared with the rapturous delight with which they will hymn forth the anthem of the redeemed: "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing. Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power be unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever!" Rev. v. 12, 13.

ON DISCIPLINE.

WHEN an indulgent father, after much forbearance and forgiveness, has to correct an offending child, he rebukes him mildly and affectionately by word of mouth; and if that does not effect his purpose, he sends him to stand alone in a corner. Should the young urchin still rebel, the next course is to take him and shake him; and if even then he be not obedient, out comes the stick, which is laid across his shoulders. It is a bad case, indeed, if none of these modes of chastisement answer the end.

It is in a way somewhat similar to this, that our heavenly Father frequently rebukes his children. He often bears long with them, but increases his punishments as needful, when they harden themselves in iniquity. The returning prodigal is willingly received; but the obstinate are visited with stripes.

If we have been convinced of our errors by his holy word, happy are we: and if the hiding of his countenance has been necessary, and we have been left alone for a season, it is well for us, if, through Divine grace, our proud hearts are

humbled. Even if we are shaken by losses and crosses, we have reason to be thankful, if thereby God has taught us to acknowledge our iniquity. Nay, if we have rendered it necessary that He should inflict the stripes of bodily affliction, we ought still to rejoice, if the chastisement of our bodies has been sanctified to the benefit of our souls. But if we have carried our rebellion so far as to be given over, cast out, and abandoned to our own reprobate hearts, then indeed is our case forlorn.

If you are bearing the merciful rebukes of God, ask him not, by your stubbornness, to withdraw himself from you. If you are standing alone in a corner, tempt him not to visit you with trials and anxiety. If you are being shaken by losses and bereavements, constrain him not to smite you with severe afflictions. And if you are stricken by painful infirmities, oh call not down on your guilty head the fearful sentence of eternal banishment from his Almighty presence.

“STAND YOUR GROUND!”

It is only an hour ago, that I heard Gideon Hawkes say to a tempted Christian, “Stand your ground, Deborah, stand your ground! When Satan takes up one arrow to annoy you, always meet him with two, drawn from the heavenly quiver, the word of God. When he throws at you your state as a lost sinner, throw at him, ‘I have found a ransom,’ Job xxxiii. 24. ‘The Son of man is come to seek and to save that which was lost,’ Luke xix. 10. When he flings at you the accusation that you are a rebel, and therefore cannot be pardoned, fling at him the pointed arrows, ‘To the Lord our God belong mercies and forgivenesses, though we have rebelled against him,’ Dan. ix. 9. ‘Christ hath redeemed us from the curse of the law, being made a curse for us,’ Gal. iii. 13. And when, enraged, he hurls at you a double dart, the blood-red character of your sins, and the infinite number of your iniquities, hurl back the triple-headed arrow in

return, ‘ Though your sins be as scarlet, they shall be as white as snow ; though they be red like crimson, they shall be as wool,’ Isa. i. 18 ; ‘ He forgiveth *all* thine iniquities,’ Psa. ciii. 3 ; and, ‘ The blood of Jesus Christ cleanseth us from *all* sin,’ 1 John i. 7.”

ON

THREE IMPORTANT POINTS.

THERE are three important points in the Christian pilgrimage. One word upon each of them.

The first is, *the setting out on our pilgrimage*. Some, through mercy, set out early, and some set out late; but whether late or early, it is a blessed event to set out at all. To have our loins girded, our feet shod, a staff placed in our hands, and our faces turned Zionward, is, I say, a mark of unmerited mercy. To be moved to take the first step in the Christian course, is the gift of a gracious God. Do you look at it in this light? To every pilgrim I would say, "God speed thee!" and to him who has not yet set out, I would cry aloud,

Oh gird thy loins, set out for heaven,
Ere earth's enjoyments wither;
And give not slumber to thine eyes,
Till thou art journeying thither!

The second is, *the going forward on our pilgrimage*; and this is oftentimes no easy matter.

Sometimes we are grievously hindered by the things behind us drawing us back ; and sometimes we are sadly frightened by the things before us driving us back. When a lion is in the way, we forget that God is able to deliver us from the lion ; and when the wilderness is spread before us, we remember not that He who sent the cloudy pillar and pillar of fire to direct his people of old, is our God, and will be our Guide unto death. "Speak unto the children of Israel that they go forward," said the Lord unto Moses, even when the sea was before them, and Pharaoh and his host behind them. Look to the same Almighty hand, pilgrim, to strengthen thee.

Though death and hell in dread array
Thy heavenly course withstand,
Go forward, pilgrim, on thy way,
And gain the promised land.

The third is, *the finishing our pilgrimage with joy, and finding the end to be eternal life* ; and this is an important point indeed. What trifles, what trumpery are the gewgaws of the world, in comparison with heaven ! Ought we not to be ashamed to desire them, when we know that "eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him,"

I Cor. ii. 9. Pilgrim, be not satisfied with husks that the swine do eat, but sit down to the fatted calf at thy Father's table.

Let all thy heart and all thy soul,
Amidst thy joys and pains,
Be set on that eternal goal,
Where Christ thy Saviour reigns.

ON
THE LILAC TREE.

I AM very fond of a sketch ; let me give you one lately drawn by me of the lilac tree.

The sun was throwing his declining beams from the western sky, and the evening breeze was sweetly breathing around with balmy breath, when, walking to the window of the room in which I had been sitting, my eyes fell on the lovely lilac tree, that, in full bloom, was gently waving to and fro within reach of my hand. Sometimes the heart is more alive than at other seasons to admire the beauty of God's creation ; a buoyant emotion rushes through the bosom ; the hands are half uplifted ; and the eye brims with a grateful tear before we are aware : it was just in such a moment as this that the lilac tree burst upon me in all its glory. I observed its beautiful pyramidic blossoms, pointing to the sky. I noticed its green leaves, that gave an additional loveliness to its flowers. I remarked the decayed and blackened blossoms of the last year, that still mingled with the fresher buds. I gazed on the

bees that hummed amid its branches, and the butterflies that, now and then, alighted on its wilderness of sweets; and I breathed the delicious odour that its freshness and its fragrance exhaled. Oh! thought I, may it be with me as it is with the lilac tree! May my desires, like its blossoms, ever point towards the skies! May I be adorned with kind affections, and holy aspirations, more abidingly lovely than its greenest leaves! May I, like it, breathe a grateful influence around me! May multitudes derive more pleasure and profit from my example, than the bees and butterflies do from its fairest flowers! And may age find me, like the last year's blossoms of the lilac tree, surrounded with youthful kindred, ready to occupy my place with renovated lustre, beaming forth the beauty of holiness, and casting around them the fragrance of a well-spent life!

A REVIVER.

I HAVE just had a reviver from my zealous friend Gideon, in the following words:—“What manner of men ought we to be, Humphrey, who are running the race set before us, full of the hope of the gospel of Christ, and abounding in the consolations of the promises of God! What an exalted standard ought we to attain to! How fresh and alive should we be in serving our Lord and Master! How dead and buried to the world! To what a vast height should we soar in our devotion! To what a profound depth should we descend in our humiliation!

“Well may we ask, Who is sufficient for these things? and happy for us if we can answer, ‘Our sufficiency is of God,’ 2 Cor. iii. 5. Are you not frightened by the words, ‘Except your righteousness shall exceed the righteousness of the scribes and Pharisees, ye shall in no case enter into the kingdom of heaven?’ Matt. v. 20. Why, if we had not the Friend of sinners for our Friend; if he were not our guard and guide, our sword and shield, our hope and our joy, our grace and our

glory; if he were not **our** all in all, our sacrifice, our justification, our sanctification, and our redemption, we should have enough to sink us into the slough of despondency for ever.

“Up, and be doing, Humphrey. Let us be no longer children, but acquit ourselves like men. The sons and daughters of a king should be kingly in their thoughts. The heirs of heaven should be heavenly in their desires. Let us press on, well knowing that, amid all our infirmities, more are those that are with us than those that are against us. Let us be ‘stedfast, unmoveable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, forasmuch as ye know that your labour is not in vain in the Lord,’ 1 Cor. xv. 58.”

ON
UNREASONABLENESS.

SURELY man is the most unreasonable of all God's creatures! Feed the birds of the air, or the beasts of the field, and they will be satisfied; but the more is given to man, the more he requires.

If he have riches, he will hug his bags of gold, and carry out his plans to increase them. If he have estates, he will join house to house, field to field, and vineyard to vineyard: give him a county, or a kingdom, and he will crave for more.

When we rise in the morning, we expect to pass through the day prosperously. If we lie down to rest at night, we expect to enjoy refreshing slumber. If we propose a journey, we expect to perform it unmolested and uninjured.

If we pass through one birth-day, we expect to arrive at another in good health; to eat and to drink, to ride and to walk, to wake and to sleep in peace, without considering that these

things cannot take place, unless God, of his infinite mercy, keeps us from a thousand temptations, and delivers us from ten thousand dangers.

So continually are we partaking of God's blessings, that we look on them as things of course: the seed we sow, must, in our apprehension, spring up abundantly; our tables must be provided for, and the mercies of yesterday must be supplied to-day, and those of this year continued to us through the next. How seldom do we offer up the prayer, "Give us this day our daily bread," Matt. vi. 11, with a full consciousness of our entire dependence on our heavenly Father for our earthly supplies! And how frequently do we feel more gratitude to our fellow worms, for a passing act of kindness, than to the Lord of life and glory for his permanent and unmerited mercies! We bow and cringe to a fellow sinner, to obtain at his hands the empty baubles of an hour, while the love of the Redeemer of the world, the means of grace, and the hope of eternal glory, are sought for with indifference.

Let us look more on our common mercies as the gifts of God. Let our health and our strength, our days and our nights, our bits and our drops, and our meanest comforts, be regarded as being

bestowed by a heavenly Benefactor; and let us bear in mind our own unworthiness, that we may be more reasonable in our desires, and more grateful when they are attained.

ON READING.

THE other day, it happened that, while I was sitting in the midst of a family, in which were several young people, the doctor called, one of the party being a little ailing. Now, the doctor is a friendly man, of good parts, and of a kind-hearted disposition; but very unsound in his religious views, inasmuch as he is guided by his own opinions, instead of the records of eternal truth.

It has often puzzled me how it is that some medical men, who so ardently seek to know, and who understand so much better than others, the wonderful frame-work of the body, should manifest so much apathy and ignorance respecting the soul. I always liked the society of medical men; but, for all that, Old Humphrey is not one that will tickle their ears with pleasant words, when he sees an opportunity of touching their hearts with a salutary truth. There are many doctors who are well versed in, and influenced by the Holy Scriptures, to their own advantage, and to that of their patients; but there are others, who

think neither of the souls of their patients, nor of their own.

We were speaking of books, and of the great influence they had over the minds of their readers, when the doctor unhesitatingly gave it as his opinion, that young people should be permitted to read what books they pleased, good and bad, without restriction, to enable them to form a correct judgment respecting them.

“Young persons,” said he, “who are not allowed to do this, are sure to form very cramped and precise notions.”

“Well,” thinks I, “the doctor gives his physic to those who want it, and why should not Old Humphrey? a little dose on this occasion cannot hurt the doctor; and if it should do him no good, perhaps it may do some to the young people around me;” for they, very naturally, thought a good deal of what fell from the lips of their medical friend.

“Let us see,” said I, “how your principle would work in common life; for my notions, I must confess, are so ‘cramped and precise,’ that I prefer, as a guide in such matters, the experience of a thoughtful parent, to the inexperience of a thoughtless child. What say you to allow your own children to meddle with your own drugs, and to let them taste, without restraint, your

powders and potions, to enable them to form a correct judgment of their influence? The first packet might be magnesia, which could not do them much harm; but if the second happened to be arsenic, which is not very unlike it, they would most probably be poisoned. If, instead of going to the substances, they went to the liquids, the first phial might have in it tincture of rhubarb, but the second might contain prussic acid, which would cause immediate death.

“There is certainly a difference between books and the contents of the apothecary’s shop, and it is this—that the one is medicine for the body, and the other for the mind. Books and medicines are both influential, and the prussic acid, which destroys the life of the body, is not more deadly than the bad books that poison the principles of the soul.”

I tried to say this kindly, but am rather fearful that my natural quickness of temper in some degree got the better of my prudence; for the doctor made me no reply, and the young people seemed more disposed to talk with their medical friend than to listen to my observations.

It is something, however, to sow good seed: it may not all fall in stony places, but spring up when least expected, and bring forth fifty and a hundred fold. “In the morning sow thy seed,

and in the evening withhold not thine hand: for thou knowest not whether shall prosper, either this or that, or whether they both shall be alike good," Eccles. xi. 6.

ON THE COURSE OF
A ZION-BOUND PILGRIM.

I HAVE had a communication from my kind Christian friend Simeon, in which he has set forth the different stages through which a pilgrim has to pass, before he shakes off the dust of earth from his feet, and wears a crown of glory on his brow. I have read it over with some interest, and copy down a part of it, thinking that you may get some good from its perusal, and perhaps be able to ascertain by it at what stage you have arrived. The following are his observations:—

“I do think there are many, who, in their ignorance, suppose that by their deeds they shall be saved. In the ears of such it must sound like hard language to say, that a man may fast and pray, and, like David, offer up continual praise, reading God’s word, and attending his holy ordinances, and yet labour in vain. Such can hardly believe that a man may endow hospitals by dozens, and build churches as huge as St. Paul’s or St. Peter’s, and not be a whit nearer heaven than before.

“But what a lamentable state of ignorance, of utter blindness of heart, to be in such a case! How different it is, when the scales are removed from the eyes of the spiritually blind! The heart is then seen in all its deformity, its deceitfulness, its blackness, and its rebellion. When the word of God is understood, it pierces to the joints and the marrow, laying the bosom bare, and exposing the exceeding sinfulness of the human heart. Now, when you meet with such a case as this, Humphrey, how do you deal with it? Do you go to work with the hatchet and sledge hammer of the law, breaking the already broken bones of the terrified sinner, or do you pour into his wounds the balm and the oil of the gospel of peace? Do you point him to the lightning and thunder of Mount Sinai, to complete his despair, or to the garden of Gethsemane, and the uplifted cross on Calvary, to melt him to contrition? In a word, do you weigh him down by buckling the back-breaking load of his sins on his shoulders, or give him a refreshing draught of the brook of God’s promises by the way, that he may lift up his head?

“It seems to me, Humphrey, in such a case as this, better to avoid extremes, and neither to afflict willingly, nor to heal the wound too soon. Let the affliction bide awhile, haply it may be

sanctified ; and sanctified affliction is a valuable thing—a precious gift in the hand of Divine love.

“In this season of fear and darkness, however, it will be well to pour in knowledge, and to make known the way of salvation ; pointing out the mode in which it pleases God usually to deal with his people. In the first concern for the soul, the sinner usually thinks that he has some great thing to do, whereas the principal thing is for him to see that a great thing has been done for him. What is salvation, but the saving of the lost ? The restoring a fallen creature to the love of God, by the Saviour taking away the barrier between him and God’s favour, and by imparting to him a new, a holy, and a Divine nature, that can find peace and joy only in the love and favour of God ?

“It will be well, I say, to enlighten the alarmed conscience, by setting forth the way in which a sinner is brought out of darkness into marvellous light, through a death unto sin, to a new birth unto righteousness. I grant that it is no easy thing to reduce the operations of Divine grace to any given rule or standard, seeing that God, in infinite compassion, deals differently with his people, according to the circumstances of the case ; yet still, in most things, a certain kind of order is observed. We must feel our need of a Saviour,

before we seek him. A sense of guilt must, of necessity, precede a sense of pardon, and faith go before that peace of God which passes understanding.

“ I have been penning down what appears to me the most ordinary course of a Zion-bound pilgrim, from his first alarm in the City of Destruction, to his entering the golden gates of the heavenly Jerusalem. If in aught you can amend my chart, Humphrey, if you can blot out any thing wrong, and add to it any thing that is right, it will be a friendly act. The way of salvation should be a highway to us all, and the finger-posts erected thereon should be plainly inscribed. Pilgrims may be seen in every one of the twelve stages that I have marked down.

“ 1. A sense of sin comes over the mind, often accompanied by a fearful looking-for of judgment and fiery indignation.

“ 2. A despondency on account of inward transgression.

“ 3. An earnest desire to flee from the wrath to come.

“ 4. An attendance on public worship, reading the Holy Scriptures, and frequent prayer.

“ 5. An increase of knowledge, a shunning of worldly companions, and a love of holy things.

“ 6. A looking to Jesus, an abhorrence of sin, a desire after holiness, a hope of salvation.

“ 7. Firm faith in a crucified Redeemer, delight in holy ordinances and the company of God’s people.

“ 8. An attendance at the Lord’s table, an increased love for the Saviour, and a solicitude for the salvation of sinners.

“ 9. A greater withdrawing from the world, a following hard after God, an ardent love of souls, and a zeal to extend the Redeemer’s kingdom.

“ 10. Resignation to God’s will, patience under affliction, a warmer love, a brighter hope, a firmer faith, a glorying in the cross of Christ.

“ 11. A sanctified influence and a holiness of heart communicated, with a longing to be with Christ.

“ 12. A departing in peace, with an unreserved dependence on Christ for salvation ; an abundant entrance into glory.”

In the midst of this course, many a dark, doubting, and desponding moment may be passed through. Many a sharp struggle with infirmity will take place, and many a hard-fought battle with sin must be won ; yet still believers will come off “ more than conquerors ” through Christ, “ who hath loved us, and hath given himself for us,” Rom. vii. 37 ; Eph. v. 2.

THE
UNWELCOME PASSENGER.

SOME years ago, in travelling one evening towards London, I happened to be the only passenger inside the mail. There are seasons when we would not willingly travel without company, but, being at the time in a reflective mood, I hoped that no one would disturb me. For some miles I had my wish; suddenly, however, the mail stopped near the gate of a farm-house, and a man of an unusual size soon clambered up the steps into the coach. From the glance I had of him, assisted by the bright lamp on that side of the mail-coach, I concluded, at once, that he was some honest farmer, who would talk of nothing, the whole of the way, but turnips, clover-seed, barley, pigs, sheep, and cattle. I speak not of these things disparagingly, they are each and all of them interesting and important; but I was no farmer, and besides, my head was full of other things.

To defend myself, as well as I could, from so unwelcome a trespass on my reflections, I affected to be sleepy, and leaned back my head in the corner of the mail; but my fellow traveller was

not to be so easily defrauded of a friendly chat ; he began at once, just as I had anticipated, to speak of the effect of the late rain on the turnips.

To all he said, I replied yes, or no, as the case required, and hoped that he would soon relapse into silence, but in this I was quite mistaken. Finding it impossible to evade his conversation, I tried to submit with a good grace, and endure patiently what I could not avoid. But here it will be well honestly to confess, that I thought very little of the farmer, and plumed myself highly on my superior knowledge. In short, I felt, in talking to my companion, like a man who confers a favour by his condescension. Such is the weakness, the folly, the pride, and the vanity of the human heart.

After speaking of the produce of the ground, of cattle, and of the high prices of some things, and the low prices of others, my companion ran into other topics, and so completely astonished me by the extent of his practical information, that I began to wonder wherever and however he had contrived to pick up so much knowledge.

He spoke of the value of human labour as compared to machinery, of the population and resources of the country, of its mines, its manufactures, and its commerce, of the poor laws, of capital, and of the influence of paper money. In

short, he got so far beyond me, that I felt like a schoolboy in the presence of his master. Yes, the very man whom I had estimated so low as to think myself greatly his superior, was as a giant on practical subjects, and I as a dwarf.

On inquiry, I ascertained that he was a man largely interested in mines, that the workmen employed by him amounted to several thousands, that the advantage of his practical knowledge was sought by the ministers of state, and that at the time when he travelled with me, he was on his way, with calculations of an important nature, to the first lord of the treasury, the prime minister of England.

I felt little in my own eyes. Oh, it does us good, when puffed up with an undue notion of our own importance, to meet with a reprimand like this. It was a rap on the knuckles that I shall not soon forget, nor do I think that, from that time to this, I have ever undervalued a man on account of his appearance. What my companion thought of me I cannot tell, but I know well what I thought of myself. It was altogether a humiliating affair, and taught me to prize more highly than I did before, the injunction of Holy Writ, "Mind not high things, but condescend to men of low estate. Be not wise in your own conceits," Rom. xii. 16.

ON THE
APPEARANCE OF THINGS.

THINGS are not exactly what they appear in any case ; but in some cases, they are as different from what they appear, as one thing can be from another. To know this in age is well, but could we know it in youth, it would be invaluable. This, however, cannot be expected ; it is experience, and sometimes bitter experience only, that can correct our mistakes in this particular. Our very outward senses lead us astray, until they are assisted by knowledge and judgment, from the days of our infancy. A child thinks that the sun and the moon are no larger than they appear to be ; in his estimation they are about the size of a pot-lid, or a wooden trencher. You may tell him, if you will, that they are bigger than the house ; but you must tell him so many times over, before he will believe you.

A counterfeit may look very much like a golden coin, but there is a great difference between them ; and when we have mistaken the one for the other, we feel sadly disappointed. It is so with

a thousand things in the world ; they are not half so valuable as they seem to be.

In the days of my youth, when playing with half a dozen of my companions, we saw something at a distance that shone as brightly as a diamond ; and a pretty scamper we had to get hold of it. A high hedge, a deep ditch, and a boggy field, lay between us and that which had so much excited our attention ; but had the hedge been higher than it was, the ditch deeper, and the field ten times more boggy, it would not have hindered us from obtaining the prize. After tearing our clothes, splashing ourselves up to the neck, and running till we were out of breath, we found that what glittered in the sun's rays like a diamond, was nothing more than a bit of glass—a piece of an old broken bottle ! Now, I will venture to say, that you have, many a time, given yourself as much trouble as we did, and got nothing better than a piece of a broken bottle for your pains.

When a young man, Old Humphrey once saw a beautiful blue cloud resting on the side of a very high mountain in Cumberland, called the Skiddaw, and he thought it would be a very pleasant thing to climb up close to it ; so he made the attempt : and if you have ever climbed up a mountain half as high and as steep as he

found the Skiddaw to be, you will know that the undertaking was not an easy one. Oh, how many times did I turn my back to the mountain, to rest myself, before I had clambered half-way up its rugged sides! I did reach the cloud at last, but had not much reason to congratulate myself. That which appeared from Keswick vale a beautiful blue cloud, was, when I approached it, nothing more than a thick mist. Not only was it without beauty, but it hindered me from seeing anything that was beautiful. The lovely valley, and the magnificent lake below me, were completely hidden from my view; and I came down from the Skiddaw, to my reproach be it spoken, in a much worse temper than that in which I had ascended it. Often since then have I got into a mist, in following out the foolish inclinations of my heart. How has it been with you?

