

Sunday Reading.

PERILS AT SEBASTOPOL.

Major Maian Has Interesting Memories of Some Stirring Scenes.

"Why am I writing these recollections? I ask myself. My answer comes from God's Word, 'Whoso offereth me praise glorifieth me.' I desire to offer praise and to glorify him. Is it not written in that portion of his Word where so many of his mercies are recorded. 'Oh, that men would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and declare the wonders that he doeth for the children of men?' This, therefore, is my reason for writing the following pages. For no other purpose than to praise God would I write.

It was midnight, June 17, 1855, before Sebastopol. The regiment for the assault were paraded noiselessly in their camps. The writer marched with his to its appointed place in the trenches. The signal was given for the attack, and the regiment advanced. When the assault was over, lying on a camp-bed, his body pierced with five bullet-holes, and not a bone broken, the writer spoke plainly of God's great mercy that day to him.

It was an awful morning! A dreadful scene! One over which devils must have rejoiced, while angels wept. I have often thought since, if this daring devotion and courage there and then displayed were only exerted in the service of God, what wonders we should see! But yet it is easier to rush on to an assault, and even to death, than to confess Christ.

Some time ago, after lunching at a railway refreshment room, I wished to give a tract to one of the waitresses, but felt a timidity in doing it. For ten minutes I hesitated. At last, just as the train came in, I went to her and said, 'You would hardly believe that an officer who went through the assault on Sebastopol was afraid to offer you this tract. But I must now give it to you.' I need hardly remark that she received it, and thanked me with a smile.

God was not only merciful to me on the morning of the battle of Sebastopol, but to many hundreds more in our army. Apart from the known fact that not a shot in several hundred fired ever takes effect, the mercy which watches over every field of battle—His mercy—was specially shown to the British army that day. As it tends to his glory, and to the honor of a brave and good general, who did not receive from his country the credit he deserved, I take pleasure in recording the following fact. I had been viewing the trenches, when I met Lord Raglan. I was leaning on the arm of a sergeant of my regiment. He noticed my wounds, spoke very kindly, and asked me how they were getting on at the front. I told him in schoolboy language, 'Thrashed.' I did not know at the time who he was, but was much struck by his kind face, his calm manner, and his empty sleeve.

He left the trenches, stood out in the open for a moment or two, and then spoke somewhat thus to one of his aides-de-camp, 'It's no use; no troops could live under such a fire as this. I never saw anything like it in the Peninsula.' Little did I then think that that noble disregard for his own reputation, and thoughtfulness for the lives of his men, saved, under God's mercy, hundreds of our soldiers from a useless death on that morning. Now I see that this was so.

The French assault, had failed before ours had begun, for the French did not wait for the signal. Ours was made, and failed. The attack was meant to be a surprise, and this not having succeeded, further assault, was at that stage of the siege useless. Nevertheless, the French general ordered a second assault, and many more hundred lives were sacrificed at the altar of vainglory. The English general, by God's mercy, would not order the assault to be repeated, and thus, as the trenches were crammed at the time with fresh troops, hundreds of the lives of our men were that day spared. I asked the sergeant who it was that spoke to me. He replied 'Lord Raglan, sir.' I honor the memory of Lord Raglan, as a good soldier, and I praise God who gave him grace that morning not to cover defeat under a heavier loss of life than was, alas! unavoidable.

To my mother's prayers I believe now that I owed my many merciful escapes that day. She left me for the presence of God when I was three years old; but I believe that, in answer to her prayers, His love guarded me then, as it has since drawn me to himself. I shall never forget your mother's prayers, wrote an old friend to me lately, 'so humble, so spiritual, so fervent.'

But I fancy I hear some unbelieving heart whisper as it reads this. 'Were there no sons for whom a mother's prayers were offered whose bodies were lifeless before they had been?' Doubtless many, my friend; but if you are such a mother, I would say, wait until we enter the glory to see whether your prayers were not answered. No one can tell what may pass between a soul and its God in the solemn moment preceding an assault. Remember, it is written. 'Whosoever shall call upon the name of the Lord shall be saved.' (Acts ii., 21.)

