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Poetry.

UNDER THE CLOUD.

Gloomy as some dark cloud, that moves
In mournful silence o'er the sky,
I wander through the verdant grove,
By which the bright green pastures lie;
And though the spring has decked the scene
In all its richest, brightest green,
And flowers of various hue, and shade,
Beside the woodland, and the glade,
Though birds are singing sweet and free,
And gladness swells their harmony,
No joyous thought, no ray of light,
Can touch my spirit with delight!
As one who in a foreign land,
No fond familiar face can see,
No voice his heart can understand,
No look that speaks him sympathy,
Though blessings may be in the air
That spreads its precious bounties there,
And kindly hearts may be among
The passing and unheeded throng;
He seeks it not,—his soul o'ercast,
Dwells on the dear remembered past,
And brighter prospects, far away,
But darkens more his hapless day.
So now, surrounded by the flowers,
The birds, and balmy air of spring,
And the sweet charms those blessings bring,
Untouched, uninfused by the spell
Of sunlit path, or shady dell,
Of fragrant flower, or singing bird,
I feel no silent rapture stirred—
Dead to all charms that pleased before,
A stranger on my native shore,
No power of beauty can impart
One ray of sunshine to my heart!

L'Original, May, 1870.

E. P. J.

Miscellany.

MEMORABLE CONFERENCES IN CANADA.

BY JOHN CARROLL.

FIRST ANNUAL CONFERENCE IN THE TOWN OF YORK.

There was nothing very remarkable about that Conference, save that it was the first held in what has grown up to be our present City of Toronto. The Conferences had been mostly held in country neighborhoods, in which the first large societies generally existed. Two causes led to this: besides the larger membership around those country Meeting-houses, the farmers could better keep the preachers' horses, which were the only vessels and coaches by which they travelled. *Hamilton* had had the Conference in 1827, but then it was mostly the country membership around "Springer's Chapel" that entertained it. *Kingston* had entertained the Annual Conference in 1830; and a few days after the village of *Belleville* entertained the General Conference, a smaller body. [Some unfinished business of the *Kingston* Annual Conference was completed at *Belleville*. Some of its members who failed to go to *Belleville*, but went home, were censured the next year.] And now it became the turn of our little Upper Canada Metropolis to receive the Conference.

The date of this was August 31st to September 9th, 1831. It was the first Conference in which the writer had a seat, and all the events connected with it, and its doings, were vividly disengaged on his mind and memory. Town though it was, most of the preachers came on horse-back. I myself rode a rough-gaited horse all the way from *Perth* to this place. The Rev. John C. Davidson performed a greater exploit, for he rode from *Bytown*. The equestrians who entered the town along with us, were my Presiding Elder, Franklin Metcalf, whose home was in *Augusta*; Solomon Waldron, who came from the same point. The Revs. David Wright and James Evans were in the procession, but they were in a "pleasure wagon" (save the mark) coming respectively from *Cobourg* and *Rice Lake*. At the close of so long a journey, I will not say that we sat our horses in the exact perpendicular.

There was but one ministerial examination in those days. That took place at the end of the probation of two years, (no allowance was made for the time you travelled under the Presiding Elder, and they kept you there as long as they could, to keep you single), when the candidate became eligible to deacon's orders. There were five candidates at this Conference, who, to mention according to their years, were Wood, Shaler, Huntington, Carroll, Parick. We found the subjects of examination, Divinity, Church History, English Grammar, Logic, Geography. Our examiners were: Prindle, G. Poole, Smith, Davidson and D. McMullen. They took us one at a time, but our ordeal was

I well remember, with what solemnity the Conference was opened, and how earnestly all questions of law and order were discussed. These were points on which the Rev. Andrew Prindle was very pertinacious, which earned for him the sobriquet of "Attorney-General." But the little asperity which the old man may have shown in the Conference debates, were atoned for by the clear and masterly sermon he preached (I remember to the ineffable delight of Dr. Morrison) from the apostle's vehement exhortation, "Save yourselves from this ungodly generation." Heyland preached mightily from, "Hold fast your profession." Richard Jones, it was thought, preached clearly for a young man. The writer made his first attempt at a Conference sermon, and a deplorably poor one it was.

