

Our Contributors.

THERE IS PLENTY OF TIME.

BY KNOXIAN.

The season for homilies on the brevity of life and the flight of time has once more come.

Homilies on these topics are often trite and nearly always misleading.

Time does not fly any faster than it ever did. Time has travelled at exactly the same rate since the days of Adam.

It is quite true that human life has been considerably shortened since Methuselah's time, but an average life even now brings great opportunities. A vast amount of good or evil may be done in a single day. Some men can do a good deal of mischief even after tea.

Homilies on the brevity of human life sometimes leave the impression that life is so short no one need try to accomplish anything. Most of us are idle enough and lazy enough without hearing homilies of that kind. The fact is, we have abundance of time to be good and to do good.

• WE HAVE ALL THE TIME THERE IS.

It does not take any longer to be in good humour than to be surly. A civil answer can be given in just as short a time as a rude one. A polite man consumes no more time in being polite than a boor does in being boorish. The truth can generally be told in much less time than a lie. No more time is needed for an honest business transaction than for a fraud—usually not half as much. We have plenty of time to be good, if we are inclined that way.

In the matter of doing good lack of time is perhaps the least of our lacks. It is not because we have no time that we do not pray like Abraham, or lead like Moses, or sing like David, or soar like Isaiah, or preach like Paul.

Abraham's prayer for Sodom can be read slowly in two minutes. It is a much better prayer than those long ones that begin before creation and come down through the ages for half an hour.

Perhaps David wrote the twenty-third Psalm in ten minutes. He certainly did not take a month at it. The internal evidence makes it fairly clear that it was "struck off at a sitting," if we may use a modern expression. But there it is—six verses that have cheered the hearts of millions of God's saints, living and dying. It is not lack of time alone that prevents all modern poets from writing Psalms like David's twenty-third.

Paul didn't need a twelvemonth to wake up the Athenians. He did it in one short speech. They wanted something new, and he gave it to them.

It didn't take him a week to make Felix tremble. He shook up the governor in one address with three points—but they were points. One magnificent oration almost persuaded Agrippa. It is not very long, but it is one of the best examples of high class oratory in the world. Paul could make an impression on a heathen Roman Governor in much less time than it takes some modern ministers to wind up a sermon or begin a tea-meeting speech.

The plain truth of the matter is, lack of time is the least serious of our troubles. Lack of inclination, lack of heart, lack of ability, lack of purpose, lack of perpetual motive power hinders most of us much more than lack of time. Life may be short, but it is quite long enough to do a large amount of good, if we have the inclination and ability to do good.

Who has not noticed the vast amount of mischief some men can do in a day? You never hear a very bad man complain about the brevity of life. He utilizes his time and gets his work put in, and therefore he has nothing to complain about.

You might endow a chair in one of the colleges in less than four days if you have the money and the inclination to give it. All you need do is go to the telephone, ring up one of the Principals, tell him your intentions and send along the cheque next mail. It doesn't take long to endow a chair if a man has the money and a heart to give it.

A few minutes are quite long enough to arrange for the support of a missionary in India or China. All you need do is communicate with the Foreign Mission Committee and send the money to Dr. Reid. It is the simplest thing in the world to endow a chair or sustain a foreign missionary if you have the money and are anxious to invest it in that way. There are no long, tedious steps such as have to be taken in matters of diplomacy. You can endow half a dozen chairs and send out a dozen missionaries long before Great Britain and the United States settle that old quarrel about seal. You may do any amount of good work in the Church before the Government get reciprocity with the United States or Sir John Thompson winds up the school business with Manitoba. Yes, "dear friends," as the preachers say, there is any amount of time to do good.

Four more days this year! How many poor people could you help in less than half of that time? It does not take many minutes to call on your grocer or meat man and order some good things for a number of poor families. You can do it in ten minutes. It would not take you long to slip out quietly after dark with a bundle of clothes for some poor man. The walk will do you good and the work will bring you more blessings than a month's small talk about churches and ministers and meetings, and societies and associations, and con-

ferences and conventions, and committees and church courts, and calls, and all the other ecclesiastical gossip with which the church is deluged.

Any man who wants to help his neighbours can easily find time.

A man needs no more time to be good and useful than he needs to be a nuisance. A woman needs no more time to be God's noblest work—a true woman—than she needs to be a Tartar or a fool.

