ALONZO AMES MINER.

MEMORIAL ADDRESS.*

BY JOHN COLEMAN ADAMS, D. D.

It is hard to believe in the reality of this occasion. A great meeting in this church; a gathering representative of the Universalist clergy and laity; an assembly which stands for the citizens of greater Boston;—and Dr. Miner not here! We are not to see that tall figure rise before us, nor hear the rich accents of his flexible voice. Of all that superb personality as it was clothed in the flesh

"Nothing now is left
But a majestic memory."

Yet to those who have so long been used to look on him as the central figure of every great gathering, the over-shadowing presence in every meeting for counsel, the leader in every column moving out to action, that memory will long be more vivid than any present reality, and he, being dead, will yet speak with more power than many who still live in the flesh. We have hardly begun to understand how great a character he was. No man ever is rated at his true value while he is still in this body. The glare of many commonplaces hides his virtues or exaggerates his foibles; and seen through the tears of a fresh sorrow, his faults are veiled and he becomes for the hour a paragon of excellencies. But as the days and the months pass away, prejudice and prepossession alike are weakened, the illusions of love and hate disappear, and the soul of the really great nature, clearing itself of all that was merely accidental, stands revealed more and more, defining itself in its true proportions, those which are destined to stand and to endure as characteristic of the man. There is a revelation which comes to us when this mortal puts on immortality, without which we scarcely can see our friends as they are. There was deep meaning in the words of Jesus to his friends: "It is expedient for you that I go away."

So, as the hand of time begins to divest the name of him we are met to honor of its merely earthly belongings and touch it with a glory not destined to fade, it is fitting that we should meet to speak of him to one another, and seek to realize, if we may, how much he will stand for now, to ourselves and to our church and to the world.

We have been so used to look to him to do for the cause he loved that we cannot readily bring ourselves to think of what he was in personality and in character. Yet here is where his service will grow larger and larger to all who were moved by his life. Not in what he did, but in what he was lay his pre-eminence. Much as we prize the work that he wrought for the church and for the world, we find ourselves setting a never-growing value upon the character he gave us. For men are greater than their acts. Personal force is the final expression of an individual's contribution to life. In this respect how vast is our debt to him. His personality pervaded and vitalized whatever he touched so that his deeds seemed an emanation from himself. In every word he uttered, in every act of the man, we felt the pulse of his soul putting itself thus into expression. He was a man of deep and genuine sincerities. He never kept two sets of beliefs—one for pulpit or platform use, the other for private life. The man who preached the doctrines of the Divine Love and Fatherhood was the man whose private thought glowed with the radiance of those mighty truths. The voice that rung so clear in denunciation of wrong was attuned, in every accent, to the convictions of a heart which abhorred evil. His calm counsel, or his vehement advocacy of policies or plans of church administration were the offspring of loyalty to that church and an absorbing desire for its prosperity and usefulness. His sincerity was more than outspoken; it was ingrained. It was this identity of the thought and the word, of the inward and the outward man, which first of all made Dr. Miner's life so conspicuous.

In him, moreover, we saw the effect of heredity and environment combining God's providence to produce a man. Heaven gave him a nature in which the firm virtues of a New England ancestry re-appeared without diminution or loss. The strict integrity, the passion for righteousness, the uncompromising hostility toward evil which have come to be associated with the old New England character, all found a fresh embodiment in him. It was easy to think of him as a type and to see in him what the men of old Plymouth and Concord and Hartford would be, were they walking our streets today. The same predominance of the moral sense, the same unquestioning fealty to its requirements, the same noble ardor for the kingdom of heaven among men which marked the Bradfords and the Winthrops and the Hookers of old, were the ruling traits in this modern man of God. He was another Cromwell in the rigor with which he held himself and other men to the strictness of the moral law, and insisted on the Divine Statutes, not as a dead letter on the codes of society, but as full of vitality today, to be heeded, obeyed, enforced. This was the nature of the man. And he gave that nature congenial training, and converted it into that second nature which is character. He never weakened his sense of duty by ignoring it. He never dimmed the light of conscience by trifling with it. He gave his heart without reserve to his church and his fellowmen and his Maker, so that the dispositions to right which were born in him, matured into the voluntary choice of his soul, and strengthened with the practice of the years. He fostered the gifts of God within. It was thus that he developed consistently and naturally into the man conformed to reason, to duty and to love.

