

Christian Endeavor.

TOPIC OF WEEK.

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MARCH 5.—The Lord's day, how shall we keep it? Neh. 13: 22: Matt. 12: 8-13.

The Sabbath is the oldest religious institution in the world. The first morning on which Adam and Eve looked out upon the beauties of Eden was a Sabbath morning. But the binding obligation of the day of rest was re-affirmed at Sinai, (Ex. xx., 3-11) and attention is called to the manner in which the day ought to be observed, at least about seventy-five times in the Bible. In our topic it is called "The Lord's Day." That is the New Testament name (Rev. 1., 10). In the Old Testament it is called "Sabbath"—a word which signifies "Rest." It is often called Sunday now, but this is a heathen designation. The Presbyterians and Puritans tried to have this name abolished but they were unsuccessful.

How shall we keep it? This question is a very timely one just now, in view of the discussions which are agitating the world generally in reference to the introduction of secular amusements on the Lord's day, and in view of the ferment in the United States particularly with reference to the opening of the gates of the World's Fair on Sabbath. Perhaps the briefest and most comprehensive answer can be given in the words of the Shorter Catechism, "The Sabbath is to be sanctified by a holy resting all that day, even from such worldly employments and recreations as are lawful on other days; and spending the whole time in the public and private exercise of God's worship, except so much as is to be taken up in the works of necessity and mercy."

It must be admitted that neither in this country nor in any other is the day observed as it ought to be. It is said that about 1,000,000 persons, or one in eight of the adult males in Great Britain pursue their secular work on the Sabbath. One Canadian M.P. has endeavored again and again to have more stringent legislation enacted in reference to this day, but hitherto he has met with little success. Now, apart altogether from the fact that the Lord has commanded us to keep the Sabbath day holy, there are several weighty reasons why it should be so observed. Long ago Addison remarked that "If keeping holy the seventh day were only a human institution, it would be the best method that could be thought of for the polishing and civilizing of mankind."

Our physical nature requires one day of rest in seven. Neither man nor beast can endure the strain of continuous work. The people of France discovered that even one day in ten did not afford sufficient rest. Castlereagh thought that he could work continuously, but in the course of time he broke down and committed suicide. Wilberforce said of him, "Poor Castlereagh! That is the result of the non-observance of the Sabbath." When Dr. Duff was in India he persuaded a young Scottish resident who employed 500 laborers there to try the experiment of giving them one day of rest in seven. The result was that the laborers were happier, did more work and did it better than when they worked without intermission.

Again, if the Sabbath is not observed as it should be, other evils will come in with its non-observance. If God is robbed of His day the way is paved for robbing man of what belongs to him. If men are taught that the Fourth Commandment is not binding it is easy for them to conclude that they may violate any of the Commandments with impunity.

Further, the Sabbath day properly observed helps to raise our thoughts heavenward, it enables us to hold communion with God, it gives us time for meditation upon His truth, it affords an opportunity for reflecting upon His Word, His works, His character, and His mercies. Amid the toll and bustle of our daily duties there is little time for sober reflection, or for devout, inspiring and uplifting meditation. And yet our soul requires these ennobling and cheering exercises. Like Asaph, we are apt to become worried and perplexed over the sad and harassing problems of life. But if we go to the sanctuary of God, as he did, we see things in a clearer and more cheering light. (Ps. lxxxiii. 16-17). The Sabbath, therefore, should be to us a delight, and it should be spent in the public and private exercises of God's worship, and in doing works of necessity and mercy.

THE DEATH OF THE POET.

Stuart Livingston in The Week.

At morn, my masters, cradled in the mist
The day awoke to life, yet scarce to life
So deep a gloom lay over all the world.
The very winds that waited on its birth
Spoke low, as those who stand about and wait
The end of one who swiftly nears the end;
And as it stepped adown the eastern hills,
Within the vale that leads afar to night,
It found all weeping and disconsolate.
A veil of tears, my son, in which it stepped,
Aye, masters, men have long time called it so.
It seemed a multitude was gathered there,
With all their gaze fixed on the single form
Of one who walked alone, as in old days
Weak mortals watched the struggles of the gods
Who joined the combat 'neath the walls of Troy.

Fearless he looked before where lay a sea
Wide, dark and dreamless as the void of space,
Sunless, without a star; and as he walked
The wail of those who watched him rose and fell

As lost winds rise and fall on unknown seas.
Some were in plumed armour; some were dressed

In rustic garb of simple countrymen,
And maids and matrons wept amid that throng
Where all were bowed as weighed upon with woe.

Upon the hills that closed the valley in
There stood apart another multitude
That looked with stricken faces in the vale.
And then the wonder grew upon me so
At this so strange and sorrowful a sight,
I turned to one who stood apart and said:

"My friend, who is this man and who are they
That watching him thus spend themselves in tears?"

