NOTES AND COMMENTS.

It will be conceded that a good deal of profane swearing is not due to any exceeding wickedness of heart but habit and association. A more potent cause, however, is defective education. The ordinary man finds it difficult to think clearly, to carry a line of thought to its logical conclusion. He has besides, only a limited vocabulary, and so is hampered in giving his thought exact expression. He swears, therefore, just as men shout sometimes, because like a loud cry, imprecation sums up a whole sentence. He wants to make his speech as strong and definite as possible, but his command of words and phrases is small, and a simple statement made in them would, he feels, be weak and feeble. What he needs to increase its potency is italics, and these he finds in oaths. A better educated man would, with his larger command of speech, give the full force of the statement without recourse to adventitious aids. But the ordinary man finds it easier to use the latter. By emphasizing his speech with oaths, he secures the desired verbal force, while avoiding the necessity of thinking clearly and expressing his meaning exactly. It is not alone a direct and flagrant violation of the law of God, but an offense to all who come in contact with them. It betrays a lack of real culture, the culture of the heart as well as of the intellect, and proclaims them to lack that consideration for the feelings and welfare of others which everywhere distinguishes the cultivated from the vulgar.

It may be urged, of course, that swearing is by no means confined to the two classes we have mentioned; that the use of words and devices to give emphasis to speech is general, and that such words and devices belong to the same family as oaths. That there is truth in the charge cannot be denied, though a careful distinction must be made between oaths which dishonor God, and words or forms employed only as italics. Young ladies who desire to add emphasis to certain sentences in their letters, but lack a sufficient command of the forms of rhetoric, to enable them to do so in words are apt to resort to the device of underscoring. Even contributors to the press have been known to show a similar inability to say what they mean without recourse to such symbols. With both classes a mechanical device is employed for the same purpose as in the oath by the uneducated, and so in a way is swearing, though without the element of profanity. In like manner the people who help out a natural paucity of expression by working their arms, lifting their eyebrows, or shrugging their shoulders, may be said to resort to oaths of gesticulation. But while they are to be avoided as betraying a lack of precision of thought and expression, and so of culture, they cannot be placed in the same category with profane swearing. Not so much can be said, however, for the use of words which closely approach profanity, and which are clearly employed with evil intent.

WANTED NO WITNESS.

Thieves Made Short Work of Their Captured Comrade.

A traveller in South America tells Cassell's Saturday Journal a ghastly store of an adventure among the outlaws and desperadoes there. One night a farmer was aroused from his sleep by hearing an unusual noise about the place. He got quietly out of bed, and, after listening attentively, discovered that some people outside were cutting a hole through the door close to the bolt by which it was held. It did not require any great amount of detective talent to guess the object of the operation, and the best way to foil it was suggested by a thong of rawhide, with a loop on it, which hung from a hook on the inside of the door. Noiselessly removing the thong, he slipped the end of it through the loop, and there he stood, armed with an impromptu lasso, ready for action. It was an anxious time while the farmer stood watching the hole in the door, grow larger and larger, until at last it was of sufficient size to effect the purpose for which it was made. The supreme moment arrived, and a hand was inserted stealthily, not only through the hole, but also through the loop of the little lasso which hung skilfully around it.

With a sudden jerk the loop was tightened around the wrist, the hand was dragged in as far as the aperture would allow, and the thong was securely fastened to the hook on the back of the door. The robber was perfectly helpless. His companions came to his aid, and having ineffectually dragged at the imprisoned arm till they were tired, gave up the struggle, and prepared to depart. But they were prudent men, and it occurred to them that, to save himself, their comrade might betray them. Dead men, they said, tell no tales; so they killed him on the spot and ran away.

ADULTERATE IT THEMSELVES.

A process has been invented and patented in Brazil for preparing coffee in tabloids by a system of compression. It is argued that not only will there be less expense in exporting coffee in this form, but that the customer will be more certain of thus receiving for his use the pure, unadulterated article.

"BLESS THE LORD, O MY SOUL!"

Rev. Dr. Talmage Speaks of the Love of God.

Surpasses That of a Mother—Teaching Children by Pictures—The Prodigal Son—A Father's Favouritism—The Mother's Invalid Child—When God Tests a Christian's Character.

A despatch from Washington says:—Rev. Dr. Talmage preached from the following text:—"As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."—Isaiah lxvi, 13.

