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Art. 1.—*Present state of Oxford University.*

Report of Her Majesty's Commissioners, appointed to inquire into the state, discipline, studies, and revenues of the University and Colleges of Oxford; together with the Evidence, and an Appendix. London: 1852. 760 pages, folio.

It required no small degree of courage in Lord John Russell to move his Sovereign to command such an investigation as this; but he seems to have found seven men courageous and indefatigable enough to accomplish the work. We can only regret that a place in the board of investigation could not have been offered to Sir William Hamilton, the eminent professor of logic and metaphysics in the University of Edinburgh, whose papers in the Edinburgh Review, twenty years ago, were so influential in summoning attention to the abuses existing in the English Universities. Those articles, lately embodied in his wonderfully diversified volume of learning, entitled "Discussions on Philosophy and Literature, Education and University Reform," show that much of the laborious research of the seven commissioners had been already accomplished by the single-handed Scotch professor, and the greater part of their conclusions anticipated. That no trifling toil is demanded for such an

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ART. III.—*Sketches of the Pulpit, in Ancient and in Modern Times.*

IT admits of little question that preaching took its rise from the public reading of the Scriptures. No one needs to be informed how regularly this formed a part of the synagogue service. The case of our Lord's expositions in this way is too familiar to bear recital. The apostles, and Paul in particular, seem to have followed the same method. Indeed, this may be taken as the rule, while free utterances, like that at Mars' Hill, are considered as the exceptions. Little has come down to us, in regard to the precise form taken by the discourses of Christian teachers in the early and less rhetorical period. The celebrated passage of Justin Martyr points towards the familiar harangue or exhortation, rather than the elaborate comment on Scripture. This we apprehend arose in part from the fact—now very much neglected, though significant—that inculcation of doctrine was carried on chiefly in the classes of catechumens, while the public assembly was more employed for lively addresses to the Christian people. Justin expressly declares that the writings of the prophets and apostles were read to the assembly. The Apostolical Constitutions doubtless report a well-known usage, when they say that the congregation reverently stood, while the reading took place; of which some churches retain a vestige, in the custom of rising, when the little fragment by synecdoche, called the *Gospel*, is recited. Liberty was given to the aged and infirm to remain seated. In our times, when people refuse to stand even in prayer, such a usage would prove burdensome in the extreme.

There is good reason to believe, that the portions of Scripture for public reading were at first left to the free choice of the presiding minister. After a while, when festivals and fasts became numerous, ingenuity was exercised to affix certain passages to the subject of commemoration. From this it was an easy step to a programme of regular lessons, for all Sundays and great days. But these were far from being uniform or immutable. Thus we find that the Churches in Syria read at Pen-

tecost from the Acts of the Apostles, while those of Spain and Gaul read the Revelation. In Syria they read Genesis in Lent, but at Milan, Job and Jonah. In Northern Africa the history of our Lord's passion was appropriately read on Good Friday; at Easter, the account of the resurrection; in both cases from Matthew. When we come down to the days of Augustine, we find the lessons somewhat fixed; and it would be easy to make numerous citations from his works to this point. Antiquaries refer the first collection of lessons, called Lectionaries, in Gaul, to about the middle of the fifth century; the oldest known being the celebrated *Lectionarium Gallicanum.* In the eighth century it was still necessary for the imperial authority of Charlemagne to enforce uniformity in the portions read.

When matters had gradually assumed their rubrical settlement, the Church customs became fixed. The reading was by a reader, or lector, who stood in the elevation known as the *ambo.* He began with the words, "Peace unto you," to which there was a response by the people, such as is familiar to us in modern service-books. The gospels had the precedence, as they still have in the Missal, and were frequently read by the deacon. This we suppose to have been a very ancient custom, and one which might well have a place in modern liturgies, where the voice of the minister is often overtasked, in oppressive seasons and times of ill-health. The sermon was pronounced sometimes from the bishop's cathedra, before bishops had ceased to preach, or from the steps of the altar, when this had taken the place of the communion table; in some instances, however, from the *ambo,* which reveals a connection of the discourse with the lesson of Scripture.

In attempting to gather some notices of early preaching, we have to grope amidst darkness, most of our authorities belonging to a corrupt and ritualistic period. The preacher began with the *Pax omnibus,* to which the audience responded. We find Augustine asking them sometimes to help him with their prayers. "The lesson out of the Apostles," he says, in one place, "is dark and difficult;" and he craves their intercession. And elsewhere: *Quemadmodum nos, ut ista percipiatis, oramus, sic et vos orate, ut ea vobis explicare valeamus.* The preacher sat, while the people stood; as no seats were fur-

nished for the worshippers. Augustine speaks of this, in apologizing for a sermon longer than usual, and contrasts his easy posture with theirs.

Every one must be persuaded that early preaching was without the use of manuscript. It was in regard to expression extemporaneous. Here we might again quote Justin. Socrates tells us indeed, concerning Atticus, Bishop of Constantinople, that he committed to memory at home such things as he was about to deliver in the church; but afterwards, he says that he spoke from the impulse of the moment. Sidonius, addressing himself to Faustus Rejensis, writes thus: "Prædicationes tuas nunc repentinas, nunc cum ratio præscripsit elucubratas, *raucus plosor audivi.*" The allusion is to the audible applause given to popular orators. Pamphilus relates of Origen, that the discourses which he delivered almost daily in church were *extempore*, and that they were taken down by reporters, and so preserved for posterity. We find Chrysostom changing his subject, in consequence of tumults in the street on his way to the public assembly. His discourses as now extant contain many observations which plainly arose from the circumstances in which he stood during the delivery; such as the clapping of hands, the shouts heard from the neighbouring hippodrome, and the entrance of attendants to light the lamps. In one instance we find Augustine suddenly taking up a passage which the lector, who it seems was a boy, had read by mistake, instead of the one which the preacher had premeditated. The whole air of his *Sermones* is that of the extemporaneous preacher. Again and again he descants on the psalm which has just been sung. He throws in such remarks as this: "You see, beloved, that my sermon to-day differs from what is usual; I have not time for all," etc. And we may here observe that the four hundred sermons of this father afford the richest treasure for any one who wishes to study the peculiarities of Ancient Latin preaching. Gregory the Great says in one place: "I understand some hard passages now, *coram fratribus*, which I could not master *solus*." "In the earliest times," says Thiersch, "it is certain the free outpouring more prevailed, the nearer we get to primitive simplicity, and the liberal manifestation of the *charismata*." According to Guericke, the reading of sermons

occurred only as exceptional. For example, Gregory says in one of his Homilies on the Evangelists: "It has been my wont to dictate many things for you; but since my chest is too weak for me to read what I have dictated, I perceive some of you are hearing with less pleasure. Hence, varying from my usual practice. . . . I now discourse *non dictando, sed colloquendo.*" It should seem, perhaps from the same infirmity, that he sometimes wrote sermons which were read to the people by the Lector.

