

Columbia Telescope.

BY D. W. SIMS, STATE PRINTER.

COLUMBIA, SOUTH CAROLINA, NOVEMBER 6, 1890.

VOLUME XV.—NUMBER 45.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY MORNING
TERMS.—Three Dollars per annum, payable in advance, or Four Dollars, payable at the end of the year.
ADVERTISEMENTS inserted at the usual rates.

MISCELLANEOUS.

A TALE.
There lived, in a pretty rural village, a homely, industrious, sensible and contented couple of Darby and Susan.

The tidy cottage that stood beside the village green, with the moss-rose-bush and the sweetbriar before it, and the gravelled path edged with rows of box that led to its rustic porch, and the honeysuckle climbing over the walls, till it hid the little arched windows and stretched its fragrant tendrils up to the brown thatch—that was their cottage. It was their garden that looked so gay and neat behind that pretty cottage; and it was their cow that fed in the little pasture beside it.

Darby and Susan were, in truth, a notable and a happy couple. Nobody brought such sweet scented hay to market as honest Darby; for so his neighbors were wont to call him; and not undeservedly; for nobody gave juster weight or fuller measure than he, in all the country round. Susan's fame had gone far and wide. She was a very pattern of housewives; up with the day, at work like her own bees, and as merry as the lark when it rises in the summer sunbeams. No honey was so transparent as that from Susan's hives; no cheese or butter, in all the parish, so good, as that she made. Her kerchief was the whitest at the village festival, and her step the lightest at the village dance. You might hear, as you passed her door, the busy hum of her wheel; and no lass, within twenty miles of that village, spun a smoother thread or a stronger. You might hear, too, at intervals, a song whose merry tones cheered your very heart; and that was Susan's, the sweetest and the blithest singer in all the country side.

Darby always found a well-swept hearth and a blazing fire and a pair of laughing eyes, when he returned from market, cold and weary. And a blazing fire and laughing eyes are excellent specifics against care and dullness. As he sat, in the long winter evenings, plating willow baskets, while his notable partner spread the spotless napkin and arranged his frugal supper, you might scarcely chance upon a happier man. And, after supper, when Susan always sung her merriest ditties, Darby would listen for hours, and forget to tell the strokes of the village clock. He was surely not sentimental, and he had heard all her songs for the hundredth time. Yet would his neighbors roughly tell, that as they stopped before Darby's window to catch the last words of some favorite old ballad, they had seen him lay down his half-finished basket, and slip behind Susan's chair, to steal a kiss with almost as much fondness, though certainly with less awkward bashfulness, than when he stole the first from her very lips.

And as within the cottage—on Darby's little farm and in Susan's garden, every thing spoke the careful eye and the busy hand of its possessors. Their thoughts, indeed, centered in their pleasant home; and for the world beyond, it was to them as though it existed not, except when Darby filled Debbie's panniers, and proceeded to dispose of the produce of their industry, and to gaze for the thousandth time with undiminished wonder on the marvels and the rary-shows of a market town. Yet, even there, Darby seldom saw a merrier eye or a rosier cheek than his pretty Susan's, and seldom found a neater garden or a tidier home than his own; and so Darby was not given to inconstancy.

Thus passed their quiet lives, without care for the future or regret for the past; with scarcely a wish beyond their little possessions, and scarcely a care beyond the passing hour. They lived in the present, and enjoyed it, undisturbed by dreams of rich inheritance, either in this world or the next.

It chanced, one dark November evening, that a stranger rode into the village. He wore a long black Spanish-looking cloak; and the boys, attracted by the unusual sight; followed him to the door of the village inn, where he alighted. As he entered the busy kitchen, he threw aside his upper garment, discovering beneath a dress of the same colour, very plainly cut and somewhat threadbare. There was a merry party gathered round a fire that blazed and sparkled as a November fire ought; and there the officious landlady placed a chair for the stranger, who saluted the circle with a solemn "God be with you!" and then seated himself in silence.

The laugh and the jest were hushed in a moment; each jogged his neighbor with a side glance at their visitor; and, after a few commonplace remarks about the weather and the crops, first one and then another rose and departed.

"Who can he be?" said the landlady to her help-mate, as the last guest prepared to retire.

"Ask him," was the laconic reply.

But this was not so easy, even for the assurance of Mrs. Margery. Her first remark about the weather was answered in a monosyllable; and there the conversation ended, for the landlady thought, as she expressed it afterwards, "that he was an uncomfortable looking man;" and so she smothered her curiosity, and left him to his own meditations.

