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THE MONTHLY RECORD

OF THE
CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

IN

Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Adjoining Provinces.

APRIL, 1868.



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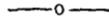
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OF THE

CHURCH OF SCOTLAND

15

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VOL. XIV.

APRIL, 1868.

NO. 4.

If I forget thee, O Jerusalem! let my right hand forget its cunning."---Psalm 137, v.5.

On Formality and Remissness in Prayer.

(From "Lectures by the late John Foster author of 'Essays on decision of character, &c.'")

"Thou restrainest prayer before God."—Job xv. 4.

THIS is one of the many censures that Job's friends passed upon him. We must think that this was not a just charge in the instance to which it was applied. But, if it had been true, as a fact, it surely would have fixed on Job a sentence of guilt. He could not be convicted of the *fact* without being convicted of *sin*. For, we do not expect to hear it asserted that prayer is no duty. Whatever the practice may seem to say there will seldom be an avowal in words, of this opinion. Nevertheless, such an assertion has been ventured, and by persons not formally and absolutely avowing rejection and contempt of religion; nay, even pretending perhaps to render the greater honour to the Divine Majesty,—to acknowledge in a more enlightened manner his sovereignty, wisdom and goodness. They have said, "It were idle and impious to imagine that representations made from *us* should direct the divine wisdom, or have any influence on the divine determinations; therefore to petition is at least absurd."

Now, even though no valid answer could be made to this, one would be irresistibly persuaded that persons dwelling with complacency on such an argument cared, for the most part, very little about the divine mercy. Those that did so care, would, in spite of the argument, be continually prompted to pray, and would regret to think it should be im-

proper, or be in vain. But answers are not wanting.

To a believer in revelation, it is answer enough that prayer is most positively enjoined, as a primary duty of religion; a duty strictly in itself, as the proper manner of acknowledging the supremacy of God, and our dependence. Let it be added, that it has been the universal practice of devout men from the earliest time till the present hour; and practised the most by the men incontestably the most pious and holy. But, if there were any force in the supposed objection, we do not see how these good men could be acquitted of gross impiety.

But independently of these considerations (of the divine injunctions, and of the constant practice of the best men), we might take the matter on more general grounds, and observe that—prayer cannot be discountenanced on any principle which would not repress and condemn all earnest religious desires. Consider the exercise of thought and affection in a mind deeply concerned about religion. It dwells upon the thought of the divine favour, "how glorious a felicity to enjoy that!" But, then, an earnest desire arises, "Oh let it be mine!" It dwells upon the redeeming work of Christ; and the desire is, "Let me be interested in it, to its whole glorious extent!" Or upon the pardon of sin; the purification of a corrupt nature; divine guidance, illumination, and protection; and the desire is, "Let these be granted to me!" Now consider these desires; they are indulged under the direct sense of the presence and observance of God, and are the more fervently indulged, the more impressive is that

sense, and indulged with a complacency in the thought that he knows them. But, would it not be absurd to indulge them, if it be absurd to express them? And worse than absurd, for what are they less (according to the objection) than impulses to control the divine determinations and conduct? For these desires will absolutely ascend toward Him. But we all know that these desires are good, that they are vital and essential to religion, inasmuch that the degree in which they prevail in the soul, is the degree in which religion prevails there. But if these feelings be the essential spirit of religion, is it consistent that they be carried into a direct act of religion, namely prayer.

Again, it is the grand object to augment these desires. Well then, here too, is evidence in favour of prayer. For it must operate to make them more strong, more vivid, more solemn, more prolonged, and more definite as to their objects. Forming them into expressions to God will concentrate the soul on them, and upon these objects. Soliciting to them, by an express act, the immediate attention of the Almighty Intelligence, must combine them with the feeling regarding Him; it must partly have the same effect as if we were expecting to be soon placed in his presence by death.

Again, as to the objection that we cannot alter the divine determinations, and, that if the things desired are proper to be given to us, he will give them, and if not so, he will not;—it may well be supposed, that it is according to the divine determination that good things shall not be given to those that will not petition for them; that there shall be this expression of dependence, and acknowledgement of the divine supremacy; that they (those that will not petition) are, by this proof, in no proper state of mind to receive the good gifts; that he has made it an indispensable circumstance, a condition, that they shall pray for them, in order to obtain them. On general grounds of reason this may well be supposed to be the case; but, the moment we turn to revelation we find that it actually is so. "I will yet for this be enquired of by the house of Israel to do it for them." And doubtless experience and fact would bring a full testimony to the same effect. Suppose two men to pass through life, both acknowledging that all good must come from God. But the one acts on the sort of philosophic principle that disowns prayer; the other habitually and fervently petitions the Almighty, in the name of Jesus Christ. We may refer it to any man to judge of the comparative account of what these two respectively will have obtained by the time they come to the end of life. We might also refer it to any man, which of the situations he would prefer to be in, in looking forward to that period.

But we need not have enlarged on such a matter as the assertion of the propriety of

prayer! (Paley, Price, &c.) It may be presumed we are under the full and irresistible conviction that men ought to implore the mercies of "the God of heaven;" that this is an homage absolutely due to Him; and that for ourselves it is indispensable, and infinitely beneficial. If we could go deep enough in thought, it would strike us as an amazing and inexpressibly delightful circumstance, in the economy of the Almighty Being, that there is a permission and appointed duty, to such creatures as we are, to speak directly to him, at any time, on any subject. Men speak to one another; some of them may not speak to some others of them; but the least, the humblest, the meanest, may speak to Him that made and commands all things!

Now then for the manner in which men avail themselves of this most sublime circumstance in their condition. Let us for one moment suppose that we could be quite uninformed of the actual state of our race, in this particular respect; knowing only just the general facts that they are rational, accountable, immortal, wholly dependent on the Almighty, and every moment experiencing his beneficence; and knowing also that they have the grand privilege we have described. What might we expect in conformity to this their condition?—now, what? Evidently, an universal prevalence of a devotional spirit; a grateful, habitual recourse to their most glorious privilege? Now then let us, by all means, deny the doctrine, and the fact, of the radical depravity of human nature, when we come to contemplate the actual state and practice of mankind in respect to the matter in question;—I repeat, let us boldly and firmly deny it, if we can, in front of the facts of the case; (the facts being as follows:)

Hundreds of Millions are paying homage to insensible substances, phantasms, or devils. Many millions are literally making to themselves an amusement and a sport of shows and vain ceremonies of a religion pretended to be in homage to the true God. But come to what is accounted the most privileged, instructed, and Christianized portion of mankind (our own nation). There are millions of them that practise no worship, no prayer, at all, in any manner; they are entirely "without God in the world." Assemble them in imagination, and look upon them! To say to but one of these, in the full and entire sense, "Thou restrainest prayer!" is pronouncing upon him an awful charge, is predicting an awful doom. But then consider, that, to pronounce deliberately but this one short sentence upon each one in our land to whom it is applicable, would take many years! But then reflect what it is that you would be pronouncing in each single instance. Think what it includes when said of a being standing in such relations as he does to God; and with death, judgment, and eternity before him. You are pronouncing that,—he habit-

ually scorns the Almighty—his soul, and the happiness of eternity; that,—he deliberately keeps himself detached from all that could save him from plunging into perdition!

Next, if we would cast an all-penetrating look through what is performed under a semblance and name of prayer; the slight formalities of it in private; the public ceremonial performances. Would it not be the mere affectation of charity to doubt whether it be the fact, that a vast majority of the performers never pray at all? If it might, by Him that knows, be revealed to you in how many instances, a vital earnest breathing of soul goes out to Him, would you not, in terror and pity, decline such knowledge? "Let me not see the proofs against my fellow mortals, of what I already too sadly believe."

But it was not so much our purpose to animadvert on the entire absence of real prayer, as to make a few admonitory observations on the great defectiveness of it in those who do feel its importance, and are not wholly strangers to its genuine exercise. And which of us can assume to stand clearly out of the reach of such admonition? "Thou restrainest prayer before God."

It may well come upon our thought to reflect how much of this exercise, in its genuine quality, there is or has been in the course of our life habitually. How much do we see marked and distinguished by this sacred colour? How much, as compared with our other exercises of mind and speech? There should be some proportion in things. A matter of pre-eminent importance should not be reduced to occupy some diminutive interstices and corners of the active system. A mere worldly-wise man is seen acting on this principle of proportion in things. Then, as Christians, how is it with us in this important matter?

That which is confessedly the most powerful of all our means and resources for good should not be left nearly out of use, for us to extol the while its great power, and be miserable through a dependence on other means. If the people on the parched tracts along the Nile had a mighty engine for raising the water to irrigate their fields, what would be thought of them for toiling with little earthen vessels, from which the element would almost evaporate while they were carrying it? Now look at our means for good. There is one pre-eminent; is just that the one that lies nearly unemployed? One image of this sort suggests another. The poor, superstitious multitudes of India believe that their adored river comes from heaven, and they are consistent. They pant to go to it; they have recourse to it with eager devotion; they purify their vessels with it, and themselves; they consider it a precious element in their food; they are happy to be carried to its banks when dying. Now if we know that our grand resource of prayer is a blessed privilege granted from

heaven, of a peculiarly heavenly quality, where is our consistency, if we are indifferent and sparing in the use of it?

"Thou restrainest prayer before God." Is there a very frequent, or even a prevailing reluctance to it, so that the chief feeling regarding it is but a haunting sense of duty, and of guilt in the neglect? This were a serious cause for alarm, lest all be wrong within. A consciousness like this, is a stronger summons to the very exercise itself than if a host of the dead were to arise to command it. That man is infatuated if he withholds prayer. What thing more urgent can mortal have to crave than this,—that he should not have to make out the safety of his state under so fearful a sign!

Is it, in the course of our days, left to uncertainties whether the exercise shall be attended to or not? Is it considered not a positive fixed thing, no more to be dispensed with than our daily bread, or the common recurring offices of life? Is the case so that a man might be supposed to say to himself, "I intend to pray to-day, or this morning, or evening; I hope I shall, but I am not certain, I may fail." *May you fail?* It is, then, too probable that you *will!* "*May you?*"—then that *may* befall you which will teach you what it is to fail of such a duty!—"May you"—? then you *may* lose the very last opportunity that will be granted to you!

Is there a habit of letting come first to be attended, any to inferior thing that may offer itself? A man may judge *when* is the fair and proper time for this exercise. When that time is come shall he wait, as if to see whether any thing else will occur to put in its claim, as if God should be admitted but on the condition that nothing else shall make a claim? He will not have waited long before something *will* come in between, and that will bring something else, and that again some other thing. This great duty is then set aside for an indefinite time, and the disposition lessening at every step, and perhaps the conscience too; and when he reflects, what reproach and shame may he not often feel to think what he has suffered to set it aside! And the weight of the reproach should fall, not on the fact merely of the neglect, but on the disposition of mind which could permit it.