No one can indeed tell what passes between a soul and its God in the anticipation of a possible death. How earnestly I prayed that night before lying down to rest! and so did a very dear friend and brother officer who tell afterwards at the second assault. I did not know how to pray; but I cried to God, and He heard me: for He does not despise the prayer of the humblest sinner who approaches him in the name of His son. I asked for the preservation of my life and for courage in battle. Wonderfully were my prayers answered.

So thoroughly was I preserved from fear, that I now remember every act in that awful tragedy as it was yesterday. The enemy of man has in our days, by a masterpiece of cunning, got most men to disbelieve the truths concerning him set forth in God's Word. He has destroyed his own individuality. It is a pleasant theory, for time, to the careless man of the world, but it will prove to have been a terrible delusion in the fast-approaching eternity. No one who has been obliged to lie down on a field of battle, and see what goes on, can doubt that there is a devil.

Soon after I left the trenches my legs were paralyzed by a bullet striking my left hip. As I lay on the ground I watched the scene. Why were these men killing each other? They had never any quarrel. They would have preferred to have met in peace. But they could not help themselves! What is the explanation of this scene of blood? Only one can be given: 'an enemy hath done this.' A mighty spirit of evil. An enemy of God and man. This enemy, Satan, is called by the Lord, 'the prince of this world.' (John xii., 31; xvi., 11.) Satan has blinded men to glorify war, and to sanction manslaughter under the plea of 'balance of power' or any other 'political necessity.' There is no intention in this narrative needlessly to record personal adventure. Human life has enough sensation in it, and needs not sensational writing. O for the time when nation shall not lift up sword against nation, and they shall learn war no more!—Christian Herald.

WHERE BLINDNESS IS NOT.

The First and Great Lens of the Christian Soul Is Abundant Faith.

The first great lens of the Christian soul is faith—a faith like that which Abraham had, who, though he dwelt in a desert, lived in constant view of 'a city which hath foundations, whose builder and maker is God.' As Thomas King once eloquently declared, such a faith gilds the horizon of our being with a heavenly glory.

The statement of our text is daily verified in the case of those who, in the absence of this faith, experience a pitiable blankness and barrenness of soul. In the absence of faith, the body weighs us down; we are helpless prisoners in it. We forget our native realm and come easily to believe that the grave is the goal of life. Every argument that can be brought for immortality is of little avail. Even the resurrection of Christ is a wonderful story to a thorough sensualist, whose aspirations have never reached beyond pleasure and the present; whose meditations, rent forth like doves from the floating ark of life, have never brought back a green and budding promise of that solid land.

To feel a conviction of immortality we must live for it. Let any one firmly believe that the soul is permanent and live from that belief, and soon existence will seem permanent, too—the world becomes the veil of a brighter glory that lies behind it; the condemnation of unbelief is lifted off, since the mind, conscious of its own rooted being, does not wait for immortality 'but is passed from death unto life.'

Such a faith renews the youth of one who obtains his visions of life through it. 'They tell me I am growing old,' said the great Scotch preacher, Dr. Guthrie, 'because my hair is silvered, and there are crow's feet upon my forehead and my step is not so firm and elastic as of yore; but they are mistaken; that is not I. The brow is wrinkled, but the brow is not I. This is the house in which I live, but I am younger now than I ever was before.'

Virtue is the lens which Peter mentions in his conditions of a far-sighted soul. We are to understand by this word virtue, moral goodness, a conforming of our lives to the requirements of the moral law. The man whose habit it is to live like that which acquires what may be called a moral sense, which gives not only a clear vision of what is right and wrong, but enables the virtuous soul to peer through the fog and sophistry of worldly standards, and know intuitively that which is right. It is a very common thing for young people who are beginning to taste the poisonous sweets of sin to imagine that they are very sharp and shrewd, but we may be sure that it is only the truly virtuous soul that is clear-headed.

The apostle points out here two other lenses—knowledge and temperance—that ought to be born in every one of us by the every day experience and observation of our lives. As another well says, we ought to be glad, as the years fly and the white hairs and the wrinkles come, that we can win the precious gift of experience from life's treasury, and correct by our false standards and narrow prejudices. The experience of life which we are passing through are only of value to us because of the knowledge we are able to obtain and make our own as we pass along the journey. We are really growing with the years, we shall know it by the deepening of the channel of experience, the rich treasures of knowledge we have gathered and the temperance and moderation which we have gained in life's school.—Louis Albert Banks.

