

LECTURE.

SYRIA AND THE HOLY LAND.

Being the substance of a Lecture delivered by Gregory M. Wortabet, Esq., at the Temperance Hall, Halifax, N. S., September 8, 1856.

(Long before the time appointed for the Lecture, the Hall which is capable of containing 1500 or 1600 persons was densely crowded with a highly respectable audience. The Lecturer a young man of average height with pleasing features, dark flashing eyes, and black moustache, appeared in his native costume. He wore a loose skirt or petticoat of light drab cloth, drawn in round the ankles, and fastened round the waist with a broad girdle or sash, a short jacket of the same material with the sleeves cut open half way to the elbow and trimmed with braid and a light blue flowered silk vest and neckerchief.

It is impossible to describe the exceedingly animated manner in which the Address was delivered, the Lecturer's utterance being very rapid, and the ideas enunciated being forcibly and graphically expressed by appropriate gestures. As these gesticulations, of course cannot be transcribed, the Lecture loses much of its original force and beauty in a written report however faithful and accurate.)

Mr Chairman Ladies and Gentlemen—

Before I say one word I have a favor to ask of you, which is that you will reserve all applause until the close of the Lecture. I can tell by your bright eyes and smiling faces when you are pleased, and at the end we will have a good round. (Laughter and applause.)

The subject of this evening's Lecture is one of deep interest to every one who calls himself a Christian. Look at the Crusaders. Were they pious men? No, some were murderers, and some were thieves, yet mark the emotion which they felt on beholding Jerusalem, the tears which rowled down their furrowed cheeks I love to see a tear on a man's face. On the face of woman the tear of sympathy is lovely and interesting but much more on the face of man as it shows a greater depth of feeling. That tear called forth by the mere sight of Jerusalem spoke ten fold more for the Crusaders in my opinion, than their greatest conquests. Now, what is there in Syria to bring all this great audience together? There is no very great difference between Syria as a country and Nova Scotia. There are rivers there just like those here, hills, trees, and so forth. The inhabitants are not very different from yourselves. I am a native of Syria, and I have hands, feet, eyes, &c., very much like your own. But you love to hear of Syria because it is the scene of Christianity, the land of the Bible, to which Israel came with Joshua at their head. Christ was borne there—Christianity was born there,—that Christianity which infidels say is an effete thing, not fit for this go-ahead age.—There you will see the manger, there you will see the inn in which Christ was born. These form an argument for Christianity which the infidel with all his power cannot gainsay. The Inns in Syria are in the form of a quadrangle, and are several stories in height. You enter by an archway, and a circular staircase inside conducts you through the building to its summits. The lower tier of rooms is used for stable, and the upper tiers for rooms for the guests. During fairs I have seen those stables used as rooms for poor people. Many was put into one of those stables, and there is one of them in a manger was Christ born. Why was Christ born in a manger! Oh depths of love! Oh delicacy of love! Christ is love, and love is Christ! Heaven is love, and love is Heaven! Christ was born in a manger, that the poorest might have no excuse for not coming to him. None of you were born in a manger, but your Friend your Saviour, the Redeemer of all was born there. I will speak to you as to men who are bound to die, and after death have to account at the great tribunal. If there be a heaven and a hell, it is time we knew something about them. If you really believed that there was a hell, you would not be so apathetic about it. I say my friends, you have no idea of a future world, or you would not be so indifferent about it. That thing Christianity born in a stable, is it going to grow? Mr Infidel says it cannot, it is contrary to common sense. Will this poor baby become the crown of the world? No, nonsense. Then the reputed father of this baby followed the business of a carpenter, which is considered the lowest trade in Syria. Is this carpenter's son going to perform a work which will affect the whole universe? His disciples were of the lowest cast in Syria, fishermen and tax gatherers. Then again, look at the creed which He propounded.

Was it like Islamism or Mormonism that it allowed the pleasures of the flesh? No! Christianity is a religion of self-denial. The human heart being evil, is opposed to it altogether. It was betrayed, denied, forsaken crucified, put underground—how can it grow? It is impossible that it should grow. But here is the most wonderful thing, it has grown! See it now in the palace of Royalty. Listen to the noble reply of the Queen of England, to a Liberian President, who enquired of her what was the secret of England's grandeur?