What a world of trouble we give ourselves to attain what is of little value! and disappointment works no cure; the failure of yesterday prevents not the expectation of to-day, and the blighted promise of to-day destroys not the hope of to-morrow.

Again I say, that things are not what they appear, and we willingly allow ourselves to be cheated from childhood to old age, by running after, or climbing to obtain, that which is any thing but

the thing we take it to be. Oh that we could use this world as not abusing it, remembering that the fashion of it passeth away! But, no! In vain the wise man tells us of the things we seek, that "all is vanity and vexation of spirit." In vain an apostle exhorts us to set our "affections on things above, not on things on the earth." Disbelieving the assertion of the one, and disregarding the exhortation of the other, we still, like children, run after bubbles, that lose their brightness the moment they are possessed.

Old Humphrey is ashamed to think how keen a relish he has for the very things which have deceived him again and again. The glittering will-o'-the-wisps that dance before him, look so like friendly tapers in hospitable dwellings, that he sometimes follows them, even now, till the bogs they lead him into convince him of his mistake. We may safely conclude, that "all is not gold that glitters," nor all pure that looks like snow.

But while we thus complain that things are not what they appear, are we ourselves what we appear to be? Though I have been speaking of other matters, this is the question that I wanted to come to. This question brought home to our hearts, is like cutting the finger-nail to the quick; taking a thorn out of a tender part; or, indeed, touching the apple of the eye: but it is worth while to put

it, for all that. Other people may pose us, but the closest method of questioning is, to question ourselves. Are we, then, what we appear to be? For if we are either ignorant of the evil of our own hearts, or railing against others when we are more guilty than they are, it is high time that such a state of things should be altered.

Were the Searcher of all hearts to put the inquiry to you, and to me, Art thou what thou appearest to be? would not the reply be, "If I justify myself, mine own mouth shall condemn me: if I say, I am perfect, it shall also prove me perverse. Behold, I am vile; what shall I answer thee? I will lay mine hand upon my mouth," Job ix. 20; xl. 4.

PART OF A LETTER,

COPIED OUT BY

OLD HUMPHREY.

ON Monday last I received a long epistle from my zealous friend Gideon, and as I think a profitable hint or two may be taken from one part of it, that part I will now copy out for your perusal. It is as follows :—

“In the days of my youth, I once saw a man, blindfolded, dancing in the midst of some eggs, laid at different distances from each other on the ground; and this he did without breaking them. A minister that I heard yesterday, who denied the Divinity of Jesus Christ, put me in mind of him. I thought that he was as much blindfolded as the other; and I am sure that he took as much pains to avoid certain texts of Scripture, as ever the dancer did to avoid the eggs.

“Oh, what a blessing it is, Humphrey, to have a clear view of the Lord of life and glory, both in his Divine and human nature, with a single eye to his praise!

“There are many who, though not Jews, Turks, infidels, or heathens, can hardly be said to be Christians ; that is, they do not worship the God of the Bible—the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost of Holy Scripture. If Christians were at liberty to accept one part of Divine revelation, and reject another ; if, at pleasure, they might add to, or diminish from, the attributes of Almighty God, as set forth in the pages of Holy Writ, then soon would there be gods many, and lords many, among Christian professors ; but we have not this liberty : with holy reverence we are bound to believe, to love, to honour, and to obey our Leader and Lord, as he has made himself known in his word.

“When the true God is not worshipped, it matters not what idol we set up in his place ; whether it be the sun or the moon, a brazen serpent, or a golden calf, a crucifix, a god of our own making, or our own unrighteous self-righteousness, it matters not the value of a straw. In all such cases, we rob God of his glory. It matters not whose subjects we are, if we renounce allegiance to the King of kings and Lord of lords.

“I trust that, some day or other, through mercy, the bandage will be taken from the eyes of the preacher I have heard, that he may read the whole of his Bible, to the praise of the Redeemer,

and the good of his own soul; and then among other texts of Holy Scripture he will find the following:—‘There is no God else beside me; a just God and a Saviour,’ Isa. xlv. 21, 22. ‘I and my Father are one,’ John x. 30. ‘Grieve not the Holy Spirit of God, whereby ye are sealed unto the day of redemption,’ Eph. iv. 30. ‘We know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding, that we may know him that is true, and we are in him that is true, even in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life. Little children, keep yourselves from idols,’” 1 John v. 20, 21.

ON ORDER.

THE subject of Order is well worth your consideration, for it is one that may have an influence over the affairs of every day, and every waking hour of your lives. Now, try to go with me in my view of the matter, and do not pass it over as a trifling affair. None can speak so feelingly of an advantage as he who has suffered by his folly in neglecting it. The trouble that I have endured in years gone by, through carelessness and neglect of orderly habits, leads me to give you some advice.

It would perhaps be difficult to determine which is the greater; the comfort derived from order, or the inconvenience brought about by disorder. Order renders all affairs clearer; disorder confuses them. Order relieves the memory; disorder increases the duties it has to perform. Order removes a burden from the back; disorder lays an additional load on the shoulders. If you have ever seen an impatient girl attempting to unravel a knotted skein of silk, or a peevish boy vainly trying to undo the tangled tail of his kite, you

have seen a lively illustration of the additional trouble which carelessness produces.

The poet says, "Order is Heaven's first law ;" but as poets are not always the most diligent readers of the Bible, nor the most fervent petitioners at the throne of grace for Divine illumination, so I consider they are not the best authorities in heavenly things. We will, therefore, leave this point, and rest satisfied in knowing that, whether order be the first law or not, it is a very essential and striking principle in all the works of God.

System is seen in God's almighty power,
In bird and beast, in herb, and fruit, and flower ;
And all throughout the vast expanse above,
Sun, moon, and stars, in matchless order move.

While I am noting down these remarks, the ever-blessed Book of truth lies beside me, and I cannot but think how many an aged servant of Christ has been perplexed, in turning over its pages, in search after some particular promise, which, in a season of trial, perhaps, had been a cordial to his heart, "oil to his joints, and marrow to his bones." Many a spiritually minded pilgrim has yearned to find out some favourite portion of God's word, which, when found, has comforted his soul; he has drunk of the brook by the way, and lifted up his head. But, oh, what poring,

what turning over of the leaves has there been, to find the object of his search! Now, the Concordance of Cruden would have saved him all this trouble. The order in which the words of Holy Writ are there arranged, renders it an easy thing to find, with its assistance, any text, from the first chapter of Genesis, to the last of Revelation. My Concordance in the green-grained cover was the gift of a friend, and a valuable one too: it is always in use, and if I feel grateful to any author, it is to Cruden.

Order, though of great use even in hand work, is especially so where the head is much employed; then it is wonderful how little can be done without order, and how much with it.

I knew a worthy man, (he has long since worn a crown of glory,) who used every morning to mark down the most important things necessary to be done in the day. If, by any unlooked-for circumstance, he did not get through the whole list, he carried on the remainder to the day following: by this orderly mode he seemed, in the midst of an active life, always to have time at his disposal. But I have a particular instance of order to mention.

The other day I popped into the study of an editor, who, if he were not orderly, could never, by any possibility, get through the fourth part of

the literary labours he performs. You may be sure that I looked around me; but bear in mind that Old Humphrey is no pryer into the secrets of others: he would feel ashamed if his roving eye fell upon an opened letter, or a confidential paper, with which he had nothing to do. No! no! he would not willingly tread on forbidden ground in these matters; but you shall hear what he has yet to say.

Any one unaccustomed to literary pursuits, would have been frightened at the very thought of finding his way through the mass of papers piled around. Books of all sizes were there, some opened, and some shut; some in leathern jackets, and some fresh from the printer, without any jackets at all; some black-lettered, hundreds of years old; and some common type, of which the printing ink was scarcely dry: files of letters, packets of papers, folded sheets of closely written foolscap, scraps, periodicals, engravings, and wood-cuts. These things would have driven me half crazy.

While I stole a glance on the right hand and on the left, the editor went to one side of the room, and slid back a kind of shutter, behind which were a number of snug pigeon-holes, well supplied with papers. Being allowed to examine these pigeon-holes, I saw that they were all labelled in

a very orderly manner. First and foremost was one for the "Holy Scriptures," and here were deposited such papers as were written on, or had reference to, the word of the Most High. Next came the labels, "Botany," "Farming," "Gardening," and after that, "Animated Nature," and the "Human Frame." If the Holy Scriptures are a revelation of the will of God in Divine things, the works of creation are a revelation too of his amazing power, infinite wisdom, and almighty care in earthly things: no wonder, then, that a place in the pigeon-hole should be reserved for pieces treating on the subjects already named. "Philosophy," "Chemistry," "Astronomy," "Natural Phenomena," and "Antiquities," came next; and then came the space for "Evangelizers." The papers which found their way into this pigeon-hole were to be of full tale and weight; they were expected to come up to the gospel standard. Wickliff, Bradford, Latimer, and Ridley; Knox, Tindal, Cranmer, and Jewell, would have been the men to have filled up this pigeon-hole; or Baxter, Flavel, Scott, Hall, and Leighton; or Boston of Ettrick, and Ralph and Ebenezer Erskine, and fifty other such heavenly-minded scribes. The mere names of these men warm my very heart; but I must on with my tale.

The next pigeon-hole was marked "Philanthropy," and then followed the label "Enliveners." Old Humphrey felt that he could almost have written a paper on the spot for this pigeon-hole. "True Narratives," "Facts," "Anecdotes," "Useful Information," and "History," were put together; and after them, "Household Stuff," and "Interesting Pieces" of a general kind. The last two labels were "Miscellaneous;" one of them decidedly religious, and the other of a moral and instructive cast.

Now, it must be plain to you, that this method of reducing a mass of papers into order is an excellent one. It simplifies what is complicated, and greatly adds to the dispatch of important business.

The lesson to be gathered from what I have told you is this, that if concerns of such magnitude can be orderly arranged, surely you and I may conduct our little affairs without confusion. There is so much power, and so much peace, communicated by orderly habits, that we sadly stand in our own light when we neglect them.

After writing in my parlour thus far on the subject of order, I had occasion to tramp up-stairs into my study, when the large round table in the centre, and the chairs near it, presented a spectacle so completely at variance with the orderly

opinions which had so recently dribbled from my pen, that I stood amazed, with my remarks in my mind.

Whether a young relation of mine, who sometimes coaxes me over to let him enter my study, had been there among my papers; or whether the kitten had been endeavouring to decipher them, or cutting her capers in the middle of them, I could not at the time decide: but if one or both of these events had taken place, scarcely could my literary establishment have appeared in a more unfavourable plight.

Cruden's Concordance was lying open, back uppermost; two bundles of letters, one answered, and the other not, were mingled together. Four black-letter tomes, three numbers of the Visitor, Bailey's Dictionary, and a Van Diemen's Land Almanack had been piled up, with the Bible Catechism at top: but somehow or other, they had toppled over, and lay untidily, stretching half across the table. Papers, printed, written, and ready to be written upon, lay in sad confusion; even my old "trumpery bag" was turned over, half emptied of its contents; and out of the six chairs, five of them were occupied with papers, put down apparently just for the moment, and intended to be removed.

Now when I came seriously to take myself to task, and recollected, that for some days I had sat down in the parlour, not having been well; when I considered, too, that during that time I had frequently gone into the study, and put things down carelessly, here and there, and taken up others hastily, there seemed almost enough evidence to convict me of being the author of my study's disorder. I could not, with a safe conscience, accuse either the kitten or my young relation, and I felt an accusing glow on my cheeks, that either went to, or came from my very heart.

Without waiting a moment longer, I set to work. The chairs were soon emptied; the letters assorted and tied up in separate bundles; the papers were placed in an orderly manner. Cruden's Concordance was put in its proper place; the black-letter tomes, the Van Diemen's Land Almanack, the Visitors, and Bailey's Dictionary were once again piled up like a pyramid, with the Bible Catechism at the top; and at the moment I am noting down these remarks, my study makes a very creditable appearance.

You see that I have not spared myself: mind that you spare not yourselves in this matter, for order is an excellent thing. Ahithophel, though

bent on self-destruction, set his house in order ; David desired his very steps might be ordered of God ; Solomon set his proverbs in order ; Luke set in order the truths of the gospel of Christ ; and Paul promised to order the affairs of the church of Corinth, when he came among them.

In our worldly affairs, in our Bible reading, in our attendance on the word of God, in our religious exercises, and our appeals to a throne of grace, let us be orderly. In short, "Let all things be done decently and in order," and, with a blessing from above, we shall reap from the practice incalculable advantage.

THE
IMPROVIDENT TRAVELLER.

A CERTAIN traveller, who had a distance to go, one part of his road leading through green fields, and the other through a tangled road of brambles and thorns, made great preparation for the first part of his journey.

He dressed himself in light and gay clothes, and put a cake in his pocket; he stuck a nose-gay in his bosom, and taking a light slender cane in his hand, nimbly proceeded on his way along the beaten path across the green meadows. The sun shone in the skies, and on went the traveller comfortably, pleasantly, and delightfully.

After a while, the road became rugged, and, by the time night drew on, the traveller was in a pitiable plight. His provisions were exhausted; his clothes wet through, and partly torn from his back by the briars; his flowers were faded; and, weary as he was, his slender cane would not bear his weight: a stream of water was before him, and darkness around him.

“Alas!” said he, smiting his breast, “I am hungry, and have no food; wet to the skin, and have no dry clothes; weary, and no staff to rest on; I have a stream to cross, and here is no boat; I am bewildered, and have no guide; it is dark, and I have no lantern. Fool that I am! why did I not provide for the end of my journey, as well as for the beginning?”

My friends, time is hastening away: you are travellers! You are every moment hastening nearer to the end of your journey, and to the eternity beyond it. If you have made preparation for both, happy are you; but if otherwise, you resemble the foolish traveller.

ON REFLECTION.

REFLECTION, among other advantages, enables men to arrive at the point to which they would go, by a plainer and shorter pathway than that usually trodden. How often have we accomplished undertakings with great labour and pains, which experience has afterwards enabled us to effect in a much better manner, with half the exertion! A man has a boggy and undrainable field, through which his family must pass in their road to a place of Divine worship, or go half a mile round by a dirty lane. He sets to work to form a pathway, and with great labour makes a bad road half across the boggy ground, and then gives up the undertaking, on account of the expense and trouble. A neighbour of greater reflection advises him to lay small faggots of wood at stepping distances from each other: by this means he constructs a good dry footpath, with one-tenth of the expense and trouble, beside the advantage of enabling his family to go regularly, where before they went very seldom, to hear the word of God.

Or whether mean or poor,
Or blessed with house and lands,
One thinking head does more
Than twenty working hands.

A farmer, having to drive his team daily along a lane, in which is a valley, and after that a hill, resolves to dig gravel in a neighbouring pit, wherewith to fill up the valley; but no sooner does he set to work, than a reflecting friend gives him a little useful advice. "If," says he, "instead of getting your gravel from the pit, you take it off the top of the hill, you will do your work much sooner, and get rid of two evils instead of one. Your hill will be lowered, and your valley raised up." Here again is the advantage of reflection.

While thoughtless mortals waste their strength in vain,
Reflecting minds with ease their ends attain.

A husbandman finding the road from his farm blocked up with snow, determines to cut a way through it; but while he ponders on the great labour of his undertaking, he is struck with the plan of rolling it over with a heavy roller, thus rendering the road passable with little trouble. The plan succeeds, and he becomes convinced of the advantages of reflection. The process of

beating down the snow, by drawing over it a heavy iron roller with stout horses, is practised with advantage in America; and, on one occasion, the road from Stobo Castle to Peebles, in Scotland, a distance of seven miles, when blocked up with snow, was, in a few hours, rendered passable for loaded carts.

Reflection serves alike the small and great;

It smooths the rough, and makes the crooked straight.

But if reflection is useful in mending the roads of earth, it is equally useful in clearing the pathway to heaven. It is absolutely necessary when we begin our course; and how many a stumbling-block in the road of Christian duty is removed! how many a rough dispensation has been made plain! how many a crooked providence has been straightened, by reflecting on God's goodness, and meditating on his precious word! "Commune with your own heart upon your bed, and be still," Psa. iv. 4. Call to mind the faithfulness of God, the boundless love of the Redeemer, and "meditate thereon day and night." "Blessed is the man that walketh not in the counsel of the ungodly, nor standeth in the way of sinners, nor sitteth in the seat of the scornful. But his delight is in the law of the Lord; and in his law

doth he meditate day and night. And he shall be like a tree planted by the rivers of water, that bringeth forth his fruit in his season: his leaf also shall not wither, and whatsoever he doeth shall prosper," Psa. i. 1—3.

ON
VISITING CATHEDRALS.

LIKE many other people, I am fond of visiting cathedrals ; and few persons are more affected by the Gothic arches, the clustering pillars, the carved ceilings, the stained glass windows, and the olden monuments of these ancient temples. I cannot pace the broad grey stones in the ample nave ; nor gaze on the cross-legged crusader, in his chain-mail, lying on his back ; nor on the old lord or baron, kneeling in his trunk hose, without emotions of solemnity, heightened by the pealing organ, pouring by turns its softened harmony and arresting thunder.

I know that these things are but the perishable elements of passing time ; but they soften my spirit, awakening within me reflections that humble my proud heart, and dispose my thoughts to meditation. Wherever the dead lie, the spot is favourable to the reflections of the living ; but education and habit have, in my case, clothed a cathedral with an influence to which I willingly surrender myself. The past, the present, and

the future, crowd round about me, and impress me with a more feeling persuasion of the fading nature of earthly things. Lichfield cathedral, with its richly decorated front ; Canterbury, with its olden shrines ; York, with its splendid window ; and the abbey of abbeys, Westminster, with many others, have afforded me much gratification.

Some years ago, having visited Hereford and Gloucester cathedrals, I passed an hour or two in that of Worcester. After admiring several beautiful monuments, I stood in a musing mood opposite that erected to Bishop Hough, when my conductor, a man with a long wand in his hand, came up close to me, and said, "I see, sir, that you admire that beautiful piece of workmanship. Some time ago, Bacon, the celebrated sculptor, came from London on purpose to examine it ; and he stood, as you have done, for a long time, just where you are now standing, and in just the same attitude : you quite bring him to my recollection."

Feeling a little flattered that I should in any way resemble so distinguished an artist, the remark was impressed on my memory, and I dare say that my gratuity to my conductor was not a niggardly one.

Another year rolled away, and, passing through Worcester, I paid another visit to the cathedral.

My old friend was again in attendance, and accompanied me, while I once more inspected the monuments, as though I had never been in the place before. When I came to that of Bishop Hough, I went to the old spot, crossed my arms, and gazed on the monument before me. In a short time my conductor came up to me, and said, "I see, sir, you are admiring that monument: it is by far the best piece of workmanship in the place. You very much remind me of the celebrated Bacon, who came down from London on purpose to examine it. He stood just where you are standing, and in the same attitude, and fixed his eyes upon it for nearly an hour: you quite bring him to my recollection."

I could scarcely forbear laughing in the man's face, though I was a little mortified, for it now appeared that Bacon was a standing dish, which my conductor, no doubt, set before every visitor whom he thought likely to swallow it.

Though this affair amused me at the time, when I reflected on it afterwards, I could not but call to mind how much flattery is condemned in the word of God. "He that speaketh flattery to his friends, even the eyes of his children shall fail," Job xvii. 5. "The Lord shall cut off all flattering lips, and the tongue that speaketh proud things," Psa. xii. 3. These passages of the

Sacred Scriptures not only rebuke the sin of flattery, but also point out that it will assuredly be followed with punishment.

In visiting another cathedral, the vergers who conducted me finished almost all his observations by saying, "It was done by our dean." I admired a beautiful monument; "It was put up by our dean." I was struck with the elegance of a costly screen, carved all over with well-executed figures; "It was designed two years ago by our dean." I lingered with pleasure, looking on a magnificent window of painted glass; "It came from Italy, and was paid for by our dean." In short, so far as the cathedral was concerned, the dean seemed to have done almost every thing; and I could only desire that he might be more free from conceit than the vergers appeared to be, and as much interested in the souls of those committed to his charge as he undoubtedly was in the beauty of his cathedral.

A FABLE.

IN ancient times, wise men were accustomed to instruct those around them by parables and fables; and men, not over wise, might, even now, pursue the same course with advantage. I am half inclined to try my hand at a fable. If any good can be derived from it, it will be well; and if not, it will only add another to the many instances wherein Old Humphrey, with a good intention, has laboured in vain. Now, then, I will begin :

Weak is the head that is not able
To gather wisdom from a fable.

A ship, in olden times, richly laden, and somewhat obstructed by the winds, had on board many inexperienced and discontented seamen, who, though they were very ignorant, took upon themselves the management of the vessel. Over anxious to reach their desired haven, they murmured at the slow progress of the ship, and, consulting together, endeavoured to find out the cause. They knew it could not be the hull—that was well-built and water-tight; neither was it the masts—they were straight, strong, and of

the best materials ; the rigging was good in every respect ; and the sails, swelling with the wind, excited universal admiration. It was, at length, observed, that some tons of sand, apparently of no use, were stowed in the bottom of the vessel, and all agreed that it must be the sand which impeded their progress. They set to work immediately, and in a short time the sand was thrown into the sea. Scarcely had they ended their labour, when a storm arose, and the vessel rolled about on the waves, first on one side and then on the other. Their rigging torn, their sails rent, and their masts broken, they saw their mistake, and would gladly have given the whole of their cargo for the sand which they had imprudently cast into the sea ; but it was too late : deprived of her ballast, the vessel, having tossed about for some time, turned bottom upwards, and all, except one of the crew, perished in the waves.

MORAL.

When the wise are afflicted, they consider if their trials are such as can be safely and advantageously removed, being willing rather to endure temporary annoyances, than to plunge themselves, by rash remedies, into deeper calamities.

A PASSING SUGGESTION.

OLD Humphrey has been a trumper in his day : many a weary mile has he trudged along the highways and byways of life, and he ought therefore to think of his sore-footed and weary-limbed fellow pilgrims.

Often and often, when exhausted with fatigue, does the traveller look around for a comfortable resting-place, without finding one. Now, never are we so sensible of a favour as when it is conferred at a season when we most require it : this sentiment, common-place as it may be, might be turned to a national advantage.

