

HENRY WARD BEECHER.*

THERE are more than thirty thousand preachers in the United States, whereof twenty-eight thousand are Protestants, the rest Catholics,—one minister to a thousand men. They make an exceeding great army,—mostly serious, often self-denying and earnest. Nay, sometimes you find them men of large talent, perhaps even of genius. No thirty thousand farmers, mechanics, lawyers, doctors, or traders have so much of that book-learning which is popularly called "Education."

No class has such opportunities for influence, such means of power; even now the press ranks second to the pulpit. Some of the old traditional respect for the theocratic class continues in service, and waits upon the ministers. It has come down from Celtic and Teutonic fathers, hundreds of years behind us, who transferred to a Roman priesthood the allegiance once paid to the servants of a deity quite different from the Catholic. The Puritans founded an ecclesiastical oligarchy which is by no means ended yet; with the most obstinate "liberty of prophesying" there was mixed a certain respect for such as only wore the prophet's mantle; nor is it wholly gone.

What personal means of controlling the public the minister has at his command! Of their own accord, men "assemble and meet together," and look up to him. In the country, the town-roads centre at the meeting-house, which is also the *terminus a quo*, the golden mile-stone, whence distances are measured off. Once a week, the wheels of business, and even of pleasure, drop into the old customary ruts, and turn thither. Sunday morning, all the land is still. Labor puts off his iron apron and arrays him in clean human clothes,—a symbol of universal hu-

manity, not merely of special toil. Trade closes the shop; his business-pen, well wiped, is laid up for to-morrow's use; the account-book is shut,—men thinking of their trespasses as well as their debts. For six days, aye, and so many nights, Broadway roars with the great stream which sets this way and that, as wind and tide press up and down. How noisy is this great channel of business, wherein Humanity rolls to and fro, now running into shops, now sucked down into cellars, then dashed high up the tall, steep banks, to come down again a continuous drip and be lost in the general flood! What a fringe of foam colors the margin on either side, and what gay bubbles float therein, with more varied gorgeousness than the Queen of Sheba dreamed of putting on when she courted the eye of Hebrew Solomon! Sunday, this noise is still. Broadway is a quiet stream, looking sober, or even dull; its voice is but a gentle murmur of many waters calmly flowing where the ecclesiastical gates are open to let them in. The channel of business has shrunk to a little church-canal. Even in this great Babel of commerce one day in seven is given up to the minister. The world may have the other six; this is for the Church;—for so have Abram and Lot divided the field of Time, that there be no strife between the rival herdsmen of the Church and the World. Sunday morning, Time rings the bell. At the familiar sound, by long habit born in them, and older than memory, men assemble at the meeting-house, nestle themselves devoutly in their snug pews, and button themselves in with wonted care. There is the shepherd, and here is the flock, fenced off into so many little private pens. With dumb, yet eloquent patience, they look up listless, perhaps longing, for such fodder as he may pull out from his spiritual mow and shake down before them. What he gives they gather.

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Other speakers must have some magnetism of personal power or public reputation to attract men; but the minister can dispense with that; to him men answer before he calls, and even when they are not sent by others are drawn by him. Twice a week, nay, three times, if he will, do they lend him their ears to be filled with his words. No man of science or letters has such access to men. Besides, he is to speak on the grandest of all themes,—of Man, of God, of Religion, man's deepest desires, his loftiest aspirations. Before him the rich and the poor meet together, conscious of the one God, Master of them all, who is no respecter of persons. To the minister the children look up, and their pliant faces are moulded by his plastic hand. The young men and maidens are there,—such possibility of life and character before them, such hope is there, such faith in man and God, as comes instinctively to those who have youth on their side. There are the old: men and women with white crowns on their heads; faces which warn and scare with the ice and storm of eighty winters, or guide and charm with the beauty of four-score summers,—rich in promise once, in harvest now. Very beautiful is the presence of old men, and of that venerable sisterhood whose experienced temples are turbaned with the raiment of such as have come out of much tribulation, and now shine as white stars foretelling an eternal day. Young men all around, a young man in the pulpit, the old men's look of experienced life says "Amen" to the best word, and their countenance is a benediction.

