

hurst, Cowdray Castle, Petworth, Lavington—every name suggestive of noble associations."

The Excavation of Gezer.

Is the title of an interesting paper in the Sunday at Home, by R. A. Stewart McAllister, the director. For some time past, in fact, since Tell-el-Amarna was brought to light, we have not heard of any new discoveries. Consequently, what is now recorded has much and fresh interest. Unfortunately it reveals the habitations of cruelty. "A cave in Gezer was discovered luridly setting forth the savagery which in the Amorite race co-existed with their artistic culture. This cave had originally been excavated for a cistern, and was for some time used for that purpose. For some reason, however, it was adapted to receive the remains of a number of persons, whose skeletons were found when the cistern was cleared out. With the skeletons were deposited a magnificent collection of bronze spearheads and knives, some of which, unfortunately, came to pieces after being exposed to the atmosphere, though fortunately a photograph was taken before this happened, so that records of all of them are preserved. The number of skeletons was sixteen, fifteen of them males, ranging between the ages of about sixteen and fifty. The sixteenth skeleton was that of a girl about fourteen years of age, whose body had been sawn asunder a little above the waist. At the temple of Gezer, under the earth beneath a row of Ashera-stones, was made a discovery which even more clearly showed the savagery of the rites enacted at the temple. A series of jars were uncovered, each of which contained the skeleton of a very young infant. The marks of fire on two of these made it abundantly clear that these children were the victims of sacrifices, and showed that the appalling accounts preserved by Lucian and other writers on the nature of the worship of the Syrian divinities are no fiction, but sober facts. There is reason to believe that the infants sacrificed in the temple were first-born children, and that the Amorites of Gezer followed a custom of sacrificing their first-born to the divinity whose temple stood in their midst."

Tintern Abbey.

To those who have been privileged to visit this beautiful ruin, and even to the larger class whose knowledge is confined to pictures, it will be of interest to know that since it has come into the hands of the Crown, discoveries have been made which may be followed by others. Part of the original and elaborate system of drainage has been disclosed, and, by the removal of old cottages built into the Abbey, gateways and windows formerly hidden have been brought to light. Most interesting of all is the discovery of the lay brothers' staircase. On the demolition of an old cottage and subsequent excavation the workmen found a doorway leading from the lay brothers' quarters to the staircase, and thence by the door named after them into the Abbey.

EXTEMPORE SERMONS.

Fashions change in the Church, as elsewhere, and to-day extempore sermons are general, if not universal, whereas fifty years ago preachers without a manuscript were exceptional and few. The greatest preachers of the Church of England, for instance, the late Canon Liddon preached, and Canon Ainger now preaches from carefully prepared manuscripts. A sermon that was extempore, as to its subject matter, that is composed, performed, or uttered without previous study, unless by some man of wide reading and a well stored mind must necessarily be crude, ill-digested and to a great extent unedifying. Superficial thought and a glib utterance are mistaken by some for cleverness, and upon them deep study and careful statement would be largely thrown away. Some contend that when a subject

has been well thought out, the form of words or expression may be extempore, and that force and attractiveness is given to the subject by a ready and informal delivery. Such is not the opinion of one well qualified to speak on this subject, as being himself a preacher of great attainments and influence. Bishop Huntingdon, who, in a recent address to his clergy and laity at the annual convention said: "Without presuming to go into the actual or possible ways of getting a message from God's Word and Spirit into readiness for a devout utterance, I express a deliberate opinion that the language of such a message is a part of it, that the words and ideas cannot be detached from one another, that any theory of rhetoric which allows such separation is unsound, and that to think or say that it is a small matter what the preacher's "style," or language, or grammatical construction, may be, or that his choice of words, as to their force or weakness, their harmony or discord, their grace or awkwardness, their fitness, their suggestiveness through imagination or pictorial vividness,—I say that to think or imply this is a deplorable misconception of the greatness and honour and sanctity of the vocation of an ambassador of Christ, and a Prophet of Judgment, and a voice from the spiritual world. The ways in which the preparation for preachers is made are not to be now pointed out. They belong to other fields. Some of them are very subtle. Extempore discourse is not to be trusted for them, even in trained and proved discourses." The venerable Bishop deprecated also the variety of topics now treated of in Sunday sermons. They are becoming less and less these of Apostolic Evangelism, whether theological or ethical, and are either concerned with the secular, literary, commercial, or social concerns of life. We read of sermons on the last novel or on some subject purely speculative, likely to arouse curiosity, or on sensational topics more calculated to merely interest than to edify. Hence with subjects of this character, treated in an extempore manner, the gravity and solemnity of the sermon is lost, and it degenerates into an address, or that excuse for study and preparation both of manner and matter, "a little talk." Preaching is a divine ordinance, it is a special function of the priesthood, the Church gives it a place in her highest act of worship and service, the Holy Communion, and when we observe the rubric which says, "Then shall follow the sermon." After the solemn recital of the Nicene Creed in which the great facts and doctrines of the Catholic Church are recited, and we confess our faith in them, it is a serious departure from what has preceded, and is about to follow the sermon, if it be not a grave, studious and careful utterance on some text or subject, in harmony with the faith thus acknowledged, and the grand eucharistic service of which it forms part. Extempore sermons which cost the preacher no thought are an insult to intelligent congregations, and can carry no message and convey no blessing, and if prepared, they are worthy of still further preparation in elaborating the sentences, and arranging the words by which God's message uttered by His ambassador is to reach the listening ear and the understanding heart. The preacher who studiously prepares to unfold God's Word, and out of that treasure-house to bring forth things new and old, wherewith to feed and edify the faithful, will not lack for patient and attentive hearers, and may feel sure, that if he only faithfully sow the good seed, and plant and water, that God will bless His own Word and ministry, and in His own way and time give the increase.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S SOCIETIES.

