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A PROTEST AGAINST TOBACCO.

BY A. B.

It is said that the subjects of temperance and tobacco have long since been exhausted, and that now living examples of the benefits arising from the one, and of the opposite effects resulting from the other, are promoters of greater good than mere theorizing on either.

All of this may be and possibly is true; but if people will insist on walking straight through the highway of life with eyes and ears wide open, yet apparently hearing and seeing nothing, it does seem necessary to revive occasionally hackneyed arguments on such subjects, even though they be but the old and disregarded truths in a new garb.

I hope, therefore, I may be pardoned for reintroducing the well-worn subject. I insist that the use of tobacco is an entirely useless, filthy and inexcusable habit; deteriorating to mental, moral and physical advancement; rendering a man repugnant and disagreeable to those about him, and chaining himself down to a vile weed. For the use of tobacco is a habit which, once acquired, proves in great majority of cases life-long in its duration.

One striking proof that the plant was never designed for man's consumption, is the extreme difficulty with which he accustoms himself to its use. Nature summons all her forces to fight against its introduction; but all in vain. After making her voice as as audible and as sensibly felt as in her power to do, she gradually ceases the useless struggle, and the victim (he surely may be regarded in that light) rejoices at his triumph.

Truly, his perseverance deserved a better cause, but he is satisfied, yea, more than satisfied at his success; rolls the delicious morsel under his tongue, and, I suppose, really makes himself believe he is in a state of bliss.

Is it, therefore, to be supposed that an object attained under so many difficulties is going to be laid aside for any trifling reason? By no means. So the boy of sixteen goes through life chewing and spitting and smoking and puffing until he is compelled to lay down pipe, cigar, and tobacco-box, when it comes his turn to be called the way of all living.

I sometimes wonder, and I say it with all due reverence, if some men will be perfectly happy in the other world when deprived of the sweet luxury, as they surely will be, for we are told that order is heaven's first law, and the presence of tobacco-users would be in direct and violent opposition to this. However, we will leave things of the future alone, for surely "sufficient to the day is the evil thereof."

As an example of what we, of the petticoat order, have to submit to, notice that lady with immaculate skirts, a perfect pink of neatness from the tip of the pretty spring bonnet to the faultlessly fitting little boot, which peeps so coquettishly from beneath her skirts. She is just entering a street car which contains a number of passengers, but plenty of sitting-room. She looks from one vacant place to another. A seat to be sure, she may have, but right where her petticoats must come is a puddle of tobacco juice. She glances from that place to another, ditto still; still another, ditto still; so there being no other alternative, with a sigh she ensconses herself in the vacant place with feelings of disgust and uneasiness at the filth beneath her. Such occurrences take place hundreds of times in a day, and frequently still more aggravated ones than the above, where a lady is compelled to sit opposite or beside some one who is making himself obnoxious as possible by chewing and spitting and spitting and chewing, befouling the air as well as the car. The use of tobacco in any form in a street car should be prohibited. Smoking has been, and chewing should be without delay.

Street cars are by no means the only place where tobacco is made an extreme annoyance. It is hardly possible to walk a square, on a crowded street, without being choked and stifled by cigar smoke, or otherwise made uncomfortable by the contact of skirts with sundry puddles, which furnish striking proof of the expectorating propensities of the young man of the period.

By the reports of distinguished medical men it has been proved that the incessant use of tobacco, in a large number of cases, produces the most injurious effects upon the brain, resulting sometimes in an incurable malady. A distinguished writer has made use of the following strong expression, which, though somewhat exaggerated, perhaps, contains a good lesson: "Tobacco and drink are twin demons, for though the evil effects of the former are more subtile and imperceptible than those of the latter, yet, when carried to excess, the results are much the same."

Moreover, the mere expense, considered apart from more weighty reasons, is enormous. Millions of dollars are expended annually upon it. Did I not, unfortunately, possess a natural abhorrence for statistics, I might bring unmistakable figures to corroborate this statement. But they are not needed. Look at the large number of tobacco establishments to be found everywhere, from the most pretentious wholesale firms to the smallest retail shops, where "a specialty is made of choice chewing brands and the finest Havanas," and I venture to declare that there is not a commodity in market that is more liberally patronized, except, perhaps, whisky. Recent reports show that the demand is increasing instead of diminishing, which is undoubtedly the case; for now-a-days, as soon as a boy becomes old enough to take notice of the example of those about him, he immediately is of the opinion that he will have attained a long step toward manhood by forming the habit of using tobacco in as many different ways as possible, which he accordingly does.

Oh! how much I wish that some one with the fiery eloquence of Demosthenes, would gather all the boys in Christendom in one place and address them on this subject, inspire them with contempt for the disgusting habit, and adjure them to spurn it as low, degrading, vile. With the exception of man, not a creature in all the animal creation but has a peculiar aversion to it. The great, awkward, clumsy, good-natured elephant, tame and peaceable as a lamb under ordinary circumstances, becomes infuriated and unmanageable if the smallest portion of tobacco be offered to him; and, stupid as the animal appears, he will remember for years the person who once affronted him, and revenge himself if opportunity presents. Thus, it appears that man, "the noblest work of God," lowers himself voluntarily beneath the brute.

But, some may say, the plant which you so severely denounced is highly beneficial in some diseases. Undoubtedly; that was what it was made for. We are taught from Scripture that, after the creation, "God saw everything that he had made, and, behold it was very good." He probably designed tobacco for medicinal purposes, not as an instrument through which His crowning work, man, was to render himself a fountain of filth.