"Thou restrainest prayer before God." "Another time, another hour, will be much more convenient." How many prayers are thus precluded! "I shall be in a better tone of feeling; my thoughts more composed; there will be less liability to interruption; such an affair I shall have disposed of, and discharged from my mind. It were even irreverent to approach the divine Majesty just as I now feel." As if that commanded serious effort, required in such approach, were not one of the best expedients for putting the mind in order. And then what does experience say, as to the actual occurrence and improvement

of that expected better season? How soon, commonly, does the seasonable hour come, when the first is easily let to slide by as unreasonable? Is there a disposition to give a ready allowance to pleas for deferring or cutting very short? "That will be a fair excuse." "That must be attended to immediately." "To delay that will be a serious evil." "That is a matter of practical duty, for which God will excuse the mental." When engaged in the exercise, a person may detect himself readily recollecting and allowing a call away. What a test of the habitude of the heart is there in all this!

"Thou restrainest prayer before God." We may specify again. In the interval appropriate to this exercise, a man may defer it till very near what he knows must be the end of the allowed time. He may be under obligatory regulations requiring him to meet certain business engagements at nearly a precise time. Now, having this known measured time before him, does he allow himself to pass away the moments that belong to devotion till very near the appointed moment, so that there is time for only a few hurried sentences?

Again, an inconvenient situation for devotional exercise, will often be one of the real evils of life. But here let the question be, Is this circumstance readily seized as a plea to conscience for but little practising the solemn exercise? The man is almost pleased that there is such a ground of excuse, and yet laying the whole blame of the omission or slightness on this cause.

This lamentably defective state of mind may be verified again in a mode like this, namely; "I did not very long since employ some moments in prayer; it will not be necessary so very soon again. For awhile I am free from the pressure of duty." As if the chief use of the preceding prayer were its clearing the time forward.

The having engaged in a social act of religion may be assumed as a partial excuse for omitting the private exercise, a kind of acquaintance; the share of a social exercise is reckoned enough for the whole tribute from the individual. As if a social tribute were for the purpose of gaining an exemption for each individual.

Sometimes the exercise is made very brief from real unqualified want of interest. Or prayer is delayed from the sense of recent guilt. No wonder there should be an indisposition then. But will mere time wear the guilt away? And what will be the best security against renewed sin? Do not defer praying till more guilt come between! Do not, lest death come between!

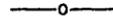
The charge in the text falls upon the state of feeling which forgets to recognize the value of prayer as an important instrument, shall we call it, in the transactions of life. There may be an acknowledgment, in a general way,

of its value, but in practice things are left to ordinary resources.

The charge falls, too, on the indulgence of cares, anxieties, and griefs, with little recourse to this great expedient. We may put the evil charged under the final general description, praying but so that there is a consciousness, "This will not do *always*."

This is more than enough for enumeration and description. The few admonitory considerations which we might have added, to enforce a reform, can be little necessary, when the evil is so plainly evident.—It is a privation of whatever state and happiness it is, that is imported by "communion with God."—How much it foregoes the benefits of the intercession of Christ!—It precludes the disposition to refer to the Divine Being in social communications.—It saps a man's moral and Christian courage.—It raises a formidable difficulty in the way of recourse to God on urgent occasions and emergencies.

On the review of such an exposure, we do not adopt any formal language of exhortation. Mere exhortation is never of any use. Such representations and appeals to painful experience are of the essence of exhortation, and here therefore we leave the subject.



The Uses of the World.

The phrase, "the Church and the world," has become so very familiar that we are apt to understand by the word "world," a class of society, or a condition of things, which is entirely opposed to, and distinct from another class or condition, which we call "the Church." And the result of this habit of thought is, that Christian men look upon the world as something in every sense sin ul; and upon the fact of their being in the world as a misfortune which is to be got over as easily as possible, by their getting quietly through life, without much trouble to themselves or care for their neighbours.

Now, this view of "the world," and our position in it, is somewhat unfortunate, and has its origin in the fact that the word "world" has undergone a change regarding its signification, to which all words of that character are liable, and also to the peculiar use of that word in Holy Scripture. It generally happens that a word of very extensive signification, in the course of time, comes to be applied to only one small department, which was included originally under the term. Thus, to take but one instance, the word "church," in its corporate signification originally was applied to all the members of the Christian communion; and to have entered the church simply meant to have been formally received into that body. But a certain portion of that body gradually becoming more and more important, it has, at last,

come to this, that if we say that a certain person has "entered the church," we mean that he has taken holy orders. In like manner the term "world," originally signifying all the present condition and economy of things and persons, has become so limited in its signification that we now generally understand by it a particularly wicked and sinful portion of the community. In addition to this, we repeatedly find in Holy Scripture that "the love of the world" is most strongly condemned. "Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him." On a cursory consideration of this and such like passages, we have come to consider "the world" as something to be avoided; forgetful that the love of the world, and not the world itself, is the thing condemned.

Thus far we have cleared the ground for the observations which we have to make upon the uses of our present position in the world. We may be quite sure that God has not placed us in our present position, subject to so much pain, and anxiety, and temptation to do wrong, without some object in view, without some good to be finally obtained by our sojourn here. It is our duty then to discover *why* we have been placed here. Is it our duty to avoid, in every way possible, the peculiarities of our position, hasten as quietly, yet as swiftly, as possible through this life, as a useless condition of being, on to that which is to be the real sphere for the development of our character and exercise of our faculties?

Now, we shall best answer such inquiries by briefly considering three propositions, in doing which we shall only take for granted that the future state will be, for real Christians, a condition of true enjoyment and happiness, and that all its pleasure and happiness, may be summed up in the one expression of Scripture—how deep, how significant!—"being with Jesus."

Our three propositions are—I. That there can be no enjoyment without certain capacities for it. II. That such capacities are, as far as we can judge from our experience of nature and things around us, formed gradually by slow processes; and, III. That the condition of this life is admirably suited for the development in a true Christian of such tempers and conditions of mind and soul, as will fit him for the thorough enjoyment of the future life.

I. Every condition of life requires certain peculiar faculties for the appreciation of particular enjoyments. This is a truth so patent and so simple as scarcely to require any remark. A man who is blind cannot discern any objects which are apparent to ordinary vision. A man who is colour-blind cannot distinguish between the varieties of colour and shade, which afford the greatest delight to the person of perfect sight. One man is ravished with the charm of some melody,

which affords no pleasure whatever to the man who has not the faculty which appreciates harmony. Thus, no external condition, of itself, produces pleasure. External circumstances can be productive of pleasure, only so far as they harmonise with the internal capacity for enjoyment. In the words of one of our ablest writers "Every creature is designed for a particular way of life, to which the nature, capacities, temper, and qualifications of each species are as necessary, as their external circumstances. Both come into the notion of such state or particular way of life, and are constituent parts of it. Change a man's capacities or character to the degree to which it is conceivable they may be changed, and he would altogether be incapable of human course of life and human happiness." One of the masterpieces of Dean Swift's genius, is where he represents a traveller, who has long spent his time amid beings distinct from the human race, and cultivated the faculties suited to an appreciation of their condition of life, returning to the society of his own fellow-creatures, and finding himself unable to enjoy their mode of life, and scarcely able to tolerate their company. We may, then, take it as absolutely true, that no condition of external circumstances can, of itself, produce pleasure, without some corresponding faculty in the individual, enabling him to appreciate the enjoyment.

II. It is still further apparent that human beings become capable of enjoying certain conditions of existence, not *per saltum*, but by slow and gradual processes of development. Now, we have instances of this on every side. The full-grown man is capable of enjoying many things, which afforded no pleasure whatever to the same being when he was but a child. The educated and refined man takes delight in pursuits, which would have been stupid and uninteresting to him when he was uneducated and uncultivated. In each case it is not that the sources of pleasure or amusement have altered. The change is internal. The power of appreciation has been acquired or improved, and what before was dull, has now become a pleasure.

Not only so, but it will invariably be found that the difficulty or labour experienced in the cultivation of any faculty is always proportionate to the refinement of the pleasure which the exercise of that faculty, when cultivated, will bestow. Thus, if we divide all pleasures—for the sake of illustration, and not that we suppose this division to be strictly accurate—into physical, mental, and moral, we find that the enjoyment of them is easy of acquirement in the order in which we have mentioned them; and the pleasure derivable from these sources corresponds with this faculty. Physical are less exquisite than mental enjoyments; but then they are much more easily appreciated. Before we can enter into the thorough enjoyment of mental

or intellectual pursuits, we must spend much time and care in intellectual culture. But when once the faculty of this class of enjoyment has been acquired, the pleasure derivable from these intellectual sources is far more exquisite than anything which the mere physical man can appreciate.

Now, let us bear in mind that we are not discussing whether it is well that it is so; we are only enquiring, Is it so? and we think it cannot be questioned, much less denied. Some may inquire, Why is this so? would it not be much better if men were born into this world with capacities for enjoyment and pleasure of every kind? would it not be far better for all men to be endowed with faculties which would enable them, without any labour or trouble on their part, to enjoy the most refined and delightful pleasures, and not to have such enjoyments confined to a comparatively few? would not this earth be much better, and life, as a rule, be much happier, if what are now the pleasures of the few were really the source of the same gratification to all, by reason of the implantation in every man of the power to enjoy the highest intellectual and moral pleasures?

Now, in the first place, to such objections we might easily answer that they are entirely beside the question really under consideration; we merely require for our argument to prove that things are so; we are not, therefore, to show *why* they are so, or one might retort that comprehensive and invincible interrogatory, "Shall not the Judge of all the earth do right?" God has so arranged the course of this world, and of life, that what we have stated is the fact; and as God knows the whole case, and we know only a small corner of it, He is sure to be right. But, on the face of the thing, there are plenty of reasons why it is better that the highest kinds of enjoyment should, as regards the capability to appreciate them, be the most difficult to attain. As precious stones are valuable in proportion to their scarcity, so enjoyment, as a rule, depends upon the difficulty which we have had to obtain it. The man who has been born to a large fortune, and from an infant has had the so-called luxuries of life, does not value or care for them half so much as the man who, by patience and industry, has won his way from a condition of poverty to one of competence. Were it otherwise, one of the strongest motives to human industry, and one of the greatest incitements to human progress, would be at an end; and pleasures, which anybody could have without trouble or exertion, would soon entirely lose their value. As it is however, every man finds himself in a position, not to enjoy every pleasure which he sees to be the lot of his neighbour, but to fit himself, by the cultivation and acquirement of certain capacities, for the obtaining of pleasures from certain sources, which, though at present open to him, his own incapacity renders it impossible for him

to appreciate. Thus we may, I think, take it as a truth established beyond all controversy, that all enjoyment, and particularly that which is most refined, depends, not so much upon outward circumstances as upon the existence in ourselves of certain capacities and qualities; and, further, that these capacities for enjoyment, which are the conditions of our happiness, are to be acquired and cultivated by our making the proper use of those conditions and circumstances of life in which we find ourselves, by God's providence, placed.