The minister is not expected to appeal to the selfish motives which are addressed by the market, the forum, or the bar, but to the eternal principle of Right. He must not be guided by the statutes of men, changeable as the clouds, but must fix his eye on the bright particular star of Justice, the same yesterday, to-day, and forever. To him, office, money, social rank, and fame are but toys or counters which the game of life is played withal; while wisdom, integrity, benev-

olence, piety are the prizes the game is for. He digs through the dazzling sand, and bids men build on the rock of ages.

Surely, no men have such opportunity of speech and power as these thirty thousand ministers. What have they to show for it all? The hunter, fisher, woodman, miner, farmer, mechanic, has each his special wealth. What have this multitude of ministers to show?—how much knowledge given, what wise guidance, what inspiration of humanity? Let the best men answer.

This ministerial army may be separated into three divisions. First, the Church Militant, the Fighting Church, as the ecclesiastical dictionaries define it. Reverend men serve devoutly in its ranks. Their work is negative, oppositional. Under various banners, with diverse and discordant war-cries, trumpets braying a certain or uncertain sound, and weapons of strange pattern, though made of trusty steel, they do battle against the enemy. What shots from antique pistols, matchlocks, from crossbows and catapults, are let fly at the foe! Now the champion attacks "New Views," "Ultraism," "Neology," "Innovation," "Discontent," "Carnal Reason"; then he lays lance in rest, and rides valiantly upon "Unitarianism," "Popery," "Infidelity," "Atheism," "Deism," "Spiritualism"; and though one by one he runs them through, yet he never quite slays the Evil One;—the severed limbs unite again, and a new monster takes the old one's place. It is serious men who make up the Church Militant,—grim, earnest, valiant. If mustered in the ninth century, there had been no better soldiers nor elder.

Next is the Church Termagant. They are the Scolds of the Church-hold, terrible from the beginning hitherto. Their work is denouncing; they have always a burden against something. *Obsta decisio* is their motto,—“Hate all that is agreed upon.” When the “contrary-minded” are called for, the Church Termagant holds up its hand. A turbulent people, and a troublesome, are these sons of

thunder,—a brotherhood of universal come-outers. Their only concord is disagreement. It is not often, perhaps, that they have better thoughts than the rest of men, but a superior aptitude to find fault; their growling proves, “not that themselves are wise, but others weak.” So their pulpit is a brawling-tub, “full of sound and fury, signifying nothing.” They have a deal of thunder, and much lightning, but no light, nor any continuous warmth, only spasms of heat. *Odi presentem laudare absentem*,—the Latin tells their story. They come down and trouble every Bethesda in the world, but heal none of the impotent folk. To them,

“Of old things, all are over old,
Of new things, none is new enough.”

They have a rage for fault-finding, and betake themselves to the pulpit as others are sent to Bedlam. Men of all denominations are here, and it is a deal of mischief they do,—the worst, indirectly, by making a sober man distrust the religious faculty they appeal to, and set his face against all mending of anything, no matter how badly it is broken. These Theudases, boasting themselves to be somebody, and leading men off to perish in the wilderness, frighten every sober man from all thought of moving out of his bad neighborhood or seeking to make it better.—But this is a small portion of the ecclesiastic host. Let us be tolerant to their noise and bigotry.

Last of all is the Church Beneficent or Constructant. Their work is positive,—critical of the old, creative also of the new. They take hold of the strongest of all human faculties,—the religious,—and use this great river of God, always full of water, to moisten hill-side and meadow, to turn lonely saw-mills, and drive the wheels in great factories, which make a metropolis of manufactures,—to bear alike the lumberman’s logs and the trader’s ships to their appointed place; the stream feeding many a little forget-me-not, as it passes by. Men of all denominations belong to this Church Catholic;

