

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER,

And Bible Society, Missionary, and Sabbath School Advocate.

E. McLEOD, Editor.

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

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Practical and Moral.

RECOLLECTIONS OF A PASTOR'S DAUGHTER.

NOVEL READING.

Good old Mr. Brown used to say, "I do wonder why people will read novels, when there is so much truth to be read." My father sympathized with him; but there was a time when my sisters and I thought otherwise. Whenever my father found us engaged in this way, he looked displeased; and, not infrequently, although our hero and heroine were most critically situated, as heroes and heroines are apt to be, and we were distressed in their distresses, we were obliged, like other false friends, to forsake them in the midst of their difficulties. Once, when my father positively forbade us to read another novel without his permission, I answered, very improperly, "I think novels are much more interesting than theology; I hate such dull books." This reply soon met with its own retribution. "Now, Ellen," said my father, "don't you read any other book but the Bible, until you have gone through one entire volume of 'Ridgely's Body of Divinity.'" I did not dare to disobey, and the hours which were usually devoted to my favourite authors were spent in what seemed to me a waiting through an intellectual quagmire. Poems, reviews, histories, lay neglected on the shelf; and, to complete my misery, "The Last Days of Pompeii," about that time made its appearance. It had been so warmly recommended by one of our acquaintances, that my sisters were allowed to read it. I was shut out from that paradise of fruits and flowers, and doomed to wander through the desert, to roam through strange places with my eyes wilfully blinded; for when I had actually finished the last page of "Ridgely's Body of Divinity," I was as ignorant of its contents as are most girls of sixteen, who never thought they had read it. However, my task was done. I had obeyed the letter of the law, if not its spirit. Since that time, theological writings have become interesting to me. That science which treats of God, his works, and ways, seems as far above all other sciences as the heavens are above the earth; but Ridgely will never become a favourite author with me.

But how right our parents were in discouraging us from reading novels, that observation have taught us. How many have made shipwreck here! Perhaps some one replies, "I know of respectable and intellectual people who have read novels, and were not hurt by them." Very true, and so a person may escape from a burning house, and the shipwrecked mariner, grasping his solitary plank, may at last reach the shore; yet these instances do not prove that a burning house and a plank at sea have therefore become safe places. Let us look abroad and see who are the novel readers? Do the best and most useful classes of mankind take these books for their companions? It is not the healthful and laborious who find upon poisoned sweets; it is the idle, enervated, useless, and criminal, who waste their lives in this way. If the intellect is left unimpaired by such a course of reading, the standard of right becomes changed and lowered,—the morals are made to sympathize with that class of writers who have little or no morality of their own to boast of, and who would make the public heart as corrupt as their own. Who would willingly send his child to school to a known libertine, who has forgotten to distinguish between good and evil? Yet every parent does this who allows his child to read novels, indiscriminately, as they come from the press. If these works thus undermine morality, can religion escape?—not the sentimental religion which consists in shedding tears over imaginary sorrow, nor the pharisaic religion whose foundation and superstructure is its own righteousness; but can the religion of the Bible flourish in such an unwholesome atmosphere? Does the humiliating, purifying doctrine of the cross, thrive and blossom amid such uncongenial rubbish?

Do novels give wisdom where it is wanting, or increase wisdom where it already exists? Do they fortify the heart for the duties and ills of life?—Their effect upon the intellect is well known to those who will look about them and see, or, it may be, look within them and observe the effects of such reading upon their own minds. Not only do novels give a positive distaste for better books, but, in many instances, they have undermined reason.—I once heard of a young lady who was most thoroughly ruined in this way. She read fiction

year after year, her morbid appetite for it increasing by indulgence, till at length she forgot how to draw the line between the imaginary and the real. She ceased to feel an interest in things around her, began to think herself a heroine, and the world she lived in was no longer this working-day world. It was a world of romance. She shut herself up in her chamber, for long months and years, awaiting the arrival of some foreign lord or prince, who, hearing of her surpassing charms, would come to claim her as his bride. Amid such miserable delusions as these, the poor victim of novel reading wasted life.

