

THE
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LIFE-BLOOD ECCLESIASTICAL.

OF Churches as of individuals it is true that they never reach their best and highest state till they have more to do than can be done. To do his best, a man must be over-worked. Not so thoroughly over-burdened as to be crushed ; but with the measure of disproportion between his energies and his work that compels unwearied vigilance, systematic effort, and constant pressing toward the mark. We are speaking now of a natural law regulating the development of human energy ; we are not yet adverting to that experience of feebleness which compels application to an unseen Power. Few men can afford to work on half-steam. The machinery gets too languid, and the capacity is lost for higher exertion. Public life on half-steam is a lazy, humdrum affair. It is an auctioneer's idea that a "living" in a beautiful rural parish, with ample stipend and little work, is the *ne plus ultra* of clerical desirability. Looked at from a higher point of view, and with reference to the higher ends of life, it ought probably to be regarded as the lowest. Surely in the army the best berth for a young man is that which will make the best soldier of him. If regard be had in like manner to what will make the best clergyman, purify and elevate his aims, strengthen and mature his powers, enlarge the record of his service, yield him the purest enjoyment,—in a word, turn him into the highest and noblest kind of being,—the preference is undoubtedly due to a dense and destitute city parish. Men professedly serving Christ may disguise paltry motives and selfish lives as they please ; but when the great Captain comes to review and reward His troops, it is the men that have borne toil and risked danger, and that have struggled and laboured to put down wrong and falsehood, and to exalt truth, meekness, and righteousness, that will get the stars and decorations. So it is the Churches that aim most earnestly at these things that will have most of His countenance and blessing here. And it is the Churches that, setting such aims before them, and striving perpetually to accomplish them, are

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policy of stopping those who take a more vivid view than themselves of the needs of the world and the duty of the Church !

There is another class of men, far more ardent and progressive indeed, but with whom we cannot quite agree—who would increase the Church's energies in one direction by lessening them in another. They would have more done for home wants by discouraging operations abroad ; or they would have more done for the foreign field by ceasing to do so much for the home. Neither policy seems to be wise. The great thing is to enlarge men's hearts, and to enlarge the hearts of large bodies of them. Warmer hearts, deeper experience of Divine grace, larger views of the wants of the world, are the elements that have most need to be gendered. To us it always seems perilous policy to bid men do more for one field by doing less for another. If it be said that however large men's hearts may become, their purses and their pockets do not increase proportionally, we meet that objection by referring to the enormous increase of available resources that comes through what is called "systematic beneficence." The habit of laying aside, as a solemn act of devotion, a proportion of one's income for objects of religion and charity, has not yet been established among an immense proportion of the members of our Churches. Until it comes to prevail universally, the resources of Christian philanthropy must be held to be susceptible of indefinite increase.

One great benefit of the practice of looking abroad with open eye upon the wants of the world, and the obligations of the Christian Church, is, that it brings men closer to Christ, and teaches them to rely more on His grace, and more earnestly seek His blessing by fervent prayer. The work is His, far more than it is ours. If we feel it to be ours more than His, we cannot be viewing it aright. Overwhelming though it is when measured by our strength, it is simple and easy when measured by His. "All power is given unto me in heaven and in earth." The spirit that relies on Him is the spirit that is honoured by Him. If only faith were as a grain of mustard seed, it would remove mountains. If it were like the mustard plant itself, it would transform the world.

W. G. BLAIKIE.

SABBATH LAWS IN THE UNITED STATES.

UNDER the complex system of government in the United States, laws for the protection of the Sabbath are enacted, not by the Federal Congress, and enforced by the Federal Courts, but by the legislatures of the several States constituting the Federal Union. The constitution of the United States does not even name the Supreme Being ; nor is the name of God mentioned in the Oath of the President ; nor is the matter of religion referred to, beyond the simple provision of the First Amendment—"Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, nor prohibiting the free exercise thereof."

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Indirectly, and by implication, the natural right of every man to his rest-day is recognised in the provision of the constitution that Sundays shall be excepted in counting the ten days allowed the President for the consideration of Bills presented by Congress for his approval. By the Revised Statutes of the United States, pupils in the national military and naval schools are not required to pursue their studies on Sunday; and chaplains in the army and navy are required to hold religious services for the soldiers and sailors at least once on Sunday. By settled usage, Congress and the Federal Courts suspend their business on Sunday. Such is the whole amount of recognition which the Christian religion and the Sabbath receives from the national Government of the United States.