III. Whenever we find certain great general laws operating in the kingdom of nature, we may rest assured that the same laws will be found at work in things spiritual. If our future life is to be one of unspeakable and unalloyed happiness, we may rest assured that, in accordance with what we have said above, there must be a certain condition of mind to appreciate the pleasure of that state of existence; and further, that this quality of being is not a thing with which a man is supernaturally and suddenly endowed, but something to be acquired in a regular school system of training and discipline. A man is born into this world, and he has the opportunity of his earlier years for the cultivation of habits and the formation of a character suitable to his future condition of manhood. So a man is born when, by God's grace and the operation of God's Spirit, he is converted; and he is permitted to remain in this world, with opportunities existing all around him for the formation of a certain moral character and condition which will enable him, not to attain heaven,—for we pre-suppose him spiritually born, and therefore the life which he is to live in heaven begun—but to enter into a full and complete enjoyment of those pleasures which are at his Father's right hand. If, then, this world stands in respect to the next world in the same relation that the earlier do to the latter years of our ordinary life, to a Christian man it becomes the all-important question, What use am I making of this life? Am I trying to hurry it over as rapidly as possible, so that I may hasten on to that coming state of existence which will be so much more congenial to my tastes and desires? If so, this is a mistaken course of conduct.

We commit a great and practical error when we forget the object with which we have been placed in this world, with all its sin, and all its trial, and all its temptation. All the faculties which a Christian man can acquire or improve in this life, by controlling his natural temper and desires, resisting temptation in all its alluring forms and ministering to the social and spiritual good of those around him, will be such as will enable him to enter with a keener enjoyment into the pleasures of the world to come. One star doth not differ from another star in glory because it reflects the light of some more

luminous and brighter sun, but because of the larger extent of space on which the self-same sun, which illuminates all the stars, shines. And so, in that land where the Lord God, who is the light thereof, shall reign, the same ray of light and love shall shine upon each and every jewel in his crown, and each shall blaze with the lustre of its own reflective power. This is the teaching of the whole tenor of Scripture. The man who gains the ten talents obtains a lordship over ten cities. The use he made of this lifetime during his master's absence was to improve what had been committed to him till it became of double value. And so it becomes the duty and privilege of every Christian to cultivate the Christian virtues and faculties with which his new birth has endowed him.

What a blessing to the Church, to the world, to Christians, would it be, if they always bore this great truth in mind. If we are to have pleasures hereafter, we must have cultivated while here those capacities or qualities of mind which alone render their enjoyment possible. Physical pleasure cannot be had without physical exertion. Mental enjoyment cannot be procured without mental culture. And can it be possibly expected that moral and spiritual pleasure—the highest and keenest of all—can be hereafter experienced by us, without the cultivation previously of our spiritual nature? No. Life is a battle to be fought, and a race to be run. As a man soweth so shall he reap. And he who has used this world as a school to prepare him for the next, shall enter most completely into the enjoyment of that last great day, when the angel reapers shall descend from heaven and gather the wheat into the garner of our Lord.—*Quiver*.

—o—

Echoes from the Threshold.

How impatient we grow to catch a glimpse of the beyond! to hear but one word of the mystic speech that is spoken on the other side; to catch the passing fragrance of the celestial flowers, or the cadences of the holy choir! So much of the present is bound up in that which is to come; so many love and faded ones are associated with the future; so sacred a spot do they occupy in our heart's affections, that we often linger about the thresholds of tombs, if haply we may steal a glance in at the open door as some spirit is entering.

Most holy and impressive, surely, are *last words*—syllables breathed out upon the very verge of the infinite, when the gurgling of the death-stream is heard, and the faint flutter of wings proclaims the angel-heralds are approaching. Very sacred and solemn are the last farewells that float into our ears, the echoes of which are never to be lost through all the noises and turmoil of after years.

How deeply significant, too, at times, are

these faint farewells! How they often let us into the characters of those who breathe them, solve a life-long riddle, and set at rest endless surmises and vague imaginings! Often, when the shams and semblances of life are dropping off, like the chrysalis shell from the escaping moth—when the man stands visibly before the great reality, trembling in the presence of the dread eternity—he raises the vizor so long drawn down, and, in one word or sentence, reveals the secret of a life! Last words are often blessed litanies that lead the soul up to the Highest. Alas! that they should ever be but the wringing of the dregs of a wasted life into one last utterance, fearful as a doom, chilling and deadly as a blight.

Many a parting admonition has followed, like an unseen footstep, some soul in its course through the world; has gleamed, as from a celestial taper, a beacon-light; has whispered, by brink of ruin and precipices of shame, a warning voice. How often have last words been burned into the heart, and have glared in fiery characters when some evil was to be averted, some false step to be shunned!

There is, surely, something inexpressibly solemn in the thought of looking into the pale face of death; the stepping out into Cimmerian night; the passing from artificiality into reality—the sophist and the casuist alike fronting stern doom. What a thesis for the moralist and the sage!

The last hour!—when the man is alone with self; when he enters into himself, and reads the strange inscriptions on those chambers of imagery, the faded years; when he is about to lay aside

“The burden and the mystery
Of all this unintelligible world,”

and comprehend the great vexed questions that have so perplexed him here. What if the recording pen may write upon his tomb,

“Samson hath quit himself
Like Samson, and heroically hath finished
A life heroic?”

That is a beautiful sentiment, uttered, by the Hindoo priest, when holding an infant in his arms, “Little babe, thou enterest the world weeping, while all around the smile; contrive to live that you may depart in smiles, while all around you weep.”

Ah! that is the great life-problem, to *contrive* to leave the world with a brow calm amid the whirling of tempests, and a cheek flushed with the radiance of the after-life.

What a manly assurance was that of George Washington, whose last words are recorded as, “I am about to die, and I am not afraid to die!”

What a noble confidence is expressed in John Wesley's—“The best of all is, God with us;” and Edward Irving's—“In life and in death I am the Lord's;” and Addison's request—“Come and see how a Christian can die;” and brave old Martin Luther's latest prayer—“Into thy hands I commend my

spirit, O Lord God of truth; thou hast redeemed me!"

How mysterious and impressive a death was that of Dr. Beament, who expired in the pulpit while pronouncing the line—

"Thou while the first archangel sings,
He hides his face behind his wings;
And ranks of shining hosts around
Fall worshipping and spread the ground."

Very calm was that saying of the dying Tasso—"In Manus tuas Domine."

St. Thomas a Becket, as he fell beneath the sword of the assassin, whispered, "I humbly commend my spirit to God who gave it."

Schiller stepped from the turmoil of life to the quiet of the after-time, whispering "Calmer and calmer;" and Goethe when the shades were drawing around him, shutting out the golden sun-sheen, murmured "More light."

Humboldt departed, saying, as he gazed out on the glorious sun, "How bright these rays! they seem to beckon earth to heaven."

The one beautiful work with which brave Jeanne d'Arc closed her stormy life, was the peaceful one "Jesus."

Melancthon died saying, "*Aliud nihil nisi cælum.*"

How sad and solemn a death was that of the Emperor Charles V., with a tapier in one hand, processioning around that sombre catafalque exclaiming, "*Ya roy Senor*" (Now, Lord, I go); and, as his fingers relaxed their hold, murmuring, in broken accents, and, with them expiring, "*Ay Jesus!*"

"A king should die standing," said Agastus.

"All my possessions for a moment of time!" exclaimed the dying Elizabeth.

"Lord, take my spirit," prayed Edward IV.

How tragical were many of those French Revolution scaffold death-scenes. Those hoarse words spoken beneath that gleaming knife, with what horrible and sickening sound they echo in our ears.

"This, then, is my reward," said Barnave, as he mounted the fatal scaffold.

Clootz died there, discoursing on materialism, and requested to be executed last, "in order to establish certain principles."

Madame Roland died there too, asking for paper and pen "to write the strange thoughts rising in her," requesting (as a favour to a lady) to die first, to show Lamarche how easy a thing it were, and then, turning her fiery eye to the statue of Liberty, exclaiming, "O Liberty! what things are done in thy name!"

Is there any death-picture more horrible than that of Brissot and the twenty shouting *Vive la Republique!* and singing the hymn of the Marseillaise, the chorus growing every moment fainter as the heads of the Girondins fell before the devouring guillotine, silently dying away, until but one was

left to shriek the grim death-song?

It is pleasant to leave all this horror, although it is to press around the martyr's fire, yet frem out that flame and smoke we hear the faltering voice of the venerable Latimer: "Be of good comfort, Master Ridley, and play the man; I trust we shall this day light up such a candle in England, as by God's blessing, shall never be put out."

At the stake at Vilvorde, brave old Tyndale, translator of the English Bible, prayed, "The Lord open the eyes of the King of England."

Noble words, too, were those of the great German reformer, Zwingli, who was killed in battle in 1531, gazing calmly at the blood trickling from his wounds, and exclaiming, "What matters this misfortune? They may, indeed, kill the body, but they cannot kill the soul."

"My dear," said Sir Walter Scott to Lockhart, "I may have but a moment to speak to you; be a good man, be virtuous, be religious—be a good man; nothing else will give you any comfort when you come to lie here. God bless you all."

Burke's son died quoting the lines of Milton—

"His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops, ye pines,
With every plant in sign of worship wave."

And reading the 142nd Psalm, St. Francis of Assisi died as he reached the last verse: "Bring my soul out of prison."

"Galilean! Thou has conquered," closed the life of the Apostate Julian.

The brave Polycarp, at the age of ninety, at the stake refused to be bound; for, he said, "Let me alone as I am! He who has given me strength to endure the fire, will also enable me to stand without moving in the pile."

"I must sleep now," said Byron.

"Don't let that awkward squad fire over my grave," entreated Burns.

"What, is there no bribing death?" asked Beaufort.

"A dying man can do nothing easy," was the assurance of Franklin.

"Kiss me, Hardy," said Nelson.

"Thy kingdom come, thy will be done," devoutly prayed the dying Sir Edward Coke.

John Knox, earnestly expecting the last summons, said, as he closed his eyes, "Now it is come."