One of our acquaintances affords another pitiful illustration of the evil effects of novel reading.—She was the daughter of an infirm old gentleman, who had once been richer and in better repute in society than he was when we knew the family.—The Flemings felt above their circumstances, and were quite disposed to repine at the dealings of Providence with them. How much they needed true religion's soothing, encouraging, strengthening power! How much they needed the Bible for their constant companion! Sophia Fleming, my friend, was a church member, but in her best days did little to adorn her profession, and why? She was the most inveterate novel reader I ever knew. If you saw her with a book in her hand, it was most probably a novel. She discussed the characters described in novels in her common conversation, and not at all as a thing by the by, but as though they were real, living, and breathing men and women. When out of the regions of romance, for stern realities would sometimes compel her to open her eyes, she was one of the most unhappy persons I ever knew. She was vexed at the dealings of Providence; she was vexed at society for being so unconscious of her superior claims upon it; and envious of those whose situation was better than her own. When we left the city, we lost sight of her for awhile. Then we heard she was married to a worthy and wealthy young merchant. A few years more passed, and we heard her husband had purchased an elegant residence in one of our New England towns, abounding within and without with all that could please the eye or satisfy the reasonable expectations of the heart.

The next news we heard of poor Sophia Fleming was of her sad fall. A wife and a mother, she deserted her own husband and children for a stranger. Yes, she forsook the husband of her youth, who had married her in her poverty and obscurity, who had been proverbially observant and tender of her interests, who had refused to believe in her guilt till it confronted him in his public walks and stared him in the face,—she left this husband for a villain of graceful manners and fascinating address. The name of "mother," so sacred to the heart, can never be heard by her poor children without a blush. Who was her seducer? It was the novel's insidious poison, which for years had been her meat and drink.—Will any dare to walk in her footsteps by reading her favourite authors? If any will persist in this course, it would not be strange if they fall as she fell; for it is most true, that a man is known by the books he reads, as well as by the company he keeps.

My father once visited a man imprisoned for murder,—one who, although afterwards acquitted by his judges, was yet condemned by public sentiment; who, though he had escaped the laws of his country, would still escape the divine retribution. "Whoso sheddeth man's blood, by man shall his blood be shed," for his iniquity afterwards found him out. Exiled from his home and kindred retribution followed him, and he died a violent death at the hand of another. My father visited this man in his prison, and observed that his table and shelves were loaded with books. On looking them over, he found them to be novels! How large an influence these books had in forming his wretched character, that day which shall reveal the secrets of all hearts alone can determine.—Chris. Trans.

THE SWEARER'S PRAYER.

What! a swearer pray? Yes, swearer, whether thou thinkest so or not, each of these oaths is a prayer—an appeal to the Holy and Almighty God.

And what is it, thou swearer, thou dost call for, when the awful imprecations, damn and damnation, roll so frequently from thy profane tongue? Tremble, swearer, while I tell thee. Thy prayer contains two parts: THOU PRAYEST, first, that thou mayest be deprived of eternal happiness; secondly, that thou mayest be plunged into eternal misery.

When thou callest for damnation, dost thou not, in effect, say as follows: "O God, thou hast power to punish me in hell for ever; therefore, let not one of my sins be forgiven. Let every oath that I have sworn, and all the sins that I have committed, rise up in judgement against me, and eternally condemn me. Let me never partake of thy salvation; and let men never enter into the kingdom of heaven."

This is the first of thy prayer. Let us hear the second.

"O God, let me not only be shut out of heaven, but also up in hell! May all the members of my body be tortured with inconceivable agony, and all the powers of my soul, tormented with horror and despair, inexpressible and eternal. Pour down thy hottest anger; execute all thy wrath and curse upon me; arm and send forth all thy terrors against me; and let thy fierce, thy fiery, thy fearful indignation rest upon me, and torment me in hell, for ever, and ever, and ever!"

SWEARER, IS THIS THY PRAYER. O dreadful impression! O horrible, most horrible! Dost thou like thy petition? ART THOU DESIROUS OF ETERNAL TORMENT? If so, swear on—swear hard.

The more oaths, the more misery; and perhaps the sooner thou mayest be in hell. Swearer, be thankful; Oh, be exceedingly thankful, that God has not answered thy tremendous prayer. Never let him hear another oath from thy unhalloved tongue, lest it should be thy last expression upon earth, and thy swearing prayer should be answered in hell. Oh, let thine oaths be turned into supplications! Repent, and turn to Jesus, who died for swearers as well as for murderers. And then, O then, though thou mayest have sworn as many oaths as there are "stars in the heavens, and sands upon the sea-shore innumerable"—then thou shalt find, to thy eternal joy, that there is love in his heart, and merit in his blood, sufficient to pardon thy sins, and save thy soul for ever. Swearer, canst thou ever again blaspheme such a God and Saviour as this? Does not thy conscience cry, God forbid? Even so, Amen.—American Tract Society.