The Bible is a warm letter of affection from a parent to a child, and yet there are many who see chiefly the severer passages. As there may be fifty or sixty nights of gentle dew in one summer, that will not cause as much remark as one hail-storm of half an hour, so there are those who are more struck by those passages of the Bible that announce the indignation of God than by those that announce his affection. There may come to a household twenty or fifty letters of affection during the year, and they will not make as much excitement in that home as one sheriff's writ; and so there are people who are more attentive to those passages which announce the wrath of God, than to those which announce His mercy and His favor. God is a Lion, John says in the Book of Revelation. God is a Breaker, Micah announces in his prophecy. God is a Rock. God is a King. But hear also that God is Love. A father and his child are walking out in the fields on a summer's day, and there comes up a thunder-storm, and there is a flash of lightning that startles the child, and the father says, "My dear, that is God's eye." There comes a peal of thunder, and the father says, "My dear, that is God's voice." But the clouds go off the sky, and the storm is gone, and light floods the heavens and floods the landscape, and the father forgets to say, "That is God's smile."

The text of this morning bends with great gentleness and love over all who are prostrate in sin and trouble. It lights up with compassion. It melts with tenderness. It breathes upon us the hush of an eternal lullaby, for it announces that God resembles your Mother. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I remark, in the first place, that God has a mother's simplicity of instruction. A father does not know how to teach a child the A. B. C. Men are not skilled in the primary department; but a mother has so much patience that she will tell a child for the hundredth time the difference between F and G, and between I and J. Sometimes it is by blocks; sometimes by worsted work; sometimes by the slate; sometimes by the book. She thus teaches the child, and has no awkwardness of condescension, in so doing. So God, like our Mother, stoops down to our infantile minds. Though we are told a thing a thousand times, and we do not understand it, our heavenly Mother goes on, line upon line, precept upon precept, here a little, there a little. God has been teaching some of us thirty years, and some of us sixty years, one word of one syllable, and we do not know it yet—f-a-i-t-h, faith. When we come to that word we stumble, we halt, we lose our place, we pronounce it wrong. Still God's patience is not exhausted. God, like our Mother, puts us in the school of prosperity, and the letters are in sunshine, and we cannot spell them. God puts us in the school of adversity, and the letters are black, and we cannot spell them. If God were merely a king, he would punish us; if he were simply a father, he would whip us; but God is like a mother, and so we are borne with and helped all the way through.

A mother teaches her child chiefly by pictures. If she wants to set forth to her child the hideousness of a quarrelsome spirit, instead of giving a lecture upon that subject she turns over a leaf and shows the child two boys in a wrangle, and says, "Does not that look horrible?" If she wants to teach her child the awfulness of war, she turns over the picture-book and shows the war-charger, the headless trunks of butchered men, the wild, agonizing, bloodshot eye of battle rolling under lids of flame, and she says, "That is war!" The child understands it. In a great many books the best part are the pictures. The style may be insipid, the type poor, but a picture attracts a child's attention. Now, God, like our Mother, teaches us almost everything by pictures.

God wishes to set forth the fact that in the judgment the good will be divided from the wicked. How is it done? By a picture, by a parable—a fishing scene. A group of hardy men, long-bearded, geared for standing to the waist in water; sleeves rolled up. Long oar, sunglit; boat battered as though it had been a playmate of the storm. A full net, thumping about with the fish, which have just discovered their captivity, the worthless moss-bunkers and the useful flounders all in the same net. The fisherman puts his hand down amid the squirming fins, takes out the moss-bunkers and throws them into the water, and gathers the good fish into the pail. So, says Christ, it shall be at the end of the world. The bad he will cast away, and the good he will keep. Another picture.

God, like our Mother, wanted to set forth the duty of neighbourly love, and is done by a picture. A heap of wounds on the road to Jericho. A traveller has been fighting a robber. The robber stabbed him and knocked him down. Two ministers come along. They look at the poor fellow, but do not help him. A traveller comes along—a Samaritan. He says, "Whoa" to the beast he is riding, and dismounts. He examines the wounds; he takes out some wine, and with it washes the wounds, and then he takes some oil, and puts that in to make the wounds stop smarting; and then he tears off a piece of his own garment for a bandage. Then he helps the wounded man upon the beast, and walks by the side, holding him on until they come to a tavern. He says to the landlord, "Here is money to pay the man's board for two days; take care of him; if it costs anything more, charge it to me, and I will pay it." Picture—The Good Samaritan, or Who is your neighbour?

