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A PICTURE FROM LIFE.

The following from the pen of Emily B. Page, of Bradford, Vt., breathes the spirit of genuine poetic inspiration, and will bring before many a reader's mind some loved household image. We copy from that excellent paper, the *Portland Transcript*, a weekly which is a credit to the place in which it is published, and worthy of a cordial and generous support.

OUR KATY.

There's a pattering of light footsteps
Across the sanded floor,
And a face like the laughing sunshine
Peeps in at the half-shut door;
'Tis a vision of dreamlike beauty,
With tresses of paly gold,
And eyes like the violet blossoms
That first to the spring unfold.
With a brow like the first pure snow-flake
That floats to the frozen earth,
And lips all dimpled, and parting
With a smile of bewitching mirth;
Half hid by the trembling shadow
That robes her mystical grace,
Is seen through the opening portal
The light of her beautiful face.
One look of endearing welcome,
And I fold in my sheltering arms
And I hide on my thrilling bosom
The wealth of her glowing charms:
One moment she lends her sweet presence,
One moment she lingers and smiles,
And the light of her loving spirit
The gloom of my heart beguiles,
Then away with a fawn like footstep
She glides o'er the sanded floor
And the voice of her silvery laughter
Floats back through the open door;
She is gone, like a gush of music
Breathed out in the pathless air,
Like a rainbow that archeth the heavens
To bend but a moment there;
Yet there dwells in my innermost spirit
The light which her gladness brought,
And my soul with a thousand bright visions
And a thousand sweet fancies is fraught.

REV. DR. NEALE'S ELECTION SERMON.

Dr. R. H. Neale, Pastor of the 1st Baptist Church in Boston, was called to preach the Annual Sermon before the Governor and Legislature of Massachusetts, usually called the *Election Sermon*. In noticing the event and the subject of the discourse, the Editor of the *Christian Watchman and Reflector* indulges the following natural reminiscences. The time is rapidly approaching when the sentiments of this discourse shall be acknowledged true throughout Christendom, much as they are now contemned by a part of it.

The very title page of this sermon does us good. "RELIGIOUS LIBERTY," discoursed upon in an Election Sermon before the General Court, by a Baptist Minister, and he the pastor of the First Baptist Church in Boston! The times are changed, indeed. We protest that we don't wish to annoy anybody by unpleasant reminiscences, but such an occurrence is too suggestive to permit silence, and we must take a look at the records. If the result does not awaken gratitude to God for our better heritage, then are we unsusceptible to just impressions.

We pass over the banishment of Roger Williams, nor will we dwell on that law of 1644, which the General Court enacted against the Baptists, and the spirit of which was illustrated that same year in the case of one Thomas Painter, who, having "suddenly turned A-baptist," refused to have his child baptized, and declaring infant baptism an antichristian ordinance, was made to suffer for it. "He was very poor," says Winthrop: "so, as no other but corporal punishment could be fast-

ened upon him, he was ordered to be whipped." And he bore it without flinching, like a martyr. We will not linger on the circumstances of that visit of love made in 1651, by Dr. John Clarke, of Newport, with Obadiah Holmes, and Crandal, to their aged Baptist brother at Lynn; how they were arraigned and fined, and one of them, Holmes, in the words of his sentence, "well whipped," in this very city, so that, as Governor Jenks testifies, he could for some time after take no rest but as he lay upon his knees and elbows. Three cords had the whip,—thirty strokes was the number, and thrice did the executioner spit in his hands that he might lay on the blows with greater force. "It doth not a little grieve my spirit," said Richard Saltonstall, writing of this matter to John Cotton and Mr. Wilson, "to hear what sad things are reported daily of your tyranny and persecutions in New-England, as that you fine, whip and imprison men for their consciences." But Cotton was always ready to defend persecution. "You think," said he in reply, "to compel men in matter of worship is to make them sin. If the worship be lawful in itself, the magistrate compelling him to come to it, compelleth him not to sin, but the sin is in his will, that needs to be compelled to a Christian duty." Cotton died soon after this letter was written, and Gov. Dudley, who, when asked whether those who differed in opinion from the established faith of the colony might migrate from England into it, had said, "God forbid our love for the truth should be grown so cold that we should tolerate errors," soon followed him to the grave. These lines were in the Governor's pocket at his death:

"Let men of God in courts and churches watch
For such as do a TOLERATION hatch."

