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Religious Miscellany

From the Dublin University Magazine.

The Two Worlds.

Two worlds there are. To one our eyes we strain— Whom magic joys we shall not see again: Bright haunts of morning veils its glimmering shore. Ah, truly breathed we there Intoxicating air— Glad were our hearts in that sweet realm of Nevermore.

The lover drank her delicious breath Whose love has yielded since to change or death: The mother kissed her child whose days are o'er.

Alas! too soon have fled The irremediable dead: We see them—visions strange—amid the Nevermore.

The merry song some maidens used to sing— The brown, brown hair, that once was wont to cling To temples long clay-cold—to the very core They strike our weary hearts, As some vexed memory starts From that long-faded land—the realm of Nevermore.

It is perpetual summer there. But here Sadly we may remember rivers clear, And hellebore quivering on the meadow-floor. For brighter bells and bluer, For tenderer hearts and truer, People that happy land, the realm of Evermore.

Upon the frontier of this shadowy land, We pilgrims of eternal sorrow stand, What realm lies forth, with its happier

Of forests green and deep, Of valleys hushed in sleep, And lakes most peaceful? 'Tis the land of Evermore.

Very far off its marble cities seem— Very far off—beyond our sensual dream— Its woods, untroubled by the wild wind's roar. Yet does the turbulent surge Howl on its very verge, One moment—and we breathe within the Evermore.

They whom we loved and lost long ago Dwell in those cities, far from mortal woe— Hunt those fresh woodlands, whence sweet carolings soar.

Everal peace have they: God wraps their tears away: They drink that river of life which flows for Evermore.

Thither we hasten through these regions dim, But lo, the wide wings of the Seraphim, Shine in the sunset! On that joyous shore Our lighted hearts shall know The life of long ago: The sorrow-burdened past shall fade for Evermore.

From the Christian Advocate & Journal.

The Theatre.

In this age of civilization and of Christianity, how strange does it seem that the theatre, which even all sober pagans have pronounced to be a school of vice, should still continue to lead captive myriads of votaries, both young and old. Let us hear and attend to the voice of antiquity on this subject. Plato tells us that "plays raise the passions and pervert the use of them, and are, consequently, dangerous to morality." Aristotle lays it down as a rule for the dramatist, that his comedies ought to be forbidden to young people; such indulgence not being safe until age and discipline have confirmed them in sobriety, fortified their virtue, and made them proof against temptation." Ovid, even in his most licentious passages, mentions the theatre as a reproach—their dissoluteness of principles and manners; and afterward in a graver book, addressed to Augustus he advises the suppression of this amusement as being a grand source of corruption.

In the primitive Church, too, both the players and those who attended the theatre were debarr'd. The Christian rules that "the voice, attest the solemn fact. Indeed, some of them, as well as some of the early synods and councils, employ in reference to this amusement, and the class of people who conduct it, language expressive of the strongest abhorrence. Not only players were excluded from the privileges of the Church, but all who intermarried with them, or in any wise openly encouraged them; thereby declaring that they considered the whole institution as pernicious, and to be avoided. Almost all the reformed Churches, too, have at different times pronounced a similar condemnation. To these authorities it may be of use to add the judgment of a few conspicuous individuals, all of whom were well qualified to decide on the subject: individuals, not of austere or illiberal minds, and who never have been charged with a desire of contracting, to an unreasonable degree, the limits of public or private amusement. Thus Archbishop Tillotson pronounces the play-house to be "the devil's chapel;" a nursery which ought not to be allowed among a civilized, much less a Christian people." Bishop Collier declares his conviction that "nothing had done more to corrupt the age in which he lived than the stage; and he informs us that while in Oxford he was so much corrupted by frequenting the theatre, that for some months he almost wholly forsook his studies, and found his mind filled with many vain images and false sentiments, so that he began to be alarmed for the safety of his soul. Happily, however, on returning to London, this good and great man resolved never to see a play again, and to this resolution he rigidly adhered throughout a long and useful life. The eminent philosopher, Rousseau, declared that the theatre is, in all cases, a school of vice; and though he had himself written for the stage, yet when it was proposed to establish a theatre in Geneva he zealously wrote against the project, and expressed his opinion that every friend of pure morals should oppose it. Hannah More, too, blushing for the aberrations of her youthful pen, consigned,

as is well known, many of her dramatic productions to the flames. In conclusion, it is related of Hervey, who has been lately designated, by an American writer, "Hervey of the Tomb," a well-known and eminently pious divine of England, that being once on a journey in a stage coach, the theatre became the topic of conversation. A lady in company expatiated on the pleasure attending it, observing that she experienced much gratification in anticipating the performance, much in witnessing it, and much in conversing upon it. Hervey listened with respectful attention, and when she had done said: "Madam, there is one pleasure which you have omitted to mention." The lady asked with eagerness to what so staid a gentleman referred. To the pleasure which the remembrance of your having attended the theatre will give you on a dying bed." This reasonable rebuke made a deep and permanent impression; the lady never went again to a theatre; and, reader, she became a Christian. T. M.

