

## ETERNITY.

FROM ADDISON'S "SPECTATOR" AUG. 4, 1714.

A lewd young fellow seeing an aged Hermit go by him barefoot, Father, says he, you are in a very miserable condition if there is not another world. True, love, said the Hermit; but what is thy condition if there is? Man is a creature designed for two different states of being, or rather, for two different lives. His first life is short and transient; his second permanent and lasting. The question we are all concerned in is this, in which of these two lives it is our chief interest to make ourselves happy? Or, in other words, whether we should endeavor to secure to ourselves the pleasures and gratifications of a life which is uncertain and precarious, and at its utmost length of a very inconsiderable duration; or to secure to ourselves the pleasure of a life which is fixed and settled, and will never end? Every man, upon the first hearing of the question, knows very well which side of it he ought to close with. But however right we are in theory, it is plain that in practice we adhere to the wrong side of the question. We make provisions for this life as tho' it were never to have an end, and for the other life as tho' it were never to have a beginning.

Should a Spirit of Superior rank who is a stranger to human nature, accidentally alight on the earth, and take a survey of its inhabitants, what would his notions of us be? Would not he think that we are a species of beings made for quite different ends and purposes than what we really are? Must not he imagine that we were placed in this world to get riches and honours? Would not he think that it was our duty to toil after wealth, and station, and title? Nay, would not he believe we were forbidden poverty by threats of eternal punishment, and enjoined to pursue our pleasures under pain of damnation? He would certainly imagine that we were influenced by a scheme of duties quite opposite to those which are indeed prescribed to us. And truly, according to such an imagination, he must conclude that we are a species of the most obedient creatures in the universe; that we are constant to our duty; and that we keep a steady eye on the end for which we were sent hither.

But how great would be his astonishment, when he learnt that we were beings not designed to exist in this world above three-score-and-ten years? And that the greatest part of this busy species fall short even of that age? How would he be lost in horror and astonishment, when he should know that this set of creatures, who lay out all their endeavours for this life, which scarce deserves the names of existence, when, I say, he should know that this set of creatures are to exist to all Eternity in another life, for which they make no preparations? Nothing can be a greater disgrace to reason, than that men, who are persuaded of these two different states of being, should be perpetually employed in providing for a life of three-score-and-ten years, and neglecting to make provision for that, which after many myriads of years, will be still new, and still beginning; especially when we consider that our endeavours for making ourselves great, or rich, or honourable, or whatever else we place our happiness in, may after all prove unsuccessful; whereas if we constantly and sincerely endeavour to make ourselves happy in the other life, we are sure that our endeavours will succeed, and that we shall not be disappointed of our hope.

The following question is started by one of the schoolmen. Supposing the whole body of the earth were a great ball or mass of the finest sand, and that a single grain or particle of this sand should be annihilated every thousand years. Supposing then that you had it in your choice to be happy all the while this prodigious mass of sand was consuming by this slow method till there was not a grain of it left, on condition that you were to be miserable for ever after; or supposing that you might be happy for ever after, on condition you would be miserable till the whole mass of sand were thus annihilated at the rate of one sand in a thousand years; which of these two cases would you make your choice?

It must be confessed in this case, so many thousands of years are to the imagination as a kind of eternity, tho' in reality they do not bear so great a proportion to that duration which is to follow them, as a unit does to the great-

est number which you can put together in figures, or as one of those sands to the supposed heap. Reason therefore tells us, without any manner of hesitation which would be the better part in this choice. However, as I have before intimated, might in such a case be so over-set by the imagination, as to dispose some persons to sink under the consideration of the great length of the first part of this duration, and of the great distance of that second duration which is to succeed it. The mind, I say, might give itself up to that happiness which is at hand, considering that it is so very near, and that it would last so very long. But when the choice we actually have before us is this, whether we will choose to be happy for the space of only threescore and ten, nay perhaps of only twenty or ten years, I might say of only a day or an hour, and miserable to all eternity; or, on the contrary, miserable for this short term of years, and happy for a whole eternity; what words are sufficient to express that folly and want of consideration which in such a case makes a wrong choice?

I here put the case even at the worst, by supposing (what seldom happens) that a course of virtue makes us miserable in this life; but if we suppose (as it generally happens) that virtue would make us more happy even in this life than a contrary course of vice; how can we sufficiently admire the stupidity or madness of those persons who are capable of making so absurd a choice?

Every wise man therefore will consider this life only as it may conduce to the happiness of the other, and cheerfully sacrifice the pleasures of a few years to those of an eternity.

### NEGLECTED CHILDREN.

Some Remedy Needed for a Sad State of Affairs—Views of Physicians.

The recommendation of a coroner's jury, the other day, that the Legislature should pass a law to punish parents who do not give proper medical care to their children, has stirred up the medical profession to a considerable extent. Several practising physicians, who have been seen, are of opinion that the recommendation was a timely one and that it should be acted upon without delay.

