



Waiting for the Postman.

ETTERS

FROM A

STRANGER IN TRELAND.

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By G. W.



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Estters from a Strangen in Angland.

LETTER I.

"The Emerald Isle."

NOWING how pleased you are to have a letter, I desire to spend a few quiet moments in writing to you: but hark! Rat-tat! What is that? Ah, well the listening ear can tell, it is the postman,

and off to the door rushes the waiting one! Thus it was with a little girl who lived in the same house where I was lately. Her brothers

had gone to the seaside to spend their brief yearly holiday, and the loving sister counted on a letter from them. No sooner, therefore, did the postman appear, than the little watcher was at the door, and the eager hand held out for the expected letter.

Very welcome indeed was the paper message, though only a post-card; and now to tell the glad news, and share her joy, was our little friend's next thought. So there was the patter of a pair of feet on the stairs, and the child, unable to wait till the landing was reached, called out, "Mamma! a post-card! and it is for Miss M. K." Full well could the loving mother share in the simple joy of her child, and even I in my room, unseen as I was, did truly rejoice in that little girl's delight.

Such was the welcome postman to the youthful heart, but ah! those who have lived longer in the world have learned that letters do not always bring gladness, but sometimes sorrow both deep and lasting. However, I am not

going to dwell on that side of one's correspondence, but only desire to send a letter to you, my dear young friends, on subjects of interest to us both. It certainly does not come in the form of a sheet of note-paper neatly folded within an addressed and stamped envelope. That would only be intended for *your* eye, but this is in the shape of a printed letter, for you and your companions to read at your leisure.

The letters being such that no answer is required, neither date nor address will be needed as I begin my printed epistle to you. This much, however, I may tell you, that the country from which I write to you at the present moment is green and fair, so much so that it has received the name of "The Emerald Isle"—the emerald, as you may know, being a precious stone of a lovely green. Even in the depth of winter, when I first set foot on Irish ground, the great freshness of its verdure immediately arrested my attention.

I should like to tell you a little of this

green spot, as its beauty unfolded itself to me in the month of December. The grey dawn of morning was fast giving way to the beams of a winter's sun, when I reached my destination in the county Down in the north of Ireland. As the morning rays dispelled the darkness, they lit up to view a country very refreshing to the eye of one who had lately left a smoky, foggy town on the journey westward. Behind lay Belfast Lough, up which the steamer had safely brought its living freight a few hours before. The night had been as calm and fine as any one at sea could possibly have desired, and my heart was truly thankful to God who had given this token of His loving care. In front, lay fields, gardens, and shady lanes, while beyond, the graceful outline of a range of hills bounded a prospect fair and bright.

Not many days had passed, however, before that landscape of beauteous green had changed its aspect, and lay hidden under a covering of snow. Then the morning sun lit up a glittering scene, when every tree, and bush, and field, was seen clothed in a mantle pure and white. Keen, biting frosts, and sharp cold air, told that winter had begun in stern reality. Many must have suffered where home comforts were lacking, and to such the thaw which soon came was doubtless very welcome indeed.

Those who go much to the homes of the poor, well know what a pitiful sight it is to see some shivering woman or child by an empty grate on a winter's day. How one contrasts the comfortable look of a glowing fire and a well-furnished house, with the cheerless room in such a condition! Yet God is just when He gives to some and withholds from others, for He is wiser than we are, and "His way is perfect."

Weeks and months passed on, during which storm succeeded storm with unusual frequency. Safe in a sheltering home, one's heart could only think with pity and prayer, about any who were exposed to the tempest on land or sea.

Like much else on earth, these months glided

on silently but swiftly, as the dark hours of a dreary night pass on to the dawning of day. There were lessons for me in them as they sped onwards; and in a future letter, I hope to tell you some of hoary winter's teachings, in these storms of rain, and wind, and snow.

What a rest it is to the troubled heart to know that the elements are all in God's hand of power, and as His servants obey His will! Although storms may alarm, and the winter's chill be felt, nothing can befall us that is unknown or unpermitted by God our Creator. We read in Psalm cxlvii., those beautiful words written in divine wisdom:—"He giveth snow like wool; he scattereth the hoar-frost like ashes. He casteth forth his ice like morsels; who can stand before his cold? He sendeth out his word, and melteth them: he causeth his wind to blow, and the waters flow."

A little girl was once setting out on a journey, part of which was by sea. Some one spoke to her of the dangers of the ocean, while expressing the hope that she would not be afraid when she found herself upon its waters. I cannot give you the exact words of her reply, but the thought was this: How can I have any fear, when the Bible speaks of the waters being in the hollow of God's hand? How true and real was that faith which could thus trust the Lord anywhere, and at any time! Can you, dear child, do the same, and trust both soul and body to the eternal keeping of One who will never fail the confiding heart?

Writing by divine guidance, the apostle Peter tells his believing readers that they are "kept by the power of God." And what could the heart desire for safety more than that? Yet, dear little child, do not forget that the holy and beloved Son of God suffered agony and death before the Holy Ghost gave those happy and assuring words. The power of God could only have given us the punishment we so fully deserved, had not God's heart of love sent the Son "to seek and to save that which was lost."

If you have not already seen the following poem in one of your school-books, I think you will be interested in reading it now.

"THE CHILD AND THE WIND."

- "FATHER, father, are you listening," Said the shepherd's little child,
- "To that wind, so hoarse, so hollow, As it howls across the wild?
- "When I hear it in the chimneys,
 When it sweeps along the ground,
 "Tis to me as if deep voices
 Mingled strangely with the sound.
- "Now they louder swell and nearer— Now they fall and die away; Can you tell me, dearest father, What it is the wild winds say?"
- "Nay, my child, they are not speaking, Not a word the winds impart; But each sound the Almighty sendeth Hath a message to the heart.
- "And that murmur deep and awful, Couldst thou catch its voice aright,

- It might whisper, 'Child be grateful, Thou art safe at home to-night.'
- "While for thee the bright fire burneth, Sitting by thy father's knee, Many laden ships are tossing Far away o'er many a sea.
- "Many mothers sitting watchful, Count the storm-gusts one by one, Weeping sorely as they tremble For some distant sailor son.
- "They might tell of Him who holdeth, In the hollow of His hand, Gentle breezes and rough tempests— Coming all at His command.
- "He provideth our home shelter, He protecteth on the seas; When the wild winds seem to whisper Let them tell thee things like these."

Thus replied the shepherd father;
And the child, with quiet mind,
Had a thought of God's great mercies
As he listened to the wind.



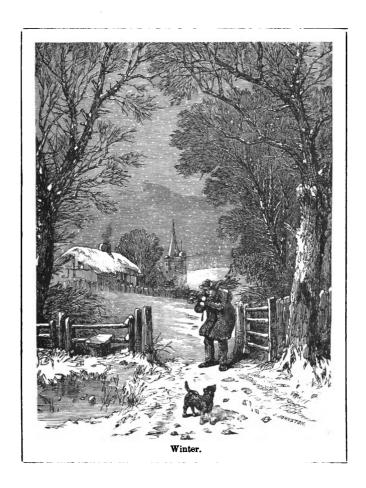


LETTER II.

The Winter of Age.

UMAN life, as well as the outer world, has its winter season of decline and decay. Sad and cheerless it is in itself, but wearing its own peculiar beauty when lighted up by divine grace. When the

natural buoyancy and hopefulness of youth have departed, when the attachments of more advanced years are severed one by one, and all the things of this life begin to lose their interest and charms, mournful indeed is the case of the poor soul which has no possession or hopes outside this world.



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On the other hand, the aged pilgrim who, through the joys and sorrows of a long life, has known the goodness of the Lord, and whose future is bright with the prospect of seeing the One who has been loved although unseen, is an undeniable witness to the power of the grace of God. It proves how fully the latter brings down heavenly joy into circumstances naturally dreary. Shall I tell you of a glimpse which I had of one such cheerful winter scene lately, a little specimen of the closing days of a happy child of God, quietly waiting for the moment when the Lord shall come and receive her to Himself?

The room in which I saw this dear aged believer was very plainly and sparingly furnished, but as neat and comfortable as her hands could make it. Useful and needed gifts which the dear woman pointed out to me with evident gratitude, testified to the love and interest of the Lord's people. I spent a happy little time in conversation with her, and we both felt the presence of

the Lord as we spoke together of Him and of His love.

