

Communications.

ON THE REGIONS OF THE NORTH.

In connexion with the causes now in activity in destroying the Animal and Vegetable Kingdom, or Animate and Inanimate Nature, from all that is well authenticated.

BY WILLIAM SMITH,
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TO MOSES H. GRINNELL, MERCHANT, CHANT, NEW YORK.

The great changes produced on the surface of the earth by the deluge, is still causing natural philosophy to wander in search of those natural causes which brought it about, and was at one time so fertile in visionary speculation and false reasoning, as either to render the name of geology ridiculous, or produce a sort of dread of that delightful study, from the attacks on revelation to which it seemed to lead, and the injudicious defence too commonly opposed to them. At present, however, it seems to be universally admitted that the grand object of revelation was the religious and moral discipline, and not the literary or scientific instruction of mankind; and that since the sacred books have not communicated the principles either of astronomy or chemistry, there was no reason to expect from them those other departments of knowledge more intimately connected with the welfare of the human race. Even where, as in the case of the deluge, the Scripture treats of great natural events, the principles of interpretation are so very far from being agreed upon, that the greatest caution should be employed in founding arguments upon it; and if the attempt to connect the details of Scripture narrative with the results of physical inquiry were prudent upon other topics, it would still be premature and dangerous in geology, from the very imperfect state of that branch of natural history itself. But whatever may be thought of the prudence of attempting to connect the discoveries of natural science with the sacred writings, it is evident that if the testimony of science can ever be of any value in support of Scripture history, the physical researches by which it is intended to confirm, the historical statements should be most strictly independent. No latent facility should induce us to accept weak evidence because of its tendency to the desired object. But for the sake of revelation as well as of science—of truth in every form—the physical part of the enquiry ought to be conducted as if the scriptures were not in existence. The tone and language of such an inquiry should betray no desire to force conviction by connecting with it extrinsic considerations, or by holding up to obloquy those who dissent from our opinion, or reject our arguments. Imputations of this character, connected thus with a subject of acknowledged difficulty, are not less impolitic than uncharitable; for it may be retorted that more tangible agents sometimes have a share in religious controversy, and the hope of advancement in wealth, station, or authority may be no less powerful in one direction than the pride of scepticism on the other. But the great objection to all attempts to cramp the exercise of reason and conscience upon questions of this nature, rests upon much higher grounds; they render doubtful the goodness of the cause whose advocates stoop to such resources, and violate those maxims of mildness and benignity which are the characteristics of our religion, and assuredly not the lowest proof of its divine origin.

However, if we attend a little to the Mosaic account of that period when the earth was covered with water, we will find that the great law-giver derived his information concerning the origin of the world from the Egyptians, and that he could not have ventured to teach opinions contrary to those generally received. This, however, is to form a notion very contrary to the character of this great legislator, as appears in his writings, and by no means consistent with the superiority which his religious system undoubtedly possessed above those of the nations by which he was surrounded. We have here an instance of the danger of mixing religious and philosophical opinions together, and an evidence that from the union of these two things the corruption of both is likely to ensue, and we would have a fantastic philosophy on the one hand, and a heterodox religion on the other. Whatever may be determined on that point, it seems material to remark, that the deluge, as it is described by Moses, cannot well be supposed to have left any proof of its existence among the monuments of the mineral kingdom, as its duration was too short to have allowed such monuments to be produced. The face of the earth was covered by the waters above the tops of the mountains only for the space of five months, or 150 days, and after that time the waters were abated. Now the increase of the mass of waters even to the height of 27 or 28,000 feet above their present level, and their continuance for five months at that height, if attended with no violence, tempests, or earthquakes (and it is not said it was so attended) is not likely to have produced any marks or vestiges on the surface which the lapse of a few years would not efface. We are not at liberty to engrave on the sacred text any commentaries or speculations. A miraculous event must be received just as it is given by the inspired writer. There is no room for reasoning on principles of analogy about what is confessedly supernatural, and placed beyond the sphere to which analogy extends.