Youthful Profanity.

"Because of swearing the land mourneth."—Jeremiah. While a little boy, some six or seven years of age, was passing my house on his way to school recently he was noticed by some of the family to be crying with the cold. Enquiry made respecting his dress, which was found to be nothing more than of common thin cotton cloth. He was called in and asked, "Why do you cry so, when on your way to school, my little man?" Answer: "I cry 'I see darn odd." And it is no uncommon occurrence to hear children of his age use much more profane expressions. When this little boy was told that it was wicked to use such language, he looked surprised, as though he had never been told so before; and probably never had been. Profane words are not accustomed to rebuke their children for swearing. But, O how painful to think of the multitudes of children in enlightened and christianized New England, who receive their first knowledge of their Maker and Preserver from the oaths and blasphemies of their fathers and mothers; for it is a fact that many mothers swear. As a little girl was reproved in school by her teacher for using profane language, a few days ago she excused herself by saying, "Father and mother swear." Yes, it is true that there are fathers and mothers who swear. And what fathers and mothers! What instructors of the rising generation! What teachers of morals and religion! "The Lord will not hold him guiltless that taketh his name in vain." Profanity and respectability are seldom found in company. The profane cannot expect to be respected either by others or themselves, and much less by their Maker. Debauched expressions are sure indications of a mean, grovelling, sordid mind. They are the little corrupt and corrupting habitations of a vicious heart, "for out of the abundance of the heart the mouth speaketh." He who profanes the name of Deity, shows thereby his contempt of Him, his disregard to the feelings of sensible persons, is unfit for any decent society, and unworthy of the confidence. It is an old proverb—"he that will swear will lie, and he that will lie will steal." Profanity and scurrility are to the mind what intemperance and licentiousness are to the body; and a profane person is in the same manner infected with a plague, a poisoner and corrupter of all whom he approaches.

"One sickly sheep infects the flock, And poisons all the rest."

Some persons are so filthy of mouth, that even a mere word cannot escape their lips without being contaminated by corrupt and impious expressions. Such persons usually supply the want of good common sense, with a want of decency, and the want of a good reputation, with the want of shame and a sense of propriety. Their praise is a reproach—their friendship a deep pit—their company a contagious, deadly disease—their end destruction. This infamous and common practice of cursing and swearing upon the most trivial occasions, and leading even common conversation with oaths and blasphemies, prevails shamefully with many, both old and young, who are pleased to think they live in a christian land, though they did not know what a disgrace and burden they are to it. "Nor is the custom less ridiculous than impious; as it is the only crime human nature is capable of committing, neither proposes nor secures either pleasure or profit, either honor or praise. It is a volunteer work for Satan to aid him in insulting the majesty of heaven."

"Of all the noxious confounding errors, Which more affect and signify the times; There's none that can with impious oaths compare, Where vice and folly have an equal share."

Common swearing argues in a man a perpetual distrust of his own reputation for veracity, and is a public acknowledgment to all who hear him that he thinks himself to be so great a liar, that his word will not be believed without an oath. And still he labors under this disadvantage of making all decent persons suppose that he lies when he swears to the truth of what he says. Would that the conversations of all were such that the young might find improvement in it, instead of a pernicious example—worldly modesty—the aged respect—all civility—and Jehovah, complacency!

"But I say unto you, that every idle word that men shall speak, they shall give account thereof in the day of judgment."—Congregational Journal.

Prayer.

There is much in all prayer that passes our understanding. It is the meeting point of the seen and unseen. It is the ladder laid between earth and Heaven. It is the contact and communion of the finite beings with the Infinite. What wonder any analysis of ours should fail to unwind all its mysteries and explain all its divine economy. It is enough that wherever religious wisdom has opened its lips to teach anything, it has taught this: enough that the great body of believing men since Christ, if we may not say since the beginning, have proved it; that all elevation, calmness, as by prophetic utterances, declared that the play of the spirit is in all cases, a school of vice; and though he had himself written for the stage, yet when it was proposed to establish a theatre in Geneva he zealously wrote against the project, and expressed his opinion that every friend of pure morals should oppose it. Hannah More, too, blushing for the aberrations of her youthful pen, consigned,

The End of the Great.

