

peril of living without God and without hope in the world. They say, "I am not doing anything. I don't lie. I don't swear. I don't steal. I don't break the Sabbath day. I am sitting here to-night, in my indifference, and what you say has no effect upon my soul at all. I am just sitting here." Meanwhile the long train of eternal disaster is nearing the crossing, and the bridges groan, and the cinders fly, and the brakes clank, and the driving wheel speeds on, and there is a blinding rush, and in the twinkling of an eye they "perish from the way when God's wrath is kindled but a little."

To win life there must be a struggle, there must be a prayer, there must be a repentance, there must be a speed like that of a hunted deer running for the water brooks; but to lose heaven, there is nothing to be done. Absolutely nothing. Breathe no prayer. Ask for no counsel. Fold your arms. Look down. Still! altogether still! and your destiny is decided, and your doom is fixed, and your fate is but a dismal echo of the lepers' lamentation, "If we sit still here, we die."—*De Witt Talmage.*

A BRAVE WOMAN MISSIONARY.

No women, and but few men, have been able to do as much for Protestant missions as Miss Melinda Rankin. It is seldom indeed that a single life has accomplished such great results as have been obtained in Mexico through this woman's labors. She was born and educated in New England, but since 1840 her time has been spent in missionary work among the Catholics of Mississippi, Texas, and Mexico. The story of her life,* as she has told it—simply, modestly, and unaffectedly—has an interest and a lesson for all. In 1840 she felt that she was called to labor among the Catholics of the Mississippi Valley, who were rapidly increasing in numbers and influence from European immigration. While engaged in this work the war with Mexico broke out, and learning from returned soldiers something of the spiritual condition of the poor Mexicans, her sympathies were enlisted in their behalf. Failing to interest others by tongue or pen in the evangelization of Mexico, she resolved to devote herself to the work. Although she could not preach, she could teach and circulate the Bible. Her self-imposed mission was not an easy or a pleasant one. Texas was then overrun with outlaws and robbers, and a lone woman might well shrink from the dangers of life in their midst. Miss Rankin went, however, and opened a school at Huntsville, remaining there until 1852. She then went to Brownsville, on the border of Mexico, which for several reasons was not likely to be a pleasant place to live in. The next morning after her arrival in the town she gathered five children into a school, soon increasing the number to forty. Although the laws of Mexico forbade the introduction of Protestantism in any form into the country, Miss Rankin managed to have Bibles secretly carried over to Matamoras. She found that the people were ready to receive the truth everywhere, and they treasured their Bibles and studied them with great care. Hearing that a party of French nuns were about to establish themselves at Brownsville, Miss Rankin resolved that she would have means to compete with them in the education of the children. So she came North, and, after hard work and many discouragements, raised enough money to build a seminary. She opened it in 1854, and made many converts of parents through their children. She diligently circulated the Bible and publications of the Tract Society, for which a demand was soon created, orders with money coming from as far as Monterey. She saw the opportunity opened to a Bible distributor, and endeavored to secure the services of one through Dr. Kirk. Disappointed in this, and still undaunted by persecution, sickness, discouragements, and many perils, Miss Rankin prepared to go herself. Her life in Matamoras, her experience in Brownsville at the breaking out of the rebellion, her ejection from the seminary by Southern authorities, her trips to the North to obtain money to forward the evangelial work in Mexico, her attempts to interest men in her enterprise and to obtain helpers, are striking features of her story. After engaging several colporteurs to travel in Mexico, two of them became faint-hearted when about to start out. Miss Rankin, equal to every emergency, put courage into their hearts and inspired them with zeal, and these young men eventually carried the Gospel to Oaxaca.

Thousands of Bibles and tracts were circulated, many sermons were preached, and converts multiplied. Miss Rankin superintended the work and organized the fruits of the mission into congregations. She fixed the headquarters of the mission for Northern Mexico at Monterey, and by her own exertions raised \$15,000 at the North to buy a suitable building in that city.