Margery's remark was not inapplicable to the stranger. His figure was tall and spare, and he stooped from his shoulders. Care was imprinted on the wrinkled brow, over which his straight black hair was formally combed; and care and restlessness was in his dark grey eyes. There was a strange, absent, uneasy, swimming expression, too, about those eyes. You might at times have imagined they were turned on the inward man, rather than were turned on outward objects; so dead and unsettled they seemed. And then again you might have supposed that they looked through the vulgar realities of sense to something of a vaguer nature, distant and longed for and unseen; for in the frequent fixity of his gaze, there was rather the excitement of eager and dissatisfied expecta-

tion. For, in truth, there was nothing in their jovial, pleasant looking countenance to awaken either fear, enthusiasm or austerity.

He read over the service of the day in the same tone of voice (only somewhat shriller and weaker) and with the very same accent and emphasis, as he had read it twenty years before. He was a very regular man, that jolly curate; regular at his meals, regular in his yearly visits to his parishioners, above all regular in his sermons. His stock of sermons held out precisely two years; and so scrupulously did the good man adhere to the order of succession which he had once for all prescribed to himself, that several of his veteran parishioners were able to fortel, with unerring accuracy, not only the text, but even the length of the sermon, before they entered the church; an effort of memory which obtained for them no little share of respect and admiration from their juniors in age and experience.

Yet might the appearance of the reverend stranger, then, form an era in the village history; and little wonder that older and wiser heads than the pretty Susan's were puzzled to conceive what it could mean. They had gone to church all their lives on Sunday morning, because, as Sunday was proper to go. Their curate used to read prayers and sermons to them, because it was proper for a curate to do so, and they had returned home satisfied to have completed their Sunday morning's obligation. To have absented themselves, because Sunday morning was meant for people to go to church in; and Susan would abstain as soon have omitted to feed and milk her favorite cow, or Darby have forgotten his regular trip to market, as that curate had missed their weekly devotions.

Thursday was not meant for a preaching-day; and even if it had been, it was not a danger's business to preach to them. Old man observed, that, for his part, he wished people would be content, as their fathers and mothers had done before them, to let every day to its proper use; while another remarked, that he thought it little better than sabbath-breaking to employ the church on a week-day.

Curiosity ultimately silenced all scruples. They were to hear a sermon which the oldest parishioner had never heard before; and the very text of which they were unable to foretel. The appearance of the preacher, too, as he had sauntered reverently through the village during the forenoon, had awakened an interest not looking so common; so totally different from that of good, easy pastor.

"Darby," said Susan, as they entered the church, "is not it for all the world like Sunday?" "It's very droll. I'm sure I shall lose count of the days this week altogether. I shall be thinking that to-morrow's Monday; and I shall forget my churching, for I know I never churn on Monday."

"Hush," said her partner; and he pointed to the ere, stooping form of the stranger as he ascended to the steps of the pulpit. "Sit and sit down."

It needed not a warning to arrest poor Susan's curiosity. Her eyes met those of the preacher, and she shrank back in actual terror that unearthly, ascetic gaze.

If the stranger's appearance had awakened curiosity and fixed attention, the manner and the matter of his delivery were well calculated to confirm the impression. After a few verses, past, apparently, in silent devotion, suddenly rose, stretched forward his lean arms, closed his eyes, and in a low, solemn, earnest tone, commenced an extempore prayer. His audience numbered scarcely one among the pews; but those that were there were all prayers; and, under other circumstances, perhaps, they might have been scandalized to hear a man address the deity in other words than those the church sanctified; and address him, too, in one of mingled complaint and confidence. But the preacher's earnest sincerity, his impressive manner, extinguished all feeling of disapproval, and carried hearers along with him. As he became more animated, and in impassioned accents called on him who rides on the tempest's wing and speaks in its thunders, to be the heavens and come down among the mortal creatures of his hand; to smother the sun in the mists of his hand, and to rescue the regenerate sinner, and to rescue the souls from the pit that yawned before them, his congregation involuntarily followed the direction of his eyes, half expecting some special revelation of the divine presence, amongst them; and when at last he closed his prayer, they sat in silent and breathless expectation of what they next might hear.

The preacher's text was Matthew, Chap. 16, Ver. 26. "What shall a man profit if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

He read his text twice, and looked on the assembled audience, felled with a mixed feeling of sorrow and earnest, and then proceeded:

"There was a man who wandered into a strange country. He found it populous and fertile, its fields fair to the eye, its pleasures pleasant to the senses. In a man who loved his fellow mortals, he wished them well; and who felt in his heart a willingness to sacrifice much for their happiness. He remarked, that the inhabitants of that country were continually dying; no one remained there more than a day; and that day each usually spent in feasting and making merry with his friends. On the morrow he passed away, and the next day his very existence was forgotten. This grieved that man's evil heart; he sought to discover where these travellers went, and what became of them.