And it was this entire genuineness, this harmony of the man and his deeds, this perfect *rapport* between his moral life and his manifold activities which gave his personality such weight. There can be no lasting influence in this world without sincerity. The man, as teacher, leader, prophet, who carries his fellowmen with him does it by virtue of the moral gravitation of his inner life, his real self. Perhaps there is the more propriety in the stress put upon this truth, from the fact that Dr. Miner himself never claimed any especial deference to himself, as a man. I do not think that he looked large to himself, or that, if he did feel his own weight, he ever was perturbed by it. There was none of the fussiness of little-greatness about him. He never timed his entrances nor hastened his exits in men's sight, so that they should have him much in their eye. He never used his gifts of speech for oratory's sake. He was never a man to minimize the force and value of the outward details of life. He never neglected the little things which express and perform life's functions, because he himself was great. But small matters grew large and dignified under his touch, and the litt'e episodes of intercourse, as he used them, became vastly significant. His morn ning salutation had all the broad and gracious effect of the sunrise. His handshake was like the sealing of a compact of perpetual friendship. In the smallest transactions with him one felt the sway of this large personality. Yet never was the thrust of this force at all like egotism. It was the inevitable and necessary power of a great nature.

In this power of his personality we may find, I suspect, one source of his hold upon the men and women who heard his preaching and went away again and again, a little troubled that they had not been more interested. His words were often above the heads of his hearers. They could not always follow where his mind moved so easily. But nevertheless they liked to listen, if only to hear the man. They might not feel the force of what he said; they always felt the force of what he was. The sermon might be too abstruse; the man never was. Whatever else they might misunderstand, they understood him. He was a noble illustration of the rule that the preacher is more of the sermon than anything he says. The orator is the real oration. And so when that clear voice clove the air, and that graceful arm accented speech with gesture, and the eye brightened with the fire of kindled thought, all of us who listened became aware of something far transcending speech and action and all the arts of oratory,—the man who was making them the means of reaching other men, the energy of a noble soul pouring out its life upon other souls.

It has seemed to me that there were two or three words which were the keynotes of his character, to which all his thinking and acting were attuned. They explain his spirit and they account for the consistent, unswerving lines of his conduct through that long and active life. The first of them is Truth, which he loved, for which he lived. He was not one of those uneasy souls who are forever exploring, seeking, rummaging, in the universe to find new facts and new relations, but whose interest in them ceases when they are found out. There is a difference between truth-seekers and truth-lovers. The truth-seeker is a pioneer, an adventurer, a restless rover over the world of ideas, whose chief interest is in the unknown, and who when he has brought it within the limits of the known, abandons it to others to care for while he goes on new quests. The lover of truth is eager, not only to find it but also to live with it; to cherish as well as to discover; to develop, to apply, and to practice that which he has found. That was Dr. Miner's attitude toward truth. He was as much interested in it after it had been published as he was in discovering it. He loved to see it working, leavening the loaf,

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growing like the mustard seed. He was sometimes a long time ahead of the harvest; and men called him all those rasping names which they apply to the quick-eared souls who have heard the great tidings of the universe before it is hawked abroad by the newsboys. But he sometimes was permitted to enjoy the revenges of time. He early perceived the truth in regard to the final holiness of the race; and he lived to see the tacit admission of that truth in the growing sentiment of sects where once it was hated and scorned. He asserted the right of the State to prohibit the sale of intoxicants, against brilliant and powerful legal advocates; and he lived to see Massachusetts concede that right to every town which chooses to exercise it. He used to declare that the laws regulating the liquor traffic could be enforced by any official who would be true to his oath of office; and he lived to see his words proved by that courageous man who has forced the entire liquor interest of New York City to capitulate. Let those who called Dr. Miner a fanatic and a visionary, because he was so confident of the moral order of the universe, stop and think how many of his positions have been justified, proved, demonstrated in the lapse of the years. A mind whose thinking in such signal instances proved so true to the great trend of advancing enlightenment does not deserve to be called narrow.