The waters, therefore, are to be understood as raised up quietly to the great height at which they stood, and to have continued in

that state just 150 days, and if so, the destruction of land animals, and the deposition of a coat of mud over the surface of the earth, are the only consequences which we can infer with certainty to have taken place. When the waters subsided, the dead carcasses would many of them be carried down to the sea, or where they remained would soon be consumed in the midst of the luxuriant vegetation which would soon cover the earth during the almost entire absence of the animals destined to feed on it; the coat of mud would be washed down by the rains, or added to the general mass of vegetable mould. It seems probable that this great catastrophe, destined to cut off men and animals, would produce no other effect upon the surface of the earth; none certainly that could be supposed to remain distinctly visible at the distance of some thousands of years. The great object is to ascertain correctly to what extent the antediluvian population extended around the garden of Eden; on the banks of the Euphrates, in proportion as the waters began to rise, they would repair to the tops of the highest mountains, in Central Asia some of them rising to the enormous height of 27,746 feet above the level of the sea, and there remain until surrounded by the increasing waters. When the waters began to abate they and the rest of the animal creation would be washed down to the great central basin, from 320 to 205 beneath the level of the sea, there to undergo a process of change; but what the nature of this change was, we who live in these latter days are entirely ignorant of. The Bible tells us that sin was the cause of the destruction of the old world, and that their wickedness was so great as to bring about the deluge. It appears by a genuine exercise of natural philosophy, without allowing it to wander far into the regions of doubt and mystery, that the design of the waters covering the earth, was not only to destroy mankind for their wickedness, but to prepare an atmosphere something analogous to the one we have at the present time, but not so adulterated. The pure air of the antediluvian world enabled its possessors to live to a very great age, and likewise gave them an opportunity to commit a large amount of sin. What kind of sin it was we are not told; but it was of such a nature as to occasion their destruction, and to leave certain parts of the earth's surface in a diseased state, with so many animated bodies undergoing a process of decomposition, in those parts of Central Asia near where the primitive abode of the human race was first appointed by the Creator. To carry on war in these countries, where such things have taken place, is certainly erecting the standard of rebellion against the natural laws, and incurring painful suffering from such a transgression.

A PLEASANT TRIP THROUGH SCOTLAND,

BY A GERMAN. WRITTEN BY HIMSELF.

The night which I passed at Murray's Hall was disturbed by shocking and most delightful dreams. One moment I was at Waterloo, and the next I was talking nonsense to a fairy queen, in my restless sleep! At present, thank God, nothing disturbs my night's rest, because I have more command over my imagination. In those days of delight and prosperity, the least thing would make me unhappy or delighted with myself, and every body around me, and I readily forgive now all young people, particularly young ladies, when they are enthusiasts in love matters. Only let it not be at the expense of their honor, and all romance is to be excused in young people, for a worthy poet says very justly:

"There is nothing half so sweet in life
As young love's dream."

The only advice I will give them from the bottom of my heart is—Do not be in too great a hurry to get married, for 'the imagination is very short, but the repentance long,' as Schiller says, the great Poet of Germany.

The next day at Murray Hall I passed in company with Lord Lynedoch and several other gentlemen, riding about that delightful part of Perthshire, where one is on the classic ground of Shakspeare's tragedy of Macbeth. During the evening Lord Lynedoch told me that he was going to pay a visit to the Duke of Athol, at Dunkeld, and that he was sure the Duke and his amiable Duchess would be very glad to see me; therefore he requested me to be ready at six o'clock next morning. Being very tired that evening, I went to bed early, and neither dreamed of Waterloo or fairy queens, because nature was exhausted, and wanted rest. Ready to the minute next morning, I jumped into the carriage, and drove to Dunkeld, a distance of about 18 miles, through a very interesting part of Perthshire, having always in view the distant highlands, at the foot of which the residence of the Duke of Athol was situated.

When we arrived at the Castle it was about 9 o'clock, just in time for breakfast; and after having been introduced in due form to the Duke and Duchess by Lord Lynedoch, as 'Mr L., a German friend of mine,' I was requested to be seated near the charming Duchess, and made a most hearty breakfast at this table of royalty. After breakfast a walk in the beautiful garden was proposed, and I galloped the ladies as if I belonged to royalty myself. So much for the assurance of a poor commercial traveller!

During the afternoon a drive through the extensive grounds of the Duke of Athol was arranged, which gave me a good opportunity of seeing some of the wild, picturesque scenery of the highlands, and convinced me of the loyalty of the people towards the Duke, who was beloved by his tenants.

