

THE WINE-VAULTS OF BERGENSTEIN.

A GERMAN LEGEND.

BY MRS. MARGARET J. PRESTON.

Old Heinrich sat at the hostel door,
And counted the gains of the market o'er,
That never had seemed so small before.

"How Gretchen will scold! But thou the beer
Has heartened me with its kindly cheer.
Boy, bring me another tankard here!"

The tankard he drained, then homeward went
With a stagger of stolid, dull content,
That Gretchen should know his gains were spent.

But scarce had he stumbled one-half his way,
When, as it was nearing the close of day,
He heard at his elbow a traveller say:

"Ah! here are ruins of Bergenstein,
So famous, you know, in the days long ago,
For vintages of the rarest wine.

"For such, of a surety, were nowhere known,
As mellowed beneath yon pile of stone,
In cobwebbed tuns with the moss o'ergrown.

"And the lords of the castle, although they
were
Right ancient barons with 'sontchoons fair,
Held riotous, shameful revel there.

"They drank in the morning, they drank at
night,
They wasted their lives in brawl and fight,
And the castle, it crumbled, as well it might.

"Yet steadily under it all, the vine
Kept bearing beneath the rain and shine,
And still in the vaults they stored the wine.

"'Twas over two hundred years ago
Since all that I tell you happened so,
For I was the cooper, and I should know.

"The last of the Bergen knights was he
Who flung, in his dying throes, the key
Of the vaults with an awestruck glare at me.

"And said: 'It has slain us, one by one!
Go turn the spigot of every tun,
And let the accursed wine all run!'

"I flew to obey in heat and haste,
But stopping to take one golden taste,
I had not the heart to see such waste.

"And lifting my hands, I could but say,
'God keep his perilous gifts, I pray,
'Til the millennium!' When that day

"Shall dawn on a world new-made again,
Such wine may be harmless unto men
Grown like to the angels, but—not till then!"

"My prayer had its answer: year by year
I visit these ruins, and linger near
To see that no trace of the tuns appear.

"For as soon as the blossoms scent the vine,
The crones have a saying, that 'tis a sign
The cooper has come to taste his wine.

"Poor fool! As you listen to what I've told,
I think you would barter a bag of gold
To look on the tuns, and touch their mold."

"And taste them!" aloud old Heinrich said;
And he looked around, and he raised his head;
But cooper and castle and all had fled!

And there in the roadside ditch he lay,
And puzzled his brains till the break of day,
And wondered what Gretchen would have to say.

LETTER FROM MY LIBRARY.

THE SECRET OF PREACHING.

My friend, the Rev. William Peter, writes me a letter in which he expresses the wish that I would tell him what I regard as the secret of success in the pulpit. He accompanies this request with the expression of some not wholly unreasonable doubts as to whether there is any secret, whether good preaching is not good luck rather than skill, and some complimentary remarks which I pass by with no other comment than this. That he does not in the least exaggerate my honor for the pulpit, and my hearty sympathy for minister in their ministerial work.

I think there is a secret of ministerial success. It is not in luck; neither, however, is it in skill. There is a third alternative, which my friend, William Peter, does not mention, and which, from what I hear of theological seminaries, I suspect does not get much mention in them. And I hardly know how to give expression to it myself.