Nor was his mind a mere logic-mill, grinding premises into conclusions, without any reference to the quality of the grist. He took counsel with his heart in all his thinking and never let his logic do injustice to his better sentiments. His thought was often upborne on the wings of a high imagination which took him and them who tried to follow him into those rare atmospheres where the mind divines greater truths than it can grasp and hears things which cannot be uttered.

There are memories dear to those who knew him in the class-room, of moments when he seemed to be thinking as it were, under inspiration, when he kindled with his theme, and, gathering power and momentum, as he talked, swung off into daring metaphysics and thrilling vaticinations which made the dullest heart beat quicker and the most sluggish imagination stir with faint suggestions of great ideas. An hour with him in lecture or recitation was like a run in the stimulating air, a mental refreshment, an intellectual tonic. But these episodes of his more brilliant thinking were like the ascent of some mountain height, when, after the hard climb, came quickened energy along with visions of a transfigured world. I suspect that few people realize how really great he was as a teacher. He had the three qualities which give power and distinction in this noble sphere. He had grasp, and enthusiasm, and inspiration. He held his theme with a strong grip; he made it glow with his own vitalizing thought, and he kindled the fire of thought in other minds. The memory of his teaching is one of the most precious legacies to those who shared it.

How many times, too, it was the delight of undergraduate days to watch him as he followed his thought through those intricate sentences in which he sometimes involved himself. We used half to expect that he would trip and waver and go hopelessly astray, as ordinary men surely would have done. But he never failed to lead his subject straight to its predicate and keep his pronouns on the best of terms with their antecedents. And by and by we learned to know that he who had such command of long and complex forms of speech was just as great in other modes. In the heat of invective against evil, in the passion of the advocacy of great reforms, his words rung like the axe in the forest. He could be as terse as Tacitus and as Saxon as the Bible.

The fruits of the thinking which he so carefully matured and so stirringly presented, he himself embraced with deep and immovable faith. He was a man of profound convictions. The truths he held he held with all his soul. He was cautious and he was careful in forming opinions. He had many tests of truth, and many lights in which to search it out. He knew the real world and he knew the men that are in it. If he seemed an idealist among men of the world, nevertheless he was a man of the world among idealists. He had more faith than most of us in the things which can be accomplished in the regeneration of society. But that was not because he was a visionary or a dreamer. It was not because he had less knowledge of the weakness of human nature, or the low ideals of the average man, or the vast inertia that resides in human interest, selfishness and passion. It was because he had a larger faith in the divine factors which overcome human obstinacy and repair human error. He knew men, the world, the tenacity of evil. But he had seen the tokens of a Divine Presence, he had recognized a Father's firm hand, he had bowed before an Infinite Power whose movement toward righteousness and blessedness he loved to declare and to describe. These were the sources of his faith in the triumph of good over evil. These were the roots of his convictions and of his working creed. He had a fighting faith in Almighty God and his infinite resources. It was this faith which made his heart so strong and his sword-thrusts so trenchant.

