

## Family Reading.

### TWO TRANSFORMATIONS.

SAY beautiful gem whence the living light  
That plays in thy bosom came.  
Beneath the stream  
You caught the beam  
Of the Pole-star's brilliant flame?

"My mother was Carbon, my father was Coal,  
We lay buried in dust and mire.  
But the elements raged;  
When the tempest assuaged  
I was purified thus by fire."

Beautiful Spirits robed in white,  
What are you, and whence came ye?  
"Like diamonds of earth  
Of ignoble birth  
And made of the dust are we.  
The 'Source of life'  
Through mortal strife  
Let the 'Quickening Spirit' in,—  
And the radiant light  
Of our garments white  
Is Eternal Life within!"

SIDNEY THORP

### THE GLASGOW CATHEDRAL.

PREVIOUS to the twelfth century there was a cathedral in Glasgow, on the site of the present edifice; but it is said to have been a very humble structure. It was replaced by a larger one in 1136, which not long afterward was destroyed by fire. The erection of the present cathedral was begun about 1238, by Bishop Bondington, and the crypt and choir were probably completed in his time. Many years were consumed in building it. In 1277 the Lord of Luso, in consideration of a sum of money paid to him, made a grant of timber from his forests in Dumbartonshire for building a steeple and treasury. In 1400 this wooden spire was struck by lightning and destroyed. The erection of a stone structure to supply its place was immediately projected. The work was begun under Bishop Lander, and completed by his successor, Bishop Cameron.

There appears to be no means of determining when the nave was added to the choir and crypt, or when the massive and imposing square tower, which till recently stood at the north-west end of the cathedral, was commenced. It is certain, however, that the tower was of great antiquity. It was 120 feet high, and on each side near the top were two fine windows with rounded arches. On the south-west corner of the nave stood also, till recently, another important erection, in all probability coeval with the tower. This was the consistory house. It had been no doubt intended for a tower, but it was not carried up, and was finished with gables. In the ancient records it is called the library house of the cathedral. It was a highly picturesque building, supported by buttresses, and lighted on the south side by a variety of windows, square-headed and pointed. Both tower and consistory house were, apart from their antiquity, valuable as adding greatly to the beauty of the cathedral, and the first-mentioned was really essential to the proper balance of the structure.

Yet, incredible as it may appear, these interesting and important parts of the cathedral, both at the time in the most perfect state of preservation, were, within the last forty years, pulled down by order of a Royal Commissioner of Works, under pretence of restoration and improvement! The early reformers at one time contemplated the entire destruction of the cathedral, and a day was set for their work of vandalism. But the crafts of the city assembled with arms in their hands, "swearing with many oaths that he who should cast down the first stone should be buried under it." The magistrates, who had undertaken the work, were compelled to yield; but they cited the leaders, and threatened them with punishment. The king, however, took the part of the crafts, and prohibited the ministers, who were the complainants, "to meddle any more in that business, saying that too many churches had been already destroyed, and that he would not tolerate any more abuses of that kind." Thus the magnificent building was saved by the zeal of the working class. Unfortunately, the royal commissioner experienced no such opposition when he ordered the demolition of the tower and consistory building.

The see of Glasgow was one of great dignity and influence, and its cathedral was held in very high reputation. The general jubilee proclaimed in 1450, on the termination of the great papal schism, was extended to Scotland, and penitential visits and offerings at the Cathedral of Glasgow were declared equally meritorious with those at Rome. The church

was richly furnished with ornaments, jewels, and vestments, and its "library house" contained what was then considered a large collection of books. There were 165 volumes, many of them rare and expensive. Among them were several fine Bibles, a number of works in theology and philosophy, but very few of the classics.

The interior of the cathedral was enriched with many beautiful altars and sculptures. The windows were filled with painted glass, and the stalls were richly decorated. But all this disappeared at the time of the Reformation. The altars and their ornaments, the sculptures, the painted glass, were broken up and cast into the street. Some of the windows were roughly built up with stone to save the expense of glazing. The cathedral remained in a dilapidated state down to the beginning of the present century, when the work of restoration was begun. Unfortunately, it fell into the hands of men who, as already stated, destroyed some of the most interesting portions of the structure. It would better have been left to go to ruin.

### OUR PARISH INVALIDS.

My parish is in a town which is reputed healthy. I may entertain a different opinion on this subject, indeed; but the inhabitants often speak in enthusiastic terms of our bracing atmosphere and the general salubrity of this region. I am about, however, to record my experience with the vast number of invalids who dwell around me.

I have, belonging to my parish, say about four hundred souls. Of these, about one hundred are children; and supposing that fifty adult persons are detained at home, this would leave about two hundred and fifty persons who ought to be in regular attendance upon the Sunday service; but, on the contrary, seventy-five is regarded as a large attendance. We seldom have more than fifty present. So here are from one hundred and seventy-five to two hundred persons absenting themselves from the sanctuary. And what is the cause? I met one and another of the absentees during the week, and asked why I missed them. The answer is the same in all cases: They were not "feeling very well." But when there comes an unpleasant Sunday, then the number of invalids is greatly increased, and on very bad days my congregation numbers not over a dozen; and of course I must be content, for I cannot expect those in feeble health to expose themselves in inclement weather.

But there is something peculiar about the valetudinarians of this parish. I go to their place of business on a week day, and I am sure to find them there, or not far off; and to my inquiry, "How are you?" they almost invariably answer, "Very well. I thank you, sir." And if sometimes they tell me they are "not feeling very well," this does not keep them from their place of business. Even on rainy days it is the same; and, what is more, I often meet on such days ladies whose health never permits them to leave home on inclement Sundays, picking their way through mud and wet. I tremble for the consequences, and expect certainly to be sent for with a message saying, that "Mrs. So-and-so, who has been in feeble health for some time, imprudently ventured out on an unpleasant day, and is not expected to live;" but no such message comes.

