

ROCKS RESOUNDING PRAISE.

BY THE REV. A. McILROY WYLIE.

Every child, not to speak of the inexperienced believer, wonders how that dumb creation can praise the Lord. So it seemed a strained conception to us in our childish years. Here is the glorious Psalmist beginning his compositions, though inspired, yet in a very natural way, by pronouncing the blessings upon the man who companies with them who fear the Lord: "Oh! the blessings" (he bursts out in an impetuous way) "of the man that walketh not," etc.; and then by a steady and sublime gradation through one hundred and fifty steps, he concludes in that thrilling climax, of three parts, calling upon all creation to unite in praise to "Him who spake and it was done, commanded and they were created."

In this gradation or development, there lies a most profitable lesson to serve both as a gauge, and a guide to every believer's experience.

The man who hides the law of God in his heart, who doth meditate in His law day and night, is he whose first stage insures all that follows in the course of a successful development. He never, when passing through the worst darks and dangers of a fearful ordeal, loses the consciousness of that final safety which is conveyed by the persuasion of the guardian presence of "Him who keepeth watch within the shadow." And when he reaches the end of his psalm-singing—when he has gone through all the phases of the minor key as well as touched the chords of the major—he finds himself ushered into that vast, glorious choir which stands in front of the whole of God's creation as one mighty organ, and joins in with the choral harmony of the whole heavens and the whole earth—when angels and celestial hosts, sun, moon, and stars; fire, hail, snow, and vapor; stormy winds, mountains, and hills; beasts and cattle; creeping things and flying fowl; kings of the earth and all people; princes and judges of the earth; young men and maidens; old men and young children—praise the name of the Lord. And when a man reaches this stage of development he carries the symphony of heaven in his soul, and the birds of paradise lodge upon the branches of his meditation.

And why is this that nature forms one vast choral harmony to the man who catches, or, rather, grows into and up to the Psalmist's spirit? There is a divine philosophy in it. Any one who has spoken in a variety of public buildings know that in some he is not in tune with the vibrations of the materials which surround his person; while in others his voice floats out in an agreeable unison with the pitch of the entire edifice. In the former case he feels out of joint; he is made uneasy, and if of a sensitive temperament, the seeming mockery of his surroundings rolls back upon him in repeated and pertinacious discords.

In the latter case, his whole nature is tremulous with the sweet discords which float in the atmosphere around him, and he feels that the whole situation aids him in his discourse. Now, what takes place in these limited surroundings is daily enacted throughout the entire earth, and on a scale gigantic as nature, and as extended as the entire race of mankind.

Poets on a lower plane, converse with nature, hear harmonies, and see visions which are denied to more grossly-tempered mortals.

The greatest division, however, in the voices of nature is drawn upon the plane of man's moral and spiritual being.

When fire, hail, snow, and vapor, mountains and hills, are vocal with the praise of God, it is because these praises are echoes, and echoes are secondary, and the primary must be in ourselves. Echoes must have a source, as much so as the tuneful vibrations of the strings in tension imply a skillful performer at the keys. And when rocks and hills sing a hymn of praise to God in our hearing, it is because that hymn has already been composed and sung within the tuneful recesses of our own hearts within.

At the very same moment we are standing in an entranced attitude listening to the symphony of the rocks, there is another figure on the other side of the hill, fixed in horror at the undying wail of another echo. It is the unprincipled plotter against the weal of his human kind—perhaps he is a murderer of human life or virtue, and he hears not the choral measures which entrance your ear; he hears curses instead of blessings, and the horrifying echo of his foreshadowed fate rasps an organization already inflamed, and fearfully out of tune with the whole of God's creation and the entire course of His providence.

Nature thus becomes a vast mirror, not of appearances only, but a reflection throughout the whole range of human experience.

