

Correspondence.

OUR SPECIAL EUROPEAN CORRESPONDENT.

LONDON A LITTLE CLOSER.

CHARING CROSS HOTEL, LONDON, June 12, '67.

DEAR EDITOR: In my last, I gave you some of my first impressions of London. Let me give you a rather closer view.

THE PARKS.

The city abounds in beautiful open squares like ours, only smaller, though much more numerous. Then besides them, there are three extensive parks right in the midst of the thickly built up city, and a fourth in the north-eastern suburbs. St. James' and Green Parks, with Buckingham Palace Gardens, commence close by Charing Cross—almost the centre of the city—and run westward for a mile, varying from one-quarter to one half a mile in width, and cover some 200 acres. You enter and pass from one to the other (they are all connected) through handsome gateways; prettier, more expensive than anything of the kind we have in America. Then, at the western extremity of these parks, commences Hyde Park, which, with Kensington Gardens, stretches a mile and a half further west, and from a half to three-quarters of a mile in width all the way.

In Hyde Park, the trees are not as large nor as thick as I expected to have found them, but in the western end, Kensington Gardens, where no carriages, only pedestrians, are allowed, the trees are older and larger. The Serpentine River runs through it, about 100 yards wide and a mile long—with row-boats in it. It is a beautiful feature, though not as picturesque as the sheet of water in Central Park, New York, nor as our Schuylkill running through Fairmount Park.

These parks are all very level, the greensward is beautiful, foot passengers not forbidden to walk on it, and some handsome breeds of sheep feed on it in both St. James' and Hyde.

Less than a mile north of Hyde Park is Regent's Park of 470 acres. Just think of all this green space, surrounded on all sides by the densely built up city! With us, it would have been sold off into building lots long ago. Four miles to the east of Regent's Park, across the city, comes Victoria Park, 270 acres.

The drive through Hyde Park, late in the afternoon, is a magnificent affair. Not less than 1200 to 1500 of the finest equipages in London turn out, beside a full thousand ladies and gentlemen on horse-back, and pedestrians without number.

ROTTEN ROW.

All congregate at the eastern end of the park, along what is known as "Rotten Row," and such a sight! The police, mounted on fine horses, keep the carriages in lines, to avoid a total jam; two lines going in, two coming down—a fifth line standing still next the side-walk. The side-walk crowded with pedestrians, and beyond it the riders on horse-back, thickly crowded together, and mostly standing still; and all the riders in their carriages and on horses and the pedestrians staring at each other. The carriages are nearly all open, driven by liveried driver and footman, dressed mostly in blue coat with silver buttons; though many have drab, yellow, green, red, or white coats, with breeches of all colors, tight at the knees, and fair-topped boots. Many of the drivers and footmen wear wigs of silvery white hair in little curls, many have their hair powdered white; some wear plaited cords and tassels over one shoulder. Sometimes the ladies drive, or oftener the gentlemen, leaving the driver to sit to the left, or perched up behind.

The ladies show off their most gorgeous dresses, and ride on horse-back for the most part without gentlemen, while the pedestrians are, nine-tenths, gentlemen, in their best dresses, who come solely to see the ladies and their fine turn-outs. Most of the carriages are great, heavy, lumbering things, that we, in America, would have long ago condemned as murderers of horses, and sold for the old iron on them. Some of them have the family coat-of-arms painted on the doors, as large as a dinner plate. It is said that the largest and clumsiest carriages belong to the nobility. I noticed several in the full diligence shape; the gentleman driving his fine team, four-in-hand, himself, his family, wife and daughters, seated two beside him on the box, two or three behind him on the top seat, and driver and footman on a high seat behind; the door and blinds of the coach tight shut, and the coach empty inside. None of the dense throng of carriages can drive faster than a slow walk, so that there is ample chance for every one to see and be seen to their heart's content, and after getting out of the line at one end and making the circuit of the park, you come into it again, as you come down on the other side, and the whole pageant passes in review again. This crowd of fashion turns out every fine afternoon in the early summer.

STATUES.

England worships her own great men with a passion which certainly tends to perpetuate her nationality. Equestrian and other statues, in bronze, are so often seen in the street that I do not stop to hunt up who they represent. Westminster Abbey and St. Paul's are so full of fine marble statues that I am tired out and bewildered in examining them.

