

## Notches on The Stick

Some good men, and vigorous writers in the religious press, are led by their anxiety to "point a moral" into serious mistakes respecting the authors they quote. They do them unintentional injustices. We had marked an instance of the kind for comment some weeks ago; but now another occurs which surprises even more than did the first.

The editor of a prominent religious weekly, known for his ability and enterprise, his humanitarianism and zeal for reform, has an article in a recent issue of his journal, entitled, "Pessimism in Scripture, Poetry, and Actual Life," which opens with these words: "The sustained popularity of the well-known hymn, 'Lead, kindly Light, amid the encircling gloom,' penned amid the author's tears near the old Sicilian city of Palermo, is more owing to the tender pathos of its prayer than to the merit of its poetry. It records a mood which Milton hailed as 'divinest melancholy,' which we to-day designate 'pessimism.'"

Who are included in the company who make this designation? It is to be supposed that "we" are much in advance of Milton both in philosophy and in lexicography. We are aware that there are some who have confounded "divinest melancholy" with what is termed "pessimism," but we did not suppose any careful writer, after due inquiry and reflection, would do so. We understand pessimism to be the philosophy of persons who conceive the universe tends to darkness and to evil, and the pessimistic spirit to be that of settled gloom, which would be the natural birth of such a philosophy. But we have supposed that Milton's "divinest melancholy" was the philosophic frame in which most serious and religious thoughts are entertained. If our definition is the one to be accepted the writer from whom we have quoted proceeds upon an error.

We might demur, also, at his seemingly low estimate of Newman's hymn, considered as poetry. Whether we estimate its form or its spirit, we know few hymns that we regard as more poetical. Its tenderness and pathos are admitted—and they are poetical elements,—but classic strength and dignity are there, almost to the measure of sublimity. Milton himself would not disdain such an utterance; and surely we find in it no pessimism, as we understand the word, and nothing inconsistent with the spirit of christianity.

Our author's deduction is evil. He continues: "Men whom nature has richly gifted, whom Providence has signally favored, upon whom the world has bestowed its warmest tributes of approval and praise, are often the victims of despondency and gloom." True; but this is not to be deduced from the foregoing, nor that which follows after by way of citation. The pessimist is not a worshipper; the pessimist has no appeal to God; he utters hymns neither of joy nor sorrow; he writes poems about "The City of Dreadful Night." Melancholy is a strain that runs through the greatest natures. The grand souls of Paul, David, Luther, Dante, Milton, were not without that element. It appeared in the humanity of the divinest nature earth ever saw. It was manifest in Isaiah, Moses, Job, and Solomon, whom our author, strange to say, quotes with disapproval. And there is often an ascertainable reason for the existence of these shadows, and a justification for them. F. W. Robertson, through whose finely-strung nature this chord sometimes predominated, said: "It is awful moment when the soul begins to find that the props on which it has blindly rested so long are many of them rotten. It is an awful hour—let him who has passed through it say how awful—when this life has lost its meaning and seems shrivelled into a span." He is describing the distress of an earnest soul that struggles with doubt and error before emerging to the truth, or to a settled faith. Now this was Newman's condition; he was striving amid uncertainties, and had not yet come to the valley of decision. He gives us his mood; he represents a phase of experience. There are many souls, who need not rebuke but encouragement, who find consolation in that hymn. If it were pessimistic it would not be fit for religious use.

Our moralist does not forbear quotation from the noblest, most sacred liturgies of all time: "Behold thou hast made my days as a handbreadth. . . All flesh is grass, and all the goodness thereof as the flower of the field." . . All our days are passed away in Thy wrath, we spend our years as a tale that is told." I am satisfied in that majestic anthem, through which I heard the voice of the Divine, to hear the voice of the Human. Would our author suppress that voice? Yet he goes

on as follows: "This dismal (?) strain is repeated in our own time. Coming to us with all the rhythm and music of modern poetry, we do not readily recognize its identity, but now as of old its representatives are among the most gifted of our race. 'What is our life?' asks Henry Kurke White, and answers

'A peevish April day!  
A little sun, a little rain,  
And then night sweeps along the plain,  
And all things fade away.'"