There is yet another word which helps to outline Dr. Miner's character and describe its salient traits. It is the word Duty. To him conscience was authoritative, supreme and final. Every truth had its moral bearing and had to do with conduct. Faith involved works, and pointed invariably to deeds. It would be almost impossible for those of us who knew him even to imagine him in the act of shirking a duty, or of evading a responsibility. When his conscience uttered the solemn word "ought," that ended the matter. He turned at once to do according to his abilities the thing he was called to do. If he had his hesitancies or his rebellions, if he ever tried to avoid the thing which conscience ordained, if he ever sought to escape it by running away, he certainly kept the fact concealed and no man outside his closest friends was aware of it; for prompt to the hour and the moment, he appeared at the rendezvous of duty. He and his task were never seeking each other. He always found the thing he ought to do, and what he ought to do always found him.

It has been common to think and to speak of him as a man run in the mold of a military character, a type of the soldier. There was indeed much about him to justify the comparison. He had the soldier's courage and his ardor in combat, and the insight which clears as the smoke of battle thickens. He had the heroic qualities which in a more martial age would have laughed at wounds, and courted the perils of the charge, and always kept his face to the foe. Even his form had all the attributes of the warrior, and to see that graceful figure in the saddle, was to be irresistibly reminded of Von Moltke, of Wellington, or of Washington himself. But chief of all the traits which suggested the soldier, deeper than the martial bearing and the heroic mold and the brave heart and the zeal for the combat, was his loyalty to duty. That, after all, is the under lying granite of the warrior's nature; and that was the basis of his character. It was revealed in the loyalty with which he followed his convictions, and enlisted in the service of a despised and suspected church and fought her battles and shared her fortunes and fared with her "for better or for worse." It appeared in the courage and ardor with which he espoused the cause of temperance, incurring all the sneers and the resistances and the enmities which that long warfare brought upon him.

It echoed in those last faint words, whose failing whisper was like the exhortation of the dying King Arthur, "Tell the brethren to be faithful." No man ever had a better right to send that dying challenge of conscience to conscience! It was "the ruling passion, strong in death." For fidelity was in his very blood. It was his meat and drink to do the will of his Lord. He had lived by that watchword himself. He might well lay the charge upon the hearts of others.

For it was this fidelity which so often drove him from the side of the men he loved and honored, whose companionship and sympathy would have been as dear to him as to any man. He could sooner break with those whom he would fain have had as comrades and friends than he could break with duty. That was the whole matter in a word. That was what led him to head forlorn hopes against the citadels of evil. That was what sent him ahead of his generation in theories of social order and efforts for human weal. That was what won the hate of the vicious, the wrath of the narrow-minded, the dull resistance of the bigots of ignorance and loose morality. That, too, was what made him seem to the young men whose loyalty he had won, a bright and shining incarnation of the soldier's fidelity and the apostle's zeal, as he strode without blenching or recoil into the fierce fire of battle, and struck for righteousness and the Lord. And if any had asked him why he went, and why he incurred all this hardship, pain and wounds, his answer must have been that old stanza of Tickell's:

"I hear a voice you cannot hear
Which says I must not stay;
I see a hand you cannot see
Which beckons me away."

Let us not misunderstand this heroic soul. His uncompromising warfare upon evil and upon evils, was not the asperity of a quarrelsome nature, or the love of contention, or a propensity for antagonism. He did not fight for the sake of fighting, but for the sake of the truth. He had made oath to God that he would serve the truth and the right wherever they needed a word or a life to help or save them. It was his fealty to the everlasting Reality, manifested either to mind or to moral sense which kept him in the ranks of brave minorities. It was not a petty nature, but a great one which could undertake all he endured for the kingdom of heaven's sake. No man better deserved the praise of Lowell's lines:

"Life may be given in many ways,
And loyalty to truth be sealed
As bravely in the closet as the field,
So bountiful is fate,
But then to stand beside her
When craven churls deride her,
To front a lie in arms and not to yield
This shows, methinks, God's plan
And measure of a stalwart man
Limbed like the old heroic breeds
Who stand self-poised on manhood's solid earth
Not forced to frame excuses for his birth,
Fed from within, with all the strength he needs."