"After much diligent enquiry, he found that they all journeyed towards a dark valley, the entrance to which was covered with goodly garbages and tempting groves of spices; but within there was a growth of thorns and cypresses; and a gloom of midnight, even when the sun was set, and a damp chilly air, even when the sun was fairest and warmest. He went that into that dismal valley the occu-

poised its thousand inhabitants, never, never to return. With much labor and difficulty he penetrated to its silent gloom, and discovered, that it terminated in a frightful whirl but one day before he had seen rioting in careless enjoyment, were hurried in clips, and below he saw a burning lake reach, and from all that wide lake there arose day and night, without ceasing, the piteous groans and the moving lamentations of those that were tormented in its flames.

"It pained the good man at his heart to see the writhings and tossings of hopeless wretches in that scorching, unquenching lake; and to hear the ceaseless moaning that arose from his fiery waters. So he stood by the entrance of the valley, beside its groves of spices and its goodly garden-trees, and cried aloud to those that would enter in, warning them of the burning precipice and the lake of fire below.

Would ye know more of that fair land, and its passing inhabitants, and its dark valley? Look around ye, fellow Christians! Ye see it here. This world is the country whose fields are fair to the eye, and its joy pleasant to the senses. Ye are its inhabitants; and the short day that ye spend in singing and making merry, that ye spend in earthly life. The valley of cypresses and gloom is the valley of the shadow of death, and the fiery precipice beyond opens into the great eternal hell. I—I am that man that stands at the entrance of the valley, crying aloud to you to turn back while there is yet time, that ye may save your undying souls.

I try to ye, as a father to his children, as a brother to his brethren. I tell ye, that valley is before you. Ye will die; ye know ye will. Ye will sleep the cold, dull sleep;—and where will your waking be? Your bodies will perish; where will your souls exist?"

Poor, thoughtless, misguided mortals!—Ye take thought for this life. Ye care for your bodies. For them ye labor; for them ye spend your time and your talents; for them—that shall return tomorrow to the dust whence they were formed. And ye take no thought, nor care, for our precious imperishable souls.

Can ye imagine a being whose life should be extended one million times beyond the term of your earthly existence? Can ye imagine such a being giving all his thoughts and time and substance to increase the enjoyment of one little, short moment of his enduring life, a moment so brief that his senses should scarcely note its duration; and willfully casting from him, for the sake of that brief moment's enjoyment, the perfect happiness of a million of centuries? Can ye so mad as this?"

Ye such beings ye are. The smallest, shortest moment that your senses can distinguish, when compared to a million of this life compared to eternity. Yet for that single, passing moment ye live, ye care, ye labor; and ye are content to be tormented through the million of centuries. Are ye not childish and blind and mad?"

Ye will tell me that ye hope to escape from hell; and after having cherished your bodies here, to save your souls hereafter. Ye could first enjoy Earth, and then win Heaven. Ye give Mammon six days, and ye think to propitiate God by giving him the seventh. But he not deceived; no man can serve two masters; so neither can ye serve God and Mammon.

Between God and Mammon, therefore, ye have to choose. Said I ye have to choose? I rather, ye have chosen. And were, were for your choice! When the day of reprobation is passed, and the torments of eternity are upon ye, then shall ye know and feel the choice ye have made!

Think ye that I speak harshly and unadvisedly, and that I condemn ye without a reason? I would to God it were so. I would to God that I could look among ye and find one righteous man—one that prefers God to Mammon, one that labors for heaven, one that thinks and speaks for eternity. But I find none.

Ye will remind me, perhaps, that ye frequent this holy place on the first day of the week; that ye pray, it may be, once a day; that ye succour the poor and the naked; that ye reverence the church's creed, and give the tenth of your substance to support her ministers. And these are your claims to the favor of the Most High; these are your titles to a place in His paradise? Ye fools and blind! Which of you, if he loved even a sinful fellow creature, will be satisfied to receive a tithe of his heart in return? Is your earthly time so valuable that ye cannot give but a seventh to your Maker?—Are your worldly goods so precious that ye cannot devote but one tenth to Him who gave ye all things? Trifle not thus with holy things, ye frail worms of the dust!—Give your time, your talents, your substance your exertions—give your all to God; in his sacred cause labor night and day; for him sacrifice your ease, your comfort, your temporal happiness;—your worthless, mortal life. And know, that when ye have done all, ye are but wicked and unprofitable servants; still still burdened with a debt that ye can never liquidate.