I suppose it would be better if I were to stop now, but I can not resist the temptation of alluding to the manner in which some men openly display their *penchant* for the weed by "taking a chew" in the presence of ladies, actually appearing proud of the very ungallant action. I hope and trust that this class is limited to very few, for such conduct is a flagrant and inexcusable act of ill-manners, which it seems almost impossible could be committed by a person who respects himself, or who wishes to be considered a respectable and gentlemanly member of society.

In conclusion, I would remark, for the comfort and consolation of those unfortunates with whom the use of tobacco has become a fixed habit, that in one place between the lids of the Bible they may find themselves upheld by the inspired writer. This portion may be found in Revelation, twenty-second chapter and the second clause of the eleventh verse—"He that is filthy, let him be filthy still."

Sermon by Rev. Myron W. Reed, of the Prytania Street Church, Sunday, February 25, 1872.

Jesus said unto him, If thou canst believe, all things are possible to him that believeth. And straightway the father of the child cried out, and said, with tears, Lord, I believe; help Thou mine unbelief.—Mark ix, 23 and 24.

Christ never did a miracle for its own sake. He was no traveling wonder worker, giving exhibitions of power. He was not satisfied with the amusement of men. He did miracles that men might believe on Him, or because men believed on Him. The belief was the thing. It is the worthy cause or the worthy effect of the mighty works The world is to be saved by its convictions. How does it affect you to listen to the doubts of another? You have enough doubts of your own. What you want is a belief.

Every child has a gift of enthusiasm, but the years wear it away. He listens to the cynical remarks of those that are wiser and sadder than he is, and loses his tone in theirs. He gathers the doubts of the neighborhood into his little breast, and they make an infidel of him, cool the heat that was in his heart, make him ashamed to say the prayer his mother taught him; make a frigid little fool of him. He would prefer being shot at to being laughed at. How easy it is to sneer at Fulton or Columbus, Paul or Christ. They could not be disheartened; but most men can, and most men are. All that is fine in us seems to be at the mercy of a scoff. Ulysses has to tie himself to a mast in order to keep his purpose and go on his journey. If he should land and listen to the charmers they would persuade him that his purpose was a folly. This unbelief is the fall of man. "Ye shall not surely die," says the serpent, and the wicked doubt of God's word does the business of ruin for the first man and the latest.

Let a doubt come in, and where is your energy? Can you sail with a mutinous crew toward a shore you have not seen, unless you believe in that shore? Can an infidel plant an acorn or plow a field or strive to enter into the straight gate?

The world was dying of doubt when Christ came into it. The doctrine of the Sadducee was become the pitiful thing not to believe in the resurrection or in anything else. Having given up eternity, he did not believe much in time. The significance of life had died out within him, and the prophecy of the soul was hushed as the speech of a silly child.

Not believing in anything of value in himself, what could he believe in his neighbor?

The power of Christ is in his affirming something. He taught not as a Scribe, asking if this or that on probable and balancing arguments, but with quiet, self-assured assertion.

He stood in a world of fugitive philosophies, chasing one another, going out like a fashion, and said, "My sayings shall not pass away."

He said such things as "Blessed are they that mourn," without any preface, and giving no reason that could be seen.

The Sermon on the Mount is one affirmation after another. No "perhaps" or "if" to weaken or to make the mind of the listener cautious.

Christ is a builder. The temple of truth is built of assertions. While other teachers are ridiculing one another, while the Sadducee is making a cartoon of the Pharisee, who devours widows' houses and prays at the corner of the street: while men are pointing out the defects in their neighbors' houses and seeking to find other men as meanly sheltered as they are themselves, Christ builds. Other foundations can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

Upon that the Disciples go on to build. Paul does not rail at the poverty and powerlessness of the gods of Athens, but declares the true God. They have doubts enough in Corinth, so he packs his letter to that city with convictions. Any man can quench the dying belief that is begging to smoke, but what the word needs is flame. The embers need raking together and blowing upon. Nothing is possible to him who doubts. The double-minded Reuben is unstable as water; he shall not excel.

Hamlet makes himself sick with discussion and vain questioning of a plain duty. He envelopes it in a cloud of doubt, and then, because he can not see it distinctly, delays action, and thinks of suicide. "All things are possible to him that believeth," says Christ. Faith is *the* word of the New Testament. Everything hangs upon it—health to the sick, forgiveness of sins, the life that now is, and the resurrection from the dead.

All the heroes of the world, in thought or action, are heroes of belief. They had an immense faith. Wagner was content to "write the music of the future." Kepler thought that if God had waited patiently six thousand years for Kepler to observe and declare his truth, Kepler could wait for the world to accept it. Some belief has the assurance of knowledge. Mahomet, and Cromwell, and Charles XII had a conviction that sent them direct to their result. Their bow turned not back; the arrow was not shot at a venture. When men could not see what they aimed at, they could not show it to them. They believed that it was there.

Why, then, should any man be an infidel? Why should he enfeeble himself? Why should he break the connection between his head and his hand, and being disobedient to the heavenly vision, wander in darkness forever.

Suppose Paul, going into Damascus, should sit down there, and reason away the miracle of his conversion—call it sunstroke, begin to question whether he heard a voice. I say nothing about what he would fail to reach in eternity, but let his belief in the divine word go out of him, and where is St. Paul? Where is that wonderful life on the earth? Can that be a fancy which will lift a man into true immortality? Did you ever hear of so beneficent, so gracious a delusion, a lie? By their fruits ye shall know them. This belief makes men of whom the world is not worthy. It is the foundation of all courage, all success. Does the world delight to honor a faithless, cowardly soul? Any conviction that is dearer to a man than his life lifts the man above death. The people, in spite of themselves, honor him. They may detest what he believes; they are drawn to him because he believes.

