

our Lord Jesus Christ. For the darkness here is great, very, very great.—
The Parish Visitor.

VALUED WORDS.

"My dearest of mothers." I heard the words repeated in soft tones by my next-door neighbor at an island farm-house where we were sojourning. "My dearest of mothers." My friend was a widow, and her son, an affectionate, talented fellow, was engineering in Idaho. In one of his late letters he had said at the close: "And now, my dearest of mothers, good-bye." Did he guess, I wonder, how the little petting phrase would please the heart that loved him so? Did he think that she would say it over softly to herself as she sat alone in her room?

The home days were over. The babies with their sweet ways, their joy-giving and trouble-making had grown to noisy boys, then to self-asserting men; they were out in the world making their way; brains busy, thoughts absorbed, hearts full; yet here was one who remembered the mother, still in middle life, loving and needing love the same as when her boys were her very own in the dear child's home. He wrote her long letters, describing his adventurous, changeable life, the strange companions by whom he is surrounded, the wonderful scenery of the wild western world. It was all intensely enjoyed; but better than all were the love phrases that showed the son's affectionate heart. I wonder if the "boys" know how dear they are to their mothers, and how little attentions, little gifts, tender words, flying visits, cheer and warm the hearts that have borne the test of years and sorrows.

Life is a little chilly to the mothers whose homes are the things of the past. Even if they remain in the old home, the rooms seem very bare and silent after the children are gone. It is as if summer had flown, with its nest and song-birds, and autumn winds were blowing. Then the love of the sons and daughters is like sunshine or warm fires to the hearts that sadly miss them. Let us hope there are many sons who write, "My dearest of mothers."

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