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"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

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Poetry.

Consider the Lilies, how they grow.

The lilies fair are found
On shadowed ground,
The shady haunts of sunny elms,
And breathe the balm of summer time:
Refreshed by morning dew, and veiled from noontide glow,
They taste the softest light and air, and this is how they grow.

Updrawn from verdant sod
By look from God,
These holy, happy flowers pervade
The sloping lawn, the forest glade:
And charmed by zephyr's wing, and lulled by streamlet's flow,
They calmly muse, they brightly dream, and this is how they grow.

They bloom in sheltered nook,
By curling brook;
And Earth how firmly, fondly loves
These treasures of her streams and groves:
The dark mould cherishes their petals white like snow,
With heaven-portioned nutriment, and this is how they grow.

I have considered them,
The flexible stem,
The blossoms pending airily
Beneath their leafy canopy,
Their withering fragrance, spotless hue, and thus I feel and know
That God imparts their loveliness, and this is how they grow.

—Dublin University Magazine.

Miscellaneous.

MADAGASCAR.

Since Christianity triumphed over paganism in the Roman empire, the world has rarely heard of the deadly persecution of Christians by a heathen government. With light, Christian nations have also won wealth and power, and where Christianity has come into contact with paganism in modern times, it has generally been under such circumstances as restrained intolerance from going to the excess of cruelty.

The most conspicuous recent exception has appeared in Madagascar, where a body of Christians, left without missionary instruction, of course with an imperfect measure of intelligence, have stood for twenty years against a government which persecutes unto death. "What Nebuchadnezzar attempted on the plains of Dura, what the Roman Emperor attempted in the days of Pliny, . . . has in our times been attempted in Madagascar, modified, it may be, by the external usages of the age or the circumstances of the people, but differing little in the spirit, the agency, or the end." Such are the impressive words in which Mr. Ellis enters upon his narrative of the martyrdoms which must make Madagascar ever illustrious in the annals of the Christian faith. His work,* while it confirms all that had been reported of the sufferings endured for Christ's sake, and dispels some too sanguine hopes excited by unfounded rumors of a change in the government, gives good reason to trust that the night will surely end in a brighter day; and incidentally communicates much valuable and interesting information respecting a country not very well known.

The copious illustrations, copied from photographs taken by himself on the spot, make the delineation by Mr. Ellis, of the people and their land, with its strange vegetation, peculiarly life-like. His book leaves us only one occasion for regret; it is unnecessarily large—a copious journal of his visits, instead of an orderly exhibition of the results of his observations, which would have given us all we wish to know in less space, with no loss of interest. But it cannot fail of an extensive circulation. Before speaking particularly of the events

*Three Visits to Madagascar during the years 1853—1854—1856; with Notices of the Natural History of the country, and of the present Civilization of the People. By the Rev. William Ellis, F. H. S. New York: Harpers. 8vo. pp. 614. Illustrated.

which excite the deepest interest in connexion with this subject, a hasty view of the island and the people may give entertainment to some readers.

Madagascar, an island separated from the eastern coast of Africa by the Mozambique channel, has an area larger than that of Great Britain and Ireland combined. The population has been estimated at nearly five millions, but there is a deficiency of exact information. The people are of distinct races, but speak essentially the same language, so far as is known. The principal (though not the most numerous) of the tribes is the Hova people, inhabiting the central part of the island. These have extended their rule over most of the other tribes, though some still retain their independence. There is a remarkable similarity between the Malagasy language and that of the South Sea Islanders, which again is manifestly kindred with the Malay,—a fact which suggests more questions than can now be answered.

"That there is an intimate connexion, if not radical identity, between the Malayan and other languages spoken throughout the Asiatic Archipelago and those used by the races inhabiting the islands spread over the eastern part of the Pacific Ocean on the one hand, and that spoken by the natives of Madagascar on the other, does not now admit of doubt. Verbal and grammatical differences characterize the several families of languages or dialects in their respective regions, and also prevail to some extent among collections of languages or dialects belonging to the same region; but, underlying these, appear indubitable traces of one primitive language, of which the verbal or structural features may, in a greater or less degree, still be discovered in them all.

