

MINISTERIAL HYGIENE.

RATIONAL SCIENCE OF THIS ORDER AND ITS PRINCIPLES.

Five Commandments that "Pastor Felix" Can Warrant to Be Good, If Kept, and True, Whether Kept or Not—A Code That Clergymen Should Study.

My brother: You have been kind enough to quiz me a little on the subject stated above. Why you have chosen me for an oracle I cannot imagine; for I am, it is understood, inclined to make free with the laws of the human constitution. But as, some seem to think, we have not to be good in order to suggest the plain path for others; and as you insist upon the matter, I will for you lay down the commandments. But first listen to my preamble:

Fortunately, and also unfortunately, the ears of the present age are being deafened by hygienic and physiological doctrines. With the zeal of specialists, and the overheat of animated discussion, we fancy that points are occasionally overstated, and that too great emphasis is placed upon a first-rate body in first-rate condition, and its relation to mental and spiritual manifestations. They say one might as well be dead, as not to be an A No. 1 animal. Be one! but I advise you there is a great deal of gas talked and written on the subject, and I can get an army of racked and suffering geniuses to rise in the judgment and tell you so. History-abounds in instances of "mighty souls" that "o'er inform their tenements of clay"—of admirable minds in contemptible bodies, from Saul of Tarsus down; albeit their bodies had grit and endurance, serving their owners long, and held somehow together, if they did not do so well and pleasantly. The fact is, after all, the needs of the body are first in time and place; but not the first in perpetual importance. Youth ought to have a chance to build itself up; for the chief concern of life's earliest period, mayhap, is to confer a good frame, and build it up in healthful solidity, if possible; and at that point of being, if ever, the basis of a good constitution is to be established, and good health habits may best be formed. After this, the region of concern with most men, infallibly with all earnest working men, will be where we may have something to do, and to do it mightily;—will be in the soul's realm—the realm of will and endeavor, where there is little time or inclination to study morbid conditions; where, in the stress of work, a man will strain his nerves and sometimes overstrain—will break his body to advance his cause. Do you not know that with all our hygienic science—and it is considerable—we are an immensely nerve-stretched-and-broken, morbid, miserably self-conscious people? And not every miss and young master study physiology till they might dispute on anatomy? Why, it is a thought of awe that a lean man cannot go abroad but the innocent on the street can tell all his bones, and see 'em too, maybe. Forsooth! let us turn to something serious and healthy. Give me some of the ignorance of the past! Let me not take too good care of myself; somebody may want my place. If, on the one hand, the Voice cries—"Do thyself no harm"; on the other hand, as deep a Voice may be sounding within him who would live to any purpose: "He who [over]loveth his life [and will at all hazards save,] shall lose it"; he who would never be off the body's base—would make his health an over-weening concern, shall reduce his real, his higher life to nil, or so near it, that there remains little to save. A good medicine is a grand opportunity nobly observed.

Would you believe me, that just today we are over-doctored? The sensible are beginning to say, "Keep clear." The world never so abounded, I think, in specialists and theorists, in visionaries and the makers of extravagances, who deal with these subjects in opposing and contradictory ways; so that it is difficult, in some cases, to see where science ceases and quackery begins. So I say to you, my brother, clear your mind of cant on health subjects. Instead of Sancho Panza's court physician, whose prudence left the burly governor with nothing but a roaring appetite, since this dish and that was not wholesome, and must be removed; we have now a multitude to prescribe or to taboo everything, till we are driven despairingly back upon the modicum of sense we have, in order to make our own decision. One would take pork away from our regimen; another would withdraw all flesh; another proclaims all vegetable substances most difficult of digestion, until the impression of how fearfully and wonderfully we are made, when nothing indeed suits our frame, deepens upon us, and life becomes a doubt and bewilderment. Wool! Wool! Cobwebs! Brush them from your eyes. Give us the perfect hygienic standard, that we err not therefrom.

But don't I believe in taking care of one's body? And don't I believe in hygienic and physiological science and its pursuit? Oh! I do, indeed. I think that to take such care is one of our duties, and that we ought to keep the tone of our bodies up, in order not only to greater comfort, but to greater working efficiency. There is a rational science of this order, with well-established truths and principles; and if it has helped to intensify the agnostic tendency of the time, and a morbid self-consciousness, it has also conduced to the abolishment of abuses, and the establish-

ment of safeguards to health non-existent before. It has called for a revision of Wesley's famous maxim, and rendered it—"Be ye clean, who would be healthy." The region of infinitesimal life it has explored, and found that much of disease is animate; and 'tis dispossessing the serpents and tigers of malaria, and promising to slay many an insidious power that now slays us. Already it has done much toward clearing the sewers and sinks, applying disinfectant agents, and generally revolutionizing sanitary conditions, where death, through former ignorance, was rife and reigned.

