

# The Portfolio.

*Vita Sine Literis Mors Est.*

VOL. 2.

HAMILTON, FEBRUARY, 1880.

No. 5.

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## A REVERIE.

It was on an evening dreary, when the grate fire, burning low,  
Flickering, cast such strange weird shadows, shadows that  
would come and go  
Quickly as the moonbeams glitter, flash and flit o'er  
sheeny snow.

And the wind without was moaning, sorrowing for the  
dead year gone,  
Grieving that the fierce strong winter, left not, only  
lingered on,  
Keeping all the spring flowers sleeping, sleeping silent,  
pale and wan.

—Such an evening, when I pondered, wistful wondering,  
asking “why,”—  
Why is life so brief, so fleeting, why so changeful?—days  
go by—  
Were it not for this poor self-worm, this poor, restless,  
questioning “I,”—

Sometimes we could say that all things are but shadows,  
nothing more,  
Like to those that gaily dance, or sadly wander o'er my  
floor,  
Whose dull emptiness my fancy kindly hides and covers  
o'er.

What are shadows, then? I queried, and as if to answer  
right,  
Suddenly the fire burned brighter, filled the room with  
steady light,  
—Everything was as it had been,—fancy's figures lost to  
sight;—

Yonder, on the window curtain, self alone was pictured  
there.  
Then I knew that, doubt I could not, neither yield to  
weak despair,  
Seeming shadows are but pictures, God and life are every-  
where.

## ALEXANDER POPE.

IF, in reading the lives of the most eminent literary characters that have scattered broadcast the precious seeds of knowledge and truth bound up in coverings of poetry and prose, we should happen upon a figure striking in its infirmities and characteristic dress; a disposition vacillating, irritable and proud; a mind well stored with classic literature and determined to succeed in its undertakings in the face of every obstacle, we should need no introduction to Alexander Pope. Always delicate he had never enjoyed a college training. This home life ill pre-

pared the sensitive boy for an entrance into the great world where he advanced to fame, not by feeble steps, but by rapid strides and with the ringing tread of one born to rule. During those eight years of sickness, his amusements consisted in reading and studying the most polished poets of every nation, and writing the “Ode on Solitude” and the four thousand verses of Alexander when but little over twelve years old.

The sharp arrows of satire hurled at Pope pierced to the most tender part of his nature and rankled there, imparting bitterness and scorn to the cutting words that flowed from his pen, designed in turn to give others pain. The “Dunciad” is the most stirring satire of the time. In it the mighty mother Dulness, lulls within her capacious arms many a drowsy son. Foremost of those aspiring to the vacant throne of Dulness is the Poet Laureate, Colley Cibber. Mr. Pope found, however, at his expense, that the sleepers were not as safe in the arms of Morpheus as he had represented them, for the appearance of the “Dunciad” soon roused the angry horns that for long after buzzed relentlessly about the unhappy poet's head. After the translation of the “Iliad” many were the praises it received, but none, perhaps, was so appropriate as the following, “It is a very pretty poem, Mr. Pope, but you must not call it Homer.” Who could hope to catch the spirit of the old Grecian as wandering by the raging Ægean he caught the glowing inspiration of the sea and gave to all the sons of earth the sad story of Troy divine. And especially Pope, the prince of the artificial school; his clear cut statues little correspond with the animated figures of Homer. Finding that the highest types of poetry, the epic and dramatic had been perfected by Milton and Shakespeare; that his genius could not equal theirs; that his pride and ambition scorned a name second to any, he received and acted on the advice of a friend to make his aim the perfecting of style and versification. To this end his whole energies were now bent, and the result we see in

the machine made poetry so exquisite in its musical flow that the lack of originality is not perceived. In reality, he did not write because he thought, but thought in order to write. To descriptive talent Pope unites oratorical talent. The old proverbs and axioms, religious, philosophical and metaphysical problems that had been collecting for ages Pope throws into rhyme, and in "The Essay on Man," "Essay on Criticism," and "The Universal Prayer," we recognize a tiara of brilliant gems each enhancing the beauty of the other, a storehouse of truths though old yet ever new. Reading Pope's works for the first time, we are amazed to find so many familiar passages, lines that we have heard hundreds of times without knowing whom to thank for them, such ones as "Order is heaven's first law," "A little learning is a dangerous thing," "Pleased with a rattle, tickled with a straw." It is astonishing to find how many of this man's sayings have gone to swell the ranks of English proverbs.