She told me that for many years she had been privileged to be at the Lord's table, and mentioned numerous changes which had taken place during her recollection. Many had come and gone, but the Lord had left her still, and she owned with thankfulness His goodness in this and much else.

A little granddaughter usually went with her on the Lord's day, and she expressed to me an earnest desire for the little girl's blessing. It was a pleasant picture to see these two side by side in the presence of the Lord; one whose time on earth was well-nigh over, and the other who had only known a very few years of life, yet both with precious souls which will live for ever and for ever, when each shall have passed from time into eternity.

I trust you know, dear child, what it is to honour and respect old age, instead of despising it as a godless world does. When you hear any one speak slightingly of the aged, remember the words of God as given by Moses and Solomon, and seek to act upon them. In the book of Leviticus it is written, "Thou shalt rise up before the hoary head, and honour the face of the old man." In Proverbs we read, "The hoary head is a crown of glory, if it be found in the way of righteousness."

Another winter scene I beheld not long ago, which brought only pain and sadness as I gazed upon it. I was asked to go to see an aged woman who was dying. She was eighty-four, so far as I can remember, and her head indeed was hoary, yet there was no evidence that she was in that way of which the wise man wrote. The eyes were dim and the mind weak, while helpless in the feebleness of age, lay that wasted body. Her surroundings were poor, yet she appeared to have all that was really necessary in her homely cottage. But alas! there seemed no one to speak to her of Christ in her own home, in those closing hours of life.

She listened eagerly to the words which were read from holy writ, and in no way appeared to be a despiser of the Son of God. But yet she gave no proof that she was trusting Him for her soul's salvation. She accepted all that was said to her, and expressed a wish to have the forgiveness of sins, but whether she obtained that or not, only God can tell. It was indeed a touching and solemn sight, to see that aged white-haired woman striving to follow the words which were spoken, while the dimness of approaching death was in her eye. A man who, I was told, thought that he could be accepted by God apart from Christ, was sitting in the kitchen as I passed through it; the company near was, therefore, not fitted to give comfort in the presence of death.

A few days more, and that aged one had gone from earth, for her spirit had returned to God who gave it. I could only hope that there might have been a little faith in her which rested on Christ, though, like many more, she gave no satisfactory evidence of it. It brings sadness to

the heart to think of any uncertainty on a matter of such importance, and makes one thankful to know the Saviour in days of health and strength.

And you, dear child, may honour the Lord, and shew by your life and ways that you are unmistakeably His, for such is your privilege now. Then, should you live till the winter of age come upon you, you will have learned the love of God in life, and the worth of Him who has made it known to you. During the years between, so long as God leaves you here, you will have countless opportunities of honouring the Lord who has bought you with His blood. But all the future is uncertain on earth, and your only certainty of time is the present, so reckon not even on to-morrow.

I once knew a very interesting little boy, who often spoke of what he would do on the morrow. It seemed, therefore, well to tell him God's thoughts about that, so the first verse of the twenty-seventh chapter of Proverbs was taught

him, and most profitable it proved. After that, each mention of the morrow that seemed to go too far, called forth the reminder "G—! G—! 'Boast not.'" Then sweetly the child's voice would repeat the sacred words, "Boast not thyself of to-morrow; for thou knowest not what a day may bring forth." I believe those precious words taught him a lesson which he will not forget, so long as the uncertainty of his days makes that counsel necessary.

And now, as I close this letter, let me remind you that this is your spring-time for many a golden opportunity, which, once lost, will never return. The word of God is the only seed that will take root and bring forth the shock of corn, to which the Spirit of God, through Job, likens the winter of life. Long life was a blessing desired by the Jews, and therefore the promise to the man whom God correcteth is, "Thou shalt come to thy grave in a full age, like as a shock of corn cometh in in his season."

What a picture of beauty and usefulness there

is in the ripe and mellow corn, the fruit of God's blessing on the seed that was sown! A poem comes to my mind, which simply but forcibly brings out a great principle that you may profit by. It is one by the poet Southey, in your school-book, which perhaps may be already well-known to you. I remind you of it, however, because of its reference to the subject of youth and old age. If the latter is to be beautiful and happy, the best foundation is a well-spent youth.

The poem to which I refer, is entitled

"OLD FATHER WILLIAM."

- "You are old, father William," the young man cried,
- "The few locks which are left you are grey;
 You are hale, father William, a hearty old man;
 Now tell me the reason, I pray?"
- "In the days of my youth," father William replied,
 "I remembered that youth would fly fast,
 And abused not my health and my vigour at first,

And abused not my health and my vigour at first,
That I never might need them at last."

"You are old, father William," the young man cried,
And pleasures with youth pass away;

And yet you lament not the days that are gone; Now tell me the reason, I pray?"

- "In the days of my youth," father William replied,
- "I remembered that youth could not last;
- I thought of the future, whatever I did,
 That I never might grieve for the past."
- "You are old, father William," the young man cried,
- "And life must be hast'ning away;
- You are cheerful, and love to converse upon death; Now tell me the reason, I pray?"
- "I am cheerful, young man," father William replied,
- "Let the cause thy attention engage:

In the days of my youth I remembered my God, And He hath not forgotten my age!"





Spring Time in Ireland.



LETTER III.

Spring Bays.



Γ length, the storms of winter give place to the mild and genial influence of spring, and all nature wears a brighter hue. Late indeed it has been in coming, to bring the opening bud, and the chirp-

ing of the songster, as well as to follow with bright and gladdening sunshine those cold dark days of cloud and gloom. But having thus come, spring is doubly welcome, and cheers the hearts of many who have been longing for its return. The birds begin to build their nests, the welcome cry of the cuckoo is heard in the woods, and lengthening days bring delight to many who have long been hindered from enjoying the open air.

The farmer may be seen hard at work in his field, and the country householder no less busy in his garden. Vegetation both useful and beautiful springs forth in abundance, and the air is filled with the grateful odour of simple wayside flowers. Everything speaks of opening life fit and beautiful in its season, as designed by our God in His boundless wisdom. The very lambs playing on the grass, or following their dams with gentle cry, tell out in their enjoyment, the goodness as well as the power of the Creator who has given them being.

We have spring-time in the East, vividly and with great sweetness, described by King Solomon in his beautiful "Song of Songs," "Lo the winter is past, the rain is over and gone; the flowers appear on the earth; the time of the singing of birds is come, and the voice of the turtle is heard in our land. The fig-tree putteth forth her green figs, and the vines with

the tender grape give a good smell." (Chap. ii. 11-13.)

These words have a deep spiritual meaning to the people of God, beyond the mere mention of natural things. For their hearts will yet rejoice in the blessing God will give in richest fulness on the earth in days which are still to come. But even now, the believer ought to accept with thankfulness every ray of sunshine, every drop of dew, or shower of rain which God sees fit to send. All comes to us His undeserving creatures, in the purest unmerited grace which the heart can conceive. To give in grace proves the goodness of the Giver, bestowed on those who have no claim upon Him, but who deserve severity.

Some years ago I was sitting in a garden in Scotland when I learned a lesson which I shall endeavour to tell you, simple though it is. It was a bright day in summer and as I sat alone, I was greatly enjoying both the quiet stillness of the place and the sunshine. Seeing a little worm creep on the grass before me, and not being

particularly occupied at the time, my eye watched its twistings and turnings with some degree of interest. The tiny creature had a small but disagreeable burden in the shape of a piece of straw. Every effort to get rid of this little trouble seemed useless, and still the worm writhed and wriggled in its vain attempts.

All unknown to this helpless creature was the presence of a human being, and aid was at hand though it knew it not. The worm needed not the moral teaching which I did, but I felt its value and my privilege as I stepped forward and lightly removed the irritating straw. It did me good to see the little worm's relief, and made me long to give to others the valuable lesson which God then taught me by a tiny worm and its conscious burden. Does your little heart not know already what it is to carry a burden that makes it ache for sorrow, and causes you to drop many a tear that fills the eye in spite of yourself? At such a moment you may be led to think of this little worm and how its burden was relieved

by the hand of another. The creature tried every movement but without succeeding, so that it had no part in obtaining the removal of its troublesome load. But pity moved the heart of an onlooker, and a hand was put forth to help the little sufferer which could not help itself. Go—dear child—in your weakness, and carry your sorrows to our God who is mighty to save. You will find relief from your burden, and know better the meaning of grace than by the feeble example I have given.