Trafalgar square is a beautiful open triangular

space, 500 or 600 feet long and about as deep. At the apex stands a column 175 feet high, with Lord Nelson on the top, in bronze. Around the base radiate four immense bronze lions, thirteen or fourteen feet long and six feet high. Two colossal statues (one of them Havelock) stand fifty or sixty yards to the right and left, back of the column—two equestrian bronzes still farther back, and in the triangle thus formed, two large fountains play. Along the base of the triangle runs the National Gallery of Paintings; a fine building, four or five hundred feet long, with a dome and beautiful colonnade, forming altogether a handsomer picture, column, statues, fountains, buildings, (all right in the heart of the great city, with the busy multitude passing along the streets forming the sides,) than we ever saw in any of our American cities.

CHURCHES AND PUBLIC BUILDINGS.

Many of the churches are built right in the centre of the street, the street widening to hold them, and you drive to either side. They all look very old. The stones turn black from the damp climate, very soon, and give all buildings alike, an air of age and decay. Westminster Abbey looks old, but no older than many other recent buildings. The Houses of Parliament, though quite new, are beginning to look as old as though they had stood a hundred years. The stone is much softer than our marble or granite. The churches generally have bulletin boards put, on which are posted printed handbills, telling of service and who is to preach—which is a good feature.

PRIVATE DWELLINGS.

The houses are built mostly of rough brick, burned yellow, not red, and so rough that we in America would not endure them. I notice nice residences built of such material, laid more roughly than any brick wall I ever saw in Philadelphia. Our back buildings are palaces, compared to any brick work I see here. The very fine houses have stone fronts, and good dwellings have the lower story sometimes of stone, with a pretty door frame, to save the hideous look of the front wall. Thousands of houses are painted black, which hides the roughness.

TOWER OF LONDON.

A visit to the Tower of London is very interesting. To pass under those old gateways and under the very portcullis, armed with its old spikes, which was hoisted five hundred years ago to admit the Edwards, to walk along the very same passage-way trod by William the Conqueror, and the early kings of England, of whom we read, when we were children; to see where the royal infants were murdered and buried; the very spot where Hastings and Anne Boleyn were beheaded; then, oh horrors, to see the beheading block and the headman's axe, and the marks on the block where his axe came down! How our hair used to stand on end when we read of these things in boyhood, and how it stood on end again when we saw the block and axe the other day! Then the thumb-screw, and the iron collar, and the other instruments of torture, how they made us thank God that we lived now, and in free America, where we have no reminders of such barbarities. The mounted knights and kings, dressed in the armor of the different periods, were very interesting. Henry VIII, and the veritable armor worn by him; Dudley's suit, too, while the veritable iron helmets worn by the Roundhead soldiers; a hundred of them, ranged round the ceiling, reminded me of stirring times. The figure of Queen Elizabeth, with white and yellow satin dress and purple velvet robe, reaching from her shoulder down over the back and tail of the horse, gives us an idea of the rich dressing of her time.

The crown of Queen Victoria disappointed me much. A heavy, ungraceful affair, made of silver, but set with glorious diamonds, one ruby being as large as a pigeon's egg. If Sindoo's Brother, or some equally good "American" firm had been the designers and makers, I'll guarantee it would have had more graceful curves and a more gainly appearance. It was made of the crowns of former kings, and hence but few old crowns are shown. Sceptres, solid gold plate, maces, &c., are there in abundance, and a golden christening font and a wine salver, each as large round as a washing tub. It is all a glittering display, but in us Americans does not awaken any awe whatever.

But I am trying to do in a paragraph, that for which two or three columns would not suffice, so I might as well stop here as go on.

THE RIVER.

The river has fast, sharp-built steamboats plying up and down it constantly, at omnibus fare, and they run crowded all day. I took a trip down stream and saw much that Dickens describes in his "Mutual Friend." The boats along the shore were all dried up, however, by the hot sun, though the ships and their cables and the little boats pulling about, were all there just as he describes them. I still want to go to Lime House pier and hunt up the old windmill and the "Three Jolly Bargemen" tavern—if I can get the chance.

POOR HOTELS.