"Dying, dying," were the last words of Thomas Hood, when, after making his last pun, he turned his head upon the pillow to the wall. He said a little before the latest moment, "There was the smell of the mould, but he remembered it nourished the violets."

"It is beautiful!" finished the beautiful life of Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

"I am going to take a leap in the dark," were the syllables that escaped from the lips of the metaphysician and sceptic, Thomas

Hobbes. Poor Hobbes use sublime heathens, Empedocles and Prometheus, had a brighter outlook than thee: the one, to become a god, leaped into fiery Etna; and the other threw himself into the sea, to enjoy the delights of Plato's promised Elysium.

Who can think of Poor John Keats' death-bed without a sigh, as he told the sorrowing ones "he felt the flowers already growing o'er him," and asked them to write as his own epitaph, "Here lies one whose name was written on water:" or of Charlotte Brontë's, as, clinging to her fond husband, she said, in that nervous language of hers, "I am not going to die, am I? He will not separate us: we have been so happy."

Great, noble words were those of the expiring judge and poet, Thomas Noon Talfourd, as he said, in charging the jury, "That which is wanted to bind together the bursting bonds of the different classes of this country, is not kindness, but sympathy." What a great, human word that "sympathy," with which to close a noble and a brilliant life! Very sad is the impression left upon us, as we read, that when Oliver Goldsmith was asked that last question, "Is your mind at ease?" replied, "No, it is not." We leave it to Another, content to love him most dearly, and too reverent to ask vain questions of destiny and doom, not daring to indulge in guesses as we tread by his dust.

Douglas Jerrold said, when his heart was beating out its last few throbs, he felt "as one who was waiting and waited for."

Very solemn and very significant was that death-scene in the monastery of Jarrow, in 735, of the Venerable Bede. He was engaged on a translation of St. John's Gospel into the Saxon tongue. It was nearly completed, but his strength began to ebb. The scribe who was writing from his dictation exclaimed, "Dear master, there is just a sentence not written." This speech recalled the old man's fast failing sense. Gathering up all his strength, he said, "Write quickly;" and then he dictated the last sentence of the last chapter of the Gospel. The scribe wrote it down rapidly, and then said, "The sentence is now written." Bede replied, "It is well. You have said the truth. 'It is finished.' *Consummatum est!*"

What sermons might be preached from these texts! What sermons they do preach to those who listen for the sound! Life and death. What solemn words! The fever and unrest of the one, the quiet and repose of the other. Life, with its majesty and mystery, the prophetic entrance to immortality. Life, to some so sad and tragical, so weary, and weird, and wonderful; and death so calm and restful.

To the tired and sorrowful,

"Death

Opens her sweet, white arms, and whispers,
Peace!

Come, lay thy sorrows in this bosom! This
Will never close against thee; and my heart,

Though cold, cannot be colder much than
men's."

The grave is the true *Kiaba*, the great black stone by which we reach the temple whose name is Immortality.

There is something very sad, yet very glorious, in the thought of the *work* surviving the *man*; the pyramid still lifting its flame form crest to the heavens; the moonlight pointing its silent finger to the calm, blue, star-studded sky, a great excelsior monitor, while their Egyptian architects are but a few grains of dust mingling with the sand.

There is a tinge of sadness in the thought, however, of the powerlessness of the man to perpetuate the uses and appliances of his work; the man rearing the cathedral and the capitol, then lying down to die, and, in after years, priests offering sacrifices there, which the builder would have scorned; or the orator pouring out his philippics against the creeds and deeds around which the affections of the man, if that dust could be reanimated, would cling.

The deaths of great men—men whose lives have been heroic and brave; great men who are the lamps in the cathedral naves of the world—how precious they are! How their memories shine down the dusky ages, and flood with beauty the sombre shade! What a power there is in their latest utterances—those strange whisperings we have caught, as they have stood shivering by the banks of the great *Lago Morte!* their last moment, how holy and significant!

One moment! The flowerage and fruitage of the mighty past; on its brow flash the jewels culled from the great mines of the eternity that has gone; all the joys and griefs of the faded years; all the lights and shades of the shrouded centuries, are woven into the woof of this one moment. If every moment is so precious, so freighted with glorious activities and achievements, this *last moment* of a great life how inestimable its value—the moment when the all-uncomprehending soul pushes out upon the unknown and trackless sea! Yet what is life but a continuous pushing out? Each moment is the surf-wave to an unexplored eternity; in each moment lie wrapped innumerable possibilities and tragedies. A great man's latest benediction is surely most sacred and precious.

What an incentive to a noble life to send, dawn a loving message along the vista of the coming years! Zisca, the Bohemian warrior, as the only legacy he had, left to the army, with the memory of his valour, his skia for a drum. How blessed to send down to the later times some heroic poem, wrought in an enduring life, and graven on the warm, red tablets of a manly heart; to sow the seed, then die—the seed which shall bud and bloom by and by, and fragrant blossoms, wafted over deserts and wastes, shall carry a sweet and beautiful memory, more potent than the trumpet-blast of fame!

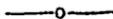
Death in life—life in death; all points to this.

At the Egyptian banquet a coffin, with a waxen effigy, was passed round amongst the guests—amid the mirth, a monitor of mortality; and Philip of Macedon wrote at his feasts the warning words: "Remember thou art mortal."

No need have we of these "aids to reflection." Nature's tear-choruses for ever ringing in our ears, and the mysterious provisions that echo in the inner chambers of our hearts, all remind us of the motto, "*Tempus, fegut.*" and whisper of the rising tidalwave. To all they say—

"Perform thy work, and straight return to God."

One last word meets us upon the threshold; and like a song in the night, its welcome note sounds gladly in our ears—the *dead* and the *deathless* are one!—*Quiver.*



A DAY IN GENOA.

BY THE REV. W. MORLEY PUNSHION, M. A.

Now that everybody talks about Italy, and is interested in its political fortunes, perhaps one of the more notable cities of its northern provinces may be seen with advantage in a fireside ramble—one of those inexpensive ones which books provide. Genoa lies terrace over terrace, open only to the sea, like a disdainful beauty, who cares not to reveal her charms. If you want to be impressed by one of those sights which become memories, you must not enter Genoa by the rail, but either by the gate of the Lanterna, or, better still, along "the silent highway" into the stately harbour. From either of these points the city is indeed, "Genoa la Superba."

I had travelled for three days over the beautiful Corniche road. My driver was a reckless, handsome fellow, given to trolling patriotic songs, with an indifferent opinion of the Pope and the Emperor, and an idolatry of Garibaldi, in whose service, as he told us with pride, one of the horses which conveyed me was destined to figure as a charger.

Commend me to this Riviera di Ponente for successions of exquisite beauty. The road is now carried on the sides of the cliff, high above the sea, and now sweeps through some picturesque village on the shore. Groves of orange, lemon, mulberry, acacia, vine, and olive, with here and there giant aloes and clusters of statelier palm trees, abound in exquisite variety. Rocks of many colours, quaint old Moorish towers, bridges and aqueducts, grey with wondrous age, and proud even in their ruin, as if they knew that Roman hands had piled them; strange, weird-like towns, beautiful for situation, but repulsive and miserable as you enter them, whose narrow streets seem meant for murders, and whose swarthy sons seem as if they could

soon be bribed to perpetrate them—with now and then, like a jewel with its crust of mud, glorious eyes, flashing through the dirt, which would have charmed a Correggio; and everywhere, chafed or calm as its mood is, the grand blue sea, fencing and watching the whole. It would be difficult to surpass this three days' wonderful ride.

Through a long suburb, rounding the gulf, you approach the city, but see nothing but fortifications, straggling villas, and solitary lines of streets, until you pass the gate; then at once you realize the panorama—palaces, terraces, hills, and harbour.

Genoa is a city of contrasts. In half an hour you may traverse streets of palaces, burrow into all kinds of infragant courts and alleys swarming with a population innocent of towels, and come out into all the bustle and enterprise of a flourishing seaport town. Begin at the railway station. Close by is the palace of the celebrated Andrea Doria, gardened to the water's edge. There are many hearts in Genoa still which are proud to recall his name. In the piazza is a fine statue of Columbus, for although the little town of Cogoletto claims to have been his birthplace, he is popularly called a Genoese. On through the Strada Balbi, the Strada Nuova, and the Strada Nuovissima. These three streets are almost entirely composed of palaces, and as you walk along them they are so narrow, and the vast piles are so lofty, that the sky seems like a band of blue ribbon far away. Each palace has a grand facade facing the street, many of them of white marble. By a grand archway in the centre you pass into the courtyard (no house in Italy is called a palace unless there is a courtyard, round which a carriage can drive), in which myrtles, oranges and oleanders bloom, and from which the marble staircase conducts you to the suite of apartments on the first floor. Marble columns, fine paintings, long mirrors, statuettes, alti and bassi relievi, vases of malachite, or of rare old Sevres china, gorgeous mantlepieces, tessellated pavements, panels exquisitely carved, the rooms furnished with wonderful taste, and hung with the finest draperies—all these combine to add to the splendour of the Genoese palaces, and to create in the unsophisticated beholder a bewildered confusion. If, when reflection succeeds excitement, you ask, "*Cui bono?*" there is but the echo to answer. These palaces of the former time only deepen by their contrast the squalor and misery which abuts upon them.

Just at the end of the Strada Balbi is the Church of the Annunziata, built by the Lomellini family. Over the entry is a fine painting of the "Last Supper;" but the chief feature of the Church is its excessive decoration. The pillars are marble, and the roof is exquisitely painted, but not an inch of the walls is without its adornment of gilding: you are in a blaze of gold—

"Gold, fine gold, both yellow and red,
Beaten and molten, polished and dead;
To see the gold in profusion spread,
In all forms of its manufacture."

you must go to the Church of the Annunziata in Geno, and when you come out you will be ready to think less of a sanctuary of God than of the shop of a carver and gilder. In the Piazza Carlo Felice is the largest theatre, and a vegetable market in front of it is the best place for the study of costume and character. Here trips along a pretty Genoese girl, with her snowy white *pezzotto* or veil, fastened on the head, and forming a graceful framework for the face; there, a sunburnt peasant, with slouched hat and gait to match, gazing listlessly round him with latent fire in his dark eyes; yonder, with his head (because of many salutations) bobbing up and down in perpetual motion, walks a comfortable priest, with shepherd-hat and flowing robes; here, again, some thrifty housewife, basket on arm, preparing for the wordy war of bargaining; there a coquettish flower-girl; while stealing through the crowd, with downcast but observant eye, some bareheaded Capuchin creeps, in coarse brown serge, fastened by a rope around his loins. To a stranger's eye it is an endless and interesting panorama.