"The Universal Prayer" appeals alike to the hearts of men of whatsoever creed. The most perfect saint, or the most wretched sinner can approach Deity with that self-same petition—

"Teach me to feel another's woe,  
To hide the fault I see;  
That mercy I to others show,  
That mercy show to me."

That beautiful *ars poetica* in English tongue, "The Essay on Criticism," is a superb poem, embracing as much knowledge as most men only acquire during a lifetime spent in close application, while Pope, when writing it, was but twenty-one. It is dainty, but not insipid; it has fervor without any sacrifice of dignity; it is not, however, lacking in excellence of judgment. Taine says in regard to it, "We may, or even ought, to weigh all the words, and verify all the connections; the question concerns exact precepts and close arguments. In this Pope is incomparable. I do not think that there is in the world a versified prose like his. The art of expressing the ideas is truly marvellous—marvellous is the word." Yet the measured tramp of the pentameter is wearisome; monotony gains the better of pleasure and consequently Pope should only be read in fragments. Johnson ranks the epistle from Eloisa to Abelard among "the happiest productions of the human mind,"

while Taine cries out at its stiffness and inquires if it is not labeled "For Press." It consist of cold commonplaces, plainly showing that Pope could not be natural. That pretty poem, "The Rape of the Lock," in which we are introduced to our fairy brothers and sisters, purposed to conciliate Lord Petre and Miss Arabella Firmor, from whose fair head the tress had been severed causing the coolness between them. The trifling offense is described with so much more seriousness, that the best method to get rid of the trouble that appears, is to laugh it off. If Pope, when bitterly satirizing his fellow authors, had paused and but read his own couplet:—

"Tis with our judgments as our watches. None  
Go just alike, yet each believes his own,"

and applied it in regard to them and their works, the criticism would not have been so severe. He also might have remembered his own dictum, "To err is human, to forgive—divine." Take the couplet—

"And binding Nature fast in fate,  
Left free the human will,"

and compare with a passage of Milton's,—  
"I made him just and right, sufficient to have stood, though free to fall. Not free, what proof could they have given, sincere of true allegiance, constant faith, or love." Is it not the very kernel of truth, for which numbers of philosophers are now searching?—the golden chain that when followed leads from bewildering darkness out into the eternal sunlight beyond? The first poet, staggering in his blindness; the second, hardened by his infirmities;—one the most illustrious epic poet, the other the most perfect classical one—the former out of the deep waters of affliction, the latter from the gay drawing rooms of Lord Oxford—both grasped the cords of truth and on the sweet wings of poetry wafted the tidings to man.

In the "Essay on Man," metaphysical subjects are discussed, subtle questions settled, rules prescribed for human life and conduct; in fact it is acknowledged by all to be the most perfect poetical reasoning extant. Think for one moment of the well-known lines—

"Know then, thyself presume not God to scan,  
The proper study of mankind is man."

And further, as if counselling us not to aim too high, he goes on—

"Pride still is aiming at the blest abodes,  
Men would be angels, angels would be Gods;  
And who but wishes to invert the laws  
Of order, sins against the eternal cause."

Is Pope not right? There is a universe within the soul, and how much knowledge is to be derived from the study of self—this wonderful *ego*, the god in us, that is often so selfishly wrapped up in its own joys and sorrows, and yet with such unfathomable capabilities! As Longfellow so beautifully sings—

"We can make our lives sublime,  
And, departing, leave behind us  
Footprints on the sands of time."

At first, as we read—

"Two principles in human nature reign—  
Self-love, to urge, and reason, to restrain."

we vehemently say, No. There is something nobler than self-love inciting us to action. But wait, that is not all; read on and see that—

"An honest man 's the noblest work of God."

And how beautifully Pope shows—

"That Reason, Passion, answer one great aim;  
That true Self-Love and Social are the same;  
That Virtue only makes our bliss below;  
And all our knowledge is, Ourselves to know."

Of his writings as a whole we can not think of a descriptive expression more applicable than "faultily faultless, icily regular," but would exclude the remainder of the line, "splendidly well." In thinking of his well-nigh perfect productions, we are reminded to follow his own advice to critics:—

"Whoever thinks a faultless piece to see,  
Thinks what ne'er was, nor is, nor e'er shall be."

