

Poetry.

THE ARCHBISHOP OF YORK'S FAREWELL SERMON.

The following lines were suggested by the Archbishop of York preaching his farewell sermon, in consequence of his advanced age, being in his 85th year. The venerable prelate's text was "The night cometh when no man can work." The congregation was very numerous:

These limbs are failing fast,
This voice is feeble now,
And age's hand has cast
Its snow upon my brow.
Yet let me once again,
In my accustomed place,
Tell to the sons of men,
The message of my grace.
Will it not come with power
From my pale lips once more—
"O! are ye ready now?
Your Lord is at the door—
The solemn night comes on
Wherein no work is done;
Oh, hear the voice of him
Whose hands are well nigh run."
So spake the prelate, and, with reverent grace,
Gently he passed to his accustomed place;
Ascended, with slow step, his pulpit stair,
And bent his feeble knees in silent prayer.
Then, as ambassador from God to man,
Set forth, once more, salvation's glorious plan.
I marvel not that numbers crowded there,
To see that old man in the house of prayer;
To catch his last, long tones along the aisle,
And gaze upon his aged form—the while
He stretched his hands, and, "let them all depart!"
Their prelate's latest blessing at their heart.
How beautiful is age! when this is shed
A crown of glory round the hoary head;
When spring and summer, time, and autumn past,
On the mid brow pale the snows are cast!
How beautiful is age! Almost at home,
The ebullient spirit does no longer roam;
Amid the trials of our waking night,
But planes her soaring wing for realms of light.
Yet lingers still the pilgrim on his way,
Stiles on the infant in his happy play,
Lays his kind hand upon the young man's head,
And tells him all the way his God has led;
Or greets some aged brother with a smile;
"O, my old friend, press on a little while."
How beautiful is age! Looks brighter never
The kindling eye than ere it shuts for ever;
And never speaks the voice in tone more thrilling,
Than when, at length, our being's end fulfilling,
The fluttering spirit parts to reach its home,
And feebly cries—"I come, O Lord! I come!"

NATHAN BIDDULPH;

THE STRAIGHTFORWARD ELECTOR.

(From the Englishman's Magazine.)

The man whose name you have just read, and whose straightforwardness as an elector is pointed out in the little story before us, lived in days of great political excitement; and in the days too when the truth was not sought after with that earnestness, and followed with that eagerness, which its importance demands. He was the holder of a few acres of land, entitling him to a vote for the borough of Cattledale, and he held under a landlord to whom a very considerable portion of the parish in which he lived belonged, and who had been returned several times for the borough in which he had his franchise. He had been religiously brought up, and instructed, after the manner of his fathers, in the principles of the English Church; and these principles he had endeavored from his youth up to realise in his daily words and deeds. His religion was deep, still, and abiding; and he was, as might be expected from the principles he had imbibed, a straightforward man—a man who saw things with a single eye, to whom both men and matters were either right or wrong. Not that Biddulph was in the bad habit of judging others; but when people used to try and stagger him with objections, or difficulties, or deceitful things having the appearance of truth, or throw dust in his eyes by advocating what are called advantages, and useful changes, and beneficial reforms, and so forth,—he would refer them to God's word, and by the light of that try every thing that was put before him; and whatever that sacred word told him was right he regarded as right, and whatever it told him was wrong, he regarded as wrong, whether in men or things; and he had none of that false charity which often keeps men back from saying what they think, when occasions demand the expression of their opinions. This guide he found so sure, and that of so useful a nature, he was often astonished at getting out of difficult situations and puzzling questions so easily as he did.

It was on the eve of a general election that Biddulph's landlord, Mr. Winter, called on him. He and his wife were just going to their tea, which their landlord was most respectfully invited to partake after his long and dusty ride. As some men are particularly condescending about election-times, Mr. Winter acceded, smiling most graciously, and complimenting Mrs. Biddulph upon her cream, bread, tea-things, &c., though he felt all the while that he would just as soon have had a dose of physic as a dish of farmer's tea. But as he kept a good deal aloof from his tenants and the lower orders in general at other times, he thought a condescension once in a way a penance he might put up with. I say, might tend to secure it; for Mr. Winter was half afraid of Nathan, and strongly suspected that his straightforwardness might some day or other lead him to refuse to vote for him. It was with something of this feeling that Mr. Winter swallowed his cup of tea; for Biddulph was looking, every inch of him, an honest, truth-loving man; whilst he himself was conscious that he did not care a straw for any thing but his seat in parliament, and was willing to secure it at any risk.

