

Selections.

PAINE'S AGE OF REASON.—A book once given to the world cannot be recalled. Once committed to the hands of the public, it becomes public property and cannot be withdrawn. Man has not the power to annihilate his own works. If he gives a bad book to man, it may cost him a life of sorrow and an eternity of woe. Such an act is like time—once gone, it is gone forever. The leaves can be sent forth, but they can never be returned. An author is not at liberty to withdraw what he has once given to the world. Though he may, by repentance, undo in part what he has done, yet it is not wholly destroyed. How important, then, that every act be good and useful, rather than wicked and ruinous. A few weeks since, a fact in the life of Thomas Paine, threw this thought with great force upon my mind. It occurred just after the publication of his "Age of Reason." My uncle J. K. then a youth of nineteen years, was predisposed to scepticism, and had for a long time desired to read Paine's works. Having been to Sing Sing, New York, on business, the inn keeper, as he was about to return observed to him that there was a gentleman, who wished to get a ride—and if he would carry him, he would speak to him. Mr. K. enquired who it was. The innkeeper replied, 'It is Mr. Thomas Paine, recently returned from England.' This highly pleased Mr. K. for he had long desired an interview with him. Mr. Paine took his seat by his side, and they rode on. Their conversation immediately turned on his recently published theological works. Mr. K. having secretly cherished a hope that the claims of the Bible might be proved null and void, began to congratulate him on the anticipated success of the "Age of Reason." Paine enquired after its popularity—wishing to know how it was received—what his neighbours thought of it, &c., and drew out of him all that he felt disposed to say. After satisfying himself with these enquiries, he took a long breath, and made subsequently the following reply:—"Well, sir," said Mr. Paine, "I am sorry that work ever went to press, I wrote it more for my own amusement, and to see what I could do, than for any design of benefiting the world." "I would give worlds," said he, with great emphasis, "had I them at my command, had the *Age of Reason* never been published! No sir, I regret the publication of that work exceedingly. It can never do the world any good, and its sarcastic style will, doubtless, lead thousands to esteem lightly the only book of correct morals that has ever blessed the world. I would advise you," said Paine, turning his eye to meet Mr. K.'s, "not to read that work." At this Mr. K. said he was "perfectly surprised." He knew not what to say. "What!" thought he, "the author of a book so notorious, repudiating all faith in his own work! What confidence can he expect others to have in it, if he has none himself? If Paine himself cannot rely on his writings, how shall other men dare to trust themselves in the belief of them? If the 'Age of Reason' will not answer for its author, it will not answer for me, or for any other person in the world." Mr. K. took up with Mr. Paine's advice, "not to read that work," for he felt no concern to pore over three or four hundred pages simply to fill his mind with an acknowledged lie—and from that time, his tendencies to scepticism left him. I have seen boys sit together in the evening, after a day's labour, and tell stories; one relates a wonderful exploit, and another is reminded of a noble achievement, and another has a heroic deed to tell of, and so they go round, each one vying with the other in attempts to tell the biggest story. This must have been the real heart of Paine when he sat down and took his pen to translate and belittle the sacred volume. He felt like making out a good story, which he in his heart did not believe. Notice then, two fearful warnings:—

1. All those who read and believe Tom Paine's *Age of Reason*, are more credulous than the noted author himself, for he had no confidence in his own story.

2. An infidel in this world may begin his suffering for the publication of his wicked doctrine. What a regret fills the poor man's mind! "I would give worlds, had I them at my command, if the *Age of Reason* had never been published!" O you who are tempted to reject the record God gave of His Son, beware.—*Morning Star*.

MISSIONS TO THE ROMAN CATHOLICS.—At the Annual Meeting of the Society for English Church Missions to the Roman Catholics, it was stated that a far larger sum was required to carry on the work and to respond to the many pressing calls from various points. This Society prosecutes its work by means of spiritual missionaries, Scripture-readers, schoolmasters;

controversial sermons, special addresses to Roman Catholics in churches, school-houses, and the open air: by discussion classes, house to house visiting, and the circulation of the holy Scriptures and tracts; and addressing the Roman Catholics in their vernacular, whether English, Irish, French, or Italian.

There were four discussing classes in the metropolis. Upwards of seven hundred Roman Catholics had frequently attended within one week, and had behaved with decorum and listened attentively while the clerical missionary or other conductor of the class commenced with prayer and an exposition of the Word of God.

There have been five hundred and ninety-one converts since the Society commenced its missionary operations, up to the 30th of April, 1865; and upwards of one thousand pupils, chiefly Irish and Italian Roman Catholics, had been instructed by the Society's schoolmasters, while many more had attended the preaching of the Gospel.

CONSECRATION OF THE SCUTARI BURIAL GROUND.—The Bishop of Gibraltar, on the 16th, consecrated the burial ground at Scutari, the Ambassador and the Commandant attending. "A double file of soldiers," says the *Times* correspondent, "the clergy, headed by the Bishop, a long line of ladies and nurses, moved in solemn procession round the space originally or lately appropriated to the dead. A group of silent and wondering Turks stood near, while the Bishop and his Chaplain, then under open heaven, in the declining sun, read through the offices of the Church. It was a scene not easily to be forgotten. The edge of the plateau on which the two hospitals stand is here some fifty feet above the Bosphorus. The white tombstones which now rise among the green hillocks shine across the blue water, and are visible to every ship which brings our soldiers to the seat of war. They each record the death of one or, at most, of two persons. One stone bears the name of two Nevills, brothers in life and in death, but they speak of many thousands laid beneath the sod. One could not well help regarding the prayer said there and the benediction uttered in the light of an attempt at reparation—could not help the involuntary question arising: "Who slew all these?" and, as of other rites of religion paid and days of fasting set apart, could not refrain from glancing not over hopefully at the common reformation which they are taken to attest. The hours are over in which from their drenched and sodden tents upon the plain, or from the noisome and infectious wards of an unprovided hospital, English soldiers cried out to English citizens unavailingly; but the mounds of the Scutari graveyard—rather tumuli than common graves—are there, making to all the future perpetual appeal, urging what to undulled senses experience should be enough, pleading that such a loss in the fore front of the conflict suffice to shield from similar destruction those who go afterwards to battle.

