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REVIEW SECTION.

I.—THE USE AND ABUSE OF WIT AND HUMOR IN PREACHING.

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AMONG the forces of society the pulpit is an illustration not only of the survival of the fittest but of the best. When we consider how much it has had to contend with, both from within and without, in the struggle for existence, we are constrained to admire its inextinguishable vitality as an institution. Think of its history, especially when, not buttressed by a State Church, it has had to survive or perish by the suffrages of the people. What stilt and stiffness, what dogmatism and dulness, what threshing over of platitudinous straw, what pedantry, unreality, and ill adaptation, what morbidness, what droning readers to sleepy pews have often afflicted common sense! And yet the preacher to-day has a larger constituency, a more respectful and lively hearing than ever before, and this in spite of the powerful rivalry of the press, which so many declare has superseded the pulpit and stolen its glory. As a rule the preacher of to-day is more free, and natural, and human, and, indeed, more vigorously religious than the average minister of a century ago; to which he adds a broader culture and larger knowledge of the world and men. But he has by no means broken every fetter from his limbs, nor seized every weapon at his hand, nor impressed his work upon society as broadly and deeply as he might if he would heed some patent facts concerning audiences and their susceptibilities.

POPULAR POWER OF WIT.

What, for instance, is more frequently in evidence than the power of Wit and Humor over men; but what professor of homiletics has treated it to more than a shy and sidelong glance, if not utterly ignoring the subject? I desire to claim in this paper a place and a value for wit and humor in the pulpit.

I am aware that the very mention of such a claim will awaken surprise