

From a Lecture delivered by the Rev. Wm. Arthur, before the Young Men's Christian Association of London.

THE BRITISH EMPIRE.

In speaking of the British Isles, it is not unusual to adopt a derogatory strain, as if the British power were only great in its foreign acquisitions. But much of this is gratuitous. It is true, that in respect of mere acreage, we have in Europe six superiors, France, Spain, Turkey, Austria, and Russia, with the united kingdom of Sweden and Norway. A dominion, however, is not to be measured by the number of mountains it encloses, but by the number of men it commands. He that reigns over waste lands, rules nothing; he only reigns who governs men; to control mind is dominion; population is empire. Now, in this light, taking but our home empire, only three states in Europe excel our own. The population of the British Isles is greater than that of Spain and Turkey put together; but less than that of France by seven millions, than that of Austria by ten, and numbers only half that of European Russia. Thus, were our empire confined to these islands, it would even then rank as one of the five great powers of Europe; for her Majesty rules, in the united kingdom, a population twice as numerous as that governed by the king of Prussia. Besides her home empire, several patches of European territory are held by England. The beautiful little Channel Islands (Jersey, Guernsey, Alderney, &c., with a population of about 70,000), though lying close upon the shores of Normandy, are English in political position, and thoroughly English in feeling.

At the extreme south of the Spanish coast stands Gibraltar, which, notwithstanding its commanding position and classic fame, as one of the pillars of Hercules, does not seem to have been fortified earlier than the eighth century, when it was occupied by the armies of the Caliph Alwalid Eben Abdalmalik. The Moors held it for above seven centuries, with but one short interval. The reign of Queen Anne was rendered illustrious by continental victories; but of all the triumphs of Marlborough, nothing remains to England, except their pride. In that same reign an admiral, lacking employment for his fleet, captured the fortress of Gibraltar, with a handful of troops under a German prince, and a few sailors. The Parliament of the day would not give its thanks for the conquest; but the importance of that conquest to our shipping, its command of the Mediterranean, its impregnable fortifications, and, perhaps more than all, the determined assaults against which it has been retained, now confirm it as a national possession of the highest value. To have cost years of battle, and almost seas of blood, it is a small territory, measuring in length only two miles and three quarters, while three quarters of a mile is its greatest breadth. Its population is about 15,000.

Proceeding up the Mediterranean, we next find the English flag waving over the islands of Malta and Gozo, which, from their close proximity, are usually designated by the name of the former. Malta is sacred as the scene of St. Paul's shipwreck, and has an almost unequalled fame for historical vicissitudes. It was first held by the Phoenicians, who yielded to the Greeks; these were overcome by the Carthaginians, who were in turn subdued by the Romans; they were swept from the island by the Vandals, and they, again, by the Goths; Justinian recovered it to the empire; but it was soon overrun by the Arabs, and these were conquered by the Normans. At length it fell to the kingdom of Sicily, with which it remained till the days of Charles V., who placed it under the knights of St. John of Jerusalem. They held it till 1798, when it was seized by the French during Napoleon's expedition to Egypt; but the people rising against them, were joined by an English force, and in 1800 this place, so often lost and won, was numbered among our possessions. The two islands are about twenty seven miles in length, with a population of about 120,000 souls. The climate is warm, but salubrious; and Valetta, the capital, is at once a beautiful city, and one of the strongest military posts in the world.

Pursuing our way in that classical sea, we find, strewn along the west and south-west coast of Greece, the seven Ionian Isles, known as the Septinsular Union; namely, Corfu, Paxos, Santa Maura, Ithaca, Cephalonia, Zante, and Kerigo. They formerly belonged to Venice; during the wars of the French revolution their possession alternated between Russia and France; but in the great territorial settlement of 1815, they were placed under the protection of Great Britain. They may be considered as a half-independent republic; being governed by a court of representatives, under a lord high commissioner appointed by our queen. Their climate and productions are semi-tropical. The population is about 200,000.

We might have thought that a tiny islet, measuring in full length a single British mile, would never have attracted the broad eye of England; but during the last war, when the continental powers combined to exclude our commerce from their shores, Heligoland, lying close to the south of Denmark, and commanding the mouths of the Eider, the Weser, and the Elbe, was seen to offer such advantages to our shipping, that it was seized, and is still retained by Britain. The population is about 2000.

Looking at the British empire as existing in Europe alone, it comprises a population considerably exceeding twenty seven millions. This gives us a proportion, in the population of all Europe, of about one in eight and a half; so that in that division of the world which is the centre of knowledge, enterprise, and power, out of every seven-and-a-half men, two at least hail Queen Victoria as their sovereign.

