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WILMINGTON, N. C.

SUNDAY, JULY 3, 1898.

CHAT

Lately we referred to "Quo Vadis," the very strong, intensely interesting novel by the gifted Pole, Henry K. Sienkiewicz. It is impossible to read it understandingly, and not be amazed at some of the very offensive realistic descriptions, for instance, the feast of Nero, and the brazen libertinism of some of the women and men who figure in the book. Whatever the purpose of the author the results are that it is not clean or pure or fit for the youth of our land, of either sex. Luridly in affluent description, or orgies all veiled in flowers of rhetoric or garlanded in roses intertwined with the thorns of vice, are not nice drawing-room-books or fit-books for the bedroom of a pure woman. The realism of "Quo Vadis" however virile and artistic if such it be, is made highly objectional in places by surrendering decency at the demand of skill or the requirements of accurate study and true reproduction of the times of Nero, the Brute. There are Americans who have written in praise and defence of the novel who have sneered at modesty and morality denouncing it as prudery and stupidity. And yet a writer of this kind who wrote ably in laudation in the New York Times "Saturday Review" admitted the brutality, the coarseness, the dreadfulness, the unbridled phrensy of some of the scenes. He is constrained to say:

Sienkiewicz does not write for young misses. He does not fill his novels with angels and Arcadian shepherds. He knows and he paints his heroes with their vices. He knows that the man has different bad propensities. He paints them boldly, frankly. Sometimes he says something too boldly about the "love of the skin" but he does not put any stress on it. The consequence of it is that a scandalous or improper situation can be found in Sienkiewicz's novels as one of the sides of human life, as a thing which happens in life.

After all has a novelist any moral right to choose subject and introduce characters that necessitate a lowering of art, and an appeal to lust and vice as the seasoning of his romance? Why describe anything that will taint the mind, corrupt the morals, debase the heart? Even the eulogist of Sienkiewicz towards the end of his nearly three column review, quoting from an essay of the Pole on the French realist, Zola, with evident indorsement says: "One cannot continue any longer that way! On an exhausted field only weeds grow. The novel must strengthen the life, not weaken it; make it nobler, not soil it; carry 'good news' and not bad."

A wreaking cesspool is not fit for minds pure or ears polite. And still a northern Methodist bishop, a man of ability and education, Vincent, commended this impure book to the young people, of both sexes, who heard him at Greensboro. Deliver the youth of North Carolina from such crude and cruel advice as that for under it there is no guarantee of safety. Virtus laudatur et arguit.

While noting objections to "Quo Vadis," which still sells at a grate rate, and perhaps has slain its thousands, another new romance is being praised by some indiscreet writers. We have not taken in any of its poison for we have avoided it as we would a lazar house. We have read brief reviews of it. It is Richard Le Gallienne's last novel he calls "The Romance of Zion's Chapel." From what we have learned of it it is pestiferous and calamitous, the output of perverted gifts, and with unquestioned cleverness in some particulars it is wholly unfit for people who live pure lives and avoid morbidity and disease and all immoral microbes that can be planted in the human heart. What sense is there in sitting down to a feast, the dishes of which are concocted of scandal and suicide, of disease and filthiness, of adultery and brutality? A clear cut notice of this book appeared on 6th April last in New York "Saturday Review" and we take from it a passage or so that tells how one competent writer was impressed with this output of LeGallienne's literary shambles: "The story is painful and morbid to the last degree, and not free from re-

volting situations and suggestions. We feel ourselves adrift in a chaos of anguished emotions, from which we emerge with a sense of moral squallor. * * * Inasmuch, however, as Mr. Le Gallienne has elected to lead his "Romance" through the atmosphere of miasma into that of the charnel house, it must be reckoned a fascinating failure. Of a book no less than of a human soul, it is true that 'Greatness is to take the common things of life and walk truly among them.'"