If any should inquire how we come to have so many extant sermons of the Christian fathers, the reply must be, that they were taken down by reporters; the revision and emendation of the author being added in some instances, then as now. Great preachers in every age have been accustomed also to write out at their leisure, the discourses which they had delivered extempore. It would be a great historical error to suppose that short-hand reporting was unknown to the ancients. There were many causes which operated to bring it into general use. The enthusiastic admiration of eloquence, which prevailed among the Greeks and Romans, furnished a motive for seeking to preserve what had electrified the populace. The extraordinary amount of manuscript, in ages before the invention of printing, led to a facility in the penman's art, which we probably undervalue. The use of uncial or separate characters, in place of a cursive or running-hand, in rapid writing, would naturally prompt, first to such ligatures and contractions as we observe in many manuscripts, and then to still greater abridgments, condensations, and symbols, by means of which a whole word or even a whole sentence was denoted by a single mark. Specimens of these, from ancient remains, may be seen appended to some editions of Cicero. But as to the details of the methods, we are altogether uninformed. The results show that full reporting was as much relied upon by them as by us. Those orations of Greek and Roman orators, which were produced on the spot, were thus taken down; and as soon as Christian eloquence began to be regarded from its worldly and literary side, the same mode was applied. Eusebius assures us that the discourses of Origen were thus written by stenographers. Reference has already been made to the case

of Gregory the Great. Almost all the sermons of Augustine which remain to us, are due to this method. Many, doubtless, received their fitness for this work from acting as amanuenses. Thus, Augustine writes feelingly of the death of a boy who was his notary.* In the Ecclesiastical Acts, concerning the designation of Eraclius as his successor, we find Augustine thus addressing the assembly: "A *notariis ecclesiæ*, sicut cernitis, excipiuntur quæ dicimus, excipiuntur quæ dicitis; et meus sermo, et vestræ acclamationes in terram non cadunt."† But the authorities on this head are innumerable; indeed, some of our most valuable patristical treasures were thus preserved. Modern times and our own days have seen the same means employed. The expositions of Calvin on the Old Testament are from reports of this sort, which contain the very prayers which he offered. The Commentary on the Ephesians, by McGhee, one of the most admirable evangelical works of the age, was delivered by the author at a little weekly lecture in Ireland, and reported in stenography. Some of the greatest sermons of Robert Hall were never written till after the delivery; and some of these were "extended" from the notes of Wilson, Grinfield, and Green. But we need look no further than to the orations of Webster, Clay, Russell, Palmerston, Cobden, Thiers, and Montalembert, to escape all doubts as to the practicability of what has been supposed.

With the secular advancement of Christianity, the augmentation of assemblies, and the accession of learned men and orators, the simple and ardent addresses of apostolic times gave place to all the forms of Grecian rhetoric. The house of worship, no longer a cavern or an upper chamber, became a theatre for display. This is apparent more among the Greeks than the Latins, and was not inconsistent with much ardour of piety and edification of the faithful; yet the change was very marked, and in the same proportion we observe the art of homiletics assuming a regular shape. It is impossible to condemn what we here discern, without at the same time censuring the pulpit of our own day in the most refined portions of Christendom; but we are not sure that a universal advancement in the

* Ep. clviii. † Ep. ccxiii.

spiritual life of the Church would not instantly put to flight many adventitious glories of the sermon, and restore a more natural and impassioned species of sacred oratory. The ancient preacher was frequently interrupted by bursts of applause, clapping of hands, and acclamations of assent. Chrysostom says:—"We need not your applause or tumultuous approbation," and asks for silence. These tokens of admiration are to be compared, not with the devout exclamations of the Methodists, in their more illiterate assemblies, but with the cheers of our anniversary meetings, if not with the turbulent praise of the House of Commons. The great preacher last named, found it necessary, therefore, to remind the Christians of Antioch that they were not in the theatre. Yet such signs of sympathy in the people, when moderate and decorous, were expected and approved. For example, Augustine thus closes a sermon: "*Audistis, laudastis; Deo gratias.*"

In early times, public preaching was by no means confined to the Lord's day; and its frequency indicates a great interest in divine things on the part of the public. It is necessary only to look through a number of consecutive sermons of Augustine, particularly at the beginning and end of each, to learn that he was accustomed to preach very often, and during sacred seasons for several days in succession, and at times more than once in the same day. Seasons of extraordinary religious emotion are always signalized by this avidity for the word. So it was at the Reformation; Luther preached almost daily at Wittenberg, and Calvin at Geneva, as did Knox and Welsh in Scotland. And so it will be again when religion is greatly revived in our own land.

As a matter of course, the great body of ancient sermons has passed into oblivion; but enough remains to give us a very complete notion of the way in which the fathers treated divine subjects before the people. Of the Greeks, we possess discourses of Origen, Eusebius of Cæsarea, Gregory Thaumaturgus, Athanasius, Basil, the Gregories of Nyssa and Nazianzum, Cyril, Macarius, Amphilochius and Chrysostom. In all these the traces of Gentile rhetoric are visible. Of the Latins, none are so remarkable as Ambrose, Augustine, and Leo the Great. To gain some fair conception of the manner adopted, it would

be well for every student acquainted with the ancient languages, to peruse a few discourses of Basil, Chrysostom, and Augustine. He will discover amidst all the elegance of the golden-tongued Greek, an admirable simplicity in the exposition of Scripture in regular course, as for example, in the numerous sermons on the Romans; and a fidelity of direct reproof, worthy of imitation in all ages. What are called the *Sermones* of Augustine are not only shorter—perhaps from abridgment by the notary—but in every respect more scattering, planless, and extemporaneous, but at the same time full of genius, full of eloquence, full of piety, all clothed in a latinity, which, though not Augustan, and sometimes even provincial and Punic, carries with it a glow and a stateliness of march, which oftener reminds us of the Roman orator than the elaborate exactness of Lactantius, the "Christian Cicero." If, sometimes he indulges in a solecism, for the sake of the *plebs Christiana* of Carthage, it is not unconsciously; and we seem to see him smile when he says in apology, "Dum omnes instruantur, grammatici non timeantur." He even begs pardon for the form *fenerat;* though this is used by Martial and occurs continually in the Digests. And of a blessed neologism he thus speaks: "Christ Jesus, that is *Christus* SALVATOR. For this is the Latin of JESUS. The grammarians need not inquire how Latin it is, but the Christians how true. For *salus* is a Latin noun. *Salvare* and *salvator*, indeed, were not Latin, before the Saviour (*Salvator*) came; when he came to the Latins he made this word Latin."* But we check our hand, on a subject, which from its tempting copiousness, is better fitted for a monograph. On this period of patristical eloquence much remains to be written. There are good things in Fénélon, Maury, Gisbert, Theremin, and above all in Villemain; but we have reason to long for a work of research and taste, which shall present the modern and English reader with adequate specimens and a complete history and criticism of the great pulpit orators of the Greek and Latin Churches.