If the author of this comment will refer to his White he will discover that he has not quoted him accurately. As to his objection to the spirit or idea, we might refer him to the words of the apostle: 'For what is your life? It is even a vapor, that appeareth for a little time and then vanisheth away,' but an appeal to Scripture is not decisive, since the impeachment of psalmist and prophet. We content ourselves, however, with affirming that White's poem is colored by melancholy, but that it is not pessimistic, since it supposes that man's sorrows tend to good. We know our brother, the editor, he abounds in robust energy; He is absorbed in work that delights him,—excellent antidotes for melancholy,—yet we venture to say he has sad hours, if he fails to record them. Were he an ambitious student, in love with life, endowed with the gift of poetry, yet the prospective victim of consumption, he might well have written the "Ode on Disappointment," and we should not have blamed him.

He proceeds with quotation:  
"What worth, what good is given to man  
More solid than the gilded clouds of heaven?  
What joy more lasting than a vernal flower?"  
gloomily (?) inquires Wordsworth. His answer is None. 'Tis the general plaint of human kind in solitude.' So Gray:—  
"The boast of heraldry, the pomp of power,  
And all that beauty, all that wealth e'er gave,  
Await alike the inevitable hour,  
The paths of glory lead but to the grave."

'Consider,' says one of these children of the night (?) 'the insipid pleasures, the insane religion, the degraded art, the sullen toil, the merciless war, the vain hope or vile in which the nations of the world have lived.' 'Think,' says another, how generation after generation of the young rush sanguine into the arena and generation after generation of the aged step wearily into the grave; how the noble and the beautiful are cut off in youth, while the mean and the stained drag their ignominy through a long career. Think of the sorrows that do not chasten, of the trials that do not purify, of the pains and privations that burden the tender heart but do not soften the stubborn will, of the virtues that dig their own grave, of the light that leads astray.' His recital is a sad one, but it is only a half-told tale. It is an estimate as unredeemed by God, unilluminated by His Spirit, unblest with the sweet and holy consolations of religion, and unrelated to the life to come. It is a one-sided estimate—an aspect of existence unwarranted by the facts of life. It sees life where the shadows fall, not on the side where the sunshine sleeps."

There is an Optimism that resembles the vacancy and benevolence of the smile upon the face of one whose brain has softened. All has not become white halcyon noon eternal to him who has faith—who has the consolations of Christ. Did our brother ever see a ray of sunshine or a shaft of shadow that did not move on? Over the dial of man's experience, they go in alternation; and in equipoise, the two are neither unnatural nor unwholesome.

'How sweet the moonlight sleeps upon this bank!'

Yet even this calm radiance is not age-long in its abiding; it has intermissions. There is no spot where God has parcelled out sun and shadow here is all of one, here is all of the other; And we like a generous share of the latter, in nature and in poetry. If our editorial brother goes on at this rate he will have under his ban a large part of the best poetry in all languages as for the passages of verse quoted above, to us they are unexceptionable; we find no error in teaching, no morbidity of tone; only the iteration of venerable and indubitable truth,—the facts of human mortality, and the transitoriness of all experience on earth. The thought is old, but drest anew, and given with poetic force and beauty. The passages of prose are also forcible statements of truth. Whether or not they tend to pessimism must depend on the context and the argument of their author. But this is the point we would make: not everyone who takes occasionally a sombre or mournful view of life is justly to be considered a pessimist. And, this another point: First, mistaken terms; second, mistaken conclusions.

Mr. Alfred Austin since he received the laurel from the brows of Tennyson has "uttered nothing base,"—unless it be certain lines on that South African raid,—yet he has been the constant sport of the critics. It is asserted that he is the last person to be bitterly or contemptuously

treated among those who know. His foes are not to be found among his acquaintances. 'It is,' says one who occupies an inside seat, "impossible for a house which holds him for to be dull. In fact he may be set down as a social lion of the first rank. Why that is so many a man would find it hard to tell. Mr. Austin is not witty. He is much too serious to play either with words or ideas. He sparkles nevertheless. He coruscates incessantly."