yet all are of one *persuasion*, the brotherhood of Humanity,—for the one spirit loves manifoldness of form. They trouble themselves little about Sin, the universal but invisible enemy whom the Church Termagant attempts to shell and dislodge; but are very busy in attacking Sins. These ministers of religion would rout Drunkenness and Want, Ignorance, Idleness, Lust, Covetousness, Vanity, Hate, and Pride,—vices of instinctive passion or reflective ambition. Yet the work of these men is to build up; they cut down the forest and scare off the wild beasts only to replace them with civil crops,—cattle, corn, and men. Instead of the howling wilderness, they would have the village or the city, full of comfort and wealth and musical with knowledge and with love. How often are they misunderstood! Some savage hears the ring of the axe, the crash of falling timber, or the rifle’s crack and the drop of wolf or bear, and cries out, “A destructive and dangerous man; he has no reverence for the ancient wilderness, but would abolish it and its inhabitants; away with him!” But look again at this destroyer, and in place of the desert woods, lurked in by a few wild beasts and wilder men, behold, a whole New England of civilization has come up! The minister of this Church of the Good Samaritans delivers the poor that cry, and the fatherless, and him that hath none to help him; he makes the widow’s heart sing for joy, and the blessing of such as are ready to perish comes on him; he is eyes to the blind, feet to the lame; the cause of evil which he knows not he searches out; breaking the jaws of the wicked to pluck one spirit out of their teeth. In a world of work, he would have no idler in the market-place; in a world of bread, he would not eat his morsel alone while the fatherless has nought; nor would he see any perish for want of clothing. He knows the wise God made man for a good end, and provided adequate means thereto; so he looks for them where they were placed, in the world of matter and of men, not outside

of either. So while he entertains every old Truth, he looks out also into the crowd of new Opinions, hoping to find others of their kin: and the new thought does not lodge in the street; he opens his doors to the traveller, not forgetful to entertain strangers,—knowing that some have also thereby entertained angels unawares. He does not fear the great multitude, nor does the contempt of a few families make him afraid.

This Church Constructant has a long apostolical succession of great men, and many nations are gathered in its fold. And what a variety of beliefs it has! But while each man on his private account says, CREDO, and believes, as he must and shall, and writes or speaks his opinions in what speech he likes best,—they all, with one accordant mouth, say likewise, FACIAMUS, and betake them to the one great work of developing man's possibility of knowledge and virtue.

Mr. Beecher belongs to this Church Constructant. He is one of its eminent members, its most popular and effective preacher. No minister in the United States is so well known, none so widely beloved. He is as well known in Ottawa as in Broadway. He has the largest Protestant congregation in America, and an ungathered parish which no man attempts to number. He has church members in Maine, Wisconsin, Georgia, Texas, California, and all the way between. Men look on him as a national institution, a part of the public property. Not a Sunday in the year but representative men from every State in the Union fix their eyes on him, are instructed by his sermons and uplifted by his prayers. He is the most popular of American lecturers. In the celestial sphere of theological journals, his papers are the bright particular star in that constellation called the "Independent": men look up to and bless the useful light, and learn therefrom the signs of the times. He is one of the bulwarks of freedom in Kansas,—a detached fort. He was a great force in the last Presidential campaign, and sev-

eral stump-speakers were specially detailed to overtake and offset him. But the one man surrounded the many. Scarcely is there a Northern minister so bitterly hated at the South. The slave-traders, the border-ruffians, the purchased officials know no Higher Law; "nor Hale nor Devil can make them afraid"; yet they fear the terrible whip of Henry Ward Beecher.

The time has not come—may it long be far distant!—to analyze his talents and count up his merits and defects. But there are certain obvious excellences which account for his success and for the honor paid him.

Mr. Beecher has great strength of instinct,—of spontaneous human feeling. Many men lose this in "getting an education"; they have tanks of rain-water, barrels of well-water; but on their premises is no spring, and it never rains there. A mountain-spring supplies Mr. Beecher with fresh, living water.

He has great love for Nature, and sees the symbolical value of material beauty and its effect on man.

