

THE HOMILETIC REVIEW.

VOL. XIX.—MARCH, 1890.—No. 3.

REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE ILLUSTRATIVE ELEMENT IN PREACHING.

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WHAT differentiates one preacher from another in popular effect is largely illustrative power. There shall be two sermons on the same topic, equal in logical construction, equal in point of style, equal in manner of delivery. If one have any advantage over the other in point of illustrative fertility, that sermon is the one talked about most, because it took hold of most in the audience. Glancing at my library shelves as I wrote the above sentences, I saw there, side by side, the volumes of two great preachers—one of the seventeenth, the other of the nineteenth century; one a court preacher, the other a preacher to the people; one an Episcopalian, the other a stout Congregationalist, both with a very striking gift for illustrating the truths they preached—Dr. Robert South of England and Henry Ward Beecher of America. It was, I think, a fortunate thing for homiletics when the sermons of Mr. Beecher were taken down by an expert phonographer and published. They, indeed, subserve far higher ends than that of a text-book for young preachers. What impresses one in reading them is the high spirituality of their teachings on Christian life. How large and noble, how rich and manifold, this becomes in his handling of it! I have never yet seen any adequate analysis of this element in his preaching. It is yet to be given, and can only be given by a thorough study of all his published volumes. Recent perusal of some of his sermons has suggested to me this article. In the field of illustration he is unique; unique in fertility, in aptness, in beauty, in pathos, in wit, in clinching effect. His illustrations are by turns the nail which fastens impressions, the light which suddenly transfigures a subject, the trumpet which rouses attention, or the stamp which makes truth the current coin in the realm of spiritual life. An entire article might be written on his wonderful gift in this line. About the first thing a writer would have to consider would be the fact that he has been a disciple in the school of the Great Teacher. We all know how his teachings are lighted up by illustrations from common life and common things. Mr. Beecher has learned of Him. He lays nature, art, history, all under