

ness, but for the numerous wax lights which burn on the altar.

All Saints is the last feast which is kept in the chateaux.* After its solemnity, people think of returning to the cities. The country then becomes melancholy to those who love only verdure and flowers, and cloudless skies. Then fall the dry leaves, and fall like the illusions which vanish with them; then great sounds are heard in the night, which create sorrowful musings. But in this mourning there is still a great attraction for those who have grown old, and who have suffered. The flowery festivals of spring belong to youth—our feast is that which precedes the day of the departed.

* The country seats of the wealthy.

ALL SOULS' DAY.

(FROM THE SAME.)

"Religion," says Chateaubriand, "not satisfied with pouring forth prayers and benedictions on each grave, has crowned the things of another life by a general ceremony, in which she includes the memory of the countless inhabitants of the tomb—a vast community of the dead, where the great and the humble lie beside each other—a republic of entire equality, into which no one enters without taking off his helmet and crown, in order to pass through the lowly gate of the tomb.

"On this solemn day, when the obsequies of the entire family of Adam are celebrated, the soul mingles her tribulations for the ancient dead with the sufferings which she endures for her recently-departed friends. By this union, sorrow acquires a something that is sovereignly beautiful; just as a modern grief assumes an ancient character, when he who expresses it has nurtured his genius with the old traditions of Homer. Religion alone was capable of enlarging the heart of man to such an extent, as to be able to contain sighs and affections equal in number to the multitude which it had to honor."

On the evening of *All Saints*, whilst each family, after its return from the Church, is grouped around the domestic hearth, which has now resumed its flame, and its gratifying warmth, funeral peals are heard to descend from the towers and the belfries, and to mingle with the first silence of the night. It is the voice of the departed, who beseech the living to pray for their repose.

This voice of iron, as Shakspeare terms it, falls from on high on those who would flee from it to seek distractions, and spectacles, and enjoyment. It rings in the ears of all, inspiring with grave thoughts those who would desire only to laugh and make merry. For observe: this *feast of the dead* is not like the other festivals. There are certain freethinkers who have no regard for Christmas or

for Easter, who believe neither in the birth, nor in the resurrection of Christ . . . but who are painfully forced to believe in the death of their mother, of their father . . . of their children, perhaps! . . . Then, indeed, the bell of All Souls' Day tells them something; then they must avow in their inmost soul, that Catholicity has solemnities which speak to the heart.

Admire the knowledge of the human heart which religion possesses! She was anxious to make her children pray for the dead, but lest their souls should be too deeply absorbed by grief and sorrow at the sight of so many tombs, she has shown them the rays of heaven alongside the shadows of the grave—resurrection beside death.

On All Saints' Day, she spoke only of the bliss of the elect, of their endless delights, of their glory—in order that on the morrow we might with more fervour and earnestness beseech the God of the living and the dead, to grant our father, our mother, our friends, that repose and felicity whose descriptions we have heard.

Imagine, then, All Souls' Day without a reflection, without a gleam of heaven! O God! how sombre and melancholy would it not appear! The grave—destruction—rottenness—these are what would be present to the spirit, and afflict the heart, when we think of our deceased parents and friends. We should retire in consternation because we should behold nothing but worms and corruption. The incense of this cruel festival would be the stench of the tomb; its lights would be funeral torches; its music would be lamentations; and its hymns nothing but groans.

God, who created the heart of man, knew its weakness, and understood its terrors. Thus, when he wishes, for our good, that we should think of death, he permits some gleams of his glory to fall upon it. When he commands us to go to pray beside the tombs, he causes two daughters of heaven, FAITH and HOPE, to descend into those funeral regions; and these holy enchantresses speak to us these words so sweet, that terror forsakes us; and instead of the fears of death, we experience a consoling tranquility and peace. In the midst of our tears we behold beauteous angels bearing aloft on their wings the souls of our delivered friends. And in the profound silence which broods over all the tombs, if one word reaches our ear, it is the word RESURRECTION! Never have we been so powerfully taught the efficacy of prayer, and the excellence of our great sacrifice, as before the altars that are clad in mourning. The Church wished to let us see that prayer is stronger than death.

It is over the icy corpse of our mother, over the remains of our old father, over the tender bodies of our children, and the ashes of our friends, that