* "Twenty Years Among the Mexicans: A Narrative of Missionary Labor." By Miss Melinda Rankin. Cincinnati: Chase & Hall, 1875.

At last, when this brave woman had established the mission securely, worn by disease and incessant labor, she turned it over to the American Board, with regret that she could no longer aid and direct it.

She now retires from missionary life with the satisfaction of seeing several societies laboring for the evangelization of Mexico. She sees an independent evangelical church, with fifty-six congregations, established in the centre of the republic, while zealous missionaries are carrying the Gospel to the distant and dark corners of the country. It must rejoice her to know that the years she consecrated to Mexico were not spent in vain, but resulted in planting Protestant Christianity firmly in that country, and in drawing the attention of the Christian world to so promising a field of missionary enterprise.—*Methodist.*

EVIDENCE OF LONGEVITY.

We shall now advert to one of the most difficult features of this curious study, viz.: the lack of reliable evidence in the cases of abnormal longevity. Perhaps this paragraph should have preceded what has already been said, for, if we cannot believe what has been written, any story of the romancer might prove far more interesting. But, though a very large degree of faith must be exercised in these matters, we cannot agree with Sir G. Cornewall Lewis, that no person ever lived one hundred years. Nor do we sympathize with a late writer, Mr. William J. Thoms, who will credit no centenarian, unless his story is supported by the evidence of statistics. Mr. Thoms, in reviewing the subject of longevity, claims that there have existed in latter days but four cases which have been satisfactorily proved: Mrs. Williams, of Bridehead, died 1841, aged 102; age proved by parish statistics and family records; William Plank, of Harrow, died 1867, aged 100; age proved by being in school with late Lord Lyndhurst, in 1780; bound apprentice in 1782, and received indentures of freedom in the Salters Company in 1789; Jacob William Luning, died 1870, aged 103; age proved by statistics of birth, baptism, and testimony of disinterested friends, while his identity (the most difficult of all things to prove) has been established by statistics from the Equitable Assurance Society in London, where, at the age of 36, in 1803, he was insured for £200. This is the only case on record of an insured life extending to 100 years. The fourth was Catherine Duncombe Shafto, who died in 1872, aged 101; age proved by parish statistics, and identity established by the fact that, in 1790, she (being then 19 years of age) was selected as one of the Government nominees in the tontine of that year. Her husband and many of her sons were representatives in Parliament. Thus, the greatest skeptic with whom we meet, in the discussion of our subject, admits the fact of centenarianism. Some cases are proved. Records are not always kept of birth, or baptism, or marriage, nor do all men insure their lives. The early companions of the extremely aged are all dead, and their testimony cannot be procured. Shall we therefore say, that none pass the hundredth nor the hundred and tenth birthday, but the select four referred to by Mr. Thoms?

Indeed there is a remarkable concurrence of all testimony in assigning 130 to 150 years to the most aged of various races and times. Dr. Van Oven, an authority of great ability, has given seventeen examples of age exceeding 150 years. So have written and believed Hufeland and Haller, the latter asserting that the vital forces of man are capable of reaching, in some cases, 200 years. Therefore, those kindly disposed toward history, and not anxious to examine the records too minutely, may, by an extraordinary effort of faith, believe the assertion that Thomas Parr lived to be 152, and that Henry Jenkins died at the age of 169. But it will take a good many grains of salt to confirm the world in the belief that Peter Zartan, the Hungarian peasant, lived to be 185, or that Thomas Cam (notwithstanding the parish register of St. Leonard's, Shore-ditch) died January 28, 1888, aged 207 years. Indeed the great age of the latter resulted from the trick of some wag, who, with venerable intent, fashioned the figure "1" on his tombstone into a "2," thus jumping a century in a few minutes. The friends of Thomas Damme, who died 1648, aged 154, provided against similar trickery, and had his age cut on the tombstone in words at length. It might be supposed that statistics would furnish very valuable evidence on this subject. But, in the first place, it is only within certain European areas and a part of America that tables relating to age are prepared, and the qualifications to which these are subject from the shifting of population are of a very complex character. These records show that extreme age is almost uniformly found among the poor and the degraded. And although one might suppose that the possession of wealth, education and intelligence, would contribute to long life, the evidence seems to point the other way. The cases that are

