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TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 16, 1887.

THE *Globe's* parliamentary special gives the following graphic description of the way in which our Legislators on Front Street acquit themselves in the matter of elocution:

There were a score or more of bills introduced at yesterday's sitting. Member after member rose and said: Mr. Speaker—mumble—mumble—mumble. The speaker said: Mr.—mumble—mumble—mumble. The clerk said: This is a—mumble—mumble—mumble—and then the whole House said "hear, hear" or "carried," and smiled and mumbled in chorus.

No doubt, these worthy gentlemen who "mumble in chorus" are all excellent judges of preaching. They would not care to hear a preacher who mumbled alone, nor to attend a meeting where the speakers mumbled in chorus. It is one thing to criticise the elocution of others, and an entirely different thing to speak well yourself. But seriously, the mumbler is a great infliction in deliberative bodies. The number of even educated men who are what Homer or somebody calls "articulate speaking men" is small. Three Synods and a General Assembly will soon meet. Whatever else may occur, we may always be sure of one thing—a considerable number of members will have to crane their necks and shout "can't hear."

DR. WILLIS used to say that there is a difference between that which is merely religious and that which is spiritual. Exercises distinctly spiritual, he contended, were the proper exercises for the Lord's Day. We seem to be getting away from this high ground. The very utmost that anybody ventures to say—so far as we are aware—on behalf of the Pavilion meetings is that they are religious. Nobody pretends to say they are spiritual. It might be asked if opening a meeting with praise and prayer makes it religious? The Local Parliament is opened with prayer. It has never been said that its deliberations are of a religious nature. Mayor Howland opens the first meeting of the City Council with prayer. The deliberations of that body have never been noted for piety. Prayer does not make the "laughter" and "applause" of a so-called temperance meeting proper on Sabbath. It is quite possible that an edifying religious meeting, with temperance as its chief topic, might be held on Sabbath. So much depends on how it is conducted, and on the character of the persons conducting it, that it is impossible to speak positively on the abstract question. One thing is clear. The more spiritual Sabbath exercises are, the better for everybody, and the better for Prohibition in the end.

THESE were the last words of Henry Ward Beecher's last sermon:

We are all marching thither. We are going home. Men shiver at the idea that they are going to die; but this world is only a nest. We are scarcely hatched out of it here. We do not know ourselves. We have strange feelings that do not interpret themselves. The mortal in us is crying out for the immortal. As in the night the child, waking with some vague and nameless terror, cries out to express its fears and dread, and its cry is interpreted in the mother's heart, who runs to the child and lays her hand upon it and quiets it to sleep again, so do you not suppose that the ear of God hears our disturbances and trials and tribulations in life? Do you not suppose that He who is goodness itself cares for you? Do you suppose that He whose royal name is Love has less sympathy for you than a mother has for her babe? Let the world rock. If the foot of God

is on the cradle, fear not. Look up, take courage, hope and hope to the end.

Powerful and pathetic under any circumstances, with how much greater power and pathos would these words have fallen from the great orator's lips had it been known they were his last. And yet who knows when finishing any sermon that it may not be his last? Who knows when listening to the close of any sermon that he will ever hear another? We are all marching thither, and no one knows how near the end of the march he may be. We are going home, and the home may be near. Shall men be found sinning who may be but one day's march from the heavenly home? There is surely a powerful motive here for purity in life and activity in work.

A PROFESSOR of elocution, writing in the *Hemlock Review*, says:

Of the three places where we hear most public speaking and reading—our courts of law, our theatres and our churches—the place where we hear the best elocution is the first, and the place where we hear the worst is the last. The reason we hear the best elocution in our courts of law is because there the speakers are most occupied with the thoughts expressed by the language they utter, because they are most in earnest and because they address themselves most to the intelligence.

The last two reasons are not worth anybody's notice. The first has truth enough in it to make it of interest to all preachers. It is a fact that the gentlemen of the bar must, from the very nature of their work, be chiefly concerned with *thoughts* rather than words. Not knowing what turn a case may take, not knowing what the judge may rule, or a witness may testify, or the opposing counsel may argue,—it is simply impossible for a lawyer to write his speech, or in any way prepare words. He must deal with thought. And here is just where a good speaker at the bar has a most decided advantage over a preacher, or any other speaker, who makes verbal preparations. It is next to impossible to deliver written composition in a free, easy, pleasing manner. The more careful the composition, the more stilted and unnatural the delivery is likely to be. Probably not one speaker in a hundred can deliver carefully prepared matter without appearing to recite it from memory. Perhaps the best remedy is to write, if possible, in a spoken style. Dr. Parker says somewhere that in his earlier years he used to repeat every sentence to an imaginary audience before writing it. If it sounded like direct address, he put it down; if not, he changed it to a more direct form. His sentences are all direct enough now.

