

## LXI.

THE PECULIARITIES OF NEW YORK  
CHURCHES.

CLERICAL REPUTE. — FLUCTUATION OF CHURCHES. — GRACE CHURCH. — WAY-  
SIDE WORSHIP. — TREATMENT OF STRANGERS.

NEW YORK is unlike any other city on the face of the globe. In her churches she is more peculiar than in anything else. She has a style of her own ecclesiastically. On Sunday morning almost all the churches are well attended. The Sunday dinner — the only meal in the week, perhaps, in which the husband and father is at home — prevents afternoon worship. The Sunday evening congregations are usually very small, except when some stirring theme is to be presented, or a sensation preacher promises to entertain the crowd.

## CLERICAL REPUTE.

A local reputation will not serve a man in the city. No matter how popular he is at home, or how eloquent he may be, it will not avail him unless the New Yorkers know him. Men who can fill the largest houses in other cities preach to empty benches in New York; and no amount of advertising will draw if the party is

a stranger. New York tries a minister more than any other city. If he has mettle in him, and patience, he will succeed. Men of marked ability and talent get a call to New York, and are as completely lost as if settled at Sandy Hook. It is a great wonder that any one well settled will come to the city. A few large, rich congregations are all well enough. The great mass of the churches are poor. To build houses and maintain public worship cost a great deal. Living is high, and ministers are cramped, hedged in, and confined. Hundreds of families, who, before they moved to New York, supported and attended public worship, do neither after they come. Pew rents are very high, and a man on a small salary, with a small income, might as well attempt to live on Fifth Avenue as to attend a fashionable place of worship. Hosts of persons professing to be Christians have no religious home, but from year to year drift round from church to church, and pick up their spiritual provender where they can find it. The population is constantly changing from the east side to the west, from the west side to the north, from the north to Brooklyn, from Brooklyn to the country, and from the country back again to New York. Many persons are exceedingly liberal in their contributions to religious objects. The mass care but little, and the whole burden falls on a few. The population fluctuates, and the labor of keeping a city charge together is very great. Many pastors have left a large, warm-hearted, liberal people in the country for a church in New York. Their salaries, large as they seemed, proved inadequate to a comfortable support. After spending what they saved in their rural home, they

retired from the city in disgust. A Connecticut pastor moved to this city not long since. He had a commanding church, and was one of the most popular men in New England. He was called to what had been one of the most fashionable churches. It had begun to wane before he came to the city. The influence he had in other places did not avail him here. His congregation steadily decreased, and he soon resigned.

Fashion has a great deal to do with ministerial success. New York has great business talent, but it is less æsthetical, less literary. The standard of intelligence is much lower than in any of the rural towns. Pulpit ability need not be high to satisfy the churchgoers of New York, but it must be fashionable. If a man has a congregation composed of the upper-ten, though his pulpit talents be small, and his oratory positively bad, he will have a success. If he has not a good position, he will struggle in vain against the worldliness of the city, and fight hard to keep poverty from his door. In a few instances the settlements in New York churches are very long. In most cases, however, pastors come and go. In one denomination, the members of one association, and that a very large one, all changed their pastorates in ten years.

#### FLUCTUATION OF CHURCHES.

At one time all the leading churches were down town. They are now nearly all up town. They are so near together that the singing of one church can be heard in another. Between Twentieth and Forty-eighth Streets, and between Fourth Avenue and Broadway, there are probably more costly churches than can

be found in the same space in any other part of the world. They have outrun the population, and nearly all are thinly attended.

This up-town movement is a very queer thing. The old Wall Street Church began it many years ago. The society purchased a square in an unpaved, muddy, and untried locality, giving little promise that it was to be the abode of wealth and fashion. A costly church was built, which still stands on Fifth Avenue and Twelfth Street. The Duane Street Church followed, and built a costly edifice on the corner of University Place and Tenth Street. Those new churches made a heavy drain on the down-town societies, and took the wealthy men who were driven from their homes down town by trade. For a time they became the aristocratic churches of the city. The Rivington Street Church having been depleted by the up-town movement, took a start and erected a fine brown-stone edifice on the corner of Fourteenth Street and Second Avenue, then a fashionable locality. Broome Street Church caught the fashionable fever, secured that most eligible site corner of Madison Avenue and Twenty-fourth Street, and put up one of the richest and most gaudy edifices in New York. The churches which had gone up town, and stripped the humbler congregations of men of wealth and ladies of fashion, had a tribute of justice meted out to them. Madison Avenue Church became the height of fashion, and served the up-town churches as they had served their brethren in the lower part of the city. The Old Brick Church at the Park followed in the wake of sister societies, secured a most fashionable site on Fifth Avenue, and outbuilt all churches

