

with it. It may be delightful, it may be harmless to some. never mind, if it is a snare to you and me, let us put it away and try something else. Were life all growth, then if we had a strong preponderance of heavenly vitality, we might not fear the result; but life is a battle as well as a growth, and it is almost all battle, where we have weights to lay aside and sins to conquer. If we would run the race and win, we must drop the weights, if we would fight the good fight and lay hold on eternal life, we must come to the girding and the sword.

Now we come to specifications. Let us take four or five notable and fascinating popular amusements. It is ours to give facts, and then for each one, under and in the spirit of the principles we have enunciated, to exercise thought and conscience. But all the while let us remember that the question we are discussing is not "What may people do and still go to heaven," but "What may, what should each of us do so as to reveal heaven upon earth."

a. The horse race. Many a Christian, perhaps tired with over-work, perhaps from very exuberance of health, is exhilarated by "holding in" and then "letting out" a blooded horse. It is a grand thing to "speed him" down the Boulevard. These may be all right. But when it comes to the question of making merchandise of manhood, I am for the man every time. The race-course is not that we may admire the noble horse, but that the tempted ignoble man may be fleeced. Betting is its aim and spirit. It can't live without it. It frankly says so, and betting is a blighting curse. A friend tells me he can stand at the corner of a certain avenue and street in the goodly city of Brooklyn and point out twenty places of business out of which men ruined by the race-course have gone during the past five years. Isn't the Church warranted in writing "Tekel" over its gateways?

b. Card parties. Harmless are the pictured cards if properly used. But no one who sees things from a Christian standpoint will contend that in the past they have been more used than abused. For the most part "playing cards" have been among the "pots of Egypt." The pots of Egypt blacken whatever touches them. I do not believe "poker" or "euchre" is essentially harmful. But in associations and tendencies, what is the drift? I have a friend, decidedly a Christian, who is very fond of these games. Last summer he rose deliberately from a card-table, came thoughtfully to me and said (he had won the game) "I am done with cards, they fascinate and unman me." He is a strong, well-balanced man, has been mayor of one of the largest New England cities. And when it comes to cases like the following, has the Church no right of remonstrance? (Remember our subject is "The Church and Popular Amusements.") Last year, in one of our prominent cities, several members of a Church had every week a "progressive euchre party" on prayer-meeting night. Because the pastor, as in duty bound, remonstrated, he had to resign his pastorate, and in his recommendation papers from the Council which released him were the words "Whereas in the providence of God." The words are almost mockery, unless you take them in the sense of divine deliverance. During the recent Week of Prayer, January, 1891, a lady who is a Church member in one of our New England villages, perhaps thoughtlessly, surely independently, gave a card party, and invited members of the same Church, and they went. Has the Church no right to protest in such a case?

c. The theatre. The dramatic and spectacular are, within their sphere, legitimate and healthful. But of the theatre, as it now exists, it must be said that with rare exceptions it stirs the emotions without fastening convictions. For the most part it thrills the impulses, but does not strengthen right opinions. So thinking ones say who have thoroughly tried it. Generally it tosses its audiences to and fro like waves under winds, and so in time, craving excitement as if it were food, they shrink from the scenes and appeals of real life. The audience weeps at the sorrows of the stage orphan, and to-morrow turns coldly away from the sorrows of the real orphan. The habit of pitying sorrow, and not the one who sorrows, is baneful. I say the "habit" is baneful. I have no doubt that there are some rare people who are intensified toward charity by a play which commends charity. But to the most of us it is not so. Thought and resolution do not go far enough on the current of emotion to touch actual life. To "Richard of the Lion-heart," and to "Ivanhoe," the heavy old armour was a fit; it suited them, somehow it became a part of them, and they fought the better "clad in steel from top to toe"; but to the great majority it was weight and hindrance.

Real, throbbing, struggling life is what we need for renewing us, not that which puts it on and plays it. The average play of our day (there are exceptions) panders to animal enchantment. Of this fact a recent New York daily bears testimony, and goes on to say "This life of ours is a short one, and people can always be better employed than in raking over a pile of rotten rubbish." We may well challenge the average theatre, because it peoples its realms with exaggerations—because it quickens such feelings as dreams are made of. Now and then there appears some grandly historic scene unstained by the touch of vice; now and then some play with a refreshing and noble purpose, with genuine delineations of real life, appears, which sends one away with animation of soul; but alas, how few they are!

d. Dancing. In itself dancing is as innocent as calisthenics. "Broom drills" and "fan drills" are permitted and

countenanced and enjoyed in their proper place by Christian assemblies. But who ever heard of a broom drill or fan drill lasting all night? If I knew how, I should have no more qualm of conscience in dancing up and down my parlour with my wife or daughter than in jumping the rope; but as it is practised when it becomes a public amusement—well, "I speak as unto wise men, judge ye." Under the patronage of the Church, by the encouragement of the Church, or in any organization which is connected with the Church, it has no right.

