

CURRENT NOTES.

In these days of very complicated political conditions and diversified social phenomena we hear a great deal said with reference to the preachers attitude to politics and civic affairs. That he has some relations to public questions is conceded on all sides—that has become a commonplace of popular conviction. But just how far the preacher should go, and how far he can go, in any given case is a very nice question. Shall he have his say on all topics of national or local interest, or shall he (as far as his public ministry is concerned) remain an inscrutable sphinx? Questions of detail as to political duty can only be decided by the individual minister himself, if not just selfishly for himself. It is probable, however, that a consensus of opinion obtains among intelligent Christian people to the effect that it is entirely possible for the preacher to be a power in civic affairs without becoming a partisan of this or that political endeavor, or at any rate, without announcing his partisanship offensively from the sacred desk. Perhaps we may characterize this ideal of a preacher's civic opportunity as an argument, not so much for politics in the pulpit as for the influence of the pulpit in politics.

It is entirely unnecessary, and quite repugnant to the gospel purpose of sermonic address, to bring the passing problems and noisy discussions of the platform into the services of the sanctuary, while it is not inappropriate, but rather a bounden duty for the pulpit to make itself felt as a live, telling force in politics—as a practical power which must be reckoned with, because of (and not in spite of) the fact that it is a power which makes not only for a righteousness which is already in sight along the lower levels of the average politician's vision, but also for an ideal which far transcends humanity's ordinary quest. Can the pulpit be in politics as a force and permeate influence unless politics with its catchwords and party cries be voiced in the pulpit? Certainly; but in order to that result the pulpit must be manned not merely occupied by figureheads; and the gospel that is preached must be of that virile, practical type which announces its relations to time as well as to eternity, and to earth as well as to heaven. If the author of the epistle of James were to occupy any one of our pulpits for a few Sabbaths his influence upon the political situation would be immediately felt, even though he failed to quote the watchwords or to echo the rallying cries of any party. In time of great civic crises there may possibly be a demand for politics in the pulpit, but during the "off years" (and through all the year) there is call for the vigorous exertion of the influence of the pulpit in politics.

HUGE TIDAL WAVES.

Those That Sweep the Coast of China at Least Twice Every Year.

Twice a year—at each equinox—the famous Tsien-Tang river, that flows from the borders of Kiangsi, Fuhkien, and Chekiang to Hang Chow bay, attain their greatest height, and a bore of sometimes over forty feet in height sweeps irresistibly up its shallow and funnel-shaped estuary, often producing tremendous havoc to the surrounding country—hence its name, "money-dyke," from the amount expended in successive centuries on its embankment.

It is seen at its best at Hang Chow, the prefectural city not far from its mouth. Twelve or fourteen minutes before it is visible a dull, distant roar heard, momentarily swelled until all of muddy water, takes the form of the biggest liner, sweeping down as a glacier, sweeps into the bend a mile or so from the city.

Christmas Bells.

Ring out the merry Christmas chime, Proclaim the message far and near, Peace and good will in every clime, To rich and poor sweet Christmas cheer.

Loudly proclaim o'er land and sea What love divine for men did plan, The setting of the captive free, The nobler brotherhood of man.

Surcease of grief to those that mourn, Rest to the weary, heaven to win, A fuller life beyond death's bourne To such as seek to enter in.

Peal forth with no uncertain tone That love leaves none beneath the ban, And they alone are blessed that own Their duty to their fellow man.

Proclaim as loudly as you can The tidings glad to old and young, Peace upon earth, good will to man, First by the angel chorists sung.

Christmas Marriage.

Park Village East is a quiet street in London, near Regent's Park. The houses are small and old-fashioned, and one or two of them are so overrun with vines that not the slightest glimpse of the masonry of the walls is seen. These houses are small and old-fashioned, and lywood Terrace," "The Lindens," or "Somner Villa." They are of picturesque, whimsical design, and one fancies they must originally have been peopled by picturesque, whimsical people. The present occupants of the street are musicians, actresses and singers, who come and go with amazing rapidity.

The denizens of Park Village enjoy almost absolute stillness, for the noise of the omnibuses on Albany street does not penetrate here; nor does the great traffic of Kentish Town and Camden Town that flows through Hampton Road in any wise disturb its peace. The milkman who enters this tranquil spot involuntarily "meows" in a lower key, and even that daring light-horseman, the butcher boy, reluctantly checks his pace on entering here, when he sees there is nothing to run over.