Turning to our Foreign Empire, we shall first of all direct our attention to the west; and here the possession we meet with as our nearest and oldest is Newfoundland. This island is only sixteen hundred miles west of Ireland, so that with steamers travelling twelve miles per hour, the distance from Limerick to St. John's might be accomplished in six days. The two kingdoms of Denmark and Hanover scarcely equal the extent of Newfoundland. Its winters are rigorous; but the climate is neither so unbearable, nor the soil so utterly barren, as is generally supposed. The population, amounting to 75,000, is mainly engaged in the fishery; but the few who cultivate the ground find remunerative crops. The possession of the island was long disputed between England and France, the fishery making it valuable to both. The latter held it for a considerable time, but at length the fortunes of England prevailed.

On the American continent our oldest possession is Nova Scotia, a province remarkable for its superb bays and harbours, enjoying a salubrious climate, and rich in instances of hale longevity. Though occupying a comparatively small space in the public view, it is equal to a country in Europe, which, with its Alps, its glaciers, and its hardy conflicts, has ever held a high place in the attention of the world. Nova Scotia, with a population of only 150,000, is in extent equal to Switzerland. This statement includes the Island of Cape Breton, which was formerly held as a separate colony.

Adjoining to this, New Brunswick spreads over a territory equal to both Holland and Belgium; but its population, being only 120,000, is so inadequate to its extent, that vast tracts continue to be occupied by forest and prairie.

In the Gulf of St. Lawrence, lies a rich and beautiful island, of which we scarcely ever hear but as of some inconsiderable appendage to New Brunswick. Yet this, Prince Edward's Island, is as large as that famous Italian state, the grand duchy of Parma, which, since the downfall of her meteor lord, has formed the dominion of Maria Louisa.

A century has not passed since the martial spirit of Wolfe, in its last struggle, cried, "I thank God and die content;" at that instant he heard the voice of victory bidding the flag of England welcome to the Canadian shores. Several enterprises begun by Francis I., and matured under the vigorous reign of Henry the Great, had given France the possession of that country, to which, by right of discovery, England had a prior claim; but in the one campaign of 1759, it all reverted to the British crown. The two provinces into which Canada was formerly divided are now united; but it is still customary, and certainly convenient, to speak of them under the old names, Lower and Upper. Lower Canada, or that portion which lies nearest the Atlantic, is as large as France; it has severe winters, but a fertile soil, and is not deficient in the physical capabilities of a great country. Its population are largely descended from the former French occupiers; but immigration has mingled with them a considerable proportion of our own countrymen. The exact limits of Upper Canada are not easily ascertained, its western boundary being sometimes stated as the Pacific Ocean, sometimes as the Rocky Mountains, and more frequently as resting on the ninetieth degree of west longitude, at Goose Lake. Taking this last boundary, it makes the extent about equal to that of the whole Prussian territory; but with either of the others it is prodigious. This province is, on the whole, a finer country than the other, having a richer soil, and more genial climate. The population is mainly English. The progress of cultivation is rapid; and cities spring up as if by magic. Toronto, which some men living remember to have seen with only two log-houses and a tavern, is now a splendid city, with a population of 20,000; and every thing making it worthy to be, as before the union of the provinces it was, the capital of a new country. Montreal is the seat of government. The population of Canada is supposed to amount to a million and a half.

We now come to a territory which, both as to its width and its climate, may be called the Russia of America; and yet, vast as it is, some books, laying claim to popularity, omit it altogether from the catalogue of our possessions. Charles II. granted to a company a charter, vesting in them the exclusive privilege to trade in furs, in the regions lying adjacent to Hudson's Bay. This company retains its charter, and now holds the unmeasured tracts designated as the Hudson's Bay Territory. The precise extent of this region is not ascertained; but it stretches from the northern frontier of Canada to the pole, and from the shores of the Atlantic to the boundaries of Russian America. This latter is a breadth twice as great as that of the Atlantic Ocean from Ireland to the Labrador. Were a right line drawn from London to the western limits of our possessions, it would cross no land but what is ours; and would travel in its course over 140 degrees of longitude, or within some eighteen hundred miles of half the earth's circumference. Our American territory, stretching from the Atlantic to the Pacific, and from the latitude of New York to the north pole, covers an area larger than the United States. But though, even on their own continent, we have more acres than they, their superiority in soil and climate is conspicuous; and in population, the essential strength of empire, they outnumber British America seven-fold.

[To be continued.]

Procrastination has been called a thief—the thief of time. I wish it were no worse than a thief. It is a murderer; and that which it kills is not time merely, but the immortal soul.