handed down to us, from the earlier centuries of the Christian era are often but tradition. In later days more positive evidence exists; and yet the dusty parish registers are not above question, and the family records and familiar obituary notices frequently come to us unverified. It is also a strange feature that miraculous length of days occurs in obscure villages, where no evidence exists but the mere *ipse dixit* of Old Mortality, and that as soon as we draw near the cities, where science can handle the case, the wonderful story flies the light. The fact is, aged people have their full share of the marvellous appetite, they have too frequently lost their memories; and so, from ignorance or deceit, do not tell the truth. And then a vanity which never grows old affects equally the statements of old and young. The register, to which we are often referred, is a record, not of birth or baptism, but of death, and merely contains a statement of the age as derived from the friends of the deceased, and which will soon be found carved and unquestioned on the tombstone. This is valueless in proof of longevity. Then in villages, where many of the same name are found, a confusion in identity has often taken place, and, where nobody will rise up to prove the contrary, some octogenarian has doubtless felt himself called upon to assume the years of both his father and his grandfather. If we bear these things in mind, it will not appear very marvellous that negroes live long. Louisa Truxo, at the age of 175, was living in Cordova in South America in 1780, and another negress, aged 120, was called in evidence to prove the case. Of course to ignorant folk and innocent statisticians this was satisfactory.—*Scribner's Monthly.*

THE SAFE SIDE.

An excellent lady, for many years a member of a society near the city of Pittsburg, related to me the following incident: "Her father was a captain and owner of a passenger ship from Baltimore to ports in Europe, at the time of the trouble in France. On his return to this country he took on board Thomas Paine, the great infidel, escaping to the United States for his life. The old captain was also an infidel. On board this vessel was the captain's daughter. She had been converted at a Methodist revival in the city of Baltimore, and, as her father said, to save her from utter melancholy, he took her to France, and on the return he requested Paine to enter into a controversy with his daughter; and, as he was a subtle reasoner, he could easily drive the young lady from her moorings. He approached her blandly and said: 'Learn, young lady, you are a professor of the religion of Jesus.' She said: 'I am, sir; and just then she felt the power of the Divine Spirit in her heart.' Said he: 'Allow me to ask you a question.' 'Certainly, Mr. Paine.' He then proceeded to say: 'You Christians are looking for a day of judgment?' 'Yes, sir.' 'Now, young lady, suppose the long-looked-for day does not come, what then? Where are all your false alarms and fear of a great day, and the future of which you dream and dread so much?' 'True, Mr. Paine. Let me answer your question by asking another. 'Proceed, lady.' 'If, sir, the Bible is true, and if there will come a judgment day and a great future, what then, Mr. Paine—what then?' 'Young lady, it is a noble answer and true. If I am wrong, I lose all; if you are wrong, you have nothing more than I to lose. Lady, stick to your profession, I have not another word to say. I am taken in my own net.'—*Christian Friend.*

MY TIME IS NOT MY OWN.

"Go with me to the matinee, this afternoon?" once asked a fashionable city salesman of a new clerk.
"I cannot."
"Why?"
"My time is not my own; it belongs to another."
"To whom?"
"To the firm, by whom I have been instructed not to leave without permission."
The next Sabbath afternoon the same salesman said to this clerk,—
"Will you go to ride with us this evening?"
"I cannot."
"Why?"
"My time is not my own; it belongs to another."
"To whom?"
"To Him who has said 'Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.'"
Some years passed, and that clerk lay upon his bed of death. His honesty and fidelity had raised him to a creditable position in business and in society, and, ere his sickness, life lay fair before him.
"Are you reconciled to your situation?" asked an attendant.
"Yes, reconciled; I have endeavored to do the work that God has allotted me, in His fear. He has directed me thus far; I am in His hands, and my time is not my own."—*Working Church.*

AN EXAMPLE.