He has great fellow-feeling with the joys and sorrows of men. Hence he is always on the side of the suffering, and especially of the oppressed; all his sermons and lectures indicate this. It endears him to millions, and also draws upon him the hatred and loathing of a few Pharisees, some of them members of his own sect.

Listen to this:—

"Looked at without educated associations, there is no difference between a man in bed and a man in a coffin. And yet such is the power of the heart to redeem the animal life, that there is nothing more exquisitely refined and pure and beautiful than the chamber of the house. The couch! From the day that the bride sanctifies it, to the day when the aged mother is borne from it, it stands clothed with loveliness and dignity. Cursed be the tongue that dares speak evil of the household bed! By its side oscillates the cradle. Not far from it is the crib. In this sacred precinct, the mother's chamber, lies the heart of the family. Here the child learns its prayer. Hither, night by night, angels troop. It is the Holy of Holies."

How well he understands the ministry of grief!

"A Christian man's life is laid in the loom of time to a pattern which he does not see, but God does; and his heart is a shuttle. On one side of the loom is sorrow, and on the other is joy; and the shuttle, struck alternately by each, flies back and forth, carrying the thread, which is white or black, as the pattern needs; and in the end, when God shall lift up the finished garment, and all its changing hues shall glance out, it will then appear that the deep and dark colors were as needful to beauty as the bright and high colors."

He loves children, and the boy still fresh in his manhood.

"When your own child comes in from the street, and has learned to swear from the bad boys congregated there, it is a very different thing to you from what it was when you heard the profanity of those boys as you passed them. Now it takes hold of you, and makes you feel that you are a stockholder in the public morality. Children make men better citizens. Of what use would an engine be to a ship, if it were lying loose in the hull? It must be fastened to it with bolts and screws, before it can propel the vessel. Now a childless man is just like a loose engine. A man must be bolted and screwed to the community before he can begin to work for its advancement; and there are no such screws and bolts as children."

He has a most Christ-like contempt for the hypocrite, whom he scourges with heavy evangelical whips,—but the tenderest Christian love for earnest men struggling after nobleness.

Read this:—

"I think the wickedest people on earth are those who use a force of genius to make themselves selfish in the noblest things, keeping themselves aloof from the vulgar and the ignorant and the unknown; rising higher and higher in taste, till they sit, ice upon ice, on the mountain-top of eternal congelation."

"Men are afraid of slight outward acts which will injure them in the eyes of others, while they are heedless of the damnation which throbs in their souls in hatreds and jealousies and revenges."

"Many people use their refinements as a spider uses his web, to catch the weak upon, that they may be mercilessly devoured. Christian men should use refinement on this principle: the more I have, the more I owe to those who are less than I."

He values the substance of man more than his accidents.

"We say a man is 'made.' What do we mean? That he has got the control of his lower instincts, so that they are only fuel to his higher feelings, giving force to his nature? That his affections are like vines, sending out on all sides blossoms and clustering fruits? That his tastes are so cultivated, that all beautiful things speak to him, and bring him their delights? That his understanding is opened, so that he walks through every hall of knowledge, and gathers its treasures? That his moral feelings are so developed and quickened, that he holds sweet commerce with Heaven? Oh, no!—none of these things! He is cold and dead in heart and mind and soul. Only his passions are alive; but—he is worth five hundred thousand dollars!

"And we say a man is 'ruined.' Are his wife and children dead? Oh, no! Have they had a quarrel, and are they separated from him? Oh, no! Has he lost his reputation through crime? No. Is his reason gone? Oh, no! It's as sound as ever. Is he struck through with disease? No. He has lost his property, and he is ruined. The man ruined? When shall we learn that 'a man's life consisteth not in the abundance of the things he possesseth'?"

Mr. Beecher's God has the gentle and philanthropic qualities of Jesus of Nazareth, with omnipotence added. Religious emotion comes out in his prayers, sermons, and lectures, as the vegetative power of the earth in the manifold plants and flowers of spring.