Taste varies much in letters. Some very able men are not men of literary judgment and good taste. This might be amplified in an essay. Literature is full of examples of this kind. Then there is a difference of taste even among men of distinguished name in letters. Owing to some twist of the mind, or some peculiar idiosyncrasy in mental construction or some extraordinary warping in critical judgment and insight some very eccentric opinions as to authors and books are given. You will meet with men who have not the slightest appreciation of poetry but who will talk of poetry. There are excellent men—some decidedly learned and strong—who cannot tell the difference between flowing rhyme and great poetry, and who would prefer one of the popular latter-day romantic or realistic novelists to a great writer like Thackeray or George Eliot. If we could take time we could cite examples for they abound. Think of as great an author and man as was Dr. Samuel Johnson, saying of Thompson's "The Castle of Indolence" that "the first canto opens a scene of lazy luxury that fills the imagination," and then dismisses this best of all of the poet's productions and showing true genius, as if there were nothing worthy of consideration: Read also some of his criticisms of Shakespeare. Even Charles Kingsley, fine novelist as he was, declared that Dickens's charming Christian stories were "gloomy and depressing." Thomas Carlyle, who often tripped in his judgment, thought the humor of the incomparable and forever delightfully amusing "Pickwick" was "very melancholy." One Bostonian said either to Mr. Gladstone or to his friend, that "he did not think there were ten men in Boston equal to Shakespeare." That reminds us of a question we had asked us by a native of this state. He inquired if "Shakespeare was not a smart man." To show how tastes may vary, or remain dormant and impenetrable, it is a fact that "Vanity Fair" was refused by seven publishers. This is given as the statement of Thackeray himself in London "Literature" of June 4, 1838. Thackeray thought it his greatest achievement, and in this many critics have agreed with him. It is a very great novel, but we cannot say it is our favorite. It shows genius enough to make the reputation of a score of the popular landed novelists of this day. Professor Tyler, the American critic, historian, etc., has published a "Literary History of the American Revolution" in several volumes, and gives an eccentric opinion of the value of "The American Soldier's Hymn," which he places by the side of Luther's great hymn. He also insists that Philip Freneau "ought to be classed with Cowper, Burns and Wordsworth." This is very extravagant and absurd. Freneau wrote in 1775-85. Take this stanza from the poem so enthusiastically praised, in 1783, when the British King recommended peace:

Grown sick of war and war's alarms,
Good George has changed his note at last:
Conquest and death have lost their charms.

He and his nation stand agast,
To see what horrid lengths they've gone,
And what a brink they stand upon.

"Literature" cites this as "hopeless bathos."

RELIGIOUS EDITORIALS FOR SUNDAY

The Greeks desired to be ever hearing some new thing, was the Apostle Paul's report of his study at Athens. The moderns are equally curious and inquisitive. No people approaching civilization can surpass the Americans in a love of novelty and in receptivity of mind. They are for the most part ready to receive any philosophic fad or folly, and as for religion they take to the mystical, the improbable, the impossible, the fanatical, the ridiculously absurd as readily, as greedily as the puppy does to milk. It can not be said that the south, where illiteracy more abounds, is so much given to such excesses and follies as New England far better educated. The "isms" of our continent are for the most part the product of that rich, progressive section, or the descendants of its people, who have emigrated to other states. So patent is the fact that the Living Church, an able Protestant Episcopal weekly of Chicago, lately said this:

"The American people, especially of the Boston type and cult, seem to be very much like the old Greeks. * * * Always eager to try some new scheme of progress or reform, and each of these in its turn needs to be reformed out of sight, as a rule, so that the old Gospel may come back to do the work it was sent into the world to do, viz. to save society by saving the souls and uplifting the characters of which society is composed. There is always something new, if not something good, coming out of the New England Nazareth, and just now it is 'Christian socialism,' so called. To be sure, Christian socialism, in the old sense, is as old as Christianity, but that kind is too tame and unpretentious for these times, though it did impress the world in its day. The queer thing about it is that the Church failed to perceive what the modern apostles of socialism have discovered, that the whole Gospel lies in this cult."

