

Pastor and People.

A LOST HERITAGE.

BY ELLEN HAMLIN HUTLER.

There was a day—one day in seven—
When earth's grim gateways turned towards heaven,
And fair winds from the future bore
The rest of God to us once more.
Time's reign seemed brief, his promise great,
And Love ruled Death and Sin and Fate,
O peace, too heavenly to dwell!
With busy life, farewell, farewell!

There was a day when chains and bands
Fell from our weary feet and hands,
When God's own hush on toil was laid
And all the wheels of labour stayed;
When man might, for an hour, assuage
His thralldom with his heritage.
But now he knows himself too blest
With one bright, kindly day of rest!

There was a day when learned men
Laid by the tome, the chart, the pen,
And, reverent, walked upon the strand
Of the unknown and beckoning land.
One quaint, old Book they coned anew,
One blessed tale they held more true
Than all their lore; but culture sneers
At this lost day of early years.

There was a day made sweet and strong
With gentler speech and holier song.
In soft, green pastures we were fed,
By still, celestial waters led;
But now a broader life inspires
New pleasures, hopes, demands, desires—
Why should we meditate and pray
On this, the world's glad holiday?

There was a day once set apart
To serve the restless, breaking heart,
To draw us near our Father's breast,
To teach us that His will is best.
At even we were wont to feel
Dear forms from heaven around us steal;
Must we forget these sacred things
For this strange manna progress brings?

O God, with anguish-smitten eyes
We watch Thine angels leave our skies;
We see the grim gates close, and, lo,
No more the winds prophetic blow!
Cursed by the toil that may not cease,
Mocked by the mirth that knows not peace,
The soul, imprisoned, starving, prays,
"Give back our blessed day of days!"
—*The Congregationalist.*

Written for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

THE GRASS OF THE FIELD.

BY W. H. M.

A great modern writer, who beyond any other man in any age or country, has profoundly and minutely studied nature in all its phases, and who had been fitly called "the high priest of the beautiful," makes much of the fact that landscape as such never exercised a strong influence on any pagan nation or artist, and that the Bible is distinguished from all other ancient literatures by its delight in the beauty or sublimity of natural scenery. Whenever nature is alluded to by the ancients, it is either agriculturally, sensually, fearfully, or superstitiously, any higher sensibility being rarely exhibited. On the other hand, every reader of the Bible can recall numberless expressions showing the deepest sympathy with, and the most intense delight in, natural things, for their own sakes, quite apart from their human associations. The sacred writers give souls to the rocks, the forests, and the streams. Isaiah speaks of the cedars of the mountain rejoicing over the fall of the king of Assyria. And in the Psalms we read that the floods lift up their voice, the hills clap their hands, the mountains skip like rams, and the trees of the wood sing for joy. The great Hebrew prophets never tire exulting in the majesty of the hills, the roaring of the waters and the tempests; and the beauty and tenderness of their references to the quieter aspects of nature have gone to the hearts of generations. "The cedars of God:" how loving the phrase! and how these men made all things voiceful with praise to Him! "Mountain, all hills, fruitful trees, and all cedars, praise ye the Lord." Light and darkness, sunshine and tempest, the rugged mountains—all created things—expressed the power and majesty of Jehovah, and were His servants and messengers; "He maketh the winds His messengers, and His ministers a flaming fire." It is He who "sendeth forth springs to the valleys," that the wild asses may quench their thirst; He plants the cedars of Lebanon, where the birds make their nests, and "the high mountains are for the wild

goats," and "the young lions seek their meat from God." In the New Testament the same feeling is present, though not so prominent (the hearts of all being intent on one supreme matter). Christ has not left us without witnesses to His appreciation of the beautiful, and His sense of the divine care for the smallest creature, or the slightest blade of grass that springs by the wayside. And, like the prophets, He found nature rich in spiritual symbols and analogies.

So this love of nature, so intense in the prophets of God and in the Son Himself, would seem to be a peculiarly sacred feeling, and closely bound up with, if not a part of true religion. And it is not one of the least distressing signs of the times, that for a small pecuniary advantage, we so ruthlessly destroy natural beauty. But what is it we do not make merchandise of in our struggle "to get on in the world?"

