

Selected Articles.

DAYS OF VANITY.

CHRISTINA O ROSSETTI.

A dream that waketh,
Bubble that breaketh,
Song whose burden is death,
A passing breath,
Smoke that vanisheth,
Such is life that dieth.

A flower that fadeeth,
Fruit the tree sheddeth,
Trackless bird that dieth,
Summer time brief,
Falling of the leaf,—
Such is life that dieth.

A scent exhaling,
Snow waters falling,
Morn'g dew that drieth,
A sudden blast,
Lengthening shadow cast,
Such is life that dieth.

A scanty measure,
Rust eaten treasure,
Spending that naught buyeth,
Moth on the wing,
Toil unprofiting,—
Such life that dieth.

Morrow by morrow
Borrow breeds sorrow,
For this my song singeth,
From day to night
We pass out of sight,—
Such is life that dieth.

Scribner's for November

THE POWER OF THE AFFIRMATIVE.

She power of positive ideas and the power of positive affirmation and promulgation of them move the world. Breath is wasted in nothing more lavishly than in negations and denials. It is not necessary for truth to worry itself, even if a lie can run a league while it is putting on its boots. Let it run, and get out of breath, and get it out of the way. A man who spends his days in arresting and knocking down lies and liars will have no time left for speaking the truth. There is nothing more damaging to a man's reputation than his admission that it needs defending when attacked. Great sensitiveness to assault, on the part of any cause, is an unmistakable sign of weakness. A strong man and a strong cause need only to live an affirmative life, devoting no attention whatever to enemies, to win their way, and to trample beneath their feet all the obstacles that malice, or jealousy, or selfishness throws before them. The man who can say strongly and earnestly, "I believe," has not only a vital and valuable possession, but he has a permanent source of inspiration within himself, and a permanent influence over others. The man who responds: "I do not believe what you believe," or "I deny what you believe," has no possession, and no influence except a personal one.

In nothing is this principle better exemplified and illustrated than in the strifes of political parties. The party that adopts a group of positive ideas, and shapes a positive policy upon them, and boldly and consistently affirms and promulgates both ideas and policy, has an immense advantage over one which undertakes to operate upon a capital of negations. The history of American politics is full of confirmations of this truth. No party has ever had more than a temporary success that based its action simply on a denial of a set of positive ideas held by its opponent. The popular mind demands something positive—something that really possesses breath and being—to which it may yield its allegiance. There is no vitalizing and organic power in simple opposition and negation. Earnest, straightforward affirmation has a power in itself; independent of what it affirms, greater than negation when associated with all the influences it can engage.

The Author of Christianity understood the matter. His system of religion was to be preached, proclaimed, promulgated. Its truths were not to win their triumphs by denying the denials of infidelity, but by persistently affirming, explaining and applying the truth. With this system of truth in his hands—so pure, so beneficent, so far-reaching in its results upon human character, happiness, and destiny—the Christian teacher commands the position. Infidelity and denial can make no permanent headway against faith, unless faith stop to bandy words with them. That is precisely what they would like, and what would give them an importance and an influence which they can win in no other way. Why should an impregnable fortress exchange shots with a passing schooner? Silence would be a better defence than a salvo; and deprive the schooner of the privilege of being reported in the newspapers. The world whirls toward the sun, and never stops to parley

with the east wind. The great river, checked by a dam, quietly piles up its waters, buries the dam, and, rolling over it, grasps the occasion for a new exhibition of its positive power and beauty. The rip-rap shuts an ocean door, but the ocean has a million doors through which it may pour its tides. Stopping to deny denials is as profitless as stopping to deny truths. It is consenting to leave an affirmative for a negative position, which is a removal to the weak side.

So a man who has really anything positive in him has nothing to do but persistently to work and live it out. If he is a politician or a statesman, or a reformer or a literary man, he can make himself felt most as a power in the world, and be secure of ultimate recognition, by living a boldly affirmative life, and doing thoroughly that which it is in him to do, regardless of assault, detraction and misconstruction. The enemies of any man who suffers himself to be annoyed by them will be certain to keep him busy. The world has never discovered anything nutritious in a negation, and the men of faith and conviction will always find a multitude eager for the food they bear. Men will continue to drink from the brooks and refuse to eat the stones that obstruct them. Even error itself in an affirmative form is a thousand times more powerful than when it appears as a denial of a truth.—*Dr. J. G. Holland in Scribner's for November*

THE UNITARIAN DILEMMA.

