

PICKED UP BY THE WAY.

THINGS SEEN AND HEARD IN THE TOWN AND VICINITY.

Matters of a Local Nature Commented Upon and Placed Before the Readers of the "Tribune" in Large Letters—Some Paragraphs May Interest You.

It was on Friday for the first time in several months that I heard any one speak of the electric railway, over which our citizens and business men had such an interesting agitation last spring. From the tone of the conversation, and I am pretty certain the gentlemen knew whereof they were speaking, it is evident that the Scranton company, which was given the right of way through the borough, has sunk into oblivion as far as Freeland is concerned. As a result we will live in darkness, and the people of the outside towns will be compelled to plod through the slush and snow another winter at least if they desire to visit Freeland.

A backward glance at the proceedings which have taken place convinces me that the matter as advocated then was on rather narrow basis and not altogether for the best interests of the town. It was simply a contest between the friends of two companies for the right of way for one, when to have done the matter wisely the both should have been given equal privileges. To have competing companies was not thought of, at least it did not have any prominence, although to drive trade and make it brisk, almost everyone knows, competition is at all times necessary. Apparently, to create a monopoly of both trade and railway service within the limit was the end to be attained.

One of the gentlemen remarked that "Freeland merchants were afraid of the Hazleton business men competing with them in case a through line ran between the two places, and this was the reason they preferred the Scranton company to have the right of way." I have no doubt but the Hazleton men will spread largely here for trade when an electric road between the both places becomes a reality, and until then very little can be said about the loss or gain to either town. However, I have not the least hesitation in saying that the merchants of this place will not be at any loss, because I am satisfied they can sell as cheaply and have the quality as good as can be done in Hazleton or elsewhere and be as obliging to their customers.

Notwithstanding all this, every man who earns his money by hard work has or ought to have the privilege of saying how and where it shall be spent. But the opinions of many of the residents of the mining towns adjacent to Freeland are, now as then, that their interests were ignored from the fact that the only market intended for them was Freeland, where if the Hazleton company had been permitted to run its line to Freeland, without being opposed, they could purchase to the best advantage. Then the merchants of Freeland would have an equal chance to compete for trade with those of Hazleton, from the towns of Eberleva, Harleigh, Milnesville, Lattimer and even Hazleton, as in a year or so, when the Jeddo tunnel is completed, work will be resumed at several of these places.

From what I can learn the Hazleton company will not attempt to reach Freeland with their road before the weather opens next spring, and from a rapid transit view of the matter there is not much consolation in this, either for the Freeland business men or their customers who reside in the outside towns. The company, it seems, proposes to take care of Hazleton and its business interests first. This has been pretty well demonstrated by the extension of their tracks to almost every town on the south side of that city. On this side the tracks are laid as far as Harleigh, and when Milnesville is reached it is said work will be suspended until the winter season is over.

Whether the territory is large enough or not for competing lines matters but little, as the law which controls the

right of way in townships was framed and passed for the purpose which it so well serves. A glance over it convinces me that there is abundant room for amendment if the men who are elected to the legislature could be induced to serve their constituents with as much fidelity and zeal as they do corporations. But this is not the rule in Pennsylvania, if anywhere, and this law which allows supervisors to give away secretly and without discussion something which they only hold in trust, as it were, conforms strictly with many others on the statute books.

Centre street, along the five squares from Carbon to Walnut, has fifteen vacant business places—a greater number, probably, than at any time for several years. How it came that so many stands on the best business street in town are unoccupied at present I do not know, and can ascribe it only to the dullness which existed in the coal trade the past summer. The exorbitant rent asked for the use of some of the places may have something to do with the question, but whatever is the cause it gives Freeland a poor appearance to see these darkened and empty storerooms. With the coming of cold weather I have good hopes of seeing them filled again. The outlook for better and steadier work is reported to be good, and the consequent revival of business which will follow may make the future brighter for the merchants, who have stood the financial stringency remarkably well. Those who could not persevere have retired without the aid of Sheriff Walters.