Her reply was to send him a Bible;—that was the secret of England's grandeur! If Herod and the Roman soldiers could jump over to our age and see this, what would they say?—Christianity has spread north, south, east and west, and now fills the whole universe. Let the infidel think of this fact only, and let him show me anything equal to it, that this Christianity sprung from flame, from crucifixion—has risen up and filled the whole universe. Christian heart! take courage. The interest which brings you here to-night is no mere fiction. Every bible reader has in his heart the foundation of Christianity. Doubtless, you have all seen a fireplace filled with a large heap of coals, with a very little fire underneath it. The fire was there, but it required to be poked up. So with your Christianity. It is smothered up with the rubbish of this world, but it is there, and only requires to be poked up. Syria was the home of the Founder of Christianity. He died on the trees of Syria. It was the remembrance of this which brought the tear down the hardened cheek of the Crusader. Everything which makes Christianity sure must be of value. Suppose I were to tell you of some plan by which you could win £10,000, you would listen to me until to-morrow morning. If you do not show equal interest in hearing of Christianity, it shews that your Christianity is very poor, and that it requires to be poked up. Syria should be loved by you as a memorial of the great redemption. You call me a native of Syria. You are natives of Syria as well as I am; for there is a patriotism in Christianity. Think of the Plains of Jericho—of Bethlehem—of Jerusalem—of Bethany. Can you think of them, without thinking of the Great Redeemer, who so often trod their streets? Can you think of the waters of Galilee, without thinking of His words who said, "Be of good cheer it is I; be not afraid?" Can you think of Cana of Galilee, without thinking of his first miracle there? Have any of you lost a relative? By the sable dresses I observe among you, I presume many of you have.

I go into your room and ask you to give me a Bible I see there. You say no! I cannot give you that Bible, it is my dead son's Bible. You will not part with it, because it is a memorial of love. So with Syria. It is a memorial of Him who was there, who worked miracles there, who died there. Now we come to the claims of Syria upon the Christian mind.—In Syria you can never be an infidel. She shows you in every mountain, and in every river the fulfillments of God's own word.—When the prophecies came upon the land Syria was a great, rich, and powerful country.—Syria was then a great city. So was Jerusalem. Solomon then reigned there in all his glory.—The prophecies foretold the destruction of the country. Who believed them? This is the age of Railways and Telegraphs. If our fathers were raised up and put on a Railway Station and heard the steam car whizzing by, they would suppose themselves in another world, they would not believe they were on this earth.—Suppose you take them to the telegraph station, and you ask them if they would like to send a message to a friend in New Orleans. They say, yes, and you send the message on. You ask them how soon they expect to have an answer. They say, oh, in about three months. You tell them the answer is here already—they will not believe you. Now let us compare this very advanced age with Syria. Go and view the mighty ruins of the Balbek, which lies between Lebanon and Anti-Lebanon. That town was built by Solomon, and is so wonderful that your architects are struck dumb with astonishment on viewing it. Its building are wonderful for their conception. Some of the stones in those buildings are 64 feet long, (one in particular, 69 ft.) 16 feet high and 17 wide. They were all cut out of a quarry half a mile distant, and all polished before they were put into the buildings. They are fitted so closely to one another that you cannot find the seam between them. It seems as if the city could not have been the work of man. Gaze for awhile on its columns 90 feet in height, with the entablature surmounting them. What do you think of it? You cannot think any longer.

A person asked me what I thought of that mighty cataract Niagara. I told him that when I saw it I did not think at all. I could do nothing but just gaze. So it is with the beholder of these magnificent ruins. And, why is it that Syria's architecture is unequalled?

It was said by a mouth that cannot lie, that there never had been and never should be any one like unto Solomon. The great Queen of Sheba said that the half of Solomon's wisdom and prosperity had not been told her, and this Anglo-Saxon age is not equal to Solomon's, although it is three thousand years in advance of it. Syria's Architecture is unrivalled yet—Solomon is unequalled yet,—and God's truth remains true.

