

TERMS.  
By Mail, \$2. By Carrier, \$2.50.  
Twenty cents additional, after three months.  
Clubs—Ten or more Papers sent to one address,  
payable strictly in advance and in arrears.  
By Mail, \$2 50 per annum; By Carrier, \$3 per annum.  
Ministers and Ministers' Widows, \$2 50 in  
advance.  
Home Missionaries, \$2 00 in advance.  
Remittances by mail are at our risk.  
Postage—Five cents quarterly in advance, paid  
by subscribers at the office of delivery.  
Advertisements—25 cents per line for the  
first and 10 cents for the second insertion.  
One square (ten lines) one month.....\$3 00  
..... two months..... 5 50  
..... three months..... 7 50  
..... six months..... 12 00  
..... one year..... 20 00  
The following discount on long advertisements, in-  
serted for three months and upwards, is allowed:  
Over 20 lines, 10 per cent. off; over 50 lines, 20 per  
cent.; over 100 lines, 35 per cent.

## American Presbyterian.

THURSDAY, JANUARY 10, 1867.

### DRIFTING.

A very pleasing picture, designed, we think, by Millais, bears the title "Drifting." It represents the occupants of a pleasure-boat, with oars slung lazily by the side, as giving up the direction of their craft wholly to the current. They are content with whatever disposition the force of circumstances may make of them. They are without plan of their own; they make no effort, they offer no resistance, they are apparently without energy. A listless, languid feeling pervades the picture, in which the broad-leaved pond-lilies seem to share. The water is placid and the current slow.

The picture suggests a fact of frequent, nay, habitual, occurrence in human conduct and experience. The great multitude only drift with the tide. They have no independent purpose. They have no plan of life which they pursue with energy. They submit passively to the sway of a corrupt nature; they are satisfied with the beliefs and the standards of living which prevail around them. They feel no call within or from circumstances without to distinguish themselves. There is nothing of the racer or the wrestler contending for a prize, in their conduct. They are not to be compared with fleet yachts, spreading every inch of canvass, and employing every device of nautical skill, to excel in speed in a voyage of thousands of miles across a stormy ocean, in midwinter. They are rather like the listless occupants of Millais' pleasure-boat, who, without a shred of canvas, or the stroke of an oar, are gliding along as the current may please to bear them.

It is, indeed, very pleasant to drift, upon a summer evening, among fragrant pond-lilies, and in the society of those we love. And when a fair share of the rowing and the rough work of life has been done, when we have pulled ourselves into places where the current is safe and no remote roar of a cataract is in our ears, it may be altogether consistent with man's duty and destiny to rest upon one's oars, and to enjoy the Sabbath calmness and beauty which God sometimes gives to peculiar periods of our lives. Certainly there is a drift of Divine Providence to which we faintly may yield, and sometimes it is very far from calm to our view. But whatever is its seeming nature, and however we may have struggled against it at first, when a Divine current is manifest in our lives, it should give us satisfaction to recognize and to yield to it. Taking care not to confound Providence with our own sluggishness and blameable incapacity, with subdued and submissive hearts, we should turn our prow into the current and say, The Will of the Lord be done. There may be sensuous pleasure in drifting as the artist has drawn it. But there is great and solemn joy, there is a rapturous awe of the spirit, in discerning and acquiescing in a real and clear manifestation of the Divine will in our affairs. The joy and triumph of success in some arduously pursued and important scheme of life, attained in the face of strong opposing currents, is scarcely so pure and so unalloyed as the deep satisfaction of finding oneself in the hands of a God, who makes himself known even in heavy crosses and disappointments.

But opposite to all this is the drift of the worldling on the irresistible current of his own sins, on the tide of passion, of pride, of worldliness and of selfishness; the drift of the self-deceived on the superficial tide of formalism and legality, while just beneath the strong current of the unrenewed nature sweeps him unsuspectingly toward destruction; the drift of the impenitent sinner who will not heed the favoring gale of the Holy Spirit, but perhaps plies the oar vigorously in the other direction, when there is the least motion in the current toward salvation. Selfishness is the one great, steadily-moving, all-powerful stream in the unrenewed life, with many side currents and eddies, yet all yielding to its great onward sweep. Passion is a great gale blowing in the same direction. To these influences it is certainly easy to yield; drifting is agreeable to the flesh, but the movement is swift, and sure, and accelerating; until the roar of the great cataract announces the end, and instead of a smooth and steady current, the fearful rush and rage of the rapids catches the unhappy vessel, and whirls it with irresistible fury over the edge of the precipice, into the abyss below. Terrible, indeed, is the fact that the sinner needs but to let things take their course—to drift, in order to perish forever. Alas! for the youth who is fairly adrift on the fatal tide of sensual indulgence. The movement, at first, is so quiet and

