

Original Communications.

NOTES OF PORTLAND, ME.

Portland, the Forest City, as it has been termed, is like Jerusalem, "beautiful for situation." It stands at the head of a magnificent bay. An island guards the entrance, and forms a breakwater against the billows of the Atlantic, securing quiet anchorage, whatever storms may rage. The channel admits vessels of the largest size, and preparations were made to receive the "Great Eastern," as it was ascertained that no other harbor on our shores was as capable of floating the great Leviathan. Although so far north, there is scarcely ever any obstruction by ice, and the Canadian lines of steamers for half the year land at Portland on account of the difficulties presented in the navigation of the St. Lawrence. The natural scenery is exceedingly picturesque, said to be second only to the Bay of Naples for beauty. In the distance the White Mountains can be distinctly traced—Mt. Washington, worthy of its name, rising high above all the rest. The bay itself is decked with numerous islands, three hundred and sixty-four, it is said, some consisting of a few acres, others small patches of verdure or wave-washed rocks. The city stands on a promontory projecting into the bay, and the elevated sides of which form beautiful promenades, and afford magnificent views of the surrounding scenery. The streets of the city are irregular, and as they wind in all directions, new views are presented at every turn. The side walks are generally lined with rows of lofty elms, whose arching branches often cross the street. The houses are neat, and often handsome, many being in the villa style. The dreadful fire which occurred on the 4th of July, 1866, and which raged for two nights and the intervening day, destroyed the principal portion of the business part of the city, and masses of ruins and scathed and charred trees still show how terrible must have been its desolating course. By this calamity 1,500 dwellings were burned, besides eight churches, four school-houses, eight hotels, all the banks, and a number of the public buildings, some of them very splendid structures. One-third of the city was destroyed, and about twelve thousand persons were left homeless. It may give an idea of the extent of the conflagration to mention that if all the buildings consumed were placed in a line, they would form a frontage of seventeen miles!

It is surprising to find how large a part of the burnt district has been rebuilt, and what magnificent edifices have been erected or are in progress. The City Hall, which was designed for the Legislature, is a splendid building; and in addition to apartments for various offices it contains a room for public meetings which will accommodate comfortably about 2500 persons. The Roman Catholic Cathedral is a large building, with a lofty spire. The interior is painted in a gorgeous style, but the other internal arrangements are not yet complete. A gilt cross about eight feet high was raised to the summit of the spire, on the Sabbath afternoon, in the presence of a vast multitude of spectators. The bishops in gaudy decorations sprinkled holy water, pronounced some sentences in Latin, and delivered an address in English. About two hundred girls, dressed in white, with pink scarfs, and garlands of flowers, chanted a hymn. The Romanists of Portland are chiefly immigrants from Ireland or Canada, and comparatively few in number.

CHURCHES—PAYSON'S GRAVE.

The churches of Portland represent nearly all denominations except the Presbyterians. They are about thirty in number. The building in which the renowned Dr. Payson preached was consumed by the fire, but a large and handsome structure has been commenced by the congregation on another site; to have the name of the Payson Memorial Church. Its present pastor is Rev. Dr. Carruthers, originally a Scotch Presbyterian, who has filled the pulpit for nearly twenty-five years. He is a worthy successor of the great and good man, whose memory is cherished with such profound regard by all who have read his Memoir, and especially by those who had the privilege of hearing him preach. Some few of these still survive, and speak of him with the greatest reverence and love. His grave, in the public cemetery, is marked by a small obelisk, and numerous garlands of evergreens placed upon it, testify that his remains rest in an honored grave.

PUBLIC SCHOOLS—COLORED GRADUATE.

The public schools of Portland are numerous and well attended. One large building will accommodate 1500 pupils. The number in all the schools is 10,463, or about one-third of the entire population. The High School numbers 717 pupils, male and female. Its graduation exercises were held on the 15th of July at the City Hall. Addresses were delivered by a number of young ladies, as well as by young gentlemen. Among the former was a colored girl of intelligent and serious countenance and very modest deportment, who had attained a high rank in the school, and seemed to be treated by her classmates, as well as by the teachers and trustees of the school, and by all the audience, as if there was no degradation in her sable skin. Her name is Isidora Mayo, the first of her race to enjoy equal advantages which she has proved herself worthy to receive.

