

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, JULY 11, 1891.

THEY COULD NOT AGREE

AS TO THE RIGHT KIND OF PRAYER FOR A PRAYER MEETING.

An Interesting Discussion in a City Church During Which Opinions Were Given Freely Without Regard to Surroundings or Anything Else.

At a prayer meeting on Wednesday evening, not long ago, the minister who was presiding called on one of the elders or deacons, I don't know which, to lead in prayer. Mr. Bland did so by repeating the Lord's prayer. There was a ripple of excitement as he sat down. The next who was called on declined, saying "he did not know that there was any need of further exercise. He thought the meeting should adjourn now." Mr. Boanerges then rose, and in a very high toned voice besought the Lord to grant to the meeting the spirit of prayer and supplication without formalism. That he would put it into the hearts of the congregation to ask for what they needed, etc. Mr. Bland immediately rose and said that he had asked for what he needed, and what the congregation, he thought, needed, and according to a highly authorized form, and he did not think he would be heard by God any better for "much speaking"—a vice for which Jesus had reproved the hypocrites. There were some other things which Jesus directed. He objected to persons who loved to pray in the synagogues—that is in modern times—prayer meetings—and directed His disciples to pray in their closets with the doors shut. He did not want to make any proclamation of his piety, or he would say that on prayer-meeting evening he would rather spend the hour in his own chamber than come here to offend the Master by word babbles. "I think sir," addressing the minister, "I heard you say that that was the true rendering of the word rendered 'vain repetitions.' He could not see that the prayers repeated in prayer-meetings were anything but 'Battalogies'—memorized phrases or intellectual exertions. Indeed from the nature of the case they could not well be anything else. It is announced that prayer meeting will be held on Wednesday evening at 8 o'clock. An hour is to be spent in prayer—that is the usual time—or partly in prayer, and partly in addresses. Perhaps the pastor occupies the most of the hour in his exposition of some passage. That is perhaps the best use the time can be put to—but it is a misnomer to call it a prayer meeting. If the true idea of prayer meeting is carried out, then we have a series of prayers mixed with

addresses. These prayers are generally repetitions of pious phrases, or perhaps an ingenious application of scripture language to supposed circumstances of the church, or instructions to God as to how he should order his providence, or a rehearsal of what he had done for his people, but which he may have forgotten. The fact is that not a title of the constituent elements of the prayers that are offered can be considered as prayer at all, but rather impertinences in the face of the Almighty. I therefore use the Lord's own method of prayer. It may be displeasing to the church, but this only shows how far the church is from being possessed of the spirit of Christ.

Mr. Bland sat down, when again rose Mr. Boanerges, who asked what the last speaker made of Christ's instruction, that men should always pray and not faint, with the illustrative parable of the unfortunate widow.

Mr. Bland said, I quite accord with the teaching of the Master here. If there is anything that appears very valuable or necessary to the worshipper, and that is within the province of faith, by all means let it be sought with persistent earnestness at a throne of grace. One great evil of our prayers is that they are not in earnest. We pray for light and we shut our eyes; for love and we cherish hate; for—we don't want what we ask for—and our whole service becomes a hypocrisy, the sin for which Jesus had no mercy, no apology. The man who pretended to be pious, but was not, was most unmercifully scourged. Woe unto you who for a pretence make long prayers.

The pastor here interposing said he thought the meeting had been greatly blessed in bringing to light the duty of sincerity, and he trusted that Mr. Bland would continue to favor them with his presence and counsel. He had no objection to the lashing he had given the hypocrites—an agreeable variation of the usual exercises. Let us sing the doxology.

REP.

MARGARET ACH LEAN.

The Remarkable All-Around Accomplishments of a Welsh Woman.

In Welsh lore we sometimes find things of doubtful authenticity; but the readers of this brief sketch may rest assured that it is no fiction. I find it in Pennant's *Tours in Wales*, first published in English something over 100 years ago, and lately brought out in the Welsh language by the well-known publisher, H. Humphreys of Carnarvon. I take it from the Welsh edition. This phenomenal person was born about the year 1696, and brought up at Llanberis, North Wales. Nothing is said of any of her relatives. Mr. Pennant says:

"At the head of the lake there lives a very noted woman, Margaret Ach Ifan, and I was sadly disappointed on not finding her at home when I called. She is the last specimen of the ancient Britons. At this writing (1776) she is about 90 years of age. In the line of hunting, shooting, and fishing, in her active days, she had no equal. She kept at least a dozen dogs of the best breed; bloodhounds, grayhounds, setters, and terriers. She would secure more foxes in one year than the other hunters combined would get in ten.

"In boating she was quite at home and the queen of the lakes. She played finely on the violin, and was well acquainted with the Welsh melodies of her day. She was also a musical composer, and some of her pieces are highly spoken of. She made two harps on which she skillfully played. She was a good carpenter, shoemaker, tailor, and blacksmith. She made her horse's shoes and shod them with her own hands. She built her own boats, in which, in harmony with an agreement, she conveyed the copper down the lakes from the foot of the Snowden. She composed poetry, and was a superior musical vocalist. She had more strength than any two men of her acquaintance. When 60 years of age she was more than a match for the best two wrestlers of the region, and she was never defeated. She received offers of marriage by the score, but for a long time she threw them all aside. At last, however, she smilingly accepted an offer from the feeblest of the lot."