The following story is told of the late Dr. Hook, Dean of Chichester. His great interest in the working classes was shown, among other acts, by his signing the temperance pledge in order to save a man whom he saw to be giving way to drinking. Telling the story in his own words, in speaking of the time when he was Dean of Leeds, he said:

"I had in my parish at Leeds a man who earned 18s. a week; out of this he used to give 7s. to his wife, and to spend the rest in drink, but for all that he was a good sort of man. I went to him and said:

"Now, suppose you abstain altogether for six months."

"Well, if I will, will you, sir?" was his reply.

"Yes, I said, 'I will.'"

"What!" said he, "from beer, from spirits, and from wine?"

"Yes."

"And how shall I know if you keep your promise?"

"Why, you ask my missus and I'll ask yours."

"It was agreed between us for six months at first; and afterwards we renewed the promise. He never resumed the bad habit that he had left off, and is now a prosperous and happy man in business at St. Petersburg, and I am Dean of Chichester."

SELECTIONS.

—As old Mr.—heaved the last scuttle of four tons of coal into his cellar, he was heard to remark: "If they had been boys instead of girls, it wouldn't have been thus. One ton would last all winter."

—A Lancaster youth sent a dollar to a New York firm, who advertised that for that sum they would send a recipe to prevent bad dreams. In reply to his letter the country lad received a card with the words, "Don't go to sleep," plainly printed upon it.

—"Pull on this rope and you will find me" is the careful written direction left by a Pennsylvania man, who drowned himself. Such men should be encouraged, for few suicides appear to care how much trouble and expense relatives are put to in hunting them up.

—A Boston schoolgirl of tender years thus writes to her bosom friend: "Dear Susie, I shan't attend school agin until I get some new cuffs, collars, and Jewelry—dear Mama agrees with me that is my dooty to take the shine out of that Upstart Mamy Jones, and I'll do it if I never learn nothing."

—A Paris paper says: A gentleman was seated before the Cafe Riche, when a young artist passed with a companion. "I will bet you," said the artist to his friend, "I will drink that gentleman's coffee, and he will thank me for doing it." "You are crazy." "You will see." "You know him then." "Come and see the proceeding then." Very solemnly they approached the gentleman. "Sir," said the artist, "I am an inspector of the Board of Health. If I ask for coffee they will give me without doubt a very good cup, for they know me. You, sir, whom they do not know, are served like the rest of the world. Will you allow me to taste your coffee?" "Certainly," said the gentleman. "This is really good. The government has great care over the people. The police cannot be too watchful over the public health." The artist drank the coffee, and having finished it said politely, "Thank you things properly at this cafe; this is excellent coffee." He bowed, and left the gentleman to pay for the coffee he had not had, but profoundly grateful for the care of the government.

COMIN THRO THE RYE.

A New York pictorial publishes an illustration of 'Comin thro the Rye,' and blunders into what we presume is the popular misconception of the ditty, giving a laddie and lassie meeting and kissing in a field of grain. The lines:

"If a laddie meet a lassie

Comin thro the rye,"

and especially the other couplet:

"A' the lads they smile on me

When comin thro the rye,"

seem to imply that traversing the rye was an habitual or common thing, but what in the name of the Royal Agricultural Society could be the object in tramping down a crop of grain in that style? The song perhaps suggests a harvest scene, where both sexes, as is the custom in Great Britain, are at work reaping, and where they would come and go through the field indeed, but not through the rye itself, so as to meet and kiss in it. The truth is the rye in this case is no more grain than Rye Beach is, it being the name of a small, shallow stream near Ayr, in Scotland, which, having neither bridge nor ferry, was forded by people going to and from the market, custom allowing a lad to steal a kiss from any lass of his acquaintance whom he met midstream. Our contemporary will see that this is the true explanation, if he will refer to Burns's original ballad, in the first verse which refers to the lass wetting her clothes in the stream.

"Jennie is a' wat, pair bodie;

Jenny's seldom dry;

She drag'd a' her petticoatie,

Comin thro the rye."

—*Newburyport Herald.*