

A WORD ON MAKING THE BEST OF IT.

BY THE REV. P. WILSON, OF ST. CROIX, N. B.

In one of my rambles in the country, I saw beside the way two rustic cottages; doubtless very plain simple kind of folk lived in them; yet very opposite must have been the complexion of their characters.

The little cottage landscape became impressed upon my memory; and all the journey on in that soft air and under that summer sky, "making the best of it," was the subject to which this simple scene invited my leisure reflection.

I have known children of Christian parents depressed and discouraged in early days, because the worst was made of them. "It is useless teaching her music, she has no ear."

I have seen, in visits to the sick, the wondrous influence upon the invalid of a room made the best of. The medicine bottles were all put away, not placed in a regimental row upon the mantle-piece, reminding the sick girl that she had been "all that" ill.

I have before me a scene at the present moment witnessed many years ago. A christian mother had gathered around her a few girls, who in their leisure hours liked to enjoy the luxury of doing good.

But to come home. Certainly we ought to make the best of ourselves; if few of us can afford to do otherwise. In all humility of heart, but with all strength of will, the whole trinity of our nature, body, soul and spirit ought to be made the best of.

The body surely is not too mean a thing for thoughtful painstaking and care. Of course I do not mean that it is made the best of when it is bedecked with fine raiment, or bespangled with costly jewels, but I do mean that it might be suitably clothed, and more than all, scrupulously clean.

As to the mind, no one can doubt the power of industry in making the best of that. In his "Conduct of Life" Emerson asks, humorously enough, "Who can doubt the power of training who has seen the industrious bees?"

Take the heart also into this estimate, and think of human temper and tastes, likes and dislikes. Naturally we may be very fretful or resentful, or careless, or discontented, or at times, or vain. Hard work is this heart work; but if we are sensible of any special failing, we know how to make the best of our disposition by self-denial, and self-conquest.

Have you noticed how many little things help to make the best of it? Little shreds of time were all poor Kitto could obtain; but from them sprung the golden harvest of his precious volumes.

To make the best of our mistakes is a duty incumbent on us all. To be disheartened never, but always to learn by disaster and defeat. The sailor boy, who rocked amid the storm, high on the giddy mast, had many a slip and perhaps a fall; but he went to the deck again with a stronger will, till he gained the steady eye and the safer hold; to make the best of our blunders may not be pleasant, but it is practicable.

And surely, though the doctrine be true, it would be neglect indeed if we despised our opportunities, and the duty of making the best of them. They come and go in brief seconds of time. A word, a look, a sentence, often shapes a character and moulds a human history.

And now my jottings upon making the best of it are all transcribed save one. Forgive me, but do you make the best of wet Saturdays? Catch the moments of intervening sunshine, or of gentle shades. Come carefully clad, but come, and you will help the pastor to make the best of his sermon, the leader to make the best of his singing, and the congregation to make the best of the service.

And now, in closing, I will add, always look at the best side of other people's character. Look at the worst of your own if you like; that will do you no harm. Most people have a good side to their character, and I think, though I may be mistaken, that we should all be happier and more useful if we kept a kindly eye upon the best side of the character of our friends.

THE MEANING OF TROUBLE.

Men often think that suffering is punishment. When they come into trouble they say, "What have I done that God should punish me?" As if this were the supreme idea of providential grace! As if this were an honorable interpretation of the great constitution which belongs to all time, and to the race!

The string that has been cut of tune, low down, upon which the key is placed, comes groaning and sighing up to its concord; and the sighing and groaning a sign of disgrace and penalty in the string? It must come into tune with the other strings, and the groaning and sighing are simply caused by the process of bringing about the result.

GO TO HEAVEN BOLDLY.

Let men say what they will; don't act as if you were afraid men would know where you are going, or as if you were ashamed of the place, your company, and your principles.

Be as earnest, active, diligent, and persevering in striving to get to heaven as you are about your daily business. Heaven is sure to those who thus seek it. No man will be ashamed, or regret at the close of his life, that he marched boldly on through all the scorn and reproach of the ungodly world.