"Well, Nathan, I find there is a likelihood of a general election, and you must come and back me as usual; for those hungry Conservative dogs will not let me alone, though they have not a shadow of a chance; I am seated as firm as a rock."
"I am sorry, sir," said Biddulph, rising immediately, "that you should be put to anxiety and expense; and if there is no chance, I do not think it right to disturb a place, and rouse the bad feelings which are usually excited on such trying occasions. But both my duty as a Christian, and your relation to me as landlord, compel me to speak out openly and honestly on the subject you have just mentioned. I cannot vote for you, sir, and I will tell you why. You cannot have forgotten that you very distinctly expressed your determination to support the Church to the utmost of your power. Now, though I am no great politician, I have seen your name invariably on the side of the question against her. When she has been opposed, you have joined her opponents; when any step forward to help her, you have given your voice against them. I do not think this, sir, sticking to your promise. When a man does this, he is all in his power, which branch of Christ's holy apostolic Church with the preserver of his country; and when he opposes the Church at all, he is opposing the truth, because trying to shake her who is 'the pillar of the truth.'"

"Now, then, I differ from you, Nathan, altogether. I have done better than at all. What I have done, good. We only wish to make her more pure and useful, and a brighter light, and less exclusive. See how 'Why, sir, that's what grieves me quite—quite brings me to a nuptial. I see you joined with quietists, dissenters, men of all religions, and men of none; and all of you giving out that you are trying to make the Church better than she is. I read of those who abuse her in the grossest way, and her ministers, and Prayer-book, and everything belonging to her, being

very anxious to do her good, and better her, and make her more efficient, as it is called. Now, sir, it quite entirely passes my poor comprehension, how a man's enemies come to think of doing him good, and are always talking about it. I always thought a man's enemies wished to do him harm. Do you really believe, sir, that they intend good to the Church because they say so? And yet I suppose you do, or else I should not see you joining with them on every occasion; that, as I said before, puzzles me quite entirely. You know, sir—and Master George will tell you—how Pincher, and I, and Jack Tits, are always bullying the rats whenever we find them; but if I were to go and tattle at market that I did this to improve the breed should not I be thought stark mad? I want to get rid of them; and take my word for it, so do some of your friends wish to get rid of the Church; and they never have so good a helper as you can do to deceive a Churchman into joining them. But I am becoming too bold in speaking thus to a member of parliament: I hope no offence, sir."

"O, no, Nathan," said Mr. Winter, laughing, and affecting indifference; "you would make a capital speaker in the house; you had better change places with me."
"O, sir," said Biddulph, "people, in my opinion, often talk very lightly of politics and seats in parliament, as if they were all play and holiday work, and for private men's pleasure, and to raise them to stations of honour. But I have long thought that the duties of members of parliament are of great national importance, affecting men's best interests here and hereafter; for you know, sir, every day, after the meeting of parliament, when public prayers are said, we pray that God will direct their consultations to the advancement of His glory and the good of the Church... that peace and happiness, truth and justice, religion and piety, may be established among us for all generations; as if the right discharge of their duties was not lost upon generations to come. But, pardon me, sir; you know a great deal more about your own duties than I do; and it is not my business to teach you. I was going to speak of what I consider mine as an elector, if I may be so bold."

"O, yes, Nathan, go on; I like to hear such a sensible man as you speak."
"O, well, sir, I look upon a vote as a great and responsible trust, and a religious one too; and it appears to me to have a religious character, since I help by it to send a gentleman into parliament to consult for the good of the Church, as well as the state. I feel sure that I shall have to give an account at the last day of the way in which I have exercised my franchise, just as much as I shall have to account for any of my other deeds. And I cannot help thinking a severe account will be demanded of such matters, inasmuch as a public deed has greater and more extensive effects than a private one—just as 'a city set on a hill cannot be hid.' Only see, sir, what my single vote might do; and if there is a chance of a thing doing evil, I am bound as a Christian to try and guard against the evil that may happen. My single vote might give the wrong man a seat in parliament; his vote might turn the scale against some measure tending to promote religion and piety; that public act of the representatives of the kingdom might induce God Almighty to withhold His blessing from us as a nation; and then woe to us! See, sir, how great a thing my little vote might bring to pass step by step; just as you know, 'how great a matter a little fire kindleth.'"

Mr. Winter began to get rather fidgety, and thought this all stuff, not being a very religious man himself, and not liking the sort of defence which Biddulph made use of, which, he clearly saw from the tone of it, was taken from God's word. Biddulph, however, was not aware of this; for he never entered his head that a Churchman could look at the elective franchise as any other than a religious trust; so he continued—
"O, now, sir, seeing you have somehow or other got joined with the enemies of the Church, and that I am bound as a Christian to give my vote 'as to the Lord, and not unto men.' I must decline voting for you at the next election. Had I seen you defending the cause of religion and the interests of the Church, in and out of parliament, as a member and as a country gentleman, I would have voted for you with the greatest satisfaction; but as it is, I cannot. Great as are the obligations of a tenant to his landlord—I mean, in the matter of obedience—his obligations to his Church, and the Head of it, are still greater. If I can help it, I will never forsake the truth to please men. I trust you will not be offended at my plain speaking."