These latter day Solomons and zealots have discovered that St. Paul was

no theologian and the Christian church has been all along benighted. It is simply impossible to have any respect or tolerance for such madness, stupidity and presumption. Let it not be supposed that the Church is losing ground or that its power is diminished. Christ has promised to be with his people always, ever present, and that the gates of hell shall not prevail against His church.

Solomon wrote of the vanity of human life. His gifted father, King David, a great soldier and a great poet, sang of the vanity of this earthly, unsatisfying, vain, empty life. In the 39th Psalm he indulges in a saddened, painful and yet proper reflection, and godly meditation. In fact he is led by dwelling upon the earthly, uncertain, transitory life into the language of devout and sincere prayer. He says at the beginning: "I will take heed to my ways that I sin not with my tongue." There is great trouble in the tongue. It is so easy to offend; to sin with the tongue, "the ungruly member." When suffering under severe provocation it is so extremely easy to offend God and injure man by hot or uncharitable words. Look at the patient, submissive, faithful Job and hear him indulging in unbecoming, even rash and impulsive murmurs. The adorable and blessed Son of God knew the safety and wisdom of silence, and when to break it. We learn that "when he was accused of the chief priests and elders, he answered nothing." David reflected in silence and "held his peace." He said his "sorrow was stirred." In the fourth and fifth verses it is recorded: "My heart was hot within me, while I was musing the fire burned: then spake I with my tongue." Reflection and silence led him to consider God in His infinite glory and dominion and power, and he then sought Him in prayer: "Lord, make me to know mine end, and the measure of my days, what it is: that I may know how frail I am." The vanity and imperfection, the shortness and uncertainty of human life impressed him, and then the gifted and inspired singer broke out in the ardor of high thinking and the fervor of adoration and devotion: "Lord make me know mine end." These are fit words for every child of Adam, and more especially become those who are nearing the even-tide of life, whose days are almost gone, whose sun is westerling and casting long shadows. It fits the aged peculiarly to meditate upon the rapidly passing away forever of this little life, and upon the certainty and nearness of death, and upon the destiny beyond the perishing world. Meditation and prayer are great helps. They bring peace and hope to many a weary, troubled, sorrowing soul. When you are maligned and misunderstood, afflicted and persecuted, it is best to be silent, looking to God to make it all plain and to right it in His own wise way and good time. David watched "the fire that burned within him" and was careful that it should not break forth into words of consuming wrath, into expressions of unseemly severity, into raging discontent, or into declarations of haughty defiance. He mused and considered until his heart became soft and tender and worshipful, and then he spake in words of holy prayer—"Lord, make me to know mine end and the measure of my days, that I may know how frail I am." There was much wisdom in that. The fire of God's compassion and love was kindled in David's heart, and then he was subdued, the fire burned low, the soul was hushed up in blessed communion with the Holy One and was comforted. It is a good thing for one to remember the shortness of his days and "how frail he is." God's spirit came to David and taught him, calmed him, blessed him. He continued his meditative mood and praying still said: "Behold, thou hast made my days as an hand-breadth." How fleeting how short his life—a hand-breadth as compared with the everlasting days, the eternity beyond. To know that we are mortal, that we were born to die, that we live in a vain state, and time is fleeting with dreadful swiftness—this is enough to make sober, wise, prudent men reflect long and often. David still praying says: "Verily, every man at his best, state is altogether vanity." The absolute nothingness of man—mere dust in the balance—liable to be swept away any moment, in a flash, should make him pause and consider and ask himself—"Am I a fool? With er am I tending." It is better a thousand times never to have been born than to so live this vain, empty life, so as to lose heaven at last. "Surely every man walketh in a vain show." There is no exception. Poor weak, idle, thoughtless, heedless, vain man, "he heareth up riches, and knoweth not who shall gather them." (verse 6.) How stupid, how blind, how infatuated it is to heap up riches here, that may take wings and fly away, and neglect to lay up treasures in heaven. And yet that is precisely what the wicked world is doing daily—living for self, for sense, for time, and forgetting heaven and God and eternal life. David then turns to the true source of all help and all deliverance and all joy and says: "And now, Lord, wait I for thee. My hope is in Thee." Have we that hope, sure and steadfast? If not let us be tried and seek until we find. He is indeed a happy, blest man who can say from the soul with David—"Lord, my hope is in Thee."

