

mercifully so ordained. For were we for ever to be wounded with the same fine poignancy of regret, we could not fail being miserable. One by one the friends of our youth depart—the children we have held in our arms, are now perhaps no more; the aged to whom we looked for instruction have been gathered to their fathers! and some who may read this tale may in some brief space of time have passed onward. Flowers fade. “All things around us preach of death!”

A twelvemonth sped over the vicarage of D—. Again was the solitary rose seen clinging to the lattice—again were the withered leaves strewn over the gravel walk. It was the day on which Mary had breathed the inspired language of heaven. It was the day of Nora and Charles's wedding. They had fondly wished it to take place on that awful anniversary, that they might through life remember what had been the price of their love; and therefore treasure it through storm and sunshine—through the clouds of woe and the light of joy; even when the last sigh of death should pass over their then rosy lips. Nora tremblingly faltered out “I will;” the same words were pronounced by the clergyman as her poor sister had spoken; the same blessing was bestowed. She was Driscoll's wife. But it was not doomed that the last rose should be plucked from the vicarage garden. After a short continental tour, for they deemed the change would in a degree alienate their minds from grief, the young pair returned to the vicarage to soothe the waning years of the widowed parent by the presence of his only daughter, whose gaiety had now become sobered by affliction into a beautiful calmness; nor did they leave that peaceful home until a new incumbent was appointed to the living.

AN INCIDENT AT LA TRAPPE.

“The prison,” says Wordsworth, “to which we doom ourselves, no prison is.” There are many instances recorded in which a degree of voluntary suffering has been borne, which if compulsory, would be scarcely endured by nature. The celebrated monastery of La Trappe presented to the world an example of a system of self-denial and rigour being undertaken and sustained, compared with which the tortures of a dungeon were easy, and the horrors of exile were light; imposed by a resolution which never flagged, and endured with a constancy which nothing could abate.

The Count Albergotti, soon after his retirement from the world, was visited by one of his most intimate and valued friends; but he refused to see him. This model of friendship, unable to endure a perpetual separation, actually entered the monastery and became a member of the brotherhood. But the count, during the long remainder of their mutual lives, never once raised his eyes to look at him.

About a hundred and fifty years ago, there resided at La Trappe a monk, who was celebrated, even *there*, for the ardour of his devotion, and the rigidness of his seclusion. Regular at the altar, at other times always in his cell, he had never spoken to any member of the household, during the twenty years that he had lived there, and had never once entered the room of a brother. He was an old man, and was rapidly declining in health. Though an invalid, and demanding all the relief which carefulness and attention could suggest, still he was never absent from the matutinal services of the chapel, and never allowed himself the least addition to the plain accommodations which he had always employed.

One morning he arose and found himself much weaker than he had ever felt before. But he did not for a moment think of desisting from the duties of his station, and he went forth before sunrise to attend the usual prayers. It was with difficulty that in returning he reached his cell. Slowly, and with tottering steps he entered, and closing the door behind him, he stretched himself upon his bed, which—like all the beds in the monastery—was a rough board, with no more covering than a single blanket. He laid himself down to die; but the monk was manifestly not at his ease. In a few moments the door opened, and the occupant of the cell next to him entered. It was the first

time, for twenty years, that any other than the owner had passed that threshold; but the intruder did not seem to be unwelcome. It was a monk, who had been a resident at La Trappe for a period scarcely shorter than that of the other; and though always living next to him, and every morning, and every noon, and every evening walking in company with him to the chapel, neither had ever looked upon the other; neither had ever spoken.

“Brother,” said he, and the tone of the speaker had a tenderness unusual in that place of mortified affections—“Brother, is there aught in which I can minister to your comfort?”

“The period of comfort and discomfort,” answered the other, “is for me rapidly passing away. I would raise my thoughts and my feelings from the world, and send them before me into that heaven where my spirit will soon repose; but there is one ligament which yet binds me to this sphere, and as I approach my final agony, it seems to become tighter than ever. At my entrance into this monastery, I left behind me in the world a much-loved brother, involved in the whirlpool of dissipation and sin. The doubts which oppress me as to his situation, if indeed he still lives, are the source of the disquietude which now hangs over me. If a message from me at this time could reach him, I think that it would not be without effect. If you can convey one to him, tell him of the anguish which I feel for his condition; tell him of the infinite importance of religion; implore him,” and the speaker, as he grew more excited, raised himself upon his arm, and fixed his eye keenly upon the stander-by, “implore him—yet—stay,” pausing and gazing wildly, “who are you?” “I am strange,” and he drew back and stared with eager doubt upon the other. “That face, I have seen it; yet no, it is not.”