The company of Virginia infantry that had marched to guard the prison of John Brown ask leave to pay their respects to the prisoner. There is no fascination about the man who has to handle and weigh an idea before he can have faith in it. When Christ is accepted, and a man lives by faith, we see what it does for him now in this life. Belief has demonstrated its power over and over again. Contrast any pilgrim with any prisoner in Doubting Castle. Why, then, should a man reject Christ and his words? And if he must do this for himself, why should he labor that others should do the same? Of what spirit is that man who would take away faith? If a man destroys my belief in whatever he thinks unworthy, let him give me something better. He does not like the timber of which the trestle-work which holds up the vine is made. Shall he then break it down, and leave the vine along the ground? Has the unbeliever in Christ any other savior to offer? If not, let him be satisfied with his own ruin. If a man will not leave the wreck and step into the boat, that is his loss; but if he tries to scuttle the boat, that is his crime. Who can measure the villainy of publishing an infidel book? Where does the motive come from that impels any man to seek to lessen the authority of the Bible or of the conscience? It is from the devil, on the face of it. I have what I believe to be the Gospel—good and sufficient views of the meaning and destiny of human life. Why should any one try to take this away? It concerns them as much as it does me; they need it as much. We must all in some way cross the stream. By what name shall I call him who seeks to break down what I believe to be a safe and sure bridge? He who rejects Christ does all he can to pry out the cornerstone of the house of the whole human family. We all live together. Unbelief is a vacuum. There is no breath of life in it. Here are heaven and hell, a lost race and a Saviour. Is it evidence of liberality to make an argument that there is no Saviour, and thereby make hell a personal necessity for every sinning soul? If any one wishes to take away my faith, let him give me that which is better—knowledge. If he will not do that, then some other faith—something that will make better men than Christianity. Let him place something in stead of that which he would destroy. If he will not do this he is a thief and a robber. He steals the pilgrim's staff. In the Valley of the Shadow of Death he puts out the light. He leaves us

"To sit unmoved upon our burial sod,
And know not whence we come or whose we be,
Comfortless mourners for the mount of God,
The rocks of Calvary."

If their belief is so strict a necessity of being and doing, how is it that the word doctrine has such an unpopular sound? The man who is all at sea in a wide washy waste of creedlessness calls him a "liberal Christian." If it is good to believe, is it not well to know what you believe, and be able to state this? Can Columbus get ships or a crew if he has only a vague notion of a new world somewhere? Queen Isabella desires to know where this world of which he speaks is! The more definite his statement the better his cause. He needs himself to know. Suppose Columbus sails with a sincere belief that the land he seeks is in the Artic Circle, because he is honest will the land go up there to meet him? Is it not essential that a man believe, and that he believe the truth? It seems so. I think we have heard enough of praise, of vagueness in theology, and of condemnation of its opposite. But it is said, take the whole Bible. Very well. But when the man has read it, and is asked what he believes, his statement will be his creed. Of course it is narrow. The human mind is narrow—is wider than what it contains; but let us not rail at the size of our cup. If it holds the water of life, and enough for our thirst, why complain of littleness. If the thirsty man by the mighty river can take up enough in the hollow of his hand, it is enough. All Israel needs is a path through the sea. We might as well call the man who breathes, narrow, because his lungs do not exhaust the atmosphere that circles the world. It is the quality that is of consequence. What that quality is we ought to know, and we can know. We can not find out the Almighty to perfection, but we can begin to find him out. We can know what is divine, and we must. The Hindoo is sincere, and the Mormon. They give their lives in evidence of it. They believe. It is what they believe that is the wretched thing. It does make a difference to the child whether it is cast into the Ganges or saved alive in a Christian home.

Let us hear Paul on this subject—of doctrine:

"For other foundation can no man lay than that is laid, which is Jesus Christ.

"Now, it any man build upon this foundation gold, silver, precious stones, wood, hay or stubble, every man's work shall be made manifest, because it shall be revealed by fire, and the fire shall try every man's work of what sort it is. If any man's work abide which he hath built thereupon, he shall receive a reward. If any man's work shall be burned he shall suffer loss, but he himself shall be saved, yet so as by fire."

It seems to make a difference what we build, even upon the rock.

The builder upon the right foundation must be more than sincere, or he will lose his work. It makes a difference what doctrine he draws from the life and death of Christ. A man may believe in Christ, and then build of stubble, or of gold.

It does make a difference which he chooses. The men of Chicago have discovered that there is something to be considered beside a good foundation. The toil of thirty years was swept away in a night. The day declared it smoke and ashes. The man was saved himself, "yet as one escaping through fire." He was saved, and his foundation—nothing else; no reward. On the principles of Christianity have been erected many systems, many doctrines; "on the one foundation many churches have arisen." These words of Paul refer to the people that are gathered into these churches, and generally to the churches themselves—to the whole superstructure that is erected on the foundations of Christ. The workman is saved if he is sincere, but his work is subjected to a more rigorous test; that must be true. The error of doctrine in the good man's creed is not accepted for his sake. The truth does not shift and change to suit diverse Christians. Nothing shall endure but what is true.

If any church has any fiction in it—if there is anything out of proportion in it: if it exaggerates one saying of Christ at the expense of others, whatever of error there is will be burned up. Therefore, it is of importance even to the Christian what he believes. He is not to nod assent to a creed at random, indifferent whether he is in a Roman cathedral or Quaker meeting-house. All filagre work and overhanging upholstery—all superadded forms and traditions of men—will burn. A bad man may teach the truth; it will save men. A good man may teach error, and it will lead men astray; his work is worse than lost. The perfect man is he who is sincere, and whose work is true. He is saved and his building.

To become an architect requires more than willingness; there are rules. A leaning wall will not stand, though a saint should build it. How is it, then, that we hear so much of the deadness and dryness of doctrines, and at the same time so much praise of practical Christianity?

