

## THE FAMILY CIRCLE.

## THE COMFORTS OF RELIGION AMID POVERTY AND WRETCHEDNESS.

ONE case of peculiar interest which has engaged much of my attention, (says the agent for visiting the Scottish poor in Liverpool,) during a considerable part of the past year, was that of an Englishwoman, the widow of a Scotchman. On the death of her husband, she became entirely dependent upon her own exertions in a business to which she had been regularly brought up, and at which she was remarkably expert. What principally interested me in her behalf was, her being a Roman Catholic, and that she was slighted, and actually forsaken by her nearest relatives, because she had permitted the influence of her Protestant husband to detach her from the leading rites of the Romish Church. She had distant relatives, who were kind to her for a time, but they were poor. Her very earnest wish, therefore, and my first object, was to get her into employment. I was thoroughly prepared to do this, from the knowledge I obtained of her superior mind and character, through a very protracted period of severe affliction, which bereaved her of her children, and left her a widow. A simple recommendation of her case to several ladies of active benevolence, procured her employment to a certain extent in her peculiar line of work; but not sufficient, as I afterwards found, to prevent her from selling piece after piece of her little furniture. She was a woman of unusual observation, and of strong but chastened feeling, and her very dependent and destitute situation appeared to be sinking deep into her heart. Her chief consolation at this period was calling at my office, as the only place where she could "speak her mind;" and though the conversations usually began with passing occurrences, or going over present grievances, to which she was able to impart a peculiar interest, they sometimes went far and delightfully beyond it. The hope in death which the Gospel discloses—the ground of a sinner's justification before God—the necessity of repentance, and the place which good works hold in the Gospel scheme—God's abounding love to the world—and, what was a favourite theme of hers, the amiable character of the Saviour, as exhibited in the narratives of the Evangelists,—these, and such like subjects, now and again passed before us in conversation. I could not perceive that the soul withering peculiarities of Popery at all affected her mind; if they did so once, as I have no doubt they did, their evil influence was mastered. She listened with reverence, and evidently with much interest, to any declaration or announcement of Gospel truth; and when it went beyond that, though only contrasting the truth as declared in Scripture with existing error, if it trenchanted upon the errors of Popery, which it sometimes did, and often inadvertently, she showed that she noticed it only by a smile, which was always received as meant, and kept most strictly to the purpose I had most at heart; namely, to lay before her eager desire the sense of Scripture on the vital points of the Gospel. There was a remarkable nobility of mind about her. She felt keenly and deeply any act of meanness or injury done either to herself or others, but was as ready to forgive, and seemed above being angry. It was this superiority of mind, perhaps, which gave her that sympathy with the character of the Saviour just noticed; or may we not hope, that it was the fruit rather of an acquaintance with the suffering, gentle, and forgiving character which He exhibited? Certain it is, that she found, on many trying occasions, an ample consolation, and a complete triumph over her sharpest feelings, by an instant reference to some trial in His life, who, though "tempted like as we are," was "without sin." Her complaint was lingering consumption. As her weakness increased, she was unable to take her accustomed walk, and I was sent for. It was then, and not till then, that I fully knew of her perfect destitution, having parted with every thing she once possessed, by sale, not pawn, to the poor, very poor bed on which she then lay. She had, the day before, sent for her brother; she thought he might do something for her, if it should be ever so little; but, able or not, and I rather think he was not all, he refused. His manner of doing so appeared to have cut her deeply; and again she was upbraided with de-

serting her religion. She had now nothing before her but the workhouse. Often had she spoken of this, when she was more able to bear it; but now that the reality was inevitable, she became excessively agitated—the first, but not the last time I had seen her fairly overcome. She had begun to fear that her landlady, though a very distant relative, but dependent herself on her daily labour, was about to order her away, and, if I deserted her, then she had not a friend on earth. The arrangements, however, made with her, though nothing more than what is usual in cases like hers, if it did not completely set her mind at rest, considerably relieved her as to the future; but Providence, (and how she marked this!) God's good providence, just then brought other friends to her aid, who, each in their own way, relieved her so, that she afterwards wanted for nothing. And what seemed to be as a balm to her spirit, a comfort to which she continually resorted throughout her illness, was the kindness of one lady, in not calling herself, but sending her servant almost daily to inquire after her. This was "Christian"—it was "such a kindness"—"little does she know the good it does this poor broken heart," were her words. In the midst of these attentions, she rallied so far as to walk about the house; and the hope of recovery again, and it may be said, even "against hope," took possession of her mind, but only, and very suddenly, to meet a sad reverse. One evening, soon after, a little messenger came, to say she was worse, and wanted to see me, stating to my surprise that she had gone to other lodgings. I called, and found her by the fireside, listlessly struck down, and greatly afflicted. What she feared had occurred. Her increasing illness, combining with an accident which occurred in the family, produced the excuse for her requiring her to look for other lodgings, and a neighbour, a few doors off, took her in. She never recovered the shock this gave her. "It is the hardest stroke of all," she said; "but there is something here (putting her hand to her heart) which tells me it will be the last." A few days more brought a Sabbath of intense cold, and getting much worse towards the evening of that day, she was asked by a kind neighbour, who knew her well, and esteemed her much, if she would send for the friend she so often spoke of. The reply was, that "she knew he was always particularly engaged on that evening, (alluding to the Sabbath school) and would not disturb him; but the boy would call in the morning in passing, and she would send a message then." That morning came, but it was the dawn of eternity to her. She was buried by the parish; but oh! how far above being a pauper was her spirit!

