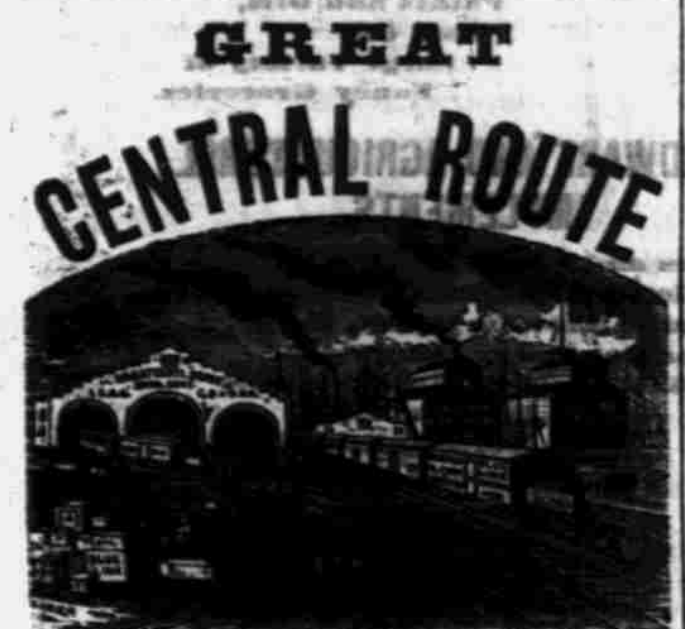


MEAN MEN.—Henry Ward Beecher says of mean men: "I have great hope of a wicked man, slender hope of a mean one." A wicked man may be converted and become a prominent saint. A mean man ought to be converted six or seven times, one right after the other, to give him a fair start, and put him on an equality with a bold wicked man. I have known men who thought the object of conversion was to cleanse them as a garment is cleansed, and that when they are converted they were to be hung up in the Lord's wardrobe, the door of which was to be shut, so that no dust could get at them. A coat that is not used the month of the year, and a Christian who is hung up so that he shall not be tempted, the month of the year, and they have poor food at that!

PLAIN SPEAKING.—Plain speaking is desirable, as a matter of good taste as well as of edification, in the pulpit. There, of all places, affection, or the savor of affection, raises a sneer of angry disgust; whereas, an honest homeliness will at the worst but call forth a harmless smile. A Welsh Calvinistic minister, well known in his day as "Sammy Breeze," was called upon to preach amongst others at one of those periodical gatherings popular amongst the Welsh, which are, as it were, feasts of sermons—two, three, or even four preachers succeeding each other in the pulpit—perhaps in Welsh and English alternately. The young man who immediately preceded Sammy had taken as his text, "He that believeth shall not be damned," but "begged pardon" of his audience for the strong language he was using. Sammy got up after him, and read the same text. "Brethren," said he, in his honest Welsh English, "our young friend has been very fine to-night, and very polite. I am not very fine, and I am not polite; but I will preach a little bit of gospel to you. 'He that believeth shall not be damned,'—and I beg no pardons."

FRASCO.—The employment of this word, which is now much used by dramatic and musical critics, is asserted to be derived from one of two sources. A German visitor to an Italian glass factory, thought nothing could be more easy than to blow a sphere such as he saw one of the men engaged in blowing. He was invited to make the attempt; made several, and could never get beyond the formation of a pear-shaped flask, like that we are familiar with as the receptacle of salad oil; hence the use of the word to indicate a partial failure. The other etymology—which is suggested by Paul Gravier—appears more probable. He says: The celebrated baritone, Biancolli, used to make his appearance before the audience, and deliver a monologue previous to the commencement of a play in vogue, which was so amusing that it was looked for with greater interest than the play itself. One evening he made his appearance on the stage with a straw-covered flask in his hand, but he failed to excite the usual laughter and applause, upon which he held up the wine-flask, and addressing it, he said: "It is thy fault if I am dull this evening!" and threw the flask over his shoulder. Since that time the word has been used to signify the failure of an artist.



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