It seems as if words such as "decrepitude" and "senility" could never be applied to such a man as Gladstone. Indeed he resists the encroachments of age most wonderfully, and his increasing deafness does not daunt or retire him as in the case of an inferior personality. He is still in the front of his time, and very much alive. He does not decay after the manner of the dwarf pine, but the century-built oak, rather. Erect, jaunty, vivacious, flower adorned, he sets out for Cannes in such style as to remind someone who sees him departing of some ancient tree of the forest with a pink blossoming on its heavy trunk. Long may his strength and vivacity continue.

A correspondent of ours lately visited Riverside Park and the tomb of General Grant. With deep interest she peered into the enclosure where rests the coffin of the great captain, with the funeral wreaths, now withered, lying upon it. The new tomb, or mausoleum, at the head of One Hundred and Twenty-third street, is now completed, and Tuesday the 27th of April is fixed upon as the day for the removal of the remains to their destined place. This magnificent memorial is conspicuous from different parts of the city, and it overlooks the river. Its white dome will shelter a sarcophagus of porphyry, polished to the brightness of a mirror. Mount Vernon and Springfield have long been shrines which the pilgrim loves to visit, and now Riverside Park will hold another.

"Progress," says Victor Hugo, "is the mode of man. The general life of the human race is called Progress; the collective advance of the human race is called Progress. Progress marches; it makes the great human and terrestrial journey toward the celestial and the divine. . . . What then is Progress? We have just said. The permanent life of the peoples." N. B. PROGRESS is also a weekly newspaper, published at St. John, N. B. PASTOR FELIX.

The Revd. S. Riopel, M. D., County Jacques-Cartier, writes: "I have had considerable experience with Dr. Levers' 'Quickcure' and have always found it surprisingly effective, answering fully, when directions were observed, the several claims of its author. It relieves pain in an incredibly short time."

For Rheumatism, Pain in the Back, Sides or Chest, spread "Quickcure" on linen, or cotton, as for Burns, and cover with cotton batting, or even paper, over which put a bandage to keep all in place and protect the clothing. Many physicians will not prescribe or allow use of ordinary plasters, as so many of them contain Belladonna, and Aconite, and sometimes these drugs may be absorbed by the system and cause serious disturbances. Plasters made of "Quickcure" have been recommended, as being entirely free from anything which could possibly injure even a child, and no plaster removes pain so quickly.

In severe cases, doctors tell you to apply hot applications also, over the "Quickcure" plaster, covering the back, chest and neck well: flannel cloths wrung out of hot water will not injure "Quickcure," but aid its effect.

### A Russian Telephone.

According to L'Electricien, of Paris, a Russian scientist has invented a telephone far superior to anything hitherto used. With it a man may talk to more than one of his friends at a time, provided they are all in the same room, for it is not necessary to stand near the receiver in order to hear the sound. The voice issues from a metallic funnel, and may be heard at some distance. The new telephone has other advantages. Sounds transmitted through it lose very little of their intensity by reason of distance. In experiments made between Moscow and Rostov, a distance of eight hundred and seventy miles, speech, songs and music could be clearly heard. A large number of official people were present at the experiments, and the official report was full of praise of the new telephone.

Extract of the "American System of Surgery."

"Boils are caused by Microbes, (or 'germs') called Cocci, which penetrate the skin, usually along a hair follicle, and 'unless destroyed they cause Boils and 'Carbuncles being favoured by constitutional disturbances and certain atmospheric conditions. Carbuncles are like 'Boils—at first superficial, but are caused 'when the microbe penetrates deeper, or 'into denser tissue. All Boils appear at 'first as pimples, or pustules.' 'Quickcure' removes all boils or pimples."

## IT IS THE EACT, Think as You Please

It is not generally known, but it is a fact readily proven by the investigations of science, that the real danger from every known ailment of mankind is caused by inflammation; cure the inflammation and you have conquered the disease in each case. Inflammation is manifested outwardly by redness, swelling and heat; inwardly by congestion of the blood vessels and growth of unsound tissue, causing pain and disease.

