

Sabbath on the Sea.

Written for the Review.

It was an ideal Sabbath morning. The restful peace, emblematical of the day, reigned supremely: for on the sea, the world with its worries, activities and ills, is, to a great extent, left behind. Then, nature was met in one of her most pleasing moods. Sublimity and grandeur were not wanting in the vastness and impressiveness of the scene, but the wind was scarcely perceptible and not a wave disturbed the surface from horizon to horizon. The sun also contributed. His rays coming from a cloudless sky fell shimmering on the ripples below and relieved the otherwise dull, leaden expanse of water from the suspicion of monotony. A quieter, more delightful morning and a more beautiful scene it would be difficult to picture to the imagination of man. And all on board drank in the enjoyment of the moment to the full. We were on the steamer "Lake Winnipeg"—of whom all praise—from Montreal to Liverpool. The trip so far had been so pleasant that the Sabbath service was much looked forward to, a fact which shows the close dependence of the mental on the physical condition of man. For the good weather, the health and the happiness vouchsafed by an over-ruling providence a feeling of thankfulness prevailed that harmonized with the sentiments expressed by the preacher who was a gentleman of German descent, Rev. C. F. Winbigler, of the First-Baptist Church, Bloomington, Illinois. The singing was led by Rev. Mr. Cairns, a cousin of the famous Principal Cairns of the United Presbyterian Church, Edinburgh, and a man of stature and proportions not at all unlike that of his renowned relative.

Mr. Winbigler did not conduct the service on regular lines. He adopted a method perhaps better suited to the circumstances by which those present read the scripture, and as everybody joined in the singing the service was hearty and taken part in by all. The text was Micah's words: "and thou wilt cast all their sins into the depths of the sea." The discourse was in the form of a practical talk, pointed and effective. Sin-laden humanity was invited to come to a loving Father who in Christ was ready to forgive sin and to remember it no more. There were depths in the sea which had never been fathomed and there were sins so heinous that nothing short of a belief in the unfathomable depths of God's love could give ground of hope for forgiveness. But there it was; a sea of forgetfulness for the greatest sinner who came to God through Christ. And God's pardon differed from man's. Men forgive but did not always forget; it was difficult for human nature to forget injuries fancied or real, with God it was different. He did not draw the sins of the past from the hidden depths of his forgiveness. That ought to be our standard of practice. Husband and wife had often to forgive one another: father and son, sister and brother, comrades and friends on the voyage of life needed the grace of a forgiving spirit. Let forgiveness be full and free; let there be no sting left behind. Christ's rule was that we should be perfect as our Father which is in Heaven is perfect. The aim ought to be "I believe," even when it was felt that that must be followed by the cry "help thou my unbelief." And God, he said, was gracious in this grace of forgiveness the cultivation of which brought the believer very near to God.

There were sublime and profound thoughts associated with forgiveness. It was the most wonderful thing connected with God's dealings with man. That God should have created man was wonderful, that He should have endowed him with the high human faculties was more wonderful still, that he should have possessed a pure, spotless, sinless, nature was a marvel surpassing the sweetest and holiest experience of the holiest saints on earth; but that the angels of mercy and love should bear redeeming balm to the fallen soul, passed the human understanding. The love of God to the sinner was indeed a wondrous love. It exercised its regenerative sway in full and perfect harmony with God's law of justice and truth: in fact when God forgave sin there was no violation of the coordinate attributes of the absolute Godhead. Therein lay the theme of the everlasting, heavenly song of the redeemed. But forgiveness was also interesting as an element of human character. Its exercise denoted strength of character, because it was often a most hard thing to pardon a grave offence to a foe. Who did not know something of the sweets of vengeance? How easy to find an excuse for gratifying one's spleen at the expense of his rival, opponent, or one who for some reason had become distasteful to him. "He well deserves it" was a remark too often elicited by the misfortune of a fellow-being. Forgiveness between man and man was the token of a generous disposition, of great wisdom, of a sense of human fellowship and a sense of human responsibility to a higher Being than frail man.