While the general Government is bound, under the constitution, to secure to the several States a republican form of Government, there is nothing in the constitution to prevent any one of the States from establishing any religion,—Papal, Protestant, Jewish, Mormon, or Infidel. In the case of *Permoti v. The First Municipality of New Orleans*, on an appeal against a sentence for violation of an ordinance requiring funerals to be conducted only in an “obituary chapel,”—the Supreme Court of the United States held that “the Federal Constitution makes no provision for protecting the citizens of the respective States in their religious liberties,—that being left to the State constitutions and laws; nor is there any inhibition imposed by the constitution of the United States, in this respect, on the States.”

But though the general Government has only this very limited recognition of religion and the Sabbath, yet, under the constitutions and laws of the several States, every one of the thirty-eight States,—except Louisiana, which came into the Union as a French colony by purchase,—has made provision for the protection of the Christian rest-day against desecration by servile labour, or by noisy dissipation. While in most of the State constitutions, or in the “Bill of Rights” prefixed to them, the utmost liberty of conscience is guaranteed to the citizen, and the compulsory support of religion, or any abridgment of his rights, in consequence thereof, is explicitly forbidden; at the same time, it is not deemed incompatible with these principles to enact laws against Sabbath-breaking, with a view to protect the Christian rest-day from desecration. For such enactments are not regarded as resting upon a recognition of revealed religion and the recognition of the Divine obligation of the Sabbath, but upon the ground that this weekly rest-day is important to the interests of society; and that the people demand that the quiet of their rest-day shall not be disturbed; and that, by immemorial usage, the first day of the week is the proper rest-day of seven.

The Sunday laws of these thirty-seven States of the American Union, with their variations and peculiarities, would furnish an interesting subject of study, though it would require a volume to set forth their significance and peculiarities. It must suffice here to cite a few specimens from the

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statutes of representative States, without comment upon the principles involved in them.

Taking Massachusetts as representative of the New England States, the Revised Statutes, chap. 84, enact :—

“Whoever keeps open his shop, warehouse, or workshop, or does any manner of business or work, except works of necessity or charity, or is present at any dancing or public diversion, show, or entertainment, or takes part in any sport, game, or play on the Lord’s day, shall be punished by a fine not exceeding ten dollars for every offence.”

In 1862 this law was made to include any one present at any game on the Lord’s day.

Another enactment in 1865 prohibits shooting, hunting, fishing, and travelling on the Lord’s day. Other enactments restrain public-houses from the sale of intoxicating drinks, and from permitting gaming on the Lord’s day.

The Revised Statutes of the State of New York, which may be taken as representative of the Middle States, enact (chap. 20, title 8, Act 8) :—

“There shall be no shooting, hunting, fishing, sporting, playing, horse-racing, gunning, frequenting of tippling houses, or any unlawful exercises or pastimes, on the first day of the week, called Sunday ; nor shall any person travel on that day, unless in cases of necessity or charity, or in going to and returning from some church or place of worship within the distance of twenty miles ; or in going for medical aid or for medicines and returning ; or in carrying the mail of the United States ; or in going express by order of some public officer ; or in moving his family or household furniture when such removal was commenced on some other day ; nor shall there be any servile labouring on that day, excepting works of necessity and charity, unless done by some person who uniformly keeps the last day of the week, called Saturday, as holy time, and does not labour on that day, and whose labour shall not disturb other persons in their observance of the first day of the week as holy time. Every person of the age of fourteen years offending against the provisions of this section shall forfeit one dollar for each offence.”

As representative of the Southern States, of the original thirteen, may be cited the statutes of North Carolina, which from the year 1741 have forbidden any persons from pursuing their ordinary trades or avocations on the Sabbath, and to which have been added, so late as the 20th March, 1879, the following “Act to prevent the desecration of the Sabbath day :”—

“Sect. 1. That no railroad company shall permit the loading or unloading of any freight-car on the Sabbath day (known as Sunday) within the limits of this State.”