These rocks, resounding praise, become mighty teachers of everlasting principles, which every man ought to learn, and whether learned or not, never can be tricked or avoided, so that they shall fail of their hearing: "Sermons

in stones" is something more than a figure of the poet's imagination, and we may speak truly, too, of rewards and retributions in stones. It is a glorious thing to be brought into harmony with the whole creation of God, and it is a terrible thing to be at discord with all the works of the Creator.

He alone is put in tune with the nature and government of God, who can hear fire and hail fulfilling His Word, as well as snow and rain. Rely upon it, if your inner life is in holy accord with the revealed Word of God, you shall find all creation re-echoing the songs and praises which have already been first set to notes, traced by the spiritual finger of the Divine Renovator upon both your mind and heart at the hour of your conversion, and have been restored, in ever-increasing distinctness, throughout the whole course of your sanctification.

HAVE PATIENCE.

The Scripture has said that we have need of patience, and we have indeed. Certainly in this life one has opportunities enough to exercise it, and whether it be a quality of the mind, or an act of the will, or a state of the heart, it is to be cultivated by everybody who desires to get on well and easily through earthly experiences.

The sick or wounded man whom the doctor tends with assiduous care he calls his patient. And in one sense we are all patients, for is not the world one vast hospital, the abode of every form of pain? Yet how few patients exemplify their name.

Patience may relate to labor, or to expectation, or to bodily suffering, or to injuries received. Except in a figurative way God cannot stand to us as an embodiment of the virtue which He here enjoins upon us, and yet we may brace ourselves for the duty by a glance at Him.

To be patient in labor we have only to remember that from everlasting God has been working out His processes. There is no sense of the lapse of time to Him, yet as we conceive of Him there is, His work has been slow, toilsome. The world grew. The race has crept. And God has hastened neither. He has fainted not, neither has he been weary.

To be patient in expectation we have only to remember how slowly have come to God the fruits of His plans. In the beginning when he laid the foundations of the earth, He foresaw results to his glory which are even now in the far distant future. But he waits until His truth and His Providence, naturally working, bring about things to please Him. And shall we be weary in our short term of well doing? If God can wait the fruit of our labors cannot we?

To be patient in suffering, we may not, to be sure, fortify ourselves with the thought that God knows anything of pain, but we do know that the Godman bore our sickness, that, tempted in all points like as we are, He is touched with a feeling of our infirmities, and that the grace of one like Him is fully sufficient for us in every bodily anguish.

And to be patient under injuries received, we have only to remember Him who bore the taunts of envy and the indignities of contempt and the abuse of hatred without a murmur. There has been one, at least, who, when reviled, has not reviled again.

Let the Christian then stand in his lot, patiently, with his hand to the work and his eye on God. If their is labor to be done, let him do it with diligence to the end. If the fruits are withheld, let him not be discouraged. If their is pain to be borne let be uncomplainingly. If their is malice to be encountered let it be without a word.

So having done the will of God he may receive the promise.—*The Congregationalist*.

QUEEN ANNE AND DR. SOUTH.

It is related of Dr. South, who was chaplain in ordinary and court preacher to Queen Anne of England, that after service on one occasion the Queen was graciously pleased to say to him, "Doctor, you have preached an excellent sermon to-day; I wish you had taken time to make it longer."

"May it please your Majesty," he replied, "I wish I had taken time make it shorter."

The remark of the Queen and the reply of the preacher were indicative of the respective mental power and cultivation of each; hers, of the immature judgement of an uninformed mind; his, the proof of the accomplished scholar and skillful writer. It costs no great effort comparatively, to write a long sermon, or a discursive, rambling essay. Such a production of the brain may be thrown off at a single heat; but sift and analyze the thought, and to simplify and condense the language so as to bring it within the limits of twenty or thirty minutes of time, or of two columns of a public journal, require much longer study. And it is study that pays. It pays in the pulpit and it pays in the press. The lights in the sanctuary of God should be supplied with beaten oil, and the busy public have no time to throw away on crude compositions in religious journals. "Brevity is the soul of wit."

HOW THE ELDER GAVE IT UP.