QUEEN VICTORIA is said to have a long memory for persons and faces. Her whole thoughts now seem centered in her soldiers, especially in those who have been wounded in her service, and in looking over paintings of subjects in the recent wars, she knows and remembers the names of all those soldiers—even privates—on whom she has conferred the Victoria Cross or other honors, at once picking them out in the painting and asking after them by name.

## Literary Items.

LONGFELLOW was seventy-three years old on the 27th ultimo.

THERE are about 490 newspapers, magazines, etc., in New York City.

THE success of recent numbers of *Scribner* has been so marked that the edition of the February number has been placed at 125,000 copies.

MR. KINGLAKE, the historian, is obliged to leave London because of bronchitis. He is residing at Wilton House, near Lamton, and is convalescing.

It is stated that Lord Beaconsfield intends to write a preface to a biography of the late Lord Derby, which is being written by his son, Colonel Stanley, the Secretary for War.

GOETHE once presented a set of his works to Harvard College library—a fact which has just been brought to light in making a new catalogue of the German literature of the library.

MR. TENNYSON—of whom it has before been stated that he was a Spiritualist—is said to have so firm a conviction as to personal immortality, that he cannot bear the slightest contradiction on that subject.

BARON RAYLEIGH, who has been elected Professor of Experimental Physics at Cambridge, is the first peer who has been a professor in the University. Lord Rayleigh is a man of vigorous intellect, and is the author of the most elaborate treatise on sound in the English language.

THE Pope's new paper, the *Aurora*, sells for twenty centesimi, or four cents, and is printed on whiter paper than any other journal in Italy. The leading articles are written by men of European reputation, and refer chiefly to social and political topics connected with religion.

THE British Museum has acquired about one thousand tablets and fragments of inscribed terra-cotta documents from Babylon. Amongst them is a tablet of Samsu-Trba, a Babylonian monarch hitherto unknown, who probably lived about the time of the Bardes, and was one of the intermediate rulers between Cambyses and Darius, B. C. 518. Another fragment has a representation of one of the gates of Babylon.

# The Portfolio.

Published monthly by the Students of the Wesleyan  
Female College, Hamilton, Ontario.

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former students.

It would seem as though phonetic spelling as a subject of discussion should be about exhausted, to judge from the length of time it has been before the public. The arguments in favor of, and against it are not so numerous as to have wholly occupied the time spent upon it. The inexhaustible part of the subject is probably that which deals with applications and illustrations. We do not speak of it in the hope of bringing some new proof to light, but simply to express an opinion on the subject. To advocate the continuation of the present mode of spelling from principles of conservatism, to cling to it simply because it is old, would be unjust and unwise; but it would be greater folly to adopt the new on account of its novelty. Matters of importance such as this would, were a revolution deemed advisable, demand unbiassed judgment. Supposing a change were necessary, in order to have it consummated within a reasonable space of time—not to have our orthography go limping, lingering, uncertain down the ages, here dropping a useless vowel, there a needless combination of consonants—it should be radical and general.

"If 'twere done when 'tis done, 'twere well  
It were done quickly."

Then, having altered the many words

whose sound does not suggest their orthography, we find that we have at the same time disposed of a study among the most interesting to students, particularly students of the classics—that of the growth and development of the English language. More complicated and composite in its structure than perhaps any other tongue, it is interesting, accordingly, to trace its words to their origin, to consider the way in which it has been affected by conquest, climate, commerce, culture, and the innumerable influences which leave an impression upon a nation and a language when in its infancy; and to compare the modern spelling with that in use in the centuries that have intervened since the time when the Saxons established themselves in the British Isles. Would the advantages accruing from the introduction of the new system be adequate to the loss? The acquisition of the language would certainly be made easier to foreigners, and spelling as a study be rendered infinitely less tedious and difficult. It is positively pitiful to see children struggling to acquire the difference in pronunciation of sets of words such as *rough*, *cough*, *sough*, *lough*. If, as some advanced thinkers have predicted, our language will before long be the chief medium of intercourse throughout the world, out of kindness to the many that have yet to master the intricacies of our spelling books, we ought to adopt the simpler system.

