American Presbyterian.

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Poetry.

SPEAK NOT ILL.

Nay, speak not ill! a kindly word
Can never leave a sting behind:
And, oh! to breathe each tale we've heard
Is far beneath a noble mind.
Full oft a better seed is sown
By choosing thus the kinder plan:
For if but little good be known,
Still let us speak the best we can.

Give us the heart that fain would hide,
Would fain another's faults efface:
How can it please e'en human pride
To prove humanity but base?
No! let us reach a higher mood,
A noble sentiment of man:
Be earnest in the search of good,
And speak of all the best we can.

Then speak no ill, but lenient be
To others' failings as your own;
If you're the first a fault to see,
Be not the first to make it known,
For life is but a passing day,
No lip may tell how brief its span;
Then, oh! the little time we stay,
Let's speak of all the best we can.

MR. EDITOR,—I was very much interested in these lines, which I recently saw on a tomb stone. Judging that others might be pleased with them, I transcribed them, and hand them to you. The lady has been dead more than thirty years. J. B.

Underneath these stones doth lie,
As much of virtue as could die,
Which when alive did vigor give
To as much of beauty as could live.

Ye who have wept o'er genius in its bloom
That faded daughter withered in the tomb,
Who love to linger where the mourner weeps,
Oh come and shed a tear where Martha sleeps.

Correspondence.

For the American Presbyterian.

INDIA.

PREVALENCE OF THE ENGLISH LANGUAGE.

MESSRS. EDITORS:—Some years ago, the American missionaries in Western India wrote as follows, viz.:

"Among the young men of this country, the desire for education is very strong, and is daily becoming stronger. What they principally seek is an English education. They regard it as the avenue to success and influence. We may find fault with that desire; we may exert ourselves to make them do so; the *fact* remains. We cannot overcome it. We should incur odium by attempting to do so. And having the appearance of being something providential, it commands our respect. India is awakening, and, like a Caspar Hauser, needs to be taught every thing. The young men wish to know not only western theology, but every thing western.

"God has a high purpose to fulfil in regard to India. And in the passion for English education, and in all the peculiar circumstances of this people, we must discern his workings. His hand is in it. The way in which he has chosen to accomplish his purposes may be different from what we expected, and different from what we desired. But we must fall in with his plans, when once indicated, or we must suffer the penalty. We may kick against the pricks if we will; we may row against wind and tide till we are weary; but our blind obstinacy will avail us nothing. God has, in a most remarkable manner, given India into the hand of England, and *the English language and English literature have here a high destiny to fulfil.*"

These views of the American missionaries are becoming speedily and remarkably verified in India. They were not the sentiment of the American missionaries only. The convictions of European missionaries on this subject have been equally strong, and perhaps they have yielded to the current, and availed themselves of the providential facilities thus furnished for prosecuting their work, with less hesitation and constraint than the American missionaries have.

It was not a question with the missionaries whether the Hindus should have a knowledge of the English language and the western sciences, but whether they would make the intense desire of the Hindus for these studies a means of bringing them under Christian teaching, and winning them to Christ.

It was entirely evident that the Hindus would learn English, and gain the knowledge they desired. The question pressed upon the missionaries,—Shall we teach English and the sciences in our schools, and thus bring the intelligent, high caste Hindu youth under our teaching and influence, or shall we make it necessary for all such youth to study in schools and colleges wholly under infidel and heathen influences, and confine our labors to the lower castes?

Most missionaries felt the necessity of doing what they could to make this strong passion for English and the western sciences subservient to the higher objects in preaching the gospel. Those who turned their efforts in this direction have had the joy of seeing them highly successful, and a good number of Christian converts gathered into their churches from these higher and more intelligent classes of Hindu youth.

The passion for English continues, and this language is every day becoming more universally prevalent in India. It is already the common medium of intercourse among the different nations of India. When educated youth from the Punjab, Calcutta, or Madras visit Bombay, they find access to their countrymen there only through the medium of English. And the same is true when educated young men from Bombay visit other parts of India. A young Hindu from Calcutta recently visited Bombay, and was invited to address an audience of his countrymen there. He did so, with much ability, in the English language. Their vernacular languages were unknown to each other, but in the English they found a common medium.

Tracts, books, and sermons, in every one of the vernacular languages, are limited in use and circulation almost entirely to a particular province or kingdom. The same in English find readers among all the different nations of India, and when native newspapers and periodicals shall aspire to universal patronage among all the people of India, they will be published in the English language.

Were not the missionaries right? Is there not something manifestly providential in this passion for English, and its increasing prevalence throughout India?—a language which unlocks to the Oriental mind the treasures of true science and the choicest literature, and is more thoroughly impregnated with the principles of the gospel than any other living language of the globe. Ought not missionaries to avail themselves unhesitatingly of this Christian language, and the valuable facilities it offers, in prosecuting their efforts to evangelize the 200,000,000 of India? R. G. W.