Under the preaching, great and small, at this Conference, especially as engineered by the not very severe. One aged brother asked me "where was the outlet of the Dead Sea?"

When we met to receive our appointments, there was a little of the feeling of lads let loose from school, but we were severely reprobated by the well conducted Mr. W. Smith, who, in the earnest tones of his shrill voice, expressed a hope to the President that, as the people would soon be flocking in to hear the appointments read off, we would "deport ourselves in a manner befitting the dignity and gravity of that Conference, and not like a parcel of boys." The admonition was not lost.

It was Saturday, but before night most of us were far on our journey towards our respective Circuits. I preached the next day in *Pickering*. Where, now, are the most of those who assembled in that Conference forty years ago? How few of them are present in this Conference of 1870!

THE INSPIRATION OF GENIUS IN THE PULPIT.

Several statements in reference to genius, in the form of old sayings, have brought it into bad repute with some Christian men and Christian ministers. "Genius is always erratic." "A genius is short-lived," etc. Now the idea which these and similar sayings seem to embody is, that genius pays no regard to laws and regulations, and will soon exhaust itself in a fiery and unsuccessful race after immortal fame. Consequently every weak-minded mother who begins to think that her son, made after her own likeness, is a genius, also begins to feel the necessity of saving it, to buy him a monument. With this misapprehension of the subject, many good people think that this creature called genius, must not be allowed to even enter the altar, and sit on the pulpit steps, lest it might produce a volcanic explosion which would overturn the pulpit, and blow up the pews.

We do not believe that genius is necessarily self-exhaustive. God is the infinite Genius, and is immutable and eternal. Many persons put into the class of geniuses have no genius; and there are others who are erratic, and soon exhausted, who are not largely endowed with it. The small class of real ones who have prematurely died, were cursed with other influences which constituted the unholy fire that consumed the casket. Sickly sentiments and morbid feelings have hurried some to the grave, while, so far as their real genius was concerned, they might have reached the age of Methuselah. Pure genius enables its possessor to grasp the higher laws of our existence, and of the universe; to pursue the holy work of our mission in a steady, upright fight towards the ultimately pure, and good, and beautiful. It lifts the soul above the fogs, and clouds, and miasmas of this world, to the regions of a pure atmosphere, of bright sunlight, and glorious visions. And need these healthy and vigorous, bold and sublime efforts of an immortal being destroy him, or injure any good cause? We have spoken of genius sitting on the pulpit steps. In many instances it never gets above that position. To most of those who raise the cry against "head-work," that sin will never be charged. Not every good man can give power to the pulpit; and it is a wrong to himself, to the Church, and to the world, to put him into a position for which he has scarcely the first qualification.

We assume, then, that the inspiration of genius should be an element of power in the pulpit, and that it is a very important element. This fact is clear to our own mind, and that in the teeming brains of the great men of antiquity were the germs of all the great ideas and great events of the present. The thought involved in the fabulous stories of the gods that were said to speak from the ocean's depths, finds fuller and clearer expression in the transatlantic telegraph cable; nations speaking through the ocean's depths to each other in a language which is destined to annihilate earth's Babel towers, and fill the world with its living echoes. And these germs are found in the Word of God. The words in *Nahum* ii. 4, "The chariots shall rage in the streets, they shall jostle one against another in the broad ways; they shall seem like the torches, they shall run like the lightnings," doubtless applied to things in the past; but may there not be in this passage an idea of the present then not well understood by the mind of the prophet? Picture to yourself a modern war, the railroads employed in its prosecution, the cars passing each other in the city in the tracks near the depots, and then hurrying away in the dark hours of the night to carry express to other parts of the country, and the above passage would be a graphic and vivid description of the scene.

