

dealings. It was for them to interpret God, His will and His Word, but no one could do so unless they had affinity with Him and were sharers in His truth. Only in proportion as they were Godly and God-like could they receive of the things of God and transmit them to others." Straight to the mark go the good Bishop's words. Their application to the public and private life of the clergy makes clear the true ground of failure and the true source of success.

#### Old-fashioned Governesses

It is a salutary discipline sometimes to discover that we are not so wise or our ways are not so much better than those of our predecessors. It is seldom given to anyone to live long enough or to pass a long life in one class in society and to retain to old age the organs of youth. But Lady Cardigan has been blessed with such faculties and also with great power of expression. She has surprised this generation of English girls by standing up for the governesses of the early days of Queen Victoria. The novels of recent years have created a creature stiff, severe and incompetent, who taught little else than deportment and accomplishments and was looked on as an old dragon. She declares they were sensible, clever women, every whit, at least, as competent, and as loveable as those ladies who now undertake similar duties. The ladies who rule nowadays on this continent, too, would be none the worse of a more vigorous method, order and discipline, than is customary. A young New York girl, writes in the *Evening Post*, a long account of her experience at a ladies' school in Berlin. The curriculum was limited but the subjects studied, especially modern languages, were thoroughly taught, and few girls in America could boast so much skill with the needle. Altogether she is rather glad that she had the training.

#### Retreats

Hitherto retreats have been commonly considered as desirable exercises for the clergy only. Drawing apart from worldly thoughts and cares for a time and during that period of enforced retirement meditating on the things that belong to our highest life has been held up as a salutary experience. But, if of any use to the clergy, such a discipline is at least as needed by the harassed business man. The world is too much with us as Wordsworth taught. Sir Walter Raleigh and John Bunyan are two striking examples of laymen who found that stone walls did not a prison make, or iron bars a cage, but, who turned such enforced seclusion to profitable uses. From the extracts which we recently published from an article upon Jesuit training our readers would realize the spiritual benefits of seclusion, self-examination and obedience. That Order has tried the experiment in New York of a retreat for laymen and finds the results so successful as to propose the establishment of a permanent retreat. A place where man mentally overworked could resort—in an overcrowded city for two or three weeks for enforced quiet—strikes one as desirable. The circular contains these sentences: "One of the healthiest and most promising signs of the times is the enthusiasm which the Retreat movement has aroused among all classes of men. Those who have already experienced the vital discipline of the exercises of the Retreat have gone out from it, refreshed in spirit, renewed in heart, and quickened with all the higher ideals of manly and Christian character. They become a very leaven among their fellows, and form the most effective lay apostolate which is to uplift and save by the living gospel of character and conduct. But—valuable as this Retreat may be could not our men by correspondence with a country cleric find in our secluded parishes a farm house where they could rest awhile apart from business cares in strange, yet healthful seclusion.

#### The Will to Believe

Dr. William Osler in a lecture, published by Henry Frowde on the treatment of disease thus sums up the outbreak of faith-healing which seems to have the public of this continent in its grip. "In all ages and in all climes the prayer of faith has saved a certain number of the sick. The essentials are first a strong and hopeful belief in a dominant personality, who has varied naturally in different countries and in different ages. Buddha in India, and in Japan, where there are cults to match every recent vagary: Aesculapius in ancient Greece and Rome; our Saviour and a host of saints in Christian communities; and lastly, an ordinary doctor has served the purpose of common humanity very well. Faith is the most precious asset in our stock-in-trade. Once lost, how long does a doctor keep his clientèle? Secondly, certain accessories—a shrine, a grotto, a church, a temple, a hospital, a sanatorium—surroundings that will impress favorably the imagination of the patient. Thirdly, suggestion in one of its varied forms—whether the negation of disease and pain, the simple trust in Christ of the Peculiar People, or the sweet reasonableness of the psycho-therapeutist. But there must be the will-to-believe attitude of mind, the mental recessiveness—in a word, the faith which has made bread pills famous in the history of medicine. We must, however, recognize the limitations of mental healing. Potent as is the influence of the mind on the body, and many as are the miracle-like cures which may be worked, all are in functional disorders, and we know only too well that nowadays the prayer of faith neither sets a broken thigh nor checks an epidemic of typhoid fever. The less the clergy have to do with the bodily complaints of neurasthenic and hysterical persons, the better for their peace of mind and for the reputation of the Cloth. As wise old Fuller remarked, Circe and Aesculapius were brother and sister, and the wiles of the one are very apt to entrap the wisdom of the other."

