

Christian Messenger.

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"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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Poetry.

Nova Scotia to Great Britain.

D. W. E.

I hear a mingled din afar—
A noise of strife across the ocean;
I hear the gathering storm of war,
The jarring factions' mad commotion.
Then stretch, O royal mother mine,
Thy mighty arm across the water,
And link in that strong clasp of thine
The right hand of thy loyal daughter.

And let thy banner's sacred folds
Free to these western winds be given,
For dear each child of Britain holds
That glorious ensign loved of heaven.
My sons shall neither fail nor pause,
With thine heroic deeds before them,
And, chosen guard of equal laws,
The red cross banner floating o'er them.

Not thine alone its crimson pride,
Is thousand years of stainless glory,
The fame of freedom's champions tried
Embalmed in thine heroic story.
The sires went forth for love of thee—
Home, country, kindred, all forsaken,
Their sons arise that thou mayest see
Their faith and love are all unshaken.

Their blood has freely mixed with thine
Where strife has purpled land and ocean,
And still to where thy glories shine
They turn their eyes with fond devotion.
The spotted flag shall never fly
Above Acadia's valleys loyal;
No sordid hopes shall ever buy
The children of a lineage royal.

To them as to their sires belong
The deathless honors of thy story,
And Shakespeare's page, and Milton's song,
And Wellesley's fame, and Nelson's glory.
When foes of liberty combine,
Her trampled torch beneath them lying,
My sons shall light it at thy shrine
Where vestals feed the flame undying:

Shall point to where across the waves
Britannia ceaseless watch is keeping
Round freemen's homes, and o'er the graves
Where freedom's sainted sons are sleeping—
Majestic form—her streaming crest
In battle victory's surest omen;
Her shield the refuge of the oppressed,
Her sword the dread of freedom's foemen.

And while Atlantic surges roar,
Thy song of liberty repeating,
And while Acadia's happy shore
Re-echoes to their joyous greeting,
It shall be still as it has been—
My sons shall strike for England's honor;
Their voices for the Island Queen
Crave heaven's richest blessings on her.

Then stretch, O royal mother mine,
Thy mighty arm across the water,
And link in that strong clasp of thine
The right hand of thy loyal daughter,
And let thy banner's crimson folds
Free to these western winds be given;
For dear each child of Britain holds
The red cross banner loved of heaven.

Religious.

Deacons and Deacons.

The controversy which is being carried on in the *Daily Telegraph* relative to the salaries of Dissenting ministers has brought a characteristic letter from the Rev. Arthur Mursell. Mr. Mursell complains bitterly of the "vulgar insolence of Dissenting deacons." It seems that a certain deacon complained that his minister furnished his library with the works of Dickens and Shakespeare "out of the Lord's money." Mr. Mursell wonders "whether the deacon, as he passed through the lobby of the ministerial manse, regarded the articles arranged upon the hatpegs as 'the Lord's umbrella,' and the Lord's 'walking-stick and topcoat.'" He tells us further that "the first two or three years of a minister's settlement in a church too often resolves itself into a sort of match at neck-breaking, whether he or 'the leading man' is to be crushed." And then he gives a spicy illustration. He says, "A young friend of mine once had an invitation to a church in a large town in the north; and before he went the deacons held a meeting, at which one of their

number proposed that the church should resolve to have two regular services weekly, and as many societies and meetings as possible, so as to necessitate 'the young man's' attendance at the chapel every night in the week; because the former minister 'had too many friends,' and used to go to see them too much. So they laid their heads together to cut out the young man's work for him, determined that he should know his place, and work out his seven pounds a week with as much regularity as any other servant-of-all-work. When there was no other kind of meeting to engross his time, the feminine section of the flock would go down to the vestry to do a little millinery, and the 'young man' would be expected to sit among the matrons from three o'clock to seven, and read *Good Words* (not Shakespeare or Dickens) to them, while Dorcas darned."