It was with sorrow that we learned through the columns of an exchange of the death of an old student—Lizzie Haywood—who died at Arkansas City, Kansas, on the morning of January 1st, 1880.

The following we take from the *Syracuse University Herald*: "In the fall of 1875, Lizzie Haywood entered the Fine Art College of this University. During her four years' course, by hard work, she attained a proficiency in painting never as yet reached by any student in the College. During the fall term of '77, on account of her health she

was obliged to remain at home, but was enabled to resume her work in the winter of that year. Her health failed during her last year in College, and it was only by her indomitable will that she remained in Syracuse until her graduation with the class of '79. During her stay here she endeared herself to all by the loveliness of her character. August 20th, 1879, she was married to A. C. Haven, the son of our Chancellor. Her physicians advising a change of climate, the latter part of October, she, accompanied by her husband and her mother, left her former home—Fredonia—for the southern part of Kansas, where she died in great peace and a firm trust in her Savior at the dawn of this new year."

#### NEW PUBLICATIONS.

WE have received a volume of *Preludes*, by Manrice F. Egan. The little book presents an exceedingly neat appearance, and is no less neat in its contents. The sonnets and some of the shorter poems display considerable talent; one, entitled "Of Life," is both pretty and unique—

"He fixing eyes of hope upon the sun,  
And never steering while the swift waves run,  
Him turning as they list, reaches no gaol."

"For all our life is made of little things,  
Our chain of life is forged of little rings,  
And little words and acts uplift the soul."

"'Tis good to look aloft with ardent eyes,  
And work as well; he doing this is wise;  
But one without the other gains no gaol."

The versification is sometimes faulty, but as a general thing, is good, while occasional clever alliterations add greatly to the sprightliness of the lines.

WE regret that, owing to several causes, our Exchange column cannot appear in this number of our paper.

THE Centenary Church Social, held in the College last month, was well attended and pronounced by all a complete success.

#### College Items.

"BEEN at your tongue's end, but just slipped off."

"QUERY.—Is the total depravity of chimneys possible?"

ROGER BACON, invented gunpowder. What a noise he prepared to make in the world.

"WHAT did Roger Bacon write?—"The *Novum Organum*." "You won't save your Bacon on that answer."

WE were informed the other day that the plays of Shakespeare in the course read by the seniors last year were—"As you like it," and "Every Man in his Humour."

PROFESSOR RICHARDS said it did not take much gas to make a great deal of noise. We are of precisely the same opinion in regard to carbonic-acid-gas in particular.

AN irreverent junior, on hearing that the senior class was reading part of the "Canterbury Tales," remarked—"Oh, so the seniors are going to take a canter on a berry with a tail; is it a *goose*—berry?"

THE subject of the lesson was the "miracles of the Old Testament." "Miss ———, you have omitted to mention one of the miracles." "Oh yes, I remember now, it was the transportation of Enoch."

WE are not quite sure of her standing in mathematics, any way we overheard her say—"I've been looking over old letters this afternoon, just think of it, and have burnt over three-thirds of them as trash."

THE members of the Geology class were told that before preparing the lesson for the next day, they would have to borrow an "Animal Kingdom." What did it mean? Wouldn't a menagerie have done as well?

TEACHER—(in exasperation), Miss ——— would it be possible for any man to get further away from the North Pole than by going to the South Pole? Miss ——— "well, I suppose he might climb up the pole."

MISS ERB, of '79, surprised the College with a visit last week, staying over two days, which time her friends would certainly have lengthened had it been possible. She was greeted with quite a demonstration by the few resident members of the Stibbs family.

SHE was in the class beginning Virgil, and having given her rendering of the first lines in Book 1st., was asked for the principal parts of the verb *cano*, she repeated them, but hardly had the infinitive *canere* crossed her lips, when a smile spread over her countenance and she exclaimed, "oh, that's why singing birds are called canaries!"

THE O'Neil *Tableaux* on the evening of the sixth of this month, was quite a success. The "Fairy Fortune Teller," was about the most striking and pretty of the pictures. The posturing and dresses were very good, but could not quite make up for the defects in scenery, however the performance was highly creditable to those engaged in it.

LAST Wednesday, all our students had the pleasure of attending an illustrated lecture, delivered by Prof. Wright, for the especial benefit of his class in astronomy. The illustrations presented by means of the Magic Lantern, were in themselves most interesting, and were rendered quite amusing by the occasional witty sallies of the enthusiastic Professor.

