

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

For the Christian Messenger.

New-Year's Address.

How speedily time seems to glide away,
On pinions, like a dove, an hour, a day,
Another week, a month, and now a year,
Will pass away from us, and disappear:
The year just given, has thus, forever fled,
And like the past, lies slumbering with the dead;
Now friend meets friend, wishing "a happy Year,"
We shall respond, and "and wishing to each good cheer,"
"A happy year" to all our friends and foes;
Good will to these, our kind regard to those;
A feast of fat things, to our social neighbours,
And patrons who appreciate our labours:
Our course straight forward, we have still pursued,
And, clear of rocks and breakers, made it good;
By frequent soundings, every night and day,
We found where shoals, and hidden dangers lay—
Now land appears! all hands in transport cry
The place we love, our home is drawing nigh.
Acadia, Hail! thou favored spot of earth;
Endeared to thee by all the ties of birth,
Enchanted ground; where thy dear children played,
And thro' thy meadows, fields, and woodlands strayed,
Where roscat health still cheers thy hills and plains,
And sacred Liberty, triumphant reigns;
While hallowed peace enshrined, ne'er leaves thy shores
But brooding o'er thy children, dove-like soars,
Thy sons can never estimate, or prize,
The untold wealth, that in thy bosom lies.
The Ocean, teeming laves thy peaceful shores,
And yields abundantly, her choicest stores—
Thy fields are well refreshed with timely rains,
And copious dews descend upon thy plains.
Rivers and lakes, brooks, rills, and springs abound,
Like a well watered garden thou art found.
O'er the vast landscape, villas new rise,
With architecture tasteful, rich, and new—
Well planned for comfort and convenience too.
"Knowledge is Power," and thus we seem to rise,
And Franklin-like, bring lightning from the skies,
The swift winged courier the command obeys,
With Angel speed, our message it conveys.
For ages past it seemed decreed by fate
That "time and tide" should for no mortal wait:
The spell is broken—man triumphant rides,
"And far outstrips the boisterous winds and tides":
Onward he goes—majestically towers—
Controls the elements, by magic powers,
Thus ushers forth a new and glorious day,
That crowns him lord, of both the land, and sea;
We're marching onward, tho' a little late,
In all those movements we participate:
Canal, and railway movements are begun,
Our iron steeds their rapid courses run.
Hope bears us onward, shortly we shall see,
Art's greatest triumph, ever land and sea—
The Eastern and the Western world combined—
The Earth's four quarters all in converse joined
Creation's swift messenger employed,
Till time and distance both are near destroyed.
"GOD SAVE THE QUEEN"—the mother and the wife,
That strews with flowers the social paths of life,
Was ever woman so on earth revered?
Was ever woman so to man endeared?
Was woman ever more esteemed and praised?
Was woman e'er to higher honor raised!
Hail "GOLDEN LAND" where our great sires had birth,
Thine the most glorious Monarchy on earth
A bulwark strong—a prodigy, it stands,
Humbling its haughty foes, in distant lands,
Rich manufactures swell thy golden stores
And commerce sends them to Earth's farthest shores;
Great empire of the Sea, long thou hast been
And well may'st say:—"BEHOLD I SET A QUEEN;"
But cannot add: "NO SORROW I SHALL SEE;"
For lately, it has rolled its tide o'er thee;
Because thou hast sinned, and "sin lies at thy door,"
But "go thy way and strive to sin no more."
Thy wealth and fame are great—say'st thou "tis good";
But wealth and fame are dearly bought with blood.
O'er India's sons thy sovereigns long have reigned,
And wealth untold thy traders there have gained.
By sale of vile Indulgence thou hast made,
Even murder legal, as an artist's trade.
A dreadful gulf beneath those victims rolls,
What shall be given in exchange for souls?
Are Hindoo souls committed to thy care?
And yet less precious than their Rupees are?
Hast thou no Christian statesmen skilled to rule?
Must Sepoys teach thee in Mahomet's school!
What dreadful lessons! How severely taught!
"Bought wit is best," but thine is dearly bought,
"England with all thy faults I love thee still,
And wish thee happy with a right good will."

Religious Miscellany.

"The Year of our Lord," 1858.