“Sect. 2. That no railroad company shall permit any car, train of cars, or locomotive to be run on Sunday on any road within the limits of this State, except such as may be absolutely necessary for the transportation of the U.S. mails, and except in cases of urgent necessity other than for the purpose of business or pleasure ; *provided*, that the word Sunday, as used in the Act, shall be construed to embrace only that part of the day between sunrise and sunset.”

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The violation of either of these sections renders the parties liable to indictment in each county in which the car is loaded or unloaded or through which the cars pass ; and the fine for each offence is not less than five hundred dollars.

Taking Ohio and Illinois as representing the States formed out of the territory of the original thirteen States, and subsequently admitted into the Union, the penal code of Ohio provides :—

“Whoever, being fourteen years of age, engages in sporting, quarrelling, hunting, fishing, or shooting, on Sunday, shall, on complaint made within ten days thereafter, be fined not more than twenty dollars, nor imprisoned more than twenty days, or both.”

“Whoever, being over fourteen years of age, engages in common labour on Sunday, works of necessity and charity excepted, shall, on complaint made within ten days thereafter, be fined not more than five dollars ; but this section does not extend to those who conscientiously observe the seventh day of the week as the Sabbath, nor shall it be construed so as to prevent families emigrating from travelling, watermen from landing their passengers, superintendents or keepers of toll bridges or toll gates from attending the same, or ferrymen from conveying travellers over waters.”

“Whoever sells or barter any spirituous liquors on the first day of the week, commonly called Sunday, shall be fined not more than five dollars.”

The Revised Statutes of Illinois declare :—

“Whoever keeps open any tipping house, on the first day of the week, shall be fined, not exceeding two hundred dollars.”

“Whoever disturbs the peace and good order of society by labour (works of necessity and charity excepted), or by any amusement or diversion on Sunday, shall be fined not exceeding twenty-five dollars. This section shall not be construed to prevent watermen and railroad companies from landing their passengers, or watermen from loading or unloading their cargoes ; or ferrymen from carrying over the water travellers and persons moving their families on the first day of the week ; nor to prevent the due exercise of the rights of conscience by whoever thinks proper to keep any other day as a Sabbath.”

Texas, in the extreme south-west, has a statute enacted so recently as December, 1871, declaring :—

“Any person or persons who shall hereafter labour or compel, force or oblige his or her employees, workmen, or apprentices to labour on the Lord’s day shall be deemed guilty of a misdemeanour, and upon conviction thereof shall be fined in a sum not less than ten or more than fifty dollars. *Provided* that household duties and works of necessity and charity shall not be prohibited by this Act. And provided, further, that this Act shall not apply to any work done on plantations and farms that may be necessary to prevent the loss of any crop or crops.”

The second section of the law, however, excepts from its operation a very numerous list of cases—as of steamboats, railroads with the receiving and delivery of goods, stages carrying the United States mail and passengers, foundries, sugar-mills, herders who have stock gathered, persons travelling on the public highway, &c. &c. The third section

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prohibits, under penalty of twenty to fifty dollars, all gaming, horse-racing, match-shooting, &c.

Section 4 prohibits the sale of wares and merchandise, except drugs, between the hours of nine in the morning and four in the afternoon, under penalty of twenty to fifty dollars (Pascal's "Digest of Laws," vol. ii., articles 6501-5).

The Revised Statutes of Kentucky, which may represent the "Border States," as lying along the line formerly separating the slave-holding from the non-slave-holding States, declare :—

"Sect. 10. No work or business shall be done on the Sabbath day, except the ordinary household offices, or other work of necessity or charity. If any person on the Sabbath day shall be found at his own or any other trade or calling, or shall employ his apprentices or other persons in labour or other business, whether the same be for profit or amusement, unless such as is permitted above, he shall be fined not less than two nor more than fifty dollars. Every person or apprentice so employed shall be deemed a separate offence."

"If any person shall hunt game with a gun or dogs on the Sabbath, he shall be fined not less than five nor more than fifty dollars."

"No spirituous liquors shall be kept or sold in any room where a billiard-table is kept; nor shall any game be played on such table on Sunday,"—under penalty of fifty dollars for each offence.

It should be added here that in most, if not in all the States, it is provided that no civil process shall be executed on Sunday; and the courts have held that no contract made on Sunday is binding.

