SURPRISES OF RELIGION

DR. TALMAGE'S DISCOURSE AT THE AUSTRO-HUNGARIAN CAPITAL.

The Royal City of Solomon, the Wise, and the Lessons Taught By Its Magnificence.

TEXT: "*Behold, the half was not told me.*"—1 Kings x., 7.

Appearing before you to-day, my mind yet agitated with the scenery of the Holy Land, from which we have just arrived, you will expect me to revert to some of the scenes once enacted there. Mark a circle around Lake Galilee, and another circle around Jerusalem, and you describe the two regions in which cluster memories of more events than in any other two circles. Jerusalem was a spell of fascination that will hold me the rest of my life. Solomon had resolved that that city should be the center of all sacred, regal and commercial magnificence. He set himself to work, and monopolized the surrounding desert as a highway for his caravans. He built the city of Palmyra around one of the principal wells of the east, so that all the long trains of merchandise from the east were obliged to stop there, pay toll and leave part of their wealth in the hands of Solomon's merchants. He manned the fortress Thapsacus at the chief ford of the Euphrates, and put under guard everything that passed there. The three great products of Palestine—wine pressed from the richest clusters and celebrated all the world over; oil, which in that hot country is the entire substitute for butter and lard, and was pressed from the olive branches until every tree in the country became an oil well; and honey, which was the entire substitute for sugar—these three great products of the country Solomon exported, and received in return from all nations precious woods and the animals of every clime.

He went down to Ezion-geber and ordered a fleet of ships to be constructed, oversaw the workmen, and watched the launching of the flotilla which was to go out on more than a year's voyage, to bring home the wealth of the then known world. He heard that the Egyptian horses were large and swift, and long maned and round limbed, and he resolved to purchase them, giving eighty-five dollars apiece for them, putting the best of these horses in his own stall and selling the surplus to foreign potentates at great profit.

He heard that there was the best of timber on Mount Lebanon, and he sent out one hundred and eighty thousand men to hew down the forest and drag the timber through the mountain gorges, to construct it into rafts to be floated to Joppa, and from thence to be drawn by ox teams twenty-five miles across the land to Jerusalem. He heard that there were beautiful flowers in other lands. He sent for them, planted them in his own gardens, and to this very day there are flowers found in the ruins of that city such as are to be found in no other part of Palestine, the lineal descendants of the very flowers that Solomon planted. He heard that in foreign groves there were birds of richest voice and most luxuriant wing. He sent out people to catch them, and bring them there, and he put them into his cages.

Stand back now and see this long train of camels coming up to the King's gate, and its ox teams from Egypt, gold and silver and precious stones, and beasts of every hue, and birds of every wing, and fish of every scale. See the peacocks strut under the cedars, and the horsemen run, and the chariots whirl! Hark to the orchestra! Gaze upon the dance! Not stopping to look into the wonders of the temple, step right on to the causeway, and pass up to Solomon's palace.

Here we find ourselves amid a collection of buildings on which the King had lavished the wealth of many empires. The genius of Hiram, the architect, and of the other artists to be seen in the long line of corridors and the suspended gallery and the approach to the throne. Traceried window opposite traceried window. Bronzed ornaments burst into lotus and lily and pomegranate. Chapiter surrounded by network of leaves in which imitation fruit seemed suspended as in hanging baskets. Three branches—so Josephus tells us—three branches sculptured on the marble, so thin and subtle that even the leaves seemed to quiver. A layer capable of holding five hundred barrels of water on six hundred brazen ox heads, which gushed with water and filled the whole place with coolness and crystalline brightness and musical pleas. Ten tables chased with cherub wheel and lion and cherubim. Solomon sat on a throne of ivory. At the seating place of the throne, on each end of the steps, a brazen lion. Why, my friends, in that place they crimmed their candles with snuffers of gold, and they cut their fruits with knives of gold, and they washed their hands in basins of gold, and they scraped out the ashes with shovels of gold, and they stirred the altar fires with tongs of gold. Gold reflected in the water! Gold flashing from the apparel! Gold blazing in the crown! Gold! gold! gold!

Of course the news of the affluence of that place went out everywhere by every caravan and by wing of every ship, until soon the streets of Jerusalem are crowded with curiosity seekers. What is that long procession approaching Jerusalem? I think from the pomp of it there must be royalty in the train. I smell the breath of the spices which are brought as presents, and I hear the shout of the drivers, and I see the dust covered caravan showing that they come from far away. Cry the news up to the palace. The Queen of Sheba advances. Let all the people come out to see. Let the mighty men of the land come out on the palace corridors. Let Solomon come down the stairs of the palace before the Queen has alighted. Shake out the cinnamon, and the saffron, and the calamus, and the frankincense and toss it into the treasure house. Take up the diamonds until they glitter in the sun.