If we seek still another word which shall suggest a ruling trait of his nature we may well fix upon that noble term which describes the corner-stone of all his theology as it was the fundamental thing in his own spirit. He was an apostle of the Gospel of the Universal Love; and he entered upon that apostolate because that gospel found such a perfect response in his own spirit. It was the unselfish love in his own great heart which interpreted for him the fullness of the Divine Love. So he became a loving messenger of the gospel of love.

It is unfortunate that this word and all its congeners have been suffered to fall into the hands of sentimentalists and rhapsodists, to denote little more than a soft amiability, a frothy emotion, an impulse of shallow sympathy, of fickle enthusiasm, of nerveless good-nature. For in this narrowed conception not only is love itself belittled and dishonored, but the nature in which it displays some of its most glorious aspects are not counted at all as examples of its power. Dr. Miner was no sentimentalist. He was not blown hither and yon by the shifty gusts of impulsive ardors. He had a strong man's aversion for all that seemed like "gush." And nothing maudlin ever found lodgment in his thought or expression from his lips. Yet, tried by any of the larger tests he was a man of loving heart, richly dowered with "the greatest of these," the supreme trait in the Pauline trinity of virtues. Love toward God and love toward man were corner-stone and cap stone of his theology. They were the very heart of his preaching and his teaching. They were the center and core of his own personal religious life. What he wrought and what he taught were fruits from the prolific root planted in his soul. Once when a student at the end of his college days, came to him and tried to speak his gratitude for the teaching and for the example this college president had afforded, his keen eye softened, his hand was extended with that dignified cordiality we know so well, and he responded, "I thank you! I thank you! I do not know that I deserve what you have told me. But one thing I can truly say. I long ago ceased to live and to work for myself. I am glad if I seem to have accomplished anything for others." That was the heart of the man. He was unselfish. He worked from the higher motives. He lived the doctrine he professed.

The breadth of his sympathies bears witness to the same great fact. He was a many-sided man, and touched human life at more points than most men ever can hope to. His versatility was the wonder of all of us. But it was not a mere facility of his mind, a restlessness of the wits which craved employment and hated monotony. He might have had a variety of talents and still never have used them. That he trod so many paths of usefulness; that he became a leader in so many good causes; that he lent a hand to so many struggling enterprises of righteousness, was because he had a heart so catholic in its sympathies.

His hand and his voice followed the promptings of his great, sympathetic soul. His appearance in so many roles, now as preacher, and again as teacher, here as administrator and there as orator, a leader of reforms and a defender of the things that cannot be shaken, the critic of arrogant evils, the philanthropist befriending weakness and misfortune—was the sign of his interest in men and what pertained to them and to their welfare, and his sense of obligation to turn all the powers God had bestowed to the highest utility for humanity's sake. If he had been selfish, if he had sought his own glory and advancement, if he had been scheming for the praise of men he would have refused the calls to lend his strength to so many causes and kept to the narrower works in which he saw the largest revenues of selfish honor. That he spent himself so freely, in so many ways, using all his versatile faculties with equal unselfishness, is a perpetual witness to his humane interests, his large love of his fellowmen.

But there is a cloud of witnesses of another sort telling the same story in his praise. He was not a man to be generous in theory and stingy in practice. He had more than an abstract interest in man; he was the friend and helper of men in particular. Who was ever more accessible than he to the plea of need, the cry of distress, the appeal of the wronged or the penitent? How many times have we seen him espouse the cause of men with a grievance, or excuse and extenuate the wrong-doer seeking reinstatement, or plead for charity and mercy! How many times has that liberal purse relieved financial distress and helped out private shortage! How many students could tell of his quiet but substantial aid, which opened the way to education or to professional life. In him we saw again that old-time priority of good works so famed since Chaucer's day:

"This noble ensample to his sheep he gave,
That first he wrought and afterward he taught."

