

BETTER THOUGHTS.

LET us anchor our hearts in eternity. Presumption is the daughter of ignorance.—Riviera. THE great want in modern piety is a real, deep, vigorous, inward, repentance.—Faber. See how all is sad and cold among Protestants! It is a long winter. With us all is cheerful, joyous, and consoling.—Core of Arts. The fewer wants one has, the freer will he be to do whatever duty commands, and the less will he have in important crises to listen to the suggestions of cupidity. In cases of doubtful morality it is usual to say: "Is there any harm in doing this?" This question may sometimes be best answered by asking ourselves another: "Is there any harm in letting it alone?" There never did, and there never will, exist anything permanently noble and excellent in the character which is a stranger to the exercise of resolute self-denial.—Walter Scott. The consciousness of being loved softens the keenest pang, even at the moment of parting; yet, even the eternal farewell is robbed of half its bitterness when uttered in accents that breathe love to the last sigh. The work which God has given me to do is to amend whatever is amiss in my natural disposition—that is, what he would have me do; correct my faults, sanctify my thoughts and desires, become more patient, more meek and lowly of heart. Making people happy is neither a small nor an unimportant business. As I regard good nature as one of the richest fruits of true Christianity, so I regard the making of people round about us happy as one of the best manifestations of that Christian disposition which we are commanded to wear as a garment. In the middle ages, on the death of a monk, his plate was placed on the table at every meal for a month. The usual amount of food was put upon it, and this was distributed to the poor, who were exhorted to pray for the repose of the souls of the departed brother. "Revealed truths have the property of abysses—they are fathomless and dark; this it is which makes the merit of faith. But we are led to them by sure and luminous roads, by the word of God and the witness to that word. Hence submission to the truths of faith is an actual and reasonable obedience." That heart where selfishness has found no place and raised no throne is slow to recognize its ugly presence when it looks upon it. As one possessed of an evil spirit was held in older times to be alone conscious of the lurking demon in the breasts of other men, so kindred vice, know each other in their hiding-places every day, when virtue is incredulous and blind.—Dickens. Ten times a count, ten times a lord, possessor of so much wealth, master of so many persons, minister of so many councils, and so on; nevertheless, let him multiply himself as he will, one single death is sufficient to lay him low. But the man who is not of, and in, the same high and noble nature, it never occurs to him to measure himself by his coffin, which is yet the only correct standard.—Bossuet. A good character is to a young man what a firm foundation is to the artist, who proposes to erect a building on it; he can build safely, and as all who behold it will have confidence in its solidity, a helping hand will never be wanted. But let a single part of this be defective, and you go on hazard, amid doubting and distrust, and ten to one it will tumble down at last and mingle all that was built on it in ruins. Fortune is like a good swordsman; she seems to encounter a timid, fearful man, there is no honor in a victory where there is no danger, and it is in adversity that the mind is tried and purified. Chastening are often blessings sent to us to remind us of our duty and what is due to the goodness of God. The afflictions of a great mind teach others to suffer; for example has its salutary influence. GOETHE said that the thought of endless life was sometimes a period when further progress was impossible. But he was reassured on this point when he looked up to the stars. The poet felt that in revealing such depths of space to him, they laid other in their shining void, so that at intellectual distances he could not travel. "Two things fill me with perpetual awe—the moral law and the starry heavens."—John Weiss. The Chamber of Death. The propriety of observing the greatest possible reverence in the presence of the Blessed Sacrament when a priest attends a sick-call is necessary, and on such occasions, to see that there be an air of cleanliness around the chamber of death, and that the priest be provided with a table, on which should be a linen cover. A wax candle, a taper, and a small quantity of water for the purpose of ablutions should also be in readiness. These are simple matters in themselves, and yet, strange to say, there was no regard paid to these things, numbers of instances. When a clergyman arrived, it is too often the case that all is confusion, no preparation whatever having been made beforehand. The very poorest can provide the little necessities required, and, to say the least, it is very disrespectful in the presence of the Holy Hosts not to do so. Persons make all sorts of preparations to receive distinguished friends, but when our Blessed Lord comes he is treated with indifference. "I don't want that stuff." Is what a lady of Boston said to her husband when he brought home some medicine to cure her of sick headache and neuralgia which had made her miserable for fourteen years. At the first attack thereafter, it was administered to her with such good results that she continued its use until cured, and was so enthusiastic in its praise, that she induced twenty-two of the best families in her circle to adopt it as their regular family medicine. That "stuff" is Hop Bitters.—Standard.

THE VATICAN.

This word is often used, but there are many who do not understand its import. The term refers to a collection of buildings on one of the seven hills of Rome, which cover a space of 1,200 feet in length, 1,000 feet in breadth. It is built on the spot now occupied by the garden of the cruel Nero. It owes its origin to the Bishop of Rome, who in the early part of the sixth century erected a humble residence on its site. About the year 1150 Pope Eugenius rebuilt it on a magnificent scale. Innocent II, a few years afterwards gave it up as a lodging to Peter II, King of Aragon. In 1268 Clement V., at the instigation of the King of France, removed the papal see from Rome to Avignon, when the Vatican remained in a condition of obscurity and neglect for more than seven years. But soon after the return of the pontifical court to Rome, an event which had been earnestly prayed for by the poor Petrarch, and which finally took place in 1376, the Vatican was put into a state of repair, again enlarged, and it was thenceforward considered as the regular palace and residence of the Popes, who one after the other added fresh buildings to it, and gradually enriched it with antiquities, statues, pictures, and books, until it became the richest depository in the world. The library of the Vatican was commenced fourteen hundred years ago. It contains forty thousand manuscripts, among which are some by Pliny, St. Thomas, St. Charles Borromeo, and many Hebrew, Syriac, Arabian, and Armenian Bibles. The whole of the immense buildings composing the Vatican are filled with statues found beneath the ruins of Ancient Rome, with paintings by the masters, and with curious medals and antiquities of almost every description. When it is known that there have been exhumed more than seventy thousand statues from the ruined temples and palaces of Rome the reader can form some idea of the riches of the Vatican. The Vatican will ever be held in veneration by the student, the artist, and the scholar. Raphael and Michel Angelo are entombed there, and their thrones will be as durable as the love of beauty and genius in the hearts of their worshippers.



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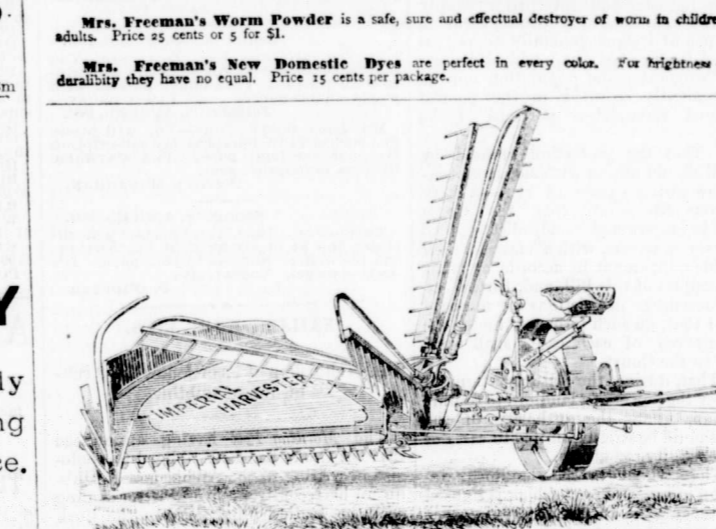
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