and outtopped all steeples. The work of removal still goes on. Feeble down-town societies, which could scarcely live, sell their valuable sites for merchandise, and are able to build a costly up-town church. Go as high as a congregation will, some church will outstrip them, and secure the fashionables, who are ever on the wing for a new aristocratic place of worship.

#### GRACE CHURCH.

For nearly twenty years Grace Church has resisted all the fluctuations of the city. It led in the up-town movement. From its location below Trinity Church it removed to its present commanding site on the bend of Broadway, at the head of Eleventh Street. It has always been crowded with the intelligence, wealth, and fashion of New York. Its singing has always been one of its great features, and has never been surpassed. To be married in Grace Church has been regarded as the height of earthly felicity. It boasts the most noted sexton on the continent. Brown of Grace Church is known everywhere. He is a man of immense size. His face is very red, and he has the air of a boatswain. It is worth a visit to Grace Church to be ushered into a pew by Brown. With his coat flying open, with the speed of a man who is under a great pressure, and with the air of an alderman handing a bowl of soup to a charity boy, he shows you into a seat, and impresses you with his condescension as he closes the door. He is immensely popular with the élite of New York. No party, bridal, or burial is considered complete without him. He keeps on hand any quantity of dukes, marquises, counts, and distinguished foreigners, ready to be

served at popular parties at a moment's notice. Outside of Grace Church, on Sunday morning, can be seen the finest turnouts in the city, — carriages, coupés, cabriolets, with coachmen and footmen in livery, — which fill the street, making it gay and brilliant for blocks around.

#### WAYSIDE WORSHIP.

All sorts of plans are resorted to, to get an audience. Ministers preach from the decks of ships and in bar-rooms, in halls and in theatres, under tents and in billiard-rooms, in public parks and in public gardens. To reach the masses, a benevolent gentleman hired Cooper Institute for one year, paying two thousand dollars for its use on Sunday. It was thrown open to the public. The movement was a failure, for the people would not attend. The Academy of Music has been thrown open, with assembly rooms, and opera houses. If they were filled, the stated ministrations of the gospel were neglected. Small congregations gather to hear men and women preach ultraism on the Lord's Day. Long-bearded men and strong-minded women officiate, without disturbing very much the regular worship of the city. Nothing is more curious than the Sunday notices which fill the Sunday papers. At one time the regular churches scorned to advertise. They left this custom to the erratic and sensational, and to men getting up new congregations. But religious advertising has become a necessity, and new congregations cannot dispense with it. Sunday notices indicate the religious teaching of the day. Odd texts and queer themes are put forth to attract the floating masses. No subject comes amiss. Themes are announced that are suited to a French

Sabbath better than to a Christian one. Others are advertised that would conform to a New England Sunday. The Turks, the Chinese, Pagan and Infidel, the Catholic, Jews, with all grades of Protestants, keep Sunday after their own fashion. Operatic choirs, Scotch precentors, and surpliced boys, lead the devotions. Scraggly prophets prophesy to a handful of old women and a few damsels in bloomer costume, about the coming doom. Daniel's horns are explained by men who preach to the few faithful; and worship adapted to every nationality and form of belief can be found on the Sabbath.

#### TREATMENT OF STRANGERS.

Much complaint exists that New York church-goers are proud, exclusive, and rude to strangers. In most New York churches the seats are abundant, and strangers are welcome. A few aristocratic churches are crowded, and some sensational houses are jammed. New York is full of strangers. They are here to see the sights. They want to enjoy the five thousand dollar choir. They want to hear the minister that is paid thirteen thousand dollars a year, and earns twenty-five thousand more by speaking and lecturing. Besides these \*strangers, we have in New York a boomful of drift wood, who float round popular assemblies, and demand the best pews. These come to see, not to worship. They gape, and stare, and whisper, and sit bolt upright during prayer. Their boldness, flippant talk, and rudeness annoy regular worshippers. They criticise the minister, wonder how old he is, and if he is married. They criticise the singing, the length of the sermon,

take out their watches, and wish the thing was done. Congregations tire of this; they are not honored by having such persons occupy their pews; and when strangers complain through the newspapers that they have to stand in the vestibule, and that no one invites them to a seat, they can find the reason in the rude and ill-mannered behavior of a large class of strangers who beset our churches.