We all have more time than we make a good use of. Let us stop whining about the brevity of time and use what we have. So far as human eye can see some people have too much time rather than too little.

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL IN EUROPE.

BY REV. E. WALLACE WAITS, D.D., OF KNOX CHURCH, OWEN SOUND.

(Concluded.)

HERE AND THERE IN HOLLAND.

Holland, Hollowland, the Netherlands, Pays Bas—and by whatever name known—is, perhaps, the most remarkable region on earth. Everything is fresher and stranger than elsewhere. Napoleon pretended he annexed the country because it was the debris of French rivers. No doubt the soil is formed of alluvial deposits, but the delta so created is the most wonderful under the sun. Man is here indebted to nature for nothing. The great plains, intersected with silent water-courses, are his work. Towns and rivers and vast seas are under his control, and the wind itself does his bidding. Foreign writers have thrown ridicule on Holland, partly because of its small size, and partly because of its characteristics. Butler, the Author of "Hudibras," describes it as:—

A land that rides at anchor, and is moor'd,
In which they do not live, but go aboard.

The laws of nature are reversed. There is an injunction against building on the sand; but in Holland every house has to be built on the sand, and a whole coast-line is held together by straws. The sea is everywhere higher than the land, and the keels of the passing ships are higher than the chimneys of the houses. There is little or no wood in the country, but whole forests have been buried in the shape of pilos. Except, perhaps, in the island of Urk, there is not a stone to be found; but artificial mountains of granite, brought from Norway and Sweden, have been erected to serve as barriers against the sea. By means of windmills, always present in a Dutch landscape, the air is made to pay toll. The trees grow and the rivers run just as they are wanted to grow or run. Air, earth, and water are under control, and the result is—Holland.

When M. de Arouet, known as Voltaire, exercised his wit, on taking leave of the country, with the words, "*Audieu! canaux, canards, canaille!*" he doubtless thought he had said something offensive. Those, however, who gave themselves the name of "*Gueux*" would not be much offended with the sarcasm of the Frenchman who thought Shakespeare half a fool. It may be safely said that nowhere on the continent of Europe will the American traveller be better received than in the land of the legendary Mynheer Van Dunck. The men are not demonstrative, and the women are not forward, but men and women and children pay every attention to a stranger that can be expected. Holland, though of insignificant area—being scarcely larger than the county of Yorkshire—has a history of greater interest than States of more imposing dimensions. She has had to keep perpetual watch and ward against the forces of nature itself; and any lack of care may entail disastrous consequences, such as when, in 1421, a tract of land near Dort was submerged, with seventy small towns and villages, and nearly 100,000 persons perished in the flood. At home she has had to make heroic resistance and heroic sacrifices against foreign tyrants, and abroad to meet enemies aiming at her existence. And in all cases she has shown herself equal to the task imposed upon her. To all British people the little kingdom of the Netherlands has special attractions. The Dutch have stood side by side with us fighting for the liberties of Europe, and when opposed to us they have proved themselves a worthy foe.

THE DYKES OF HOLLAND.

Here, if human care were withdrawn for six months, the whole of the low lands would be under the sea again. A corps of engineers called "*waterstaat*" continually employed to watch the waters and to keep in constant repair the dykes, which are formed of clay at the bottom, as that is more water-proof than anything else and thatched with willows, which are here grown extensively for the purpose. If the sea passes a dyke, ruin is imminent; an alarm bell rings, and the whole population run to the rescue. The moment one dyke is even menaced, the people begin to build another inside it, and then rely upon the double defence, whilst they fortify the old one. But all their care has not preserved the islands of Zeeland. Three centuries ago, Schouwen was entirely submerged, and every living creature was drowned. Soon after, Noordt Beveland was submerged, and remained for several years entirely under water, only the points of the church spires being visible. Walcheren was submerged as late as 1808, and Tholen even in 1825. It has been aptly

asserted, that the sea to the inhabitants of Holland is what Vesuvius is to *Torre del Greco*. De Amicis says that the Dutch have three enemies—the sea, the lakes, and the rivers; they repel the sea, they dry the lakes, and they imprison the rivers; but with the sea it is a combat which never ceases. The enormous expense incurred in the construction and maintenance of the 1,550 miles of sea-dykes now existing may be imagined. The cost of construction is not over estimated at 150,000,000 guilders or £12,500,000. As in the case of Scotland, the character of the territory has exercised a marvellous influence on the inhabitants themselves; and, on the other hand, perhaps, no people has so extensively modified the condition of its territory as the Dutch.

