

The Examiner.

A WEEKLY JOURNAL OF POLITICS, LITERATURE AND NEWS.

EDWARD WHELAN]

This is true Liberty, when Free-born Men, having to advise the Public, may speak free.—EURIPIDES.

[EDITOR AND PUBLISHER.

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No. 1.

MOON'S PHASES.—JULY, 1856.

New Moon 2d day, 4h. 51m. morning. E.
First Quarter 10th day, 2h. 43m. morning. N.W.
Full Moon 17th day, 4h. 51m. evening. E.
Last Quarter 24th day, 10h. 22m. morning. S.W.
New Moon 31st day, 4h. 29m. evening. W.

Literature.

WOMAN'S LOVE.

AN ANECDOTE OF THE COMMONWEALTH.

Harsh brows were bending on her;
Stern, armed men are there;
Fierce eyes were flashing round her—
The lady, young and fair—
The lady, pale and beautiful,
In her own ancestral hall,
But the foe had forced the portal,
The rebel manned the wall.

Her gallant husband's banner
Lay trampled in the dust;
And broken to its glittering hilt
The blade that mocked his trust;
And wounded and dejected,
Her captive vassals stand;
But where's Lord Edward Stanley,
The leader of the band?

"The castle is our own, lady,
From battlement to tower,
And thou art standing now, lady,
A captive in our power;
But say where he is hidden,
That traitor lord of thine,
And the bridge shall fall and the gates be closed
On the last of me and mine."

"My noble lord is hidden
Where ye can never reach,
No force can win the secret clue,
No treachery can teach:
He is hidden whence he will return,
To his own baronial halls,
And plant King Charlie's flag again,
On his loyal castle-walls."

"There are fearful dungeon-vaults, lady,
Where many a captive pine,
Through long, long years of misery,
Where never sunlight shines;
There is a law for traitors,
The block and the axe are dight,
The chain and the scaffold menace thee—
Where is thy rebel knight?"

The dark eye did not shrink away
The proud lip did not quiver,
The voice in which she answer'd them
Was firm and clear as ever:
"Ye may chain the feeble body,
Ye may stop the passing breath,
But ye cannot force my lip to speak—
I fear not bonds nor death!"

They led her to the dungeon,
They showed the winding track,
They barred the heavy portal close,
And pointed to the rack:—
"A woman's blood has flow'd ere now
Upon that iron frame,
And rebel lips it will can teach
To speak a traitor's name!"

A scornful smile shone on her face,
Her eye flash'd brighter then,
"Ye have conquer'd; lo! I yield myself,
Ye noble, mighty men!
Well do ye read a woman's heart,
Well test a woman's fear!
What strength could brave such gentle foes?
My lord is hidden—here!"

And on the heart that throbb'd so high
She laid her small, white hand,
And haughtily her dark eye flash'd
On that fierce and baffled band;
And, in shame and awe, they turn'd away,
Nor longer sought to move—
They left her to the triumph
Of her perfect woman's love.

PULPIT PECULIARITIES.

A certain minister had a custom of writing the heads of his discourse on small slips of paper, which he placed on the Bible before him, to be used in succession. One day, when he was explaining the second head, he got so excited in his discourse, that he caused the ensuing slip to fall over the edge of the pulpit, though unperceived by himself. On reaching the end of his second head, he looked down for the third slip; but, alas! it was not to be found. "Thirdly," he cried, looking round him with great anxiety. After a little pause, "Thirdly," again he exclaimed; but still no thirdly appeared. "Thirdly, I say, my brethren," pursued the bewildered clergyman; but not another word could he utter. At this point, while the congregation were partly sympathizing in his distress, and partly rejoicing in such a decisive instance of the impropriety of using notes in preaching—which has always been an unpopular thing in the Scotch clergy, an old woman rose up, and thus addressed the preacher: "If I'm no mista'en, sir, I saw thirdly flee out at the east window, a quarter of an hour syne."

As a quaint specimen of clerical brevity, we offer the following; it is ascribed to an old English divine. The text upon which it was based is to be found in Titus ii. 9. He thus unfolded his doctrine.

"I. There are three companions with whom you should always keep on good terms. First, Your Wife; Second, Your Stomach; Third, Your Conscience.

"II. If you wish to enjoy peace, long life, and happiness, preserve them by temperance. Intemperance produces: First, Domestic misery; Second, Premature death; Third, Infidelity.

"To make these points clear, I refer you to: First, to the Newgate Calendar; Second, To the hospitals, lunatic asylums, and work houses; Third, To the past experience of what you have seen, read, and suffered, in mind, body, and estate.

