

Our Contributors.

GEMS FROM SPURGEON.

All college openings are not dull. Spurgeon opened the Hackney College the other day and he certainly made the proceedings lively enough. One of his best hits was at the expense of his neighbour, Dr. Parker, whose *ore rotundo* style is known the world over. "Some preachers have a tremendous style," said Spurgeon, and in making the statement he imitated Parker's well-known roll so successfully that the house came down at once. The writer of this column enjoyed the following gems from Spurgeon's speech so much that he clips them bodily from the *British Weekly*, where they are reported and lays them before his readers:—

I have no theories. I preach facts. If these things be not so I am a liar to my people, and that I am not, I know. Very dogmatic, you may say, but faith is bred by faith.

Sometimes conversions are wrought by a kind of fluke. Omnipotence itself could not convert by some sermons, save by making the people understand a man to mean what he did not mean. I once took a friend to the Crystal Palace, and said "Suppose we try a shot at the target." He did, and made a centre. But there were two targets, and the man in charge said: "Which did you aim at?" He said: "The first." "But you have hit the second." So he had small credit for skill.

I knew a good minister who prepared very elaborately. He told me he got tired of the hard work, and one day preached a simple sermon, such as he would have preached in his shirt sleeves if he had been awakened up in the middle of the night. The people were far more impressed than by his usual discourses. I said: "I'd give them some more of that." But I should not say so to you, young man. This was an elderly man, full of matter. What he said in course of conversation was good.

Some ministers have a shell into which they crawl when they begin to preach. They might begin every sermon by saying: "Lord, I thank Thee that I am not as other men are." They are full of affection.

Make soul-savvy of our supreme thought, so that we shall dream of it at night and think of it when first we wake.

We should be willing to be nothing and nobody, but not willing to be unuseful.

When you have shot a man you know, fire yourself. Kill yourself by preaching, and make yourself alive by prayer. Keep nothing in reserve. Say, "I don't care whether I ever preach again."

A man never becomes a man till his manhood is crushed into oblivion.

One man I know is very useful. His power is the power of goodness. You can see that he did not come out of a bandbox to his pulpit, but out of his closet.

I believe I have a perfect right to drink a glass of wine. But others cannot take one without taking a man, and for their sakes I forbear. We lay our liberties aside that we may liberate others.

If somebody would set me my texts, my ministry would be easy. But I must have a text which needs only a tap and it breaks up of itself.

I never knew a soul won by sermons on the ten toes of the image, and such like subjects.

A man prayed, "O Thou that art encircled with the auriferous zodiac." I knew that man would never get to heaven: they would not understand him there.

Latin is turf. Saxon is stone, good to pelt sinners with. I know that Welsh was spoken in the garden of Eden, but for these degenerate times nothing like Saxon.

A good negro preacher was very fond of loud-sounding phrases, and whenever he heard one secured it. He once heard a dignified gentleman say "Under peculiar circumstances," and took possession of the phrase. He applied for a situation, and was asked to give an address before a committee. In this he constantly brought in the phrase, "I left Cincinnati under peculiar circumstances," and so on. He was rejected, and his brother-in-law, who was not quite so black as himself, told him that "under peculiar circumstances" had lost him the situation.

You all know how I prepare. You have read descriptions. So have I, but I never recognized any of them as true.

Once in a train I met the manufacturer of a patent medicine. He explained that he was full of electricity, and he put his electricity into his pills. That is how I make my pills.

There is enough haze about London without your making more. Be clear.

I knew an independent minister, a very superior person, who was very particular about his gloves. Cats with gloves never catch mice. He did not; he went in for showing his paws.

People are not to be molassified into grace, sugared into Christ.

I used to preach for a minister who had a great turn for weeping in the pulpit. Once when I asked for a glass of water to be taken into the pulpit he said: "Excuse me, I think it is an affectation of yours." "No," I answered, "I can't carry my water up in my head as you do."

Whitfield was the preacher. His sermons as prepared by himself are of small account. But there is a little volume issued by reporters which shows some of his power.

The most dignified people in the world are fools. If you want dignity you must join the Church of England. Dissenting ministers have nothing to do with dignity. Letters are written addressed "Rev. John Smith, Spurgeon's College."

When a dog isn't noticed he doesn't like it. But when he is after a fox he does not care whether he is noticed or not. If a minister seeks souls he will not think of himself.

When the census was taken in Northampton an old couple, each over eighty, were found sitting in large chairs opposite each other. "You must be very happy," said the enumerator, "spending the evening of life together?" "Nay," was the reply, "we ain't got chick or child; an' he sits there and I sit here, and we hate the sight o' one another." So often with a minister and his church when there are no births of souls.

THE BI-CENTENARY OF "THE GLORIOUS RETURN" OF THE WALDENSES

IN 1680.

VII.

We now come to the greatest festival of all,—

V.—THE FESTIVAL TORRE PELLICE,

on the 2nd of September, 1889. In fact we may say that there were two, as they were so different in their nature and under different management. The one during the day was of a religious nature, the one at night of a spectacular. We shall take them in their order.