If stone benches were to be erected on the turnpike and other roads, a few miles asunder, throughout the kingdom, it would much accommodate the toil-worn traveller, and strengthen the ties which bind Englishmen to their native land. The celebrated Mirabeau, when he visited London, burst into an exclamation of pleasure, while he regarded the pavements of broad flat stones, and expressed his joy at being in a country where the comfort of those who were obliged

to walk was considered. Now, would not such erections as those before alluded to be a source of accommodation and comfort to the poor, and would not they deservedly excite the approbation of foreigners? We have national pillars, and obelisks, and statues erected, which call forth the admiration of the thinking part of mankind; and why should we not have national resting places, to call forth the thankfulness of the poor and the weary? A milestone gives comfort to many a dejected spirit, and a resting-place would do the same.

Oh that I could persuade some one with a warm heart and a long purse to set the thing going, that the sore-footed, heat-oppressed soldier and sailor might have a resting-place when tramping to their friends, and the worn and the weary traveller be comforted and refreshed!

A HIGH WIND.

“FAITHFUL TO A FAULT.”

HERE am I sitting in my study, while the wind is blowing a perfect hurricane, and the rain descending one minute in a shower, and another almost in a torrent. Oh the delight of a dry, warm, snug habitation! Seasons such as this make us sensible of our comforts, and the heart counts over treasures which at other times are disregarded.

What a hubbub and commotion there appears to be abroad! The smoke from the houses flies swiftly on the wings of the wind, and the cowls at the tops of the chimneys are rapidly turning backwards and forwards. The sumach tree is writhing about, turning up the light underside of its glossy green leaves, and twisting to and fro, as if in a state of torment. The variegated holly, too short and stiff to wave, trembles as if with passion. The lilac bends, backwards and forwards, all together. The poplars give way to the blast; and the graceful laburnums lash each other with their long, slender branches, as though maddened with rage. The tall hollyhocks are

broken short off near the root; and the sunflowers lie prostrate on the ground, in all the humiliation of faded grandeur. Shrubs and flowers, which lately were watched and watered with pleasure, are now cut off, and will soon be forgotten. Even so will it be with us also!

The world is gay and fair to us, as now we journey on,
Yet still in little space 'twill be the same when we are
gone.

Some few, perchance, may mourn for us, but soon the
transient gloom,

Like shadows of the summer cloud, shall leave our narrow
tomb.

Well! well! we won't make ourselves unhappy about that. Whether our friends mourn for us, or not, if we get safe through the "golden gates," we shall then have no cause for mourning among ourselves.

The storm continues, and sweeps along the turnpike road. Most of the carmen and wagoners have thrown bags across their shoulders, while the manes and tails of their horses are ruffled by the sudden gusts which toss them to and fro. There is an old man forced along, the loose collar of his blue great coat blown up against his hat. There is a young one dressed in white trowsers, that cling to his legs as closely as though they had been dipped in a tub of water. And yonder

is a servant girl pulled along by her umbrella, which is turned inside out by the blast.

These raging winds remind me of the lawless passions of the human heart. To each of us it may be said,

Thy passions are a numerous crowd,
Imperious, positive, and loud :
If they grow mutinous and rave,
They are thy masters, thou their slave.

The stage coaches are whirling by, the horses smoking, the coachmen holding down their heads, and the passengers wrapped up in great coats, and plaid cloaks, with handkerchiefs round their necks, and all their hoisted umbrellas turned to the wind. Nay, look yonder! the red cloak of the poor old woman flies fluttering like a flag over her head, while the broad-brimmed hat of her aged companion is scudding along the turnpike-road full twenty yards before him. He cannot run as he did twenty summers ago, and if some one does not help him in his troubles, he will never overtake his flying beaver.

A young man, up to his knees in boots, has just run the point of his umbrella against the face of a baker with a basket on his back. "It is of no use to be in a passion about it, my honest friend, for in such a day as this no one who meets the wind can see before him."

There! two tiles from a neighbouring house have fallen on the stone steps, and been dashed to pieces. What a storm! Every window of the house is rattling: the wind raves, and the rain pelts against the panes as though they would burst in upon me.

Doubtless many benefits are conferred upon us by a storm, and some of them are these: it is calculated to lead us to praise the Father of mercies for the common comforts of life; it renders home dearer to us; it disposes us to feel for those who have to contend with the rude elements, and brings the promise to a Christian's remembrance, "A man shall be as an hiding-place from the wind, and a covert from the tempest," Isa. xxxii. 2.

"A friend in need," they say, "is a friend indeed;" and certainly that is the case now, for as the rain falls, a cloak and a great coat rise in value. Ay! ay! the good folks among the straw, under the tarpauling in the broad-wheel wagon yonder, have a snug berth of it. The wagoner, on his grey pony, is screening himself behind the wagon, leaving the horses to choose their own pace. What a rumbling there is in the chimney! The rain appears inclined to abate, but the wind is as boisterous as ever. The clouds are flitting along the heavens; the garden gate is swinging backwards and forwards; and the leaves of the

trees, though borne by the blast for a moment in the air, soon fall to the ground. "We all do fade as a leaf;" let us reflect, then, that each of us

Is like a passenger below,
That stays perhaps a night or so.

And well is it when it can be added,

But still his native country lies
Beyond the boundary of the skies.

Ay! gallop along, my friend, for you seem to have had a pretty drenching! I will be bound for it that you are taking a wet skin home with you, though you have half a dozen capes to your coat. What a day is this for a journey on foot or on horseback! How many poor miserable beings, half-fed, and half-clothed, are enduring the pelting of this pitiless storm, while I am under shelter! There goes a dripping, drabble-tailed girl, with her splashed white cotton stockings, wretched thin-soled shoes, and scanty clothing, without cloak or umbrella. I know her, and she is one who prefers finery and folly to comfort and suitability in her dress.

How thankful ought I, and those who have the comforts of life, to be! He who has this world's good, and feels not for those who have it not, is unworthy to possess it; and he who can feel for the wants of others, and relieves them

not according to his means, is equally heartless. It is well for us all, if we can say, in the language of sincere supplication,

“Teach me to feel another’s woe,
To hide the fault I see ;
That mercy I to others show,
That mercy show to me.”

This tempestuous storm will scare the birds and the beasts. It will injure the fruit, blight the flowers, tear up the trees, and devastate the crazy habitations of the poor ; and thousands will gaze on its wide-spread desolation with confusion and dismay. This is the land scene, what then is the state of things at sea !

“Ye gentlemen of England, who sit at home at ease,
How little do you think upon the dangers of the seas !”

Many a boat is drifting on the beach bottom uppermost ; many a barge driven from its moorings ; and many a gallant ship, her sails close reefed, with creaking timbers, is lying in the trough of the sea, or being tossed up and down at the mercy of the wind and waves.

But let the winds blow over the earth, and the storm sweep the surface of the seas, for we know that they are only the servants of the Mighty One : we gaze on the ruin they occasion, but

we understand not to the full the benefits they bestow, otherwise we should acknowledge them as a part of His designs, "who throws his blessings o'er the wide-spread world." It is His, amid the most fearful expressions of his power, to mingle the influence of his love.

'Tis His, oh depths of love profound,
That none but God can know,
To scatter mercies all around,
And bless mankind below!

ON TRAVELLING.

OH, 'tis a pleasant thing to travel! I was always fond of it, from my very boyhood; from the time when I used to trudge twice a year to see my uncle and aunt, who lived at a farm-house, full six-and-twenty miles from our habitation.

And now I find travelling an excellent relaxation from sedentary labour, an encourager of cheerfulness, and, I hope, a means of usefulness, as well as an incentive to praise and bless Him from whom every mercy flows.

'Tis a pleasant thing, when you have health, and strength, and good spirits, to travel on foot: you can stop when you like, and turn round and look at the prospect. You can call at a cottage, and talk to the old woman there, as she goes on with her knitting: or loiter in the green lane, pulling down a brier, and plucking the delicious blackberries. You can stand and breathe the fresh air, as it comes over the blossomed bean-field, or gaze at the lambs at play in the knolly pasture. You can creep into the copse, and gather nuts from the hazel-trees, bunches of bright brown

shellers ; or make a posy of the violets, the cowslips, or the dancing daffodils. All these things you can do, and a hundred others ; and as you go on, and your bosom beats with happiness, you can sing of the Divine goodness and mercy with a cheerful heart.

'Tis a pleasant thing to travel on horseback, when your steed is full of spirit, and yet manageable : when you can walk leisurely, trot fast, canter pleasantly, or gallop rapidly, as it may suit your purpose. I was always fond of riding, from the time when the donkey that my father bought me used to throw me over his head two or three times a day ; but the donkey was low, the green turf was soft, and I fell gently, so that it did not hurt me.

Oh, 'tis a fine thing to be mounted on the back of a bright chesnut, or coal-black horse, when he grows warm, and gets full of life, with the white foam falling from his mouth against his broad chest ! when you feel as if you were almost a part of him, so firmly seated in the saddle, and so capable of controlling him ! Many a pleasant ride have I taken, and many a journey have I gone on horseback. It is said that "the merciful man is merciful to his beast ;" and I am sure we ought to be very kind to so useful an animal as the horse.

Yes! whether we walk, or whether we ride,
 Let us act a kindly part;
 And wherever we go, and whate'er may betide,
 Encourage a grateful heart.

'Tis a pleasant thing to travel by gig; for you are so much at your ease, and have so little to do, that you may journey far without weariness. It is true that you should always keep the reins well in hand, in case of a trip, and be ready in every accident that might take place, to act with presence of mind; but the very watchfulness required, rather adds to than takes away from the pleasure you enjoy: you would grow weary without it. In travelling by gig, you can snatch a glance now and then at the country round you; you can admire your horse as he arches his neck, points his ears backwards and forwards, and lifts up his feet as regularly as clockwork; you can indulge a cheerful or a sober train of thought, and you can occasionally fling a tract into the road. Many an agreeable journey have I made with a horse and gig;—

When the summer has smiled, and the winter frown'd,
 At the spring of the year and the fall,
 When the heavens and the earth have been beautiful,
 And God has been seen in all.

'Tis a pleasant thing to travel by post-chaise;

the rattling of the wheels over the stones, the jingling of the windows, the clattering of the horses' hoofs, the odd figure of the postboy jumping up and down in his buckskins, cracking his short-handled whip, and the rapid rate at which you dash along, altogether fill you with animation.

I have travelled many a time by this pleasant conveyance, and my spirits have risen with the occasion. Wide open flies the turnpike-gate as you approach; when you rattle under the gateway into the inn-yard, the landlord and landlady make their appearance with smiles, and the waiter turns round the brass handle of the chaise-door in haste, to hand you down the steps. Again I say, it is a pleasant thing to travel by post-chaise; and hundreds of people agree with me in this opinion.

It is pleasant to travel by stage-coach, or by the mail, especially if you are outside on a fine summer's day. You go along at so delightful a rate, and you have nothing to do but to enjoy yourself. The four grey horses with their bright brass harness, the coachman with his "upper benjamin" wrapped round his legs, and the guard with his red coat and laced hat, all these are often pleasant objects to gaze on. You feel so much at

ease, so independent, and so comfortable, that you pity every foot passenger you meet, and you say to yourself, "I wonder how any one in his senses can ride inside, this delightful weather!" Many hundred miles have I travelled by stage-coach and mail, nor should I be very unwilling to set out on a fresh journey to-morrow. The sound of the horn, and the changing of horses, and the towns and villages you pass through, and the labourers on the road, who are sure to leave off work, and lean idly on their spades and pick-axes as you go by; and the guard, flinging down his letter bags as he passes, at the country inn, or the lodge by the park gate; the dogs that run after the coach barking, and the locking and unlocking of the wheels, afford a constant variety to the passenger, so that it is a very agreeable thing to travel by the stage-coach or by the mail.

Almost every one must have seen the mail set off.

The horses start, and the wheels turn round,
And hasten away from the view;
And 'tis well to reflect, while they rapidly run,
That our lives run rapidly too.

'Tis a pleasant thing, also, when time is an object with you, to go a journey by the railroad. When you are once set going, you feel that you are travelling in right earnest. Away goes the

steam-engine, almost flying along the iron pathway, leaving a long line of smoke, eight or ten feet from the ground; and away go the steam-carriages after it, filled with company. One talks of the useful discovery of steam; another wonders what will be invented next; and a third doubts, after all, whether the affairs of men absolutely require them to hurry on so fast through the world. Still, on you go, and before you can believe it, you are at your journey's end. When you are in a very great hurry, the railroad is a capital mode of conveyance.

Thus through life's stage we hurry on,
And our journey soon is o'er;
And this beauteous earth, that gave us birth,
Beholds our face no more.

'Tis a pleasant thing to travel by pleasure-boat along the river, when you have plenty of time on your hands. Oh, how delightfully do you glide through the clear running stream! I have sailed as much as a hundred miles together down the winding Wye, fairest and most romantic of British rivers; sometimes gazing on the pebbled shallows, and sometimes on the dark deep waters. It was pleasant to dart down the rapids, pleasant to glance at Chepstow and Goodrich Castles, and Windcliff and Tintern Abbey; and pleasanter

still, looking up at the snow-white, sun-lit clouds, as they glided through the clear blue sky, to sing with the heart as well as the lip,

“ When all thy mercies, O my God,
 My rising soul surveys,
 Transported with the view, I'm lost
 In wonder, love, and praise.”

'Tis a pleasant thing to travel by steam-boat, when the sun shines, and the river is broad, and the music plays, and the passengers wear smiles on their faces. I have travelled by steam-boat, and talked with the captain and passengers, and stood by the steersman, as he turned round his wheel to guide the vessel, and leaned over the bulwarks, musing on the paddle-wheels tearing their way through the waters. The band has played the while, and the huge vessel has followed the helm as obediently as a child. Sometimes, too, I have met with a fellow passenger, who has made a serious remark, an acknowledgment of God's goodness, and we have talked together of holy things, and of the way of salvation through the Saviour of sinners.

'Tis pleasant in our pilgrimage,
 In fair or stormy weather,
 To meet a traveller Zion-bound,
 And journey on together.

'Tis a pleasant thing to travel over the mighty

ocean in a ship, when the broad sails are filled with a favourable wind, and the sea and the sky seem to lose themselves in each other. When the billows of the great deep sparkle with beautiful colours, when the dolphin plays, the flying-fish leaps from the water into the air; and the sea-gull hovers over the foam-fringed waves. I have sailed on the billowy ocean in a gentle breeze, and in a storm I have mounted up as if going to the heavens, and plunged downwards as if descending to the bottom of the sea. Yet still the rudder has guided the ship, and still the sails have enabled her to keep her course. God has given wonderful power to man, enabling him to say to the bounding waves, "Bear me safely on your back;" and to the blustering winds, "Waft me forward on my course." Truly, "the Lord is a great God, and a great King above all gods. In his hand are the deep places of the earth: the strength of the hills is his also. The sea is his, and he made it; and his hands formed the dry land. Oh come, let us worship, and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord our Maker," Psa. xcv. 3—6.

Where ocean rolls his mighty flood,
Where billows rise and fall,
Wisdom and power are infinite,
And God is all in all.

Ah, well! whether we travel high or low, by land or by water, by ship, steamer, or boat, by railroad, stage-coach, or post-chaise, by gig, horseback, or on foot, we are all travelling towards the grave, and every stage brings us nearer our journey's end.

It may be that we shall see threescore and ten birth-days; perhaps we may be strong enough to witness fourscore: but he who looks back to his childhood, even though his hairs are grey, regards it as yesterday. "We spend our years as a tale that is told," Psa. xc. 9. Is it well, then, to think so fondly of a bubble that is so soon to burst? of a dream that has well nigh passed away? Will it not be better to think less of this world, and more of the next? Less of what is, as it were, for a moment, and more of what shall endure for ever? Surely it will. Begin then, reader, to do this at once.

Oh gird thy loins, set out for heaven,
Ere earth's enjoyments wither;
And give not slumber to thine eyes,
Till thou art journeying thither!

ON
DEPARTED FRIENDS.

SHAME upon us! shame upon us! when our friends are taken away from this world of tribulation, we think more of their perishing bodies than we do of their immortal souls. We go amid the gloom of eventide to sigh over their graves, rather than take the wings of the morning to visit their enfranchised spirits, in the mansions of the blessed. Shame upon us! shame upon us!

I think it is Franklin, who says, or intimates, that we should not be immoderately moved at the carriages of our friends being ready first, seeing that ours are so soon to follow. But, alas! it is so easy to talk philosophy. I could pour out the affections of my heart for my friends gone before me, even to sobbing: this is my infirmity; I ought to know better, nay, I do know better—but in things of this sort a heart-rush sweeps away head-knowledge.

It is a hard thing, to be sure, to part with those who have been almost as dear to us as our

own souls, and no one but the God of all consolation can make it easy to us; but when we think of the glorious things he has prepared in heaven for his people, our tears for those who die in Christ should be those of thankfulness, and our sorrow should be turned into joy.

To a Christian, death appears the portal to eternal life, and therefore he ought to rejoice when a fellow pilgrim to the heavenly city is mercifully permitted to pass through it; but it is otherwise with the worldly man; the grave must needs be a fearful thing to him who has no hope beyond it. It has often been a puzzle to my mind, how worldly men bear up under the loss of their friends. Is it not enough to touch our hearts, to see those who have been precious to us as the "ruddy drops that warm the heart," stretched on a bed of sickness, unconscious of our presence and sympathy? To hear the hard-drawn sigh, and midnight moan; to mark the glazed eye, the heaving breast, and the falling jaw, while the last breath rattles in the throat?

Are not these things, and the shroud, the coffin, the mattock, and the grave, enough to try humanity to the utmost? Surely the cup of sorrow that every sincere mourner has to drink is bitter enough, without anticipating the gall and wormwood of eternal woe! Blessed be God, for

his gracious promises of eternal happiness to the believer, for they are as unchangeable as eternity itself!

What poor creatures we are! Here have I received tidings that a highly respected and dearly beloved friend has been removed from the gloom of earth to the glory of heaven, and yet I cannot rejoice. My selfish heart will brood over what it has lost, and will not exult over what my friend has gained. In our day we had shared both joy and sorrow. We had taken "sweet counsel together, and walked unto the house of God in company," Psa. lv. 14. We had encouraged each other to endure worldly trouble patiently, and to rejoice in the hope set before us of eternal glory; and yet for all these things I cannot help visiting his resting-place in sorrow.

But the spirit is not there! It is a better employment, and more likely to be successful, to prepare to follow our Christian friends to the heaven of heavens, than to wish to drag them once more down to this poor perishable world. I am ashamed of myself, for every now and then a tear rolls down my cheek, and tells me that my earthly affections are opposing my heavenly desires and consolations.

ON ALMANACKS.

“TIME and tide,” it is said, “stay for no man ;” and one might suppose that the rapid progress of time much occupied men’s minds at the present period, for never was there such an attempt made, as there is now, to divide time, and set its months, weeks, and days continually before us.

This is the age of almanacks : go where I will, if a stationer’s shop is to be seen, the window is crowded with almanacks. You may buy one to put in your book-case, another to lie on your study table, a third to pin against the wall, and a fourth to paste in your hat-crown ; so that whether at home or abroad, you never need be without an almanack.

As I pass through the world, I cannot but notice what is going on in it ; and sometimes, when inclined for reflection, a little thing is enough to furnish me with a subject. A molehill will then do as well as a mountain, and an almanack is as suitable as the library in the British Museum.

After standing a short time at a stationer’s window, the other day, sometimes gazing on the different publications that were there, and some-

times peeping between them at other things, I walked away, musing on the subject of almanacks. "Well," thought I, "no doubt almanacks are good things, when put to a good use; but if otherwise, they leave us worse than they find us, because every one who does not grow better as he grows wiser, is a spendthrift of that time which is more precious than a king's ransom."

There are usually in almanacks so many chronological, astronomical, and meteorological observations, that with the little knowledge Old Humphrey possesses, he can hardly make top or tail of one half of them. Then there is the comet; when I think of it, it so puzzles my poor brains, that it seems to take me with it into the wide regions of space, whirling me millions of miles in so short a space of time, that I am quite giddy, and am glad enough to get back to something more simple, and better suited to my plain understanding. Keep to common words, such as *sun*, *moon*, and *stars*, and I can get on pretty well; but talk to me about "*the horizontal parallax*," "*the place of perihelion on the orbit*," and "*the mean terrestrial radiation*," and I am as much lost as if wandering without a guide in the Black Forest of Germany. Often do I think to myself, What an unspeakable mercy it is, that the ever-blessed book of truth, the word of God, is written in

such plain language as the following :—“ When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars, which thou hast ordained ; what is man, that thou art mindful of him ? and the son of man, that thou visitest him ? ” Psa. viii. 3.

It is very well to be told of the *festivals*, both *fixed* and *moveable* ; but there is hardly one in ten of us that thinks any thing about them, except it be *Christmas day*, *Good Friday*, *Shrove Tuesday*, *Easter* and *Whit Mondays*, and *Gunpowder Plot* : and the words and deeds that are said and done on these days are too often of a kind not to be commended. Then there is *Hilary Term*, and *Easter Term*, and *Trinity Term*, and *Michaelmas Term* ; but if one has neither a law-suit on hand, nor a son at one of the universities, these terms pass by “ as the idle wind, that we regard not. ” As to the eclipses of the sun, folks had rather by half look at them through a smoked glass, than read of them in an almanack ; but then if it were not for the almanack, they would not know when to look. That will be a glorious time, or rather a glorious eternity, when we shall be able to look not only on God’s creatures, but on God himself. We now see “ Him through a glass darkly, ” but then we shall behold him “ face to face. ”

An almanack often contains much information

about the *tides*, very necessary to be known by many people, though not very important to Old Humphrey. He has but little occasion to inquire about the tides of the Thames, but much to consider about "the swellings of Jordan."

There is generally, too, a *table of the kings and queens of England*: I sometimes look over the names therein, and think to myself, "If those whose reigns are ended are now wearing heavenly crowns, all is well; and if not, their earthly crowns were of little value." In the *list of lord mayor and aldermen*, I discern nothing but a group of strangers to me; and I have so little money in the Bank of England, that the names given of the *bank directors* are seldom looked at. There is a heavenly treasury in which I would willingly seek a store of incorruptible riches, but every year I have reason to mourn for being so sad a spendthrift of my mercies.

A correct *list of charitable institutions*, in an almanack, is a new feature, and one that pleases me much. It is a kind of set-off against the selfish, griping, grinding, hard-hearted uncharitableness of a money-getting, ungodly world. It is a page on which I gaze with pleasure; not an institution escapes me, but, like a bee banqueting on a bed of flowers, I rove from one charity to

another, with admiration and love of the benevolent hearts and hands thus banded together for the benefit of mankind.

