

Miscellaneous.

WESTERN ASIA BEFORE THE BABYLONIAN CONQUEST.

In order to bring the catastrophe of the conquest of Western Asia by the Babylonians more vividly before the mind, it is requisite to throw ourselves back in imagination so as to take a survey of the world as it existed just before the revolt of Nabopolassar from the dominion of Assyria, B.C. 625, the thirteenth year of Josiah's reign—the year in which Jeremiah was "set over the kingdoms," and called to the prophetic office. (Jer. i.) For this purpose, let us conceive ourselves to have planned our steps on the summit of Lebanon, and to be endowed with the power of seeing two or three hundred miles in every direction. We should then have found ourselves under that glowing sky, standing on a crest of eternal snow, but beneath us would have extended on every side, not as now, the dreary wilderness of barren Turkish provinces; but the dazzling scene of the old civilized world—a scene of surpassing splendor, of ceaseless activity among the countless millions who people the great cities of the seaboard, swarm through the Syrian wilderness with their winding caravans, cover the river-banks on all sides with their merchandise, and plough the Mediterranean with their innumerable ships, from Phœnicia at our feet to the gates of the Atlantic, and the gloom of the Northern seas.

First, let us turn toward the setting sun. There, immediately below us, we see stretching along the shore of the dark blue sea a very narrow strip of country, not more than twenty miles broad, since the mountains run parallel with the Mediterranean and inclose Phœnicia. Its length is about one hundred and twenty miles. This short line of territory, rich in bays and harbors, is covered with lofty hills, many of which run out into the sea and form bold promontories. The sea, which breaks with fury upon the rocky coast, has separated some of these promontories from the mainland, and formed little islands at a small distance from the shore, which are not less worthy of note than the mainland itself, being everywhere covered with extensive colonies and other cities. Thus Aradus was built on one of these islands, and on the shore opposite, Antadus. Eighteen miles south stands Tripolis; at a like distance Byblus, with the temple of Aëonius; and further south Berytus, now Beyrout. Keeping along the coast, we come to Sidon, the most ancient of these maritime settlements, so called after the first-born of Canaan; and finally, fourteen miles lower down, at the extreme south, where Phœnicia joins Palestine, stands the stately Tyre, the Queen of the Mediterranean. The spaces between these cities are filled with smaller towns and inland settlements, forming, as it were, one unbroken city, whose lights flashed, when seen by night from the mountains, almost in one continuous blaze, extending over the whole coast and the islands. In the background the beautiful range of Lebanon is overgrown with forests, and at the base the hills are excavated in numberless quarries.

A METHODIST LOVE FEAST.

The Love Feast is in institution peculiar to the Methodist body. Its name, however, scarcely conveys a correct idea of its character. The love that is spoken of is the enjoyment which the brethren and sisters experience in the love of God; and the "Feast," is the narration of experiences by communicants of both sexes, who, in short, emphatic remarks, give expression to their feelings. Ordinarily, in a Love Feast of two hours' duration, as many as fifty or sixty stand up for Jesus and bear their testimony. These brief speeches are interspersed with frequent singing. Some remark dropped by a speaker will suggest a verse in a particular hymn; and as he or she sits down, the verse will flow out from one voice, pitched to a familiar tune, and the whole assembly join their voices, until the house resounds with the sacred song. When a brother is bearing his testimony, especially if he is very fervent and animated, the brethren become jubilant, and shout of "Glory to God," "Hallelujah," "Amen," "Bless the Lord," etc., and heard all through the meeting.

The effect produced by these Love Feasts is in the highest degree dramatic—we use the word in no offensive sense. The feelings and the sympathy of lookers-on are awakened, and many are drawn into the fold of the Church through such meetings. The grandest and most effective meeting we ever attended was of this kind. It was held on a Sunday afternoon, early in May of the present year, in the "Foundry Church," at Washington. Rev. Jesse T. Peck, of California, who is now in this city, a Boanerges of the church, presided. It was a Union Love Feast, and drew together all the old Methodists of the District. After an opening prayer and hymn, and a brief exhortation from the pastor, the true feast began.