#### Dante's Self Portraiture

In the November number of the *Nineteenth Century and After*, is one of those graceful and scholarly articles, under the above title, with which the learned and literary members of the Episcopal Bench occasionally favour us. Bishop Welldon is the contributor and within the limits imposed upon him he has given us a noble representation of the self-revelation of the great Italian. "Everything about Dante," says Dr. Welldon, "is, and ever will be interesting. His stooping gait, to which he makes reference in one well known passage of the *Purgatorio*, the weakness of his eyes, whether it were study or sorrow that had clouded them, his dreaminess of nature, perhaps his liability to visions or trances are characteristics which, if he only hints at them, served to make his personality life like. Even the colour of his hair is in question; it is said by Boccaccio to have been dark, and so it must probably have been; but as Longfellow has pointed out, Dante, himself, when answering in Latin verses the invitation of Giovanni del Virgilio to receive the laurel crown at Bologna, seems to speak of his own locks as being golden. Not less interesting are his stray allusions to his love of music and art, his study of medicine and astronomy; his reminiscences of civil and political life. But it is Dante's portrait which best tells what manner of man he was. He is the one poet whose countenance has stamped itself like a haunting memory, on the imagination of the world."

#### Infinite Pains

Great writers—men who have made their mark on the world's best literature are those who have acquired the habit of taking infinite pains. It was infinite pains that gradually wrought out

the splendid style of Newman, and we question whether any great writer has been able to dispense with this masterful habit. "It is worth recording" says the elder D'Israeli "that the great Milton was anxious for correct punctuation,"—as also, we may add, with distinguished success in attaining it, was Tennyson. "Addison," D'Israeli adds "was solicitous after the minutiae of the press." The same author tells us that Pascal "was frequently twenty days occupied on one a single (Provincial) letter. He recommenced some above seven or eight times, and by this means obtained that perfection which has made his work, as Voltaire says, 'One of the best books ever published in France.'" Amongst the historians, Gibbon's vast learning was the product of ceaseless industry and extraordinary painstaking. With regard to the study of any particular subject, he writes: "I suspended my perusal of any new book on the subject till I had reviewed all that I knew, or believed, or had thought on it, that I might be qualified to discern how much the author added to my original stock." And now for the encouragement of those who would be scholars and writers, another more modern historian, Lecky, in the following words, bears testimony to the absolute need of infinite pains:—"A book requires endless patience, for I at least rarely finish a chapter without finding it necessary to recast it thoroughly. There are also innumerable little difficulties of style, arrangement, and research, which no one but an author can know, and there falls upon one not infrequently an utter brain weariness, a despondency which is very painful. But by long patience something really comes at the end. As far as my own experience goes, the chief motive of writing seems to be that one has thought much, has crowds of arguments, tendencies, speculations, etc., floating, often half formed, through the mind, which it at last becomes necessary to rescue from a subjective to an objective state. To develop one's being to its full capacity is, perhaps, on the whole, the least vain thing in this vain world."

#### An Unusual Word

Archbishop Davidson, at the Swansea Congress, said, "it is the merest truism that our activities in every branch of the Church life have been quadrupled—possibly decupled—within the lifetime of many of us." This statement from the highest dignity of the Church ought to be sufficient answer to the jeremiads so often heard about the Church losing ground, or about her lethargy and want of interest in the lives committed to her care. It may be that the gain and the fruit, of this tenfold increase, may not always be apparent or satisfactory, as the archbishop said, yet he said truly it was a subject to thank God for every day. Even if our methods are not always perfect, and the results not adequate, still, it is the growing time, the time of laying foundations and building wisely, and let us thank God that the Church is wide-awake and zealous and trust Him, in His own time, to add the blessing.

#### The Key to Life's Mysteries

How often sincere Christians are troubled over the seeming inconsistencies and pressing perplexities of everyday life. Are we not too much like the disciples looking for a material Kingdom, instead of, like the Master, realizing the existence, and toiling for the extension of the spiritual kingdom established on earth with His advent. Keble has these wise words of comfort for those who are apt to be perplexed over the ever pressing mysteries of life: "When accidents happen to hinder dangerous purposes, when opportunities come for performing some holy work, when words pierce you like arrows shot at a venture, when you wish to pray and cannot; and contrariwise, when He helps you to be fervent, when He gives you means of grace, and when He