

Original Communications.

VENICE. II.

WATER SUPPLY.

Venice is supplied with water in part by the clouds, and when that source fails it must be brought from one of the rivers at a distance of several miles. In this case it is brought in boats, in open tubs or vats, which could not be driven on wheels for fear of spilling. It is pumped from the boats (and it is sometimes brought in bulk) into the cisterns of the houses. The rain water is the best. There being no dust in the city, there is none on the house roofs, which are all of tile—and the water caught in cisterns, and filtered through charcoal is very palatable. The public wells of which there are necessarily many, are supplied in the same way, and at certain hours in the day are open to all. At such times the space around is thronged by women and girls wearing a peculiar hat, each with two copper or bronze kettles holding two or three gallons each, hanging at either end of a yoke across the right shoulder. Each woman carries her own rope with a hook at the end with which she lets down her buckets and draws up the water. The wells have wide curbs, and those in the Court of the Doge's Palace are of bronze, chased on the outer rim, and the inner edge cut in deep grooves by the ropes wearing against the side.

It is a lively scene about those wells when they are open. The women and girls chat and laugh as they meet and go and return in company. Many of the wells are covered with iron gratings and locked between the hours of public opening. As the clock in the tower at St. Mark's Square can be heard nearly throughout the city, and strikes the quarter hours, no one need be ignorant of the time when the wells are opened. Water, therefore, is not in excessive abundance in Venice—and the most common of all the street cries is "Aqua," "Aqua," heard day and night, in plaintive and long drawn tones something like the cry of "hot corn" in our streets in August. Men carry water about the streets in jars and decanters, and sell it very cheap. I believe, however, they put something in the water when required, perhaps as has been said elsewhere, "to kill the insects." Be that as it may—the water carriers do a lively business, and no one is intoxicated.

MARKETS.

The markets are well supplied with fruits and vegetables. Of the former there are oranges, lemons, figs, apples, pomegranates, peaches, pears, grapes in great abundance, and very fine looking; of vegetables—white potatoes, cabbages, celery, (which they boil), pumpkins, tomatoes, squashes, onions, carrots and cauliflowers. Fish are here in great variety, but the oysters are detestable from their coppery taste. But of meats I venture to say there was not as much exposed for sale in all the city as may be found any Saturday at three or four stalls in a Philadelphia market. Their fruit, always excepting grapes, is not so good as it looks. Their peaches are beautiful to the eye—but you rarely see a free-stone peach. They are hard, and tough, and insipid. As to grapes, for ten cents you can buy as many as three or four persons can eat, and of the finest quality. Roast pumpkin is hawked about the streets as hot corn is with us.

GREAT SQUARE OF ST. MARK.

The great place of attraction in Venice day and night is the Piazza or Square of St. Mark. It is five to six hundred feet long and two to three hundred feet wide, somewhat of a parallelogram. On the east side it is faced by the great church of St. Mark, and its towering campanile, on two other sides by the King's palace, and on the fourth by a long building resembling the palace. On all the sides except that of the church, there is an arched gallery some fifteen feet wide, on a level, or nearly so, with the square but separated by columns supporting arches. The lower story of these buildings are occupied by brilliant shops of every kind, and by cafes. The upper part is for the King's palace and other offices. The open space is perfectly level—paved with large square stones, and abundantly supplied with gas lamps. I have seen six hundred burning at once, besides the light of the cafes and shops. The flags of the pavement have never been crossed by a wheel or a hoof; but the constant tramping for centuries of human feet, shod and unshod, has worn them so smooth that they fairly glisten under the moon or the reflected light of the lamps.

To this square and to the piazzetta with which it is connected, and which opens on the grand canal—come all the strangers in Venice towards the hour of noon for lunch; and here, in the evening, all the gay and brilliant, whether citizens or strangers, are sure to come. Three or four times in the week a band discourse excellent music for an hour or two, and at other times families of strolling players move your pity and your alms by their poor efforts to support themselves by indifferent music. At such times the cafes are crowded—thousands taking their refreshments in the open air, at tables provided for the purpose. These refreshments are very simple—generally limited to a cup of coffee, an ice cream or a cigar. People of all classes come here in the evening—officers, sailors, priests—the rich, the poor—beggars, flower girls—sellers of the greatest variety of articles, almost every conceivable thing that can be carried in a basket.