One old lady, bent with years, her voice weak and tremulous, arose. She proclaimed that she had been a follower of the Lamb seventy years, and that she found religion as precious to-day as it was when she first gave her young heart to God, and learned to walk in His ways. She was now going home to glory, and she expected, in a few days, to be with her Saviour, to join in the songs of redeeming love throughout the endless ages of eternity. Oh! what a shout went up while this aged Christian, standing upon the verge of the grave, spoke the joy and confidence that filled her soul. And as she sat down, the simple and touching hymn, "I'm going home, I'm going home," never sounded so cheerfully sweet as it did when sang by that congregation.

Immediately a brother rose and said he had been in this good way sixty years, and blessed be God, he loved it more and more every day. Another brother had given his heart to Christ forty-nine years ago; and he had taken sweet converse in the days and years that are gone, with the brother who had just spoken. He concluded by saying he hoped to meet all with whom he had walked pleasantly on the shores of time, in the blessed land where they would shout and sing and praise God forever more. The verse— "Now here's my heart, and here's my hand, To meet you in that better land," was sung with great effect.

cinnamon, cassia, spices, for sacred rites; gold and precious stones, the rubies and onyxes of Ceylon, carbuncles, agates, and corals; the diamonds of India, the horns, the ebony, the ivory of Ethiopia, the embroidered robes of Babylon, the sword-blades of Yemen, and blue mantles from the looms of Kedar and Dedan.

These lines of inland traffic form, however, but one-half of the Phœnician merchandise; for, see the miles of wharfrage along this wealthy shore are covered with chests bound with cords, and "made of cedar," ready for export to a thousand stations around the Mediterranean Sea. The well-built harbors are crowded with shipping. Forests of masts are seen close at hand, and others dimly fading into the horizon. Many of those vessels are masterpieces of shipbuilding. Benches of box inlaid with ivory, flags of fine linen embroidered in scarlet and blue, white sails of bright Egyptian canvas, and awnings of purple, made them "very glorious in the midst of the sea." The Mediterranean is covered with their lofty ships. Three hundred Phœnician colonies along the African coast, Carthage at their head, depend for their supplies upon commerce with their mother country. Asia Minor, the Archipelago, the Peloponnesus, and Northern Greece, open their piratical ports to the Tyrian adventurers, who sometimes, like Cadmus, settle in Hellas, and bring arts and letters with their trade. They have rich settlements in Sicily, and a thriving trade with Italy; they have found their way to Southern Spain, where gold was then as plentiful as it is in Mexico; they have planted a distant colony where the wild citron blooms in Grenada, and the wondrous moonlight smiles over the valleys of Seville. And, having passed Gibraltar, they founded Cadix, where the Atlantic breaks in thunder on the western shores of Europe, and pushed their adventurous prowls in the latitudes of Madeira and Penzance.

The King of Tyre sits aloft, enthroned in his palace, in the centre of this scene of splendor and power, "like a god in the midst of the sea." "By the greatness of his wisdom," and the wisdom of his ancestors for centuries, he has "multiplied his wealth," and thinks himself as glorious as an angel, while his diadem and royal robes shine with the topaz, the beryl, and the jasper, "like the anointed covering cherub." But he has corrupted his wisdom by reason of his brightness. Through the multitude of his iniquities, and the infinite villainies of his traffic, and the oppressions of his government, he has incurred the wrath of the King of kings. And the hour has come when that stupendous fabric of Phœnician power is to fall to the ground, when Tyre is to burn like a mountain of cedars in the midst of the waters, and when the sceptre of the Mediterranean is to pass away to another race of men. The catastrophe is impending; but there are no signs of ruin as we look down now upon the Phœnician shore. All are blind to their doom—Evangelical Christendom.

One of the speakers had experienced joy in believing fifty-three years before, but his love, after a time, grew cold, and he fell into a state of unconcern. But he was mercifully awakened to a sense of his true condition before it was everlastingly too late, and he now had a joy in believing. Christ was his stay and staff, and the promises of the Gospel were his comfort day and night. The verse— "My God is reconciled— His pardoning voice I hear; He owns me for his child, I shall no longer fear."

was sung as the speaker took his seat. A brother now rose and said he was a stranger in the city; there was not probably one in that congregation who knew his face. Yet he felt himself at home, for he was with the Lord's people. At his distant home, a thousand miles away, he had enjoyed, on the Sunday previous, just such another feast. They loved the same Jesus, and the shouts, and the hymns, and the testimony were the same. As he concluded, the verse was sung beginning— "Jesus, the name high over all."