HERCULES AND THE BISHOP.—"So Hercules, I am glad to hear that you were pleased with the Bishop on Sunday."

"That I was sir; I tell you the truth, when I went into Church, I was that cold, I was a trembling all through the service, but when the text was given out and he began to preach, why sir, the sweat came billing out of me."

[Our refined readers will not be too hard upon the expressive orator who enforced his rather strong language by one of his most emphatic gestures.]

"Well—but Hercules, are you not afraid of turning the Bishop's head by praising him so much?"

A little taken aback by the suggestion of such a possibility, Hercules was not to be thrown off his feet.

"Oh! no sir! You see 'twas his word, 'twas the Word of God that he preached—'twas God's word in his mouth—that's what makes me feel it so—cause I believe it sir. Some of them who was there I poso didn't feel nothing of the kind. All collared people sir has't got faith."

This last observation, given in a peculiarly telling tone of voice, upset all within hearing.—*S. Episcopalian*.

A MOHAMMEDAN VERDICT.—A Governor in Ceylon, thoroughly impregnated with the spirit of the British Constitution, empanelled a jury of Mussulmans on a man found drowned, and they returned the solemn but significant verdict, "His time was come."

REDUCTION EXTRAORDINARY.—A merchant in Burlington, Vt., having sunk his shop floor a couple of feet, announces in the *Sentinel* that "in consequence of recent improvements, goods will be sold considerably lower than formerly."

DUPUYTREN AND THE PRIEST.—Dupuytren was, the most celebrated French surgeon of his day; he was destitute of faith, and by his powerful mind and brusque hardihood, overcame the individuality of almost every one who approached him. One day a poor priest, from some village near Paris, called upon the great surgeon. Dupuytren was struck with his manly beauty and noble presence, but examined, with his usual nonchalance, the patient's neck disfigured by a horrible cancer. "With that cancer you must die," said the surgeon. "So I thought," calmly replied the priest; "I expected the disease was fatal, and only came to you to please my parishioners." He then unfolded a bit of paper and took from it a five franc piece, which he handed to Dupuytren, saying; "Pardon, sir, the little fee, for we are poor." The serene dignity and holy self-possession of this man about to die in the prime of life, impressed the stoical surgeon in spite of himself, though his manner betrayed neither surprise nor interest. Before the priest had descended half the staircase, he was called back by a servant, "If you choose to try an operation," said Dupuytren, "go to the Hotel-Dieu; I will see you to-morrow." It is my duty to make use of all means of recovery," replied the priest, "I will go."

The next day the surgeon cut away remorselessly at the priest's neck, laying bare tendons and arteries. It was before the days of chloroform; and unsustained by any opiate, the poor priest suffered with uncomplaining heroism. He did not even wince. Dupuytren respected his courage, and every day lingered longer at his bedside, when making the rounds of the hospital. In a few weeks the priest recovered. A year after the operation, he made his appearance at the *salon* of the professor, with a neat basket containing pears and chickens. "Monsieur," he said, "It is the anniversary of the day when your skill saved my life; accept this humble gift; the pears and chickens are better than you can find in Paris: they are of my own raising." Each succeeding year on the day of the month, the honest priest brought his grateful offering.

At length Dupuytren was taken ill, and the physicians declared his heart diseased. He shut himself up with his favorite nephew, and refused to see his friends. One day he wrote on a slip of paper: "The doctor has need of the priest," and sent it to the village priest, who quietly obeyed the summons. He remained for hours in the dying surgeon's chamber; and when he came forth tears were in his eyes, and Dupuytren was no more. How easy for the imagination to fill up this outline, which was all that was vouchsafed to Parisian gossip.

The great historian of the Peninsular War has told us for the first time—in a delightful volume just issued of selections from his "History"—who his authorities were for some of the more striking and disputed statements in his work. His chief authority, we now learn, was the Duke of Wellington himself. The great captain was always ready to answer any query the historian put to him, and the historian had the good sense to profit by such promptness and liberality. Oddly enough, says the *London Illustrated News*, we know—but not from Napier—that the Duke never read Napier's history; and this, not from any discourtesy to a man he esteemed, but from a desire to avoid controversy.

TELEGRAPHIC INVENTION.—The *Piedmontese Gazette* says:—"The evening of the 4th May will be an epoch in the history of telegraphs and railways. Then was seen a railway carriage proceeding at the utmost speed, and receiving and sending messages from and to the station from which it set out. Yesterday evening, at six o'clock, the Chevalier Bornelli made the first essay of his locomotive telegraph on the line from Turin to Moncalieri. Though the carriage was proceeding at the rate of a kilometre in two minutes, he easily exchanged questions and answers with the station at Turin throughout the whole trial, and announced his complete success to the official persons present."

Mr. James Sheridan Knowles has written a pamphlet with the object of proving that "the Gospel attributed to Matthew" was composed by all the apostles together, who employed Matthew as a penman.

ADVERSITY may strip the Christian of all but a good heart. If that remains with him, he will bear up in the deepest of his extremity. True Christian fortitude wades through all difficulties.—*Bishop Hall*.

OUR HOPE.—God's mercy and Christ's merit should bear up our faith and hope, when a sense of our sin is ready to cast us down.—*Crocket*.