Can a man practice anything that he does not know? He can not lift his hand except he does it according to rule; neither his heart, I think. Vague thinking makes vague living. Belief to remain belief must be positive—let the anchor hold somewhere.

It does not seem to me that the head is to be idle in religion. We use it in everything else in which we succeed. We use it in the culture of the soil, why not in culture of the soul? The attacks on Christianity come from the intellect—they must be met by the intellect. Emotion will not answer an argument against the inspiration of the scriptures, the divinity of Christ, the depravity of man. Even if emotion could answer, how is that to be fed? What stirs the heart like a good thought? The truth is sword and shield. "Ye shall know the truth, and it shall make you free." Fervor is a good quality, but what makes fervor? If the Christian is to depend on the sympathy of numbers, what will he do when he is alone? It is the sight of the reality of things that must keep us in our belief.

The old dry, jagged doctrines are the iron in the blood of Christian life. When a Christian begins to live carelessly it is a sign that he has been living thoughtlessly. Does a revival of religion in the heart of the individual depend on his presence in a mass meeting of Christians. If so, where did John the Baptist get his fervor? He came from the desert, where no man was. He had been alone; he had been thinking of life and eternity, the sovereignty of God, the promise of the Messiah, the need of man's repentance. These great thoughts fed the burning and shining light.

We want more doctrine, and not less. We want it well defined, clear cut, arranged ready for our use. It is the bread of life. It may be dry in the catechism, but worked up into life it is light and heat and motion. It is this that accounts for Paul and Luther and John Knox and all earnest men. They said let God be true, and every man a liar. They meditated. David says: "I was dumb with silence; I held my peace. While I was musing the fire burned. Then spoke I with my tongue." He went out in the night, and considered the heavens—not simply glanced at the sky, but considered it, and then came in, and sat down, and wrote a psalm.

In conclusion, consider the faith of the man in the text. He believed certain things—his own helplessness. He had thought upon that until he was certain. It was a definite fact. He believed in Christ as a definite power. It was not knowledge; only belief enough to make a trial. His prayer was that Christ would cast out the devil from his son and the doubts from himself.

"Lord I believe, help thou mine unbelief" is a good prayer. Faith is the gift of God; it is to be prayed for; we are to pray to be taught to pray. We are to pray for power to believe; believe and pray to believe more, and so go from one grace of believing to conviction, and from strength to strength. Power to believe the doctrine is power to do the will and to know the doctrine. All things are possible to him that believeth. It is safe near the shore, but there you can toil all night and catch nothing. The word of Christ to his disciples is "Launch out into the deep."

The Compilation of the Books of the Old Testament.

Beginning with the oldest books, and considering these a nucleus, it will be interesting to examine the Old Testament canon as book after book was added, until we shall arrive at the time when the Scriptures were complete as we now have them.

This we shall find no easy task. At nearly every step we shall be met with differences of opinion by men equally honest and devoted to Christ. But, fortunately, on matters necessary to the integrity of the sacred word, as a rule, there is unity of judgment. As far as my time would permit, I have gone over the ground, and where there has been a difference of judgment, I have adopted what to me seemed the most reasonable view—not, of course, pretending but that further study might in some cases change my view. In the main, however, there need be no doubt as to certainty. God having given his word to man, has not failed to preserve it.

Modern critics now generally accept the view that Job is the oldest book in the Bible. According to the Ussenau or Bible chronology, which we will follow, it was written in the year 1520 B. C., or a few years before the exodous of the Israelites from Egypt. It is more than probable that it was written before the time of Abraham. If this be so, then the people of the world have in all ages among some people had a clear revelation of God's character. Job lived in the land of Uz, a country probably located in Arabia Petrae. He wrote in Arabic, and his book, in some unknown manner, fell into the hands of Moses, and by him was translanted into the Hebrew and preserved with the sacred book he wrote.

The books that rank next in age are those compiled and written by Moses, and are Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers and Deuteronomy. Exactly when each was written we do not know. Moses died 1451 years before Christ, and most of what he wrote must have been written as it was divinely given to him while leading the children of Israel in the wilderness. Portions of the first books of Genesis indicate that a part of that book was compiled from other and older documents or records. This has led some to believe that Genesis was mostly written before the Exodus. Exodus, Leviticus and Numbers must have been written as the events transpired, or else records kept of the events, and then afterward systematically arranged. The book of Deuteronomy, which literally means the second law, must have been written toward the close of the wilderness bondage, or at it. From Deuteronomy, i. 5, we learn that Moses began to write it in the plains of Moab.

From Deut., xxxi. 24-26, we learn that when Moses had made an end of writing the words of the law until it was finished, he commanded the Levites to place it in the side of the ark, that it might be a witness against them. In the side of the ark of the covenant, then, is the first definite place where we find any portion of God's words placed for preservation.

The children of Israel entered and settled Canaan under Joshua, the successor of Moses. The records of these events, which probably occupied seventeen years, were kept by Joshua, and by him arranged, with whatever of revelations God made to his people during that time, and, according to Joshua, xxiv. 26, by him written in the book of the law of God.

After Joshua, followed the period of the Judges, which lasted about 500 years. The Judges ruled for life, but their authority was not hereditary. They were the defenders of the divine law; the avengers of crimes, especially that of idolatry, which was treason against Jehovah. The book of Judges gives the account of their reign; it was probably written by Samuel, who was the last Judge. The book of Judges gives the history of all the Judges except Eli and Samuel. The book may not have been written until during the reign of Saul. The book of Ruth is considered an appendix to the book of Judges; most probably written by Samuel. It relates with equal beauty and simplicity the history of a Moabitish damsel who renounced idolatry, and by marriage was ingrafted among the Israelites; it has always been considered a part of the Scriptures. David descended from Ruth, and her adoption (she being a converted heathen) was a pre-intimation that the Gentiles were to be admitted into the church. The book also gives an instance of how God rewards the righteous. The pious Ruth was raised from a state of deepest adversity to that of highest prosperity.