HOSPITALITY TO THE CONVENTION.

It was gratifying to find that the citizens of Portland manifested so much interest in the meeting of the Convention. At the Meeting of Welcome, the Mayor of the city presided and some of the most distinguished ministers and others delivered addresses. Among others Dr. Carruthers alluded to the spirit of petty bigotry manifested in the suspension of Mr. Geo. H. Stuart for hymn singing and communing with other Christians. Arrangements had been made for an excursion in the beautiful Bay, but a dense mist at the time designated, prevented this. There were, however, many instances of private hospitality, which those who have received them will not readily forget.

PROHIBITORY LAW.

The population of Portland is about 32,500, and seems remarkable for good order. This is no doubt owing in a very great degree to the Prohibitory Liquor Law. Intoxicating liquors can be sold only by a person appointed for that purpose by the city authorities, and under such restrictions as greatly diminish its use. Not a drunken man is to be seen on the streets, and the boisterous brawls which disgrace other places are almost unknown. There is an intelligence, a cheerfulness, a quietude, a reliability in the manner of the people which indicates that the soul has not become the captive of a great vice, but is master of itself. Those who wish to know what effect a Prohibitory Law would have may form an opinion by visiting Portland.

OMICRON.

IMPRESSIONS OF EUROPE.—No. III.

It was a wretched night passing from Belfast to Glasgow. The boat was good enough, but very much crowded with passengers, and the forward deck was stowed as closely with cattle as they could stand. The poor creatures could not rest themselves by lying down, or by changing their position in any way. The cabin was almost insufferably close, and yet it was so cold on deck, that only with all our wrappings could we make it tolerable to remain up. There was a stiff breeze, and while it was not exactly rough, there was sufficient motion to make some of the passengers sick. One of the sufferers was a young Scotchman in my room. We were very early on deck next morning, not later than five o'clock, and found our steamer discharging part of her cargo at Greenock, on the Clyde. The Clyde is a small river at Greenock and Glasgow, not wider than our Schuylkill, but the channel is kept deep by the constant operations of the mud machines. The tide was out, and we made our way up very slowly from Greenock, sometimes shutting off steam entirely. For a long way down below Glasgow the shores of the river are lined with ship-yards, and vessels of all sizes were in various stages of completion. This ship-building forms a large part of the business of Glasgow, and furnishes employment for thousands of people. We came opposite the city at eight o'clock, but we were not landed until the boat could be turned round head down stream, and as the boat was almost as long as the river is wide, this was no slight thing to do. But we reached our hotel (McLean's) at nine o'clock, not too late to have a substantial Scotch breakfast of coffee, steak, chops, omelet, good bread and butter and gooseberry jam. A Scotch breakfast is no trifle, and as we had eaten nothing for eighteen hours, we were in favorable circumstances to appreciate it.

We spent two days in Glasgow. It is the business metropolis of Scotland, and is the third city in Great Britain in wealth. The population, including suburbs, is not much short of 500,000. The city is supplied with pure water from Loch Katrine, forty miles distant, at a cost for the construction of the works of about \$5,000,000 of our money. I could not help wishing Philadelphia were as well off in this respect. The new part of the city, and much of it is new, is well laid out, with broad streets, and the houses of the merchants and the wealthy classes in the west end are very handsome indeed. Their Park is uncommonly fine and well kept. In this part of the city the new University is located, and the buildings are magnificent.

But that part of the city which interested me most was the old city of Glasgow. And the first place we visited was the Cathedral. This is very old, having been built in the twelfth century, in the reign of David I. Originally of course it was for Roman Catholic worship, but in the Reformation it passed, with all other Church property, into the hands of the Protestants. The revenues of the Cathedral were at one time very large, but a large part has fallen to the University of Glasgow, and a part to the crown. Service is held only on Sundays, according to the form of the Established Kirk of Scotland, which is the Presbyterian Church. This service is held in the choir, which is itself as large as St. Mark's church, Philadelphia, and the nave and transepts are not seated.

Within a late period, the Government has repaired and renewed certain parts of the Cathedral, which had fallen much into decay, and within ten or fifteen years, the city of Glasgow and the West of Scotland have combined to renew the windows with stained glass, after a certain arrangement of Scripture illustration. It is very pretty indeed, but hardly in unison with the character of the building; and the various windows supplied by individuals or families have the coats of arms of the contributors so promi-

ently emblazoned, that one hardly knows which was the prime motion, the beautifying of the old Cathedral, or the glorification of the contributors.