Another year since the Saviour was born; for our years pay their homage to HIM. Other dates have been chosen, but they are all vanishing from the face of the earth. Wherever modern civilization triumphs, and it is destined to fill both continents, the "Year of our Lord" is the year of which every one speaks when he wishes his neighbour "A happy New Year;" the year by which the merchant recommences his accounts, and the chronicler of events dates his facts. Confucius and Mahomet may retain yet awhile their Anniversary honour in China and in Islam; but Russia and England are embracing all Asia in their arms, and the time must come when all Asia will regard the birth of Christ as the centre-point of their history, and date all events as having occurred before or after Christ.

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-SEVEN YEARS of the new series of the world's history gone! The world may well be ashamed of it! The sermon on the Mount has for all these years been preached, with the attestation and enforcement of Calvary, and yet the world is what we see it! Love, gentleness, meekness, have been taught as never man taught; God has commended his love to us as love was never shewn before; eternal life has been proclaimed to the guilty dying, through the death and resurrection of Incarnate Holiness, Love, and Might; and the world is still a world of selfish and fiendish passions,—a world that loves not its God,—a world that shuts its eyes to all but the present,—a world which will live only for death, not for honour, glory, and immortality.

EIGHTEEN HUNDRED AND FIFTY-EIGHT has dawned upon the christian church, and the church, too, may well be ashamed! The world is what it is, because the church is what it is. Ministers of religion, persons avowing that they are serious in religion, are those who must answer for the universal disobedience of the world to that Lord by whom it numbers its years. Still, one man impiously professes to be Christ's vicar on earth, and antichristian abominations corrupt the people's religion and morals in the very name of Christ himself, while the voice of the Living Lord of Life and Love can scarce be heard amidst the din.

In the year of our Lord eighteen hundred and fifty-eight, christian nations, therefore, still decide mutual disputes by shedding oceans of their brethren's blood. Christian monarchs and governments covet dominion as much as a Cæsar or an Alexander did; and christian communities make no effort whatever that Christ's spirit should pervade society, and his laws render coercive laws superfluous. One great and Protestant nation even holds in cruel and brutalizing slavery three millions of negroes; buys them, sells them, and breeds them for sale; and not content with making property of men, denies them the Bible, lest they should learn the wickedness of their oppressors and their own christian rights, and enforces violation of the christian law of marriage! Is it not wonderful that such christians can ever use the phrase, "In the year of our Lord"?

But, happily, there is some dawning of hope. This "year of our Lord" begins, indeed, in awful contrast with its name and number; and to think that more than eighteen hundred of such years have passed away, leaving the world what it is, might well blight the hopes of the most sanguine. But hundreds and thousands of years are nothing in the biography of the Creator, though much in that of creation. He can afford time to convince his creatures by their own madness and follies. He has shewn them what they were under his revealed law, and under his natural law; he has shewn them now, in eighteen hundred years, what they are under his gospel,—if they reject it, if they corrupt it, if they abuse it, to purposes of worldly dominion. And these are signs, to us, that the lesson is beginning to be learned. They are few,

they may be uncertain, but they are not altogether wanting.

But a new, or rather an old phase of our Faith is reviving. Christ himself is resuming his place in the church; creeds, and catechisms, and formularies, and forms, are giving place to HIM. JESUS, himself, is becoming recognized as the great want of human hearts, and the sanctifier of human lives. Scientific theology retains its place with other intellectual sciences; but the church is learning that it is the Living Christ, not any theology, who is the power of God unto salvation, to every one that believeth. Our great Hope for the nations lies in the fact, that free Christianity is the only possible Life of the world; and is gradually divesting itself of all that is merely adventitious, and directing men from words and forms to the Lord himself.

China and the Opium traffic.

OUR last intelligence from the East leads us to expect that China will shortly occupy far more of public attention than it has hitherto done. The position of affairs in India has almost absorbed the concern of the philanthropist as well as of the mere politician. Whilst we have cause of reproach, as a christian nation, in the Sepoy rebellion, we have reason to fear that China has also cause of complaint against us for the countenance given to the trade in Opium, in opposition to their laws and authority.

We make a few extracts from the Missionary intelligence received from Mr. Knowlton, at Ningpo:

"There are rumours that the French, or the English, are about to take Chusan and hold it permanently. Whatever be the issue, I think our duty to go forward in our work there remains the same. Should the English take the island, it would no doubt be of great advantage to the mission;—and if the French take it, I believe their rule would be as favourable to our work as that of the Chinese.