The hotels are poor affairs when compared with ours in America. I am stopping at one of the best, and our Continental would have to shut its doors in thirty days if it furnished no better accommodations than we get here. They charge for what we order. I order very plain fare, and my bill is about \$4 per day (in gold, of course.) I order dinner half an hour before I want it, then

go to the coffee-room and wait from a half to three-quarters of an hour longer sometimes, before I get it. Order roast beef, that will not be up, perhaps, for the next hour; so I take my mutton. Order roast fowl; it comes after long waiting of quality and cooking that we would not eat at home. With your roast meat they bring you potatoes and boiled cabbage—nothing more. Order asparagus, and they charge you 62¢ extra for a little wilted stuff that would be thrown out in America. No ice cream, no strawberries, no nice fresh fruit on the bill of fare. They don't seem to know anything about it.

The ice cream here would make a Philadelphia laugh. Twice, the signs in the confectioners' windows have tempted me to try it. For a shilling, they give you about half of one of our fifteen-cent plates—and such stuff—milk flavored with lemon juice or mashed strawberries! No darkey would eat such trash through the poorest streets at home, and expect ever to sell it! Would you believe it, they live without ice almost entirely here! No jingling pitcher of ice water comes up to your room, on a hot day, as is universally the case in our hotels in America. This morning, hot and sultry, we breakfasted at nine o'clock, but could have no ice water, as the ice had not come in yet—too early. In the eating-houses they don't have it, don't seem to know anything about the luxury.

My wife and I dined with Mr. Hammond and lady at a crack eating-house on Parliament street. Called for roast fowl—could not furnish it under an hour; roast beef—none up this hour; would be next; so we took roast mutton, which was finer than any mutton I ever tasted. Vegetables: potatoes and boiled cabbage again. Called for lettuce. They brought lettuce, small red radishes; with red beets cut up, and water cress, all on the same dish. Strawberries or ice cream they had none—but gave us pretty fair pudding with execrable pastry. My little daughters at home can make better pastry than any we have tasted in three of the best hotels in England. But enough of London eating.

We spent a day at Crystal Palace at Sydenham, five or six miles south of London. There are several hundred acres of very handsome grounds, abounding in summer houses, fountains, and glorious fountains. The Palace stands on a rise of ground, giving a fine prospect of a very beautiful country surrounding, one of the loveliest landscapes I ever saw.

It is the old palace of the London exhibition of immense size, though an end has recently been burnt off. It contains inside a world in miniature. A beautiful fountain and quite a large basin, containing water lilies and goldfish, occupy the centre of one wing. Plants in great abundance, small trees, vines and hanging baskets in profusion, are ranged along each side of the great central aisle. Birds fly about in every direction. Among the trees are figures of life size in groups representing the various heathen nations and their customs. Stands and stores, exhibiting for sale a great profusion of fancy articles, photographs, pictures, &c., &c., arranged with some eye to nationality, French, Belgian, &c.; stores for dry goods, and then, numberless restaurants, where meals of all grades and prices are furnished, with ale, beer, and wine ad libitum, fill up the ground floor. A theatre stage and a concert gallery, that will accommodate 5000 singers, with a great organ, are located in the centre. In the upper corridor, is a large gallery of paintings, over 1000 in number, of which nine-tenths are dabs. A grand feature, however, is the reproduction in plaster of all the noted statuary in Europe. These fine statues are ranged round the entire building, and are very interesting. Then there are halls made up entirely of Egyptian architecture; temples, copies of them as they now exist in Egypt, and you walk through them seeing what you would see there, frescoes and all complete. In the same manner, Grecian, Roman, and other buildings and temples are reproduced. An accurate model of the Acropolis, another of the Roman Forum, are to be seen, with ten thousand other objects that would fill a column to mention. Negro minstrels, rope dancers, trained ponies, monkeys, dogs, and goats were exhibited on the stage the day we were there, without extra charge except for reserved seats. There were probably 3000 to 4000 persons present that day. They have gala days, when they exhibit fire-works on a grand scale, illuminate the fountains and show other extra attractions, when 40,000 or 50,000 of London's population come out. It is owned by a stock company and partly by the railroad company, and is carried on solely to make money. On Sunday it is always open and is immensely patronized; a grand desecration of the Sabbath than we know anything about in America.

I attended one of Mr. Hammond's meetings in Rev. Newman Hall's church Surrey Chapel—the same in which Rowland Hill preached years ago, and standing just as he left it. I found a very full house and a good work going on, the church members taking hold admirably. But I must close this long letter. The next will be from Paris.

Yours,

G. W. M.

The bloody battle of Philippi laid the foundation for the Empire of Augustus; the bloodless victory of Paul, a century later, laid the foundation for the kingdom of Christ upon earth.