Such things had laid a good foundation for an agitation of the question of baptism, which usually turns out for the furtherance of Baptist sentiments. Henry Dunstar, President of Harvard College, preached against infant baptism, and the minds of others in high places were disturbed by questionings on the subject. Dunstar was forced to quit his Presidency, and retire to the more tolerant colony of Plymouth, where he died not long after. Ministers' meetings, conventions and synods assembled in Boston, to settle questions about baptism. "As some were studying," says Hubbard, "how baptism might be enlarged and extended to the seed of the faithful in their several generations, there were others as studious to deprive all unadult children thereof, and to restrain the privilege only to adult believers."—The establishment of the "half-way covenant," was immediately succeeded by the rise of the First Baptist Church in Boston. That church was organized May 28, 1665. Nine members composed the humble any godly fellowship. "Of such a peaceable disposition" were they, says Backus, and "so far from disturbing others, as the Quakers did, that their rulers hardly knew where to find them." But they were hunted out at length, and brought before the magistrates. "Christ's commission," said they, "is to teach and baptize, and those who gladly receive the word and are baptized, are fit matter for a visible church." "If any take this to be heresy, then do we, with the apostles, confess, that after the way which they call heresy, we worship God, the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, believing all things that are written in the law, and the apostles and prophets." The General Court disfranchised such of them as were freemen, declared them to be no church, and subject to imprisonment on conviction of persisting in their errors. Fines and imprisonment followed, and sentence of banishment was pronounced, but in vain. Some better disposed people petitioned the Court for leni-

ency towards the Baptists, but were punished for their impertinence. Robert Mascal sent over from England a most sensible and moving letter in their behalf, but without effect.

Ecclesiastical difficulties were now multiplying. These people, who assumed the guardianship and control of their neighbors' faith, were unable to preserve unity among themselves on this very question of baptism. A minority split off from the church over which Cotton and Wilson had presided, formed a new church in 1669, (the present Old South) embodying the new notions of baptism lately established by authority. Gov. Bellingham feared a tumult, and called his Council, but the Council by a major vote, allowed the new church to go on. The General Court when it assembled, saw in this "declension from the primitive foundation work," an ominous cause of God's displeasure, and declared the new church "irregular, illegal and disorderly." But the next election changed the composition of the Legislature, and when that body came together again, it reversed this condemnatory proceeding,—beautifully illustrating how Cæsar takes care of the house of God.

It might be supposed that such differences among themselves would have promoted tolerance. But not so. In 1672, Shepherd preached his "Eye-salve" election sermon, and both quotes Cotton, who had said, "It was toleration that made the world anti-Christian, and the church never took hurt by the punishment of heretics," and himself ascribes toleration to the devil. "'Tis Satan's policy," says he, to plead for an indefinite and boundless toleration." And this year the General Court revises and reprints the laws banishing Baptists from the colony. The year following, 1673, President Oakes, of Harvard College, preached the election sermon;—"I look upon toleration," said he "as the first born of all abominations." In the election sermon of 1676, William Hubbard said, "It is made, by learned and judicious writers, one of the undoubted rights of sovereignty, to determine what religion shall be publicly professed and exercised within their dominions." And in dedicating the sermon he used this significant language,—"If he was not mistaken who said, It is morally impossible to rivet the Christian religion into the body of a nation without infant baptism, by proportion it will necessarily follow, that the neglect or disuse thereof will directly tend to root it out." Hubbard the preacher, and Hubbard the historian, are in harmony. The latter says that synods and messengers will not keep ecclesiastical peace, "unless they be a little acuated by the civil authority." *Acuated* means sharpened, and the word is to the point. In 1677, Increase Mather preached the election sermon. He, too, quotes Cotton, who can hardly be opened amiss when one desires aid in that line, and gives his own testimony thus: "I believe that antichrist hath not at this day a more probable way to advance his kingdom of darkness, than by a toleration of all religious persuasions." But, all honor to Increase Mather, he thought better afterwards.