But insult not the Most High with a pittance of your time and your thoughts and your money. Shall Mammon be served first, and would ye have the Almighty content to accept what Mammon chooses to leave him? Ye fools and ungrateful! In whom do ye live and move and have your being. From whom do ye draw health and wealth and happiness? Who gave you this fair world, and endowed you with faculties to perceive and with senses to enjoy it? Was it not the God of your fathers? And Him, just Heavens! Him ye would postpone to the sordid interests of your grovelling passions! Ye would seek meat and drink and raiment, the lust of the eye and the pride of life—all before your gracious Benefactor! For these ye would employ nine tenths of your substance, and ye imagine that the rest will suffice to purchase Heaven!

And do ye not employ the six days, and do ye not spend nine tenths of your substance? Answer to your own hearts, and let your hearts record the answer.—Say what are your thoughts when ye rise up, and what your hopes when ye lie down. Say what are your daily occupations, what the themes of your conversations, and what the chief objects of your desires. And if truth dictate the answer, will ye not confess that for one hour consecrated to God, and for one talent devoted to his service, there are often hours and talents devoted to this world and its vanities?

While careless youth and buoyant health are yours, ye may evade the question or reply to it falsely. But a day of reflection will come—aye, and a day of retribution. When age and sickness press upon ye, when ye hear a still small voice calling ye to your long home, will ye tell you, that ye lived for this life and that every moment of your lives, every tear of your souls, every portion of your property, every exertion of your faculties, every effort of your industry OUGHT TO HAVE BEEN GOD'S; and it will tell you, that they WERE GOD'S.

If six days only of every week were consecrated to religion and nine tenths only of your substance devoted to her service, while the seventh day and the tenth of your worldly goods were spent in earthly pursuits, well might the Deity complain that he was robbed by the creatures of his hand of a portion of that which belongs exclusively to him; and well might ye be taxed, like Ananias and Sapphira, with iniquitously keeping back a part of God's heritage; and well might ye be reminded, even then, that ye gave to the care of the body that which ought to have been given to the care of the soul alone. But how shall I find words to paint the sordid impiety that fills this vain earth, day after day, with worldly thoughts and worldly cares, and worldly hopes, and worldly enjoyments? Ye punish with disgrace and death the man who robs a fellow creature of his miserable substance; how shall those merciless robbers be treated, who steal from the Deity, day by day, and that in His. Ye treat with indignant scorn the wretch that should be entrusted by a mortal benefactor with worthless, worldly riches, and should basely betray the trust. In what terms will ye curse him, whose impious ingratitude betrays the trust of our immortal Benefactor, and appropriates to secular purposes the talents that were lent to him, that he might win a place among the happy in paradise?

But ye need not punish, ye need not curse the wretch. Punishment and curse are already meted out to him. Already is the eternal flame kindled; already does the pit yawn for its victims! And soon shall those victims feel what it is,—to be tormented of God!

Have ye ever thought—Poor, sinful worms—Have ye ever thought what it was, to feel the Almighty's vengeance; to feel the fiery worm gnawing at your maddening hearts; to feel the burning pulse throbbing through your glowing veins, to pray with phrenzied impatience for death, yet not to find it; to long, with a lover's hugging, for annihilation, yet not to obtain it; to cry through millions of centuries for one moment's respite from your racking pains, and to know assuredly that millions and millions of periods shall approach, and arrive, and pass away, yet never bring that one mitigating moment; to feel that a hope of relief so distant that your reason refuses to comprehend the intervening period—to feel that even such a faint hope would afford you ecstatic bliss, and then to know that you can never—never hope again!

Soon, soon shall ye feel and know what it is. The great gulf is before you. The precipice opens at your feet! I see it! I feel its hot breath! Great God!"

Excess of emotion stopped the preacher's utterance. He covered his face with his hands and sunk back in the pulpit. A cold shudder passed over his audience. The men gazed around them in vacant terror; the women sobbed aloud. Susan, who, in the excitement which the stranger's oratory produced, had involuntarily stood up that she might not lose a syllable which fell from his lips, now sunk back; and scarcely conscious of what she did, clung imploringly to her scarcely less terrified partner. At last, with an almost convulsive effort she whispered to him, "Oh! take me home!" "I cannot," ejaculated Darby, "I cannot. See! he is going to speak again!"

The wild, piercing tones of the orator's voice sunk to an expression of softness and compassion, as, after an interval, he proceeded.