But the crypt was specially interesting to me, for it was here that Rob Roy gave his mysterious warning to Frank Osbaldistoun. (How easy to idealize Scott's characters!)

"Conceive Tresham," says the author of Rob Roy, "an extensive range of low brown, dark and twilight vaults, such as are used for sepulchres in other countries, and had long been dedicated to the same purpose in this, a portion of which was seated with pews, and used as a church. The part of the vaults thus occupied, though capable of containing a congregation of many hundreds, bore a small proportion to the darker and more extensive caverns which yawn around what may be termed the inhabited space. In those waste regions of oblivion, dusty banners and tattered escutcheons indicated the graves of those who were once, doubtless, princes in Israel. Inscriptions which could only be read by the painful antiquary, in language as obsolete as the act of devotional charity which they implored, invited the passengers, to pray for the souls of those whose bodies rested beneath."

The church-yard about the Cathedral is closely covered with flat grave-stones, so closely that but little grass grows between them. Some are of great age. Just over the ravine is the Necropolis, and on the tombs of the sleepers may be read many of the best names in the history of Scotland.

The old University of Glasgow is about to be removed to the new buildings in the West-End. We were fortunate enough to fall into the hands of one of the Professors, who kindly showed us through that part of the building which would most interest strangers. The old law is still unrepealed; that the precincts of the University are a kind of sanctuary, and no person, however guilty, can be arrested here by the civil authorities, but the Faculty of the University have full authority, and can adjudge the case as a court, with fullest sanctions.

We drove through the city in the afternoon, out into the newest and best part, and down through the Salt Market, where Bailie Nicol Jarvie lived, which is now the worst part. But it is no worse than the lowest parts of New York and Philadelphia. Then we passed out, over the bridge, where Rob Roy and Frank met at midnight, into the country, which is very beautiful all about here.

In the evening—it is not dark until towards midnight—the streets in the old town are full of people, orderly and quiet, though pleasure-seekers. At a street corner was a blind man, reading in a loud harsh voice, easily heard above all the noise of the throng, passages in raised letters, printed for the blind, from Ecclesiastes. Sometimes a group would gather round him for a few moments; and listen, and drop a penny in his hat, and pass on. He had chosen a place of much resort, near a public fountain, and no one treated him with rudeness.

The next day we devoted to Ayr and the "Land of Burns," forty miles away on the coast. As we approached the town, the road was near the sea, and Ailsie-Crag was very prominent, far out in the bosom of the water. At Ayr, we took carriage for Alloway; and made our way to "Burns' cottage," a low, thatched cottage of the plainest kind. The room where he was born is pointed out, which seems to have been the kitchen, or living-room of the house. Here was the recess where a bed formerly stood, a very common usage in Scotch kitchens—here was the same dresser, almost worn out by continual scrubbing; and still very clean—here was the same stone floor that his bare feet often trod upon; the same low ceiling his eyes rested on in his infancy and childhood. Here was the parlor, the best room of the family, probably used also as a bed-room in those days (spirits are sold there now); and now there is a large room built as an addition to the house; for a dining-room for the gentlemen who have bought the property, and now keep it from destruction.

Having seen all about the house where the Poet was born, we passed on to Kirk Alloway, so famous in "Tam O'Shanter." It is now a ruin, only the walls remaining. But there is still

"The winnowed bunker in the East,
Where sat Auld Nick in shape of a beast,
There are still the walls, of which it is said:
"Coffins stood round like open presses,
That showed the dead in their last dresses."

We could fancy we saw the very spot where Tam sat on his gray mare, looking through the window at the Kirk which

"Seemed in a breeze"
and the witches engaged in that dreadful dance—and could in fact conceive the tremendous change, when he unluckily uttered those words, at which,

"In an instant all was dark,"
and the rush made at him through the windows and over the stone wall by the infuriated witches, and the scamper down the hill—the break-neck speed to which the mare was urged by her master's fright and her own, the narrow winding way to the bridge over the Doon—the key-stone barely reached, and the loss of the mare's tail, for the moment we regarded the whole thing as real, and enjoyed it extremely. Later in the day, in Ayr, we saw the tavern where the said

Tam and Souter Johnny sat and caroused on that awful night, when

"The wind blawed as 't would blaw its last."
We sat in their chairs, and tasted the liquid, of which it was said:

"With two-penny we fear no evil,"
but did not proceed to the Usquebaugh, with which—but I will not continue the quotation.