To the left from the piazza you soon reach the *Acqua Sola Gardens*, a public promenade, blushing with roses and glistening with fountains, where the band plays, and white veils flash among the shrubs, and the nobility air their carriages and their manners. Back again to the piazza, and straight on, you come to the church of St. Ambrose, built by the family of the Pallavicini, which word is more suggestive of the sacrilegious than of the Samaritan; for it means, "Strip my neighbor." The church is a mass of marble and gilding, which does not please good taste; but it is redeemed by two great pictures—Guido's "Assumption" in the third chapel, and over the high altar, Rubens' "Circumcision." Thence is a short way to the *Duomo*, dedicated to San Lorenzo, where at the time of my visit a large congregation—the largest I had ever seen on a week-day—were gathered at prayer. There is something to be learned from the practice of these peasant-women, who devote some of the best hours of the market-morning to devotion; it is the true spirit of sacrifice, and we would fain hope that through the symbol, and in spite of the superstition, they may see the Saviour "whom they ignorantly worship," and find life and healing in his name. The Chapel of John the Baptist is said to contain his relics, and, to expiate the sin of Herodias, females can enter it only once a year. In the treasury those of large belief are shown (for five francs) the *Sacro Catino*, variously described as a present from the Queen of Sheba to Solomon, or as the dish on which the Paschal Lamb was served at the Last Supper—strangely enough made of *modern glass*; but credulity disdains

chronology, and if the facts interfere with the faith, "why so much the worse for the facts"—that is all.

To the right from the Carlo Alberto, in which the cathedral stands, is the *Via Orefici*, or the Street of the Goldsmiths, where every shop on either side the causeway glitters with the gold and silver flagree for which *Genoa* is famous. In the middle of the street, carefully framed and glazed, and surmounted by an elaborate canopy is a picture of the Madonna, the work of a young artist, Pelligrino Piola, who was early assassinated through the envy of a rival, who was jealous of his superior skill. When the First Napoleon, on his foray through Italian cities, removed some of their choice art treasures to enrich his Louvre, he respected the goldsmiths' affection for this, and graciously suffered it to remain.

The strangest looking part of the city, perhaps, is down by the harbour-side. Here odd sights, discordant sounds, grotesque varieties, both animate and inanimate, and—alas! that it should be so—distilment of a hundred smells, abound. The houses are in a state of lofty dilapidation; they are black with the grime of years; there is generally something frowzy hanging from their tiers of windows, for it is the chosen place for drying of carpets and airing of beds; these houses stand upon dark arches, heavy browed and low, beneath which you walk, as in a grim arcade. Enconced in these arches, sellers of macaroni and polenta establish themselves, and come upon you unawares; and against the base of them, on the street side, are heaps of offal and garbage, venerable for age. That building is the *Porto Franco*, something similar to a bonding warehouse in England, where two custom-house officers keep ward at the gates, to search any one whom they suspect, and to keep out monks and ladies! The reason for this equivocal prohibition is not so arbitrary as it seems, nor is it found in any presumed affinity between the two classes, but simply that their dresses being loose and flowing, are supposed to aggravate the temptations to smuggling, by furnishing better means of concealment for the smuggled goods.

The *Dogana*, or custom-house is a fine building; and in its long room are statues of the worthies of the city, reared to stimulate their sons by their memory to deserve as well of their country as did their fathers. Everything about the harbour itself has a bustling, prosperous look, such as we are accustomed to see in thriving seaports at home, and such as every friend of Italy must be glad to see. There is fresh life in the fair young kingdom; and Genoa, freer than in the days of her old republics, because no longer living in armed truce with her neighbours, nor torn to pieces by her own factions, may look forward to a progress as bright as the long years of her sorrow have been gloomy. Let but the Sun of Righteousness shine into her people as the material sun shines upon her white roofs and

glorious hills, and she will indeed be queenly.

Before we leave Genoa we must see her from the water, or we shall have no true impression, after all of her marvellous beauty. If you come by steamer from Spezia, coasting along "the sunrise shore," so much the better; that is if you could see the scenery, but the steamers sail by night. Well, study the heavens instead. How glorious they are! The stars sparkle like diamonds, they seem as if they were *incisive*, and had cut through the sky to shine. The silver sheen of the Milky-way is radiant as a polished mirror. Oh! it is a rare delight to be on the Mediterranean in a clear night and with a smooth sea. It is a still voice speaking upon the seat of a great calm. It is a magnificent apocalypse of God. You are in the harbour of Genoa before the daylight, and you can watch its birth. Slowly the stars fade, one by one, and as if loth to die; then an indescribable softening of colour, like a shimmer of moonlight without a moon; then a brief gray dawn; then the gay sun, waking up the world, and lo! there is the city, a line of white houses, two miles long, girding the harbour, like a living crescent, tier rising above tier; then higher up, breaking into villas which lose themselves in groves of green and these resting on the bosom of solemn and guardian hills! It is a sight that is not to be forgotten—"a thing of beauty and a joy for ever."

Priests abound in Genoa; nearly every fifth man met in the streets, excepting by the harbour, is a member of one or other confraternity. They seem to have more influence here than in some other Italian cities, and the "festas" at the various churches are kept up with great pomp and grandeur. The inhabitants are not flippant, but industrious, for the most part and obliging. Peasant women, with naked feet, are seen washing clothes in the tanks and roadside streams. The clothes are laid on a smooth stone and scrubbed with a sort of wooden mallet, flat instead of round. One almost wonders, with Charles Dickens in his "Pictures from Italy," amid all the dirt, who wears the clothes when they are clean. There is a look of contentment about the people, generally, as if they drew in cheerfulness with each breath of their balmy air. With a little more cleanliness, a little more earnestness of purpose, a little stricter local government, and, above all, "the knowledge of the truth," Genoa may shine among the world's great cities with far more than her ancient splendour. She has many traditions, and a checkered history; but she has caught the spirit of her newly-acquired freedom, and has entered upon a path of material prosperity, of which no prophet can prophesy the end. May He who is the life of cities and of men, guide all these movements of our time to his own greater glory!—*Quiter.*

New Church of England Catechism.

Referring to an idea thrown out that the fragrance in the Ritualistic Services in St. Alban's was of a sanitary nature, a London paper says:—"Who in the world can object to such Ritualism as this? No symbol, no doctrine—nothing but mere hygienic precaution! Let us suggest something in the shape of a catechism, that must disarm all further opposition:

Q.—What is the cope?

A.—A sort of ecclesiastical overcoat, to be worn by rheumatically disposed ministers.

Q.—Can you tell me when it first came into use?

A.—Yes; in the year A. D., 372, when Gregory III. adopted it as a preventive against influenza.

Q.—Quite right, my child; and now can you tell me why it is sometimes adorned with worked flowers, and variously ornamented with fringe, gold, or satin?

A.—When the case is considered severe, these things are not unfrequently added for the sole purpose of increasing its warmth.

Q.—You rightly refer ceremonial to its true origin—a desire to minister to the comfort and health of those engaged in services of a religious character. Can you tell me why candles are lighted upon the altar?

A.—Yes, I can, and will. They are lighted in order that the heat produced by combustion may create an upward current of air, and thus carry off the noxious gas not unfrequently generated in crowded places of public resort.

Q.—You are quite right, my child; and now let me hear you reply briefly to the questions I am about to put to you. Why is the surplice worn in the pulpit?

A.—Black is a color that is painful to the eyes. Out of consideration for those of the congregation who are affected by looking at the black gown, the white surplice is worn.

Q.—What is the use of flowers?

A.—They supply oxygen, and thereby counteract the injurious effects of too much carbonic acid.

Q.—Why is the service intoned?

A.—To strengthen the lungs of the minister and the congregation.

Q.—Why is the organ to be used throughout?

A.—For the purpose of invigorating the legs of the organist, and of giving plenty of exercise to the blower.

Q.—You talk of exercise, my child. Can you now tell me why processions in church are not unfrequently organized?

A.—Yes. Exercise is in itself a healthful, and therefore desirable thing. Processions are, therefore, organized in church, in order that the officiating clergy and choristers may have the benefit of a walk.

Presbyterian Union at Home and Abroad.

We would see with great pleasure the question of Union re-opened between the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces and the Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia and New Brunswick. Nothing is gained by continued isolation, and it is morally certain that there would be great gain in Union. There have been disagreeable and humiliating scenes in some parts of these provinces arising from disunion; and such scenes may occur again and again, and bring the blush of shame to the cheek of every Presbyterian. We are glad to find an article pleading for Union in the *Record* of the "Church of Scotland," written by Rev. G. M. Grant of this city. It is right that the movement should commence with our "Kirk" friends, as overtures from the larger church might be misunderstood. But we are persuaded that the most fraternal and friendly sentiments from the one side will be most cordially reciprocated from the other side. There will be no desire to place our brethren in any position that might possibly compromise them with the parent church; and there will be no disposition in any quarter to treat them otherwise than with that respect and manly christian consideration to which they have a right.

In the four Australian colonies the representatives of the Established Church of Scotland have been embraced in the Unions which have been consummated, and no injury has resulted to any party or any interest. Why should it not be the same with us, in these Provinces? We are persuaded that no good reason can be assigned.—*Pres. Witness.*

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PRESENT TO THE PRINCESS OF WALES.—The Princess of Wales has accepted a Bible presented to her by the Sunday School children of Great Britain and Ireland. Her Royal Highness's state of health not allowing her to receive a deputation, Mr. H. N. Gaulty, the originator of the movement, who was introduced by Lord Harris, presented the Bible, with an address, to which her Royal Highness returned the following answer:—"I accept the very beautiful Bible which you present to me with, I hope, a full appreciation of the sentiments you express concerning its inestimable value, as the Word of God. I am very sensible of the exertions which you have made to supply me with this proof of your interest in my welfare and of your loyalty to the throne. I offer you my very sincere acknowledgment, and will only add that the gratification with which I receive your present is enhanced, when I regard it as a token of the Christian union subsisting between those who have joined together to give it to me." The schools uniting in the subscription numbered 1514—

1238, English, 146 Scotch, and 130 Irish. In regard to the religious communities to which they are severally attached, the English schools are thus classified:—Church of England, 546; Independents, 166; Baptist, 123; Wesleyan, 95; Primitive Methodist, 23; United Presbyterian, 8; Jews, 3; Unclassed, 274.

The Monthly Record.

APRIL, 1868.

NOTES OF THE MONTH.

