

terrible lot is to have to retrace with enfeebled feet each step of the way along which he has strayed." *

In the second place, it would not hurt the pulpit if it did interest people. The pulpit would not suffer. It would not lose dignity, nor would the preacher suffer. He might, it is true, have to run the gauntlet of criticism thrown down by Fogeydom, and he would require marvellous tact and reticence in arranging his subject-matter, so, that, on the one hand, he might not approach too near a lecture or mere secular address, or, upon the other, proffer too sentimental or flowery a discourse. But with a very little extra trouble even the average divine might transform the sermon, habitually dry, conventional and sometimes disconnected and puerile, into homilies worthy of the closest attention. It is no light or trivial thing to appear in a pulpit, under the very roof of the consecrated House of God, and to speak to one's fellow-men, some of whom are cultivated, earnest and enthusiastic, as others are illiterate, suspicious and slow, of the great things of this world and the next. Towards this end should the preacher muster all his strength, all his mind, all his mental resources and gifts of sympathy, tact, alertness and common sense, as well as his most heartfelt humility, his deepest sense of unfitness, and his most absolute reliance upon God.

And in the third place, is it not perhaps a mistake, engendered by years of custom, to demand an original sermon once or twice a week from a hard-worked incumbent of a growing church and increasing congregation? Can any practical suggestion be thrown out which may fit the situation and be of use to the pulpit worker?

There may be several, but there is one, certainly, which, if carefully and prayerfully tried, might prove of incalculable benefit to both pastor and congregation. The divine should realize his own importance. Not alone the Bible, but the entire literature of the world, the whole history of the human spirit, are his to choose from, for illustration, for example, for instruction, for encouragement.

Should he make a new departure, and one day read from his pulpit a sermon by Robertson or Macleod, by Stopford Brooke or Theodore Mûnger, would he receive commendation? Why not, even if he occasionally substituted an essay by Charles Kingsley, or Thomas Chalmers, or Julius Hare? As Archdeacon Farrar says, "Let the modern preacher adapt himself to the changed conditions of our modern life," learning tolerance and modesty, and endeavouring to the best of his power to preserve some freshness of thought.

Freshness of thought, most important to the jaded intellects, the wearied bodies that "sit under" the rector or the curate as the Sundays slip by. The priesthood was formerly the enemy of progress. Let it not be so now. Let the divine do what the priest would never consent to do—interest and devote the minds of his people at the same time that he is seeking to impress their souls. Even supposing the schoolmaster to be abroad, most ordinary men and women have very little leisure for reading, and they would doubly and dearly appreciate that sermon and that preacher through whose influence new and interesting truths might be presented to them—perhaps for the first time. To create a high standard of thought and live up to it should be the duty of every working and preaching pastor, and where he has neither high original gifts nor the leisure to improve those he has, it should be considered only proper and legitimate that the aid of greater minds than his own should be called in. Supposing that the preacher chose the text, "For he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind and tossed. For let not that man think that he shall receive anything of the Lord. A double-minded man is unstable in all his ways,"—where would be the unfitness or degradation of accompanying it by extracts from one of the most powerful essays ever written, that on "Decision of Character," by John Foster? A moment's reflection would satisfy the congregation that however unconventional the step, it was at least sensible, and it would not be long before similar attempts were undergone, revealing pleasant phases of thought and increased usefulness in the preacher. Some occasional variety, such as this suggested, would go far towards creating for the pulpit that position it should eventually attain, and guard it from grave errors of dictatorial dogmatism and theatrical display.

THE SONNET.—X.

It will be rather as a disciple of Newman and a composer of hymns than as a follower of Wordsworth and a writer of sonnets that Frederick William Faber will be chiefly remembered; though his rank in the second regard is high. The influence of Wordsworth came upon him in his youth when sojourning in the Lake District, and the effect which the young parson produced on the old poet is thus recorded by Mr. Aubrey De Vere in Wordsworth's own characteristic language:—"I have hardly ever known anyone but myself who had a true eye for Nature, one that thoroughly understood her meanings and her teachings. There was a young clergyman, called Frederick Faber, who resided at Ambleside. He had not only as good an eye for Nature as I have, but even a better one; and sometimes pointed out to me on the mountains effects which, with all my great experience, I had never detected."

Faber's first book—a description of his foreign travels—was appropriately dedicated to Wordsworth in 1841. Four years later he joined the Romish Church, and sacri-

ficed in great measure his poetical aspirations to the more serious services of religion; but in his hymns he was yet enabled to exercise his great gifts. We reproduce here as connected with the classical sonnets now under consideration his verses addressed "To the Four Religious Heathens," viz., Herodotus, Nicias, Socrates, and Seneca. In these he has broadly depicted the leading characteristics of the great heathens selected by him as worthy of being termed "religious," and though diversity of occupation and circumstances operated on each life—producing thoughts, acts and final issues thoroughly distinct—there was a common ground of lofty morality, of truth and honour, on which Faber could very properly base his sonnet-series.