We looked at the Monument as we walked down to the bridge; it is modern, and well done, and a just tribute to the genius of the man, who was certainly a true poet, whatever else may be said of him. But we lingered on the bridge. It was one of the brightest days of all the summer. The foliage was in its richest luxuriance, the air was laden with the fragrance of the Hawthorn, and the birds were singing around us everywhere. We leaned over the walls of the narrow bridge, steep and high; we looked down into the clear waters of the Doon to its pebbly bottom, and we sang

"Ye banks and braes of bonnie Doon,"
with an appreciation of the scene, such as we never could have had except on the very spot. Every allusion in the verses to the surrounding scenery was literally sustained.

On the way back to Glasgow, we stopped at Paisley, a manufacturing city, and specially noted worthy for its shawls, and as the place where the famous Coats' spool cotton, so well known to the ladies, is made. One of the Messrs. Coats, who married a New York lady, politely showed us through the establishment. They employ about nineteen hundred operatives, chiefly girls. The works are going day and night, from Monday till Saturday—two sets of hands alternating, yet they can't meet the demand which comes from all quarters of the world. Thence we went to the shawl mills, where we saw fine shawls in the looms (all hand-loom), the weavers at work with their treadle and shuttle, some of them old men, who have spent all their lives here at these looms. The work was very beautiful, but the fashion is not now for "Paisley shawls," and the trade is dull.

We left Glasgow next day for Edinburgh, via the Trossachs. The road led us by Dunbarton castle, of which we had a view, as we passed up the Clyde, thence to Bullock station, on Loch Lomond. Here we took steamer through the lake (which reminded us much of Lake Winnepesaukee, in New Hampshire, and naturally not any more beautiful) to Inversnaid, where we took coaches, all outside seats, to some place with an unpronounceable name, on Loch Katrine. We had a most delightful trip on this most beautiful of all the Scotch lakes (but not more beautiful than our own Lake George), one of our fellow passengers reading aloud to us the "Lady of the Lake" as we glided along. We passed the sluices of the Glasgow water-works, and then along and almost around "Ellen's Isle," not failing to observe the little bay and the "silver strand" where the fair Ellen obtained her first interview with the Knight of Snowdon. Reaching the hotel at five o'clock, we had dinner at six, and started back at once for a ride of a mile to the lake (the hotel is at that distance from Katrine), through the beautiful pass of the Trossachs, and dismissed the carriage, intending to walk home. We took a boat, with a strong Highlander to row us, and went back to Ellen's Isle, landed and explored it. There is no trace of the place

"Where for retreat in dangerous hour,
Some chief had framed a rustic bower."

But we enjoyed the romance none the less for this. Ellen's Isle will be famous many a year to come. It is a rock, some three acres in extent, all over wooded, and at this season covered with the blue bells. One of our party read again such parts of the poem as were descriptive of the Isle, and then having had a most delightful time, we walked back to our hotel through this grand and beautiful pass, trying to point out the crag where Fitz James met Roderick Dhu. Reaching the hotel at 9 P. M., still light as day almost, we were regaled with some music from bagpipes, the young people running up to the windows in the tower, and waving their handkerchiefs in the mock-heroic style—and then to a well-earned sleep.

B. B. C.

THE PYRAMIDS AND THE MOSAIC CHRONOLOGY.

It is a common supposition among the unscientific public, that the North pole of the Earth's axis always points to the same star,—the polar star or "lode star." At present, the North pole points to no star whatever, but so nearly to one star, (the bright one in the constellation of the Lesser Bear) that it is, for practical purposes, regarded as a Polar star. At various periods in the world's history in the past, other stars have been real or approximate polar stars; at other periods, yet in the future, yet other stars will be our polar stars,—real or approximate. The pole of the earth is in truth describing a circle in the heavens,—a circle which it will complete in nearly 26,000 years from its beginning.