The Queen of Sheba alights. She enters the palace. She washes at the bath. She sits down at the banquet. The cup bearers bow. The meat smokes. The music trembles in the dash of the waters from the molten sea. Then she rises from the banquet, and walks through the conservatories, and gazes on the architecture, and she asks Solomon many strange questions, and she learns about the religion of the Hebrews, and she then and there becomes a servant of the Lord God.

She is overwhelmed. She begins to think that all the spices she brought, and all the precious woods which are intended to be turned into harps and psalteries and interwalkings for the causeway between the temple and the palace, and the one hundred and eighty thousand dollars in money—she begins to think that all these presents amount to nothing in such a place, and she is almost ashamed that she has brought them, and she says within herself: "I heard a great deal about this place, and about this wonderful religion of the Hebrews, but I find it far beyond my highest anticipations. I must add more than fifty per cent. to what has been related. It exceeds everything that I could have expected. The half—the half was not told me."

Learn from this subject what a beautiful thing it is when social position and wealth surrender themselves to God. When religion comes to a neighborhood, the first to receive it are the women. Some men say it is because they are weak minded. I say it is because they have quicker perception of what is right, more ardent affection and capacity for sublimer emotion. After the women have received the Gospel then all the distressed and the poor of both sexes, those who have no friends, accept Jesus. Last of all come the greatly prospered. Alas, that it is so!

If there are those who have been favored of fortune, or, as I might better put it, favored of God, surrender all you have and all you expect to be to the Lord, who blessed this Queen of Sheba. Certainly you are not ashamed to be found in this Queen's company. I am glad that Christ has had His imperial friends in all ages—Elizabeth Christina, Queen of Prussia; Maria Feodorovna, Queen of Russia; Marie, Empress of France; Helena, the imperial mother of Constantine; Arcadia, from her great fortunes, building public baths in Constantinople and toiling for the alleviation of the masses; Queen Clotilda, leading her husband and three thousand of his armed warriors to Christian baptism; Elizabeth, of Burgundy, giving her jeweled glove to a beggar and scattering great fortunes among the distressed; Prince Albert, singing "Rock of Ages" in Windsor Castle, and Queen Victoria, incognita, reading the Scriptures to a dying pauper.

I bless God that the day is coming when royalty will bring all its thrones, and music all its harmonies, and painting all its pictures, and sculpture all its statuary, and architecture all its pillars, and conquest all its scepters, and the Queens of the earth, in long line of advance, frankincense filling the air and the camels laden with gold, shall approach Jerusalem, and the gates shall be hoisted, and the great burden of splendor shall be lifted into the palace of this greater than Solomon.

Again, my subject teaches me what is earnestness in the search of truth. Do you know where Sheba was? It was in Abyssinia, or some say in the southern part of Arabia Felix. In either case it was a great way off from Jerusalem. To get from there to Jerusalem she had to cross a country infested with bandits, and go across blistering deserts. Why did not the Queen of Sheba stay at home and send a committee to inquire about this new religion, and have the delegates report in regard to that religion and wealth of King Solomon? She wanted to see for herself, and hear for herself. She could not do this by work of committee. She felt she had a soul worth ten thousand kingdoms like Sheba, and she wanted a robe richer than any woven by Oriental shuttles, and she wanted a crown set with the jewels of eternity. Bring out the camels. Put on the spices. Gather up the jewels of the throne and put them on the caravan. Start now; no time to be lost. Goad on the camels. When I see that caravan, dust covered, weary and exhausted, trudging on across the desert and among the bandits until it reaches Jerusalem, I say: "There is an earnest seeker after the truth."

But there are a great many who do not act in that way. They all want to get the truth, but they want the truth to come to them, they do not want to go to it. There are people who fold their arms and say: "I am ready to become a Christian at any time, if I am to be saved I shall be saved, and if I am to be lost I shall be lost." But Jerusalem will never come to you; you must go to Jerusalem. The religion of the Lord Jesus Christ will not come to you; you must go and get religion. Bring out the camels; put on all the sweet spices, all the treasures of the heart's affection. Start for the throne. Go in and hear the waters of salvation dashing in fountains all around about the throne. Sit down at the banquet—the wine pressed from the grapes of the heavenly Eshcol, the angels of God the cup bearers. Goad on the camels. The Bible declares it: "The Queen of the south"—that is, this very woman I am speaking of—"the Queen of the south shall rise up in judgment against this generation and condemn it; for she came from the uttermost parts of the earth to hear the wisdom of Solomon; and behold! a greater than Solomon is here." What infatuation the sitting down in idleness expecting to be saved. "Strive to enter in at the strait gate. Ask, and it shall be given you; seek, and ye shall find; knock, and it shall be opened to you." Take the Kingdom of Heaven by violence. Urge on the camels!