Did you ever take up a simple flower and look into some of its hidden and tiny beauties? When examining the formation of such a small but lovely thing, one wonders at the matchless workmanship of the great God of the universe! Man may imitate the handiwork of God even in the making of a flower, yet he must always come very far short in his imitation of the reality. What human hand could make anything to equal the daisy of the field or the sweet little violet that nestles under the hedge?

Even a simple blade of grass is far beyond human skill to produce, though God has covered, one may say, the whole surface of the wide earth with this common herb of never-wearying green. The bright gay flower that blooms and fades, and the grass amid which it finds its home, alike speak to us from God of the fleeting days of life down here. David, the king of Israel, thus wrote of you and me in Psalm ciii.: "As for man, his days are as grass; as a flower of the field, so he flourisheth. For the wind passeth over it, and it is gone, and the place thereof shall know it no more." In beautiful and striking contrast are the words which follow. "But the mercy of the Lord is from everlasting to everlasting upon them that fear him."

I know you like to hear about birds and their nests, so we must not forget to speak of them in the happy days of spring. Sweetly indeed do these little creatures tell forth the wisdom and goodness of the Creator in their brief joyous lives. Whether chirping as they work, or singing out

of pure delight, or quietly resting on a branch of a tree, they enjoy to the full all that God has provided for them. It does one good to observe these feathered friends—the workmanship of the same divine hand that has created us. Are we as happy and contented all the day in our superior place, as these little birds are in their own sphere—the creatures of God?

Instead of writing more on this subject, I shall quote another poem to you from the school-book which I have already mentioned, entitled—

"THE NESTS OF BIRDS."

"The skylark's nest among the grass
And waving corn is found;
The robin's on a shady bank,
With oak leaves strew'd around.

The wren builds in an ivied thorn,
On old and ruin'd wall;
The mossy nest so cover'd in,
You scarce can see at all.



The martins build their nests of clay,
In rows beneath the eaves;
The chaffinch builds with moss and hair,
And not a crevice leaves.

The cuckoo makes no nest at all;
But through the wood she strays,
Until she finds one snug and warm,
And there her eggs she lays.

The sparrow has a nest of hay,
With feathers warmly lined;
The ringdove's careless nest of sticks
On lofty trees we find.

Rooks build together in a wood, At the summit of a tree; The owl will build inside a barn, Or where it cannot see.

The blackbird's nest of grass and mud In bush and bank is found; The lapwing's darkly spotted eggs Are laid upon the ground.

The magpie's nest is made with thorns
In leafless tree or hedge;
The wild-duck and the water-hen
Build by the water's edge.

Birds build their nests from year to year According to their kind; Beauty marks some, and neatness some, And simpler ones we find.

The habits of each little bird,
And all its wondrous skill,
Are surely taught by God Himself
And guided by His will."





LETTER IV.

The Spring-Time of Youth.

HY do you go away? a little boy once asked, as he watched me preparing to leave his happy home in the south of England. "Because I think the Lord is sending me elsewhere," I replied, looking down

on the little upturned face. A sweet and trusting spirit was his, but the heart's affection was being tried and keenly felt the strain upon it. Sorrow at the prospect of parting was a very real thing to that dear child, and a little conflict seemed going on between faith and affection. A few moments passed in which he sat quietly thinking, then suddenly a bright thought struck

the childish mind, and in triumph he inquired, "But if the Lord send you back, you will come again, won't you?" "Yes," I said, "unless He come Himself first." "Oh then!" he exclaimed, with great delight, "we shall both go up in the air, to meet Him, shall we not?"

Life has its days of spring as well as this fair earth on which we live, and the little boy of whom I write was a good example of this. He was five years old then, and like the bud opening in the early months of spring, so were the workings and growth of his infant mind. Many of his sayings were pleasant and interesting to me, but I must not tell you more, as he may read this himself, for he is still in the spring-time of youth, though a few years older now.

These early years form a very important part in the history of every human being who passes through them on to later days. The beginning of life in this world is like the opening season of the year. As days grow into weeks, and weeks into months, so the babe grows from infancy to childhood, and from childhood into youth. This is the gentle spring of the young and joyous spirit, which, knowing little either of itself or the world in which it lives, is full of hope and expectation. As life thus speeds on to maturity, the character is being formed for the future, by various and almost unnoticed influences. Youth is the sowing-time, and God says "Whatsoever a man soweth, that shall he also reap." The habits which you form in childhood, will, more or less, remain with you in after life. How important then it is, not only to do that which is right, but to do the right thing in the right way as well. The motive for doing a thing may be quite what it should be, and yet your mode of doing it may be very wrong indeed.

I shall give you an instance of this, by telling you of a little boy living in Ireland, who is about your own age, who meant well, but made a mistake in carrying out his desire. Only a few weeks ago, I called to see his mother, and found her sitting with five of her children all busy around her. Some were sewing, others knitting, and the only boy in the group was undoing the sewing of a garment which required mending. He had been told to take out one sleeve and that he did nicely, but going on to do the same with the other, the mistake began to which I refer. The work which he was patiently undoing with willing hands and happy heart, had to be re-sewn only a few minutes after by a friend who came in and joined the group. That little boy was right in obeying his mother in the first part, and in his continued desire to do so, but wrong in doing more than he was told.

To you, dear child, who are now in the springtime of life, I cannot say too strongly—if you would live the life which God sets before you in His word as the only right one, then let Him sow in your heart now, the good seed of His own precious truth. I write as one who was early taught to trust the Lord, and can heartily say, you cannot do so too young. There are few things which one called in youth prizes more in later years, than the fact of the soul having been early brought under the power of the word, which reveals the sinner's lost condition and Jesus Christ as a seeking Saviour. I remember well the gladness of my heart when, after knowing that I was lost, I learned by the Spirit of God through the scriptures, that the Saviour was seeking me. Dear child! you are lost unless Jesus the Son of God has found you, and if He has, His joy is far greater than yours can ever be.

Take the word as really written for your benefit, and listen to the voice of God speaking in that book to you. If you do thus hear His voice and obey, depend upon it, that will be a precious sowing-time for eternity. Valuable and lovely will be the actions produced as the fruit of this divine seed—every growth from which is beautiful and lasting. But oh! dear child, be very watchful that your cunning enemy, Satan, may not catch away the good seed of the word, as was the case with the wayside hearer of whom we read in chapter xiii. of Matthew's Gospel!

Not long ago, I stood by the death-bed of a child of God in a crowded city. He had spent the prime of his manhood in its delusive pleasures, but the recollection of the past brought no joy or comfort to him. Why, think you? Because he had lived for himself only, and, as he said, he could give to his life no other name than ungodly. He saw, on looking back, how thoroughly he had been without God. The Holy Spirit convicted him of sin during an illness in the last few months of his life, and then gave him "peace with God through our Lord Jesus Christ." How often I heard him mournfully regret that his youth and manhood had been wasted beyond recall, and that now he had let every opportunity pass of being in the world for God! But the grace of God reached him in spite of neglect and self-will, and he could thank God, that it was not yet too late.

"Oh! what a Saviour is Jesus the Lord!
Well may His name by His saints be adored!



He has redeem'd them from hell by His blood, Saved them for ever and brought them to God. Jesus the Saviour is mighty to save, Jesus has triumph'd o'er death and the grave.

Now in the glory, He waits to impart

Peace to the conscience, and joy to the heart;

Waits to be gracious, to pardon and heal

All who their sin and their wretchedness feel."

Did you ever see people running to catch a train? or do you know what it is to enter a station just as the long line of carriages is moving off on its journey? I remember once walking a couple of miles intending to take the train for the remainder of my journey home. It was a pleasant evening in summer, and we had walked too slowly down the country road to be in time. Consequently when we saw the station all quiet and still, it was not much of a surprise to learn that the train had left, and we were too late. The thought of being "too late" struck us both with moral power, and my friend remarked in keeping with my own feeling—"Well, we shall

not be too late for heaven," or words to that effect. Missing the train was really no great loss, but it made us think and speak of the grace of God that had brought us to Christ in time.

And now I end this little letter with a poem which I think you will like; it is called—

"THE SPRING JOURNEY."

"Oh, green was the corn as I rode on my way,
And bright was the dew on the blossoms of May,
And dark was the sycamore's shade to behold,
And the oak's tender leaves were of emerald and gold.

The thrush from his holly, the lark from his cloud,
Their chorus of rapture sung jovial and loud;
From the soft vernal sky to the soft grassy mound,
There was beauty above me, beneath, and around.

The mild southern breeze brought a shower from the hill,
And yet, though it left me all dripping and chill,
I felt a new pleasure, as onward I sped,
To gaze where the rainbow gleam'd broad overhead.