LETTERS FROM THE HOLY LAND. NO. XII.

BY REV. EDWARD H. HAMMOND.

We bade adieu to the Monks of Mar Saba on the morning of December 6th. Our most direct route to Jerusalem would have been by the deep glen of the Kedron. By that way we could have reached Jerusalem in two hours and a half, but we wanted to see the place where our Lord incarnate first entered this world at Bethlehem. As we passed by the northern part of the "wilderness of Judaea," we felt that it was indeed a wilderness. Wild, O how wild it was! Away to the South from the high barren rocks over which we passed, we could discover the locality of the "wilderness of Engedi," whither Saul took three thousand men and went to seek David and his men upon the rocks of the wild goats. The wild goats still live among the rocks of the wilderness of Engedi, sharing the permanence of every thing in Palestine. As we looked down upon the spot where Saul and his army pursued David, it was most interesting to read in 1 Sam. xxiv., the account of David's bloodless victory over his enemy that it was won by kindness. Would that Christian nations, and especially God's people, might always thus conquer all their enemies.

BETHLEHEM. A little before noon we reached the confines of BETHLEHEM. Though our thoughts were occupied with the history of the Lord in connection with that sacred spot, still we could not fail to observe the singular appearance of that village, little among the thousands of Judah, yet second in interest only to Jerusalem itself. In the distance, it had the appearance of a hill ascended by lofty steps; up which a giant might walk to the top. But as we drew nearer, we found it was covered with terraces adorned with beautiful olive trees, with a sprinkling of the vine and the fig. The atmosphere was remarkably transparent—it was like a summer's day, and we were entering BETHLEHEM, of which we had heard our mothers read in our childhood.

As we ascended the hill-side, the first prominent object in the village which attracted our attention, was an irregular pile of dingy-looking buildings, which Michael told us was the Church of the Nativity, and the three convents belonging to the Latins, Greeks, and Armenians. We turned our horses at once to it. It seemed as if half the people in the town were all astir at our coming—a crowd of boys and men rushed around us, each claiming the privilege of holding our horses, for, out of the United States, I have seldom seen a hitching post. Therefore, in all places visited by travellers on horseback, a number, far greater than the horses, are invariably quarrelling about performing the duty and about the backlashes which is given.

At the door of the convent, a Monk met us and kindly showed us into a comfortable sitting room and brought us some refreshing coffee. We were then conducted into the church. Its appearance was to us at first somewhat like the mosque of Akka at Jerusalem. It was difficult to believe our Murray, which told us that this church, built by the Empress Helena, was the oldest monument of Christian architecture in the world, and that possibly the marble columns which support the roof were taken from the porches of the temple of Jerusalem. Different parts of the great church are now used by the Latins, the Greeks and the Armenians. It is indeed common property, and hence a constant source of contention.

Our greatest desire was to see the cave below where tradition says our Saviour was born—it is called the chapel of the Nativity. Descending by a flight of stairs we stood in a small room, lighted by lamps, kept burning night and day. We saw fixed in the pavement a marble slab with these words written upon it, in a circular form, with a star in the centre: "Ecce Virgine Maria Jesus Christus natus est." Here Jesus Christ was born of the Virgin Mary. But how different the place looked from what we had supposed from the Scripture account—no "manger" was to be seen. If any existed, it was covered up with most unsuitable and gorgeous decorations. The "altar of the shepherds" and the "altar of innocents" were shown us; but we turned away again from these to meditate over the events full of interest to every Christian heart.

There is a class of visitors who, fearful of the charge of undue credulity, and not having patience to enter fully into all the facts and probabilities, throw aside nearly all tradition about the sacred places in Palestine. The arguments for and against this cave being the stable where our Lord, clothed in flesh, first entered this world, cannot in one letter be discussed; but I must say, after reading carefully the opinions of Dr. Robinson, Joseph Dupuis, Horatius Bonar, W. C. Prime, and others, I am strongly inclined to believe that the Lord Jesus was born in the cave or stable beneath the church of the Nativity in Bethlehem. Caves to this day in Palestine are very frequently used for shelter by day and by night, for domestic animals.

With this conviction resting upon us, it was impressive to reflect upon the wonderful condescension of our Lord taking upon himself our nature, who though in the form of God made Himself of no reputation and took upon Him the form of a servant and was made in the likeness of men. How vivid those words appeared to us in Luke ii., as we read them in Bethlehem. And there were in the same country shepherds

abiding in the fields, keeping watch over their flocks by night. And lo! the angel of the Lord came upon them and the glory of the Lord shone round about them; and they were sore afraid. And the angel said unto them, Fear not; for behold I bring you good tidings of great joy, which shall be to all people.