gradual that it rouses no fear. He glides along, surrounded and lulled to sleep with pleasures. He goes deeper and deeper into indulgence. The current sweeps on, growing stronger and stronger. Evil habit binds and disables him with her chords. His soul is drugged, his conscience is stupefied, his reason is confused, his energies are crippled, his good name is defaced; when, the charm of the tempter being broken, he rouses up barely in time to see his boat sweeping around the inner circle of the whirlpool of vice, from which his most frantic efforts avail not to deliver him. Merciful God, compassionate Saviour! though often provoked and blasphemed by the perishing sinner, only thy almighty grace can rescue him now!

The oars which we must ply to escape this fate are named self-denial and prayer. Instead of drifting, we must breast the current in its smooth, deceitful reaches, and against the wind and tide of custom, habit and nature, we must work—work out our own salvation with fear and trembling. We must strive, agonize, to counteract the current which sets so strongly to perdition. We must cross nature. We must not be conformed to the world, but transformed by the renewing of our minds. In place of our own will, we must put the good, acceptable and perfect will of God. All claims to righteousness, merit or strength in ourselves, must be given up for the merit and strength of Christ and his Spirit. Against the current of despair, we must ply the oars of humble and hearty trust in an all-sufficient and infinitely gracious Saviour.

Many, far too many Christians are merely drifting. They are not positive, independent, earnest in their lives. They are not steadily, day by day, striving to build up a well-balanced, beautiful, noble character. They are not carrying on the inward conflict with passion, with covetousness, and with besetting sin, like soldiers in a great cause. They are not striving to make their influence felt for God in their own sphere. They do not feel personally responsible for the progress of Christ's kingdom, for the suppression of vice and the maintenance of just and righteous laws in the community. They do not earnestly endeavor to shape their own and others lives to holy uses and a heavenly destiny. They get along with as little effort as possible. They drift with the rest of the Church. In ordinary times, there are many of these drifting Christians. There is no violent opposition to face now, so that the mere profession and outward observance of Christianity may be maintained without hard tugging. A revival is a time when many of these drifting Christians are roused to seize the oars and work. But even then many are satisfied to see the rest work, while they still drift on the quickened tide.

We don't believe in drifting as the prevailing mode of locomotion. It is not suited to a probationary state, or to a sinful world in which the drift is altogether in the wrong direction. It is out of place, premature, disastrous. As free, intelligent creatures, under divine grace, we must put forth independent volitions, and interfere with and counterwork the natural tendencies of things around and in us.

Nor do we believe in a philosophy which leaves all the world drifting on a current called "natural law;" which will scarcely have patience to listen even to a question as to the time when all things commenced this drifting; but which sees in beginning, middle and end, only a blind, material submission to law. The formation of species and the birth of man, according to this philosophy, are mere incidents and marks of progress in this inconceivably prolonged drifting. We are mere waifs on an infinite, irresistible tide, which will bear us out of sight, as it has borne away forever, other forms of being. In this way of viewing things, no place is left, scarcely at the unimaginable beginning—none certainly afterwards—for an oar to be put in, for a force to be exercised adverse to this current. Nothing betraying real freedom in God or man is admissible in this scheme. The drift cannot be arrested by miracle or by prayer. It is remorseless, heartless law. It is blind, incomprehensible nature, in whose hands man, though immeasurably superior, is powerless. It is a great, restless current, rushing down awful precipices to eternal chaos and night.

The world is not adrift. A personal God is in it. None are adrift but false philosophers and enemies of God, and willing victims of passion, prejudice and sin.

THE ENGLISH ROMAN CATHOLIC has held a great demonstration in favor of the Temporal Power of the Pope. Speeches were made and funds subscribed; the former more freely than the latter.

### AT IT AGAIN.

The enemies of the good old Sunday laws of our Commonwealth, of the good order of our city, and of "the ease of creation" generally, are again before the Legislature with their plea for repeal. The very first bill offered in the Senate was the product of their zeal, and is as follows:—

*Be it enacted, &c.,* That it shall be lawful for all passenger railway companies within the County of Philadelphia to run their cars upon their respective railways upon all days of the week, and all laws and parts of laws inconsistent with this act are hereby repealed.