It is, indeed, as has been said, "a ball room in the open air." I have seen five thousand people at once in that square, and under the colonnades, most of them in motion—but no crowding—no jostling, no loud talking, no annoyance or disturbance of any kind. All seemed bent on enjoying themselves without interfering with the comfort of their neighbors. There is no place in the world like St. Mark's Square in Venice.

CHURCHES—SUNDAY IN VENICE.

Then the churches, so numerous, so old, so rich in paintings, in statuary, in mosaics, in precious stones! Who can adequately describe them?

St. Mark's alone is a study. There is not an inch of canvass painting in it. Yet the walls, the ceiling, the domes are full of figures all in mosaic! The very floor is mosaic of rich and precious stones. Some poet has called it "a billowy floor," and not inaptly; for the surface is undulating as the roll of a gentle wave. The cause is that the church like all the other houses is built on piles, and in some places they have settled. St. Mark's altar is particularly rich, and we had the rare opportunity of seeing an altar screen exposed, because of the visit of the Empress, some twelve feet square or more, literally ablaze with gold and diamonds and other brilliants. The church is unlike anything we have seen elsewhere in architecture or ornament. Without, it somewhat resembles a Morgue, and within it is loaded with precious marbles from the East.

On Sunday we went to the church, expecting to see the Empress of the French and the King of Italy; but we were too late, the service was concluded before we reached the building. We saw them rolling up the carpets over which her majesty had walked. Another service followed, but I sat down and read to myself the sermon on the Mount, contrasting the plain and simple truths of that divine discourse, the hill-side, the disciples, the multitude, and the preacher—with the mysteries of the Roman Catholic religion; the altar blazing with gold and jewels—the priests in their rich dresses bowing and kneeling before that altar in the belief that Christ was there, who when on earth was so poor, so lowly; the incense, the organ, the kneeling congregation, the singers, the great cathedral—and I wondered what the Lord Jesus Himself would say if He should suddenly come into this temple.

My companions were going over the Episcopal service to themselves with their prayer books; but we went into a somewhat retired place in one of the transepts, where we found seats, and I read aloud, though in an undertone undisturbed and not disturbing others in that vast cathedral. Dean Stanley's sermon on "the doctrine of Apostolical Toleration," certainly the first sermon in the English language ever read audibly in that ancient temple. The people passing by and kneeling near us probably thought the reading was from a guide-book, and no one noticed us. Once during the reading one of the officials came rattling his box for money. I paused, dropped some money in to pay for our accommodation, he passed on, and I resumed and finished the reading of the sermon. B. B. C.

REV. A. M. STEWART'S LETTERS.—XLIX.

SYNOD OF ALTA CALIFORNIA.

This, our N. S. Synod, has just held its annual meeting in this city. It heard a sermon from the retiring Moderator—elected a new one—appointed various committees—held devotional exercises—heard reports—made speeches—presented resolutions and discussed, passed or rejected them—listened to delegates from other Ecclesiastical Bodies, and spoke good words to them in return—talked, ate, slept—and adjourned to meet next year under authority of the United General Assembly—all in fine, that respectable, subordinate, orderly Synods are wont to do.

Numerically, this body is among the smallest of our ecclesiastical families—not having as many ministerial names on its roll as the Third Presbytery of Philadelphia, from which I come commended to this coast. Nor were more than half the members on the roll present, and but few elders. A number of members have for a year or years, been doing service on the Atlantic side. A curious phase this of Presbyterialism. Business was transacted with a plainness, bluntness and directness characteristic of Pacific life.

Pastors here know but little of one another, or of each other's work. Seldom, save at Synod, and often not then, do they look each other in the face. No Presbyterian Church organ has existed as a common bond of union, until lately, nor has it, as yet, gotten into general circulation. Our Church organizations, save in San Francisco, and immediate vicinity, are far separated and feeble; while travel is very expensive. One Presbytery is so scattered, that a regular meeting is hardly thought of, save during the sittings of Synod.

