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Poetry.

Eternity.

BY E. ALICE FINNEY.

Ye say there is no end; that on these hills,
And deep ravines, and blackened moun-
tain sides
Of life, the hateful shall shine forever;
Over the mounds, and scathed and seeth-
ing wastes
Of human thought God's stars may never
don
The midnight; but years and centuries
shall bring
No dream, no thought of change. The
fires will burn
Unquenched, unquenchable, the dusky
flames
Leap up and kiss with gold the white,
lost gates
Of distant heaven, and then, in burning
showers
Fall, scintillating death.

And this ye say,
This living fire, this forked, dividing
flame
Of scorpion sting and dragon shape, this
death,
With all the torments of eternal life,
Is hell? Dost think thy dainty soul, thy
heart,
All warm, all sensitive to pain, is ripe
For this? Dost feel in every passing hour
The Samuel breath grow hotter o'er thy
cheek,
As demons' feet clank on the iron floor
Without thy palace?

Does the thought bring light
To thy tormented vision? Has the fire
A taste of pleasure for thy dainty flesh?
Dost thou, even thou, like prospect of a
feast
At hell, served up in human skulls? Me-
thinks
Our very inmost soul recoils in horror;
That the flesh seems starting from our
bones;
Our eyeballs fire, and being all accursed
With that dread thought, and yet, how
near, how near,
How very near the downward path! how
thick
The veil that separates stern Right from
face
Of blessed Mercy! Oh! the days of grace
Are not yet past; there is a path all fair
Yet winding up to heaven; and, though
the way
Skirt very hell, though pain, and death
and sin,
Encompassing erring life, there is one Star
O'er the blessed star, whose light and
hope
Yet lead us back to God.

The Pulpit.

Awake Thou that Sleepest.

There is a state of indifference to religion closely resembling the bodily condition called sleep that it is appropriately called by the same name. The phenomena connected with it are similar to those associated with slumber. In the latter condition, men cease from their labor. The hands which, during the day, were busily employed are now idle, save a few convulsive, unmeaning motions. So, in this soul slumber, there is idleness. Religious duties are neglected; the Saviour is not sought; the Church is not visited; prayer is not offered. These duties are vastly more important than those of a worldly kind; yet while men are wide awake to the latter, they neglect the former. Once in a while conscience arouses the man, and he seems to put forth efforts for a new life; but these have so little heart and earnestness in them as to remind us of the spasmodic and unmeaning motions of the sleeper.

This indifference to religious interests is also represented by the unconsciousness of the sleeper. One by one his senses are closed to the external world. First the heavy eyelids fall, and he sees not; then the sense of smell is blunted; next the hearing becomes dull, and, last of all, he is insensible to touch. He now presents the strange spectacle of a living man, in fulness of health and strength and yet totally unconscious of everything around him. Place before his eyes the most beautiful paintings or the most brilliant gems; he sees them not. Bring to him a bunch of sweetest flowers, or an alabaster vase of richest perfume; he perceives not the fragrance which loads the air. Speak to him; tell him of danger—fire, famine, war, pestilence—or tell him of a rich inheritance bequeathed to him, and in evidence read to him his father's will. No impression is made; he hears not. Touch him gently, and he does not awaken; he must be shaken before he can be aroused. So strongly locked are his senses by sleep that one might almost as well address himself to a log as to the sleeper.

The condition of the man who is indifferent to his religious state is pre-

cisely like this. Bring before him a vivid picture of his sins or of his Saviour, and he sees neither. Tell him that he is in danger of hell, but that if he will repent of sin and believe on Christ, he may be an heir of heaven; he does not heed such godly admonitions, nor is he attracted by the prospect of such a heavenly inheritance. There are thousands of unconverted people who hear preaching every Sunday and are not affected by it. They become accustomed to the sound, as one may get used to the clangor of an alarm-bell, and sleep unconscious through it all. They daily transgress God's law, and have neither feeling nor care about it. They think themselves safe, just as the sleeper dreams of safety. They even consider sometimes the probability of reaching heaven, and enjoying its raptures, just as the slumberer often dreams of wealth and joy which, alas! he is never to possess in reality.

The saddest fact in connection with this state of indifference is its danger. There are many subjects about which we may be perfectly indifferent, but religion is not one of these. The issues involved in it are of such importance that our hearts should be thoroughly aroused to their consideration. This consideration cannot safely be delayed; for while we delay, our opportunities for moral improvement pass on and may soon be out of reach. While the sleeper dreams in fancied security, the robber may be at work at his strong-box, or the fatal incendiary may apply the torch to his dwelling, or the stealthy assassin may stand over him with drawn dagger. So, while the ungodly man carelessly takes his ease, never thinking about his religious obligations, indifferent to all the pressing claims of God upon him, dreaming of heavenly happiness, Satan is setting snares and digging pitfalls in his path, and seeking in every way to destroy him.