"The sun does not shine for a few trees and flowers, but for the wide world's joy. The lonely pine on the mountain-top waves its sombre boughs, and cries, 'Thou art my sun!' And the little meadow-violet lifts its cup of blue, and whispers with its perfumed breath, 'Thou art my sun!' And the grain in a thousand fields rustles in the wind, and makes answer, 'Thou art my sun!'"

"So God sits effulgent in heaven, not for a favored few, but for the universe of life; and there is no creature so poor or so low, that he may not look up with childlike confidence and say, 'My Father! thou art mine!'"

"When once the filial feeling is breathed into the heart, the soul cannot be terrified by augustness, or justice, or any form of Divine grandeur; for then, to such a one, *all the attributes of God are but so many arms stretched abroad through the universe, to gather and to*

press to his bosom those whom he loves. The greater he is, the gladder are we, so that he be our Father still.

"But, if one consciously turns away from God, or fears him, the nobler and grander the representation be, the more terrible is his conception of the Divine Adversary that frowns upon him. The God whom love beholds rises upon the horizon like mountains which carry summer up their sides to the very top; but that sternly just God whom sinners fear stands cold against the sky, like Mont Blanc; and from his icy sides the soul, quickly sliding, plunges headlong down to unrecalled destruction."

He has hard words for such as get only the form of religion, or but little of its substance.

"There are some Christians whose secular life is an arid, worldly strife, and whose religion is but a turbid sentimentalism. Their life runs along that line where the overflow of the Nile meets the desert. *It is the boundary line between sand and mud.*"

"*That gospel which sanctions ignorance and oppression for three millions of men, what fruit or flower has it to shake down for the healing of the nations? It is cursed in its own roots, and blasted in its own boughs.*"

"Many of our churches defy Protestantism. Grand cathedrals are they, which make us shiver as we enter them. The windows are so constructed as to exclude the light and inspire a religious awe. The walls are of stone, which makes us think of our last home. The ceilings are sombre, and the pews coffin-colored. Then the services are composed to these circumstances, and hushed music goes trembling along the aisles, and men move softly, and would on no account put on their hats before they reach the door; but when they do, they take a long breath, and have such a sense of relief to be in the free air, and comfort themselves with the thought that they've been good Christians!

"Now this idea of worship is narrow and false. The house of God should be a joyous place for the right use of all our faculties."

"There ought to be such an atmosphere in every Christian church, that a man going there and sitting two hours should take the contagion of heaven, and carry home a fire to kindle the altar whence he came."

"The call to religion is not a call to be better than your fellows, *but to be better than yourself.* Religion is relative to the individual."

"My best presentations of the gospel to you are so incomplete! Sometimes, when I

am alone, I have such sweet and rapturous visions of the love of God and the truths of his word, that I think, if I could speak to you then, I should move your hearts. I am like a child, who, walking forth some sunny summer's morning, sees grass and flower all shining with drops of dew. 'Oh,' he cries, 'I'll carry these beautiful things to my mother!' And, eagerly plucking them, the dew drops into his little palm, and all the charm is gone. There is but grass in his hand, and no longer pearls."

"There are many professing Christians who are secretly vexed on account of the charity they have to bestow and the self-denial they have to use. If, instead of the smooth prayers which they *do* pray, they should speak out the things which they really feel, they would say, when they go home at night, 'O Lord, I met a poor curmudgeon of yours to-day, a miserable, unwashed brat, and I gave him sixpence, and I have been sorry for it ever since'; or, 'O Lord, if I had not signed those articles of faith, I might have gone to the theatre this evening. Your religion deprives me of a great deal of enjoyment, but I mean to stick to it. There's no other way of getting into heaven, I suppose.'

"The sooner such men are out of the church, the better."

"The youth-time of churches produces enterprise; their age, indolence; but even this might be borne, did not *these dead men sit in the door of their sepulchres, crying out against every living man who refuses to wear the livery of death.* In India, when the husband dies, they burn his widow with him. I am almost tempted to think, that, if, with the end of every pastorate, the church itself were disbanded and destroyed, to be gathered again by the succeeding teacher, we should thus secure an immortality of youth."