The organization of the young members of the Church into societies is, we are glad to notice, being more and more promoted by those in author-

ity, and its importance is being more generally recognized by those who desire the retention of the young in the communion of the Church. For the Christian nurture of the young the Church has a system that is not only Scriptural, but most wisely, as might be supposed, adapted to its end. In Holy Baptism, in early infancy children are introduced into the household and family of God, they are reared as God's children, provision is made for their instruction—and in the Catechism they have a manual of teaching in Christian faith and morals, which, for simplicity, order and fidelity to God's Word, cannot be surpassed; and fed with the sincere milk of God's Word, we may expect, with His blessing, a growth and development of the Christian life. By precept and example in the home life and in the Church, they are fitted to become citizens of heaven, and hence to discharge with God's grace, their duty both towards God and towards men. At a time when they are about to be less under parental control, and to assume the duties and responsibilities of manhood and womanhood, the Church in the Rite of Confirmation, puts before them their responsibilities, and grace is imparted by it to enable them to discharge their now more fully understood duties and engagements, and they are admitted to that chief means of grace, the Holy Communion by which their souls are fed with heavenly food—with the Bread of Life—by Christ Himself, who said, "He that eateth Me, even he shall live by Me."—John 6: 57. Hitherto they have been treated as children in a state of pupilage, now they are expected in the possession of the full privileges of the Church to stand alone. This we contend is the most critical period in the life of young Christians. To help and safeguard the young at this time, to keep them in close touch with their spiritual pastors, and in fellowship for the great purpose of worship, work and edification are objects worthy of all effort, if possible, to accomplish. There are, no doubt, many efforts made to accomplish this, but they lack unity of aim and organization. An attempt has been made to overcome this, and a movement originating in the diocese of Huron in 1902, seems likely to commend itself to many, and to spread throughout the Church. This society is known as the Anglican Young People's Association. It aims at the promotion of the religious, social and intellectual life of the young, and their association together for mutual improvement and co-operation in good works. The association is comprehensive in character, and a uniform organization for the Church has benefits which are obvious and cannot fail if rightly guided, to accomplish great results. At the Synod of Huron the Association reported thirty branches formed, with a membership of 900, though it was late in the autumn when the aims and principles were formulated. The Synod of Toronto, at its recent session, approved and adopted the constitution of the A.Y.P.A., as formed in Huron, and appointed a committee to further the matter in that diocese. In his charge to the Synod of Quebec, the Bishop "greatly commended the aims and objects of the A.Y.P.A., and recommended that the clergy should form branches of that society in their parishes." Wide interest in all parts of the Dominion has been awakened on the subject, and we trust that with diocesan action will make this society a power for good in the Canadian Church. The hope of the Church and its future are with the young, and no means should be left untried to hold them to the Church of their baptism, and to help them to steadfast continuance in the Church's principles and usages in that trying period of life between confirmation and marriage, when they pass from the formative into a more settled habit of life religiously, as well as socially and intellectually. The necessity and helpfulness of such societies is shown by the existence of the Epworth League and the Christian Endeavour Societies among the denominations, and in an obituary notice of the late Cardinal Vaughan in

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