Communications.

Reports of Wilmington District Conference.

REPORT OF COMMITTEE ON FINANCE.

The support of the ministry is a responsibility that has been devolved upon the Church, and how that duty can best be discharged is worthy of the most serious consideration. Our Itinerant system, or the removal of our Preachers year after year from one field of labor to another—a system which has been blessed of God, and productive of great good in the World—a system of Divine Origin, and apostolic precedent—prevents engagements in whole or in part, by the clergy, in the secular pursuits of life, and if practicable such engagements would shackle their efforts and greatly impair their usefulness. That "the laborer is worthy of his hire," is universally conceded, and the man who obey the Divine command "Go forth and preach the Gospel" should find wherever their lots may be cast, homes and plenty and it is the duty of the Laity to make such provision for their support, that their minds shall be relieved from all anxiety in reference to this matter, and until this is accomplished, the skirts of the Laity are not clear and God will not hold them guiltless. The membership have relied too much on ministers to aid in the matter of ways and means, they have been expected to move, call attention, preach sermons and even to beg in their own behalf—in a word to bear burdens which others should bear, and thus the membership have shifted their responsibilities and too often failed to discharge their positive obligations.

The minister's duty is to preach, and not to work or beg for their support, and any interference or intervention by them in financial arrangements, cannot be reconciled with their Holy Office;—the laity should understand and appreciate this truth and by their industry and fidelity so promote all the temporal interests of the Church, as to avoid any necessity for such intervention.

God will hold no Brethren responsible, and if we neglect this high trust we shall certainly incur his disfavor, and may expect blighting droughts and devastating floods and decreasing revenues. He as certainly rules in the affairs of men, as he does in Heaven.

The voluntary support of the ministry is a prominent feature in Methodist Economy—one that has been pro-

posedly conceded by our people but the sad story of the past is, that we have promised, but, too generally have failed to pay—years past and gone have recorded our delinquencies in too many instances.

The present Conference year is rapidly passing away; already two thirds gone, and what facts do the statistics in the hands of the Sect. reveal? this—that but little or no amendment over former years is evidenced. A glance will show that the stations and circuits, in nearly every instance have not paid more than one third or one half of their indebtedness.

Shall this state of things continue? No, common honesty forbids it—our religious obligations thunder, No!

The annual Conference has submitted a plan for raising money, by assessment of all the members, thereby causing a more equitable division, and affording to all the privilege of contributing—each according to his means as God hath prospered. This plan has not been universally adopted in this district—where introduced it has wrought well, and more money has been raised by its operations, and the statistics show that on circuits where only in part operated, the church that adopts it excels the others. This plan is not arbitrary or compulsive as some assert, but is based on the assumption that every Christian man or woman will willingly co-operate and gladly contribute their proportion towards defraying the expenses of the Church.

Notwithstanding however that this plan has been devised and operated, and with partial success, still it is a fact that deficiencies continue to be the rule. We are therefore prompted to inquire into the cause and suggest the remedy.

The stewards of the Church are its financial agents, and we hold that in proportion as they are faithful and efficient, or indolent and unfaithful, will be found balanced accounts, or much indebtedness. The truth is, that as Stewards we have not devoted the time, nor given that attention to the interest of the Church which is demanded, interests vital to the success and prosperity of our Denominational organization.

Methodist people have always been celebrated for being liberal and hospitable and in years anterior to the late war nobly responded to the calls of the Church, and although calamities have befallen them, making the rich poor, and the poor poorer, yet the old fire burns in their hearts, and if appealed to properly, they will again bring their gifts to the altar. If a spirit of self sacrifice was inculcated and practised, there is none so poor but that like the Widow in the Gospel might cast their mite into the Treasury.

The real wants of life are but few and require but little to supply them; it is the imaginary wants, which add neither to health or happiness, that create such heavy demands on our pockets and purses and prevent an accumulation for religious and charitable appropriations.

It is the duty of faithful stewards to present this doctrine of self sacrifice to the people, not occasionally, but perseveringly, prayerfully, patiently, pleasantly and practically, line upon line, precept upon precept, example upon example, and urge them to discard the superfluous and practice economy, that thereby their resources may be husbanded, and they be enabled to give liberally, and thus discharge fully their obligations to the Church, which are morally and religiously, as honestly due as obligations contracted for lands or merchandise. The practical effect of such teaching would soon be realized and like good seed sown in a fertile soil, would produce abundantly, and the teaching of the Scriptures that the "Lord loveth a cheerful giver" and "it is more blessed to give than receive," would be properly appreciated and cause a response that would gladden despondent hearts and fill many an empty Treasury.

We submit the following resolutions:

1st. Resolved, That it is the opinion and advice of this Conference, that the Financial plan recommended by the last Annual Conference, should be inaugurated in every station and circuit where it has not been introduced.