It is a splendid monument of him which stands on College Hill, the beautiful hall he reared for the training of young men in the ministry. Noble in its architecture, admirable in its appointments, refined in all its belongings, it is a memorial such as any man might covet, as a witness of his love of the highest things, and his desire to spread them among men. But the finest thing about that building is not the one public beneficence it stands for, but the thousand unrecorded charities of which that was only the culmination and the crown! Into those walls are built the unselfish impulses of a lifetime. It is the embodiment of his helpfulness and humanity.

This meeting is not to pronounce any final word about him; it but begins the strain of eulogy and honor which will last long after our voices are as still as his own. His name will gain upon the hearts of men with every year that passes. For Alonzo Ames Miner was a greater man than his contemporaries realize. He was not merely the great man of a small church. He was one of the great men of a great city, of a great commonwealth, of a great nation. He was the peer of Phillips and of Sumner, of Horace Mann and Phillips Brooks, of Hosea Ballou and Lyman Beecher. He was great in intellect and great in heart; great in affairs and great in faith. He was an orator who could bear comparison with Phillips. He was a teacher in the rank of Mark Hopkins. Men schooled in the law declared that he would have been an ornament to the bar. Great merchants counted him their peer in business acumen. That he took all these great gifts and consecrated them to the office of the Christian minister shows how he held that office in honor, and how strong was his spirit of devotion. Nor did the standards of the ministry suffer at his hands. He brought to it a character against whose honor and whose purity no breath of suspicion ever came. He pursued it with a faithfulness and unselfish love which never flagged till death's hand was laid upon his frame. And there are thousands today for whom he will be the one pastor of a life-time. He had a Christian's unfailing courtesy, a dignity which bent to any level, yet without condescension, a kindliness of heart toward all classes and conditions of men. He was indeed a man to be dreaded as an antagonist in the battles of ideas and principles. But if he struck hard it was not at men, but at the uniforms they wore and the banners they carried. He was stern and uncompromising only against evil things and principles and those who represented them. He was cautious in the conservation of the good; in the attack on wrong he knew neither fear nor reserve. Because he threw himself with all his soul into the causes he loved, weak men, who never knew the enthusiasm of a hearty devotion to anything, called him Puritan and bigot. But the loyalty which never swerved, the zeal which never cooled, the love which never waned, will justify themselves at last, and men will yet praise him for this unfaltering righteousness and this immovable faith. The church he served will love him equally for the devotion he gave and the honor he brought her. The city in which he wrought his life work will count him among her grandest sons. Boston has had many great ministers: Cotton and Mather; Beecher and Taylor; Eastburn and Brooks; Channing, Ware and Freeman Clarke; Ballou and Parker;—these are names which shine "as the stars forever and ever." Now the sorrowing city adds another whose light is no less pure and bright and enduring, Alonzo Ames Miner.

Agriculture In Great Britain.

The fact that agriculture is in process of gradual abandonment in Great Britain may account in part for the increase in immigration from that country, the number of arrivals since August aggregating 238,000. It evidently does not pay the British farmer to raise wheat on high priced British land. The next problem is to make this land profitable in some other way. The decline in wheat acreage this year is 26 per cent less than 1894. This indicates that upward of 200,000 acres of land have failed of cultivation because agriculture no longer pays.—*Philadelphia Times.*

LITERARY NOTES: PERSONALS.

—Mr. Nathan Haskell Dole has translated Victor Hugo's Letters to His Wife, and Estes & Lauriat publish the volume. These letters are included in no English or American editions of Victor Hugo's writings, and are in a sense, autobiographic, affording an insight into some phases of a remarkable career which will be novel to most readers. They were written mainly during a visit to the Alps and Pyrenees and include many charming descriptions of the scenery and incidents of travel.

—Mr. Justin McCarthy does not care for books of the Yellow Aster type. "Woman we have had always with us," he says, "and we have known her a long time. We cannot change her much, nor she us, and therefore I'm inclined to think the modern problem novel a waste of power."

