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## A GREAT DROUGHT.

The Atlantic slope of the Alleghenies has been suffering seriously from drought, at first accompanied with a temperature as low as 50°, and then with a heat ranging for days together, in the hottest part of the day, at 100°. Crops of corn and potatoes are parching into nothing. About Richmond, Va., no heavy rain has fallen for nearly three months, and even forest trees are dying. In some districts cattle have perished from thirst. The Schuylkill river is lower than for thirty years before; navigation and manufactures dependent on its water supply, have been suspended, and, for the first time in its history, our city, standing at the confluence of two great rivers, has been in hourly dread of the entire loss of those principal supplies coming from Fairmount water works. Millions upon millions of man's wealth have wasted away under the sun's unmitigated heat, while the abundance thus far promised in other regions of country, depreciates the value of the small escaping remnants here.

Shall we complain of this?—Shall we not rather consider how much less it is than the Lord might justly render to us for our sins—personal and national? Shall we not rather make what judgments we actually experience, the occasion for marking more plainly, the very lightness of the judgments themselves? How tenderly, at the worst, God deals with a race which habitually forgets Him; which purposely and perversely shuts Him from its thoughts and plans; which said of His Son, on His errand of unspeakable mercy and forgiveness to the world: "This is the Heir, come, let us kill Him," and then hung Him up in the midst of three Roman crosses; a world which continues, in the spirit of His murderers, to reject and despise Him still.

Murmuring reader! have you received Jesus into your heart; or, if you have, do you so faithfully serve Him, that you can wonder at any small degree of inconvenience or suffering laid upon you as if it were marvellously unjust? Does not God prove His faithfulness to you, and to a sinful community, by just such inflictions as these? May we not recognize the truly wise and kind Parent, the more certainly for the chastisements which He mingles with His more agreeable gifts?

The useful purpose of such an infliction of natural evil is not indeed always clear; but may we not suggest that it is calculated to try the quality of our praying. Against such an evil as prolonged drought, it is as right for us to pray as for our daily bread. And we ought to pray against it specifically, and doubtless, have done so. But do we not think it altogether an uncertain, unpractical question, whether our prayers shall have a specific answer? "Do we not look somewhat askance upon those who expect a specific and favorable answer, as just a little fanatical? Yet how can we quite get over the illustration in James v. 17 and 18, which seems to have no meaning at all, if it cannot be applied to just such a case as this? Why are we expressly told that Elias, whose prayers for drought and for rain were so effectual, was "a man subject to like passions with ourselves," useless to bring his case within the range of our every day life and wants? Shall we depreciate the specific value of prayer, or shall we not say that drought continues, in spite of our prayers, because the prayers are not what they should and can be? Instead of lowering our views of prayer, we are rather called upon to lower our views of our praying. It is not THE PRAYER OF FAITH that is going up from our lips and hearts, and so answer is withheld. It is not the humble, united, believing, Christ-honoring, promise-grasping, Spirit-given prayer, which we have been offering. That soles the heavens and grasps, under God, the powers of the world. That is the mightiest of all instrumentalities. That is stronger than armies in war; more effectual than medicine in sickness; greater than enterprise, sagacity and capital in business, or statesmanship in politics, or than all Martha's cares in housekeeping. Using and consecrating all right means, it sweeps them along with it to the throne of grace. There it finds a power which can work above and without and against means, and which is ready and pledged to act in response to its calls. The history of the Church, in the Bible and out of it, in ancient and modern times, in the life and observation of almost every pastor, and not a few private Christians, warrants us in declaring the Prayer of Faith for specific ends, and with specific answers, a reality; and such a time of trial as the existing drought is allowed to come upon us, to test the quality of our prayers and lead us to a more diligent cultivation of the gift which Christ's people are so slow to value and to exercise aright.

