

CLERICAL EDITORS.

I have been much amused since I undertook the editorship of the SPECTATOR at the number of serious criticisms, small jokes, and smaller sneers, which have been aimed at my head by the knowing writers of newspaper articles. To say "the Rev. Editor," seems to be understood as a witticism; and to suggest that said Rev. should confine himself to preaching and visiting, and not go beyond his legitimate sphere, is regarded as the very voice of worldly or other kind of Wisdom crying in the gates. A clergyman to write anything about politics! Bah! The heavens might as well come down at once. It is an effort—an unholy effort—to invert the order of the universe. The clergyman ought to know that he has been ordained of heaven and earth to teach the people to try and save what they are pleased to call their Soul; he is a machine set to do one kind of work, and he has no more right to attempt some other kind of work than a reaping-machine has to try and drive an ocean vessel. Here are his duties as defined by the unwritten, but emphatic, rules of civilized society: Not particular in insisting upon definiteness in the matter of theology, but an assumption of having the whole of truth from its beginning to its term, from its centre to its circumference, in calm possession; but he must be careful to talk about religious matters always and everywhere, not recognizing that anything else can be of interest to mortals when he is near; his coat or waistcoat—society has left a choice as to which—must be of peculiar cut, generally called, and known by the name of, "clerical"; concerning the necktie, it must be white; concerning the garment which covers the other extreme of the reverend personality civilized society has not dogmatized, except to say—Sir, whatever shape you like, but your—must be black. There is no regulation length, I believe, for the face, but it is generally understood that it must be long, with a look upon it that shows a mixture of thought and tender sentiment, and inward peace and certainty as to the future of the wearer, but dashed with a concern and doubt as to the future of the great, bad world of laymen. If he should call for a glass of water, he must by tone of voice let his hearers know that hymns are said and sung in church. If he should go to buy anything, the vendor will knock off ten per cent. because his customer is a clergyman. But he must diligently confine himself to his own peculiar and particular work, not meddling with business, or corporations, or—and that most decidedly—politics.

Now this is all very good for a man who wants to live an easy, uneventful life. For myself, I do not at all object to some parts of the programme. I have no serious objection to that ten per cent. off, for I know that the tradesman will not sell his goods at a loss, thus robbing his wife and family for the sake of me and Mother Church. True, the Corporation dry-nurse me; but then they pay me about \$100 per year for the favour, and why should I grumble? True, also, that other citizens must bear burdens of which I ought to bear a share; but, I am a law-abiding citizen, and a clergyman, and accept the duty imposed upon me. The civilized world is divided into men, women, and the clergy, and the last named are treated tenderly by the stern and the tender sex. The priests of the Roman Catholic Church act with consistency; for, knowing that they are a class apart, with gender undefined, they wear a petticoat of black stuff and a man's coat over it. But I have no concern about that consistency. The fashion of a coat is nothing at all, and every one may do that which is right in his own eyes. I have no philosophy, and no religion of clothes.

But I am concerned about this matter of marking off the clergy and putting bounds to their work. For it seems to me, that if any man should have a manifoldness of interest, so as to keep life fresh and strong and many-sided in him, that man is the preacher. The man of mere business grows to be a money grub, a miser; the man of science who thinks only of his flint flakes, and his gases, gets to feel scornful towards all other men who follow life in other ways; the mere theologian soon gets to believe that he has a right to dogmatise, and that all the world must listen or be lost. And so the politician,—that is to say, the newspaper writers,—have got to think that they have a monopoly of political knowledge, and no other dog must bark. They drive clergymen into a theological bigotry in order that they may indulge in the bigotry of politics.

The clergyman must talk of business, and of social matters, and why not of politics? For politics are sacred; they teach the life of the man, the life of the community, the life of the nation, the life of the world. Said an over-wise writer in a Toronto paper the other day: "Whenever the clergy have turned to politics, it has ended badly," or words to that effect, and he gave some instances drawn from his not over-lively fancy. His knowledge of history is limited, or he would have known that clergymen have often played, not merely a conspicuous, but a great and noble part in the political life of nations; he might have known that many English and Scotch clergymen now are powerful politicians. I was trained to regard politics with great and constant interest. The Nonconformist Clergy of England are politicians almost to a man, and they often sway the judgment of the nation. I hold that a clergyman should not only have understanding of political

matters, but he should say the thought of his mind in criticism, or censure, or approval of the conduct of those who have undertaken to guide the affairs of the nation. I know that clergymen have often made a mess of politics, but then, so have the learned gentlemen who write the leaders for daily papers.