"Should the barriers which government has raised against foreigners and foreign religions, and foreign opinions of every kind, be thrown down, countless cities and villages and densely populated districts would at once be open to evangelical efforts. Missionaries would, for the most part undoubtedly, be received kindly by the common people, and would be permitted in peace to prosecute their labours of love. This would emphatically be the case, I believe, at King-hwa, a district in the interior, some 250 miles distant from Ningpo. The first fruits which we have gathered in that place, in the persons of Chu, our young assistant, and Dong, a promising young man baptized a few months since, and the interest which their labours have awakened there, are an earnest of a kind reception for the truth and its promoters, and of a rich harvest yet to be gathered. The father of Dong, referred to in a previous letter as a literary man of high standing, (having received the second of the four great literary degrees,) has been with us several weeks, attending diligently to the study of the scriptures and to the other means of grace. He seems to be a sincere inquirer; and we hope he will ere long know by experience the power and truth of the religion he is so carefully examining. A young man, a relative, accompanied him to Ningpo, and put himself under the care of Dr. Macgowan, to be cured of opium-smoking. He is now freed of this wasting disease and loathsome habit; and is also giving his whole attention to the study of the scriptures, and Christian instruction.

The Miscellany of the same periodical has an article on the Opium Curse, an abridgement of which we insert.

Canton is not only one of the most important places in China, but confessedly one of the most crowded cities in the world. The reflection that a powerful fleet had drawn up in battle array before its walls, and had poured a destructive storm

of shot and shell into its densely populated streets, on account of a provocation apparently trivial, has agitated the heart of the nation to its very core. Without entering at all into the merits of the Canton controversy, or the mistakes and misconceptions that have given birth to some of the most fervent outbursts of feeling among members of Parliament, every lover of his race will nevertheless thank God and take courage at seeing such proofs of the existence of a rectified sense of justice as these debates have developed.

There is now, and has been for a long series of years, lying quiet and unmolested in the waters of China, a fleet of ships which is doing infinitely more mischief than Admiral Seymour inflicted upon the turbulent Cantonese. In technical language they are called "receiving ships." They are not located themselves in the usual anchorage of other vessels, for the reason that the trade in which they are engaged is declared contraband by the Chinese Government. They occupy the position usually chosen by pirates, lying moored outside the mouths of rivers, but in places easy of access to those who share with them "the price of blood." The opium is brought from various places in the East India Presidencies, rolled up in balls, and protected, each ball, with a crust of rusty looking poppy leaves, about the size and appearance, when complete, of a thirty-two pound shot. When taken, in boxes carefully sealed, out of the fast sailing vessels that bring them, they are received on board these ships to await the calls of purchasers.

Eloquent tongues and strong language have been found to portray the misery that has been brought upon Canton by the precipitation of this conflict, and in expressions of sympathy for the helpless women and children who have suffered in consequence. This suffering has not been unduly magnified. But, great as it confessedly is, how it diminishes in magnitude when compared with the evils resulting from opium! In what language can any one adequately describe the untold and unutterable ruin that attends its use? What comparison shall he use, and whereunto shall he liken it? Talk of the ordinary figures of speech, by which men are accustomed to describe the waste, on a great scale, of human property and the destruction of human life. Talk of storms at sea, by which navies are scattered, and the pride and boast of architecture shivered into formless fragments upon the seashores. Talk of fire bursting out in the night in crowded cities, and sweeping away in a few hours the fruits of long years of patient toil and labour. Talk of volcanoes, belching forth their lurid rivers of molten lava, and engulfing whole towns and villages in fire. These similitudes are tame, and all such figures are too weak to describe the black flood that is now sweeping over southern and eastern Asia—billow after billow, each more destructive than its predecessor.

I know of but one comparison that seems adequate to suggest its multiplied and multiform horrors. It is the account in the book of Revelation of the rushing forth of Death on the pale horse, in connection with whom it is said, in one short sentence more comprehensive and expressive than any ever written by uninspired pen, "Hell followed with him."

Opium is scooping deeper furrows among these nations, and filling them with a more blasting torrent, than any that ever issued from Vesuvius or Aetna. The lightning from heaven scatches not with a more unerring certainty, than does that faint and flickering blaze which hovers over the bowl of the opium pipe. Did these "receiving ships," that carry on the merchandise of this baneful drug, but discharge hot shot or sixty-eight pounders into these maritime cities instead of opium, they would inflict a small evil in comparison. The enterprise and elastic vigor which distinguish the race, would impel them, as soon as the storm had passed over, to rally and rebuild their mansions more durably than before.

But when in silence, and oftentimes in the darkness of midnight, they discharge

*Golden Land—an Anagram of "Old England."
†License to the Car of Juggernaut—The Opium traffic.