Again, my subject impresses me with the fact that religion is a surprise to any one that gets it. This story of the new religion in Jerusalem, and of the glory of King Solomon, who was a type of Christ—that story rolled on and on, and was told by every traveler coming back from Jerusalem. The news goes on the wing of every ship and with every caravan, and you know a story enlarges as it is retold, and by the time that story gets down into the southern part of Arabia Felix and the Queen of Sheba hears it, it must be a tremendous story. And yet this Queen declares in regard to it, although she had heart so much and had her anticipations raised so high, the half—the half was not told her.

So religion is always a surprise to any one that gets it. The story of grace—an old story. Apostles preached it with rattle of chain; martyrs declared it with arm of fire; deathbeds have affirmed it with visions of glory, and ministers of religion have sounded it through the lanes, and the highways, and the chapels, and the cathedrals. It has been cut into stone with chisel, and spread on the canvas with pencil; and it has been rustled in the doxology of great congregations. And yet when a man first comes to long on the palace of God's mercy, and to see the royalty of Christ, and the wealth of this banquet, and the luxuriance of His attendants, and the loveliness of His face, and the joy of His service, he exclaims with prayers, with tears, with sighs, with triumphs: "The half—the half was not told me!"

I appeal to those who are Christians. Compare the idea you had of the joy of the Christian life before you became a Christian with the appreciation of that joy you have now since you have become a Christian, and you are willing to attest before angels and men that you never, in the days of your spiritual bondage, had any appreciation of what was to come. You are ready to-day to answer and say in regard to the discoveries you have made of the mercy and the grace and the goodness of God: "The half—the half was not told me!"

Well, we hear a great deal about the good time that is coming to this world when it is to be girded with salvation. Holiness on the bells of the horses. The lion's mane patted by the hand of a babe. Ships of Tarshish bringing cargoes for Jesus, and the hard, dry, barren, winter bleached, storm scarred, thunder split rock breaking into floods of bright water. Deserts into which dromedaries thrust their nostrils, because they were afraid of the simoon—deserts blooming into carnation roses and silver tipped lilies.

It is the old story. Everybody tells it. Isaiah told it, John told it, Paul told it, Ezekiel told it, Luther told it, Calvin told it, John Milton told it—everybody tells it; and yet—and yet when the midnight shall fly the hills, and Christ shall marshal His great army, and China, dashing her idols into the dust, shall hear the voice of God and wheel into line; and India, destroying her Juggernaut and snatching up her little children from the Ganges, shall hear the voice of God and wheel into line; and vine covered Italy, and wheat crowned Russia, and all the nations of the earth shall hear the voice of God and fall into line; then the Church, which has been toiling and struggling through the centuries, robed and garlanded like a bride adorned for her husband, shall put aside her veil and look up into the face of her Lord the King and say: "The half—the half was not told me!"

Well, there is coming a greater surprise to every Christian—a greater surprise than anything I have depicted. Heaven is an old story. Everybody talks about it. There is hardly a hymn in the hymn book that does not refer to it. Children read about it in their Sabbath-school books. Aged men put on their spectacles to study it. We say, it is a harbor from the storm. We call it home. We say it is the house of many mansions. We weave together all sweet, beautiful, delicate, exhilarant words; we weave them into letters, and then we spell it out in rose and lily and amaranth. And yet that place is going to be a surprise to the most intelligent Christian. Like the Queen of Sheba, the report has come to us from the far country, and many of us have started. It is a desert march, but we urge on the camels. What though our feet be blistered with the way? We are hastening to the palace. We take all our loves and hopes and Christian ambitions, as frankincense and myrrh and cassia, to the great King. We must not rest. We must not halt. The night is coming on, and it is not safe out here in the desert. Urge on the camels. I see the domes against the sky, and the houses of Lebanon and the temples and the gardens. See the fountains dance in the sun and the gates flash as they open to let in the poor pilgrims.

