

Family Reading.

A GENERATION ON THE MARCH.

A generation on the march from the cradle to the grave is an instructive spectacle, and we have it carefully presented to us in the report by Dr. Farr, an English physician. Let us trace the physical fortune which any million of us may reasonably expect. The number, to begin with, is made up of 511,745 boys and 488,255 girls, a disproportion which, by and bye, will be reversed before the close of the strange, eventful history. More than a quarter of these children will die before they are five years old—in exact numbers 141,887 boys and 121,795 girls. The two sexes are now nearly on the level. The next five years will be much less fatal. In the succeeding five years—from ten to fifteen—the mortality will be still further reduced. Indeed, for both sexes, this is the most healthful period of life; the death rate, however, is lower for boys than for girls. There will be some advance in deaths in the next five years, and still more in the five which follow, but 684,045 will certainly enter on their twenty-sixth year. Before the next ten years are at an end, two-thirds of the women will have married. The deaths during that period will be 62,052, and of those no fewer than 27,184 will be caused by consumption. Between thirty-five and forty-five a still larger "death-toll" will be paid, and little more than half the original band—in exact numbers, 502,915—will enter on their forty-sixth year. Each succeeding decade, up to seventy-five, will now become more fatal, and the numbers will shrink terribly. At seventy-five only 161,124 will remain to be struck down, and of these 122,559 will have perished by the eighty-fifth year of the march. The 38,565 that remain will soon lay down their burden; but 2,153 of them will struggle on to be ninety-five, and 223 to be one hundred years old. Finally, in the 108th year of the course, the last solitary life will flicker out; such, then, is the average lot of a million men and women.—*The Economist.*

THE CEDARS OF LEBANON.—A traveller says:—"The cedars of Lebanon, once the glory of the earth, have become like a history of the past. Time was when their wide-spreading branches, each forming a green plateau one above the other, flourished in their luxuriance and beauty on the far-famed mountain of Lebanon. That was the time when the Monarch of Tyre—a city then queen of the nations sent thousands of his workmen to fell cedars for the construction of the temple of Jerusalem. Those who would view the cedars of Lebanon now must be somewhat affected by the fewness of their number, and their decay and desolation. A little remnant is left, and the traveller gazes upon them with a feeling, that has in it a touch of rudeness. All through the Middle Ages a visit to the cedars of Lebanon was regarded by many persons in the light of a pilgrimage; some of the trees were thought to have been planted by King Solomon himself, and were looked upon as sacred relics. Indeed, the visitors took away so many pieces of wood from the bark, of which to make crosses and other articles, that it was feared the trees would be destroyed. The once magnificent grove is but a speck on the mountain-side. Many persons have taken it in the distance for a wood of fir-trees, but on approaching nearer, and taking a closer view, the trees resume somewhat of their ancient majesty. The space they cover is not more than half a mile; but once amid them, the beautiful fan-like branches overhead, the exquisite green of the younger trees, and colossal size of the older ones, fill the mind with interest and admiration. The trees are fast disappearing from the face of the earth. Each succeeding traveller finds them fewer in number than his predecessor. There are but seven of the cedars remaining, which from their age and experience, indicate that they had an existence in Bible days."

ABOUT HATING.—Hate not, It is not worth while. Your life is not long enough to make it pay to cherish ill-will or hard thoughts towards

any one. What if that man has cheated you, or that woman has played you false? What if this friend has forsaken you in your time of need, or that one, having won your utmost confidence, your warmest love, has concluded that he prefers to consider and treat you as a stranger? Let it all pass. What difference will it make to you in a few years, when you go hence to the "undiscovered country"? All who treat you wrong now will be more sorry for it than than you, even in your deepest disappointment and grief, can be. A few more smiles, a few more tears, some pleasure, much pain, a little longer hurrying and worrying in the world, some hasty greetings and abrupt farewells, and life will be over, and the injured will be led away and ere long forgotten. Is it worth while to hate each other?

WHEN WE ARE WELL OFF.—You are well off when you are in a healthy neighborhood, with enough to eat and drink, a comfortable, well ventilated apartment to sleep in, and you are paying all your expenses and laying up something—even slowly—for a rainy day, and, in addition to all this, acquiring knowledge and strengthening your character. Young men, whose situation combines all these advantages, should be very cautious about exchanging such a certainty unless it be for another certainty. Happiness does not depend upon great wealth so much as it does upon independence and intellectual and moral culture. Add to the above, always a conscience void of offence toward God and man. When the Maker of the universe is your guide, and you have access to Him by prayer, you are rich, whether your income be one hundred thousand or one hundred dollars.

THE KING'S RING.

Once in Persia reigned a King,
Who upon his signet ring,
Graved a maxim, true and wise,
Which, if held before his eyes,
Gave him counsel at a place,
Fit for every change and glance—
Solemn words, and these they were:
"Even this shall pass away."