HOW TO SPEND THE SABBATH.

1. RISE EARLY.—God requires one-seventh part of your time. The Sabbath is just as long as any other day. If you indulge in sleep Sabbath mornings one or two hours later than usual, you rob God and your own soul of so much holy time; and if you begin the day by robbing God, you cannot expect he will bless you.

2. PRAY FOR YOUR MINISTER.—He will then preach better, and you will be better prepared to profit by his preaching. He needs your prayers. He has tasked his energies to prepare good sermons to interest and instruct you. Exhausted by the labours of the week, and trembling under his awful responsibility, he will be cheered and encouraged if he believes he is remembered in your prayers.

3. PRAY THAT THE PREACHING MAY BE BLESSED TO YOUR SOUL.—He is a foolish man who sows his seed before he breaks up the soil. You are more foolish if you expect a blessing without asking for it, or preparing your heart to receive it. If a blessing is not worth asking for, do not complain if it is not bestowed.

4. DO NOT INDULGE IN SECULAR CONVERSATION.—To spend the interval between the services of the sanctuary in talking about business, or pleasure, or politics, is not remembering the Sabbath-day to keep it holy. If you spend your intermission in this manner, you must not wonder if in the afternoon you feel sleepy, and the preacher scolds dull.

5. BANISH WORLDLY THOUGHTS.—You must not, on the Sabbath, "think your own thoughts." If your thoughts are allowed to wander unrestrained over the business of the past week, or the plans for the week to come, you will suffer for it. God will leave you in darkness; your love will be cold, your prayers formal, and you will be disqualified to engage profitably in the services of the sanctuary.

6. DO NOT CRITICIZE THE PERFORMANCES OF YOUR MINISTER.—If he has preached a poor sermon, make the best of it; if a good one, be thankful and improve it. Your praise or censure can do no good either to him or yourself, but many do both. You will profit far more by praying over the sermon, and applying it to yourself, than by criticizing it.

7. SPEND EVERY SABBATH AS THOUGH IT WERE YOUR LAST.—Your last Sabbath will soon come. Perhaps the next will be your last. Spend it then as you will wish you have done, when you review it millions of ages hence. If you knew it would be your last, you would be much in prayer, you would banish worldly thoughts and conversation, you would read your Bible, you would meditate much on divine things, and examine the foundation of your hope for eternity. Do this, and your Sabbath will not be spent in vain.—American Tract Society.

"DID YOU SPEAK TO HIM?"

"Blessed are ye that sow beside all waters."—Is. XLIII. 21.

A pious mechanic says, "On new-year's day, 1827 or 1828, which was Monday, I reflected that I had never attended a monthly concert for prayer in this city, and determined that for once I would go. I went early, found only the sexton in the room, and sat down. Soon there came in a plain man, who spoke very pleasantly to the sexton, and then coming and sitting by my side, after a kind salutation, said, 'I trust you love the Saviour.' The question instantly filled my eyes with tears. I had been preached to at arm's length all my days, but this was the first time in my life that ever a Christian thus kindly and directly put such a question to my heart. We conversed together, in the course of which, at his request, I gave him my name and residence. The next day he came into my shop and brought me the tract, 'Way to be saved,' which he thought I should like to read. He called again and again. I became interested in him, and the next Sabbath joined his Sunday-school, was brought, as I hope, to Christ, and soon united with the church." Have you never noticed such instances, my Christian reader? Have you never observed a line-er in the step of some one in your Bible-class, or in your circle of friends, as if your visitor had something on his mind he desired to bring my—some heart sickness—and wanted but a kind word? Did you speak to him?

Has it never happened that one whom you little thought to be labouring under religious impressions, has hesitatingly and half-jestingly touched on religion as if to call your own attention to it, he at the same time knowing you to be a professed Christian? Did you speak to him?—Sunday School Teacher's Magazine.

Religious and Secular.

THE SANDWICH ISLANDS.