My reference about six weeks ago to the surveying and probable extension of the D. S. & S. to Stroudsburg has finally reached Philadelphia, and the Press last Friday published it as it appeared in these columns, with the additional information that it is thought if the line is begun it will be continued on to Tidewater. I have not yet learned anything further, and as the company has made no statement upon the rumor it is likely the matter is still under consideration. I believe the road will eventually connect with all the principal eastern lines or may go to the seaboard itself, but I think it is destined to run much farther west than it can east.

As usual the Plain Speaker bit off more than it could comfortably masticate when it tried to raise a political storm over my allusion to the lethargy of the Democratic voters of this locality. On Tuesday it floundered around like a fish out of water, and its rattle-brained effusions as to what constitutes editorial utterances gave unmistakable signs of its bewildered condition. A "sorry that I spoke" flavor was the prominent feature of the article, but true to itself and its policy in controversies, the paper could not reply without misstating what has already been said. Here is one of its twisted sentences:

He says the Plain Speaker's editor erred when he said that the opinion of the editor of the Tribune need not be taken as a final decision.

Such nonsense shows how necessary it is that somebody's imagination should be muzzled.

Another paragraph too rich to go without reprinting is this:

That the "Saunterer" or whoever you choose to call him made a bad break, his wiggling position clearly shows, and thanks to the Plain Speaker, which has no axe to grind, and is therefore a fair and impartial judge of the situation, the effect of the Tribune's bomb shell was very dismal, and the Tribune's "Saunterer" will think up some other scheme.

There is a mixture of magniloquence and false modesty in the above, and if the staff can evolve nothing more to the point, I think it unjust to waste time and space replying to statements devoid of sense and truth. Some people do say strange things when laboring under suppressed excitement, and a great deal should be allowed by the public when its sensibilities are jarred by expressions of that kind. I trust the new assistant editor, Mr. Burke, will succeed in bringing the Speaker back to the position from which it strayed when its editor deluded himself into believing that he was the political Solomon of the lower end. SAUNTERER.

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HIS FAREWELL SERMON.

(Continued from Page 1.)

speculate on the various problems of national and social life; to discuss moral enterprises, to seek for scientific, historical and theological knowledge rather than for the biblical; to take a text from the scriptures and then go hither and thither for the material for the sermon; to substitute the glitter of rhetoric for a desire to please men, for the "fire" and the "hammer" of the word of the Lord. Nor is the pulpit wholly to blame. For the relation between the pulpit and the pew is somewhat reciprocal. If the sentiment of the people is foreign to the scriptures; if they clamor for brilliant preaching; if they want merely intellectual food and stimulants; if they desire a man to draw and fill the pews and increase the financial income of the church, is it any wonder there should be even good men beguiled? But imparting instruction on the multiplied and multiplex scientific, literary, metaphysical, theological and political topics is not the business of the pulpit.

But why have we not sought to preach morality? We have, but after all there is only one sin which keeps Christ and heaven out of the human heart; only one sin that keeps any individual upon earth out of Christ and heaven. It is the sin of unbelief. I read in this book, "God is no respecter of persons." I read in this book, "For there is no difference between the Greek and the Jew." I read in this book, "Therefore by the deeds of the law there shall no flesh be justified." I read in this book, "He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved; but he that believeth not shall be damned." It is then neither our morality nor good works that lifts us into heaven; nor our transgressions and iniquities that casts us into hell. It is faith in Jesus Christ that saves; it is unbelief in Jesus Christ that condemns us to everlasting despair. You have ten dollars in greenback; you have a thousand dollars in Paris. You are hungry. We enter a restaurant. I place on the counter my ten dollars; you your one thousand; but neither of us with that sort of money can purchase a penny's worth. So, if at last we come to the door of heaven and have not our hearts washed in the blood of the lamb; if we have only morality and our good works for a recommendation we shall verily not be able to enter the kingdom of God. And so you see friends, how believing in this we have sought simply to proclaim the gospel of Jesus. I recall a king who once asked a courtier what made a certain French preacher so famous. "Your majesty," answered the nobleman, "he preaches the gospel, and that is the secret of his fame." I fear that this is only too true, not only in France, but in England and America. And this is one reason the cause of our Risen Lord does not make still more rapid progress. What the people need now should be to hear the blessed gospel of the Son of God. Yes, about Jesus whose blood cleanseth from all sin. Jesus, the only foundation of the church. Jesus, the source of grace. Jesus, the "balm for every wound." Jesus, the "Bright Morning Star." Jesus, the "Sun of Righteousness." Jesus, the reformer of all wrongs. Jesus, the grand center of the universe. Jesus, the one universal keynote in the unending song of the unfolding and eternal ages.