"Poor, perishing, lost sinners! My heart yearns towards ye. My spirit mourns for your fate. I see ye hurried onward, as a lamb to the slaughter, unconscious what ye are, unconscious whither ye go. I see ye stand on the very brink of your eternal destiny. A breath, a touch—and your earthly footing will crumble from beneath you, and ye will sink down, despairing, to unending, unending torments. I see ye careless, cheerful, smiling; and oh! too well I know the change that shall come over that careless cheerfulness, and turn these thoughtless smiles to sighs of agony. It breaks my heart, that harrowing thought; it clouds my eyes, and wounds my heart. Shall I sit down in peace, and think that, when the angelic messengers bear my spirit to the realms above, I shall look across the great gulf and witness your tortures? It may not be; in heaven I may lose the sympathy that binds me to bring of nature like to my own; but on earth I can never cease to feel, to mourn, to weep, to pity them.

Ye might yet escape. Weak, sinful as ye are, ye might yet, perchance, save your imperishable souls. Ere ye reach your long homes, ye might yet turn aside. But alas for ye! weep for your earthly passions! weep, yet more, for your lukewarmness and your inconsistency! How straight is the gate, how narrow the way, how hard is it to enter the kingdom of Heaven! And oh! how vain the attempt to call worldly spirits off from worldly pursuits, and fix mortal thoughts on the concerns of immortality!

Nor may ye halt between two opinions. Expect not that earth and heaven can both be yours. Choose between them; and stand to your choice. Well did the Son

of God know your heavenly faculty; and children of this world; carnality did he reprove, and pointedly did he denounce. Hear his own words, as recorded by the evangelist Matthew:

"No man can serve two masters; for either he will love the one and hate the other; or else he will love the one and despise the other. Ye cannot serve God and Mammon."

Is not this plain language? Does it not tell ye, that if ye will be God's children, ye must labor in his service; and not only so, but through all the hours of every day of your lives? And let ye imagine that worldly cares are still permitted ye, I mean proceeds yet more explicitly:

"Therefore I say unto you. Take no thought for your life, what ye shall eat, or what ye shall drink; nor yet for your body, what ye should put on. Is not the life more than meat and the body than raiment?"

Behold the fowls of the air; for they sow not, neither do they reap, nor gather into barns; yet your heavenly Father feedeth them. Are ye not much better than they?"

Alas for ye! How does every action of your lives and every thought and care of your hearts offend against your heavenly teacher! Do ye not daily, hourly take thought for your life? Are ye not embarrassed and troubled about many things, thinking what ye shall eat, what ye shall drink, and what ye shall put on? And is not this expressly, positively forbidden by Jesus Christ himself? Eternal perdition on your busy selfishness, that blind your eyes to the law of the Most High, and closes your ears to the gracious words of our merciful Savior! But read further; listen while he repeats the heavenly precept, which ye are so dull to hear and so slow to obey:

"Why take ye thought for raiment? Consider the lilies of the field how they grow; they toil not, neither do they spin; yet I say unto you that even Solomon, in all his glory, was not arrayed like one of these.—Wherefore, if God do clothe the grass of the field, which today is and tomorrow is cast into the oven, shall he not much more clothe ye, oh ye of little faith?"

Therefore take no thought, saying what shall we eat or what shall we drink or wherewithal shall we be clothed? (for after all these things do the Gentiles seek.) But seek ye first the kingdom of God and his righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you. Take therefore no thought for the morrow; for the morrow shall take thought for the things of itself. Sufficient unto the day is the evil thereof."

There are those who exhort ye to carnal industry, and who bid ye labor that ye may eat. Ask yourselves if these be God's commands! Hath not Christ said, "Labor not for the meat that perisheth;" hath he not promised "that God will clothe ye?" And will ye, oh ye of little faith, will ye persist in laboring to feed, and to clothe yourselves? Will ye sell Heaven for a morsel of pottage, or a garment to cover ye? Instigated and blind, is God a man that he should bid, or are his commands but empty words, that ye should despise and neglect them?

Your life and your death are before you. Yet again I bid ye choose between God and Mammon. Will ye love all and follow God? will ye forsake earthly cares and abstain from worldly labors? will ye cease to lay up for yourselves treasures on earth whom noth and rust corrupt and thieves break through to steal? will ye think and labor for the one thing needful alone, commencing your spiritual journey without scrip or staff and casting your care on him who careth for you? will ye trust Him who clothes the lilies of the valley and feeds the sparrows of the air, to clothe and to feed you? and will ye, in return, devote your souls to his worship, and your bodies to his service? Will ye thus win yourselves a place in God's holy favor and a seat in His glorious paradise?—Hold to God, then, and despise Mammon. Live a spiritual life, and touch not the unshiny thing!