Alexander, after having climbed the dizzy heights of his ambition, with his temples bound with chaplets dipped in the blood of countless millions, looked down upon a conquered world, and sighed that there were no more worlds for him to conquer—set a city on fire, and died in a scene of desolation. Hannibal, after having to the astonishment and consternation of Rome, passed the Alps, and having put to flight the armies of the mistress of the world, and stripped three bushels of golden rings from the fingers of her slaughtered knights, and in his boundations quaked, fled from his country, being hated by those of his own country, and called his name to that of his god, and called him Hanni Baal, and died at last by poison administered by his own hand, unlamented and unwept, in a foreign land.

Cesar, after having conquered eight hundred cities, and dyed his garments in the blood of millions of his foes, after having pursued to death the only rival he had on earth, was miserably assassinated by those whom he considered his nearest friends, and in that very place the attainment of which had been his greatest ambition.

Bonaparte, whose mandates kings and popes obeyed, after having filled the earth with the terror of his name, after having deluged Europe with tears and blood, and the world with skeletons, closed his days in lonely banishment, almost literally exiled from the world, yet where he could sometimes see his country's banner waving o'er the deep, but which could not bring him aid.

Greatest Street Preacher.

Archbishop Leighton returning home one day, was asked by his sister, "Have you been hearing a sermon?" "I've met a sermon," was the answer. The sermon he had met was a sermon on the cross. The preacher was Death—the greatest of street-preachers! No laws or penalties can silence him; no tramp of horses nor rattling of carriages, nor rush and din of crowded streets, can drown his voice. In heaven, Pagan and Protestant alike, he is more than a conqueror, and his dominion is over all cities and free states, in town and country, the solemn pomp of his discourses is going on. In some countries a man is imprisoned for dropping a tract—but what prison will hold this awful preacher? What chains will bind him? He lifts his voice in the presence of tyrants, and laughs at their threats. He walks unobstructed through the midst of their guards and delivers the messages which trouble their security and embitter their pleasure. If we do not meet his sermons, still we cannot escape them. He comes to our abodes, and taking the dearest objects of our love as his text, what terrible sermons does he deliver to us! O that weeping audiences sometimes has this silent preacher. Yet there is a secret doctrine, an occult mystery, in his voice. Here there is no continuing city. Why are you laboring for that which will presently take from you and give to another? Take no thought for the morrow. Prepare to meet thy God!

Live not for Thyself.

Man seeks to live for himself; God made him to live for others. How swells that mother's heart with joy when she can make her children happy! What a thrill of delight comes with that look of gratitude, that tear of joy, that one of the French Republic that the widow and the orphan can render to their benefactor. The cup of happiness is an overflowing cup. It is like a bubbling fountain, ever pouring forth its blessings to refresh the weary and quench the thirst of the poor. It is like the quiet meadow rill, fringed all along with flowers, yet concealed by the very exuberance of beauty and verdure itself doth nourish.

The man who, to answer the purposes of ambition or irreligion, avails himself of the privilege of the different classes of society, is more execrable in his deeds than the assassin or the incendiary. The one kills at once a single victim, the other afflicts an entire community with a poison that perpetuates the sufferings and spasms of a living death. The one lays in ashes cities that can be rebuilt, the other kindles in society a fire, as if fed from beneath, which, like the burnings of the volcano, no storms or floods can extinguish, and which not unfrequently extends its ravages through many generations.—Dr. Beecher.

Religious Intelligence.

Evangelical Movements in Italy. At a recent meeting of the Free Church Commission of Assembly, held in Edinburgh, an address on this subject was delivered by the Rev. Mr. McDougal, of Florence: The religious movements which have now arisen in Italy proceeded, he said, from the humble classes, and was all the more hopeful on that account; and it was a gratifying fact, that the revolution which had not taken place in that country was not stained by the usual excesses of the French Republic. Within the last fifty years God has been pleased to pour out his Spirit on Central Italy, though it had been hitherto unsafe for the Missionaries to tell about the interesting movement going on. Fifteen months ago, the Italian acquirements were things about Protestant Churches; but now the priests who presided in the Custom-house in Tuscany, and kept out Bibles and heretical books, were removed, and the people eagerly read, not only the Bible, but Bunsen's *Pilgrim's Progress*, the works of Ansell James, and *McCracken's Reformation in Italy*, and kindred works, and were most anxious to know about that Protestantism which had made such great countries of Britain and America. Bible colporteurs were now propagating from the Mediterranean to the Adriatic, and from the Alps down to the very confines of the States of the Church. During January and February of this year, 1,500 bibles went through the London Bible Society's depot in Florence; and during the

