

*Angry words:* They were noted down.

In a short time Rose returned; David had left the house. It was the custom of Rose to read aloud from the Bible to her sister every morning, and afterwards to sing a hymn. She now seated herself opposite to the window, carelessly opened her book, and after every hurried verse her eye glanced out into the fields, to see if the rain were beginning to abate. So, when she sang her hymn, while the name of her Lord was on her lips, and she sang of His cross and sufferings, her eye was ever wandering, and her manner showed but too plainly that her heart was far otherwise engaged. Was not such mere *lip-service* a mocking of religion? It was noted down.

A few minutes afterwards there was a tap at the door, and Bell Marks appeared, shook the wet from her shining umbrella, rubbed her shoes on the mat, shook hands with the sisters, and sat down.

"Why, Bell, what brings you through such pelting rain?" inquired Nancy.

"I thought I'd stop here a few minutes for shelter. I'm on my way to Farmer Green's to know if it's true that Sally's turned off."

"I dare say that it's true enough," said Rose. "I only wonder that they've let her stay so long. I cannot bear that girl."

"Nor I," replied Bell, "she's so proud."

"And so selfish," exclaimed Rose.

"I wonder what they have turned her off for though," said Nancy, "that's what I want to know."

"I dare say," answered Rose, "that she has helped herself in the dairy, Mrs. Green found her cream running short; or——. Why, Nancy! what are you doing?" added she, suddenly turning round towards her sister.

"There is no more room on my paper," said Nancy, quietly laying down the pencil.

As soon as Bell had departed, Rose took up the paper with a blushing check, and read the record of her "*idle words*."

"Oh, Nancy!" she cried, "it is not yet ten o'clock, and all this is written down against me. If I must give account for every *idle word* spoken in all the years that I have lived and may yet live, where, where shall I be on the day of judgment? Is there punishment for every sinful speech do you think, Nancy?"

"The Lord Jesus has said so. 'By thy words thou shalt be justified, and by thy words thou shalt be condemned.'—Matt. xii. 37."

"Then what will become of me?" cried poor Rose. "I shall never be able to stand before God."

"No poor sinful mortal ever could," replied Nancy. "If thou, Lord, shouldst mark iniquity, O Lord, who shall stand! But there is forgiveness with Thee. . . . —Psalm cxxx. 2, 3. This is your only hope—*forgiveness*. And you know through whom to seek it."

"Through the Lord Jesus Christ."

"Yes, for Him hath God exalted . . . to give repentance unto Israel, and forgiveness of sins."

"Then, need I not fear?" inquired Rose.

"Not, if you are resting your hopes upon Him, and striving in His strength to overcome sin. But, Rose, if you are one of Christ's children, you will strive, you will keep a watch over your lips. You will say, like King David, in the 39th Psalm, 'I will take heed to my ways, that I sin not with my tongue: I will keep my mouth with a bridle.'"

"Ah! Nancy, I feel now how difficult it is to do so, the *scorpions* seem to come so much more readily than the *diamonds*!"

"Pray and persevere," replied Nancy. Reader! let that be our motto, *pray and persevere!*"

From the News of the Churches.

RELIGION IN THE COLONY OF VICTORIA.

The population of this colony may be estimated at present at about 300,000—this allows for the increase since the census was taken in 1854. It may be interesting to exhibit the numerical proportions of the various denominations, as reported by the registrar in November 22, 1855. The numbers were as follows:—

|                             |                   |
|-----------------------------|-------------------|
| Church of England, 108,002  | Baptists, 4,724.  |
| Roman Catholic, 45,111      | Lutherans, 3,014. |
| Presbyterians, 42,317       | Unitarians, 180.  |
| Wesleyan Methodists, 15,284 | Irvingites, 75.   |
| Jews, 1,547                 | Mormons, 132.     |
| Mahometans & Pagans, 3,000  | No religion, 805. |
| Independents, 7,000         |                   |

In regard to ministers or persons discharging ministerial duties, the following table will exhibit the condition of the churches named, at the close of the year:

|  |               |              |
|--|---------------|--------------|
|  |               | In all.      |
| Church of England, 48 min's, 8 lay preachers |               | 56.          |
| Roman Catholic, 35 priests                   |               | 35.          |
| Presbyterians—                               |               |              |
| Synod of Victoria                            | 14 ministers, | } 46.        |
| Free Church Synod                            | 18 "          |              |
| U. P. Synod                                  | 14 "          |              |
| Methodists—                                  |               |              |
| Wesleyans                                    | 20 "          | } 169 " 194. |
| Primitive Methodists                         | 2 "           |              |
| Wesleyan M. Assoc'n                          | 2 "           |              |
| Bible Christians                             | 1 "           |              |
| Independents                                 | 16            | 1 " 17.      |
| Baptists                                     | 5             | " 5.         |
| Evangelical Lutherans,                       | 3             | " 3.         |
| Unitarians                                   | 1             | " 1.         |

One pleasing feature in the ecclesiastical state of the colony is the absence, I may say the entire absence, of sectarian strife and jealousy, and the evidence displayed on all occasions of brotherly goodwill, and a desire to co-operate in the work of the Lord. The tone of the preachings, with certain exceptions, are decidedly evangelical; nor is there the slightest encouragement for the moral-essay style of pulpit address. The most energetic and aggressive body are the Wesleyans; and, looking at their numbers on the census roll, I am really astonished at the great things they have done; their system of lay-agency has many advantages in a country like this. It enables them to provide in some measure for the spiritual wants of a district so soon as the necessity presents itself. Scotch Presbyterians will be satisfied with no services but those of an ordained minister or a regularly trained licentiate—which argues, perhaps, a higher intellectual taste. But, in the circumstances, such an attainment is often a decided evil; for between the demand for ministers, that is the need of them, and the ability to supply, there is a lamentable disproportion. Few Scotchmen will tolerate lay-preaching—they must have an able minister or none; and the consequence is, that thousands of them are rapidly forgetting the habits of better times, and settling down in a state of absolute ungodliness. The Church of England is seen here in the fairest aspect. The bishop is not only esteemed but beloved by all; and most deserving he is of the popularity he enjoys. He is in his own person an earnest, unassuming, servant of Christ. His great anxiety is to secure for his people a zealous clergy and a pure Gospel. No one better understands the peculiarities of Victoria. He employs all his influence at home to obtain evangelical preachers for his