

way of life cheerfully enough, refusing all offers of assistance. His brother-in-law once proposed to send him a present of whisky.

"No," said he in reply; "spirits never enter this house save when I cannot help it."

His brother-in-law next offered to send him some money. He answered:

"God grant you more sense! I want no sovereigns. It's of no use sending anything down here. Nothing is wanted. Delicacies would only injure health. *Hardy* is the word with working people. Pampering does no good, but much evil."

And yet the latter days of this great-souled man were a woeful tragedy. He was the best baker in the place, gave full weight, and paid for his flour on the day, and was in all respects a model of fair dealing. But his trade declined. Competition reduced his profits and limited his sales. When the great split occurred in Scotland between the Old and the Free Church, he stuck to the old, merely saying that the church of his forefathers was good enough for him. But his neighbours and customers were zealous for the Free Church. And so for various reasons, his business declined; some losses befel him; and he injured his constitution by exposure and exhausting labours in the study of geology.

There were rich and powerful families near by who knew his worth, or would have known it if they had themselves been worthy. They looked on and saw the noblest heart in Scotland break in this unequal strife. They should have set him free from his bakehouse as soon as he had given proof of the stuff he was made of. He was poet, artist, philosopher, hero, and they let him die in his bakehouse in misery. After his death they performed over his body the shameful mockery of a pompous funeral, and erected in his memory a paltry monument, which will commemorate their shame as long as it lasts. His name has been rescued from oblivion by the industry and tact of Samuel Smiles, who, in writing his life, has revealed to us a rarer and higher kind of man than Robert Burns.—*James Parton.*

SUGGESTIONS ON SINGING.

Whatever differences of opinion there may be on minor questions, there are certain principles which we believe experience and propriety both establish in regard to sacred song.

First. While there should be a choir to lead the singing, that choir ought by all means, to be made up of Christian people.

Second. Since even Christians need to take pains to be in a fit state to worship, nothing is more important than that the members of the choir should be accustomed to attend the prayer and devotional meetings of the church.

Third. The singers should prepare themselves for their duty by prayer, and an earnest seeking of the Spirit's aid, just as the minister should prepare himself for preaching.

Fourth. If the singer can not pray, he can not sing. He may have the best voice in the world, but his efforts will be without power or blessing.

Fifth. It ought to be the custom for the pastor and his choir to have a season of prayer before commencing the service, in order to seek special preparation from God.

Sixth. Nothing is more evident than that the effect of singing is greatly dependent on the spiritual state of the singers at the time. Even a converted organist can make his piety felt through his keys.

Seventh. In order to insure those results, the church ought to have the appointment of singers in her own hands. The matter should not be put into the hands of a society, or an unconverted music committee.

Eighth. Beyond all else, it should be understood that the choir is for leading the congregation, and not for entertaining them with their musical performances. Great responsibility rests on the pastor in this matter. He should see to it that the people are furnished with plenty of books; and he should always, in a hearty, friendly way, urge all to unite in the singing. The example of the pastor is all-powerful.

Sometimes a minister gives out an invitation for all to sing, in such a sad, mournful tone, that no one cares any more about it than he seems to; and hence there is no spirit in the singing. As far as possible, the children should be enlisted. The hymns, at least, ought to be such as they can join in.—*Ira D. Sanky in the Watchword.*

HISTORICAL FICTION.

Nobody, perhaps, disputes that in its higher or poetical form historical fiction includes most of the immortal work of the human imagination; and it might be thought superfluous to mention the *Iliad* and the *Aeneid*, the *Book of Job* and the *Nibelungen Lied*, and the principal pieces of all the greatest dramatists. But even prose historical fiction, at its very best, must outrank the cleverest pictures of contemporary manners, for it bespeaks in the writer a more difficult exercise of a less common order of faculties. The fame of Walter Scott is only now beginning to emerge from those rising mists that are apt to cloud a great reputation during the first generation or two of its posthumous being; but even we, the children and grandchildren of those who watched open-mouthed for the Waverleys as they came, can shrewdly guess that his work will last in the very form which he gave it, as will not, for example, that of the well-beloved Anthony Trollope, so like Scott in the easy simplicity of his methods and the prevailing sweetness of his humour. Thackeray touches his highest level in Henry Esmond; Dickens in the serious portions of the *Tale of Two Cities*; Charles Kingsley in *Hyperion* and *Amyas Leigh*; while George Eliot's *Romola* and Schaffel's *Ekkehard*, over and above their æsthetic value, are monuments of the unflinching application to this branch of literary art of the sternest and most abounding principles of modern historical research. The German, for a wonder, disguises his learning more gracefully than the English writer. It is rather with Schaffel, in his beautiful romance, as it ought always to be in such a case, the sunken, yet all the more impregnable foundation of a romantic superstructure; but either of these memorable

books is a better help to the comprehension of a bygone epoch than the blind and pompous histories of the eighteenth century; quite as much so as any of the preeminently picturesque histories of our own time, like Carlyle's and Macaulay's and Prescott's; little less so than the massive and legitimately splendid work of any of the long list of so-called "brilliant" contemporary historians, Kingslake, Motley, Taine, Froude, and the rest. No one of these men would have deigned to apply for material to anything short of those "original documents" of which we hear so much; but the moment they pass beyond mere transcription and compilation, the moment they begin to select and fuse and recast, the element of the historian's personality enters in, and his work becomes, in a degree, one of the imagination. No two men can even read the same record any more than two can see the same picture.—*September Atlantic.*

THE FREE CHURCHES OF BELGIUM.

