

Saturday Sermons.

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SERMON II.

Text: What is Life?

BELoved HEARERS,—In my opening discourse last Saturday, I endeavored to convince you, and of course I succeeded in demonstrating, that Human Nature is *all right*; that man, having evolved himself, and having progressed without any extraneous help to his present condition, has reason to look upon himself with complacency and to consider himself and his doings very good.

On this occasion I propose to follow up this interesting line of thought a little further, and to offer some observations on the great question of my text—"What is Life?"

Let me remark that I use the word *life* here as indicating the activity of sentient beings in the world about us—which, of course, is the only world. And the question may be briefly answered by saying, in the words of the poet,

Life is a turmoil,
A troubled dream.

It cannot be denied that human life is full of sorrow, pain and trouble. I do not for a moment dispute that. Indeed, in contemplating this profound fact I often wonder what could have induced man to evolve himself. We were all, beloved hearers, much happier when we were unconscious germs. Although it was undoubtedly a clever thing to do, I cannot but feel that it was a mistake on man's part. Still, as Haeckel has beautifully said, "There is no use in crying over spilled milk." Here we are, and the only question is, "What are we going to do about it?" We find ourselves surrounded on all sides by cares and troubles, and within us we feel an unnameable longing for something, we know not what. Moreover, we cannot close our eyes to the existence in and about us of forces which make for inconvenience—I refer to those impulses which manifest themselves in what unscientific people call crimes. Our newspapers are full of records of overt acts, the outcome of these inner propensities; the very best of us must be conscious of feelings which, if they took the form of overt acts, would look badly in print. Now, this being the true state of the case with reference to Human Nature, the question comes back to us. What is to be done about it? We all feel that *something must be done*, and, speaking for myself and you, my hearers, it is perhaps unnecessary to add, that *Something must be in accordance with our scientific theory*.

The remedy offered by the Church is, I must confess, admirably suited to the case, but, as I have already indicated, it is in direct antagonism to our cherished postulate of Blind Force. If we could only reconcile our Scientific Intellects to the conception of a Benignant and Eternal Creator, how clear the whole mystery would become! From that hypothesis we could see the reasonableness of a Divine Revelation, and in that Revelation, as the Church has it, we could indeed find the balm of Gilead. And mark you, having once accepted the idea of a Personal Creator, we could avail ourselves of the remedy offered without the slightest violence to Science, for it would be scientific then to believe that Human Nature is really all wrong, and that it needs regeneration by the intervention of a Power superior to itself. It would then also be unnecessary for us to close our eyes to the historical facts of Christianity, which, on examination, might be found to be quite as easily authenticated as those of Greek or Roman literature. But, my friends, all this we must put on one side. We must try and solve the problem of life aside from Christianity, because our theory demands that we exclude the idea of God from the universe.

Happily we can solve the problem. Modern Thought has solved it. These are the Glad Tidings I am commissioned to preach, beloved friends! I have to tell you to-day that the vilest malefactor may be regenerated by gazing upon the masterpieces of classic art; that the impure mind may be cleansed by the contemplation of the lily; that domestic infelotry may be purged away by the gracious offices of b-i-c-a-brac, and that, in short, the sin and misery of Life may be cured by Culture.

Next week I shall give you a discourse on Hope. A special collection will now be taken up to supply a bereaved family with a volume of Homeric Poems, of which they are very much in need.



LATEST FROM DUDEVILLE.

"Oh! oh! bay jowve!" screamed young Poppleton Dudeskin, as a stout man tramped on his tooth-pick shoe, "that gweat bywute has squashed my foot to a complete jelly."

"Lor, sir," said a pale, care-worn looking woman in the crowd, "do 'e give it to me, sir."

"Give you *what*, female?" asked Dudeskin, his features still contorted with anguish.

"Yer fut, sir: if it's squashed to a jelly it's just what my little sick gurl at home wants, for the doctor says she must have some calf's foot jelly, and I can't afford to buy none."

LOT'S-WIFE CITY.

Grim old party, an ex-resident of Hamilton, reading the Hamilton news in the "*Globe*."