"A religious life is not a thing which spends itself. It is like a river, which widens continually, and is never so broad or so deep as at its mouth, where it rolls into the ocean of eternity."

"God made the world to relieve an over-full creative thought,—as musicians sing, as we talk, as artists sketch, when full of suggestions. What profusion is there in his work! When trees blossom, there is not a single breastpin, but a whole bosom full of gems; and of leaves they have so many suits, that they can throw them away to the winds all summer long. What unnumbered cathedrals has he reared in the forest shades, vast and grand, full of curious carvings, and haunted evermore by tremulous music! and in the heavens above, how do stars seem to have

flown out of his hand, faster than sparks out of a mighty forge!"

"Oh, let the soul alone! Let it go to God as best it may! It is entangled enough. It is hard enough for it to rise above the distractions which environ it. Let a man teach the rain how to fall, the clouds how to shape themselves and move their airy rounds, the seasons how to cherish and garner the universal abundance; but let him not teach a soul to pray, on whom the Holy Ghost doth brood!"

He recognizes the difference between religion and theology.

"How sad is that field from which battle hath just departed! By as much as the valley was exquisite in its loveliness, is it now sublimely sad in its desolation. Such to me is the Bible, when a fighting theologian has gone through it.

"How wretched a spectacle is a garden into which the cloven-footed beasts have entered! That which yesterday was fragrant, and shone all over with crowded beauty, is to-day rooted, despoiled, trampled, and utterly devoured, and all over the ground you shall find but the rejected ends of flowers and leaves, and forms that have been champied for their juices and then rejected. Such to me is the Bible, when the pragmatic prophecy-monger and the swinish utilitarian have toothed its fruits and craunched its blossoms.

"O garden of the Lord! whose seeds dropped down from heaven, and to whom angels bear watering dews night by night! O flowers and plants of righteousness! O sweet and holy fruits! We walk among you, and gaze with loving eyes, and rest under your odorous shadows; nor will we, with sacrilegious hand, tear you, that we may search the secret of your roots, nor spoil you, that we may know how such wondrous grace and goodness are evolved within you!"

"What a pin is, when the diamond has dropped from its setting, is the Bible, when its emotive truths have been taken away. What a babe's clothes are, when the babe has slipped out of them into death and the mother's arms clasp only raiment, would be the Bible, if the Babe of Bethlehem, and the truths of deep-heartedness that clothed his life, should slip out of it."

"There is no food for soul or body which God has not symbolized. He is light for the eye, sound for the ear, bread for food, wine for weariness, peace for trouble. Every faculty of the soul, if it would but open its door, might see Christ standing over against it, and silently asking by his smile, 'Shall I come in

unto thee?' But men open the door and look down, not up, and thus see him not. So it is that men sigh on, not knowing what the soul wants, but only that it needs something. Our yearnings are homesickness for heaven; our sighings are for God; just as children that cry themselves asleep away from home, and sob in their slumber, know not that they sob for their parents. The soul's inarticulate moanings are the affections yearning for the Infinite, but having no one to tell them what it is that ails them."

"I feel sensitive about theologies. Theology is good in its place; but when it puts its hoof upon a living, palpitating, human heart, my heart cries out against it."

"There are men marching along in the company of Christians on earth, who, when they knock at the gate of heaven, will hear God answer, 'I never knew you.'—'But the ministers did, and the church-books did.'—'That may be. I never did.'

"It is no matter who knows a man on earth, if God does not know him."

"The heart-knowledge, through God's teaching, is true wealth, and they are often poorest who deem themselves most rich. I, in the pulpit, preach with proud forms to many a humble widow and stricken man who might well teach me. The student, spectacled and gray with wisdom, and stuffed with lumbered lore, may be childish and ignorant beside some old singing saint who brings the wood into his study, and who, with the lens of his own experience, brings down the orbs of truth, and beholds through his faith and his humility things of which the white-haired scholar never dreamed."

