

A serious question arises as to the best methods of dealing with this nuisance. In the first place, it should be clearly understood, and, on all occasions maintained, that such a "profession" is not "respectable." If those who follow it cannot be touched by law—and, we think, in the exercise of it, they might sometimes be touched by law—they can at least be affected by public opinion. Let them know that honest men will have nothing to do with them, that their very calling excludes them from all decent society, and a first step will be taken to abate the nuisance.

Another thing might well be done. When it was known that any man employed a private detective he might be visited with social ostracism, or, as boys used to say, he might be sent to Coventry. The receiver is as bad as the thief; the employer who requires unlawful work is as guilty as the man who does it. He is more guilty; since the other man does it for a living and shelters himself under the plea that the responsibility rests upon those who employ him to do things which, after all, are not illegal. If it were decided that the employment of this kind of labour was as dishonourable as cheating at cards or any of those things which make a man to be despised by his fellow-men, we should be on the way to amendment. We might not, all at once, get rid of the mischief. People would continue to do this, like other unlawful things, on the sly. But there would always be the danger of being found out. The employer might find his agent "bought" by another as unscrupulous as himself, and ultimately such work would be avoided by all who retained the slightest degree of self respect.

Of course the evil goes deeper, and the remedy should also go to the root and source from which it proceeds. The love of tittle-tattle and gossip and scandal, the vulgar curiosity, the busy-body prying—all these things, not to speak of envy, hatred, malice, and uncharitableness—these are the evils which explain all the rest. But these things are for the teacher and preacher of ethics and religion to deal with. Our own suggestions have simple reference to social life and duty.

A MOOD.

My soul is like a dim, unbounded sea,
That feels the sky in all its breadth and length,
Holds every star in its unfathomed strength,
And lies wide open to infinity.

Mine is the splendour of the sunrise, mine
The unimagined glory of the moon;
Upon my breast blooms—dies—the flower of noon,
And sunset turns my waters into wine.

I have forgot that hate and death can be;
I have forgot that I have ever sinned;
I feel the strong uplifting of the wind,
And hear its deep and deathless melody.

A. ETHELWYN WETHERALD.

THE PULPIT ADMONISHED.

THE "liberty of prophesying" is a very precious possession, valuable not merely to the clergy, but equally to the laity. In fact, if the pulpit is not free, it is worthless; it is worse than worthless. It does not merely fail to publish the truth, it confirms men in error. When the preacher ceases to be a *Vox Dei* and becomes a *Vox Populi*—which, after all, are not absolutely identical, when he becomes the mere echo of the opinions and prejudices of his congregation, then he is undoubtedly a curse and not a blessing.

Of course there are limits to this liberty, as there are to all other kinds of liberty. For example, preachers should never indulge in personalities, should never preach at individuals; and, even when a subject is suggested, as sometimes happens, by the conduct of some particular person, it should be treated in such a way as to make its application general, and so as not to draw attention to any one hearer in particular. It is also desirable that the tone of a teacher towards his hearers should be sympathetic, kindly, respectful. On the other hand, there must be apparent exceptions to those methods. We do not say real exceptions; but a preacher will hardly be able, in addressing his people, to obey the apostolic command to "rebuke them sharply" without appearing to be, for the moment, without the "milk of human kindness." If we add that there are certain subjects, which, by common consent, are banished from the pulpit, we have perhaps said enough on its restraints.

There are, however, certain other subjects upon which it is not only the privilege, but the duty of the preacher to discourse; and we may say, generally, that these are the subjects which are treated in the New Testament. If there is a grace, a virtue, a duty which is commended to Christians by an inspired apostle, then it is the duty of all Christian ministers to commend and inculcate those qualities and duties throughout all ages. If a vice is condemned, if warning is given against a fault or a transgression,

then the same condemnation, the same warning, must still be given, unless it should become clear that the particular evil in question has disappeared, or the danger been averted.

Among the duties which have always been made prominent in the Christian Church are the duties of generosity, liberality, alms-giving, and the like; and these are specially obligatory upon the wealthier members of the community. "Charge them who are rich in this world that they be ready to give and glad to distribute, laying up in store for themselves a good foundation against the time to come." These words are clear and explicit as regards the duty and blessedness of giving and also in reference to the duty of the clergy in enforcing the obligation. We suppose that never at any time has this duty been neglected by the ministers of the Church of Christ. We suppose never at any time have they been blamed for performing this duty, and making it a part of their ordinary teaching.