The Yale Theological Seminary has been, for a number of years past, hearing from various justly celebrated preachers lectures on preaching. It has selected for these lectures the most successful preachers in this country, and one of the most successful in England. Henry Ward Beecher, John Hall, William M. Taylor, Phillips Brooks, R. W. Dale, and Bishop Simpson, have successively delivered these lectures. These are all successful preachers. They have large congregations; and they are all recognized in their respective communities as men of pre-eminently useful lives and ministries. In each case, too, the success has been well won. These men were not born great, and did not have greatness thrust upon them. Mr. Beecher came unknown from the West to an infant church in Brooklyn, has ministered to it for considerably over a quarter of a century, and has seen it grow, under his ministry, from nothing to the largest church in America, with a score or more of sections which have gone out from the parent roof and made Plymouth Church a sacred name in half a score of States. John Hall and William M. Taylor were both called to successful and well-established churches; but one has removed his church to a new location, and under his influence a new edifice has been erected, which is, I suppose, for the combined purpose of worship and instruction, without a superior in America, and the other has practically revolutionized the character of his congregation, if not of his church, in the five or six years that he has been preaching to it. Phillips Brooks began his ministry in an obscure church in Philadelphia, and, by the power of his pulpit, has made the wealthiest and most aristocratic church in aristocratic Boston a servant of the common people. Bishop Simpson began to preach despite the assurances of his college mates that, whatever else he could do, he never could be a public speaker, and earned his bishopric by his rank as the foremost pulpit orator of his denomination. Mr. Dale's history I do not know; I only know him as a successful pastor of a vigorous church in one of those material manufacturing centers where the still small voice of the Gospel is apt to be drowned by the roar and rattle of ceaseless machinery.

Now, is there anything in common in these preachers? Is there any one element that belongs to them all that can be called the secret of their success? There is nothing in common in their methods. Bishop Simpson never writes his sermons; Phillips Brooks sometimes writes and sometimes extemporizes; John Hall writes, but does not read; William M. Taylor writes and reads; Mr. Beecher rarely goes into the pulpit without notes, and rarely adheres to them when there. Mr. Beecher preaches with much dramatic intonation and gesture; John Hall with few and simple gestures, and these wholly undramatic; William M. Taylor with incessant and excessive nervous action; Phillips Brooks with intense rapidity of utterance, but almost without a gesture. In internal as in external manner there is little in common. Mr. Beecher is argumentative and philosophic, his sermons are generally psychological not to say metaphysical, his text furnishes the limit for, rather than the basis of his sermon. The sermon would be equally good without a text. John Hall is expository; his sermons are generally the simple unfolding of Scripture. William M. Taylor also adheres to his text;

but he devotes less attention to expounding its meaning than to applying it to modern phases of life and experience. Phillips Brooks uses his text as a modern physician might use a microphone, to reveal the heart beats of his patient; he speaks directly of and to personal experience. Mr. Beecher's preaching is philosophical, Dr. Taylor's practical, Phillips Brooks's experimental. Of course, I do not mean that either excludes all elements in the others' discourses; I only characterize in a single word the salient characteristic of each. In dress, their discourses are as different as in structure. Mr. Beecher abounds with illustration, often pictorially elaborated. A truth which he caught up as an illustration he stops to press home, the hour is often over before the sermon is half preached, his fiery earnestness carries him away as well as his hearers, and his language is frequently the unguarded hyperbole of passionate oratory. Dr. Hall rarely uses any illustration; if he is a poet, he denies himself the use of his poetic gift; and he selects his words with as much scrupulous care as if he were delivering theological discourses to a body of trained students, he never outsteps the bounds of restrained moderation. Dr. Taylor rarely preaches without illustration, but as rarely diverts the mind from the general aim of the discourse by the brilliant beauty of any single figure; his illustrations are taken from the common life of the plain people or are borrowed from literature; the artistic symmetry of his discourse is never impaired; he is never fragmentary, and his vehemence of feeling is expressed by the energy of his action rather than by that of his language. Phillips Brooks weaves his figures into the woof of his discourse. He speaks as a man who is in such great haste to reach the final result that he cannot stop to dally with illustrative truths, be they what they may, he suggests pictures, but does not paint them; the beauty in his sermons is like those of flowers seen from a passing train in a distant meadow—they lighten up the whole, but there is no opportunity to study, hardly even to catch a passing glance at any particular flower. I make no attempt to include Bishop Simpson and Mr. Dale in this comparison, because I am not familiar with their pulpit addresses.

From this comparison, I judge that the secret of those preachers is neither in the structure of their discourse, nor in its rhetorical address, nor in the manner of delivery. A preacher may be expository, practical, experimental or philosophical; he may abound with life and figure, or he may cultivate a Quaker-like plainness of oratorical attire; he may be calm or vehement; he may read or speak, and still be a great preacher. In other words, he may be a Moses, a David, an Isaiah, Paul, a James or a John, and succeed, whichever character he possesses.