Trains of camels through the sand
Brought him gems from Samarcand;
Fleets of galleys through the sea
Brought him pearls to match with these.
But he counted not as gain,
Treasures of the mind or main—
"What is wealth?" the King would say,
"Even this shall pass away."

In the revels of his court,
At the zenith of the sport,
When the palms of all his guests
Burned with clapping at his jests,
He, amid his figs and wine,
Cried, "O, loving friends of mine,
Pleasure comes, but not to stay,
Even this shall pass away."

Fighting on a furious field,
Once a javelin pierced his shield,
Soldiers with a loved lament,
Bore him bleeding to his tent,
Groaning from his tortured side,
"Pain is hard to bear," he cried,
"But with patience, day by day,
"Even this shall pass away."

Towering in a public square,
Twenty cubits in the air,
Rose his statue carved in stone,
Then the King, disguised, unknown,
Stood before his sculptor's name,
Musing meekly, "What is fame?
Fame is but a slow decay,
"Even this shall pass away."

Shook with palsy, sore and old,
Waiting at the gates of gold,
Spoke he with his dying breath,
"Life is done; but what is death?"
Then in answer to the King,
Fell a sunbeam on his ring,
Showing by a heavenly ray—
"Even this shall pass away."

CHRISTIAN UNION.

The following is an extract from the Convention address (1876,) of Bishop Wilmer, of Alabama:—I was sitting one day in my study, when the servant ushered in a committee of Ministers of several Christian communions. After an interchange of the usual courtesies, one of the Committee, who acted as spokesman, said: "We have called to see if you would join us in a Union Prayer Meeting." I replied that "it would give me very great pleasure to do so." He said, "it gratified him very much to hear me speak in that way, for he had feared, from what he heard of my general views, that I would not feel free to engage in a meeting of that description." I replied that "the great desire of my heart was to unite with all Christian people in the worship of God." "But," I went on to say, "I am not contented to meet with you for an hour, a day, or a week. I have too great a regard for you to rest satisfied with this brief suspension of hostilities. I would fain dwell together with you in a lasting unity. Suppose we take the Worship, Faith, and Order of the Church for the first three centuries, and base our union upon the unquestionable facts of that era. I pledge myself to unite with you on that basis."

After some hesitation and some confusion, he replied, "No sir, we do not feel ourselves prepared for such a programme," and rose to take his leave, the others rising with him. "Now," said I, as they were departing, "don't say that I declined to join you in worship, but that I proposed an intimacy and duration of worship with you for which you did not feel yourselves prepared."

Now these were earnest men. Do you suppose it would not have gladdened my heart to have assembled with them before the Altar of God? But to what end? The closer together you bring heterogeneous and discordant elements, the greater the ultimate repulsion. One of these men believed that I had never received Christian baptism, and consequently that I was not a member of the Church of Christ; and he believed this sincerely, and I had respect for his sincerity. After labouring and praying together, we could not "break bread" together. What sort of a union could we make, when we could not unite in the highest act of Christian worship? Are our people prepared to be satisfied with such a sham union as this? If so, oh! how far off is the day, the promised and blessed day, when "there shall be one fold and one shepherd;" when charity, which shall have swallowed up faith and become the fruition of hope, shall rejoice in the triumph of all truth! God speed the day! Amen.

—The times are hard; money is scarce; everybody is feeling the effect of the stringency in money matters. Yet in one of our Southern States Edwin Booth played for fourteen nights, and received therefrom twenty-six thousands dollars. "The times are hard; money is scarce; everybody is feeling the effects of the stringency in money matters." But how much money the South spent in visiting the Centennial Exposition we know not; several millions, we suppose. "Times are very hard," and yet the other day we read about "a church of two hundred and sixty-seven members, sixty-seven of whom use tobacco, paying for it annually \$845. Last year, that church and congregation contributed for pastor's salary, missions, education, church extension, freedmen, and other benevolent causes, \$841. One member gave 60 cents for church extension, and \$145 for tobacco; another gave \$91 for tobacco, and \$1 for missions." "Times are very hard, you know." If we spent less money for things we could do without, we think the times would not be very hard to us. Diocesan missions, diocesan education, domestic missions, foreign missions, all pleading for funds; but times are so hard. Let us be careful lest eternity be harder.—*Southern Churchman.*

—What dost thou mean by fortune? If mere chance, then to envy the lot of others, or murmur at thine own, is folly; if providence, then it is impiety; for whatever goodness, guided by unerring wisdom, doth, must be so well done that it cannot be mended; and whatever is merely in the power of a blind, giddy and inconstant humor (which is the notion by which men choose to express fortune), can neither be prevented, fixed nor regulated.