And who are they that stand upon the hills?"
He raised his glance to mine and made reply:
"He is our sweetest singer come at length
Down to the edge of life, for yonder strand
Whereon the waves of that dark ocean roll
Within the shadow, is the verge of time,
And they who watch him thus within the vale
Are children of his mighty brain and heart
Whom he himself created. Look, the one,
Strong, brave and dauntless, with his lance in rest,

And on his face the light, is Galahad.
The one so like a lily is Elaine,
And he whose heart is like a heavenly flame,
Whose beauty is the radiance of the pure,
Whose shield is blazoned with a cross of gold,
Who rides the nearest after him they mourn
And always has been nearest to his heart,
Is Arthur, Engalnds' first and purest knight;
There at the end, borne to the ground with grief,
Is Guinevere, the gentle Arthur's Queen,
Who lost the poet's love because she erred
And was not pure as he had made her fair.
The others are not less his children too,
Gareth, Lynette, the Princess, Launcelot,
And all the numerous, bright, imagined train
That mourn, refusing to be comforted,
Because he nears the limit of the world
And goes to join the friend whose death he sang.

Those who thus weep for him upon the hills
Are they who knew his children and himself,
And from them drew an inspiration pure
Which filled to overflow their lesser lives
With such great strength of purpose high and fixed

As raised them to a fellowship with God."
He ceased, and as I watched the scene with awe,
Slow onward, steadfastly, with weary feet,
He made his way down to the dark-rimmed sea

Where break the formless waves upon the strand

With noise, like whispers spoken in the dark.
A ship lay anchored there amid the gloom,
No pinnace, but a tall and stately ship,
As built to bear across the gathered flood
A mighty spirit. Those upon the land
Stood still with bated breath in reverence
And even forgot to weep as, filled with awe,
They listened for the last thing he would say,
The gloom was great, but as he stood erect
Upon the lofty deck, his eye fixed strong
Upon the density that lay before,
The moonlight broke the cloud and bathed his brow,

Serene and calm, in gentle silvery light,
While from his lips there fell these words of faith:

"I hope to see my pilot face to face
When I have crossed the bar."

Natural abilities are like natural plants,
they need pruning by study.—Bacon.

Truth is eclipsed often, and it sets for a night; but never is it turned aside from its eternal path.—Ware.

A sound discretion is not so much indicated by never making a mistake as by never repeating it.—Bovee.

Thrift of time will repay you in after life with a usury of profit beyond your most sanguine dreams.—Gladstone.

PARIS PRESBYTERIAL SOCIETY.

The eighth annual meeting of the W. F.M.S. of the Presbytery of Paris was held in Zion church, Brantford, on Thursday, Feb. 9th. There was a large attendance of delegates and friends of the society from the different Auxiliaries and Mission Bands. The interior of the church was bright with blooming plants, making a cheerful contrast to the wintry appearance of the outside world. The morning session was entirely devoted to business. The president, Mrs. Thomson, occupied by chair. Devotional exercises were led by Mrs. McMullen of Woodstock. Officers for Paris; 1st Vice-Pres., Mrs. Thomson, Ayr; '93 are as follows: Pres., Mrs. Coburn, 2nd Vice-Pres., Mrs. McKay, Woodstock; 3rd Vice-Pres., Mrs. McMullen, Woodstock; 4th Vice-Pres., Mrs. Shearer, Drumbo; Cor. Secy., Mrs. McWhirter, Woodstock; Rec. Secy., Miss May Patterson, Paris; Treas., Mrs. Robertson, Ingersol. A cordial invitation to meet next year in Paris was accepted. Mrs. Hay, Woodstock, was appointed Presbyterial delegate to the general society's annual meeting. The delegates then adjourned to the lecture room where a luncheon awaited them, which left nothing to be desired, so generous were the preparations made by the ladies of the church. A very pleasant social hour was spent. The afternoon session began at two o'clock. Devotional exercises by Mrs. McKay, Woodstock, and Mrs. McLeod. Miss Purves read the address of welcome to which Mrs. Shearer of Drumbo, replied. After the address of the president, Mrs. Thomson, in which she spoke of the Home Mission side of Foreign Mission work of the reflex influence of such work on the workers, and urged the individual responsibility of each one, the reports of the Cor. Sec. and Treas. were read. Both were full and interesting. There are sixteen Auxiliaries and thirteen Mission Bands in connection with the society, with a membership of 721. Special mention was made of thank-offering meetings which many had found to be both profitable and most enjoyable. Clothing to value of \$541.55 was sent to Northwest in Sept. The amount contributed, \$1,651.74, being an increase on last year. The dedication prayer was offered by Mrs. Coburn, Paris. A duet by Misses Carson and Salmon was listened to with great pleasure. Friendly greetings were presented on behalf of the W.F.M. societies of the Baptist and Methodist churches. The speaker of the afternoon, Mrs. Wilson of Neemuch, India, was then introduced, and in a very bright, earnest way, gave a most graphic picture of mission life in India, with its difficulties and encouragements, dwelling more on the latter. The people are intelligent and lovable. They are intensely grateful for the smallest service, and work among them is encouraging as to results and pleasant in itself. The foundation of work there must be school work among the girls, who are bright, quick, and anxious to be taught, and fond of music which has great power over them. They carry the news home, and results follow in families which cannot be measured. As a people, the natives of Central India are not religiously inclined. The enthusiasm of the speaker carried all hearts with her and her words will not soon be forgotten by those privileged to hear her. It was a pleasure to greet Dr. Beattie of the Indore Mission staff, who is home on furlough, and much regret was felt that owing to ill health she was not able to address the meeting. A beautiful solo was sung by Miss Whitaker. A hearty vote of thanks was tendered Mrs. Wilson for her address, and the ladies of Zion church for the kindly hospitality shown to the visitors, and to those who had given so much pleasure by their music. The public meeting held in the evening was well attended. The pastor, Dr. Cochrane, occupied the chair, and in a happy manner expressed his enjoyment of the day's proceedings in so far as he had been allowed to participate. His belief was that the best foreign mission workers were pretty sure to be the best workers for home missions. Addresses were followed from Mr. Brook of the Farrington church, Brantford, who gave kindly words of greeting to the society, as a member of another denomination. Rev. Mr. McTavish, Moderator of Paris Presbytery, presented the Presbytery's congratulations, and eloquently contrasted the condition of women in heathen lands with Christian women, showing the power of the Gospel in raising womanhood socially, intellectually and morally. Rev. R. P. McKay, Parkdale, Foreign Sec., gave an earnest, practical address. All the speakers had the interested attention of the audience. The music rendered at intervals by the choir and others was most excellent, and was a very enjoyable feature in the programme for both afternoon and evening. The meeting which was a most successful one throughout, was closed with the benediction.