Does God want to set forth what a foolish thing it is to go away from the right, and how glad Divine mercy is to take back the wanderer? How is it done? By a picture. A good father. Large farm, with fat sheep and oxen. Fine house, with exquisite wardrobe. Discontented boy. Goes away. Sharpers fleece him. Feeds hogs. Gets homesick. Starts back. Sees an old man running. It is father! The hand, torn of the husks, gets a ring. The foot, inflamed and bleeding, gets a sandal. The bare shoulder, showing through the tatters, gets a robe. The stomach, gnawing itself with hunger, gets a full platter smoking with meat. The father cannot eat for looking at the returned adventurer. Tears running down the face until they come to a smile—the night dew melting into the morning. No work on the farm that day; for when a bad boy repents, and comes back, promising to do better, God knows that it is enough for one day. "And they began to be merry." Picture—Prodigal Son returned from the wilderness. So God, like our Mother, teaches us everything by pictures. The sinner is a lost sheep. Jesus is the Bridegroom. The useless man a barren fig-tree. The Gospel is a great supper. Satan, a sower of tares. Truth, a mustard-seed. That which we could not have understood in the abstract statement, God presents to us in this Bible-album of pictures, God engraved. "Is not the Divine loving-kindness ever thus teaching us?"

I remark again, that God has more than a mother's favouritism. A father sometimes shows a sort of favouritism. Here is a boy—strong, well, of high forehead and quick intellect. The father says, "I will take that boy into my firm yet;" or, "I will give him the very best possible education." There are instances where, for the culture of the one boy, all the others have been robbed. A sad favouritism; but that is not the mother's favourite. I will tell you her favourite. There is a child who at two years of age had a fall. He never got over it. The scarlet fever muffled his hearing. He is not what he once was. The child has caused the mother more anxious nights than all the other children. If he coughs in the night, she springs out of a sound sleep and goes to him. The last thing she does when going out of the house is to give a charge in regard to him. The first thing on coming in is to ask in regard to him. Why, the children of the family, all know that he is the favourite, and say, "Mother, you let him do just as he pleases, and you give him a great many things which you do not give us. He is your favourite." The mother smiles; she knows it is so. So he ought to be; for if there is any one in the world who needs sympathy more than another, it is an invalid child, weary on the first mile of life's journey, carrying an aching head, a weak inside, an irritated lung. So the mother ought to make him a favourite. God, like our Mother, has favourites. "Whom the Lord loveth he chasteneth." That is, one whom he especially loves He chasteneth. God loves us all; but is there one weak, and sick, and sore, and wounded, and suffering, and faint? That is the one who lies nearest and more perpetually on the great, loving heart of God. Why it never coughs but God hears it. It never stirs a weary limb in the bed but God knows of it. There is no such a watcher as God. The best nurse may be overborne by fatigue, and fall asleep in the chair; but God, like our Mother, after being up a year of nights with a suffering child never slumbers or sleeps.

"Oh!" says one, "I cannot understand all that about affliction." A refiner of silver once explained it to a Christian lady. "I put the silver in the fire, and I keep refining it and trying it till I can see my face in it, and I then take it out." Just so it is that God keeps His dear children in the furnace till the divine image may be seen in them; then they are taken out of the fire. "Well," says some one, "if that is the way that God treats His favourites, I do not want to be a favourite." There is a barren field on an autumn day just wanting to be let alone. There is a bang at the bars, and a rattle of whiffle trees and clevices. The field says, "What is the farmer going to do with me now?" The farmer puts the plough in the ground, shouts to the horses, the coulter goes tearing through the sod, and the furrow reaches from fence to fence. Next day there is a bang at the bars, and a rattle of whiffle-trees again. The field says, "I wonder what the farmer is going to do now." The farmer hitches the horses to the harrow, and it goes bounding and tearing across the field. Next day there is a rattle at the bars again, and the field says, "What is the farmer going to do now?" He walks heavily across the field, scattering seed as he walks. After a while a cloud comes. The field says, "What, more trouble?" It begins to rain. After a while the wind changes to the north-east, and it begins to snow. Says the field, "Is it not enough that I have been torn, and trampled upon, and drowned? Must I now be snowed under?" After a while, Spring comes out of the gates of the South, and warmth and gladness come with it. A green scarf bandages the gash of the wheat-field, and the July morning drops a crown of gold on the head of the grain. "Oh!" says the field, "now I know the use of the plough, of the harrow, of the shower, and of the snow. It is well enough to be trodden, and snowed under, if I can yield such a glorious harvest." "He that goeth forth and weepeth, bearing precious seed, shall doubtless come again with rejoicing, bringing his sheaves with him."