III. In the third place we have aimed at the saving of souls, and the Lord has wonderfully helped us. I am aware that there are some churches quite content, quite satisfied, to toll year after year without the presence and music of new born souls, and still have faith and keep working. I may be radical; what of that? I am, however, firm in my opinion that any church which does not bring men and women and children to Jesus is a tremendous failure. I care not how imposing and costly the edifice, how learned and eloquent the preacher, how sweet and charming the music, how well dressed and jeweled the congregation, how cultured the church members, that church is a failure over which the angel must sigh, and the Christ who died for human redemption sheds scalding tears. \* \* \* For what purpose did the Son of God leave the glory of heaven and come into this world? Why did he die upon the accursed tree? Oh, why did he seek and save the lost? For what purpose did he call and commission men to go into all the world and preach the gospel? Was it not that the world might be saved? The highest glory of the church is to have it said of her here and yonder, "This and that man was born there." I believe the greatest shame of a church is not to be the agent of saving souls, and preparing them for heaven. \* \* \*

IV. Then, too, the Lord has helped us in our endeavor to be an aggressive and unconquered church. We have believed most firmly in the local church being the instrument chosen of God for the redemption of men. We have been in hearty sympathy with its reform that would elevate society and raise the fallen, and for so to the world. We believe that "the church organized by the Lord Jesus, organized upon the plan made known in the new testament, is the social nucleus, is the society which is the cure for all the ills of the world." This all the people will see after awhile. It can not possibly be otherwise. Yes, we have sought to be an aggressive people, yet not as much so, as we ought to have been. One of the greatest surprises to the citizens of Freeland was our undertaking the erection of a church edifice without a single dollar to begin with and carry it through to such great success, and a still greater surprise to the people was to see the number of men brought into the church, saved from sin. I can say I believe truthfully that no church has been a greater blessing to this community than the Bethel Baptist church.

For proof of this ask the leading merchants of the place, who now get the dollars instead of the saloons; visit the happy homes and see the joy and contentment there where sorrow and misery reigned, and for this reason there is need of this church and the support of every good man to help sustain it.

We have not tried to imitate others; but have no objection to others imitating us. No two churches in our place should try to work just like ours. Bless those who try to imitate the charms of sweet and elevating music to save some; God bless those who strive with the power of logic and the sway of eloquence to save some; God bless those who take upon themselves the herculean task of converting critics, and metaphysicians, and philosophers, and scientists, and materialists, for heaven; God bless them who are battling for the wealthy and noble. I say again, from the bottom of my heart, God bless them all in their work.