"I had used tobacco many years; they were, however, years of darkness, when people generally chewed, and smoked and drank to their heart's content. I never seriously troubled myself about the morality of the habit, and still I ought to say that though I never thought it decidedly wrong, I never thought it right. A text of Scripture applied by the Spirit of God cured me. When reading the Bible, one morning, in my family, I came to this passage: 'Whether ye eat or drink, or whatsoever ye do, do all to the glory of God.' I was having some trouble with a redundant amount of saliva just that moment; I was drooling and spitting and all that sort of thing, when suddenly something told me I was wrong; I felt like a guilty man, and I exclaimed, 'Wife, wife! How can I glorify God by chewing tobacco?' Thus moved, I threw my idol into the fire and have never resumed its use.

"Some men pretend that it is a mere trifle to drop tobacco, and laugh about it, but I had a tussle, and it has proved a great event in my life. I was relieved of an intolerable incubus; I got my freedom, and was made a happier man in soul and body.

"I have saved a good deal of money. True, I used the article in its least expensive form. I never paid half so much for my 'Cavendish' and 'fine cut,' as gentlemen pay for their costly cigars, but I dare say I have saved enough already to pay for a hundred copies of the Word of God to give to destitute families.

"I have saved a good deal of time. The process (take it as a whole) of buying, chewing and expectorating, wastes no little amount of time; some English Lord says a snuff-taker wastes a twentieth part of his time, two years in forty, in manipulating his snuff-box. Be that as it may, I have saved a great deal of precious time which I once was consuming upon this pernicious indulgence.

"I have saved myself from a great deal of mortification. Vulgar men would sometimes ask me for a quid before others, and as tobacco users, like Free Masons, understand each other, and have a fellow feeling, I could not deny them, and finding myself on a grade with the most common-place men, I would submit to the mortification. In public halls, in churches and prayer-meetings, when my quid has swollen to fearful dimensions, I have been puzzled to know when and how and where to spit, and it sometimes required skillful generalship to get out of the scrape. I had some trouble with this habit at the communion table. I knew that as a Christian, my body should be the temple of the Holy Ghost, and I was conscious that I was defiling that temple. There seemed to be an incongruity between my handling tobacco and handling the bread and wine, consecrated emblems of the body of Christ. As I passed these elements from pew to pew, I sometimes thought that the looks of my mouth, and the odour of my person betrayed my impure habit, and that in the view of the purest men and purest women in our Church I stood at a discount in consequence of this very thing.

"I have no sermon to preach to my fellow elders in our churches, but could I reach them, I would say, dear brethren, 'Be ye pure that bear the vessels of the Lord, taste not, touch not this nauseous and polluting thing. The habit is anti-Christian. Let us banish the heathenish thing at least from our churches, and thereby purify the waters of the sanctuary.'" T.

THE FOREIGN DEMAND.

The demand for Presbyterian ministers from the mother country in America and British colonies, is becoming more than usually great. Since the Rev. Mr. McLaren, the English Presbyterian minister of Brighton, went to Australia for the benefit of his health, he has received no fewer than three calls from congregations. The Rev. Mr. McLeod, the Free Church minister of Campsie, only last week demitted his charge in order to proceed to the colonies; and it was stated at the last meeting of the Irish Presbyterian Board of Missions that four or five of their ministers had left for Canada, New Zealand and Australia. In India the Established and Free Church of Scotland are greatly in need of men as missionaries. At the meeting of the Glasgow Established Presbytery on the 3rd ult., the Rev. Dr. Norman McLeod said they would be glad to have three or four missionaries at every station; but they were in immediate want of seven men to bring up their Indian Mission to its former strength. The Free Church Colonial Committee have ordained the Rev. Anthony Yeoman, one of their probationers, to the pastoral oversight of the Presbyterians in the Falkland Islands; and it is stated that he will be the first Presbyterian minister who has ever landed on these distant Islands. The United Presbyterians are appealing for missionary agents for Ceylon, Calabar, Trinidad, India and China.