Send the word up to the palace that we are coming, and that we are weary of the march of the desert. The King will come out and say: "Welcome to the palace; bathe in these waters; recline on these banks. Take this cinnamon and frankincense and myrrh and put it upon a censer and swing it before the altar." And yet, my friends, when heaven bursts upon us it will be a greater surprise than that—Jesus on the throne, and we made like Him! All our Christian friends surrounding us in glory! All our sorrows and tears and sins gone by forever! The thousands of thousands, the one hundred and forty and four thousand, the great multitudes that no man can number, will cry, world without end: "The half—the half was not told me!"

Tea-Chests, Teas and Tea-Making.

In a letter from China a correspondent says: "The manufacture of tea-chests being peculiarly Chinese, is of itself a curiosity. In the course of construction, each chest passes through many hands. Each person employed has a specific part to perform, such as sawing the rough boards, dressing them, nailing the box together, lining it with paper and then with lead. When it comes to the painting, there are as many different painters employed as there are shades in the coloring, one applying his color or particular part of the ornamentation, and then passing the chest on to his next neighbor, and in turn to the next—and so the box is made, lined and painted in an incredibly short time. The "tasting room" at the Tea Hong is an interesting place to visit. Here we saw a thousand "musters" of tea. A muster, by the way, is about a pound a tea. The taster weighs an equal quantity of tea from eight or ten different musters, and puts each by itself in a china mug. Boiling water is poured on and the tea steeped for five minutes by the glass. It is then poured off into cups, and the leaves placed on wooden trays. By the taste, color, aroma and strength of the liquid, and the condition of the steeped leaves, the quality is determined. An expert taster commands a large salary, and upon his judgment hangs the fortune of the Chinese tea merchant. Of the different teas we tasted, we thought the Flowery Pieul the finest. It is a high-priced tea which we never see in America. It sells for $16 a pound. The next best for a cup of afternoon tea, the time when you want the best, was the Fonchong, No. 1. This is $3 a pound. There are teas in China which sells for $100 a pound, but they are the product of very old and celebrated nurseries, and find their way only to the tables of the Emperor and the Lord High functionaries. The Japanese makes tea in a charming way—charming, that is to say to the drinker who does not wish to shut her eyes for twenty-four hours after taking a cup of it. Water is always kept ready for tea-making, and when any one calls, a cup of the steaming beverage is set before the guest after it has been boiled exactly thirty seconds. Unless you have tried the experiment, you have no idea of the superior flavor of tea poured off the instant the boiling water touches it."

Protecting the Plate Glass.

Passing along Dearborn street, yesterday, says a writer in the Chicago *Journal*, I saw a crowd watching closely the placing in position of some enormous panes of glass in a handsome new building. The glass was the best French plate, and the workmen handled it as carefully as if it were worth something more than a week's wages. The task of putting it in place was no sooner completed than one of the workmen grabbed a pot of whiting and with a big brush daubed a lot of meaningless marks on it. I thought it about as silly a thing as a man could do, and with the usual reportorial curiosity asked the foreman why he allowed it. The answer was a crusher. "Why," said he, "we have to mark them that way or they'd be smashed in no time." My look of amazement doubtless prompted him to further explanation, for he said: "You see, the workmen around a new building get in the custom of shoving brasher, etc., through the open sash before the glass is put in. They would continue to do it even after the glass is in if we didn't do something to attract their attention. That's the reason you always see new windows daubed with glaring white marks. Even if a careless workman does start to shove a stick of timber through a costly plate of glass he will stop short when his eye catches the danger sign. That white mark is just a signal which says: 'Look out; you'll break me if you are not careful.'"

Vanderbilt's New Palace.

George W. Vanderbilt, the youngest of the sons of the late William H. Vanderbilt, is determined, in addition to his well-known palace in New York, to have the most magnificent private park and the lordliest country estate in America. To that end he has recently bought at a cost of $310,000 nearly five thousand acres lying just outside of Asheville, N. C. His landscape gardener is already at work laying out and beautifying those extensive grounds at an expense of $300,000 more. His architect is busy preparing the plans for a lordly pleasure house, like an old style French chateau, which will cost an additional $400,000. His model stables, which will be scattered over the 5000 acres, for the purpose of housing thousands of horses and cattle of the very bluest of blue bovine blood, will cost, it is said, at least $200,000 more. So that the estimated cost already foots up the magnificent sum of $1,200,000.