"In a Welsh volume in my possession—'Cymru Fu' (Wales of the past). I find the following, which abbreviated, I insert as an addition to Mr. Pennant's account: 'One day her little dog Ianto stole the dinner of one of the miners. This so enraged the man that he instantly killed the dog. When Margaret heard of this she went to the miner's lodging place and found him standing with others outside of the house. She told him that she was willing to pay for the stolen dinner four times over, and that he in return must pay for the dog. The man, who was one of the largest and strongest in the neighborhood, laughed at her scornfully. In a threatening manner he approached her and commanded her to depart or she might share the fate of 'Ianto.' No sooner had he finished the sentence than a tremendous blow from Margaret's fist laid him senseless on the ground, where she left him and departed toward her home."

She died at the ripe age of 102, and it is said that she never, even for a day, was confined to her bed by sickness.

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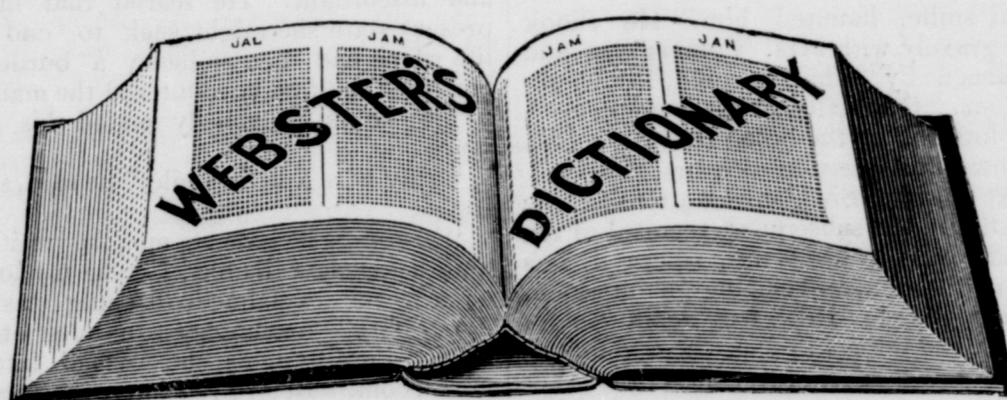
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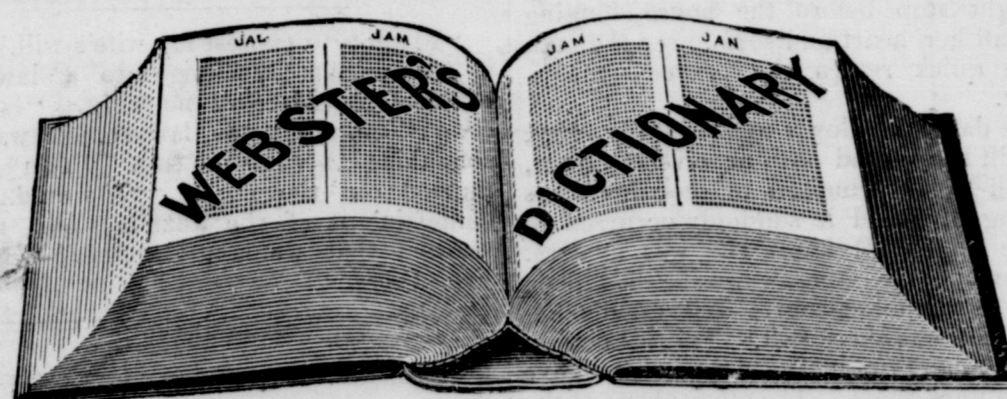


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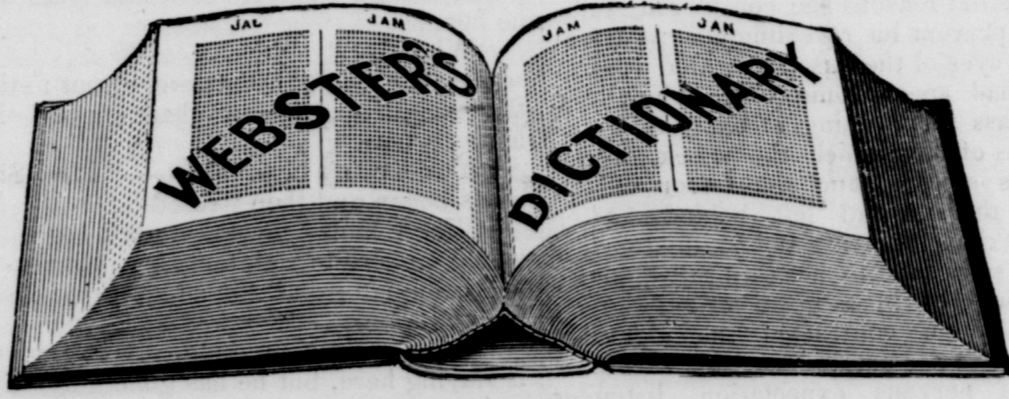


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