Or—will ye cast contempt on the divine law, by keeping his own from the lord; by spending your time in temporal labor, and your money in temporal comforts; by caring for your bodies when ye ought to care for your souls alone; and thus making Him a liar who has promised to provide for ye, if ye will but seek His kingdom—then take your portion. Drink the cup ye are raising to your lips. Bitter—bitter and poisonous are the drugs; but to the last drop ye shall drain them. And the hot fire which their poison kindles in your veins shall burn on, unquenched unquenchable, from henceforth and for ever!"

The preacher lips refused to utter the horrible "Amen!"

It is a grievous thing to behold the blighting traces of ignorance and error; the ravages of superstition. Had you known Darby and his thrifty partner in their days of worldly-mindedness and temporal prosperity, it would have pained your heart to revisit them after a few short years, in that quiet cottage of theirs. It stands there still, by the village green; and the ray of sun's newshook still clings to its humble walls. But alas! the spirit of its inmates is gone. Susan—the ray, light-hearted, bright-eyed Susan, the merry songstress, the notable housewife, the laughing village—alas! for her eye, it checked her laugh, it crushed her light-heartedness and poisoned her industry. Gentle and uncomplaining she still is; a stranger to sectarian intolerance and spiritual pride; not superstitious itself could teach her these. But the heart that cannot be irritated, may be crushed—may be brought to shudder at itself; to read depravity in its most innocent thoughts and wickedness in its gentlest impulses.

Alas! alas! for that Thursday evening! Its lessons sunk into Susan's heart, and recurred, at every moment to her excited imagination. She sought to hide their effects from Darby's hand and her own susceptible nature; but they betrayed themselves with all her care. She strove to forget them in the bustle of occupation, but they recurred in spite of herself. The heart-searching tones of that wild and warning voice, as it repeated the command "Labor not for the meat that perisheth!" still rang in her ears; as she started, as in conscious-

ness, than the calmer expression of actual perception.

Let it not be imagined that all these reflections passed through Margery's brain, and elicited the remark, "that he was an uncomfortable-looking man." No, she was not one of those who look beyond the outward show; but the outward show of that pale, thin visage, and gaunt figure, was unimposing enough.

And, in truth, the appearance of the stranger did not belie his avocation. His labors and his thoughts were not of this world. His body, indeed, sojourned on our earth, but his spirit had wandered out of it. He walked through life with the careless indifference of a hasty pilgrim, who scarcely bestows a glance or a thought on the scenes that open around him; so deeply and solely occupied in his imagination with other lands and future prospects. He walked through life, not only without tasting its joys, but even unconscious that it contained any. As he conceived it the duty, so he made it the business of his life, to render others as careless of time and its labors and its pleasures, and as careful for eternity as he was himself. In a word, he was a preacher—a zealous, enthusiastic, untiring, consistent preacher.

The morning after his arrival, Jem, the town-crier sallied forth with a manuscript in one hand, and his well known bell in the other. Jem was considered, and he considered himself, a scholar. Yet he conned his task for the space of several minutes, puzzling over the hurried abbreviations it contained, and the blots that disfigured it, before he contrived to inform the curious and impatient crowd which had meanwhile gathered around him, "that a friend to the welfare of their eternal souls would meet them, God willing, in the parish church, an hour before curfew."

"Darby," said Susan, as they returned to their cottage, after listening to Jem's oratory, "what does all this mean?" "Did not you hear what Jem said?" rejoined her partner.

"To be sure I did. He said somebody would meet us in the church. But what can we do in the church to-day? It's only Thursday. What could the man mean?"

"He meant what he said," replied Darby, "very sagely." "He meant, that somebody would preach in the church tonight."

"La! Darby! Tonight! on Thursday night!"

"Why not?"

"Why not! How droll you are! Who ever heard of preaching except on Sunday! What would be the use of it?"

"The use! why, what's the use of it on Sunday?"

"Oh! darby. You know it's proper to preach on Sunday; and you know it's proper for us to go to church then. But we need not go today."

"No," said Darby, as they entered the cottage, "we need not."

"But must I put on my Sunday gown if I go?"

And Susan carefully took down a new straw bonnet with bright yellow ribbons that hung, pinned up in a white bandkerchief, against the wall.

"Just as you like," said Darby.

"But won't the neighbors laugh if I wear my Sunday bonnet on a Thursday?" persisted Susan; at the same time smoothing and adjusting the rumpled bows.

"I don't know," replied he.

"But if its proper to preach to-day," reasoned Susan, "it must be proper to wear a Sunday bonnet too."