When I see God especially busy in troubling and trying a Christian, I know that out of that Christian's character there is to come some especial good. A quarryman goes down into the excavation, and with strong-handed machinery bores into the rock. The rock says, "What do you do that for?" He puts powder in; he lights a fuse. There is a thundering crash. The rock says, "Why, the whole mountain is going to pieces." The crowbar is plunged; the rock is dragged out. After a while it is taken into the artist's studio. It says, "Well, now I have got to a good, warm, comfortable place at last." But the sculptor takes the chisel and mallet, and he digs for the eyes, and he cuts for the mouth, and he bores for the ear, and he rubs it with sand-paper, until the rock says, "When will this torture be ended?" A sheet is thrown over it. It stands in darkness. After a while it is taken out. The covering is removed. It stands in the sunlight in the presence of ten thousand applauding people, as they greet the statue of the poet, or the prince, or the conqueror. "Ah!" says the stone, "now I understand it. I am a great deal better off now standing as a statue of a conqueror than I would have been down in the quarry." So God finds a man down in the quarry of ignorance and sin. How to get him up? He must be bored, and blasted, and chiselled, and chiselled, and scoured, and stand sometimes in the darkness. But after a while the mantle of affliction will fall off, and his soul will be greeted by the one hundred and forty-four thousand, and the thousand of thousands, as more than conqueror. Oh, my friends, God, like our Mother, is just as kind in our afflictions as in our prosperities. God never touches us but for our good. If a field clean and cultured is better off than a barren field, and if a stone that has become a statue is better off than the marble in the quarry, then that soul which God chastens may be His favourite. Oh, the rocking of the soul is not the rocking of an earthquake, but the rocking of God's cradle. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you." I have been told that the pearl in an oyster is merely the result of a wound, or a sickness inflicted upon it, and I do not know but that the brightest gems of heaven will be found to have been the wounds of earth kindled into the jewelled brightness of eternal glory.

I remark that God has more than a mother's capacity for attending to little hurts. The father is shocked at the broken bone of the child, or at the sickness that sets the cradle on fire with fever, but it takes the mother to sympathize with all the little ailments and little bruises of the child. If the child have a splinter in its hand, it wants the mother to take it out, and the father. The father says, "Oh, that is nothing," but the mother knows it is something, and that a little hurt sometimes is a very great hurt. So, with God: all our annoyances are important enough to look at and sympathize with. Nothing with God is something. There are no ciphers in God's arithmetic. And if we were only good enough of sight, we could see as much through a microscope as through a telescope. Those things that may be impalpable and infinitesimal to us, may be pronounced an infinite to God. A mathematical point is defined as having no parts, no magnitude. It is so small you cannot imagine it, and yet a mathematical point may be a starting-point for a great eternity. God's surveyors carry a very long chain. A scale must be very delicate that can weigh a grain, but God's scale is so delicate that He can weigh with it that which is so small that a grain is a million times heavier. When John Kitto, a poor boy on a back street of Plymouth, cut his foot with a piece of glass, God bound it up so successfully that he became the great Christian geographer, and a commander known among all nations. So every wound of the soul, however insignificant, God is willing to bind up. As at the first cry of the child the mother rushes to kiss the wound, so God, like our Mother, takes the smallest wound of the heart, and presses it to the lips of divine sympathy. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I remark farther that God has more than a mother's patience for the erring. If one does wrong, first his associates in life cast him off; if he goes on in the wrong way, his business partner casts him off; if he goes on, his best friends cast him off. But after all others have cast him off, where does he go? Who holds no grudge, and forgives the last time as well as the first? Who sits by the murderer's counsel all through the long trial? Who tarries the longest at the windows of a culprit's cell? Who, when all others think ill of a man, keeps on thinking well of him? It is his mother. God bless her grey hairs, if she still be alive; and bless her grave if she be gone! And bless the rocking chair in which she used to sit, and bless the cradle that she used to rock, and bless the bible she used to read! So God has patience for all the erring. After everybody else has cast a man off, God, like our Mother, comes to the rescue. God leaps to take charge of a bad case. After all the other doctors have got through, the heavenly Physician comes in. Human sympathy at such a time does not amount to much. Even the sympathy of the Church, I am sorry to say, often does not amount to much. I have seen the most harsh and bitter treatment on the part of those who were wavering and erring. They tried on the wanderer sarcasm, and Billingsgate, and caricature, and they tried tittle-tattle. There was one thing they did not try, and that was forgiveness. A soldier in England was brought by a sergeant to the colonel. "What," says the colonel, "bringing the man here again. We have tried everything with him." "Oh no," says the sergeant, "there is one thing you have not tried. I would like you to try that." "What is that?" said the Colonel. Said the man, "Forgiveness." The case had not gone so far but that it might take that turn, and so the colonel said, "Well, young man, you have done so and so. What is your excuse?" "I have no excuse, but I am very sorry," said the man. "We have made up our minds to forgive you," said the colonel. The tears started. He had never been accosted in that way before. His life was reformed, and that was the starting-point for a positively Christian life. Oh Church of God, quit your sarcasm when a man falls! Quit your irony, quit your tittle-tittle, and try forgiveness. God, like your Mother, tries it all the time. A man's sin may be like a continent, but God's forgiveness is like the Atlantic and Pacific Oceans, bounding it on both sides.

