

The Church.

"HER FOUNDATIONS ARE UPON THE HOLY HILLS."

STAND YE IN THE WAYS, AND SEE, AND ASK FOR THE OLD PATHS, WHERE IS THE GOOD WAY, AND WALK THEREIN, AND YE SHALL FIND REST FOR YOUR SOULS.—JEREMIAH VI. 16.

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Poetry.

A FATHER'S DREAM.

There was a lovely little flower,
I fondly hoped to rear;
I saw it at the matin hour,
It was expanding here.

I looked again—my flower was gone;
I knew it must be dead;
And put a robe of sackcloth on,
Strawd ashes on my head,
And sat me down to wail and weep
That thus my flower had died;
And in my sorrow fell asleep:—

There stood One by my side,
Who told me of my lovely flower,
And showed me where it grew,
Beyond the scorching summer's power,
Where winter never blew;
And told me he had taken it
To that more genial sphere,
Because, in truth, it was not fit,
That it should wither here;

And said, "It was too sweet a thing
To bloom on earth for me,
For waters from a purer spring,
Around its root must be;
And dew, which always falls in heaven,
But never here below,
Must wash its leaves, both morn and even,
Or it will never grow;

And it must have a tender care,
A truer love than thine."
He pointed into Heaven, "And there,"
He said, "a hand Divine
Shall tend, and drain thy flower for thee,"
"Till it is fully grown;
Then, come to Heaven! and it shall be
Eternally thine own."

And then he went away. My heart
Was calm and reconciled:
But gently yearning to depart
And join my blessed child:
And thinking of my pleasant dream,
In happy sleep I sang;
Both joy and grief were in my theme,
And both were on my tongue.

It was not quite a gloomy strain,
Nor quite a merry glee;
But a sweet mingling of the twain
In one deep melody.

I woke in tears—when soon were dry,
And knelt me down to pray;
And then I laid my ashes by,
And flung my weeds away.

British Magazine.

THE NATIONAL EDUCATION SYSTEM IN IRELAND.

BY CHARLOTTE ELIZABETH.

Alas! the bright picture of Christian zeal and diligence in Newry is deeply shadowed with that ominous, unwelcome appendage—the new National Education system. I have not, as yet, fallen in with a single individual of either sex, from Waterford to Newry, who does not denounce it as a curse to the land. In Dublin I saw the immense building, or rather palace, that they are preparing for the Central Board; but I had neither leisure nor inclination to turn my attention from better things to that mischievous institution. In Newry the plan is vigorously pursued, under the special patronage of priests and nuns; and a few plain facts in reference to this place may give you an idea of the reasonableness of the hope indulged by some, that Popery will be undermined by such a system. You know the ostensible purpose of these schools is to provide a strictly neutral ground, on which the children of both parties can meet, without any danger of either being influenced in a way contrary to the wishes of their parents. The necessity for such a plan is stated to have arisen from the objections raised by the poor people against having their little ones taught to read the word of God; and the notable device agreed upon was, that religious instruction of all descriptions should be excluded from the schools, except at particular hours, on a stated day in the week, when a separation was to be carefully made, the children of the Romanists to be taught according to the doctrines of Popery by their peculiar guides, and those of Protestants allowed to receive Scriptural instruction from any Clergymen who might choose to give it. Well, this looked plausible in the eyes of that class called liberal, and even deceived some really good people. How do you suppose it is carried into effect here? The National School for girls adjoins the convent,—the usual entrance being through that building, with another door on a line with the nunnery hall door, and within its precincts. The teachers are all nuns, habited in the most remarkable and extreme dress of a monastic order, robes, rosaries, and all the awful paraphernalia of the black sisters. No Protestant visitor can enter this 'public' school, without being previously examined, and kept waiting sufficiently long to put aside objectionable books; but in spite of every precaution it has been ascertained, and proved too upon oath, that at all hours bigoted catechisms of the Romish Church are in use, being regularly taught by the nuns; and books of the most pernicious tendency have been found in the hands of the children. Attempts are continually made to induce Protestant pupils to join in these exercises; by introducing them during the period avowedly set apart for secular study; and the consequence is that all their parents who do not value a little paltry and most miserably inferior education for their children before the salvation of their souls, are obliged to withdraw them. Consequently the national grants, with all the vast and costly machinery of this deceitful system, are employed in rivetting the fetters of spiritual bondage on these poor little creatures by the hands of male and female ecclesiastics of the Romish creed. What renders the whole thing most inexcusable is, that by a rule of the board, the regular daily teachers must belong to the laity, while here, as in Galway, and innumerable other places, professed nuns are the sole and exclusive conductors of the whole business of the girls' schools; as monks, regularly habited, and belonging to the various orders, Dominican, Franciscan, Carmelite, black, grey, and so forth, are of the boys. It is common to have a small sliding panel in the doors, which are kept locked: when a visitor knocks, the master partially withdraws the slide, takes a survey, asks questions, then refastens his panel, and puts away whatever books he does not wish to expose to the prying gaze of a heretic, before the door is opened. I will give you an extract from a book studied by the children in the nuns' National School here in Newry, that you may duly appreciate the 'useful knowledge'