IT was at a supper on a Saturday evening, not long since, and the oysters were served *Sortant de leur coquille*; when some one remarked—"really, it is sometimes so awkward eating these large ones whole," and was proceeding to relate an experience of the kind, her neighbor retorted—"do you mean to insinuate that you have ever seen oysters too large for your mouth."

TUESDAY afternoon and evening Miss Dods delivered the concluding lectures of the course which she has been for some time conducting, under the auspices of the Alumnae of the W. F. College. The lectures have been well attended throughout, and the result is highly satisfactory to those interested. Miss Dods left yesterday for London, where she will conduct classes. She is accompanied by her sister, who assisted her during her lectures in this city. She carries with her the best wishes of her Hamilton class.—*Spectator*.

TOWARDS the close of last month our students had the pleasure of attending a course of exceedingly interesting and instructive lectures on science, given in the Mechanics' Hall by Prof. Richards. His subject was treated of under three heads, to each of which he devoted an evening. The first and

grandest topic was that of "Oxygen; or, The Matter King," and the whole lecture was rendered delightfully simple by a series of experiments, closing with a grand display of phosphoric glow, or the mock sun. The second lecture was on "Hydrogen; or, The Matter Queen," while the third and last was wholly devoted to experiments in "Electricity," and was fully as interesting and wonderful as the preceding ones had been. A matinee was also given, intended chiefly for children, by whom it was liberally patronized. These lectures were an unexpected intellectual treat to our students, and have endeared the subjects of Natural Philosophy and Chemistry to many who before regarded them with ignorant indifference.

#### DIVERSITIES OF HUMOR.

IN the olden days, physicians professed to have found, while anatomizing bodies, a vein particularly devoted to mirth; any commotion in the blood of this vein being instantly followed by uncontrollable laughter.

Tasso's "Ardoneo," met his death by a lance,—

"Which pierced him through the vein  
Where laughter has her fountain and her seat;  
So that (a dreadful bane),  
He laughed from pain and laughed himself to death."

According to this belief of the ancients, the mind received its prevailing tone from the amount of moisture in that particular vein, and the chief characteristics of the "ego" depended on the temperature of the body.

The word *humor* has been much modified and restricted by the enlightenment of the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries; our best lexicographers now defining it as "general temper," "fancy," "freak," etc., classifying it as comic or serious. Pope says "it is a quick conception and an easy deliverance." Some consider its chief essence to be a serio-jocoseness; others found it with wit, placing the two words in juxtaposition, we find them so various as to make it difficult to include them within the circle of a precise definition. Humor is less poignant and brilliant, and also less offensive than wit. The former savors too highly of mock gravity; the latter is too

much like a keen edged sword to be at all times the desirable companion that humor is invariably acknowledged to be. The curt and irreligious Voltaire wrote with pen steeped in the fiery liquid. The kindly Cervantes wrote in a far different strain; and we become merry at the incongruities of such characters as Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. We do not, however, wish to imply that every humorist is an amiable person, or that a wit is always sarcastic and rude; but the faculty of humor belongs essentially to man, as a gregarious animal, it is developed by civilized society, and in that society it finds its continual incentive and subject matter. It produces in the humorist's own mind a recast of all his experiences,—they become to him very different from what they are in themselves, or what they would seem were he not a humorist.

Whether wit or humor, incisive or expansive, we find it accompanied by laughter; doubtless from the subtle intercourse of soul with body, or that particular part of the body before mentioned—the laughing vein. Hobbes attributes all laughter to a sense of exulting superiority, in which the owner must indulge even if at the expense of a friend. Humor differs, not so much in kind as in degree; it would seem as though certain natures had a greater fund of humor than others, all have it, at least, to some extent. All do not laugh at the same thing, some people have a much keener sense of the ridiculous than others. The Englishman laughs at the Frenchman's pronunciation; Monsieur titters at burly John's air of consequence; the Indian laughs because his brother does; while the African is ready at all times to chuckle at anything and everything; the Dutchman has almost forgotten how to laugh, and the "cannie" Scotchman don't remember; but the Irishman, what depths of humor, what flashes of wit! laughter seems to fairly ripple through his veins. Now we may ask the question what amount of this electric current do we, as Canadians and Americans, possess? It is pure humor when we do indulge it; but are not our eyes too intent on the golden pavement leading into the City of Wealth, to cultivate the hilarious spirit which is the offspring of leisure and freedom. True, no nation is as composite as ours; our own and sister country appears to be made up of

portions of all nations, kindreds and tongues; consequently for all sorts of humor.