IN an article on the Sabbath afternoon meetings held in the Pavilion under the auspices of the Young Men's Prohibition Club, the *Christian Guardian* says:

We can, however, suppose circumstances under which the holding of meetings of this sort, however lawful, and granting the utmost of good experience shows them capable of accomplishing, are not expedient. If they are the occasion of the neglect of other and more important moral agencies, such as public worship and the Sabbath school, or if they fall into the hands of political declaimers whose zeal has more reference to the exigencies of partisanship than to the moral interests of society, or if they are so conducted that the religious element is not so predominant as to be in harmony with the purpose for which God set apart the Sabbath, then it is a question whether, in the end, the interests of the very reforms they are organized to promote would not be better advanced without them.

There is no question about it. Meetings of the kind supposed must inevitably injure the reforms they are organized to promote. No reform can be promoted by Sabbath-breaking. The only question is whether the meetings held in the Pavilion are of the character described by our neighbour, and do the things the *Guardian* supposes might be done at such meetings. The very fact that the meetings now held raise doubts in the minds of many of the best people in the community, and are an offence to many Christians, is of itself presumptive evidence that they must in the end hinder rather than help Prohibition. Can these young men carry Prohibition in this country without the aid of the people who are strict in their views in regard to the Sabbath? Can any body of temperance men afford to alienate those who do not believe in such meetings on the Sabbath? Is the Scott Act such a success in Ontario that any temperance organization can afford to ignore the people who believe the Sabbath to be a day for rest and worship. Is Prohibition to be so easily won that the feelings of a large majority of the Presbyterian people of the country can be treated with indifference, if not with contempt. Wise soldiers never fire on their own allies.

HENRY WARD BEECHER.

LAST Saturday the grave closed over all that was mortal of Henry Ward Beecher. After a brief illness, at whose sudden approach hope of recovery died out, the great and energetic pastor of Plymouth Church, Brooklyn, lay at rest. His illness and death occasioned general and intense interest. The city in which he had ministered for forty years was moved as communities are seldom moved. Until the final obsequies were over, the deep feeling evoked by the mournful event had not subsided. Only in the case of extraordinary men are such manifestations possible, and Henry Ward Beecher was no ordinary man. The descendant of a distinguished family, he became the most distinguished of the name. He reached distinction by no adventitious means. He began his ministry in the West, not the quiet and orderly West of the present. There was much in the habits of a migratory people to discourage a less resolute spirit than that animating the young Western preacher. By native energy and rare talent he made his impress felt, and fame began to whisper his name abroad. In the East his commanding ability and promise began to be recognized, and under happy auspices his ministry was transferred to Brooklyn, where, for a long series of years, he was the most conspicuous figure in that city of churches.

Mr. Beecher's fame was not confined to the circle embraced in his immediate field of ministerial labour. His acceptability as a lecturer and speaker on public questions was great throughout the United States, and he has frequently appeared on Canadian platforms. The announcement anywhere of a lecture by Henry Ward Beecher was sure to attract a large audience. In Great Britain his fame was equally recognized, although there were sufficient reasons why on his last and a former visit his audiences were not wholly in sympathy with him. During the war there was in Great Britain a strong feeling in favour of the South. President Lincoln felt its injustice, and at his personal request, Mr. Beecher undertook to enlighten the British mind on the causes and real merits of the conflict. His powerful and persuasive appeals compelled attention, and many were convinced that the Northern cause was just, and in the interest of freedom; but he encountered considerable opposition. During his recent visit, his theological opinions were to a large extent the cause of his cool reception in certain quarters.

A brilliant charlatan may by adventitious means and judicious advertising cause a temporary lodgment in popular attention. By such means he cannot hold his place unless there be solid qualities on which his claims can rest. Mr. Beecher was somewhat erratic, but he was no quack, and he was certainly endowed with sterling qualities. He had an excellent training, a fine physique, a noble presence, and that indefinable essence named personal magnetism. His voice in public addresses was melodious, flexible and powerful. He was a born orator. His mobile countenance was an index to the strong emotions by which he was swayed when borne irresistibly onward by the stirring thoughts within. He had a strong mastery of the English language. Under his control, it was flexible, always choice and appropriate and generally powerful. A deep and abiding human sympathy kept him in constant touch with the popular heart, and the proof of this is seen in the profound emotion with which his loss is felt. All these were elements of strength, and to these must be added that he was free and fearless in his public utterances. On questions agitating the public mind he was never undecided. Right or wrong, Henry Ward Beecher never sought shelter in a half-way house. He was never an intellectual tight-rope performer, balancing himself with mellifluous but meaningless ambiguities. He spoke straight out the truth, or what he believed to be the truth, that was in him.

Of the dark cloud that for a time rested on his fair fame, and from which he emerged, with scars, it is unnecessary, as it would be ungenerous, now to speak. Those who knew him best stood by him during the dark eclipse, and the sad story may now fittingly be left in oblivion.

Neither is it grateful at present to dwell on his theological vagaries. He drifted from his moorings, and was driven hither and thither by outward influences and inner impulse. No wonder that especially his later teachings lacked stability. It is no marvel that a theology based on self-consciousness should