Oh, such be life's journey, and such be our skill,

To lose in its blessings the sense of its ill;

Through sunshine and shower may our progress be even,

And our tears add a charm to the prospect of heaven."

(Heber.)



LETTER V.

Seed Sown in Spring.

EFORE passing on to another subject, I should like to tell you a little of a very interesting springtime in the town where I am at present. Those happy months are past and gone, but they have

been a sowing-time for many, and their results will abide for ever. God has been working in a wonderful way in the salvation of souls, and giving also, a great increase of joy to His own beloved people. First He sent a gifted and faithful evangelist into our midst, and then led His own to ask and expect great blessing as the result.

Our giving God, who never disappoints the cry of the Spirit within His children, very soon began to work mightily. Many, many a soul was brought out of darkness into light, and made to rejoice in God's salvation. One marked feature in this work, was the number of young people who got peace in believing on the Son of God as their Saviour. Everyone thus trusting must be saved, for God has said, "Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved and thy house." Not a few of these have expressed a desire to come to the table of the Lord, there to eat bread and drink wine, in remembrance of Him, through whose death they have life.

I do not intend to tell you how any of these dear souls were brought to Christ, though each doubtless has an interesting history to relate, shewing forth the grace of God. But I should like to tell you a little about the conversion of an Irish factory girl, though I cannot give the exact words in which she expressed herself. It was God's spring-time with her, and the seed He then

sowed in her heart, has brought forth fruit, and will yet more and more, I trust. I listened with great interest as this dear child of God told me of those days when the Holy Spirit spoke to her heart and conscience, and showed her God's Christ as her Saviour.

Between two and three years ago, the young woman of whom I write, was as heedless and careless about the salvation of her soul as she could be. Fond of fun and frolic, it was her delight to pass off with a laugh and a jest, everything serious that came in her way. With no thought beyond that of present enjoyment and the honest earning of her bread, she sought not a Saviour, and saw no beauty in Him. But the Good Shepherd was following her in patient long-suffering, and He knew, that ere long, that lost sheep would be happy on His shoulders, and He rejoicing over her.

A young friend working in the same factory, asked whether she would like to go with her to a gospel meeting. An evangelist who had been

much used to the conversion of souls, had come to the town, and the invitation was to hear him. The girl who invited, had herself got blessing, and she was anxious that her companion should get the same. Her desire was evidently of God, and He owned and granted it for His own glory.

Well, the working-day came to a close and the hour of meeting drew near. Each of these girls might have been seen hurriedly preparing to go, for there was little time between leaving the factory and the hour at which the preaching began. Together they wended their way through crowded streets and narrow bye-ways, till the hall was reached, where the gospel meeting was to be held. How differently they felt, those two young hearts, as they neared the door to enter there! One knew it to be a place where her soul had been stirred to its depths; the other cared little or nothing about the whole thing. The lost sheep was going headlong on in waywardness, but the Good Shepherd was very near to seek and to find the wanderer still.

I must not tell you all the particulars, but only a few, so I shall pass over the preaching and the preacher, to tell you the effect of the former on the wayward heart of that thoughtless girl. God's word convicted her, and she began to see that she needed salvation. There was the first step—to know herself a sinner. The next thing was, how to find the Saviour. A gentleman spoke to her after the meeting was over, and gratefully does she still recall his words. A friend afterwards walked home with the two girls, and he, too, seemed to have a message from God to her. Still that poor troubled heart found no peace or rest, and in spite of every effort to throw off the feeling, she became really anxious.

In this uncomfortable state of mind, the girl reached her home, and soon retired to rest. Before leaving the kitchen, however, she contrived to slip away from it a large type Testament which belonged to her mother. It was not in daily use, so she expected that no one would miss it. Thus carrying with her the "sword of

the Spirit," she went to her room, there to read that blessed holy book, which was able to make her wise unto salvation. Still no peace, no rest broke in upon the unspoken trouble that disturbed her youthful mind. The scripture which she had read was Romans iii., and God had therein only further shewn her the wickedness of the human heart and her own sad condition. Sleep came at last to that sorrow-stricken girl, but even then God spoke, for in the middle of the night, she awoke with a deepened sense of unforgiven sins upon her. She could not speak, but in her heart in silence she cried to God for mercy, for it seemed to her then, that it must be at that moment or never. In an agony of distress, she was enabled to see that God was the One who had sent His Son to be her Saviour; yet peace she knew not even then.

The following morning found her early astir preparing to be at her work at six o'clock. She had risen from her bed, mentally promising that she would do better that day than she had ever

done before. With that resolution she went to the factory, only to find how impossible it was to carry out a good intention in her own strength. The fear of death was before her soul, and dread of the judgment which must follow made that young and merry heart grave, sad, and thoughtful. What was to be done she knew not, but in utter wretchedness of spirit, she resolved to leave the factory for that day, and seek the help of some Christian in whom she had confidence.

A little circumstance revealed her sinful helplessness, and made her tremble afresh. Stooping to fasten her shoe, she broke the strap in her nervousnesss and hurry, when a naughty word escaped from her lips in the impatience of the moment, and she could only despise herself for that which, she had become conscious, was sin. She then thought all hope was gone, and in utter despair gave up the idea of seeking the help of another. Ah! little knew that chosen one, that she had the best of help close at hand, when the Spirit of God was thus winning her to Christ! Evening came, and once more this truly convicted girl found her way to the meeting. Preaching, conversation, prayer, all served their purpose, as anxiously her soul sought peace. Then the truth contained in the latter part of the third chapter of the gospel by John brought light to that poor troubled heart and her spirit was made to rejoice in God her Saviour. The words on which her soul rested are contained in the last verse of the chapter. "He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life; and he that believeth not the Son shall not see life: but the wrath of God abideth on him."

By the time, however, that home was reached, and the girl found herself in the quiet of her room, that new-found happiness was gone, and in distress she turned to the New Testament as before. There she read "Perfect love casteth out fear." By grace she was then enabled to believe in the perfect love of God towards her, and His peace filled her soul. Now it is manifest in her

life, and she can "joy in God through our Lord Jesus Christ."

"Christ the Lord has come in grace,
Lived and died in this dark place,
Shone as "Light" and "Love" below,
Passing on to Calvary's woe.

He who filled the throne above;

Here reveal'd God's wondrous love,
Came to do His holy will,
Died, the Father's house to fill.

Died beneath the hand—the rod Of a righteous, holy God, There made sin upon the tree, That the sinner might be free.

He who once for sinners died, See Him now the glorified! Raisèd from among the dead, Set o'er all things there as Head.

Flee for refuge, sinner flee
To the One who died for thee;
Now from Him salvation flows,
Soon the door of grace will close."

(G. W. F.)



LETTER VI.

Summer Months.



LTHOUGH you dearly love the congenial spring, it is still more pleasant to have long days and a glowing sun of summer, is it not? All nature rejoices in the welcome warmth, and are there any who do

not delight in the additional daylight which this season brings? There is gladness in its sunshine, and a healing virtue in the soft and balmy air, cheering and strengthening both mind and body.

With summer-time in B— came the visit of another well-known evangelist who preached with a truly God-given power. Few were the weeks that we were privileged to hear him, but great was the blessing which he brought to us from God. No matter how hot the days, or how delicate the health of the preacher, the glad tidings of God's salvation were freely made known, and many a soul rejoiced therein.

It would have interested you to have heard a request which he uttered to God one evening for the children of the household amongst whom he knelt. Mentioning each by name, he asked that God might not allow Satan to get a bit of any of them, but that He might get glory to Himself in their young lives. Oh let this be your case, my dear young friend! let God have His own way with you, that He may be glorified in your life being henceforth spent for Him. Thank God! there are many who are seeking to live for Him down here, and you may help to swell a happy rank of precious blood-bought ones on their way to glory.

Long days brought light and mild evenings, and these were graciously permitted by God to

be used for Him. Then the voices of other evangelists were often heard, resounding through the open streets. The message was that of God's love to a ruined world, and His remedy in the gift of His Son. I should like to tell you a little of one such open-air preaching, for I know you would have been pleased to have seen that little company as I did.

The evening was dry, and the air soft and pleasant, so that the weather was all that one could have desired in that respect. The place was the corner of a thickly populated street where many lived in need of the gospel of God's grace. The hour was one when those who had been engaged in factories or work-shops during the day had a little leisure in which to listen without distraction.

