

A "NEW DEPARTURE."

Hitherto the *Editor's Portfolio* has been a receptacle for correspondence, and brief original articles in poetry and prose. Henceforward we shall include in this department brief extracts from the best religious books, new and old. Will our readers kindly note good extracts in the books they read, and send us a copy? In all cases let the extracts be short and pointed.

LIFE OF THOMAS COLLINS.

We have just begun reading, for the second time, the "Life of the Rev. Thomas Collins." In our judgment it is the best religious biography that has yet been given to the Church. This is putting the case strongly; but we are persuaded most persons who have read the book will concur in this opinion. Where every page is good, it is not easy to make choice of extracts; but we append a few taken almost at random.

CHURCH EXPANSION.

Speaking of months of weary delay, after Mr. Collins had offered himself for the foreign Missionary field, the biographer (Rev. S. Coley) says:—

"This delay of men of burning soul, whose qualifications have been tested and approved, argues guilt somewhere. Heaven makes no mistakes. When the Master sends laborers for his field, there assuredly is maintenance for them, if His stewards do not withhold it."

"Hope wearily deferred brings temptation and peril. Thomas Collins passed the trial unscathed; but cases have occurred, and not a few, in which men of ardent temperament, feeling that they cannot be quiet, and finding that they cannot get recognized, lose patience, and set to work on their own account. Thus mushroom sects multiply, the outcome of zeal which older organisations, if they have not been deficient in energy, wisdom and courage, might have absorbed, regulated and employed. Of this defect evil comes. These ecclesiastical splinters sometimes do in dark corners a medicine of good; but, at best, lack sobriety and weight. Ropes of sand, they have no cohesion. They run wild, and at length vanish as suddenly as they rose, too often leaving a sad stench of antinomianism behind them.

"Few things of this sort would occur, if the Church always remembered that expansion is the law of its life. Old hives should swarm. Too large concentration of membership binds its minister over to keep peace with the devil. Pastoral requirements swallow everything. No time is left to carry war unto hostile territory. A tendency to repose, much to be guarded against, strongly affects well circumstanced congregations. They easily adopt, 'Rest and be

thankful,' as their mot'o. The chariot gets into ruts. All things run in old grooves."

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"The practicability of further aggression upon the Nation's darkness is proved by what occurs when quarrel wakes the slumberers. Secession takes place. Then, see, the Church gives double to keep up; the out goes treble to get a start. The separated fragment, in its new fervour, erects structures and sustains agencies, which it had before been declared impossible for the united whole to do."

PREPARING FOR BATTLE.

Where is the minister who would not be the better for entering upon his work as Thomas Collins did :

"Oct. 28th, 1831.—Here I am—home left—a new circle entered—a new work before me. My soul trusts in God. Before Him I resolve,—

- "1. That I will rise early.
- "2. That every Sunday morning, upon my knees, I will, in the form prescribed to Methodists for annual use, solemnly renew my covenant with God.
- "3. That the whole time before breakfast shall be spent in Bible-searching, meditation, and prayer.
- "4. That from breakfast to dinner shall be given to regular and consecutive study.
- "That the afterpart of the day be sacredly devoted to active labour,—as visitation, preaching, or the like.
- "6. That I will have some selected text to which—embracing opportunities as they occur—my mind may turn and keep itself profitably practised in the composition of a sermon.
- "7. That, unless compelled, I will leave no home without prayer.
- "8. That wherever I am received to lodge, I will, if possible, morning and evening, gather all together for united family worship.
- "9. That, if I can anyhow reach, I will never miss an appointment.
- "10. That I will neither jest, nor trifle, nor waste time in parties.
- "11. That I will faithfully rebuke sin wherever I see it.
- "12. That I will seek to act as one altogether given up to labor for the salvation of the souls of men, and the promotion of the work of God."

A HINT TO LEADERS.

"In every place I find vowel marks (a) far too common in the class books."

POWER OF PRAYER.

(From a letter to Mr. Collins from his father.)

"Seven of the Redditch squadron met the other day at your sister's house to pray for poor D— G—. While Annette was pleading, a strange influence mastered the unhappy backslider in the tavern where he sat. Agitated and alarmed he rushed away, and was mysteriously drawn to the very room where the little company interceding for him was gathered. There, after no small struggle, his backslidings were healed. Glory be to Him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever!"