All this Biddulph said firmly, but mildly; both his manner and his voice showing how deeply he felt the uncomfortable situation in which his principles placed him of refusing his landlord.
Mr. Winter, knowing that Biddulph's principles were not to be shaken by argument, though he would try what he could do by bringing forward examples of persons, of the first rank and station in society, being guilty of the thoughtless and unprincipled sort of voting which his tenant could not be led into.
"Surely, Nathan, it is unkind in you, to say the least not to vote for the landlord whose farm you occupy. Let me entreat your vote as a personal favour, as an act of kindness and attention to your landlord. You call your refusal principle; surely it is not something like obstinacy?" said Mr. Winter, rather overshooting the mark. "Look at Mr. Scott, of the Wilderness; Mr. Easy, of Cove Park; and Mr. Lucy, of the Court,—they all voted for their friends, though of directly opposite politics. And you well know there are instances around us of men coming forward on Conservative principles, and voting for Radical friends. If people in the upper ranks do this, can it be very wrong in you to do it? Ought not they to know what they are about?"

Now Mr. Winter did not at all believe in the soundness of his argument; but he thought these great examples might stagger Farmer Biddulph, and win his vote; for he looked upon those who voted for their friends whilst opposed to them in politics as little better than fools. He ought to have regarded them as base men, devoid of all true principle; but as he thought more of the ascendancy of party than the triumph of truth, he looked upon them as fools ignorant of their own interest. Biddulph, however, was not to be borne down by a few great names; he had a higher standard to go by—the Gospel, which furnishes us with the best and only rule to discern between right and wrong. No man had a higher respect for his superiors, when doing right, than Biddulph; and no man was more deeply grieved when he saw them deserting their principles, and acting unworthily of the station they occupied. His look spoke volumes, and he seemed to grow an inch or two taller; and he said in reply, "If men regard politics as trifles or nothing, and that it is all one how men think and act, I am truly sorry for them. I firmly believe there is a right and a wrong in every thing; and no names, however great, shall make me say black is white, or that black and white are all the same. And besides, sir, is not voting for friendship just as much bribery as voting for money? A rich man sells his vote when he votes for a friend to whom he is under obligations, just as much as a poor man sells his vote when some agent or other puts money into his hand to supply his necessities. It does not look so much like bribery; but it is bribery, and nothing else. No, great as the examples are, and sad as it is to think of them in the upper ranks, who ought to know better, I will follow, in this instance at least, the example of my landlord, whom I never knew to vote for a friend who was opposed to him in politics."

"Well, Nathan, I see nothing will move you, you are so grounded and settled. But if you will not vote for me, may I ask you not to vote against me?"
"That I willingly promise, sir; and I think it is what, under present circumstances, may be fairly demanded of me."

The thought had crossed Mr. Winter's mind, that it would be as well to dissolve the connexion of landlord and tenant, in this case, as soon as convenient; and whilst he was thinking what opinion his straightforward tenant would have of him for doing so, he was relieved by Biddulph saying, "As I doubt not, sir, it is your wish that your tenants should always vote for you, and as I cannot consistently with my principles do so, I must beg you to allow me to quit my little snug farm, though I have spent many happy days here; for I think it is better for landlord and tenant to agree in such matters; and I do not know that it is quite fair to use a man's land, and employ the power which it gives one against him, unless indeed tenants have full liberty to act as they like. It is an advantage that I do not feel sure I am justified in taking; and therefore I would rather give up your land, and vote according to my conscience. And on the other hand, to hold a man's land, and never to vote at all, is to hide one's talent in a napkin, and be just as guilty as the man who abuses it."

Mr. Winter took his leave, expressing his regret that Biddulph's principles led him into such sacrifices, and inconveniences, and disagreeable, and so forth; but heartily glad that he was saved the trouble of giving him notice to quit. Biddulph soon found a landlord and a holding much to his liking; and though he was at some little loss in removing, yet his sound principles were strengthened by this manifold contending for the truth; and he was known to every body as Nathan Biddulph, the straightforward elector; and respected by men of all parties, whose good opinion was worth any thing.

A SUNDAY AT GENEVA.

(From "Notes of a Traveller" &c. by Samuel Laing Esq., a Scottish Presbyterian.)