The dinner and the evening party were

most brilliant, and I raised myself again a few inches in my own estimation, for I was dining at a royal table, and was in company with the highest nobility of the realm, there being several ladies of rank and fashion on a visit to the Castle, whose manners I found very easy and condescending, and by no means so haughty as some upstart families of a purse-proud merchant!

When I was shown to my bed, and would lay down, I saw above me a royal crown, which made me exclaim, 'John, John, you never will get higher in this world!' To sleep soundly was impossible, for my mind was too much excited by all I had seen, and the kindness I had experienced at the hospitable board of the Duke of Athol. In fact, I was bewildered, and my dreams were of queens and princesses, outriders and horses, hunting, dancing, and singing. Next morning I left the Castle early with Lord Lynedoch for Perth, and the next day I was on my way back to Glasgow, on the box seat near the driver of a stage-coach, as proud as possible. Before I left Glasgow, to return to Liverpool, I visited Loch Lomond, Loch Catharine, Loch Fine, and found the scenery most charming and picturesque.

Since then I have visited Mexico and the United States, where the mountains, bays and rivers are on a much grander scale than in Europe; but travelling in a civilized country, where one is protected by strict laws, and travelling amongst a set of half barbarians, as in Mexico, or people who are full of impudence, guessing or calculating, and whose sole object is to get by all means, fair or foul, the almighty dollar, is a great difference. Liberty is all very well, if properly restrained by the strong arm of the law; but instead of calling liberty independence, it should be called impudence, when practised as it is now-a-days in Mexico and the United States. Pray where is there a greater burlesque upon liberty than in the Southern States? where the slave suffers under the lash of his cruel master, notwithstanding the expression in the Declaration of Independence, 'that all men are born free.' O temporal O mores! But touch Brother Jonathan at his pockets and his slaves and he will be found a hard customer to deal with. Money! Money! Money! is his God! He adores the golden calf even more than the people of olden days ever did; and if gold was to be found along the icy coast of Labrador or Spitzbergen, a Yankee would surely be the first pioneer! It is said of an acute Scotchman that it requires three Jews to cheat him, but to overreach a Yankee it requires three Scotchmen! He thinks and dreams of nothing else but money, and as the laws are not very strict nor severe, great scope is given to wild speculations and swindlings, gambling and dissipation. In Europe, at least people are kept back in their proper sphere of honesty, by strict moral laws, and all who find these laws too severe, leave their country for their country's good, and practise in the States what was refused to them in their own country, because failing three or four times and cheating his creditors is nothing thought of in the United States. On the contrary, if it becomes known that he made some \$100,000 by a bankruptcy or a fire, he is considered a clever, keen fellow, and is as much respected as before his failure!

Money, to be sure, is a very necessary article, and we cannot well do without it; but to make it our sole happiness in this life is a mistaken notion. Contentment is the greatest wealth, and peace of mind passeth all understanding, but those who make money their God alone, will never enjoy contentment nor peace of mind.

Let me conclude this epistle with a few lines of poetry, which I copied many years ago, and which I have found in the course of my life consoling and true:

In the tempest of life, when the wave and the gale
Are around and above, if thy footsteps should fail,
If thine eye should grow dim, and thy caution depart,
Look aloft, and be firm and be fearless of heart.
If the friend who embraced in prosperity's glow,
With a smile for each joy, and a tear for each woe,
Should betray thee when sorrows like clouds are arrayed,
Look aloft to the friendships that never shall fade.

If they who are dearest, the son of thy heart,
The wife of thy bosom, in sorrow depart,
Look aloft from the darkness and dust of the tomb
To that soil where affection is ever in bloom.

If the visions which hope spreads in light to thine eye,
Like the tints of the rainbow, but brighten to fly,
Then turn, and with tears of repentant regret,
Look aloft to the sun that is never to set.

On my return to England and Germany, I intend publishing an account of my late trip to the United States and to this place; and the kind reception which I have experienced here, as an entire stranger, shall not be forgotten.

L. M. N.

Chatham, Miramichi, Sept., 1850.

ON MR WILLIAM SMITH'S LETTERS.
To the Editor of the Gleaner.