So, now, for my few brief commandments. I can warrant them to be good, if kept; and true, whether kept or not. As a clergyman, you have the same need, as a nerve and brain worker, to attend to this code that any professional man has:

1. Don't keep the mind on one thing too long. This habit is belittling and killing tens of thousands. Vary your occupation. The operative works at the head of a pin till his head becomes like the head of a pin, or something small, far off and dazed. Invertebrate and intense specialism narrows the brain and ruins the nerves. The preacher who doesn't turn from theology, sometimes, to poetry and history, and various things, will not only become a dry-as-dust or a fanatic, but he will surely injure his health. Stick to your task till it is accomplished, and then vary your occupation.

2. Eat. How can I help it? Rather ask—How in these steam-magnetic-dynamo days can I help guzzling? Take time to do it; and learn the pleasures and acquire the virtues of a taster. You may not become a Heliogabalus, and yet it may be a real merit in you to get a wholesome sensation from what you introduce to your palate, while you chew, chew like the patient, ruminant creature in the meadow, where—Forty are feeding like one.

Again, don't eat. When you have occasion to pastorally or socially sit at that sister's table who puts on twelve kinds of cake, and coolly informs you that had she been aware of your coming she would have been prepared with a larger variety—pray abstain.

3. Take exercise. If you are a particle like your adviser, this particular rule you are bound to neglect through much forgetfulness. Josh Billings recommends it; but would have us avoid sawing wood, unless it be clearly necessary. I will reverse his judgment, in part, and assure you that I saw a little from choice. I convert the bucksaw into a harp, by turning it upside down; while leaning over it affectionately, as did the hoar minstrel of old time, I play a brief anthem of labor. Instead of scraping the saw over the wood, I sometimes vary the operation by scraping the wood over the saw. Hygienically, it secures the same result. Walk a little; I do—but not enough. If the brain is like an edged tool requiring more or less of sharpening, legs and arms are also implements that need stretching; for they, too, come under the honest law of exercise—of health and growth by motion. Walk, then, on the highway, and off it; among fields, and under branching vines, and upon dry pasture-knolls, and over crisp winter snows. Before you know it, you and the veritable goddess Hygeia will stand face to face.

4. Don't worry. As a minister you ought to trust in Providence; and if you do, you won't worry—much. But not even a dog can have health if given to worry.

5. Sleep. You will want to burn more or less of oil past midnight, if you are a student with the book-hunger on you, and are like the shaggy fellow in "Rab" (who could never get enough of "fechtin," he took life so "sairiously"), in th t you can never get enough of reading; but you are liable to converse with immortality at the expense of your mortal body. You should have a precious task when lit to it by a wick that is a nerve, and oil that is your heart's blood. You may share with me the sentiment of Southey's impressive lines:

My days amid the dead are passed; Around me I behold, Where e'er these casual eyes are cast The nightly minds of old; My never-failing friends are they, With whom I converse night and day. And yet some less sentimental author may take you down with a verse like this:

He pays too high a price For knowledge and for fame Who gives his sinews to be wise, His teeth and bones to buy a name, And crawls through life a paralytic, To earn the praise of bard or critic.

Therefore, sleep, measurably, and so "knit up the ravelled sleeve of care"; but don't permit yourself to encounter damps in the process of being your parishioner's bed-warmer, or you won't sleep much, or prosper well; but rather mildly assert yourself. Then, when it is time to arise, Dr. Franklin will be at your elbow, with his familiar and appropriate maxim, which you will please to observe.

That both the preamble and the five commandments may be of use to the inquirer, is the prayer of the inquired-of, and the sincere hope of. PASTOR FELIX.

A Beggar to Be Pitted. Scene—A lonely spot on a dark night. "Would the gentleman be so kind as to assist a poor man? Besides this revolver, I have nothing in this wide world."—Boston Saturday Gazette.

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THE LAND OF FLOWERS.

THE FOLIAGE AND BIRDS OF SUNSHINY FLORIDA.

G. E. F. Describes the Beauties of Spring in the South—Interesting to Lovers of Flowers and Birds—Descriptions of a Beautiful Country.

[FIFTH LETTER.]