Old Humphrey was once so situated at a country inn, that he could get no book to look at except an almanack, and never did he estimate one so highly before. Hunger makes a man relish plain food: even the *commercial stamps* supplied me with amusement, and the *fares of the hackney coaches and watermen* were read with interest.

We no longer stare and gape at the hieroglyphic picture in an almanack, as on a faithful exhibition of the wondrous events of the year before us. This is a folly that we now seem ashamed of; neither do we run to the almanack to deceive ourselves with an *account of the weather*. The unblushing effrontery of predictions is now “shorn of its strength,” and it is now plain nearly to all, that the almanack is written by a mere man; a weak, erring, wayward, sinful man, of like passions and infirmities with ourselves: these things are advantages. An almanack seems to be an almost endless subject, though it principally contains the records of time.

When earthly memorials shall cease, and when the sun and moon shall be blotted from the skies, may we, through Divine mercy, be found

among those who "shall shine as the brightness of the firmament," and "as the stars for ever and ever!" Dan. xii. 3.

The Christian oftentimes finds his own diary a kind of almanack to him; for therein he sees recorded *feast days* and *fast days*; days wherein he has been nourished and strengthened in Divine grace, or has mourned the leanness of his soul. He has his *remarkable events*, too: seasonable supplies in times of need; wonderful deliverances from evil; and heavy afflictions changed into merciful visitations. He can turn over to days both *fair* and *cloudy*; seasons brightened with the beams of heavenly hope, or darkened by the shadows of earthly despondency. His *Sunday letter* is conspicuous among those of the week-days, for the Lord's day is a *red-ink day* with him, and one that he delights to keep holy. He has his *tides* of love for the Redeemer, his *ebbs* and *flows* of Christian zeal; and if, now and then, there be a *partial eclipse* in his prospects, at other times, his confidence is *at the full*, and he can rejoice with "joy unspeakable and full of glory." He looks at the *aspect of events*, the *signs of the times*, but instead of attempting to trace the will of God in the *stars*, he reads it in his holy word, where it is written as with a sunbeam. Whether there be *war* or *peace*, *plenty*

or *famine*, disturbs him not; he knows that all events will work together for good. The disasters that others fear affright him not, being satisfied that "neither death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate him from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord," Rom. viii. 38, 39.

Bear in mind, while regarding *an eclipse*, either of the *sun* or *moon*, that the most awful eclipse which can happen is a spiritual eclipse. Let the moon be covered, and the sun hidden from our sight for ever, rather than the dark shadows of sin hide the "Sun of righteousness" from our souls. There is no darkness like God's displeasure: there is no light like that of his presence. Oh what a glorious period will that be for the followers of the Redeemer, when, in the mansions of the blessed, the promise shall be fulfilled, "The sun shall be no more thy light by day, neither for brightness shall the moon give light unto thee; but the Lord shall be unto thee an everlasting light, and thy God thy glory!" Isa. lx. 19.

In former times of ignorance, and even down to our own days, most almanacks were expected to say something about *coming events*, and oftentimes they ventured on predictions which were

never realized. The following predictions, however, may be relied on, being obtained from a source too pure to deceive, and too wise to err.

Let times be ever so good, if you are slothful, you will be in want; let times be ever so bad, if you are diligent in the ways of God, you will prosper. “The soul of the sluggard desireth, and hath nothing: but the soul of the diligent shall be made fat,” Prov. xiii. 4.

Even though you be simple, yet, if you study God's word, you will become wise. “The entrance of thy words giveth light; it giveth understanding unto the simple,” Psa. cxix. 130.

Whatever cause others may have for fear, you shall not be hurt, if you trust in the Lord. “They that trust in the Lord shall be as Mount Zion, which cannot be removed, but abideth for ever,” Psa. cxxv. 1.

If you love and practise sin, it is impossible for you to escape punishment. “Be sure your sin will find you out,” Numb. xxxii. 23.

If you trust in your own resolution, strength, or righteousness, you are sure to fail. “He that trusteth in his own heart is a fool,” Prov. xxviii. 26.

If you seek salvation from any but the Lord Jesus Christ, you will infallibly be deceived. “For there is none other name under heaven

given among men, whereby we must be saved," Acts iv. 12.

Though you prosper in worldly things, if you practise sin you will be unhappy. "There is no peace, saith the Lord, unto the wicked," Isa. xlvi. 22.

Whether you are young or old, weak or strong, sick or well, death is near. "Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return," Gen. iii. 19. "There is but a step between me and death," 1 Sam. xx. 3.

Death will be unspeakable gain to you, if you are a faithful follower of Jesus Christ. For such "to live is Christ, and to die is gain," Phil. i. 21. "Be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life," Rev. ii. 10.

ON
LIVING IN PEACE.

“PAUL, an apostle, not of men, neither by man, but by Jesus Christ, and God the Father, who raised him from the dead;”—Paul gave this injunction, among others, to the Corinthians, when he was bidding them farewell, “Live in peace,” 2 Cor. xiii. 11.

There is no doubt his brethren at Corinth needed this exhortation, and sure I am that we need it too. Oh the bitterness, the fierceness with which the professing followers of the meek, forbearing, and merciful Redeemer attack each other! How is the family of Christian worshippers divided against itself! How is the cup of Christian fellowship dashed with the wormwood and the gall!

Is a burning cheek, an angry eye, a hasty heart, or a clamouring tongue consistent with peace? I have known instances wherein meekness, and forbearance, and charity, and brotherly love, have reclaimed a wanderer from his way of error: but no instance has yet reached me of

fierceness, and intolerance, and uncharitableness, and apparent hatred, ever having convinced the judgment, or won over the affections of an offending brother.

Will it be a proper defence to set up, when accused of bitterness to a Christian brother, to say, "Lord, I knew that thou commandedst thy followers to love one another; I knew that thou wert a God of peace, and that thou didst require us to love our enemies. I knew these things, and yet I did well to be angry. My brother believed in thee, and loved thee, and served thee; we had one Lord, one faith, and one baptism; we professed to be fellow sinners, bought with the same sin-atonement blood, to be animated with the same glorious hope of everlasting life, and to be journeying onward to the same heaven: but my brother would not worship in the same temple in which I worshipped; he would not use the same words in his prayers and his praises that I used; he would kneel when I stood up, and stand up when I kneeled down; and therefore I felt angry and bitter against him, and I hated him."

Is there no danger of a reply of something of this kind? "Thou wicked, unfaithful, and unprofitable servant, thou knewest the will of thy Lord, but thou preferredst to obey thy own. Thou knewest that I commanded thee to forgive

thy brother his trespasses, and to dwell with him in peace and love, but thou wouldest not forgive him, and wouldest live in discord and hatred ; how then dwelleth the love of God in thee ? Depart from me ! For the unprofitable servant shall be cast into outer darkness, there shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.”

When shall we strive to maintain the spirit of the gospel, instead of our own spirit ? and to obey God’s will, instead of our own ? When shall we hold fast the truth without compromise, fostering the kindest affections, speaking the kindest words, and doing the kindest deeds to every member of the household of faith ? When shall we “live in peace,” that “the God of love and peace” may be with us always ?

ON CONSISTENCY.

THERE is a term used among artists called *keeping*, which means that the tone and effect of the different parts of a picture should be in agreement with the whole; now, *keeping* is quite as necessary in our conduct as we pass through life.

A man who wears a ring and a gold chain should not be out at the elbows; nor would it look well to see a minister of the gospel dressed in a soldier's uniform: these things would be out of order, out of propriety, out of keeping; there would be no consistency in them.

But there is a keeping, a consistency in things, as well as in persons; in books as well as in men. I was led into this train of thinking by taking up a religious magazine the other day, whose outside cover and inside contents were so out of keeping, that, according to my wonted custom, I sat me down to examine the subject a little more closely.

Though Old Humphrey never willingly gives offence, nor intentionally brings an unnecessary blush on the face of any one, yet he cannot help being somewhat free in his observations. If he

sees a friend wearing a lamb's-wool stocking on the wrong side; or a stranger, who has set his back against a whited wall, he can no more help pointing out the defect than he can help warming his hands in cold weather.

The magazine, as I said, was a religious one, and I took it up with that sort of feeling which harmonized with what I expected to find in the work itself. The title of a book is often, to a reader, what the tuning of a violin is to a musician, it prepares him to enter on his undertaking in a proper manner. Unfortunately, the magazine had six or eight leaves of advertisements at the beginning and ending, of so odd and mixed a character, that the mind of Old Humphrey, too often affected with trifles, was sadly deranged by them. If, in going into a place of Divine worship, you were to find two buffoons standing in motley dresses, arrayed in their caps and bells, it would perhaps unfit you for the service, and so did these advertisements unfit me for the profitable reading of the contents of the magazine.

The leaves, in their very colour, were at war with the tone of my mind; there was nothing sober about them: one was a deep blue, another a fiery red, and a third a frightful yellow; but the colour of the leaves was a trifle compared to their contents. It was well enough to advertise

“Prayer Books and Homilies:” but what had they to do with “Rowland’s Kalydor,” his “Pearl Dentifrice,” or his “Macassar Oil?” To put into the same page “Histories from Scripture,” and “Old Hock, fine crusted Port, straw-coloured Sherry, and exquisitely sparkling Moselle,” seemed a little out of order. What affinity, what possible connexion could there be between “Watts’s Psalms and Hymns,” and “Imperial Saxony Cloth, Canton Drill Trowsers, and Peter-sham Great Coats?” These things, to say the least of them, were sadly out of keeping; they were not consistent.

So long as we remain such poor infirm mortals as we are, so long will it be necessary to pay some attention to those things that affect us. I confess I cannot read a pious commentary in a proper frame of mind, after running through a whimsical puff on “Improved Periwigs.” Or at once turn, with becoming gravity, to the spiritual food provided by Flavel and Fuller, Boston and Baxter, from a paragraph written in high commendation of “Pickled Gerkins, and Potted Yarmouth Bloaters.”

It may be that I am a little fanciful—many old people are so; but every thing that I read affects me for some time after, and therefore it was that the strange admixture of advertisements

on the outside of the magazine, disqualified me altogether from reading the inside with advantage.

Old Humphrey wanted to enter into the marrow of the work ; but he was so pestered with the strange medley of "Artificial Teeth," and "Steam Cooking Kitchens ;" "Quarto Bibles," and "Insurance Companies ;" "Fountain Pens," "Tallow Candles," "Beaver Bonnets," and "Sabbath Meditations ;" "Irish Linens," and "Cheddar Cheese ;" "Religious Tracts," and "Cure for the Tic Doloureux ;" "Soda Water," "Fire Escapes," "Sacred Classics," and "Patent Chronometers," that he was fain to shut up the book altogether, till the hodge-podge had subsided in his mind.

A great deal more might be said on this subject ; but, to confess the truth, Old Humphrey himself is often complained of as being sadly out of keeping ; sadly inconsistent. He is blamed, and perhaps with reason, for letting too much of the liveliness of his disposition peep through some of his most serious remarks. He goes from a cheerful observation to a text of Scripture too suddenly ; and therefore, knowing his own infirmity, he ought not to be severe on the infirmities of others.

He will say no more, then, about the medley of advertisements on the covers of the magazine,

than this, that he hopes what has already escaped him is not out of keeping with good nature and Christian affection, and it may suggest to some whom it may concern a useful hint on consistency.

ON THE BIBLE.

THE Bible tells us all that we know of God, as Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. All we know of heaven, as a place of joy, and of hell, as a place of torment. Such is the information of the Bible.

The Bible is the only book that tells us of the beginning and the end. It is the only book that makes known to us our creation and redemption. None other book is the word of God. Such is the authority of the Bible.

The Bible excites us to kindness, zeal, holiness, and happiness; it upholds all that is virtuous and good, and condemns every thing that is sinful in thought, and word, and deed. Such is the spirit of the Bible.

The Bible tells us that all men have sinned, and come short of the glory of God, and that the wicked shall be cast into hell, and all the nations that forget God. Such are the terrors of the Bible.

The Bible tells us that God has found a ransom; that Jesus Christ, his Son, died upon the cross for sinners; and that all that believe in him shall not

perish, but have everlasting life. Such is the hope of the Bible.

All who believe the Bible, and live a life of faith in the Son of God, have the promise not only of this life, but of that which is to come. Those who disbelieve the Bible, despise the hope of salvation in a crucified Redeemer, and lead a life of ungodliness, have in this world a life without peace, and a fearful looking for of eternal judgment in the next. Such are the promises and threatenings held forth by the Bible.

Dost thou reverence, love, and practise the precepts of the Bible? the book is a blessing to thy soul. Dost thou deride, hate, and disobey the precepts of the Bible? the rejection of this book will prove thy heaviest condemnation.

ON RETROSPECTION.

THIS pen of mine is but a poor one, but perhaps it will do to write another paper before it is mended; and now what is to be my subject?

No doubt, when desirous to cut a straight stick out of a hedge, you have often been beguiled by the appearance of another, and another, further on, still straighter, till, in the end, you have been compelled to be content with a crooked one.

And, no doubt, when about to pluck an apple from the tree, others more enticing have caught your attention, till, at last, you have plucked one with a grub on the under side.

This is just the same with me, when sitting down to choose a subject for my homely observations. The one fixed upon is given up for another, and that again abandoned for one still more inviting, till, impatient of delay, I begin to write, perhaps, upon the dullest that has occurred to me.

A good painter will make a clever picture, and a good poet will make a clever poem, out of a bad subject, but, alas! I am neither the one nor the other. I cannot lay on the colours harmoniously, softening the distances, and strengthening the foregrounds. I cannot adorn poverty-stricken thoughts with glowing language, and exalted metaphors; you must take my subject just as it drops from an old man's pen, with no other adornment than his good intentions.

It is a profitable thing sometimes to stand still in this bustling world; nay, to turn round and take a retrospective glance at the pathway we have trodden, even though the flowerets that adorned it have withered away.

Many of us have made some awkward turnings and windings; here we have been in the mud, and there in the mire; mercies have been despised, and reproofs neglected; but let us, for a moment, in spite of the shame that may crimson our cheeks, take a steady and sober view of the course we have pursued.

It may be, that you have no inclination to look backwards, lest the view should remind you of what you would not willingly remember. Alas! who can turn over the pages of his past life without a sigh? Who can answer the inquiry, "What have I been doing in the world?" without a pang

of reproach. My poor broken thoughts on this matter, though oddly thrown together, may call forth a few profitable reflections.

Let me ask, then, what have been the objects of our ambition; for if mutability be written upon them, whatever they may be, we may class them together. The rocking-horse of the boy, and the race-horse of the man, afford pleasure for a few months, or a few years, and then alike pass away, leaving no trace for man's good or God's glory. In honest truth, let us sum up the main objects of our past lives.

Shall we begin with a marble? Ay, and if God, in his goodness, has not raised our hearts above earthly things, we may as well end with a marble, too; for though the difference between a marble and a money bag may now appear great, we shall be equally indifferent to them by and by.

The tip-cat staff of the urchin at play, and the sceptre of the monarch on his throne, will alike moulder in the dust.

We have, perhaps, in our little day, desired a penny trumpet, a peg-top, a picture book, a painted kite, a new suit of clothes, a golden guinea, a fine horse to ride, a fine house to live in, and servants to wait upon us: and if we add to these the praise of our fellow mortals, perhaps we shall have the elements of what we have been

most anxious to attain. Now, look at these things, and see what any, or all of them, can do for an immortal soul! Will worldly possessions, worldly power, worldly reputation, give us support in the trials of life, or peace in the hour of death? Will they purify us in time, or prepare us for eternity?

Shame, shame, on our contracted views: well may we put up the prayer,

“What in me is dark,
Illumine: what is low, raise, and support.”

Will the eagle, to whom God has given wings to mount to the sky, be content to wade in the mud and mire of the earth? Why, then, should our desires be grovelling here below, when they ought to be mounting upwards, and tending to the throne of the Eternal?

Old Humphrey has seen strange things in his time: he has quailed beneath the fierce eye of the proud man, and shrunk from his oppressive power, and said to himself, “Let be, a few coming years will make me strong, I shall be in my prime; they will make him weak, he will be growing old;” and it has been even so: he has lived to see that eye lacking its lustre, filmed over with the dimness of age; he has seen the strong man brought low, tottering along with

the weakness of a child. He has known the man who was an oracle of wisdom, sink into second childishness; men who were rich, oppressed in the day of their calamity by those whom, once, they would have "disdained to have set with the dogs of their flock."

These are humbling things; for when riches, and power, and pride, and wisdom, are prostrated in the dust, what is there on this side the grave to glory in? Yet even these things are not enough of themselves to bend our stiff necks, and melt our hard hearts: unless sanctified by God's grace, they do not, they will not, they cannot bring us like chastened children to the footstool of our heavenly Father. Though I have seen these things, they have not kept me from error; I have fostered the folly that I have derided, and practised the pride which I have condemned. How many vain desires enter into our hearts! How many foolish and mischievous projects do we engage in! Some of these pass away, like the snow pyramid of the schoolboy, when melted by the sun; and others, like the card house of the child, which a breath destroys. We sometimes thank God for our success; but we know not how much we owe the Father of mercies for our disappointments. We ought to kiss the rod that he uses to subdue our pride,

and reconcile us to himself, whether it be peril or pain, loss or cross, plague, pestilence, or famine.

The most overwhelming affliction is a mercy, if it bring us back to the Father of mercies; the keenest scourge is kindness, if it convince us of sin; losses are gains, when they lead to durable riches; and the greatest affliction the greatest mercy, if, through Divine grace, it be made the means of saving our souls.

There are seasons when Old Humphrey could put his hand before his face, and weep like a child, at the retrospect of his past years. Monuments of his folly are in abundance, but the vestiges of his wisdom, where are they? If your retrospect be at all of the same kind, let us unite in the prayer, "Teach me to trust in thee, O Lord, with all my heart, and not to lean to my own understanding; enable me to acknowledge thee in all my ways, and do thou direct my paths."

ON ANTICIPATION.

It was with a poor pen that I noted down what occurred to me on the subject of retrospection. I have now mended it; but whether, on that account, my thoughts will be better worth your acceptance, is a question.

I wish that I could talk with you, instead of writing to you. Seated, as I now am, in my old arm chair, I long to be very eloquent; but when eloquent thoughts have to pass from the head to the hand, and to be dribbled through the slender barrel of a goose-quill, they often become very homely.

If it be a profitable thing to take a review of the past, it will not be unprofitable to take a glance at the future. Retrospection and anticipation may be both turned to a good account. These are long words, and I have been casting about to find shorter, with the same meaning; for I hold it to be rather a proof of folly than wisdom, to use a long word when a short one can be found to answer the purpose as well. As, however, I have not succeeded, you must even be content with the terms I have chosen.

It often happens, that when, in a lively mood, I dip my pen into the ink, a solemn thought presents itself. You may have observed before now, the shadow of a great cloud come over the earth on a windy, sunshiny day. At first it spreads over part of a field, and then runs on before you, almost as fast as the eye can follow it, stretching along the meadows, and up the distant hill, till the whole prospect, a minute before gilded with the sunbeam, becomes shadowed and overcast. In like manner, a sense of responsibility comes over my buoyant spirit, and I say to myself, "Now think, for a moment, that what you are about to write, thousands may read, and you are accountable for the impression you will make on their minds. What will an idle tale, or an old man's small talk, do for them? Give them something that will do them good; serious, solemn, and impressive."

In these seasons, and the present is one of them, mirth seems but a mockery. To indulge in it would be like feeding the hungry with husks, or giving a stone instead of bread. At this moment, pigmy as I am, I long for the strength of a giant; ignorant as I am, I yearn for the wisdom of a Solomon, that I may say and do something worth saying and doing for my fellow sinners. What cyphers we are! Truly, man in his best estate is

altogether vanity! Is it not marvellous that God should ever use such unworthy instruments in bringing about his merciful designs?

Amidst these solemn reflections, let me ask you, What are your anticipations? Even if you are young, the question is important; but if you have lived as many years as are graven on the brow of Old Humphrey, it is one that may well thrill through your hearts. Whatever you and I may have anticipated in bygone days, we must now have reaped the advantage of experience; we must now see the hollowness, the utter worthlessness, of many things that our hearts once coveted. Surely the past should suffice to have followed the fleeting will-o'-the-wisps that have continually deceived us. We ought no longer to cheat ourselves by blowing bubbles which, while they glitter with glowing colours, burst into empty air. By this time we ought to be very moderate in our worldly desires, and to find, with honest John Bunyan, that

“Fulness to such a burden is
That go on pilgrimage;
Here little, and hereafter bliss,
Is best from age to age.”

It is true that we stand in need of a thousand things, and, among them, of more humility and contrition of spirit. We require more love to

the Saviour, and more charity for our fellow men; a stronger desire to know and to do the will of God; a brighter hope, a more unfeigned faith, and a more abiding conviction of our own unworthiness, and the boundless compassion of our merciful Redeemer. Happy for us, if we are seeking and desiring these things! happy for us, if these are our anticipations!

Let us be honest, then, one towards another, and not allow a fellow pilgrim to loiter on the way to heaven, picking up flowers that must shortly wither, and plucking fruit which, though sweet in the mouth, will be bitter when swallowed. If we had that heavenly-mindedness, one of the rarest qualities among men, which prevents its possessor from becoming conformed to the world, we should not long so for the "gold that perishes," nor yearn after "the flesh-pots of Egypt."

We should not stoop, so greedily to swallow
The bubbles of the world, so light and hollow;
To drink its frothy draughts, in lightsome mood,
And live upon such empty airy food.
Fools that we are, to follow forms that spurn us!
And spend our breath in fanning flames that burn us!
We do the thing we hate, and would pursue not;
And what we most desire to do, we do not;
Leave what we dearly love with weeping eyes,
And closely cling to what we most despise.

It is pretty enough to see children make their cat's cradles with a piece of string, tie up their buttercups into a posy, and blow their bubbles of soap and water; but surely it is high time for us to be differently occupied, to anticipate other things.

If the symbols of coming decrepitude; if the dim eye, the grey hair, the wrinkled brow, and the declining strength of a man, do not persuade him to think less of earth, and more of heaven, what will suffice? If they do not convince him that the time is short, and dispose him to hear Moses and the prophets, and the apostles, would he listen if one were to rise from the dead? Oh no! the heart needs changing. May Divine grace turn our hearts and hopes from earth to heaven!

