

Christian



Visitor.

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"BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED."—ST. PAUL.

{Rev. E. D. VERY, Editor.

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SHADOWS OF DEATH.

From Poetical Remains of the late Mrs. James Gray, in the Dublin University Magazine.

There's a feverish thrill in my veins,
There's a leaping pulse in my brow;
I feel that no refuge remains,
Save one, for the weary one now;
I hear a voice in the breeze
That tells of a fairer home,
A murmur amidst the trees
That softly whispers, 'Come!'
I shall go down to the grave
Just when my sun is clearest—
Down to oblivion's wave,
Just when my fame is nearest;
Just when the light of affection,
Longed for in vain so often,
Casts on life's path its reflection,
The rugged way to soften.
Weave a wreath for my head,
And weave it of faded roses;
See that ye make my bed
Where the first pale spring flower reposes.
Faded flowers are best
For the grave of the early perished;
And quiet shall be my rest
Where the worm is cherished.

The Death of a Mother.

BY REV. ALBERT BARNES.

The following extract is from a sermon by Rev. Mr. Barnes, published in the National Preacher. It was occasioned by the recent death of his own mother, and is an interesting and touching tribute to the memory of an earthly parent—for who would not feel the bereavement on the death of a mother?

One feature of the bereavement on the death of a mother is in the change which is produced in our ideas of home—the home of our childhood and youth. When she lived there, there was always a home—a place which in every situation of life we felt was such, and which we regarded as such.

In our childhood and youth, there was in that home where she was, one who always cared for us. There was one who, we were sure, would take an interest in everything that we took an interest in, and whose ear we were certain would be open to listen to all our tales of childish success or of childish trouble. We were sure that she would take the same interest in it which we did, and we expected confidently that whoever might be against us, she would for us. We never had a doubt that she would listen to our tales of fright, of disappointment, of calamity; nor that she would feel just as we did about it. The matter might be in itself important or unimportant; it might be dignified or undignified; yet we never doubted that she would regard it as important, and as sufficiently momentous to claim her attention. We might have felt that it was not grave enough to tell a father about; we might have doubted whether he would suspend his more weighty employments to interest himself in our affairs; but we never had such a doubt for a moment about a mother. No matter what her employments or her cares, or what she might be interested in, we were sure that she would be interested in us, and that, in all our troubles, we should find her our friend. We had our difficulties in the little world of childhood. Bigger and older boys struck us; or laughed at us; or reviled us; or surpassed us in learning, in running, or in skill, and in that little world we might have found no sympathy, and there was no one there to whom we could unburden an aching heart. But we were sure that there was one who would sympathize with us, and who would be on our side. Our playmates derided us, and laughed at us because we said, in our simplicity, that we would 'tell our mother.' And yet it

was philosophy deep and pure to do so—like the crystal spring that breaks out of the side of a hill in the uncultivated forest. It was what nature prompted to—for nature designed that she should know our troubles, and nature had formed for us such a friend there, that, whoever was against us, we knew that she would be on our side; whoever wronged us, she would not; whoever exulted over us, she would not join in the exultation. You may say that this is childish philosophy. So it may be—and the nearer our philosophy comes back to simple nature as developed there, the nearer we shall be to truth. In our troubles we have always needed a friend who would sympathize with us, and to whom we might unburden all the sorrows of the soul. The disciples of John's Redeemer came, and took up his murdered body, and buried it, and went and told Jesus. (Matt. xiv 12.) In him they had a friend—tender and delicate above all a mother's feelings—who, they were sure, would sympathize with their sorrows; and what was more natural than they should go and tell him? So in the home of our childhood, it was dear to us as a home, for there was not a sorrow of heart that we might not tell our mother.

Many of us—most of us who are advanced beyond the period of childhood, went out from that home to embark on the stormy sea of life. Of the feelings of a father, and of his interest in our welfare, we have never entertained a doubt, and our home was dear because he was there; but there was a peculiarity in the feeling that it was the home of our mother. While she lived there, there was a place that we felt was home. There was one place where we would always be welcome; one place where we would be met with a smile; one place where we would be sure of a friend. The world might be indifferent to us. We might be unsuccessful in our studies or our business. The new friends which we supposed we had made, might prove to be false. The honor which we thought we deserved, might be withheld from us. We might be chagrined and mortified by seeing a rival outstrip us, and bear away the prize which we sought; but there was a place where no feelings of rivalry were found, and where those whom the world overlooked would be sure of a friendly greeting. Whether pale and wan by study, care, or sickness; or flushed with health and flattering success, we were sure that we should be welcome there.—Though the world was cold towards us, yet there was one who always rejoiced in our success, and always was affected in our reverses—and there was a place to which we might go back from the storm which began to pelt us; where we might rest, and become encouraged and invigorated for a new conflict. So have I seen a bird in its first efforts to fly, leave its nest, and stretch its wings, and go forth to the wide world, but the wind blew it back, and the rain began to fall, and the darkness of night began to draw on, and there was no shelter abroad, and it sought its way back to its nest, to take shelter beneath its mother's wings, and to be refreshed for the struggles of a new day—but then it flew away, to think of its nest and its mother no more.—But not thus did we leave our home when we bade adieu to it to go forth alone to manly duties of life. Even amidst the storms that then beat upon us, and the disappointments that we met with, and the coldness of the world, we felt still that there was one there who sympathized in our troubles as well as rejoiced in our success, and that whatever might be abroad, when we entered the door of her dwelling, we should be met with a smile. We expected that a mother, like the mother of Sisera as she 'look-

ed out at her window, waiting for the coming of her son laden with the spoils of victory, would look out for our coming, and that our return would renew her joy and ours in our earlier days.