PREPARE.

We must all give account of our stewardship. Will it be a good or a bad one? Will it give us joy or sorrow? Will it be greeted by the "Well done," or the displeasure, of our Lord? We are making up the report every day. What are we inserting—generous deeds, or selfish ones? evidences of supreme love to Christ, or supreme love of self? record of duties well-performed, or duties neglected? of burdens borne, or burdens avoided? sacrifices made, or persistently shirked? of industry and perseverance, or idleness and vacillation? Some are making up the last column of the report. They cannot blot a word from the past: it is all in the book, and must stand for ever. But there is still a little space for better deeds. Shall they be inserted? Will the last acts of life be as sordid as the former, or noble, generous Christian? Is there moral force remaining equal to the demands of the closing hours? Many noble impulses have been stifled in years gone by: will they triumph now? Generous intentions have failed of execution: will they now be executed? Th at chance is come; will it be improved? Angel scribes wait to set down the closing deeds of many lives: what shall they be? Eternity will reveal the decision.—Baptist Union.

THE LATE DR. THOMAS GUTHRIE.

There was a touch of sentiment in the funeral, a few weeks ago, of this great and good man, that was more German than Scotch. Considering what his life-work had been, however,—what he had done for the poor of Edinburgh and Glasgow and the rural districts of Scotland, and what he was in himself, it is fitting that there should be something more than usual bald Scotch coronation when men bore his body to the burial. There was something of medicinal romance in Thomas Guthrie,—a romance that was interwoven with irrepressible humor, as there was with Augustine and Luther and John Knox, breaking out continually in action and speech and look, and exhibited on the platform and in pulpits as well as in his parochial visits, sometimes in the most grotesque forms, and again as in the buoyancy of a child at play. This humor was a part of the man's nature, flashing through even grim sorrows of his life, like the tender sallies of Lear's fool upon the wintry moor. And so, on that first spring-like day of 1873, while the iron bell was tolling its slow peals over the city, and the shops were shut and flags on the distant castle walls were at half mast, and St. John's Kirk was hung in heavy festoons of black, and the streets were lined with spectators more perhaps from the wynds of the Old Town than the streets and squares of the New, and the long procession was marching past Carlton Hill, and the Mound and the National Gallery towards that resting place of Scotland's mighty dead—the Grange Cemetery, and provost and magistrates in their robes of office lent an effect like gorgeousness to the ever-shifting panorama, it was eminently becoming that an array of children from the Ragged School, girls, rough, lawless and wild, and boys on whose features the stubbornness of sin had been stamped in, rescued through the patient efforts of the departed, should march in advance, and there stand around the open grave and with tearful eyes and sobs of grief pile a wreath of flowers upon the coffin of their father in God. The very appropriateness of the ceremony touched all hearts and made it free from affectation.

I first heard Dr. Guthrie preach in 1857. It was my earliest visit to Edinburgh. Strolling out on Sunday morning, I mingled with a crowd of people entering St. Cuthbert's Chapel, and upon being shown to a seat I noticed at once that every part of the vast edifice was being rapidly filled. Presently a tall, spare, elderly man, in a black gown, and with long greyish hair stirred by the wind through the open casement over the most benevolent and grandest of faces, ascending the pulpit stairs, stood still for a moment facing the people, and then, with a voice so clear and sweet that in the hush its lowest tones were distinct, offered a prayer. I never heard anything more filial. Thoughts, feelings, words, nay, the very Scotticisms, were all child-like. No sooner was the invocation ended than I asked of an elderly dame at my side:

"Pray, who is this minister, madam?" "Is it the domno ye are spiering arter? Dinna ye ken, na? Wha should it be but Dr. Guthrie!"