Have you expected a catalogue of permitted and prohibited amusements? This is not the "Dispensation of the Law," but of the Gospel. The Gospel doesn't make catalogues. Under the Gospel each soul is called upon to face God, and solemnly, honestly decide questions of right and wrong. Good consciences are made as athletics are made.

Let us go to our work and to our recreations with a firm resolve to have and to brighten a Christian conscience. Seasons of vague delight are sure to be followed by poor work. "By their fruits ye shall know them." How long must the world be in learning that pleasant sensations are not happiness, and that pleasures which appeal only to the senses are to be sipped, not quaffed?

Just as Gideon's three hundred lapped the water from the palm of the hand, stooping, but still standing, ready and alert, remembering they were men of war, so should we take the waters of pleasure, for life is the reality, and the "crown of righteousness" the reward.

Brooklyn, N. Y.

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL IN EUROPE.

BY REV. E. WALLACE WAITS, D. SC., OF KNOX CHURCH OWEN SOUND.

EDINBURGH CONTINUED—INTEMPERANCE—JOHN KNOX—THE PEOPLE'S WILLIAM—UNIVERSITY—GRANGE CEMETERY—OLD GREY FRIARS—A VISIT TO HOLYROOD, ETC.

THE ANCIENT CALEDONIANS.

The ancient Caledonians were a noble, brave warlike race of savages when the Romans first made their descent upon the island. It only required the power of education and the blessing of Christianity to transform them into what we find them in later times—the foremost men of all the earth. I shall never forget my visit to the field of Culloden with a Highland man who showed me the spot where an ancestor of his named Donald McBain had killed eleven of the British soldiers before a bayonet thrust reached his gallant heart, and laid as brave a man on his native heather as any who defended the pass of Thermopylæ. There certainly was the raw material here out of which to make the free, independent, liberty-loving nation the Scotch are to-day. If you want to stir Scotchmen up to deeds of daring and make their blood leap wild as the cataracts of their own rocky land take "Scots wha hae wi' Wallace bled," the grandest war ode outside the Bible—

By oppression's woes and pains!
By your sons in servile chains,
We will drain our dearest veins,
But they shall be free!

Lay the proud usurper low,
Tyrants fall in every foe;
Liberty's in every blow,
Let us do or die!

The efforts of the king were frustrated by Jenny Geddes, a poor woman who kept an apple-stand in the High Street of Edinburgh. She went to worship in St. Giles Cathedral one Sunday, taking with her the "creepie stool," on which she usually sat. The newly-appointed dean came forward and commenced to repeat the service of the Church of England. Grasping her creepie, she threw it with all her might at the clergyman, saying: "Wilt thou say mass at my lug," and in the confusion which followed the service was stopped. We saw the creepie stool in the museum, and a brass tablet marks the place where she sat in St. Giles when she threw it at the dean. It was the first and last time the English prayer book was attempted to be read in St. Giles. Jenny Geddes' act was but a trifling one in itself, but it was the match which lighted the flame which blew up at length the divine right nonsense of the Stewarts, and sent them packing off to the continent and seated William III. on the throne. The people were not opposed to prayers being read in the cathedral, for Knox's liturgy had been used there and they were accustomed to such a form of worship, but they were opposed to having a religion or a creed thrust upon them. The home life of Scotland has done much for its greatness. It was the home that made Carlyle, and the father's piety and influence have blessed the world through the writings of the son. But changes have taken place there; those homes get touched in their turn by the same unsparing hand as withers the flowers and dries up human strength. It is so with the great empires of the world, and cities change their inhabitants like the trees of the forest (their foliage, and homes once merry with exuberant and joyous life get empty, silent and desolate, for death invades them all. I shall never forget searching for my grandfather's and grandmother's graves in New Machar parish churchyard. Some of you, perhaps, have revisited the home of your boyhood and come back again saddened by that visit. True, the dear old hills never

change, but I heard one say "that all his friends were either dead or moved away, and the people stared at him as a stranger.

