

THE DEAD-PRAYER OFFICE.

What becomes of all the unanswered letters? Thousands of them find their way to the Dead-letter Office. Some never reach the person for whom they are intended because the postage is not paid, some fail because they are directed to the wrong office; some cannot be sent because the address is illegible, and some because the matter inclosed is unmailable. These float through the mails, are examined at different offices, marked "mis-sent," and finally they fall into the Dead-letter office. There they are opened and read, and, if valuable, are forwarded; if not, they are given to the flames. Such is the accuracy and skill of the postal officials that no very valuable letters ever fail of reaching their destination.

Some prayers never reach God, because they are not addressed to God's office. They are directed to the audience. Here one prays a "sharp-cut" to some brother, or drives some keen-edged blade of censure into another, directs a severe criticism to some who are running into fashionable follies, and sometimes (shame on us!) the very supplication, which we offer in tenderest tones, in behalf of the weeping widow and helpless orphans, is intended more for those who kneel in mourning before us than for God who sits in glory above us. God's office is not in our neighbor's care, and if we direct our prayers to that point they will certainly go to the "dead-prayer office."

Again, there is a prayer upon which the address is illegible, not because it is rough, scrawling "hand-write"—these can always be deciphered—but because it has so many flourishes. This prayer is uttered in a pompous, grandiloquent style. It is full of long words, scientific terms, and classical quotations. The writing on the envelope is very much in keeping with the style upon the inside. The ink was fancy, and it soon faded; the pen was the tongue, and it did not set the color in the prayer. How different when indited by the heart! It is no wonder that this prayer gets lost and finds its way into the "dead-prayer office."

The last prayer we notice is the unavailable prayer. There is a great latitude allowed us in the postal matter of our government, but there are a few things which cannot even get into the mail-bags. Sharp-edged tools and corroding acids, no matter how securely wrapped, will not be transported through the mails; these are put in a separate box and sent to the "Dead-letter Office," or they are captured by the first postmaster that handles them. Many of our prayers, if answered, might be blessings to us, but they would fall like a shower of daggers upon our neighbors. Sometimes in our prayers we half-way complain of the strange providence which has befallen us, and argue the case with God; then the prayer is full of sharp pointed arrows. Is it at all strange that kind answers are not returned? The corroding acid of selfishness or sensuality or pride is sometimes in our prayer. Such a prayer is lost on the way. It is poured out in midair. It is never answered and well for us that it is not.

No legally "stamped," sincerely directed, and well-meaning prayer is ever lost. The answer may be delayed, but the prayer is "on file."—*Advance*.

Insomania can be relieved by inducing muscular fatigue before retiring.

"DON'T."

A little manual of social proprieties, published under the name of "Don't" has obtained a wide circulation; and, as its negative precepts are inspired by much good taste, we have no doubt the tiny book will prove of real value. But, while good social habits are well worth forming, good intellectual ones are at least of equal importance; and it occurs to us that there is ample room for a manual that, in a series of brief and pithy sentences, would place people on their guard against the most obvious intellectual errors and vices. Possibly the objection might be raised that, while everybody wants to be cured of his or her social solecisms (if the expression may be permitted), none so little desire to be cured of intellectual faults as those who are most subject to them. Who, it might be asked, applies the moral denunciations of the pulpit to himself? Who would apply himself the cautions of your proposed manual? Granted, we reply, that it is easier to bring home to the individual conscience the sin of eating with a knife than the sin of reasoning falsely by acting unjustly, we should still be glad to see a telling compilation of the most needed "Don'ts" for the use of all and singular who make any profession of an independent use of their intellects. Some of the maxims would be commonplace; but then the object would not be to lay down novel truths so much as to enforce old ones. Let us throw out a few at random, by way of a start:

Don't think that what you don't know is not worth knowing.

Don't conclude that, because you can't understand a thing, nobody can understand it.

Don't despise systems of thought that other men have elaborated because you can not place yourself at once at their point of view.

Don't interpret things too much according to your own likes and dislikes. The world was not made to please anybody in particular, or to confirm anybody's theories.

Don't imagine that because a thing is plain to you, it ought to be equally so to everybody else.

Don't insist on making things out simpler than they really are; on the other hand—

Don't affect far-fetched and over-elaborate explanations.

Don't be overwise. Why should you make a fool of yourself?

Don't imagine that anything is gained by juggling with words or by evading difficulties.

Don't refuse to change the point of view of a question, if requested by an opponent to do so. A true conclusion can not be invalidated by any legitimate process of argument.

Don't be inordinately surprised when a man who knows quite as much as you do on a given subject, and perhaps a little more, does not agree with you in your conclusions thereon. Try the effect of being surprised that you don't agree with him.

Don't refuse to hold your judgment in suspense when the evidence is not sufficient to warrant a conclusion.

Don't imagine that, because you have got a few new phrases at your tongue's end, you have all the stock-in-trade of a philosopher, still less that you are a philosopher.