The Bible often talks about God's hand. I wonder how it looks. You remember distinctly how your mother's hand looked, though thirty years ago it withered away. It was different from your father's hand. When you were to be chastised, you had rather have mother punish you than father. It did not hurt so much. And father's hand was different from mother's partly because it had outdoor toil, and partly because God intended it to be different. The knuckles were more firmly set, and the palm was calloused. But mother's hand was more delicate. There were blue veins running through the back of it. Though the fingers, some of them, were picked with a needle, the palm of it was soft. Oh! it was very soft. Was there ever any poultice like that to take pain out of a wound? God's hand is like a mother's hand. What it touches it heals. If it smite you, it does not hurt as if it were another hand. Oh you poor wandering soul in sin, it is not a bailiff's hand that seizes you to-day. It is not a hard hand. It is not an unsympathetic hand. It is not a cold hand. It is not an enemy's hand. No. It is a gentle hand, a loving hand, a sympathetic hand, a soft hand, a mother's hand. "As one whom his mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

I want to say, finally, that God has more than a mother's way of putting a child to sleep. You know there is no cradle-song like a mother's. After the excitement of the evening it is almost impossible to get the child to sleep. If the rocking-chair stop a moment, the eyes are wide open; but the mother's patience and the mother's soothing manner keep on until, after a while, the angel of slumber puts his wing over the pillow. Well, my dear brothers and sisters in Christ, the time will come when we will be wanting to be put to sleep. The day of our life will be done, and the shadows of the night of death will be gathering around us. Then we want God to soothe us, to hush us to sleep. Let the music at our going not be the dirge of the organ or the knell of the church-tower, or the drumming of a "dead march" but let it be the hush of a mother's lullaby. Oh! the cradle of the grave will be soft with the pillow of all promises. When we are being rocked into that last slumber, I want this to be the cradle-song. "As one whom a mother comforteth, so will I comfort you."

"Asleep in Jesus! Far from thee
Thy kindred and their graves may be;
But thine is still a blessed sleep,
From which none ever wake to weep."

A Christian man was dying in Scotland. His daughter Nellie sat by the bedside. It was Sunday evening, and the bell of the Scotch Kirk was ringing, calling the people to church. The good old man, in his dying dream, thought that he was on the way to church, as he used to be when he went in the sleigh across the river; and as the evening bell struck up, in his dying dream he thought it was the call to church. He said, "Hark, children, the bells are ringing; we shall be late; we must make the mare stop out quick!" He shivered, and then said, "Pull the buffalo robe up closer, my lass! It is cold crossing the river, but we will soon be there. Nellie, we will soon be there!" And he smiled and said, "Just there now." No wonder he smiled. The good old man had got to church. Not the old Scotch kirk, but the temple in the skies. Just across the river...

How comfortably did God hush that old man to sleep! As one whom his mother comforteth, so God comforted him.

COFFEE DRINKERS.

Supported in the Use of the Stimulant by Late Authorities.

The question of coffee drinking being injurious is agitated for every now and again; then the agitation subsides, and people go on drinking it.

According to the best authorities, coffee taken in moderation is not only harmless, but highly beneficial. Its value as a stimulant has always been recognized, and the fact that it is so highly prized as a beverage, if there were no other reason would go far to prove that it has a powerful influence on the nervous system.

The action imparted to the nerves, however, is natural and healthy, and habitual coffee drinkers generally enjoy good health and live to a good old age.

For brain workers its value cannot be overestimated. It has been called the "mental beverage," and, unlike alcohol, the gentle exhilaration it produces is not followed by any harmful reaction. It causes contentment of mind, allays hunger and bodily weakness, and increases the capacity for work.

The mental exhilaration and physical activity it causes explains the fondness for it which has been shown by so many scientists, poets, scholars and others devoted to thought. Its effect on the imagination is remarkable, without causing any subsequent depression, as in the case of narcotics. Balzac, the great French novelist, declared that he could not have written the "Comedie Humaine" without its aid.

VISUAL ORGANS ALL RIGHT.

Can I see the mistress of the house? asked the tourist in reduced circumstances who stood at the kitchen door.

You can if you have good use of your eyes, coldly replied the woman confronting her. You are looking at her!