The cottage where my mother lived
Is now a roofless heap,
My early friends are scattered wide,
Or in their graves do sleep;
All, all is changed save hill and dale,
Where I in youth did stray,
Yet when I say, farewell, farewell,
I cannot add—for aye!

The physical features of the country played a most important part in forming the character of the people. A land of lofty mountains, deep glens, broad lochs, rapid rivers dashing cataracts, impenetrable mists and sublime storms, I would expect to find there a race free as the air that plays around the mountains' brow, the heather that blooms on her native hills or as the eagle that cleaves her native skies. No Scotchman is ashamed of his country. The land of the heather is a loadstone to the hearts of her sons in whatever land they may dwell.

Breathes there a man with soul so dead
Who never to himself hath said:
This is my own, my native land?

(To be continued.)

IMPERISHABLE MONUMENT.

MR. EDITOR.—The horrors of the wholesale massacre and burning in Syria during 1860 occasioned the advent of Mrs. B. Thompson's British Syrian schools. This work began in much weakness and Mrs. Thompson aimed at first at gathering about her in Beyrout as many of the widows and orphans as possible, "read the Word to them, teach them to read, to work, and otherwise help and sustain them." The mission grew and one department was added to another. In 1868, Mrs. Thompson was called to her rest, and her sister, Mrs. Mott, assisted by Mrs. Smith and Miss Lloyd, shouldered the burden. The mission now has reached Tyre and Mount Hermon to the south and south-east and Damascus to the east. It employs 120 agents teaching and preaching among the various sects of Syria, with 3,640 scholars, including young and old, now under instruction. This is the only kind of monument which is imperishable. Whether Mrs. Thompson has any marble pillar marking her grave or not, I know not, but the British Syrian schools, with which I was connected from 1869 to 1874, still live and give life. And beyond doubt, Mrs. Mott, who is the unpaid directress, will be glad to see any of your readers who may visit Beyrout, and show them what is being done. Her work includes a mission to the Jews, and those who are interested will find it profitable to help her in this work. Address Mrs. M. Mott, Beyrout, Syria. Postage five cents. But, above all, see the work for yourself if possible. G. B. H.

ITALIAN EVANGELIZATION BY THE WALDENSIAN CHURCH.

MR. EDITOR.—I have just received from Dr. Prochet, of Rome, a large number of copies of the last Report of the Italian Evangelization Committee of the Waldensian Church. Along with this, I send you one. You may find in it some facts likely to interest and delight the readers of THE PRESBYTERIAN.

Dr. Prochet is very anxious that every one who gave a donation for his Church to Rev. Sig. Tron in 1889 should get a copy. The donations are all mentioned in the Italian Report. But most of the names of the donors are spelt in an outrageous manner. Some are—as an Airish jintleman would say—anonymus ones. I cannot, therefore, make much use of the list referred to, in distributing the copies sent me. But any giver who wishes to have one, has only to write to me.

Dr. Prochet says: "If the givers feel disposed to renew their grant, it will be a double favour this year." The Committee is \$5,000 in arrears. It will afford me much pleasure to send the Doctor any gifts for the aforementioned object which I may receive. T. FENWICK.

Woodbridge, Ont.

TOO BUSY TO PRAY.

Jesus appears to have devoted himself specially to prayer at times, when His life was unusually full of work and excitement. His was a very busy life; there were nearly always "many coming and going" about Him. Sometimes, however, there was such a congestion of thronging objects that He had scarcely time to eat. But even then He found time to pray. Indeed, these appear to have been with Him seasons of more prolonged prayer than usual. Thus we read: "So much the more went there a fame abroad of Him, and great multitudes came together to hear and to be healed by Him of their infirmities, but He withdrew Himself into the wilderness and prayed."

Many in our day know what this congestion of occupations is—they are swept off their feet with their engagements, and can scarcely find time to eat. We make this a reason for not praying. Jesus made it a reason for praying. Is there any doubt which is the better course? Many of the wisest have in this respect done as Jesus did. When Luther had a specially busy and exciting day, he allowed himself longer time than usual for prayer beforehand. A wise man once said that he was too busy to be in a hurry; he meant that if he allowed himself to become hurried he could not do all he had to do. There is nothing like prayer for producing this calm self-possession. When the dust of business so fills your room that it threatens to choke you, sprinkle it with the water of prayer, and then you can cleanse it out with comfort and expedition.—Dr. Stalker.