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., March 14.—I had the pleasure of attending an evening "At Home" in one of Florida's fine mansions, and there met what we call at the North some of the elite of Tallahassee society, consisting of ex-governors and judges and high officials, such as reside at the capital of the state—the counterpart of our provincial capital—also medical and other professional gentlemen, besides a captain of H. M. Royal Engineers, here for the present. There was also an authoress of stately presence, a daughter of ex-Governor or Call, deceased, who held office during the Jackson presidential term, when Florida was yet a territory. From this lady I obtained considerable information upon the early history of this country and also a copy of her work, known as Florida Breezes, by Ellen Call Long—the composition of which displays considerable literary ability and research, while the book is especially edifying to a stranger and sojourner like myself in quest of information upon the early history and Indian struggles of Florida and interesting incidents connected therewith, somewhat blended with romance, but presented in a highly picturesque and artistic manner. It is altogether a work not only of great interest and value, but well worthy of preservation in the university library of this place, which is a most creditable and useful institution. We returned to our homes at an early hour, and shall not soon forget the hospitalities of our host and hostess. Of course, if it were in New Brunswick, Progress would not hesitate to parade all our names before its readers. I am afraid were I to do this "on the present occasion," it might cause a mild shock to the tender susceptibilities of our Florida friends, whose attentions during our short stay here have been very kind and unexpected.

"For lo! the winter is past, the rain is over and gone—the flowers appear on the earth—the time of the singing of birds has come."

We have just entered March, and are surrounded by all the Palestine loveliness of nature so beautifully described by the sweet singer of Israel. According to my reading of the map, Jerusalem is situated in the same parallel of latitude as Tallahassee, between 30° and 31° north. I doubt if there can be much if any difference in the temperature of the two places, whatever way the isothermal line trends, if one may take the above quotation as an evidence of the spring's advancement in the respective hemispheres—for here, truly, as at Jerusalem, the time of the singing of birds has come, and the flowers in these early days of March appearing "on the earth" are really a delight to behold. Not only are they in the gardens, but even in the neighboring woods, which are umbrageous with trailing vines, bedecked with blossoms of every hue and shape, such as we see in picture books, while the atmosphere around is impregnated with the "balm of a thousand flowers," the real thing itself, in its pristine state, not diluted like that we obtain from our druggists bottled up, and used at home to bedew ourselves on gala occasions.

In a former letter I stated that in January and February the gardens were alive with flowers, such as the camellia japonica, jessamine, roses, etc., etc. This was the winter bloom; we are now in the spring bloom—(thermometer rising into the 70's, with scarcely any change)—such as the yellow jessamine, growing wild in the woods, perfume delicious, but like deceitful folks, poisonous at the heart or stamen, and dangerous at close quarters, pretty much like the northern "monk's hood," a blue flower in our gardens, which is death to children who put it in their mouths.

Then there are the fruit-tree blossoms, nearly all out—the Conde pear, the peach, the crab-apple, the pomegranate, and such like—it is a sight to behold the pink, brown and white bloom in the orchards and gardens, just now. The roses continue to develop, increasing in size and beauty with the advancing season. The Cherokee rose, a small white floral beauty, is bursting its buds and taking possession of everything that stands in its way; not being very particular as to the character of its trellis, it twines its branches among the trees, runs up the spouts, takes possession of veranda supports, invades the roofs of the houses—and spreads its mantle of white, like snow upon our northern house tops.

The May-thorn is also out, which stands, I think, for the English hawthorn; the banana is lifting its head from its winter quarters—the use of this word winter in this climate seems to me like a solecism—and when in full leaf will look majestic, running up ten or twelve feet, with long, glossy leaves. The shrub, or small tree, called here the "red-bud," or Judas tree, is all aglow with its cups of bright red, the leaves not having yet arrived, which is a freak of nature applicable to other plants or trees, the peach for example. But the beauty of this red bloom is indescribable. The dogwood is also out, as it determined

not to be behind hand in presenting its charms for the admiration of your correspondent. The verberna is in full feather in our little garden, the white pink daisy is creeping all about the borders, and the hydrangia—a large bush here—is getting ready to burst into bloom. The tulip tree, with its bell-like flowers, very like the brogmanche lily—our friend Bebbington will understand me—divides the palm with the other floral beauties visible on all sides. The azalia, so symmetrically trained in the north, stands in the open garden here, a blooming sugar cask (excuse the roughness of the comparison—size is intended), and not a bit less sweet in whatever sense we view it.