God's pardoning love, however, was only possible through the

great atonement. Infinite love had found it impossible to pass the barrier of sin without an adequate sacrifice. Yet the sacrifice was found, for nothing could withstand God's gracious purposes—not even the heart of adamant. In the little company before him there were probably two classes, those in whom God's grace had wrought savingly and those who were still unforgiven. The one class had or would have the blessed experience of God's forgiving love which covered their sins as might the depths of the sea; the other class were face to face with the wonderful offer of this pardon. It was still theirs to cast themselves in faith on God's mercy in the assurance that God was a God who "pardoneth iniquity and passeth by the transgressions of the remnant of his heritage."

Mr. Cairns offered an earnest prayer and there were several hymns sung, which brought the short service to a close. The afternoon was quietly spent in reading and gazing on the ocean over which the soft gray clouds lightly hovered all day long. A short gospel song service led by Rev. Mr. Cairns was held in the evening and brought to a close as peaceful and devotional a Sabbath Day as could well be imagined, for although one cannot always choose his company to his liking on board ship, so select was that which travelled on the "Lake Winnipeg" that the variety of type but brought into relief the pleasant harmony of tastes and ideas. And the good steamship is in charge of a captain and officers whose conspicuous merits are their skill and care and the high standard of their moral character.

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A. F.

Sabbath Day Lake.

WM. MORTIMER CLARK, Q.C.

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About six miles from Danville Junction on the line of the Grand Trunk Railway, in Maine, stands the magnificent hostelry known as the Poland Springs Hotel. Here year after year assemble some 600 guests to seek rest from the harassing activities of business life in American cities, and to drink the waters of the wells which, if not possessing any marked curative properties, are at least of great purity. The establishment is maintained on a very large and liberal scale, and from its popularity has become the rendezvous every season of many families of the wealthier classes. The house stands on a hillside and overlooks a rolling and well-wooded county surrounded by a circle of mountains. The view embraces a vast range of prospect, and the panorama of woodland, lakes, hills and mountains—visible from the immense verandahs exceedingly beautiful. To those who do not indulge in tennis, croquet, etc., there is but little to do except walk or drive along the sweet country roads, and the temptation to sit on the piazzas, gaze on the landscape, inhale the air of the hills, and indulge in dolce far niente is very great. Learning that a settlement of Shakers was situated some three miles from the hotel, we drove one forenoon in August to visit the community. On previous visits to New England resorts, we had frequently met sisters and elders of this peculiar sect engaged in vending the small wares manufactured by them, and finding ourselves so near one of their villages we were anxious to see them at home and learn something of their life and belief. After driving about two miles along a pleasant country road we passed an abandoned settlement of the society formerly known as Gloucester, and about a mile further, reached the present home of the community known as Sabbath Day Lake. The quaint designation is said to have originated with a party of explorers in the early days when Maine was a wilderness. These hardy investigators agreed that, after ranging about the country on week days, they should always meet on Sabbath, at this beautiful sheet of water, and compare their notes. In the midst of a rather rough and thinly wooded district stands the settlement of the "United Society of Believers called Shakers." The village consists of a very large brick building, in which the Society, numbering about fifty members dwell together, and also of ten or twelve frame houses all painted white and in excellent order. We stopped our carriage at a house which seemed to look as if it were the residence of some person of prominence, and ringing the door-bell, were met by a sister, whose name we afterwards learned was Aurelia. To our request for permission to inspect the settlement she replied, "Oh, yea," and invited us to come in. Sister Aurelia was of middle age, of small stature, very plainly dressed in dark blue cotton, and wore a light quaint muslin cap devoid of any ornament. She was pleasant in manner, and precise in speech. We were shown into a large room which seemed to be used as a place of reception and also as an office, for it turned out that Aurelia was the business woman of the community, and was the one in whose name all worldly affairs were conducted. We had some general conversation on Shakerism, but Aurelia very speedily suggested that we might desire to visit the store. Deeming it advisable to