

## POWER OF THE CROSS.

In the Palace of Justice at Rome, they take you sometimes into a chamber with strangely painted frescoes on the ceiling and around the walls and upon the floor, in all kinds of grotesque forms. You cannot reduce them to harmony, you cannot make out the perspective; it is all a bewildering maze of confusion.

But there is one spot upon the floor of that room, and one only, standing upon which every line falls into harmony, the perspective is perfect, the picture flashes out upon you instinct with meaning in every line and panel. You can see at that point, and that only, the design of the artist that painted it. I believe that this world is just as bewildering a maze looked at from every point except one. I looked back upon the records of history; I look upon the speculations of science; I endeavor to gaze into the future of this world's career; wherever I turn I am opposed by the mysteries that hem me in and crush me down until I take my stand at the foot of the cross. Then darkness and discords become light and harmony, the mystery is solved; the night that shuts me in becomes radiant with the divine light and glory. At the foot of the cross, art, science, literature, history, become at once to me divine, glorious, and blessed things. And so I claim for my Lord his rightful dominion over all the works of his hands. We will gather all the beauties of art, all the treasures of music, all that is brightest and best in the world, and will lay it down at his feet; for "worthy is the Lamb that was slain to receive might and majesty, and riches and power, and honor and glory."

## EVENING PARTIES.

Nothing has contributed to deprive evening parties of an intellectual and conversational character, and to reduce them all to the same level of dulness and barrenness, more than the invariable introduction of music. It is known that almost every lady "has brought her music," and expects to be asked to play or sing; and it is proper to give any gentleman who is reputed to have "a voice," or to cultivate the science of harmony, an opportunity to display his accomplishment. Of course there ought to be no talking at all, and there can be no general conversation while these performances are going on. Instead of an agreeable interlude they become too often the staple of the evening's entertainment. The expectation of them is quite sufficient to prevent the introduction of subjects of a nature to engage the interest of a considerable number of those present. Or if by chance a group has entered into the discussion of a question, or is listening to a good story, the first notes of the piano are a signal for the abrupt abandonment of both talk and narrative; and after the song or sonata they cannot be very effectually resumed, especially as, when once begun, music is thenceforth the order of the evening. No disparagement is intended in this complaint to music as an art, or as an accomplishment of either sex. Its influence in society, in education, and as a public amusement, is elevating and refining. Large or small parties formed for the purpose of practising and enjoying music, are by all means to be encouraged in every class among us. But both musical taste and social intercourse would be improved if a distinction were established between musical soirees and ordinary evening parties. It would contribute to the satisfaction of all, and the relief of many, if, as in the case of dancing, music were always announced on the card of invitation when it is intended that

music shall be the chief engagement or entertainment of the evening. After all, however, it is probable that the introduction of music is the consequence, as much as the cause, of the dulness and emptiness of our ordinary parties. It has been found necessary, in order to relieve the ennui which is experienced after the first hour or so, when everybody has arrived, and the weather and kindred topics having been thoroughly chattered out, it is universally felt that there is nothing to say and nothing to do, so that the remedy for the "weary, stale, flat, and unprofitable" character of our social reunions is not to be found in the mere relegation of music to strictly musical parties.—*Leisure Hour*.

## FORGIVE THE DEBT.

About a year ago I went to a neighboring city to see an old customer of mine, who owed a balance of account, to see if he would not pay up. I had noticed that the payments had been made with great difficulty, and for some months had ceased altogether. I had heard that he had been somewhat unfortunate.

He called at the hotel at my request. I saw at once that he was poor, he had lost his vim, and the elastic spirits of old were removed by the dull, heavy sullenness of despair. I stated my business; but before I had finished he stopped me with the positive word that he had nothing in the world that he could use in payment; and then he told of his losses and poverty; his wife keeping boarders; he in debt \$5,000, and assets all used up; he was bound hand and foot—helpless. I suggested a release.

"How can I be released with nothing to pay with?"

"I will ask for you."

"Yes, but they will not do it without something."

"Only ask through me. I will intercede for you, and you may yet be released a free man."

"I have long since lost all hope, but perhaps there is a chance yet;" and with tears he held my hand for the parting.

