

## A NEW AFFECTION.

JUST on the verge of womanhood, Mary Pearce left her home for service full of life and gaiety.

With a light step, a toss of her head, and an arch smile, Mary was wont to pass up and down the village, the admiration of some, the envy of many. A bonnie looking maiden she was, with her bright eyes and plump rosy cheeks; and as she stood at her cottage door, laughing gaily with one and another as they passed, the matrons argued that no good would come of it, but shook their heads and congratulated themselves that their own girls were quite different from Mary.

But Mary was bent upon seeing the world, and when a situation as under-housemaid was offered in the neighbourhood, she applied for it, and obtained it; she was in high spirits from the time of her getting the situation, up to the last evening before leaving home.

Mary's tears at parting were soon dried, new scenes soon dispelled the old ones, and once settled in her new situation she quickly became reconciled to the change. In many respects her new mode of life was a pleasant one. Her mistress also valued her, and often was leave granted to Mary to go out when the work was finished. Being naturally fond of gaiety, Mary sought every opportunity of frequenting places of amusement. In her eager search after pleasure Mary soon forgot all about her home.

It was clear that she had got upon the wrong track, and was fast speeding away from all good influences and good habits. She had been going on for a long while in a system of deceit, cheating her mistress into the idea that she was attending the church regularly, when one morning, dressed as usual for a walk with a foolish young companion, she heard the church chimes suddenly burst out; her companion was not true to his appointment, and Mary walked, attracted by the sweet sound of the bells, towards the church, stood for one moment at the gate of the churchyard, then hardly knowing what she was doing, passed through the gate into the churchyard, and from thence into the porch.

The service had already begun, and after a hymn the minister gave out his text—"The wages of sin is death; but the gift of God is eternal life through Jesus Christ our Lord." The Holy Spirit of God brought those few words home to Mary's heart. "And have I," she said to herself, "been selling my

soul to Satan, and is death the wages he gives? Will health and beauty last only for a little while, and have I nothing to supply its place when it is gone? Must the end of it all be death? How very terrible!" With these bitter reflections, she left the church. Her first feeling was that the offer was not for her; and, oppressed and overcome with grief, she walked home. Her heart was full; her fellow-servants rallied her on her low spirits, but she could not rouse herself or tell them the cause: the trouble was real. God's Spirit was showing her to herself, telling her the truth, convincing her of sin. For several days Mary was in a state of sad depression, very silent, and often with eyes brimful of tears.

One evening, when the rest of the servants were otherwise engaged, Mary took her little Bible and seated herself in a corner of the kitchen, near the window, to catch the last gleam of twilight, and read once again the minister's Sunday morning text, the text that had been haunting her so all the week. She read it through and through, and exclaimed, almost audibly, "The gift of God—eternal life, did the minister say there was such a gift, and that I might have it? If it is to be had, I will plead for it with all my might."

Silent words of earnest prayer followed her resolution. She prayed for grace to believe, and that prayer was heard. The hand of faith was stretched out to receive the gift,

and Mary felt a joy within to which she had been long a stranger. Mary's fellow-servant looked astonished, and asked her, somewhat pettishly, what was the matter with her. Mary at once replied—

"I have loved gaiety and worldly pleasure and sin, and I thought myself happy; but I did not know till now what real happiness was. I have a new affection," she said, her old bright smile lighting up her face, "and I'm happier now than I ever was in my life."

Reader, the world is passing away, and you are passing out of the world. What have you to look to when every earthly thing is fading from your view? What support have you for old age? Those who have tasted the love of Christ know there is nothing on earth to be compared to it. If you will make Him your friend, then you will be able and ready to forego all mere earthly pleasure; attracted by His love you will be ready to give it up for His sake; you will even wonder that you ever grasped at shadows when real happiness was within your reach.



Mary read once again the minister's text.