HOME FOLKS

A joke, a joke! Marion Butler praising Dan Russell. "Birds of a feather."

Mr. Charles R. Thomas, of Newbern, is the democratic nominee for the house of representatives in the second district. He is a lawyer, and of good capacity. He is the choice of the convention after fourteen ballots, and he will be willingly supported throughout the district by all democrats and white voters who prefer a white man of character to any black radical or renegade or black and tan. His father, the late Judge Charles Randolph Thomas, was a man of ability and character and a republican, and was an alumnus of the University of North Carolina. He had the reputation among the Philanthropic Society members of being a good speaker of real promise.

It is far too early to try to cast the political horoscope in North Carolina. Two months hence the men at the front will know more of the real outlook. Cheering reports come from many counties that the democracy are getting into fighting trim and white men are very, very sick of the situation and of negro rule and government by incapables. The only hope, as we see it now, in redeeming North Carolina in 1898, is by a determined, vigorous fight based upon a thorough organization in all the counties. Ever since 1876, we have been urging the one sure way to victory was by systematic, intelligent, industrious, most complete township organization. Strange to say, since the war no democratic chairman of the state committee has ever appreciated the necessity of such organization, or made a serious attempt to affect it. Butler and his crowd understood this and made a house to house canvass with great results to them.

We notice that the railway commission propose to punish the able managers of the Wilmington and Weldon railroad because they have made some money and done better than their rivals. It is a crime and offence in North Carolina to earn dividends and pay interest to investors in railroads. The cry is that the daughters of the horse-leach, "Blood! blood!"

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SPECIAL MEETING OF THE Stockholders of the Wilmington, Columbia & Augusta R. R. Co.

OFFICE OF THE SECRETARY OF THE Wilmington, Columbia and Augusta Railroad Company, Wilmington, N. C., June 21, 1898.

AT A MEETING OF THE BOARD

of Directors of the Wilmington, Columbia and Augusta Railroad Company, duly called and held at Room No. 104 Chamber of Commerce building, in the City of Baltimore, Md., on Friday, the 17th day of June 1898:

It was resolved that a special meeting of the stockholders of this Company be, and the same is hereby called by this Board, to be held at the office of the Company in the City of Florence, South Carolina, on Friday, the 15th day of July, 1898, at 12 o'clock m., for the purpose of considering and acting upon the question of securing the surrender of the lease of the railroad and property of this Company now held by the Wilmington and Weldon Railroad Company, and for the further purpose of considering and acting upon the question of the consolidation of this Company with the North Eastern and other Railroad Companies of South Carolina, under the Act of the General Assembly of South Carolina, entitled "An Act to incorporate the Atlantic Coast Line Railroad Company of South Carolina and to authorize the consolidation of certain railroads under that name," approved March 5, 1897, and for the transaction of such other business as may be brought before the meeting.

JAMES F. POST, Jr., Secretary.

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Does the Stomach Rule?

The warfare between the citizen and the stomach—Some pertinent suggestions.



HAPPINESS

depends on digestion. The stomach is a much abused organ. It is given the most unheard of tasks and frequently rebels. There is inflammation of the mucous membrane lining the stomach—this is catarrh. Stomach troubles are nearly all summed up in the word catarrh. Indigestion, that murderer of peace, is catarrh. Millions of people to-day are at odds with their stomachs; they have catarrh. Like all tartrical troubles indigestion has baffled science; the treatment has not been thorough. It is, however, fully established that a normal flow of blood through the mucous membrane makes it healthy and stops catarrh. The remedy that will do this cures every phase of catarrh and that remedy is Pe-ru-na.

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