SIR,—I see by the last paper the Smith publications are still continued; burdened with all the mystery and exhibiting all the profundity of one who has become so eleva-

ted in the turgid path of erudition, that the early lessons of school-boy days have become unremembered, and the syntax of his youth has been forgotten; age appears to have lost its beginning in consequence of the deeper and more comprehensive acquirements of later days. The last communication contains the following paragraph—'When they employed Faraday and Playfair to see how far moving azote from moving combustion would be consumed, they little dreamed what they were doing, when it would rise by evaporation and do more mischief, and contribute to poison the pure air of the atmosphere, than in its azotic state.' Let any person possessing any knowledge at all of representing his ideas upon paper take a glance over this sentence—not only take a glance but read it over a number of times, and see if he can comprehend it; does its author mean that the employing of Faraday and Playfair would rise by evaporation or not? by the reading I think it would; or whether he means that the moving azote would rise by evaporation and do more mischief than its azotic state; either reading is equally unmeaning and void of any saving clause by which it can be recommended as being worthy of observation. Who ever heard of a gas evaporating? No person ever did except in the production of Mr Smith. He says, shortly after, that the cholera of 1849 originated from the liberation of a large quantity of 'arterial effluvia from the dead and dying,' and by 'eccentric and irregular azote.' (This eternal azote appears to chime in and ring a change in every sentence, and seems to give sweet music to each line.) The emanations from putrid and putrescent animal matter in its incipient stages of decomposition yield gases such as phosphuretted hydrogen, sulphuretted and carbonated hydrogen.

Compound gaseous substances, which, when inhaled, are highly deleterious to the animal economy; but that the evaporation of a small quantity of aqueous vapour escaping from recently drawn blood producing the cholera, is unworthy of notice. Blood yields no injurious gas until decomposition becomes apparent, when it is subjected to all the changes of animal putrefaction. 'Arterial effluvia' then, is nothing more than a slight quantity of watery vapour which escapes, and that is owing to the heat of the recently shed blood. The following, more likely, is the cause or one of the causes of cholera—'There is not a more dangerous spot in the world than Hungary, from its swamps and marshes.' This is the secret of its unhealthiness. The gases which produce such detrimental effects, have their origin from the stagnant collection of water and putrescent vegetable matter, the exhalations and miasma from which are all that is required to kindle the awfulness of the pestilence and all the frightfulness of its development. I repeat that azote produces no deleterious effects upon the vital functions of animal bodies. Two thirds of our inhalation is composed of this beneficial element. What Mr Smith's object is in writing such a series of sentences, some copied from good authorities, which, unfortunately for himself, contradicts his own compositions, which appear like patches of potato rot interspersed through a healthy field. It brings to my recollection a story related of a painter whose piece of artistic composition had been accidentally destroyed or mutilated by his color boy. The boy after making such a blemish, undertook to paint it as near the original as possible, in hopes to deceive his master, so that the artist would not recognise the injury the work had sustained; but the angry stare that came over the face of the painter when he observed it, convinced the boy that all his efforts had been unsuccessful. He, like Mr Smith, had not dove-tailed the edges of his originality so completely as to elude detection. Before we leave him we will take a passing glance at all his productions:—He has bantered about in the ice strewed sea of the pole, and accompanied each voyage in his cold and cheerless wanderings. He has conveyed us over the frozen surface of Polar waters and caused our fancy to gaze upon their desolation. He has followed each plague-devastating era in its awful silence while inhuming its myriads in the grave, telling you of their commencement and when they first stole their mysterious and terrible visits upon our changing world to sweep its beings to the gaping grave. He has caused you to look upon the devastating effects of earthquakes, and pictures to you the distress and death attending their visitations. He passes into Hungary with all the confidence of a physician, and informs us what we never knew before, that cholera is produced by 'arterial effluvia.' He voyages away to the jungles of Hindostan, and you fancy you hear the moan of the pestilence-breeding breath of the servid breeze that conveys on its bosom the effluvia of decaying vegetation. He contemplates the changes of geology, and strolls over the changing effects of time, and marks the never-ceasing operations of the universe in that delightful and contemplative science. He discourses with all the confidence of a chemist upon azote and combustion; touches history with the assurance of a Hume, while cause and effect are bid to depart, and reason dethroned by a dogmatical egotism. Theology has not as yet passed before my eye, but I expect it must be arraigned on equal terms with the rest. He mingles all those separate subjects together in one mass of incongruities, and throws the polar regions, earthquakes, volcanoes, geology, and a sprinkling of politics together in one confused mixture of knowledge and nonsense—of erudition and ignorance—of sanity and imbecility—of obser-