The Secret of Happy Days.

The proverb that have been spoken and the songs that have been sung concerning the glory of the first hours of the morning are almost as countless as the sands by the sea or the stars in heaven. Type and symbol of happy youth, the dewy morn comes to us richly laden with new-born possibilities of usefulness and service. Its mouth is full of the gold of blessed opportunities. The testimony of the truest philosophy, sustained by the most profound and varied experiences, is that the real secret of happy days lies largely in the way in which the mornings are spent. A song of gladness sung before the dew has left the flowers is very apt to fill all the day with music. The first notes of the morning will tell the harmonies of the later hours. The Hebrew poet who gave the world this sweet psalm

understood, as only a poet breathing the spirit of devotion could understand, the secret that made sure the gladness of every day. Whoso begins the day with God and starts the pilgrimage of every rising morn with an upward and heavenward gaze is sure to find hope and courage quite sufficient for the days requirements. Mornings without any thought of God are apt to find noons full of hard places and difficulty and nights of anxious care.

STRANGE RELIGIOUS SECTS.

Singular Beliefs Which Have Given Rise to Some Remarkable Customs.

At different times some very remarkable customs have been practised in the name of religion, both by heathens and Christians says Tid-Bits. The followers of Mahomet, for example, have always had a reputation for bloodthirstiness in the course of their efforts to conquer the world; but perhaps the sect called Assassins, from whom the modern word assassin is derived, have been amongst the most cruel. They had large settlements in Persia and in Syria, and existed for about 200 years—during the 11th, 12th, and 13th centuries.

The chief of the sect was called the 'Old Man of the Mountain.' All the members were trained in absolute obedience to him, holding themselves ready at any moment to proceed to murder any person that he might point out. It was customary to give to these murderers an inebriating draught when they were about to execute the chief's commands, called hashish, made from the leaves of hemp. It is from this that the word assassin is derived.

The Thugs was an Indian sect with customs not unlike the Assassins. With them the great object was to kill by stealthy means, and the stories that their skill in approaching and slaying their victims unobserved was perfectly extraordinary. The name is derived from a Hindu word, thag, a deceiver. Every victim was counted as a sacrifice offered to their Goddess Kali. It is not known how long they existed. They were found in active operation when the English conquered India, but it was not till 1810 that measures were taken to exterminate them. It was some twenty or thirty years after this date that they were ultimately crushed.

The Zanzibians were followers of a man named Zanzale, who collected a body of adherents in Syria in the year 535. They were called Christians, though they held the belief that baptism was not to be performed with water but with fire. Carrying this belief into practice, they used red-hot irons, with which they branded and burnt their converts.

The Shakers were a notorious body. It may not be generally known that they have existed from the time of Charles I. At that period they had a struggling existence, and ultimately fell out of notice, but some years after, about 1750, they were revived. England did not offer them a congenial home, so they emigrated to America, where they flourished more vigorously. About twenty-five years ago they tried to gain a footing in England, and settled in the New Forest. At the end of 1874 they were ejected from their cottages for neglecting certain payments, and their sufferings in the winter weather called out much sympathy.

Ten years later they became notorious, but when it was seen that their sufferings were simply the result of a refusal to work for hire, they were less pitied. Their leader in these days was a Mrs. Girding, and when she died (in 1886) the community gradually broke up. The name of Shakers was derived from the dancing and convulsions that formed part of their worship; they denounced marriage as sinful, and held many strange views.

Amongst those who have been content to hold peculiar views without making themselves notorious by their customs, we may note the Abecedarians, who looked upon all worldly knowledge as sinful, because it was supposed to lead them from the study of spiritual things. True to this principle, they would not even have the alphabet taught, and from this their name, which is formed from the first four letters of the alphabet, was derived. They all disappeared 300 years ago.

A certain Scotch lady, Mrs. Buchan by name, gave herself out as the woman spoken of in the book of Revelation, as being 'clothed with the sun and upon her head a crown of twelve stars.' She promised to conduct her followers to the new Jerusalem, but she died in 1791, and the sect of Buchanites, as they were called, was dispersed.