"Regarding Sumatra or the Malayan peninsula as a centre, this language has extended to the eastward across the Pacific Ocean to Easter Island, a distance of 150 degrees; and, on the other hand, it has stretched over the Indian Ocean to Madagascar, 50 degrees to the westward, thus reaching, chiefly within the tropics, over 200 degrees of longitude, or 20 degrees more than half the circumference of the globe. This same language also prevails from the Sandwich Islands, in latitude 20 deg. 30 min. N., to New Zealand, in latitude 46 deg. S., thus spreading in a direction north and south over 70 degrees. The latter two clusters of islands, although nearly five thousand miles apart, appear more closely allied to each other by language than, with one or two exceptions, either of them is united in the same manner to any of the intervening groups. Not less remarkable is the extension of this language westward to Madagascar. The western point of this island is not three hundred miles from the coast of Africa, yet but comparatively few words of African origin have been found in the language of its inhabitants. On the other hand, the nearest island of the Asiatic Archipelago is three thousand miles to the eastward of Madagascar, and yet the resemblance between the language spoken by their respective inhabitants is as close as between the former and the eastern Polynesians."

The accurate transmission of this language over so great spaces, and for a period of probably not less than two thousand years, is the more remarkable from the fact that it was, except in the Archipelago, an oral language merely, until within about forty years.

The Portuguese and French, at different times within the last three hundred and fifty years have sought to colonize Madagascar without much success. The Jesuits made some attempts to introduce Romanism, but their practices roused the indignation of the people, who expelled them from the island.

The English governor of Mauritius, in 1817, made a treaty with Radama, chief of the Hovas, who was regarded by the English as sovereign of the whole country. The object of the treaty was the abolition of the slave-trade, and in compensation for the loss to the chiefs which this measure involved, an annual payment was made by the British government to the King, consisting partly in arms and ammunition. Men were sent to instruct the natives in the use of fire-arms, and in military tactics. By the means thus furnished and unsparingly used, the Hova power was extended over a considerable part of the island. Native youths were drilled in the British navy, and others were sent to England to learn the arts of civilized life.

The London Missionary Society, in 1818, sent missionaries to the island, who acquired the language, introduced an alpha-

bet, arranged its grammar, prepared elementary books, and translated the Scriptures. The society also sent a number of intelligent men to instruct the natives in the useful arts. In the space of ten years from the settlement of the teachers at the capital, from 10,000 to 15,000 of the natives had learned to read, and many of them to write, a few had learned something of the English tongue, and a number professed themselves Christians. A thousand to fifteen hundred apprentices had been taught to work in iron, which abounds in the country; others worked as carpenters, builders, tanners, curriers, shoemakers, &c. Such was the promising state of things at the death of King Radama, 1828. But other counsels prevailed. In 1835 the profession of Christianity was prohibited. With this act a "strange, eventful history" commenced, the end of which is not yet; of this, some account will be given hereafter.—W. & R.

A Good Investment.

A few gentlemen were gathered pleasantly around our fireside one winter's evening, and were discussing the news of the day, the latest failures in business; and, as one of the party had some reputation as a skilful financier, the conversation gradually turned on the best methods of profitable and secure investment. Bank stock and insurance companies, real estate, railroad securities and bonds and mortgages, were in turn canvassed, and the advantages and disadvantages of each kind, their annual percentage, their inviting nature, or their fluctuations and instability, were enlarged upon.

At length, at a pause in the conversation, a clergyman present, remarked:

"Well, the best investment I ever made in my life was a razor."

"A razor?"

"Yes," he replied, "a single razor, and it happened in this manner: Some years before his death, the Rev. David Nelson, the author of the 'Cause and cure of Infidelity,' was staying at my house, during my settlement in E. I knew what an unselfish, laborious, simple-hearted, devoted, God-fearing servant of his Master he was. He had preached in my pulpit, and as I listened I seemed to hear an apostle. He led in our family prayers; and such prayers! As he wrestled for a blessing, there seemed neither roof, nor sky, nor stars; there seemed just nothing intervening between him and the mercy-seat. I discovered accidentally that the razor which he was using one morning during his visit, was very rough and blunt; in fact, more an instrument of torture than anything else; so I was glad to give him a very superior new one which I happened to have. It was almost pained, by the gratitude this trifling gift elicited. Pained, because it unconsciously told a tale of self-denial and privation even more severe than I had supposed.