It was fathered by the celebrated Mr. Donovan, the Irish Catholic member from the third district in this city. Our readers are, we believe, well acquainted with the character of this Democratic State Senator. If they are not, we need only say that his claims to political elevation at the hands of his fellow-citizens are almost identical with those of Mr. John Morrissey, of New York; the only difference being that those of Mr. Morrissey are on a grander scale, and have, consequently, been rewarded by a generous New York constituency with a seat in the National, rather than the State, legislature.

It will be remembered, too, that Mr. Donovan undertook the management of a similar measure in the Senate a year ago. It is a little singular that, with the prestige of utter failure in that attempt weighing upon him, he should once more be entrusted with the enterprise. Can it be, that he is the only member from our city who can be induced to engineer this miserable piece of work; that a measure on which Mr. Forney's heart is set must be put into the hands of one of his bitterest political foes, and who has already been badly beaten in the attempt; that an open and violent sympathizer with secession must be engaged, a second time, for a work which a leading republican journal advocates with such devotion? We have been told that the defeat of our former Senator from the first district, Mr. Nichols, was a consequence of his vote against the repeal of the Sunday laws last session. Yet the gentleman who, on this supposition, owes his seat in the Senate to the anti-Sunday sentiment of this city, is passed over in the arrangements for introducing the bill; nor do the Republicans show the zeal of men who wish to purge themselves of such a bad repute as that of friends of the Sabbath.

However, ere this article meets our readers' eyes, much may have occurred to throw light on the situation. We may venture, meanwhile, to deny any intimation that the friends of the Sabbath have resorted to the device of securing Mr. Donovan's services, and thus introducing the measure burdened with all the disadvantages which it must suffer in his hands, before it could be introduced under more favorable circumstances. The result may show that such a policy would have been shrewd. But whatever services may be rendered by the member from the third district, they are no doubt voluntary, and with quite opposite views from those of the friends of the Sabbath.

But seriously, we ask our legislators to spare our city such an infliction as is contemplated in this repeal. We ask them whether they can seriously meditate the loosening of the bonds of good order, especially in a great city, where there is such special and growing need of them? We respectfully remind them that this very anti-Sunday movement, in its persistence and violence, is a novelty; and is itself a symptom of the demoralization which is growing with the growth of the city. It is not the work of the wise and good and orderly and pious of our city. Judges and lawyers, who know crime and its causes, are not in the movement. It is a demonstration of hostility to the Evangelical Churches of the city, many of which will be rendered useless and their ministry silenced, several months in the year, if it is carried out. It is a movement whose strength is almost exclusively in the foreign elements, the infidel Germans, the Irish Catholics, the Jews, and the small unevangelical sects in the city.

No, Messrs. Legislators; the appearance of such a movement should warn you, that the time has come for you to exercise greater watchfulness than ever, over the morals of the greatest city of your Commonwealth. Rather should you be stirred up, by the renewed offer of Mr. Donovan's bill, to instruct your Committee on Vice and Immorality to inquire what reasonable restraint upon vice and immorality has been left unapplied; what laws directed against the prevailing sources of disorder among us are yet to be enacted or need to be amended; rather should it be your

concern, as wise rulers, to put new guards around that institution, which, well-observed, is the surest defence of morals and good order in the community, the Christian Sabbath. For be assured, your own labors and those of the co-ordinate departments of authority in the State for the protection of morals, will be successful in proportion as you maintain the fundamental ordinances of religion. As you suffer them to be sacrificed and trampled upon, your work will be at once more arduous and less effectual. If you wish to relax the restraints of law anywhere within the State, let it not be among the seething population of your large cities. If you wish to plant a second New York in your State, give us the license of a New York Sabbath.

We believe it is a question whether a legislature has power, under the Constitution, to tamper with a fundamental law in the manner proposed by Mr. Donovan; whether it can rightfully abrogate such a law for one section or locality, and leave it in force in all the others. But if distinctions are to be made between the cities and the rural districts, at the very first glance it must be evident that more stringent regulations are required in the former than in the latter. It is a grievous legislative blunder that is proposed in this bill. It leaves the sanctity of the Sabbath undisturbed in districts where there is little temptation or opportunity to violate it, and comparatively small need of its influence; while it throws it open to an immense traffic, and to public, gross, and continuous desecration, precisely in those districts where its purifying, restraining, conservative power is most imperatively demanded.

Whatever else you do, rob not our city of its ancient and honorable repute of being the most orderly great city on the globe, on the Sabbath. Make not the beautiful calm of a Philadelphia Sabbath a thing of the past.