instilled into the minds of the pupils, and admire the strict adherence of the Board to its first great principles of total abstinence from all that can offend the consciences of any class. Here it is—the work is entitled 'Indulgences granted by the sovereign Pontiffs to the faithful who perform the devotions and pious works prescribed.' Printed by and for 'the Catholic Book Society,' and it was found among the books for united instruction—that is, for instruction totally unconnected with any thing religious, during the hours when, on the faith of this exclusion of all that could bias the minds of the children either way, all are mingled together. As a specimen of the valuable information contained in the volume, and its freedom from all obnoxious subjects, take the following: 'By a plenary indulgence we gain the remission of all the punishment which remains due to sins forgiven, provided we have the proper dispositions, and comply with the conditions required.' These conditions are thus explained, 'It is enjoined to visit a church, and pray according to the pious intentions of the sovereign Pontiff.' These intentions are again described a little farther on: 'the intentions of the Pope are generally these; the exaltation of the Catholic Church, the propagation of our holy faith, peace and concord among Christian Kings and Princes, and the extirpation of heresy.' Now not to mention the importance of communicating such knowledge to the Protestant children; what think you of a plan that supplies the monks and nuns with means to diffuse it among the little ones of their own flock? The concluding expression too, conveys an early lesson of fearful import: the lower order of the Irish know of no other mode of extirpating heresy than by draining it out with the life blood from Protestant veins. It was the war-cry of the sacerdotal warriors, who in 1798 led their people to the attack; and whatever spiritual meaning it may be intended to convey to the minds of the pupils, the idea with which they are certain to connect it is that of slaughtering their fellow creatures.