Pursuing our ramble among old Churches, we leap without further apology into the middle age, in order to say that in this period, about which there is so much dispute and so little knowledge, preaching could not but suffer a great decadence,

* Serm. ccxcix.

when sound letters and taste fell as low as religion. When every other description of oratory became corrupt, it is not to be expected that sacred eloquence should abide in strength. Among the Greeks, it sank under the influence of superstition, frigid rhetoric, tinsel, and bombast. In the Latin Church, plagiarists and abridgers took the place of genuine preachers. The method of postillating came in; that is, of uttering a short and jejune discourse after the lesson; *post illa* (sc. *verba Domini*) hence the name *postill*. The diction and style of Latin preaching decayed with the general language. Preaching in the vernacular was not unknown in the West, but grew less and less impressive. At times of great popular excitement, when crowds were flocking after crusading captains, or trembling before the invading Turk, there were vehemently passionate harangues, and we have instances of street and field-preaching. What great revivals are with us, were those simultaneous awakenings of religious emotion which sometimes stirred the entire population of large districts. These engendered a sort of eloquence which in degree was high enough, but of which few records appear in our books of history. Among the most extraordinary actors in these moving dramas were the *Flagellantes*, *Geisseler*, or Whippers, of the fourteenth century. We find an account of the entrance of these penitentiary fanatics into Strasburg, in the year 1349. The universal panic in expectation of invasion, and even of the judgment-day, prepared the people for singular impressions. About two hundred entered the city, in solemn procession, singing those ghastly hymns which were chief instruments of their work. Their flaunting banners were of the costliest silk and satin. They carried lighted tapers, and all the bells of the country sounded at their approach. Their mantles and cowls bore red crosses, and as they chanted together, they would sometimes kneel and sometimes prostrate themselves. Multitudes joined themselves to their number, for purposes of penance, and subjected themselves to the fearful lacerations of self-flagellation, from which the order took its name. The discourses delivered by these sombre itinerants were in every way fitted to harrow up the consciences, and beget the religious fears in which middle-age popery had delighted.

Every reader of Church history is familiar with the preaching friars, as they were called. The same enthusiasm, and the same successes, attended their progress from land to land. That branch of the Franciscan Minorites, called the Capuchins, is well known, even in our day, to every traveller in Europe. The bare head, filthy robe, and tangled beard, occur in many a picture. The cant of these holy beggars has received the distinctive title of *capucinade*, a vulgar but impressive sort of preaching, which was found very serviceable to the Church of Rome. In the *Lager* of Wallenstein, the most comic and at the same time the most Shakspearian of Schiller's production, the camp-sermon of the Capuchin is one of the most felicitous parts. It was, evidently, in the mind of Scott, when he depicted, in exaggerated burlesque, the fanatic preacher of the Covenant in Old Mortality. As to preaching before the Reformation, it needs scarcely be repeated here, that as a part of regular religious worship in churches, it had fallen very much into desuetude. The great preachers of Popery were raised up as the result of a re-action against Protestant reform.

The modern pulpit really dates from the Reformation. With few exceptions the Reformers were mighty preachers, and some of them wielded an influence in this way which far surpassed all their efforts with the pen, and was felt over half Europe. In the British isles the power of the Word was particularly felt. Cranmer, Latimer, and Jewell, in their several varieties of eloquence, awakened an interest in the new doctrines which nothing was able to allay. The fearless tongue of John Knox, even against princes, has been noted as fully by foes as friends. In the recorded specimens of his sermons, if we translate them out of the atrocious Scotch spelling, and the fetters of the uncouthest dialect ever pronounced, there are apparent both power and elegance. From that day to this, the Presbyterians of Scotland have been, above all people, lovers of the preached Word.

Some of the more prominent characteristics of the Scottish pulpit are familiarly known. It was at once expository, doctrinal, methodical, and impassioned. For ages it was without book, as it still is in a great degree; for the country parishes retain all their ancient contempt for the "paper-minister;"

notwithstanding the eloquent examples of reading by such men as Chalmers, Irving, Candlish, and Hamilton. The citation of Scripture passages, and the custom of "turning up" the same in the little Bible of the hearer, have given a peculiarly textual character to Scottish sermons. The great stress laid upon strong and tender emotion at the Lord's table, the meeting of several ministers and multitudes of people on sacramental occasions, and the continuance of these services during several days, have contributed to an unction and pathos which have been extended to our own churches, among the purer settlements of strict Presbyterians. The power of the pulpit has, therefore, been nowhere more manifest. No public authority has ever availed to silence this mode of popular agitation and rebuke.

In the sermons of the Scottish Church two very unlike tendencies are clearly distinguishable; one is the fondness for scholastic method and minute subdivision, derived from the dialectical turn of the people, and the familiarity of the preachers with the severe manuals of Calvinistic theology; the other is the disposition to give outlet to high religious feeling. In some portions of the Kirk both have been active throughout the entire period; there have been manifest the acumen and ratiocinative precision, as well as what Buchanan calls the *ingenium perfervidum Scotorum*. This has been diversified by the constant practice of lecturing in the forenoon service, which has maintained expository preaching for three hundred years, and done much to mould the religious temper of the nation. There was indeed a period in the eighteenth century, when the chill of Moderatism fell upon public discourses, in a part of the Church, producing the tame literary elegance of Robertson and Blair. But the same age produced the Erskines of the Secession, in one school of homiletics, and Walker and Witherspoon in another. The Ecclesiastical Characteristics and the Corporation of Servants, did much to stigmatize the unfaithfulness of the frigid preachers, and even to open the way for those triumphs of principle which have since resulted in the strength and fervour of the Free Church. It would carry us beyond all due limits to enlarge on the new modes of pulpit discourse which have owed their origin to the brilliant but some-

times misleading example of Chalmers and his imitators. This great preacher, admirable as he appears in his printed works, can never be fully comprehended by those who never heard him. The cool reader has time to pause over solecisms of language and excesses of amplification, which were put utterly beyond the hearer's sense by the thunder of his delivery. When Dr. John M. Mason, on his return from Scotland, was asked wherein lay Chalmers's great strength, he replied, "It is his blood-earnestness."

The free course of our remarks has led us somewhat further than we intended, and we must go back to gather up a few observations respecting the English pulpit, more, however, in the way of desultory observation than of historical detail. From the very beginning of Reformation times, the pulpit has been a potent engine of popular impression in England. Indeed, we suppose that at no time has preaching been more powerful in its influence on the people, than before the rise of those corruptions which rent the Anglican Church, and drew off some of its greatest minds to the side of Puritanism. When this rupture took place, it is just to say, that in many of the greatest qualities of preaching, the true succession was in the line of non-conformity. But it is impossible to ignore the fact, that in some important attributes, the Anglican pulpit is the greatest of which the press has given any record. As the movement-party was characterized by great warmth, extemporaneous flow, and assault on the religious passions, it became at once a necessity and a fashion for churchmen to cultivate a species of discourse which was more learned, more accurate, and more sedate. We do not mean to admit the force of the vulgar taunt, that the Puritans, as a body, were deficient in learning. The first generations of Dissenters numbered among them some of the most profound scholars in the Christian world. Yet, as the lines diverged, and the Nonconformists were excluded from the great seats of learning and all the emoluments of the Church, the difference in this particular became more marked; and, notwithstanding some brilliant exceptions, it must be acknowledged, that in point of erudition and elegant letters, the dissenting ministers of England, as a body, are inferior to the established clergy. The latter, indeed, vaunted

of this difference much beyond any substantial ground, and sometimes made the pulpit a place for dogmatic discussion and patristic lore, to a degree which was unseasonable and offensive. In its more favourable manifestations, the learning of the Anglican Church has been nobly brought out in defence of the truth; especially against the freethinkers, the Unitarians and the Papists. A body of divinity might be compiled solely from the sermons of great English divines; a library might be filled with the elaborate dissertations which they have preached.