"Hearer, decide! which will you choose? Temperance, with happiness and long life; or Intemperance, with misery and premature death?"

Frederick the Great being informed of the death of one of his chaplains, a man of considerable learning and piety, determined that his successor should not be behind him in

these qualifications, took the following method of ascertaining the merits of one of the numerous candidates for the appointment:—He told the applicant that he would himself furnish him with a text the following Sunday, when he was to preach at the royal chapel, from which he was to make an extempore sermon. The clergyman accepted the proposition. The whim of such a probationary discourse was spread abroad widely, and at an early hour the royal chapel was crowded to excess. The king arrived at the end of the prayers, and on the candidate's ascending the pulpit, one of his majesty's aides-de-camp presented him with a sealed paper. The preacher opened it, and found nothing therein. He did not, however, lose his presence of mind; but turning the paper on both sides, he said:—"My brethren, here is nothing, and there is nothing; and out of nothing God created all things;" and proceeded to deliver a most admirable discourse upon the wonders of Creation.

Louis XIV. said one day to Massillon, after hearing him preach at Versailles: "Father, I have heard many great orators in this chapel; I have been highly pleased with them; but, for you, whenever I hear you, I go away displeas'd with myself, for I see more of my own character." This has been considered the finest encomium ever bestowed upon a preacher.

When Massillon ascended the pulpit, on the death of that prince, he contemplated for a moment the impressive spectacle—the chapel draped in black—the magnificent mausoleum raised over the bier—the dim but vast apartment filled with the trophies of the glory of the monarch, and with the most illustrious persons in the kingdom. He looked down on the gorgeous scene beneath, then raised his arms to heaven and said, in a solemn, subdued tone, "Mes freres, Dieu seul est grand!" "God only is great." With one impulse all the audience rose, turned to the altar, and reverently bowed.

When Dr. Hussey preached at Watford, on the small number of the elect, he asked, "Whether, if the arch of heaven were to open, and the Son of Man should appear to judge his hearers, it were quite certain that one of us," he exclaimed in a voice of thunder, "would be saved?" During the whole of this apostrophe, the audience was agonized. At the ultimate interrogation, we are told, there was a general shriek, and some fell to the ground.

M. Brideine, a French missionary, and the peer of the most renowned orators of that eloquent nation, preached a sermon at Bagmole. At the end of it, he lifted up his arms, and thrice cried in a loud voice, "O, Eternity!" At the third repetition of this awful cry, the whole audience fell upon their knees. During three days, consternation pervaded the town. In the public places young and old were heard crying aloud, "O Lord, mercy!"

Rather a remarkable incident is related of the preaching of the venerable Dr. Beecher. Many years ago he was engaged to officiate in Ohio; it was in the depth of winter, and the roads were nearly impassable with snow, yet the doctor pursued his journey, and, on reaching the church, found not a single individual there. With his characteristic decision of purpose, he ascended the pulpit, and waited the arrival of his congregation. One solitary person at length entered, and the doctor commenced the service. At the conclusion, he hastened to greet his auditor, but he had vanished. Some score of years subsequently the parties accidentally met, when the pleasing fact was communicated to the doctor, that that sermon had proved the means of his conversion, and that he had since become himself a minister over a large congregation.

Dean Swift was once solicited to preach a sermon for the benefit of the poor. When the time arrived, he arose and selected his text: "He who giveth to the poor lendeth to the Lord." "Now," said he, "my brethren, if you are satisfied with the security, down with the dust." He then took his seat, and there was an enormous collection.

The Rev. Sydney Smith, preaching a charity sermon, frequently repeated the assertion that, of all nations, Englishmen were most distinguished for generosity and the love of their species. The collection happened to be inferior to his expectations, and he said that he had evidently made a great mistake, for his expression should have been, that they were distinguished for the love of their specie.

He once said, in speaking of the prosy nature of some sermons, "They are written, as if sin were to be taken out of man, like Eve out of Adam—by putting him to sleep." Dr. Barrow once preached so long, that all his congregation dropped off, leaving the sexton and himself alone. The sexton finding the doctor apparently no nearer a conclusion, said to him, "Sir, here are the keys, please to lock up the church, when you get through your discourse."