The shortest distance from the stately entrance gates to the still statelier mansion of the lord of this vast estate will be four miles by a magnificent roadway sixty feet wide, and it is said that there will be more than fifty miles of macadamized roads within the grounds.—*Philadelphia Times.*

The milk supply of New York city affords an income to the farmers furnishing it of $10,000,000 at 2½ cents per quart. Over 200,000 cows are milked to obtain this supply, and $60,000,000 of capital is invested, exclusive of the railroads and of dealers. Milk is drawn from five States, and some of it is hauled 300 miles by the railroads.

The British and Foreign Bible Society has, during the eighty-one years of its existence, issued from its London house alone 29,000,000 complete Bibles, nearly 32,000,000 New Testaments and 11,345,000 portions of the Bible. This makes a total of 72,500,000 books issued from the London headquarters.

SUNDAY SCHOOL.

THE LESSON FOR JANUARY 12

"The Song of Mary" Luke 1.46-55. Golden Text, Luke 1.46-47. Notes and Comments.

46. "And Mary said: My soul doth magnify the Lord." Hannah said in her prayer: "My heart rejoiceth in the Lord;" and David calls upon us to "magnify the Lord in him" (1 Sam. ii., 1; Ps. xxxiv., 3). The spirit of Antichrist is to "magnify one's self above all else," but the spirit of Christ will cause one to desire with Paul that "Christ may be magnified in our bodies, whether by life or by death." (Dan. xi., 36, 37, Ph. i., 20). Mary had submitted herself cheerfully and wholly to the will of God, and in these ways we, too, may daily magnify Him. It does not seem difficult, and yet who does it perfectly. Since God is truth and love, let us heartily believe all He says and cheerfully accept His will in all things.

47. "And my spirit hath rejoiced in God my Saviour." The only way to be full of joy is to believe God, even as it is written, "The God of Hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing" (Rom. xv., 13). Notice that Mary says "My soul," "My spirit," her whole being rejoiced in God, her whole heart believed Him; it was no outward, formal, or lip service merely, but she meant it every word, as when Jeremiah's soul said: "The Lord is my portion" (Lam. iii., 24), and added, "therefore will I hope in Him." So it was with Mary, her joy was in God not in His mercies chiefly, nor in her circumstances, but in Him, the unchanging and the unchangeable God of Abraham, Isaac and Israel. When our joy is in Him, it will abide, for He abides ever the same. But she adds: "My Saviour," and here is the foundation secret of all joy and peace to be able to say from the heart: "My own Saviour." Jacob said: "I have waited for Thy salvation, O Lord." Simeon said: "Mine eyes have seen Thy salvation." David and Isaiah said: "The Lord is become my salvation" (Gen. xlix., 18; Luke ii., 30; Ps. cxviii., 14; Isa. xii., 2). May each one say with the heart: "God is my salvation, I will trust and not be afraid."

48. "He hath regarded the low estate of His handmaiden." "Not many mighty, not many noble are called," but "God hath chosen the poor of this world rich in faith." "Though the Lord be high yet hath He respect unto the lowly; but the proud He knoweth afar off." He loves to dwell with the poor and contrite spirit that trembles at His word (1 Cor. i., 26; Jas. ii., 5; Ps. cxxxviii., 6; Isa. lvii., 15; lxvi., 2). So it was in the case of Gideon, David, Amos and many others, and so to-day He passes by the whom we would call the likely people and selects some obscure, unheard of one as His choice.

"Behold from henceforth all generations shall call me blessed." The Spirit through Elizabeth had just said: "Blessed is she that believed," and so it has come ringing down all the ages since. Most honored among women no doubt Mary was, but lest we should think too highly of her, let us remember what Jesus said to one who had spoken of her blessedness: "Yea, rather, blessed are they that hear the Word of God and keep it." And again, "Whosoever shall do the will of God, the same is My brother, and My sister, and mother" (Lu. xi., 28; Mk. iii., 35).

49. "For He that is mighty hath done me great things; and holy is His name." In this song we have the pronouns "He, His, Him," applied to God twice seven times; it is all about Him and His doings; reminding us that we are nothing, but He is everything. "My meditation of Him shall be sweet, I will be glad in the Lord" (Ps. civ., 34). He is the Almighty before whom we are to walk (Gen. xvii., 1) looking up to Him for everything. The Almighty God (El Shaddai) does not represent Him as simply having all power, and therefore able to do anything, but rather, as the derivation of the word Shaddai implies, the all sufficient pourer forth of all blessing; literally, the breasted one (from "Shad," signifying "breast"), and therefore representing the power of bountiful, self sacrificing love, giving and pouring itself out for others. It is often in Scripture associated with fruitfulness, or with emptying, in order to fruitfulness. Mary was poor in this world's goods, and poor in spirit, and now the Mighty One comes to her to do great things for her.