"I suppose so," said Darby.

"Then let's go," said Susan. "I'll put off my charming till to-morrow, and iron a clean shirt for you; and you'll come home at five o'clock; and we'll dress, and go."

Susan was not the only one who was startled at this innovation on week day customs. The villagers generally did not know what to make of it. Their own curate, a quiet, easy good-tempered soul, who left his parishioners to arrange their eternal concerns, each according to his own fancy, never preached but once a week, on Sunday morning; and no itinerant preacher had ever yet visited the remote village. But a few of the more travelled having averred that, in other towns and villages, they had heard men preach on Tuesday, on Wednesday, on Friday, and, indeed they believed, on every day of the week, the majority concluded that, at least, there could be no great harm in it, though it was Thursday. So the day's work was hurried over; and at six o'clock, the church was nearly filled.

If you had chanced to walk into that old cathedral-looking building, with its ancient grey aisles, and its well worn stone floor, and its small-panelled gothic windows,—on a fine Sunday morning at half past ten o'clock, you might have witnessed a cheerful if not a merry scene. As the eastern sun-beams streamed, in checkered rays, through the dusky pile, and fell on the faces and forms of the assembled audience with all the painting-like effect of bold broad lights and shades, you might have fancied each quiet silent group, a study for a master's pencil. It was not the silence of gloomy contemplation. There was still expression enough to interest the spectator. The hale, smiling old dame, her snow-white cap peeping from beneath her ancient bonnet, sat thinking over the tale of olden times which she had been relating to a neighbor gossip as they had walked slowly together to the house of prayer.—The half-bushful, half-laughing lass still pondered over the homely jokes and rustic efforts at gallantry, with which her favored avain had wiled away their morning's stroll; while he sat in a neighbouring pew, his face turned towards her, and his eyes, it would seem, intently fixed in study, on an old dark-red, well-worn prayer book, which he held up before him with both hands; although as his sister who sat next him archly told after they left the church, "Harry's prayer-book was turned up side down, and you could see him looking over it, just as their old grandmother looked up over her spectacles at the minister, when he began his sermon."

And if, as the service proceeded, the various expressions sobered down into the vacant look of indifference, or into the drowsy, half-repossed yawn, still there was nothing like ascetic gravity or bigoted severity of countenance in all that congrega-

tion. For, in truth, there was nothing in their jovial, pleasant looking countenance to awaken either fear, enthusiasm or austerity.

He read over the service of the day in the same tone of voice (only somewhat shriller and weaker) and with the very same accent and emphasis, as he had read it twenty years before. He was a very regular man, that jolly curate; regular at his meals, regular in his yearly visits to his parishioners, above all regular in his sermons. His stock of sermons held out precisely two years; and so scrupulously did the good man adhere to the order of succession which he had once for all prescribed to himself, that several of his veteran parishioners were able to fortel, with unerring accuracy, not only the text, but even the length of the sermon, before they entered the church; an effort of memory which obtained for them no little share of respect and admiration from their juniors in age and experience.

Yet might the appearance of the reverend stranger, then, form an era in the village history; and little wonder that older and wiser heads than the pretty Susan's were puzzled to conceive what it could mean. They had gone to church all their lives on Sunday morning, because, as Sunday was proper to go. Their curate used to read prayers and sermons to them, because it was proper for a curate to do so, and they had returned home satisfied to have completed their Sunday morning's obligation. To have absented themselves, because Sunday morning was meant for people to go to church in; and Susan would abstain as soon have omitted to feed and milk her favorite cow, or Darby have forgotten his regular trip to market, as that curate had missed their weekly devotions.

Thursday was not meant for a preaching-day; and even if it had been, it was not a danger's business to preach to them. Old man observed, that, for his part, he wished people would be content, as their fathers and mothers had done before them, to let every day to its proper use; while another remarked, that he thought it little better than sabbath-breaking to employ the church on a week-day.

Curiosity ultimately silenced all scruples. They were to hear a sermon which the oldest parishioner had never heard before; and the very text of which they were unable to foretel. The appearance of the preacher, too, as he had sauntered reverently through the village during the forenoon, had awakened an interest not looking so common; so totally different from that of good, easy pastor.

"Darby," said Susan, as they entered the church, "is not it for all the world like Sunday?" "It's very droll. I'm sure I shall lose count of the days this week altogether. I shall be thinking that to-morrow's Monday; and I shall forget my churching, for I know I never churn on Monday."

"Hush," said her partner; and he pointed to the ere, stooping form of the stranger as he ascended to the steps of the pulpit. "Sit and sit down."