This absence of the prayer of faith, points to

the fact that there is a drought in many a reader's soul, corresponding to that in the material world. The softening reviving, showers of grace, at times so plentiful, have in many instances, as much disappeared as if they had never been enjoyed at all. Plants of grace, bright professions of piety, once so charming and promising, now stand withering, since the sun is up and there is no depth of earth. Plans of work are at a standstill. Great schemes for God and man, once pursued with enthusiasm, have nothing left but the bare and motionless machinery. Dry and barren and dusty channels take the place of the fresh, swift streams, which once made everything quiver with life and activity. The fervent, frequent prayer has sunk to a hurried, formal whisper. The glare of worldliness and gayety has evaporated the tender early dew and morning cloud of piety. The fierce devouring heats of covetousness have drunk up the shallows of principle, made conscience as dry and callous as a beaten high road, and in place of the pure, running stream of an unstinted and generous liberality have left nothing but a few pitiful pools that are drying up without prospect of replenishment.

It is time for the Holy Spirit to be again poured out. Let us seek the latter, as well as the early rains upon our famishing hearts.

## A NATIONAL DANGER.

The London Spectator, in a kindly but humorous article on the Boston Musical Peace Jubilee, with its Chorus of 10,000 singers, its orchestra of cannon, bells and anvils, its audience of 37,000 souls, touches on one of our national weaknesses, if not our great national temptation,—the confounding of bulk with greatness. It suggests that the tendency of our thought and our admirations is to produce "a new sort of human nature, with sensoria of telescopic grasp, but with a loss of microscopic power." It sees in it a recurrence to that Asiatic taste for, and worship of, the gigantesque which has "disappeared in the closely compressed life of Western Europe. . . There was and is in Asiatics, and there is in Americans, a notable desire to reassure themselves against the menaces of nature, by getting visible signs of human unanimity and cooperation on a grand scale. We suspect that there is much more of real psychological analogy between the Asiatic attempt to build a tower that might scale the skies on the plains of Shinar, and the American attempt to peal forth a kind of musical thunder of human liberty and peace at that centre of the world, Boston, Massachusetts, than our Yankee friends would at all admit."

The criticism seems to us to have a good deal of truth in it, if for Asiatic you substitute the more emphatic word *pagan*. For the tendency was not universal in Asia. One Asiatic nation at least was free from it. One Asiatic people, dwelling in a land of no broad plains, no lofty mountains, no mighty rivers, no rich mines, and no vast resources, seem to have been a living protest against this worship of bigness. Engrained into the heart of this people, and reiterated in every possible shape by their teachers, was the belief that the weak things of this world had been chosen to confound the mighty, and that they themselves were to be, by God's grace, the channel of influences and forces which should mould all the peoples, as none of these huge and gigantic kingdoms and forces around them ever did or could. And we would trace the comparative freedom of Europe from this pagan worship of huge things, to an influence which proceeded from a part of that Asiatic Jewish nation—the influence of Christ and His Church. That the whole of that Jewish nation did not become the means of disseminating that influence was owing mainly to their having lost faith in the truth revealed to their fathers. Their hope became a hope that God would change their little things into such as were gigantic,—would give to them an empire as great as that which had belonged to the heathen. And so when One came who claimed to be Lord over all, and to be the centre of the unity which had bound the nation in the past, they asked of Him pagan and gigantic signs of His power. He refused to be made a King on the same plane with Tiberius and Herod; He refused to establish a universal monarchy by His miraculous power, and they rejected Him. He had lived the life of a poor man; they put Him to the death of a slave.

The message of His life and death has been the saving word of life to Europe. European civilization has been largely built upon it. It was a message that "God had chosen the foolish things of the world to confound the wise; and the weak things of the world to confound the things which are mighty; and base things of the world, and things which are despised, yea, and things which are not, to bring to nothing the things which are." All the permanent

strength of Europe has come from faith in that message, in the truth that God is the Omnipotent Source of all power, and will prevail with the weakest weapons against the mightiest. All the weakness of Europe, of her nations and Churches, has been through forgetting that and coming down to the worldly level of the gigantesque, and of trust in the merely big as if it were the great. The "great apostasy" of the Church of Rome was the seeking of greatness on this outward and worldly plane of vastness. Protestantism was a re-assertion of the spiritual principle that Christ's kingdom was not of this world, and its strength not to be thus measured.