The residents are of a retiring nature, little disposed to trouble themselves with their neighbors' affairs. They dig in their gardens and trim their vines without a thought of what is going on next door. But though the days are quiet, the nights are not. The lights of hansom cabs flash in and out of the winding streets; they drive up to the houses at all hours; people get in or get out, and the cabs disappear in the Serpentine Road. The policeman walking his solitary beat thrusts his lantern suspiciously in the gardens and peers over the walls, for the neighborhood offers every opportunity for thieves. The Albany street police station chronicles many a thrilling episode that has happened hereabouts. Behind the houses on one side of the street flows the sluggish waters of the canal, in whose muddy depths many unfortunates have ended their wretched lives.

In this locality resided Mrs. Polworth, an actress of much cleverness and considerable means. She had lived her greatest triumphs, and had now set herself to a life of retirement, devoted herself to deeds of charity and piety.

Many years before the opening of this story a secret marriage occurred on Christmas Day at Bath, England. After the ceremony the young couple issued from the church and were about to enter their carriage, when officers of the law arrested the bridegroom for some petty crime. The lady thus unceremoniously separated from her husband, cried a little at first, then, drying her eyes with her handkerchief, she slipped the wedding ring from her finger and returned home. Years passed, and she met a Mr. Polworth, whom she married, keeping silent about her secret marriage. They were said to be very devoted to each other.

On the morning of the opening of this tale, Mrs. Polworth, bent upon charity, came down her front steps, crossed the pretty garden, and, stylishly attired, stood in the gateway. She glanced up and down the winding street,

peace. bodies a They sit in changing remi in the great hall cally in their garden ers or vegetables, to move about the neighb wandering along the watching the barges crossing the river a tersea Park—or ga windows on King street. The art Chelsea frequen sit to them as thus earned the porter.

The birds were gardens. In the shades of green delicate leaves evergreen, whose motionless and heavy somber sort than the of the lighter foliage. on a bench was an old man in the customary blue coat of the pensioner. He had a short white beard and his deeply-wrinkled face was pitted with the smallpox. He had lived thirty years in Africa and, strange to say, it seemed as if the character of his face had been affected by his residence there. The wings of his nose had become flattened and his lips were thick like a negro's. His face bore an expression of suffering and resignation.

The lady had distributed her crowns and half-crowns plentifully among the old soldiers, and was about to return when her glance fell upon the aged soldier. Then a vale was torn from the past. The secret marriage again came to her; she heard the words of the clergyman in the country church, and murmuring "My husband!" she turned and fled from the pathetic, lonely figure. She almost ran past the little garden decorated with cockle-shells, and white and agitated, re-entered her cab.

The week that followed was like a dream; her youth and romance came to her as a bright vision and all that intervened vanished and faded away. All London was asleep on that morning preceding Hospital Sunday. Along the embankment everything was hushed and the mighty river going out with the tide made no apparent sound as it washed against the solid stone bulwark. In the east was indicated the breaking of day. The color changed on the face of the water and the houses along the riverside assumed a more vivid outline. The gas jets which followed the winding line of the embankment now began to grow pale.

Suddenly from Battersea Park a bird's note was heard, rising clear and penetrating out of the silence. Other songsters caught up the note until the whole park was filled with music. These sounds were wafted across the still water and then the birds in the Chelsea Hospital gardens resounded. The light became more apparent in the east the melodies arose louder and louder, ringing out Nature's song in the very heart of London—redemption for all mankind. The first beams of the rising sun touched the housetops. Then the birds abruptly ceased to sing. The overture was done.

To-day the drama to be enacted by London is "Hospital Sunday." It appeals to everyone, for it is suffering that makes the whole world kin. Mrs. Polworth entered the gardens. Every old man stood near his small square of ground.

"Oh," said a visitor, "this garden with a pretty window." Mrs. Polworth trembled. A man handed her a bunch of flowers. "Thank you," she said in a low voice.

At the sound of her name, "Carrie," she turned. "Tom," she said, "me?"

His lips moved. When suddenly he pressed his heart and without a groan fell to the ground. Mrs. Polworth pressed her knees by his side and then in the fervor of a nature that had been pressed for years burst its bonds wept and pressed her lips to the man's brow. The doctor was summoned, but his services could be of no avail. Toward nightfall a pensioner who had been an old comrade of Tom's met his way toward the dead-house. The door was locked, but standing on the he peered through the window. The motionless form was lying on the bed. The aged face was as white as snow. "Poor Tom was a-cold!"

Two days later the pensioner had the body to the grave in the same fashion when one of their comrades was away. In the cemetery the dress and celebrated work was covered with flowers. The pensioners alone remained.

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