But we will drop election sermons here, and return to the First Baptist church. By this time their numbers had increased to about eighty persons, (Backus, vol. 1, p. 484,) and they had proceeded to build a house of worship, in so quiet a way that the purpose of the edifice was not suspected until they met in it, Feb. 15, 1679. This was too much to be endured, and in May, the Baptists were summoned before the General Court for the offence. They had violated no law, however, and the Court was obliged to make a new law to meet the case, under which the use of the house was forbidden. The Baptists submit-

ted until they learned that the King had received intelligence of their suffering, and had ordered their persecutors to desist. Having learned this they resumed the use of their house, but were forthwith summoned before the court of assistants, to answer for their breach of the law. Here they defended themselves with signal ability, but in vain. The marshal nailed up the house, and by a written paper on the door, bearing the signature of "Edward Rawson, Secretary," forbade it to be opened for meetings or any other purpose, until the General Court should further order. The Baptists met the next Sunday in the yard, and in the ensuing week constructed a shed for the purpose, but on the second Sunday, they found the doors of their house open, and believing the process of ejection to have been illegal, they ventured to enter. In May they were summoned before the Court, when they urged in their defence, 1, that the house was their own, 2, that there was no law against it when it was built, and 3, that it was the king's pleasure that they should occupy it in peace. They then petitioned for leave to occupy, but the Court, though they forgave the past, forbade their meeting in it any more.—The prohibition was of little force however; for they were soon in quiet possession.

Indeed the days of this sort of persecution, were drawing rapidly to a close. Great events were close at hand. James II. annuls the charters of the colonies at his pleasure. Andros is Governor of the province of New England, and Episcopacy is the Established religion. Old South opens its doors to the surplice, and its walls echo the liturgy of the Church of England. Thankful are the late oppressors of their Baptist brethren, that now they can have "toleration" in common with those brethren. True, this anomalous political condition is of short duration. The revolution of 1688 in England witnesses a similar revolution here, but under the reign of William and Mary the arrogant persecutions of former times cannot be renewed. Religious liberty was yet by no means attained, but a large step towards it was taken. More than a century of annoyances, vexations, and pecuniary losses, were yet to be the lot of the Baptists of Massachusetts, before the magistrate should cease to intermeddle with ecclesiastical affairs. The change which even a few years had effected, however, was noticeable in the substance and tone of the election sermon, at the first General Court after the union of the two colonies, Massachusetts and Plymouth, by the charter of 1692. The preacher still reserves a place for the interference of the magistrate, but protests that he is not to compel men, who are conscientiously of a different way of thinking, to this or that way of worship by civil penalties. Progress was in the right direction, and we are blessed with the liberty and peace which are its ripe fruits. In our day a minister of that denomination, which first and alone testified against persecution, and suffered exile, stripes, fines and imprisonment for its testimony, and of that very church whose members were hunted and driven as we have described, ascends the pulpit of Old South Church, and before the assembled authorities of the Commonwealth, proclaims those same doctrines of religious liberty which his church and denomination have contended and suffered for from the beginning;—and all that Great and General Court say, AMEN! Hear him:

"Such is the religious liberty enjoyed in these United States. It is derived directly from the King in Zion. It is not regarded as a matter of toleration, but a heaven-descended and inalienable right. Saul is an Episcopalian, and Cephas a Presbyterian, and Gaius a Baptist, and Demas a Roman Catholic, because in the exercise of their own judgment,