The Book of God contains more of the productions of genius than any other book extant; and we do not advance this idea to account for its eloquent and glorious character without admitting its inspiration, but with the strongest faith in its inspiration. God, being the infinite Genius, is the source of it; others; the Bible embodies it, and why should not the pulpit possess it, and use it for the glory of God and the good of men? When the pulpit is radiant with the light, and inspired with the spirit of sanctified genius, it is a great moral Pharos amidst the world's awful darkness and deep gloom, to direct the poor pilgrim to the star-chamber of God's eternal glory. By dwelling so much length, and with so much emphasis upon this element of inspiration, we would by no means undervalue other—and more important elements of pulpit power, of which we are yet to speak.

MARRIAGE.

The young women of our country are to decide the great controversy now arising between the Christian and Pagan ideas of marriage. I would not seem insensible to all the sweet, and pure, and lofty family life in our country. But I cannot shut my eyes to the cloud that seems rising to eclipse our homes. If we can believe half we hear, and see and read, we must be wilfully blind not to see that the American home is threatened with destruction. A growing multitude of people all over our land, especially in the American Western States, now insist on trying a series of new experiments in marriage. They have decided that marriage is not a Christian sacrament of love between one man and one woman, only to be entered into with holy fear and unselfish consecration, and only to be dissolved by that sin which strikes at the heart of a family. They are giving the old Pagan system a new trial. In savage countries a woman refuses to be married at the peril of her life, and they treat a woman who cannot satisfy her noblest womanhood in marriage, more like a barbarous than a Christian community. They prepare their daughters for the best market, and buy and sell at the altar as basely as women are sold in the slave markets of the Orient. They fill the souls of our girls with falsehood and folly on this most sacred theme, and behold them enter the most difficult and solemn relation of life as giddy and thoughtless as a flock of butterflies are drifted before a summer wind. They make a young lady such an expensive luxury, that the young man she could love and honor, turns from her in affright, seeing the bankrupt act and the Sheriff in the very lines of her face. They offer a premium on sensuality, by making marriage almost a game of chance, and build up the house of perdition on the ruins of the home. And we have permitted them to go to the Legislature and make laws of divorce that are the scandal of a Christian age, and unless repealed, will resolve Western society into a house of uncleanliness and social anarchy. Under the reckless administration of these laws, we virtually abolish Christian marriage, and permit men and women to disport themselves through a succession of unions scarcely more lasting than the leagues of infancy itself. The land is swarming with male and female philosophers who teach our boys and girls that love is as air, and that our passionate caprices are the rightful law of our life.

There is but one power in American civilization that can save us from plunging into a slough of such all-prevailing sensuality as this world has never seen, and that is the power of a Christian womanhood. If the consecrated mothers and daughters of this land will rise up in holy indignation and rebuke this whole abominable idea of marriage; will resolve that with them at least matrimony shall be a sacrament of the soul, entered upon only from high and holy sentiments, used for the uplifting of society, adhered to "for better or for worse," if they will brand this infamous looseness that is preached as a reform, with the foul name it deserves and to try and keep our young women out of promiscuous society, where female delicacy is trampled into a common mire of vulgar familiarity; if they will demand a thorough revision of our laws of divorce, and command our law-makers to shut those open gates of perdition through which multitudes of deluded people are pouring down to social death; they may, through the blessing of God, inaugurate a new era of purity and genuine family life.—*Star in the West.*

TRUE WORD PICTURING.

Accurate and vivid speech may be gained, and that is always impressive. It is of less consequence how much shall be said, than what shall be said. There is as much danger of too many words as of too few. The orator's pauses are as vital as his vehemence. He makes his silence help him as well as his sonority. He must know when to stop as well as when to begin. It is not the amount of paint which the artist puts on which determines the quality of his work. He must use the right colors and dispose them judiciously. And when he has produced just the right shade for the needed effect, another stroke of his brush would mar or ruin the whole work. And with such a skill must the teacher-artist paint with words. Can any inherited garrulousness furnish such an ability as this? Can the persistence of patient study wholly fail of attaining it?

