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LITERATURE.

THE SPIRIT OF THE MAGAZINES.

From Chambers's Edinburgh Journal.

LESSONS FROM BEYOND THE ATLANTIC.

The first ten years saw this colony numbering less than 300 men; but they, nevertheless, obtained a patent from the king, giving them the property of their lands, although not investing them with any rights of self-government. At their own discretion, they met in council, and framed regulations for the general benefit. In a little time, more settlements were made within the bounds of what was afterwards called New England. Additional parties of Puritans, feeling themselves uneasy at home, came to seek freedom of worship in America. Fishing seems to have been the chief resource; and it is probable that these ultra-Protestant communities found much of their prosperity in supplying to the Catholics of Spain, a food which was demanded by a religious principle, totally opposed to the views of those who caught and exported the fish. They also applied diligently to the cultivation of the soil. At length King Charles I. granted them a charter, which assigned them rights of self-government, not because he was willing to see any independent state erected there, but because he deemed them only a trading company; and with the internal proceedings of such a body it did not seem necessary that he should interfere. He probably felt an additional security in reflecting, that the heads of the Massachusetts corporation resided in England, where he could of course easily check any conduct disrespectful to his authority. Great must have been his surprise when these head men emigrated also, carrying the charter and its powers along with them. In 1630, there was a large emigration from England to Massachusetts, chiefly of Puritans, including many men of high endowments, some of large fortune, several good scholars, and eminent clergymen. It was now that the city of Boston was founded.

In those days, when the Scriptures, with their wonderful narrations and deep spiritual teachings, were a novelty to the intelligent English mind, men acted towards them and from them with an earnestness which we scarcely see anywhere now. The Puritans desired no other rule of life, or any better code of public laws. Massachusetts, therefore, became a kind of theocratic republic. All men were expected to vote, but not unless they were "church-members." Scolding and hesitations in belief were held as delinquencies calling for severe punishment. Among the strictest laws, was one compelling all persons not mere infants to attend church. Newly escaped, as they are, from persecution for conscience' sake at home, they had not learned to be tolerant of any doctrines, which to themselves seemed strange. There was one Roger Williams at Salem—a man of accurate and capacious understanding, who had 'revolved the nature of intolerance,' and arrived at the great principle which is its sole effectual remedy—the sanctity of the conscience. 'The civil magistrate,' he said, 'should restrain crime, but never control opinion; should punish guilt, but never violate the freedom of the soul.' On this doctrine, he reasoned luminously, accepting every fair inference from it, and with great ingenuity repelling every objection. It brought him painfully into collision with his fellow citizens, for he condemned the law for church-attendance as one violating natural rights, and tending to generate hypocrisy. What must have been more exasperating, he said that to select magistrates exclusively from members of the church, was no more reasonable than it would be to choose a doctor of physic or a pilot according to his skill in theology. 'The controversy,' says Mr Bancroft, 'finally turned on the rights and duties of magistrates to guard the minds of the people against corruption, and to punish what would seem to them error and heresy. Magistrates, Williams protested, are but the agents of the people, or its trustees, on whom no spiritual power, in matters of worship, can ever be conferred; since conscience belongs to the individual, and is not the property of the body politic; and, with admirable dialects, clothing the great truth in its boldest and most general forms, he asserted that 'the civil magistrate may not intermeddle even to stop a church from apostasy and heresy'—that his power extends only to the bodies and goods, and outward estate of men.' With corresponding distinctness, he foresaw the influence of his principle on society. 'The removal of the yoke of soul oppression, as it will prove an act of mercy and righteousness to the enslaved nations, so it is of binding force to engage the whole and every interest and conscience to preserve the common liberty and peace.'

Lamentable to say, the settlers of Massachusetts could not put up with the novel doctrines of Williams; and he had to fly from his home at an inclement season, and seek shelter among the Indians. The man to whom the honor is due of being the first man on earth to announce the great doctrine of soul-liberty wandered in the wilderness without a guide, and often had no house but a hollow tree. At a more propitious season, he went with five companions to Narraganset Bay, and, making a small independent settlement, proved the founder of the state of Rhode Island. He took care, of course, to exclude the magistrates of this infant community from any concern in the affairs of the conscience. The character at first given to its institutions has never been obliterated. Mr Bancroft says: 'The annals of Rhode Island, if written in the spirit of philosophy, would exhibit the forms of society under a peculiar aspect: had the territory of the state corresponded to the importance and singularity of the principles of its early existence, the world would have been filled with wonder at the phenomena of its history.'

While we must deplore this failure of toleration in the magistrates of Massachusetts, it is gratifying to record, that many of the colonists, including the whole community of Salem, where Williams had acted as a pastor, were his friends throughout, and disapproved of his persecution. He himself, with mildness worthy of his principles, never ceased to love the whole people of Massachusetts, and never uttered a word of revilement against even those who had been active in expelling him from the colony.

