

THE
FAMILY TREASURY

For 1876.

CONTAINING CONTRIBUTIONS BY WELL-KNOWN WRITERS IN ALL
DEPARTMENTS OF RELIGIOUS LITERATURE.



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THE
FAMILY TREASURY.

ON PILGRIMAGE.

Twas a Puritan who saw in his dream a town called Vanity, where a Fair is kept all the year round; and who tells of two honest wayfaring men that were sorely maltreated by the people frequenting it. The men could not help passing through the Fair. They were on a journey, and their road traversed it. But they were thoroughly inoffensive, and in a better place they would have been allowed to hold on their way without molestation. The Fair folk, however, were self-conceited and intolerant. They thought it ridiculous and impertinent and unbearable that anybody should speak differently and dress differently from themselves, and should refuse to employ their standard of value; and so a great hubbub arose in the town, which ended in the ill-treatment of both the pilgrims, and in the ultimate death of one of them.

Vanity Fair still continues to be held. Through it, as of old, the road leads to the Celestial City. And travellers Zionward are yet to be found in its streets. But the times have changed since Bunyan wrote; and Christian and Faithful, if they had lived in our day, might have managed to get through the town without personal suffering, and even without a very great deal of trouble. Nor is this merely because Lord Hategood and Mr. Superstition have gone to their own place. That the alteration is owing in part to that, there can be no doubt. But other things

have combined to make the pilgrimage easier. We have brought our philosophy to the help of our religion, and are now disposed to be eclectic and accommodating. Disliking above all things to be suspected of narrow-mindedness, we have entered into a sort of truce with the world. Puritanism, we have confessed, carried things just a little too far. There is really no need for anything "outlandish" in our dress, nor for anything provincial in our manner of speech. To say to any man who civilly asks us to buy something, "*We buy the truth,*" is obviously irrelevant, if not incoherent. Let us get out of the mist, and speak about spiritual things just as we do about ordinary matters; and the men of the world will respect what is good underneath, while they will have no excuse for getting out of patience with our affectations. So we have reasoned, and we have acted accordingly. Vanity Fair has been met about half-way, and we have imitated the people in it with such success that it is often quite impossible to detect the foreign accent in a pilgrim, or notice anything out of the fashion in the cut of his clothes. In plain terms, things have got so "mixed" now-a-days, that among the crowds in our streets it is difficult to distinguish those who are "pilgrims and strangers."

And yet these two terms most appositely describe the conditions of the Christian life. Those who live that life are "strangers" here. *Ubi Pater ibi Patria*—"Where one's father is, there is

Thus hath it chanced that, since the world began,
 No soul hath found its fellow; fates may blend
 In the close ties of lover, husband, friend;
 Yet, through some subtle difference, man from man

Severed, sees not his brother's innermost life.
 The lover his sweet mistress knows in part,
 And each to other half revealed in heart,
 Pass deathward, the true husband and true wife.

Shall heaven make all things plain? Nay; who can tell?
 Only, sick heart! like the sore-wounded dove
 Seeking her distant nest, *hold fast to love*,
 Till death's deep curfew tolls its vesper bell.

III.—A YEAR IN HEAVEN.

BY MRS. M. J. PRESTON.

A YEAR uncalendared;—for what
 Hast thou to do with mortal time?
 Its dole of moments entereth not
 That circle, infinite, sublime,
 Whose unreachèd centre is the throne
 Of Him before whose awful brow
 Meeting eternities are known
 As but an everlasting *Now!*

The thought uplifts thee far away—
 Too far beyond my love and tears;
 Ah! let me hold thee as I may,
 And count thy time by earthly years.

A year of blessedness, wherein
 No faintest cloud hath crossed thy soul;
 No throe of pain, no taint of sin,
 No frail mortality's control;
 Nor once hath disappointment stung,
 Nor care, world-weary, made thee pine;
 But rapture, such as human tongue
 Hath found no language for, is thine.
 Made perfect at thy passing,—who
 Dare sum thine added glory now,
 As onward, upward,—pressing through

The ranks that with veiled faces bow,—
 Ascending still from height to height,
 Fearless, where hushed the seraphs trod,
 Unfaltering 'midst the circles bright,
 Thou tendest inwards unto God?

A year of progress, in the lore
 That is not learned on earth: thy mind,
 Unclogged of clay, and free to soar,
 Hath left the realms of doubt behind;
 And mysteries which thy finite thought
 In vain essayed to solve, appear,
 To thine untaakèd inquiries, fraught
 With explanation strangely clear.
 Thy reason owns no forced control
 As held it here in needful thrall;
 God's secrets court thy questioning soul,
 And thou mayst search and know them all.

A year of love;—thy yearning heart
 Was always tender even to tears,
 And sympathy's responsive art
 Lent its warm colouring to thy years;
 But love, whose wordless ecstasy
 Had overborne the finite, now
 Throbs through thy saintly purity,
 And burns upon thy dazzling brow.
 For thou the Hands' dear clasp hast felt
 That show the nail-prints still displayed,
 And thou before the Face hast knelt
 That wears the scars the thorns have made.

A year without thee!—I had thought
 My orphaned heart would break and die
 Ere time had meek quiescence wrought,
 Or soothed the tears it could not dry.
 And yet I live,—to faint, to groan,
 To stagger with the woe I bear;
 To miss thee so! to moan and moan
 The name I dare not breathe in prayer!
 Thou praising, while I weakly pine,—
 Enraptured, while I sorrow sore;
 And thus betwixt thy soul and mine
 The distance widening evermore.

A year of tears to me;—to thee,
 The end of thy probation's strife,
 The archway to eternity,
 The portal of thy deathless life.
 To me, the corpse, the bier, the sod;
 To thee, the palm of victory given:
 Enough, my bruised heart!—Thank God
 That thou *hast* been a year in heaven!

IV.—THE PRESSED GENTIAN.

BY JOHN G. WHITTIER.

THE time of gifts has come again,
 And on my northern window-pane,
 Outlined against the day's brief light,
 A Christmas token hangs in sight.
 The wayside travellers, as they pass,
 Mark the gray disk of clouded glass;
 And the dull blankness seems, perchance,
 Folly to their wise ignorance.

They cannot from their outlook see
 The perfect grace it hath for me;
 For there the flower, whose fringes through
 The frosty breath of autumn blew,
 Turns from without its face of bloom
 To the warm tropic of my room,
 As fair as when beside its brook
 The hue of bending skies it took.