



A True Sermon

Now and then in the novels of the day we find passages that appeal, with effective force, to man's spiritual nature—passages that lift him out of a state of indifference to religion, and awaken within his soul a thought of the life to come, and a sense of the horror of sin and its dreadful consequences. The following taken from the popular novel entitled "The Silence of Dean Maitland" is an illustration of this fact. One cannot read it without being deeply impressed with the moral and religious truth which breathes through it :

"It is true, indeed, that what a holy writer has called "the princely heart of innocence," may be regained after long anguish of penitence and prayer, but the consequences of sin roll on in ever-growing echoes, terrible with the thunder of everlasting doom ; the contrite heart is utterly broken, and the life forever saddened and marred. Innocence once lost, my brethern, the old careless joy of youth never returns. Oh, thou, whosoever thou be, man, woman, or even child ; thou who hast once stained thy soul with deadly sin, "not poppy, nor mandragora, nor all the drowsy syrups of the world, shall ever medicine thee to that sweet sleep which thou ow'dst yesterday."

"Yet despair not, beloved brethern, there is forgiveness and healing for all. But oh ! keep innocence, keep innocence ; guard and treasure that inestimable, irrecoverable possession, that pure perennial source of joyous days and peaceful nights, and take heed, take watchful heed, of the thing that is right. Keep innocence, oh little children, sitting here in the holy church this evening beneath the eyes of those who love and guard you, you