No one could reasonably expect us, in an article of such limits and character as this, to recite the splendid roll of English preachers; but there are a few whom we would earnestly commend to the notice of every theological student. Omitting entirely the great names which occur in an earlier period, it is important to mention the four bright luminaries, Barrow, Taylor, South, and Tillotson, each so unrivalled in his way, and all so unlike. Barrow was an extraordinary man, as a traveller, a philologist, a mathematician, and a divine. He read Chrysostom at Constantinople before he was made Greek professor at Cambridge. He was predecessor of Sir Isaac Newton in the mathematical chair. Both pursuits tended to make him the eloquent reasoner. It was the age of long periodic sentences, such as appal modern lungs, and Barrow knew how to give a sonorous swell and climacteric advance to his Demosthenic passages. Many is the period in his pages, which for matter might fit out the whole fifteen minutes' sermon of a dapper Oxonian of our times. He abounds in high argument, which is more inflamed by passion than coloured by decoration. His noblest passages leave us thrilling with his passion, rather than captivated by his imagination. He is sometimes too abundant, and sometimes unwieldy; but not dull, not weak, not quaint. A ponderous earnestness and a various wealth strike you in every page. With Barrow, multitude of words is never verbosity, and length of discussion is never diffuseness; it is massive strength without brevity. Hence, we do not wonder that the great Chatham should have taken him as a model, reading over some of his sermons as much as twenty times. "In his sermons," says Mr. Granger, "he knew not how to leave off writing, till he had exhausted his subject; and his ad-

mirable discourse on the duty and reward of bounty to the poor took him up three hours and a half in preaching." His bust in Westminster Abbey will be fresh in the recollection of all clerical travellers.

How abrupt is the transition to the "Shakspeare of the pulpit!" Bishop Taylor, in his own manner, has had a few imitators, but never a competitor. If we except the great dramatist, no man can be named in any department of literature, who stands more clearly alone. Never were there sermons, we suppose, which purely for intellectual pleasure have been read with such satisfaction. In everything but the outward guise, they are often the highest poetry. Imagination has no flights more lofty and adventurous, than many which have been quoted again and again. He soars in a grand similitude, with a boldness of preparation and a sustaining power of wing, and then descends to the earth with a graceful undulation and gentle subsidence, which are absolutely without a parallel. The voluptuous melody of the rythm gives a charm to his diction. Interwoven with these brilliant strands of fancy, there is often a subtle thread of argumentation which wins your assent before you are aware; often, unfortunately, to worse than semi-pelagian laxity; for Taylor was very remote from the orthodoxy of his day. Along with all this, there is poured out upon us a profusion of learning as from a golden horn of plenty. No preacher of our day would venture to quote as much Greek, during his whole life, as Jeremy Taylor sometimes brings out in a single sermon. But the reminiscences and allusions of classic learning spin from him spontaneously in every paragraph. While his invective is sometimes of a scalding heat, he is often tender and pathetic; and there is a scholarly negligence in the style which charms while it baffles all attempts at imitation. It must now be admitted that with all these claims to our wonder, Taylor seldom makes prominent the peculiarly gracious doctrines of the evangelical system. There is a saintly calm about his ethics, which reminds us of the purer class of Romish preachers, but the ascetic directions and the exaltation of human merit belong to the blemishes of the same school. The amplitude of his comparisons, sometimes conducted with a sameness of display which runs into mannerism, did not escape

the censure even of his contemporaries, and was plainly struck at by the following sentences of the austere and caustic South: "Nothing here [namely in Paul's preaching] of the 'fringes of the north-star;' nothing of 'Nature's becoming unnatural;' nothing of the 'down of angel's wings,' or the 'beautiful locks of cherubims:' no starched similitudes, introduced with a '*Thus have I* seen a cloud rolling in its airy mansion, and the like.' "*

But a single perusal of any one of those beautiful passages, of which the above is so clever, and so cruel a travesty, will instantly obliterate the criticism from the mind of any tasteful reader. Though it would end in ludicrous disaster for any one now to try to preach like Jeremy Taylor, we are persuaded that the study of his works would be an excellent regimen for young clergymen, especially for such as labour under the diseases of coldness and lethargy. It would at least stimulate them to warmer effusions, and would show them that logic and immensely fertile learning are compatible with a flow of elegance and an exuberant illustration, such as we commonly seek only in verse.

We speak of the "witty South," as familiarly as of the "judicious Hooker," and with less fear of any exception. But we despise the man, while we admire the genius. South was a veritable Vicar of Bray, trimming his sails to every gust of

* Compare the famous passage from Taylor: "For so have I seen a lark rising from his bed of grass, and soaring upwards, singing as he rises, and hopes to get to heaven, and climb above the clouds; but the poor bird was beaten back with the loud sighings of an eastern wind, and his motion made irregular and inconstant, descending more at every breath of the tempest, than it could recover by the libration and frequent weighing of his wings; till the little creature was forced to sit down and pant, and stay till the storm was over; and then it made a prosperous flight, and did rise and sing, as if it had learned music and motion from an angel, as he passed sometimes through the air, about his ministeries here below: so is the prayer of a good man; when his affairs have required business, and his business was matter of discipline, and his discipline was to pass upon a sinning person, or had a design of charity, his duty met with infirmities of a man, and anger was its instrument, and the instrument became stronger than the prime agent, and raised a tempest, and overruled the man; and then his prayer was broken, and his thoughts were troubled, and his words went up towards a cloud, and his thoughts pulled them back again, and made them without intention; and the good man sighs for his infirmity, but must be content to lose the prayer, and he must recover it when his anger is removed, and his spirit is becalmed, made even as the brow of Jesus, and smooth like the heart of God; and then it ascends to heaven upon the wings of the holy dove, and dwells with God, till it returns, like the useful bee, loaded with a blessing and the dew of heaven."

popular or royal favour. It is amusing to find this scourge of dissent beginning his career at Oxford, with a paper of Latin verse in eulogy of Cromwell. He afterwards had rich livings and stalls and high diplomatic places. When it was no longer profitable to truckle to the Stuarts, he took the oath of allegiance to William and Mary.