Offshot settlements on the Connecticut and at Newhaven were meanwhile attesting the vigorous vitality of Massachusetts. The king and Archbishop Laud heard with jealousy of the large community that was springing up in utter disregard of prelatic institutions, and but a slight acknowledgement of even the royal authority. They prepared to bring the colony into subjection, and had roused a strong feeling of resistance in the settlers, when, fortunately for them, the troubles in Scotland diverted the king's attention. He was never afterwards in circumstances to molest the Puritan colony, otherwise its progress might have been seriously retarded. The twenty years of non-interference from the home government, which the New England states now enjoyed, were of vast service to them.

The change which their industry had wrought in the wilderness was the admiration of their times. Plenty prevailed throughout the settlements. The wigwams and hovels in which the English had at first found shelter, were replaced by well-built houses. The number of emigrants who had arrived in New England before the assembling of the Long Parliament, are esteemed to have been 21,200. One hundred and ninety-eight ships had borne them across the Atlantic; millions of dollars—a great expenditure and a great emigration for that age. In little more than ten years, fifty towns and villages had been planted; between thirty and forty churches were built. . . . The natural exports of the country were furs and lumber; grain was carried to the West Indies; fish was also a staple. It was signally seen of all these English transatlantic states, that they required nothing but that 'salutary neglect' of which Mr Bancroft speaks, in order to flourish. Home-government interference alone could check their naturally rapid and brilliant career.

The one dark spot in their history, is the denial of freedom of conscience. It seems to have been something not to be expected in nature, that these Puritan colonists should be the simple, earnest, faithful men they were, and at the same time distrustful of their title to check and punish dissent from their own views. While Cromwell was ruling in England, a few stray members of the sect of Quakers landed in Boston. As is well known, the Quakers of those days formed a most distressing problem to the Christian world; they were everywhere regarded with intense aversion. The New England magistrates contented themselves at first with returning them to England. Several persisted in staying in the colony, and preaching, having made up their minds to die if necessary for their doctrines. Most sad to say, the austere semi-clerical magistracy did bring several of these poor people to the gallows, notwithstanding that many of the citizens condemned the proceedings. One is almost disposed to be angry with the victims for bringing such a stain upon an otherwise fair scutcheon; but, on serious reflection, the guilt of the magistrates is great, and should on no account be extenuated. The fact is, there is a want of mildness in the whole demonstrations of those men. Apparently the most stern and uncompromising

natures were attracted within the Puritanic fold. They denounced innocent trifles—such as wigs for men, and tiffany-scarfs for women—and made a rigid principle of many indifferent things. In setting themselves to maintain in all men a strict system of belief, they could not but become tyrannical. In seeking to realise in modern society the customs depicted in Scripture, they could not but be guilty of many solecisms. Where there is so much to remember in their favour, it is hoped that these things may be said of them without offence.

(To be continued.)

From Chamber's Edinburgh Instructor. A NEW STORY OF A LIFE.

BY G. MORR.

'The seasons come and go, and find him the same.'

SPRING

The hedge is sprouting out again,
The thrush resumes his voice,
The rainbow spans the daisied plain,
The hills and woods rejoice:
But on a roadside mound there sits—
Made up of skin and bone—
And sorely plagued with coughing fits—
A man—a-breaking stones!

SUMMER

The hedge is in its greenest suit,
The thrush sings clearer still,
The plain is decked with flower and fruit,
The sun lights up the hill:
But there—upon the rubble bank,
With short asthmatic groans,
And silvered hair, all long and lank—
That man's a-breaking stones!

AUTUMN

The hedges gleam with varied leaf,
The thrush starts to and fro,
The plain yields up the golden sheaf,
The hill is all a glow:
But—settled down in granite seats,
With weak and childlike means,
And big, ungainly, outstretched feet—
That man's a-breaking stones!

WINTER

Now, stark and spare, the hedges stare;
The thrush resumes his bold;
The plain is bare—all's cheerless there,
The hill is black and cold:
But there he sits, as folks pass by
Chattering in cheerful tones—
With purple lip and tearful eye—
That man's a-breaking stones!

MORAL

Perchance you pity this old soul!
His work will soon be o'er:
Then, recollect, to what a goal
The immortal part may soar!
If man, for all his wicked ways,
If after-life atones,
'Twere well if some had spent their days
Like him—a-breaking stones!

From the Illustrated Magazine of Art. THE VESPER BELL.

'Ave Maria! blessed be the hour,
The time, the time, the spot, where I so oft
Have felt that moment in its fullest power
Sink o'er the earth so beautiful and soft,
While swung the deep bell in the distant tower,
Or the faint dying day hymn stole aloft,
And not a breath crept through the rosy air,
And yet the forest leaves seemed stirred with prayer.'