The evangelist was a young man particularly fitted for that kind of work, and God had already used him much in the conversion of souls. His voice was clear and distinct as it rang through the stillness of the summer air. His preaching

was of that awakening character fitted to make the sinner see the folly of delay and the reality of having soon to meet His God. In addition to this, one solemn fact was held forth, and repeated with power, which must have stirred the consciences of many. That was, that the Lord Himself will soon return, and after that, all hope for the unsaved who have heard and refused the gospel, will be gone.

Oh, how solemnly have I heard him repeat those words of holy writ which might well make every listening sinner quake!—"When once the master of the house is risen up, and hath shut to the door, and ye begin to stand without and to knock at the door, saying, Lord, Lord, open unto us; and he shall answer and say unto you, I know you not whence ye are depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity."

My dear little child! would you be shut out to listen to those awful words if the Lord should now rise up and shut the door? or would you be inside with Himself in glory? These are questions which can easily be answered now by "yea" or "nay." You know whether you are trusting in Christ for your salvation, and if you are, that holds good for ever. Or are you one of "the fearful and unbelieving" mentioned in the Revelation, who are to be cast into "the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone"?

Let us return however to the preacher and his preaching, as once more we join, in memory, that little group. The scripture read was John iii., and the necessity of the new birth as there taught, was clearly pressed upon the people.

A pleasant sight indeed it was to look upon that listening company. Side by side with the evangelist stood some who were his brothers in Christ, ready to help the servant of God in any way they could. Two or three converted women were a little behind, standing there for Christ's sake, but in a more retired place. Such were those who knew the gospel and were interested in hearing it again in the streets and highways.

The hearers took up their places somewhat

differently. Close to the preacher stood a little circle of ragged children, some eagerly listening, others full of play and fun unable to be still for so long a time. A still wider circle was formed of women and girls, whose homely dress told that wealth was not their portion here. Scarcely one wore a bonnet, but the shawl thrown over the head marked them as the usual type of Irishwomen whom one sees in such parts of the town. Those who wore no shawl did without head-covering of any kind. Some men were there, from youth to old age, but they were few compared with those I have described.

The young, the old, the middle aged, stood around, eagerly listening in the summer twilight, to the words of life from the Book of God. Many babies were there too, held in the arms of the mother or grandmother who could not be present without the children. I followed one woman to her cottage, whither she was going with her little ones. I asked her if she were not able to remain longer, as I was sorry for her to

lose any of the preaching. "Oh!" she said, "I only wish to put the children to bed, and then I am going back to listen." In a very short time she had returned to the spot, and stood earnestly taking in the words which fell from the preacher's lips.

Only think for a little of the importance of that moment which you possess at present—that "Now" which is God's time to give salvation! Think too of the solemn choice which Joshua put before the people of God, as given to you:— "Choose you this day whom ye will serve." Can you, from the heart, echo the words of that faithful servant of God, as he continued to say, "As for me and my house, we will serve the Lord." "To serve the living and true God," as the Thessalonians did, we must first have turned to Him from everything that is opposed to Him. They "turned to God from idols."

"Those who are young, O God Make them Thine own;



Hear from Thy blest abode,
Make them Thine own;
Now in their early days,
Turn them to Thy blest ways,
Save from the giddy maze,
Make them Thine own."

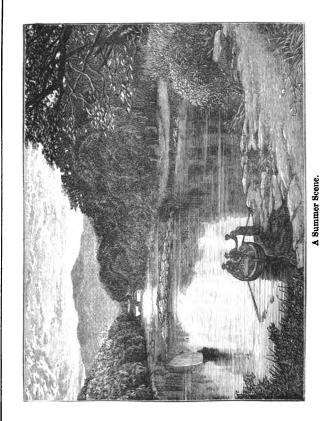
It needs not an easy life down here to make the heart happy and bright, and God can make even the most painful circumstances channels of joy direct from His heart of love. To illustrate this, I should like to tell you a very touching story which I heard a servant of God relate, shewing how the spirit may be perfectly happy even amid intense bodily suffering. Two young ladies had been brought to Christ, and were very desirous that others whom they knew, should know their precious Saviour. In the circle of their acquaintance, there was one infidel gentleman who told them that he did not believe there was such a person living as one born of God. I do not quote his exact words, but only the meaning of those he uttered. "Shew me one," he said,

"and I'll believe." A suffering sister in Christ was known to them, and to her sick-room they took this sceptic, doubtless counting on God for blessing.

The invalid was tossing on her couch in an agony of pain, taking notice of no one, but speaking only to God. Too ill to pay any attention to the three who entered, she continued unhinderedly to pour out her thoughts into the Father's ear. Her cry was not for relief, nor yet for release, but with a heart full of thanksgiving, her lips overflowed with praise to God in her affliction. The unbelieving stranger stood astonished before such an unusual occurrence for his eyes to see, and his ears to hear—the body suffering, the spirit free to give thanks, and the soul rejoicing in the Saviour-God!

Pale with emotion, and trembling with fear, that strong man was there and then bowed before the Holy One whom he had disowned. It was not pity alone which made the tears flow thick and fast, but his soul was touched by the Spirit of God. He saw his own folly as he learned the power and reality of that which divine power could work out in a human being. He was henceforth enabled to own God true, and himself a sinner. That sick-room scene convicted the infidel, and his life was, by the grace of God, changed from that of unbelief to one of faith.





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LETTER VII. Summer Scenes.



THINK you would be interested in knowing a little about the country from which these letters are written to you. My first speaks of the County Down, but my present dates from the County Antrim.

Never having set foot on any other part of Irish soil than these two counties, I can, as yet, only tell you of them.

One interesting feature of this part of Ireland is the number of caves which abound, particularly round the coast of Antrim. The name itself is supposed to have been originally, "Tir an niam," meaning "the land of caves." There are other

suppositions as to the origin of "Antrim," however. Many of these caverns have been formed naturally, while others have been made by the inhabitants of the north of Ireland centuries ago. The natural ones are considered to have been the result of one kind of rock crumbling to pieces, while that of a harder character surrounds the gap thus made, and remains firm. Hence the cave becomes an interesting instance of the changes which have taken place during the past ages of the earth's history.

There are other caves of a different character, which have been formed by man for a distinct purpose. These were usually built of unhewn stone, underground, and in the localities where they exist, they are called "coves." Both kinds of caves seem to have been used in troublous times, as hiding-places from the enemy. The natural ones were therefore probably enlarged and arranged, so that they might afford suitable shelter to the people who took refuge within them.

A very interesting example of such a cave district is to be found in one of the Antrim mountains, which in former days was called " Reann Uamha." Such were the Irish words for "the hill of the caves," which have now given place to the plain English name of Cave Hill. A grand old spot it is too, with its stern and rocky head rising to the height of nearly 1,200 feet. The fresh breezes which blow over its towering cliff, the purple heather which stretches far and wide upon its summit, the interesting caves scooped out on its side, have each a charm of their own. Add to these a magnificent view spread out in front, behind, on the right hand, and on the left, and you can believe that the person who reaches the top of Cave Hill, need not have spent his labour in vain.

The distance from the town of Belfast is only about three miles and a half, and this is now made very easy by a steam tram-car, which runs to within a short walk of the base of the hill. For those who prefer to go on foot, the road is

very pleasant, and rich in vegetation on every side. Such was the method I adopted, as my object was not sight-seeing, but to inhale God's fresh free mountain air, of which the body stood in need.

It was a pleasant day in August, when summer had not quite departed, yet was merging into the mellowness of autumn. Rain had fallen during the early part of the day, but only sufficient to allay the dust. The sun was not disagreeably hot, and the air was as genial and reviving as one could have wished. Our walk towards the hill lay along the road which leads to the town of Antrim, though my steps were not bent quite towards such a far-off destination.

Ascending the front of the hill by a narrow path, known as "the sheep's walk," the way became more and more steep as we neared the top. When that point was reached, however, I felt abundantly repaid for any strength spent in climbing. The bracing air became a wind fit to

blow one over the cliff, yet it seemed to me to come directly from the hand of God, so distinctly did I feel that He had given it. Yes, and all around lay land and sea of God's creation, bathed in His pure sunlight, in rich and varied beauty. Very faintly can I describe the scene to you, but I shall try to give you some idea of it as it met my eye that day.