Here then, unexpectedly, was I sitting under the preaching of the greatest pulpit orator Scotland has produced since the days of Dr. Chalmers. Of course I listened, but I found it almost impossible to criticize or analyze. The refinement and grace, the picturesqueness and pathos manifest in everything the speaker said and did took away every purpose from the hearer but that of listening. And then the naturalness and influence of his illustrations; his mysticisms and hidden meanings and apocalyptic speech; his command of feeling; the wide range of his voice; the fiery flow of his zeal, alternating with his persuasive pleading; and, above all, the way his simple idiomatic expressions flowed above his text, like clear water through which it could be always seen; caught every hearer up to the third heaven. More than any preacher I ever heard, Dr. Guthrie arrested the attention and controlled the emotion of the audience.

When he once preached in London, an American lady, of superior intellect, who was a regular attendant upon Mr. Punshon's preaching, went to hear him. The church was thronged. Up the stairs to the pulpit door, on the open window beds, and in every "cogin' of vantage," through the aisles and in organ-loft and doorways, men and women had crowded in, to hear the famous Scotchman. I had frequently watched the play of thought and feeling on my friend's face as she listened to the vigorous and brilliant eloquence of the great Wesleyan, but I never saw a tear on her cheek, and it was with a sort of physical curiosity that I observed her now. Preliminary exercises finished, Dr. Guthrie stood up to preach. The tall angular figure, the scattered hair over the kingly head and brow, the magnetic face, and the clarion tones of his voice, were what I had then become familiar with. They evidently impressed the vast audience as they had formerly impressed me, and when, as if it were John Baptist himself who was calling attention, he pronounced the words, casting his eyes as if towards the coming Jesus, "Behold the Lamb of God which taketh away the sins of the world!" he had under his touch, keys to every heart in the house. His exordium was of the simplest,—his descriptions wonderfully graphic,—and as he carried his hearers along so gently as hardly to be perceptible through the three years' drama of the Saviour's life, sighs, and choking throats, and sobs began to be manifest. I looked for my lady friend. Her form was bent slightly forward, her face was aglow with interest, and her tears, like the first large drops of a shower, were falling upon her cheeks.

As a pastor Dr. Guthrie excelled even more than as a preacher. He was alike friend with the great and the mean, at home as much in the wynds of the Cowgate as in the apartments of Inverary Castle. His terse language made him a great favorite with the Scotch poor. "People think it weakness," he said patiently one day "to forgive an insult. Then God would be the weakest in heaven and on earth, for no one in heaven or on earth forgives as much as He."

"Preach first, brother," he said to a younger clergyman, "and then if you and

I have been digging from the same mass-bod, I'll give the people some old text." Dr. Guthrie was not a logician, nor a finished scholar, nor a man of science. In each of these he was excelled by many of his co-workers. But as a man of earnestness who brought to the pulpit not only the living spirit of the gospel but illustrations of its power, as well from the mountains and moors and lochs of his native land as from the fuses of the Cowgate and the wynds of the fish market, clothing all with the poetic power of the true orator, he had no equal in Scotland.

A story, undoubtedly authentic, is told of a visit he made last year to Inverary Castle. It was a fat day. The Gordons and Southlands and Devonshires were there. Lord John Russell was a visitor, and Mr. Gladstone, and the Earl of Derby. Before breaking up for the night the host requested Dr. Guthrie to conduct family worship. "Certainly," he said, "and let us begin according to Scotch custom by singing a psalm."

He read the hymn and named the tune, calling upon one person and another to lead. No one being able to perform the duty, a moment's embarrassment followed, when Mr. Gladstone arose and said:

"I will pitch the tune, Dr. Guthrie, which he did, performing the part of precentor as if he had been a parish clerk. A hundred years hence, when the persons then present shall have become historic characters, the scene might become a subject not unworthy of a great artist.—A. S. Dodge in the "Christian at work."

ASSYRIAN EXPLORATIONS.