For the American Presbyterian.

NATURE THE SOURCE OF POETIC INSPIRATION.

There is, probably, no place in the world where the cultivation of the land, and what is called landscape gardening, is carried on to so high a state of perfection as in England. The English study nature intently, and seem to have an exquisite sense of her graceful forms and harmonious combinations. It is on account of this devotion to nature that England has furnished so many poets. The poets of other countries have become acquainted with the general charms of nature; but the British poets seem to have studied nature minutely, to have revelled in all her hidden treasures. The rustling trees, the gurgling brook, the humble violet, the spotless lily, and the glistening dewdrop, all have been seen by these close observers, and wrought out into some charming tale or moral.

Thomson, it is said, was accustomed to wander whole days and nights in the country among the hills and groves, and thus he was enabled to write that beautiful poem—"The Seasons." Milton was no less acquainted with nature than Thomson, and drew his most striking images from nature herself. In Cicero's poetry—for he wrote some poetry—we do not find any traces of that fire and fancy which so mark his oratory. He was not deficient in art or philosophy, but in his knowledge of nature. Thus it is, why the poet always selects for his haunt some secluded spot, surrounded by all that is grand and inspiring in nature.

The examples we have produced, show the importance of the poet's acquiring extensive knowledge of nature. By this we do not wish to be understood as placing no importance to science, art, or philosophy, as a source of poetic inspiration, but, on the contrary, it is of the utmost importance that the poet should be sound in his philosophy, and versed in the sciences. Astronomy, especially, opens a boundless field for the imagination. But we do mean to say, that nature is the great source of poetic inspiration, and that all who have excelled as poets have studied her most carefully; they have found in her secret charms which are unseen by the careless observer. It is too true, that there are only a few who can find enjoyment in wandering alone through the green fields, by the dancing brook, and among the groves, touched by the finger of frost; that so many pass along without even looking up to see a beautiful sunset, that gorgeous picture, painted, and spread out over the heavens, by our Maker, for man to view.

It has been said, that it is sufficient, without exactly copying nature, that the poet should conform to popular opinion or general sentiment; but as the great aim of poetry is to please, and as nothing unnatural can give pleasure, it ought to conform, as much as possible, to nature. The poet is, however, sometimes allowed to deviate from nature, and, by the aid of fancy, to embellish it.

As it is from the study of nature that the artist is enabled to make the dull, cold canvass expand with life, so, in no less degree, nature gives life and beauty to the verse. We cannot honor too much the genius of the artist that enables him to paint an enchanting landscape, and also to place before our weeping eyes the form of beloved friends; but is not the genius of him who can sketch the conquering hero on the memorable battle-field with his pen, and color them with rich figures and striking illustrations, more to be admired?

It is said that the poet is born a poet. True; the germ, that which by proper culture will grow and bear golden fruit, is born in the poet; but let that germ be uncared for, and left to grow wild, without any grafts of nature in it, it will bring forth nothing worthy of notice. You may say there has been but one Milton, or one Shakspeare: may not there have been many on whom nature has bestowed the same gifts, but whose after training has been such as to kill even genius? The poet must have first the poetic element in him, and then, by the aid of a careful study of nature, he will be able to write that which will live with the world. C. M. W.

For the American Presbyterian.

QUERIES.

MESSRS. EDS.—Queries, doubts, and fears, sometimes arise in my mind—strange, perplexing, unpleasant thoughts, which I would not harbor. Hence, I propose a few of them to you, hoping that some one skilled in theology may forever expel them by the sword of the Spirit.

Some years ago, there was a city minister lodging with me, who was a slave to the "weed." Its daily use seemed to be well nigh as necessary for him as his daily food. He even acknowledged to me his inability to preach well without it. Hence, it seemed to be an indispensable to the success of his religious services. But on one occasion, I was under the necessity of placing my head nearer to his than was agreeable, and his breath smelled worse than an ordinary carrion. It was indescribable. I believe it was unlike anything except its own kind. An unpleasant thought occurred to my mind, can the Holy Spirit enter in and dwell in a place so filthy as his body? for I could not help judging from the smell that such must be its character. But thoughts so disagreeable I would not harbor. Yet the spiritual character of the man and my olfactories seemed to be at variance.

Again, we have learned ministers, and even D. D's., of whom I am credibly informed, that the sick dislike to have them enter their rooms. These brethren, doubtless, are not aware of the fact, or they would be cautious where they go; but their ignorance does not mitigate the evil. A habit which all pronounce "filthy," has disqualified them for a very important duty. Are they glorifying God by the use of tobacco? Do they use it to the glory of God? Can a habit which is "filthy" be Christ-like?