The Synod of the Free Churches of Belgium held its annual meeting at Gohyssart July 14th. Protestantism is, numerically, very feeble in Belgium. Twenty-four churches, several out-stations, and a little company of pastors and Evangelists compose its organization. Not a single Fleming preaches the Gospel, though two or three young men are now in preparation for the work at the theological institution in Brussels. The ministers are mostly Dutch. The Synod met under the presidency of Baron Prisse, General Manager of the railway from Ghent to Antwerp. Delegates from England were present, and were warmly welcomed. The principal subject discussed was the work which the new Educational law is likely to throw on the ministers and Evangelists. The Belgian Evangelical churches have had only six day-schools in all; but these will probably be closed, as parents will prefer the free communal school, with its trained teachers, to a small institution where fees must be paid for fewer privileges. It is a great gain to have the priest and the Romish catechism removed, but how are the Protestant children to receive religious instruction? This question was earnestly discussed, but no conclusion was reached, and the Administrative Committee was directed to prepare a report on the subject for the next Synod. The principal session was held in a dancing-hall, beautifully decorated, and M. de Pressensé, of Paris, delivered an oration on "Liberty," in its relation to religion. The reports presented show a growing work in Belgium and a gradual gain for Protestantism. The immediate future is full of perils for the Belgian churches. The loss of educational control has infuriated the Romanists to a degree that can best be understood by a recent utterance of the "Avenir Belge," in which it says: "We proclaim an implacable and merciless war on the enemies of our religion, our country and our king. Catholics, to work! It is the will of God. Crusaders of the nineteenth century, Jerusalem is in the hands of the modern Mussulmans. Let us deliver it!"

AN IMPORTANT GEOLOGICAL FACT.

Geology has shown us that nature accomplishes her greatest revolutions in the earth's surface conformation slowly. Every year the river makes the channel deeper, the glacier wears a deeper gorge in the Alpine rock, and the ocean tide deposits the sand it has crumbled from the rocks upon which it breaks. We note the earthquake and the devastating hurricane; but these changes are so gradual man seldom observes them until the channel has become overhanging cliffs, or a mountain has disappeared before the icy stream, or the ocean has given us a Florida. Thus it is in disease. Our attention is attracted by acute diseases, as fevers, cholera, etc., while chronic diseases (often the most dangerous in result), being slow in their development, are seldom noticed until they have made an almost ineffaceable impression upon the system. Persons believing themselves comparatively healthy are oftentimes the victims of these diseases, and only become aware of their presence when relief is almost impossible. Diseases of the liver and stomach are the commonest of these chronic affections. Dr. Pierce's Golden Medical Discovery and Pleasant Purgative Pellets are never failing remedies for these diseases. They produce a healthful secretion of the bile, prevent indigestion by regulating the bowels, and impart a vigorous tone to the whole system.

NOW, OR NEVER.

But as for all those theories which tell the sinner that if he dies in his sins he shall have another opportunity; which forget the grandeur and awfulness of God's moral government; which undertake to know more than Christ dared to teach about the Father's tenderness; which insist that the divine justice exhausts itself in merely reformatory discipline, and which tend to exclude from legislation as well as from theology, the very idea of punishment—I have no fellowship with them, and if I had a pulpit, no preacher of those theories should stand in it with my consent. Behold! *now is the accepted time, and now or never* is the deep undertone of the gospel in its call to repentance and its offer of salvation.—*Rev. Dr. Leonard Bacon.*

There is no morrow. Though before our face
The shadow named so stretches, we always
Fail to overtake it, hasten as we may;
God only gives one island inch of space
Betwixt the eternities, as standing place
Where each may work—th' inexorable to-day.

—Margaret J. Preston.

DIFFICULTY is the nurse of greatness, a harsh nurse, who roughly rocks her foster-children into strength and athletic proportions. The mind, grappling with great aims and wrestling with mighty impediments, grows by a certain necessity to their stature. Scarce anything so convinces me of the capacity of the human intellect for indefinite expansion in the different stages of its being, as this power of enlarging itself to the height and compass of surrounding emergencies.—*Bryant.*

BRITISH AND FOREIGN ITEMS.