The pole points to-day to the place in the heavens towards which it was directed nearly 26,000 years ago,—far back in "the geological ages." Since then it has described a circle on the sky, as with a mighty and slowly moving wand. Twenty-six millenniums hence, it will again point to the spot which it points at to-day, having again described the same circle among the stars which lie near the north pole of the heavens.

This fact was known very early to the astronomers, and, as in early ages all science was associated with mystery, so this was. It was said by the Egyptians that this period of nearly 26,000 years was the "great year" or the "year of restitution." All the world's life and history were revolving in a circle like that thus described by the pole. However great and manifold the changes which were to take place, however wide the sweep of revolution, all would at last work back to where the world started. At the end of a "great year" all things would return to their primal condition.

In six of the Egyptian pyramids, there are long passages looking to the North. Scientific men have examined them and found that they do not look at the present polar star, nor at any that was known as a polar star within any period of known Egyptian history. But they find that about the 4000th year before our Era these passages if then built would have looked out on a star (*Alpha Draconis*) at which the earth's axis exactly pointed. In nearly 26,000 years from that date, those passages will look out on the same star.

Is it not most probable that the builders of those passages regarded the year 4000 (or 4004) B. C. as the beginning of man's life upon earth, and therefore the beginning of that "great year" whose completion would be ascertained by an observation through those same passages? That they had referred to the "great year" in their erection, scientific men concede. What date more probable for them to begin that year from, than the year of man's beginning?

Some savans say: "No. These passages, instead of confirming the Mosaic chronology, refute it. These passages must themselves have existed as early as 4000 B. C. They must have been built to look out upon that star, at a time when that was our polar star." I cannot see the force of such reasoning. The vanity of man had not risen in those days to a pitch so high as to fix on their own times as the great *terminus a quo* of history. Least of all were the Egyptians likely to fix on that period as the beginning of the great "year of restitution," which was to bring back all things to their primitive state. On the face of the case, the balance of probability is immensely in favor of the first supposition, viz: Egypt dated the beginning of human history from about 4000 B. C.

As a further confirmation of this supposition, we may draw on the annals of a neighboring people, who, at an early period of their history, sustained a very close relation to the Egyptians. The earliest records of this people bear the name of one, who by a strange providence was brought up in an Egyptian court, at a time when the national religion and the national government were most closely associated. He was therefore educated by the priests, the great repositories of the national learning. His works evince among many characteristics, three which we shall especially notice:

1. They evince the greatest care in the collection of those genealogies which were of such immense importance at the period of the world's life, when the family was the social unit. 2. They evince a very marked poetical temperament in their author, such as would be more likely to be attracted than repelled by histories and genealogies which should trace the world's age for millenniums and myriads of years into the dim past. 3. They evince the closest acquaintance with Egyptian matters, being full of those casual and matter-of-fact allusions, which show that he was not drawing on knowledge obtained from travellers, but referring to things well known to "his public" and himself. So much is this the case, that multitudes of passages would be unintelligible to us were it not that we possess explanations of Egyptian customs from travellers of the Greek nation.

Now this observer and author,—thus said by tradition and shown by fact to occupy the best possible position for becoming acquainted with the Egyptian chronology,—and at least not disqualified by any mental idiosyncrasy for recording what he knew—this man, we say, fixes the date of man's creation at the year indicated by the pyramids, viz. 4000 B. C. Is his testimony the less weighty that his name is Moses?

What is there against Moses and the Pyramids in this matter? A lot of genealogies, most probably of contemporary dynasties, which have been treated as they do land in Vermont, where they plant corn on the upper side and then stand it on edge and plant potatoes on the under. Our sceptical Egyptologists (not the best of their class) have piled these contemporary dynasties one upon the other and built up a new Tower of Babel, whose top reaches to heaven, but confusion shall be upon them. Not a man of them but knows more of Egyptian history than Moses does. ULTONIENSIS.

—Victor Emanuel, of Italy, has his private library in Pitti Palace in Florence, and a French journalist who lately visited it, says he found scarcely any books have their leaves out. If this be true, it is quite in keeping with the state of the people when the last census showed that of the twenty-two millions of inhabitants in the country, over seventeen millions could neither read or write.

—M. Renan has just published a large volume on the life of St. Paul, said to be characterized by the same imagination that marked his "Life of Christ;" so that a plain reader of the Book of Acts would scarce recognize the hero.