

# Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL & GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"Not slothful in business: fervent in spirit."

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## Poetry.

### God's Thoughts not our Thoughts.

God's thoughts are not our thoughts, we look on  
Dreading to climb some mountain far away,  
Counting the sharp stones on its tedious way,  
He cares for our small troubles, day by day,  
Smoothing them down.

We keep our patience for our greater cares,  
And murmur unrepenting o'er the less,  
Thinking to show our strength in our distress,  
His patience with our hourly fretfulness  
Still gently bears.

God's ways are not our ways; we lay down  
Schemes for his glory; temples for our King,  
Wherein tribes yet unborn may worship him,  
Meanwhile, upon some humble, secret thing  
He sets his crown.

We travel far to find Him, seeking still,  
Often in weariness to reach his shrine;  
Ready our choicest treasures to resign,  
He in our daily homes lays down the line,  
"Do here my will."

There, in the lowly valley walking on,  
Some common duty all we have to do,  
His higher thoughts of love makes all things new,  
His "higher way" we tread, yes, leading to  
God's holy throne.

## Religious.

### Notes of a Traveller in Egypt.

CAIRO

We watched the people coming and going at the different stations. It was quite in accordance with all one's ideas of Eastern life to see them fantastically arrayed riding on camels or mules, or walking through the land; but quite out of place and incongruous they seemed in a railway carriage. Arriving and departing, the greetings and salutations were amusing in the extreme. A man on leaving clasped the hand of his friend, bent low over it, touched the hand to his heart, then the tips of his own fingers to his forehead and lips with a gesture that would have been impressive had it not bordered upon the ridiculous. The servant followed his master, and bent his forehead forward upon, and then kissed the hand of the departing guest. But we might go on for hours dilating upon what particularly struck us as new and strange during this hurried passage, either about individuals or relating incidents; however pleasant it might be to rest in the region of fancy, we are forced to deal with facts, and so simply glance at these *dissolving views*, leaving imagination to fill up the outlines. We can but inquire how these people live, what they do, what is going on in the interior of their unattractive houses; and whether all this semi-civilization with its painful peculiarities is tending. We must know of their products, if there is still "corn enough in Egypt"; of their commerce, if the grain of Alexandria still supply the world; of their schools, if the philosophy of Hypatia, and the zeal of the Christian fathers, and the learning of the early Egyptians has left no trace except the tombs and obelisks, and the records from the bowels of the earth. We can only know through closest use of observation, and the experience of those who have dwelt in the land. True, we can see the surface of things, and we see first that these people are intensely dirty. Talking with the captain of the steamer on our voyage out from Naples, he told us that the natives of this country never wash a child till he is five years old. I believe it now, for I see mothers with children on their arms on whose faces the flies are as thick as around an open sugar bowl, and bodies and garments of old and young are superlatively filthy. The only thing that in any sense redeems them from disgust and abhorrence, is, as I stated before, their noticeable dress and the ease with which they wear it, and the ease with which they bear their burdens. The turban, and sandal, and veil, and flowing mantle of this country, under which all defects are concealed make the veriest beggar wonderfully picturesque.

But here we are at the station; prepare at once for a contest with porters, hotel runners omnibus drivers, and dragomans, and the crowd generally. Such a noise, such a jargon of Arabic, Greek, French, German, Italian and English never was heard since Babel. The exact locality of that spot was settled to my

entire satisfaction: surely the confusion of tongues commenced right here. We are fortunate enough to escape to a carriage through it all, and to have no more than five men odiously crying out for "Backshuth," to which they think themselves entitled for not having left you alone, for having tormented you with gestures and noise, and laying hold of every umbrella and basket and box, thereby retarding your progress most disagreeably. The Hotel des Ambassadors, the only tolerable one they say, but of most unprepossessing exterior is full to repletion. The Orient therefore is tried. We are given rooms so high that they overlook the house tops, and so dirty that we would fain turn our noses if not our eyes away from Africa forever,—to be thoroughly uncomfortable is such a trial even to the best disciplined temper. Yesterday and the day before, we were entertained, but the third day the edge of novelty having worn off, a creeping disgust of the abominable filth overruled and quietly took possession of us, and not that alone, but the laziness, and British ignorance, the moral and physical condition of the lower orders, the places in which these human beings herd,—oh! many things in detail, are such a shock and outrage to all one's habits and thoughts, that altogether it became unendurable, repugnant alike to organs of sight and smell. And here discomfort and dirt cost enormously;—one longs for a fortune of something that would enable us to dispense with what so nauseates us, and yet seems indispensable. And so it was more than the abundance of flies and fleas that chased us from the Hotel d'Orient; we rose before the dawn to be ready to take leave; looked out the square or public promenade, where even then were gathered a throng of people, representing more nations than could be numbered. The palm trees waved quietly in the breeze; the water lay still in the great pools called fountains; the birds were filling the air with songs, as in the heart of summer at home. Just a few of the shops were being opened, a few early travellers and workmen were distinguishable by their quick movements; a few Turks were performing their devotions, bowing three times an prostrating themselves in the dust,—no body seemed to mind them at all. Several Jews came and bathed their feet, and then walked off barefooted in the dirt. There is little apparent gain, but perhaps they have "fulfilled the law," at any rate they look well satisfied. Just then our leader informed us of a discovery, and I rejoiced at the prospect of a change of accommodations; we enter the waiting carriage, are borne rapidly through the crowded streets, through the shouting, surging multitude of every nation, color, and class.