There was one, who bore his testimony, a rude, unlettered man, who remembered the day, and the hour, and the very spot where he stood in the old Foundry Church when the burden of sin rolled off from him thirty-two years before. He had now almost finished his pilgrimage. He was approaching the river, and on the other side he saw the palace of his King, with angels waiting to conduct him thither. As he sat down, the brethren shouted in tuneful chorus the hymn— "Oh Canaan, bright Canaan!"

And now followed, in quick succession, testimony from brothers and sisters, interspersed with singing and shouting, and the exercises were continued until the waning sun admonished them that the meeting must be brought to a close. But so many pressed forward to bear testimony, Dr. Peck could only accommodate them, by giving an invitation to all present, who desired it, to stand up and testify to their love of Christ. Almost every one in the vast assembly, men, women and children arose, and while they stood, they sang— "Praise God from whom all blessings flow."

During the exercises many were melted to tears, and one dear old Christian woman, almost ripe for glory, thrilled the hearts of all by rising and proclaiming Christ present with her and heaven begun below. It was a meeting full of interest and magnetic power.—Boston Courier.

CHRISTIANITY IN INDIA. Amidst a dense population of 200,000,000 of heathen, the little flock of 200,000 native Christians may seem like a speck; but surely it is that "little cloud of the sea, like a man's hand," which tells that there is to be "a great rain." Every other faith in India is decaying. Christianity alone is beginning to run its course. It has taken long to plant, but it has now taken root, and by God's grace will never be uprooted. The Christian converts have already been tested by persecution and martyrdom, in 1857, and stood the test without apostasy. And I believe that if the English were driven out of India to-morrow, Christianity would remain and triumph. In conclusion, I would wish to guard all friends of missions against two great errors,—the Saylor and Charlydis of Evangelical work. 1. Expecting too great results. 2. Valuing too little the results obtained. On the one hand, don't expect a millennium on earth before the coming of our Lord himself. The conversion of 200,000,000 of heathen is not to be done by pulling a bell at your fireside. It is the vast inheritance of the Saviour, and must be gathered in by toil and waste of human life. But do not, on the other hand, be discouraged by the testimony of these faint-hearted witnesses who return from the promised land with the report that "the people be strong that dwell in the land, and the cities are walled and very great, and moreover; we saw the children of Anak there." I too have gone up and seen it; and haveaving at your feet a cluster of the grapes of Eschold. It is but a cluster; it is true; for time and strength do not serve to gather more; but it testifies that the land "floweth with milk and honey" of Christian promise; and I would say with Caleb, "Let us go up, and possess it, for we are able to overcome it." Put confidence, then, in your missionaries, and sustain their hearts.

I feel ashamed to offer my poor testimony in behalf of such a band; but the questions that have been put to me in England compel me to say a word. I have been 25 years in the Indian Service, and have been thrown into contact with many missionaries of many Protestant denominations, and from many countries. I have found no angel among them. They were all men. Some were gifted by God with very high powers indeed, and some with very humble powers. All had some share of human frailty. But I have never seen one who was not laboring with a single eye for the conversion of the heathen to the utmost of his ability, and setting the example of a holy Christian life. Well would it be for the State, if in any department of its service, civil or military, it had such a body of servants as the missionaries in India. Do not discourage them, then. Do not distrust them. Send out more to help them. Think how little can be done by 500 missionaries among 200,000,000 of heathen. I remember the two first Protestant missionaries who ever went to India—Zeigenthal and Plutschow. They were sent by Frederic IV. of Denmark, great-great-grandfather of our Princess of Wales, in 1705. They found not one Protestant or Christian in India! Remember Schwarz, and Rhenius, and the long line of Evangelists and martyrs down to Ragland, Dr. Cander, Jamier, and Robert Noble. These men plowed, and sowed, but only reaped their tens and hundreds. And where are they now? Absorbed like the souls of the Brahmins? or annihilated like the souls of the Buddhists? No! They are a portion of the "great cloud of witnesses" who encompass you now, as Noah, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob encompassed the Hebrew Church. And they are now, thank God, for the 200,000 redeemed ones over whose scanty numbers you are murmuring with faithless discontent. Murmur no more, but urge

your missionaries to develop and complete the native churches—to bring forward native pastors for ordination; and where these have been secured, with vast congregations of native Christians, as at Tinnevely, give no rest to the Bishops of India till they consecrate a native Bishop, and leave the native Christian church to walk alone. Christianity will then be more indigenous in India than Mahomedanism has become in eleven centuries; for instead of being propagated by the sword of the stranger, it will be preached and evangelized by the natives of the soil. God grant that we may all live to see it.—Sir Herbert Edwards at the Anniversary of the Church Missionary Society in London.