The Daily Telegraph prints another letter which it has received from Mr. George Smith, who has commenced excavations at the mound of Nimrud. The mound is ascended principally by a cutting or ravine on the west face, near the southern end, and the appearance of the surface on reaching the top is as follows:—At the north end the cone represents the ancient ziggurat or tower. It is furrowed and cut into in every direction, and shows great gapping tunnels and trenches in various places. On descending one of the cuttings, we enter a deep tunnel which has exposed the stone-facings of the base of the building. The excavations by which he discovered the base of the pyramid or tower are well described by Layard in his work. The stones by which the facing is formed are large and heavy, roughly squared, and disposed with some light show or ornamentation. In a tunnel on the east face we found an entrance left by the former excavators, and having procured a light, made our way through a succession of low galleries in the base of the structure. The roof has fallen in at many places, and the whole of these are dangerous; their condition is now so ruinous, that it is generally impossible to tell whether they are recent cuttings, or galleries in the original structure. Coming out again into the open air we find, south and west of the tower, the ruins of a temple dedicated to the Assyrian Hercules. The space occupied by this temple now resembles a succession of hillocks of clay, with fragments of brick and alabaster, and some pitfalls and treaches. In one place there appears above ground the head and top of a fine stone lion, the companion sculpture to which is now in the British Museum. In another place we see the tops of two winged bulls forming one of the entrances to a chamber, and ends and edges of inscribed slabs are visible in different directions. Passing a considerable ravine we find a second group of objects south of the temple, and on the western side of the mound. These remains belong to what is called the north-west palace, a structure built by the Assur-nazir-pal, King of Assyria, who reigned about 880 years before the Christian era. The most perfect series of sculptured and inscribed slabs in the British Museum came from this palace, and the visitor to the mound can now trace walls and chambers ornamented with carvings of the king and his attendants, with winged figures and sacred trees, all in good preservation. On the north side of the palace there remains an entrance ornamented by colossal figures, and a similar one on the west face. At the east of this palace, and some little distance from it, lay, partially excavated, the broken fragments of some gigantic figures, with lions' feet, wings, and human heads. These once formed an entrance to some building, but what structure they belonged to cannot be determined without further excavations. South of the palace of Assur-nazir-pal, and still on the west face of the mound, are the remains of a second palace, built by his son, Shalmaneser, now in far more ruinous condition than the first. The slabs had been torn from the walls, and even the winged bulls taken from the entrances to ornament the neighbouring palaces of a later king. The palace of Shalmaneser is called the "Centre Palace," and it lies on the left as you ascend the mound. There have been found in it interesting relics of several monarchs, from Shalmaneser, about n. c. 850, to Tiglath Pileser II., about n. c. 750; but this portion of the mound now shows little of interest. South of the centre palace, and on the right as we ascend the mound, are the remains of what is called the "South-west Palace," a structure built by Esarhaddon, who reigned 680 years before the Christian era. The monarch commenced this palace late in his reign, and died before it was finished. The walls, many of which are still visible, are ornamented by slabs taken from the centre and north-west palaces, and it appears to have been the intention of Esarhaddon to polish off the sculptures of the former monarchs and carve his own on the slabs. Some of the sculptures are upside down, and all are in disorder; but some good specimens can still be seen exposed at the south end of the palace. East of Esarhaddon's palace is a large and elevated space, in which detached portions of buildings had been excavated, these have all been described as the "South-east Palace," and were generally supposed to be the work of the last King of Assyria, Assur-bani-pal. These remains, however, belong to two different buildings—the most

northern the Temple of Nebo, and the southern a palace. These buildings do not now present any points of interest, the whole region having the appearance of a series of pin-tails. North of the Temple of Nebo, and extending round the eastern side of the mound to the tower, are the ruins of a considerable wall which once shut the palace in from the gaze of the inhabitants of Calah, as the city was originally called.

DR. CANDLISH ON UNION AND THE MUTUAL ELIGIBILITY OVERTURE.