BYRON.

It is rather difficult to convey to the mind of the reader who has never been in Italy a just conception of the passing beauties of the evening hour in that splendid climate. In these latitudes day fades so insensibly into darkness, that our attention is scarcely ever called to the transition; but in the south of Europe, the twilight is surrounded by glories of which we know but little; golden hues on the water, on the woods, on the mountain tops, a sky of the deepest blue, save where the last rays of the setting sun have tinged it with yellow; the air feels soft and balmy, and a mellow light is diffused over the whole landscape. What gives an additional charm to the scene is the pealing of the Vesper Bell from the various churches and convents, about half an hour after the sun has set. Upon hearing this every one in Roman Catholic countries, no matter in what way he may be engaged, uncovers his head and repeats the Ave Maria, or salutation of the angel to Mary, followed by entreaty to pray for the worshipper now and at the hour of his death.

The hour of twilight seems in all countries, and at all times, to have inspired emotions of sadness, or have carried back the mind to past scenes and lost friends. The effect produced by the sound of bells at this hour is well described by Moore:—
'Those evening bells—those evening bells,
How many a tale their music tells,
Of youth and home and that loved dame
Whom first I heard their soothing chime.'
But this feeling, whatever may be its cause, does not by any means prevail in this country with the same intensity as in the Roman Catholic countries of the south, where the sound of the Vesper Bell is the signal for a solemn act of religious worship. Let our opinions be what they may as to its worth, it must inspire some feelings of solemnity to see all the labour ceasing, all noise hushed, the plough stopped, the spade laid down, the oars raised from the water and a whole nation engaged in prayer at the same moment every

day. Our engraving, from a painting by a German artist, is a good representation of one of these scenes. Two Italian peasants are rowing a monk across the lake, when the bell tolls out the hour for vespers from the adjacent convent, and they immediately suspend their progress, and repeat the formula.

The curfew, which by order of the Conqueror was tolled every evening as a signal for the inhabitants to extinguish their fires, we may suppose to have produced a somewhat similar effect upon the minds of our ancestors. It is said, also, that during the carnival at Rome, when the Vesper Bell tolls, the rioting and merriment instantly ceases, and all kneel down for a moment in prayer. This mixture of religion and gaiety is quite characteristic of the people of Italy. Light-hearted and enthusiastic, they think only of the passing hour.

From Hogg's Edinburgh Instructor for July DESTINY OF THE BIBLE.

ARRANGED FROM THE 'BEAUTIES OF THE BIBLE,' BY W. LEASK.

WHAT is to become of this beautiful book? Shall it live and prosper in the world, bringing all nations in obedience to its laws—forming all human government, societies, and families on its principles, and moulding all hearts by its gentle influence? Shall it conquer all opposition, live down all assaults on its character, silence all gainsayers, and stand confessed the verity of high Heaven? Shall it be read in every language and dialect of the earth, and displace the traditions of the fathers, the canons of priestcraft, the Koran of Mahomed, the Shaster of the Brahmin, the Book of Confucius, and the fables and legends of many a nation yet unbled by its beautiful and glorious gospel? Shall it write on the wall the doom of every dark despotism, break the rod of the oppressor, and set the bondman free? Shall it tell 'the sweet story of grace' to millions of the 'heavy laden,' so as to make them sing forth the joy of overflowing hearts? Shall it proclaim its mild message in the ear of the guilty, so as to turn their agony into praise? And whisper its melody of 'Come unto me' in the hearing of the little ones, so as to evoke their hallelujahs to the Son of David? Shall it continue to consecrate genius, talent, and eloquence to the service of God and humanity? To awaken the echoes of the building, the market-place, and the wilderness, with the living voice of its ministers? and to force its way by holy compulsion into the haunts of infamy, wretchedness, and crime, with the balm of mercy in its hands, a song of grace dropping from its lips, and unutterable love burning at its heart? Shall it multiply by millions the evidences of its divinity—these internal evidences which are more convincing than libraries relating to the external—by soothing the pains of the sufferer, drying the tears of the weeper, becoming a companion to the lonely widow, dispelling the cloud from the lot of the orphan, and holding the lamp of immortality by the bed of the dying, that the enfranchised spirit may find its way to a beautiful heaven? In a word, shall the history of Bethlehem, Gethsemane, and Calvary—the history of miracle, mercy, and truth—the history of redemption, resurrection and life; the history of Jesus of Nazareth, the Prophet, the Sovereign, the Priest—outlive commonwealths, survive dynasties, and pass down the stream of time, till time itself be lost in measureless eternity, like a drop of dew in the bosom of the mighty sea? Is this the destiny of the Bible? Are we so sure of this, that we can take it in our hand, turn over its fragrant leaves—fragrant with odour of holiness—and press it to our heart, with the conviction that, come what may in this world of continual change, we have here a friend that will never leave us, a friend that will never die?