### ACCESSIONS TO OUR LIST.

We have to thank our friends for their exertions to increase our list during the past few weeks. We have received accessions from many different places, and it is noticeable that the largest lists have come from the smaller places. The excellent pastor of the Catasqua church has sent us twenty-eight new names, although the list in that vicinity was already respectably large. Other cases might be mentioned, showing that zealous efforts undertaken by pastors, or under their immediate direction, can be made successful, even in limited fields.

The efforts made to secure our premiums without any special aid from pastors, have also brought us many new names. We do not wish to turn our paper into a mere business instrument of the puffing and sensational type, but we are quite as willing as any other to reward liberally such as undertake to procure us new subscribers. We "give away" sewing-machines or books every day in return for these services. We take especial pleasure in circulating good books; those of our own Committee first, and then such others as are deserving of the patronage of intelligent Christians.

We want an average of ten new names each from two hundred churches, during the present season. A very little effort in each church would secure it. We ask our friends in these churches to see that it be done.

### THE WEEK OF PRAYER.

This season, waited for with deep and hopeful interest by the multitudes of Christian people, is now being observed by the universal Evangelical Church. In this city, the services were inaugurated in our own church, by the observance of the first Monday in the year as a day of prayer for the Conversion of the World. A general meeting was held in Calvary Church, in the morning. The services, moderately well attended, were full of interest. A most instructive missionary address was made by Mr. Barnes, who made the main facts in the history of civilization tell powerfully in his argument for the Gospel as the only sufficient instrument for the elevation of the race. Several other addresses were made.

Union meetings are being held from day to day in different Evangelical Churches, On Wednesday, in Clinton Street Church; Thursday, in Spruce Street Baptist Church; Friday, in the First Reformed Church, Broad and Pine, and Saturday, in the Epiphany, Fifteenth and Chestnut streets. Services commence at four o'clock.

The North Broad Street Church holds prayer-meetings every night in the week.

THE AFRICAN M. E. CHURCH was organized in this city half a century ago, by sixteen colored men.

### OUR WASHINGTON LETTER.

The judicial leg of our "Three-legged stool," as our government has been called, is just now attracting more than its accustomed share of the attention of the public and the press. Good and wise statesmen are beginning to share the opinion expressed by De Tocqueville, a third of a century ago, that "the peace, the prosperity, and the very existence of the Union are vested in the hands of seven Federal judges." The recent decision of the Supreme Court in regard to trials by military commission, is calculated to awaken more anxiety than any utterance of that body since the famous Dred Scott case. It impugns the constitutionality of what has been done to maintain the Union, and furnishes many crumbs of comfort to those who have striven to overthrow it.

President Lincoln, with a sagacity which shines brighter and brighter as time rolls by, said in his inaugural address:—"The candid citizen must confess that if the policy of the Government upon vital questions affecting the people is to be irrevocably fixed by decisions of the Supreme Court, the instant they are made in ordinary legislation between parties in personal actions, the people will have ceased to be their own rulers, having, to that extent, practically resigned their Government into the hands of that eminent tribunal." The decisions of this "eminent tribunal" are not regarded now with the reverence shown to a Delphic oracle or to the sanctity of the Jewish Sanhedrin, as formerly. When they are in conflict with the settled convictions of an enlightened public judgment, some means will always be devised to avoid the necessity of carrying them out. If, in struggling to perfect our institutions according to the necessities of the present day, some grave decision of ermined judges, pertinent enough to the case that evoked it, stands in our way, so much the worse for the decision.

Irrevocable laws may have operated well in the days of the Medes and Persians, but they are not suited for our times. As the army of fabled story found shelter from the pelting storm under the enormous tongue of the giant Pantagruel, so a host of guilty traitors will seek protection from deserved punishment under this utterance of the Supreme Court. But neither the decisions of courts, nor the policy of a recreant President will prevent the American people from sustaining the Government's conduct of the war, or perceiving the work of the soldiers who conquered rebellion.

Contrary to general expectation, Congress had a quorum on reassembling after the holidays, and even the New Orleans Investigating Committee, who had traveled twenty-seven hundred miles in twelve days, were in their seats to answer to their names. Both Houses proceeded to business without delay, and seem determined to accomplish the herculean task of clearing from the Speaker's desk, and the committee rooms, the innumerable bills that encumber them.

The President returned to the Senate this afternoon, with his objections, the bill to regulate the elective franchise in the District of Columbia. He has begun the year with a veto. It was expected by everybody. The Senate gave but little attention to the reading of the message, as it is chiefly a rehash of the objections offered against the bill on its passage through that body and the House of Representatives.