THE MISCHIEF OF SELF-EDUCATION.

Self-educated men, says the Watchman and Reflector, often wield great power in their generation, for the strength of will acquired by surmounting formidable difficulties gives them a persistence of purpose which naturally commands influence. But they are apt to adopt unwise theories, and to form "one-sided" characters, from which a liberal culture and intimate acquaintance with educated men might have saved them. Some of the most mischievous errors in Church and State, in literature, and philosophy, and science, have originated with educated men, who lacked the broad views and the wise caution in judgment which a liberal education is designed to furnish.

An article in the Bibliotheca Sacra for April, gives a curious confirmation of this fact in the case of Mr. Buckle, the famous historian, a man whose marvellous erudition was equalled only by his eccentric opinions and rash judgments. The reviewer says: "The story of his life, told in this country, for the first time since his decease, gives the clue to the singular defects of his character and his history. He was an insatiable reader from his childhood, like John Milton; and like Milton, too, was blessed with an indulgent father, proud of his abilities, and willing to release him from care and toil, and leave him to woo the muses at his own sweet will. But, unlike Milton, he escaped the severe discipline of English schools and universities, and was left, at the early age of fourteen, to consult his own tastes in study, without the guidance or control of wise teachers. Such a method of study yielded its natural fruit. The undisciplined boy grew up to manhood with an overweening confidence in self, and a hearty contempt for men and institutions beyond the range of his personal sympathies. The intense dogmatism of his history is a natural sequel to his distorted education. Two or three years on the lower forms of Rugby or Eton, with a constrained submission to older boys, and to monitors and teachers, or the experience of men and life gained by a competition with equals at Cambridge or Oxford, might have supplemented original defects, and made him a wiser man and a more discriminating historian. Mr. Coleridge always confessed a great obligation to one of his masters who had given him a sound flogging in boyhood, for impudence in broaching skeptical opinions; and one has an instinctive feeling, in reading our author's crude theories, that a similar discipline in his boyhood might have exerted a wholesome influence."

Trust God for small things. We are too much like children, who cry and make a great ado about sweetmeats and toys, while they can trust for clothing, general care, and a house in which to live. How many of what may be called the small things of this life and of religion we are anxious about, while the great concerns we leave with God! Now, why can we not commit ourselves into his hands for the small as well as the great? Let us not forget that he rules the atom as well as the world, that he feeds the humming-bird as well as the eagle, that he provides the crust as well as the feast, that he numbers the hairs of your head as well as the stars of the firmament. Shall he uphold all things, and not uphold you? Shall he clothe lilies, and feed ravens, and not clothe and feed you, O ye of little faith? As a Christian, God has made over to you a crown that fadeth not away; and can you not trust him for a crumb which perisheth? Has he clothed you with the garment of salvation, and will you not trust him for the clothing of the body? Has he provided a house for you in the heavens; which hath foundations, whose Builder and Maker is God; and will you not trust him for a tabernacle, or a cottage in the wilderness? Has he given you Himself, his Son, his Spirit, his Word, his grace, his promises; and can you not trust him to give you bread, friends, clothes, habitation, and all the necessities of this life? Surely, if he has given you the greater, he will give you the less. This is the very argument of St. Paul: "He that spared not his own Son, but delivered him up for us all, how shall he not with him also freely give us all things?"

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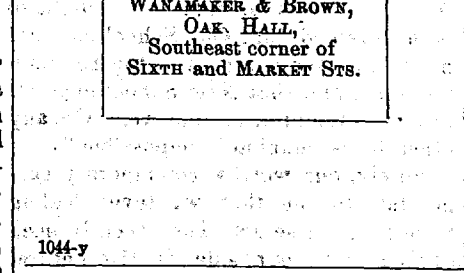
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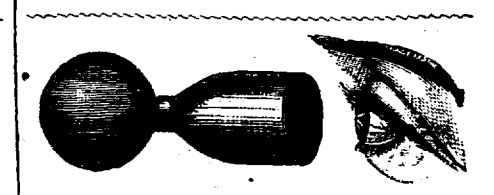
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