

The Poor Man's Friend.

THE Rev. John Fletcher, who lived something like a hundred years ago, was notable among other good qualities for his devoted love of the poor and his generous consideration of their needs.

His wife says of him: 'He was never happier than when he had given away the last penny he had in his house. If at any time I had gold in my drawers it seemed to afford him no comfort; but if he could find a handful of small silver, when he was going out to see the sick, he would express as much pleasure over it as a miser would in discovering a bag of hid treasure.'

'He was never better pleased with any employment than when he had set me to prepare food or physic for the poor. He was hardly able to relish his dinner if some sick neighbour had not a part of it; and sometimes when any of them were in want, I could not keep the linen in his drawers.'

'On Sundays he provided for numbers of people who came from a distance to his church, and his house as well as his heart was devoted to their convenience. To relieve them that were afflicted in body or mind was the delight of his heart. Once a poor man being brought into great difficulties, he took down all the pewter from the kitchen

shelves, saying, "This will help you, and I can do without it; a wooden trencher will serve me quite as well."'

These were not the days of the penny post, so Mrs. Fletcher goes on to detail how tears have come into this good man's eyes when 'five or six insignificant letters have been brought him at three or four pence apiece, and perhaps he had only a single shilling in the house to distribute among the poor where he was going.'

He often said to his wife, 'Oh, Polly, can we not do without beer? Let us drink water and eat less meat, that we may have more to give away to the poor.'

Indeed he shared his all with the poor, who lay so close to his heart that at the approach of death, when he could not speak without difficulty, he cried out, 'Oh, my Poor! What will become of my Poor?'

In these days, when the haters of religion delight to scorn and accuse God's ministers, it is well to recall such records of a parish priest. Truly he lived many years ago, but here and there all over our land there are at this day many of our clergy who in their quiet way care for their poor just as faithfully, living sparingly that the poor man may benefit by the money thus saved.

Too Young.

BEN SYRA, a little Jewish boy, asked a wise man to instruct him in the Law of God.

'Go and play, my child,' said the master, 'you are too young to be taught these sacred mysteries.' 'But, master,' returned the child, 'in the burial-ground I find many graves shorter than I am; now if I die before I have learned the Word of God, shall I not feel strange in His presence?'

Might not many of our little ones ask such a question as this? A child is never too young to be taught holy things. The infant that cannot speak can clasp its hands and remain quiet while its brothers and sisters say their prayers. We ought never to know the time when we began to instruct a child in religion.