

tiquity, manners, literature, and religion; and it also contains some notices of the more ancient, as well as a fuller account of the more recent, labours of Protestant missionaries; and, while affording ample proof of the writer's title to the confidence of the great society as its leading representative in China, it has become a text-book for all who take an active part in the evangelization of her teeming millions.

GREAT SERMONS.

What are they? I mean by them, just now, such as require a great effort to prepare and deliver; which make a great impression upon both preacher and hearer; and which are generally great failures. Their where history is greatness long drawn out. The Scriptures are now searched, if never before, for a striking feature, thus applied, may be a wretched pun. Then Common Place Books of Poetry, Hand Books of Proverbs, and a Concordance of Shakspeare, are consulted and applied. The old translators are exhumed for the sake of some quaint version of the text, or for some fanciful rendering of it, which affords the preacher a good opportunity of amending the version. Then follows the great principle, made startling by a paradoxical form of statement. This great principle is now unfolded, garnished, and applied, in a style which rises in grandeur as the excitement of the composer arises, under the stimulus of his own oratory, night-sweats, strong tea, and the approaching Sabbath, until that day arrives; which, we pray, may be pleasant enough to warrant the delivery of one of his "great efforts." His people, who remember the many dull Sabbaths preceding, seem to have an instinct that something unusual will occur to-day, and so they shoal out, saying one to another, with a sly wink and nod, "Guess our moon falls to-day. Mighty new and thin along back." Their guesses at truths are sometimes wider of the mark than to-day; for see, the coming event casts its shadow before. The preacher, conscious of power hidden in his pocket, walks very slowly and awkwardly up the pulpit stairs, throwing off his cloak, and showing his bible about, as if he were saying, 'I can afford to despise small things to day.' The long prayer in due time is disposed of, after having taken occasion in the course of it to remind his audience of the general principle that preaching is foolishness, and preachers poor and feeble creatures. His long, cool introduction is now read in a calm, subdued voice, as a sort of foil to the rush he is preparing to make. Ere long he straightens up, and suffers the orator to gleam out through the minister. A great thought has dawned upon his mind; and like a giant refreshed with new wine, he wants for some grand achievement, and must do it, or explode. But he prudently restrains himself now, knowing that his hour has not fully come. The audience is not yet ripe. So he exercises his power by keeping cool, and holding in, as Wellington did his generalship, till almost sunset, at Waterloo. But as time moves on, the pulse throbs harder, the reins stand out on the temples, the brain heaves, and the imagination glows while this inward excitement expresses and relieves itself by fuller tones and a loftier gesticulation. His people, accustomed to these periodical ecstasies, know what is expected of them in the premises. They have learned to predict the exact moment of climax, and so begin to brace themselves, and hold their breath at the right moment precisely. The grand consummation comes just as expected, only it is a little more tremendous than ever. They bear it, however, like good martyrs accustomed to the fire, and then recover themselves by sitting back into their seats,

taking a long breath, and exchanging glances of satisfaction. And as they leave they receive from the trembling hands of their exhausted minister, who is now baptized in his own perspiration at least, a parting benediction whose spirit is, 'Now my dear people, do keep calm, I beseech you, until you are fairly out of the house.' And they have respect unto the cry of the needy! But in truth, the sermon d.d. make a great sensation. By universal acclaim, it was a 'most splendid production.' It was obvious to all that it was a 'great effort.' Few had ever heard it surpassed; and some said they felt now as if they never wanted to hear another sermon. Even all the sinners in the congregation praised it with a loud voice; for not one of them was sent away maimed, or dumb, or in bad humor with himself. Only one solitary unfortunate was badly injured for the time, and he, by its recoil. The big gun did kick badly as it went off; for which rebound the gunner had forgotten to make his calculations. The over-worked man did little, all the next week, but walk wearily around as much as to say, 'You don't expect anything more of me *this week!*'

In this land of light and privilege, great sermons are more numerous than most rare things. Not so numerous, however, but we know their localities, as well as we know the whereabouts of the White Mountains, or of the Great Lakes.

Brother A., has a splendid Chalmeric, Astronomical Discourse, somewhat nebulous, it is true, but only so, because so lofty. Those who have examined it closely, on its annual return, say that its fan-shaped tail is gradually condensing around its head. Brother B., has a famous one upon the Lilly, familiarly called 'The Lillywhite sermon.' Its sweet meadowy perfume lingers in many a grateful memory. Brother C. has a terrible onslaught upon the schamp, Judas, which will almost make a bald man's hair stand on end. Brother D. has laid himself out upon Absalom, or the sleek sinner; but he never preaches it abroad without first consulting the minister of the parish. Dr. E's great effort is a Discourse on the Relations of Learning and Religion. This able argument justifies Colleges, and an educated ministry; puts Genesis and Geology in their proper places; and, wherever repeated, is called as good as new, although it has been in print for three years. Dr. F. has laid out his strength upon the true doctrine of the Logos; in which the most learned of the Greek and Latin fathers are summoned to bear witness in their own tongues, to the truth of John. All the symbols of the Church, unimpaired by translations, also give in their testimony to the same effect. Dr. G's ability has found relief in a Discourse upon Dignities and Duties of the Christian Citizen under an unchristian government, being a triumphant reconciliation of the higher and the lower laws. And Brother F's *chef-d'œuvre* is 'The Fading Leaf'; which, when delivered in that pensive season in which it was conceived, and when illustrated as it can be by veritable 'sere and yellow leaf' held up to view is exceedingly affecting! It makes one sigh to die in Autumn, when he may lay this poor mortality down amid the sympathies of nature expiring all around him! There is also in a remote part of this country, as we have heard, by distant reverberations, a great sermon on the Believer-Hero; another smasher upon stormy Sundays; another quite smart affair called the Crooked-stick Sermon: one upon 'Momory in Hell,—the Worm without End;' and the last one reported is upon three great similar silent, sister forces of the moral Universe, viz: Light, Life and Love. The praise of these sermons is in all the churches. We recognize them, when we cross their path, as easily as President Hitchcock does the