“When I was a child,” says the apostle, “I spake as a child, I understood as a child, I thought as a child: but when I became a man, I put away childish things,” 1 Cor. xiii. 11. Ay, and let us put them away too; let our anticipations be of a more exalted character; let us look forward to, and long for, a home in heaven! a white robe! a golden crown! a burst of hallelujahs! the society of saints and angels, and the presence of God! Happy those of whom it was said, “Ye are come unto Mount Zion, and unto the city of the living

God, the heavenly Jerusalem, and to an innumerable company of angels, to the general assembly and church of the first-born, which are written in heaven, and to God the Judge of all, and to the spirits of just men made perfect, and to Jesus, the Mediator of the new covenant, and to the blood of sprinkling, that speaketh better things than that of Abel," Heb. xii. 22—24.

FEW PASSING THOUGHTS.

ALWAYS carry a few crumbs of Scripture about you, that you may nibble at them as opportunity may serve. It is a bad thing to fast too long, either as it respects the bread that perishes, or that which endureth for ever.

The clock-face not only tells us the hour of the day, but also how much of that day we have lived and died.

A Christian may learn a lesson from the swallow. He may build a temporary house on the earth, but his desires should be ever on the wing heavenward.

Venture not on the precipice of temptation; the ground is deceitful, and a false step, or a sudden blast, may bring about your destruction.

When you see, in a pottle of strawberries, that the finest fruit is placed purposely at the top, take the following hint: There are toppers in dress, toppers in trade, toppers in learning, and toppers in religion, as well as toppers in strawberries.

Never take the humble and the proud at their own valuation ; the estimate of the former will be too low, that of the latter sadly too high.

If you want to see a melancholy sight, look at a man professing Christianity giving way to passion, and bristling up like a hedgehog twenty times a day.

Bad as it is to bite a man's fingers with your teeth, it is worse to mangle his reputation with your tongue.

The dearest of all dinners may be that for which you do not pay : a crust of your own is better in the end than a haunch of venison given by another.

Afflicted Christians, like Paul and his companions, may be sadly buffeted by the waves ; but whether they "cast themselves into the sea," or ride on boards, or on broken pieces of the ship, it is one comfort that they are sure to get "safe to land."

It is a fearful thing to tempt His wrath, who holds in his hands the lightnings of heaven.

He who hopes to go to heaven on account of his good works, and he who expects to go there without doing any, may shake hands, for one is as deep in the mud as the other is in the mire.

When I see the profusion of daisies, primroses, buttercups, and cowslips of the fields, and the

hips, the haws, the sloes, and the blackberries of the hedges, I burst into the heartfelt ejaculation, "What bountiful supplies are provided for the little birds and insects!"

Never do we so truly value our bits and drops, as when we see the hand of God stretched out to bestow them.

True religion embraces the highest degree of love for God and man. When I meet a man too wise, too upright, and too virtuous, then I shall expect to meet with one too religious.

He who punishes an enemy has a momentary pleasure; he who forgives one has an abiding satisfaction.

The Christian's heart cannot always be merry; but it must be sadly out of tune when it cannot sing of mercy.

ON HOUSEWIFERY.

NEVER am I put out of temper without sinking in my own estimation : but, notwithstanding this, it too often occurs, in spite of all my attempts to the contrary, that my stock of patience is exhausted, and I am angry. Willingly would I be employed from the crowing of the cock to sunset, in speaking in praise of what is estimable, rather than in censuring what is faulty ; but, now and then, circumstances occur that require more forbearance than Old Humphrey possesses, to put up with them without a reproof.

Mistresses of families, I have a word to whisper in your ears.

The duties of a well regulated house are many ; some of these occur every day, and others at periods more remote from each other. Among the latter, there is one that requires considerable address. Most families have occasional visitors, that pass a few days and nights with their friends in a sociable way, and then take their leave. Now, it is respecting your duties when you have

a visitor in the house that I wish to speak. I will not indulge in a wearisome exhortation, but merely mention the circumstances of a late visit of my own, from which I do trust, you will contrive to extract a hint or two that may be useful.

Weary and worn, I arrived at the house of a friend, and was received in the most hospitable manner. I felt that I was welcome. But though the wife of my friend had many excellent qualities, she was sadly deficient in some departments of good housewifery: she did not know how to make a visitor comfortable. At my time of life, a little attention is absolutely necessary to my peace. I like to feel that there are those around me who are mindful of my comfort. We all have our little whims and peculiarities, and I have mine. A little attention wins me over directly, while the want of it sadly disturbs my accustomed serenity.

Soon after my arrival, I was shown into an upstairs chamber, that I might wash my hands and face, adjust my cravat, and comb my few remaining grey hairs; and here I heaved a sigh at the want of good housewifery on the part of my hospitable hostess. A piece of soap lay soaking in water in the wash-hand basin; a dirty towel lay on the dressing-table; and shoes, slippers, and clothing of different kinds, occupied the chairs and

floor at the far end of the room. The looking-glass was so dusty, that I wrote my initials on it with my finger, to render any other admonition unnecessary. Now, why could not the good lady of the house have given a glance round the room before I was shown into it?

I must acknowledge that I felt far from happy; but, "Come, come," said I to myself, "the best housewives are sometimes a little negligent. I am an unexpected visitor, and must not expect to find things so orderly as if they had looked for me."

The day passed, and the night came, and once more I was shown into the chamber, which had then undergone considerable alteration. The slippers and the clothing had been poked all together into a closet, the door of which was left half open. An attempt had evidently been made to wipe the dust off the looking-glass, for only a very small part of my initials could be seen upon it. The dirty water had been emptied out of the wash-hand basin, and a clean towel hung on the small clothes-horse. So far, so good; and I congratulated myself accordingly.

Aged people generally attach a great deal of importance to a good night's rest. It is so wearisome to lie, hour after hour, listening to the ticking of a watch, or to the clock, as it lazily

strikes the slow-footed hours. For my own part, perhaps I am a little too particular in my preparation for the night's repose. A night-gown, and a comfortable, clean, warm night-cap are indispensable. It may not be customary to provide visitors with night-gowns, but it so happens, that I have usually fallen into the hands of some of the kindest and most considerate of friends, and I fear this has spoiled me. Alas! alas! neither night-gown nor night-cap was placed in my chamber. Now, why could not my kind-hearted hostess have seen that suitable things were provided for her aged visitor? "Well," said I, "a happy turn of mind will make the best of every thing; with a little management I shall do very well:" so, tying my silk handkerchief around my brows, I hoped, being very weary, to obtain a hearty slumber. Turning first on one side, then on the other, I wrapped the bed-clothes around me, drew up my feet, and tried all sorts of contrivances, but in vain: the night was cold, and the blankets scanty, and it was not till I had spread my coat over the bed that I felt comfortable.

I was sure that the good mistress of the house did not mean to neglect me, but it would have been thoughtful of her to have seen that I had an extra blanket.

Bright were the sunbeams that welcomed me, when, on the morrow, I drew up my window-blind, and approached the wash-hand stand to begin my ablutions. By some strange mishap, no water had been put for me; so, opening my chamber door, I called aloud for Sally, who came running with a face ruddy with health, and lighted up with good humour, to my assistance. No sooner did Sally know what I wanted, than down stairs went the willing, but thoughtless girl, to supply my wants; this she did with so much good humour, that I heartily forgave her, or rather her mistress, for the neglect. I now prepared to wash in good earnest, but not a morsel of soap could I lay my hands on. Once more Sally was summoned, and once more did she disarm me by her ready alacrity to do my bidding. "Sally! Sally!" said I, "I have got no soap! and stop a moment," for the girl was off like a shot, "you may as well bring me a little spring water to wash my mouth with, for I do not see any on the table." Sally was "very sorry," and winged her way down the stairs so nimbly, that the soap and the spring water were soon forthcoming. When I took up the water-bottle, however, to pour a little water into the glass, no glass was to be found. I used the bottle without a glass, managing matters as well as I could. "Surely, surely," thought I,

“mine is a chapter of accidents ; the lady of the household cannot always be so forgetful of her friends !” Breakfast passed off very well, but when I wanted my great-coat and shoes, neither the one nor the other had been brushed. Sally ran off with them to John, the gardener, who hastily performed his task, but why could it not have been done before ? It was not John’s fault, nor Sally’s fault, but that of their mistress ; a good housewife would not have left me to the care of negligent servants. No ; she would have seen that they did their duty. One glance of a kind-hearted housewife is of great value to the order and comfort of every dwelling. I did not expect my friend’s wife to carry me up water and soap ; to clean my shoes, or to brush my great-coat ; but surely it was not unreasonable to expect that she would see these things were done for me.

Mistresses of families, let me tell you a plain truth ; I know twenty households that have worthy beings at the head of them, who seem to have almost every other good quality but that of good housewifery ; and for the want of this, comfort, instead of being a stated inmate, is only an occasional guest.

There is a cleanliness, an order, a sprightliness given to the abode of a good housewife, that is absolutely alluring ; but if the chairs are allowed

to be all sixes and sevens ; the table littered over with work ; the fire unsupplied with fresh coals ; the hearth unswept, and the candles unsnuffed, until a domestic attends to them, negligence prevails all around. Many a husband, of a quiet temper, walks away from such a scene, not only seeing, but feeling, how little his happiness is attended to, to seek, in other places, that comfort which he finds not in his own habitation.

Old Humphrey, from the days of his boyhood, was dependent on these things : an expiring fire, an unswept hearth, an untidy room, and a candle burning in the socket, are all sources of annoyance to him. Come, ye mistresses of families ! see if a useful lesson cannot be learned from these remarks.

There is one habitation at which I am an occasional visitor, that presents a pattern of good housewifery. Kind, quiet, and thoughtful, without bustle, and without ostentation ; the mistress, by her systematic and persevering attention to her friends, renders her house one of the most comfortable and delightful in the world. All my wants are anticipated ; all my peculiarities provided for ; so that, whether I go out or come in, I have constantly the feeling that I am cared for. There is no negligent servant in the establishment ; and why ? because the mistress is a good housewife ?

She sees that the servants do their duty. She has kindness enough to desire to make her guests happy, and industry sufficient to effect her purpose. Mistresses of families ! again I say, Listen to the admonitions of Old Humphrey, and be good housewives.

ON
THE FRESH FEELINGS
OF
YOUTHFUL CONVERTS.

AMONG the fair and beautiful things witnessed on earth, the first feelings and ardent desires of the young convert to Christ surely ought not to be disregarded. The green leaf of spring has a freshness and vigour that are delightful to the eye; and the love, the ardour, the disinterested devotedness of the young convert, are equally delightful to the heart. Alas, that the green leaf should ever become sere! that the warm-hearted disinterestedness of the young convert should ever languish!

True piety is a precious thing, in its beginnings and its progress; and though the pilgrim who has journeyed far, and borne the heat and burden of the day, may smile at the bustling alacrity with which the youthful convert sets out on his pilgrimage, he will give him a word of encouragement as he passes onward, and pour

his blessings on his head ; yea, he will bless him “in the name of the Lord.”

The following letter, from a daughter to her father, which has fallen into my hands, has so much affected my own mind, that I have copied it out, almost without the alteration of a word, though some parts have been omitted. It will, I hope, be the means of impressing solemn truths on some youthful heart ; and it may bring a blush into the faces of some more advanced Christians, at the comparative coldness of their love of the Redeemer, and their apathy in regard to eternal things :—

“And now, dear papa, I want you to let me speak plainly about one remark of yours. Will you let me speak out ? and will you bear in mind that it is the warmth of my feelings, and not any lack of love and respect to the best father that ever breathed, that makes me do so ? Yes, I know you will. You say in your note, ‘For, much as I desire you to be intellectual, I would rather a thousand times over that you should be pious than poetical.’

“Now this way of talking, and I often hear it, and meet with it in books, produces a strange feeling in my mind, which I can hardly, perhaps, make you understand ; but it creates a sensation as though the Bible could not be true. It seems

as though, if it were all true, people could not, believing it, talk in this way.

“Suppose you stood by a house that was on fire, and there were people inside so torpid that they used no exertion to get out; suppose, during the raging of the flames, a person came up, and began to talk to the people inside in this way:—
‘Now, although I wish you to be intellectual, and to read and study much, yet I would much rather that you should come out of this house; it will be much better for you every way; it is exceedingly pleasant out here, the moon shines brightly. I do hope you will come out. Nay, I would rather a thousand times that you should come out, than do any thing else!’—what would you think? ‘Why,’ say you to yourself, ‘my senses certainly deceive me; this house cannot really be on fire; it is a delusion, a “cunningly devised” picture, or a disease in my eyes. But if it be really true; if this house is indeed on fire, then this poor man is out of his senses. He advises the people by all means to come out, and says he would rather they should come out than do any thing else; why, if they stay in, they will all be burnt to ashes! If this house were really on fire, and this man soberly believed it to be so, he would have them dragged out by the hair of their head; if it were but barely possible for them

to escape, he would not care how they came out, naked or famished, or even with broken bones, so they might but come out.'

“Now, this is just the way I look upon the truths of the Bible ; when people talk about the advantages of piety, and how much better it is to be religious than any thing else, the thought comes to my mind, sometimes with power, Can the Bible be true? It speaks of everlasting life and eternal death, heaven and hell. Well, but this must be merely strong language, figurative, allegorical : it cannot literally mean what it says ; for if it were literally true, would those who believe it, talk about it being better to be religious? One would think they would not care whether their neighbours had food to eat, or clothes to wear, so that they were religious.

“What is being religious? what is being pious? Is it not having faith? And do I not read, he who has faith shall be saved, and he who has not faith shall be damned? This is the language of my Bible : Mark xvi. 16. Woe to me, should I dare hold out to any human being the probability that this will not literally be fulfilled. We know not what God's plan will be in the great day of judgment ; and we know, whatever it is, we shall be swallowed up in the will of God ; but whatever takes place then, we have the Bible

for our guide now, and I can see nothing in it but awful denunciations against all who receive not the truth as it is in Jesus: 'If ye believe not that I am he, ye shall die in your sins,' John viii. 24; and who is he that believeth, but he that loves God, and keeps his commandments; or, as we express it, he that is pious;—so, then, it is life and heaven to be pious; death and hell not to be pious. How inexpressibly dreadful, then, not to be pious! Nay, what can possibly exceed the dreadful? Therefore how unsuitable the language so often used in handling this tremendous subject!

“I always from childhood believed the truth, that it was a dreadful thing not to be religious; and truly, I thought I was pious enough; for if any one had catechised me, I should have told him that I was a sinner, and that Jesus Christ died for sinners; that we cannot be saved by any of our own works, but must believe in him; and that all our righteousnesses are as 'filthy rags,' etc. All this I should have set forth, and repeated many texts to prove it; and beside all this, I could weep in church, when the organ was very soft, or the hymn rose high, which I took for a certain sign, that my heart was 'right in the sight of God;' for mere morality, I thought, could never do this. May God in his

mercy preserve me evermore from such a religion as this, which has truly neither life nor love in it; for, had the whole truth been known, it never happened to be the words of the hymn, but always the music, that made me cry. As for my sins, they did not trouble me much; for though I often heard of them, I could never see them very distinctly. I never felt but I could do very well without this Saviour, and so I never loved him for dying for me. Yet all this time I was fully persuaded it was a dreadful thing not to be religious, and would have wished all the world to be pious, even as I was.

“The apostle Paul takes no such calm view of the case, when he advises the Corinthians to be pious, for he says, ‘Examine yourselves, whether ye be in the faith: prove your own selves. Know ye not your own selves, how that Jesus Christ is in you, except ye be reprobates?’ 2 Cor. xiii. 5. Neither did he seem to use any mincing words when recommending piety to Felix; for ‘as he reasoned of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come, Felix trembled,’ Acts xxiv. 25.

“It seems to me that a cold way of talking about piety is perfectly consistent and proper, if the Bible be what I said, figurative or allegorical; for then it would not be a life and death

business. People had better be pious, then, by all means, for piety is exceedingly lovely; she brings a sweet reward in her hand, looking no farther than 'the life that now is:' but if any one very greatly prefers the study of romance, or poetry, or philosophy, to the study of the Bible; why, there is no very urgent reason why they should not gratify themselves. But if the Bible is not figurative, but literally true, and people recommend piety to their neighbours with the same expression of countenance and tone of voice, (I continually hear this,) as they recommend neatness in dress, cheerfulness, etc., it is like saying, 'I could wish you to do this and that; but, on the whole, I had much rather, nay a thousand times, that you should go to heaven than to hell.'

"I will endeavour to do what you say with regard to my pieces, though from henceforth for ever they must have but one tendency. And I will not compromise with the highest attainment under heaven, the brightest wreath of laurels that ever graced mortal brow, for so much as one of my Saviour's smiles! This is no fanaticism, my soul can testify; for 'his left hand hath been under my head, and his right hand hath embraced me,' and when I saw him, 'I determined to know nothing among men, save Jesus Christ and him

crucified.' When first he stood knocking at the door of my heart, my reply was, 'Not yet, Lord; not yet.' I believed not the good report I had heard of him and his service, and was ready to say with Pharaoh, 'Who is the Lord that I should serve him?' Oh, how justly might he have turned away, and left me to my idols; for I was wedded to them! But no, he came again and again, until at last, I said unto him, 'Yea, Lord, thy face will I seek.' Then I saw him; and when I saw him, I gave him my heart at once, and was filled with great astonishment. I had suspected all that was written and said of Him before, but now I believe every word of it; and though my wicked and ungrateful heart is ever, even now, following hard after other gods, there is no thought so terrible to it as the fear that 'He whom my soul loveth' should withdraw himself, and leave me cold and lifeless as I was before. This may well be called the joy of 'first love;' for I know nothing like it under heaven, and I am certain there is nothing like it under heaven.

"Ah! it does not last long! these visits to 'the banqueting house' are 'few and far because.' If it were not so, there would be no such a thing as passing through 'great tribulation;' and how would the partakers of the Redeemer's resurrec-

tion and glory be made also conformable to his death and sufferings? I never could form the slightest idea, except a poetic one, of what heaven is; but now I know, and have tasted, in what the glory of it consists: it is not in harps and crowns of gold, nor even in meeting again those we love; for the rapture of that place is in being in the presence of God, and seeing the Saviour face to face! I may say, with a good man long since gone home, 'If there be any other heaven beside the presence of Christ, I shall not covet it.'

"My heart has said in some moments, 'Why tarry his chariot wheels?' and then, if it were not for the earthly part of death, which the flesh hangs back from, I could have stretched forth my arms, and gone to Him, leaving all behind; yes, even you, my dearest and best of all earthly idols, though I once thought—if you died, I should die directly. How wonderful! Educational religion and real faith in the soul, are no more like one another than Mohammedism is like Christianity.

"I am ready to exclaim, Will no one rejoice with me that I am 'passed from death unto life?' They would rejoice if I had an estate left me, a poor, perishable, earthly estate, to carry my foolish heart farther from God than ever; but no one seems to care that I am 'delivered from the power of Satan, and translated into the kingdom

of God's dear Son!' If it is given me, through mercy, to stand at the right hand of God, will they not then be glad that I am among them?

“Some time ago, I looked into every face for a smile, at least, to say, Art thou also made partaker of ‘like precious faith’ with us? But I have left off looking now: one has his ‘farm;’ another his ‘merchandise;’ they have no time to talk about these things. While you are saying, ‘Come and hear what the Lord hath done for my soul,’ they are calling, ‘Come and see what I am doing for my body.’ Alas! there are none to speak often together of the Lord, that a ‘book of remembrance’ may be written! ‘To you, therefore, that believe he is precious.’ Is he not precious to them? Much I wonder they can help talking of him. ‘If a man love me he will keep my words: and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him.’ Oh, glorious promise! My faith is extremely weak and confused; yet it is sufficient to give me unspeakable joy. What I long to ask is, If real believers can remember the time when they were confused respecting many things, and could not tell whether they believed rightly or not? Can you remember such a time? and did your views gradually become more clear? I mean, did you at first rest and trust at once in Christ? or did you work hard for

some time without him, not understanding how to rest and trust in him? This I have done; and since I tried to be better, I have found myself worse than ever."

SHORT OBSERVATIONS.

WHEN I see rich people care so much for their bodies, and so little for their souls, I pity them from the bottom of my heart, and sigh to myself, "We may be as surely ruined by riches as by poverty!"

Many a man would prove to be an excellent physician to himself, if he would take all the good advice that he gives away to others.

He who goes into his garden to look for cobwebs and spiders will no doubt find them: while he who looks for a flower, may return into his house with one blooming in his bosom.

Have a care in climbing high trees and high stations; if you fall from the bottom bough, it will shake you; if from the top one, it may break your neck.

Who makes his bed of brier and thorn,
Must be content to lie forlorn.

The reptile in human form should be avoided with care: you may rub off the slime of a snail, but not the slime of a slanderer.

The less you ask favours of your fellow sinners the better; but ask freely of God, for he "giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not."

When a poor blind mole shall tear up from the ground the giant oak of a hundred years' growth, by burrowing under its roots, then may the poor blind infidel, with his higgling and wriggling, expect to overturn the truth of God's holy word.

The crazy habitation of the body will decay: you may repair the broken tiles and damaged roof; you may rub up the dim window lights, and oil the rusty hinges of the doors; you may patch up and plaster over the shattered walls, and paint the outside of the tenement till the passer-by wonders at its fresh appearance; but, for all this, the old house must come down at last!

The silence of the tongue is oftentimes the eloquence of the heart.

When you are rich, praise God for his abundant bounty. When you are poor, thank him for keeping you from the temptations of prosperity. When you are at ease, glorify him for his merciful kindness; and when beset with affliction and pain, offer up thanksgiving for his merciful reminders that you are approaching your latter end.

Oh, how I love to see a well-worn Bible! Not

one that has been abused by the idle and careless, but one that has been used by the diligent seeker after salvation.

Occupation cures one half of life's troubles, and mitigates the remainder. A manacled slave working at the galleys is not so miserable as he would be without any employment.

As a man may gain strength of body who partakes not of spiritual food, so may he grow spiritually weak while feeding on turtle and venison.

As the limpet clings to the rock of the ocean, so should the Christian to the rock of his salvation.

ON REMOVALS.

ALL who are in the habit of observing persons and things with any degree of attention, and reflecting on what takes place around them, must now and then be occupied with odd subjects. This is continually occurring to me, as those must be aware who have read that small part of my observations which has been made public.

There is such a pleasure in giving way to the mood of the moment, such a luxury in indulging one's wandering inclinations in such matters, that I can hardly resist it; and for this reason it is that the subjects which engage me are so unconnected one with another. Who ever read two papers of Old Humphrey's on the same subject?