LAMARTINE'S MOTHER.

Lamartine, whose influence for the last few months has been so great in France, thus opens the beautiful narrative of his travels in the east.

My mother had received from hers, on the bed of death, a beautiful copy of the bible of Royamoit, in which she taught me to read when I was a little child. This bible had engravings on sacred subjects on every page. They depicted Sarah, Joseph and Samuel, and above all, those beautiful patriarchal scenes, in which the solemn and primitive nature of the East was blended with all the acts of the simple and wonderful lives of the fathers of mankind. When I had repeated my lesson well, and read with only a fault or two the half page of historical matter, my mother uncovered the engraving, and holding the book open in her lap, showed and explained it to me as my recompense.

She was endowed by nature with a mind as pious as it was tender, and with the most sensitive and vivid imagination. All her thoughts were sentiments, and every sentiment was an image. Her beautiful, noble, and benign countenance reflected, in its radiant physiognomy, all that glowed, in her heart, and all that was painted in her thoughts; and the silvery, affectionate, solemn, and impassioned tone of her voice, added to all that she said, an accent of strength, grace, and love, which still sounds in my ear after six years of absence.

The sight of these engravings, the explanations, and the poetical commentaries of mother, inspired me from the most tender infancy, with a taste and inclination for Biblical lore.

From the love of the things themselves, to the desire of seeing the places where these things occurred, there was but step. I braved therefore from the age of eight years, with a desire to go and visit those mountains on which God descended; those deserts where the angel pointed out to Hagar, the hidden spring, whence her famished child, dying with thirst, might derive refreshment; those rivers which flowed from the terrestrial paradise; the spot in the firmament at which the angels were seen ascending and descending Jacob's ladder. The desire grew with my growth, and strengthened with my strength. I was always dreaming of travelling in the East. I never ceased arranging in my mind a vast and religious *epopee* of which these beautiful spots should be the principal scene.

From Hogg's Instructor.

FLOWERS IN THE CITY.

Flowers! buy flowers! and cheaply too,
In their rainbow colours glistening;
They were pluck'd while the silver dew
Within each fairy cup was dancing,
All through the rosy matin hours,
Flowers! buy flowers!

Here is the Columbine, whose horn
Offers to the bee a flowing brimmer;
Convulsiol, that open with the morn,
And close when rival stars begin to glimmer
In the pale sky; and with the Woodbine
wreathed,
That smells as though an angel near us breathed.

For you the Fuchsia drops its bells,
The chaste Tuberosa its perfume sheddeth;
For you were born those Asphodels,
And the rich bloom the Poppy spreadeth:
Things all so bright and fair, that sure
This earth hath a beautiful garniture.

Busy man with clouded brow,
Mayhap a sister's cheek doth borrow
Too much of the Lilly's wanness, and e'en now
For childhood's joys long past doth sorrow;
Oh! place these Roses in the sunless room,
To glad the sick one with their sweet perfume.

Woman, whose sad looks may tell
Of a fond one from thee taken,
Repress thy bosom's passion'd swell,
Feel not utterly forsaken,
Kiss these blessings; He who made
Their forms so exquisite will be thine aid.

And ye who toil in the great city,
Co-dwellers all with woad and wart,
By vice removed from human pity,
Should these flowers reach one equal'd haunt,
Let your hearts soften while you see them shine,
And hear them whisper of a Love Divine!

POWER OF A GOOD MAN'S LIFE.

The beauty of a holy life constitutes the most eloquent and effective persuasive to religion which one human being can address to another. We have many ways of doing good to our fellow creatures; but none so efficacious as leading a virtuous, upright, and well-ordered life. There is an energy of moral suasion in a good man's life, passing the highest efforts of the orator's genius. The seen but silent beauty of holiness speaks more eloquently of God and duty than the tongues of men and angels. Let parents remember this. The best inheritance a parent can bequeath to his child is a virtuous example, a legacy of hallowed remembrances and associations. The beauty of holiness beaming through the life of a loved relative or friend, is more effectual to strengthen such as do stand in virtue's ways, and raise up those that are bowed down, than precept, command, entreaty or warning. Christianity itself, I believe, owes by far the greater part of its moral power, not to the precepts or parables of Christ, but to his own character. The beauty of that holiness which is enshrined in the four brief biographies of the Man of Nazareth has done more, and will do more, to regenerate the world, and bring in an everlasting righteousness, than all the other agencies put together.—*Chalmers*

From Hogg's Instructor.

THE PASTOR'S SOLILOQUY.

AN EXTRACT.