The notorious sect of Mormonism began in the following way. Early in this century a clergyman named Samuel Spaulding wrote a religious romance in imitation of the style of Scripture. It came into the hands of a man named Joseph Smith, an American of New York State, who said he had had a wonderful vision of the angel Moroni, and later on, declared that he had received the Book of Mormon from Heaven written on gold plates. This was nothing more than Mr. Spaulding's religious romance, but it formed the basis of Mormonism. The first leader, or prophet, was this Joseph Smith, and when he was killed in 1844 he was succeeded by John Taylor, since dead. They settled at Salt Lake City, Utah, in 1847, and were recognised by the United States Government, who appointed Brigham Young governor. Of late years they have been less prosperous.

One of their most notorious principles is polygamy. It is usually supposed that every Mormon has a great many wives, and they have been the subject of much ridicule on that account; but this custom has been greatly exaggerated, and in practice polygamy is said to be quite the exception. Yet the sect is a very curious product of the 19th century.

Our High Heritage.

How readily do we enter into the full possibilities of our high heritage. They who have learned to live on the heights have been the prophet souls of all ages and all races. The multitudinous voice of humanity has uttered itself through them. If

we must know humanity we must interpret it at its best. What these are, all humanity may be. The ideal man is the actual man. It is what all men may become. The Ought that moves one man to deeds that thrill a nation is essentially the same kind of Ought that impels the lowliest deed in the obscurest corner of the world. If one human soul has come into being without a tendency toward goodness, toward the right, the true, and with hope to at length reach a divine destiny, then the universe is a failure. There is a place where God is not, and infinite goodness, infinite justice is a myth. Morality may not be possible in ant and bee, and beaver and dog, but ethical principle is there. 'Striving to be a man, the worm mounts through all the spires of form.' Not that a man is recognized, and that there is a conscious reach toward him, but because back of worm and cloud there is the same persuasive power that impelled man to be man, that led him to lay hold of the forces of the universe and compel them to serve him.—Isa. C. Halbin.

So We Depart Hence.

What I aim at is this: 'To live is Christ; to be Christ in the world, to be like Christ, to be of Christ, to be in Christ's stead, to show Christ's presence, to do Christ's work.' This is the great object of life; and often I think I would be glad to live on, and on, and on, and on—to live for the world's sake, to live for the purpose of doing a little more good in the world; but if God sees fit to say we have stood in Christ long enough, come up higher, there will be no anxiety, no fear. We are willing to depart and be with Christ if we are joined to Him, indissolubly, in body and soul; and the great secret of not being afraid to die is to have Christ in the heart, and be working for Him. And if we live for Him, we know that we shall live with him hereafter. Death loses its terrors; we shall be willing to go hence. Care, anxiety, sin, suffering, we must have here, and we shall be willing to be released from them—to depart. The word 'depart' signifies to set out, to sail, to let go. It is as if a vessel were fastened to the dock; the cable is firmly bound to the shore. Just loose the cable, unfurl the sails, set the vessel free; the winds are bearing it out into the open sea. Here we are now, working, toiling, but if God will let the cable unloose, we shall sail out into the wide sea of eternity.—Bishop Simpson.

Christianity is Broad.

I am a Christian and must needs look at things from a Christian point of view. But that fact should not hinder the broadest observation. Christian scholars have for centuries admired the poems of Homer and will never lose interest in the story of Odysseus, the myriad-minded Greek, who traversed the roaring seas, touched many a foreign shore and observed the habitations and customs of many men. Will they be likely to discard the recently deciphered Accadian hymns and Assyrian penitential psalms? It is probable that men who can devote studious years to philosophy of Plato and Aristotle will care nothing about the invocations of the old Persian Avesta, the Vedic hymns, the doctrines of Buddha, and the maxims of Confucius? Nay, I repeat it, I am a Christian, therefore, I think there is nothing human or divine in any literature of the world that I can afford to ignore. My own New Testament Scriptures enjoin the following words as a solemn commandment: 'Whatever things are true, whatever things are unworthy of honor, whatever things are just, whatever things are pure, whatever things are lovely, whatever things are of good report, if there be any virtue and if there be any praise exercise reason upon these things.'—Professor M. S. Terry.

A Message From God.