Accounts are somewhat conflicting as regards the Abyssinian expedition; some apprehending trouble and many fearing long delay. The country is so high and inaccessible, the climate is so peculiar and water so scarce, that we should not be surprised if the most severe hardships were in store for the expedition. But good will result from it. The light will be let into places where an old branch of the Christian Church has mouldered into superstition for want of intercourse with the world, and Africa will resound with the report of the wonderful deeds, the war materials, the guns and the steam-engines of those nations that forget not? the Gospel of Jesus Christ. A new and valuable door may be made for the entrance of the Christian Missionary into a continent which yet remains almost wholly a domain of Satan. By this time our army has, in all probability, reached the neighborhood of King Theodore.

A valuable article in the *Bullionist* shows that the trade of 1867 has been far better than has generally been supposed. While scarcely so good as in '66, it has been better than in '65. Capitalists have been alarmed and withheld capital, but people have traded with their own. The vitality of British trade is evinced, while, on the other hand, there has been lately scarcely an American vessel in the Port of New York, foreigners carrying American goods almost wholly.

The Marquis of Lorne, heir presumptive to the dukedom of Argyll, is now offering himself for the representation of his native County, and by his modesty of manner, his excellent address, and the liberality and moderation of his opinions, has secured a large amount of favor. He is for the disendowment of the Irish Church as well as Maynooth and, not the subversion, but the improvement and extension of the present parochial school system of Scotland. The youthful Marquis bids fair to sustain the credit of an ancient house, famous in the past history of Scotland—illustrious in political and religious annals, by him who threw the weight of his influence and wisdom into the covenanting Assembly of 1638 and died upon the scaffold, saying:

"He placed a crown upon the King's head but now he hastens me away to a better crown than his own:" of him, who fought for our liberties at Sheriffmuir in 1715, and was so remarkable for his loyalty and devotion to his native country, and last by the present Duke, who has so distinguished himself as a writer upon moral and religious subjects, grasping the great religious problems of our day with dialectic skill and a liberal spirit, and manifesting in politics the wisdom and moderation characteristic of his race. The youthful Marquis has been returned without opposition.

Disraeli is now Prime Minister of England, the health of Lord Derby having rendered his retirement necessary. Few public men have enjoyed such respect and honor as Lord Derby. A great natural orator, he retained in public life all his love of literature, of manly sports and his chivalrous character. His politics never degenerated into a sordid game of selfishness. And if in later life he consented to introduce a sweeping reform measure, it was by sacrificing his own feelings to the wishes and interests of his party. It must have been a chivalrous soul that in advanced age and amid the cares of politics could publish a noble poetical version of Homer's Iliad.

His successor is quite an extraordinary man, though in a far different sense. Mr. Disraeli is a man of Jewish extraction, of literary tastes, inherited from his father, (the author of "the curiosities of literature,") of great perseverance in seeking a coveted object, of no enthusiasm at all, or, if he has any suppressed, a great master of the niceties of language, so that in his hands it does his work effectually and conceals or expresses just as the master player desires—a splendid tactician, whose natural talents for management has been improved by long parliamentary experience, a man, not without principles, but whose principles are certainly not of that rigid nature that they will not bend before an object—one, who without any advantages of birth, or any early presages of success, or inspiring his followers with any enthusiasm for himself, or pretending or feeling any enthusiastic devotion to them, has rendered himself by his masterly talents as a politician so necessary to the conservative party with all its titles and accredited men that they have followed his guidance into measures and political connexions, completely at variance with their historical character as a party. These are talents for which Lord Russel cannot forgive him, judging from his Lordship's late speech in the House of Lords.

The measures proposed by the Government for Ireland have given general dissatisfaction. They consist in delay as regards the Irish Church, a commission upon land tenure and the establishment of a purely Roman Catholic university. Lord Russell's proposal to endow all has been denounced by

the organ of the English dissenters; as well as by Dr. Buchannan in the Free Church Commission last year. It is to be hoped that no more endowments shall be given to Romanism in Ireland, and if the Irish Church encourages disloyalty then it should not be tolerated any longer.

Political affairs in the States of America indicate a great amount of party agitation. The impeachment of President Johnson is considered an extreme party move. Nothing but the highest reasons of State can justify such a measure. The Dominion Parliament is now in session, and all the Nova Scotia representatives are there except two. As yet nothing has been heard of the repeal delegation to London. It is to be hoped that the Canadian Parliament may pass such measures as may tend to allay discontent. The postage law comes into operation on the first of April and we fear that the readers of the *Record* will have to pay for their *Records* on delivery six cents per annum. Perhaps exceptions should be made in favor of religious periodicals which are benevolent enterprises and scarcely ever pay, but we do not see that newspapers, which are purely mercantile speculations should go free. Only the postage law is undoubtedly too complicated.

The Scotch Reform Bill has been introduced into the House of Commons, receiving Whig opposition, as might have been expected. The Scotch members would rather have nothing than receive it from the Tories. This, however, is very natural, as the more good the Tories do, the more injury will accrue to Whig aspirants to office and its loaves and fishes. The main features of the Scotch Bill are a simple payment of notes with a year's residence in burghs, and in counties an occupancy upon which £5 is paid or an ownership of £12 value, and an additional seven to the 658 members of the House of Commons. All this is so low that universal suffrage would add very little to the number of voters and make scarcely any difference upon the results of the vote. So far as the franchise is concerned Great Britain may now be considered a democracy. The masses are omnipotent and wealth has lost many of its advantages. Will the country henceforth be as happy, as peaceful, or as prosperous? These are questions for the future to solve. A. P.

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SCOTLAND.—The Middle Church congregation, Paisley, lately elected a minister in room of the Rev. Mr. Bryson, recently translated to St. Michael's, Dumfries. The three candidates were Mr. Duncan, assistant at Pathhead; Mr. Reid, assistant at Lochgelly; and Mr. Burns, Dundee. On a vote being taken the largest number (142) registered for Mr. Duncan.

Lord's Day Observance.

The subject for thought and discussion at the united Prayer Meeting of St. Matthew's and St. Andrew's Congregations, Halifax, on the third Wednesday of March was: How to observe the Sabbath so as to make it, as it is intended to be, a blessing and a privilege.

The Chairman gave out the subject for discussion, remarking that this Institution, which occupied so prominent a position alike in the Jewish and Christian Churches, was, undoubtedly, designed for a beneficent end—to be a joy to the Church—a blessing and not a yoke. Is it so? Do Christians generally draw from it what it is calculated to yield? Is it a joy and a blessing as held and observed by our Christian men and Churches? If not, then there is something wrong in our thought or action regarding it—it is not to us what it should be. The question, therefore, is—what is the right thought—what is the proper observance—which may make it a true blessing and privilege?

M. L. said he was afraid when the question was proposed that it was an unwise one, because the time allowed for each speaker was so limited that there was danger of being misapprehended. But it was one of so much importance that it was well to bring it prayerfully before the attention. Never was he more firmly convinced of the claims of the Sabbath as set forth in the eternal word:—“Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy.” But the whole question turns on what we mean by the word “holy.” From misunderstanding what a true sanctifying of the “Lord's day” meant,—though there was no appointment of the Church which was designed to be a greater blessing,—yet he was afraid there was none made a more powerful engine by the enemy for his own purposes. No one who has been trained in the old hard way, when the Sabbath was made to be the most irksome and disagreeable day of the week, when the children could not look forward to it as a joyful and happy day, but as a day of drill and worry, of hard lessons and dark looks, but understands how that is so. Those people who were ever ready to claim for themselves the championship of the Sabbath really made more Sabbath breakers than avowed assailants. Let children be taught to like the day—to understand that it is a day when their young hearts may be glad without sin, and that it is a day for special thanks to the good God and Father of all, and not merely for marshalling to Church, and learning long lessons,—and you'll find no Sabbath breakers among these. It becomes to them a day of happy union—a peaceful joyous day and all their associations connected with it will be pleasant,—and when they go from the parental home they will find the need of it and not be glad to get rid of it. We ought to know what we mean when we speak of the Sabbath—we ought to know that it is not the

Jewish Sabbath which was one of form and letter, but it is a *free* day commemorating to us the glorious deliverance of the Resurrection. Here lies the root of the matter—keep it as the formal Jewish day and you restrict it from the freedom of the Christian spirit—you make it irksome to the young—but make it a day of happy enjoyable converse in the family as a Christian blessing and not as a Jewish form, and you bring it into harmony with the spirit of Christ's whole teaching.

G. said if we want practical subjects for discussion, here is one—look at it. What is the day which we call Sabbath? There are two ideas connected with the history of the word—the one Jewish, the other Christian. Some assert that there is no difference, but this is simply assertion. It is not true, for by no one is it now observed as it was by the Jews. They interpreted *liberally*, as they were bound to do, thus:—“Thou shalt not do any work.” But the Christian consciousness, under the reign of the spirit, has differently interpreted the aim of the day and its observance. The whole point is:—Is the Christian Sabbath to be observed in any set form? If it, is then what form? Which of the fifty forms presented us has Divine right: Scotch, English, or Continental? We must look at facts. We have not the Sabbath but the Lord's day. Whenever *our* day is mentioned in Scripture it never has the Jewish name, and the “Lord's day” has a fullness of meaning which the other has not. The word Sabbath means “rest,” but we have a higher idea before us than mere rest in our thought of the Lord's day, *i. e.* the day the Lord rose; and this leads us again to the significance of the day specially set apart for the worship of the Lord and feeding on Him. This is what the day is for, feeding on Him, meditating on Him, and in every way in which we possibly can, and not by any one set form or by any one routine, learning of Him. Again we are under Christianity not Judaism. The central idea of the letter was simply *Duty*—of the former freedom in the Spirit—what to the Jews was mere command which they were to obey, is to us privilege in which we ought to delight. The Sabbath among them took its character from the command,—the Lord's day among us takes its character from the freedom of Christian life. Some will observe it better than others, just as some have a higher Christian life than others. The way to make the latter observe it better is not by imposing it on them as a command to be observed in a particular way (which would be giving them a yoke and checking the naturalness of their own life,) but by raising them up to a higher spiritual being. The good Christian will observe the day so as to aid his christian life, and in so doing will never “desecrate” it. The former speaker referred to the evil influence on children often exercised by extreme views. We see the same gloomy ideas in grown up people too. The reason is they

Sabbath Evening Readings.