PLACE OF MEETING.

San Francisco is the ecclesiastical Athens of the Pacific; as well as the centre for all other human interests; social, political, financial, manufactures and commerce. The annual meeting of our Synod is seldom thought of, save in this emporium. A feature for entertaining delegates here, would be looked upon by Atlantic side Christians with disfavor, as manifesting a cold and selfish hospitality. A large number of

the members attending our Synod have been accommodated at hotels—a committee of the church where the sittings were held, announcing, that all bills, when presented to them, would be paid.

Social life on the Pacific side has not grown into those delightful proportions which are seen and felt in old established Christian communities in Eastern States. All, however, is tending in the right direction. Many persons and families, foremost in doing good, in connection with our churches here, are not in a condition to have guests over night. Many of them board, and some keep boarders. Restaurant eating in this capital of the Pacific, is certainly an institution.

OTHER BODIES.

At the same time of our meeting, the Synod of the Pacific, (O. S.); the Synod of the Cumberland Presbyterians; the Congregational Union; and Baptist Association held their annual meetings here and in Oakland. By hearing, and through reports, the impression gathered from all these is, that none of them are strong; yet that all have obtained a firm hold; which, through a liberal continuance of men and money from the Atlantic side, will eventually become as the Lord's House, established upon the top of the mountains. All speak of progress and development; yet attest the special and seemingly growing obstacles, in these marvellous communities, to the coming of Emmanuel's kingdom.

UNION MEETING.

Our Old and New School Synods,—which terms, by the time this is in print,—will have lost their significance—held a very pleasing, cordial and profitable meeting together. They talked earnestly and lovingly about the great things which are to be accomplished when actually one. Among these were—a well sustained religious paper, a theological seminary, a cheap church literature, together with a widely increased and strengthened Church extension.

Presbyterian Union had an earlier growth and more ready development here, than in almost any other portion of our land. Feebleness, together with a tremendous external pressure, compelled a practical union, years since. Yet will the Great Marriage ceremony, shortly to take place in Pittsburgh, give to Presbyterianism on this Pacific coast, a strength, a dignity, and an expansive power never before known. San Francisco, Oct., 1869.

UNION.

ADJOURNED MEETING OF THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

The Assembly met according to adjournment, on Wednesday, Nov. 10th, at 11 o'clock, in the Third Presbyterian Church, Pittsburg; Rev. P. H. Fowler, D. D., moderator in the chair. The Assembly was called to order. The moderator stated the time allowed for devotions—one hour—would be abbreviated, on account of press of business, to half an hour. The devotional exercises commenced with singing

"All hail the power of Jesus' name."

Rev. Dr. Beatty, of Steubenville (O. S.), being present, was called upon to make the opening prayer. The excellent brother, whose services for reunion in the committee of 1868, of the other body, are well known, quite identified himself with our body in the whole strain of his earnest supplication.

Rev. Dr. Fowler, the Moderator, said: We meet to day with mingled feelings of sadness and joy—sadness at the death of those who have passed away since the meeting of the last Assembly. Blessed be God for the faith they have manifested, and for the work that they have accomplished, and for the assurance we feel that our loss is their everlasting gain. Our hearts are filled with joy, at the love of the Lord Jesus Christ, and are filled with love to the members of the other Assembly. Our fears have been dispelled, and we meet to day to conform to the decree that we should be one as the Father and Son are one. What encouragement we have to pray and to thank God that He has carried on this work so far and consecrated it. How little tax upon our faith then is it to believe that God will consecrate it to the glory of His name, and to His cause upon the earth.