And now America stands as yet but on the threshold of a national existence, with manifold temptations around her, and none more dangerous than the very idolatry. We know what the doom will be if she give way to the tempter. Nebuchadnezzar's fate will be repeated in substance in every imitator of his sin. "Behold this great Babylon that I have made," and he was sent to herd with the beasts of the field.

But is America to fall back on the godless paganism of Asia? What is to be the source of her national trust and confidence? Is it to be in her huge resources and vast area, her boundless plains and mighty rivers? What is to be her national boast and glory? Is it the external advantages of which she is providentially possessed? The "American thirst for big things," the "pride which Americans have always shown in the great scale of their political life, in the immense area of their States, in the vast square-mileage of their lakes, even in the enormous dimensions of their catastrophes," seems to us not exempt from the old description:—"pride goeth before destruction." At best these things are not the means to true national greatness. Every nation that has risen to world-historic greatness, has thriven largely through the want of these things; while of every people that has possessed them it might be said: "Their history was written on sand." It may be—we trust it is the case—that God has a great purpose to work out on this continent, the upbuilding of a nation vast in extent, yet permeated by the Spirit of all righteousness. But to that end we must be rid of that Ahab-spirit which hurried us into war with Mexico, and would hurry us into similar wars now "to get all the land that joins our farm." We must have better teachers than our popular politicians, who are debauching the national conscience by appeals to "manifest destiny," which they have put in the plan of the will of Him who has fixed the bounds of the nations, and will take vengeance upon the mover of "the ancient landmarks." If not, our sin will bring its own punishment. We shall gather and grasp, absorb and spread, until the unity and homogeneity of the national life is destroyed, and the nation's integrity and honesty overthrown, when we will be the easy prey of any faction that shall arise to demand disunion.

## ROMISH AND PROTESTANT WORSHIP IN PRAGUE.

It was easy to see within a very short time after crossing, day before yesterday, the frontier between Saxony and Bohemia, at Bodenach, on our way from Dresden by rail, that we were entering a country where the Catholic religion predominates. By the way side—in the fields—on the coping of bridge walls—on the hill-tops and in the valleys—in the open fields and on the fronts of the houses—everywhere, we beheld the cross, the crucifix, or the Virgin and Child, in wood, or rude sculpture, or painting. And here in the capital of Bohemia, with thick-clustering associations of the bloody conflicts between Papacy and Protestantism, ending in the success of the former, when Frederick V. of the Palatine and the Bohemian Protestants were defeated at the battle of White Hills by the Austrian Catholics; all through the city, in the crosses, the crucifixes, the images of the Virgin, painted or rudely carved, on the sides of houses and stores and taverns, sometimes with lights burning before them day and night;—in the processions, with crosses and banners, priests and swinging censers, passing along with songs to the Virgin;—in the 69 Catholic churches, with but three Protestant ones, the former open every day, the entrance ways and the vestibules lined with beggars, male and female, telling their beads, and interspersing the pious exercises with solicitations for alms; all these features, and many more which it is impossible to enumerate, force upon the traveller's observation the difference between this and a Protestant city, like Berlin. These are, however, but outward and material characteristics; of the more essential and vital differences in the lives, habits and morals of the people, I am free to confess that I cannot fairly judge from my limited and most cursory knowledge.

This morning, at 9, I went to the Tein-church,

on Old-town-square, quite surrounded by houses built close up against its walls, entering through vaulted passage-ways, dark and close. The original structure was built about 1100 as a chapel, and had been added to, enlarged, damaged by fire, and lightning, and the ravages of numerous wars, repaired and re-constructed, till it stands, as at present, the second church in the city, in point of interest, not only from its historical associations, but from its architecture, its paintings, its carvings and statues, its numerous tombs and chapels. The Cathedral alone, in the old Strádschin, of any of the churches of the city, has richer attractions, and the extensive repairs at present being made there, interfere materially with the inspection of its interior. John Huss preached in the Tein-church, and from 1310 till 1620, the date of the battle of the White Hills, it was in possession of the Hussites. In 1458 George Podibrad was crowned King of Bohemia in the May Chapel near the church, and by him the two buildings were connected, and two towers added to the church; between which, high up on the pointed gable, he placed a gilded chalice, emblem of one of the great points for which Huss contended—that the cup, in the administration of the Lord's Supper, should be given to the laity. In 1621, after the Catholics obtained control of the church, this chalice was taken down, and replaced by an image of the Virgin, which still remains there.