2nd. Resolved, That whereas the duty of providing for the financial interests of the Church, has been confided to the Stewards of the Church, that it is essential to her prosperity both temporal and spiritual, that the Stewards be men of active habits and business qualifications—men of true piety and noted for their devotion to the Church—and that we recommend to the Quarterly Conference the election of such on'y as combine these qualifications.

3rd. Resolved, That in view of the fact that the Conference year is drawing rapidly to a close, that we exhort our Stewards to exercise all possible diligence in making their collections, that at the end of the year the report may be had, that on every circuit and station in the district, the monied obligations of each have been fully met and discharged.

S. D. WALLACE, Chm'n.

ON THE STATE OF THE CHURCH.
The Committee on the State of the Church beg leave to report as follows:

Considering the misfortunes of the times, and the various demoralizing influences which have environed us on every hand, the exciting worldly topics which have engaged the minds of men, through a series of years, and the state of poverty to which the country has been reduced by the late disaster, we are constrained to say much for the fortitude, zeal, piety, and liberality of our church; especially within the bounds of the Wilmington District. She has certainly been abundant in labors to a large degree, patient in suffering, and all the while maintained according to the genius of Methodism, a liberal catholic spirit toward all other denominations.

At present, it is evident that in many respects, she is the embodiment of energy. In the Sabbath school enterprise, in the cultivation of Church Music, in the disposition to support the Gospel liberally, and in a settled principle of piety, there is a marked improvement in many quarters, upon the former times.

But while justice constrains us to say so much in her favor, the same principle demands that we should not disguise certain evil tendencies, or fail to seek for the means of contracting them.

For years, there has been a growing tendency to disregard pastoral authority, to break away from the restraints of the church, and to claim a larger latitude, both in faith and practice.—Have we not yielded already too much to this tendency? Have we not pandered too much to a vitiated popular taste, both in the pulpit and in the administrations of the discipline?—Has not the church in many cases feared to do her duty, lest she should incur the censure of the world, or sacrifice her pecuniary strength? Has she not increased her numerical strength at the expense of her purity?

These are questions which it is well to consider. And if these things be so, is it not wonderful that so many are found within the church, who daily set at naught the duties which she requires—defy her authority, and render the strict administration of discipline apparently dangerous to her existence?

Again, large charity has ever been a prominent characteristic of the Methodist Church. All exclusiveness—all narrowness and liberty—all blind adherence to favorite creeds, and exploded dogmas she has scrupulously ignored, as inconsistent with the liberal spirit of Christianity. In every land, he that believeth is acceptable of her, whatever may be his peculiar views upon minor topics. But we are constrained to believe that her very liberality has, to a large extent, proved a snare to her.

In extending her charity, she has often surrendered her ground. For the sake of peace (sometimes for the sake of popularity) she has sacrificed her principles and failed to meet her obligations. She has failed to attack prevalent errors, to insist upon her peculiar doctrines, and to demand the respect of sister churches. Many of her people are not indoctrinated, and really do not know whether they are Methodists or not, at all events, they are not Methodists, because they believe her doctrines to be truth, and

the Methodist Church to be the "soundest, safest, and best." For these reasons, there is, we think a great want of steadiness and decision. The lines between us and other denominations are not distinctly drawn, and consequently, we can never be certain of our real status. Many among us are imbued with the doctrines and ideas of other Churches, and therefore, are not reliable Methodists, yet, they are expected to do their duty as Methodists, and when these fail to do so, the church suffers. We need a reliable membership—to use the language of Bishop Pierce, "a compact, serried host, instinct with one spirit"—every man stepping to the music of spiritual religion—loving, harmonious—of one accord—wedded to the institutions of Methodism—not bigoted but warmly denominational—not exclusive, pretentious, illiberal, but yet, thoroughly persuaded that our Church, in doctrine, discipline, economy, experience, is the "soundest, safest, best." Such being the tendencies and wants of the times, it seems to follow:

1st. That the great leading doctrines of Methodism, (which we believe to be the leading doctrines of the Bible) should be set forth with peculiar prominence and distinctness—that error from every quarter, should be vigorously attacked and exploded, not in the spirit of controversy, but for the love of truth, and that the lines between us and others, should be distinctly drawn.

2nd. That greater strictness should be maintained in the admission of members into our church, and in the administration of the discipline of the church, leaving the consequences with God.

3rd. That there should be special efforts to revive class meetings, prayer meetings and love feasts, wherever it is practicable, and to give them their original effectiveness and power.

W. ROBEY,
B. B. CULBRETH, } COM.
M. P. OWEN.

Selections.

A True Woman.

A TOUCHING INCIDENT ON A RAILROAD TRAIN.

The following incident of travel is narrated by a correspondent of the Daily Saratogian. It took place on one of the Northern trains, between Saratoga and Whitehall, N. Y.