The Moderator then read the eighty fifth psalm. Rev. R. H. Allen, D. D., of Philadelphia said: Brother Moderator and brethren, I suppose the great feeling to-day in the minds of all is the union that is about to be consummated. I know it is in mine. And I feel like humbling myself before God to be directed in this matter, and I think we need the Spirit of God at this time, as we are about to consummate this wonderful event in the history of this church. I have only belonged to this branch of the church for three years, and I can feel how many of you will regard the particular personal associations that will be broken up by this union. I have learned to love the brethren of this branch since I joined it, and although raised in the other, I feel this branch of the church is just as dear to me as the other is. Never in all my life have I seen a movement in a church in which was visible so manifestly the finger of Providence. And I feel it is doing just what Jesus Christ our Saviour prayed for, that it might be one. And I feel that it is in answer, not only to the prayers of the Divine Master, but in answer to what our churches have been praying for. I believe it will carry joy and gladness, and thrill the heart of many an humble child of God.

Dr. Adams said: We must all have been struck with the singular appropriateness of that portion of the Scripture to which we have listened, [The Eighty-fifth Psalm.] What are the words of man compared with the word of God? It seems like the eye of a well-executed portrait, which, wherever, we may change our position, seems to follow us. If that logic had been pre-

pared expressly by the Spirit of God for our circumstances and our use this morning, it could not have been more appropriate. It is an argument for faith, for hope, for prayer, founded upon past experience. Would God have brought us out of the wilderness, if He had intended to destroy us? And if He had not intended something grand and glorious for our Church in the future? Let us be enlightened by the memory of the past, and be encouraged to pray for true spiritual blessings upon our church. The Moderator then made a prayer, which he concluded as follows:

We ask it all in the name of Christ, our only Mediator, who has taught us to say: "Our Father who art in Heaven." [The Moderator here recited the Lord's prayer, in which the whole Assembly audibly joined.]

The time for devotional services having expired, the business of the Assembly was opened with prayer by the Moderator.

The roll being called, ninety-three members and seventy-six elders responded.

The Moderator announced that there were a number of persons present holding commissions to fill vacancies, and wished to know the pleasure of the Assembly with regard to the matter.

The Stated Clerk read the action which had been taken on the subject at the meeting of the Assembly in May last, from the minutes. This action provides that new elections must be held and new commissions be issued, to fill vacancies resulting from death and resignations.

In accordance with this action commissions to fill such vacancies were presented and referred to the committee on Commissions, consisting of the Clerks of the Assembly.

Rev. Mr. Noble, from the Committee of Arrangements, submitted a report that the morning session commence at nine o'clock, and close at twelve o'clock; the afternoon at two and a half o'clock, and close at five o'clock. The first hour of the morning service will be devoted to devotional exercises. Evening service will commence at seven o'clock. The report was adopted.

REPORT OF THE VOTE ON REUNION.—EVERY PRESBYTERY OFFICIALLY REPORTED.—THE VOTE UNANIMOUS.

The stated clerk, Rev. E. F. Hatfield, D. D., then read the following report:

Report of the Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church of the United States of America, on the answers of the Presbyteries to the Overtures on the Reunion of the two branches of the Church:

The number of Presbyteries connected with this General Assembly is one hundred and thirteen. Official responses have been received from every one of them. They have all answered the Overture in the affirmative. In each of the Presbyteries of Albany, Wellsboro and the District of Columbia, a single negative vote was cast. In each of the remaining one hundred and ten Presbyteries, the vote was unanimous. Respectfully submitted.

EDWIN F. HATFIELD, Stated Clerk. Pittsburgh, November 10, 1869.

Great applause attended the announcement.

At the request of the Moderator, Rev. Dr. Adams, offered up thanks for the most auspicious result.

The Assembly then rose and sang, with a great outpouring of harmony, the Doxology:

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,
Praise Him all creatures here below,
Praise Him above, ye Heavenly Host,
Praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost.

On motion of Dr. S. W. Fisher, of Utica, a committee of three, two ministers and one elder, was appointed to inform the other Assembly of the action of the Presbyteries of this Assembly. By request of Dr. Fisher the oldest minister of this body, Rev. Dr. Aiken, of Cleveland, was appointed Chairman. The other members are: Rev. Z. M. Humphrey, D. D., of Philadelphia, and Hon. John A. Foote, of Cleveland.