Then there is the fig tree. We also read in the good book, "Whenever the fig tree puts forth its leaves, then we know that summer is nigh"—I may not have it altogether correct, but such is the substance. How true our climatic idea holds good likewise in this respect, for, as in Jerusalem in the early spring, this indication of summer holds good, so here in the same latitude. The fig trees in all directions are putting out their early leaves; and so with the grapes, also of scriptural reference. "The vines with the tender grape give a good smell, . . . take us the foxes, the little foxes, that spoil the vines; for our vines have tender grapes." How true, for what flower of the field is more fragrant than the grape blossom? The vineyards are in bloom in the neighborhood—as in France upon a commercial scale, for here wine of the various brands is made, and equal to the trans-Atlantic quality, so I am informed, such as (sub rosa) port, claret, hock, etc. But the grape appears to grow wild, in the gardens and along the by-ways and hedges countrywards, taking precedence, as it were, of every other fruit, in its season, for its lucidness and different varieties. But I cannot more than begin to enumerate the manifold treasures of nature which this month of March is unfolding to view in tree, shrub, flower and fruit—for the strawberry, the dewberry and blackberry will presently be in the market plentifully and inexpensively. Don't you wish you could look in upon us in about ten days?

But "the time of the singing of the birds has come." Although we have had bird-song going on all winter it has been in a half-hearted sort of way. But since real spring has set in, the woods and gardens have become vocal from new visitors, such as the wren, the thrush, the blue bird, the sabel, the lark, and above all the mocking bird, which appears to be the king of all the Florida feathery choristers, and if I could only discount his notes in print I think that every amateur ornithologist in St. John would agree with me that this bird could not be beaten—for he is a whole show in himself, as his refrain is the echo and imitation of all the other birds of air. The notes of the poor robin go, but a short distance in the presence of his mocking neighbor, who appears to be the soloist of the feathery choir. But there are many birds flitting about here and singing there, of rare plumage, of whose names and habits I have no knowledge.

Again, "the rain is over and gone." This sentence contains a great deal, for when it rains in Florida, at all events here it is very watery, but not quite so bad as a Scotch mist, the kind I experienced on a cruise through Loch Lomond in Scotland, once upon a time, a mist which saturates one to the skin, pervious to mackintosh or umbrella, for no human contrivance can resist it. It does not only go to the skin, but through it, and enters every nerve, fibre and tissue of the body. If this may not appear to our Scotch friends like an exaggeration, it will at all events convey my ideas of a Scotch mist, however erroneous. But here the rain comes down so hard and in such big drops that it makes no more impression upon one than it would upon a water fowl. It has no time to stop on its way, or allow any obstacles to impede its course, but rushes down the sides of the steep hills, or streets, with the wildest impetuosity, ploughing up the earth and leaving gullies or furrows in some places ten feet deep, carrying with it all the debris and street sweepings, thus acting as scavenger and purifier at the same time, rendering the sanitary arrangements, through these natural downpours and outlets, all but perfect. It rains until it gets tired, it one may so speak, and leaves off as it dawns, without hesitation, and makes room suddenly for the sun to shine. Not so with us at home. I have known the clouds to frown and sulk for a whole week in "wet weather" in summer time, and then we are not sure of sunshine until the St. John fog has taken its departure round Red Head, driven by its enemy which is a stiff westerly breeze. (I hope that this remark will not disturb the serenity of any body.) But now "the rain is over and gone"—in other words the winter is past, and we are basking in sunshine beneath cloudless skies, inhaling the fragrance of a "thousand flowers."

But, Progress, you must not suppose that these southern charms I have been attempting feebly to describe make me dissatisfied with or forgetful of our own country, many parts of which at this writing are enshrouded in snow and encased in deep layers of ice. While the laws of compensation and equivalents hold good in climatic as in other respects, we have nothing to complain of on the score of being kept out in the cold in New Brunswick considerably beyond the month of March. If our winters are long, our houses are warm and we enjoy the best summers in the world when they come about, with a soil as fertile and productive as any (ceteris paribus) under the sun. If a person's purse were long enough to enable him to copy after the wild geese and spend six months North and six South, migrate November 1, and remigrate May 1, summer, or the next thing to it, might be enjoyed all the year through—and in such case we should all be the wiser and healthier for the change. However, as my own purse is now getting shorter than it was when I left home, I shall soon have to right-about-face, and then, perhaps, feel like Mrs. Malapropos who, on returning from Nice, declared that the pleasantest thing in life was to leave home, except to return to it. G. E. F.

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ST. JOHN, N. B., March 15, 1889.

HARRY COMEQUICK.

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Your friend, T. H. E. TRUTH. P. S.—At Night Look for the Red Light.

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