The Witch of Endor.

carry with them the old bondage spirit—they are afraid to do this, afraid to do that, afraid of reading this book and that book, because the title may not be “good” enough. The man who lives in the Christian spirit will rise above such fears; he will feel thus:—“This is the *Lord’s* day—the day of Christian work—these are my days of joy—the pearls of days. Mine it is to enter as far as I can into sympathy with Christ and Christ’s work—not to live a life of *rules*, but a life inspired by a *spirit*.” Then he will reach a higher elevation and breath a stronger atmosphere. He will rise above the fear that depends on restrictions—he will read what will do him *good*—he will work whatever is *good* work. This spirit he will carry into all the relations of life. If he have the care of children he will endeavor to breath the same spirit into them—enkindle a true life by a spirit, and not restrict and cramp by mere rules. If he have care over servants, he will make the Lord’s day a free spiritual day for them too. To such a man the day is priceless. He would defend it as his most cherished privilege and blessing. The Christian man cannot do without his Lord’s day; the Church cannot do without it.

P. said there is just one point he wished to say a word about. There is generally a certain portion of time on each Lord’s day which may be called “spare time”—longer or shorter as the case might be. How was this to be spent? One thing is necessary for Christian life, whether had on that particular day or not, and that is reflection—reflection on Christ as the divine food of the soul—on the great truths which He taught, &c. This spare time might well be devoted to that. We learn from ministerial instruction, from our Sabbath Schools and the like, but unless these truths are turned over in our minds and by reflection appropriated to ourselves they are useless—mere dead lumber. We are commanded to repent, we are urged to love. We cannot call up these by a mere act of will. Only by reflection can we arouse the dormant capacities of the soul for repentance, love, &c. The Lord’s day gives us time for this—for making Christian truths familiar to us—for careful meditation and the like. And instead of letting our minds wander over the whole range of Gospel truth, we ought each day to select one particular truth, suggested by the Sermon of the day, or by our particular circumstances or difficulties. This would be found to be invaluable to Christian life.

A. gave from his own experience an interesting example of the value of an early training in love for the day—not a harsh, coercive training, but one which would make children value it as a blessing. It gives a tone and principle which ward off temptation, and guides into right when he who wants such strays into the paths first of indifference and then of vice.

C. M. G.

The scene depicted in the 28th Chap. of 1st Samuel, is very graphic and striking. Few grander scenes have ever been attempted by the pen of the dramatist, the pinion of the poet, or the pencil of the artist. On the one hand, the colossal and warlike figure of Saul, with a dark cloud of misery and despair on his brow; on the other hand, the woman habited in the dress, and handling the crafty implements of her deceitful art; and, then, to the astonishment of all parties, an august form rising up, which, from the figure, features and dress, they immediately know to be Samuel. The spirit of the Prophet immediately enquires why he has been disturbed or disquieted;—why he, after being done with this life, is again brought back to what is, to him, so mean and contemptible. Saul then makes known his anxiety and trouble. Samuel replies that he should not have asked of *him*, since he had ceased to serve God, and God was become his enemy. Then he announces his death on the morrow, and the death of his sons who should be in battle, and the utter defeat of the armies of Israel.

We offer a few thoughts on “the Witch of Endor.”

Saul having failed to obtain any comfort or peace from God, applies, in his desperation, to one that pretended to be an agent of the Devil—one that pretended to have the control of some evil spirit, as her servant, to do her behests. The law of Moses had said: “Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live.” Saul had been a zealous executor of this law, and had endeavored to root all such impostors out of the land. In this matter, as in every other, he had been moved, not by principle but by passion. He acted, without assigning to himself a reason. It was an easy way of shewing zeal for God. Hence, when his trouble came, he was as irrational as before. He, with great inconsistency, applied to a woman who secretly pursued the forbidden arts of witchcraft—a woman who pretended to hold intercourse with demons, and to know what is not allowed to men to know.

The narrative of the interview between Saul and the woman is very curious and interesting. It affords a view of the tricks and impositions of witches at a period long anterior to the dawn of general history. It shews how little society will change, while human nature remains the same. In reading it, we could imagine ourselves present at some of the fireside spirit-rappings of modern times, and witnessing their wretched attempts to converse with deceased persons. Moreover, the passage is one that has greatly exercised commentators. Some say, that the thing was an imposture throughout, and that

we have here a counterfeit Samuel and a counterfeit Prophecy, others say, that Satan spoke under the appearance of Samuel. But surely these are very extravagant suppositions. If we take the narrative as it stands we shall find that this woman was an impostor—that she knew not Samuel at first—that she was as much frightened at the result as Saul himself—that Samuel was really the spirit of the prophet under a visible form such as angels assume—that he appeared by the miraculous power of God, and delivered a circumstantial prophecy, which was fulfilled to the letter—that the woman had no more to do with his appearance than simply being the occasion. In confirmation of this, it is to be observed, that Samuel charges Saul, and not the woman, with disquieting him, and bringing him up.

The only objection to this view is, that Samuel's appearance at this time and in this way seems to countenance impositions and cheat of this kind. Observe, however, that there may have been circumstances, not recorded, shewing plainly that the woman's arts had nought to do with this appearance. The circumstances that are given shew her amazement and alarm. And lastly, the result serve to shew the uselessness of such attempts, the woman did nothing; but the information, which was, not indeed the cause, but the occasion of giving to Saul, and which, but for his unlawful meddling with forbidden, useless and hurtful arts, the goodness of God would have withheld, this information was not only unserviceable but injurious. It overpowered his soul and body, and unfitted him for the trials of the morrow. And so will it be with all who seek counsel of Satan, either in reality or in pretence.

Was it only in those ancient days that men believed in witches? Up till a very recent period in Scotland and England men believed in witches; and, I fear, many believe in them yet. Probably nothing ever happened among ourselves that so clearly shewed the want of principle of many people, the shallowness of Christian instruction, and the thinness of the layer of profession that covers the darkness and unbelief of many professing Christians, as the fact that when an impostor appeared in this County a few years ago, hundreds went to her to get fortunes read more cheaply than made. This most degrading thing, this tempting of Providence was more culpable than Saul's sin. Lies and deceit, if believed, can only do one thing—delude, injure, and perhaps destroy him who believes them. Deception in abundance can be had without paying for it. Moreover, any one, by applying to such persons, whether he knows it or not, renounces Christ, casts away the pearl of great price, and allies himself with the Devil. Read what is said concerning Saul, 1 Chron. x, 13, "So Saul died for his transgression which he committed against the Lord, even against the word of the Lord, which he kept

not, and also for asking counsel of one that had a familiar spirit, to enquire of it; and enquired not of the Lord; therefore he slew him, and turned the kingdom unto David the son of Jesse." We believe in a spiritual world of course. We believe in evil spirits: who have some evil influence upon men,—not far good. But to believe that they can be employed to tell the future, (which is concealed from us and them,) by impudent and deluding cheats, is a very different thing. What right have we to know what God has concealed? If it were good for us, he would have told us. Let us hear Isaiah when he speaks of necromancers whispering and muttering, and ventriloquists speaking as it were out of the ground: "And when they shall say unto you, seek unto them that have familiar spirits, and unto wizards that peep and that mutter; should not a people seek unto their God? for the living to the dead? To the law and to the testimony: if they speak not according to their word, it is because there is no light in them." (Is. 8: 19, 20.) Again, see the effect of embracing Christianity, shewn in the Acts of the Apostles. The Ephesians were great Magicians. When Paul preached there the effect upon many such is thus described: "And many that believed came, and confessed, and shewed their deeds. Many of them also which used curious arts brought their books together, and burned them before all men: and they counted the price of them, and found it fifty thousand pieces of silver. So mightily grew the word of God and prevailed."

A. P.

The Child Samuel.

I SAM. III.

In the history of the Hebrew commonwealth, Samuel was the last in the line of the Judges, and the first in the line of the Prophets. At the time of his appearance, the degeneracy of the people was great, and demanded some immediate check. The tribes were dissuited, the country was torn by dissention within, and harassed by hostile invasion from without;—worse than all the authority of their Divine Ruler was but feebly felt. "The word of the Lord" we are told "was precious (or rare) in those days; these was no open vision." But better days were soon to dawn upon them; God was about to renew his messages, and resume the deliverance of his mandates to the people. He was about to choose a prophet for himself, and the choice fell on the Child Samuel.

It was in the stillness of the night that God first spake to Samuel, and, let us bear in mind, that it is also in stillness and in silence that God usually reveals himself to our souls. When we are alone, with nothing to distract our thoughts, or disturb the calmness of the spirit, then it is that God will whisper His secret to us, and make us

feel that he is near. And when to us the voice of the Lord does come,—when the still small voice of conscience is heard, though, like Samuel, we scarce know whence it comes, he it ours to answer in these beautiful words, put into the child's mouth by the aged Eli. "Speak, Lord, for thy servant heareth."

God's first message conveyed through Samuel was a message of judgment. It was the announcement of the destruction of Eli's house, and the doom of his delinquent sons. The sin of Eli's sons was undoubtedly great, but the fault of the father, seems, at first sight, small. It was simply that he restrained them not, or, as the Hebrew has it, he 'frowned not upon them.' Eli's character was, on the whole, an amiable one. In this very chapter we cannot fail to notice his humble deportment in envying not the honour put upon his young servant—his meek submission to the will of God, expressed in that ever memorable saying, "It is the Lord; let him do what seemeth him good"—and his earnestness in enquiring as to the message that God had sent;—all these are good points in his character. But his very mildness was carried to extremes. He failed to check and chastise his sons with anything like the severity that their iniquities deserved. He did, indeed, as we read in the previous chapter, reprove them, but not sharply enough. His duty clearly was not merely to administer mild reproof, but to address to them firm and unflinching remonstrance. And forasmuch as he did not, that indulgent temper of his opened the way for enormities almost unheard of in Israel; "and the sin of the young men was very great before the Lord." The terrible denunciation of wrath had already been proclaimed; it is now repeated and confirmed to Samuel. And Samuel's conduct in regard to it brings out two good qualities of his character; first, his modesty, and second, his openness:—his considerate regard for the feelings of Eli, combined with unflinching faithfulness in unfolding all, when he found that he must declare the vision,—a beautiful combination of the tender, on the one hand, and the truthful, on the other. Let us learn a lesson from Samuel here; let us not unnecessarily give pain by our tidings, but where there is any matter that we must tell, let us tell it out at once—let us "tell it every whit."

The message of that morning was but the starting point in a long and useful career. Slowly but surely his prophetic fame increased; and, after twenty long years, the crisis came when Samuel gathered all Israel to Mizpeh, exposed the idolatry of the people, enlisted their sympathies and was elected Judge. Of the line of the Judges he formed the last. But while he ended this line, he inaugurated another; for with him the Prophetic Office first assumed its settled form, and by him were the schools of the Prophets founded.