Mingled in that view, were the works of God and those of man, but the contrast was great, and it was a relief to turn from the busy stir of the town to the quiet country life. Still, God is over all, and without the skill He has given, man could do nothing, but would be powerless even to be of service to himself. One sad thought, however, enters into any bright scene on earth of the works of God, and that is the presence of sin, which defiles it all at the present moment. Not a spot on this beautiful earth can be looked upon as stainless, till that day when God will cleanse and beautify it according to His own perfect holy thoughts and mind. God's Son has

been put to death on it, and He has not forgotten that crowning act of the wickedness of man.

Standing on the brow of the hill, it was quite a relief to me to turn the eye from those tall chimneys on the right, to the rich vegetation of the valley spread out at our feet. For the quiet stillness reigning there, formed a striking contrast to the smoke, and stone, and brick, which everywhere met the eye in the busy town of Belfast. Beyond the valley lay the bay formed by the river Lagan, known as Belfast Lough. There too, man's ceaseless activity was manifest, for the harbours were filled, and the waters dotted with many a funnel, sail, and mast. Still onwards from that restless scene of shipping traffic, a watery expanse spread out in the distance, till the coast of Scotland bounded the far extended view. Such was the scene before me, while only a glance to the left, brought Ailsa Crag in sight, rising clear and distinct out of the grey waves which surge around it.

Turning the eye farther to the left, but

nearer my stand-point, the hills which skirt the Antrim coast stood boldly out, while Slemish mountain raised its interesting head in solitary state. Alone it rises 1,437 feet from the valley, and has memories which must ever be grateful to many an Irish heart. For there the first missionary who carried the gospel to the island, is said to have laboured for many years. While a boy of sixteen, and engaged in hard work and toil there, the missionary known as "Saint Patrick," formed the idea of giving himself to the preaching of the gospel in this country. His desire was carried out at that very place in later years.

I need scarcely tell you that, though men have put his name in the list with those whom they call saints, none but God can make a saint in reality. When God, by His grace, washes a sinner in the blood of Christ, He calls that saved one "a saint," because thenceforth he is separated to a holy God for ever. From the accounts which we hear of that Irish missionary, he does

seem to have been truly a saint of God, because trusting in Christ for salvation. But happily, there have been many more such in the past history of the world, and there will be, through the grace of God, still more till the Lord return.

Turning to the left from where Slemish mountain met the eye, till the back was towards the valley and bay, a brilliant scene opened out as we passed onwards. The sun was sinking in the western sky, and in its passing light, Lough Neagh lay glittering like a sheet of silver in dazzling purity. As the largest lake of fresh water in the United Kingdom, that lough is of no small importance. It is nearly fourteen miles long, and eight and a half wide, while its shore measures almost sixty-three miles, and touches five counties.

Once more looking down from the brow of the hill, towards the right of the point whence we first started, we looked on the bright waters of Strangford Lough, running far into the centre of the County Down. From these, one long look on the Mourne Mountains, which stretch along the coast there, and though interesting the scene, we could only turn from it in order to descend the hill-side, ere nightfall. Then the view behind opened out before us, bringing the varied scenes of the country round to our view.

I think I have told you enough, however, to interest you in all that lay before my gaze that day, though I may simply mention in passing, two spots of interest to some. One is "Macart's Fort," the ruins of which stand on the top of the hill, and "Donegore Moat," which comes to view in the distance, when the fort is left behind. Like the busy town, however, we leave these works of man for other pens to write of, and other eyes to read than yours and mine.

The wild strawberries would have pleased your taste, and the purple heather your eye, had your little feet trod that Irish ground with me. But after all, the heart's happiness does not depend on these fading pleasures, but on that which God has given in all that is of Him. So that these natural things can bring no lasting joy, unless received from the Father's hand, who gave His well-beloved Son.

"He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

How one's heart delights to look forward to that happy day, when the new heavens and the new earth, will shew forth the holiness and purity of our God, our Creator. Well may it grieve us now, to think of so much meeting His eye and ear from the heart of man, that can only be hateful to a holy God. Be it yours, dear child, to seek to please Him always, in heart, and word, and ways!



LETTER VIII.

Antumn Memories.



I last letter told of the approach of autumn days as the summer departed, and now we must notice a little more that interesting season. Beautiful autumn! how soft and mellow its lights and shadows! how

rich and useful the fruits it yields! Yet thoughts of decline and decay sadden our hearts, when the withered leaf and the dark cold ground tell of the fleeting things of this earthly scene. Yes, like life itself, it comes, full of joys and sorrows, fraught with fruit and death, yet bearing to us this comfort—God gives or permits them all.

I cannot picture many of the autumn scenes of life in this green isle, such as harvesting the yellow grain, or digging and storing the farfamed Irish potatoes. But I can tell of constant heavy rains, which must have sorely hindered the husbandman's labours, and tried the faith of many of the Lord's people. Still, all comes in perfect wisdom, and the rain must be blessing when God sends it. The potato crop was considered very good, and that for Ireland, has an importance which you can scarcely understand. For in some parts, the food of many a child of your age, is little else than potatoes, varied with oatmeal, and buttermilk completes the fare.

Porridge is here sometimes called "stir-about," because of the way in which it is cooked, I suppose. Perhaps you do not know, however, how that is done: simply by dropping oatmeal out of the left hand into boiling water, in which is a little salt, and as it boils, stirring steadily with the right, till it is well mixed. You will see therefore, why the Irish child gives the oatmeal thus cooked, its simple name of stir-about. Oatmeal is also made into bread here as in

Scotland. Flour is baked in the same homely way, and many Irish people prefer their "soda bread" and "oaten farls," to any brought from a baker's shop. Potatoes are frequently baked in a similar way, and cost little.

There is much in this part of Ireland that reminds one of Scotland, in the habits and ways, as well as the language of the people. Though differing in accent, many of the expressions used are distinctly Scotch, while not a few moral traits seem the same. No wonder either, seeing that half the number of people in some thickly populated parts are traceable to Scotch origin. The surnames give one a distinct clue to this, and many of these shew the ancestry to have been lowland Scotch.

It is better for me not to speak of the various qualities which mark the people themselves. I shall leave you to find out for yourself, when you come in contact with them, should such ever be your lot. Suffice it for me to say, that human nature is the same everywhere.

The Irish child has just such a wicked, deceitful heart as you possess, and that which flows forth from it is of the same character: sinful actions—the outflow of a sinful nature.

The grace of God, too, is the same all the world over, and it is manifest in Ireland, I am happy to say. The outcome of that when displayed, is consistent with the character of Him who is the source, and that cannot be otherwise than perfect. Therefore the dear children of God here, bring forth by the Holy Spirit, the same blessed fruit as in other nations, to the praise and glory of His grace, who has made His own accepted in the Beloved. Hence it is the same old fact as elsewhere—all that is divine here is perfect, while all that is of man only evil, and that continually.

The land itself has seen troublous times in the past, and many a day of bloodshed it has witnessed. Now, through the mercy of God, peace and plenty reign to a great extent. Still, there might be a little more of both, if contentment were more common. However, we cannot

expect to see that, unless godliness is the spring of it, and then it becomes "great gain." And indeed, true godliness leads not only to a contented heart, but it calls forth much thankfulness besides. God has prospered many who in days of persecution stood fast for what they knew of Him.

A friend told me, only the other day, some interesting facts in connection with her family. The first of her ancestors who came to Ireland, was one who had fled from Scotland in days when the persecution of Nonconformists by Claverhouse spread terror through the land. Coming to this neighbouring isle with no inheritance as his on earth, save the courageous heart which beat within his breast, he took his stand here for that which he believed to be right and due to God. Let us hope that he may have known the Christ of God, and with Him, an "inheritance that fadeth not away," for without that, all the courage of earth would be valueless.

Time passed on, and the stranger from the land of persecution became a faithful tiller of

that soil which had afforded him at first only a resting-place. And as the years rolled on, from being a lonely refugee, he became the owner of fruitful fields in the land of his adoption. Generation after generation of his descendants have lived and died in the blessing as well as the responsibility of religious liberty, where he was once hunted as "a partridge on the mountains." But, better still, there are those in that family who have been born of God, whose home and inheritance are both on high. Such have a far higher portion than anything earth can afford, for they are "heirs of God and jointheirs with Christ."