It is said that a monthly magazine is to be started in England, which will be the organ of the Evangelical Party of the Church of England.

It is announced that the New Testament as revised by the Revision Committee will in all probability be issued from the University Press early next year.

THE Union Theological Seminary of New York has \$200,000 in buildings and grounds, \$750,000 in invested funds and an income of \$50,000 a year.

FIVE Russian nihilists at Odessa, Russia, have been sentenced to be hanged, one woman to exile in Siberia and twenty-two other prisoners to penal servitude for ten years.

It is reported that Sir Edward Bulwer-Lytton will soon retire from the Viceroyalty of India and be succeeded by Lord Dufferin, the present British Ambassador at St. Petersburg.

ACCORDING to an English newspaper, in some of the English ritualistic societies every member is obliged to pledge himself never to enter a nonconformist place of worship.

THE two hundred and fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the First Church, Salem, Mass., was appropriately celebrated on Sabbath, Aug. 17. The Psalms used 250 years ago were sung to old tunes.

THE "Dublin Freeman's Journal" a few days ago published a letter from its com. assoner in the west of Ireland, representing that almost a famine prevails among the tenant farmers in that section.

WILLIAM H. VANDEBILT has given \$100,000 for the erection of a gymnasium and of a civil engineering and scientific hall on the grounds of Vanderbilt University, at Nashville, Tenn., erected and endowed so liberally by his father.

THE doom of the Tuilleries in Paris is sealed, as the French Chamber of Deputies has voted by a large majority to tear down the ruins that have been standing since the Communists endeavoured to destroy it by fire, and to transform the site on which it stood into a pleasure garden.

THE editor of the "Bee-Keeper's Magazine" finds that honey can be made in New York city. He has 600,000 lively operators in the form of Italian honey-bees. They go to the battery and pay close attention to the white clover there, and some of them make trips to the Central Park, and to other regions where honey blossoms are opening to their wants.

THE foundation-stone of the new Eddystone Light-house was successfully laid August 19, by H.R.H. the Duke of Edinburgh. The new tower will be 130 feet above the highest water level; the light will have a range of seventeen and a half miles. The work is expected to be completed within the next four years, at a cost of between £60,000 and £70,000.

THE "Manchester Guardian," in an article reviewing the general position of the cotton manufacturing industry, says: "The winter will be one of the most severe experienced for some time past, and the position of operatives will be considerably aggravated if they have to suffer another reduction. Some of the manufacturers state that the only alternative of closing the factories will be another reduction of ten per cent in the wages of the operatives."

HERBERT SPENCER's definition of evolution is as follows: "Evolution is a change from an indefinite, incoherent homogeneity to a definite, coherent, heterogeneity, through continuous differentiations and integrations." The great mathematician Kirkman translates into plain English thus: "Evolution is a change from a nohowish, untalkable, allalike, to a somehowish and in-general talkable, not-allalike, by continuous somethingelifications and sticktogetherations."

THE arrests for Sunday drunkenness for the six months after the Irish Sunday-closing Act came into operation, and for the corresponding period of the previous year before the public houses were closed, as reported to the House of Commons, were; for twenty-seven weeks with open public-houses, 2,364; for twenty-seven weeks under Sunday-closing, 707; being a reduction of seventy per cent. In the five cities and towns exempted from the full operation of the Act, but where the hours of sale were shortened, the result was a reduction of twenty-five per cent.

THE London "Times" publishes a despatch from Newcastle, South Africa, dated August 3rd, which says that one tribe of Zulus who have not yet felt the brunt of war are massing toward Zlobane. A detachment of a corps of British troops, which was under orders to return home, is being hurried against them. Sir Garnet Wolseley telegraphs to London as follows: "Five thousand savages are ready to attack King Cetewayo, and this number will be increased to 10,000 before entering Zululand. The British operating with these, or another composite force coming from the direction of Lunenburg, should either capture Cetewayo or drive him toward Colonel Clarke's column, which is moving from the southward. There have been further submissions of Zulus."

THE following statistics are given of the forms of worship in Amsterdam, Holland: Reformed Church of the Netherlands, ten churches with about 30,000 members; French Reformed Church, two churches, four clergymen and 2,354 members; English Reformed, one church, one clergyman; Arminians, one Church, two clergymen, 834 members; Christian Reformed Church, one place of worship, 185 members; Evangelical Reformed Church, two places of worship and five clergymen; Restored Evangelical Lutheran Church, one church, four clergymen, 4,729 members; United Methodists, one church, three clergymen and 3,408 members; Roman Catholics, nineteen churches, sixty-nine clergymen and 65,000 members; Old Episcopal Church, two places of worship and 181 members; English Episcopal, one church; Dutch Israelite Church, eight places of worship and 3,000 members; and Portuguese Israelite, one place of worship and 3,000 members.