It is high wisdom, I think, for all of us (even though there be "no money in it") to strive, with what powers we have, to keep or gain the priceless faculty of admiration and reverence for the handiwork of God, as He unfolds it day by day in leaf, flower and cloud. We are so apt to pass by all these things with the careless glance of thoughtless admiration, which sees nothing new because it sees nothing that cannot be taken in at the first glance. I confess I do not feel, nor even understand, that intense delight in nature experienced by the poets and many persons of high poetic feeling. Yet I believe that the practice of close and accurate observation would reveal to many of us, apathetic though we be, the secret of their ever-active admiration and wonder, and thus increase the joy of living beyond what we dream of. Few will understand Mr. Ruskin when he says: "On fine days when the grass was dry I used to lie down on it, and draw the blades as they grew with the ground herbage of butter-cup or hawkweed mixed among them, until every square foot of meadow or mossy bank became an infinite picture and possession to me, and the grace and the adjustment to each other of growing leaves, a subject of more curious interest to me than the composition of any painter's master-piece." Here we have one extreme of rational and artistic admiration. The other extreme of total blankness is well illustrated in the case of a "thoroughly educated" young lady, who confessed to me that she did not know on what kind of a tree acorns grew.

Yet, if we take time, and give ourselves to it, (having due consideration for other claims,) we may all of us deepen these sacred sensibilities of our nature, and hear for ourselves "the voice of God upon the waters," and the "God of glory thundering even upon many waters;" for "He sitteth as King at the flood."

One should begin his observations during some of the calm, balmy days of early April, when the "river of God is full of water," and the grass is yet brown on the hillside. There is a strange charm, after the winter is past, in watching and listening for the beginnings of life, in catching the first glimpse and sound of it; even though your reward be to see only brown fields, and a leafless landscape, and to hear only the murmurous oozing of the soft sod, the rippling of the streamlet in the meadow, or the distant plash and gurgle of the tiny waterfalls among the rocks, and high above all the loud cry of the crows and glossy blackbirds. "The time for the singing of the birds is come," the mystery of life is beginning anew, and we know that a few weeks will

"Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
The little speedwell's darling blue,
Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
Laburnums, dropping-wells of fire."

But even now the tender grass, more beneficent and beautiful than these, is springing forth, and is soon to be glorious on lawn and field. The grass of the field! How little it is regarded by us, yet how wonderful is God's adaptation of that embroidered carpet of the earth to all our needs, and how it "girds the hills with joy," from the time the delicate spires spring, multitudinous, enamelling the landscape, to the time they wave and dance upon the autumn plains and hillsides with "shaking threads of fine aborescence, each a little belfry of green bells all a-chime."

THE INSTABILITY OF THE PASTORATE.

This is a distressing subject to contemplate, but good may be done by looking steadily at the facts. In New England the settled pastor has become an exception. The custom is to hire the minister for a year, on his good conduct, as it practically means.

A Presbyterian friend of mine received a call from a very respectable church in New England, and was about to accept, when he learned that there was to be no installation service, and only definite hire for a year, when he somewhat indignantly declined the call.

But not only in New England is the pastoral tie dishonored. A letter came lately to me, saying: "Mr. — came to see me to-day. He is Stated Supply, and has done an excellent work: sent to the church by the Synod. He received notice suddenly and unexpectedly, that at a meeting where only those that were 'in it,' knew what was going on, it was voted that he was *not wanted any more*. Yet the church was never in its history so prosperous as it has been under his ministry." This case falls under the jurisdiction of the Synod.

My friend writes me again: "So in a little church near by they had a minister, a Stated Supply, a capital man and an admirable preacher, who had an enthusiastic Young People's Society of Christian Endeavor, and who has had a revival lately, in which about twenty souls were gathered in, and they have *turned him out*. Is not this a case for Presbyterian investigation?"

I remember well how a certain co-presbyter of mine managed this thing. It is perhaps forty years ago. The minister concerned, who himself related the incident to me, is living yet, a Doctor of Divinity, now over eighty years of age, and after a most fruitful and vigorous ministry, wearing the medal of H. R. to his name. If he reads the *Evangelist* (as no doubt he still does), he will recall the scene as I depict it. In his parish, which was a large rural one, was an elder of much capacity and of preponderating influence, who might have filled out Dr. Cox's description of Robert J. Breckinridge before the latter became a preacher, "A ruling elder, yes, sir, a very ruling elder!" The style and bearing of the man was such that he was familiarly called, "The Governor." He was in the habit of dismissing the pastor at the close of the third or fourth year, and sometimes sooner. Well, at the close of the third year (as I think) the Governor came to his pastor and said to him, no doubt with a becoming preface: "Mr. S., I think your usefulness has about culminated here, and that the time has come for us to have a change. 'Now the pastor was an impressive sort of man, of large mould, and with a voice of sonorous power, and he opened on the Governor about thus: "Mr. P., this is not unexpected to me; I learn that it has been a habit with you at the end of a certain time to give your pastor the notice you have given me. Now I have only this to say to you, that if you attempt to carry this any further, or make me any trouble, I will bring you before the Session for discipline, and failing there, I will arraign you at the bar of the Presbytery as a man who is a troubler in Israel."

