

### The Blind Chaplain.

The Rev. Dr. Milburn, the blind chaplain of the United States Congress, is well known in England, where he has given many lectures. A recent number of the 'Sunday at Home,' has the following concerning his wonderful memory:—

'In the Congressional library lay vast fields of knowledge, and the blind man contrived from the first to make good use of his opportunities. He cultivated voice and mind, and after six years' hard work, became an extempore preacher. Much of his success he owed to his wife. Many a day was spent by her in reading to him. Everything was read—newspapers, reviews, history, voyages, travels, poetry, and metaphysics. Zoroaster and Aristotle, Plato and Bruno, Thomas Aquinas, and Duns Scotus, Des Cartes, and Leibnitz, Kant and Fichte, were all studied. The German critics came in for a large share of attention. Neander's "Life of Christ," volumes by Strauss



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and De Wette, were eagerly devoured. There came a time when that wife passed away, and successively six children were called to their rest. To-day, two adopted daughters do the reading, and attend to the correspondence of the chaplain. He has said, 'Openness of mind is the divinest gift of the soul, while universality of inquiry and catholicity of taste are the invariable attributes of the true critic and scholar.'

The blind man can give one a vivid description of men, places, and scenes, both in England and America. He walks much, being a great believer in outdoor exercise. Of New York he knows every inch. The Rev. William Arthur, M.A., has testified to this, and writes: 'In the city of New York he was my best guide. It was amusing to see the facility with which he turned corners, especially when he drew near Franklin Square, the habitat of Harper's, the great publishing house, of which he was an inveterate habitue. Then, as he passed down Broadway, never looking to the opposite side of the street—and with what means of judging his position I cannot tell—he would say, "Now we are just passing Dr. B.'s church on the opposite side, you will remember so and so," telling you of any prominent feature in its architecture and internal arrangements; and if you chose to inquire about any prominent man's personal appearance, probably you would get the best description New York could furnish.' And, said an English cleric, who walked from the British Museum to Liver-

pool street with the blind man: 'He showed me the way; scarce a street of importance but what he knew. In City Road he pointed out Wesley's Chapel and Bunhill Fields, and told me all about them. In Old Street he noted the Hall of Science, and so on; and yet, for twenty years he had not traversed the way.' The ear, moreover, had been wonderfully trained to interpret voice, and by the aid of that organ unerring estimates of character are formed.

As a preacher it has been his rule to prepare his sermons carefully. His custom is to have the chapter from which any quotation is made carefully read. The lessons are committed to memory: a chapter is read twice, and the verses, four at a time, are repeated after the reader. At the age of seventy-two the powers of his memory are as great as ever. When a book is to be written, the whole is slowly dictated.

His own testimony in relation to his infirmity, in 1857, was:—

'The dearest compensation awarded the blind, is the love that attends his steps. I am told that this is a hard, cold, world; that man is the devil's child; that the child's works are worthy of the offspring of the father. I am assured that selfishness is the ruling law of life; that friendship is a name, and love a deceit. Such have I not found the world, or men. The heavy laden are dear to God; and man has not so utterly lost God's image, as not to be kind to those whom the Father loveth.'

And after thirty-nine years he endorses this view fully.

T. C. COLLINS.

### On Patmos.

(Julia MacNair Wright, in 'Forward.')

There is a little island in the Aegean Sea, where, along the rough volcanic cliffs, a few mulberries and olives grow, while here and there orange and lemon trees perfect their globes of gold, and bees hum above narrow beds of thyme. Hills rising sharply over nine hundred feet from the blue level of the sea, afford grand outlooks, alike to the rising and setting sun. The ruins of a huge old fortress are there; in the deep undulations of the shore, are harbors where once pirates swarmed. Poor, barren, sparsely inhabited, ten miles in greatest length, and six in width, this island is known to fame in all the world; not from feats of arms or birth of kings, or great discoveries, or mineral riches, but because on one of its lonely crests a worn gray prisoner spent once a Sabbath day. Imperial Rome had chained him and set him his bounds in this penal island, but his soul was not bound. That gray head had rested once—perhaps often—on the bosom of his Lord, the Nazarene. His eyes had seen, his hands had handled the Word of Life. On that Sabbath day, on some one of those sharp hills, perhaps in that Cyclopean fortress, now decaying, beyond the glory of sunrise or sunset, John saw the eternal splendor of the Divine Man, garmented like the sun, and holding in his right hand seven stars. The sea washes the steep boundary cliffs of Patmos, with sharp sound, dashing in and drawing out of narrow clefts and flumes, and shrilly shrieking in its long battle with the land. John heard one whose voice was like the sound of many waters. Before him passed not the panorama of the Aegean, with its fishing fleets, and its slave-rowed galleys, and its ships with high-beaked rostra, hastening with corn towards Rome, but the panorama of the world's future, down to the

close of time. The mystery which no one has ever been able to solve was told him; angels spoke with him; heaven opened. There were in garrison; convicts, natives, Carians and Ionians by race, Roman serfs—twelve thousand, perhaps, crowded on the little island that day; but on none of their eyes fell the visions of the seer.

In the majesty of events drifting before his illumined eyes, Domitian, the emperor who had exiled him, was too insignificant to be noted. Rome and its grandeur, Greece and its glory passed away and their places are filled; nothing has taken the place of the



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wonderful seer and his wonderful vision. The name of the island has suffered change—Phora, Patmos, Patino; its religion has changed from pagan to Christian, and then to Mohammedan. The population has dwindled to one-third of that which swarmed there in John's time; Roman fortress, monkish convents and churches, have fallen in ruins; the deadly hand of the Turk grasps Patmos; the women of the island sit knitting in the sun, their children lying across their knees; the men, bent low, knead clay and mould pottery on the flying wheel; still, along the crest of the hills with their fringes of cypress and carob trees, hangs the glory of that Apocalypse which wrapped the soul of the beloved disciple on that Sabbath day.

### 'A Bit at a Time.'

It was during a mission. The Spirit of God had appealed to the consciences of many. The evening service was over, and the missionary was passing from pew to pew to converse with those who still remained in the building.

An old man, with white hair and bent back, could not fail to attract attention. His seamed hands covered his face, but failed to stem the tide of his tears, for they oozed through his fingers and fell on the floor.

'Are you saved?' asked the minister in a gentle whisper.

'Oh, no,' he replied. 'I wish I were; I do want to be saved. You do not know what a sinner I've been.'

'Never mind. If you are a great sinner you have a greater Saviour.'

'Oh! it is impossible I can be saved all at once,' he urged in a despairing voice.

'Behold, now is the accepted time.' 'He is able to save to the uttermost.'

'Nay, nay. I cannot be saved all at once. I got a bit forgiven last night, and you shall do a bit more for me to-night if you'll be so kind, and I'll get a bit more forgiven to-morrow night, but I cannot expect to have the last bit forgiven till I die.'

The idea was so rooted in his mind that the hour was very late before he saw the all-sufficiency of Christ to forgive everything at once, and that by an appropriating faith he could make this his own without delay—

'He that believeth on the Son hath everlasting life.'—'The Christian.'