I can use them well enough, madam, he responded, with much stiffness, to see that you are a purist, and not a philanthropist. We have nothing in common. Good afternoon, madam.

POINTS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Places That the Present War Brings Into Prominence Before the Eyes of the World.

DUNDEE is in Natal, and is [illegible] miles north of Ladysmith, on the line of railroad from Durban to Pretoria. It is 290 miles below Pretoria. The famous gorge at the pass of the Natal territory is near there. Dundee, formerly the capital of the Zululand African Republic, is adjacent.

The region is mountainous, and abounds in coal and iron [illegible]. It is where all the coal for the railway comes from.

VRYBURG—This is the place where the Boers blew up an armoured train of the British. Vryburg is an ancient capital of Bechuanaland. It is on the railroad from Cape Town to Buluwayo, 775 miles north of Cape Town. It is 127 miles north of the Kimberley diamond fields, and 45 miles west of the border of the South African Republic. It is an important centre.

KIMBERLEY—Here the besieged Cecil Rhodes, the director of the British South Africa Company and of the De Beers Diamond Mining Company.

Kimberley is in Cape Colony, [illegible] miles above Cape Town, on the road from the latter place to Buluwayo. It is located on the [illegible] border of the Orange Free State. It is the centre of the greatest diamond mines in the world. There is a vast amount of gold locked up in Kimberley, supposed to aggregate [illegible].

MAJUBA HILL, where the Boers defeated the British in 1881, is [illegible] miles north of Newcastle, [illegible] der of the Orange Free State, [illegible] 275 miles from Durban, on the railway which leads from Durban to Pretoria. The mountain has an altitude of [illegible] feet, and guards the pass called Nek. The trunk line from Durban to Pretoria now runs through this place. It is about 235 miles from Durban, in a north-west, to Pretoria.

VAN REENEN'S PASS—This mountain defile is located on the railroad from Ladysmith to Harrismith, and is in Natal, on the side of the mountain range which separates Natal from the Orange Free State.

From Ladysmith to the pass the ascent is gradual, from the Natal lands to the defiles of the mountains. The pass is 5,500 feet above the level. The Drakensburg is the watershed which divides the Indian from the Atlantic oceans.

INGOGO HEIGHTS—This station is given to the mountains which [illegible] the angle where Natal, the Orange Free State and the South African Republic come together. The place is historic, for it contains [illegible] the battle fields in the war between the Boers and the British in 1880-1. Ingogo station is 283 miles north of Durban on the road from Durban to Pretoria. The railroad passes [illegible] is 4,000 feet above the sea level.

Ladysmith is in Natal, 90 miles north of Durban, on the road to Pretoria. It is on a mountain side of the Klip river, 3,281 feet above the sea, and thirty miles from the foot of the Drakensburg range. It is just east of the Orange Free State border.

HARRISMITH is 250 miles north of Durban, in the Orange Free State, just west of the Natal border. It is on a branch of the road from Durban to Pretoria, is built of wood, and is 5[illegible] from the Table Mountains, and is a most important trading centre of the Orange Free State. It is a [illegible] sort. Harrismith is one of the seven rendezvous of the militia of the Orange Free State.

MAFEKING—This place is supposed to be one of the objective points of the Boers in their first campaign. Mafeking is on the railroad from Cape Town to Buluwayo; and is 275 miles above Cape Town. Until two years ago it was the terminus of the railway. It is a free warehouse port, under the South African Customs Union Convention. It is located in Cape Colony, [illegible] west of the border of the South African Republic, and is on the line between Bechuanaland and the Transvaal. The place is of strategic importance. Formerly it was the home of the Ba-Mangwata, a highly civilized native race. It is an important trading centre.

OFFICIALS IN SOUTH AFRICA.

Men Who Preside Over the Republics and Colonies Made Famous by the War.

South African Republic—President, Stephanus J. Paul Kruger, "Oom Paul;" Vice-President, Gen. P. J. Joubert, "Slim Piet;" Secretary of State, F. W. Reitz; Commandant-General, Chief Commandant of First Volksraad, P. J. Joubert; Commandant of Second Volksraad, N. Steen Kamp; Chief Justice, Gregorowski, Pretoria.

Orange Free State, independent—President, M. J. Steyn; Secretary of State, F. J. Blignaut; Chairman of the Volksraad, C. H. Wessels; Chief Justice Supreme Court, M. [illegible]; Capital, Bloemfontein.

Bechuanaland, English—Governor, Sir Alfred Milner; Resident Commissioner, Major Hamilton; Government Secretary, Major Adams. No capital. The colony is governed from Cape Town.