When the train halted at Saratoga, among the passengers from the West, came a man of about thirty years of age, elbowing his way through the crowd, and bearing in his arms a child. He was a poor man; his clothes were poor, he looked poor. Around his hat was tied a piece of soiled, worn rags. It was evidently all the mourning his scanty means would permit, for the mother of the child was dead.

This man was rough in exterior, yet his face was an honest one. He handled the baby awkwardly, yet there was a tenderness in his sad look that showed the purity of a father's love.—The little fellow lay on his coarsely-clad knee, a stray sunbeam glanced across its tired face. They were both tired, the father and the child for they had come from the far West; and as he placed his hand, toil-worn hand to shield it from the golden rays, there was in his look a mixture of sadness and care, as if his pent up feelings had been so crowded back into the inner cells of his heart that even tears could have been no relief to the hidden anguish that was making his life a misery.

The poor child cried; it may be that the little thing was tired; it missed its mother; perhaps it was hungry; perhaps it was sick, and so it cried. The tears rolled down its baby cheeks; the father wiped away the tears as they fell, and tried to feed it. He was so awkward with the bottle—his had been a life of toil and hardship—and he knew not how to give his darling its nourishment. As he made effort after effort to stifle the cries and check the tears of his motherless babe, how he must have missed her who in his life of labor and privation had been his

solace and comfort. An unbidden tear started to eye, but he brushed it quickly away. All who saw him pitied him. At length a woman richly appareled, with an infant resting on the lap of her nurse beside her—she had been watching the man—said in a gentle tone, "Give me the child."—The poor fellow looked at her with a look of gratitude, for there was a mother's tenderness in her voice.—With humble resignation, as though it was pain to part with him, even for a moment, he gave her his boy. The woman took it; its soiled clothes rested on her costly silk, its tiny head was soon beneath her shawl, and in a moment all was still. Like the Grecian daughter who through the iron bars fed her starving father, so did this high born lady from her breast feed the hungry child, and when on her gentle bosom the little one lay in calm and untroubled sleep, she put aside the shawl.

The father's heart swelled with gratitude. He said as a tear welled in his eye, and his voice was thick with emotion, "Thank you; I'll take him now," then the woman's nature spoke forth, as she gently answered, "Not yet, you will wake him," and for mile after mile that noblehearted woman held that poor man's child, and it was not until her own babe required such nourishment as only a mother can give she gently rose and placed the strange boy with its father.

BREVITIES.

Wickedness is then great, when great men are wicked.

They that aim, like the Babel builders, at a great name, commonly come off with a bad name.

Luther was accustomed to say, "Bene orasse, est bene studuisse."—To have prayed well is to have studied well.

Many a rich father has made of his only son what Aaron made of the offerings of the Israelites—a golden calf.

The ancients used to say that "Truth is in a well." We have to dig for it, and often dig deep. Matthew Henry says, "Man digs the well; God fills it."

The North American Review said more than forty years ago: "The poetry of Byron is the poetry of earth only; where it is not, as in his Cain, the poetry of hell."

Claudius Buchanan says, "I fancy that youthful sermon-writers are generally at a loss to know how to begin, and when they do begin, they know not where to stop."

De Lac says, "Real and general advances will only then be made in the Science of Nature when the dread of proximity shall be overcome."

Sir William Jones gives the title—*Bostani-Kheiyal*—of a Persian romance in sixteen quarto volumes. How many of our young ladies read it?

Diogenes, boasting of his plain, humble apparel, was told, "There is pride in every hole of your rags."

Sterne says, "Gravity is a mysterious carriage of the body to hide the defects of the mind."

The author of "Tale of a Tub" says, "The most accomplished way of using books at present is, to serve them as some do lords—learn their titles, and then brag of their acquaintance."

"What is all righteousness that men devise?"
What, but a sordid bargain for the skies? But Christ as soon would abdicate his own, As stoop from heaven to set the proud a throne."

Theocritus, when asked which were the most rapacious of all wild beasts, replied: "Bears and lions in your mountains; tax-gatherers and slanderers in your cities."

John Gray, speaking of the Duke of Newcastle's eloquence at his installation as Chancellor of Cambridge University, says, "Vesuvius in an eruption was not more violent than his utterance, nor Pelion, with all its pine trees, in a storm of wind, more impetuous than his action."

Dr. Burney said of the English parochial music of his day:—"It is such as would sooner drive Christians out of the church than draw pagans into it." Pope was more severe:

"Light quirks of music, broken and uneven,
Make the soul dance upon a jig to heaven."

Possidonius relates of Austin, one of the Christian Fathers, that this Latin distich was inscribed on the table where he entertained his friends:—"Quisquis amat dietis absentem rodere amicum,

Hanc mensam indignam noverit esso sibi."

It must have spoiled the appetites of every backbiter.