My olfactories frequently inform me of Christians whose breath is more offensive than ordinary *carrion*. I do not like the use of that word, but I cannot think of a better. The apostle Paul prayed for the Thessalonians:—"And the very God of peace sanctify you wholly; and I pray God your whole spirit, and soul, and body, be preserved blameless unto the coming of our Lord Jesus Christ." 1 Thess. v. 23. That verse teaches the sanctification of our entire being—the body as well as the spirit. Then in the case of every Christian there ought to be a process of sanctification going on—a sanctification of, not merely the inner man, but also of the outer. But with many, a process of carrionization—pardon the word—seems to be going on. The breath very much belies them, if some such process is not going on. Their breath has become unendurable, and is continually becoming more so. Is such a body being sanctified? Certainly, if the spirit is being sanctified, the body cannot. The breath forbids such an idea. If the spirit is santified and the body is not, by-and-by what will become of it? Can it enter heaven without sanctification? Can a defiled thing enter that holy place? Or can the spirit enter the new Jerusalem, while the body is shut out as a defiled thing? Is that which is being utterly unfitted to enter the sick-room, being fitted to enter heaven?

Again, Paul says—1 Cor. iii., 16, 17: "Know ye not that ye are the temple of God, and that the Spirit of God dwelleth in you? If any man defile the temple of God, him shall God destroy; for the temple of God is holy, which temple ye are." There are a great many whose breath is very deceptive, if they are not defiling the temple of God—their bodies. To my olfactories, they seem as much like a defiled thing as any thing on earth, and if they are not defiling the temple of God, I do not know how they can do it. When the spirit is so wholly sanctified, and shall be admitted into the new Jerusalem, what will become of that defiled temple of God? For what place will it be fit? Will God destroy it? If the sick cannot endure it in their room, and even the well wish it at a respectful distance, would it be a proper subject for heaven?

We are told of fleshly lusts which war against the soul. From the manner in which this lust wars against the body, is there not danger lest it may affect the soul?

I should love to learn from some erudite D. D. if it really does leave the soul untouched, so that the soul's sanctification is going on, while the body is becoming worse than bestialized?

As our life here is short, these questions are important, and I should love to have my mind set at rest. Should some good brother enlighten my mind on these points and others which are intimately connected with them, I shall be thankful to him. And doubtless it will be quite a relief to many consciences, for I believe there are many who have their doubts about their being able to glorify God in the use of tobacco.

QUERIST.

CHANGES.

Mrs. Bailey—or the "elegant widow," as she was sometimes called—was a friend of my mother, and a particular admiration of mine. I admired a certain air of matronly dignity she possessed; I admired her rich dark hair, her still beautiful complexion, her white plump hands, her earnest, sincere manners and conversation, enriched with good and tasteful reading.

Just before I was married I called to say farewell, and to try to tell her how affectionately and how pleasantly she would be remembered. I found her in her sitting-room, surrounded with all that wealth could buy, and an exquisite taste select. She was in a state of joyful and loving expectation. Her only child—her handsome son—was to be home that day from college; a graduate, full of honors.

I knew Ralph well; a generous, chivalrous boy; no thought of meanness could be associated with him; so brave, so free-hearted, withal such a gentleman. Well I remember how she looked that day; how her large, dark eyes swam with tears; how she started when the door-bell rang, although she knew that it was much too soon.

There was the large rocking chair placed near the glowing grate, his new embroidered dressing-gown thrown over its back. His gay slippers placed ready. A vase of choice hot-house flowers filled the air of the room with a spirit-like fragrance. For Ralph had been journeying after leaving college, and, as his mother said, all the little things he loved to see, will be grateful and comfortable, after travelling in this snow, for it was snowing—large, feathery flakes, coming down with a swaying, wave-like motion, gently falling, and then dissolving—like our dreams—when the bare earth comes in contact.

I left the rich room, with its heat and delicate fragrance, and passed out to face the snow—and my own future.

Years have gone by. I have been working out my destiny. How well, that ponderous book, (the *last book* ever to be opened,) will reveal. Care, and the sharp tooth of time have been at work.

Another city and another home. After you have looked at my children, and I have exhibited them, and am sure that you appreciate the wit and talent and the uncommon ability of my "jewels," I will take you to look at my old friend. Not to the old splendid mansion you have seen her mistress of, but to one of the poorest courts in a city—very narrow—squalid, is not too strong a term. It snowed just at this time, many years ago. It is snowing now, but not as it did then, in large soft flakes, but in large crystallizations; ragged, and with stinging edges; driven fiercely by a biting wind, it whirls and eddies, and blinds you in its fury.