Exaggeration seems to be the salient point of American humor; as an example, every "Yankee" of ordinary spunk bounds his country on the North by the "Aurora Borealis," on the East by the "Atlantic Ocean," on the West by the "Setting Sun," and on the South by "The Day of Judgment."

As things now are, we require change; our genteel laughter is becoming a simpering titter; our laugh of labor is uproarious, oftentimes rude; our (at least some) school-girl laughter flies off in shrieking screams.

Our humor requires both moderation and refinement. As a people we are great; but we should be great in a better sense. There is no national platform like *good humor*; if the rich would smooth the harsh prejudices of the poor, let them cultivate *good humor*; if with kindly laughter the velvety hand of the professions can only grasp the hard hand of honest labor, a unity is formed wherein is strength. Why should we care so much for the fleeting things which depress our spirits and worry our lives? If we think of it, our fair Canada is but a sand grain in the vast spaces, and our little life but a watch-tick in the eternal year of God. Let us, while we live, gather the flowers of merriment; not soil their bloom by rude clutchings, but so tenderly gather them that the fragrance of content may be shared by all; thus causing our enjoyment here to antedate the joys of the bright hereafter.

#### SUNSHINE THOUGHTS.

SUNSHINE not only supports life, but beautifies all creation, and lends, each day, fresh charms to common every-day things that would otherwise become monotonous. Life means so much more in the sunshine, not that gloom is always depressing. A rainy day, even in the full glory of summer, is sometimes welcome; we love to hear the soft splash of the rain-drops against the window; and the drip-drip of the water-spouts has a peculiar dreamy charm about it like the sound of a far-off church bell, or some lowtoned lullaby.

But in the sunshine every thing seems teeming with joy and activity. Even dumb animals are conscious of the genial influ-

ence and bask with lazy contentment in the warmth, while we human creatures feel so much more the richness and beauty of our lives when the sun is pouring out on us the wealth of its golden treasury; the little birds flutter joyously about or twitter blithely in their leaf-hidden nests; the graceful trees, laden with rich foliage, catch the gleaming sunbeams in their long, willowy hands and then shake themselves in gentle rippling laughter as the gold slips off their wind-swayed branches, though trying vainly to retain a firm grasp of so treacherous a resting-place. The trees are full of this golden light, yet they cast long, cool shadows on the ground, beneath which, perhaps, some way-worn traveller may come and rest, withdrawing for a time from the too dazzling light of the sun.

Longfellow says: "Life is checkered shade and sunshine." Although sunshine makes life seem so fresh and sparkling, it would not be complete without shadow, and, as in nature, vegetable life is incomplete without the shadow plants—the marvellously beautiful ferns and lichen and moss growths—so the more delicate traits of character are developed in the sad and shady nooks of this world. Some of the best and noblest thoughts are wrought out in the darkest hours of a life, and some of the noblest deeds are done in the agony of the greatest pain. Bunyan's "Pilgrim's Progress" was written within the gloom of prison walls; Milton's "Paradise Lost," for the most part, after the shadow of his blindness fell upon him; Beethoven's sweetest music was composed when the great musician could no longer hear the faintest sound, while under the very shadow of death that glorious "Charge of the Light Brigade" was made. Some people have apparently so many more shady places in their lives than others, their gleams of light are "few and far between." But sometimes shadows are only stepping-stones to some great and glorious lights, for the brightest sunbeams always lie nearest the darkest shadows. And yet, perhaps, in reality the more shadowed life may be the happier; in some cool sequestered spot, "far from the maddening crowd's ignoble strife," and the rush and gaiety of a sunny life, even though it be some great sorrow that shuts us out from the merry throng. A quiet patient content is often the truer enjoyment. But a

dark heavy cloud may be lined with silver, for things do not always show their best sides; and the reason the dark side only is seen is because the cloud is between us and the sun, while often times the cloud is of our own making.