I have a theory that the locality of the church has something to do with this matter; for we have in E. Pluribus Unum Hall, in our town, frequent public lectures and exhibitions on week days, and as sure as I go there, so sure am I to find all my invalids present, and apparently enjoying themselves. It was not long since that General Tom Thumb and his suit gave an entertainment in our town. The General was so kind as to send me a ticket. I did not intend to be present at all; but when the day arrived, it was so stormy that I began to pity the Liliputians. I said to myself, "Poor little fellow! you have come to a place where invalids abound; and on such a day as this, you will be under the necessity of exhibiting to empty seats." Musing in this manner, and thinking how disheartening it is to me to discourse to an empty house, I made up my mind to go, so that he should have an audience of one at least. Accordingly, I went; and, will you believe it? E. Pluribus Unum Hall was crowded! There were all my invalids—the delicate men and feeble women, and their children. Neither rain, snow, nor mud kept them back on that day, and I never learned that their health suffered in the least.

But I have further proof of the correctness of my theory. I enter the church on Sunday, and find that of those who are strong enough to be present, quite a number find their health too delicate to allow them to assume the postures required by the rubrics. Very few of them have sufficient strength to stand through the singing of the psalm or hymn, or the reading of the psalter or gospel; and that this lassitude comes upon them only on Sundays, and at church, I know from close observation. Thus, it is not long since I was present at an evening party, where there were but very few seats for the large number present, and

there I saw dozens, yes, scores, of my parishioners—whom I had always observed too feeble to observe the standing postures required by the Prayer-book—standing or promenading (to say nothing of dancing) for one, two, and three hours together, without apparent fatigue.

Now, I have no doubt that some persons, on reading this article, will be so uncharitable as to insinuate that there is no real case of sickness at all; that my parish is composed of idle, lazy, indifferent, lukewarm Christians. Now I wish to hold no argument with any such uncharitable persons. I stand up for my parish. I am not to be convinced that those to whom I preach so earnestly about their Christian duties have such a low sense of duty as some would imagine. I only wish I was a physician, as well as a clergyman, and I feel sure I could substantiate my theory.

### APOLLOS WAS AN ELOQUENT MAN.

WHAT the secret of eloquence is, is one of the mysteries. We have never been able to get satisfactory answer, nor do we suppose it possible. There are men whose voice is keyed on a note low as the sound of thunder; we have heard such voices eloquent. On the other hand we have heard men whose voices were pitched on an high key, almost a squeak, and they were eloquent. And voices pitched anywhere between may be eloquent. It is manifest that eloquence consists not in the tone on which the voice is pitched.

It has been said *grand thoughts* are eloquent. They may be eloquent, yet the man who utters them may not be eloquent. There are grand thoughts in Hooker, but Hooker was not an eloquent man. Where the definition comes in we do not know. We only know that there are men endowed with this power, and a mighty power it is; but the secret of it we do not know. The man who has this gift can speak as he pleases and he will be heard, and his audience cannot help hearing him. He will make them listen in spite of all they can do.

This power is given only to one here and another there; it is not a common gift. Most speakers whether at the bar, or in the senate, or in the pulpit, are not great speakers; nor is it in their power to make themselves such. It is therefore an interesting question how those who have not this great gift can utilize the moderate powers they have, so as to do their best? Some men are born orators; some can make themselves so as Demosthenes did; but the large majority of speakers are not orators, nor can they make themselves such. What are they to do? If we could give a perfect answer we would be a public benefactor; unfortunately we cannot. So we must be content to give an answer that the wise man may be able to get profit from. We ordinary speakers should remember Brougham's maxim:—"If you want to speak well learn to talk well." There now, we have the secret. An ordinary speaker, the 999 in every 1000, if he speaks in the "ore rotundo" style will be apt to fail. If, however, he speaks naturally, as he talks, he will be listened to. But in order to put this to the test, suppose the preacher who reads this, will try next Sunday to *talk* his sermon; talk it seriously, as if in private he were speaking to a man deeply concerned about his duty to God; let him talk it thus, and then let us know what success. He will not find it easy; he has been speaking in a constrained manner for so long, it will be difficult to break away from bad habits all at once. But let him persevere and *then* give us the benefit of his experience for the good of others. We shall expect at least six communications on this subject, which if short and to the point, will be inserted in these columns for the benefit of speakers.

### OFF THE TRACK.

SAYS a devout writer: "There are moments when, whatever be the attitude of the body, the soul is on its knees." But there are moments, too, when, though the body be on its knees, the soul is strutting about on rhetorical stilts, parading in lofty self-sufficiency its tinsel glories before a knee-sore audience. Something of this kind might have been seen the other day at an anniversary occasion. The school and audience were told that they would be led in prayer. But, instead, they were led *from* prayer by the high-strutting leader, while he told the Lord, with a flourish of language, the history of the Sunday-school cause from the beginning. He depicted the marvelous growth and accomplishments of that particular school. He lauded the faithfulness and self-sacrifice of its teachers; the punctuality and liberality of its scholars; the energy, ability, and self-denying labours of its superintendent; and a multitude of other things, ending with an elegant compliment to the pastor of the church and the audience before him. It was, in its way, very striking. It was in some respects instructive. But it was not prayer, nor any kin to prayer. We wish we could say there was never anything like it before or since.