Whitfield, when preaching at Princeton, New Jersey, detected one of his auditory fast asleep, came to a pause, and deliberately spoke as follows: "If I had come to speak to you in my own name, you might question my right to interrupt your indolent repose; but I have come in the name of the Lord of Hosts" (and accompanying these words with a heavy blow upon the pulpit,) he roared out, "and I must and will be heard." This had the effect of awakening the sleeper; and on his perceiving it, his reverence eyed him significantly, saying, "Aye, aye, I have waked you up, have I? I meant to do it." This suggests another similar incident; we forget the name of the party or the place; however the circumstances were as follow. A clergyman was once preaching, in the sultry summer time, when many of his hearers yielded to the soporific influence of the weather (or the sermon—perhaps both). The domine seeing this drowsy condition of his audience, paused for some time, when the sleepers returning to consciousness, he thus addressed them, "My good friends, this sermon cost me a good deal of labor, and I do not think you have paid to it the attention it deserves. I shall, therefore, go over it again;" and he was as good as his word. An equally successful expedient was adopted by a minister in New York, not long since, while holding forth to his congregation in a style that ought to have kept them awake; suddenly he stopped in his discourse, and said, "Brethren, I have preached about half of my sermon, and I perceive that twenty-five or thirty of my congregation are fast asleep. I shall postpone the delivery of the balance of it until they wake up!" There was a dead pause for about five minutes, during which time the sleepers awoke, when the preacher resumed. Another instance might be cited, which proved no less effective. A worthy divine, in a church at Norwich, Connecticut, observing many sleeping, paused awhile, then said, "I come now to the third head of my discourse, to which I ask the serious and candid attention of all who are not asleep," giving a marked and peculiar emphasis to the last word.

A preacher in the time of James I. being appointed to hold forth before the Vice Chancellor and heads of Colleges at Oxford, chose for his text, "What, cannot ye watch for one hour?" which carried a personal allusion, as the Vice Chan-

cellor happened to be asleep. The preacher repeated his text in an emphatic manner at the end of every division of his discourse, the unfortunate Vice Chancellor as often awoke, and this happened so often that at last all present could very well see the joke. The Vice Chancellor was so nettled at the disturbance he had met with, and the talk it occasioned, that he complained to the Archbishop of Canterbury, who immediately sent for the young clergyman, to reprove him for what he had done. In the course of the conference which ensued between the archbishop and the preacher, the latter gave so many proofs of his wit and good sense, that his grace procured him the honor of preaching before the king. Here also he had his joke. He gave out his text in these words, "James the First and Sixth, 'Waver not;'" which, of course, everybody present saw to be a stroke at the indecisive character of the monarch. James, equally quick-sighted, exclaimed, "He is at me already." But he was, upon the whole, so well pleased with this clerical wag as to make him one of his chaplains in ordinary. He afterwards went to Oxford, and preached a farewell sermon on the text, "Sleep on now, and take your rest."

The sin of sleeping during service time is of no modern date. In Henry Seventh's chapel, Westminster Abbey, there are ingeniously contrived chairs, for preventing the drowsy monks indulging a nap. These chairs are pleasant enough if you preserve your balance, but if you should become oblivious, you suddenly find yourself on the middle of the floor.

A minister of the "Kirk" of Scotland, once discovered his wife asleep in the midst of his homily on the Sabbath. So, pausing in the steady, and possibly somewhat monotonous flow of his oratory, he broke forth with this personal address, sharp and clear, but very deliberate:

"Susan!"

Susan opened her eyes and ears in a twinkling, as did all other dreamers in the house, whether asleep or awake.

"Susan, I didna marry ye for your beauty, sin' ye had' none! And I didna marry ye for your beauty, that the hail congregation can see. And if ye have no grace, I have made but a sair bargain!"

A clergyman of Cambridge, Mass., was once in a singular dilemma, according to his own showing: he told his people that if he spoke softly, those at the end of the church would not be able to hear him, and if loud those near the pulpit would awake! We have heard of a worse disaster which befell a certain deacon. He fell asleep, and, as is usual in such cases, made repeated inclinations of his head; when suddenly it rebounded back with such force as to throw his wig into the pew behind him. In his consternation, vainly seeking for his vagrant wig, where it could not be found—in his own paw—he covered his bald pate with his red silk handkerchief, to the great scandal of the congregation and his own greater dismay.

A celebrated clergyman once told his parishioners he should reserve the best efforts of his mind for rainy days—the worse the weather, the better should be his sermons—and he kept his word. The consequence naturally was, that his church was never so well filled as in wet weather, and the harder the rain poured down the more the people flocked in, until it finally became his practice to include in his prayers, rainy Sundays!