Under Samuel the children of Israel desired a king, and although protested against by God, still He granted their request, and Saul was made king. Samuel was the prophet and priest under whom the change of government was made.

I. and II. Samuel give an account of the judgeships of Eli and Samuel, and of the reigns of Saul and David—a period of about 129 years. In the Jewish Scriptures the two books were considered one. The first twenty-four chapters of I. Samuel were written by Samuel. They carry events to the time of his death. The remainder was written, it is supposed, by Gad and Nathan, who lived in the reigns of David and Solomon. It was customary for prophets to write histories of their times. As David was the author of most of the Psalms, they were mostly therefore written during this period, but, as they were not compiled in their present form until much later, we will pass them until we reach that period.

It will be noticed that the books already enumerated are not simple histories. They contain divine precepts, prophecies, and general instructions. As they were written, we learn, from I. Samuel, x. 25, they were "laid up before the Lord;" that is, deposited with the former books by the ark.

We have now reached the reign of Solomon, during which Israel rose to the greatest power. Solomon wrote three books—Songs of Solomon, Proverbs and Ecclesiastics. These were probably added by him to the sacred list, under divine inspiration. Solomon built the Temple, and in it the sacred writings were deposited and sacredly guarded. From this collection of autograph copies careful copies were made for the use of the Scribes in instructing the people. In the seventeenth chapter of Chronicles we find Jehosaphat, a hundred years after the building of the Temple (912), sent out Scribes with the book of the law throughout all the cities of Judah to teach the people. Isaiah, two hundred years later (713), urges the people to seek out the book of the Lord and read. And also, still a hundred years later (624), in the reign of Josiah, "Kilkiah, the high priest," said unto Shaphan, the Scribe, "I have found the book of the law in the House of the Lord." And in the parallel place in Chronicles this is called the book of the law of the Lord by Moses. So there is little doubt but that this was the original copy of the law written over eight hundred years before, and preserved first with the ark in the Tabernacle and then in the Temple.

After the time of Solomon there arose a series of prophets, whose writings enriched the sacred collection. The first was Jonah, who was God's special messenger to the Ninevites. Next, following in quick succession, and probably contemporary with each other, Joel, Amor, Hosea and Isaiah, each with a divine message to the people of God. About the same time Micah wrote his prophecy. Then followed Nahum, commissioned to announce the final and complete ruin of Neneveh. Next came Zephaniah, "the son of Cushi," who prophecied, about the eighteenth year of Josiah's reign, before he had reformed the corruptions of his kingdom. The wickedness of Judah and the Babylonish captivity were foretold.

As we now approach the period of captivity, as it is called, it may be well in a word to explain it. The ten tribes that revolted after Solomon, were already captives in Assyria and their nationalty gone. Judah yet remained a kingdom, but it, too, was to go into captivity. This began in the year 606, when Nebuchadnezzar, King of Babylon, invaded Judah. One invasion and deportation of Israelites followed another until in the year 588 B. C., the Temple was destroyed, and all the people of God except a few of the poor classes were carried into captivity beyond the Euphrates. Daniel was among the first captives. Ezekiel also was a captive. This captivity lasted seventy years. Several of the books of the Bible were written near and during this period. Jeremiah began to prophecy before this sad event, and continued to write until after the destruction of Jerusalem. His prophecies cover a period of forty-two years, and are found in the book of Jeremiah. He also wrote Lamentations, in which he mourns the destruction of Jerusalem. Habakuk and Obadiah wrote at the same time, each dwelling on some divine dispensation. Daniel wrote his book in captivity. So, too, did Ezekiel.

It was during this period that probably Jeremiah completed and wrote the books of Kings, in which the history of the Israelites is brought down from the time of David to the captivity.

How were the sacred writings preserved during this period? All the prophecies written before the destruction of the Temple were deposited in it, and some claim the autograph copies were destroyed. However, there is no proof of this, and there are some indications that they were not. One thing is certain—that copies of the Scriptures were preserved during the captivity. It must be remembered that there were probably many copies of the sacred books among the people, and that even if the original copies were destroyed, these would remain. At any rate, Daniel (ix. 11-13) quotes from the law of Moses, and also expressly mentions the prophecies of Jeremiah (ix. 2), which he could not have done had he not seen them. Jeremiah labored with God's people who remained in the Holy Land, and Ezekiel labored with those in captivity, each seeking to keep the people true to God. Places of worship were established (Ezekiel xxix.) in Chaldea. Here, perhaps, we have the beginning, or, at least, fullest development thus far of the system of Jewish synagogues, by which the people worshipped in many places. It is but reasonable to suppose that in these places certified copies of the Scriptures were kept and read. We read in Ezra that when the Temple was rebuilt in the sixth year of Darius' reign the Jewish worship was fully restored as it is written in the law of Moses. And what is still more conclusive, when the people requested Ezra (Acts, viii. 1), after their return from Babylon, to produce the law of Moses, they asked that he should bring forth the law of Moses as the Lord had commanded to Israel. So we have positive evidence that the sacred books were preserved during the captivity.