**EXTERNAL** inflammation accompanies bruises, bites, cuts, stings, burns, scalds, chaps, cracks, strains, sprains, fractures, etc., and is the chief danger therefrom. Internal inflammation frequently causes outward swellings; as instances familiar to all we mention pimples, tooth-ache, stiff joints and rheumatism. Yet the great majority of internal inflammations make no outside show, for which reason they are often more dangerous than the external forms.

**INFLAMMATION Causes Every Known Disease!**

Inflammation of the nervous system embraces the brain, spine, bones and muscles. The breathing organs have many forms of inflammation; such as colds, coughs, pleurisy, bronchitis, etc. The organs of digestion have a multitude of inflammatory troubles. The vital organs form one complete plan mutually dependent; therefore inflammation anywhere is felt more or less everywhere, and impairs the health. The late Dr. A. Johnson, an old fashioned Family Physician, originated JOHNSON'S ANODYNE LINIMENT, in 1810, to relieve pain and cure every form of inflammation. It is today the Universal Household Remedy.

Send us at once your name and address, and we will send you free our New Illustrated Book, "TREATMENT FOR DISEASES," caused by inflammation. L. S. JOHNSON & Co., Boston, Mass.

## What are you wearing On your feet this weather?

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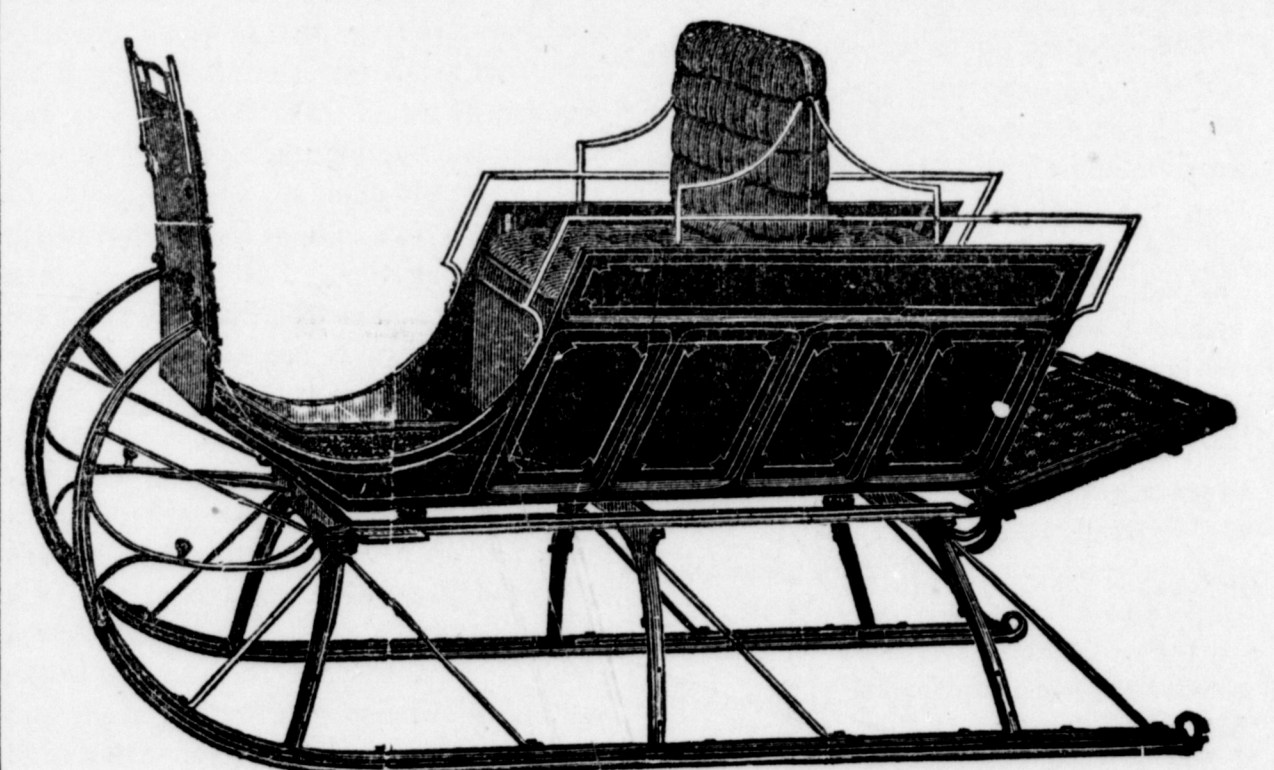
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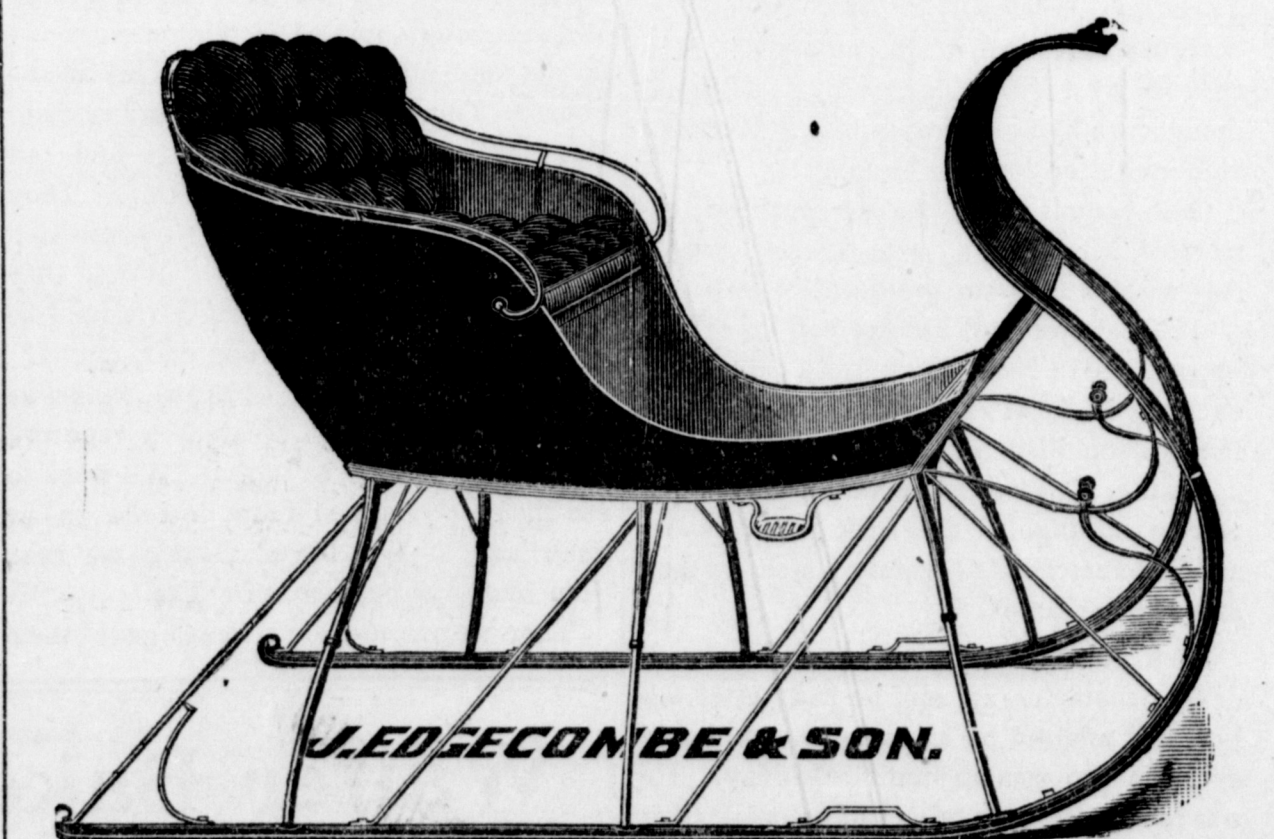
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