We are now fairly beyond the region of fancy, pathos, or eloquence, in its ordinary sense. South is clear, strong, saturnine, and truculent. He is a cogent reasoner, always observing an exact method, and establishing his point by the most effective reasoning. He seldom quotes, never displays his reading, and always advances with directness, brevity, and a sort of bull-dog fierceness to his purposed end. Where his terrible prejudices do not come into play, he commands our highest respect, as in some of his masterly arguments for divine predestination; but in other places he bends his tremendous powers against the other doctrines of grace. It would be difficult to find in any language such insufferable rebukes of worldly indulgence, as in certain sermons of South. But his dark and bitter sarcasm is chiefly expended on the Puritans; and he leaves any subject to deal a blow at these enemies, when no longer in power. It is difficult to speak of his style without danger of exaggeration. It combines some of the highest excellencies of human language. Being always sourly in earnest, he never makes ornament or elegance an object of study, though he often attains them. Rotundity and periodicity in sentences are not sought. But he is perpetually clear, energetic, vivacious, and memorable. He strikes us as far before his age in English writing, as having by the prerogative of genius seized upon the imperishable part of the language, and as having attained the excellencies of such prose as that of Pope and Warburton. The antithetic character prevails throughout, and this always ensures brevity, and gives opportunity for that tremendous sting which makes the end of many a paragraph like the tail of a scorpion. This venom is for the most part distilled on the Non-conformists. A few quotations will not only exemplify his manner, but illustrate the homiletics of that day, by showing what were the charges brought against the Puritan pulpit. Speaking of falsehood, he says: "But to pass from that to fanatic treachery,

that is, from one twin to the other: how came such multitudes of our own nation, at the beginning of that monstrous rebellion, to be spunged of their plate and money, their rings and jewels, for the carrying on of the schismatical, dissenting, king-killing cause? Why, next to their own love of being cheated, it was the public, or rather prostitute faith of a company of faithless miscreants that drew them in and deceived them. And how came so many thousands to fight and die in the same rebellion? Why, they were deceived into it by those spiritual trumpeters who followed them with continual alarms of damnation, if they did not venture life, fortune, and all, in that which wickedly and devilishly those impostors called the *cause of God.*" In his two sermons "against long extemporary prayer," he thus distils his gall: "Two whole hours for one prayer, at a fast, used to be reckoned but a moderate dose; and that for the most part fraught with such irreverent, blasphemous expressions, that to repeat them would profane the place I am speaking in; and indeed they seldom 'carried on the work of such a day,' as their phrase was, but they left the church in need of a new consecration. Add to this, the incoherence and confusion, the endless repetitions, and the insufferable nonsense that never failed to hold out, even with their utmost prolixity; so that in all their long fasts, from first to last, from seven in the morning to seven in the evening, which was their measure, the pulpit was ever the emptiest thing in the church; and I never knew such a fast kept by them, but their hearers had cause to begin a thanksgiving as soon as they were done." "The consciences of men," he says again, "have been filled with wind and noise, empty notions and pulpit-tattle. So that amongst the most seraphical *illuminati*, and the highest Puritan perfectionists, you shall find people of fifty, three-score and four-score years old, not able to give that account of their faith, which you might have had heretofore of a boy of nine or ten. Thus far had the pulpit (by accident) disordered the church, and the desk must restore it. For you know the main business of the pulpit, in the late times, was to please and pamper a proud, senseless humour, or rather a kind of spiritual itch, which had then seized the greatest part of the nation, and worked chiefly about their ears; and none were so overrun

with it, as the holy sisterhood, the daughters of Zion, and the matrons of the New Jerusalem, as they called themselves. These brought with them ignorance and itching ears in abundance; and Holderforth equalled them in one, and gratified them in the other. So that whatsoever the doctrine was, the application still ran on the surest side; for to give those doctrine and use-men, those pulpit-engineers, their due, they understood how to plant their batteries, and to make their attacks perfectly well; and knew that by pleasing the wife, they should not fail to preach the husband in their pocket." Our own day might learn a lesson from the fling at the prophetic preachers, who interpreted Scripture, "as if, forsooth, there could not be so much as a few houses fired, a few ships taken, or any other calamity befall this little corner of the world, but that some apocalyptic ignoramus or other must presently find and pick it out of some abused martyred prophecy of Ezekiel, Daniel, or the Revelation." It was South, who, in a sermon, said of Milton, "as the Latin advocate, who, *like a blind adder*, has spit so much poison upon the king's person;" and who says of the opposition to liturgies: "I question not, but that fanatic fury was then at that height, that they would have even laughed at Christ himself in his devotions, *had he but used his own prayer.*" But one grows weary of malice, however, epigrammatic. When the same edge is turned against prevailing sins, especially among courtiers, it does great execution. We would send no man to South, for gentle, persuasive, melting, spiritual instruction; but the scholar may gain from him many lessons of dialectic force, of directness and pungency, of earnest, indignant invective, and of pithy, apothegmatic declamation. The vice of his method is indicated by one of his own sayings: "That is not wit, which comporteth not with wisdom."

It is refreshing to turn from such a malignant, to the sweet and gentle Tillotson. The good archbishop's father was a Yorkshire clothier, a stern Calvinist; perhaps this may account for the son's mildness towards dissent. But in Kneller's great portrait at Lambeth, we discern the unmistakable lineaments of holy peace, joined with everything that a wise churchman might wish in the personal presence of a primate. In this,

though for other reasons we might compare the picture with that of Bossuet, which ennobles the gallery of his native Dijon. Burnet testifies of Tillotson, after long acquaintance, that "he had a clear head, with a most tender and compassionate heart; he was a faithful and zealous friend, but a gentle and soon conquered enemy; his notions of morality were fine and sublime, his thread of reasoning was easy, clear, and solid; he was not only the best preacher of the age, but seemed to have brought preaching to perfection; his sermons were so well liked, that all the nation proposed him as a pattern, and studied to copy after him." Such was the judgment of contemporaries. After his death, there was found a bundle of bitter libels, which had been published against him, preserved and endorsed with his own hand as follows: "I forgive the authors of these books, and pray God that he may also forgive them." When the Huguenot Refugees sought the prayers of the Church, Beveridge, with genuine Episcopalian etiquette, scrupled to read a brief to this effect, in Canterbury Cathedral, because it was against some rubric. "Doctor, doctor," replied the wiser, greater Tillotson, "Charity is above rubrics." We are not to suppose, however, because the archbishop was good and gentle, that he was either feeble in argument or tame in controversy. Against both infidels and papists, his sermons afford some of the most powerful apologetic treatises which have ever been composed. His argument on Transubstantiation would singly be sufficient to make the fortune of a common disputant. Vulgar minds so commonly think that what is very clear must be very shallow, that reasoners of great simplicity and perspicuity are in danger of losing credit; and such we believe has been the case with Tillotson, in our day. He was so little offensive to Dissenters, being indeed the friend of John Howe, that his works would have been widely read and long preserved in our churches, if the stature of his theology had not fallen far below the mark which Evangelical Calvinism fixes as a standard. But there is a boundless store of wealth, in all those discourses which treat of Natural Religion, the difficulties of infidelity, the absurdities of Popery, and the neglected circle of Christian duties. The style of Tillotson is graceefully negligent, sometimes even flat, but generally agreeable, invariably

perspicuous, and at times eminently happy from his idiomatic English; it is well known that Addison took him as a model. For studied ornament, and the glow of oratorical passion, he will never be quoted; but a better model of didactic or practical discourse, could scarcely be chosen.