The influence of religion on Herodotus is apparent throughout his works, in the tender way he treats of myths and legends, which he himself cannot accept as truth, and in his careful recording of the forms of foreign worship that came under his notice; moreover there is apprehended beneath all his writings that suggestion of a divine cause whereby human events are unrolled and to which the human heart is drawn. Herodotus seems fully to have appreciated religion in the light of one of its modern definitions, as "that feeling which falls upon man in the presence of the unknown." The sonnet of Faber reads as follows:—

I. HERODOTUS.

Converse in fear, during the time of your sojourning here.

He was a mild old man, and cherished much
The weight dark Egypt on his spirit laid;
And with a sinuous eloquence would touch
Forever at that haven of the dead.
Single romantic words by him were thrown,
As types, on men and places, with a power
Like that of shifting sunlight after shower
Kindling the cones of hills and journeying on.
He feared the gods and heroes; and spake low,
That Echo might not hear in her light room:
He was a dweller underground; for gloom
Fitted old heathen goodness more than glow;
And, where love was not, faith might gather mirth
From ore that glistened in pale beds of earth.

In the above we have a beautiful and accurate mountain effect in the last two lines of the octave, which must have delighted Wordsworth, and which has called forth the following from Mr. Ruskin:—"On the Yorkshire and Derbyshire hills, when the rain-cloud is low and much broken and the steady west-wind fills all space with its strength, the sun-gleams fly like golden vultures, they are flashings rather than shinings; the dark spaces and the dazzling race and skim along the acclivities, and dart and dip from crag to dell, swallow-like;—no Graia these, —gray and withered: Grey Hounds rather, following the Cerinthian stag with the golden antlers."

These phenomena have been seen by all mountain dwellers; but it is only after attention is called to them by the real seer that their wonderful beauty is learned. Attention must be called to the "light room" of Echo—a most poetical thought.

Nicias, the rich aristocrat of Athens, was remarkable for his high moral character. Probity and honour were regarded as the prime duties of life, and neither his wealth nor his political influence could tempt him from the path of right living. Had he been as successful a leader of men as he was a governor of himself the disastrous consequences of the second or Sicilian act of the Peloponnesian war might not have occurred. Faber, however, deals with the religious character of the man and the superstitious clouds that hung over the placid lake-depths of his soul.

II. NICIAS.

In all these things Job sinned not by his lips, nor spake he any foolish things against God.

Nursling of heathen fear! thy woful being,
Was steeped in gentleness by long disease,
Though round thine awestruck mind were ever fleeing
Omens, and signs, and direful presages.
One might believe in frames so gently stern
Some Christian thoughts before their time did burn.
Sadness was unto thee for love; thy spirit
Rose loftily like some hard-featured stone,
Which summer sunbeam never makes its throne,
E'en while it fills the skirts of vapour near it.
One wert thou, Nicias! of the few who urge
Their stricken souls where far-seen death doth hover
In vision on them, nor may they diverge
From the black line his chilling shadows cover.

The third heathen, Socrates, was trained as a sculptor; but destined to become one of the most remarkable of that class of men, who, believing themselves especially chosen as divine instruments, abjure everything that does not tend to assist them in their appointed work. Simple and virtuous was the life of this old heathen, and although he left no writings, a crowd of followers preserved his teachings, and many schools were founded on the record of his deeds and sayings. Faber's sonnet reads thus:—

III. SOCRATES.

Of making many books there is no end; and much study is an affliction of the flesh.

Thou, mighty heathen, wert not so bereft
Of heavenly help to thy great-hearted deeds,
That thou should'st dig for truths in broken creeds,
'Mid the loose sands of four old empires left.
Motions and shadows dimly glowing fell
On thy broad soul from forms invisible.
With its plain grandeur, simple, calm, and free,
What wonder was it that thy life should merit
Sparkles of grace, and angel ministry,
With jealous glimpses of the world of spirit?
Greatest and best in this—that thy pure mind,
Upon its saving mission all intent,
Scorned the untruth of leaving books behind
To claim for thine what through thy lips was sent.

Seneca, the last of "The Four Religious Heathens," was a contemporary of Christ and his followers. Like Nicias, he was very wealthy and very pious, and further-

more was endowed with a deep philosophical cast of mind. The influence of the early Church is apparent in his writings and not a few allusions and phrases were in all probability directly inspired by Christian doctrine. On account of this tendency in his writings some of the first fathers of the Church claimed him for a Christian and doubtless it was due to the reflection that the repute of such a convert would prove of great value, that the letters alleged to have passed between him and Saint Paul were forged. Of this heathen, Faber wrote as follows:—

IV. SENECA.

When Peter came, his shadow at the least might overshadow any of them.