REMARKABLE LONGEVITY.

A correspondent of the *Halifax Citizen* writes:—"It may not be uninteresting to your numerous readers to hear the account of the ages of seven of a family by the name of Logan, all living in this county, with the exception of Isaac, who lives in Turo, the ages of which combined reach the enormous figures of 551, viz.: Matthew, in his 89th year; Isaac in his 87th; Thomas in his 79th; William, in his 77th; James, in his 75th; David D. in his 73rd; and Rebecca in her 71st. Their parents were born in Ireland. Hugh Logan in the county Antrim and his wife Margaret in the county Derry. They both came to this country shortly after the French left, and were amongst the first English settlers in Cumberland, and lived in Amherst till the days of their death, honored and respected, which, of a truth, can be said of all their children, who are all members of the Presbyterian Church, with the exception of Thomas and William, who belong to the Baptist denomination. Their bodily strength, of course, is not to be expected very great, but all of them retain their mental faculties remarkably well. It is doubtful, in my mind, whether seven of one family in the whole Dominion can beat this."

TESTIMONY OF A SCOTCH SEAMAN.

A seaman, on returning home to Scotland, after a cruise in the Pacific, was asked: "Do you think the missionaries have done any good in the South Sea Islands?" I will tell you a fact which speaks for itself," said the sailor. "Last year I was wrecked on one of these Islands, where I knew, that eight years before, a ship was wrecked and the crew murdered; and you may judge how I felt at the prospect before me—if not dashed to pieces on the rocks, to survive for only a more cruel death. When day broke we saw a number of canoes pulling for our ship, and we were prepared for the worst. Think of our joy and wonder when we saw the natives in English dress, and heard some of them speak the English language. On that very island the next Sunday we heard the Gospel preached. I do not know what you think of missions, but I know what I do."

GATHER UP THE FRAGMENTS.

A late statesman, one of the conspicuous names on our country's roll of honor, told me that he always carried in his pocket a small volume, now one author and now another, which he took out and read while he was waiting for others. In this way he had used the little intervals of time through many years, and had (though without early educational advantages) made himself a learned man. Scarcely a day passes in which we have not to wait five, ten, or fifteen minutes, in office, parlor, or committee room, for others to meet their engagements with us, or for others to attend to our call. This waiting is done away from our own business-places, so that we cannot attend to our own business avocations, and so the precious moments are usually wasted. Suppose we have an average of fifteen minutes a day of such waiting. It will make, in the business days of the year, a total equal to seven and a half business days of idle waiting! Now, think of seven and a half days of careful reading in history—for example, seven and half long days, of ten hours each.—*Exchange*.

HIGH-HEELED BOOTS.

The following from the *Pacific Medical and Surgical Journal*, is too good to pass unheeded:—

"It is worthy of note that while a malignant hatred of Chinese, individually, is fomented under cover of hostility to their immigration, our females have fallen in love with Chinese costumes and customs, in some respects, and accepted them as models. The pictures of Chinese ladies to which one has been accustomed for many years, bears a close resemblance to the American belle of the present day. The dress, uncouth and deforming as it is, would not of itself deserve notice, but the high-heels, crippling the feet and distorting the limbs; an outrage on grace, on anatomy, on humanity, entitling the authors, could they be detected, to criminal responsibility. A convention of corn-doctors, in the interest of their trade, could not devise a better scheme for good times. Women, whose feet are solidified, may escape with corns. But that a whole generation of little girls should have their toes jammed into the points of their boots, to do the work of heels, and that their legs should be thrown out of their natural balance, and the plant bones bent into semi-circles, is a sacrifice to fashion which would disgrace a nation of savages. All this is a trifle compared with the mischief done to the pelvis, spine, and chest, by the constrained attitude which the abnormal elevation of the heel must of necessity induce. Fashion is at best a cruel tyrant; but the whole history of her capricious rule does not exhibit a grosser violation of natural laws, and a more unpardonable assault on the beauty and health of woman, than the invention of HIGH-HEELED BOOTS.

