

Family Department.

"VIDI AQUAM."

BY REV. WM. AUGUSTUS WHITE.

"Whosoever drinketh of the water that I shall give him, shall never thirst."—ST. JOHN iv. 14. (See NUMB. xxi. 17.)

Come, ye who thirst for living streams,
The Fount of Life is free;
Its crystal tide with brightness gleams,
And rivers rise as morning beams,
O Christ, our Rock, from Thee.

My soul, tho' like a parched land,
New songs of joy will sing,
When saving Grace shall near me stand,
And give the chalice to my hand,
From Love's immortal spring.

Thro' all the weary march below,
Beneath the burning sun,
The Rock shall follow where we go,
The waters in the desert flow,
Till Israel's course is done.

O sacred Fountain, mine thou art,
Life's pilgrimage to bless;
"Spring up, O well," and fill my heart
With joys no earthly scenes impart,—
With truth and righteousness.

—Episcopal Register.

CLAIRE.

A TALE.

(Written for the Church Guardian).

BY T. M. B.

(Continued.)

This spring afternoon, as she sews and sings softly to herself, looking out now and then at the grey towers of the abbey, a great happiness comes to her—a letter, a long, long letter from Marthe. How lovingly she holds it in her hands; how lingeringly she reads and re-reads the closely written pages that tell so much, yet leave so much untold. The letter is in answer to one from Claire, telling of her home in London, of her father's kindness, of her good fortune in finding pupils, of the little details of her life, of the great city surrounding her, teeming with strange existence, telling, too, of how, amidst it all, the writer sees so often, oh, so often, the green pine woods and grey turrets of Du Plessis and the dear familiar faces far away. And now this answer comes, telling, first of all, the joy which Claire's first letter had given. Felix had been fortunate beyond his most sanguine expectations. He had already won confidence and esteem, and seemed to have a bright future before him in the young city. Marthe kept house for him in a pretty cottage, almost in the country; there were great trees standing around it, she said, and the porch was all overgrown with roses and wild vine. Through the day she always found plenty to employ her, and when evening came she watched for Felix. It was the happiness of her life to hear his coming footsteps, to run to meet him at the gate. Often, when the moon was up, they would walk out towards the country, and fancy that the distant woods were the woods about Du Plessis, and that a twinkling light among them was a light from the chateau. "Ah, Claire, *bien aimee*, do you know how you live in our lives? How many times in every day we speak of you, and how much oftener you are in our thoughts? Oh, to see your dear face but for one happy quarter of an hour now and then! When, when will that be! Had you but seen Felix when he brought me your letter! There was a look in his face which I have never seen in it since the day we parted from you. Now you seem almost to be within reach again; now we can picture you to ourselves in your home; we can think 'she is doing this or that just at this moment'; we can see you day by day. How have I thanked *le bon Dieu* for your good tidings! . . . We have written to my father constantly, but have hitherto received no tidings from him. Felix has implored him to come to us, has implored him to make over to Monsieur Le Comte what is rightly his due, and to come to

this land with clean hands and a clear conscience. He has promised to work for him, and that we two will live for him and make his home happy, but we have had no response." Claire sits reading the letter until the daylight has begun to fade out of the sky. She sees Felix coming to the garden gate, his firm, erect figure, his clear cut, noble face; she hears the pleasant voice call "Marthe," and Marthe comes out from the porch with its drapery of wild vine and roses, and lifts her face to greet her brother with a kiss." Would he start if she, Claire, were to follow Marthe? Would he look at her as he did for that moment as they stood, side by side, in the parlour of the Inn at Ostende? and clasp her hand as he did then?

Claire wakes out of her dream with a start; she hears her father's voice outside and hastens to draw the curtains and light the candles, and make things look their best to welcome him.

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As time goes on the Count becomes more and more accustomed to his exile. Claire's love and care take a still larger place in his life and his own affection for her, though a selfish fondness, is the truest feeling he has ever known. But, as he loses his frivolity, his shallow brilliance of manner, he grows strangely older too; he has not led the life to keep a man physically or mentally young; and now that the excitements of fashion have failed him, there is no stimulus to take their place. Claire has begun to look with a feeling of vague anxiety into the face that often has a pinched and faded look, and she detects each day new lines about the mouth and eyes. He is beginning to lose faith, too in the future which was to restore him to all that he had lost. That enthusiastic conviction of a speedy restoration of the old order of things no longer finds expression in the little gatherings in Claire's *salon*. Some of the older nobles shake their heads, as they say that it may not come to pass in *their* time. They only trust that their sons may be true to the traditions of their fathers and may avenge their wrongs. At other times they are more hopeful, and now and then some political intelligence, true or false, stirs up the old ardour of hope and courage for a while. Still, as the months swell into years, hope deferred makes some heart-sick, and in others fades imperceptibly away. Amongst these latter is the Count Du Plessis. Were it not for Claire's fond and constant affection and bright companionship he might have "eaten out his heart" in bitter and unavailing wrath and regret, but she had won a place there for herself, and the wrath and bitterness had no longer full scope. Tenderly and trustfully too the daughter was seeking to drop a purer balm than any earthly love into the heart so long callous to any higher influence. Claire had become a constant worshipper at the Abbey; the wondrous beauty of the sacred place had first drawn her to it, then the noble simplicity of the service, until its full and holy meaning had taken possession of her mind and heart. The previous religious impressions of her life had been vague but deep—a little prayer, learnt at her mother's knees, the ignorant, childlike but profound devotion of Ursule, the desultory teaching of the old priest of Du Plessis, small influences in themselves, yet had resulted in longings and aspirations now grown into the clear and steady faith, which was the guiding star of Claire's life.