Another instance of the power enjoyed and exercised by the inferior officials of this Board appears in the fact that, although the exclusion of religious instruction, except on the appointed day, is publicly boasted of by its advocates as the one all-sufficient guarantee against the communication of any thing to the children which their parents would not approve, in this very school the nuns possess a distinct permission in the Inspector's hand-writing, for imparting religious instruction every day. The excuse offered for this is, that no Protestant children attend the school; which again proves that the public money is withdrawn from scriptural institutions, where all denominations alike drink at the pure fountain of truth, unadulterated by man's inventions, to be placed at the disposal of those whose existence as a church and community depends on their keeping the people in ignorance and error; and who do actually employ it for that purpose, to the exclusion of the offspring of a loyal Protestant population. Do you not suppose it must be a startling thing to those who have had such fearful experience of the temper of Popery towards themselves, to send their little ones within the very walls of a convent, to be taught exclusively by females habited in so strangely imposing a manner, who firmly believe that all must be eternally lost who do not embrace the delusions of popery? I have alluded to the dress,—we are all influenced by externals, children especially so, and you may imagine the effect likely to be produced on the mind of a little ignorant timid creature, by the appearance of a teacher, whose semite severe aspect, and stiff practised solemnity of manner are further enhanced by the following garb:—A loose robe, with a flowing train, formed of the blackest serge; the bust being enveloped in a peculiar wrapper of white cotton, somewhat between a shawl and a tippet. A cap or hood close, and so drawn down on the sides as to perform the same office as blinkers to a horse; while the small portion of face thus left open to view is farther curtailed by an enormous neck-cloth, covering the chin, and meeting the aforesaid wrapper. In fact, nothing can approach nearer to the grim effect of old-fashioned grave-clothes. Several of these apparitions, each with an hour-glass in her hand, a black rosary and crucifix depending from the leathern girdle that confines her waist, and a black riband beside it, with an image of the virgin and child, are to be seen daily in the school-house, the sole teachers and managers, moving up and down among the awe-stricken little ones, and bringing all these striking externals to bear upon the doctrines which they inculcate, and of which you have a sample in the foregoing extract. Such is my solicitude for the deliverance of those poor Irish children of the Romish persuasion from the deep and fatal darkness surrounding them, that I would cheerfully relinquish every shilling of the national grant to their service alone, trusting to private liberality for the means of educating the Protestant class. But is it not frightful to see the latter deluded, except so far as the watchfulness of their parents may keep them from these schools, into sharing the deadly poison thus administered to the minds of the poor little Romanists? It will be a terrible thing for England when in her skirts is found the blood of the souls of these poor innocents. What a strikingly applicable passage is that to which I allude, Jer. ii. 34: "I have not found it by secret search but upon all these." This national board plan is not a sin of mere passive connivance, where abuses may creep in unprovoked against, because unexpected: it is a sin of which the government vaunts, an offence in which the perpetrators glory, a confederacy deliberately entered into with popery and infidelity, to secure their present possessions against the intrusive claims of the Lord Jesus Christ.—He comes to seek and to save his lost sheep: they build an inclosure, shut in the poor victims, and place a guard of wolves to watch their fold. I could not bear the spectacle, had I not that glorious promise ever before me, given by Him who most assuredly will fulfil every title of his own word. Let earth and hell combine; let all the enemies of Christ unite their efforts, and some of his friends abandon their Master's cause, to bless that which he has cursed, and to build up that which he has sworn shall fall; yet can they not avert the coming hour, when he who has spoken will also make it good. "I will seek that which was lost, and bring again that which was driven away, and will bind up that which was broken, and will strengthen that which was sick, but I will destroy the fat and the strong; I will feed them with judgment." That thirty-fourth chapter of Ezekiel will yet be felt in all its awful applicability, by those who so justly incur the rebuke, "Seemeth it a small thing unto you, to have eaten up the good pasture, but ye must tread down with your feet the residue of your pastures; and to have drunk of the deep waters, but you must foul the residue with your feet?"

RELIGIOUS JOURNALISM.*

Under this head will be found on our last page an article from Blackwood, which we have copied from *The Church*, (a paper which often lays under similar obligations,) and which contains suggestions that have long seemed to us worthy of consideration. It is easy for monks and ascetics to find reasons, and for querulous objectors to multiply complaints without reason, against the use of journals and periodicals as vehicles of religious intelligence and discussion. The question, however, ought not to be considered abstractly, but in relation to the actual temper, customs, and idiosyncrasy of the age. It may be true that in past ages and in the absence of many now prevalent means of popular religious excitement, men were more given than at present, to meditation, prayer, obedience and the substantial duties of the Christian life. But this, if true, is foreign to the purpose; for we are not called upon, as practical men, to discuss the relative merits of different ages, but to say whether we shall or shall not adopt and make available to the Church a species of instrumentality which belongs to the age in which we live. Breads and crosses were very little things, and the Reformers were very great men; and as theirs was not the age in which the lion and the lamb could consort together, it was to be expected that forms and ceremonies instead of being enlivened and spiritualized, should be run down and discarded. But no men in some ages, and few men in any age, are worthy to become reformers: the majority of us must take the age as it is, and use the machinery already furnished to our hands.

