

quality of his mental pabulum. Sometimes he goes far outside the beaten track, as when he says in one of his letters, "I am reading Clavigero, one of the best histories of Ancient Mexico, to whom Prescott is much indebted for his excellent work." It is safe to say that this divine's study table was never without some book on it which represented the importance and worth of secular studies.

Such studies, however, subserve a far higher use as correctives of dryness and narrowness in preaching. The most frequent criticism one hears on sermons is that they are "dry." The "dryness" may come from a variety of causes—the themes may be "dry," or the treatment. A dry treatment may impoverish a rich theme. A dry theme, dryly handled—ah! me, what a weariness it is. It would lead me too far away from the subject to analyze all the varieties which this fault in sermons assumes. But such analysis is scarcely needed. In all the discussions which have been going on since Mr. Mahaffy raised the question whether preaching was not losing its hold on the people, the changes have been rung on this dryness as the main cause of the decay in the power of the pulpit.

There is, however, another vice of the modern pulpit. Its range is narrowed. It goes on in too restricted a topical field. The views are those of the seminary lecture-room. The treatment is provincial—not narrow in the sense of bigoted perhaps, but narrow in the sense of being thought out on too limited a scale, narrow in not having the broader touch of human speech on other non-professional themes. Many of our modern discourses are open to this charge. They lack breadth and color. One does not need to read the sermons of the late Phillips Brooks twice to see how he moves on homiletic lines of breadth as well as freshness, the result of his constant contact with secular studies.

In the *Life of Charles Darwin*, we find that in 1836-39, at the beginning of his great scientific career, he could say, "I took much delight in Wordsworth's and Coleridge's poetry and can boast that I read the 'Excursion' twice through. In my excursions during the voyage of the *Beagle*, when I could take only a single volume, I always chose Milton."

Toward the close of that career, he has a very different account to give of his mental habits. It is a very dreary confession. "But now—for many years, I cannot endure to read a line of poetry; I have tried lately to read Shakspeare and found it so intolerably dull that it nauseated me. I have almost lost my taste for painting or music." Little comment is needed here. If scientific pursuits can be carried on in such a way and with such a spirit as to make Shakspeare a nauseating dose, it is very clear that something is horribly wrong in the scientific world. Nauseated by Shakspeare, and yet content to absorb all the energies of the soul in a study of earth-worms!

But I fear that not a few honored divines, if they were as outspoken as Darwin, would have the same melancholy confession to make. Their theological studies have dried them up, have narrowed their mental