The *Liberal Christian*, in discussing the proper policy of the Annual Unitarian Conference soon to assemble inclines to the opinion that it will not adopt a "statement" of belief, and indeed that it would not be wise to attempt it. Such a statement in the circumstances of the denomination, it inclines to think, will not be deemed desirable.

The reasons for this are frankly given. There is no concealment of "the variety and latitude of theological opinions" which prevail within the body. A trial for heresy would be an anomaly and a subject of ridicule in the Unitarian Church. "The Unitarian body believes that Christianity is not essentially a matter of opinions," "but a matter of faith," and hence it is compelled to disown a creed. A statement of belief is evidently regarded as an approximation to a creed, only it would not be authoritatively imposed, or binding on any one. But to secure it would be no easy matter. The plan suggested, if a statement is to be adopted, is certainly ingenious.

Let the maximum of faith in the majority be set forth, and let the minimum or any other degree of the faith of the minority be also set forth as an appendix to the statement of the majority. This would be just to all. There would be no compromise—always to be dreaded in matters of conscience—and yet there would be perfect justice done alike to the varieties of opinion among us, and to the public, which has a claim to explicit information as to our opinions.

But even this might be considered as going too far. The mild statement suggested might introduce "wedges and walls of separation." On this account "many wise and good men shrink from any effort to explain ourselves." The present union is considered better than one "of more form and less substance," that might result in bringing the members of the body "by the ears with each other."

Hence a strong disposition to avoid "the chief sources of quarrel in other religious bodies." Evidently Unitarians are wise in their generation. They handle their organization carefully. It is a piece of glass ware that may not be dashed against the points of a creed or even a "statement." Their silence now, when the community is calling for some account of their belief, will be equivalent to a confession that they have no belief that can safely be stated, that the attempt to state it might introduce "walls and wedges" and split them into fragments. Evidently the consciousness of their numerical weakness as well as of their diversity of opinion, has not a little to do with such a conclusion. Each section of the body derives its importance and respectability largely from its connection with the others, incongruous perhaps in belief, but swelling the aggregate of what is included under a common name.

For our part we confess that we should be curious to see the maximum and minimum of faith, which the Convention could adopt. It

seems to us, in the utter impossibility of securing any common statement, a happy device to set forth the real attitude of the denomination as a body. We might measure approximately the divergence of the right and left wings. We might see how "broad" this broadest of modern churches—the English Establishment perhaps excepted—is. We might estimate the power of that "spiritual unity" which can hold together year after year elements confessedly so diverse. Possibly also we might find the limits of Unitarian Christianity in the descending scale. We might find how far a man might go in the direction of utter infidelity or transcendental Pantheism and still claim the benefit of Unitarian fellowship and sanction. But the disposition to gratify outside curiosity will in all probability—so it is admitted—be curbed.—*The N. Y. Evangelist*

A GOLDEN THOUGHT.

Nature will be reported. All things are engaged in writing their history. The planet, the pebble, goes attended by its shadow. The rolling rock leaves its scratches on the mountain, the river its channels in the soil, the animal its bones in the stratum, the fern and the leaf their modest epitaph in the coal. The falling drop makes its sculpture in the sand or stone; not a foot steps into the snow, or along the ground, but prints in characters more or less lasting a map of its march; every act of the man inscribes itself in the memories of his fellows, and in his own face. The air is full of sounds the sky of tokens; the ground is all memoranda and signatures, and every object is covered over with hints, which speak to the intelligent.