Modern sermonizing has been a growth, and in its redundancy, an exercise of the Reformation. "I will remember," says good old Jackson, (speaking of those times and those dioceses wherein there were then scarce to be found preachers besides the prebendaries of the Cathedral Church, under whose tuition in a manner the rest of the clergy were,) "and I cannot but remember with joy of heart, that the synods of that diocese wherein I was bred, did constantly examine licenced readers how they had profited in learning, by their exercises, which they did as duty exhibit unto the Chancellor, Archdeacon, &c., as they did their orders or their fees. Such as had profited well, were licenced to preach once a month, or once a quarter, having certain books appointed from whose doctrine they should not swerve, but for the most part translate." "But," he presently adds, "since the liberty of prophesying was taken up, * * * things have gone so cross and backward in our church, that I cannot call the history for these forty years or more to mind, or express my observations upon it, but with a *bleeding heart*." What then would Jackson, or the English Reformers of whose views on the subject he is in the above passage a witness, have said to every deacon in the church, preaching two or three times a week! But whatever they might, or we may think, of modern sermonizing, no judicious man would advocate a return to postils, and reading sermons and homilies. The age demands preaching, and will demand it, until the victory gained by the apostles and primitive Christians, is again achieved; and men are once more reclaimed to the church from which Papal superstition and intolerance have driven them. Other means may help to secure the victory after it is achieved; but preaching, varied and multiplied, aggressive as well as conservative, converting the world as well as edifying the church, is an indispensable means to achieve it.

Now religious journalism we hold to be one respect similar to modern sermonizing.—It is a growth of the age, demanded by it, and a needful implement for all those who would work upon its character. It is an agency, *sui generis*, having its own peculiar laws and character; its own ends and its own way of attaining those ends; and to wish to explode it or quarrel with it because it is not something else than it is, would argue as morbid, captious, and impracticable a temper, as the wish to abolish preaching because we have sometimes the infelicity of a frothy sermon; or to explode learned commentaries and systematic treatises, in divinity, because they are not manuals of devotion.

Religious journalism, as it seems to us, (and we wish our remarks on the subject to assume more of the suggestive than the didactic form,) has its own peculiar ends. Besides matters of intelligence, there are many topics of daily occurrence which are not of sufficient seriousness for the pulpit; nor of sufficient magnitude for books, which may be properly (and nowhere else so properly and effectively) introduced into the columns of a religious journal. These are matters on which churchmen without any detriment to the unity of the faith, may have different opinions which they wish to interchange; they concern points on which the church is open to misrepresentation and assault, and need to be instantly and briefly vindicated to the world; they relate to the minutiae of worship, to ecclesiastical arrangements, to the externals of the church, to her minor morals and policies; they are notices of books and new publications, or fragments of history or biography, or fugitive essays in prose or poetry; or they may be even matters of faith and fundamental principles of church polity, developed in their relations to the passing fashions of the age, and with a view to that instant, fresh, and distinctive impression which journalism is so well fitted to produce. The rapid treatment and discussion of such topics in a religious journal, tend to bring the principles and features of the church into contact with the minds of many who might otherwise never give them a thought; to cherish and increase in many others an interest which without such excitement might flag and become torpid; and to absorb and make subservient to the digestion of sounder aliment an amount of excitability which would otherwise be wasted on the world, or made to nourish tastes, predilections, and interests that have no sort of affinity with the church.

But religious journalism has not only its own ends, but its own way of attaining those ends. It has its own individuality, as much so as preaching or conversation; and its characteristic traits are the freedom, off-handness, piquancy and raciness which belong to popular periodical literature. To write reviews of books, or notices of the passing events of the religious world, its fantastic fashions of sentiment or odd vagaries of error, in the style of Wilson's *Sacra Privata*, or Sutton's *Discourse Moral*, would be as *outré* as to discuss politics on the model of Sternhold and Hopkins; and in the twang of Puritan pedantry. Sermons are good in the pulpit, learned treatises in the study, devotional books in the closet, and colloquial gifts in society; but not any of these nor all of them together constitute religious journalism. Journalism itself, as it now exists, is an entity by itself; a new feature of society; a new phase or fashion of mind; a new medium of intercourse, having its appropriate laws, style and complexion, and occupying an intermediate position between grave books and sprightly conversation. Whether it becomes the church to adopt it, and if so, under what regulations, are questions which we stop not to discuss, and which perhaps it is too late to discuss; we suppose it to be anything more than a drug or an anodyne, it must still be journalism. It must be treated as a separate language, and be made the vehicle of instruction for those who understand and enjoy it. It must bring out the treasures of history, biography, theology, and liturgical lore, in its own peculiar way, and allure the minds of men to sound principles, by a style adapted, as far as it is justly and innocently may be, to the taste and temper of the age. Otherwise, the end which it proposes will never be gained; it may have the name and form of journalism, and multiply itself in folio or quarto sheets, monthly or tri-monthly pamphlets, but

* From the *New York Churchman*.

its life will be gone; it will bring upon us the evil which the French wit was willing to bear without the compensation for it which he so eagerly coveted, or in other words, it will cause us to be abused by every body and read by nobody; instead of helping us to seize on the activities of the age, and shape them towards sound principles, it will doom us to perpetual leavay; instead of being a new and independent wheel in the machinery of the church, it will be no better than a clog on her operations, and a dead weight to impede her movements.