But we have reached the court. The snow has *not* fallen like loving spirits, and covered with its pure veil all of the meagerness of that place, but it has been blown into heaps, and drifted into corners; and the pale gleam of light that issues from the window of the last house, shows just enough of this for heart and eye to take in. Look through the window. There is poverty, but clean poverty. An old stove with just coals sufficient to be called a fire; a small piece of rag carpet, just large enough to hold the plain square table, at which sits an old woman, sewing up stockings for weavers. She is sewing rapidly—almost nervously. Her thin hands show every vein. That one tallow candle does not shine upon "rich dark hair," or the beautiful full bust, or the bright countenance that woman once possessed; "age should have withered her," and it is time for the "silver thread" to have come. But oh, not as now. Those large eyes are sunken deep; her clothing meager, not sufficient for heat; but clean, so clean that you see she must have been a lady. There is nothing in that room but the bed, and the table she is sewing by, and one chair—poor, cold, and dreary. As the wind rises, it has that cruel, chill whistle, indicative of intense cold. She leaves her chair, goes to the window, and listens long and anxiously; then walks to the mouth of the court, her gray head made still whiter by the snow; returning, she murmurs, "It is too cold for him to be out; if he should fall coming home, without being seen, he would die of cold." She resumes her large needle and begins to sew, but she weeps and trembles.

One or two more journeys to the street, and she puts on her bonnet and poor shawl, to go after him. She knew his haunts—has often gone after him. The police on "that round" know her, and often say, as she passes—"poor thing." She has several squares to battle with the piercing wind. Arriving at the first drinking-house, she is almost blind and deaf, with the conflict. The bar-keeper knows her, and her errand, tells her, no. Ralph is not there. He had left some hours ago. Alone? Yes—alone,—I *must* find him. She knows she has often found him, at another place some distance off. But she *must* find him; should he fall, he might die in the snow—he is so enfeebled and broken by dissipation. She thinks of his boyhood; how he loved the snow; how joyously his blue eyes shone at the first flake that fell; his eager enjoyment of the sledging and snow-balling; she remembers the great snow man he made in the yard; how huge and grotesque it looked; and Oh! with what a thrill memory recalls that once, when he came home in the evening, how sad he looked, as he told her of a drunken man he had seen falling and refalling in the snow; how the poor wretch had cut his face, and left its bloody mark upon the snow; and how he feared he would not get safely home;—she remembers, too, how, in his sleep, he cried out, and when she went to him, he told her that he had dreamt that he saw the man—dead—lying in a pile of snow; and how it was only with caresses she could quiet him.

With this rush of memory and emotion, she hurries along; sometimes walking backwards; sometimes seeking refuge in door-ways, to escape the storm's furious rush; sometimes falling; sometimes breathless and panting. She at last stands in the wished for door. The bar-keeper, usually surly and cross, seems touched by her pale face and her exhaustion; tells her that Ralph is not there; that he has gone some time; tells her, with a somewhat human voice, to come in and shake off the snow; but she hurries away, and pleadingly implores the first policeman she meets, to look out for Ralph. She is forced to ask the assistance of the next one for herself.

Yes!—Ralph had left the drinking-house—very, oh! very much bewildered with liquor—reeling and confused—blinded by the wind and snow—he turns the wrong street—goes farther from home. In passing a deserted house, with an area—a sudden whirl and gust—he reels—loses his balance—and falls with his drunken weight into the area.

The wind abates. The snow falls more gently down, and shrouds him. The cold flakes fall upon his open blue eyes, and they do not shrink; kisses with its pure cold embrace the lips so fondly pressed; the cold flags, and not a mother's breast, pillow that once innocent baby head.

HAGAR.

BEHAVIOUR IN CHURCH.

We lately called the attention of our readers to the importance of punctuality in their attendance at the appointed place of worship. We beg leave to throw out a few thoughts as to that deportment which is becoming those who are engaged in the worship of Almighty God. We propose in these remarks simply to give a few hints, in the hope that they may prove useful to some who may, through inattention, not have adverted to some matters about which we wish to say a word.

And here, in the first place, we would say to you, Christian reader, make it a rule, when you reach the house of God, to proceed forthwith to your pew. It is, in our view, very unseemly for persons to be standing in the church-yard, or about the church-doors. Such a practice is certainly a very poor preparation for the solemn exercises of the sanctuary.