'Bless the Lord, O my soul; and all that is within me, bless his holy name. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits; who forgiveth all thine iniquities; who healeth all thy diseases; who redeemeth thy life from destruction; who crowneth thee with loving kindness and tender mercies; who satisfieth thy mouth with good things; so that thy youth is renewed like the eagles.' . . . As far as the east is from the west, so far hath he removed our transgressions from us. . . . Bless the Lord; O my soul.' Psalm 103.

MEN AND WOMEN

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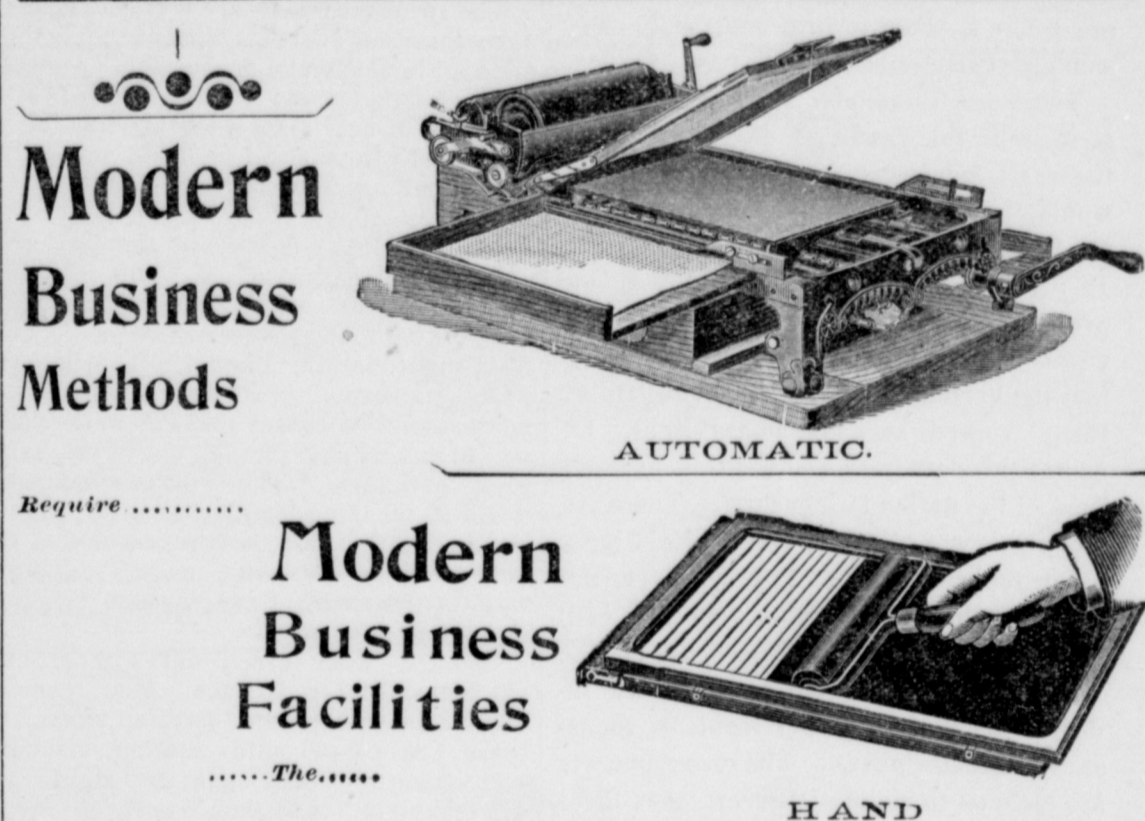
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POSSIBLY NEVER HAPPENED.

The Story of a Trick Played by the Prince of Wales When a Youth.

Albert Edward Prince of Wales is perhaps the most popular man in England. This popularity is due to his love of sports and all many traits which are particularly commendable in the eyes of the average Britisher. As a youth, his audacity and appreciation of a joke, either as a perpetrator or victim, were well known.

One of his early escapades resulted in her Majesty the Queen footing a bill for broken crockery and wrecked furniture which the young Prince caused in the house of one of the lesser members of the nobility. A rather elderly Countess, whose quick temper and sharp tongue drove even her servants away from her, advertised for a footman. The Prince, to whose ears tales of the peculiarities of the old lady had come, resolved to teach her a lesson. He therefore presented himself in disguise at her ladyship's house and applied for the position of footman.

