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EDITORIAL.

HYSTERIA AND HOMILETICS.

Solomon has said that there is "a time to weep and a time to laugh." Ever since the time of Jeremiah, and perhaps from days immemorial, preachers have considered weeping highly appropriate in their pulpit ministrations. But "weeping preachers" are going out of fashion. Whether this fact is due to the poverty of the hortatory element of the sermons, or to atrophied tear ducts, or to the adverse criticisms of a gainsaying generation, this "deponent sayeth not." That there are times when the gravity of the theme and occasion demands a full exercise of easily excitable lachrymal glands, goes without saying. That the pulpit should be made a Jeremiah's cave, or the church's wailing place, as has been done at divers times within our recollection, we will never, we trust, be so unwise as to admit. It is perhaps best that the tribe of Jeremiah should decrease. The opposite operation might be better. We are not inclined to discuss this phase of the subject.

In this goodly section of the South, we hardly know what a "laughing preacher" is. We have, it is true, some preachers who at times during the sermon laugh, and make their congregations laugh. We are satisfied in our minds that their tribe should decrease. But a preacher who incessantly hilariously laughs during his so-called sermon is for us who are not up to the latest wrinkles in religious fads, fancies, and fakes—a *rara avis*, which, being interpreted, with all deference to the feathered tribe, means "a most sorry article."

But he is here. We have been hearing of him all the week. The last we heard of him he was in goodly Greensboro. He was astonishing the saints there with his cacophonous feats extending through his so-called sermon. The reports say that he is in the habit of describing the horrors of hell, and then touching the whole thing off in an explosion of laughter. The thought of men going to hell seems to amuse him. He calls it, we believe, the "holy laugh." He claims to be a Quaker. In Greensboro he filled the Quaker Church to overflowing. On one night over five hundred were "turned away on account of lack of room."

We are sorry for the "laughing preacher." We are sorry for those to whom he is in the habit of ministering. God wants, in His pulpit, no buffoonery, attended by hysterical demonstrations of lunacy. Such things as the "holy laugh" and the "holy dance" are more symptomatic of cerebral derangement than indicative of wealth in holiness. Imagine St. Paul, or any other man carrying the burden of Christ's Kingdom cutting such antics! After our observation of such sporadic excrescences as have been developed in the last few years in the Old North State, we cannot honestly

expect to enjoy an immunity from the last named nuisance. We are afraid that it will spread, and that in a few months our Jeremiahs will in disgust leave the field to the laughing evangelists.

We cannot emphasize too strongly the necessity of every preacher having what is called "a concern for souls." Christ had it, and, when he spoke to dying men and women, His words throbbed with a mighty pathos. Paul had it, and his tense earnestness lives in his wonderful writings, and we can almost see the tear stains on the printed page. God gives His preachers places where the heart can break forth in blossom, and the face can wear the sunshine of smiles. But in the pulpit where eternities meet, and the immortal soul looks into the face of destiny, the issues are too grave to be veered with desecrating mirth.

THE TRUE KNIGHTS.

Whatever may be said of "end-of-the-century" life, we feel sure that it is not subject to the criticism that it is suffering from dry rot. Activity in almost every department is so marked that events not only occur in almost kaleidoscopic variety, but are of such a nature as to quicken the most sluggish currents of the soul. The heroism of the Rough Riders last year, the gallant feats of some of our boys in the Philippines, the daring of obscure men and women in fire and flood are still sending the thrill through appreciative hearts, and we are being taught in a gloriously objective way that we do not have to pull down dusty volumes from dust-covered shelves to read of heroes and heroines. They are with us.

We have lately thought much of our chief heroes. They are not the men who carry guns under foreign skies, or brave death on ocean waves or amid tempests or fire. They are poor, obscure preachers of the gospel who are doing picket duty for Christ on the little dreary circuits and missions of our Conferences. Funston, swimming the river with a rope in his mouth under a murderous fire of bloodthirsty savages, dared death amid the huzzas of appreciative and heroic companions. But there is many a poor preacher who, practically alone, fights from Conference to Conference the battles of Jesus. No human applause ever greets his ear. He brushes up and cleans his well-worn clothes, goes up to Conference with his meagre collections, receives his appointment, returns to scenes of toil and struggle, until the great Captain calls him above, and angels sing for him the peans of praise which make the arches of Heaven ring. Bravest soldiers of the Cross, we send them a greeting. The self-sacrificing, patient wives are just as worthy of praise, and are as truly heroines as their husbands are heroes.

A BROCHURE IN BIOGRAPHY.

Rev. J. P. Rodgers, of the Western North Carolina Conference, and present Principal of Pilot Mountain Academy, has favored us with a copy of his "Life of Rev. James Needham." The author, Prof. Rodgers, in the writing of this booklet, had the advantage of having a good subject, and the ability to treat it in plain, expressive English.