After having reached your seat, should the services not have commenced, let it be your concern to spend what time you may have in the way of lifting up your heart to God for his blessing upon the holy exercises in which you are about to engage. We have often had our heart saddened in looking over a worshipping assembly, to see so little indication of seriousness on the part of those who were about to draw near to God in the most solemn acts of worship. We have sometimes occasionally noticed persons on taking their seats, bowing the head, or placing the hand upon the head, in which act we recognise an expression of devout feeling; and whenever it has been seen, it has always had a most happy effect upon us before rising to lead the exercises of the sanctuary. It cannot be doubted that, if congregations were more generally impressed with a sense of the solemnity of the occasion on which they meet as a worshipping assembly, such manifestations of devout feeling would be much more frequently witnessed.

The deportment of persons during the exercise of prayer is often very different from what it ought to be. The outward posture should be attended to by persons when engaged in this exercise. We have various approved postures mentioned in the Scriptures, such as standing, kneeling, and prostrating the body. The posture observed by our church in public assemblies is that of standing. It is not our object at present to discuss the propriety or warrantableness of any or all of these outward forms. What we wish to impress upon the minds of our readers is the importance of uniformity in this matter. We cannot but consider it as very improper for some to sit while others are standing. Of course this remark does not apply to the aged and the infirm. But it is well-known that these are not the only persons who are chargeable with this departure from the usage of our church. In connexion with this we would remark, that we have sometimes been not a little pained in witnessing the indifference which many manifest during this solemn exercise. They seem to forget that the minister is only their mouth to God, and that it is their duty as well as his to engage in the exercise. How unseemly to see persons, after having listened to a few introductory sentences, turn their backs upon the speaker, put their arms akimbo, and continue, during the service, staring at every object which can possibly engage their attention, until the service is closed! How improper is such a deportment! How utterly inconsistent is it with that reverence which should manifest itself in those who profess to be addressing the Majesty of heaven!

If we look at the conduct of some persons during the preaching of the word, we shall often see much that is very improper. There are those who sleep during the greater part of this exercise. Yes, we have seen persons from whose conduct you might suppose that they came to the house of God for this very purpose. The speaker will not, perhaps, be through the introduction of his discourse before the eyes of some about him are closed, and their heads hanging, or very comfortably lying back against the wall of the house which, no doubt, the sleeper finds to be very convenient. Sometimes the speaker is blamed for not keeping persons awake. We are willing that he should have a share of the blame; but it is sometimes the case that the sleeper will not give him a chance to keep him awake; for he falls asleep before the preacher can be properly said to have entered upon his subject, and as for waking up some by a lively and animated manner of speaking,—why, it is altogether out of the question. It only seems to increase the somnolency of some people; or if they should happen to open their eyes, the next moment will find them closed again. Christian reader, leaving out of view the sinfulness of such conduct, one would suppose that a sense of good manners would be sufficient to keep persons from indulging in it. We are aware that a great many plausible excuses are urged on behalf of sleepers, but say what we will in defence of such persons, their conduct is highly unbecoming. Let them retire early on Saturday night, eat light dinners, pray to God before coming to his house that they may be able to give attention to his word, and when they hear the text announced, let them endeavor to stir up their souls to hear what God will speak by his servant,—let them do these things, and we are persuaded that efforts of this kind persevered in would not fail to effect a radical and lasting change.

Had we time, we would like to say a word to a class of persons who, although they do not sleep, yet seem to listen with the utmost indifference. It matters not what may be the subject of discourse,—the agonizing sufferings of the Saviour, or the terrors of the judgment-day—there is still the same appearance of listless indifference. Let such persons bear in mind that, if their manner is a true index of the state of their feelings, their heart is far from being in such a frame as it should be; and if this be not the case, this manner is very improper. It is discouraging to the speaker, who supposes you to be paying no attention to what he is saying; for it is hard to convince any one who is addressing a person with his eyes half shut, or wandering about through the house, that he either hears or regards what he is saying. But this is not all. It has a bad effect upon the rest of your fellow-worshippers; and more than this, it is displeasing to God, in whose presence you are, and who is addressing his message to you. Persons who act in this way may say what they please; we cannot persuade ourselves that they know how they ought to behave in the house of God.

How improperly, too, do persons sometimes conduct themselves during the time the benediction is being pronounced! They seem to look for this part of the Divine worship as though it were just the signal of dismission from the sanctuary. Accordingly, you will sometimes see persons placing one hand on the pew door, with their hat in the other, just ready to start as soon as the *Amen* escapes the lips of the minister of God. Nay, you will sometimes see them, during this solemn exercise, adjusting their garments, or those of their children, as though the consequence of being detained one moment in their pews after the benediction has been pronounced, would be of the most serious character. Christian reader, this is very improper. There is no exercise more solemn, and none should strike the mind with greater awe, than that of the benediction. It recognises the doctrine that there are three distinct persons in the Godhead,—that each of these sustains distinct offices in the scheme of redemption,—that they are all present in our religious assemblies, and that the blessing and agency of each are necessary to the success of religious ordinances. When such is the import of the words uttered in this exercise by the minister of God, with what solemnity and awe should they be uttered by the speaker and heard by the congregation!