I am not one of those who think that the clergyman should be barred by law or by custom from taking part in political matters. I do not object to his exercising all the influence he can bring to bear upon the people as an educated and thinking man. To the PRIEST, with his pretensions to represent the Church and the Pope and Christ—with his claims to wield the powers of hell, and to command the benedictions of heaven on the obedient, I do object. His appeal is not to reason, but to the superstitions of the ignorant. It is not so with myself, or other Protestant ministers. Our people have been taught from their childhood up to think and judge for themselves, and with the favours they bestow upon us, that of infallibility is not among them. The Protestant clergy can only lead—the priests attempt to drive; the first use an argument—the last a lash. If the priests can influence elections in a legitimate way, by all means let them have the rights of men and do it.

But I am forgetting that the great sin in question is that of Clerical Editorship. "The Reverend Editor"—that's the rub. Quoth the wise man of Toronto beforementioned—"what if newspaper editors should get behind a velvet cushion and attempt to preach?" Answer I—why not? If they can preach, let them do it. There is no law against it, and certainly the Gospel would allow the thing. They do write on theology—and occasionally succeed very well. A man who can preach well, is a man who has understanding of the people's condition and needs—and he can write well—and he can judge what is good writing in others. I could give the names of men who were indifferent preachers, but have made good editors. I could give the names of those who are good preachers and good editors. I could give the names of good editors who are also good preachers, and speak with authority on matters of politics and matters of theology. I could name editors who should be—well doing something they are better fitted for. So that really there is no law in the matter, my dear critics.

Of this I am sure—the introduction of another and a purer element into the conduct of our Canadian daily press would do no harm to the people. A little more truthfulness in the parliamentary, and other reports—a little less garbage as to the social sins that are done—a little less violence in party strife—a little less countenance given to scurrilous scribblers, who dare not put their names to what they have written, would be a general and lasting good. I have great faith in the clergy, and wish they would speak and write more about politics. And as to newspaper work, I believe in "the survival of the fittest."

A. J. BRAY.

THE TURKS AND THE EASTERN QUESTION.

Now that the Congress has been decided upon, and peace is almost a certainty, and the excitement has died down in consequence, it seems a fitting opportunity for giving something like a history of the Turks and the war and the Eastern question in general. Of course, this cannot be done in one article, for many books have to be epitomised, and many points discussed; but it shall be done briefly and in as pleasant a manner as any we have at command. At any rate, we will give information enough for sensible people to base an opinion upon, and to have a judgment of the doings of the Earl of Beaconsfield and those who go with him.

And first as to the Turkish Empire and people. They sprang from some numerous and extensive tribes, originally scattered over the plains and table lands of Central and Western Asia—and were known by the ancients under the general denomination of Scythians. There was a kind of nationality among those several tribes, to be found in a certain conformity of physiognomy and by the prevalence of a common speech. Of course, like almost all nationalities, they have a legendary history which fades off into remote antiquity. They claim to be descended from an individual named Turk—a grandson, they say, of Japheth—and recognised by some as the Togarmah of sacred history, and the Targitaos of Herodotus. It is probable that they once occupied the high plateau of Central Asia, which extends from the frontier of China proper to the Altai Mountains—and it is also probable that they are identical with a powerful and celebrated people mentioned in Chinese history, as having threatened the Celestial Empire before the Christian era. But it was not until the 5th or 6th century that they were heard of in Europe. The knowledge of them was gained then through the medium of the Byzantine or Greek-Roman Empire. For about that time, having migrated westward from the barren table lands of Mongolia, they spread over the vast Steppes, now bearing the name of Turkestan, and appeared on the banks of the Oxus. Some, I imagine, in search of better pasture ground—but more led by warlike Khans, were intent on Empire and on spoil. At a later period, having established themselves in Persia, they came into contact with the Mohammedan powers. They gradually embraced Islamism, entered the service of the Caliphs of Bagdad, and swelled their armies by every means at command, until the commanders of the Faithful were compelled to give their temporal supremacy to the new converts, the new converts affecting to hold in great respect their spiritual authority. Solhr was the first chief of importance who became a convert to Islamism, and called his tribe Turk-imâms, or Turks of the Faith, to distinguish them from their brethren who remained in heathendom. The name Turk-imâms is the original of the name we know so well, Turkomans. The first Turkish tribe which became famous in history was