We descend at the entrance of a dark alley, we walk down picking our way carefully, we wind in and out of a stone archway, something like an old castle entrance, and suddenly emerge into light and bloom. A pleasant court, all green and bright; trees, flowers, walks, and arbors. In the centre a Chinese pagoda for the billiard table, and chairs and tables scattered about. A stone walk runs all the way around, into which open the doors of pleasant rooms, wonderfully, tidily comfortable. Here we struck our staff. This is our Alabama. About nine to our chamber—acoucher they bring coffee and rolls; and such coffee as we have never found in Europe,—the *fragrantest* of Mocha. At noon we breakfast, after which commences the regular duty of sight-seeing; so the long afternoons are fully occupied, and at half past six we dine. There are a number of Americans here and the evenings are social and delightful. And in this loveliest of climates, the last week has brought us only perfect days and glorious calm nights. We are in the land of bananas and oranges, and palms, where the green of vegetation never loses its freshness, and the weather alone seems to build one up, to raise the spirits, as it does the circulation. Such an air! mild as a pure morning, soft—oh! so soft, with a sky more glorious by day and more luminous by night than any ever looked into before,—it is eternally blue, deep, grand and infinite. And yet, just here, while so pleasant to look up, where the air is the purest and the heavens most smiling, one must walk without seeing the earth or those who inhabit it, if he would be spared much pain.—*Nat. Rep.*

Prudence often saves from disaster.

### The Room in the Old House.

Fifty years ago the Hon. George Nelson built himself a prodigiously fine house. At all events, that is what the people of that generation called it. A tall thin man, was Hon. George Nelson—eyes eagle-like, face striking, even among the noblest; frame willowy and elegant. What had he not that might not constitute a man's happiness?—Friends, health, honors, wealth, wife and children, leisure to cultivate his aesthetic tastes—many a man envied the Hon. George Nelson. But alas for the fair promise of fruit at whose core lies the worm that will surely destroy it! This man so affluent in externals, was at the heart an atheist. He had no belief in goodness—did not know the meaning of faith—sneered if a Christian axiom was spoken—loved argument for the sake of giving Christian people pain. Yet outside he was so fair. People would sometimes remark that amidst all her luxuries his wife often wore a look of care or sorrow. The poor soul, through deep tribulation, known only to God and herself had found the pearl of great price. But she was forced to keep it as a hidden treasure. Many a time, when he had gone for a while, did she gather her children about her, read to them some sweet and sacred passages from the blessed book, sing a little song of Zion, and kneeling in their midst, pray as only a nearly heart-broken mother can pray. But alas! how often were these beautiful exercises followed by the sad words—

"Children, you needn't say any thing to papa about this."

"But why not?" the eldest would ask at first.

"Because, my dear, it is my wish." Her gentle heart would not compromise the husband and father, and her word was law with her children.

A brave and beautiful house it was, built under this man's constant supervision; and he was very proud of it, when, on its completion, he gave a supper and a ball.

"Long life and good fortune" was drunk to the host, and he responded eloquently. He expected long life—all his ancestors had died at an advanced age; as to good fortune, it had always been his. That was the sum and substance of his reply.

That night the soul fled shrieking from its tenement. In oversteering some part of the premises, a door forgotten by him, opened outwards, and he was precipitated twenty feet, and his back broken.

They say who watched the sufferer, that never was there seen a sadder death-bed than that of the man who looked for long life and happiness here, and for hereafter, nothing.