"And now, brother," said he, after he had expressed his thanks so warmly, 'what blessing shall I ask of my Master every morning when I am using it? for I shall certainly pray for you, every time, as long as it lasts.'

"You may imagine how I felt. How would you feel, if in giving a man a sum, he offered to return you a thousand per cent, every year of his life. And then, you observe I have great faith in the value and efficacy of the prayers of such a holy man as Dr. Nelson was. You may be sure I did not refuse his request. I was, in fact, overwhelmed with the offer of so large a return for so trifling a favor. These thoughts so crowded on my mind, that for some moments I could hardly find words to reply. While I was thus hesitating, he repeated simply:

"Well, what shall I ask God every day for you in return for your kindness!"

"And then I asked him to pray for me for wisdom and faithfulness to preach Christ crucified to dying men, for more love to souls, and for God's spirit to bless my labors more abundantly until my work was ended. A few years afterwards he was called higher. And then we had a blessed revival in our place, and in one season one

hundred and thirty were added to my own church. How much was granted to my ministry in answer to the prayers of that holy man, I may not know until we shall walk together on the banks of the 'pure river,' and talk over the dealings of our heavenly Father. Perhaps long cycles of eternity shall roll around before I shall fully comprehend the mystery of God's character as an answerer of prayer; but this I do know; I would not exchange those prayers for the specie in the richest bank in the land. Yes, this razor was the best investment I ever made."

Tetzel's Indulgence Box.

At Jutterbogk I was obliged to stop three hours for the down-train from Berlin. In this old Wendish town stands the church of St. Nicholas, in which is carefully preserved the Indulgence-Box of Tetzel. Its genuineness cannot be doubted, and its history is as follows. Tetzel's pretensions had aroused the friends of Luther, and their methods of resistance were as various as their temperaments. Perhaps they cannot always be justified.

The waggish old knight, Hans-Von-Hacke, having obtained of Tetzel a pardon, not only for the past, but for all the sins he should commit in the future, determined to make the most of his bargain. He watched his opportunity when Tetzel was returning from one of his tours—his box well filled with the spoils he had obtained for his pardons—and on a dark night waylaid and robbed him, box and all.

I had seen this fact briefly stated in the reading of my younger days; but the town related the story at length, and with special enthusiasm.

My curiosity was, of course, greatly excited. Obtaining admission to the church, after some delay, I was not at all disappointed. The box stands conspicuously near the middle of the church—not the common, diminutive affair which is usually seen in the shape of a modern contribution box, but a massive and most imposing antique, illustrating very impressively how the Pope did things in those days. It is a great log, dug out of oak, ten feet long, three feet broad, and two and a half deep, strongly hooped with iron; the front covered with iron ornaments. The lid is a heavy two-and-a-half-inch plank, with a large slit in the middle for the money, secured by stout hinges and three strong hasps. The padlocks which are said to have once secured these hasps are gone.

This immense chest, when filled with the metallic currency of those times, must have made a load for at least four strong horses.

A good haul for old Hans; and no wonder the Pope was angry with the Reformers.—Correspondent of the Tract Journal.

A Paying Business.

The editor of the *Western Christian Advocate* seems to think that while the amusing anecdote below "may sound very much like a fib, yet it nevertheless is true, and teaches true doctrine." We accept the charitable construction, and give the incident, as a hint to the "worldly wise."—W & R.

At the close of a great meeting in Mississippi, a Presbyterian minister gave notice that a collection would be taken up for Gospel purposes in the neighborhood. A Methodist preacher also present, and who had just preached the sermon, it being his regular Sabbath at this place, then rose and remarked that very little had been done toward the proper support of the Gospel or of himself; that he had begun his circuit with two horses. One was used; he expected the other would soon go, and he would have to go afoot. Charity began at home; and, "Besides, brethren, Christianity is a paying business; it pays a profit even in this world. Did you ever hear the story of the infidel in the Tennessee camp-meeting? Well, I'll tell you.

"Up in Tennessee, once there was a camp-meeting held in a notorious bad neighborhood; and when, at the close of the exercises, the hat was sent round, a roll of notes, about fifty dollars, was found.