The Countess had just finished her breakfast, and pushing her chair back from the table, instructed the servant to bring before her the applicant. The Prince was therefore ushered into the room. The Countess looked him over from his feet up. Apparently pleased with the appearance of the Prince, she said: "Let me see you walk."

Albert Edward did as commanded, and walked backward and forward several times across the floor from one end of the room to the other, now walking briskly at the request of the old lady and then pacing slowly, as she wished to obtain points on this score.

This performance over, the Countess ordered him to trot. The dining-room still the theater of action, the Prince trotted across the room. When this exercise was completed he again came to a standstill near the head of the table, where the Countess was seated. Her ladyship seemed pleased and was just on the point of asking the young man some questions about himself when he shouted:

"Now see me gallop!"

Grasping a corner of the table cloth firmly in one hand, the Prince rushed around the room, pulling the crockery off on the floor in a heap, knocking over the furniture and finally winding her ladyship up in the fold of the cloth. He then bolted for the door leaving the Countess sputtering and shouting and the servants running about in a distracted way to liberate their mistress and quiet her rage.

In the hubbub and confusion the Prince escaped. The next day a check from the Keeper of Privy Purse settled the amount of the damages, and likewise established the identity of the mischief-maker. Herald.

Quick Change of Heart.

Deacon Skinnem—I can't tell you how blessed I am in my son now. You know I always had trouble in getting him to go to church, out of late he has been going willingly, not only on Sundays, but on week-days. He never misses a service, and I

feel at last that his soul is safe, and we will all meet together in that far-off heaven of love and peace promised to the faithful.

Neighbor—your son is in love with Miss De Poore, who sings in the choir.

Deacon Skinnem—What! That poverty-stricken minx? If he goes near that church again I'll disinherit him!—New York Weekly.

ROMANCE OF THE TELEGRAPH.

Some of the Difficulties of Operating a Line in Queer Countries.

A good deal of romance hovers around the means by which the world's news is gathered. The speed and accuracy with which telegraph messages are transmitted between the uttermost parts of the earth is marvellous when the conditions under which they are sometimes transmitted are considered.

The Indo-European telegraph line offers a good illustration. It runs from London to Lowestoft on the east coast of England. It then dips under the sea to Emken, on the German coast, whence it passes through Germany to the Russian frontier. From this point the wire passes by way of Warsaw, Rowno, Odessa, the Caucasus, and Tiflis, to Persia, and by Tauris to Teheran, the capital of the Shah's queer domain. There it joins the Indian Government line, which runs from the Persian capital to Bushire on the Persian Gulf. Thence the wires run through Beloochistan, and complete the route by connecting at Kurrachee, in northern India. The operation of this immense stretch of line, passing through countries of such varying climates and general characteristics, is obviously one of much difficulty.

On the snow-swept steppes of Russia the wires are sometimes snapped like thread by the rapid flight of flocks of wild geese. The poles are cut down and made into firewood by the nomad tribes of the Caucasian districts, and the cunning inn keepers of Georgia seek to boom their post-horse trade by deliberately creating faults in the wires. In certain parts of the mountainous regions of Asia the maintenance of the solitary line involves no little personal risk and hardship to the staff hands. Communication is often cut off by avalanches in the mountain districts, and the work of repairing after a snowfall of five or six feet is no light matter.

These mountain stations are provisioned with several months' supplies before the winter sets in, as the staff will be in touch with the rest of the world by the wire only until the spring weather opens out the passes. In these supplies are always included a liberal allowance of books and games wherewith to relieve the monotony of the tedious winter exile.

A Wrinkle to Prevent Wrinkles.

In repairing or altering cotton clothing, it is vexatious to find that the machine stitching has shrunken, drawing seams, hems, etc., into puckers. The teacher of dressmaking in one of the largest educational institutions in the country taught me to overcome this by soaking the spool of thread overnight in a glass of water, then standing it where it will dry, and it is ready for use. She also told me to oil colored thread, thoroughly, with machine oil, to make it stronger and have it work up easier. Try both these ways, and see if you are not pleased with the result.