

the the contrast struck Mary and Laura very forcibly, when, having alighted from their carriage, they passed through the great iron gates that admitted them into the realm of the dead.

At that late hour the vast cemetery was quite deserted, and they passed in silence up the long avenue of tombs till they reached a rising ground on the left, where they paused involuntarily for a moment, to look at the magnificent view of Paris which was there opened out before their eyes.

It seemed like the golden city of some fairy vision, as it lay beneath their feet bathed in the glory of the sunset glow; and it was hard to believe, as it shone there smiling and peaceful, with its fair gardens and its sparkling river, that so lately, in the reign of the terrible Commune, the smoke of its torment had been ascending to the heavens while its maddened children had been revelling in blood and flames.

Now all was serene and bright beneath a sky of pure pellucid blue, and Mary felt that the scene was an apt type of the life of him whose ashes they were about to visit, for his existence having closed in anguish and violence by murderous hands, had straightway passed into the peace and loveliness which for ever make glad the City of God on high.

She drew Lurline on to a solitary spot a little further up, which lay free and open to the sky at a distance from the trees and the other graves, and when they had reached it, while no word passed between them, it needed not the gentle detaining touch of Mary's hand to tell Laura Brant that she stood at last beside the sepulchre of her truest friend. It was easy to see that reverence and tender care had been bestowed on the whole arrangement of this resting-place, which made it strikingly unlike any other among the forest of tombs that surrounded it, where every variety of decoration and elaborate symbolism had been put in requisition by the somewhat meretricious taste which the French are apt to display in all that touches on religion. The narrow green mound that lay at Laura's feet had not a single wreath of everlasting flowers or other device to mar its quiet simplicity, only round it had been planted a number of violet roots, which now were blossoming again for the second time, and sending up their sweet incense through the soft still air, like the evening sacrifice; and at the head was placed the memorial, which had been executed according to Mary's direction. It consisted simply of a tall exquisitely proportioned obelisk of spotless alabaster, which shot up with its pure white shaft towards the calm and liquid sky, as if it were the very embodiment of an intense longing to reach that heavenly region. The flood of rose colour on the western horizon immediately behind it brought out in strong relief its stainless whiteness, and caused the words inscribed on it to glow as if carved in shining letters; Laura stooped to read them: first the name—which none could doubt was already written in the archives of heaven—next the date on which it was stated as a simple fact that he "gave away his life," and then below on the step that supported the obelisk was this one sentence—

"My soul is athirst for the living God."

No more; but it was enough, for it expressed all that had been the energizing motive power, the very essence of John Pemberton's existence for the last and noblest year of his earthly probation. Laura stood and gazed on the fair white stone, and the green mound, and the glorious sunset beyond, from whence the pearl and opal-tinted clouds were rolling back like the gates of Paradise unfolding; and for a long time she did not break the

silence, though her heaving breast and trembling lips told how deeply she was moved.

"Ah, Mary!" she said, at length, "you understood him well, and with pure and beautiful feeling you have done him honour in his grave; but think what it must be for me to know that beneath that sod lies cold and still the true heart I once trampled under foot, the heart that beat for me till it could beat no more!" and then sinking on her knees, she laid her head on the grave, and murmured, in a broken voice, "Forgive me, John, dear John, forgive, forgive me."

"Be very sure he has forgiven you long ago, dearest Laura," said Mary, softly; "and you must no more so bitterly regret the past, for all has turned out well and happily for him."

"Mary, I broke his heart; you know I did."

"Yes, dear Laura, but like a flower that gives forth its sweetest scent when crushed and bruised, that broken heart sent forth the fragrance of an undivided pure devotion to his Lord, such as he could never have offered without reserve had any mortal love retained him in its power. You see the steps by which he ascended to his Master, in the words that are inscribed on the base of the obelisk; dare we, dare even you, presume to mourn for him, when we know that his thirst is slaked now in the immediate presence of Him who is the well of Life?"