Natal and also Zululand, English—Governor, Sir Walter F. Hely-Hutchinson; Premier, Sir Henry Bale; Attorney-General, Mr. Bale; Capital, Pietermaritzburg.

Cape of Good Hope and Cape Colony, English—Governor, Sir Alfred Milner; Imperial Secretary, George Fiddes; Commander of Troops, Lieut.-Gen. Sir William T. Butler; Premier, William Philip Schreiner; Speaker of the Assembly, W. B. Berry; Capital, Cape Town.

Basutoland, English—Resident Commissioner, Sir Godfrey Lagden; Capital, Maseru.

THE ALTERNATIVE.

I shall not go out of the door, said the irate subscriber, if I do not have an explanation.

Oh, all right, responded the editor. The window is just as handy.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

INTERNATIONAL LESSON, NOV. 26.

"Woes of Intemperance." Prov. xxiii. 29-35. Golden Text. Prov. 23. 1.

PRACTICAL NOTES.

Verse 29. Who hath woe? Who hath sorrow? Literally, "Who has Oh! who has Alas!" Whose life is made up of exclamations of distress? "Oh!" and "Alas!" are occasional interjections with most of us; they are outcries of pain that suddenly interrupt the peaceful flow of life. But Solomon knows a man whose life is one prolonged outcry of agony. Who is he? Who hath contentions? Who hath complaint? The liquor shop is the headquarters of fighters and of fools. If a man is determined to fight with another, he must get rid of human reason, so he takes alcohol and becomes a brute. If a man wants to learn a fool's secret, he must first get rid of a fool's lingering senses. So he goes to alcohol, and the secret is divulged, wounds without cause. Wounds without reason. A large proportion of the diseases which scourge us, a larger portion of fatal accidents, and nearly all the causeless and unfortunate disputes of life, arise from alcohol, intoxicating drugs. Who hath redness of eyes? "Dimming of eyes" would be a better translation, but bloodshot and bleared eyes are marks of a drunkard.

This verse is an awful arraignment of wine. In Solomon's day wine was not stronger than wine was known, ours distilled liquor and the evil effects of popular drinks bring ruin much nearer to our households. Rob. Hall, the famous Baptist, called brandy "liquid fire and distilled damnation." The fabled Circe invited men to delightful banquets, which partook of, transformed, the guests into beasts. Such is the "liquor habit." Alcohol overworks the heart, poisons the blood, weakens the lungs, paralyzes the nerves, congests the brain, dulls the mind, and destroys the soul. In our day, as in Solomon's, the twenty-ninth verse can be truthfully answered only by the thirteenth; only that we have paused to "wine" and "mixed wine" wearisome list of intoxicating drinks and drugs.

30. They that tarry long at the wine. There are in almost every community drunkards whose "sprees" are protracted through days and even weeks. There is an evil charm in all intoxicants. They that go to seek mixed wine. "Mixed wine" is wine spiced and drugged to strengthen it. "Go to seek" literally "go in to sample," to test. We have in this verse grouped together those who drink "regularly" at home and those who haunt the groggeries. The weaker always leads to the stronger; cider to wine, wine to whisky, whisky to the strongest intoxicants.

31. Look not thou upon the wine. If wine is charming, turn thine eyes away. Total abstinence, then, is no nineteenth century doctrine. Three thousand years ago wise men saw clearly that moderate drinking was the most means to develop thoroughly sober men, while it makes multitudes of drunkards. But how pitiful is this vice! Three thousand years! Ninety generations! Think those long years how many lives have been ruined by intoxicants, how many souls lost! What immeasurable practical folly there is in this world in spite of all its aggregated wisdom! When it is red. Or golden, the beauty of wine adds to its temptation and its danger. Giveth his color in the cup. Sends the sparkling head up to the surface. Moveth itself aright. The Revised Version "goeth down smoothly." Which of these phrases be preferred, the reference still is to the evil charm of wine; it glows and sparkles to please the eye; its flavor delights the sense of taste.

32. At the last it biteth like a serpent. However fascinating at first, the end it stings. And how exactly is the pain of its sting picture of miseries, remorse, defamation, degradation, of characters! Prof. An adder. Probably referring to Dr. Plumptre, "This is the asp, or horned snake, which rears itself up on the sands of the East and strikes unexpectedly at wayfarers."

33. Thine eyes shall behold strange women. The Revised Version, "Thine eyes shall behold strange things," a phrase which suggests to Bishop Jeremiah Taylor Lewis, "denotes topsy-turvy things. The Hebrew word means, utter contradictoriness, perversity, and wild confusion." The intoxicated man having stupefied his moral purpose and depraved his lawless imaginings, [illegible] will not words be uttered? Strong drink greatly stimulates the lower passions.