If our object had been to go fully into the history of the Anglican pulpit, we should have inserted many other names; but then we should have written a volume. Among these we should have found a place for Atterbury, a man of worldly character but great force, and often superior to Tillotson in the elaborate graces and warmth of oratory. We could not have omitted Bull, and Waterland, whose learned and profound vindication of Athanasian truth will abide as a venerable and unequalled monument, as long as our language shall be the vehicle of sound theology; Samuel Clarke, the friend and interpreter of Newton; Secker and Ogden, smooth, judicious and instructive sermonizers; Bentley, Butler, Warburton, and Horsley, giants in theological conflict. But these and many others must be left unrecorded. The perusal of all will only serve to evince more fully the justice of our statement, that the predominant quality of the Anglican pulpit, has been learned and extensive instruction. A manner corresponding to this has prevailed even till our day. Sermons have been read from the manuscript, with little elevation of voice, little action of body, and no fervour of delivery. As the liturgy has become the crowning part of public services, the sermon has become more attenuated in matter and curtailed in length; until in many a fashionable church and chapel, there is a cold essay of fifteen minutes. The mode just now is to cultivate what is called a "quiet manner;" by which is meant a *nonchalant* utterance, such as may persuade the hearer that preaching after all is almost a work of supererogation. There have indeed been Simeons, Melvilles, and McNeiles; but these are *raræ aves* in the Anglican flock. Though a Scotchman, Blair was in all respects a sermonizer after the English heart, and his discourses had immense currency south of the Tweed. No manly critic can read without contempt his pretended survey of the British pulpit, in his Lectures. Amply has the truth been avenged by John Foster's strictures on the once famous sermons of

Blair himself. "After reading five or six sermons," says Foster, "we become assured that we must perfectly see the whole compass of his powers, and that, if there were twenty volumes, we might read on through the whole, without once coming to a broad conception, or a profound investigation, or a burst of genuine enthusiasm. A reflective reader will perceive his mind fixed in a wonderful sameness of feeling throughout a whole volume; it is hardly relieved a moment, by surprise, delight, or labour, and at length becomes very tiresome; perhaps a little analogous to the sensations of a Hindoo while fulfilling his vow, to remain in one certain posture for a month. A sedate formality of manner is invariably kept up through a thousand pages, without the smallest danger of once luxuriating into a beautiful irregularity. A great many people of gayety, rank, and fashion, have occasionally a feeling that a little easy quantity of religion would be a good thing; because it is too true, after all, that we cannot be staying in this world always, and when one gets out of it, why, there may be some hardish matters to settle in the other place. The Prayer-book of a Sunday is a good deal to be sure toward making all safe, but then it is really so tiresome; for penance, it is very well, but to say one likes it, one cannot for the life of one. If there were some tolerable religious things that one could read now and then without trouble, and think it about half as pleasant as a game of cards, it would be comfortable. One should not be so frightened about what we must all come to some time. Now nothing could have been more to the purpose than these sermons; they were welcomed as the very thing. They were unquestionably about religion, and grave enough in all conscience, yet they were elegant; they were so easy to comprehend throughout, that the mind was never detained a moment to think; they were undefiled by Methodism; they but little obtruded peculiar doctrinal notions; they applied very much to high life, and the author was evidently a gentleman; the book could be discussed as a matter of taste, and its being seen in the parlour excited no surmise that any one in the house had lately been converted. Above all, it was most perfectly free from that disagreeable and mischievous property attributed to the eloquence of Pericles, that it 'left stings behind.'"

If we retrace our steps to the last point of departure, in order to consider the preaching of the Nonconformists, we shall find abundant cause to believe, that even after being politically defeated and overthrown at the Restoration, they continued to possess learning, eloquence, and piety, such as were worthy of that great Church of England, of which they were really though not nominally a part. It is somewhat remarkable, that notwithstanding the extraordinary theological interest which characterized the Puritans, and the voluminous works which proceeded from their great men, these less frequently took the precise form of sermons, than was the case with their churchly oppressors. Most of them, it is true, left numerous sermons, but the great mass of their religious writings were given to the public in the shape of treatises and protracted works. This did not certainly arise from any undervaluing of the pulpit; indeed, an over-estimate of this instrument was universally laid to their charge; they preached more frequently, more fervently, and at greater length, than the beneficed divines, and these exercises were attended by greater throngs of animated hearers. But the sermon, as a species of literary creation, was less an object of separate regard. They were more accustomed to the effusion of thought and feeling in language suggested at the moment of delivery; and even when they studied for successive months and years on particular books of Scripture, or heads of theology, and preached constantly on the same, the utterances of the church were not identical with the labours of the study, and the latter continued to retain that form which we now observe in their published works. Of some great treatises we know assuredly, and of others we have the strongest presumption, that they contain the substance of a series of pulpit discourses. This we suppose may be affirmed concerning the greatest works of the most eminent Puritan divines. We need scarcely add, that they had among them some of the mightiest preachers whom the Church has ever seen. Whether we judge by extant remains, or by the testimony of coevals, Richard Baxter was one of these. In our judgment, the English language was never more dexterously wielded by any writer. The thing most observable is, that it is the language of the common people, that which does not

grow obsolete, that which is racy with idiomatic anomaly, that which obeys every impulse of the heaving mind, that which goes direct to the heart. His perspicuity is absolutely cloudless. When he chooses to inveigh against sin, or to thunder from the legal mount, or to depict the doom of sinners, or to awaken the slumbering sinner, he is terrific and irresistible. In graceful description he paints without a superior. And for melting pathos, such as soothes the soul and opens the hidden spring of tears, what can be compared to some passages of the Saint's Rest? Baxter was often betrayed by his native subtlety and his familiarity with the schoolmen, into an intricacy of excessive distinctions which mars all the beauties of his style; and though this occurs more in his controversies than his pulpit labours, we should never think of setting up his sermons as the greatest of his works. The eminent piety which breathes through his practical writings makes him a model for the preacher and pastor of every subsequent age.

The number of distinguished Puritan preachers is so great that we should not dare to attempt enumeration; and if we used selection, we should name those who are familiar to our readers. Of Owen and his works, we have lately written, at some length, in a separate article. In connection with the argumentative force and profound experience of this greatest of the Puritans, the student of theology will remember the silver current and figured diction of Bates; the sweet and simple eloquence of Flavel; the sententious brilliancy of Charnock, like the iridescence of crystals on the surface of a massive rock; and perhaps, above them all, the majestic strength of Howe, a grave and stately bearing of mind, which looks down on the quaint antitheses and foreign images of his contemporaries. In John Howe we meet a writer who seems entirely free from the vicious passions of his day, in thought and language. He even shuns the conventional phrases of the Calvinistic schools, while he teaches their theology. But he was a great Christian philosopher, imbued with the choicest literature of the ancients, and trained by long meditation to expatiate in tracts of spiritual truth, where superficial minds will never follow him. His manner is said to have been in a high degree engaging and impressive. If any one will collate his sermon on the "Vanity of

Man as mortal," with the famous discourse on the same topic by Robert Hall, who profoundly admired him, he will find the germs of the latter in the former; yet, in everything but the exquisite finish of Hall's style, we think the palm must be given to the older divine.