But Syria was not only Great in Architecture but also in the Arts and Sciences. The Sidonians were celebrated for painting on glass, an art which has been lost to the world. The Trojans also were distinguished for the beautiful dye called Tyrian purple which has been hitherto inimitable. Syria was also distinguished for her knowledge of astronomy and navigation. This country was known to them. The wise men of the present know a great deal more. I can prove to you from the Bible that

this country was known in Solomon's time, and that its inhabitants were of the same race as our Bedouians or Ishmaelites. You talk of the wealth of the present age. Do you know what Baalbek cost? There is not a king, or a dozen of kings on the earth at present who could build it. A whole quarry (and in some instances three or four) were exhausted for every stone there. The persons who were quarrying the stones would go to a neighbouring hill, cut it down some 30 or 40 feet until they came to a rock. They would probably find it cracked, and therefore unfit for their purpose. They would then go to another hill, and another and perhaps after cutting down some four or five hills, they would find a rock which was sound. Then they had to cut, shape, form and at last carry the rock. Now, what do you suppose would be the cost of one stone?—What the cost of the whole building? What the cost of the entablature? If this city built by Solomon on the confines of the Holy Land in honor of an Egyptian queen cost so much, what do you suppose must have been the cost of the Temple at Jerusalem—of Solomon's own house—of the whole of Jerusalem?—Think also of the other cities which Solomon built—of Baal-Hamon, Baal-Hanan, &c. Think of Solomon's private expenditure, for he had a thousand wives. Think of all this, and you may have some idea of the riches of Solomon.

We will now leave Baalbek and come to Tyrie, that merchant city. What is Tyrie now? What said the Word of her? Tyrie shall no longer be, she shall be like the top of a rock. I spent a night in Tyrie a twelvemonth ago last March. The old town is entirely lost, no one can tell where the olden city stood. I rode out of the town at seven in the morning and saw thirteen nets drying on the rocks as I left. The modern town is situated on a tongue of land which juts out into the sea. The Word said, "it shall be a place for the spreading of nets in the midst of the sea." Keith was so struck on viewing Tyrie, with the fulfillment of the prophecies regarding her, that it led him to write his great work on that subject.—Suppose I told you that in ten years time this whole city would be under water—that where this fine building stands, fishermen would anchor their boats; you would tell me, "what a fool you are." You would probably say, "take that man to the Asylum, and put a waistcoat on him; he is crazy poor fellow." But if what I foretold actually took place you would then say what a wise man I was! You would speak of the merchant princes of London. Where did you get that term? From Syria! You speak of Liverpool as the modern Tyre. It is said that Ireland was peopled from Phenicia, and it is evident that she colonized other countries, for she is called in the bible the mother of nations. The siege of Tyre is the most wonderful thing in history.

It was foretold of Tyre that an army should be brought against her—that a mount should be built over against her, and that the dust of her walls should be scraped. Tyre was a great and flourishing city when the edict went forth against her. "I will make the like the top of a rock, thou shalt be a place to spread nets upon, thou shalt be built no more." Tyre was twice besieged, the first time by Nebuchadnezzar. The Trojans feared that their city would be taken, cut a channel all round the outer wall, and brought the sea around it. Nebuchadnezzar was therefore obliged to build a mount over against it, higher than the walls of the city, but still he could not get near enough to make the battering rams play upon the walls; his soldiers, therefore, scraped the walls with horse's hoofs. The walls of Tyre were made of mud, just like part of those of Sebastopol. (People are just beginning to find out that mud walls are superior to stone for resisting cannonade.) Is this all fiction? Was it by mere chance that these prophecies were so literally and so remarkably fulfilled?

Come with me to Jerusalem. Jerusalem being surrounded with high hills, cannot be seen until you are close upon it. It is 40 miles distant from the sea, and as you leave the shore early in the morning you generally reach the city a little before sunset. Your first idea of that crowning city is, where is the first, the second, the third wall?—where is the tower of Antonia?—where is Zion?—where is Mount Moriah? You search for even fallen ruins, but you can find none. The scene is one which really bring your hearts down. I have often gazed with pleasure upon the ivy-covered ruins of England. I love that dear little, fond, affectionate ivy. It seems to say to the ruin, "Never mind, I will be your friend throughout; though all forsake you, yet will I cling to you."