The worst of it is, that sometimes I get dozing and prozing over things which cannot be turned to much account, and then it vexes me. Oh the delight of feeling the heart beat against the bosom, and the pulse throb quickly with some

holy or philanthropic purpose! Those who have ever known what it is to be filled with a glowing desire to glorify God, or to compass some benevolent undertaking for the good of man, will acknowledge that all other designs are poor and pitiful in comparison. There are glorious moments at times mercifully vouchsafed to us, of this kind, when the lagging pen cannot keep pace with the beating of the heart; and when the beating of the heart is equally far behind the winged spirit, urging its way to the bright end of its high desires. Such seasons as these are the very sunbeams of life, the precious gifts of the Eternal.

At the moment I write this, I am seated at the window; it is early. Two vans have been for some time opposite the door of the adjoining house; some hay has been shaken down on the ground for the horses, their bridles having first been unhooked from their collars; and five men are now busily employed in carrying out the furniture from the house, and placing it in the vans: heavy packages, corded boxes, chests of drawers, bedsteads, sofa, bookcases, tables, and chairs. As the load gets higher, lighter things are added; cornices, bedding and blankets, carpets, hearth-rugs, and bandboxes tied round with red tape. A large piece of brown matting is now thrown

over the loaded van, and the men are covering the whole load. One man is pulling with all his might, setting his foot against the nave of the wheel. Another man has taken off his hat to wipe his brows with his blue cotton pocket-handkerchief. Ay! ay! he is now differently employed. It is hard work, no doubt; but for all that, it is rather early to pull away at the tankard in that fashion.

There they are, beginning to load the other van. Grates, pots, kettles, and fire-irons are all lying ready, with kitchen chairs, deal tables, flat irons, and saucepans; tubs, barrels, and crockery. The coal-scuttle and some empty hampers come last.

The loaded van is moving, and the other will not be long after it, for it fills apace. How frequently scenes presented to the eye call forth those of the imagination! These vans of household stuff remind me of the command of Pharaoh, king of Egypt, to Joseph. I have just turned to the passage in Genesis: "And Pharaoh said unto Joseph, Say unto thy brethren, This do ye; lade your beasts, and go, get you unto the land of Canaan; and take your father, and your households, and come unto me: and I will give you the good of the land of Egypt; and ye shall eat the fat of the land. Now thou art

commanded, this do ye ; take you wagons out of the land of Egypt for your little ones, and for your wives, and bring your father, and come. Also regard not your stuff ; for the good of all the land of Egypt is yours," Gen. xlv. 17—20.

At this moment I can see in my fancy the venerable Jacob journeying into the land of Egypt, to fall upon the neck of his best beloved son.

Many a removal have I seen in my time ; some that have been pleasant and cheerful, and others that have made my heart ache. Poor mortals as we are, we move about from one crazy habitation to another : we put on a little paint, we patch on a little plaster, we remove our household goods, and begin, as it were, anew. We enter a fresh neighbourhood, and form fresh acquaintances ; and perhaps years roll on before we feel an inclination, or find a necessity, for another removal.

At last we see some advantage in quitting our habitation for another ; or some loss or cross renders it expedient ; or some bereavement alters our position, and calls us to perform fresh duties ; then again we pack up our household stuff, and pitch our tent on another part of the desert. At every removal we find that some favourite nook, some snug corner to which we have been accustomed, is wanted. Some friend, whose talents, or kindness, or cheerfulness, or integrity, or piety,

may have endeared him to us, is no longer in our circle. There are lingerings after what we have enjoyed, yearnings after what we can never more hope to enjoy.

Many years ago some of my relations removed from their native country; they embarked for America, and settled on the banks of the Delaware, in the state of Pennsylvania. There were thousands of uncultivated acres around them, when they first set about building their log-house. They had to fell the trees, to clear away the brush-wood, to cultivate the ground, and to produce order from the existing chaos. Industry is seldom without its reward; and in the course of time, comfort smiled around them, the thorn and the brier gave place to the olive and the myrtle; and the wilderness blossomed as the rose.

In that far land they did not forget me. I have seen before now on a seal the impression of two doves flying in different ways, holding in their beaks the opposite ends of a silken cord, tied like a true-lover's knot, so that the farther the doves go asunder, the tighter the knot was tied. It is a pretty device, and I am sure that it aptly sets forth the increase of affection that absence in many cases produces. My relatives corresponded with me, they named a tree after me, and often at sunset took their tea, or a glass

of their own wine made from the maple tree, underneath it, and talked of old times, of old friends, and of their fatherland. Sometimes, too, the voice of prayer and psalmody rose from the place, for the head of the family was like a patriarch among them.

Often and often has Old Humphrey indulged the thought, that he should like to cross the heaving ocean, and surprise them in their retreat. How delightful to take bales and packages of all sorts of things for their comfort, and to steal upon them when they were assembled under that tree, either refreshing their bodies with sustenance, or their souls with prayer and praise! What idle dreams of joy we indulge in!

While I make these remarks, both persons and things are tugging at my heart. I have hitherto been speaking of the removals that appertain more immediately to the body; what shall I say to the removal of the soul from its earthly, perishable tabernacle, to a glorious mansion prepared for the believer in Christ? That will be something like a removal! we shall have no need to regard our stuff, no necessity to repair or beautify our new abode. There will be no damp walls and smoky chimneys; no ill-natured neighbours, no rent and taxes to pay there! The mansions are fair, and lightsome, and glorious. There

is no rent or tax, and the lease is fully granted, and its term is "for ever and ever!"

Here I have run into a strange mistake in talking of a lease. No! no! there is no lease at all in the affair. Heaven, and happiness, and eternity, are, through Divine grace, the freehold of God's people; for they are the children of God, "and if children, then heirs; heirs of God, and joint heirs with Christ," Rom. viii. 17.

If this be the true state of the case, as undoubtedly it is, then may we patiently endure the temporary changes that take place in our worldly affairs. Our household stuff may begin to look a little old-fashioned. The tenement to which we have removed may not be so commodious as the last; our funds may be diminished, and our friends fewer than before; but let not these things trouble us. Those who are heirs of the eternal things of heaven, should not value too highly the transitory things of earth. It may be well to be able to say, in a worldly sense, "By and by I shall remove to the house yonder on the hill, which is larger, and better, and pleasanter than this which I now inhabit in the valley;" but it is much better to say, "We know that if our earthly house of this tabernacle were dissolved, we have a building of God, a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens," 2 Cor. v. 1.

While I have been thus musing, and noting down my thoughts, the last van has moved away.

The butcher has been to the vacant tenement, and has gone back again, finding no one to give him an order. The brewer's cart has arrived with a barrel of ale: it is too late; the gate is shut, and the brewer has doubtless lost a customer; the house is empty, the household stuff is removed. The tenant is gone, and Old Humphrey, having mused so long on removals, must now hasten to fulfil an engagement with an old friend.

ON THANKFULNESS.

WE sometimes think that we are thankful, when we have rather cause to blame ourselves. When our minds are at ease, our bodies in health, and our property seemingly secure, when every want is well supplied, and every reasonable wish gratified, there is, alas! little proportionate gratitude. It is one thing to be thankful for a well-spread table, and another to be thankful for the table crumbs. It is one thing to be thankful when we have all we want, and another to be thankful for whatever God bestows.

So long as God's dealings fall in with our inclinations, and add to our prosperity, we may not repine; but when the Trier of the heart and reins puts forth his hand, and touches us; when he abridges our comforts, afflicts our bodies, and burdens our minds with care, how great, frequently, is the change: too often impatience and unthankfulness take possession of our hearts.

It is an old remark, that we bear no affliction so patiently as the afflictions of others. Oh, there is much truth in this! We think ourselves wondrously patient, and contented, and thankful, when we

hear others complain, without considering that we are not smarting under the scalding drops of affliction that agonize their hearts.

Now, the degree of thankfulness that a Christian should try to attain, I take to be this: to have such a sense of God's wisdom and goodness in all his dealings, as to rest fully satisfied that what he does, must be for the best; so that come what will, we can be thankful. God made the sun to gild the earth and skies with glory, and he made the clouds, also, to shroud his beams. God made the rose to burst forth in fragrance and beauty, and the stem on which it grows he has set with prickly thorns. His are the sun and flowers; his also are the shadows and thorns. Never do we err more than when we make our desires the test of God's mercies; we wish to have flowerets and sunbeams for ever, and often feel unthankful for thorns and shadows.

Thankfulness is a hard lesson to learn: we must beg the Father of mercies to be our instructor. That is the right sort of thankfulness which is thankful for all things; believing "that all things work together for good to them that love God." Thankful for much and for little: thankful when comforts are lessened, that they are not all gone: thankful when they are all gone, that the Father of mercies is able to provide more:

thankful, when afflicted with gravel, that it is not the stone : thankful with a broken arm, that it is not a broken leg : thankful, whether high or low, rich or poor : in health, and in sickness : in life, and in death : being fully persuaded, that neither “ death, nor life, nor angels, nor principalities, nor powers, nor things present, nor things to come, nor height, nor depth, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, which is in Christ Jesus our Lord,” Rom. viii. 38, 39.

ON
RELIGIOUS AND BENEVOLENT
PUBLIC MEETINGS.

I NEVER remember an instance of a number of bad men meeting together with a bad intention, without their trying to do some mischief, and should as soon expect to see a red-hot iron thrust into a heap of gunpowder without an explosion, as for such a thing to take place. If you sow thistle-seed, thistles will spring up; if you plant thorns, thorns will grow; and evil intentions, just in the same way, will produce evil deeds.

But if this be true, and true it certainly is, then this reasoning may be applied to good as well as to evil. I never remember a number of godly men meeting together with a godly intention, without some good effect following; and should as soon expect that a fruitful vine would bear poison-berries, as that Christian men would lay their heads together, willingly to dishonour God, or to afflict mankind.

It is a glorious thing for those who desire to make the world better, and happier, and holier

than it is, by spreading wider the kingdom of the Redeemer, to refresh themselves with each other's presence, opening their hearts freely, and kindling a brighter flame on the altar of devotion than might otherwise burn there.

But do not suppose, by what has been said, that I am a speaker in public assemblies. No; Old Humphrey never mounts the platform, but glides into a back seat on such occasions; the fittest place for him. He cannot make his eye be "felt from afar," flashing with the energy of his soul; he cannot eloquently pour forth his warm wishes for the welfare of a sinful world. No; all that he can do is, to take up this stump of a pen, with which he is now noting down his poor thoughts, and, after supplication at the throne of grace, that his mind may be so governed as to be kept from dishonouring God, or wounding a fellow sinner without cause, set forth, in the best way he is able, all things that in his opinion are true, and honest, and just, and pure, and lovely, and of good report. He highly values the public meetings of Christian people, and therefore it is that he speaks in their praise.

But do not imagine, that, after living so long in the world, I know so little of the human heart as to be blind to its errors on these occasions.

Oh no! there is sufficient room in the heart of a public speaker, full as it may seem to be of heavenly and holy things, for earthly infirmities to dwell there. There is danger of an eloquent man being too sensibly alive to the approbation of his fellow mortals; he may have too keen an appetite for human praise; and there is a danger of the assembled multitude forgetting that the object of their meeting is to praise God rather than man. These are dangers that speakers and hearers would do well to avoid; but on this point I will not be severe, for I love to honour good men for their works' sake, and often find myself thumping the floor with my cane by way of commendation, when I might be better employed in putting up a prayer that both speakers and hearers might be blessed of the Most High.

It sometimes occurs, that in meetings of a more serious character than ordinary, when high and holy things are entered into, and when the mind ought to be more serious than at other times—it sometimes happens, I say, that the speaker makes a droll remark, very droll, but sadly out of place; so that, instead of the spirit of the hearer being absorbed with sacred reverence for the Most High, it is dancing with light-hearted gaiety and turbulent mirth. This is not as it should be. I have, before now, met with some-

thing of this kind in a place of Divine worship, when the preacher, and a Christian-hearted, godly, deeply-impressed preacher too, in a moment of infirmity, has scattered abroad the solemn thoughts that he had for an hour been labouring to produce, by one unexpected, ill-timed, comical observation. The preacher has smiled, the hearers have laughed, and Old Humphrey among them, though he has reflected upon it afterwards with regret and shame.

Nor must it be denied that public speakers, especially such as are young, now and then shoot above the heads, rather than at the hearts, of the people they address, and use such lengthy words, and such high-flown illustrations, that a plain man wonders what they are after, and in what it will all end. I once heard a worthy young minister address a country congregation from the words, "And they all with one consent began to make excuse," Luke xiv. 18. One would not have thought that these plain words of Scripture could be made plainer, but the minister seemed to think differently; for he told us that "with one consent" meant "unanimously." Now, if the plain countrymen present could not comprehend the words of Scripture, it was not very likely they could comprehend the explanation of the preacher. The great object in addressing an

assembly is to inform the understanding, to convince the judgment, and to affect the heart : but sometimes this is forgotten.

With all these disadvantages, public meetings are of great value : and often have my feelings been warmed within me while some zealous servant of the Redeemer, with a heart full of love, and a tongue touched with holy fire, has declared the mighty acts of the King of kings, and Lord of lords.

Oh, it does one good to see and to hear great and good men devote their time and their talents to God's glory and man's benefit : and if we feel a little humbled that we are not able to do as much as they do, we feel, at the same time, anxious to do more than we have done. Men's hearts are, in such seasons, just like the wood laid ready on the altar for a burnt sacrifice, and the hallowed zeal of the Christian-hearted speaker kindles the holy flame.

It is a pleasant thing to read the record, printed on paper, or written with the pen of a ready writer, of what is going forward in the Christian world ; but how much more delightful is it to listen to the account poured forth by one bringing good tidings from a foreign land, whose eye sparkles with joy, whose heart runs over with gratitude to the Father of mercies, and whose

tongue richly abounds with words fitly spoken ; such as are, in Scripture language, likened to “apples of gold in pictures of silver !”

There are hundreds, yea, thousands, who return home from public meetings far more interested than they were before, in the spread of religion, and the increase of works of mercy ; and though worldly cares or worldly pleasures may afterwards assail them, yet are they, on the whole, more friendly to the Christian cause, and more abounding in deeds of charity.

Old Humphrey would not, willingly, say ill-natured things ; but he verily believes, that if it were not for public meetings, one half of the supporters of religious and benevolent institutions would go to sleep with the Bible in their hands. He judges by his own heart, which, in sacred and charitable things, is often more like a lump of ice than a ball of fire. Let us, then, as far as we can, secure the advantages of public meetings, by encouraging in our own hearts, humility, zeal, and Christian affection ; and avoid their evils, by waging war with vanity, selfishness, and a worldly spirit.

ON VISITORS.

SOME time ago, I gave an account of an unexpected visit paid by me, and I think that I made it plainly appear that my worthy hostess in some respects was in fault, not in want of friendly feeling, but only a deficiency in those attentions that add to the comfort of a visitor. Perhaps the observations that I made about the matter bore rather hard on the good lady, and I am led to believe that this may have been the case, because I have heard that several worthy ladies have alluded to the circumstances. They seem to think that Old Humphrey might either have given notice of his visit, or, at least, have provided himself with a night-cap; and that, in neglecting to do both the one and the other, he brought the punishment down on his own head.

A respected friend of mine, some time ago, slept at the habitation of an acquaintance. And going up stairs to bed, he heard the mistress of the house calling after him, "Old Humphrey! Old Humphrey! you will find a night-cap on the pillow." The good lady would have it that

my friend was either Old Humphrey himself, or a particular acquaintance of his; and if so, she was determined that he should find no want of good housewifery in her habitation.

In another hospitable abode, where I now and then stop the night, Mary, the housemaid, who had heard her mistress read my observations on housewifery, asked, with great seriousness, if it could possibly be there that any visitor had met with so little attention. "Oh, you know best, Mary," replied her mistress with a smile, "whether you have ever been negligent." Now, there never was a more attentive servant than Mary, nor a kinder and better housewife to me than her mistress; but these things prove that my observations have made a little stir in domestic establishments.

It often happens, that in attending to one thing, we are neglectful of another, and in the case alluded to, I certainly should have pointed out the errors of visitors, as well as of housewives: not having done it then, I will do it now.

It is a great error not to give due notice of a visit we intend to pay, at least if we have the opportunity of so doing. An additional inmate oftentimes renders a change in various household arrangements necessary, and we have

no right to disturb a whole family for our own accommodation.

It is an error not to ascertain and fall in with the regulations of the family; inattention in this respect, makes a visitor burdensome: he may be borne with, but his company will not be desired. Many visitors are faulty in this particular. They rise too late to attend the family devotions; they are negligent of meal hours; or they sit up late, keeping the family and servants from their accustomed repose.

It is a sad error to give unnecessary trouble, and yet this is a very common fault. Hospitable people will be sure to put themselves to some pains in pleasing their visitors, and they ought not to be trespassed upon, neither ought the time of servants to be trifled with.

It is an error to consume the time of those we visit, when it is either unpleasant or inconvenient to them. A little tact is necessary to know when we are trespassing, but good feeling and consideration will generally succeed in ascertaining it.

It is an error not to be kind and considerate where there are children in a family, and to lose any opportunity of doing them good. It is another to make your visit too long, as Solomon says, "Withdraw thy foot from thy neighbour's

house; lest he be weary of thee, and so hate thee," Prov. xxv. 17.

In a word, you will do well, when you visit, to bear in mind, among others, the following rules:—To give proper notice of your intended visit—To conform to the regulations of the family—To occasion as little trouble as possible—To be careful in consuming needlessly the time of your host and hostess—To be kind and considerate where there are children—To confine your visit to proper limits; and to do as much good while you stay as possible—ay! to master and mistress, to children and servants. Attention to these rules will render your visit an agreeable thing, you will leave a favourable impression behind you, and will never stand in need of a future invitation.

I was, once in my life, so circumstanced, as to be almost compelled to lengthen my visit, when judgment and inclination would have led me to terminate it. There was every attention paid me, and not the slightest diminution of respect, but for all that, I thought I was intruding on the kindness of my friends: this was a sore trouble to me—a heavy burden to my heart.

Old Humphrey has paid many a visit, and received many a visitor in his day, and he can hardly tell which is the most pleasant—to partake, or to practise the rites of hospitality.

If the injunctions be given us in Holy Writ, "Be careful to entertain strangers — Given to hospitality," it is certainly not a less duty and privilege to entertain our friends. The visit of a true Christian is oftentimes a great blessing: for many a word fitly spoken by him, and many an observation dropped in a kindly spirit, is afterwards remembered with advantage. This is especially the case when he acts up to his high profession, setting forth his Lord and Master, and saying emphatically, by his conduct, temper, and general behaviour, "I am a companion of all them that fear thee, and of them that keep thy precepts," Psa. cxix. 63.

ON
THE OLD COURT HOUSE.

I CANNOT forget the old court house, and I love, now and then, to ease my heart by going back to bygone days. Though the scenes of my memory have shadows dark and deep resting upon them, yet still it is an indulgence to call them to my remembrance. Come, bear a little with an old man, who cannot forget "that such things were," though he well knows they can never more return.

As the same bush bears a rose and a thorn, so the remembrance of our departed associates is mingled with gladness and gloom.

The pleasing and painful seasons of life live in our remembrance, when those who have shared them with us are slumbering in the grave.

I now only want to be permitted, in a simple way, to glance at a few things that have taken place, which exhibit a picture of real life, interesting at least to Old Humphrey: another time I will try to aim more directly at profitable instruction.

I love the remembrance of the old court house, with its projecting windows and ivy-mantled battlements. While I think of the place, persons and things are rising in my busy memory.

No doubt you know what it is to be interested in things which excite but little interest in the bosom of another, and this is just the case with me: few are there now, besides Old Humphrey, who care two straws about what he may relate of the old court house.

The roasted heron that we once had there for breakfast; the mutton venison served up for dinner; and that supper, rendered memorable by the going off of the rat-trap in the pantry, are all associated with sayings and doings to which death has given a deep significancy: but they cannot affect you as they affect me: therefore, we will pass them by, and allude to a few other things.

How often, in the course of my life, have I wished it possible that my friends could comprehend the rush of eye-filling, heart-thrilling affection that, at times, takes possession of my bosom!

One morning in summer, while seated at breakfast in the snug, comfortable back parlour, a whisper began to run round the table about a large foot-mark which had been discovered that morning in the garden, close to the first currant

tree. The honest farmer declared that no such mark was there at five o'clock, for that he passed through the garden soon after sunrise, on his way to the sheep-fold, and stopped at the very spot to pull a bunch of red currants from the tree growing there.

One or two persons left the breakfast table, and soon returned again with elevated eyebrows at the strange sight they had seen. The size of the foot-print was prodigious. Neither the gardener nor the servants were able to account for this strange circumstance. In the midst of the commotion, Helen, the farmer's daughter, an amiable girl, returned from a scrutiny of the mysterious foot-print, and archly insisted upon it, that my foot being the largest of any in the company, it was quite as likely to be mine, as that of any other person. A laugh was now circulated at my expense, and every one seemed disposed to put me down as the robber of the currant bush.

After breakfast, taking a two-foot rule in my hand, I went into the garden, with a whole *posse* at my heels, accurately to measure the foot-print. What was my surprise to find it more than three feet long, and one foot broad! It was a well-shaped impression, covered over with hob-nail marks. The young people tittered, but the honest

farmer indulged in a loud peal of laughter. "I thought it an odd matter," said he, "that there should be but one foot-mark in the garden, but it is accounted for now; for the man who has a foot as big as that, could easily stride over the barn."

The piece of playful mischief, which furnished us with no little amusement, was one of the lively sallies of kind-hearted Helen, in return for some little pleasantry that I had practised upon her. Never shall I forget her kindness, and not soon shall I cease to remember her lively device of the mysterious foot-mark.

It was about eight or nine o'clock one rude dark night, when the old court house was thrown into complete confusion by a fearful cry that appeared to come from the garden. It was a female voice, and the wild shriek of murder was one moment heard, and the next drowned by the raving winds.

The honest farmer ran one way, I went another, and the servants spread themselves in all directions, but in vain; the shriek for assistance, in a half-suffocated voice, still rang in our ears.

Some were dreadfully pale, and others excited almost to desperation, when it struck the farmer that the cry came from the cellar. Down the steps he led the way, and we, with no little trepidation, followed, expecting a fearful scene.

