

THE

# Home and Foreign Record

OF

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## NEARER.

Another stage of our pilgrimage is past; another portion of our tale is told. The years come and go with inexorable swiftness teaching us that our days on earth are but a shadow and that there is none abiding. There is one way of looking at the flight of time which is ineffably sad. We view time as the destroyer, the great revolutionist—it overturns, overturns, overturns. It tears down our idols, breaks them in pieces, buries them out of our sight. It runs off with infancy, childhood, youth, beauty, strength; it will not spare old age. It breaks the dearest and most precious earthly ties; it dims the brightest earth-born lights.

Yet see, there is a better, a brighter side to this flight of time. There is a view of it full of consolation and joy:

The Pilgrim, weary with the greatness of his way, bowed down with his burdens, sighing for rest, is nearer home. The steps that he must take are fewer. His sighs and tears are well-nigh all counted.

Pastor, thou art nearer the end of thy toil, nearer thy rich reward from the great Shepherd of the sheep; nearer the meeting with the souls that have been saved through thy preaching. The burden of souls is a heavy one; the allotted task is solemn beyond the power of thought to realize. The hour is nearer when the Master shall with His own hand remove thy burden and accept thy task as fulfilled.

Brother, sister, pining on a bed of sickness or plunged in deep waters of affliction, the hour of deliverance is nearer than ever

before—the hour of healing, of perfect health, of immortal youth. Or if sin is the disease with which thou art contending—and it is the deadliest and the worst—the death of sin, and the hour of thy deliverance are at hand. Art thou a prisoner? Thy dreary bondage must soon come to an end. The chains shall be smitten from thine aching limbs, and the full freedom of God's children shall be thine.

The wrongs and cruelties that fill the world with tears are nearer an end. The whole creation has been groaning under the curse these thousands of years. Man has been a monster of cruelty towards his fellow-man, as witness myriads of battle-fields and dungeons, and instruments of torture and of death. Even in the name of the Lord Jesus unspeakable horrors have been enacted. And even now almost under our own eyes, how much there is of woe, woe, woe inflicted on the helpless! Thank God that the time is coming when these woes shall cease; when the creatures shall be relieved from the crushing weight of the curse; when men shall cease to shed blood, and when love—the love of Christ—shall watch and bless human life from the cradle to the grave.

The dark ages of wrong and ruin, of cursing and blood, are nearer their end. The morning star has risen; nay, the Sun of Righteousness sheds forth his healing beams. Swords shall be beaten to plowshares, and spears to pruning hooks. The cry of the children shall be heard, and men and women shall be pitiful and merciful as Christ is.