At the present time, when the annexation of the Sandwich Islands to the United States is a prominent subject for discussion, both in private and political circles, and when a treaty for this end is said to be even now in process of consummation by the governments of the respective countries, a brief sketch of this important little island-kingdom cannot fail to be both interesting and appropriate.

The Sandwich Islands are situated near the centre of the North Pacific Ocean, between latitude 18 deg. 50 min. and 22 deg. 20 min. North, and longitude 154 deg. 53 min. and 160 deg. 16 min. West. This group forms, as it were, the northern advanced guard of the great island world of the Pacific. They are the half way station of the Pacific route, being nearly equidistant from the chief ports in America on the one side, and Asia on the other. They constitute the usual rendezvous for the whaler who frequents the Northern Pacific seas. The group comprises twelve islands which cover an aggregate area of sixty-one hundred square miles. Eight only of the islands are inhabited.

This little island-empire of the western world is supposed to have been originally discovered by some Spanish navigator, as upon a chart found in a Spanish galleon which was captured by Lord Anson, in 1748, there was laid down a group of islands, answering, in all essential respects, to these. Captain Cook's discovery is the first, however, of which we have authentic record. The renowned navigator saw the islands and cast anchor in the harbour of Waimea in January of 1778.—Vancouver was the next visitor; and his arrival, which was in 1792, created such a sensation that the king ceded a small island to the British; but it was never accepted. Subsequently many American vessels traded there for sandal wood, and in 1810 a school for the education of the young islanders was established by the Presbyterian Board of foreign missions. The first regular mission was organized in 1819, and afterwards successive missionary parties were sent out, until eventually the inhabitants were converted from a race of barbarous heathens to a Christian nation.

The missionaries have been laboring, however, among a decaying race. When Cook visited the group in 1778, it was teeming with inhabitants.—He computed the population at four hundred thousand; and that his computation did not greatly exceed the truth, is shown by the abundant evidence which still exists of a once overflowing population.—by the countless footpaths not yet entirely overgrown with grass; by the sights of ancient villages, of varied extent, and occupying every favorable position; and by the various remains of temples, aqueducts, &c., some of which would be regarded as extraordinary works even in the United States. Within the comparatively brief space of seventy-six years, this dense population has dwindled down to sixty-five thousand, and of this number nearly ten thousand are whites. In 1848 the year when the last census was taken, the total population was 80,641; the number of births, 1,478; deaths 7,493; thus giving a decrease during the year of 6,466 inhabitants, and this is about the average annual decrease. The nation's course of empire is fulfilled. It has long since passed the summit of its glory, and is now rapidly fading away. In the language of a native historian:—"Our account of the magnitude of these evils which have come upon the kingdom, the kingdom is sick; it is reduced to a skeleton, and is near death; yea, the whole Hawaiian kingdom is near to a close."

The causes of the rapid decrease of the numerous population which once flourished throughout the group of islands may be traced chiefly to the evils which naturally attend an excess of savage population. Indolence was one great cause of their decline. This vice seems to have been constitutional with the islanders, and to have grown from the mildness of the climate, the profusion of nature's bounties, and the uncertain tenure by which they held their possessions. Pestilence, another prominent cause of their decay, has at times swept over the island, and found many victims among the indolent, sensual natives. When Kamehameha I. resided at Oahu, more than half the population of the island was swept away in a single year, by a dreadful disease. Indolence has been and still continues to be, perhaps the most powerful, and at the same time the most deplorable source of their decline. Before the good effects of the missionary's work began to be manifest, the crime of infanticide was frightfully prevalent among the people. It was so common that its parallel was never known in any other country. Human sacrifice, too, was practised upon every public occasion; and the altars which reeked with the blood of the victims at the conclusion of every war or victory, at every failure or remarkable success of the crops, at every sickness, recovery, or death, of a king, still remain, mournful memorials of the past. What will be the result of this gradual decay, of this passing away of the original inhabitants of the soil, none can tell; whether they will conform with the habits and customs of civilized people, and ultimately become amalgamated with their white brothers or whether the curse which seems to hang over them will remain unfulfilled so long as there continues among the living one in whose veins flows the blood of the tribe of the Kamehamehas, remains to be seen.