Messrs. Maclaren and Macalven have lately published the sermon preached by Dr. Candlish in Free St. George's on the first Sabbath after the rising of the Free Church Assembly. The text is in Ephesians iv. 3—"Endeavouring to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace." The subject was suggested by the suspension of the union negotiations by last Assembly, and one of the objects of the publication is to preserve, in a convenient form, the documents printed as an appendix. These are four—viz., the minutes of the Assembly on the report of the Union Committee; the Act directing this finding to be communicated to the other Churches; the dissent of Mr. Nixon, Dr. Begg, Dr. Forbes, and others; and the explanatory statement of Dr. Dall, Lord Dalhousie, Dr. Candlish, and others. The 132 names appended to the dissent are printed here; and the 577 names subscribed to the statement. In the prefatory note it is explained that the statement was prepared by Dr. Candlish without consultation with anyone, as a relief to his own mind, but, being approved by those to whom he showed it, it was left for the signatures of any who wished thus formally to express their concurrence in its sentiments. The sermon will not be considered of the secondary importance its author assigns it. It is a most reasonable, wise, and powerful plea for the unity spoken of in the text, marked by all the earnestness, grasp of mind, originality, and yet sobriety of exposition which distinguish Dr. Candlish's pulpit efforts. The catholicity of the sentiment is a prominent feature; there is nothing in the whole of the sermon to which unionists or anti-unionists, adherents of the Free Church, or any evangelical Church will take exception. The unity commended to hearers and readers is the holiness and love which are the characteristics of all true Christians. A few sentences at the close explain in a very forcible and telling manner the conscientious difficulties of the present state in the Free Church about agreeing to suspend negotiations for a union which they are persuaded ought to be carried through. It is made very plain that the concession made to the minority in this matter was not so easy and simple as it was sometimes assumed to be. Yet this is not done in the way of imputing blame to the opponents of union. On the contrary, the whole spirit of the discourse is in harmony with the closing exhortation, that all bitterness, and wrath, and evil-speaking, and malice should be put away.

STATISTICS OF LONDON.

Colonel Henderson, the Chief Commissioner of Police, at the request of the Sheriff, supplied his Majesty with some statistics of London, which greatly interested him. The area of London, consisting of the metropolitan police district, 688 $\frac{1}{2}$ , and the City police district, 17, is 690 square miles. The population, from the census tables of 1871, of the metropolitan police district is 3,810,744, and the estimated increase to this date, 1873, is 140,018; the city police district is 74,807, affording a total population of 4,025,659.

The total length of streets and roads patrolled by the metropolitan police is 6,612 miles, or as far as from London to Teheran, and thence to Point de Gallo. As the crow flies, from London to Point de Gallo the distance is 6,600 miles. Teheran is in the direct line between these two places, 2,300 miles from London, and 3,800 miles from Point de Gallo.

The number of inhabited houses in the metropolitan police district is 619,489, in the city police district 9,805—giving a total of 682,794.

The number of omnibuses is 1,400, and of hackney coaches 8,108.

The estimated number of horses drawing public carriages, allowing two horses for each hackney carriage and six horses for each omnibus (which is about the average number), is 25,000.

The strength of the metropolitan police is 9,927, and of the city police 783—giving a total of 10,712.

The numbers of cattle, sheep, &c., sold last year in the Metropolitan Cattle Market were—Oxen, 240,000; sheep and lambs, 1,525,000; calves, 80,000; pigs, 8,500—total, 1,803,500.

The quantity of dead meat brought to the Metropolitan Meat and Poultry Market during the year 1872 was as follows:—Country meat, 87,170 tons; town killed and foreign, 66,875 tons—total, 154,045 tons. The town-killed meat was no doubt bought alive in the Metropolitan Cattle Market.

The English New Testament revisers are at work upon the fifteenth chapter of the Acts of the Apostles.

The English Churchmen are contemplating an increase in the number of their bishops.

Though a man may become learned by another's learning, he can never be wise but by his own wisdom.

The Presbyterian Advocate of St. John's, N. B., says that "the union question both in the General Assembly at Toronto and the Synod of the Church of Scotland in Montreal, has been satisfactorily dealt with. The terms are agreed upon, but the matter goes down to Presbyteries in terms of the Barriers Act. Apparently in a year hence or less the union will be effected. It will embrace the principal Presbyterian bodies in British America."