Dean Swift has the following pointed remarks about absentees from church. "There is no excuse so trivial that will not pass upon some men's consciences, to excuse their attendance at the public worship of God. Some are so unfortunate as to be always indisposed on the Lord's day, and think nothing so unwholesome as the air of a church. Others have their affairs so oddly contrived as to be always unluckily prevented by business. With some it is a great mark of wit and deep understanding to stay at home on Sabbath. Others again discover strange fits of laziness, which seize them particularly on that day, and confine them to their beds. Others are absent out of mere contempt for religion. And, lastly, there are not a few who look upon it as a day of rest; therefore claim the privilege of their cattle, to keep the Sabbath by eating, drinking, and sleeping after the toil and labor of the week.

The celebrated Robert Hall once visited London, for the purpose of hearing Dr. John W. Mason, of New York, deliver a discourse before the London Missionary Society. The extraordinary effect which the masterly address of Mason had produced, was the theme, for the time, of general observation, and Mr. Hall was among the most enthusiastic of its admirers. Shortly after his return to Leicester, a certain reverend gentleman made him an accidental visit, when Mr. Hall requested him to officiate in his pulpit that evening, assigning, as a reason, that he had just returned from London, oppressed with a sense of the wonderful eloquence of Dr. Mason of New York. The visitor affected a great desire to be excused preaching before so distinguished a scholar as Mr. Hall. The latter, however, would take no denial, insisting, that if he would not preach, his people would have no sermon that evening. Our clerical friend, who is described as "a little pompous personage, as round as a sugar barrel—a man of great verbosity, and paucity of thought," at length overcame his scruples, and ascended the pulpit. At the close of the services, Mr. Hall, with great warmth of feeling, thanked him heartily for his discourse; which, he said, had given him more comfort than any sermon he had ever heard in his life. This assertion inflamed the vanity of the one, and superinduced the sarcasm of the other. The former, with ill-concealed eagerness, urged Mr. Hall to state what there was in the effort that afforded him so much pleasure. He replied, "Sir, I have just returned from hearing that great man, Dr. Mason, of New York. Why, Sir, he is my very beau ideal of a minister; he reminds me more strongly than any other of our day, of what one might suppose the Apostle Paul to have been. Such profound thought, such majesty of diction, and such brilliancy of illustration, I have never heard equalled; and it left me with such an overpowering conviction of my own insignificance, that I had resolved never to enter the pulpit again;" and rising up, he energetically exclaimed, "But thank God, I have heard you, Sir, and I feel myself a man again!"

A certain novice once called upon Mr. Hall, to solicit his advice upon what he considered a very important matter; to wit, his supposed call to the ministry. This gentleman stated that he was impressed with the idea that it was his duty to obey that call, but that as yet he could see "no door open." "No matter for that, Sir," said Mr. Hall, "if the Lord has called you, he will open a door." "But, Sir, there is one passage of Scripture which causes me much trouble." "Well, Sir, what is it?" was the reply. "It refers to the hiding of a talent in a napkin." "Oh! my good fellow," said Mr. Hall, "don't let that give you any concern, this little handkerchief of mine (pulling out his own), would cover a score of such talents as yours."

It must not, from the foregoing, be inferred that Mr. Hall was accustomed to indulge in such severe sarcasms, excepting when he saw the weakness of the man usurping the place of his sacred vocation.

Most sermons are short-lived enough, but we have heard of one of extraordinary longevity, and it is said it was eminently productive of good. We refer to a discourse by Dr. Griffin, of New York, which he repeated ninety times. He devoted great pains to it, and revised, and re-revised it with diligent care.

Some ministers are more forcible with their hands than their heads. It is reported of a clergyman in a county town, that he was a most powerful preacher, since he is known to have knocked to pieces four pulpit Bibles in less than two years.

The Rev. Hamilton Paul, a Scottish clergyman, is said to be a reviver of Dean Swift's walk of wit in the choice of texts. For example, when he left the town of Ayr, where he was understood to have been a great favorite with the fair sex, he preached his valedictory sermon from this passage, "and they all fell upon Paul's neck and kissed him." Another time when he was called on to preach before a military company, in green uniforms, he preached from the words, "and I beheld men like trees, walking." He once made serious proposals to a young lady whose Christian name was Lydia. On this occasion the clerical wit took for his text, "And a certain woman, named Lydia, heard us; whose heart the Lord opened, that she attended unto the things which were spoken of Paul." He published a volume of *faceties* under the title of "Paul's Epistle to the Ladies."