"The present Board of Education is made up of excellent material—" hum—haw—"pon my honour—glad to hear it I'm sure—remarkably glad! Let's see—Pommodeterkins de Chapeau is in again—humph!—bound to abolish the Collegiate Institute on one pretense or other,—voters got to feed as he feeds—mentally—humph! weak stomachs, poor blood—poor brains—can't see for the pennies on their eyes—dead—and turned to clay. Poor old *Advance*! And then there's Cloots, another specimen of the Board material—pushing man, Cloots—got on without any education whatever himself—don't see why Hamilton boys can't all do as he did; he'll see they don't get any higher education than he thinks good for 'em—you bet—Bully boy Cloots! Hooray for Cloots and Pomme!—ministers of lower education. And Specs, too, one of the few who believed in the right of rich and poor alike to higher education, had to resign or be thrown over next election—eh? These Hamiltonians are the queerest specimens. For nigh on twenty years they hired a man and paid him a salary for keeping and looking them out of their own park! Ha! ha! ha! Yes, sir, their one only microscopic park, the ratepayers paid a man all these years for locking themselves and their children out of their own park! And now that they have got that opened, they offset it by appointing

trustees to deprive them of their Collegiate Institute—ah! ah! ah! ha! They are so economical—couldn't afford to keep up one Public Library—had enough to do keeping up some hundred saloons—without the addition of a library! Ha! ha! ha! they voted on both questions—the Library and the Saloon question—well—they voted the Library should be shut up, and the saloons kept open for the moral and intellectual improvement of the youth of the city Ha! ha! ho! ho! ho! In justice to them, tho' they are sometimes ashamed of themselves; had a fit of that kind last summer. They were going to have parks like other people—they weren't going to be a by-word in this age of progress—not they! There were mass meetings, no end of fuming and puffing—perfect godsend to the rival papers—they voted on *three* parks—and so it ended—ha! ha! ha! I'm most dead laughing. Now we'll see they'll vote for three libraries—no end of gaseous discussions—everybody excited for a few days. Puff! flop! it's over at last, and everybody's coughing with the smoke. Ha! ha! ha! ho! ho! ho! That's the usual finale.

(Reads again)—"And composed of a number of business and professional men who are determined that Hamilton's high standard in educational matters shall not be lowered." Well now, I call that very good of the *Globe* to give them the clue as it were—good prompter the *Globe*—but as long as Brudder Gardner rules the roost in the Lime Kiln Club its no go—he's tenacious, is the old man; got his teeth once in he never lets go—ha! ha! ha! he'll hang on till strangers from a distance come to see Hamilton and its inhabitants as curiosities of the 19th century—a city with its toes where its heels should be—a city called Lotswife City—because she stands still looking backwards. Ha! ha! ha!

"The old gentleman who penned the above has since been removed to the Asylum for the incurably insane, which is situated at the head of Queen Street on the mountain overlooking what he is pleased to call Lotswife City.—[ED. GRIP.]

THE MONTREAL CARNIVAL.

Thousands of people from all parts of the continent are at the Montreal Carnival. The *Star* has brought out a Carnival number, that eclipses in artistic merit and absorbing interest every illustrated paper heretofore issued in this country. It will be remembered that there was a tremendous *furor* over the last year's Carnival number of the *Star*, the issue running up near a quarter of a million. This year's number will be far ahead of last. The artists are Bengough, Julian, Harris, and Haberer. The writers, George Murray, John Reade, Dr. Beers, "Adirondack" Murray, and W. H. Turner. GRIP sends for production in the Carnival *Star* a double page which is considered the most side-splitting cartoon ever published in this country. Fifteen cents in stamps sent to the publishers, Graham & Co., Montreal, will secure a copy of what we unhesitatingly pronounce the greatest illustrated paper ever issued in this country.

ACCORDING to the *British Medical Journal* football is not a manly and healthy game, but a barbarous amusement, which ought to follow bull baiting, prize fighting, and other such brutal "sports" into disuse. The learned editor probably means baseball. If he doesn't, it is because he has not seen the game as played on this side of the Atlantic. It is only a question of time, of course, till all these violent games, including golf, lawn-tennis, croquet, and carpet-balls, must go. People will sometime learn to be satisfied with such healthful amusements as poker and bagatelle.