The succeeding generations certainly manifest a decline in regard to the annals of the dissenting pulpit. Even before we come down to the latter half of the eighteenth century, and leaving entirely out of view the lamentable defection from the faith of many Independents, and of most called Presbyterians, it must be admitted that the age of great English preachers was past. That title we unhesitatingly give to Watts and Doddridge. Both, in our opinion, have undeservedly fallen into the shade. For fertility, facility, graceful fluency of thought, charms of illustration, and delightful variety, we know none who excels Watts, in any period. His theological whimsies are well known, and he is not what we denominate a great doctrinal preacher; but the warmth of love, and the play of sanctified imagination, give a stamp to most of his sermons which we would gladly recall to the notice of the younger ministry. Doddridge was a safer and a graver mind, and, according to all canons, a better builder of sermons. Some of his discourses come near being master-pieces; they instruct the mind and elevate the heart; those addressed to youth, and those on Regeneration, have been reprinted again and again, and have won the admiration even of severe judges. They labour sometimes under a fault of style belonging to a particular school of Dissenters at that period, and which, for lack of a better phrase, we may call a sort of genteel affectionateness, or a tenderness of endearing blandishment; but this is forgotten amidst the great amount of saving truth, expressed in language which is always clear and pleasing. It does not fall within our plan to enumerate the celebrated dissenting preachers of a later day and of our own times.

To those who have a facility in the language, we commend the careful study of the French pulpit; for to speak of preaching, and not to name the times of Louis the Fourteenth, would be like discoursing of sculpture without allusion to the age of Pericles. Considered as a product of literary art, the sermon

never attained such completeness, beauty, and honour, as at this period. Our remark must not be taken apart from our limitations. We do not say it was most apostolic, most scriptural, or most fitted to reach the great spiritual end of preaching; the results show that such was not the fact. But viewed in relation to letters, logic, and eloquence, as a structure of genius and taste, the French sermon, in the hands of its great orators, had a rhetorical perfection as distinctly marked as the Greek drama. We are constrained to look upon it in much the same light. The plays of Corneille and the victories of Turenne were not more powerful in penetrating the public mind, than the oratory of Notre Dame. Rank and fashion, including royalty itself, thronged the church, as if it were a theatre, wondering and weeping. Madame de Sevigné, the best painter of her age, speaks of a *belle passion*, as the Good Friday sermon was called, just as she speaks of the Cid. The greatest scholars and critics of the Augustan era of France, saw their ideal of faultless composition realized in the pulpit. The culmination of the art was rapid, and the decline soon followed. No one will claim more than a few names for the catalogue of masterly French preachers; Bourdaloue, Bossuet, Fenelon, Massillon, Fléchier. Many who had a temporary vogue in their day, have been forgotten; but these sustain the ordeal of time. We shall offer a few remarks on some of them, but chiefly on the unapproachable triumvirate.

To Bourdaloue is unhesitatingly given the honour of having raised the French pulpit at once to its greatest height. The judgment of our day is coming more and more to acquiesce in the decision which ranks him clearly first. We may see in La Bruyère how degenerate preaching had become before his day. It was florid, quaint, affected, perplexed with divisions, and overlaid with impertinent learning. He restored it to reason and to nature. No misapprehension can be greater than that which imagines Bourdaloue to have been a man of show, a gaudy rhetorician, or a declaimer. He was, of course, a strenuous Papist, he was even a Jesuit; but assuming his Church to be right, there never was a more unanswerable reasoner in her behalf. It is reasoning, above all things else, which is his characteristic. Seldom does he utter even a few sentences,

without a connected argument. The amount of matter in his discourses, which are sometimes very long, is truly wonderful. His power of condensation, his exactness of method, his singular clearness, and his animated force, enable him to throw an elaborate argument into a single head. The glory of his art is his magical ability to clothe the subtlest reasoning, in diction so beautiful, as to captivate even the unthinking. In our view, his sermons are a study for the young logician. Even when he is defending the extremest errors of Rome, as in his discourse on the saving merit of alms, we feel that we are in the hands of a terrible antagonist. Amidst passages of incomparable fire he seems constrained to indulge his propensity for laying a train of proofs. Thus in his passion-sermon, on the power of the cross, he inserts in the first and greatest part, a series of admirable arguments for the truth of Christianity.

In some points which concern the outward form of the discourse, Bourdaloue left much to be reformed by his great successors. His divisions are bold and numerous, and are stated not only with openness, but with a repetition which we have seen nowhere else. So far from hiding the articulations of his work, he is anxious that they should be observed and never forgotten; but he so varies the formulas of partition, and so beautifies the statement of transitions, by ingenious turns, that the mind is gratified by the exquisiteness of the expression. It had been the fashion to quote the Fathers very largely. Bourdaloue retains this practice. He even seems to wish that his whole performance should rest on citations; and some of them look like centos from Chrysostom, Ambrose, Augustine, and Gregory. But his management of this is graceful and masterly. And it is entertaining to observe with how rich and eloquent an amplification he will paraphrase and apply one of these little Latin sentences, often bringing it in again and again to close some striking period, and making it ring on the ear with happy vehemence at the climax of a paragraph.

If the observation be modified by our protest against the enormities of Popish falsehood, we are willing to say that Bourdaloue was eminently a spiritual, warm, and edifying preacher. Upon the sufferings of Christ, the love of God, the vanity of the world, and the delights of heavenly contempla-

tion, he speaks with a solemnity and an unction, which explain to us the admiration felt for him by Boileau and other Jansenists. The manner in which Bourdaloue pronounced his discourses must have had a power of incantation to which even their greatness as compositions gives us no key. It was his remarkable custom to deliver his sermons with his eyes closed; and he is so represented in his portrait. On coming from the provinces, to preach in the Jesuit Chapel at Paris, he was at once followed by crowds of the highest distinction; and his popularity increased to the very close. For thirty-four years he was equally admired by the court, by men of letters, and by the people. To the Christian visitor in Paris, there is something solemn in the church of St. Paul and St. Louis, to approach the tablet with the simple inscription, HIC JACET BOURDALOUE.

Bossuet was a greater man, but not a greater preacher, than his eloquent contemporary. The reputation derived from his vast learning, his controversial ability, his knowledge of affairs and his strength of will, we very naturally transfer to his preaching, which was nevertheless of consummate excellence. As an author, especially as a master of style, he surpasses them all, if indeed he does not surpass all who ever wrote in French. The power of that somewhat intractable language was never more fully brought out than by Bossuet, to whom the crown of eloquence is therefore given by Voltaire. He was the orator for courts, and we suppose no prince in ancient or modern times, ever had a nobler panegyrist. To learn his argumentative eloquence, we must look to his other works; but in his celebrated Funeral Orations, we have unequalled examples of sublime and original conceptions, arrayed in a diction majestically simple and yet triumphantly splendid. The term which characterizes the discourses of Bossuet, is magnificence. We believe it to be admitted by French critics, that his style is as faultless as that of any writer in any tongue.