(a) The Inauguration of the Waldensian House.

From day-break the streets of Torre Pellice were unusually lively. Friends from all parts of Europe, and even from America, warmly grasped the hand of representatives of the Waldenses. On every breast was a cockade, a commemorative medal, or a pretty shield. In all directions were flags. You saw them on the very tops of the chestnut and fir trees, at every window, and at every balcony of the Waldensian houses. Besides the Italian tri-colour were displayed the flags of Holland, Switzerland, Great Britain, Germany, Wurtemberg, France and many other friendly countries. After the festivals at Massel, Prali and Bobi, came the turn of the spiritual capital of the Waldenses. The one there should have a special greatness. So it had. The old Waldensian Geneva came up fully, as it has always done, to the expectation of its numerous guests.

At seven o'clock the approaches to the station, where the prefect was expected, were already seized by an immense throng, in which were seen the different societies of Torre Pellice, St. Jean and Angrogna, with their banners. A picket of carabineers in full uniform made a barrier. The deputies, Peyrot and Geymet, with the municipal and ecclesiastical authorities, occupied the platform. At last the whistle of the wreath-decked locomotive was heard,* the Royal March was struck up, thrilling every heart, and the train came into the station amid the cheers of the multitude. The prefect, Count Lovera di Maria, who represented the king on the occasion, stepped out on the platform, attended by the following, among others: Senator Corte, sub-prefect Asinari, Deputies Faldella, Villa, Luzzatti, Plebana and Pasquali, Gen Crodara-Visconti, Commiss, Laura, Sig. Midana, advocate, Sig. Rolando, school inspector, and Lieut. Manduca, of the Carabineers.

After the usual salutations had been exchanged the procession, headed by a band of music, went to the Hotel de l'Ourst where breakfast had been prepared.

While these distinguished personages are, as an architect would say, "restoring" their bodily frame, let us pay a visit to the Waldensian House, the inauguration of which is the object of to-day's festival. It has an elegant simplicity, which is its most beautiful ornament. The lance-shaped windows adorned with graceful pillars are a pleasing contrast to the straight lines of the building, and give it both a sober and a graceful appearance. The central part is a storey higher than the rest. The highest contains the rooms for the Museum and the Waldensian Historical Society. The pediment is adorned with the device of the Church, standing out in white stucco from a brick ground, and is surmounted by an ornamental vase of white marble. The roofs are "cottage" ones. The part of the building to the left of one looking at it in front is set apart for the Synod Hall, the vaulted recess (*abside*) of which is occupied by the offices of the Moderator and Vice-Moderator. The members' seats slope in amphitheatrical form against the walls. Two galleries and a platform are set apart for the public along the three unoccupied sides of the hall, the acoustics of which are perfect. The part to the right is for the libraries and the rooms connected with the different schemes of the Church. On the left wall of the vestibule you see a tablet with the following inscription: "To keep in remembrance that His Majesty King Humbert I, 'willing with joy' the bi-centenary of the return of the Waldenses to the country loved by them even to suffering for it, desired to give the people, 'which has always been loyal to him,' a proof of his love as their sovereign by taking part in the building of this house, the Waldensian Church has set up this tablet, September 2, 1889."

The house is surrounded by a garden enclosed with an iron railing. But a joyous multitude soon took full possession of the garden. A platform decked with flowers was put up on the north side for the authorities. Here the prefect and his attendants took their places.

But the hour for the meeting to begin is at hand. The people are thronging into the hall; let us go with them before all the seats are taken.

At ten o'clock the Moderator, Sig. Pons, of Torre Pellice, began the exercises by reading the 100th Psalm in Italian. To our old Bible the first place. He next addressed a few words of warmest gratitude to the king's representative and the rest of those present, showing the reasons of our thankfulness to God, our king and our numerous friends from France, Switzerland, Germany, Great Britain, Austria, Belgium, Holland and even from distant America. After the darkness is passed the light of liberty and truth at last shines. After a night of anguish, a morning of sunshine.

He then gave place to Pastor W. Meille, of Turin, who was appointed to deliver the inaugural address. I cannot do justice to that address by making it any shorter than it is in

* It is not on the Continent of Europe the blood-freezing roar which ours is. It is somewhat like the yelp of a Scotch terrier.

† That is, "The Bear" Hotel. Why it is so called I cannot say. No doubt "thereby hangs a tale," as is the case with the Hotel du Chien d'or ("Golden Dog") in Quebec. I spent a day and two nights at "The Bear," so I can say that "I have been there." Gentle reader, you must not compare it to the Queen's or the Rossin in Toronto, or the Windsor in Montreal. But you may compare it with one or other of these establishments. Than either it is somewhat considerably lower in "stylishness." I think that "that hostellerie" in Southwark, the Tabard, of which Chaucer speaks in his Prologue to the Canterbury Tales, would be not very unlike it.