Others, like that courageous man, have suffered for conscience' sake, and known what it was to be "destitute, afflicted, tormented" as they hid themselves "in mountains, in dens, and caves of the earth." Many here can rejoicingly tell of a period when a rich tide of blessing seemed to flow over the north of Ireland. I refer to the year 1859, to which many thankfully look back,

as the time of their conversion. Not a few precious souls then sprang into life, breathed upon by the Spirit of God, and saved as the result of God's gospel heard and accepted. Again and again since I came to Ireland, have I heard divine blessing traced back to "fiftynine," which is familiarly referred to as if all the world knew what the date meant. Ah, blessed, happy year! known indeed on high, as well as to every soul on earth which then received the blessing of God. Yes, and we who only hear it recalled, can rejoice in what God hath wrought.

A good deal of excitement is often manifested by an Irish crowd about little or nothing, shewing how easily a people may be stirred by trifles. This strikes me frequently in passing through the streets, observing as one does, how the most trivial occurrence attracts attention. I think I learned a little lesson about this one evening, by an incident on my way to a prayer meeting. A procession was coming up the street, and I suddenly found myself face to face

with a crowd. It would not have been very difficult to have passed through the line of people on my right, but for a commotion which stirred them just at that moment.

One young man seemed bent on enjoying himself in rather a troublesome way. He took to prancing about in front of the procession in such a turbulent manner as to give annoyance and attract the attention of the police. Foolish indeed he was in every respect, yet doubly so, when he chose as the scene of his folly a street in which a police station was situated. No sooner had he begun to career about, than one policeman darted from this side of the pavement, and another from that, to arrest him. The young man saw between whom he was and rushed forward to outrun them. In doing so, however, his way lay past the door of the police station, and in an instant several more ran out upon him, and he was soon taken inside, there to reflect on his foolishness.

My lesson was this—human nature in its

folly seeking a fleshly enjoyment—the law close at hand—the culprit overtaken—the punishment speedy and certain. Ah! thought I, is this not truly like the sinner sporting on the brink of destruction, and suddenly caught in the grasp of death and judgment? Such a moral scene is not alone enacted in Ireland, but everywhere the natural heart of man will display itself more or less, in foolish, sinful, actions and ways.

I remember years ago, when I was probably not older than you are now, having seen a sight that touched me deeply. It was that of a young man walking through a crowded town, hand-cuffed to a policeman on each side. Oh! how my heart, as a child, ached for that poor young man in the grasp of the law! and I never have been able to forget the scene! Once again, I saw a grey-haired gentleman in London, who was being accompanied by policemen to the jail as a prisoner. That, too, was a most painful sight, and though I knew literally nothing of

either culprit, the thought of the law and its power over them, moved me much.

My dear child! you and I, but for the grace of God, would be now in the power of the law, and fettered for ever, because of our guilt. Yet God is a God of all grace, and "now commandeth all men everywhere to repent." Oh let us thank Him for this day of grace, and endeavour to act out in our ways, those precious truths which He has made known in the gift of His Son. But first begin at the right place, which is owning your sins, and the judgment they deserve, as you turn to Him who once hung upon the cross. Can you truly say, "The Son of God was there for me"?

"Now peace by the cross has been made, God glorified here about sin; Foundation for blessing is laid And we have redemption therein."





LETTER IX. A Scotch Refingee on Frish Soil.



my last letter, I told you that Ireland has had its dark days of persecution, like many other christian lands. I mentioned the case of one Scotchman who left his own country, when up and down

through the land Graham of Claverhouse was hunting many a faithful one to death. The story has been written in rhyme, and has not a few points of interest which may be of profit to you. I therefore quote some lines here and there, to shew you how the deeds of respected ancestors are handed down from one generation to another. Greatly prized they are, too, and certain it is

that he who suffers for the word of God is justly held in honour and esteem.

When writing to you about the caves in this country, you will remember that the fact was mentioned of these being used as hiding-places in troublous days. Naturally-formed ones were used if within reach, or artificial caverns built to suit the purpose. Concealment and shelter were in this way afforded from the cruel zeal of heartless men. Thus it was with William Gilliland, when he took refuge on the shores of Ireland to save his life from Claverhouse and Dalzell. Yet the shelter of an Irish cave was at last denied him, for even that his cruel pursuers found ways and means to destroy, as we shall see.

How beautifully does the mercy and grace of God ever shine out above the hate and wickedness of the human heart! In spite of all that Satan may do to stir up men to deeds of death and blood, the people of God are always preserved till the divinely appointed time for their

departure. And after all, when he has done his worst, is it not joy to the objects of that enmity to enter into rest, and be for ever with the Lord? Till then, every persecuting blow, and every hardship endured, can be graciously used of God to make the suffering one cling the closer to Him.

"In vain to flee his enemies, he fled his native land;
Hot persecution waited him upon the Carrick strand;
His name was on the Carrick cross, a price was on his head,
A fortune to the man who brings him in, alive or dead!
And so on moor and mountain, from the Lagan to the Bann,
From house to house, and hill to hill, he lurked an outlawed
man.

At last, when in false company he might no longer bide, He stayed his houseless wanderings upon the Collin-side, There in a cave all underground, he made his heathy den. Ah! many gentlemen were fain to earth like hill-fox then! With hound and tishing-rod he lived on hill and stream by day,

At night between his fleet greyhound, and bonnie mare he lay."

The writer goes on to tell how the mind of the homeless wanderer was occupied in those days and nights of loneliness, but these thoughts we cannot follow further at the present moment. The long hours of daylight were spent beside the sparkling river, or on the mountain heath, and there the fish and game, which he easily caught, supported his natural life. The darkness of the night found him in the sweet forgetfulness of refreshing sleep, into which sorrow and care entered not, through the mercy of God who gave it. Between the occupations of the day, however, and the rest which followed at night, the heart of that lonely one seems to have known whither to turn for comfort in the hour of need. Four lines fittingly describe the close of the day, in the hour when he reverently owned his God.

"His blithe work done, upon a bank the outlaw rested now, And laid the basket from his back, the bonnet from his brow, And with his hand upon The Book, his knee upon the sod, He filled the lonely valley with the gladsome word of God."

The bonnet was the covering for the head

worn by Scotchmen in those days. The outlaw's attitude is beautiful to see, as uncovering under the canopy of heaven, and kneeling on the green sward, he fears not the chill of evening there. In no better way could he have comforted his heart over the past, and strengthened himself for the future, than with the precious word of the living God. How he was tested when his fierce enemies destroyed even the cave that sheltered him, is shewn by the following lines which describe the scene.

"It was a summer evening, and mellowing and still,
Glenwherry to the setting sun lay bare from hill to hill;
For all that valley pastoral held neither house nor tree,
But spread abroad and open all, a full fair sight to see,
From Slemish foot to Collin top lay one unbroken green;
Save where, in many a silver curve, the river glanced between.

And now upon his homeward way he crossed the Collin high,

And over bush and brake and brae, he sent abroad his eye,

But all was dark'ning peacefully in grey and purple haze,
The thrush was silent in the banks, the lark upon the braes—
When suddenly shot up a blaze! from the cave's mouth it
came;

And troopers' steeds and troopers' caps were glancing in the same!

He crouched among the heather, and he saw them as he lay, With three long yells at parting, ride lightly east away:

Then down with heavy heart he came, to sorry cheer came he,

For ashes black were crackling, where the green whins used to be."

The next sight which met the wanderer's sorrowful gaze, was his much-loved dog lying dead at the mouth of the cave, slain by the hand of a cruel trooper. His horse, too, had been stolen, as he feared, and lonelier than ever was the homeless one now, without a living thing to welcome him. In the heat of excitement, he plunged into the smoking ruin, but glad indeed he was again to leave the cave. The little he possessed and prized, had all been taken by these heartless men; and sick at heart, he turned to

breathe the fresh air once more. Then in the darkness which was fast gathering around him, he poured out his tale of grief, and found relief in uttering the thoughts of his heart.

"He reeled out of the stifling den, and sat down on a stone,
And in the shadow of the night, 'twas thus he made his
moan—

'I am a homeless outcast; I have neither bed nor board,
Nor living thing to look upon, nor comfort save the Lord:
Yet was the good Elijah once in worse extremity;
Who succoured him in his distress, He now will succour
me.'"

After bemoaning his sorrowful position for some time, and the absence of every creature he loved, the outlaw might have been seen setting out in an easterly direction in great haste. His object was the recovery of his horse, and in that he was soon successful, for he was able to come back on his treasured steed, instead of wearily on foot. We need not follow him on that errand, nor can we admire the example of retaking his property by force. It is enough to tell you that

the pursuers failed to overtake the horse and its rider, and both were soon in a place of safety. Beyond the enemy's cruel hand, and unseen by heartless foes, the hunted wanderer once more rested in a lonely spot, where quiet reigned and peace was found, in striking contrast to that which had gone before.