H. Day, Esq., Ruling Elder in the other branch, was announced as a committee from that Assembly. He had been appointed to inform our body of the action of his Assembly in regard to vacancies on the Roll of last May.

The action is, that alternates who were chosen before the meeting of the Assembly in the city of New York, shall be allowed to take the place of members, if members are absent, and also if the alternates sat in the former meeting of the Assembly, and are now absent, their principles should be allowed to take their places.

In view of the very different action of our own Assembly on this subject, it was resolved, that Judges Strong, Haines, and Burnham be added to the Committee on Commissions, to whom the whole subject of new commissions be referred.

It was also resolved that all matters requiring the concurrent action of both Assemblies, be referred to the joint Committee of Conference on Reunion.

Afternoon Session.

The minutes of the morning session were read and approved.

The Committee on Commissions reported, recommending that the following persons having furnished evidence of appointment by their respective Presbyteries, in accordance with the rule previously adopted by this Assembly, be enrolled as members of the Assembly:

Alton—Rev. Geo. I. King. Geneva—Rev. S. H. Gridley, D. D. Utica—John D. Gallup, M. D. Champlain—Elder R. S. Cate. Brooklyn—Rev. Theodore S. Brown. Troy—Rev. Samuel M. Wood. Monroe—Rev. Joseph Swindt, Elder Enoch Tindall. Knox—Elder Lucius L. Day. Omaha—Rev. J. M. Peebles. Galena and Belvidere—Rev. John McLean. Buffalo—Elder Elijah H. Danforth, Rev. H. P. Bogue. Tioga—Rev. David D. Gregory. Schuyler—Elder Clark B. Church. Montrose—Elder Jas. Dixon. Otsego—Elder Parker Scott. Rockaway—Rev. Elijah W. Stoddart. Minnesota—Rev. E. B. Wright, Elder Henry M. Knox. Marquette—Elder J. W. Ross. Catskill—Elder Henry Waterbury. Genesee Valley—Hon. Alfred Lockhart, elder. Madison—Elder E. G. Whitney. Newark, Rev. J. P. Wilson, D. D. St. Louis—Rev. Chas. A. Dickey. Troy—Rev. Asahel Bronson.

The Moderator said it was unusual to vote upon the report of the Committee on Commissions. It was moved that the report be adopted.

Dr. Thayer inquired about the date of these commissions. The Moderator said some of them had commissions bearing date of May last.

Judge Strong wished to recall the fact that at the meeting of the General Assembly held in New York there was a committee appointed upon the subject of vacancies. They reported that where vacancies occurred from death or sickness, it was competent for the Presbytery, by a new election, to fill them. These names were presented under that rule. Where a vacancy occurred, the constituency of the absent member could fill that vacancy, and that was all that was being done now. Each Presbytery had as much right to representation as a Congressional district.

The Report was adopted. The Moderator suggested that it would be desirable for the Assembly to report its action to the other Assembly.

Judge Strong thought it would be decorous. This Assembly had no right to interfere with the rules of the other, and it would be decorous to report that we had considered their communication, but we had at the last meeting decided upon the rule by which this matter was fixed.

Judges Strong and Haines were appointed the committee to convey this action to the other body.

Dr. Adams, chairman of the Committee, reported that a joint religious service would be held by the two Assemblies in the Third church in the evening. Adopted.

The Moderator, in reply to a question that had been asked as to whether the records of the Synod of Cincinnati could be received and examined by this Assembly, said that they could; as also could other records of a similar character.

The Moderator called for the report of the Committee on Unemployed Ministers. The Chairman of that Committee announced that the Committee had been unable to hold a meeting, and had, consequently, not prepared a report.

REPORT ON AMUSEMENTS.

Dr. Herrick Johnson, from the Com. on Amusements, presented the following report, which was adopted and referred to Committee on Publication for publication:

The question of popular amusements is one that cannot be settled by statute. It has to do with the spirit and the life of Christianity, rather than with the letter of its law. Hence the impossibility of specific enactment. But the very fact of its near and vital connection with spiritual life, justifies and demands for it a thoughtful consideration.