For unto you is born this day in the city of David, a Saviour which is Christ the Lord.

And this shall be a sign unto you—ye shall find the babe wrapped in swaddling clothes lying in a manger. And suddenly there was with the angel a multitude of the heavenly hosts, praising God and saying, Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will toward men.

Not far from the chapel of the Nativity, upon about the same level, we saw the vault in which all agree that that remarkable man, Jerome, lived and wrote for the ages to come. "Here it was," says Gerardi, "that the illustrious recluse passed a great portion of his life; here it was that he fancied he heard the peals of that awful trumpet, which shall one day summon all mankind to judgment, incessantly wringing in his ears; here it was that with a stone he scrupled his body, bowed by the weight of years and austerities, and with loud cries he besought mercy of the Lord, and here too it was that he produced those laborious works which have justly earned him the title of the Father of the Church."

Leaving this sacred place, we passed through the town of about 3,000 inhabitants, to the house of the Missionary, to whom we had letters of introduction. From the top of his house, situated on the highest elevation in the town, we had a fine view of the surrounding country. To the East were the mountains upon which the shepherds were feeding their flocks, when the glory of God shone round about them. We could easily fancy the wise men from the East, toiling up that hill side at our feet, led by the star of the nativity from their distant Persian homes. Somewhere also, in those fields before us, it was that Ruth, the Moabitess, gleaned barley after the reapers of her kinsman, Boaz. That Abdullah yonder, David, the grandson of Ruth, when hiding from Saul, longed for water from the well, which lay then to the North of us; but of which he would not taste when brought to him, because to secure it three of his valiant men had hazarded their lives.

As we descended the hill-side, we saw a somewhat singular instance of inattention or carelessness in a learned writer on the Scriptures occurs in Kitto's "Daily Bible Illustrations," Vol. 2, page 333. "This is an excellent work and contains a large amount of information pertaining to Oriental countries and to the word of God, and it is generally accurate in its statements. But in the case referred to, it seems to be quite in error. The author says, speaking of the Song of Deborah:

"It may be premised, that in introducing this description, Deborah speaks of a Judge called Jael, not named in the history itself. Shamgar is supposed to have died in the same year in which he performed that great exploit, for which alone he is remembered. Jael probably occurred in the interval between Shamgar's death and the commencement of the northern tyranny; and it is impossible to speculate safely upon the circumstances which have left the mere existence of his government to be gathered from two words in an ancient poem."

The passage to which allusion is here made, is in Judges v. 6. "In the days of Shamgar, the son of Anath, in the days of Jael, the highways were unoccupied, and the travellers walked through by-ways." The person called "Jael" was not a Judge, but the wife of Heber, the Kenite. In the preceding chapter, the 4th of Judges, an account is given of the death of Sisera, the general of the Canaanitish army, by the hand of this woman, who had invited him into her tent, when he was fleeing discomfited from battle with her countrymen. In the 24th verse of the 5th chapter Deborah exclaims, "Blessed above women shall Jael, the wife of Heber the Kenite be, blessed shall she be above women in the tent," and her exploit is recounted and praised through nearly all the remainder of the chapter. The author of the Song refers evidently to the same person in the 24th verse as in the 6th. The destruction of Sisera was a most important event, bearing directly upon the deliverance of the Israelites from tyranny, and on that account it is not strange that the days in which she lived should be designated by the inspired poetess as a period worthy of special mention. The idea that there was a Judge of the name of "Jael," immediately after Shamgar, is a mere conjecture, without the shadow of a foundation.

SEEVING THE DEVIL.—How constantly, how faithfully, even unto death, do multitudes serve the devil, the world, and their lusts, without any other reward than some bones of outward enjoyment, some crumbs of sinful pleasure, and with the prospect of an everlasting bed amid devouring flames. Lord may I never serve such monsters of ingratitude! But let my soul cleave to thee; delight in thy presence; and follow thee whithersoever thou goest!

A SAD DEFECT.—Alas! how much of our life is but an empty romance! A religious shadow without substance! Is it not a sad defect in our method of education that God's word is so excluded and children's minds stuffed with pagan fooleries and romantic fancies?