‡ I did not observe what kind of bricks are used in Torre Pellice for building purposes. Most likely they are the same kind as those used in Rome. These are the very same kind as were used in building, for example, the Coliseum and the Palace of the Cæsars. They are thinner, but longer and broader than ours—what we would call tiles. Their colour is yellow. They are coated with stucco, which often is made to look like carved work. Buildings thus treated look not unlike stone ones. The stucco seems to be very durable. A great many buildings in Rome are of this kind. That occupied by the War Department, near the Scotch Church, is one. If I be not mistaken the Scotch Church is another.

the book from which I get my materials for these papers. I may as well say here that the book of which I speak is the "Historical Account of the Festivals of the Bi-centenary of the Glorious Return of the Waldenses, and Minutes of the Synod of 1889, which met at La Tour (Torre Pellice) from the 2nd to the 7th of September. Published by order of the Synod." But to go on. Sig. Meille spoke to the following effect: Setting out with the idea and the words either of Muston or of Demicis, who prove that the Waldensian Church needs no monument because everything in these Valleys is a witness borne to her history. Sig. Meille asked why it had been thought necessary to build this house in remembrance of the Bi-centenary. It was not from a vain, self-love, nor to display a sectarian spirit, but rather to affirm in a tangible, and we would say monumental, manner, the great principles which have presided over the formation and the development of the Waldensian Church. They are those of *truth, liberty and love*.

1.—Of *truth*, the greatest of these three, but of what truth? Not that drawn from human fountains, but from the divine fountain which is Christ, and the word which bears witness to Him. Called even by her persecutors, "the people of the Bible," the Waldensian Church owes to it her origin and preservation. After referring to the Waldensian colporteur* and the Synod of Chanforan, the speaker showed the part which the Bible had had in the history of our people, as strength of resistance in the struggle, and as strength of expansion for the evangelization of Italy in the past and the present, and to-day also in the mission to the heathen.

2.—This house should be a monument to *liberty*. Liberty of conscience, first of all, of which the Waldenses have often been the unconscious upholders. In their mountains sprouted that little plant which they have watered with their blood, and which is become a powerful tree which has cleft the rock which squeezed it. For this principle which was more precious to them than life, they have suffered, they have had the courage to set out, but also the firmness to return, and though the Waldensian Church should have no other glory than that of having given such a fruitful principle to her country, she could, in all justice, call herself the glory of Italy. But the result of liberty of conscience for a church is the liberty of the church herself. What do these different rooms for doing the business of the church and for the Synod, which we admire in this building, say to us? They signify that the Waldensian Church has resolved the problem of a church which lives from an independent life, and which governs herself by herself. She is willing to give the state obedience and respect. She asks of it only protection, and she seeks to realize in all its extent the saying of a great man: "A free Church in a free State."

3.—Lastly, this house should be a testimony to *love*. To the love of God, first of all, the only Author of our deliverances. (Here the speaker quoted Psalm xlv. 1-4.) A testimony of love to the people and to the country. This house represents the sum of the sacrifices accomplished by all the Waldenses, but it is necessary that, as the stones of this house are bound together by cement, the spiritual union of our people should be cemented by love. Discord was the cause of our weakness in the past, union in love shall be the cause of our strength. But though, according to Charles-Albert, we are a special people, that should not make us forget the great family of which we form a part. It was from love to their country that our fathers struggled to return to it. The same feeling must fill our hearts now. The noble persons who are before us have come to tell us that the past times are well past, and that we are brethren. May the Waldensian flag never wave without allying its colours to those of Italy, the red of which, it has been said, represents the blood of the martyrs; the white, peace and liberty; and the green, hope for the future. Lastly, love to the king. At this name every Waldensian heart thrills, for those whom he has been pleased to call "very loving children" cannot forget their father who, as he could associate himself with the trials of his people at Busca and Naples, has been pleased to associate himself with our happiness in taking part in the rearing of this testimony to liberty, but also to love, the love of the sovereign to this little people. Then, turning to the prefect, the orator exclaimed: "Tell him, this well-beloved sovereign, what part we take in the family festival which will bring him in a few days into the ex-capital, and what happiness it would give us if these valleys could one day be honoured by a visit from him. Tell him that if the mountains which surround us are a rampart for his kingdom, he shall always find in the breasts of the Waldenses, who are ready to shed for him the last drop of their blood, a rampart for his throne and his Rome which cannot be touched."

A lusty and unanimous shout of "Long live the king!" closed this excellent address.

The singing of magnificent pieces suited to the occasion added greatly to the pleasure and profit of the meeting.

Pastor Aug. Malan, of Nice, led in prayer, which closed the meeting at 11.30 a.m.

But I must not say any more at present about this festival.

T. F.

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* Of whom Whittier speaks in his well-known poem, "The Vaudois Colporteur," beginning with these words:—
"O lady fair, these silks of mine
Are beautiful and rare."

† Count Cavour. The well-known saying of his quoted above is in the original "Libera chiesa in libero Stato."