But in looking upon Jerusalem you can see no ruins, not even a single sprig of ivy to cheer you. It is a small town encumbered with hovels. As you gaze sadly upon it, the infidel says to you surely sir this is not Jerusalem. But yes, it is Jerusalem, for there is mount Olivet where our Saviour retired to pray, there is the brook Cedron, there is the pool of Siloam, there is Mount Zion, there is Mount Moriah. It is Jerusalem, but oh how changed? When we see a rich man reduced to poverty, we feel sorry for him, and that is generally the feeling one has on viewing a decayed city. But that is not the feeling which you have on seeing Jerusalem. The idea that fills your mind is, that Jehovah has pressed over the

I filled it up with my feet—with my hands. I levelled it on the top. I beat it down. I built great halls above it; but it won't stay quite. Sounds come from it up into my library, night and day; and at ten o'clock I hear a step, I see a face, its eyes on mine; and to-night, the worst of all the year. I cannot go home!

'Your lordship is most welcome to remain. I will order a bed.'

'No, not a bed. I shall never lie in a bed again. See, he rises! Give me your hand; and look!'

Lord Warleigh held Benford's hand, and looked to his right side. The fire was dull—the candles had burned nearly down. Benford was not a superstitious nor a timid man, but there was something in Lord Warleigh's manner that alarmed him. He looked where he pointed; and, straining his eyes in the direction of his finger, he saw, or fancied he saw, a pale white face, growing palpable in the darkness, and fixing its calm, cold eyes upon his companion. For a moment, the empty air had gathered itself into form, and he could have persuaded himself that Lord Warleigh's description of what he perceived was true. But the head fell away, the hand drooped down upon his breast, and his lordship was asleep. An hour passed away. A clock in the passage sounded two; and Benford touched Lord Warleigh on the shoulder.

'Your lordship,' he said, 'you must find it cold here. Your bed will soon be ready.'

But Lord Warleigh made no reply. Benford looked into his face; he spoke to him gently, loudly, but still no answering sign. No; not to the loudest trumpet call that earthly breath can utter will that ear ever be open. Lord Warleigh had passed away, with all his wealth and all his miseries; and nothing remained but a poor old figure propped up in an arm-chair, with the fitful flames of the expiring fire throwing their lights and shadows on his stiff and motionless face.

Benford was greatly shocked, but a little honored, to. It isn't every parsonage parlor where a lord with fifty thousand a year condescends to die. He preached his lordship's funeral sermon to a vast congregation. He told of his charities—of his successful life; touched slightly on the slight aberrations of a mind enfeebled by years and honorable exertion; and trusted he had found peace, as he had died in the house, almost in the arms of a clergyman. His lordship's estates were sold; the sum realized was to be applied to the foundation of schools and hospitals, but not a school-room or a ward was ever built. The will was contested. Heirs-at-law sprung up in all ranks of life; the lawyers flourished; and finally Chancery swallowed up all. When the estate of Combe-Warleigh changed hands, the estate was converted into a mill; the library was taken down, and a shaft sunk, where it had stood. When the workmen had descended about eight feet from the surface they came to a skeleton, a lantern, and a spade. The curious thing was that the spade was deeply imbedded in the skull. Mr Fungus, the antiquary read a paper at the Archaeological Society, proving with certainty the body had been sacrificed by the Druids; and a controversy arose between him and Dr Toadstool, who clearly proved at the British Association that it was the grave of a suicide at the time of King Alfred. I am of a very different opinion; being a sensible man and not an antiquarian, I keep it to myself.

WRONGLY TAKEN.—I hope you will be able to support me, said a young lady, while walking out one evening with her intended during a slippery state of the side walks. Why—av, yes, said the somewhat hesitating swain, with some little assistance from your father!

NOBLE REPLY.—An officer of distinction and tried valor, refused to accept a challenge sent him by a young adventurer; but returned the following answer:—I fear not thy sword, but the anger of my God. I dare venture my life in a good cause, but I cannot hazard my soul in a bad one. I will charge up to the cannon's mouth for the good of my country, but I want courage to storm hell.

PETTICOATS.—The extended petticoats now in vogue give the cord makers full employment. One at Newburyport has sold two thousand dollars worth to a single dealer in this dress cord in Boston within the last four months, and all the manufacturers have been unable to supply the demand for the extension of these fabulous skirts.

Love is a tender plant; it must be kept alive with great delicacy; it must be fenced from all inclement blasts, or it will soon droop its head and die.

Fashionable society generally has but two faults—first, in being hollow-headed and secondly, hollow-hearted.

Let us remove temptation from the path of youth, as the frog said, as he plunged into the water, when he saw a boy pick up a stone.

It is an extraordinary fact that when people come to what is commonly called high words, they generally use low language.