Rev. James Needham was a remarkable character. For several years before his death, he had the unique distinction of being the oldest preacher in the United States, if not in the world. On a beautiful Sabbath afternoon last fall we heard him preach a sermon of great spiritual power to an overflowing congregation. The patriarch was bowed under the weight of nearly a hundred years. As we listened to his words of wisdom, we almost prayed that God would allow him to round out a life-century. When we learned that the chariot came for him just a few weeks this side of the hundredth mile-post, we were almost tempted into a disappointment. His life, as por-

trayed by Prof. Rodgers, covers the heroic days of Methodism, and the author gives us not only the *tout ensemble* of a remarkable life, but many items which throw light on the history of Methodism in North Carolina. The booklet is interesting, exhaustive, and valuable. We bespeak for it a place in the library of every Methodist in the two Conferences.

Course of Events.

I.

THE newspapers and magazines are filled with articles on the trouble between Great Britain and the Transvaal, or South African Republic. The trouble has reached an acute stage, and may result in a war of no mean consequence. It is safe to say, perhaps, that not one out of ten understands the nature of the trouble. The press reports, while giving specific facts, are not calculated to make the situation clear to the general reader. We trust that we may succeed in our purpose to give in this column a general and adequate understanding of the situation.

II.

Transvaal is a republic, whose citizens are Boers, people of German descent, who speak a language called "taal"—a mixture of Dutch and French. Paul Kruger, called "Oom Paul", is President. The Volksraad, or Parliament, consists of forty-four members, elected for four years. The republic is not large in size. The Boers are greatly outnumbered by the Uitlanders, or foreigners, who are subjects of Great Britain. The soil is fertile, and the climate healthful.

III.

The republic has not been in existence many years. About 1835 the Boers at Cape Colony (under British rule) became dissatisfied and "trekked" northward into what is now called Transvaal. After much trouble with the native tribes, the political independence of this region under the name of the South African Republic was established and recognized by Great Britain. In 1876, Sir Theophilus Shepstone issued a proclamation annexing the Transvaal. This resulted in a most bloody war, in which Great Britain was decidedly worsted. In 1881, the English Government restored the republic, and according to the provisions of several later conventions, it is now under the suzerainty of Queen Victoria. The republic is independent, but Great Britain has a right to control the immediate relations with foreign powers.

IV.

For the last twenty-five years, the laws of the Transvaal have been getting harder and more selfish. No Uitlander enjoys the right of franchise, and consequently he is denied the right of representation. When it is remembered that the Uitlanders are largely in the majority, must teach their children the "taal" language, and pay nineteen-twentieths of the taxes, it is no wonder that Jameson a few years ago made his ill-starred raid in the attempt to change this state of things. None of the abuses, so far, have been corrected, and the situation is becoming intolerable to the Uitlanders.

V.

Mr. Chamberlain lately issued a manifesto insisting that the Uitlanders must have a representation in the Transvaal government. He says that President Kruger promised as much in the 1884 convention. This statement is not denied. Sir Alfred Milner, High Commissioner at Capetown, demands that one-fifth of the seats in the Volksraad be granted to the Uitlanders. President Kruger offers to accede to this demand, provided Great Britain renounce all claim to suzerainty. This Mr. Chamberlain refuses to do, claiming that Great Britain must possess

some influence that will insure protection to her subjects in the Transvaal. He evidently suspects that Oom Paul would not be willing to carry out his part of the bargain.

VI.

Such is the situation. Both sides are preparing for war. Unusual preparations are being made for a conflict, which is liable to come at any time. The issues would not be so grave if they could be confined to South Africa. But this would not be the case. The conflict would be on a larger scale, involving Germany and perhaps other powers.

CHRISTIAN LIFE IN OUR COLLEGES.

Probably no more significant fact could be stated concerning the institutions of higher learning of the United States and Canada than that there is in more than five hundred of these institutions carefully organized Christian work for students by students. Of the agencies which have been used of God to develop and promote this work, none have been more potent for good than the conferences held each summer under the auspices of the Student Department of the International Committee of the Young Men's Christian Associations. The well-understood purpose of these gatherings is "to deepen the spiritual life of college men, to train them in organized Christian work among their fellow-students, and to open up the possibilities of Christian service which await them after graduation."

The summer conference idea had its beginning in 1886, when Mr. Moody invited the college leaders to Mount Hermon, Mass., for two weeks to be spent in Bible study and discussion of best methods of religious work among students. From this first gathering at Mount Hermon have grown the four summer conferences now held each year in various parts of the student field of North America; and not only these, but the idea has spread to the organized Christian student movements in other lands, and similar summer conferences are now held by the college and University men of Great Britain, Germany, Scandinavia, Switzerland, India, Ceylon, China, Japan, Australia, and New Zealand.