"No," said Laura, rising from her knees, "I do not indeed dare to mourn for him, but only for myself, that I so ruined the fair promise of his youth and poisoned all his earthly life. Mary, I think there is one great lesson to be drawn from his grave, which I would thankfully teach to others as it has been taught to me, for it seems to demonstrate most clearly that the greatest crimes are not those which are recognized as such in the world and punished by the law, the murders, and thefts, and open deeds of violence; but that it is the hidden treacheries, and cruelties, and hard indifferences, with which under all fair seeming, one human being has power to torture another, that must cry most loudly to our God for vengeance. Surely, far more deadly than the assassin's knife is the cold betrayal that stabs with a fatal wound the love of a faithful heart, and worse than any midnight thief is the false friend that robs a life of all power of joy by unkindness or desertion. Ah, Mary, I believe that when the lightning of God's judgment flashes on the souls of men, it will not be the open notorious sinners that will feel most keenly the scathing fires of His wrath, but those that in secret dealt irreparable blows at the hopes and joys of their fellow creatures, or poisoned the springs of happiness within them at their very source."

"No doubt you are right, Laura; and the unfeeling recklessness with which human beings inflict pain one upon another is among the darkest problems of our existence; but I think there is a brighter lesson to be learnt from this peaceful grave, which may well banish from your mind all gloomy thoughts connected with it. Do you not see, dear Laura, how like those rays which the vanished sun has left to illuminate all the earth from whence he has departed, so the bright true life which has disappeared within this tomb has left a shining light behind it that falls on darkened souls, and draws them after it into the full glory of the love of God."

"Yes, it has been so with me, at least; dear John did more for me in his death than ever in all his devoted life."

"Many besides yourself will have cause to say so. Charlie Davenant was telling me, only this morning, of the wonderful

effect John's example has had upon himself. The influence came to him, too, in a singular manner. The Pemberton family in England had sent him the Bible John always used, to keep as a remembrance of his early friend, and when he was looking it over, he saw some words written with great care on the fly-leaf, and signed at the end with John's name, as if they were placed there to record a vow—they were these:—'As the Lord liveth, and as my Lord the King liveth, surely in what place my Lord the King shall be, whether in life or in death, even there will Thy servants be.'"

"How beautiful!" exclaimed Laura; "he applied it, no doubt, to himself and his Saviour, Christ."

"Yes, exactly; and Charlie saw this clearly, at once, and he said this revelation of the intense love felt by John Pemberton for his Divine Master filled him with such a sense of the blessedness of union there must have been between the Saviour and the saved, that he determined to take no rest till he, too, found that blest Redeemer and claimed Him for his own."

"Another jewel added to John's bright crown," said Laura, softly; "thank you for having told me this, Mary; it will be a happy thought to take away with me."

Stooping down once more, she pressed her lips on the green sod in token of a mute farewell, and then the friends, turning homeward, left the grave to its stillness and peace beneath the blue vault of Heaven.

(To be Continued.)

THE ENGAGEMENT RING.

It has been the custom since time immemorial for gentlemen who are engaged to be married, to offer their intended brides a ring, this ring is worn until the wedding ring replaces it. There is a fashion for this as for everything else. The ring varies in value according to the position of the giver. There are certain stones more suitable than others for this purpose. Diamonds are not considered in good taste for a young girl, neither are pearls. The latter because they are perishable, and because it is said, too, that pearls are unlucky stones; in evidence of this, it is stated that pearls composed the favorite parures of Marie Stuart, Anna Boleyn, Marie Antoinette, and the unfortunate Duchess de Praslin, who all met with such terrible deaths. Consequently the stones most generally favored are emeralds and sapphires, the first being the emblem of hope, the second that of endless love, according to the original belief. The emerald was for a long time the favorite stone of the Roman ladies. When emeralds are deep in color they are mounted in open work. When they are pale they are mounted on foil. Unfortunately one thing is against this stone—the facility with which it is imitated in glass colored by oxide of chrome.

THE leanness of the earthen vessel which conveys to others the Gospel treasure, takes nothing from the value of the treasure. A dying hand may sign a deed of gift of incalculable value.

If any emendations of Scripture were allowable under any circumstances, perhaps the most valuable that could be made, would be to append to St Peter's enumeration of the virtues to be added to faith, that of punctuality. The man who habitually fails to meet an appointment at the precise moment, is the thief of another's time. Such a man will never be respected or successful in life. One of the greatest blessings that the extensive railway system has conferred on our people, is the daily lesson of punctuality which it is teaching to all classes.