In Basutoland, under the magnificent jurisdiction of Sir Marshall Clarke, drink has practically been entirely excluded from the country, and we find in consequence that the Basutos are growing up without any of those vices which drink has brought into many other parts of Africa.

Another case is North Bechuanaland, where Khama, the great Christian native chief, bears rule, a man whom I am glad to know and call my friend, and who is the finest specimen of a native I have ever seen—nay, I can go further, and say he is one of the finest specimens of humanity I have seen. He has excluded drink from his country in a way hardly possible to believe. At the town of Shoshong, with from fifteen thousand to twenty thousand people in it, anybody can walk about at any moment and know that he would not meet with the slightest atom of molestation—a state of things entirely due to the way in which the drink is kept out of Khama's country.

The region of Western China alone, that magnificent new world now fast opening to exploration and commerce, a region comprising the three provinces of Suchuen Yunnan and Kweichow, is larger by 20,000 square miles than Great Britain, Ireland and France, and contains 80,000,000 inhabitants.

Mr. Lawton, one of the China Inland Missionaries, in the extreme northwest of China, on the border of the great Mongolian Desert, received from a pagan the offer of a beautiful ancestral hall for a Christian church. Mr. Lawton expressed his surprise at such generosity, but the pagan answered, "You are doing an excellent work here, and in helping you with my best I hope to obtain a small part of your merit."

At the Students' Bible Conference at Northfield last July, Bishop Thoburn said "When I went to India, my first idea was to convince the people that there was a God, who would give us a revelation of himself. Then I would try to prove that this Bible was His revelation, and thus bring out the truths of the atonement. I was surprised to discover I did not need to prove that there was a God, for all except those educated in England and America believed this. It took me nearly twenty-five years to discover that there was no need of preliminaries, but that I could at once deliver my message about Christ."

The greatest mission field is unquestionably China. Whether we consider the amount of population to be reached, their accessibility on the one hand and the obstacles they present on the other, there is no field, whether in Africa, India or Japan, but must yield the first place. A population twice the size of that of Africa, a third larger than that in the whole Empire of India, packed together in a country, every part of which is easily accessible from every other part, one in language, one in habit of life and thought, practically one in religion, for Confucianist, Buddhist and Taoist are not so distinct but that they can use each other's temples interchangeably, presents an opportunity to, and a claim upon the Christian world greater than that of any other field.

STILL REGARDED WITH SINCERE AFFECTION.

Mr. Editor: I have just seen yours of the 15th inst., and I cannot refrain from applauding your remarks on my old teacher, Mr. McQueen, whose memory is cherished by many of his old boys with sincere affection. He was indeed all that you say. His scholars delight to recall the school in his day and his original and characteristic methods. He was an excellent classical scholar; and he would read Latin with us after school hours, until it was dark in the winter afternoons, inspiring us with something of his own enthusiasm for Caesar and Hannibal and Leonidas et id genus omne. Likewise he hammered the shorter catechism into us. Alas! the educational machine was too much for him, and he had to go. There is no room for the man of originality and force of character in our educational system; and the "machine-made" youth of to-day will not we fear, in all ways, be an improvement on the "hand-made" article that men like Mr. McQueen turned out.

AN OLD FERGUS BOY.