

## A VISION OF LENT.

"Think not of rest; though dreams be sweet,  
Start up, and ply your heavenward feet.  
Is not God's oath upon your head,  
Ne'er to sink back on slothful bed,  
Never again your loins untie,  
Nor let your torches waste and die,  
Till, when the shadows thickest fall,  
Ye hear your Master's midnight call?"

CHRISTIAN YEAR.

IT was the day before Ash-Wednesday, I sat alone, feeling oppressed at the thought of the six weeks of self-discipline which lay before me. The feasts of the Church I could rejoice in, but I murmured at the fast of Lent, and began questioning its uses, when a deep sleep overpowered me.

I slumbered, but the eyes of my mind were opened, and I thought that I saw before me a landscape, over which the shades of evening were falling; I could, however, distinctly discern the figures of two men, clad in the garb of pilgrims, walking across some fields.

The foremost of them was tall and slender, and a lamp which he held in his hand illumined his pale face and dark thoughtful eyes; he was ever a few steps in front, and seemed to be continually checking his speed, that he might not leave his companion altogether in the rear; at length I heard him say, in tones of entreaty, "I implore thee to hasten, Wilfred, or we shall quite lose sight of the Master; even now I can but see the hem of His garment."

"I can see nought in this darkness," grumbled Wilfred, "now that one star in the sky is gone out, and my limbs ache with this untoward haste; I pray you let us tarry awhile."

Even as the first pilgrim spoke, I could see that One went before them in shining raiment to guide them on their way; and now I heard his voice again answer, "The Epiphany star has indeed vanished, Wilfred, it was but lent for awhile; and now through the gathering darkness I hear the Master call, let us hasten, or I must proceed alone."

"No, no, good Gabriel," cried the other, "leave me not; I follow as fast as I can."

They were come now to a desert place strewn with sharp stones, the wind arose and whistled round them; Wilfred cowered beneath its searching blast, but Gabriel moved on steadfast and uncomplaining. At length, from the second pilgrim there broke a cry of pain; "These stones pierce my feet, Gabriel! let us search for some easier pathway, surely there must be turf on one side."

"Do as thou wilt, friend," replied Gabriel; "though the whole world beside were strewn with flowers, yet would I choose the path my Master has trodden."

"I have no more wish to leave Him than thou," rejoined the other, "only I would fain find some softer path that will join His at the end of this wilderness." And lifting up his lamp, which I observed cast but a dim and uncertain light, Wilfred strayed to one side, and his companion went on alone.

By keeping in His footsteps, Gabriel's view of his Master was unimpeded, and through the storm and darkness his heart glowed with a holy joy.

Once the light of his lamp fell on blood-traces left by those sacred feet, and pausing a moment, he knelt down to kiss them earnestly.

At length, as he followed thus alone, the darkness became so thick, that his guide was quite hid from him, and he could only find his way by searching for footprints painfully with his lamp. Hunger and weariness oppressed him, and just then Wilfred's voice was heard calling, "Hither, Gabriel, I have found a grassy path, and my wallet of provisions is full, come and share with me."

The pilgrim's feet were bleeding, and he felt very faint; for a moment he was tempted, but the words, "Though He slay me, yet will I trust in Him," came to his mind, and he rejected the offer and toiled on.

The wind was abating a little, when he