V. Then, too, the Lord has helped us to demonstrate the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. Considering from our stand point that the church is made of individuals; that we have our peculiar idiosyncrasies; that we interpret scripture not all alike; that Baptist churches believe in and practice independence to a marked degree, it is a little surprising that after two years and seven months we should be so well united and dwelling together and tonight parting so delightfully harmonious and at peace among ourselves. I know not a single member of this church but kindly speaks to me, and for whom I do not have a heart-full of love. And then we have been not only at peace among ourselves, but with other Christian churches in this village. I am a Protestant; I am a thorough Baptist, and believe in pastors sometimes preaching the doctrines of their church. I have done this. I believe people in general have the greater respect for ministers

and church members who believe something, and then hold tenaciously to that belief. VI. Hitherto hath the Lord helped us, and consequently we have not paid much attention to criticisms. No man, no organization, no institution, no church can hope to have every one speak well of them. The master said: "We unto you when all men speak well of you." And you may be assured that ministers and churches are serving the devil quite satisfactorily against whom sometimes some unkind things are said. There is a story of how some soldiers, during the war, saw a light, and the captain said: "Fire on that camp!" They did. They opened musket and cannon. But brighter and brighter the light grew. They fired faster and faster, until after awhile the light proved to be the moon. The man in the moon just looked on, smiling, and continued his journey in the God appointed orb in the sky. Brethren, sisters and friends, when we have been fired at and upon we have tried to move along in what we have considered our divinely appointed work, and have always found that after awhile the musketry and cannoning of the critics have ceased. We are not tried by any slight of hand performances to bring about quick and startling results. We have kept in mind that all real solid, permanent growth takes time. Shakespeare says:

"Small herbs have grace: Great weeds do grow apace. And so, methinks, I would not grow so fast, Because sweet flowers are slow, And weeds make haste."

Now the Lord, who hath hitherto helped, will help in all the future. Hath He not said: "I will never leave thee nor forsake thee." This some great God, who hath in the past been your guide and counselor and helper, will cheerfully and lovingly still be yours in the future.

1. Be loved in the Lord, be forsighted and venturesome into good work. Is it not the remote, far-off motives that are among the most effective? If any are nearsighted and think they must shape their lives and service by looking at things nearest, just harken to these words of Peter: "He that looketh on things is blind and cannot see afar off." Now you know that men and women who have succeeded in every department of human thought and effort, have ventured. If Columbus had not started upon that remarkable voyage—well you know the rest. If the eagle had remained in the shell—well, you know. \* \* \* "We are to expect great things," said the immortal Carey, "that we may achieve them." May you begin at once planning. 2. Continue in doing individual work, continue in making it a point of your business to bring some one to Christ and into the church. If the world waits for a few ministers to bring all the unconverted to Jesus, it will wait in vain. This was recently said by a member of a Protestant church in Paris: "For you must know it is a rule in our church that when one brother has been converted he must go and fetch another brother; and when a sister has been converted she must go and fetch another sister. That is the way 120 of us have come from atheism and darkness to simple faith in the Lord Jesus Christ." There you have one of the great secrets of the kingdom. \* \* \*

3. Again, have a strong and abiding faith in the promises of God. General Sherman once said: "That General Grant's distinguished characteristic was his unbounded faith in his own ultimate success. I never saw anything like it. If Grant was to have an arm or a leg shot off and a bullet through his body, and should lie helpless on the battle field, he would fully expect to get up, mount his horse and win the day." And such absolute belief in ultimate success insures it. Now something of this "absolute belief" we shall need; and there will be no presumption in it; for it is simply taking God at his word. Don't you know that faith is the strongest force in the world; and the next strongest is doubt. The only thing that can hinder the Son of God in the work of human redemption is unbelief. I read over here that it chained His hands and sent Him from the ancient city sorrowful and unsuccessful. "He could do no mighty works there because of their unbelief." Doubt is the enemy of God. Doubt paralyzes, cripples, destroys. Doubt opens hell, shuts up heaven. Faith opens heaven; comes the world. Faith is the victory that overcomes all being called of God to a certain work, faith in the promises of the Lord will send the church to "go forth in her might, fair as the moon, clear as the sun, and terrible as an army with spears."

