

l lounged into the centre aisle during the reading of the lessons, his occupation being for the hour suspended. The second lesson was the 24th chapter of St. Matthew, some verses attracted his attention : he listened with more, and more seriousness, until at length he put his hand over his face and exclaimed aloud, " What will become of me at the day of judgment ! Lord have mercy on me a sinner." That prayer was inserted on the Angel's tablets. O may it not stand alone, but be an awakening of better things. May God indeed have mercy on such poor neglected ones as he, and raise up some to teach them, and care for their immortal souls.

After this, growing accustomed to the broken murmurs and interrupted sound, I followed many a humble Christian through large portions of the Litany : though often, while I was listening with hopeful attention, a sudden and total pause showed but too plainly that the thoughts of the kneeling suppliant had wandered far away, and that he who appeared so earnest in his devotions had become languid and silent like the rest of the congregation.

" Thou art shocked at what thou hast observed," said the Angel, " I will show thee greater abominations than these. God is strong and patient ; he is provoked every day. Listen now, and thou shalt hear the *thoughts* of all these people ; so shalt thou have some faint idea of the forbearance God continually exercises towards those who draw near to him with their lips, while their hearts are far from Him."

As the Angel spoke, my ears were deafened with a clamour which would have been shocking in a public meeting, but which here in God's holy house was awfully profane. The countenances remained indeed as composed and serious as before ; the lips moved with the word of prayer, but the phrases they uttered were of the world and its occupations.

" How shamefully late Mrs. Slack always comes," said one woman, who looking over the edge of her prayer-book saw her neighbour and a train of daughters bustle into the next pew : " What an example to set her family ; thank goodness no one can accuse me of that sin." " New bonnets again already ?" exclaimed the last comer, returning the neighbourly glance from the other seat, ere she composed herself to the semblance of devotion : " How they can afford it, heaven only knows, and their father owing all his Christmas bills yet. If my girls look shabby, at least we pay our debts."

" Ah ! there's Tom S.," nodded a young man to his friend in the opposite gallery, " he is growing quite religious and respectable, I declare. He has been at church two Sundays running ; how much longer will the devout fit last ?"

These were shocking and striking examples of irreverence : there were happily not many such, the involuntary wanderings of thought were more common.

I was much interested in a young couple near me, whose attention for a considerable part of the service had been remarkable. From the dress of the young man, I judged him to be a clergyman ; the lady wore deep mourning : they were evidently betrothed,—they read out of one book. Gradually he forgot the awful Presence in which he stood, his eyes wandered from the Bible to her gentle face, and fixing there, called off his thoughts from Heaven. " How good she is," he began to say, " how attentive to her prayers, as to all other duties ! what a sweet wife she will make ! How happy I am to have won her love." By this time the countenance of the young girl wore an expression which showed that she felt the earnestness of his gaze ; her eyelids trembled—her attention wavered, and though she looked at the book some moments longer, she too began to murmur of earthly things, and I heard her say, " O how he loves me—even here he cannot forget that I am beside him." It was many minutes before either of them returned in spirit to their devotions.