Were far from saying or thinking that there should be any descent to frivolity, ill-natured sarcasm, or to any unworthy artifice to catch popular attention. Such things are not necessary, nor indeed, actual features of journalism, in any of its more reputable specimens. The clergyman does not lose his dignity because he mingles with his parishioners and indulges in the freedom of social intercourse without the formality of a text and gown. In like manner the church, we think, may adopt the journalism of the age, with its pungency and vivacity, its playful satire and severity, and communicate her influence by means of it, to the sympathies and intellects of thousands who will feel its vibrations, without derogating from her dignity, and in strict fidelity to her character as the guardian and witness of the heavenly deposit.

There is, indeed, a class of persons—sincere and zealous men in their way—to whom these suggestions will be the proofs of "an evident carnal temper;" such men to use the words of a favourite author already quoted, "as from a passionate, humorous, cynical spurring at monkish practices and popish customs, have thrown themselves off the shore into the whirlpool, which finally sucks them in the very depths of that error, wherein the others were drowned. The very self same superstitions or magical conceits, the one bath of his beads and crosses, the other feeds by precise hearing sermons and loathsome abuse of the Word of life, upon every trivial occasion." These are men who preach in a journal, exhort in a parlour, and cant everywhere; and who seem to live mainly for two objects, to abuse the papists, and to puff themselves. Journals, books, conversation, and all else that can feed their vitality, must first be dragged down to their deadly damps of subterranean dulness; nor can they themselves ever be fairly exhumed, and grow up to humanity on the foot of men and in the light of heaven, until they have taken the advice of South, and applied for the cure of their noxious humours to Luke the physician, instead of Luke the Evangelist.

Others, however, there are, of no vulgar taste, but of a really elevated piety, of deep and fervent spirituality of mind, who shrink from every agency not sanctioned by Catholic prescription, as a development of Antichrist. To such persons, we would say, that were aware of the delicate ground which we have been treading; and that we have offered our suggestions with no other wish than to widen the sphere and to strengthen the outworks of interior spirituality, without sulling the purity or diminishing the intensity of the flame. We would not deprive the flame of its aliment, but we doubt whether journalism should be relied on to such extent as its feeder. We would have the pages of ardent religious journal offer, both to writers and readers, a relaxation from the severe efforts of devotion and a barricade of its foundation and outposts, rather than a direct and firm means of sustaining it. We would advocate journalism in its living individuality, and would have writers write and readers relish its style with the same easy versatility that they throw their minds into the colloquial style in conversation, the epistolary in letter, or that of sustained seriousness from the pulpits. Why not? Shall we die of dignity because we are churchmen? or cease to breathe and move and dress like men because we are Christians? Surely this is not the way to influence the world. We must have means of fellowship with the workers of darkness, if we would wean them from its works; we must learn the language, and bend to the bustle, and watch the ways, and study the sympathies and touch the tastes of the world, in order to leave it with the principles and influences of the church. The authors of the "Tracts for the Times," whatever may be thought of their doctrines, are allowed to be eminent for a severe and deep-principled piety; and yet where is to be found a more genuine specimen of journalism than the late article in the *British Critic* (edited by the Rev. J. H. Newman) on the writings of Dr. Channing? In this instance we had the journalism of the world made subservient to the deep and broad principles of the church; and we beheld a priest of the church, (we speak figuratively, for the writer, perchance was a layman), discoursing to the world "in a language understood of the people." Before we repudiate such writing, and denounce it as inconsistent with the vitality of the christian faith, it may be well to reflect whether, if it were more favourably regarded in the church, much loose and floating energy might not be diverted into a safe and valuable channel, which is now (at least remotely) tributary to the current of infidelity and voluntarism; whether much of the feeling and talent of the country might not by this means assume a religious form and manifestation, which, for want of such an outlet as is offered by a well defined religious journalism, controlling and directing the energies which it enlists, is left to evaporate in the mere sentimentalism of literature, or entwine itself around the ministry of vice.