We have heard of a case no less extraordinary, which occurred some fifty years ago, in Virginia. An itinerant preacher being invited to hold forth in one of the early settlements there, took for his text the words "Though after my skin, worms destroy this body, yet in my flesh shall I see God." He divided his text into three parts, thus—"first, the skin worms; secondly, what they done; and thirdly, what the man saw after he was eaten up."

Some dreary expositors of the Gospel, possibly sent to challenge our patience, seem to be endowed with at least one faculty, that of dulling all its bright and beautiful truths; they see things "through a glass, darkly." Good George Herbert suggests thus charitably our forbearance with such; he says:

"Do not grudge
To pick out treasures from an earthen pot;
The worst speak something good. If all went sense,
God takes a text and preacheth patience."

This apology, even, can scarcely be admissible in cases like that last cited; they are, however, happily, of rare occurrence.

The clerk of a retired parish in Northwest Devon, who had to read the first lesson, always used to make a hash of Shadrach, Meshach, and Abednego; and as the names are twelve times repeated in the third chapter of Daniel, after getting through with them the first time, he afterwards styled them the "aforesaid gentlemen."

NUMBER SEVEN.

Every one knows with how many things—divine as well as human—the number seven is connected. It occurs in Sacred Scripture and ecclesiastical ordinances no less than in Asiatic superstitions; it is recognised in works of our illustrious Wykeham, and also in the Grecian architecture; it pervades the authentic history of nations as well as their fable and romance; and in Europe as well as in the East, a mysterious significance appears to belong to it.

To begin with a rough glance at the use of seven. Looking first, at its occurrence in the Scriptures, and in ordinances of the Catholic Church, we have the seven-fold gifts of the Holy Spirit; the seven sentences of our Lord, and the seven clauses of His prayer; the representation by St. John in his Apocalypse of the Wonderful Being who dwells in celestial grandeur, as walking in the midst of seven golden lamps, which are churches; we are warned against the seven deadly sins, and exhorted to the seven principal virtues and the seven works of mercy; to the traditional merit of this holy number the ordinance of seven sacraments has ever been attributed, and the articles of faith in relation to the Trinity were (in a synod held at York in fourteen hundred and sixty-six) arranged into seven, as were those relating to the nature of our Lord. The Church, moreover, recites the Seven Penitential Psalms, and observes the seven hours of offices of daily prayer. The schoolmen in the middle ages were fond of speculating on the mystical influence of the number seven—"the number of perfection," and of tracing its connection with most of the events set forth in sacred books, from the mighty works of creation recorded in Genesis, in which God was believed to have employed seven angels, down to the seven years' service of Jacob for his wives. "It is that number," says Leon Baptista Alberti, "in which the Almighty himself, the maker of all things, takes particular delight."

But to pass from things sublime to things sublimary. The ancient connection of the number seven with architecture might alone form the topic of a small essay. Solomon writes, "Wisdom hath built her house: she hath hewn out her seven pillars." And Gentiles as well as Jews seem to have had a community of ideas with respect to this number. It is found in the two most remarkable temples of Grecian antiquity, viz., the Cella of the Parthenon, which is supported by seven pillars on either side, and the colossal temple of Jupiter Olympus at Agrigentum, which is adorned with seven columns on the East and West, and fourteen on the sides. Wykeham, in the plans of his chapels at Winchester and Oxford, divided them longitudinally by seven. In other English architecture, older as well as later, the number seven constantly recurs, for example, in the cathedral churches of York, Durham, Lichfield, Exeter, and Bristol, the abbey church of Westminster, the churches of Romsey, Waltham, Buildwas, and St. Alban's (in the Norman part); at Castle Acre, and at St. George's, Windsor. It prevailed especially in France, as we may find in the cathedral churches of Paris, Amiens, Chartres, Evreux, &c.

Then, to turn from the substantial monuments of mediæval time to the fabulous theories of Aëtic speculation; we have the cycles of seven thousand years seen by the mysterious Persian bird, or griffin, Simurgh, who, according to Eastern romance, had lived to see the earth seven times filled with animated beings, and seven times a perfect void, and who predicted that the race of Adam would endure for seven thousand years, and then give place to beings of more perfect nature, with whom the earth would end. The Hindoo reverence the mysterious names of the seven worlds. Amongst this remarkable people, the Creator shines with seven rays; he is the Light and the effulgent Power, who is held to be manifest in the solar orb, and to pervade or illumine the seven worlds or abodes—the seven mansions of all created beings. The earth is held, in Hindoo belief, the first or lowest of these; then, there is the world of renewed existence, in