We have felt inclined to call the attention of our readers to these things, feeling that they are too much overlooked by professing Christians. Religion is a serious, solemn thing, and those who observe its forms should have a corresponding behaviour. Their whole deportment should show that they realize the presence of the great God of heaven and earth, before whose bar they must shortly appear. Let our conduct, then, in God's house here below, ever be such as to indicate that we are seeking preparation for a place in that house not made with hands eternal in the heavens.

Christian Instructor.

LOOKING AT THE SUN.

A traveller in the east relates that a pilgrim joined in their caravan who had long been engaged in journeying from one to another of those places held sacred by Mussulmans. It had been one of his religious acts to gaze constantly at the sun. His eyes had become nearly blind, and the muscles of his neck rigid in that position. Still this earnest but deluded seeker for salvation continued the destructive practice. Christian, you are bid to look to the Sun of Righteousness and be not blinded, but blessed with increase of sight. You have looked to him, and been saved from death. You must continue to look unto him for all that you need to sustain, to promote, to perfect the life implanted in your soul. Paul says, "Let us run with patience the race that is set before us, looking unto Jesus, the Author and Finisher of our faith." Happy is it for you, if your spiritual muscles are already become fixed with perfect steadiness in that position. He that looketh back is not fit for the kingdom of God.

While we gaze steadfastly at the sun, other objects fade from our sight. So let us gaze at Christ, the Sun of Righteousness, and the sinful attractions of earth will fade away and be forgotten before His supreme glory.

LIVING FAST.

This phrase is applied frequently to certain young men who are following a fashionable course of life, attended with more or less dissipation and extravagance. But with great propriety this term may be applied to all those who are hurrying through life,—overworking the brain, and giving but little rest to their body or minds. Carlyle very truly remarks, that "the race of life has become intense; the runners are treading upon each other's heels; wo be to him who stops to tie his shoe-strings!" What a fearful amount of "wear and tear" to the nervous system is there in every department of life! What a continual strife is there in every community for wealth,—for distinction and for pleasure! How much disappointment and envy may be found rankling in the breasts of many persons! Dr. Arnold, of Rugby, used to say, "It is not work that injures a man; it is vexation that does it." It is this "fast living" in our country which produces so many of the ills that flesh is heir to—it undermines the constitution—breaks down the nervous system—produces premature old age and shortens life.

A SHORT SERMON TO SEXTONS.

WHICH MAY BE OVERHEARD BY ALL CHURCH OFFICERS.

DEAR BRETHREN:—You occupy an important office in the Church of Christ, which is the kingdom of God on earth. An ancient saint, with a crown on his head, said he would rather be among you than dwell in the tents of wickedness. *Very honorable, then, is your office.* This is the *firstly* of our sermon. Let us now pass to

Secondly. Very useful may your post be also. No man in the congregation can more effectually stupefy the preacher; no one can more effectually put to sleep the hearers. Know you, brethren, the importance of *good air?* It is next important in the worshipping assembly to the good Spirit from on high, of which the holy Scripture maketh it the emblem. As the Lord hath the gift of the latter, so the sexton hath of the former. If he giveth it not, the thoughts of the preacher flag, and the heads of the hearers bow in worship to the false god,—Morpheus. Keep idolatry out of the church, brother sexton. There was a band of old saints once, who were called Iconoclasts, because they tore down idols and cast them out of the temples. The temples of our land are degraded by the worshippers of Morpheus; sextons are the champions to make a crusade against this abomination. They could purge the land of it if they would. Up, then, brethren, and expel this heathenism. Do you ask how it shall be done?

1. Up with the windows at seasonable times.

2. Especially keep open, a little, those nearest the pulpit, during the whole service. The preacher will repay you by better sermons.

3. Manage this matter with skill; blunder not, as some in your honorable office do, by having the windows either too much open, so as to chill the hearers, or not open at all, so as to stupefy them. Distribute the ventilation in small drafts all along the casements.

Again. Never freeze the congregation by neglecting the fires; begin them early, to make sure the comfort of the temple; it is better to begin too soon than too late, for when there is too much heat it can be relieved by ventilation; when there is not enough, ventilation has to be lost without remedying the deficiency. How many in your honorable functions, brethren, have thus robbed the Lord of the worship of an entire assembly? Remember, that with your peculiar honor is connected peculiar responsibility, and we must all give account.