Happiness throws a glamor over everything; even otherwise disagreeable things lose a great deal of their most objectionable qualities in its light. Sorrow saddens and disturbs the harmony of things, and the brightest objects lose some of their radiance, and for a time become merged in the deepest gloom.

Sorrow may be lessened, or, at least, in some degree modified by turning the attention of the mind to some brighter things, just as we can quickly disperse the shadows in a darkened room by opening all the windows to the light. We know we cannot always find sunshine in the things around us, then why not lay up within ourselves resources such as we can fall back upon when the gloomy days come.

#### FAITH AND FREE THOUGHT.

THIS was the title of a lecture delivered by our Principal, Dr. Burns, at the Central Presbyterian Church, on Monday evening, February 2nd. We regret that space will permit of an abstract of it only.

Rev. Dr. Burns, in taking an inventory of the outfit of man, gave special prominence to the thinking power—that which distinguishes man from the lower animals. "To think, or not to think," is not then the question, but having the power forced upon us, how shall we exercise it. It is a sad commentary on our nature to find in every age multitudes who seem too willing to be the echoes of others—to be mere copyists or shadows; men who would tremble at their own thoughts, or strangle them in their birth, unless satisfied that they bore the stamp of the mint of other men's brains. It is only by way of accommodation that such characters can be said to live. The sponge lives—so do the tree and the oyster—but when a man lives it is because he thinks, and when he ceases to think he ceases to live. The very essence of thought, its soul and its divinity, is its freedom. Take that away and the crown of glory has fallen from our race. A few centuries ago and the world's mind was

entomed and independence was buried as not fit to live. But, vain the stone, the watch, the seal, thought had its resurrection morn, and we throw to the winds the *ipse dixit* of every human leader and look straight to Jehovah to learn His will—unshackled by the impertinent intervention of any legitimate authority. God has made His works strangely provocative of thought and He evidently intended to make heavy drafts on our reason. Everything, from the atom to the archangel, says, "Look at me." Humanity cannot proxy its brain work, and no monopoly has been given to priests or kings in this realm. No fear of Uzziah's fate in touching this ark. God and truth are always on the same side, and He presents *prima facie* evidence of hostility to one or both, that would suggest the contrary by discouraging the freest thought. But are not many of the tenets of the day held as matters of faith and not as products of reason? And does not the creed of Christendom contain much that is contradictory to reason? If so, so much the worse for the creed. Neither your creed nor mine contains a solitary tenet against which our reason protest. Reason may not have originated the thought, but should it appear contradictory to our reason we could not believe it. It is absurd to say that any man's creed contains what is contradictory to his reason. The scriptures everywhere appeal to reason. They are accepted or rejected by reason. Miracles were performed to satisfy the mind it was God who was speaking. The Jews would have been justified in repudiating the claims of Christ to Messiahship had He not showed His credentials in works which man could not do. The Christian religion is based on the supremacy of reason. The only dark spots on the Christian map cover lands and times in which thought has been suppressed, and the brightest grandest triumphs have been won among peoples whom she has made intellectual, in the land of Bacon and Locke, of Morse and Agassiz. In nothing is freedom more essential than in religion. Creeds come not to the sou' full-grown and irresistible. The true and the false are blended, and we must select. Even the evidences of Christian truth are not irresistible, and it is doubtful whether indeed they were intended to be so. An opportunity is afforded us to

show our allegiance to truth when it is to be sought from amidst masses of error, or when hostility, ignorance or questionable kindness has spoiled its symmetry or marred its countenance. Christianity has been charged with suppressing thought, but her liberating voice has first to be hushed to silence and stifled by the murderous hands of those who had stolen her liberty and with her liberty went her life. But it came again, and again the people begin to ask questions, and who has been hurt by the upheaval? None but those who found that in the opening of the eyes of the people the hope of their gains was gone—the makers of shackles and shrines. Has Christianity suffered? Has its hold on the people slackened? Has it lost its pristine power of elevating the masses? As fire to the gold dimmed by admixture, as winnowing to the golden grain has the light of enquiry been to the cause of Christ and truth. The real strength of Christianity is in its phenomena, or facts. To these its early teachers appealed, and without these it is a chemistry without a laboratory. These phenomena are as accessible as those of any science, and are as easily formulated. For ages, well called dark, an apostate Church allowed speculative and political theology to obscure the essential features of Christianity, and after the rise of the inductive philosophy, the Church fell into contempt. What did she present to the honest enquirer? A bleached skeleton for a living power, splendid ceremonies for simple piety, torturing fears for an honest doubt. Underlying Christian phenomena is prayer, and on that the lecturer dwelt at some length, treating it purely as a matter of science, discarding every element of it not found in experience or consciousness. Who affirm that prayer is answered? The millions who have prayed. Who deny answers to prayer? Only those who have never prayed. It is a curious anomaly that those who have never prayed should understand its nature, and the millions who have tasted its value should be forced to sit at the feet of those who are satisfied to treat it with scoffs and sneers. Science must deny phenomena for want of an adequate theory or explanation to know as much about the phenomena of prayer as about the simplest occurrence of nature. Free thought should be applied to the Scrip-

