

FIRESIDE READING.

THE EXHAUSTLESS FULNESS.

"It pleased the Father that in Him should all fulness dwell;" dwell, not come and go, like a wayfaring man who tarrieth but a night, who is with us to day, and away from us to-morrow; not like the shallow, noisy, treacherous, brook that fails, when most needed, in the heat of summer; but like this deep-seated spring, that rising silently though affluently at the mountain's foot, and having unseen communication with its exhaustless supplies is ever flowing over its grassy margin, equally affected by the long droughts that dry the wells and the frosts that pave the neighbour-lake with ice. So fail the joys of earth: so flow, supplied by the fulness of Christ the pleasures and the peace of piety. It cannot be otherwise. "If a man love me," says Jesus, "he will keep my words and my Father will love him, and we will come unto him, and make our abode with him."

I have read how in the burning desert the skeletons of unhappy travellers, all withered and white, are found, not only on the way to the fountain, but lying grim and ghastly on its banks, with their skulls stretched over the margin. Panting, faint, their tongue cleaving to the roof of their mouth, ready to fill a cup with gold for its fill of water, they press on to the well, steering their course by the tall palms that stand full of hope above the glaring sand. Already, in fond anticipation, they drink where others have been saved. They reach it. Alas! sad sight for the dim eyes of fainting men,—the well is dry. With stony horror in their looks, how they gaze into the empty basin, or fight with man and beast for some muddy drops that but exasperate their thirst! The desert reels around them. Hope expires. Some cursing, some praying, they sink, and themselves expire. And by-and-by the sky darkens, lightnings flash, loud thunders roll, the rain pours down; and fed by the showers, the treacherous waters rise to play in mockery with long fair tresses, and kiss the pale lips of death.

But yonder, where the cross stands up high to mark the fountain of the Saviour's blood, and Heaven's sanctifying grace, no dead souls lie.

Once a Golgotha, Calvary has ceased to be a place of skulls. Where men went once to die, they go now to live; and to none that ever went there to seek pardon, and peace, and holiness, did God ever say, "Seek ye me in vain." There are times when the peace of God's people, always like a river, is like one in flood, overflowing its margin, and rolling its mighty current between bank and brae. There are times when the righteousness of God's people, always like the waves of the sea, seems like the tide at the stream, as, swelling beyond its ordinary bounds, it floats the boats and ships that lie highest, driest on the beach. But at all times and seasons, faith and prayer find fulness of mercy to pardon, and of grace to sanctify, in Jesus Christ. The supply is inexhaustible.

Mountains have been exhausted of their gold, mines of their diamonds, and the depths of the ocean of their pearly gems. The demand has emptied the supply. Over once busy scenes, silence and solitude now reign; the caverns ring no longer to the miner's hammer, nor is the song of the pearl-fisher heard upon the deep. But the riches of grace are inexhaustible. All that have gone before us have not made them less, and we shall make them no less to those who follow us. When they have supplied the wants of unborn millions, the last of Adam's race, that lonely man, over whose head the sun is dying, beneath whose feet the earth is reeling, shall stand by as full a fountain as this day invites you to drink and live, to wash and be clean.

I have found it an interesting thing to stand on the edge of a noble rolling river, and to think that although it has been flowing on for six thousand years, watering the fields, and slaking the thirst of a hundred generations, it shows no sign of waste or want; and when I have watched the rise of the sun, as he shot above the crest of the mountain, or in a sky draped with golden curtains, sprang up from his ocean bed, I have wondered to think that he has melted the snows of so many winters, and renewed the verdure of so many springs, and painted the flowers of so many summers, and ripened the golden harvests