

Literature.

RECOLLECTIONS

OF THE FAIREST HOURS TO CHEER THE LATEST HOURS OF LIFE.

Gottreich Hartmann lived with his father, an aged clergyman, in the village of Heim. Happy were the declining years of the priest—for, when his strength failed, his son stepped into his place, and fulfilled his duties,—and truly edifying were the homilies of the young preacher to the heart of the old man.

Young Gottreich had a poetic soul; and the bloom of his youthful promise was not, like that of too many young poets, wasted and trampled under foot in his manhood, but crowned with sweet fruit. His father had felt the inspiration of poetry in his youth, but had not a favourable occasion for unfolding his powers, since, in his early days, fathers thought their sons might find far better pasturage in the humble vale and level of the reading desk, and professor's chair, than on the peaks of Parnassus. But the soul of poetry, thus repressed, worked the more powerfully within,—mingled itself with all his thoughts and deeds, and coloured all his life. Beauteous was the situation of the old priest; everything good was always about him; the twin sisters, Religion and Poetry, made their dwelling with him.

So lived the father and son together; and in addition to filial and parental love, a close friendship grew between them. The father was refreshed to see not only the soul of his youthful poetry new-glowing in the son, but also the soul of his faith. Alas! different has been the case with many a pious father, in receiving his son from the university. The old priest found his own christian heart freshly beating in the breast of his son, justifying the convictions of a long life and the love of a father.

If it be painful to differ in thought, from one we love in our heart,—to turn away the head from one to whom the heart is ever inclined, it is doubly sweet at once to love and believe in fellowship with one in whom our better self is sustained and perpetuated with youthful energy. So life is like a fair starry night, where no star sets but one arrives to shine in its place.

Gottreich had a paradise about him, in which he held the post of gardener for his father, enjoying all its fruits the more he laboured for the old man's gratification. Every Sabbath brought him a new delight, in a new homily prepared chiefly for the purpose of gladdening his father's heart. The moistened eye of the old priest,—the hands now and then, during the sermon, folded in silent prayer, made for the young preacher every Sunday an Ascension festivity; and in the quiet vicarage, brooded joys little known to the rude world. Those who imagine the preparation and delivery of a course of homilies throughout the year, to be a dull task, should have heard the father and son speaking of the last, or consulting about the next, discourses for the congregation at Heim.

And now to this blessed little society was added a new and worthy member. This was Justa, a young maiden of considerable wealth, an orphan, who had left a neighbouring town to find repose and happiness in the little village where Gottreich and his father lived.

Two may be happy together, but three may be still happier; for two may talk and expatiate of all the excellences of the third,—and so the harmonic triad of friendship admit of variations never ceasing, never tiring. This happy third person was found in the spiritual young maiden, Justa; for after she had seen the enthusiastic face of the young poet and preacher, and heard some four or five of his Lent homilies, she gave him her heart, and only reserved her hand till the disturbances of the country (for it was the time of our war with the French) should subside into peace, I wish it were in the power of my hand to paint the beauty of that continual May-day life that bloomed all about the lowly church-tower at Heim, under the fostering hand of the fair Justa. Piety and sacred beauty were here sweetly wedded together, as the church cast its holy shadow over the little garden where the happy three would meet in the evening, where the sky, like the dome of a temple, hung over them. It is pleasant to think that, in many a lowly village and unheard of dwelling, some such isolated Eden in the world is now unfolding itself; and it may be so, though none but poets know it: for the gentle flowers of true joy delight to