He has eminent integrity, is faithful to his own soul, and to every delegated trust. No words are needed here as proof. His life is daily argument. The public will understand this; men whose taste he offends, and whose theology he shocks, or to whose philosophy he is repugnant, have confidence in the integrity of the man. He means what he says,—is solid all through.

"From the beginning, I educated myself to speak along the line and in the current of my moral convictions; and though, in later days, it has carried me through places where there were some batterings and bruising, yet I have been supremely grateful that I was led to adopt this course. I would rather speak the truth to ten men than blandishments and lying to a million. Try it, ye who think there

is nothing in it! try what it is to speak with God behind you,—to speak so as to be only the arrow in the bow which the Almighty draws."

With what affectionate tenderness does this great, faithful soul pour out his love to his own church! He invites men to the communion-service.

"Christian brethren, in heaven you are known by the name of Christ. On earth, for convenience's sake, you are known by the name of Presbyterians, Episcopalians, Methodists, Congregationalists, and the like. Let me speak the language of heaven, and call you simply Christians. Whoever of you has known the name of Christ, and feels Christ's life beating within him, is invited to remain and sit with us at the table of the Lord."

And again, when a hundred were added to his church, he says:—

"My friends, my heart is large to-day. I am like a tree upon which rains have fallen till every leaf is covered with drops of dew; and no wind goes through the boughs but I hear the pattering of some thought of joy and gratitude. I love you all more than ever before. You are crystalline to me; your faces are radiant; and I look through your eyes, as through windows, into heaven. I behold in each of you an imprisoned angel, that is yet to burst forth, and to live and shine in the better sphere."

He has admirable power of making a popular statement of his opinions. He does not analyze a matter to its last elements, put the ultimate facts in a row and find out their causes or their law of action, nor aim at large synthesis of generalization, the highest effort of philosophy, which groups things into a whole;—it is commonly thought both of these processes are out of place in meeting-houses and lecture-halls,—that the people can comprehend neither the one nor the other;—but he gives a popular view of the thing to be discussed, which can be understood on the spot without painful reflection. He speaks for the ear which takes in at once and understands. He never makes attention painful. He illustrates his subject from daily life; the fields, the streets, stars, flowers, music, and babies are his favorite emblems. He remembers that he does not speak to

scholars, to minds disciplined by long habits of thought, but to men with common education, careful and troubled about many things; and they keep his words and ponder them in their hearts. So he has the diffuseness of a wide natural field, which properly spreads out its clover, dandelions, dock, buttercups, grasses, violets, with here and there a delicate *Arcthusa* that seems to have run under this sea of common vegetation and come up in a strange place. He has not the artificial condensation of a garden, where luxuriant Nature assumes the form of Art. His dramatic power makes his sermon also a life in the pulpit; his *auditorium* is also a *theatrum*, for he acts to the eye what he addresses to the ear, and at once wisdom enters at the two gates. The extracts show his power of thought and speech as well as of feeling. Here are specimens of that peculiar humor which appears in all his works.

"Sects and Christians that desire to be known by the undue prominence of some single feature of Christianity are necessarily imperfect just in proportion to the distinctness of their peculiarities. The power of Christian truth is in its unity and symmetry, and not in the saliency or brilliancy of any of its special doctrines. If among painters of the human face and form, there should spring up a sect of the eyes, and another sect of the nose, a sect of the hand, and a sect of the foot, and all of them should agree but in the one thing of forgetting that there was a living spirit behind the features more important than them all, they would too much resemble the schools and cliques of Christians; for the spirit of Christ is the great essential truth; doctrines are but the features of the face, and ordinances but the hands and feet."

Here are some separate maxims:—

"It is not well for a man to pray cream and live skim-milk."

"The mother's heart is the child's school-room."

"They are not reformers who simply abhor evil. Such men become in the end abhorrent themselves."

"There are many troubles which you can't cure by the Bible and the Hymn-book, but which you can cure by a good perspiration and a breath of fresh air."

"The most dangerous infidelity of the day is the infidelity of rich and orthodox churches."

"The fact that a nation is growing is God's own charter of change."