It was no small praise which Theodore Parker awarded to Webster, when he said, "He could make a statement better than any other man in America." That was rather a doubtful compliment which a plain Christian paid to a com-

mentator, whose exposition of John's Gospel was recommended to him. Being asked how he liked the volume, he naively replied, "I think I understand John very well; and I hope by and by to be able to understand Dr.—'s Notes." And only when a teacher uses his words as so many elements of the picture by means of which he is to put his thoughts into contact with his pupils, will his instruction elucidate instead of mystify the topics with which he deals.

Let the teacher realize that nothing is really done till he has transferred the distinct conceptions of his own mind to the sphere of the pupil's vision; let him remember that each statement is an artistic effort which can be successful only when the verbal colors are rightly blended and disposed; let him learn to estimate his prospective success by the vividness which he imparts to every representation, and his work will rise in dignity and command new devotion. For his pictures are to constitute the furnishings of that spiritual gallery where the by-gone experiences are to look down forever from the walls, and where the life is to be spread out in an illuminated panorama for the inspection of immortal eyes.—*Freeville Baptist Quarterly.*

PAINSTAKING PREPARATION.

We are told that Charles Dickens would not attempt to read a new piece in public till he had spent two months in studying it, so as to become perfectly familiar with it in every aspect—that he did not consider his time his own for indulging in all the amenities of social intercourse, but spent much of it in the most painstaking study of the parts to be read. And very much the same was said of that queen of song, Jenny Lind, when preparing to render in public those musical compositions which she gave with such inimitable sweetness and power. If it is not our vocation, as Sunday-school teachers, to charm the public assembly, our aims are not lower; and if success crown our efforts, who among us would think of literary distinction in comparison? Then why should we not learn a lesson from the world's wise ones in this matter of preparation? If to attain literary excellence or pecuniary reward, months of very severe application are freely given, let us at least give some hours in preparing lessons of Divine truth for the young minds given into our care. Let us consider time too precious to be spent in light amusements, or pursuits for merely gratifying the taste, or satisfying the claims of society, when the sublime truths of the gospel reward our search, and the Divine Teacher himself gives us our commission, and promises success in our labors.

With unwearying patience, with persevering industry, and with a faith that will not be denied, let us go forth and glean in all fields of knowledge, and returning laden with the sheaves that have rewarded our search, we may spread a feast of fat things to satisfy the hungry minds of our charge, we may give them the spiritual bread that cometh down from heaven. No teacher has a right to appear before his class without a thoroughly prepared lesson.—*The Sunday School Times.*

ARTIFICIAL EYES.

The oculist-cannellers, as they call themselves, of the city of Paris, have invariably more work on hand than they can accomplish to time, although their number is by no means inconsiderable. First of all, there are ten or twelve principal manufacturers of these clever substitutes for the natural visual organ, and there are between one and two hundred workmen and women in their employ, almost all of whom are well off, or on the way to become so. It is true that English and American enamellers have tried to compete with their Parisian brethren, but never successfully. "You see, sir," said one of the most celebrated Paris oculists to me lately, "the English have not sufficient taste to exercise this trade. The eyes they try to make for human beings are only fit for stuffed animals."

It must be confessed that Parisian artificial eyes have not only great transparency and a well-imitated humidity, but have, at times, so tender or so lively an expression, that any one might be deceived by them and take them for real.

The trade resembles all other trades, in so far that there are manufacturers on a large and on a small scale—artists and workmen, skilled manipulators and ignorant ones.

These gentlemen are perpetually travelling all over Europe, and transport their manufactures to St. Petersburg, Vienna, and even Constantinople. The sumptuously furnished salons in which they receive their clients in Paris indicate their connection among the wealthier classes. They select, when practicable, a one-eyed servant, and their first care is to replace the organ of which he is deficient by an enamel eye of their own manufacture. This does not arise from any absurd motive of benevolence, but with a view to business. When a client, a little frightened, but certainly without reason, at the prospect of the operation he is about to undergo, hesitates and interposes some difficulties in the way of confiding his eyelids to the instruments of the operator, the latter rings the bell, and Jean Polypheme makes his appearance.

"What do you think of this fellow?" asks the oculist of his client. "Study his features, his look, and say frankly what you think." "He looks well enough," answers the other, laboring usually under some little emotion.