It needed not a warning to arrest poor Susan's curiosity. Her eyes met those of the preacher, and she shrank back in actual terror that unearthly, ascetic gaze.

If the stranger's appearance had awakened curiosity and fixed attention, the manner and the matter of his delivery were well calculated to confirm the impression. After a few verses, past, apparently, in silent devotion, suddenly rose, stretched forward his lean arms, closed his eyes, and in a low, solemn, earnest tone, commenced an extempore prayer. His audience numbered scarcely one among the pews; but those that were there were all prayers; and, under other circumstances, perhaps, they might have been scandalized to hear a man address the deity in other words than those the church sanctified; and address him, too, in one of mingled complaint and confidence. But the preacher's earnest sincerity, his impressive manner, extinguished all feeling of disapproval, and carried hearers along with him. As he became more animated, and in impassioned accents called on him who rides on the tempest's wing and speaks in its thunders, to be the heavens and come down among the mortal creatures of his hand; to smother the sun in the mists of his hand, and to rescue the regenerate sinner, and to rescue the souls from the pit that yawned before them, his congregation involuntarily followed the direction of his eyes, half expecting some special revelation of the divine presence, amongst them; and when at last he closed his prayer, they sat in silent and breathless expectation of what they next might hear.

The preacher's text was Matthew, Chap. 16, Ver. 26. "What shall a man profit if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul, or what shall a man give in exchange for his soul?"

He read his text twice, and looked on the assembled audience, felled with a mixed feeling of sorrow and earnest, and then proceeded:

"There was a man who wandered into a strange country. He found it populous and fertile, its fields fair to the eye, its pleasures pleasant to the senses. In a man who loved his fellow mortals, he wished them well; and who felt in his heart a willingness to sacrifice much for their happiness. He remarked, that the inhabitants of that country were continually dying; no one remained there more than a day; and that day each usually spent in feasting and making merry with his friends. On the morrow he passed away, and the next day his very existence was forgotten. This grieved that man's evil heart; he sought to discover where these travellers went, and what became of them.

"After much diligent enquiry, he found that they all journeyed towards a dark valley, the entrance to which was covered with goodly garbages and tempting groves of spices; but within there was a growth of thorns and cypresses; and a gloom of midnight, even when the sun was set, and a damp chilly air, even when the sun was fairest and warmest. He went that into that dismal valley the occu-

poised its thousand inhabitants, never, never to return. With much labor and difficulty he penetrated to its silent gloom, and discovered, that it terminated in a frightful whirl but one day before he had seen rioting in careless enjoyment, were hurried in clips, and below he saw a burning lake reach, and from all that wide lake there arose day and night, without ceasing, the piteous groans and the moving lamentations of those that were tormented in its flames.

"It pained the good man at his heart to see the writhings and tossings of hopeless wretches in that scorching, unquenching lake; and to hear the ceaseless moaning that arose from his fiery waters. So he stood by the entrance of the valley, beside its groves of spices and its goodly garden-trees, and cried aloud to those that would enter in, warning them of the burning precipice and the lake of fire below.

Would ye know more of that fair land, and its passing inhabitants, and its dark valley? Look around ye, fellow Christians! Ye see it here. This world is the country whose fields are fair to the eye, and its joy pleasant to the senses. Ye are its inhabitants; and the short day that ye spend in singing and making merry, that ye spend in earthly life. The valley of cypresses and gloom is the valley of the shadow of death, and the fiery precipice beyond opens into the great eternal hell. I—I am that man that stands at the entrance of the valley, crying aloud to you to turn back while there is yet time, that ye may save your undying souls.

I try to ye, as a father to his children, as a brother to his brethren. I tell ye, that valley is before you. Ye will die; ye know ye will. Ye will sleep the cold, dull sleep;—and where will your waking be? Your bodies will perish; where will your souls exist?"

Poor, thoughtless, misguided mortals!—Ye take thought for this life. Ye care for your bodies. For them ye labor; for them ye spend your time and your talents; for them—that shall return tomorrow to the dust whence they were formed. And ye take no thought, nor care, for our precious imperishable souls.

Can ye imagine a being whose life should be extended one million times beyond the term of your earthly existence? Can ye imagine such a being giving all his thoughts and time and substance to increase the enjoyment of one little, short moment of his enduring life, a moment so brief that his senses should scarcely note its duration; and willfully casting from him, for the sake of that brief moment's enjoyment, the perfect happiness of a million of centuries? Can ye so mad as this?"

Ye such beings ye are. The smallest, shortest moment that your senses can distinguish, when compared to a million of this life compared to eternity. Yet for that single,