last six months, four colporteurs, supported by the Edinburgh Bible Society, had circulated 1,200 bibles through Central Italy. And all these copies were sold, none given away. Not to speak of Pisa, Bologna, and other cities where the Waldensians had larger congregations, and not to speak of smaller re-unions and many Bible-readings among the upper and middle classes not yet decided, there were four large public Evangelical religious in this country, and of which the most important was that of the Waldensians at this moment. One of these was under the auspices of the *Times* Correspondent had written so much last winter. Another was conducted by Padre Gavazzi of former days, but who had since the spirit of Evangelical religion in this country, and of which he frequently denouncing the Papal system as formerly, was also directing the attention of his congregation to such topics as justification by faith in the blood of Christ, the sole and proper sacrifice for sinners. Gavazzi had gone to Sicily, to carry on the same work there. They had now resolved in Central Italy, to follow out John Knox's plan of planting a school beside every Evangelical Church, and it was here that the priests of the greatest opposition. Italy at this moment was open to the Gospel, as Rome itself had been during the flight of the Pope. A great opportunity was lost on that occasion, when Rome was open to the Bible for months without British Christians taking advantage of the opportunity. Plymouth did not now distrust the Florence Evangelical Churches. There were from thirty to forty colporteurs employed, and the work was proceeding most hopefully, although demanding immediate aid, lest unforeseen political complications and constrained compromises with the Papacy might restrict the liberty of the Missionaries.

Garibaldi's Preachers. On the 5th inst., Father Gavazzi began preaching in one of the public squares of Florence. His discourse was so full of the political fervor of those which he delivered in 1849-50, nor do they glow with the same fiery Republicanism, but he still holds very strong language, and he strongly inculcates the necessity of forming a single and united kingdom, under the sceptre of Victor Emmanuel. Two days afterwards there began to preach in the cathedral church, Father Giovanni da Castelvetrano, the same warrior monk who ever since the battle of Calatani, has marched with the Garibaldi troops—and who, with desperate valor fought in the foremost ranks at Calatani, Palermo, and Melazzo. He is said to be a good, honest friar, well calculated to address the masses in the Sicilian dialect; whilst preachers who discourse in good Tuscan or Roman, are not so successful. Father Giovanni is respected by the abuses of the Papacy and of the Court of Rome. He keeps repeating, "I shall be glad if I only can reach home alive, and tell you that I have been in the path which Jesus Christ is not the path trodden by Jesus Christ. Father Giovanni is loved and respected by the whole army. *London Watchman.*

An Escape from the Druses. The inhabitants of Nusseya, near Mount Hermon, consisted of numerous Musulman Emirs of the Schabab family, sworn enemies of the Greek Orthodox Church, of a considerable number of Maronites, and of a Protestant community cruelly persecuted by all the other sects. In the hour of danger, however, the Protestants made common cause with the Emirs and their fellow townsmen. The defence at first was stout, but it finally grew feeble. The Turkish Colonel, Osman Bey, guaranteed the lives of the Christians, received them into the fort, starved them there, disarmed them, and then permitted a frightful massacre. Christians and Emirs were pitilessly slaughtered. One of the first victims was the civil chief of the Greek community, who had in his possession the act of capitulation, signed by Osman Bey. The chief of the Protestant community had a wonderful escape. He made his way into a small back room crowded with Christians and Emirs. When the Druses came in to kill them he stripped off his clothes, smeared himself with blood, and lay upon the ground feigning death. The Druses were deceived; three or four other Christians whom they killed fell upon him, and the better concealed when his night came he got up, put a bloody shirt and a pair of loose Arab trousers which had been left on one of the slain, made a hole in the wall, and escaped into the garden. On his way to the residence of the Naifs (sister of Said Bey), the general-in-chief of the Druses, who had given shelter to a number of Christians, he found himself between two burning houses, and at fifteen paces off, a party of Druses. He did not hesitate, but rushed through the flames. Fortunately they were not of so great extent, and he reached the house of a lady superior to a number of Christians, he found himself between two burning houses, and at fifteen paces off, a party of Druses. He did not hesitate, but rushed through the flames. 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