The service had already commenced when I entered. From the organ, accompanied by an orchestra of stringed and wind instruments, and many voices, male and female, pealed out some of the magnificent music of the Romish ritual, in response to the utterances of the gorgeously robed priest, who, at the other end of the church, with his attendants, in garments of black and yellow, scarlet and white, was engaged in the celebration of the mass at the high altar, amid the fumes of incense and the light of many tapers. The church was well filled, both nave and side aisles, while the transept and choir, as far up as the railing before the high altar, was crowded with worshippers, some of whom, kneeling at the rail, were waiting to receive the wafer. The nave was occupied throughout its entire length with slips or pews without doors, of a dark-colored wood, rendered still darker by the effects of time and the wear of the successive generations who had occupied them. The columns were adorned with tombs and monuments, paintings and crucifixes, all elaborate; but many of them tawdry and in exceedingly bad taste, having no merit but that of antiquity.

A multitude of reflections crowded upon the mind, as I stood erect through the whole service, while, at the ringing of bells, some visible and others invisible, and while the sacred emblems were being elevated, the whole mass of worshippers, fell upon their knees, in pew and aisle, before altar and side-altar, all over the church, and crossed themselves. Down upon their knees on the bare stone floor of the nave, were many old women, apparently devoutly reciting prayers or following the service out of thumb-marked and dingy books, looking even older and more toil-stained than themselves. An old woman had a sort of desk or stand in one corner, at the side of the church, where she sold candles, at a kreutzer (half a cent) apiece, to the worshippers, to burn to the Virgin, before one of her pictures in the chapels. When the trade slackened a little, she would leave her stand and wander through the church, quietly offering them for sale. The purchaser would light it, and stick it on a frame provided on the railing in front of the picture, and let it burn out. And all the while the priest at the altar, with his back to the people, except when occasionally he turned round and gave them his blessing, in the words "Dominus vobiscum,"—pronouncing the last word "com"—was intoning and chanting, and bowing and kneeling, and rising up again, and incensing the vessels and elements, and being himself incensed by his attendants, as the censers swung to and fro.

And I thought, as I stood, of the power of the Roman hierarchy, and of the appeal to the senses made by its gorgeous ceremonial, and of the mixture in all this temple, intended for the worship of the living and true God, of the tawdry artificial flowers surrounding the altars, the glare and extravagance of the gilded work, appealing to the unrefined mind—mingled with much that was rare and curious in art to attract the refined and elegant; and over all, and enveloping, as it were, in a mystic sense of the elevating and beautiful, rose the clouds of sweet smelling incense, and the volumes of delicious and ravishing strains of music, which filled the high arch of the nave, sixty feet above the floor of the church, and rolled in graceful and solemn, and swelling volume through nave and aisle, and chapel and choir, and arch and transept; and then I recalled the Treasure-house of the Cathedral which I had seen but yesterday, with its priceless robes of gold and silver, and purple and fine linen work, the production of princesses and royal and noble ladies who with fair hands had hoped in some measure thus to work out, the salvation of their souls, and with its rich utensils for the altar, of solid silver and gold adorned with diamonds, and rubies and

emeralds and sapphires, and with its so-called relics, consisting of pieces of the wood of the true Cross, of the handkerchief of the Virgin Mary, of the table-cloth on which the last supper was celebrated, of two of the thorns of the crown made by the soldiers for Christ, of a nail which pierced His feet, of a piece of the sponge upon which He was handed vinegar to drink; and then of the mighty and bloody conflicts which all this (falsely so-called) religion had given rise to; and then as I could not help thinking of the possibility, nay probability, that in our own beloved and free country, there is yet to arise a conflict, peaceable and without blood it may be, but whether peaceable or bloody, to be met boldly, firmly, manfully, with all the spirit of the old Protestant principle, and faith and sturdy rigidity, and stern determination; there was a comfort, a strength, a peace, a satisfaction, a restfulness in the feeling that God rules over all, and orders all the affairs of men, and makes even the wrath of man to praise Him; and the prayer arose even there in that temple of a foreign faith, that the Christian people of America might be awake and awakened to their responsibilities.