Three weeks ago I called at the same house. Its glory had long departed. It was reached from noisome alleys—its passages were choked with dirt, its costly carvings defaced and broken. The shoemaker's tap, tap, the splash of the homely laundress, the click of the needle, were heard in many of the rooms. Filled with emigrants, it had sadly fallen to the level of a tenement house. How little did the princely owner anticipate this change!

I thought of this as I stood in the room where it was said, the rich man had died—where Benny's father was now dying.

Benny was a newsboy—one of those sharp-featured, old-young-faced children, who do battle with the world long before they are able to carry its weapons. But Benny was a good lad—how could he be anything else with that father? For could I paint the countenance lying upon the coarse tow pillow, it would be that of a saint—ay, an almost glorified saint. So constant was the heavenly presence, that one saw the lineaments of Christ reflected in the thin, worn features, the loving beauty of Divinity stamped on every feeble smile.

He held out his hand, with the words,—  
"I'm glad to see you. The heavenly shore is almost in sight."

"Tongue cannot express  
My sweet comfort and peace."

I very seldom talked much when I went to see Benny's father; I was rather a listener, a learner. Now I saw the face was stamped as obly death can change humanity. I gazed round the large rooms—I fancied the cries and groans of the dying atheist, then felt the soul-subduing calm that trust in Christ gives at such an hour.

The rich man lies under a costly marble monument, and Benny's father, who died in the same room, has neither head nor footstone at his grave. But better than marble for him the lofty pedestal of faith in the Crucified— from which as from a stepping-stone, he passed into the portals of his Redeemer's house. The birds sing above his ashes—I know that loving angels guard them.—*W. & R.*

### Preaching in the Church of England.

How comes it that of the greatest and best endowed churches in the world is comparatively so deficient in pulpit power? Popular eloquence is specially needed in a protestant church; yet in a church that has been called the bulwark of Protestantism there are remarkably few ministers who can attract or sway large congregations. Among her 18,000 clergy, the Church can point to no Chalmers or Hall or Spurgeon, hardly even to a man of commanding eloquence or truly apostolic fervour. Her bishops and other dignitaries may be good scholars or respectable divines, but not one of them, except perhaps the Bishop of Oxford, has any great genius for pulpit oratory. Which of them, with all his scholarship and sacred learning, can touch the springs of popular sympathy, and recommend persuasively to the masses the humbling yet elevating doctrines of the cross? Among the benefited "working" clergy, highly excellent men as many of them are, there are also very few orators of any mark or name. With all their University training and State favour, they cannot stand comparison with their Dissenting brethren in respect of power to sway the popular mind. The nobility and gentry, the higher middle classes, and a large portion of the peasantry, belong, as a matter of course, to the Church of England. Fashion, taste, and ignorance combine to keep multitudes of the highest and lowest class of the people within the pale of the Establishment. But wherever Christian eloquence and zeal have fair play, wherever popular gifts and practical energy are permitted to tell, the Establishment is usually beaten by the Dissenters. The sermons heard in village churches are proverbially weak. Many of them, shamefully sold and bought in the market, are read in a characteristically cold and lifeless manner. Those even written by the men that preach them are too often insipidity itself, compared with the vigorous though perhaps not very polished effusions that are heard in Dissenting chapels. We wish to make no unjust or invidious comparisons, but we meet everywhere with the most startling contrasts between the vigour of Dissent and the apathy or feebleness of the Church. In how many rural parishes or country towns are the rector and their curates equally stiff and insipid in the pulpit, while the neighboring Dissenting ministers are full of life and energy. Any Sunday in the year in almost any English town, you may hear a curate read most winningly a sermon of twenty minutes' length, and think his prattle to be very tedious, while in the Wesleyan or Baptist chapel hard by the minister preaches in a style truly fitted to move the popular understanding and heart.

Why do the English clergy as a body so signally fail in a field where they should be specially strong? A great number of them have no vocation for their office, have entered the Church from merely private or family reasons, and are by nature quite unfit to preach with any popular power. Then many of them are over-educated men, fine scholars and true gentlemen, but by no means vigorous or effective speakers. Men of merely elegant tastes, who read in their studies or shine in drawing-rooms, are not often the men to conciliate the multitude or to win the working classes to the church. Nor are the parsons who frequent the ball-room or the hunting-field ever likely to excel in that eloquence which should be one of the chief glories of their profession. Laying aside all the non-efficient we find but a limited body of English clergy in any way distinguished for popular powers. Very many of them are hardworking men, lovers of the poor and friends of education, but few indeed even approach in preaching power Mr. Spurgeon or many other vigorous Dissenting ministers that we might name.