These specimens fairly represent the legislation of every State in the Union, except Louisiana. It will be perceived that the laws differ in their detail of things forbidden, and in regard to the classes of offenders which they aim to reach. In one case the statute aims more especially at the desecration of the Sabbath by amusements, to restrain dissipation; in another, at the desecration by servile labour, to protect the right of the labourer to his rest-day against oppressive employers. But all alike proceed upon the idea, not that it is competent to the civil authorities to recognise the Christian Sabbath as of Divine obligation, but simply that a day of rest from secular employments is essential to the best interests of society, and that by immemorial usage the first day of the week has been set apart as the rest-day.

It is a sad fact, however, that though there are laws enough, and these adequate to the protection of the Sabbath, still Sabbath desecration is increasing to an alarming degree. That "loyalty to law," which public men have held to be a peculiarity of the American people, has not been evinced in regard to the laws protecting the Sabbath. On the contrary, the popular tendency is to set the law at defiance. Desecrations of the Sabbath by labour, by travel, by public amusements, by dissipation and drunkenness, which half-a-century since would have shocked the public sense of decency, have become so common as scarcely to excite the attention even of Christian people. How is this change to be accounted for?

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It is not attributable to any change in the relative proportion of Christian to non-Christian population in the country. For, large as has been the increase of population, the increase of the Christian Church has been relatively larger. It has come, no doubt, in part from the demoralisation of the country by the civil war; but the lapse of fourteen years since the close of the war, with the marvellous growth of the Church in the meantime, ought to have occasioned at least signs of an abatement of the demoralisation in regard to the Sabbath. It has come in part, no doubt, from the degeneracy of the police and the magistracy of the country under the system of universal suffrage, applied to the scheme of a magistracy and courts appointed by popular election. But the political changes in the matter of universal suffrage and popular elections have not been so great during the last half-century as to have occasioned all the increase that has taken place of lawlessness in regard to the Sabbath.

The unfavourable change in public sentiment in America in regard to Sabbath observance may be traced to causes lying back of any that have been mentioned. Chief among these is to be reckoned the triumph of the anti-Sabbath party in the struggle concerning the Sabbath mails in Congress, some fifty years ago, and the deliberate purpose of the general Government evinced on that occasion to set aside all State laws for the observance of the Sabbath, so far as relates to the transmission and delivery of the mails. At the commencement of the Federal Government, the administration under Washington adopted the British usage in regard to the mails—closing the post-offices and staying the carrying of the mails on the Sabbath. The post-office law requiring the transmission and delivery of the mails on the Sabbath as on other days was not enacted by Congress until the 30th April, 1810, and then in immediate prospect of a war with Great Britain. Petitions for the repeal of the new law, and the restoration of the old practice, began to be laid before Congress as early as 1811 and during several years following. But these being unheeded, a concerted movement of the friends of the Sabbath began about 1826, and the table of Congress was loaded with petitions until the question could no longer be ignored. These petitions were at length referred to a committee, of which Colonel Richard M. Johnson was chairman, to consider and report on the whole subject. Colonel Johnson was by education and prejudice a Seventh-Day Baptist, and the opinion gained general currency that his report was inspired, if not prepared, by a Seventh-Day Baptist preacher. It was very ingeniously framed, and adapted specially to furnish Congressmen with a plausible excuse to their Christian constituency for their failure to heed so loud and so extensive a call from the people. The argument of this report affirmed these three propositions:—First, That the repeal of the law requiring the transmission and delivery of the mails on the Sabbath would be, in effect, deciding a question of religion which it is not competent for Congress, under the constitution, to decide.

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Second, That the principle upon which the repeal of the post-office law was demanded would lead to a practical union of Church and State. Third, That the repeal would be inexpedient, since it would operate as a serious bar to the rapid diffusion of intelligence. On these grounds, ostensibly, Congress refused the repeal. The anti-Sabbath party raised a shout of triumph, representing this action of Congress as the delivering of the country from a foul ecclesiastical conspiracy to bring the Government under the domination of the Church and clergy. For the time being, the whole country seemed to be smitten with one of those mental epidemics which, as the history of civilised nations shows, so frequently get possession of the popular mind; and throughout the country the impression was made upon the non-Christian and semi-Christian masses that Colonel Johnson had delivered the country from a formidable conspiracy to unite Church and State! Both the argument of Colonel Johnson's report and the popular clamour ignored the fact that the petition for repeal asked nothing more than a return to the early practice of the Government for the space of the first twenty years; and therefore their arguments and clamour implied that, for the first twenty years, the Federal Government had already decided a question of religion, which it was incompetent for it to decide, and had enacted a union of Church and State. Both ignored, also, the fact that the transmission and delivery of the mails on the Sabbath was in contempt of the laws of every State, save one, entering as constituent elements into the organisation of the Federal Government, and was therefore in contravention of the wishes of the people of the several States as expressed in their laws.