"Well, Jean, reveal your secret to this gentleman."

Whereupon Jean introduces a knitting needle under his eyelid, removes his eye, and places it in the hand of the astonished spectator as unconcernedly as though it was a mere shirt-stud. How is it possible for anyone to resist such a demonstration?

These gentlemen charge from forty to fifty francs for an eye.—*Good Health.*

A TRUE AND TOUCHING INCIDENT OF THE LATE WAR.

After the battle of Holly Springs among the wounded brought into the hospital were two young men, perfectly unconscious, that could not be identified. The surgeon requested the steward to watch with them so that in case they became conscious their names might if possible be ascertained. The request was complied with; in a few hours one of them became rational, but could not converse so as to be understood; he succeeded in making the steward comprehend that he wished him to look in an inner pocket; he did so and found an envelope with only the name "Brown" on it. In a few minutes the poor fellow was dead. About three o'clock in the morning the other young man became conscious. He was able to converse. All necessary questions having been asked the steward thought it his duty to see if he knew anything of the youth who had just breathed his last. The soldier did not feel able to endure the exertion of being raised to look upon the face. The steward then brought the lifeless body in his arms and asked the soldier if he knew who it was. He exclaimed, "My brother!" and fell back insensible. After a short time he regained his consciousness, and they were brothers, that they were all the children in the family, that they had a mother living, the brother was eighteen, himself twenty-one. In a short time he died. The steward saw them decently buried in one grave, then wrote their mother the heart rending news. This sad story was related me last week by the steward himself, who is a most excellent and pious young man. It was recalled to his mind by the people of our place endeavouring to identify a stranger who had been killed by lightning. It was afterward ascertained that his name was Michael Hager. When we heard the above incident related we thought it one of the most touching of which we had any knowledge. We felt quite sure it had never been given to the public, we therefore send it to the paper for publication.

M. A. W.

COMMITTING SCRIPTURE.

Children seldom realize, when they are committing to memory texts of Scripture and precious hymns, that they will "ever do them any good." They feel just the same after as before it, and thoughtless teachers also some times think it almost labor lost.

More than seventy years ago, a little Scottish boy used to trudge along a rocky road to school; a huge turf under his arm for the old dame's fire, and in his other hand his little Bible, from which he was learning the sixth chapter of *Isaiah*. As he repeated aloud the beautiful vision, commencing "In the year that King Uzziah died," the words had no more meaning to him than a parrot's words to her. He was learning them for a task to recite to his teacher. But they were well learned, and lay in his memory for years afterward. When it pleased God to touch his heart by the Holy Spirit, all these precious things he had learned in childhood came back to his mind, and oh, what meaning there was in them now! They were the very voice of God to his soul. Particularly did this chapter of *Isaiah* impress him. He thought of the dark nations who had no Bible, who were going down so fast into the pit of destruction. And, in the words of the prophet, he cried, "Here am I, send me."

That chapter was his watchword. *Isaiah* became, under his heavenly Master, his guide and standard of excellence in a minister. It helped more than anything else to mould the character of the man. Do you not think the result would have been very different, if his time had been employed in learning only frivolous, idle songs, or in reading trashy books? It was no doubt this early Bible training that made of William Milne the faithful, laborious missionary to the Chinese.

Let the Word of God dwell in you richly in your very childhood, and it will not fail to bring forth glorious fruit in your later years.—*Child's World.*

"HOW TO SPOIL YOUR PREACHER."

1. Tell your neighbors that he is a man of very ordinary ability.
2. Keep it before the people that he can do no good.
3. Magnify every fault you see in him.
4. Don't co-operate with him in any effort he may make to advance the interests of the church.
5. Stay away from meeting (or go to some neighboring church) when you can possibly find an excuse.
6. Show to the world that you have no interest in his welfare.

The above rules faithfully followed will ruin the influence of any preacher, especially if a large number of his parishioners follow them. And certainly, if it be right for a few thus to treat a minister, it cannot be wrong for the many.