In the closing verses of this chapter we have an example of one of the means by which true prophets were distinguished from false, viz. by the actual accomplishment during the prophets life-time of events that he had predicted. Just as, in later times, Isaiah had his mission confirmed by the overthrow of Senacherib;—just as Jeremiah had his claims established by the death of Shallum in his prison, so when Samuel's words were not allowed to fall to the ground, but were exactly and literally fulfilled, all Israel knew by this that Samuel "was established to be a prophet of the Lord." R. McC.

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THE Rev. W. Mc Millan is to be inducted to his new charge at Saltsprings, West River of Pictou, on Thursday 2nd April.

THE Rev. Mr. Brodie has not yet, so far as we can learn, indicated definitely whether he will accept of the Gairloch call or not.

FROM New Brunswick we get little information, save from one or two brethren. We understand, however, that the Rev. Peter Keay, who labored long and assiduously at Nashwaak, is now settled in St. Andrews. We hear, also, that they have a new D. D., and that, too, among the younger brethren, we hope the Doctor will send us a Sermon for our next No.

In addition to the acknowledgments in previous No.'s, Rev. Mr. Anderson, desires to acknowledge the sympathy shewn in a tangible form by the Congregations of McLennan's Mountain and New Glasgow.

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POETRY.

For the Monthly Record.

WINTER LIFE IN CAPE BRETON.

(The following lines are sent to us by an esteemed correspondent, we have taken the liberty of abbreviating and altering only to a small extent. Many of our readers will think far more of them than of Tennyson's 13 lines.)

Hark! there is music in the sky;
It is the wild geese passing by.
Their piper leads the airy band,
And they respond to his command—
To hold within the beaten track,
Each keeping fast to other's back.
For when they swing to right or left,
Some in the whirl are always left
Behind the rest in the long train,
And screech till they their place regain.
When some strange impulse drives them on,
And out of sight they soon are gone.

Thus warned are all
Then comes the fall,
With wind and rain
And sleet amain.

And so old winter comes again
Stripping the trees on hill and plain.
Their fallen leaves, once green and shading
From summer's heat, lie thick and fading;
Or fly like snow-flakes here and there,
The restless play-things of the air.
His frosty breath has nipped the flowers,
And scared the songsters from their bowers;
The quacking duck has left the lake
With her dark brood and ringed drake;
And warring loons* of change of weather,
And bloody hawks are gone together,
Far off their game with bill or claw,
To carry on and fill their maw.

And now the snow bird come to tell,
A harder winter did compel
That they seek shelter in our land;
And that a storm is just at hand.
Then the woods sound and windows rattle;
And pelting hail the sheep and cattle
Send back at length from the wide waste
Of frost and snow in trotting haste.
The children witness with delight
These all secured for the long night,
The father searches for his flail
To thrash the corn though somewhat frail;
But he can take it at his ease,
Or give it up where'er he please.
The sons are chopping in the wood,
And all are busy as they should;
Till night lets fall her sable wings,
And calls to rest all living things.

The mother muffled in her shawl,
Time and again, them calls in all.
Then they around the table sit.
And when the father, as most fit,
Has asked a blessing on their fare,
The daughters' hand to each their share.
And after thanks to God expressed,
Before they yet retire to rest,
Some work, some talk around the fire,
Whilst the wind blows higher and higher.
The father then the Bible takes,
The mother all about her wakes.
The Word is read with solemn tone.
Then on their knees they fall each one.
He thanks the Giver of all good
For their quiet lives led in the wood;
For the provision manifold
Made for their wants in winter's cold,—
For the rich products of the earth
And blazing fires upon their hearth;
And for His Word at morn and night,
In this dark world to be their light;
And ends imploring special grace
For them and their's in every place.
Joint supplication thus they make,
And all for the Redeemer's sake.

The howling wind rocks them to sleep,
All night He doth them safely keep.
Till day's gray light falls on their eyes.
When old and young awake and rise.
The children soon light up the fire,
Then feed each beast in barn and byre.
With nimble step and hearts as leal,
The girls prepare the morning's meal,
Potatoes, fish, oat-cakes and tea,
Their steam rolls up to the roof-tree.

But man lives not alone by bread;
His better self is not so fed.
The father reads, all join and sing,
Like as the birds make the woods ring.
Then down upon their knees they fall,

Some near the fire, some by the wall,
When he adores the great unknown
First cause from whom all good has flown.
Dwells on his wisdom with delight,
Whose is the day and whose the night.
Who gives the night for our repose
From care and thought, and oft from woe.
And then the day to feel anew
Our obligations to Him due.

They rise with looks that testify,
It is the Word will satisfy,—
What it contains, the inner man.
In all its wants, when nothing can.
And whilst the storm shuts them all in.
Whilst they sit listening to its din
Their minds roam over all outside,
Where winter rages far and wide—
Driving the snow, now here, now there
Scouring the woods already bare;
Freezing the rivers as they run,
Hiding from view the glorious sun.

Then they feel thankful—well they may,
To Him who keeps them, night and day
Admire His care for man and beast,
Even for the weakest and the least;

And now as winter fast has bound
In icy chains all things around.
Till summer comes to loose his hold
Of dormant creatures stiff and cold,
Some as if dead in caves and logs,
And others buried deep in bogs;
So is the winter of the grave,
From which the body He will save
For He has said it and will do it.
Who first created can renew it.
So is the winter of affliction,
Not always sent for dereliction
Of what we did not, or else did,
But oft for reasons from us hid.
Likewise the winter of the Church,
Let it prevail ever so much;
Her intercessor is alive,
And will His work in her revive.

B. C., C. B., March, 1868.

J. G.

* A sort of Crane so called here.

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Alfred Tennyson and the Glasgow Free- Presbytery.

The poet Tennyson has a short poem of 13
lines in the March No. of *Good Words*.
Here it is:

1865—1866.

I stood on a tower in the wet,
And New Year and Old Year met,
And winds were roaring and blowing;
And I said, "O years, that meet in tears,
Have ye aught that is worth the knowing?
Science enough and exploring,
Wanderers coming and going,
Matter enough for deploring,
But aught that is worth the knowing?"
Seas at my feet were flowing,
Waves on the shingle pouring
Old year roaring and blowing
And New Year blowing and roaring.

Some unappreciative readers may not be able
to see much in this effusion, but the most
unpoetic, will enjoy the follow rendering of
it, descriptive of a scene in the Glasgow Free
Presbytery. Dr. Gibson, as usual, got up
the scene. It seems that several members,

unequal to the exhaustive task of sustained attention during an entire sitting, had gone out at intervals (so the indignant Doctor alleged), "to refresh themselves." The imputation drew forth vehement denials from those who fancied themselves the objects of it, and there was some danger of the hubbub culminating in a Free fight, but happily such an extremity of disgrace was not reached. The Presbyter's angry passions gradually evaporated in repeated "roars" of "Chair, chair," and "Order, Order," though the still combative Doctor took the opportunity of a lull in the "roaring" to remind the rev. Court that "no roar would put him down!" The reminder was superfluous. Here is the Tennysonian version:

11, 3, 68.

I've listened for hours to long set
Speeches at Presbytery met,
With ministers roaring and blowing;
And I've said, "Oh, ye lights that get up such
fights

Have ye aught that is worth the knowing?
Scenes enough and dry boring,
For 'refreshments' men coming and going,
The Fact Dr. Gibson deploring,
But aught that is worth the knowing?"
Life's short hours are onward flowing,
While the word-flood incessant is pouring,
One Presbyter roaring and blowing,
And the rest all blowing and roaring.

FRIGHTFUL FAMINE IN FINLAND.—Every day (writes the clergyman of a parish in Finland) more than fifty peasants present themselves at my house completely exhausted by hunger, imploring bread for themselves and their families, who for some time have been living on moss, hay, and the bark of the fir. The frightful famine is far from being local, as the whole of the province is suffering under it. The last resources are exhausted, and the population has no other alternative than to eat hay or straw, or die of starvation.

SCHEMES OF THE CHURCH.

1868	HOME MISSION.		
March 4,	by cash from Wallace,	£1 11 7½	
" "	" " Pugwash	0 15 0	
" "	" " Saltsprings	5 0 0	
18 "	" " Bar. River	6 5 8	
23 "	" " Pictou Town	3 18 4	
27 "	" " River John	0 14 10	
1868.	YOUNG MEN'S SCHEME.		
March 4,	by cash from Wallace	1 1 11	
" "	" " Pugwash	1 7 6	
1868.	FOREIGN MISSION.		
Mch. 4,	by cash from Wallace	1 2 8	
18 "	" " Earltown	0 16 6	
" "	" " Tatamagouch River	0 16 11	

" " " W. B. R. John 2 13 4
27 " " " River John 0 12 0

RODERICK McKENZIE,
Pictou, March 31st, 1868. Treasurer.

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Lay Association, W. B. E. River, Con.

QUARTERLY COLLECTION.

SECTIONS.	COLLECTORS.	
Big Brook	W.B. Miss Christy McLean, " Johanna Ross	\$3.10
Hopewell	Miss Mary Barclay, " Mary Urquhart	3.25
Middle River.	Miss Isabella Grant, " Ellen Fraser	7.40
W. Side W.B.	Miss Mary B Cameron, " Jessie B. McQuarrie	5.68
E. Side W.B.	Miss Elizabeth Chisholm " Ellen Cameron	2.00
2nd div. W.B.	Miss McLean. " Eliza. McDonald	3.00
Fox Brook	Miss Barbara McKenzie, " Jane McBain	2.20
Total		\$26.63

D. GRAY, Sec,
Hopewell, W. B. March 1, 1868. B. L. A.

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List of Monies Collected for Lay Association,
St. Andrew's Church, New Glasgow, dur-
ing year ending 31st Jan. 1867, and
paid over to James Fraser, Esq.,
Central Treasurer.

Amounts collected for first three quarters
as per statement inserted in *Record* for Jan-
1868, as follows:—

Miss Sarah Fraser & Miss Jessie McKay,	\$15.25	
Miss Maggie McDonald & Miss Jessie Ann Hunter.	15.33	
Miss Mary Fraser, West Side	2 00	
Miss Christina Fraser, Fraser's Mountain	2 00	\$34.58

FOURTH QUARTER.

Miss Fraser and Miss McKay for North End, N. G.	\$4.62½	
Miss McDonald & Miss Hun- ther, South, End, N. G.	3.75	
Miss Mary Fraser, for West Side N. G.	1.25	
Miss Christina Fraser, for Fraser's Mountain,	0.50	
Miss Catherine McInnis, Fraser's Mountain,	3.77	
Miss Jessie Cameron and Miss Agness Weir for Big Cove, & S. R.	8.50	\$22.39½

\$56.97½
ALEXANDER FRASER, Downie,
New Glasgow, 26th March, 1868. Secretary.