THE GENEVA WATCH-MAKERS

Geneva has so long been the watch factory of the world that little need be said on the subject. From four to five thousand men are constantly engaged in making watches. Two or three thousand more are employed in making musical boxes. In the absence of statistics it is supposed that one hundred and fifty thousand watches are now made in Geneva every year. The work is separated into many departments. The watch-makers, so called—those who make the works of the watches—are the steadiest class. They have no trades-union. The case-makers are freer spirits and have a trades-union, as do the jewelers, engravers and enamellers. All of these latter command higher wages than the watch-makers, and, having more temptation are more given to beginning the week on Wednesday, after a leisurely spree. A watch-maker averages about six francs, or nearly a dollar and a quarter a day. Jewelers, engravers, and enamellers can make a little more than that. Case makers can earn three dollars a day. But such are the habits of all these four latter classes that they do not average more than the six francs a day of the watch-work maker. There are no very large watch factories in Geneva, that is, the workman is rarely collected in one building. The independence of the whole class is indicated by the fact that they generally work at home. Where a quaint old house reaches out for light through many windows high above the dinginess of its narrow court, you may be sure that the proud ruler of the little republic is there with his watch-making or engraving tools. He and his brethren who make music boxes and singing-birds, and the other industrious denizens of the St. Gervais quarter, are the rulers of this little republic, because they are the backbone of the liberal or independent party, which rules the city and the canton. It is these people who, under the lead of James Fazy, in 1846, brought the aristocrats of the old upper city to terms, and made them pay for the powder and ball with which they did it. They work and think, and rule one of the best, and apparently one of the least, governed cities in the world.—RALPH KEELER, in *Harper's Magazine* for November.

Most people drift. To do this is easy. It costs neither thought nor effort. On the other hand, to resist the tide one must have principle and resolution. He must watch and pray and struggle continually. And yet no thoughtful person, who cares for his own soul, will dare to drift.

Thorns and briars are but discouraged buds.

CLERICAL WIT.

THE Rev. Mr. Martin, of Burlington, Me., a man of decided talent and worth, was somewhat noted for his eccentricity and humor, which occasionally showed themselves in his public ministrations. In the time of the great land speculations in Maine several of his prominent parishioners and church members were carried away with the mania for buying lumber tracts. Mr. Martin resisted this speculating spirit, and more than once rebuked it in his sermons. One evening at his regular weekly meeting, he noticed that several of his prominent men were absent, and he knew at once they had gone to Bangor to attend a great land sale. After a hymn had been sung, he said:

"Brother Allen, will you lead us in prayer?"

Some one spoke up and said:

"He has gone to Bangor."

Mr. Martin, not disconcerted in the least, called out:

Deacon Barber, lead us in prayer!"

"He has gone to Bangor," answered another.

Again the pastor asked:

"Squire Clark, will you pray?"

"The Squire had gone to Bangor," said some one; and Mr. Martin being now satisfied, looked round upon the little assembly as if the same reply would probably be given to every similar request, and very quietly said:

"The choir will sing Bangor and then we will dismiss the meeting."

FALL WEATHER AND WARM BLOOD.

We should never allow ourselves to forget that nature intended us for warm blooded animals. In this climate of surprising changes, we are very apt to forget it, especially in the fall and spring. At such seasons, when we freeze and simmer on alternate days, there is engendered in us a certain recklessness, which takes no heed of cold or heat, dampness or dryness, and receives all temperatures with the same front, generally a defenceless one. It is certainly very troublesome to change front as often as the weather, and there is a prejudice in American minds against such change, which has a great deal to do with the rapidly increasing population of our graveyards. People like to have some stability of purpose, and if they can have it in nothing else they will try to have it in their dress. They will not make a change until they make a permanent one for the season. No matter how hot it is in the spring, they will wear spring clothes until summer, and no matter how cool it may be in August, summer clothes must be worn until fall actually sets in. Thus oftentimes suddenly and with sad results we find ourselves approaching the condition of the fishes and lizards,—for the chill, that alert forerunner of disease, is ever ready, in our climate, to take advantage of circumstances.

We suppose that there are no people in the world so indifferent to the demands of the weather—especially cool weather—as Americans, and one reason of this is that very many of us are ashamed to keep warm. To wrap up and button up, and to put down windows whenever there is a chilling change in the air, argues, to most minds, a namby-pamby eagerness to be well that is repugnant to the hardy American soul. So, rather than be laughed at, we shiver. We prefer tragedy to comedy, the grave to the ridiculous.—*Home and Society, in Scribner's for November.*

HEATING SICK-SOOMS.