It is difficult to comprehend, at this distance of time, how such an argument as that of the Sunday Mail Report could have carried Congress, on a simple proposition, to repeal a post-office law enacted originally as a "war measure," or how it could so have stirred the popular feeling. But there is good reason to believe that this was owing in no small degree to the mistaken ground taken, and the doctrines asserted by many of the memorialists—particularly those of New England—who failed to discriminate between the power of Congress over the question of religion and the Christian Sabbath, under the restrictions of the Federal constitution, and the power of the legislatures of the several States over the same question. In too many cases the argument for the repeal of the post-office law rested upon the Divine obligation of the Sabbath and the duty of Congress to recognise the Christian religion as part of the law of the land. Had the repeal been pressed as simply a return of the Government to the practice under the administrations of Washington, Adams, and Jefferson, on the ground that the post-office law required the agents of the Government to violate the laws of the several States protecting the Sabbath, and thereby tended to impair public morals; on the ground that, on the principles of natural law, the weekly rest-day, established by immemorial usage, is necessary to the best interests of

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society—then, even if their arguments had failed to secure the repeal, they would have furnished the adversary party with no material for “Buncombe” wherewith to distort the vision of Congress, and arouse the prejudices of the people.

The natural consequence of this determination of the general Government to override the Sabbath laws of the States, the all-pervading influence of the mail carriers, and the ever-present example of the post-masters violating the State laws with impunity, gradually led to the setting aside the Sabbath laws of the State as obsolete by all who chose to violate them.

Another cause which has aided largely in overriding the State laws—one nearly allied to the former—is the vast increase of railway travel and transportation within the last twenty-five years. The plea that the Government lays upon them the necessity of carrying the United States mail, opens the way for the plea of the necessity, first of Sabbath travel, and then of general traffic on the Sabbath day. The railway corporations—especially since the consolidation of most of the railways in the country under a few powerful companies—have become strong enough to set the Sabbath laws of the States at defiance. Permeating as they do every part of the country, the railways hold up a conspicuous example of the violation of the State laws with impunity in almost every neighbourhood in the country. Backed by the authority of the general Government in violating the Sabbath as regards one portion of their work, they fear not to take the responsibility of violating the Sabbath in every part of it. Thus thousands on thousands of honest labouring men, who cannot afford to starve their families by giving up their places, groan under the tyranny of their soulless corporations, which compel them to desecrate the Sabbath day by servile labour. And besides this, furnishing cheap and rapid accommodation to Sunday pleasure-seekers in the cities and large towns, they have become the most potent of all agencies for the desecration of the Sabbath, and the demoralisation of the people.

What may be the result of the recent legislation in North Carolina, restraining railways from the desecration of the Sabbath, cannot yet be foreseen. If the people sustain and the magistracy enforce it, then this will prove but the beginning of a great moral revolution in the whole country. But unhappily there is too much reason to fear that this, like most of the legislation heretofore, will stand a dead letter upon the statute-book.

A third cause for the increased disregard of laws protecting the Sabbath is to be found in the vast influx of foreign population from Continental Europe, where, for the most part, the Sabbath exists only in name, and from papal Ireland, which knows no Sabbath, in the British and American conception of it. The foreign population having become already so numerous as to be able to hold the balance of power between the two great political parties of the country, take advantage

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of their position to overturn the magistracy and courts—all of which are elective by popular suffrage—whenever any serious attempt is made to enforce the laws for the protection of the Sabbath. With amazing effrontery, these interlopers—refugees from countries wherein they were never allowed to have a conscience—raise a clamour for their rights of conscience, as against the Sabbath laws of the country in which they find shelter. And the political demagogues, in their eager desire for office, are ever ready to “bend the supple hinges of the knee” before those who have votes to cast, take up the clamour about liberty of conscience to the foreigner never accustomed to a Sabbath, and encourage him to defy the execution of the Sabbath laws, as oppressive to his conscience.