## LXII.

## MINISTERS' CHILDREN.

THE sons and daughters of the rich men of a quarter of a century ago are generally poor. The rich men of this day are not the sons of the rich. With few exceptions they are sons of porters, bootblacks, sawers of wood, and heavers of coal. They have been architects of their own fortunes. Young men brought up in idleness and luxury, expecting to inherit their fathers' wealth, are now porters, draymen, or ticket-takers. Daughters reared in affluence, and who never expected to want, are undergoing privations among the children of toil. Not a few have exchanged an elegant mansion for a room in a tenement-house. The children of ministers are generally the objects of sympathy. They occupy that narrow selvage of land between gentility and want. They are patronized and pitied. Donation and sewing parties are got up for them. They are exempt from contributions to benevolent objects in deference to their poverty. The remains of the fair are sent to the parsonage, with cast-off dresses to be turned for the children. The wife of the merchant, the lawyer, and doctor will allow the minister's children to play with their own out of deference to the cloth; but it is done with an air of patronage that

cuts to the bone. But life in New York shows that the home training, discipline, and privation of the parsonage yield beneficent fruits. Whatever else our ministers' children may lack, they do not lack culture and sound moral training. They are early introduced into the best of society, and they have an independence that is valuable to them in all after life.

The sons of clergymen in New York are among the most eminent bankers, able and accomplished lawyers, merchants of success and forecast. Most ingenious and beneficent inventors belong to this class. The daughters dwell in sumptuous palaces. They give tone to society, and their husbands are the most honorable and learned of men. The children of the wealthy, in the homes where these daughters were trained, to whom the minister's children did not dare to lift up their eyes, are in subordinate positions. Some of them are in the employ of these very children of the parsonage whom they patronized in other days.

There are residing in New York a great many clergymen without parishes. Sickness and various other causes have induced clergymen to leave their societies and dwell in New York. They dress well, and live in fine establishments. The wonder is how they live. The mystery is explained when it is known that the son or daughter has a snug corner for the parent. Not long since a clergyman was dismissed from New York because he was old. His son, a successful merchant, bought a fine church, fitted it up in elegant style, deeded it to his father, and will support him while he lives.

The clergy of America have no reason to blush for

the position they hold, or for that of their children. They founded this nation in the cabin of the Mayflower, and on the stormy waters of Massachusetts. They laid down the great principle, which has made America a mighty nation, that majorities must govern. They laid the foundation of colleges in their poverty. They founded our great libraries by donations of books from their scanty store. It was through their influence that the school-house and church stood side by side; that all should have the Bible in their own language, and learning enough to read it. Washington bears witness, in letters still extant, that the clergy were a power on the part of the people in the war of the Revolution. They were commissaries in the army, officers and soldiers. They preached and prayed for the great cause, and made their scanty salaries still more scanty, that America might take her place among the nations of the earth.

## LXIII.

REV. DR. WILLIAM ADAMS, OF THE  
PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH.

HIS EARLY CAREER. — MINISTRY IN NEW YORK. — MADISON AVENUE CHURCH.  
— SECRET OF SUCCESS. — HIS STYLE OF PREACHING. — HIS POSITION. —  
DR. ADAMS AS AN AUTHOR. — A FASHIONABLE UP-TOWN CHURCH.

DR. ADAMS is one of the marked men of New York. He is the patriarch of the Presbyterian pulpit. He has been in the settled ministry over thirty years, and is still in the full vigor of health and success. His church is in a fashionable locality. Every sitting in the house is rented, and probably no congregation in the land embraces so much wealth, so much business talent, so much social and political influence, so many active and prosperous merchants, so many energetic young Christians, — men whose names are known abroad as our most eminent bankers, princely merchants, large-hearted and generous givers. To be the pastor of such a people for thirty years, to keep abreast with this stirring age, overflowing a church when everything is evanescent and changing, to stand at his post for over a quarter of a century, and, without a question, lead the New York pulpit, indicates no common ability.