It is estimated that the sixty-one hundred square miles which comprise the area of the Sandwich Islands is capable of supporting between four and five hundred thousand human beings. The soil which is favorably situated for cultivation, is generally very fertile. A considerable amount of sugar is already manufactured there, and it has been computed that one hundred thousand acres of the land upon four of the principal islands, might be easily made to produce three thousand pounds of sugar per acre; which, at five cents a pound, would be worth fifteen millions of dollars. Efforts have been made to introduce the culture of silk upon the islands, but owing to a heavy drought added to the ignorance of the proprietors, and other unfavorable circumstances, the project fell through.

But it is not any means in natural productions that the importance of the islands consists; it is rather in their position as an entre-port, or neutral station for trade. The commerce of the islands is considerable, and is increasing from year to year. In 1824, forty-six years after they were visited by Capt. Cook, one hundred and three vessels touched there. In 1852 the islands were visited by five hundred and eighty-five vessels. The legislative power is vested in a king, a house of Nobles, and a House of Representatives. The Legislature assembles annually in the first week in April. Kamehameha III., the reigning king, is more than forty years of age, and is said to be tall, robust, amiable, intelligent, and generally prepossessing in appearance.—Boston Journal.

BIBLES IN SPAIN.

The recent disturbances in Spain have not been unattended with good. The Spanish military lines near Gibraltar having been for a time broken up, an opportunity, such as rarely occurs, was afforded for the introduction of Bibles into the country, and which was promptly taken advantage of. The following extract of a letter from the Rev. George Alton, Wesleyan Missionary at Gibraltar, of date 17th August, gives the particulars of this enterprise:—

I have the great pleasure of informing you of an enterprise, which has been so far successful in the interest of religion in distracted Spain.

On the populations of the adjoining district declaring in favour of the revolutionary party, the military posts on the frontiers were abandoned, the civil guards and revenue officers displaced, and the custom-houses closed. For several days there was entire freedom of communication with Gibraltar, and all description of merchandise were taken into the country without impediment of any kind. I felt that an opportunity so favourable for the distribution of the Scriptures, and other religious books, ought not to be allowed to pass unexploited, and I at once made arrangements for dispatching as many of such publications as I had available.

You will be glad to learn that I succeeded in introducing the following numbers, namely:

Bibles, Testaments, select books of Scripture, and single Gospels,	1741
Liturgies, and family and individual prayers,	498
Religious tracts, pamphlets, and larger works, about,	3000
	5242

Making a total, as above, of upwards of 5000 copies of the Scriptures and religious books sent into Spain. An agent was employed to pass them into the interior, and a great portion of them are already widely distributed.

Among the large religious books were a few copies of Wilberforce's "Practical View of Christianity," Gurney's "Essays on Christianity," Keith on the "Prophecies," Bickersteth's "Scripture Help," and Bogue's "Essay on the New Testament." The pamphlets, in greater numbers, included Nevins' "Thoughts on Popery," Hartwell Horne's "Romanism contrary to Holy Scripture," and Gurney's "Observations on the Sabbath." These were translated by Mr. Rule. There was also a good number of an original work by Mr. Rule, entitled, "Christianity Restored."

It cannot fail to be highly gratifying to all who take an interest in the diffusion of gospel truth in Popish countries, to learn that a little has been done in furtherance of this object by embracing a momentary opening. Nay God make the books distributed a blessing to great numbers! The misery of Spain are very great, and nothing can ever sensibly relieve them whilst the nation is closed to the Bible. I have often heard that the blight which for generations has been on the national life would never pass away; but that the curse of the righteous God, who "judgeth in the earth," would abide on it until it was wasted, and consumed after the example of those nations of antiquity which persecuted the saints of the Most High, and are not. But surely intervals of merciful visitation will yet be granted. Spain has enjoyed some such brief periods of mercy, but they have hitherto been spurned by the nation as such; and even heavy judgments have been as little regarded. Again and again do I ask myself, Is there yet hope? I often respond; but the merciful purposes of God to all nations, discovered in the covenant of redemption, never fail to re-assure me. Whatever may be the future of that unhappy country, I yet cling to the hope, that divine compassion will be manifested to the people generally, and, for a short space, at least, a door opened, in the providence of God, for publishing the gospel through the land, and crying to such as will know the day of their visitation, and cast off the corruptions and shackles of Popery, "come out of her, my people."

The services which has been rendered to the cause of Bible distribution during this temporary opportunity, show how important is a mission which, though, in ordinary circumstances, shut out from