The majority of the Senate were in favor of an immediate ballot. The galleries were crowded to witness the scene. Mr. Johnson, of Maryland, and Mr. Doolittle made short speeches, which were delivered for any other purpose than with the hope of affecting the final vote. Although there was but little doubt as to the passage of the bill, yet great interest was manifested by all to reach the result. At five minutes of four the President of the Senate asked if the bill should become a law, the objections of the President to the contrary, notwithstanding. When the clerk called the roll, but few Senators were in the seats, most of them having collected in knots about the chamber, and being in close conversation with Representatives who had come to witness the scene, which they will doubtless re-enact on the morrow. As the hand of the clock trembled on the hour of four, and Vice-President Foster announced the passage of the bill over the veto, there was no demonstration on the part of any one, but the great crowd in the galleries quietly rose from their seats, and with an air of quiet satisfaction passed down the marble stairways to the corridors below, willing that the "experiment" should be tried, at the same time confident that the closing prediction of the message, that the "all-embracing extension of popular

suffrage must end at last in its destruction" would never be fulfilled. It was refreshing to witness with what ease the legislative wheels of our Government surmounted the obstacles thrown in their way by the Executive.

Washington has seventy-five churches, neither of which the President attends. They embrace almost every denomination common in this country. Several of the more modern build,—as the New York Avenue Presbyterian, the Calvary Baptist, and Foundry Methodist,—are beautiful specimens of church architecture, and remind one of Madam De Stael's definition of it,—"frozen poetry." A dozen more churches are to be added to this large number, at the cost of nearly a million of dollars. Several of them will be larger than any at present in the city. The Catholics are building a cathedral on "the island" larger than any similar structure this side of Philadelphia, while they have another large one in progress on Pennsylvania avenue, near Georgetown. The Congregationalists and Lutherans have foundations already laid for large structures which will be additional ornaments to the city. The great fault of Americans in building churches is, that we build them too small. They should be designed for the future rather for the immediate present. The common inscription on the front of churches in this city, as well as in other cities is,

Erected in such a year,  
Enlarged in such another.

There are other public buildings, aside from those upon which the Government is lavishing its money, in course of erection, and in prospect, calculated to add much to the beauty and attractiveness of the National Capital. Among the former, are the Washington Orphan Asylum, on Fourteenth street, now occupied by the State Department; and the Providence Hospital on Capitol Hill, for which Congress, at its last session, appropriated thirty thousand dollars. Among the latter, are the building of the Young Men's Christian Association, and the Masonic Hall, which is to be erected opposite the Patent Office.

J. F. G.

JANUARY 7, 1867.

"PERMISSION."—Dr. Pusey, in his defence of the practice of confession, dwells at great length on the point that he only claims the right to hear confession from those who desire it. But what such a right amounts to in the hands of such "moral bullies" as Pusey and his followers, is shown by an instance given in Miss Goodman's "Protestant Sisterhoods in the Church of England":—

"A young lady entered a Protestant 'sisterhood,' [i. e. a nunnery] and subsequently left it at the request of her relatives. 'But Dr. Pusey, her confessor, wrote to her to urge upon her to return, declaring that if she failed to do so he could no longer remain her spiritual director—a threat which involved his refusal to again grant her absolution.' The result was, that though so unhappy in the convent that she was 'perpetually weeping,' and meditating self-destruction, the poor girl returned, and when asked the reason, could only reply: 'What could I do? I must have been lost if Dr. Pusey had not granted me absolution.'"

An English Roman Catholic calls attention to the fact that Dr. Pusey (who confesses persons in every diocese in England) claims more than even the Roman Catholic priesthood claim, viz.: the right to absolve without confession.

"But in choosing a Senator, it is not wise to select mere politicians, who to-day go this road, and to-morrow another, like ships at sea, who wait for wind and current. It is this foolish temporizing, this accepting of men who talk loudly, in preference to the sturdy and patient soldier who has stood true to his guns for years, that destroys the integrity of a party."

The above, from a leading secular journal, in reference to the pending election of a Senator in our State, has our hearty endorsement. It is the suggestion of a wisdom in which even the children of this world are sometimes grievously deficient. And in choosing men for prominent positions in the Church, the same advice is appropriate. The children of light need to be reminded of the importance and the necessity of tried men for such positions.

GONE TO ROME.—Rev. Moses A. Stewart and wife, of the German Reformed Church, were received into the Roman Catholic Church at Hagerstown, Md., a few weeks ago. The *German Reformed Messenger* says, "Rumor had it that such a transition had taken place, and to those who had been familiar with his idiosyncrasies for years past the event will not occasion surprise." Just what some sensitive Protestants have been saying of the dominant "School" in that Church.