I happened to be at Geneva one Sunday morning as the bells were tolling to church. The very sounds which once called the powerful minds of a Calvin, a Knox, a Zwingle, to religious exercise and meditation, were now summoning the descendants of their contemporaries to the same house of prayer. There are few Scotchmen whose hearts would not respond to such a call. I hastened to the ancient cathedral, the church of St. Peter, to see the pulpit from which Calvin had preached, to sit possibly in the very seat from which John Knox has listened, to hear the pure doctrines of Christianity from the preachers who now stand where once the great champions of the Reformation stood; to mark, too, the order and observances of the Calvinistic service here in its native church; to revive, too, in my mind, Scotland, and the picturesque Sabbath days of Scotland in a foreign land. But where is the stream of citizens' families in the streets, so remarkable a feature in every Scotch town when the bells are tolling to church, family after family, all so decent and respectable in their Sunday clothes, the fathers and mothers leading the younger children, and all walking silently churchwards? and where the quiet, the repose, the stillness of the Sabbath morning, so remarkable in every Scotch town and house? Geneva, the seat and centre of Calvinism, the fountain-head from which the pure and living waters of our Scottish Zion flow, the earthly source, the pattern, the Rome of our Presbyterian doctrine and practice, has fallen lower from her own original doctrine and practice than ever Rome fell. Rome has still superstition; Geneva has not even that semblance of religion. In the head church of the original seat of Calvinism, in a city of five-and-twenty thousand souls, at the only service on the Sabbath day—there being no evening service—I sat down in a congregation of about two hundred females, and three-and-twenty males, mostly elderly men of a former generation, with scarcely a youth, or boy, or working man among them. A meagre liturgy, or printed form of prayer, a sermon, which, as far as religion was concerned, might have figured the evening before at a meeting of some geological society, as an "ingenious essay" on the Mosaic chronology, a couple of psalm tunes on the organ, and a waltz to go out with, were the church service. In the afternoon, the only service in town or in the country is reading a chapter of the Bible to the children, and hearing them gabble over the Catechism in a way which shows they have not got a glimpse of the meaning. A pleasure tour in the steam-boats, which are regularly advertised for a Sunday promenade round the lake, a picnic dinner in the country, and overflowing congregations in the evening at the theatre, the equestrian circus, the concert saloons, ball rooms, and coffee houses, are all that distinguish Sunday from Monday in that city in which, three centuries before, Calvin moved the senate and the people to commit to the flames his own early friend Servetus, the discoverer of the circulation of the blood, and one of the first philosophers of that age, for presuming to differ in opinion and strength of argument from his own religious dogma. This is action and re-actio-religious spirit with a vengeance. In the village churches, along the Protestant side of the Lake of Geneva—spots upon this earth specially intended, the traveller would say, to elevate the mind of man to his Creator by the glories of the surrounding scenery—the rattling of the billiard balls, the rumbling of the skittle trough, the shout, the laugh, the distant shots of the rifle gun clubs, are heard above the psalm, the sermon, the barren forms of state-prescribed prayer, during the one brief service on Sundays, delivered to very scanty congregations, in fact, to a few females and a dozen or two old men, in very populous parishes supplied with able and zealous ministers.

Oh, Romanism! Romanism! the blood of millions is upon you. You have your popes, your priests, your friars, your nuns, your monks, your hermits, your huts, your teeth, your nails, your garments, your blessed buttons, your rotten bones, your bits of wood, your gold, your ivory, your pictures, your scapulars, your cords, your candles, your ashes, your salt, your water, your charms, your exorcisms, your wafers, your masses, your penances, your indulgences, your fasts, your feasts, your jubilees, your oils, your absolutions, your confessions, your flouting funds of good works in this life, to be sold out to the credulous to relieve them from imaginary purgatories in the next; you have your visionary rites, your holy visions, your dreams and your raptures, your miracles, your holy wells, your blessed graves, and your Lough Dears, you have all these, but you have not Christ—these form the great idol which you have set up in his stead, these are the "strong delusion," the "lie," which you are given to believe, and yet you call yourself the Church of Christ! You have first told man that he is a sinner, and you next teach him to look to human intercession for salvation! Did Christ speak truth when he declared that there is no way to the Father but by Him? He is the way, the truth, and the life? These words contain the awful sentence of your condemnation—in them you hear the eternal voice of God against you. You stand, therefore, between them and your people—you wrap that guide, from which you have departed, in darkness, lest it should testify against you—lest the people whom you have led astray should find their error and return to the truth—lest they should perceive that, like the Pharisees, whilst you have pretended to them to have the word of God as your standard, you have made it of "none effect by your traditions." But the day is coming—already come—when the imposture of the priest, and the lie of man, shall both be tried and detected by the word of God.—"Carthago a Lough Dearg Pilgrim."

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