A new country like ours, which calls her children to the active duties of life too soon and too entirely to allow them to become deep and profoundly learned scholars, affords at the same time a rich variety of talent for the species of literature we have advocated. For this reason also, it behoves, we think, serious and thoughtful men to be less desirous than some are, to treat the alliance as unholy, and to seek its separation from the church. Two things already implied we would more distinctly add, though rather abruptly, as we must hasten to a conclusion. One is, that articles of faith, considered as distinct from religious opinions, should never be discussed in religious journals, and certainly never in the style of journalism; and the other is, that the journal, however free and versatile in its tones, should always seem to candidly tend to support the faith and being of the church, and to secure for them, intellectually and practically, an ascendancy over the world.

THE PRAYER OF JABEZ.

How unlooked for, yet how refreshing, this fountain in the desert! It is the fragrance of a rose, blooming in a scene of desolation! A lovely flower, unfolding its beauties on the barren hillside! It is a familiar tone, coming to the ear when it listened only for discordant sounds! the welcome voice of a friend, rising over the din of the passing multitude, and bringing assurance of the nearness of one whose sympathies, and joys, and sorrows, are in unison with our own. The eye passes carelessly over the group of strangers congregated around us, but it rests, with delight, on one whom we recognise as a fellow pilgrim, on his way to Jerusalem. He speaks the language of Canaan! Shall we not give him the right hand of fellowship, and say, 'Peace be upon thee?' He is one of the Lord's songsters. Listen to his warblings! 'O that thou wouldst bless me indeed!' Do not our hearts re-echo the petition? We have used the very same, a thousand and a thousand times.

'O that thou wouldst indeed bless me!' This looks like humility, sincerity, and fervor! It is a good prayer, for 'the blessing of the Lord, it maketh rich, and he addeth no sorrow therewith.'

Here, too, we find the seal of adoption, the aspiration of the soul after God—and we do not doubt that the individual in whose company we are fallen, is one of the sons of the Most High—elect—precious. We hear him saying, 'My soul thirsteth for thee, O

God! my flesh longeth for thee! Oh! that thou wouldst indeed bless me!

The next petition is a request for temporal blessings, and these our Lord has himself taught us to ask for. 'Give us this day our daily bread!'—'Feed me with food convenient for me'—'Casting all your care upon him'—'Oh! that thou wouldst bless me indeed, and enlarge my coast.' My own valor and strength avail nothing. It is the Lord who teacheth my hands to war—and who subdueth the people under me. In the name of my God will I set up my banners, and take possession of the inheritance he hath given me, while my waiting eyes are unto thee, 'that thine hand may be with me.' With me to prosper my way—with me to baffle the designs of my foes—with me to shield my head from danger—with me to uphold and sustain—with me to crown with joy and gladness.

'And that thou wouldst keep me from evil!' from the evil of suffering—from the evil of temptation—from the evil of sin—'that it may not grieve me.' Here, again, we behold the Israelite indeed! All the evils which flourish so luxuriantly in the soil of earth, are sources of grief to him, but, most of all, the evil in his own heart. It is over this he sheds the bitterest tears. Other evils excite the compassion of the Divine Being, but this awakes his holy displeasure. This grieves his Holy Spirit! Against this, therefore, he most earnestly prays, 'Oh! that thou wouldst keep me from evil, that it may not grieve me.'

Surely, he who taught us to say, 'Our Father,' must have inspired this prayer, so strikingly does it breathe the spirit of that simple, beautiful model. How brief, yet how comprehensive its petitions! How childlike! How fervent! How well it exemplifies the definition of prayer:—'the offering up of our desires to God for things agreeable to his will.' At the close of such a prayer, we do not wonder to find the record, 'and God granted him that which he requested.'

DR. CHALMERS' LETTER ON DISTRICT VISITING.