If, however, the duty is to be inculcated, it is quite clear that the neglect of it must be censured. If it is a minister's duty to exhort his people to liberality, it must be his clear and bounden duty to tell them, sorrowfully, of their shortcomings when they pay no heed to his admonitions. We do not say, it is his right. There is no question here of right; it is his duty. If any one likes to say that a clergyman has a right to do his duty, he may utter such a platitude without offence. But we must protest against the notion that a clergyman who defends his actions in this respect is contending for any supposed rights of his own; he is simply explaining the grounds of his duty.

A very curious commentary on these remarks is to be found in the report of a recent vestry meeting held in the Province of Ontario. We avoid the mention of places and names, as personalities hinder instead of helping the effect whether of argument or admonition. In this way, too, we may leave out of consideration the accuracy of the report. We will even suppose—nay, we will venture to hope—that the report is not quite accurate. Still we find in it the kind of thing which we sometimes hear people saying, and we will, therefore, deal with it as it stands.

Some good things seem to have been said as to the desirableness of preventing the fluctuation in the amounts collected being caused by the weather, and it is not quite easy to make out how the argument came in, especially as several persons seem to have spoken at once; but there appears to be no doubt that one gentleman gave it as his opinion that the pulpit was not the place from which to tell the congregation of their shortcomings in giving for missions, and that two other gentlemen were found ready to support this astounding statement! One irreverent reporter records that the chairman "sat upon all three" of the speakers. Apart from the slang, we can hardly conceive of the chairman doing any thing else.

What on earth would these people have their rector do? Is he to go round and call upon all the members of his flock, and remonstrate with them personally on their niggardliness. Doubtless, this would greatly improve the state of feeling on the subject! Is he to send a private circular to the heads of families, explaining that the matter must be kept very quiet, or the congregation will be disgraced by its being known how little they have given?

Hinc illæ lachrymæ! The world apparently has learnt from the preacher's words, only too faithfully recorded by those wicked reporters, who are always in the way when they are not wanted, and out of the way when they are wanted,—that a certain congregation has contributed miserably to a certain cause of great importance, and unfortunately it cannot be pleaded that the congregation are poor. No! it is said they are the very reverse of poor. Truly a sad condition of things! And then this vestry meeting, instead of setting things right, has put them altogether wrong; for it has only published more widely the thing which apparently should never have been published at all.

Probably our readers have heard of the great French preacher, Adolphe Monod, by some thought to be the greatest preacher of this century. He was a thoroughly Evangelical man, not merely in the technical sense of the word, but in the larger and deeper sense—a man whose piety was not inferior to his capacious intelligence and even to his glorious eloquence. Among Monod's sermons will be found one on covetousness, which we strongly recommend the clergy to read to their people, saying that it is Monod's. And this for various reasons. A clergyman of our acquaintance attempted to preach it, delivered it partly memoriter and partly in substance. The effect, he said, was considerable, but, on the whole, it was a failure. He could not bend the bow of Achilles. He could not follow in the flight of one who had a pinion almost as strong as the "Eagle of Meaux." Another clergyman of our acquaintance read it to his congregation, and a certain old lady never entered the doors of his church again.

Both of these evils may be averted by simply reading it as a sermon by Adolphe Monod. In that way the reader has simply to do his best, and he will not be downcast by a failure in delivery. Moreover he can hardly give offence by reading words written by another man. He can easily explain that covetousness is supposed to be a very common form of evil, and therefore he reads to his congregation a great sermon on the subject. Of course, he can explain to his people that it may possibly have no reference to any of them; but that, at least, it is generally believed that niggardliness and covetousness are still common; and we ourselves certainly think it is so believed.

"DR. GATLING," says the *New York Sun*, "has invented another gun, which he calls the 'police gun,' and which is designed for use in riots. It is brass, weighs seventy-eight lbs., is mounted on a tripod with a universal joint, works very much like the Gatling gun, and will deliver 1,000 shots a minute in any direction—sideways, up and down."