50. "His mercy is on them that fear Him, from generation to generation." The mercy, or kindness, or loving kindness (as the word is often translated) of God, is one of the glorious topics of Scripture, and especially of the Psalms. Then notice in all the epistles how grace, mercy and peace are associated; and all this loving kindness is for all who fear Him, and that forever.

51. "He hath showed strength with His arm." Perhaps looking back to the deliverances from Egypt, for the Lord had said to Moses: "I will redeem you with a stretched out arm and with great judgments." And Moses had sung: "By the greatness of Thine arm they shall be as still as a stone" (Ex. xv., 6; xv., 16). David sings of the same deliverance that God had accomplished it "with a strong hand and with a stretched out arm" (Ps. cxxxvi., 12).

"He hath scattered the proud in the imagination of their hearts." The proud, self satisfied and self sufficient cannot know His thoughts or His way. He cannot reveal Himself to them. They are against Him, and all their thoughts and ways shall be overthrown.

52. "He hath put down the mighty from their seats, and exalted them of low degree." Hannah sang: "He raiseth up the poor out of the dust, and lifteth up the beggar from the dunghill, to set them among Princes, and to make them inherit the throne of glory" (1 Sam. ii., 8). While these songs had reference to the circumstance and dealings of God with those who sang them, we must not forget that the singers were Israelites, and the spirit of God through them was singing of future as well as present things.

53. "He had filled the hungry with good things, and the rich He hath sent empty away." Those who ask nothing shall receive nothing; thinking themselves rich and increased with goods, because they are blind, they do not know that they are wretched and miserable and poor and naked; but blessed are they that hunger and thirst after righteousness, for they shall be filled (Rev. iii., 17; Matt. v., 6).

54, 55. "He hath holden His servant Israel in remembrance of His mercy; as He spake to our fathers, to Abraham, and to His seed forever." This carries us back to the covenants with Abraham and David, and forward to their yet future fulfillment. In Mary's Son all these shall have in due time a complete and literal fulfillment, for He is the true Isaac and true David, of whom they were but types. The Scriptures are full of the records of His sufferings and the glory that shall be revealed as He Himself testified (Luke xxiv., 25-27). His sufferings as an atonement for sin are past. His sufferings in the members of His body, the church, still continue; the glory to be revealed is not yet. When Israel as a nation shall look upon Him whom they have pierced, and with true contrition receive Him, then will He cast their sins into the depths of the sea, and as it is written: "Thou wilt perform the truth to Jacob, and the mercy to Abraham which Thou hast sworn to our fathers from the days of old" (Mic. vii., 18-20). Then when He remembers His mercy and truth to Israel shall all the ends of the earth see the salvation of God (Ps., xcviii., 3). If any one thinks it has yet come, let them explain in what sense Ezek. xxxvii., 21-28, and all similar prophecies have been fulfilled.—*Lesson Helper.*

SECRETARY TRACY has adopted a new design for the flag of the navy to take effect on July 1, 1891. It will be applied to both the flag and the Union Jack of the navy, and consists of a rectangular arrangement of the forty-two stars.

RELIGIOUS READING.

COULD WE KNOW!

Could we but glance the future o'er
Its hidden depths unveil,
Look on the blessings sure in store
Whose mercies never fail,
Could we but see the happiness
Each new year seeks to give,
Our daily lives to cheer and bless—
How gladly would we live!

Could we behold the grief and care
The painful weary strife,
Allotted as our rightful share
In each new year of life,
Could we anticipate the thorns
That in our pathway lie,
Before another day could dawn
How gladly would we die!

Yet innocent of each we grope
With blind persistence on,
Upheld by patient faith and hope
Each daily strife is won,
A future's burdens unconcealed,
Our inmost hearts benumb,
While sorrows one by one revealed
Are conquered as they come.
—*Lavana W. Sheldon.*

A FLAG FOR CHRIST.

A few years ago, a converted Sikh lay dying at Amritsar, in the Punjaub, India. Before he passed triumphantly into glory, he expressed his desire to put up a flag for Christ, and left some money for the purpose. Today a flag waves in the gentle breezes above the houses of that city, bearing simply the words, "For Christ," in bold letters on a scarlet ground. That bright flag seemed to us a monument of the grace and mercy of God, who could transform an idolator into a saint; and also a glad prophecy of the future when all nations shall own the sovereignty of our coming King.

REPROVING SIN.