The inhabitants of Holland enjoy religious as well as political liberty. The total number of Protestants is about two million and a half; with about half that number of Roman Catholics. The Dutch Reformed Church is by far the largest Protestant body. The various denominations are all subsidized by the State. The total amount thus expended annually is seventy thousand pounds, sterling.

AT DORTRECHT.

Our morning at Dortrecht was very delightful, and it is a thoroughly charming place. Passing under a dark archway in a picturesque building of Charles V., opposite the hotel, we found ourselves at once on the edge of an immense expanse of shimmering river, with long, rich polders beyond, between which the wide flood breaks into three different branches. Red and white sails flit down them. Here and there rise a line of pollard willows or clipped elms, and now and then a church spire. On the nearest shore an ancient windmill, coloured in delicate tints of gray and yellow, surmounts a group of white buildings. On the left is a broad esplanade of brick, lined with ancient houses, and a canal with a bridge, the long arms of which are ready to open at a touch and give a passage to the great, yellow-masted barges, which are already half intercepting the bright, red house-fronts, ornamented with stone, which belong to some public buildings facing the end of the canal. With what a confusion of merchandize are the boats laden, and how gay is the colouring, between the old weedy posts to which they are moored! Dortrecht is about ten miles from Rotterdam on the railway between that city and Breda, and is quite an important commercial city, having a population of about 30,000. We visited the church in which the Synod of Dort was held.

An Assembly of the Reformed Dutch Church, with deputies from France, Switzerland, Scotland, and England, called to decide the theological differences existing between the Armenians (or Remonstrants) and the Calvinists, was held here during 1618 and 1619. More than those in any of the other towns of Holland, do the little water streets of Dortrecht recall Venice, the houses rising abruptly from the canals, only the luminous atmosphere and the shimmering water, changing colour like a chameleon, are wanting.

An excursion should be made from Dortrecht to the castle of Loevestine on the Rhine, where Grotius, imprisoned in 1619, was concealed by his wife in the chest which brought in his books and linen. It was conveyed safely out of the castle by her courageous maid Elsje van Honwening, and was taken at first to the house of Jacob Daetselaer, a supposed friend of Grotius, who refused to render any assistance. But his wife consented to open the chest, and the philosopher, disguised as a mason, escaped to Brabant.

Our next point was Rotterdam. It is only two hours distant from the sea, and the channel is deep enough for vessels drawing twenty-two feet of water. Rotterdam owes its prosperity to its admirable system of harbours. The central part of the river frontage is lined by a broad quay called the Boompjes, from the trees with which it is planted. Here and there a great windmill reminds you unmistakably of where you are, and the land streets are intersected everywhere by water streets, the carriages being constantly stopped to let ships pass through the bridges. Tramways, introduced in 1880, are gradually extended to various suburbs. While some nine or ten Protestant denominations, the Roman Catholics, the old Roman Catholics, and the Jews are all represented in Rotterdam, none of the ecclesiastical buildings are of primary architectural interest. We went to see the pictures in the museum, bequeathed to the town by Jacob Otto Boyman, but did not admire them much. It takes time to accustom one's mind to Dutch art. Well, we left Rotterdam and thankfully felt ourselves speeding over the flat, rich lands to Gouda; here we saw a great cheese market, for the Gouda cheese is esteemed the best in Holland. From here it is only a brief journey to the Hague, two miles inland from the German Ocean. It is the most handsome, fashionable, and the most modern-looking town in the Netherlands. Broad and regular streets, extensive avenues and drives, and spacious squares well-planted with trees, are the main features of its general plan; large and beautiful buildings are numerous; and the population consists for the most part of Government officials and members of the nobility, the army, and the navy. The town is still so small that it seems to merit the name of "the largest village in Europe," which was given to it because the jealousy of other towns prevented its having any vote in the States General till the time of Louis Bonaparte, who gave it the privileges of a city. The centre of the Hague, both historically and topographically, is the buildings of the court. A handsome Gothic building, with towers at each corner of the facade, contains the great hall