Now the argument with these foreigners ought to be very short and decisive. You have come here into a nation founded by men whose ideas and characters were moulded by Protestant Christianity, of which the Sabbath is an essential part. The fathers of this nation entered upon a new social venture, which the energy and intelligence derived from their religion made an unparalleled success. So soon as their enterprise became a success, and their stock in the social venture rose far above par, they welcomed to participate with them as shareholders men of all countries and religions—Papist, Jew, Deist, Atheist—as well as Protestant Christians, giving them equal rights of citizenship with themselves—to acquire property, vote in elections, worship God as they please, or worship not at all if they prefer. Ought not this be liberty enough for reasonable men? The desirableness of our institutions brought you here to enjoy what others had prepared for you. And the success which made them desirable was in large measure due to the Sabbath-keeping religion of its founders and their successors. You found these Sabbath laws here when you came as part of our system. But now you, who were so generously admitted into the joint-stock social venture, and who have so small a minority of interest and numbers, demand that we shall give up the management which has brought us to our high position, and manage according to certain new views which you have brought with you. In effect you demand that, in order to your enjoyment of liberty according to your notions, we shall, so far as social order is concerned, become infidels like yourselves, and give up our commemoration of our God and Saviour through our Sabbath. We must, to suit you, renounce all recognition, in our social capacity, of the fact that we, like our fathers who instituted this social order, are Protestant Christian men in sentiment and practice. Now we cannot afford to subject everybody else's liberty to restraint, in order to allow you to enjoy the odd sort of liberty which you demand. We must, therefore, kindly suggest to you that, if our ideas of liberty and our method of management do not suit you, then you should not have taken stock in this old and well-established social joint-stock concern. If you have misunderstood us and our methods it is your misfortune,

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and the simple remedy for the mistake is to withdraw from it. You can carry out of it all that most of you brought in, and many of you immensely more. Depart in peace. The world lies open before you. If you still prefer to dwell on the Western Continent, there is Mexico, in which your notions of the Sabbath prevail; or Brazil and the States of South America, where the Sabbath will give you no trouble. If you choose to return to Europe, there in Russia you may join the "advanced thought" of your party—the "Nihilists." In Germany you will find the "Internationalists," with ideas of religion and the Sabbath kindred to your own. In France you will find the remnants of your allies, the Communists, maintaining religious ideas similar to your own. Go in peace, and leave us to endure what you deem the oppressive load of a Sabbath, with laws protecting the Sabbath.

The effrontery of the adversaries of the Sabbath seems at last to be arousing the Christian people of America from their slumber and their delusive dreams of the assured safety and permanency of our institutions. Already, in almost every large city in the country, conferences are held with a view to concerted action by the friends of the Sabbath to resist the enemy that comes in like a flood. The citation of the Sabbath laws, and the facts set forth in this article, may be of service in showing what Christian people have a right to demand of the magistracy, the courts, and the police, in regard to enforcing laws of the country, touching the Christian rest-day.

STUART ROBINSON.

EVANGELICALISM IN THE CHURCH OF ENGLAND.*

THE history and influence of the Evangelical party in the Church of England has of late been a subject of exceptionally eager and general discussion. And for this I can find no special cause or occasion, except it be an article bearing on the death of Dr. Hugh M'Neile, which appeared in the *Times* on the last day of January. It was a very striking article. It had much of the manner and the effect of a funeral oration. It recited the services, it eulogised the virtues, of the school of which the Dean of Ripon had been a distinguished member. Had not its leaders "abolished the slave trade, organised benevolence, revived religion, and been the first to take in hand the education of the people"? For the fate of this school, the writer expressed a gentle regret: "It is worth while to consider whether, in the decay of Evangelicalism, the

* The following article was written before I had the opportunity of reading Mr. Gladstone's great essay on the Evangelical Movement, published in the *British Quarterly Review*. The temptation to refer to some points in this essay is strong; but, for many reasons, I think it better to abstain.