Off in the crowd and crossings of old Rome
The Christ-like shadow of the gifted Paul,
As he looked forth betimes from his hired home,
Might at this Gentile's hurrying footsteps fall,
When, from his mournings in the Caesar's hall,
Spurred by great thoughts, the troubled sage might come.
Some balmy truths most surely did he borrow
From the sweet neighbourhood of Christ, to bring
The harsh, hard waters of his heathen spring
In softening ducts o'er wastes of pagan sorrow.
As slips of green from fertile confines shoot,
Into the tracts of sand, so heathen duty
Caught from his guided pen a cold, bright beauty,
Where flowers might all but blossom into fruit.

In the "Inferno," Dante refers to "Seneca morale."

It will have been observed that Faber prefixed to each of the above sonnets a text from the Scriptures, and the series was also preceded by another, applicable to the whole: "Arise, O Lord, let not man be strengthened; let the Gentiles be judged in Thy sight."

So far as the structural qualities of these four sonnets are concerned, that on Herodotus is written in three quatrains and a closing couplet; two are composed of a quatrain, a couplet and two quatrains following—a form uncommon to meet—and that on Seneca is made up of a sestet followed by two quatrains. The series is therefore very irregular; although it has been remarked that Faber's sonnets are, as a whole, regular in form. His celebrated sonnet, "On the Ramparts at Angouleme," is also irregular in construction. We are inclined to believe that Faber lost much in the beauty—if not in the strength—of his sonnets when he left the beaten paths to attempt structural flights of his own. His rhymes are not always beyond reproach in their arrangement, the last four lines of the "Seneca" sonnet having such a repeating series as—shoot—duty—beauty—fruit.

Of the four examples given we prefer personally that on Herodotus, the beauty of the second and third quatrains especially enforcing the Wordsworthian influence and love of nature upon our attention; but the latter quality is somewhere present in each sonnet.

A sonnet which was greatly admired by Wordsworth takes us back to the "Scottish Petrarch." The poem which directly inspired Drummond to the following effort has not been identified; but there is no doubt of the sonnet-model which he used as the mould for his thought. The Hawthornden sonnet was a favourite also with David Laing, who wrote of it thus: "For solemn grandeur, it may be compared with the best of Milton's sonnets." Laing could not discover the work on "Irene" which the sonnet particularly referred to, and remembering that few men knew more of bibliography than the Scottish antiquary, it is rather unlikely it will ever be found. There can be no doubt, however, of the subject of the poem. Irene was the poor Athenian girl whose beauty raised her to the throne of Leo IV., Emperor of the East. Of the extraordinary career of this woman, now a saint in the Greek Church, it is not necessary to speak. The sonnet-model referred to is written by Sir Walter Raleigh (given in our third article). Drummond's sonnet reads thus:

BEFORE A POEM OF IRENE.

Mourn not, fair Greece, the ruin of thy kings,
Thy temples raged, thy forts with flames devoured,
Thy champions slain, thy virgins pure deflowered,
Nor all those griefs which stern Bellona brings;
But mourn, fair Greece, mourn that that sacred band
Which made thee once so famous by their songs,
Forced by outrageous fate, have left thy land,
And left thee scarce a voice to plain thy wrongs!
Mourn that these climates which to thee appear
Beyond both Phœbus and his sister's ways,
To save thy deeds from death must lend thee lays,
And such as from Museums thou didst hear:
For now Irene hath attained such fame
That Hero's ghost doth weep to hear her name.

The repetition of words in a sonnet is a delicate matter to attempt; but the mention of the moschus-like "mourn" at the beginning of each quatrain is in the present instance most suitable and most effective.

The last two lines may be compared with the lines in Raleigh's sonnet:—

All suddenly I saw the Faery Queen
At whose approach the soul of Petrarch wept.

Drummond no doubt knew this sonnet and drew upon it for accommodation, as was his custom.

In a recent number of the *Spectator* Mr. Joseph John Murphy has the following sonnet on Virgil, founded on the two quotations prefixed and dealing with the different views of life expressed therein. The reference to Dante happily connects the argument between the translated passages and supplies the link between the spirit of old pagan philosophy and the "human sympathy for human woe," which is the grandest doctrine taught by Christ. Dante cries to the shade of Virgil:—

Poeta, l'iti richieggiu
Per quello Iddio, che tu non conoscesti,
Acciocch'io fugga questo male, e peggior.

* "Natural Law in the Spiritual World." Henry Drummond, F.R.S.E.