'O, in our sterner manhood, when no ray
Of earlier sunshine glimmers on our way;
When girt with sin and sorrow, and the toil
Of cares, which tear the bosom that they soil;
O, if there be in retrospection's chain
One link that knits us with young dreams again,
One thought so sweet we scarcely dare to muse
On all the hoarded raptures it reviews;
Which seems each instant, in its backward range,
The heart to soften and its ties to change,
And every spring untouched for years, to move,
It is—THE MEMORY OF A MOTHER'S LOVE!'

It makes a sad desolation when from such a place a mother is taken away—and when, whatever may be the sorrows or the successes in life, she is to greet the returning son or daughter no more. The home of our childhood may be still lovely. The old family mansion; the green fields; the running stream; the moss-covered well; the trees, the lawn, the rose, the sweet-briar, may be there. Perchance, too, there may be an aged father, with venerable locks, sitting in loneliness, with everything to command respect and love; but she is not there. Her familiar voice is not heard. The mother has been borne forth to sleep by the side of her children who went before her, and the place is not what it was. There may be those there whom we much love, but she is not there. We may have formed new relations in life—tender and strong as they can be; we may have another home dear to us as was the home of our childhood, where there is all in affection, kindness and religion, to make us happy; but that home is not what it was, and it will never be what it was again. It is a loosening of one of the cords which bound us to earth, designed to prepare us for our eternal flight from everything dear here, below, and to teach us that there is no place here that is to be our permanent home.

ENGLAND.—I have been in England; I have been in her great manufacturing cities, the miracles of that activity which covers the whole world with the productions of a petty island in Europe. In the ports of London; of Liverpool and other places, I have gazed upon floating isles, those thousands of masses, which bear afar to every sea the riches and power of the nation. I have admired in Scotland a simple, energetic, active people, ready to sacrifice everything rather than abandon Christ and His World. I have been present at the debates of the Parliament of the three kingdoms, and I have admired that eloquence which, not content with words goes right to the heart of the matter, and impels the nation onward in its great destinies. I have found everywhere, from the lower classes of the people to the exalted stations of nobles and princes an enthusiastic love of liberty. I have wandered through those halls from which are conveyed to the four quarters of the world, Bibles printed in every known language. I have prayed in the churches, and at the religious meetings have been transported by the powerful eloquence of the speakers and the acclamations of the audience. I have found in the families a morality comparatively greater than in other countries, and pious customs, both private and public, more generally prevalent, I have been struck with admiration at beholding the people of those islands, encompassing the globe, bearing everywhere civilization and christianity, commanding in the most distant seas, and filling the earth with power and the word of God.—D'Aubigne.

THE GOSPEL IN FRANCE.—A Committee of the Church of Lyons, in France, whose business it is to promote the spread of the Gospel among the people, have lately made a report which

announces cheerful intelligence. There are 15 colporteurs constantly engaged in Lyons, supported by different societies, but working in harmony—by whose means nearly 1000 Catholic families are stately visited, by most of whom the Gospel is gladly listened to. This great progress has not been made without opposition.

At one time the prefect of the city refused to allow any religious meetings—but afterwards yielded. From Lyons, these laborers of the colporteurs are extending in every direction, with equally encouraging success.

The One Idea of the Ministry.

My brethren, I would to God that our minds were more completely occupied with the one great and glorious thought of being useful; of fulfilling the the purpose of our ministry in the salvation of our fellow men, and the extension of Christ's kingdom. You and I are heirs to the same flesh and blood, the same infirmities and corruptions and temptations, as those to whom we minister; and there is danger, even while we profess to realize our office in all its responsibilities, that we shall pervert it to purposes of criminal self-indulgence. There is danger lest, from shrinking timidity or undue caution, we should keep the more alarming truths of the Bible in the background—should incur the charge brought by the prophet, of daubing with untempered mortar. There is danger lest we indulge our peculiar tastes, at the expence of blunting the edge of the sword of the Spirit; preaching the truth indeed, but preaching it indistinctly, or out of its due proportions. There is danger lest we let opportunities slip for doing good; lest from inattention or indifference, we suffer the seed-time to pass, either in respect to individuals or our congregations at large, and then look in vain for a harvest. There is danger lest our instructions from the pulpit lose their weight by being silently compared with our conversation in the world, and that those who hear us preach, will not believe us in earnest then, because they see so little in us that looks like religious earnestness at any other time. There is danger in general that the influence which our office secures to us, and which should be directed entirely to the promotion of the best interests of our fellow-men, will be used chiefly for purposes of worldly gratification. And just so far as this takes place, we surely defeat the design of the ministry; we are worse than barren trees in the Lord's vineyard. I say, then, let us hold to our minds the thought that our vocation is attended with multiplied dangers; and that it becomes us to forget every thing else in the one idea of faithfully serving our Master. Human applause dies away upon the breath by which it is uttered. The laurels of earthly distinction wither as soon as they are plucked. We may live in the sunshine of ease; in the smiles of the worldly; in the sound of our own praise; but in the last hour we shall need something to sustain us, that the recollection of all this will not supply. I feel that the current of life is ebbing away; and that in a few moments more, I must surrender my commission as a minister, and give up my account. And now what is there that can prevent these last moments from being moments of agony? Plaudits of my fellow-men, I care not for you! Stations of honour and influence, I care not for you! But if here, lingering in the twilight of life, I can contemplate monuments of real usefulness; if I can see the wilderness which I have cultivated beginning to blossom as the rose if can call to mind how grace has triumphed in my weakness, rendering my poor labors