All in a moment the loud laugh of the farmer ran through the subterranean apartments. There was poor Betty, squatting down, with her finger pushed into the brass cock of the cider cask. Her candle had been blown out, she had dropped the key of the cask, and lost it, and could not leave the cellar, lest all the cider should run out of the cask. The cry that we had taken for "Murder!" was "Master!" The farmer held his back with both his hands, while he again indulged in a hearty roar.

The kind-hearted farmer loved to make his friends happy, and he loved also to make that happiness the greater by sharing it with them himself. He united a sound practical judgment with indefatigable industry in the management of his farm, yet he was ever ready to partake of the amusements of his younger friends.

One fine summer's day, a game of battledore and shuttlecock was going on in the great hall, which was very spacious and lofty, when in came the farmer with a strike measure in his hand.

In his comical way, he placed the measure upside down on the stone floor, and seated himself upon it, that he might witness the progress of the game. When it was all over, starting up from the strike measure, he took up a battledore himself, to see how long he and one of

his guests could keep the shuttlecock in the air. He was one of those who think that even in what are considered trifling matters, we always should seek to do our best. This is, indeed, the real Christian's principle.

But to go on with my story: with a quick eye and ready hand the honest farmer performed his part. Steady as old Time, he hardly ever stirred from the spot on which he stood; and now five hundred times had the shuttlecock been struck, flying backwards and forwards, through the hall, with the precision of a shuttle in a weaver's loom. We had gathered round in breathless expectation, for we saw that our worthy host had set to in good earnest. Six, seven, ay, eight hundred blows had been given, yet there was the farmer, as staunch on his legs as at the first, and seemingly as likely to prolong the game.

You may, in some degree, judge of our excitement in pursuing the winged shuttlecock as it lightly vaulted to and fro, for the number of blows had exceeded nine hundred. It was very hot: the combatants were as red as exercise could make them, and the perspiration streamed from their faces. The interest of the by-standers had now become almost painful, for the number had amounted to nine hundred and ninety.

The worthy farmer, as we afterwards understood, had resolved to stop when the shuttlecock had been struck a thousand times : so that when he expected to receive it, to give it the last blow, he drew back his arm that he might send it flying far over the head of his opponent ; but, alas ! the shuttlecock had been struck on one side, and the farmer, to his extreme mortification, missed his mark. Yes ! at *nine hundred and ninety-nine*, the shuttlecock fell to the ground. This achievement was directly recorded against the wall in the recess, by the bow windows, and there the record remains, I dare say, to this day.

It was afterwards reported, that some of the younger branches of the family had outdone this feat, but the honest farmer would never listen to it for a moment. The thing seemed to him an utter impossibility. Often have I heard him relate this adventure, with as much interest as if he had been describing the particulars of a ploughing match, or a Herefordshire show of fat cattle.

There was an order, a respectability pervading the old court house, from the master to the manservant, from the mistress to the maid. George, the bailiff, was a pattern of industry ; John, the gardener and groom, was a trustworthy

man ; never was a better servant than Mary Brian, nor a more kind and careful creature than Evans. It seems but as yesterday that I wrote their names in the new Bibles they had subscribed twopence and threepence a week to obtain.

The old hall had a strange medley of pictures hanging against its walls. Goodrich Castle, heads of old ancestors, and the Herefordshire ox, the prize pig, and the death of Epaminondas, were among them.

At the old court house, at family prayers, a short address was generally given, or a tract read; and seldom did a day pass without the elevated roof of the old hall resounding with psalmody.

The family, the guests, and the domestics, all assembled: I have known thirty or forty present on these occasions. The mistress gave out the hymn or psalm in a clear and solemn voice; the farmer took up his pitchpipe; his son put his flute to his mouth—he was a capital player; and Helen's voice was heard, clear, sweet, and powerful. Then rose the melody of praise and thanksgiving! There was a simplicity, a sincerity, a reverential solemnity, pervading these seasons of domestic devotion, that make them dear to my remembrance.

“It is a good thing to give thanks unto the Lord, and to sing praises unto thy name, O Most

High : to show forth thy loving-kindness in the morning, and thy faithfulness every night," Psa. xcii. 1, 2.

I shall have more to say about the old court house at another opportunity.

ON
RUBBING OFF OLD SCORES.

It is astonishing how soon a room, altogether neglected, becomes covered with cobwebs; and it is equally remarkable how rapidly neglected duties accumulate, burdening the mind as much as the cobwebs disfigure the chamber. I have often, in my youthful days, marvelled when Michael Dobbs, our milkman, has announced his tally to be full. There it hung behind the kitchen door, newly washed, without a score upon it; but two chalks for two pennyworth of milk in a morning, and one and a half for three halfpenny worth at night, run up so quickly, that, before we were aware of it, the board was full again, and a debt of four shillings and a penny for a single fortnight had to be paid. "Let us rub off old scores, Mr. Humphrey, and begin again," Michael used to say on these occasions; and often, since then, have I wished that my old scores on other accounts could be rubbed

off as easily as the chalk marks on Michael's milk board.

It is a bad plan to leave any part of a day's duties undone; for if it be difficult to do it to-day, it is not likely to be less so when the duties of to-morrow are added to it. He who cannot walk twenty miles in two days, will find it up-hill work to trudge the same distance in one; and he who is too weak in the back to carry a burden of fifty pounds, will stoop terribly when a hundred-weight is placed on his shoulders. Now, all this is too plain to be gainsaid; but the mischief of it is, that, though I find it comparatively easy to *talk* wisely, I find it very hard to *act* prudently. In spite of myself, and of the admonitions which from time to time I proffer to others, my old scores, every now and then, sadly accumulate, and I have need of the friendly whisperings of Michael Dobbs in my ears—"Let us rub off old scores, and begin again."

The reason why, at this particular time, I touch on the subject, is, that there are some old scores of mine which I feel more than ordinarily anxious to rub off; and, looking up for assistance to Him whose almighty aid can make the weak strong, and the unstable steady, I intend to accomplish my purpose. What these

scores of mine may be, it is not altogether necessary to declare; enough that they are of a varied character. It seems to me to be a good opportunity to bring the subject before my friends, that if any of them should be similarly circumstanced, they may make an effort, at the same time, to effect the same purpose. "A word fitly spoken is like apples of gold in pictures of silver." If, therefore, you have any old scores, let us be working together; let us humbly, but ardently, enter on the necessary and profitable duty of rubbing them off, and beginning again.

Some of my old scores refer to projects long ago formed, but never executed. A great number of important subjects are noted down on the papers beside me, to which, from time to time, I have intended to give my best attention; yet there they lie, day after day, and month after month, till I could almost sigh for the numerous eyes of the fabled Argus, and the thousand arms of the imaginary Briareus, to carry into effect the plans I have proposed to myself.

Happy is that man who can steadily discharge his daily duties, without mortgaging the energies of to-morrow! We may live beyond our income in regard to time, as well as to money; and he who has anticipated the winged moments of to-

morrow, will suffer for it the next day, and the day after.

Here I have a bundle of ill-chosen subjects, and ill-digested matter, over which I have pored many an hour. It never has been, nor is ever likely to be of use to me, or to any one else, though it has thrust aside inevitable duties which now I must imperatively perform. This is a score which, somehow or other, must be rubbed off. There is another set of papers, and a large set too, setting forth the outlines, the rough sketches, of plans and projects of an exalted character. What high aspirations! what noble resolvings! what disinterested yearnings have made my heart throb, and my pulse beat! How vigorously have I undertaken, how tamely have I abandoned, works of benevolence and utility! It does not signify, but Michael's motto must be mine—I must rub off old scores, and begin again.

Here is a pile of unanswered letters. No one values his friends more highly than I do, yet no one neglects them more, either in correspondence or personal communication. I must turn over a new leaf. I must diminish this pile; not a day, not an hour shall elapse before I begin to do what ought to have been done long ago. Here is a letter of a particular character. It begins

with the affectionate greeting, "Dear Old Humphrey," and informs me that at the house of a Dorsetshire friend, I have been spoken of with much kindness; and the announcement of this fact my correspondent thinks well to accompany with a little sage advice, lest I should allow it to elate me: he knows what a trifling thing will puff up an old man's heart.

I will copy one part of the letter, lest, by putting it into my own poor language, it should be robbed of half its interest:—"After a little chat, the party walked into the garden, where, among other things to be admired, were several beehives, the produce of which had been consecrated to the Bible Society. In the centre of a little lawn facing the back parlour window, and under the shade of an apple tree, there was another bee-hive on the new plan—all the inmates can be seen busily at work, and the honey can be removed without destroying them. One of the party suggested that, as Old Humphrey was a great favourite, the produce of that hive should be given to the Tract Society, which published Old Humphrey's papers. This was agreed to, provided the master of the house, on reflection, was convinced that this particular hive did not form part of the property given to the Bible cause."

Now this letter is one of my old scores : let me hasten, then, to rub it off, by acknowledging the kindness it makes known to me. I thank you, my unknown friends, for your favourable opinion : but I speak truly in saying, that it rather humbles than exalts me. Much more reason has Old Humphrey to lament on account of what he is not, than to exult on account of what he is.

To be a “hewer of wood” or a “drawer of water” in aiding any institution in doing good, ought to give me, and I trust it ever will give me, heart-felt satisfaction. A reasonable ground of belief that I had ever, in any degree, strengthened the hands of that highly honoured institution, the Religious Tract Society, would be oil to my joints, and marrow to my bones.

Again, I thank you for your kindness manifested in the most agreeable way, by your willingness to support Christian institutions, which, with God’s mercy, will increase when we are gone ; spreading far and wide unnumbered blessings in the earth, when the hillock that covers Old Humphrey will be undistinguishable.

Sweet as honey is, a bad use may be made of it. I have somewhere read of a famous general of olden time, who came at the head of his invincible troops to a wood abounding with

honey, when the eating of the tempting sweet too freely, rendered his soldiers luxurious and effeminate. Soon after this, being repulsed with great slaughter, he exclaimed, "It is the honey, and not the enemy, that has conquered me!"

You do well to put out your bee-hives to interest. Employ every means to make known more extensively the statutes, the judgments, and commandments of the Lord; for "more to be desired are they than gold, yea, than much fine gold; sweeter also than honey and the honey-comb," Psa. xix. 10. I take it for granted, that while the bees of your old hive are acting so distinguished a part, you will not allow their offspring to be less honourably occupied. Every fresh swarm from the hive will, it is hoped, form an infant colony, devoted to the same good work.

I wish you could prevail on your neighbours who have hives to adopt the same course—to "go and do likewise."

What think you, reader, of this subject of old scores? Have you nothing of the kind that, now and then, comes across your spirit like a cloud? Have you rubbed off lately, and begun again, or is the tally full? Let us have no shuffling, but meet the question like a man. Are you

sure that you have no old scores to remove? no acts of unkindness to your fellow-beings? no coldness, nor quarrels, nor heart-burnings? no parsimonious grudgings, nor thoughtless extravagance? no committed errors, nor omitted duties? have you done nothing that ought to be undone, nor left undone what ought to be performed?

Have you kept steadily to the strait but narrow way that leads to Zion? or have you wandered in the broad path that leads to destruction? Are you, without the least reservation, looking to the Saviour of sinners for salvation, or are you faltering in your faith, and partly turning your back upon the cross of Christ? Are you rejoicing with the fatted calf before you, in the house of your heavenly Father, or eating husks in the company of swine? Are you now saying, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord;" or are you ready to halt in your Christian course?

Come! come! I see that you begin to quail, and I won't press you too closely. He that narrowly scrutinizes his own heart, will be sure to know something about what is going on in the bosom of his neighbour. Your case may not be so bad as mine; my tally may be fuller than yours; and yet you may have old scores,

quite enough to bring a cloud on your brow. Let us, then, as I said before, look upwards for help to Him that is mighty; and humbly, but ardently, enter on the necessary and profitable duty of rubbing off old scores, and mending our ways.

ON

PRINCIPLE AND PRACTICE.

It is of no use talking, for if a man have not correct principle, and if his practice be not in agreement with it, all the advantages in the world will never make him what he should be.

A poor man came to me to ask my advice about companions. "Why," said I, "companions may be found as plentiful as thorns upon a gooseberry bush, and the one will prove as sharp to your bosom, as the other will be to your fingers, if you are not careful: but let Principle and Practice be your companions; the first will direct you, in all cases, what is best to be done, and the last will enable you to do it in the best manner. So long as you and Principle and Practice agree, so long will you prosper: but the moment you begin to differ, your prosperity and your peace will melt away like a snow-ball in a kettle of boiling water."

A rich man stopped to talk to me about a new carriage. "Never mind your carriage," said I,

“but take especial care of your horses. Principle and Practice are a pair of the best coach-horses in the world; while they run neck and neck together, you and your carriage will bowl along safely; but hold them up tightly, for if one trips it will go hard with the other, and you may find yourself in the mire a day sooner than you expect.”

Said a merchant to me, “I am about to send off a rich cargo, and must have a captain and a mate who are experienced pilots on board, but it is hardly in your way to assist me in this matter.” “Yes, yes, it is,” replied I, “and I shall recommend Principle and Practice to you, the best commanders you can have, and the safest pilots you can employ. The one possesses the best compass in the world, and the other is unrivalled at the helm. You may securely trust your ship to their care, even though she be laden with gold. Draw your night-cap over your ears, and sleep in peace, for Principle and Practice will serve you well, and if they cannot insure your prosperity, your hope is but a leaky vessel, and not seaworthy.”

“I wish, Mr. Humphrey,” said a neighbour of mine, “that you would recommend my son to some respectable house, for I want sadly to put him apprentice.”

“That I will,” said I, “and directly too ; my best shall be done to get him a situation under the firm of Principle and Practice, and a more respectable establishment is not to be found. So long as the parties in that firm hold together, they will be as secure and as prosperous as the Bank of England ; but if a dissolution of partnership should ever take place, in a little time neither the one nor the other would be worth a single penny.”

“I want a motto,” simpered a beauish young man, who was about to have a ring engraved for his finger.

“And I will give you one,” was my reply, “‘Principle and Practice.’ You may wear that motto on your finger, and in your heart too, perhaps with advantage ; but if you neglect it, though you wear rings on all the fingers you have, and bells on all your toes too, you are not likely to meet with a better. He who adopts this motto, may boldly appear without ornaments in the presence of a king ; while he who despises it, though adorned with all the trinkets in a jeweller’s shop, is not fit to associate with an honest cobbler.”

“I wish to take in half-a-dozen boarders,” said a sharp, shrewd, over-reaching widow lady, “if I could meet with any that would be agreeable, and

pay regularly, and not give too much trouble; but I am sadly afraid that it will be long enough before I shall be able to suit myself."

"Take my advice," said I; "be content with two boarders to begin with, Principle and Practice. You cannot do a better thing than to get them into your house, and to keep them there as long as you can; for they will pay you better, behave more peaceably, and do you more credit, than twenty boarders of a different character."

"If I had a proper plan," said a gentleman to his friend, "I should be half inclined to build me a house, and to lay out a garden, on the ground which I have bought on the hill yonder." Happening to pass at the time, I laid hold of him by the button, and advised him in all his plans and his projects to consult Principle and Practice in building a house for this world or the next.

The poor man and the rich man, the merchant and the father, the beau, the widow, and the gentleman, may or may not follow my advice; but if, in adopting any other plans, they disregard correct principle and upright practice, they will prepare for themselves a meal of wormwood, and a bitter draught; a nightcap of thorns, and a bed of briars; a life of vexation, and a death of sorrow.

"The wicked is driven away in his wickedness,

but the righteous hath hope in his death," Prov. xiv. 32. "Mark the perfect man, and behold the upright: for the end of that man is peace," Psa. xxxvii. 37.

ON THE
MERCIFUL ADMONITIONS
OF
DIVINE PROVIDENCE.

BOUND to the earth as we are, by ten thousand ties, we ought to be especially mindful of those occasional admonitions of Divine Providence which set forth the fading nature of all that is earthly; those merciful remindings that the time of our sojourning here is short, and that "the fashion of this world passeth away."

Among these admonitions and remindings, bodily afflictions, sudden accidents, unexpected losses, and the removal of friends, may be numbered: it is of the latter that I am about to speak, and you must let me do it in my own plain way.

Most of us have friends that we should not like to spare; the silver, the gold, and the goodly possessions of the earth would be valueless without them. Had a man the whole world to call

his own, if it contained no friend, it would be to him but a desolate possession ; yet, dear as friends are to us, we must bear to part with them.

Some people part with friends easily, but this is usually a proof that they have been valued lightly ; and again, all men are not equally quick in feeling : but when susceptible hearts have been knit together, their very chords twined round and interlaced with one another, separation cannot take place without a pang. It was no commonplace, every day grief, that David endured when he lost his friend Jonathan.

But there is little necessity for me to tell you that with which you are as well acquainted as myself ; no doubt, in your time, your nerves have been shaken, and your heart-strings tried, as well as mine.

It is not so much to dwell on these things, as to turn them to a good account, that I aim at. It makes all the difference to us whether we regard our trials and afflictions as the scourgings of a hard and cruel taskmaster, or as the merciful and gracious remindings of our heavenly Father, that this is not our rest.

Some require these remindings more frequently than others ; I speak feelingly.

It is long since my hat has been without crape round it, and my fears often tell me, that while I

am permitted to remain here, a monument of God's forbearance and mercy, I shall often wear this symbol of sorrow and affection.

That the arrows of death fall thickly around us, will be admitted by all; and if you have kindly dispositions, you will bear with me while I give a few faithful sketches from my own recent experience. Though the subject is of a melancholy cast, we may, perhaps, derive from it some salutary admonitions. Had we the arrangement of our own pathways, we should, no doubt, adorn them with flowers, and gild them with sunshine, but then we should lose the benefit of those heavenly instructions, which the thorny and shadowy providences of our heavenly Father so frequently impart.

I have before spoken of the old court house, but will describe it once more, for I love to dwell on its remembrance.

Near the winding banks of the Wye stands an ancient mansion, whose projecting windows and castellated battlements, covered over with ivy, take back the mind of the spectator to by-gone days. The porch, the court-yard, the out-houses, and dove-cot, are all in keeping with the principal edifice; and the extended flock of white pigeons that usually covers the surrounding roofs, or wheels in rapid circles over that ancient dwell-

ing, gives the place the appearance of an hospitable and substantial homestead.

The outer door is strengthened and adorned with studs, or knobs of iron. The great hall, as you enter, is paved with broad flag-stones, and its walls are hung with pictures; while the seat at the bow window, and the dais, or elevated floor, in the deep recess, invite you to take up a book, or to indulge in reflection.

The drawing room, or parlour, with an ornamental chimney-piece of carved oak, after the manner of olden times, is suited to a mansion of large dimensions. Dear friends are associated with that goodly chamber in my remembrance, and kindly conversations, and the melody of sweet music, and solemn prayer, and ardent praise.

The massive staircase of dark oak, uncouthly carved, leads to various apartments, where cleanliness, and comfort, and quietude, appear to have taken up their favourite abode.

Well, in this goodly habitation, Old Humphrey has often been entertained. In the ancient hall already described, he has penned many of those homely observations which his friends have very favourably received.

When I last left that hospitable mansion, the humble-minded, warm-hearted, cheerful-spirited head of the household was on a sick bed, and his

daughter, who had a place in my best affections, was looking forward to her bridal day, and removal from her native land. I took my hospitable host by the hand, and bade him farewell. Ay, and I bade farewell to his daughter, too, writing, with emotion, in her album the following words:—"And if, as I believe, our last earthly interview is now past, then, wherever thou goest, may peace go with thee!

"Pilgrim on earth, wherever thou mayst be,
Angels of mercy guide and comfort thee!"

It moves me much to add the sequel to my narrative. Parent and child, father and daughter, are now removed from this lower world! *She* died across the sea, and *his* earthly remains lie in the little church where he used to "worship with a humble mind." I have been consulted about the marble which is to bear his name.

How mysterious are the ways of the Most High! He taketh the young and the strong, and leaveth the aged and the feeble. The friendly-hearted farmer is no more. He has laid down his pitch-pipe for ever. Helen's voice will no longer be heard in an earthly choir; yet Old Humphrey is living still! But though the accustomed group at the old court house is scattered and broken, yet, when the dead shall be raised, when this corrupt-

ible shall put on incorruption, and this mortal shall have put on immortality, again, through mercy, he believes it will be gathered together to join in joyful hallelujahs, and to sing, "Worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive power, and riches, and wisdom, and strength, and honour, and glory, and blessing." "Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power, be unto Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever."

There was a friend, older than I, who used often to meet me in that ancient habitation. He was much beloved by my respected host and hostess. As a man, a scholar, a gentleman, and a Christian, he stood high in my estimation and affections. We used to read together, to converse, to wander the woods, and roam along the margin of the winding Wye! Well! his heavenly Father has sent for him, and he has entered the golden gates of the heavenly Jerusalem.

The ancient mansion is yet tenanted by the kind-hearted and attentive hostess, who has so often ministered to my comfort, and by her sons who ever treated me with respect and kindness. Helen's husband, too, has joined the circle, and given life to it; but the roof-tree of the habitation is removed; the glory is departed; the head of the family is gone: and she, the beloved

daughter, who was as a sunbeam in every apartment, is resting in the tomb—no, her gentle spirit is not in the tomb: she is, as I humbly believe, among those who, having washed their robes in the blood of the Lamb, are now harping his praises in heaven.

These things speak aloud to me; let them speak to you: let them say to us both, “Walk circumspectly, not as fools, but as wise, redeeming the time.”

Another friend, over whose head a cloud had been long resting, set sail for Sweden, his brother being vice-consul at Gottenburg. He was not in good health when he left, nor was the climate of Sweden calculated to make him better. Having a knowledge of music, as well as of languages, he requested me to send him a guitar that he had left behind him. He received his guitar, but it was to him as a harp on the willows. An affectionate passage in his letter to me, acknowledging its safe arrival, runs thus:—

“I scarcely need inform you, that I received my guitar quite safe; in my present unhappy state of health, however, I can make no use of it, so I have hung it up in a corner of my room, to remind me of happier days gone by.”

Those who know any thing of sickness, know that the appetite of invalids is liable to sudden

changes: strong antipathies and inclinations alternately are experienced. When my poor afflicted friend grew worse, he had a slice of plum-pudding sent him by a Swedish neighbour, but it was so unlike the favourite dish that he had often partaken of in his native land, that, in his disappointment, he wrote to me for a receipt to make a good plum-pudding. Old Humphrey is so much in the habit of receiving kindness from others, that it would be hard-hearted indeed, on his part, were he not to show kindness whenever he has an opportunity: he was determined not only to send the receipt, but the pudding too.