In a recent number of the *Sword and Trowel* Mr. Spurgeon gives his opinion of deacons. He writes:—

Of late years we have heard a great deal against deacons, and have read discussions as to their office, evidently suggested by no idolatrous reverence for their persons. Many of our ministering brethren bitterly rate them, others tremble at the mention of their very name, and a few put on their armour and prepare to do battle with them wherever they go as if they were the dragons of ministerial life. We ourselves are charged with having said that "a deacon is worse than a devil, for if you resist the devil he will flee from you, but if you resist a deacon he will fly at you." This is no saying of ours, we never had any cause to speak so severely, and although in some cases it is undoubtedly true, we never had any experimental proof of it. Not one in a hundred of all the sayings fathered upon us, are ours at all, and as this one it was in vogue before we were born. Our observation of deacons leads us to observe that, as a rule, they are quite as good men as the pastors, and the bad and good in the ministry and the deaconate are to be found in very much the same proportions. If there be lordly deacons, are there not lordly pastors? If there be ignorant crotchety men among deacons, are there not their rivals in our pulpits? The Church owes an immeasurable debt of gratitude to those thousands of godly men who study her interest day and night, contribute largely of their substance, care for her poor, cheer her ministers, and in times of trouble as well as prosperity remain faithfully at their posts. Whatever there may be here and there of mistake, infirmity, and even wrong, we are assured from wide and close observation, that the greater number of our deacons are an honour to our faith, and we may style them as the apostle did his brethren, the "glory of Christ." Heaviest censure is occasionally deserved, but affectionate esteem is usually due. Deprive the church of her deacons, and she would be bereaved of her most valiant sons; their loss would be the shaking of the pillars of our spiritual house, and would cause a desolation on every side. Thanks be to God such a calamity is not likely to befall us, for the great Head of the Church in mercy to her will always raise up a succession of faithful men, who will use the office well, and earn unto themselves a good degree and much boldness in the faith. Much ought to be taken into consideration in estimating the character of men sustaining office in the church, for many difficulties may be incidental to the position, and this may mitigate the severity with which we ought to judge the men. Our brethren in the deacon's work are not so migratory as our ministers; they are frequently born to Christ in the churches in which they live and die; they cannot readily remove when evil days becloud the church, but remain chained to the oar to bear the odium of discontent and the sorrow of decay. No frequent removal secures for them a renewal of popularity elsewhere; their whole career for bad or good is remembered by one and the same constituency, and hence false steps are with great difficulty retrieved, and awkward disagreements are painfully remembered. With new ministers come new ways, and men in office, especially elderly men, cannot so easily learn and unlearn as young and fresh comers might desire; perhaps cherished methods are crossed, and hallowed ideas overthrown, and this is not the smallest trial of a good man's life. We almost think it needs a better

man to make a good deacon than a good minister. We who preach the word go first, and this pleases human nature; grace is needed to make older, wealthier, and often wiser men go second and keep their place without envyings and bickerings: thousands do this, and are to be honoured for it.

We did not, however, take up our pen to eulogise deacons as a class, but simply to record our own happy experience, believing that one fact is worth a thousand theories. The deacons of our first village ministry were in our esteem the excellent of the earth, in whom we took great delight. Hard-working men on the week-day, they spared no toil for their Lord on the Sabbath; we loved them sincerely, and do love them still, though another minister speaks of them with a severity never exceeded. In our idea they were as nearly the perfection of deacons of a country church as the kingdom could afford, and we wonder that the present occupant of the pulpit could have found out faults and vices of which we never saw a trace. Since our sojourn in London we have seen the burial of the flag-end of a race of deacons of whom only one survives beloved and revered by us all. A fine gentlemanly race, rather stiff and unmanageable not quite to our mind, but honourable, respectable, prudent grandees of dissent the last generation of deacons were; men to be spoken of with reverence in all places where holy memories are cherished.

The British House of Commons.

THE LOBBY IN JULY, 1868.