Thus it is with the bitterness that is known in life; the comfort which follows, is all the more valued because of what has preceded it. God in His unerring wisdom is pleased to give His children both the bitter and the sweet, and each is good as He sees fit to appoint. Doubtless, therefore, that weary hunted outlaw was as truly blessed when he crouched among the heather from human sight, as when wide acres were his, and a happy family surrounded him in a comfortable home.

The county of Antrim, in which this scene of bygone days took place, is a wonderfully fertile one. This is very much due to the character of the soil, formed by the wasting away of rocks. The latter abound in great variety, and even those which have long since crumbled into dust, are thus of value to us now. Hence the industrious farmer can make both peace and plenty abound, with the blessing of God upon himself and the fruit of honest toil.

Glenwherry, which is mentioned in the story, is the name of a small but interesting river, flowing from near Larne (a small town on the east coast) to a village of great antiquity called Connor, which is some miles inland, where the stream changes its name. The part of the country near this was, at one time, known as "The Glynns," because it has nine beautiful and interesting glens not far from each other. The scenery is considered very fine, and the vegetation rich, while there have been events of note in the past history of Ireland, which invest the locality with interest to its people.

I need only remind you that those famous columns of basalt, known all over the world under the name of "The Giant's Causeway," form part of the northern coast-line of this county. The cold grey sea washes the base of these wonderful pillars by night and by day, while silently they bear witness to the might and majesty of our God and Creator. Many a human eye has gazed thereon in wonder, while Irish tales and legends were poured into listening ears; but the believer can turn from man to God and say, "In wisdom hast Thou made them all; the earth is full of Thy riches!"





LETTER X.

Antnmn's Departure.

LOWLY but steadily the bright long days grew shorter and shorter, while chilly winds took the place of gentle breezes and balmy air. The green foliage of the trees grew brown and seared, the branches were

stripped and the fields looked bare. And as time sped on with constant pace, these autumnal days have been succeeded by the cold and damp of an island winter. For weeks, scarcely a day has passed without rain more or less, and one's waterproof needed to be an almost constant companion. The north of Ireland seems to me to get more rain than anywhere else

I have been, as yet. Now I think nothing of it, for rain and sunshine are alike good in the way God sees fit to send them.

It is curious to observe in such things how much we are creatures of habit. If used to much sunshine, we expect little else, and if in a wet climate, we get accustomed to the constant rain. Well is it for us that perfect wisdom arranges all, and that our lot is cast where God sees fit to place us. There are many mercies which are bestowed in common upon all the creatures of God, and how little gratitude do they call forth from the heart! God "maketh his sun to rise on the evil and on the good, and sendeth rain on the just and on the unjust."

Oh that we may learn more to rejoice in these common mercies, not only because they are good, but because they come from the hand of God! Always undeserved, and often unasked, they meet us at every turn, and we are daily loaded with benefits. But it needs a heart that knows God's Christ, fully to enjoy all that He

gives, for the sake of His Son. He is worthy, though we are not, and there is nothing too good for God to give to us, for His sake.

I have no doubt you would like to know a little about the animals to be found in Ireland. Well, I shall make no attempt to tell you of all, only a very little to interest you, ere I close my last letter at present. First, let me mention one well-known to you which is not known in Ireland. The little mound of earth which the busy mole raises in England and Scotland is a thing never seen here. The reason is simple—the mole is not to be found in the island at all.

Reptiles, too, which are common in England, are not so abundant in Ireland. Even some which have been brought over, do not seem to have taken to their new home in any sense, and have soon died out. Of course, I need not explain to you that the stories which tell of Saint Patrick's power in sending them out of the island cannot be true. It is not given to man to have such power over the lower animals,

although, as you know, great authority was given to Adam over them before the fall.

Seals are sometimes seen on the coast, and some have been caught, too, but these are very rare occurrences now. It is probable, however, that they did come more frequently in days gone by. This may be gathered from the fact that a part of the shore of the County Down is called Craig-a-vad, which means, "The seal's rock." A beautiful spot it is, too, where the lough is wide and deep, and the country around most interesting. The time when I saw it was a bright spring day when the clear sunshine seemed to turn everything into objects of beauty. To me it was a positive delight to walk by the lough, and return by the road, and I am sure, you too would have enjoyed being with us. But you were far off, and I must not take time to describe it now

The salmon is found in many rivers in Ireland, and also round the coast. In Lough Neagh the "Great Lake Trout" grows to such a large size,

that it has been known to weigh over 30 lbs. It receives the name of Buddagh from the fishermen there—a word which means a "big, fat fellow." The street cry here when fish is being sold, is by no means interesting or sweet to the ear. It makes one long at times, to have it suddenly changed into the melodious sound of "Caller Herrin'" given by the Newhaven fishwives near Edinburgh. Here, it is, "Any fresh fish a-wantin?"

The names of places and people would strike you as different to those you are accustomed to hear. The study would be an interesting one, but we cannot go deeply into it in this short letter. The prefix "Bally" abounds, for many are the names thus begun. On enquiring the reason, I found that the meaning of it is "town" now, though originally, it cannot have meant more than simply "a place" before towns were formed. Derry is said to mean "an oak wood," and we have this ending in the well-known name of Londonderry (generally simply

called "Derry") and many others not so familiar.

The syllable "Mac," too, is often found beginning the names of persons in the same way as in the highlands of Scotland. You may not know that it simply means "son of," just as "O'" and the prefix "Fitz" are attached to a word and have a similar meaning to the affix or ending of "son" in many English surnames. Doubtless then, we have here the descendants of Highland ancestors in those who bear the surname beginning with "Mac."

The country abounds in ancient things of one kind and another, which link the past to the present. The hands of living men have formed many a monument which meets our eyes now, but they have passed from the scene themselves in the long-forgotten past. Yes, and death too has left its certain mark in the graves of those who were held in human greatness here. Urns have been dug up in various parts of Down and Antrim, containing the ashes of the dead, as if

the body had been burned and the ashes preserved to be placed in the earth.

A carn is a heap of stones which seems to mark the spot where a body has been buried. Hills and lonely places have been favourite spots for such. Simple rough stones were all that were required, and ready hands to pile them over the resting-place of the departed. Where stones were not at hand, a mound of earth was raised instead.

The graves of earth's great ones were marked in a special way by very large stones put in remarkable positions. Some have the appearance of stone boxes, others take the shape and size of a very small room. Many of those are commonly called "Giants' graves." It is quite possible that the men thus considered great in the eyes of their fellows, may have done wonderful things, or had a position of power which made them remarkable. Imagination and superstition have added to stories of such men, as they have been passed down from generation to generation.

A building of a remarkable kind strikes the stranger in Ireland, and makes one wonder why it exists. I refer to the round tower, many examples of which are to be seen in this county. There is a famous one near the town of Antrim. I have not seen it myself, but I am told that it is nearly ninety-five feet high. The tower tapers to a point, and has windows near the top, pointing north, south, east, and west.

Ancient crosses dot the country, some cut on stone in the roughest manner, and others sculptured in granite. Alas! these only tell of man's thoughts and ways which are totally different from God's. The cross which it is intended to call to mind stands alone in the history of the world, and is to be remembered by faith, not by sight. I trust you may, young as you are, learn to refuse any *imitation* of that witness of the guilt of man, and the love of God, whether for religion, fashion, or ornament. Be it yours to shew that you consider the cross

too sacred a thing in your heart, to be held up before the natural eye!

And now, my dear little reader may have heard enough of Ireland and Irish people for the present. I must therefore bring my letters to an end. I had no thought of being in this island when I was your age, yet to-day am as happy in it as you can imagine. So, though you know it not, it is possible that you too may yet see Erin's Isle, and mingle with its inhabitants here as I am doing now. If you do, I trust you may have warm Irish hearts to welcome you, and more than all else, I desire that you may have the blessing of God wherever your footsteps may tread.

Far above these sea-girt isles, there gleams to the eye of faith a fairer, brighter, better land than mortal eye has ever seen—purer streets than earthly feet have ever trod, happier company than human hearts could ever know down here. There, in the glory at God's right hand, sits the Man Christ Jesus for me. Is He there for you, my reader? and shall we meet in the brightness of His presence, having entered in to go no more out for ever?

That it may be so, is the hearty wish of your true, if unknown friend,

G. W.



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A

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