It may be, that some of you will indulge in a smile at the thought of my sending a plum-pudding to Sweden; but if you do, I trust it will be a smile of good nature: the most trifling kindness to a sick friend is not to be despised.

The week arrived when the ship was to set sail for Sweden. It was settled that the pudding should be a noble one, and for this purpose it was to be made of the best materials, and boiled in the boiler, the common pot being much too small for the purpose. Alas! how little we know what the day will bring forth! A ship-letter, with a black seal, was put into my hand. It was written by the vice-consul; it told me of the death of my

poor friend. He had died the same hour, and on the same day, as that on which I had received his last letter; and thus had I another intimation that life "is even a vapour, that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away."

Those who have seen me latterly may have observed a ring on my finger. It is not likely that such an appendage would have been placed there by any other cause than the loss of a friend. I wear it at the request of a saint in heaven, who, with an humble spirit, trod an humble path through life: it has inscribed upon it her last intelligible words to me, "Bless the Lord, O my soul;" and serves me as an additional monitor, reminding me that "there is an appointed time to man upon earth." It was an affecting circumstance, that this aged pilgrim could not finish the text she began—"Bless the Lord, O my soul," she said, and then failed. I added the words, "And all that is within me, bless his holy name."

Many weeks have not passed since I wrote to a youthful invalid relative. Though at a distance from me, we were linked together in bands of love, and her last lingering look of affection is now vividly present to my memory. My letter was hoarded up as a treasure through that sickness which was unto death. I knew that her days

were numbered, and thought to speak a parting word with her before she set out for heaven; but it was not to be. The day after my arrival, her ashes were carried to the tomb. How true is it, that "there is but a step between me and death!"

Some time since I told you, and I told you truly, that on the banks of the Delaware, in North America, a log-house had been built by a near and respected relative of mine; that the axe had been at work felling the trees, and the spade employed in digging the ground, till the place of briars looked like a garden.

I said, too, that in that solitary place Old Humphrey was not forgotten. That when the inmates of the log-house talked of their fatherland and of friends, made dearer to them by distance, they remembered me.

Have you forgotten that a tree was called by my name, from whose grateful shade the voice of prayer and psalmody was wont to arise, to Him who had made the desert to blossom as a rose?

Well! the far distant log-house is yet standing; the tree is still growing, and peace is reigning around; but the patriarch of the place—he whose silver hairs proclaimed that his days had been long in the land; whose soul magnified the Lord,

and whose spirit rejoiced in God his Saviour—he is gathered to his fathers. What a dream is time, and how stedfastly should we regard the realities of eternity!

Surely I have had line upon line, precept upon precept, and admonition upon admonition. How has it been with you? Had you sustained such a succession of losses as those I have enumerated, I think that I could patiently have endured your recital of them, out of pure sympathy, and therefore I reckon, confidently, on a kindly spirit on your part.

An old man's personal friends must of necessity get scarce; it is so with mine, and if I were of a desponding disposition, I might fear, from the inroads that death is making among them, that I should be left almost without any. Even this view, however, is not without comfort, for if, through Divine mercy, we ever enter heaven, (and we need not doubt, while we are in the right way,) why the more friends we have to welcome us the better.

Again, then, I say, that among the first and foremost of the favours bestowed by our great Redeemer, are the merciful remindings of their short tenure on earth; the notices given us to quit our present crazy habitations, a better being prepared for us above.

A look on ourselves, as sinners, brings a thunder cloud over our heads ; but a look at the Saviour puts a sunbeam in the sky. It converts the wrathful denunciation, "Depart!" into the loving invitation, "Come!" and death approaches, not to cut down the barren fig-tree, but to gather the shock of corn fully ripe into the garner of God.

My pen has run its length ; it may be that when next dipped into the ink-stand, a livelier subject may engage it, but an old man must be allowed to walk as it suits him, sometimes on the sunshiny side of the street, and sometimes in the shade.

ON FLOWER SEEDS.

THERE appears to be a natural or an acquired love of the wonderful in the human heart. Hence it is interesting to read about the burning mountains of Vesuvius, Etna, and Cotopaxi, the pyramids of Egypt, the falls of Niagara, the caves of Elephanta, or the icebergs of the Northern Ocean; but if, through the frequency of narration, even such subjects as these should fail to excite curiosity, there are others of never-failing interest ever at hand.

There is always some subject more or less occupying and absorbing public attention; and whether this be the missing whalers, the Nassau balloon, the fire at the Royal Exchange, or Murphy's almanack, every line that is written thereon is with avidity devoured. The love of the wonderful is as epidemical as the small-pox; it runs, it revels, it rages; and every new wonder, like a wave of the ocean, takes the place of its predecessor.

It is possible that many may pass over the title chosen for my present remarks, who would have been arrested by a more wonderful announce-

ment. Had I chosen an account of a sea-snake a hundred yards long, a terrible encounter between a bull and a buffalo, a desperate highway robbery on Blackheath, a fearful battle, a horrid murder, or a frightful sudden death, every eye that fell on the wonderful announcement would have been spell-bound. As it is, I must be satisfied with readers of a calmer cast.

There is, and it cannot be denied, a feverish excitement, a turbulent gratification, in relating marvellous adventures; but it is delightful to tell of the lonely revellings we have had in the overhanging coppice, the secluded nook, the shadowy dell, and the flowery dingle, where we have given way to our emotions without restraint, with no eye upon us save the eye of the Eternal!

It is, indeed, a treat, in an hour of recreation, to give imaginary forms to the snowy, sunlit clouds of heaven; to gaze on the ripple of the pebbled brook; to trace the shadows of the overhanging brushwood in the deep, clear, motionless water of the miniature bay of a river; or to sit down on the brink of a ditch, gorgeous with straggling plants and autumnal foliage!

Then, again, there are secluded nooks, and shadowy dells, in the every-day occurrences of domestic life, that are dear to us all; little events and private circumstances, that call forth our

affections ; and I had rather write you one chapter on such things, while my heart overflows with tender feelings, than ten chapters of overwhelming wonderment.

I have taken up my pen in a kindly mood, having just such an interesting little occurrence to relate as is after my own heart. Bear in mind that it is nothing wonderful, nor will there be any attempt on my part to make it so. If I were to try to be great and grand, wise and learned, I should deserve to be laughed at for my folly ; but as I only seek to interest you with what has interested me, you must try to like my simple narration.

In the beginning of last year, I received a packet from one that I have a right to love. As absence often increases affection, so distance frequently gives value to a letter or a parcel. Absence and distance exercised their influence, and I opened my little packet with much complacency.

It contained small packets of flower seeds ; each packet labelled with the name of the seed it contained, with some remarks thereon : these remarks much pleased me, and it is because I entertain the hope of their pleasing others, as well as myself, that I now venture to lay them before you.

The packets were neatly wrapped up, and the accompanying remarks were written in pencil, thereby setting forth of how little importance the writer considered them. You shall have the inscriptions as they are now before me.

MAJOR CONVULVULUS.

“The prevailing colour of this flower is a deep heaven-like blue. Look upon it when you have the head-ache, or the heart-ache, or are under any mental excitement, for it is of a soothing and gently joyous nature, telling us of things calm and lovely, rather than of those which are gay and gladdening. It is not good to live ever in sunshine, nor desirable to remain always in the shade. Set the major convolvulus on each side the front door, that it may grow up a moderator of joy, and a soother of sorrow. You love to support the feeble; give my convolvulus a stick to lean upon, and he will hold up his head and cheerfully thank you for the deed.”

SWEET PEA.

“Almost all plants of the curly, twirly, winding, twining class, are looked upon with tenderness, and with almost tearful eyes. The sweet pea, like unto the convolvulus, doth seem to love all things that its wiry, spiry stem can touch. I

doubt me not that it would grow around your finger. You can try it, if it pleaseth you: but, at all events, set my sweet pea, and if it twine itself not round your finger, it will, I know, for my sake, twine around your heart.

“It will grow on one side the garden gate, or against the palisades at the foot of the laburnum, and look lovely any where.”

GILLY FLOWER.

“Common though the gilly (or July) flower be, despise it not: like the sweet-william, it is the flower of the poor; you may look for the one and the other in the Sunday blue coat button-hole of aged Roger Blake, or in the broken blue jug in the alms-house window of Deborah Martin. It is called the wall-flower, and I have seen it peep out of perilous places, clinging to the high mouldering brick or stone wall. There is poetry in its clustering blossoms in such circumstances; but in its proper place it groweth in the little garden of a cottage wherein dwelleth an aged man, or a lonely widow; set it in yours, perhaps it may never come up, but if it should, and you cannot love it for its own sake, love it for mine. A homely flower should have a homely name: if I clothe it with a botanical title, you will not thank me for

LUPIN.

“This flower is a general favourite, and yet, I know not why, it never would have had much interest with me, only that I grew it in my grandmother’s garden. I like the gay and grand, or the retiring, the lovely, and the delicate; and this, whether pink, blue, or yellow, doth not partake of these qualities. Set it, at any rate, for I have said enough to make you like it. It would be a pity, indeed, to undervalue that which is lively, and pretty withal, and beloved by every body.”

MARIGOLD.

“There is nothing poetical about this flower; it thrusts up its round face like the dandelion, and stares in the sun’s countenance with a most unflower-like boldness. In days gone by, I ate some of the petals of the flower in a basin of porridge; and ever since then, I have ranked it with pot-herbs. Set it, however, for it has a curious neatness and exactitude in its construction, and if you should ever pull it to pieces, you shall see what you shall see! Set it under the old wall, or any where else, so that it is a long way off my sweet pea, and my major convolvulus.”

CARNATION POPPY.

“Though not very commanding in size, this flower is gay and grand, and fit to be gazed on

when the heart is full of some bright dream. It gives a moment of great assurance, almost seeming to promise what the heart desires. Set the seed, and if it springeth up, pluck a flower, and place it before you, when fancy is required to paint the fair future in gorgeous colouring. Talk not of its fading nature, and of the hollowness of this world's promises; tell me not that you have had enough of 'Madam Bubble;' but set my carnation poppy, and we will talk together of its withered petals when they *are* withered."

NASTURTIUM.

"You cannot set too much of this; there cannot be too much of it in the garden. I have looked into the tangled and beauteous confusion of a cluster of nasturtiums, till mine eye has brimmed again with delight. It is a wilderness, wherein a poet loveth to rove and revel. I like the leaf, and I love the flower. The smell of the plant, though it pleases not many, pleases me: there is a strangeness in it. Set it right liberally; and if you cannot love it, I will love it for you."

HOLLYHOCKS.

"No garden should be without a hollyhock, whether it belong to a prince or a peasant. Stately and aspiring, and requiring space, it yet

wisely accommodateth itself to its circumstances : adorning alike the gay parterre and the cottage door. Whether puce, crimson, scarlet, yellow, or white, it is always elegant ; never forgets that it is a hollyhock ! It reminds me of the fox-glove of the fields, growing much after the same fashion ; the fox-glove reminds me of the thistle ; and both flowers remind me of you, for they were always favourites with you. See that you set my hollyhocks !”

MIGNIONETTE.

And now I am come to my last packet. “The mignonette is not a flower to take with a stranger, but it is very dear to its friends. It promises nothing that it does not perform. It is not so gaudy as the tulip, nor so proud as the peony, neither hath it so prepossessing an appearance as the dahlia ; but it surpasseth them all in its grateful influence, and loves to give pleasure even to those who despise it. Set it. I do not say love it, for you cannot help doing that. You have a neat green trough, or a painted pot ; set it there : or you may put it in the little bed nearest the back window. Yes, that will do nicely ; and when it springs up and perfumes the air, if you have nothing better to think of, think of me.”

Now, there are in the above observations a sprightly playfulness, a fulness of meaning, and a tender affection, that exactly suit my disposition: I know not when a packet has given me greater pleasure. It is said that the Chinese have a language of flowers, and I wonder not at it, for there is much in them well calculated to express our thoughts.

So long as I have been employed in noting down the remarks of another on flowers, and flower seeds, I have felt strong; but now that I come to put down my own observations I feel shorn of my strength. A child that walks well in leading-strings, totters without them. I want words as playful, and thoughts as pleasing, as those that I have recorded, but I cannot find them; and yet, for all that, the inscriptions on the packets are so much in unison with my affections, that I feel as though I had almost a right to call them my own.

You have felt, perhaps, something like this spirit of appropriation before now, at a Bible or Missionary meeting, when some highly gifted speaker, as popular for the warmth of his heart as for the eloquence of his tongue, has carried you away captive at his will, and made your bosom burn again, in setting forth, in glowing

language, the immeasurable goodness of God, and the triumphs of the ever-blessed gospel.

You could not speak like him, but you felt like him. Not a sentiment did he express that was not your own; and at the moment, setting aside all distinctions of rank and talent, all restrictions of etiquette and custom, you could have sprung forward to take him by the hand, as a Christian brother who had given utterance to the pent-up emotions of your own heart.

I scarcely need say, that the flower seeds were set. Some of them flourished, and others of them died without coming to maturity; but they all live in my remembrance. While I write these remarks, a sprig from one of them is sticking in my bosom.

Tell me not that there is nothing to be gathered from these remarks, for I think otherwise. I should feel grateful to him who could teach me to look on a daisy, ay, on a blade of grass, with an added interest. The more we see God in his works, the more we shall trust him in his ways; for if He so adorns the flowers of the garden, so clothes "the grass of the field, which to-day is, and to-morrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe you, O ye of little faith?"

When we look on the flowers that we have

set, and watered, and watched over, in a right spirit, we regard them as God's handywork, and uniting wonder with thankfulness, feel, whether or not we express it, "that even Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed like one of these."

It is unnecessary, after the inscriptions I have given, for me to enlarge on the subject of flowers; my closing remarks shall be, therefore, brief. In passing through the garden of life, I have met with friends of many kinds, with major convolvuluses, gentle spirits, that have gladdened my eyes and my heart; with sweet peas, tender, affectionate, and loveable; with gilly flowers, homely, pleasant, and excellent; with lupins, commonplace, but ever welcome; with marigolds, busy, bustling, and good-natured; with carnation poppies, florid and hopeful, always painting the future in sunshine; with nasturtiums, eccentric, talented, and exciting, making me glad to be alive; and with consistent hollyhocks, so adorning their pathways by their graces, that I have loved them, and longed to be like them. To these must be added others of the true mignonette class, professing little, and doing much; making themselves to be felt rather than observed, and unobtrusively spreading their kindest influence around.

I will now put by my inscriptions, though most likely, if life be spared, they will be again and

again deciphered, as the spring flowers shall put forth, as the singing of birds shall come, and as the voice of the turtle shall be heard in the land.

If these thoughts on the subject of flowers and flower seeds should appear to you to be worthless, let them be blotted out with more worthy speculations, and I shall be glad to have called forth in your mind more profitable reflections than those which have occurred to my own.

A FEW CLOSING REMARKS.

To me the thought is pleasant, that my homely observations may, possibly, be received in a kindly spirit, and be instrumental, not only in calling forth some of the best affections of the heart, but also in directing many a worn and weary spirit where true joys are alone to be found. Alas! we are poor purblind mortals, and oftentimes fill up our minds with vain desires never to be realized. I must leave the matter to unfold itself. It becomes me now, however, to take a glance at the course I have pursued, and honestly to confess some of my manifold infirmities.

It would be a strange thing if any one could express his opinions, as freely as I am accustomed to express mine, without, now and then, offending the prepossessions or prejudices of his friends. How far my trespasses extend in this particular it might be hard to say; but if I knew that any remark of mine had ever called forth an angry feeling, or ruffled the temper of any one of my readers recklessly, thoughtlessly, or without having their good in view, it would be to me a source of very bitter regret.

It would hardly become an old man, who, in his experience with the world, has seen so much of the blessedness of a virtuous course, and the misery of evil ways, to be backward in reproving evil even in the thing in which he himself is faulty. Often have I, with unsparing hand, drawn a bow at a venture, to strike another's faults, when the shaft might, with equal justice, have been directed against my own; indeed, a sense of my own failings has often dictated my advice to others.

But not content with waging warfare against actual sin, I have often taken an arrow from my quiver to urge it home against bad habits, churlish dispositions, and thoughtless behaviour; in doing this, I may, at times, have been a little severe, but we have all something to forgive, and you must forgive me.

With shame, also, I acknowledge a disposition to prate about myself, which I fear is too common among old folks. I have said more of myself than I ought to have said, and thought more highly of myself than I ought to think. This is pitiful pride in an old man who ought to know, and, indeed, does know, the worthlessness of all his productions, and that man in his best estate is altogether vanity.

There is yet another failing that all must have observed in me, a bad habit of passing too suddenly from the grave to the gay, from the lively to the severe. The natural buoyancy of my thoughts renders me continually liable to this infirmity: let my friends lay hold on what is solid in my remarks, and forgive any thing like levity.

These are failings in Old Humphrey, but the worst of all his faults is yet to be named, and that is, that he has not, in a straightforward, right-on course, more constantly dwelt on spiritual subjects; he has beat about the bush, too often contenting himself with an occasional allusion to godliness. Few and far between have been his earnest appeals to your consciences in spiritual affairs: he has followed the will-o'-the-wisps of his own imagination; and has been too much like the thermometer, that accommodates itself to the temperature of the atmosphere that surrounds it. Oh for a godly sincerity, an uncompromising integrity in all things!

Now I am about to take my leave, a sense of my deficiencies oppresses me. I could blush to think of the little that I have done, where I ought to have done much: of the lightness of my language, where it ought to have been weighty! I feel at this moment that an old man has no busi-

ness to amuse himself in blowing bubbles and balancing straws, when all the best energies of his heart and soul should be devoted to the service of his Redeemer. Pass by, then, all that you have found in me undeserving of regard, my censurable pride, and my foolish levity; and if my pen has ever been that of a ready writer in Divine things, if ever a single sentence has escaped me, adapted to make you wiser and better, let it not be forgotten. "Consider what I say; and the Lord give thee understanding in all things," 2 Tim. ii. 7.

In the midst of all my errors and light-heartedness, I have that abiding conviction of the goodness of God, and that love for the Redeemer in my heart, which I would not be deprived of for all that this world has to bestow. Come, then, let us strive together, running the race that is set before us with increased alacrity, in the service of our common Master. Let us cling more closely to the cross of Christ, and seek more earnestly for the sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit, that, purged from worldly dross, we may be made meet to be partakers of the glorious inheritance prepared for God's people, through Him who has loved us, and given himself for us, and died for us, that we might live for ever.

“ Finally, brethren, farewell. Be perfect, be of good comfort, be of one mind, live in peace; and the God of love and peace shall be with you,” 2 Cor. xiii. 11. “ For ye know the grace of our Lord Jesus Christ, that, though he was rich, yet for your sakes he became poor, that ye through his poverty might be rich,” 2 Cor. viii. 9.

THE END.

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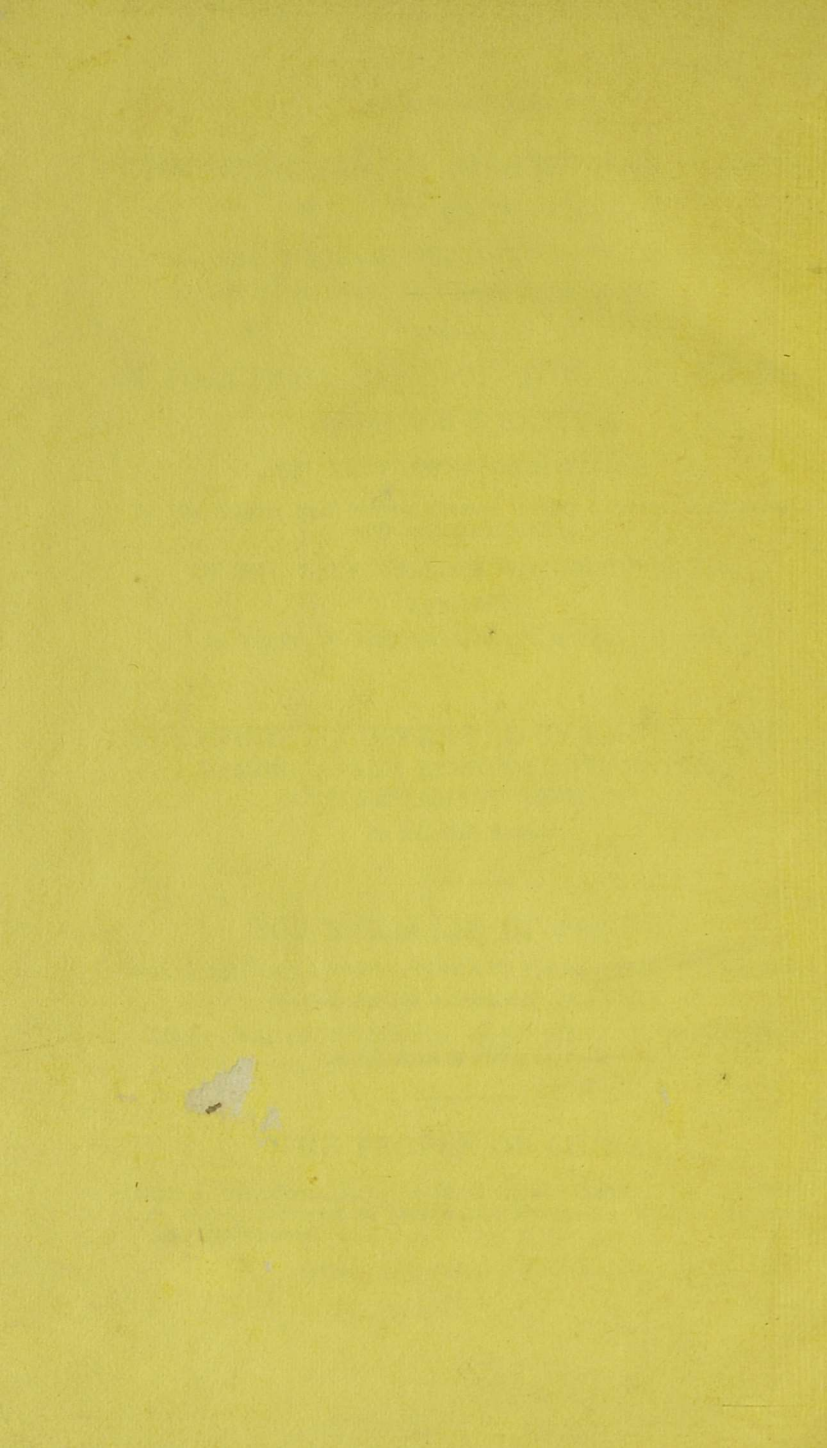
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