tures. It will eliminate errors only. The Scriptures need not the claim of inspiration to maintain the place they have held. The story they tell is imbedded in literature from the first century, corroborated by monarchs, woven into legislation, symbolized in sacrament and perpetuated in customs, that tell their origin. Modern science has not forced on the Scriptures a solitary change. Reference was then made to the effects on faith of the recent discussions touching protoplasm, spontaneous generation, the physical basis of mind, evolution and the origin of man, and most conclusive quotations were given from the leading scientists of Europe proving that not one of their doctrines had been established on a scientific basis yet, but that the failures of proof had been lamentable and the doctrines utterly discredited." In a word the discussions had been of incalculable value to the faith of the Christian. The close of the lecture was an enthusiastic defence of the utmost freedom of thought, provided it was really a reverent search after truth. The age demands it, and it is an eminently practical age, always pleased with success. It will sift the chaff from the wheat; it may shorten our creeds. Our land is especially exacting, and he who is hawking doubtful wares had better find a more credulous market. Freedom and Christianity are one and inseparable. Christ came to set the captive free, free in soul, body and spirit. "His name is in the ascendant, and if our light be not darkness itself towards it the world gravitates. It draws all men to it, and in its triumphs may be seen what gives hope to the down-trodden, purity to mortals, simplicity to faith, freedom and vitality to thought, fervor and love to religion, a sweeter earth and a nearer heaven."

THE reigning beauties of England are daughters of clergymen.

A FRENCH priest, who had usually a very small congregation, was one day preaching at the church in his village, when the doors being open, a gander and several geese came stalking up the middle aisle. The preacher, availing himself of the circumstance, observed that he could no longer find fault with the people of his district for non-attendance; because, though they did not come themselves, they sent their representatives.

## Clippings.

Two Irishmen, in crossing a field, came in contact with a donkey who was making day hideous with his unearthly braying. Jemmy stood a moment in astonishment; but turning to Pat, who seemed as much enraptured with the song as himself, remarked—"It's a fine large ear that bird has for music, Pat, but sure he has an awful cowl."

A YOUNG man dressed in the height of fashion and with a poetic turn of mind was driving along a country road, and gazing at the pond which skirted the highway, said, "Oh, how I would like to lave my heated head in those cooling waters." An Irishman overhearing the exclamation, immediately replied. "Bedad, you might lave it there and it wouldn't sink."

THE PARABLE OF THE GRIND.—Hear the Parable of the Grind. Now there was a certain Grind, who boasted himself to be somebody, for he labored from the rising of the sun even unto the going down of the same, insomuch that all men marveled at him. And there was a certain cribber sitting afar off, who toiled not, neither did he spin, and yet I say unto you that Solomon in all his glory was not arrayed in cheek like his. Now it came to pass that the Proph would question them betimes, asking them many and strange things, desiring to put them to the test. And the Grind was confused, and his knees quaked, and his lips clave to the roof of his mouth, for his memory failed him and he was N. G. But the Cribber, being questioned, did privily dispose his cribs in sundry sacred places, and casting his eyes upon them from time to time, made answer boldly. For he was wiser in his generation than the children of light. And after many days the Proph called all who abode with him to account, that he might reward them according to their works. Then spake he unto the Cribber, saying: "Well done, thou good and faithful servant, enter thou into the Phi Beta Kappa Society. For thou hast been faithful, lo, these many days." But unto the Grind he said: "Depart thou into outer darkness." And he evil-entreated him, and delivered him unto the Tormenters to be bounced. And great was the bounce thereof.—*Ex.*

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