One prominent doctor said yesterday: "Out of 105 little babies, of less than one year, who died last week, I have not the least doubt that at least one-half might have been saved by proper attendance. That is, indeed, a serious question, and one which should receive the attention of all men whose duty it is to look after the general welfare. Just think, more than fifty lives wasted in one week in one city! Out of a total 105, 98 were Catholic babies. Now this should show clearly, if nothing else would, that the large death rate is due to the want of proper care. I am a French-Canadian and a Catholic. I do not wish to be understood as saying that Catholic parents purposely neglect their children. I would rather say that generally the babies do not receive the care that they need because the parents are poor and cannot afford it. It is none the less a matter of concern for the Government. Only yesterday I was called to a house where a child of eight months had died, to give the required certificate. I called the coroner, who learned that the child had died of diarrhoea, and that not a drop of medicine had been given to him. When the coroner remonstrated with the parents, and said that a dog would not be allowed to die that way, the father replied that if he had an income of two or three thousand dollars, such as the coroner, he would have had a doctor."

"Now next door to where this baby died there was a family with twins of the same age. When the mother of the twins learned of her neighbor's baby's death, she remarked that 'God must be dreaming to take off that child, when she had had so much trouble with her own.' That same evening one of the twins died, and the other expired at noon to-day. They will be laid in the same coffin. Now, I cannot make a specific charge, but having seen the three babies, I am convinced that they were constituted to live had they been given the proper care."

"May I use your name?" asked the reporter.

"My name would not alter the facts," replied the doctor. "You must bear in mind that we are not public prosecutors and that we depend on the very people whom we might criticise for our living."

Dr. LaBerge, the head of the City Health department, was also seen. He

had no hesitation in saying that the large death rate among children was due to overcrowding. "The great proportion of Catholic babies who died as compared to Protestants is due in large measure to the fact that the former have more children than the latter. But overcrowding and want of care are the great evils. Take the ordinary workman's lodging of four rooms. Two of these are set apart for parlor and kitchen, and in the other two the eight or ten members of the family sleep. Most likely under the windows there is a privy pit. The air cannot but be vitiated, and medical authorities agree as to the fact that the largest number of cases of cholera infantum are due to impurities in the atmosphere. Then a baby is a delicate creature. It wants constant care. In a poor family the mother cannot be attending to her children all the time; and often she is not educated to do it in a proper manner. When a baby falls sick, if a doctor is called he can do little more than prescribe a diet; and I have known in my practice that the prescription is often disregarded by ignorant mothers."

"What is to be done? Well, there is first a question of education. I believe the Government could help progress in that direction. As to medical attendance, if it is going to be made compulsory the Government must supply the means to those who do not have them. I believe in that. I am a Socialist as far as that is concerned. I do not see that our Government should spend money to bring foreign immigrants until they have done everything possible to protect the lives of the children of the soil."

PROSELYTISING in the Pacific, is the title of a short but significant article in a recent number of the Liverpool Catholic Times. It runs thus:—

"Our contemporary, the Catholic Times of New Zealand, makes two serious charges against Sir J. B. Thurston, English High Commissioner for the Western Pacific. The High Commissioner is accused of attempting not only to proselytise the Catholics of Fiji into Wesleyanism, but of making use of the Government organ, Na Mata, or the Gazette, for the purpose of circulating atrocious libels on Catholics. Furthermore, Sir John, it is averred—apparently taking a few leaves out of books in circulation nearer home—has been distorting history to suit his purpose and prejudice Catholicism in native eyes. Sir John has been interviewed on the subject, and it is suggestive that his only answer is a tissue of rather coarse abuse of our contemporary. He has, in fact, 'unmitigated contempt' for it, but it is very probable that he will change the tune when his superior, Lord Ripon, has had his say in the matter. Unquestionably the case is one for immediate investigation. The charges are plain and direct, without a semblance of vagueness; and, besides, the files of Na Mata tell their own tale. Government gazettes on 'No Popery' is something we desire to be spared. Such tactics must be left to tolerate a goodly number. If High Commissioners in the restful regions of the Pacific find time hanging a little heavy on their hands, and would fain set their minds to some exciting task, it would be well to let them know that to proselytism and libels on Catholics there is a decided objection at the seat of Government. More congenial fields should be found for such doughty heroes."

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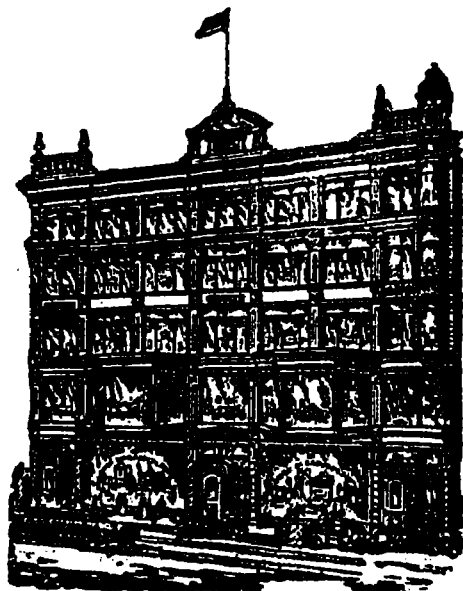
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