It is even so, thought the good old man, as the door closed behind the misguided misanthrope; this is a beautiful world of ours, but it is the gilded cage of many a fluttering spirit that, nevertheless, would shrink from freedom if it were offered. Keyling is miserable, more miserable than the poor wretch crouching amid rags, and filth, and loathsomeness (for such suffering can bear no comparison with mental agony), and yet he knows not why. What matters it to him that the heart is green, and the heavens surpassingly beautiful? He knows that the impress of his foot will ere long disappear from the one, and his eye close upon the other. He knows that the flowers will bloom, the birds sing, that summer will flush the fields, and winter bring in turn its peculiar attractions, when his heart is pulseless and his tongue mute; but he does not know that in the dissevering of the silver cord is gained the freedom for which the spirit pants. This world is too narrow for his soul to expand in, and he feels cramped and chained; yet, if the door of his cage were flung open, he would tremble at sight of the unknown space beyond, and would not venture out, but cling to the gilded wires until torn away by the resistless hand of death. Earth never satisfied an immortal mind; the "living soul," which is nothing less than the breathing of Deity himself, can be satisfied but with infinity—infinity of life, action, and knowledge. His own feeble glimmer is enough for the fire-fly; and its wing and voice, with the free heavens and beautiful earth, for the bird; they were formed by the Almighty's hand, but their life is not an emanation of His life, and their little spirits "go downward to the earth." But what can satisfy the deathless soul immured in a clay prison, with but clouded views of the finite beauties around it, and wholly unconscious of its divine origin and final destiny? No wonder Keyling is miserable; for he is blinder than the untutored savage, who "sees God in clouds and hears him in the wind." For years he has been struggling for a meteor; while it receded, he never paused or wearied; but, when his hand closed over it and he grasped a shadow, the truth dawned upon his spirit; and, in the bitterness of its first perception, he cursed himself and cursed his destiny. He hates the world, and himself, and mankind, and talks madly of the death damps, the grave, and the slimy earth-worm, as though superior to their horrors; but yet he is in love with life, as much as the veriest devotee of pleasure in existence. It is this pining for immortality, this longing for a wider range, that makes him sometimes imagine, in his impatience, that he is anxious to lie down to his eternal rest and never wake. If his spirit could but understand its heavenward destiny, if he would learn to look beyond those narrow boundaries, if, in despising the worthless, he would properly estimate the high and imperishable, poor Keyling would find that even on earth there are inexhaustible sources of happiness. Alas for the weakness of human nature! What a very wreck a man becomes when left to his own blindness and folly! The loftier the intellect, the higher its aspirations, and the more comprehensive its faculties, the lower does it descend in darkness, if the torch of religion has never been lighted within. It is misery to feel the soul capable of infinite expansion, and allow it a range no wider than this fading, ever-changing earth; to taste the bliss of life, mingled with the bitter draught of death; to love the high and holy, and never look toward the fountain of holiness—deep, deep, and mingling in its pure tide the richness of all wisdom and knowledge. Oh, how depressing must be the loneliness of such souls! How awful the desolation! Too high for earth, and knowing naught of heaven! Even the good in their nature is perverted, and adds to the chaos of darkness within. When they see the strong oppress the weak; vice triumph over virtue, innocence borne down by care and poverty, and guilt elevated to a throne, they say this is enough to know of Him who holds the reins of such a government; and, in their folly, deem themselves more merciful than the Father of mercies. Making this world the theatre of life, and the years of man its sum, they fix upon this inconceivably small point in comparison with the whole; and, from such a limited view, dare to tax the Ruler of the universe with injustice. Unable to comprehend the policy of the Whig government, and misapprehending the object and tendency of human suffering, they lose themselves in the mazes of sophistry, and become entangled in the net their own hands have spread.

Poor Keyling! he has drunk of the poisonous tide of infidelity, and every thought is contaminated the moment it springs up into the heart: This gives its coloring to the earth and sky, to life and death. It breaks the chain that binds the world of nature to its Creator, dissolves the strongest fascination of the beautiful things around us, and renders meaningless the lessons traced by the finger of God upon every thing he has made. It removes the prop from the heaving reed, and the sunlight from the heart; it binds down the wing of hope, and turns the upraised eye earthward; it offers only "the worm, the canker, and the grief," and points the fluttering soul to a grave of darkness and oblivion.

UNHAPPY HAPPINESS.—Some men are so happy in having happy wits, that they make their wit their happiness—jesting themselves out of all that is earnest, and like fools make fun of everything, even sin itself. Alas! what a pity is it that men so witty should have no more wit than to destroy themselves. A jesting lie