—Lafcadio Hearn, now a naturalized Japanese citizen, contributes Notes from a Traveling Diary, to the December Atlantic. No one knows Japan better than he, nor writes of it with more discrimination.

—At the present time a good cyclopædia seems to be a necessary of life, one of those adjuncts of a well-regulated household that cannot be dispensed with if its members are to mingle in intelligent society and not appear ignorant or foolish. The newest claimant for public favor and everyday usefulness is Johnson's Universal Cyclopædia, of which the eighth and concluding volume has just been issued by D. Appleton & Co., of New York.

—Messrs. D. Appleton & Co. will publish immediately a remarkably fine art work entitled Annals of Westminster Abbey, by E. T. Bradley (Mrs. Murray Smith), with an introduction by her father, Dean Bradley. The book, which has been in preparation for several years, will contain nearly two hundred illustrations by W. Hatherell, R. I., and H. M. Paget. The head and tail pieces, representing interesting spots in the old abbey, and the initial letters and emblematic cover, have been specially designed by prominent artists. This sumptuous volume gives the romance and life of the abbey, and does not deal with architectural details.

—The leading article in The Forum for December is probably the clearest analysis of the present financial situation in the United States that has yet appeared. The writer is M. Paul Leroy-Beaulieu, the distinguished French economist, who lays down the "Conditions for American Commercial and Financial Supremacy." He says that there is much surprise throughout Europe that a great nation like the United States should allow its development to be trammelled by frequent and severe crises, and that it should be either unable to discern their causes or lack decision to remove them from its path. He thinks that the failure of the American government to redeem its paper currency after the war was a great and vital error, whose evil influences are still felt.

—Conspicuous among the contents of the December Atlantic is another of John Fiske's historical studies. It has for a title "The Starving Time in Old Virginia," and is an important historical contribution as well as delightful reading.

Other articles of interest are "A New England Woodpile," an outdoor sketch, by Rowland E. Robinson; "The Defeat of the Spanish Armada," by W. F. Tilton; "An Idler on Missionary Ridge," a Tennessee sketch, by Bradford Torrey; "Being a Typewriter," a discussion of the relation of the machine to literature, by Lucy C. Bull; "Notes from a Traveling Diary," a study of the new Japan, by Lafcadio Hearn; and "To a Friend in Politics," an anonymous letter.

—To read Professor A. H. Sayce's description, in The Sunday School Times of November 23, of the disinterment of one of the largest and stateliest of the temples which still exist in the valley of the Nile, is almost like reading a chapter from the Arabian Nights. As the writer says, this temple "has sprung, as it were, out of the sand at the touch of a magician's rod. . . Deep underneath the ground on which we trod were vast halls and corridors, and brilliantly painted columns and walls."

—Mr. Leslie J. Perry, who is a member of the Government Commission engaged in publishing the War Records, has gathered a number of interesting letters and indorsements of President Lincoln relating to prisoners of war, and they will appear in the Christmas Century under the title, "Appeals to Lincoln's Clemency." It is said to have been almost impossible in the early days of the war to secure Mr. Lincoln's consent to the execution of a soldier for desertion, but later he was obliged to give less attention to personal appeals. A characteristic indorsement is one found on a large bundle of papers covering a single case, and that unimportant:

"What possible injury can this lad work upon the cause of this great Union? I say let him go.—*A. Lincoln.*

A Bird's Nest of Metal.

In the Museum of Natural History at Soleure, in Switzerland, there is a bird's nest made entirely of steel. There are a number of clock-making shops at Soleure; and in the yards of these shops there are often found lying disused or broken springs of clocks. One day a clock-maker noticed in a tree in his yard a bird's nest of peculiar appearance. Examining it, he found that a pair of wagtails had built a nest entirely of clock springs. It was more than four inches across, and perfectly comfortable for the birds. After the feathered architects had reared their brood, the nest was taken to the Museum, where it is preserved as a striking illustration of the skill of birds in turning their surroundings to advantage in building their nests.