After the captivity came the period of restoration when a portion of the Jews returned to Palestineand rebuilt Jerusalem, the Temple and restored the Jewish worship as in former times. This period comprises 139 years, and extends to the time when the last book of the Old Testament was written by Malachi. The period began with the decree of Cyrus, B. C. 536, permitting the Jews from any part of Babylonia to return to their native country. At first 50,000 went under Prince Zerubbabel and the High Priest Joshua. Fifty-eight years afterward (458) a second colony went up under Ezra, and thirteen years later still another under Nehemiah. Nehemiah completed his work of reformation, which only carried out what was begun by Ezra, B. C. 428, and the final prophecy of the Old Testament was made B. C. 397.

During this period of the restoration the remaining books of the Old Testament were written, and the work of compiling them all nearly or quite finished.

Haggai and Zachariah prophecied during this building of the Temple under der Zerubbabel. The work was to encourage the people. Malachi prophecied after the restoration of the Jewish polity was complete, and made the final prediction of the coming Messiah. His words were like these: "Unto you that fear my name shall the sun of righteousness arise with healing in his wings."

The other books written or compiled during this period are Esther, Ezra, I. and II. Chronicles, Psalms and Nehemiah. One peculiarity of this book of Esther is that it has not the name of God in it. This may be accounted for on the supposition that it was probably extracted from the records of the Persians.

Ezra, written by the great reformer of that name, gives the history of the return of the Jews and of his journey to Jerusalem. I. and II. Chronicles were compiled by Ezra, and include "things omitted" in the histories of the two books of Samuel and Kings. The book of Psalms, although mostly written by David, was, as a book, probably completed by Ezra, who, it is quite certain, compiled it from other and smaller collections. Nehemiah takes up the Jewish history about twelve years after Ezra leaves it, and gives an account of the improvements of the city and of reformations carried on by Nehemiah, recorded by himself.

We have now canvassed the entire Old Testament and marked the starting point of each book, and seen how each and all were preserved up to the time of Ezra. A most important question here arises. Who arranged these books in their present form, and gave them forth as one book to the people as the Word of God?

Popular belief has assigned this important work to Ezra and his associates as a part of their work in organizing the Jewish Church. This is the opinion now generally accepted. It could not have been done later than the restoration period, for then ceased the spirit of prophecy among men until John, Christ's forerunner.

It is equally true that the necessity for such a work existed in that period. The work of completing the compilation was a great one. The divine authority of each book had to be tested. Certain additions had to be made to complete the record and unite all in one; as, for example, the death of Moses and of other writers. The compiling of the books of Chronicles and Psalms was probably a part of the work.

Judging from a remark made by Nehemiah, viii. 13, it is evident that Ezra had associated with him a company of inspired men, who interpreted the law. Haggai, Zachariah, and, probably, Malachi, were among the number. The great bulk of the work was completed under Ezra, who, among the Jews, is esteemed next to Moses, and is said to have lived 120 years. Nehemiah, according to II. Macchabe, ii. 13, "founded a library and gathered together Acts of the Kings, and of the Prophets, and of David, and the Epistles of the Kings concerning the holy gifts." Thus, it is evident, Nehemiah carried forward the work, either as directed or after Ezra. Here the law is not mentioned, so that it at least must have received its final mould under Ezra. After the work of Ezra and Nehemiah was complete, their own writing and those of Malachi were added by Simon the Just, who was the last of what the Jews call the "Great Synagogue."

Thus we have sketched the history of the compilation of the Old Testament—a work extending through over 1200 years.

We must guard against thinking, as infidel critics have suggested, that the Old Testament is simply a collection of relics of Hebrew history during this long period. Not so. In Ecclesiastics, xii. 11, we read "of making books there is no end, and much study is a weariness of the flesh." The Old Testament, therefore, is circumscribed in contents, having in it only such as inspired men wrote and believed necessary to develop the great plan of redemption to be completed in the days of Christ.

Those who are arranging their continental excursions for the ensuing summer, may like to learn that the Spanish and Portuguese railway companies are providing for a series of circular tours, for which a single ticket will become available.

AN IRISH POISONER;
OR, THE
MYSTERIOUS WARNING.

About six years ago a remarkable case was tried at the criminal sessions in the county of Cork, in Ireland.

The writer wishes to pledge himself at the outset to the literal authenticity of the narrative, which he heard from the lips of the late eminent Queen's counsel, George Bennett, at the time a junior in the Muster Court, and himself an eye-witness and attentive listener at the the trial.

On a fine summer evening, when the rustic hour of supper was approaching, there arrived at the door of a comfortably thatched cabin, of large dimensions, such as the class of persons known in Ireland as "strong farmers" usually inhabit, a stranger, dressed in the then peasant costume, corduroy shorts, frieze coat, caubeen and brogues, and with a black thorn stick in his hand. The wayfarer entered, with the usual salutation—"God save all here," and asked if this was not Dennis Macarthy's house. The women who were in the cabin told him it was, and invited him civilly to sit down and "take an air of the fire;" and with this invitation he complied, entertaining his new acquaintances the while with such news as he had collected while on his journey.

The man was dark featured, of middle stature, and of square and powerful build.

In a little while, Dennis Macarthy, returning from his fields, entered the cabin-door, and the stranger introduced himself as his cousin, Phil Ryan, from Cappaghmore, in the county of Limerick, and told him what brought him to that distant part of the world. His business was to say certain prayers according to Irish usage, over the grave of a common kinsman of both, who had died two or three weeks before, and was buried in the neighboring graveyard.

Macarthy received his cousin (although he had never seen his face before) with the customary cordiality of clanship, and told him he must sup and sleep in his house that night, and eat his breakfast there before setting out in the morning on his homeward journey.

To all this the stranger consented, and then, as he was unacquainted with the situation of the graveyard, he asked Macarthy, if it was not far off, to show him the way to it and point out the grave of their cousin.

Macarthy readily consented, and, as the potatoes were not quite boiled, it was agreed that they should set out at once, and return in time for supper.