What Scripture guidance have we in the matter? What posture ought the Church to assume towards so-called popular amusements? A sweeping condemnation of them would be a sweeping folly. To say of them all that they are inherently and positively sinful, is simply to say what is not true, and to protest against suitable recreation would be to protest against a mental and moral necessity. A long-visaged, and sombre-hued piety is not after the order of the Gospel. That makes recognition of the laugh, the joy of life; has no frowns for the play-side of our nature; bids us serve the Lord with gladness. Nowhere so much as in the hearts of God's people should joy have her home, and go rippling out in the channels of deed and speech.

But what is suitable Christian recreation? We are without a specific, "Thus saith the Lord," for each specific form of pleasure. But this is by no means to acknowledge that we are without Scriptural guidance. The spirit is broader and deeper than the letter. There are general principles whose profound and subtle reach makes it impossible they should be framed by a law. These we bear on this question of popular amusements are these:

I. The first general principle has respect to the relation which Christians sustain to each other. It is discussed in Rom. xiv. and in I. Cor. viii. Christian liberty in things indifferent is there distinctly recognized. But it is bounded and limited by a higher law. We must not abuse our liberty to the offence of our brethren. We must bridle our knowledge with charity. We are bidden to beware how we tamper with the sanctities of a brother's conscience, and to beware how we trifle with the necessities of a brother's weakness. The law of conscience and the law of love are far more sacred and more precious and more to be regarded than the law of liberty. To the child of God they ought always to be paramount. To assert independence at the expense of wounding a brother's conscience, is "to sin against Christ." "It is good neither to eat flesh, nor to drink wine, nor anything whereby thy brother stumbleth." Of course, a merely personal, puerile, wretched scrupulosity is not to be foisted upon the church, for its government. But amusements whose tendencies are inherently and almost inevitably to excess, where the weak and the unstable may stumble and perish, and against which there is a general Christian conscience, are decisively condemned by this plain word of God.

II. The second general principle has respect to the relation which Christians sustain to the world. It is negative, and summed up in this: "Be not conformed to this world." It is a relation of non-conformity. Christians are to be unlike the world, and distinguishable from it. This idea of separateness runs through all the warp and woof of Scripture. And it clearly does not imply a separation from the grossly evil of the world. This is specifically and positively commanded. Christians are pledged and sworn to obedience from their very profession. The separation involved in non-conformity is from worldliness—from the worldly spirit. It is a demand that the whole tone and bent, and current and spirit of the Christian life shall be different from that of the worldly life; so different, that it shall be manifest to the world that the people of God are pilgrims and strangers on the earth; that they are walking with God; that they are a peculiar people, called out of the world while still remaining in it, God's witnesses, living Epistles, the salt of the earth, distinctive, chosen set apart, recognizable everywhere as having been with Jesus, and as holy in all manner of conversation. Let Christians apply to their lives this one central, prominent, gospel idea of non-conformity. Let them impress it on all their conduct, until they give unmistakable exhibition of the spirit of these unmistakable words of Christ and the Apostles, and it will go very far to settle this whole question of rational or irrational amusements.

III. The third general principle has respect to the relation which Christians sustain to Christ. It is positive, and summed up in this: "Whatsoever ye do in word or deed, do all in the name of the Lord Jesus." Broad, comprehensive, universal in its applicability, yet most specific after all in its fundamental conditions. "Whatsoever ye do." In another place applied to the very day necessity and acts of our lives—eating and drinking. Applicable, therefore, to our recreations. It is Scriptural condemnation of every form of social diversion in which a Christian cannot indulge, "in the name of the Lord Jesus." It is divine endorsement of whatever is done by a child of God, into which he may go, and out of which he may come, and through the progress of which he may continue, without there being one moment when it would be in any way inconsistent for him to ask his Lord's approval of him there and of what he is doing and witnessing and countenancing and supporting.

Let this principle be honestly and conscientiously applied. It will settle many a doubt. It will condemn many a popular amusement. It bars out every indulgence that cannot be had in con-

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