What a relief to step out from the dim, and smoky and oppressive church, into the open air upon the great square, and have right before me the spot where, on June 21, 1621, more than 200 years ago, 27 Protestant noblemen were beheaded for their attachment to their faith; and then to the church where worship at this day the followers of the Protestant religion in the simplicity of the faith in Christ Jesus, who offered himself up, once as a sacrifice for all sin. Turn down from the Josef Platz into Elisabeth Strasse, which leads to the new Suspension Bridge; and a short distance before reaching the Bridge, take Neumühle Strasse to the right, and a few steps bring you in sight of the church, surrounded by a wall. High up on the gable appears a large gilt chalice. Entering an arched gateway in the wall, close before you is the church itself, a plain brick, plastered, edifice, erected quite recently. It is divided into a nave and choir,—or chancel, perhaps, as we understand it. In front of the chancel stands the altar covered with a plain linen cloth. At one side where the nave joins the choir is an elevated pulpit. At the opposite end of the nave is the gallery or organ loft, with a small, but very sweet toned organ. The number and verses of the hymn to be sung are displayed on one or two blackboards on the wall. Over the pulpit is a sounding board, the front of which bears a carved Bible, on which stands a gilded chalice. The chalice also appears in relief on a blue panel in the front of a small gallery which is thrown across the back of the choir. The hour for service (11 o'clock) having arrived, the minister, Dr. Von Engel, enters from the vestry (at one side of the chancel) accompanied by a Scotch clergyman, Rev. A. Moody Stuart. They take their seats in an enclosed pew at the foot of the pulpit. The choir, accompanied by the organ, sing the first hymn for the day, in which nearly the whole congregation, consisting perhaps of 100 persons join. Then Dr. Von Engel steps into the chancel behind the altar, or communion table, and offers prayer in German, in which the whole service is conducted. Then follows another hymn, after which Dr. Von Engel ascends the pulpit and delivers a sermon.

The people all rise in their place during the reading of the text; remaining seated through the rest of the service, except when the benediction is pronounced, when they all rise. After the sermon, which occupies full half an hour, another hymn is sung; and then we enjoy a most excellent spiritual address from Mr. Stuart, which is delivered from the chancel.—Dr. Von Engel standing by the side of Mr. Stuart, and translating into German as he progresses. The benediction closes the service.

Dr. Prime, in *The N. Y. Observer*, some months since, gave a very full and interesting account of this church, and I am indebted to him for the knowledge of its existence, which led me to seek it out. The simplicity of its service was far more impressive and grateful from the contrast with the gorgeousness of the Romish service I had witnessed just previously. There is a deputation from the denomination to which this church is attached, at present in America, and Dr. Prime commends them to all evangelical denominations.

A visit to the old Jewish Synagogue of an uncertain age, but at least 600 or 700 years old in its newest part, and the interior black with the dust and smoke of centuries, presented another phrase of religious observance. An ancient roll of the Book of the Law, more than 600 years old, the characters hardly legible through the effects of time, is carefully preserved and cherished, though no longer used in the service. Near by is the cemetery, the most recent grave in which was made in 1784, and the oldest tombstone known, is 1200 years old; the whole ground, which is an English mile in circumference, crowded as thickly as a nursery garden is with young trees, with gravestones covered with Hebrew inscriptions and the emblems of the several tribes and of the priesthood, and dark with the effects of time and overgrown with moss and weeds. What another train of thought and emotion was awakened here! And then an hour spent most pleasantly with Mr. Moody Stuart, and two English clergymen and the family of one of them in their room at the Hotel, in a social religious service, singing "Jesus and shall it ever be," and "When I survey the wondrous Cross;" with prayers and reading of the Scripture, and a warm, telling, Christ-full address,—a meeting of Christians from different lands, and all interested in those who were here striving to make His name known in the midst of superstitions and difficulties,—closed a Sabbath, whose memories shall linger long as among the pleasant recollections of our foreign tour.

Prague, August 1, 1869. S. C. P.