In the south of Ireland, burial places, probably of remote antiquity, containing no vestige of a sacred building, rudely fenced with a loose stone wall, lichen stained, and often partly overgrown with ivy, with perhaps two or three hawthorns and an ancient ash-tree growing within them, are frequently to be met with. Possibly these small and solitary inclosures were dedicated to the same funeral uses long before the dawn of Christianity broke.

A wild and narrow track, perhaps as ancient as the place of sepultre itself, crossing at a short distance from Macarthy's cabin the comparatively modern road, leads over a little rising ground to the burial place, which lies in the lap of a lonely hollow seldom disturbed by the sound of human tread or voice, or rattle of car wheel.

Macarthy and the stranger walked up the ancient and silent by-road, until they reached the hollow I have mentioned. There, under the shadow of an old twisted thorn tree, a stile crosses the loose wall of the burial ground. At this stile they came to a pause.

"Go on," said Macarthy.

"Go you first," replied the stranger.

"Go first yourself," said the farmer, a little peremptorily, making a stand, he did not know why, upon the point of precedence.

"Arra, man, go on, can't ye, and don't be botherin'; what are ye afeared of?" insisted Ryan.

"Now, I'll tell you what it is; I don't understand you, nor what you're at, but divil a foot I'll go over the wall till you go over it first," said Macarthy, doggedly.

The man laughed and looked angry.

"To be sure I'll go over it first, it that'll please ye, and what does it matter who's first or who's last?" he answerod surlily, "but you's the biggest omadhoun I ever set eyes on."

And, speaking to this effect, he crossed the stile, followed by Macarthy, who pointed out the grave, and forthwith the stranger kneeled beside it, according to Irish custom, and began to tell his beads and say his prayers—an observance which usually lasts about a quarter of an hour.

When the prayers were ended, the farmer and Ryan, now quite good friends again, returned to the farmhouse, where the stranger had his supper with the family, and in the morning, after eating his breakfast, he took his leave and set out on his homeward journey.

Irish ideas about hospitality in the peasant ranks make it a matter of obligation upon the host to accompany his guest for a part of the way. Macarthy, in compliance with this courteous custom, set out with the stranger, and about a mile from the house they entered a little village, where he shook hands with his guest and bade him farewell.

But the visitor would not part without testifying his gratitude according to the custom of the country, by treating his kinsman to some drink, which he insisted on doing in the village public house, the door of which stood open close by them.

Macarthy accordingly went in with him. They sat down at a table, and the stranger, having ascertained what his companion liked best, ordered a pot of porter, making some excuse for not partaking himself.

When Macarthy raised the pewter pot to his lips, a sudden pain, which he afterward described more particularly, in the back of his neck, compelled him to put it down untasted.

The stranger urged him to drink, and, without explaining the cause of his hesitation, he a second time raised the vessel to his mouth. Precisely the same thing occurred again.

Once more the stranger expostulated, and pressed him more vehemently to drink; and again he tried it with exactly the same result.

"What ails ye? and why don't you drink your liquor? Don't you like it?" the stranger demanded.

"I don't like it," answered Macarthy, getting up, "and I don't like you, nor your ways, and, in God's name, I'll have nothing more, good or bad, to say to you."

"To the devil I pitch you and it," said the stranger, breaking into undisguised fury. At the same time, out of the open door, he flung the contents of the pewter pot upon the road.

Without another word, in this temper, the unknown cousin strode out of the door, and walked on his way, leaving the farmer in a state of perturbation and suspicion.

Happening to look into the pewter pot, which had contained the porter just thrown out, he saw a white sediment at the bottom of it. He and the publican put their heads together over it, but could make nothing of this deposit.

It so happened, however, that the physician was in attendance at the dispensary, only a few yards away, and to him they submitted the white powder that lay in the bottom of the measure. It proved to be arsenic.

The mud upon the road where the porter had fallen was examined, and some of the same deposit was found upon it.

Upon these facts and the short information sworn to by Macarthy, a neighboring magistrate at once issued his warrant, with which the police pursued the miscreant, who, without apprehension of his purpose having been discovered, was pursuing his journey quite at his ease. He was arrested, and duly committed to prison.

The animus and purpose of the heinous enterprise came afterward to light. The pretended cousin, whose real name was Mara, had been bribed to put Macarthy to death, by a person interested in the termination of a lease in which Macarthy was the last life.

The attempt to poison was only a resource in reserve. The primary plan, and that relied upon with good reason, was of a totally different kind. Upon the pretext I have mentioned, Macarthy was to have been induced to accompany Mara to the lonely graveyard, the position of which, and the stile by which it was entered, were familiar to him. He was to have allowed Macarthy to cross the stile first, and following him closely as he descended from the other side, he was from above to have dealt him, with his heavy loaded stick, such a blow upon the head as must have felled him to the ground, and, as he lay stunned in the graveyard, he would have easily dispatched him. The sounds of violence in that sequestered place no ear could have heard, and no human aid would have interfered to prevent the consummation of his atrocious purpose.

The women, who, in the large barn-like room, were attending to the preparations for supper at its further end, had caught nothing of the conversation of the two men who stood near the door. The effect of this might not very improbably have been, that no one would have known in what direction their walk had lain, or could have conjectured where the body of Macarthy, if he had been murdered, was concealed. It might have lain under the wall of that rude cemetery undiscovered until the next funeral brought people into its solitary inclosure.

At this point all turned upon the presentiment which had so mysteriously determined Macarthy, without any motive of which he was conscious, against going over the stile before him. Macarthy was too powerful a man to have been assailed on fair terms, with a reasonable chance of the intended assassin's success.