There are those who consider Massillon the greatest of French preachers; and the award is just, if we confine our regards to simple elegance of style, traits of nature, strokes of pathos, perfect contexture of the entire performance, and irresistible command of assemblies, and in elocution. Being thirty

years younger than the men we just named, he represents a different school, but it is one which he founded himself. When father Latour, on his arrival at the capital, asked him what he thought of the great orators, he replied, "I find them possessed of genius and great talent; but if I preach, I will not preach like them." Great clearness of thought, perfect sobriety of judgment, profound knowledge of the human heart and of manners, a fund of tender emotion, novelty of illustration, copiousness of language, perspicuous method, and unerring taste, are the characteristics of Massillon. He simplified the divisions of the sermon, and reduced its length, conforming the whole treatment to the most classic models. He is sparing in his citations and unobtrusive in his array of argument. Beyond all competitors, he dissects the heart, reveals the inmost windings of motive, and awakens the emotions of terror, remorse, and pity. In the ethical field, he excels in depicting vice and awakening conscience, in pursuing pride, avarice and self-love to their retreats, and in exposing and stigmatizing the follies of the great. When the aged Bourdaloue heard him, he pointed him out as he descended from the pulpit, saying, "Hunc oportet crescere, me autem minui." Baron, the great actor, said of him to a companion, "My friend, here is an orator; as for us, we are but actors." Whole assemblies were dissolved in tears, or started to their feet in consternation. When he preached the funeral sermon of the King, on the words, "Lo, I have become great;" he commenced by repeating them slowly, as if to recollect himself; then he fixed his eyes on the assembly in mourning; next he surveyed the funeral enclosure, with all its sombre pomp; and lastly, turning his eyes on the mausoleum erected in the midst of the cathedral—after some moments of silence exclaimed, *Dieu seul est grand, mes frères.* "My brethren, God alone is great!" The immense assembly was breathless and awestruck. Voltaire always had on his table the *Petit-Carême* of Massillon, which he regarded as the best model of French prose.

There are discourses of Massillon, which, with the omission of the *Ave Maria*, and a few superficial forms, might be delivered to any Protestant assembly. The union of simple elegance and strong passion has given his sermons a formative influence

in every language of Europe; and they stand at the head of what may be called the modern school of preaching.

Space would fail us, if we were to enlarge upon Fenelon, Fléchier, Bridaine, and other pulpit orators of less note. Chastely beautiful as is the style of Archbishop Fenelon, it is not exactly that which belongs to eloquence. The saintly gentleness of his temper, as well as the doctrines of Quietism which he had embraced, were not the best preparations for passionate oratory. Among his numerous and often delightful works, the number of sermons is not very large. One reason of this may be, that he favoured the extemporaneous method, of which, in his Dialogue on Eloquence, he is the ablest vindicator. There is a sermon of Fenelon's on Foreign Missions, which is full of fine thoughts, and worthy of examination.

The Protestant Churches of France, and of the Refugees, produced some great preachers, of whom the most famous are Claude and Saurin. For solid doctrinal discussion, elaborated into the form of eloquent discourse, the preacher last named continues to be admired. In our own day, there has been a revival of Protestant eloquence, in such men as Vinet, Grandpierre, and Adolphe Monod; and Parisian crowds still follow Lacordaire, Ravignan, Felix, and de Courtier.

The subject has grown upon our hands, and must be dismissed, though we leave untouched the preaching of Germany and Holland, of the contemporary Churches of Great Britain, and the inviting field of the American pulpit.

An enterprising publisher might benefit himself and the Church by issuing, under wise direction, a few volumes of sermons, which should contain none but master-pieces. There are a few such, in each period, which stand out with great prominence, as exhibiting the highest characteristics of their respective authors. In such a selection would be found Bourdaloue's Passion Sermon; Bossuet's Funeral Oration on Turenne; Massillon on the Small Number of the Elect; Barrow's discourse on the Death of Christ; Jeremy Taylor's Marriage Ring; Maclaurin's Glorying in the Cross; Edwards on "Their feet shall slide in due time;" Davies's Bruised Reed; Mason's Gospel to the Poor; Hall's Modern Infidelity; Chalmers's Expulsive Power of a New Affection; and Monod's "God is Love;"

with others, perhaps as worthy, which need not now burden our pages. It has sometimes been made a question how far it is desirable for a preacher to collect and study the written labours of others. There is a use, or rather an abuse, of other men's compositions, which is slavish and dishonourable. No young man of independent mind and high principle, will go to books for his sermon, or for its method, or for any large continuous portion. There is a tacit covenant between preachers and hearers, in our Church and country, which makes it a deception for any man to preach that which is not original. Pulpit larceny is the most unprofitable of all frauds; it is almost certain of detection, and it leaves a stigma on the fame, even beyond its intrinsic turpitude. But surely, an honest soul may wander among valuables without any necessity of thieving. Some have excluded books of sermons from their libraries, and by a "self-denying ordinance" have abstained from perusing them, lest, forsooth, they should damage their own originality. This is about as wise as if an artist should refrain from looking at the frescoes of the Vatican, and the galleries of Florence, Dresden, and the Louvre. We have seen the works of a Western painter, who is said to have acted on such a maxim; he would see no Rafaelles or Van Dycks, lest he should spoil his native manner. He has certainly succeeded in avoiding all that one beholds in these great masters. But in all labours, to the success of which, judgment, taste, and practice must combine, the highest capacity of production is fostered by studying the works of others; and we see not why this is less true in homiletics than in the arts. If a man may not read good sermons, we suppose he may not hear them. The wise student will, with the utmost avidity, both read and hear all that is accessible, of the greatest achievements in the declaration of God's truth. At the same time, he will sit down to his labours as if he had known no performances but his own. He will borrow no man's plan; he will shun all repositories of skeletons and what are ironically named "Preachers' Helps;" and will be himself, even in his earliest and faintest efforts.

In any retrospect of the work of preaching in successive ages, there is one snare which the young minister of Christ cannot too solicitously avoid; it is that of looking upon the utter-

ances of the pulpit with a mere literary eye, as objects of criticism upon the principles of rhetoric and taste. Extensive scriptural knowledge, solid thought, sound judgment, thorough inward discipline, and bursting spiritual emotions, will frame for themselves as a vehicle such a discourse as shall be truly eloquent. In this way, and in this way only, does a discourse on divine subjects come to be subjected to the rules of art. But no rules of art can ensure a sermon which shall please God; and every rule of art may seem to be observed, while yet the result shall be as "sounding brass and a tinkling cymbal." The best sermons are not those which most approach to classical perfection. As preaching is a universal function of the ministry and intended for the whole race, that property which only one man in a million attains cannot be indispensable to its exercise; yet such a property is eloquence. If we could have revealed to us which were the thousand sermons which had most honoured Christ and most benefited men, we should perhaps find among them not one of those which have been held up as models from the desk of professors. "That is a good sermon," said Matthew Henry, "which does thee good." The greatest effects have been produced, in every age, by discourses which sinned against every precept of the schools. The sermon of John Livingstone at the Kirk of Shotts, which was the means of awakening not less than five hundred persons, was never written at all, and if we may judge by what remains to us of his writings, was in a manner exceedingly rude and homely. Yet it was kindled by the fire of God. The more profoundly we are impressed with the utter inefficacy of all intellectual construction and oratorical polish, and feel our absolute dependence on the Spirit of God in preaching, the more likely shall we be to come before God's waiting people with performances, which, however defective or anomalous, as measured by critical standards, shall answer the great end of preaching, being carried to their result by the irresistible demonstration and persuasion of the Holy Ghost.