I give the spirit of his words, the effect of which was immediate and magical. It ended with the Governor becoming a firm friend of the pastor, and a reliant supporter during many succeeding years of blessed revival and spiritual work. This was evidently a case for pastoral management.—*New York Evangelist.*

FAMILY WORSHIP.

We hear many a wife and mother say: "Yes, I feel that it is the right thing to do, and I long to have it a regularly established custom in my family; but my husband is so hurried he cannot stop for it." Now, I do not believe that there is one husband and father in our city who, if he really was impressed that it was a matter of vital importance, could not in some way make time for it. But if he is not so impressed, what is the mother's duty in the matter?

I well know as we live our lives to-day there seems little time to spare between the

hurried breakfast and the train. I really know of no way but to rise a bit earlier and snatch a moment before the breakfast hour. Will the service not be acceptable even if we kneel girded, as were the Israelites the night before their flight?

We have but to decide whether or not we believe family prayers to be of sufficient importance to our children and ourselves to make this sacrifice of our comfort and inclination. What shall we gain from it? Surely, for ourselves an uplift for the day, the starting of our work upon a little higher plane, an added assurance of help whenever we shall find need, and the setting straight of what has already gone awry, for our children and the stranger who may be within our gates the proof, if proof be needed, that our religion is first and foremost in our hearts, a thing of which we have no cause to be ashamed, no desire to keep in the background, that we may rely upon our God for help in all we are to do and meet throughout the day. If, then, into the little service we put what is best in ourselves, will not the children, even though they receive no immediate benefit, recall the hour and circumstances after they have gone away from us—possibly some word, or prayer, or verse, and because of it be kept or helped in ways we dream not of?

Many have testified that the influence of their father's or mother's prayers heard at such a time has gone with them all their lives; the memory of some petition has come to them in hours of temptation, and has been just the restraining power most needed at the moment. The thought, too, that every day in the home the family prayer is offered for them, has often been a comfort and encouragement to them while fighting their battles with the world elsewhere. Of course, there is the danger of its becoming a mere form, and so in time growing distasteful and irksome, but that lies in our proper power, it seems to me, to prevent.

All that has been said of family prayers may be as well said of the custom of saying grace at meals. "Among Telugus no heathen family sits down to a meal until each one has put his offering into his idol's dish, which always has its place by the fireside. This is done at every meal by old and young." Surely it seems as if we might say at least a word of acknowledgment for God's daily blessings.

With both these customs it is so much easier if we commence them with the starting of the home. I so well remember the first meal in my own home. We had been boarding, and the change to a quiet, cozy table set for two brought such a sense of happiness that I said, voluntarily, "What do you feel like doing?" Without a moment's hesitation came the reply, "Giving thanks!" And from that moment the practice was kept up.—*The Congregationalist.*

The church and the higher education have long been in the closest association. The Christian Endeavor Society and the higher education are in closer association than the church and the higher education. For the Christian Endeavor Society is a society of young people and the higher education belongs especially to young people. The church belongs to all. The Christian Endeavor movement arouses many persons to seek the higher education, and the higher education in turn ministers to the efficiency of the Christian Endeavor Society. The turning of the heart to God through human means, not infrequently means the turning of the mind to seek the highest and best culture.—*Charles S. Thwing.*

Professor Henry Morley, LL.D., died at Carisbrooke, Isle of Wight, on Whit-Monday, in his seventy-second year. He began with the practice of medicine in Shropshire, became interested in educational questions, turned journalist, became English lecturer, first at King's, and afterwards at University College, editing meanwhile the many volumes that bear the stamp of his care.

The English Presbyterian Synod agreed to send representatives to join the committee of the Established, Free and United Presbyterian Churches of Scotland, appointed to assist in the preparation of a common hymn book for use in the various Presbyterian Churches.