And with your faith couple an entire dependence upon the Holy Spirit. Have you not noticed that there is no marked instance of great success on the part of the apostles where we have not the account prefaced by some such statement as this: "Being filled with the Holy Ghost." Well, there is no use in our trying anything today for the cause of Christ unless \* \* \* Not sermons, not music, not vast assemblies, not organizations, not machinery, not might, not by power, but by the Spirit. He fills the sinner, and then shall cavilling lips become dumb; scorers reclaimed; sinners converted; believers astonished and set on fire; the church built up in every department; and the Lord shall be greatly glorified. I tell you if our churches were only filled with the Holy Spirit they might be able to blow up the very gates of hell that obstruct the coming in of the King of Glory.

I must stop speaking. I have already detained you a much longer time than is my custom. But let me mention three things which make me sorrowful tonight. 1. This is one: That my work has been so poorly done, and that much must now be left unfinished. My feelings must be somewhat akin to those of one drawing near the close of life and is overwhelmed. Many kind words have been spoken and a warm grasp of the hand has been given, but none of these things move me. It's the poor sermons preached; the feeble prayers offered; the opportunities gone forever that press upon my soul this hour. First asking your forgiveness and then that of my Master, let me then ask you, members of the church, to carry forward the good work along the line of saving souls. You know the sacrament of the old Roman was a rite performed in this way: A company was drawn up in line and the oath was read; then a Centurian would raise his hand and say "That's for me," and then another Centurian would raise his hand and say "That's for me," and so on along the lines until the last soldier had taken the oath. Let us together raise our hearts to God in secret prayer, and then before this vast assembly and High God swear eternal adherence to the old gospel of Christ, and pledge our fidelity to this church of the Lord Jesus. No, we shall not all live to share the happy results of our labor, yet faithfully toiling until death for our blessed Master, we may share in the comfort contained in these beautiful lines of Whittier:

"Others shall sing the song," etc. 2. And the second thing that saddens my heart is this: That many of my congregation are still unprepared to meet their God in peace. Oh, they do not know how often this throbbing heart has ached and bled for them. Oh, they do not know how many times I have prayed for the salvation of their immortal souls! How shall I give thee up, ye men and women who have resisted all my pleadings,

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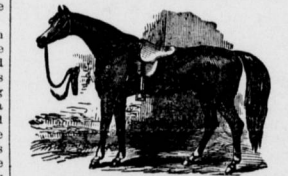
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and entertain, and prayers and efforts. Oh, Sinal, would thou mightest emit thy lightning flashes and illuminate their darkened minds. Oh, Sinal, would thy thunders might go rumbling and crashing through their souls! Oh, quaking and blood-stained Calvary let thy love plead with them in this hour! Oh, day of judgement reveal thy awful power. Oh, heaven open and let those unsaved men and women see for a moment within thy pearl gates that swing on the infinite hinges of divine love! Oh, place of the endless woe, where the lost shall forever dwell, show thyself to these deluded ones! Oh, Father for the sake of thy beloved Son, for the sake of those five bleeding wounds which He received on the cross, for the sake of those sacred hands He has before Thee on the throne in intercession, let Thy spirit plead once more with these dying \* \* \* And here and now we will raise our Ebenezer and shout: Hitherto hath the Lord helped us; and here again hath He made His arm bare unto the saving of souls.

3. And then last, as memory recalls the familiar faces and the well-known voices of many who once belonged to us but are gone from us my heart grows warm and my eyes moisten, and an inscribable feeling of sadness goes creeping all over my frame. I see them now as once they looked, and hear them as they talked and laughed. I could but think when visiting the cemetery and looking at the grassy beds beneath which sleep a number of this precious flock of God, of that hymn:

"One army of the living God, To His command we bow; Part of the host have crossed the flood, And part are passing now."

Beloved, when the books are opened and the record of our two years and seven months of united service is viewed, to each may the Master turn and lovingly say, well done, thou good and faithful servant, I will make thee a ruler over many things, enter thou into the joys of the Lord. Amen and Amen.

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