34. As he that lieth down upon the top of the sea. Very goldly, very much in danger. As one that lieth upon the top of the mast. Fanatic resistement. So is he as a wretched a bed as the mast of a vessel plunging in the tempestuous open sea would not be a resting place. But it is a comfortable place of repose compared with a drunkard.

35. They have stricken me, and I was not sick, have beaten me, and I felt it not. The drunkard [illegible] his friends: "when they have stricken me, when they have beaten me, but I felt it not." I awake should I do [illegible] what follows. It is a strange behavior of every man who delivers himself over to this fatal habit. I shall awake" I will seek it again.

ACTUALLY INSULTING.

Conductor, hastily.—How old is your child?

Young Mother, indignantly.—Old enough to have a child old enough to pay fare!

EDITORIAL NOTES.

Not long ago it was reported that a treaty had been concluded between Great Britain and Portugal by which the former power was to acquire part of the Portuguese possessions in East Africa, which lies between the Komati River, on the north, and the frontier of Tonga Land, which is a British possession. The terms of the treaty have been needed includes the Delagoa Bay, the importance of which has been previously recognized and emphasized by the present war. If such a treaty had been concluded it would not be valid until it was ratified by the Portuguese Cortes, and experience has shown that such ratification would be doubtful. As a matter of fact, whatever inconclusive negotiations may have been carried on between Delagoa Bay remains Portuguese territory and the Lisbon Government, consequently issued a proclamation of neutrality. A glance at the map of South Africa will explain the advantage, from a military point of view, which the ownership of Delagoa Bay gives the English in their quarrel with the Boers. The port is only 370 miles from Pretoria, Durban, the next nearest, is 710 and Port Elizabeth is 740 and East London 640. An advance from the Portuguese, against the Transvaal would be child's play. Regarding the contemplated [illegible] Cape Town or Port Elizabeth, the strategic value of Delagoa Bay is distinctly perceived by anyone who is with South Africa affairs. As it is now, and if the British Government should now avail itself of the port for military purposes [illegible].

When Sir Robert Morier, the British Minister at Lisbon, died a few seventies, the Transvaal was annexed to Great Britain. The apprehension of any interference in that quarter was groundless, the Kaffir war was ended as it was by the Zulus, and the necessity of securing a control over the Portuguese Lorenzo Marques, and a speedy access to the interior by prolonged negotiations. When Morier succeeded in securing the sent of the Lisbon Government to a treaty signed on May 3, 1879, by, besides commercial advantages, England secured the right to land and disembark troops and munitions of war at Delagoa Bay, and to have free passage for them from and to the British territories across the Portuguese territory. But sooner were the terms of the treaty known than a vehement outcry against them was made in the Portuguese Cortes, and there is no doubt that the British Government then, in the interest of immediate ratification, promised that it would have collapsed. As a fact, the British Government, in the successive negotiations put forward by the representative in London, and when Mr. Gladstone decided that the Transvaal to the terms of the Pretoria Treaty was still [illegible].

Its author then addressed the British Foreign Office, and on its behalf, pointing out that never great had been the importance of gaining the Delagoa Bay, for the British Government, South African possessions, the importance had been doubled by Holland's withdrawal from the Cape. No more effectual means of enforcing the rights of the Imperial Government under the convention of 1881 could be devised than those secured under the treaty. For, either the Boers would have expectations upon which Lord Carnarvon's policy (towards the Transvaal) was based, in which case the Transvaal would share the commercial advantages of the Anglo-Portuguese treaty, or they would not fulfil such expectations, and England would be free, sooner or later, to renew her claims in view of which contingency, common prudence dictated the possession of the only railway by which she could ever hope to have communication with the interior, as his argument seems to have convinced the Government of Lord Beaconsfield's immediate successors. The treaty was allowed to lapse, and upon to have been forgotten of 1879 was followed by the Boer war of 1880-1, and by the Convention of 1881 which was followed by oblivion. Sir Robert Morier considered that treaty the most important achievement in his half-century career, and the merit of it, nevertheless, sufficiently put it in the War Office just now, when pondering over the problem of reinforcing the army, under Sir Redvers Buller, from the seacoast to Pretoria.

ROOT OF SOME EVIL.

Dear Madame, the note received for the sake of the boys in the office, [illegible] under the jurisdiction of your husband and consequently have occasion to note his moods, will you kindly enough to take especial care that he gets a good breakfast this morning? If you have any hot water warmed over, give it to him [illegible]. We make this plea in the interest of peace and prosperity.