THE DANGER OF SEEMING TO BE BETTER THAN YOU ARE.

Now, I think, if we closely observe ourselves, the best of us will find a tendency in us to lapse into a lethargic state, into an amiable routine of pious appearances. The frankness and candour in confession of sin and of unsatisfactory spiritual condition, which, if practised, would go far to prevent it altogether, are very seldom seen or heard. There is a certain pressure in religious circles to make everybody feel that he must call himself a saint, or lose caste. Even young converts, before examining committees, labor under the impression that they are to answer "Yes" to every question touching spiritual development, no matter how unreasonable is the supposition upon which it is based. I have heard questions propounded to converts of four weeks' standing to which few professors of ten year's experience could affirmatively respond, and yet, under the pressure of this same sentiment, promptly answered. A word or two upon this point. Now, there are some experiences which come to one at conversion, and others come only through the process of sanctification; and no pastor or committee has a right to put a question which shall force the candidate, in order to avoid embarrassment, to declare that a "grain of mustard-seed, which is the smallest of all seeds," is a mighty tree, so strong, so vast, so perfectly developed, that the birds of heaven come and make it their home. If there is one thing which we need to guard our young people against, it is a false standard of spiritual development, and the exaggeration of personal attainments in piety. I have no sympathy with a forcing process in reference to young professors, any more than in reference to young horses. A man may assert before a committee that he feels so and so, has such and such views, which views and feelings can only come through a long lapse of years in Christian failure and victory; and all the while he is exaggerating his spiritual attainment. There are feelings and experiences which a young girl of seventeen can have; and there are others which none but the mothers in Israel, who have lived and suffered many weary years, can have; and this should be well understood. It is unseemly for the rough and unfinished block, but just lifted from the quarry-pit, to compare itself with the statue which the patient chiseling of many months has dressed into perfect symmetry; and we all know how rough the nature of man is at the first, and how slowly it grows into the "perfect stature of Christ" under the gracious application of God's grace. The age in which we live is a marked one, in reference to what it professes. What it needs is a demonstration that its virtue is equal to its profession. No one has a right to seem to be better than he is. To assume by tone or looks, in prayer or exhortation, an anxiety for souls which you do not feel; a piety which you do not at heart have, is worse than bearing false witness against your neighbour; it is bearing false witness against your own soul, and against Christ himself. I search in vain for words with which to lift and swing the weight of my detestation, and bring it down upon the head of cant and pious seeming. What we need at this time in the Church is a broad-chested, open-handed, frank-faced piety, unassuming and honest, ready to confess its failings and to remedy them. And the best rule that all of us, young or old, can adopt, is this: "I will be as good as I seem, and I will seem to be no better than I am." Such a sentiment, lived up to, would carry us higher up the plane of godliness than one might at first think.—*Rev. W. H. Murray*.

TOO LITTLE THINKING.

One of the many evils that exist at the present day is that of too little thinking—an evil much farther-reaching and more destructive in its influence than most persons suspect. It is said that Turner, the celebrated English artist, was seen to spend a whole day sitting upon a rock, and throwing pebbles into the lake, and when at evening his fellow painters showed their day's sketches and called him on having done nothing he answered: "I have learnt how a lake looks when pebbles are thrown into it." He was thinking as he seemed to be idle, like another famous painter, who when asked what he mixed with his colors, replied: "Brains." He put thought into his wonderful sea paintings. This is what we need in daily life—the mixing brains with our work, the putting of thought into what our hands find to do. How many mistakes would have been prevented, if we had always thought before we spoke, and reflected before we acted.

It is a child's oft repeated excuse, "I didn't think." But we, unlike the Apostle who, when he became a man put away childish things, still cling to childhood's lack of thinking.

Let us then strive to be thinkers, not to be profound students, not great scholars, but quiet, earnest, practical every-day workers who have good, substantial reasons for our words and deeds.