## VIVIA PERPETUA, THE CARTHAGINIAN MARTYR.

VIVIA Perpetua was a lady only twenty-two years of age. She was married, and had a little child. I believe her mother was a Christian woman, but her father was a Pagan, that is, a worshipper of false gods. Vivian was a person of quality, and exceedingly beloved by her father. She was a Christian, as was also her brother. In the time of persecution, Vivian was seized, along with four other Christians of Carthage. They were kept under guard for some time, but not thrown into prison at first. While thus confined, her father came to her, and not knowing the faith that actuated her conduct, he advised her to forsake the Christian religion, and again return to peace and safety. When he found she was not so easily persuaded to do so, he began to represent all the dangers and sufferings she would be exposed to, if she persisted in maintaining her faith; and finding this too would not succeed, he thought entreaties might: but seeing her still unmoved by all his affectionate persuasions, he became very angry. This treatment from a father she loved, was, of course, worse to poor Vivian than all the malice and threats of her persecutors; but the love of Christ was her consolation, and that supported her under every trial, and His peace enabled her to stand fast in the faith. After her father had left her, Vivian, with her four companions, were baptized; for, though Christians, they had not as yet attended to that ordinance. After they had secretly contrived to receive this visible sign of admittance into the Church of Christ, they were put into a dark prison, where they were left in extreme outward misery, without one of the com-

forts of life. But still poor Vivian felt the trials of her situation more keenly than her companions did, who were less accustomed to ease and delicacy. She had, besides, a darling child; and, Oh! how her heart must have bled when she thought of leaving her dear little one in this cold world—alone—without a mother's care, a mother's love,—without, perhaps, one to guide him in the right way, to lead him to Jesus, to pray that he might be made one of his lambs, which it is declared the Lord shall carry in his bosom! The day of her trial came, and on it she witnessed a good confession. But during the trial, poor Vivian suffered more, far more, from the well-meant, but mistaken, kindness of her friends, than from the cruelty of her enemies: her father could not yet resign the hope of saving his darling daughter; he thought to move her fond heart by a sight of her helpless child. The Roman governor joined in the request; but when Vivian had firmness enough to resist the silent language of her dear little child, you may suppose all their arguments could have no effect. She remained steadfast in her profession of Christianity, and her poor distracted father, seeing his last hope had failed, seized his daughter, and vainly endeavoured to draw her away with him. The magistrate, offended at this, ordered him to be struck with a staff; and I dare say the blow she saw given to her fond old parent was as much felt by poor Vivian as any of the cruelties shown towards herself. The day arrived on which they were to be exposed to the cruel gaze of the people. Vivian walked calmly on, holding down her eyes, but quite undismayed by the thought of what she was to undergo. After being scourged, the martyrs were exposed to a wild bull; even the cruel multitude was shocked at seeing a lovely and delicate female thus barbarously used: but the faith of the sufferers did not fail; they sang praises to Him who had counted them worthy to suffer for his name; and Vivian, calling her brother, said to him and another youth, "Continue firm in the faith, love one another, and be neither frightened nor offended at our sufferings;" and after saying this she was murdered by the gladiator, who was one of those people employed by the Romans to put each other to death at the public games for their amusement.—*The Burning Bush.*

## MISCELLANEOUS.

## REV. ROWLAND HILL.

No man ever had stronger views than Mr. Rowland Hill of the true nature of the ministerial work, and of the necessity of a humble dependence on the Lord's assistance for a blessing in it. One of his remarks was, "If favoured at any time with what is called a good opportunity, I am too apt to find myself saying, 'Well done I,' when I should lie in the dust, and give God all the glory." Another was, "Lord, make me distrustful of myself, that I may confide in thee alone—self-dependence is the Pharisee's high road to destruction." He was accustomed strongly to urge, on all who entered the sacred office, the necessity of maintaining Christian and heavenly tempers among their people. "Some folks," he would say, "appear as if they had been bathed in crab verjuice in their infancy, which penetrated through their skins, and has made them sour-blooded ever since; but this will not do for a messenger of the Gospel; as he bears a message, so he must manifest a spirit of love." He used to like Dr. Ryland's advice to his young academicians, "Mind, no sermon is of any value, or likely to be useful, which has not the three R's in it.—Ruin by the fall—Redemption by Christ—Regeneration by the Holy Spirit." Of himself he remarked, "My aim in every sermon, is a stout and lusty call to sinners, to quicken the saints, and to be made a universal blessing to all." It was a favourite saying with him, "The nearer we live to God, the better are we enabled to serve him. O how I hate my own noise, when I have nothing to make a noise about! Heavenly wisdom creates heavenly utterance." In a letter to Mr. Jones he observes, "There is something in preaching the Gospel, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven, I long to get at. At times, I think I feel something like it, and then I bawl almost as mad as the Welshman. If we deal with divine realities, we ought to feel them such, and the people will in general feel with us, and acknow-