

desiring her presence at the bedside of Dr. Barton. It was now her fate to watch—

“the stars out by a bed of pain,  
With a pale cheek, and yet a brow inspired,  
And a warm heart of hope, though hope be vain.”

All hope, indeed, was vain; for ere the week was ended, which should have seen Doctor Barton bearing to his native England a happy bride, his ashes filled a stranger's grave.

“I have no tragedy with which to conclude my story. Sarah did not die of a broken heart, or lose her reason, or fall away in a most poetical consumption—her trust was placed in ‘One mighty to save,’ and the holy Comforter vouchsafed to be her support in her severe afflictions. By Divine grace assisted, she has been enabled to maintain a cheerful resignation to the will of Heaven; and she has doubtless enjoyed more real happiness in adversity than did the proud Montgarnier in his most prosperous days, when rich, renowned, beloved, he immersed himself in luxuries, whose blighting effects we have so fully traced out, involving him and all he loved in ruin. Sarah, too, might have exclaimed with Hafed—

“naught ever grew  
Beneath my shade, but perished too!”

But she forbore all such unchristian-like repinings; and devoting herself to a life of usefulness, proportioned to her sphere, knew how to enjoy the truest felicity on earth. I know not that she is living now; but methinks if she has ascended upon high, she has deservedly received a martyr's brilliant crown.”

#### THE VILLAGE CHURCHYARD.

I shall never forget a visit I made, after a long absence, to the graveyard of my native village. It was a quiet Sabbath evening in June. The sun was setting behind the green hills—the lingering rays lighted up the heavens with a crimson glow, and dyed the clouds which hovered around the horizon with gorgeous hues.

The burial ground was situated upon an elevation overlooking the village scattered beneath it. Just below a bright stream couised onward: and between this and the graceful hills which skirted along in the distance, was a most beautiful country carpeted with rich fields and luxuriant forests, and dotted here and there with the neat farm houses and the sparkling lakes—all uniting to form a landscape of surpassing loveliness.

I seated myself upon a tombstone, and admired the beautiful scene spread out before me. All was still; not even a murmur disturbed the silence which reigned around, when suddenly a solemn knell burst forth from the neighbouring church. At the same moment a large funeral procession issued from a house in the village below. Slowly it advanced up the hill, and across the village green, and in a short time collected around a newly dug grave which was near the place where I was seated.

The bell now slowly tolled forth the age of the person about to be placed in the grave. Far and near its solemn tones told him who paused to listen, that an earthly pilgrimage of sixty years had ended.

I asked a bystander who it was they were lowering in the grave; he mentioned in reply the name of a widow in whose company I passed many happy hours. She had one only child; he was engaged in business in a Southern city when he received a letter mentioning the dangerous illness of his mother; he hastened immediately home, but before he arrived there, death had done its work. In an agony of grief, the son for a long time gazed upon the pale and lifeless form of his mother; he printed one kiss on her cold forehead, but he heard no groan, he spoke no word; his grief too deep for utterance. No empty consolations were offered him; his sorrow was too sacred to be disturbed. He had been much in the world, and learned from the selfishness of its busy throngs, a mother's true and disinterested kindness. He felt that he had lost his only friend, and that now he was alone indeed. The hope of being able soon to return to his widowed mother, and supply those comforts so much needed in her declining years, had animated him while toiling in a distant part of the land. He wished to acquire wealth, but it was only to place it at his mother's disposal. Just as his desire was about to be realized, death snatched from him the object of his exertions. The

last opportunity of returning her kindness to him had now passed away for ever.

Among the ground beside the grave, I observed an interesting youth towards whom the crowd manifested a silent respect. It was the widow's son. He had followed her to the grave; with an almost bursting heart he saw the clods heaped above her narrow bed. The last act was soon over. He took one lingering, farewell look at the grave, and overwhelmed with grief, he hastened home. Oh! how dark and cheerless now appeared that once bright and happy home. She whose smile was its light, had gone for ever. Here was the seat she used to occupy. Here he had made known to her sympathizing heart his future plans and present troubles. How invaluable were the consolations, the encouragement, the disinterested advice he had received. Alas! that seat is empty now, and she who was so often seated there, lies cold and silent and mouldering in the tomb.

Oh how lovely, thought I, is filial piety. And does it go unrewarded? No! Although in this world sorrow and affliction will come; although here death may disappoint our holiest purposes; still God never forgets the kindness of a child to a parent, and will certainly reward it either with temporal or spiritual blessings. How sweet to know that even in death his kindness was not forgotten, and the remembrance of the prayers and blessings which come from his mother's dying lips was to him a full, nay, a more than full recompense for all he had done for her.

All the villagers sympathized deeply with the bereaved son. Even light hearted children ceased their mirth in his presence, and seemed depressed with the sorrow felt by all. After the burial, the villagers were scattered in groups about the graveyard, conversing either at out the funeral which had just taken place, or reading the epitaphs on the tombstones around. I noticed that a large group of young persons had collected together. I joined them—I found they had assembled around a grave on which had been planted some delicate and fragrant flowers. This was the only grave that was thus decked. I asked who rested there. They told me that some time ago the village favourite had been buried there, and that the modest flowers I saw were emblematic of her who lay beneath. I asked her history. They told me that she was the pride of the village—that to extraordinary beauty were joined remarkable talents and the purest piety.