How we neglect this duty! There is a plain command upon the subject, "Thou shalt in any wise rebuke thy neighbor, and not suffer sin upon him." (Lev. xix. 17.)

How it would diminish profanity, for instance, if every time a man should swear on the streets, on the cars, or in depots, he should be sure to call up some witness for Jesus. The judgment hall where the Son of God stood amid His foes was a good place to cry out, with Thomas, "My Lord and my God!" There are men living today who would do it, who would glory in doing it. The effect of simply speaking the name of Jesus with reverence and love on such occasions is wonderful.

Every reader is familiar with the name of John H. Vincent. Once he reproved a swearer so powerfully, and yet so tenderly, that he not only subdued him, but melted him to tears. It was in a railway station. The room was full of passengers waiting for a belated train. A man, probably slightly intoxicated, was shocking everybody with his profanity. Suddenly Dr. Vincent began to sing:

"Jesus, Lover of my soul,
Let me to Thy bosom fly."

The song ceased. Perfect silence reigned. The swearer was reproved. After a time he came to Dr. Vincent and said:

"Could I see you a moment outside?"

They went out together.

"How came you," said he, "to sing that hymn just now?"

The doctor replied:

"I heard you swearing, and I thought I would let you know there was somebody there who loved the name of Jesus."

"That's very strange," said the man. "My sister when she was dying sung that very hymn, and she made me promise to meet her in heaven. Could you pray for me?"

Down in the snow they knelt together, and the doctor prayed for the penitent man, and asked that he might have grace and strength to keep his vows.

The train came. They were separated to meet no more, in all probability, till they meet in eternity.

REPAIRING BROKEN REEDS.

Sir Henry of a certain kind says we must lay down a law of the survival of the fittest, and if the reeds are broken throw them away. Jesus says, throw nothing away. Let us work for the saving of every life, and see that we work successfully, with as critical a love and patience, that we lose nothing at last but the son of perdition, the son of waste, the child that must go home to the devil. Let us have no roughhand ready treatment, however, of human life, but set to examine and separate and do what we can, for we are bound to save the last atom; then, if we cannot save it, we must own that we have lost. Father, I have lost none but the son of perdition. He did not want to lose any. He did not come to destroy men's lives, but to save them. If men will not be saved, even the Son of God cannot save them. To force a man into heaven is not to fill him with peace and joy, it is to violate the harmony which he cannot appreciate. "A bruised reed," say some. An instrument called a reed was meant, and there was a rift in it which spoiled the music. Jesus Christ said: We must repair this, something must be done with the reed. It was meant for music, and we must look at it with that end in view. He does not take it, saying, There is a rift in the lute, and the music is impossible; rend it, and throw it away. He always looks to see if a man cannot be made something of. He would heal us, every one. Say to Him, O Bruised Reed, if I may but touch the hem of thy garment, even my life-reed shall be healed, and I will take up God's music again, and be glad in God's house. Or a "bruised reed" may mean that wild beasts, in rushing through the water or from the flesh, have crushed the growing plant so that they are bent; they do not stand upon stability, but Jesus Christ comes to heal them. And the smoking flax shall He not quench. He will rather take it up and shake it, as He only can shake, but give a little more air to bear upon it, and scrape a little more, but so gradually, see how the spark whitens, how it begins into a kind of new life. Now watch Him how He regulates the shaking, and see how that which we thought was only smoke becomes a flame, bright as a fire useful as a torch, and how it is handed on to the aid of other men.—*Joseph Parker.*

BOOK OF ABRAHAM LINCOLN.

On board the United States steamer Swatara was one of the Yale University seniors. Before leaving the harbor's mouth, and committing himself to the mercy of the waves, he carefully fastened upon himself and wife life preservers. Some one cruelly dragged away that of the wife, leaving her with no hope except as she could cling to her husband. This she did, placing her hands firmly on his shoulders and resting there until, her strength becoming exhausted, she said, "I can hold on no longer." "Try a little longer," was the response of the weary and agonized husband, "let us sing 'Rock of Ages.'" And as the sweet strains floated over those troubled waters, reaching the ears of the sinking and dying, little did they know, those sweet singers of Israel, whom they comforted. But lo! as they sang, one after another of these exhausted ones were seen raising their heads above the overwhelming waves, joining with a last effort in this sweet, dying, pleading prayer:

"Rock of Ages, cleft for me;
Let me hide myself in Thee."