Again. Men in honorable posts should always have *courtesy* up to their honor. A sexton should be a model of politeness; he should move with alacrity, accommodating every body, and when he cannot accommodate them, showing that he feels the privation more than they do. Next in importance to a good preacher in the pulpit, is a good sexton at the portal; his smile lighteth up the multitude; his whisper of courtesy openeth the ears of the people for the trumpet of truth. A rude sexton is out of his place; he is beneath its gracious honor, as much as a bear would be, guarding the palace-gate of a king.

Application. And now, brethren, let him that hath ears to hear, hear this message. Harden not your hearts against it. He that hath sinned in these respects, let him sin no more, but make haste to repent. Let all our temples on the coming Sabbath show that the word has been fitly spoken, and the seed has fallen into good and honest hearts. The Lord add his blessing. Amen.

WASHINGTON IRVING'S FAME.

The poet, W. C. Bryant, recently delivered a fitting eulogy on Irving before the New York Historical Society, from which we take the closing paragraphs:

"I have thus set before you, my friends, with such measure of ability as I possess, a rapid and imperfect sketch of the life and genius of Washington Irving. Other hands will yet give the world a bolder, a more vivid and exact, a more distinctive portraiture. In the meantime, when I consider for how many years he stood before the world as an author with a still increasing fame—half a century in this most changeful of centuries—I cannot hesitate to predict for him a deathless renown. Since he began to write, empires have risen and passed away; mighty captains have appeared on the stage of the world, performed their part, and been called to their account; wars have been fought and ended, which have changed the destinies of the human race. New arts have been invented and adopted, and have pushed the old out of use; the household economy of half mankind has undergone a revolution. Science has learned a new dialect and forgotten the old; the chemist of 1809 would be a vain babbler among his brethren of the present day, and would in turn become bewildered in the attempt to understand them. Nation utters speech to nation in words that pass from realm to realm with the speed of light. Distant countries have been made neighbors; the Atlantic Ocean has become a narrow frith, and the Old world and the New shake hands across it; the East and the West look in at each other's windows. The new inventions bring new calamities, and men perish in crowds by the recoil of their own devices. War has learned more frightful modes of havoc, and armed himself with deadlier weapons; armies are borne to the battle-field on the wings of the wind, and dashed against each other and destroyed with infinite bloodshed. We grow giddy with these rapid ceaseless mutations: the earth seems to reel under our feet, and we turn to those who write like Irving for some assurance that we are still in the same world into which we were born; we read and are quieted and consoled. In his pages, we see that the language of the heart never becomes obsolete; that Truth and Good and Beauty, the offspring of God, are not subject to the changes which beset the inventions of men. We become satisfied that he whose works were the delight of our fathers, and are still ours, will be read with the same pleasure by those who come after us.

"If it were becoming at this time and in this assembly to address our departed friend as if in his immediate presence, I would say: Farewell, thou who hast entered into the rest prepared, from the foundation of the world, for serene and gentle spirits like thine. Farewell, happy in thy life, happy in thy death, happier in the reward to which that death was the assured passage; fortunate in attracting the admiration of the world to thy beautiful writings; still more fortunate in having written nothing which did not tend to promote the reign of magnanimous forbearance and general sympathies among thy fellow-men. The brightness of that enduring fame which thou hast won on earth is but a shadowy symbol of that glory to which thou hast been admitted in the world beyond the grave. Thy errand upon earth was an errand of peace and good-will to men, and thou art now in a region where hatred and strife never enter, and where the harmonious activity of those who inhabit it acknowledges no impulse less noble or less pure than that of love.

Candor, in some people, may be compared to lemon drops, in which the acid predominates over the sweetness.

I WON'T WORK ON THE SABBATH.

1. I need to rest. I work hard from Monday morning till Saturday night, and Sabbath is almost the only rest I get. A man must rest sometimes, or he will kill himself. Even a steam-engine, made of brass and iron, must have time to cool, and clean, and tighten screws. An omnibus horse, that will last five years if allowed his Sabbath rest, will die in three years' constant work. Every year of Sabbath work shortens a man's life seven. Why should I sell my life for any man's money? *I won't work on the Sabbath!*

3. I have a soul to save. I must die some day. And after death I must give an account to the God who gave me life for the use I made of it. It stands to reason that I ought to try to learn what he wants me to do, and that I ought to try to do it. But how can a poor fellow who is off to work at six, and hard at it all day, learn any thing about religion, unless he learns on Sabbath? And if a man keeps himself ignorant of his duty, his ignorance won't save his soul. It won't do to say, when the train arrives, "I didn't know the time, and am not ready." It is my business to know. God gives me the Sabbath that I may have time to learn, if I lose my Sabbath I lose my soul. *I won't work on the Sabbath!*