When the trial was over Mr. Bennett, my informant, who, though not in the case, and a very junior barrister at the time, had listened to the trial with deep interest, found an opportunity of speaking to the prosecutor and asking him some questions upon the most extraordinary point in the strange occurrence deposed to.

What passed was to the following effect:

"You state that you were prevented from drinking the porter by a pain in the back of your neck. Did that pain affect the back of your neck, and if not, to what part of your neck was it confined?"

"It was one spot only, close under the skull, on the backbone."

"Was it a severe pain?"

"The worst I ever felt."

"Had you ever the same pain before?"

"Never any pain like it before or since."

"Can you give any idea of what the pain was like?"

"It covered about the size of the top of a man's finger pressed hard against the neck, and it felt like a red-hot bullet."

"Did the pain last long?"

"It came whenever I raised the porter toward my mouth, and stopped as soon as I set the vessel down again; and I could not drink or hold the vessel up while it lasted."

Some persons will account upon natural, though complicated theories, for the mental and physical impressions they may suppose resulted in this sensation, and in the consequent escape of the persecuted Macarthy from a deep-laid scheme of murder. Others will see nearly insuperable difficulties in the way of such an explanation. It is, in any case, one of the most remarkable instances of justice satisfied and life saved by mysterious premonition that I have ever met with.

The hired assassin was convicted, and although his intention had been defeated, his crime was then, I believe, a capital one. The wretch who employed him was also, if I remember rightly, convicted and punished.

I relate this story with a very exact recollection of the terms in which it was told to me, and with a conscious anxiety to reproduce the narrative accurately. It is extraordinary enough, I think, to merit being rescued from oblivion.

Negro Slavery in Cuba in 1872.

[From the Baltimore American.]

Reaching the plantation after such feasts of beauty, the visitor sees many things soon enough which call his mind back from the enchanted region. Man's inhumanity to man is practically illustrated before his eyes, and, if American, he sees at once the great difference of slavery as it existed before the war in the South and here. You miss at once the nicely whitewashed little houses, with their verandas in front, standing in rows close to the master's dwelling; you miss the gay laughter and innocent merriment of those little black urchins tumbling about in the dust, looking at you with laughing eyes, very often intermingling in close intimacy with the master's children; and when you inquire here where the negro quarters are, they point out to you an uncovered space fenced in similar to the baracoons I have seen negroes confined in on the coast of Africa previous to their shipment to the West Indies or Brazil. When the hours of labor of slaves are past they are driven into these inclosures like so many cattle, the gates are closed on them and they are not allowed to pass out without special permission—watched during the night by armed white men and their savage bloodhounds. As for the children being allowed to play in idleness, your Spanish planter knows better. They are all put to work. If too young and weak to carry sugar cane, they must carry *bagazo*—ground cane, which is used for fuel here—to the sugar house; and if too young even to do this, they are employed turning the *bagazo* over while it is spread out to dry in the sun.

If ever I felt like committing a murder, it was when, stopping one of the little curly-headed blacks to speak to him and to give him a dime, the overseer came along and gave him a savage cut with a whip, telling him at the same time to go on with his work. Though the poor little fellow received the blow, I saw in the savage expression of the brute's face who committed the outrage that it was me he intended to hurt through the body of that poor negro boy. When showing us everything about the plantation, the proprietor, a wealthy Spaniard, stopped before the place his bloodhounds were kept in and pointed out a perfect specimen of its kind—large, powerful and tiger-like in his slow movements. He told us that to him that dog was worth more than his weight in gold; that once upon the trail of a negro, nothing but utter exhaustion or death could stop him; gifted with an instinct above common animals, and endowed with acute, keen senses, he invariably was successful in his search, no matter what devices the negroes took to hide or destroy their trail. The people are very hospitable, and do their utmost to make your stay pleasant and agreeable, and simply do not understand you when you express your sorrow for the hard life of the field hands. They are so accustomed to consider the negro but as some inferior animal that they think it nonsensical to express regret for his condition, and, indeed, the life the latter leads day after day soon causes everything that is human about him to disappear. Even the Chinese, with whose clean and neat appearance you are much pleased when you meet with him as a servant in the city, and who shows intelligence and brightness there, when sent on a plantation as a field hand, toiling day after day in a hot sun, under the cruel whip of a savage overseer, deteriorates rapidly, and in the course of a few years is no better than an animal, showing very often no more intelligence than a horse or a dog, caring only to get food and drink enough to appease his hunger and thirst, and sleep to recruit his exhausted body.

The latest case of absence of mind is related of a man a few miles out of Hallowell, Maine, who went to town with his team one afternoon recently, on business. During the afternoon a friend invited him to ride home with him, which he did, leaving his team hitched in the street. In the evening he went to his stable to care for his horse as usual, and the horse was not there. After some inquiry he recollected where he had left his team, and had the satisfaction of tramping back to Hallowell, where he found the poor brute where he had been left.

A *bonne bouche* in a way of a legacy is reported in the Western papers, which involves the comfortable sum of $8[illegible],000,000, that being the value of an estate vaguely announced as being situated in New York city, which has fallen to a lot of thirty-two heirs. The mere assertion of this extraordinary windfall would not in itself attach to the story the public credence, but when we learn—as we do from a Dubuque journal—of the experiences of a Rev. Joel Edwards, a clergyman of Iona, and one of the thirty-four heirs, incredulity must perforce hide its abashed head, and belief must triumphantly assume its vacated place. The fortunate Mr. Edwards, according to this authority, has already sold certain shares in his claim on the New York property, and has received therefor the following considerations: A house and lot, eighty acres of land, and $1000 in money. This speaks very well indeed for the financial abilities of the gentleman in question, and if he is wise he will keep on bargaining off his two birds in the bush for the single one in the "other feller's" hand.