Every firm signed a legal release, and I sent it to him with a letter of encouragement; and what a letter I got in return! He is now in business again, happy and hopeful.

I have often thought how it illustrates our condition. We are all helpless, bound with cords of sin; a pardon waits us, if we will but ask through the intercession of Christ. How many messages have gone to Christ on the wings of prayer, in thankfulness for the release from the bondage of sin.—*American Messenger*.

"I AM now most thoroughly of opinion," wrote the late Dr. Chalmers after he had been taught savingly by the Holy Ghost, "and it is an opinion founded on experience, that on the system of 'Do this and live,' no peace, and even no true and worthy obedience can ever be attained. It is—'Believe in the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved.' When this belief enters the heart, joy and confidence enter along with it."

The least pleasing change is that kind of mental hemiplegia which now and then attacks the rational side of a man at about the same period of life when one side of the body is liable to be palsied, and in fact is, very probably, the same thing as palsy in another form. The worst of it is that the subjects of it never seem to suspect that they are intellectual invalids, stammerers and cripples at best, but are all the time hitting out at their old friends with the well arm, and calling them hard names out of their twisted mouths.—*O. W. Holmes*.

MANY a blessed promise in the Bible would remain a sealed promise if the key of sorrow, or trial, or temptations were not sent to open its stores, and send warm to one's heart such words as, "Be of good cheer, it is I; be not afraid.—*Maria Hare*."

A LITTLE five-year-old friend, who was always allowed to choose the prettiest kitten for his pet and playmate, before the other nurslings were drowned, was taken to his mother's sick-room the other morning to see two tiny, new twin babies. He looked reflectively from one to another for a minute or two, then poking his chubby finger into the cheek of the plumpest baby, he said, decidedly, "Save this one."

THE Prince of Wales reached Calcutta Dec. 23rd.

A SIXTY-FOUR pound cucumber will represent Arkansas at the Centennial.

AN extensive eruption of Mount Vesuvius is expected to take place soon.

SPAIN proposes to address the European Cabinets on the subject of Cuba.

THE Fall Cod fishery at Cape Breton has been successful.

THE Jew's Synagogue, Richmond Street, Toronto, is to be opened Jan. 20th.

A FRENCHMAN says the Chinese first discovered America in the sixth century.

A SEVERE shock of an earthquake was felt at Naples on the morning of Dec. 6th.

ONE hundred and fifty thousand bushels of oats are on board vessels frozen in, at Summerside, P.E.I.

COMMODORE VANDERBILT has been elected President of The Canada Southern Railway.

THE temperature on the night of Dec. 22nd, was the coldest ever known in Ottawa.

SOME Americans have bought the Sarcophagos in which it was intended to bury Guibord.

SINCE the close of the war 3000 coloured persons have been sent to Liberia by the Colonization Society.

MRS. SELWYN has made a valuable donation of books to the Lambeth Palace library from the late Professor Selwyn's collection.

A TERRIFIC TORNADO on the 26th Dec. passed twelve miles east of Hickman, Kentucky, sweeping down whole forests in its pathway.

LEGACIES to charitable institutions in Liverpool amounting to four million pounds sterling have lately been left by eight persons.

MEMPHREMAGOG LAKE froze over on the 30th of November this year. During the previous thirty years it has not frozen over before Dec. 12th.

THE Hon. Mrs. Norton, aged about sixty, is about to be married to the Hon. George Sterling Maxwell. She is grand-daughter of Richard Brimsley Sheridan.

THE coldest winters on record in the United States within the last 100 years, were those of 1780, 1836, and 1856. The coldest year was 1816 which had ice every month.

THE Suez Canal shareholders, according to M. Lesseps, are about equally divided between the French and English, exclusive of those which the British government has just bought.

THE Spanish Government is said to have violated the Neutrality Laws, by enlisting through its agents in the U. S., Italian recruits for the Spanish regiments in Cuba. A similar violation of the Neutrality Laws, by British agents during the administration of President Pierce, induced the U. S. government to give Sir. John Crampton, their British minister, his passport, with the polite announcement that he might go home.