With the song seemed to come strength; another and yet another was encouraged to renewed effort. Soon in the distance a float was seen approaching. Singing still, they tried, and soon with superhuman strength laid hold of the life-boat, upon which they were borne safely to the land. This is no fiction. It was related by the singer himself, who said he believed "Rock of Ages" saved many another besides himself and wife.

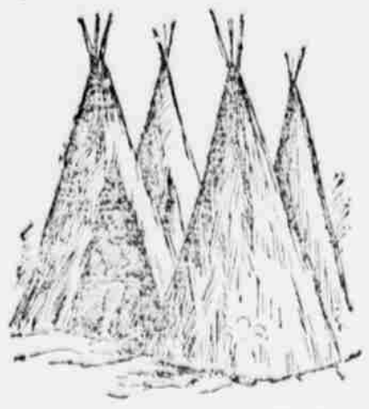
Too Much Style.

Mr. Ratte—"I'm going down to the club, Awatie. Don't set up for me."

Auntie Ratte—"Grey, if you know how much I despise a dude, you'd use your appendage to steer by—not to walk with."—*Puck.*

The Orinoco Hut-Dwellers.

The Guaharibos Indians, who live on the Orinoco River, South America, are a peculiar race of beings. Their huts



HUTS OF THE GUAHARIBOS INDIANS.

are rude shelters of leafy canes tied at the top; they are arranged in a circle around a central fire, and the Indians squat under their huts, fairly making themselves very comfortable.

Began Their Music All Together.

TEMPERANCE.

THE TWO DAKOTAS.

All hail! to the fair twin sisters
Which have entered the Union grand,
With the glorious motto regnant,
"God, Home, and Native Land."
So rugged, and so beautiful,
So young and yet so true;
If the marriage is so glorious,
What will the family be?
God bless the twin sisterhood,
And the quaint old legend read and brave;
May they lead the way victorious
Till our own loved country save
From the cursed rule of Bacchus,
From the chains its servants wear.
Let the Stars and the Stripes float o'er us,
A nation free and fair.

—Maine, Kansas, North Dakota and South Dakota.
—*Mrs. Richmond, in National Advocate.*

HOW MUCH IS CAUSED BY RUM?

The board of Estimate and Apportionment have made their final appropriations for the city expenses of New York for 1890. Among the items are: Police Department, $4,616,515, for Charities and Correction, $2,100,030; for Asylums, etc., $1,180,968; for City Court and Judiciary salaries, $1,302,240; Health Department, $320,500; Coroner's office, $57,000. These six items aggregate $9,576,252. What per cent. of this vast amount is due solely and wholly to the liquor traffic in this rum-cursed city?—*New York Pioneer.*

A MISS A DEPUTY COLLECTOR.

A few days ago a trim young lady alighted from a train at Jeffersonville, Ind., and made her way into a number of saloons and liquor-stores. The proprietors of these places opened their eyes wide in astonishment when she presented her card, which read as follows: "Miss Maud Cotton, Deputy Collector, Seventh District." She then proceeded with a most thorough and business-like investigation of the places visited. This is the first time on record that a lady has been appointed a deputy collector of internal revenue, since such a position necessitates the regular personal visitation of all the tough dives and liquor shops in the district and the inspection of all Government licenses. May Miss Maud perform her duties in a way to strike terror to the heart of every transgressing saloon-keeper and law-evading liquor-dealer.—*New York Witness.*

TEMPERANCE NEWS AND NOTES.

It has been resolved to form a National Union of British Temperance Choral Societies.

Temperance teaching in the State schools of Victoria, Australia, has been made compulsory.

The retail liquor traffic is now prohibited in seventy-nine municipalities of the province of Manitoba.

The W. C. T. U. of Mississippi has received a gift of $600 by subscriptions taken after a sermon in behalf of its work, delivered at Meridian by Sam Jones.

The new State headquarters of the Pennsylvania W. C. T. U. have been formally dedicated and opened. The rooms are in a new and handsome building on Arch street, Philadelphia.

The Woman's Christian Temperance Union, the Independent Order of Good Templars and the Prohibition party of Nebraska have formed a triple alliance to work for the State Prohibition amendment.

Mrs. S. F. Grubb, Superintendent of W. C. T. U. work among foreigners, is now publishing her tracts in fourteen different languages. She has begun to issue these tracts as semi-monthly temperance talks, ten thousand at an issue.

The Commissioners of the District of Columbia have asked Congress to pass a Sunday law for the District of Columbia, and the President approves their request. Hon. W. C. P. Breckinridge, of Kentucky, will introduce such a bill and the American Sabbath Union will work for its passage.