Beautiful, most beautiful, was the devotion with which she sought to awaken in her father the first aspirations after the high and holy things which to her were ever-present realities. Her love for him had grown with each sacrifice, every effort she had made on his behalf and their positions of parent and child seemed reversed, as the fair, pure woman, with the tender patience of a mother, endeavoured to lead the man, worn out in the service of the world, yet a very babe in ignorance of heavenly things, to take his first step on that heavenward way. Was ever such a labour of love unblest? Little by little the Count awoke to a dim perception of a world, as far beyond that in which his existence had been spent, and every thought had centered as are the summits of the eternal hills from the little tunnelled dwelling of the mole in the furrows at their base. Little by little Claude Du Plessis learned to measure his

wasted life by the thoughts of better things, and, in deepest self-abasement, to feel that he had nothing now but his penitence to offer to his Creator. Then it was Claire's blessed task to dwell upon the glorious promises even to those who, in the twilight of their misspent day, turn from the broad and beaten track of sin, to speak of the joy among the angels of God over one sinner that repenteth, and, as she marked her father's increasing feebleness, a profound thankfulness mingled with her grief for she knew that in the "valley of the shadow" which even now he might be approaching, he would not be alone.

(To be continued.)

THOUGHTS FOR TWELFTH SUNDAY AFTER TRINITY.

No. XII.

"And He took him aside from the multitude"

St. Mark alone of the Evangelists tells us the brief but wondrous story of to-day's Gospel. Nothing that we read of our dear Lord's acts of Love and Power impresses us more deeply. How He takes the poor afflicted one 'as do from the multitude,' alone, as it were, unto Himself; how, as so often, by His blessed touch, He seems to speak of His nearness, His perfect human sympathy as well as His Divine Love; how looking up to Heaven He sighs and says, Ephphatha. Particularly vivid and distinct is the whole marvellous scene; that upward look that sigh, that word of power "be opened."

Did He not as man, holy and separate from sinners, yet the man of sorrows and acquainted with grief, look up to Heaven with yearning ineffable? Surrounded on all sides by the terrible presence of sin, the curse which He came so willingly, yet at so infinite a cost, to heal; must He not have sighed in nameless pity?

"Ephphatha," one more miracle accomplished; one more in that long succession of mighty works, which should have brought the world in perfect adoration to His feet! And, for a while indeed, men seemed to realize the presence of their God amongst them; they were beyond measure astonished, saying:—"He hath done all things well!"

Dwelling upon this miracle should draw us very near to Him. Do we not feel the blessing it would be to us were He to take us aside from the multitude? He can do so now by His Spirit as He did then in His visible Presence, take us aside unto Himself alone, and speak to our souls that word of power—"Be opened." He can give us the hearing ear and understanding heart to know the happy mysteries of His Love, and He can awaken our dumb lips so that we shall speak in the voice of joy and thanksgiving.

After such nearness to our Lord, when we return to the world from which He drew us aside, things will bear a different meaning to us. His touch will still be upon us; the sound of His voice will be with us still; our hopes, our aims will all be blent up with Him, and every action will be done as in His sight, and with the end in view of being hereafter "for ever with the Lord."

Do we hope to impose upon God, as we sometimes do upon men, by a mere "form of godliness, without the power of it?" Do we think that He requires our adoration and homage for His own sake, and therefore contents himself with the honors that are done Him by "outward" shows and appearances? He who "requireth truth in the inward parts!" . . . A multitude of vain and pompous ceremonies, a variety of rich habits and ornaments, music framed for delight without improvement; these things indeed may render an assembly intent, but the devotion they produce, if they indeed produce any, goes no further than the senses; it is not that of the heart and spirit.—Bishop Atterbury.

CHRISTIAN, remember, I beseech you, that you do not stand alone in the world; that you have others to take care of and to answer for as well as yourself. Neglect no opportunity of forwarding them in the way of life; but set them onward in their course, and go along with them yourself, their companion, friend and guide.