Alas! the loveliest and best are always first to go. Just as her life began; just as her attractive graces had filled each heart with love for her, she died. They laid her in this narrow cell; they heaped the soft mould above her breast, and mourned to think what a trench death had made. The piety which was her source of happiness though life had cheered her on the bed of death, and with a calm trust in her Saviour, she looked forward to her dying hour with holy exultation and joy. Her epitaph was this: “Oh, what a precious Saviour Jesus is.”

MARY.  
These were her dying words. Happy girl—who would not early choose a lot like thine! Who would not desire to return to his God “ere he had stained the plumage of his sinless years,” and the cup of life had grown bitter to the taste—ere the sorrows and selfishness of the world had dried up the generous emotions of youth.

“Oh, what a precious Saviour Jesus is.” Comprehensive epitaph! Would that it might with truth be written over every grave. Would that every soul responded to its meaning—then, when called to part with those around whom our purest affections twine, the exalted state which that sentence betokens, would cause our sorrow to be half removed; then knowing his own unworthiness, but trusting through the merits of the Saviour soon to meet his loved and lost in heaven, each Christian mourner would bow with cheerful submission to his loss; then to the departing spirit, death would lose its sting, and each one would

“approach his grave  
Like one who wraps the drapery of his couch  
About him, and lies down to pleasant dream.”

As the mere external structure of the Church has little more to do with its essential elements than the scaffolding with a building, or the clothes with the men who wear them, there is very little said of it in the Word of God.

#### A DREAM.

DURING the night of the first of January, 1797, a man of about sixty years of age might have been seen leaning on a window in a small village in France. His windows were lifted towards heaven, where the stars were peacefully shining—as if to implore the mercy of God; then turning to earth again, he seemed to feel that it was in vain to seek for pity;—for he could not see any one so void of joy and comfort as himself—and he felt that the tomb was not far distant. Already he had descended sixty steps of the ladder which was to lead him into eternity, and since his youth he had only been surviving along with him crime and remorse. His health was destroyed, his soul diseased, and cast down, his heart torn by remorse, and his old age was embittered by vexation and grief. The days of his youth appeared before him, and reminded him of that solemn day, when his venerable father placed him at the entrance of those two roads, one of which leads to a peaceful and happy country, covered with fertile pastures and harvest, on which a bright sun shines continually, filled with most harmonious murmurs, and watered by clear springs;—while the other leads to an abode of darkness, to a den inhabited only by serpents and filled with every thing that is loathsome.

But, alas! the serpents clung to his breast, the poison polluted his lips, and he now could tell where he was, for he had chosen the latter path.

Again he lifted up his hollow eyes to heaven with an unspeakable anxiety, and exclaimed—“O youth, return! O, my father! place me again at the entrance of life, that I may choose the other way, which leads to happiness and joy!”

But neither youth nor his father returned, for they were both gone for ever. He saw a light rise above the level of the marshes and again disappear; and then he said to himself—“Thus was I in my days of folly!” Then he saw a meteor dart across the heavenly vault, waver for a moment, and then vanish.—“Ah! thus am I now!” exclaimed he again: and the sharp, bitter stings of repentance struck deeper than ever into his criminal heart.

Then he remembered all the men of his own age; those whom he once knew, and knew no more—who now, scattered over all parts of the earth, were sowing the seeds of truth and virtue, and were now spending the New-Year's eve in the midst of their happy families. The sound of the village bell, which celebrates this new step of Time, sounded from the church in a tone of praise and thanksgiving. It reminded him of his beloved parents—of the petitions they used to offer up to Heaven in his behalf on that solemn day—of the counsels and reproofs which in this awful moment he would willingly have received, to hear again the familiar sound of their voices. Prayers and wishes which had never been realized; counsels by which he had never profited. Overburdened with grief and shame, he could no longer turn his eyes to that heaven where his father was; but filling with tears, they fell on the snow which covered the ground; he sighed, and seeing nothing to console him, he could not refrain from again exclaiming: “Oh! happy youth, beloved father, I mourn your loss: return, O return to me!”

And his youth and his father did return—for all was but a dream that had disturbed him, on the first night of the new year; he was still young, and his father was still living;—the faults he had committed were alone a reality. He returned heartfelt thanks to God that his youth was not indeed past, and that he might be able to leave the path of vice to regain the path of virtue, which would lead him to the land of happiness, covered with abundant harvests.

Return with him, O my young readers; regain the path of virtue and happiness, if, like him, you have wandered away from it. This terrible dream will, hereafter, be your judgment. Some day, like him, you may be worn down with sorrows and perhaps crimes; and then in vain will you cry out, “Happy, innocent youth, O return to me, that I may choose the path which I have forsaken!”

Your happy youth will never return.

The body is the shell of the soul, and dress the husk of that shell; but the husk often tells what the kernel is.