"There is no class in society who can so ill afford to undermine the conscience of the community, or to set it loose from its moorings in the eternal sphere, as merchants who live upon confidence and credit. Anything which weakens or paralyzes this is taking beams from the foundations of the merchant's own warehouse."

"It would almost seem as if there were a certain drollery of art which leads men who think they are doing one thing to do another and very different one. Thus, men have set up in their painted church-windows the symbolisms of virtues and graces, and the images of saints, and even of Divinity itself. Yet now, what does the window do but mock the separations and proud isolations of Christian men? For there sit the audience, each one taking a separate color; and there are blue Christians and red Christians, there are yellow saints and orange saints, there are purple Christians and green Christians; but how few are simple, pure, white Christians, uniting all the cardinal graces, and proud, not of separate colors, but of the whole manhood of Christ!"

"Every mind is entered, like every house, through its own door."

"Doctrine is nothing but the skin of Truth set up and stuffed."

"Compromise is the word that men use when the Devil gets a victory over God's cause."

"A man in the right, with God on his side, is in the majority, though he be alone; for God is multitudinous above all populations of the earth."

But this was first said by Frederic Douglas, and better: "*One with God is a majority.*"

"A lie always needs a truth for a handle to it; else the hand would cut itself, which sought

to drive it home upon another. The worst lies, therefore, are those whose blade is false, but whose handle is true."

"It is not conviction of truth which does men good; it is moral consciousness of truth."

"A conservative young man has wound up his life before it was unreeled. We expect old men to be conservative; but when a nation's young men are so, its funeral-bell is already rung."

"Night-labor, in time, will destroy the student; for it is marrow from his own bones with which he fills his lamp."

A great-hearted, eloquent, fervent, live man, full of religious emotion, of humanity and love,—no wonder he is dear to the people of America. Long may he bring instruction to the lecture associations of the North! Long may he stand in his pulpit at Brooklyn with his heavenly candle, which goeth not out at all by day, to kindle the devotion and piety of the thousands who cluster around him, and carry thence light and warmth to all the borders of the land!

We should do injustice to our own feelings, did we not, in closing, add a word of hearty thanks and commendation to the Member of Mr. Beecher's Congregation to whom we are indebted for a volume that has given us so much pleasure. The selection covers a wide range of topics, and testifies at once to the good taste and the culture of the editress. Many of the finest passages were conceived and uttered in the rapid inspiration of speaking, and but for her admiring intelligence and care, the eloquence, wit, and wisdom, which are here preserved to us, would have faded into air with the last vibration of the preacher's voice.

MERCEDES.

UNDER a sultry, yellow sky,
On the yellow sand I lie;
The crinkled vapors smite my brain,
I smoulder in a fiery pain.

Above the crags the condor flies;
He knows where the red gold lies,
He knows where the diamonds shine;—
If I knew, would she be mine?

Mercedes in her hammock swings;
In her court a palm-tree flings
Its slender shadow on the ground,
The fountain falls with silver sound.

Her lips are like this cactus cup;
With my hand I crush it up;
I tear its flaming leaves apart;—
Would that I could tear her heart!

Last night a man was at her gate;
In the hedge I lay in wait;
I saw Mercedes meet him there,
By the fire-flies in her hair.

I waited till the break of day,
Then I rose and stole away;
I drove my dagger through the gate;—
Now she knows her lover's fate!

THE AUTOCRAT OF THE BREAKFAST-TABLE.

EVERY MAN HIS OWN BOSWELL.

[THIS particular record is noteworthy principally for containing a paper by my friend, the Professor, with a poem or two annexed or intercalated. I would suggest to young persons that they should pass over it for the present, and read, instead of it, that story about the young man who was in love with the young lady, and in great trouble for something like nine pages, but happily married on the tenth page or thereabouts, which, I take it for granted, will be contained in the periodical where this is found, unless it differ from all other publications of the kind. Perhaps, if such young people will lay the number aside, and take it up ten years, or a little more, from the present time, they may find something in it for their advantage. They can't possibly understand it all now.]