

gin to read when the hour of the eleven o'clock service should be announced by the ceasing of the bells; and, in the meantime closed my eyes, and soothed my impatient wishes by picturing to myself the shady avenues of blossoming limes that led to our church, and the throngs that would now be entering it for the public worship of the day.

All at once I seemed to be walking in the beautiful church-yard, yet prevented from gratifying my eager wish to enter the church, by some irresistible though unseen hand. One by one the congregation, in their gay Sunday dresses, passed me by, and went in where I vainly strove to follow. The parish children in two long and orderly trains defiled up the staircases into the galleries, and except a few stragglers, hurrying in as feeling themselves late, I was left alone.

Suddenly I was conscious of some awful presence, and felt myself addressed by a voice of most sweet solemnity in words to this effect: "Mortal, who by Divine mercy hast just been permitted to return from the gates of the grave, pause before thou enterest God's holy house again; reflect how often thou hast profaned His solemn public worship by irreverence, or by inattention, which is in His sight irreverence: consider well the great privilege, the unspeakable benefit and blessing of united prayer, lest by again abusing it thou tire the patience of thy long-suffering God, and tempt him for ever to deprive thee of that which hitherto thou hast so little valued."

Seeing me cast down my eyes and blush with conscious guilt, the gracious Being continued in a milder tone, "I am one of those Angels commissioned to gather the prayers of the Saints, and form them into wreaths of odorous incense that they may rise to the throne of God. Enter now with me, and thou shalt, for thy warning, be enabled to discern those among the devotions about to be offered which are acceptable to Him, and to see how few in number, how weak and unworthy they are."

As he ceased speaking I found myself by the side of the Angel still, but within the church, and so placed that I could distinctly see every part of the building.

"Observe," said the Angel, "that those prayers which come from the heart, and which alone ascend on high, will seem to be uttered aloud. They will be more or less audible in proportion to their earnestness,—when the thoughts wander, the sounds will grow faint, and even cease altogether."

This explained to me why the organist, though apparently playing with all his might, produced no sound, and why presently after, when the service began, though the lips of many moved, and all appeared attentive, only a few faint murmurings were heard.

How strange and awful it was to note the sort of deathlike silence that prevailed in whole pews, in which as was thus evident, no heart was raised in gratitude to Heaven. Even in the *Te Deum*, and *Jubilate*, the voices sometimes sunk into total silence. After the Creed there was a low murmuring of the Versicles, and then, distinct and clear above all other sounds, a sweet childish voice softly and reverently repeated the Lord's prayer. I turned in the direction of the sound, and distinguished among the parish children a very little boy. His hands were clasped together, as he knelt his eyes were closed, his gentle face composed in reverence, and as the Angels wrote on his tablets the words that fell from those infant lips, his smile, like a sunbeam, illuminated the church for a moment, and I remembered the words of holy David, where he says—"Out of the mouth of babes and sucklings Thou hast perfected praise."

Presently I was again reminded of a scripture passage—the prayer of the publican. A wretched-looking man, who swept the crossing near the church,