But there is one thing in common in all these men: in different methods and with different instruments, they all address the spiritual nature in man. And this is the secret of their success, and it is the secret of all pulpit success.

Every man has in him a spiritual nature, though in many men it is like a seed in frozen ground. The work of the minister is to thaw the ground and start the seed to growing. It is the function of the pulpit to address dormant spiritual nature; arouse it; make it hear, make it respond. It is the grandest and most difficult task God ever gave any man to do. It can only be done by the voice. The religious press can never take the place of the pulpit, because it can never do the work, which requires eye, voice and living soul. This spiritual nature dwells, like the enchanted princess of the fairy tale, in a secret chamber in the castle, and is there transformed so as to be unrecognized. Only he who gets the

magic word, before which bolt and bar fly back, can get in where the bewitched sleeper lies and recover her to life again. A great many ministers seem to me not to know their own mission. They speak to the imagination, to the reason, to the domestic affections, speak with considerable effectiveness and power; but they do not make the spiritual nature hear what they have to say. They are logical, brilliant, pathetic, dramatic; but they are not spiritual. The fruits of the Spirit are love, joy, peace. Their sermons quicken no love, stimulate no joy, bestow no peace. Men weary of argument; they grow tired of pyrotechnics, but they never weary of the man who really helps them to suffer long and still be gentle, who really inspires them with a broader and profounder goodness, who illumines their darkened life with the steady glow of a new-fledged faith. If it is not doing this for them they care very little whether his arguments are all sound, or his manners faultless. He may even mutilate the king's English, as Mr. Moody sometimes does, and they will hang on his utterances with the same eager attention. Whether philosophy or human experience or the Bible is the key with which he unlocks the human heart is small matter so that he gets in, past the imagination, past the insensibilities, to the spiritual nature—to conscience, faith, hope and love. When they are awake 't matters not what other faculties sleep; so long as they are asleep it matters not that other faculties are awake.

In the differentiation going on in society, it seems to me as though the ministry failed to see their opportunity, and what it demands. Preachers are no longer the sole or even the chief instrument of the people. We no longer depend on the "long prayer" for the village news; we get it from the village newspaper per. As teachers, the daily and weekly and monthly press have many advantages over the preacher. He cannot compete with them. But there is one thing he can do which they cannot, he can speak directly to that which every man knows to be highest in him—the spiritual nature, that which is of kin to God. To do this should be the preacher's study. His work is not to amuse the imagination, to excite the sensibilities or to convince the reason, but to arouse the spiritual nature. He is a specialist; and his specialty is, not to demonstrate a doctrine, but to develop character; not to develop all the character, but that which is supreme, or should be—faith, hope, love, the divine life. We do not, Messrs. Clergymen, go to church to be amused, or even to be instructed, but to be revived: Cathedral magnificence, social enjoyment and advantage, choice music, pulpit pyrotechnics and pulpit logic are a poor substitute for words that, like Christ's, have in them life.—*Latus, in Christian Union.*

BISHOP WHIPPLE'S MISSIONS.—Bishop Whipple, of Minnesota, has undertaken a tour among the Indian missions under his charge. At Leech Lake he consecrated the Indian Church of the Good Shepherd. "For fifteen years," the Bishop says, "George Bonja, one of the truest friends the Indians ever had, a man of mixed Indian and African blood, had pleaded for a church. He died without seeing it. Two years ago a Christian girl in New York city, who had long pitied the red men, died and left a bequest to build this church. My heart was full; for I could not help thinking of Miss Josie Smith and my brave old voyager, who wait for us in Paradise. I cannot describe the service. The music was heart music, and the sound of these voices like the sound of many waters in that land where they sing a song which none can learn but they who are redeemed from among men. I confirmed thirty-eight persons, and some forty knelt at Holy Communion. After service I received a message, that the wild Indians desired to hold a council. I always dread these councils for they are usually filled with complaints and pleas for gifts. These men welcomed me with very graceful words. They asked help, but it was to provide means to work. They asked for a larger school-house. These were simple things, but they told us that 'One touch of nature make the wh. world kin.'"