

where says, He "came down from heaven."

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Too Many Ministers at Funerals.

I HAVE attended several funerals recently which were a weariness to flesh and mind. One, two and even three former pastors made set addresses. The bereaved have since confessed to me their lack of edification, but they *thought* that courtesy demanded that they should invite the array of reverend gentlemen. The reverend gentlemen *thought* they might give offense by declining to go. The pastor in charge *thought* himself obliged to ask each clerical guest to paint an obsequial portrait of the character of the deceased. But it was a series of mistakes throughout. Nobody wanted any other than the pastor's voice to be heard on the occasion. Perhaps, Mr. Editor, you cannot remedy the matter from the people's side, but do give a hint to ministers. In no case should they accept such invitations to pastoral interference—for it amounts to that—in their former parishes, unless their relation to the deceased or the bereaved family is other than that growing out of their ministerial oversight. In speaking of this matter to a prominent clergyman, he said that scarcely a week passed without bringing him such an invitation from some stricken member of his former charge, but that he declined them, except where close friendship made him a real mourner; then he sat with the mourners and held his peace.—ELDER JONES.

The Moral Influence of Tolstoi's "War and Peace."

PROF. WILKINSON's implied commendation of Tolstoi's vivid description of the impurities of the Russian opera (in *HOMILETIC REVIEW*, Feb.) prompts an adverse word.

I seriously doubt the moral help-

fulness of such scenes, whether acted on the living stage or the printed page. Their most probable influence upon the unsophisticated, I fear, would be a repetition of their influence upon Natacha. Would they not feel the same "sort of an intoxication stealing over" them? The professor's commending them only to "the older readers . . . of more experience" is an indication of this danger.

I doubt not that for all who have attained purity by way of impurity (as, for example, Count Tolstoi himself) all things, even the impure, inspire purity. But for the pure who never yet have been sullied by such scenes, and for the impure, the natural result of such vivid descriptions of corrupt actions and thoughts ever will be to shock and stain purity and deepen impurity. As well might you tell Anthony Comstock that pictures of "groups of girls in short petticoats, . . . one of them remarkably stout, . . . bare-legged, . . . having little more on than her shift, the low-dressed women in the boxes . . . and her fair neighbor, who might almost have been supposed to have nothing on," etc., *ad nauseam*—as well tell him that such pictures, when drawn by God's chemicals and sunshine, are not injurious to good morals, but on the whole are to be commended, as to say that books which describe such things in life are "morally dangerous to no man."

The very fact that all such works of art (?) unmask and expose so searchingly, penetratingly and effectively all "the arts of the high-bred panderess and of the sensualist son of Belial," makes them all the more demoralizing. The main possible good they can do is to give some "older readers of more experience" "an irresistible recoil from possible like weakness and fault in" themselves. But for younger and more inexperienced readers, such impure