3. I have a mind to cultivate. Almighty God did not make me only to eat, and drink, and work, and die. A horse can do all that. Nor is making money the chief end of a man. Of what use is money, unless a man knows how to use it? A horse may draw a dray load of money after him, and be none the better of it. It is not the money but the mind that makes the man, and the Sabbath that gives the time to improve it. French Emperors, Austrian despots, and Carolina slave-owners know this, and to prevent men from thinking they bribe or cheat their slaves out of the Sabbath. But I am neither a Carolina negro nor a French peasant. If I do work hard for a living, I am just as good a man, and as well entitled to all the rights God gave me, as any rich merchant or railroad director in the land. I calculate you have not got money enough in all your railroad companies between this and Bunker's Hill to buy me for your negro. and *I won't work on the Sabbath!*

4. The working-men of America had better look after their rights, or they will soon lose them. The price of liberty is eternal vigilance. The law of God gives the working-man the *right* to rest on the Sabbath. His law is, "Remember the Sabbath day to keep it holy. Six days shalt thou labor, and do all thy work. But the seventh is the Sabbath of the Lord thy God; in it thou shalt not do any work; thou, nor thy son, nor thy daughter, nor thy man servant, nor thy maid-servant, nor thy cattle, nor the stranger that is within thy gates." The law of Ohio ratifies this right to the working-men of this State. But bold, bare-faced attempts are made to trample on these laws, and rob the working-man of his right to rest, and even to have the State law which secures this right repealed, that rich men might make money out of the lives, and liberties, and souls of the working-men of Ohio. Money is powerful; but, thank God, we have the ballot-box, and are not yet fools enough to vote away our own liberties. *I won't vote for any man who will repeal the law which secures our right to rest on the Sabbath!*

Charles Philip, Farmer, Illinois.

PECULIARITIES OF THE EARLY PREACHERS.

When a bishop or preacher travelled, he claimed no authority to exercise the duties of his functions, unless he was invited by the churches where he attended public worship. The primitive churches had no idea of a bishop of Rome presuming to dictate to a congregation in Africa. Nothing, however, was more common than such friendly visits and sermons, as were seen in practice. The churches thought them edifying. In case the bishop was sick or absent, one of the deacons, or sometimes a short-hand writer, used to read a homily, that had been preached, and, perhaps, published by some good minister, and sometimes a homily that had been preached by the bishop of the church.

We have great obligations to primitive notaries, for they very early addressed themselves to take down the homilies of public preachers. Sometimes the hearers employed them, sometimes the preachers, and sometimes themselves. For this purpose they carried writing tablets, waxed, and styles, that is, pointed irons, or gravers, into the assembly, and stood round the preacher to record what he said.

The deacons placed themselves round the pulpit, and before sermon one of them cried, with a loud voice, *Silence, Hearken*, or something similar. This was repeated often as necessary, I suppose at proper pauses, when the preacher stopped. Their manners were different from ours; but, really, our manners want some of their customs. It might do some drowsy folks good to be alarmed every five or ten minutes with, *Mind what you are about! Let us listen! Attend to the word of God!*

The fathers differed much in pulpit action; the greater part used very moderate and sober gesture: Paul, of Samosata, used to stamp with his foot, and strike his thigh with his hand, and throw himself into violent agitations; but he was blamed for it by his cotemporaries. They thought his action theatrical, and improper in a church; and yet, in every church, the people were allowed, and even exhorted, to applaud the preacher, by shouting and clapping their hands at the close of a period, as at the theatre, or in a forum. The first preachers delivered their sermons all extempore, and they studied, while they preached, the countenances of their auditors, to see whether their doctrine was understood.

Sermons, in those days, were all in the vulgar tongue. The Greeks preached in Greek, the Latins in Latin, for the preachers meant to be understood. They did not preach by the clock, so to speak, but short or long as they saw occasion. Augustine used to leave off when the people's hearts seemed properly affected with the subject. He judged of this sometimes by their shouting, and at other times by their tears. Their sermons were usually about an hour long, but many of them may be deliberately pronounced in half an hour, and several in less time.

Robinson's Dissertation on Public Preaching.

The sick-room contemplations of a religious mind weave all life's meaning and mystery into the fabric of goodness and love. Sickness, as we commonly esteem it, is a calamity. It is a calamity. It is a calamity according to our measure of evil. No one in his right mind would pray to be prostrate with disease. But there are many who from the depths of a blessed experience can thank God that they have been. You may talk about health as you please. You may extol it as the richest blessing which descends upon our mortal lot, and justly. But I ask any one who has ever had a profound experience of sickness—of sickness exalted by the holy influence of religion—if he would exchange those experiences for the health which they cost him?

Rev. Horatio Stebbins.

FEAR is a prodigious magnifier, especially when it has been excited by any unusual object. No traveller ever saw a small tiger, no landsman ever experienced a gale at sea that was not a tornado.