Here comes the great orator of the House, as usual an early attendant. He is stouter than in the old anti-corn-law days, and whiskers and hair are almost white now, but the fine eye has lost none of its ancient fire, and the announcement that "Bright is up" will still empty library and smoking-room, and fill the House with an audience which can be gathered to hear no other man. "And who is the spare unfashionably dressed person, who walks with a slight limp, beside Mr. Bright?" That is Mr. John Stuart Mill, the member for Westminster, and the author of that priceless essay "On Liberty," which would alone suffice to make his name famous. As you look at him now, you are at a loss to identify in the mild-faced old gentleman the great teacher of political economy, to whom the cause of good government is so much indebted. One of Mill's aptest pupils, Henry Fawcett, follows him, led along by a little boy, amidst a crowd which opens readily to make way for him. The face of the member for Brighton teaches one a beautiful lesson of contentment. No more cheerful laugh rings through the lobby than his, nor is a pleasanter face than his to be seen in the whole House of Commons. The man with the eye-glass who is flitting about amongst the crowds in every corner of the lobby, and who has a word and a hand-shake for each, is Mr. Maguire, the biographer of Father Matthew, and the historian of the Irish exodus; and this short-sighted gentleman, with close-cropped grey beard, and a rather military bearing, is another literary celebrity of the House, familiarly known there as "Eothen Kinglake." And see! by a curious coincidence, there has passed him just now, on his way to his favorite corner under the gallery, the editor of the *Times* whose bluff open face looks more like that of a country squire than of the omnipotent being who controls the great oracle that speaks from Printing House-square. But honourable gentlemen are pouring in now so fast that we can hardly notice them singly. Those two handsome men, remarkable for their stature, who walked in together just now, are at once rivals and friends. They divide together, the lead of the Western Circuit: one is Sir John Karslake, her Majesty's present Attorney-General; the other Mr. Coleridge, grand-nephew of the poet, and the man whom rumour points out as the next Attorney-General of the Crown. Ministers and ex-Ministers rub shoulders with you as they walk into the House, or stop to post a letter, or chat with a friend. Hardy, Layard, Cardwell, Foster, Corry, Stansfeld—all pass in quick succession. Here comes one whom you ought not to leave unnoticed—I mean the man with the grey monstache and rather melancholy eyes—that is Lord John Manners, the First Commission-

er of Works. He does not hold—he probably never will hold—a prominent position in the Ministry, but one looks at him with interest as the original Lord Henry Sidney of Mr. Disraeli's novel—the man who was in favor of the restoration of Maypoles, who preferred the word "peasantry" to "labourers;" and who was at one time the hope of the Young England party in politics. He has not rivalled the fame of Pitt; but his old friend, who has himself risen to the top of the tree, clings to him with a kindness which deserves to be remembered, and therefore he sits on the Treasury bench now. There is no mistaken the man who comes next; who looks round with keen grey eyes, taking in at a glance the whole assemblage, and who passes on quickly to the House. There is no mistaking the noble thoughtful face, in which care has ploughed more furrows than time. Men fall back respectfully, and not a few uncover as Mr. Gladstone passes them. This is not the place in which to indulge in political discussions. You and I may be of very opposite creeds, my friend; but at least we can both do honour to the man whose earnestness no one has questioned, and whose strange political career is almost without a parallel. He is gone almost before we see him; and while you were watching him, you missed another notable man, whose praises are sung by Liberals and Conservatives alike—our Foreign Minister, Lord Stanley. Mr. Lowe, conspicuous from his pink face and snow white hair, is the next to pass; and then we have the Prime Minister himself. He walks with a tripping step, with downcast eyes, and swinging arms, taking no notice of the salutations by which he is received. Look well at him, reader, and think of the time when, poor and obscure, he entered upon that wonderful career which has placed him at last on the steps of the throne, and made him the virtual ruler of the British empire. A strange halo of romance surrounds the man. When you look at him, you cannot but call to mind Vivian Grey; you think of his early difficulties, of his struggles, his temptations, his ultimate triumph; and thinking of these, good Radical though you may be, you feel a strong personal sympathy for the man who has suffered and achieved so much.—*Chambers' Journal*.

About Sermons.

"IT STOOD BY ME."

About the happiest commendation of a sermon that we ever heard, was expressed by a colored man in Louisiana, a while ago, to a certain preacher, as they met after a year's separation. Referring to a discourse he had heard from him the year before, he said, "I remember your sermon—it stood by me for two months. Hearing other sermons kind o'weaned me from it; but now, if I sit down to think, it all comes back, especially what you said about Christ being before all else." That is a good test of the worth of a sermon—does it stand by you? But this supposes not only a good preacher, but a good hearer as well. The "grace of hunger" makes many a sermon good and nourishing, which would otherwise be rejected as unsavory and unprofitable.

"KEEPS IT IN MIND."

A clergyman writing for the *American Messenger* says:

Several little girls were in my study, seeking counsel to aid them in becoming Christians. One of them, a dear child not much more than eleven years old, said:

"I haven't been to but two or three of the meetings lately."

Desiring to test her I answered,

"It don't make us Christians to attend meetings, Lizzie."

"I know that," she replied at once, "but it keeps it in mind."

GENUINE MUSCULAR CHRISTIANITY.

There have been longer but never more eloquent or logical sermons than the following. Rev. J. Burns stated that in a tract meeting in London that in a recent crowded assembly where he had preached a man stood up and with both hands clenched and uplifted said:

"These fists, my friends, struck the devil's blow; these feet trod the devil's steps; this body was the devil's home; this soul the