Where the entire dwelling is heated by a furnace, or by steam, it will probably be unnecessary to have other means of warming the sick-room: but the fire place should be always open, and kept ready for a wood or coal fire whenever the patient shall express a desire for one. The fireplaces are excellent ventilating fires even without a fire, but are nearly perfect when supplied with a wood fire, the brisk blaze of which creates a strong ascending current, and continually carries off the ever-accumulating exhalations of the sick-room.

If there is no fireplace, a window opened a short distance from the bottom, in the room in which the patient is lying, and one let down from the top in the other large room, with the doors opened between the two, will form an effectual draught during any but the warm days of

summer, and will not be too strong for the most delicate patient who is protected from the direct draught by the high head board of the bed. In cold weather the window opened from the bottom will be found sufficient. On very cold days we may trust to an entire change of air several times each day, effected by raising all the windows for a few moments at a time, during which the patient must be thoroughly protected by extra blankets, and a shawl about the head.

If stoves are the only means of heating the apartments, a "perpetual burner" (coal) may be used in one room to keep both at an even temperature, during day and night, but the sleeping room should be provided with a wood stove, the brisk blaze in this answering to some extent the purpose of a fire in an open fireplace.

Many lives have been cut short by exaggerated notions in regard to fresh air. Air must be pure, but it should also be warm. To effect this there should be, day and night, a steady and gentle heat in the room of an invalid, accompanied by an equally steady and gentle current of fresh air.—*Home and Society, in Scribner's for November*

MRS. STOWE ON LOVE

Mrs. H. P. Stowe in a letter to young women on conjugal love, says—"Many women suppose that they love their husbands, when unfortunately they have not the bearing of an idea what love is. Let me explain to you, my dear young lady. Loving to be admired by a man, loving to be caressed by him, loving to be praised by him, is not loving him. All these may be when a woman has no power of love. They may all be simply because she loved herself and loves to be flattered, praised, caressed and coaxed, as a cat likes to be coaxed and stroked, and fed with cream, and have a warm corner. But all this is not love. It may exist, to be sure, where there is no love. Love my dear ladies, is self-sacrifice; it is life out of self and in another. Its very essence is the preferring of the comfort, the ease, the wishes, of another to one's own for the love we bear them. Love is giving not receiving. Love is not a sheet of blotting paper or a sponge, sucking in everything to itself. Love's motto has been dropped in this world, as a gem of great price, by the lovelest the fairest, the purest, the strongest of lovers that ever trod this mortal earth, of whom it is recorded that He said: 'It is more blessed to give than to receive.' No; in love there are ten receivers to one giver."

SACREDNESS OF TEARS.

O, speak not harshly of the stricken one, weeping in silence! Break not the deep solemnity by rude laughter or intrusive footsteps! Despise not woman's tears; they are what makes her an angel. Scoff not if the stern heart of manhood is melted sometimes into sympathy; they are what help to elevate him above the brute. I love to see tears of affliction. They are painful tokens, but still most holy. There is pleasure in them. If there be none on earth to shed a tear for me, I should not wish to live; and if no one might weep over my grave, I could never die in peace.—*Excelsior.*

It is sometimes hard to maintain even a little faith, we are so double-minded, so unstable, so hot, so cold, so earnest, and then so negligent; we are so everything except what we ought to be, that we may well wonder that Christ allows us to do the least thing for Him.

Prayer draws down gifts from Heaven. It fills the empty soul. It brings strength to the weak, true riches to the poor, grace to the feeble. It is a bank of wealth, a mine of mercy, a store of blessings. It flies where the eagle never flew. It travels further and moves faster than the light. Well might Mary Queen of Scotland say "I fear John Knox's prayers more than an army of ten thousand men."

It is not hasty reading, but seriously meditating upon holy and Heavenly truths, that makes them prove sweet and profitable to the soul. It is not the bee's touching on the flowers that gathers honey, but her abiding for a time upon them, and drawing out the sweet. It is not he that reads most, but he that meditates most on Divine truth, that will prove the choicest, wisest, strongest Christian.—*Bishop Hall.*