The four conferences now held each summer for the aggressive Christian workers in the colleges of Northfield, Mass., for Eastern students; at Asheville, N. C., for Southern students; at Lake Geneva, Wis., for the college men of the Middle West; and at Pacific Grove, Cal., for the men of the institutions of the Pacific slope. All of these summer conferences for the summer of 1889 have been held. At the four there was present a total of 1,191 students from 383 institutions. A more select body of young men it would be well-nigh impossible to get together. At Northfield there were 586 men, representing 145 institutions; at Asheville there were 156 men from 68 institutions; at Lake Geneva, 376 men from 158 institutions; and at Pacific Grove, 73 men from 12 colleges. Hardly an important college or university of North America was without its representative at one of these summer conferences, while a large number of the leading professional, technical, and theological schools had delegates present, showing the significance and extent of the student Christian movement in North America.

Each of the four conferences followed the same general plan. Each lasted ten days, the dates being: Pacific Grove, May 19-28; Asheville and Lake Geneva, June 16-25; and Northfield, June 30, July 9. At each the mornings were given to Bible study, to study of association methods and problems, and to platform addresses; the afternoons to recreation; and the evenings to life work talks and to delegation meetings. The plan followed proved, as in others years, to be effective as well as comprehensive. The earlier addresses of the conferences in each case were searching and vigorous, dealing with the temptations and difficulties, intellectual and other, which beset the student. Thus the men were prepared for the more constructive and inspiring talks of the later days of the gatherings. The hours of Bible study each day led the men to the source of spiritual truth, and taught them scholarly, yet devotional and practical, methods of searching for that truth, preparing them both for the continuation of their own spiritual cultivation and for leading classes in Bible study during the coming year. The missionary institutes and the association

conferences each day brought out in clear relief the methods that have proved to be most practical in actual religious work among college students. The life work talks each evening gave the men a broad conception of the present opportunities for definite Christian service throughout the world, the demand for workers, and the kind of workers needed. Principles and helps in deciding one's life work were carefully outlined during these twilight outlook meetings, and the claims of home and foreign missions, the ministry, and the association general secretaryship upon Christian college men were presented. Such continuous and careful consideration on the part of the delegates of ways of developing and intensifying their own lives, of applying those lives most helpfully in promoting the best spiritual results among the men of their various institutions, and finally of applying those same lives later toward meeting a world's need, could not but transform character. It has been so in other years, and it was so this year. —C. H. Fahs, in *New York Advocate*.

TILL THE STARS APPEAR.

The work of Christ must be carried through to the end, till the stars appear. Sometimes we grow weary in our outward ministry. We would fain rest; we desire at the least a long reprieve from toil. It may be, and will be, if we live long enough, the will of God that we should change the form of our labor; but it is never his will that we should cease to be his servants. The time comes when it is well that we should withdraw ourselves from some burden; but we must be sure that it is his release of kindness, and not the release of our own impatience. Are we this day cumbered with much serving? Are things very ill with us? Let us take heed in such hours. May it be true that we have fainted for lack of seeking the Divine cordial which would have kept us busy? In middle life especially the heart sinks sometimes at the call of new duties which rise inevitably out of the old, and which we shrink from, and yet know that we should face. But our business is to sow in tears, and to work with the sweat of our brows. If it is otherwise with us, we are not in the true following of the Master; never unless as each day closes we go tired to sleep, knowing that we have done what we could. No part of the work must be abandoned while we can do the old service to God and man. It is permissible to change the fashion of our work, though this should be done deliberately; but we must always look with jealousy upon idleness as something to which we have no right. As time goes on, there will be less work for us in a manner, and yet there will be work, and it may be work of a higher though less visible sort. We must go on. Most of us will be best to go on in the old fashion, even accepting new tasks as they come, and waiting not too early for the starlight.

If we are touched by some sudden treachery, assailed by some great temptation, struck at sorely in the field of battle, we must lift our eyes to the hills from whence our help cometh, and achieve the triumph of continuance. Our rest will come, and it is not very far away, much nearer, indeed, than we often think, and it will be the noble rest of the sons of God, the rest which is not inaction, not sloth, not torpor, but the happy harmony of all the faculties in the service that is followed by no weariness. Says one writer: "The heavenly rest is an idea which inspires the soul, as unlike the idea of rest which mockers at the faith reproach as the soft swiftness with which the earth spins on its axis—so soft that it seems to sleep; as unlike the same earth, if we could fancy, motionless, stranded, like a hulk on the sea beach of eternity. And that is an idea which only those can conceive and live by and long for who have toiled and fought with ardor, courage, and faith for years." —*The British Weekly*.

More dear in the sight of God and his angels than any other conquest is the conquest of self, which each man, with the help of heaven, can secure for himself. —*Dean Stanley*.

It was said of one that as he prayed he spoke as if God was near, and talked with him so really and confidently that those who were beside him found themselves almost looking around to see where God was. —*Taylor*.