“It is!” exclaimed the other, “it is your brother. A few months had elapsed after your entrance into this monastery, when, wearied by the joyless pleasures of the world, and smitten by the noble example which you set before me, I resolved to dedicate myself to piety here. I entered the society. Chance assigned me the cell which adjoins yours. Ardent and tender as was the attachment which I felt to you, I determined, in penance for my sins, to impose upon myself the hard resolution of never addressing you until the moment of dissolution should arrive to one of us. For more than nineteen years I have heard through the apertures in the wall your daily prayers for my safety, and your nightly tears for my absence: agonising as was the effort to repress my emotion, I kept my vow and was silent. My course is nearly run; the reward is at hand. In silence we have worked out our salvation upon earth; but we will speak, my dear brother! we will speak in heaven!”

The dying man raised his eyes and fixed them faintly on the speaker, then sighed; his brother felt a feeble pressure from the hand which inclosed his. A moment, and there stood but one living spirit in that silent cell.

For the Pearl.

FRAGMENTS OF PIOUS THOUGHT.

No. IV.

POWER OF PATERNAL LOVE.

Suppose the case of an ungodly son who has just begun to taste the pleasures of sin; already on the borders of iniquity, he is in imminent danger of pursuing the way of transgressors. Brought into the house of his nativity, behold him enclosed within the once happy family circle: draw near and listen to the godly admonitions of his father—he reminds his unhappy child of the guardian care so long exercised over him—of the unutterable kindness ever experienced towards him—of the great comfort he had expected from his manhood—but the father has done, and the big tears are now rolling down the mother's cheeks—she essays to speak but her words are choked in their utterance—again and again she summons up all her energies to the painful task but to no purpose, and sobbing in agony beyond conception, all she can sigh out

is, O my son! my son! her grief is too poignant and her heart too full for expression in fleeting words—she cannot remind her son of the helplessness of infancy, and how she protected it—of the danger of childhood, and how she guarded it—of the long and dreary nights of sickness, and how she endured them, but there she sits overwhelmed with gloom and distress. But a kindly sister is present—O see her gently taking the hand of her brother, and with a look which language can never describe saying, O my brother go not with the transgressors—heed the authority of thy father—be persuaded by the tears of thy mother—O send not our parents with sorrow to the grave. It is enough—the son is now bathed in tears—parental love has struck the flinty rock and the waters gush forth in torrents. Behold then the power of a father's voice, and a mother's tears, and a sister's love. And our Father in heaven, speaketh he not to his wayward children on earth—uttereth he not his voice, supreme in authority, moving in kindness, and melting in redeeming love? O it is the invitation of our Father in heaven which brings back the wanderer—it is the love of the Father which subdues the heart of the prodigal—it is the mercy of our heavenly Father which forgives the sins of all penitent believers. And desperate is the condition of that individual upon whom the voice and love and mercy of the “Father of his spirit” have no effect—he is but one remove from the wretchedness of the lost.

No. V.

A COMPARISON.

In the natural world we are sometimes terrified with the gloom and fury of the storm. The heavens appear to frown on all terrestrial things—streams of vivid fire dart along the sky—bursts of awful thunder resound among the battling clouds, and reverberating from mountain to mountain, all nature seems to be convulsed with agony and fear. So in the moral world, the threatenings of divine revelation darken the whole spiritual hemisphere—the thunder of the divine displeasure waxes louder and louder—the lightnings of his indignation glance fitfully and fearfully along, while ever and anon God uttereth his mighty voice, and the hills melt, and the earth quakes, and wave resounds to wave, and deep proclaims to deep, and in all the majesty of the eternal is testified “It is a fearful thing to fall into the hands of the living God.” But though sometimes we are visited with the tempest, yet in the natural world we have most commonly the pleasant and agreeable. What a glowing sight is a beautiful landscape on a fine day! The yellow fields waving with corn—the vineyards smiling with fruit—the stream meandering along the vale—the forest trees lifting their giant heads on high and upon the grass adorned hills and upon the whole scene, coming down in radiance and splendour, all the glories of a setting sun. But a brighter landscape may be viewed—a more magnificent sight is spread out before our moral vision, for in the Bible are rich pastures and still waters and refreshing streams—and here too the rose is without a thorn, and the fruit has no blight—the ground is unmolested with pits and snares, and no cloud ever darkens the sky. And every ripple of the stream tells of mercy—and every shrub and flower discolours the fragrance of love—and every zephyr of wind wafts the promises, while throughout the length and breadth of this joy-inspiring land, God himself walks, and in the soft utterance of his voice, it is heard “Him that cometh unto me I will in no wise cast out.”

SILVANUS.

DEATH.

An unseen, cold and uninvited visitor,
Who hustles by the porter at the gate;
And the loquacious knave at the door,
Although it be a palace: rushes up
Unceremonious, to the inner chamber;
Giveth no card of entrance—doth not knock
Before he enters, though a king be there!
Undraws the curtains of the princely couch,
And tips his arrows in the very room
Where monarchs breathe their last.