MY DEAR MRS. FRY,—I have ever held both your own experience and that of Mr. Howard to be immensely valuable, as establishing not only a most beautiful, but practically the most important lesson I know in the management of human nature; and that is, the *charm or power of kindness, even in the hearts of the most hardened and worthless of mankind.* Let us carry back this lesson from dungeons to dwelling-places, and try, if a principle, not extinct in the malefactor's cell, in what higher degree it exists, or with what more powerful effect it may be operated upon, throughout the homes and common habitations of the people.

This grateful sensibility in one bosom to the manifested goodwill of another, is surely a right and virtuous affection as far as it goes; and if it have been found, as by yourself, to survive that depraving process which the worst of criminals undergo, in what greater vigour may it confidently be looked for, anterior to that process, in the abode and on the domain of average humanity? The experiment which you have found to be successful in the veriest receptacles of the felon and the outcast, carries in it a bright and universal promise when it comes to be tried, as is now doing by yourself, in the large scale, and upon the field of human society.

I rejoice to hear from you of the perfect welcome and cordiality wherewith your visitors are received in the districts on which they operate. It is but the exemplification of what you experienced in circumstances which at the outset looked far more discouraging and unkindly. This grateful response on the side of the people, almost unexpected, I believe, forms a cheering prognostic, if the undertaking be rightly prosecuted and constantly persevered in, of your full and final success.

In respect, therefore, of the specific errand on which those of the higher go forth among those of the lower classes, in the very mingling of the two, in the frequency and closeness of their personal intercourse, there is an incalculable benefit. Even though you should fail in certain of your objects, you will have gained incalculably in the growth which your operations must promote of a kinder and better spirit between the rich and the poor. They only require to know each other more, that they may love each other more. To sweeten the breath, as it were, of the community, and to break down those malignant and social prejudices which separate one class from another, is in itself a service of the highest order, and one which in our present distempered condition is the most urgently called for. To augment the feeling and recognition of a common brotherhood among men is of itself an achievement of the greatest value. This you will at all events do; but I trust you will do more, and that good, not of a higher certainly, but of a more substantial and tangible description, will be the result of your present labours, the distinct tendency of which is to raise the character as well as comfort of the lower orders, to elevate both the moral and economic state of our population.

THE FRIENDSHIP OF JESUS.

It is acknowledged by all, that friendship affords one of the highest and sweetest enjoyments of which this life is capable. Few subjects have been more frequently the theme of the poet's verse, or more enlarged upon by other writers. To be possessed of a sincere friend, has been among the warmest desires of the human heart. Who has not felt such a desire? A friend with whom he might take sweet counsel! A friend with whom he might increase his pleasures by sharing them, and lessen his sorrows by dividing them.

That we may better realize the privilege, allow me, for a few moments, to dwell upon the qualities that meet in a desirable friend. I notice, first, amiableness—or having those properties which are calculated to attract the heart. For friendship, being founded upon affection, can never subsist when there is not at least the appearance of what is amiable. We may be grateful to those we cannot esteem, and even admire those we cannot love; but to make a friend desirable, there must be something lovely; and need I say that this exists in our blessed Saviour in the highest degree? 'Who that has had his mind enlightened by the Holy Spirit, will readily adopt the words of the church, when asked "What is thy beloved more than another's beloved?" "He is the chiefest among ten thousand; he is altogether lovely." This is my beloved, and this is my friend, O daughters of Jerusalem.'

Another quality which makes a friend desirable, is power. For although it is not the primary quality, yet, when there are other attractive excellencies, who does not feel the value of having a friend, whose understanding enables him to give wise counsel, whose station affords him extensive influence, and whose property admits of his putting forth his resources with a liberal hand? Such a friend is the blessed Jesus. He is "the wonderful counsellor," able to give the best advice. He has that influence with his Father, that "he hears him at all times." And such is the extent of his riches, that "in him are hidden all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge;" "yes, "in him dwelleth all the fulness of the God-head bodily."

A third quality that makes a friend desirable, is faithfulness; and this assuredly our Lord possesses. He is one in whom the soul may perfectly confide. We need not fear to pour out our hearts before him, and lodge our secrets in his bosom, or imagine that he will ever betray his trust. No, blessed be his name, he is "faithful and true;" true to his word, and faithful to his engagements.