Or is the Bible destined to share the lot decreed for mundane things? Shall men live to say of it, as they have said of ten thousand other things,
'Gone! like the shade of sable night
Before the rosy dawn,
Gone! like the breeze of noonday light
At dusky eve's retreat,
Gone! like the shadowy phantom band
Our midnight dreams have known,
Gone! like the writing on the sand
Where ocean's waves have flown.'

The very idea of the destruction of the Bible, or its entire removal from the face of our earth, fills the mind with images of terror which no language can convey. The Bible thrown aside, lost, forgotten! and what then? Let us just glance at the gasty picture that we may learn to prize the Divine book as we never did before. Rationalism, infidelity, scepticism, atheism, and antichrist, have triumphed, and every Bible, has been consumed to celebrate their horrible victory; and what follows? Every house of God in this and other lands is razed to its founda-

tion; the welcome sound of the bell no longer invites the tired labourer to a day of rest. The hollow scenes of the Sabbath are gone, no more to return; the preacher of righteousness no longer makes the ungodly to tremble; no longer reasons of righteousness, temperance, and judgment to come; no longer directs the penitent to shed his tears at the feet of Jesus, with the assurance of pardon and acceptance; no longer answers the terrible cry, 'What shall I do to be saved?' with the mighty words, 'Believe on the Lord Jesus Christ, and thou shalt be saved'; no longer soothes the widow and the orphan with the assurance that they are cared for by the best being in the universe; no longer opens the book of the consolations of God, to read to the bereaved about Him who claims the majestic title of 'The Resurrection and the Life'; and no longer points the way to heaven, and journeys there himself. The Sabbath school is gone, and all its seeds of promises and lessons of faith, hope, and charity. The teacher's class of lovely children, lisping the praises of Immanuel, are scattered he knows not where; and he himself, feeling for a time, it may be, like one who has suffered bereavement, shortly becomes habituated to the idea that it was all a dream, and that the only business of existence is to eat, drink, laugh and die. The town and city missionary no longer goes through streets and lanes with the word of life in his hand, in search of the poor, the ignorant, and the perishing; no longer enters the hovel of filth, to speak about the fountain open for sin and uncleanness; and no longer leads the dying to Him who died that we might live. The numberless benevolent and religious enterprises of the Church of Christ have all perished, and the Church of Christ itself has perished too. The vast machinery set in motion for the elevation and salvation of mankind, by hands that drew the energy of love from contact with the throne of grace, stands still or has crumbled into dust. Religious Tracts and Bible societies there are none. The missionary operations of the various branches of what was once denominated the Christian Church, have all ceased. The teachers of the way of salvation have all been recalled to the land of their fathers, or have engaged in trade and commerce in the nations of their adoption. There is no voice now lifted up as a witness for the only living and true God, amidst the hundreds of millions of idolaters in Africa, India and China, and the thousand islands of the sea—no voice to shout the sublime decree in the ears of the priests of idolatry. 'The gods that have not made the heavens and the earth, they shall perish from the earth, and from under these heavens.'

And now, to complete the dread picture, behold the alarming consequences! There is no code of morals. All government is a tyranny, and all people are under the heel of despotism. The faith of man in his fellow man has ceased. There is no distinction between right and wrong. Power is the only standard of conduct. Social organisations have become scenes of chaos. The domestic relation exists only in name. Licentiousness, brutality, intemperance, and every loathsome vice, welter over the nations. Trade and commerce languish and decay. Civilisation retrogrades. England sinks into barbarism. Europe has become another Africa. Art and science have perished. Education has lost its motive power. Literature there is none, except the maniac ravings of blasphemy. Darkness covers the earth, and gross darkness the people. Men live without hope, and die without God.

Time rolls on, the gloom increases, heaven weeps, but men know it not; hell rejoices, and men shout in frenzy; time rolls on, the crisis hastens, the judgement is set, the blast of the archangel's trumpet roar through the universe, the world is set on fire, and a pale of everlasting darkness hides from all other worlds a doubly-cursed earth, those infatuated tenants had madly rejected the Bible.

Let us turn aside from this alarming catastrophe; but that something like this would be the result, if society should ever become fully leavened with the deadly doctrines which are now promulgated by not a few men in England, France, and Germany, is clear as noonday. The men to whom I refer have all the attributes which are generally supposed necessary to success in proselytism. They are well read in anti-scriptural literature. They are zealous, earnest, eloquent, and intellectual. They affect great sympathy with the masses of the people; are loud in their condemnation of every kind of tyranny and injustice; they denounce popery, jesuitism, and priestcraft, everywhere; they are liberal to the very widest limits of latitudinarianism itself; they are friends of progress, according to their idea of that term; advocates of international peace and of a free literature, and champions of popular education; and they talk about