

TABLE
SPONIBLE

TIGHT BINDING
RELURE TROP RIGIDE

The

G. W. DAY, Printer.

VOL. I.

Original Contributions

For the Christian Watchman.

STUDIES FOR THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

SECOND SERIES.

THE BAPTISM OF JESUS.

(Mat. 3: 13-17. Mark 1: 9-11. Luke 3: 21-23.)

While John was urging the people to repentance and baptism in view of the hour when the kingdom of heaven should be set up, Jesus came to him and was baptized by him in the Jordan.

At length the period arrived when Jesus was to begin that work which he had come to earth to perform. He was to go forth, to lead men to repentance and faith, to draw the rebellious into the heavenly kingdom and to take his rightful position as head of this Divine institution.

He now left Nazareth and came to where John was baptizing—a distance of eighty miles. Though he could have sent for John to come to Nazareth or have waited for a more convenient season, he did not see fit to interrupt the Baptist in his work, nor delay the practice of a duty. At the proper time he left his home and came to the Jordan to John to be baptized by him. (Mat. 3: 13.)

It is very evident that in submitting to the ordinance of baptism Jesus exposed himself to the danger of being seriously misunderstood. Baptism implied inferiority to him who might administer the ordinance. How could Jesus represent himself as such and also as head of the kingdom after submitting to baptism at the hands of John? However he who had before exposed himself to a humiliating ordinance did not now hesitate once more to declare his identity with his Father, and to expose himself to the dangers of being misunderstood.

John was personally acquainted with Jesus. (John 1: 33.) and even had known him, he could scarcely have appreciated the Divine dignity of the Messiah—the extent of his authority or the spirituality of his kingdom. However when Jesus came to John to be baptized by him, the Baptist received a supernatural intimation, that this was he, who was to establish the heavenly kingdom, "the Messiah" respecting whom he testified to the people. Hence he at first refused to baptize him. Baptism implied sin, the office of the Baptist implied a superiority over the baptized. How could John conscious of sin, and aware of his inferiority, baptize the sinless and exalted one? Accordingly he at first declined to comply with the request of Jesus, "I need to be baptized by thee," he said, "and thou comest unto me, baptizing in me in every respect." (Mat. 3: 14.)

But Jesus had come to fulfill all the ordinances instituted by God for man, even though those ordinances implied sin. Hence he replied to the objection of John, "Suffer me now to fulfill this baptism, to observe an ordinance which implies unworthiness on the part of the recipient, and to be baptized by my inferior. It is becoming in me to comply with all Divine ordinances, even though instituted for the guilty. It is also becoming in you, my appointed herald to administer this rite." (Mat. 3: 15.)

Then John led him down into the river Jordan, and there immersed him. (Mark 1: 9.) As Jesus was emerging from the water, and was in prayer, "he heavens appeared to open and the Holy Spirit in a bodily shape was seen descending like a dove, it rested upon Jesus, and then a voice was heard from heaven saying, 'This is my beloved Son in whom I am well pleased.'" This sign was designed not only to increase the faith of John, but also to strengthen and encourage Jesus himself, who just beginning his public ministry needed such a sign of the Divine approbation.

Jesus at the time of his baptism was about thirty years of age. He was not baptized until he had come to years of maturity and was in every way qualified to accomplish the work which his Father had given him to do.

Though baptism was not in the case of Jesus, the emblem of the washing away of guilt, yet it was not without significance. It was very appropriate that the founder and head of the Heavenly Kingdom should as well as the subjects of that kingdom submit to the initiatory ordinance. It was also appropriate that the great Exemplar should submit to every ordinance, as well as practice every precept enjoined on man. The baptism of Christ also indicated a beginning of a new life to him. Henceforth he was to labour publicly and actively for the well being of man. From the instant of his baptism the Holy Spirit was imparted unto him, and he entered upon a new career.

A. B. C.

For the Christian Watchman.

The Blessing of Simeon.

No. 1.

THE LIGHT OF THE WORLD.

Simeon blessed with astonishing clearness the child which the infant Jesus was to fill, and the work which he was to perform. He regarded him not merely as a deliverer of the chosen people from

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BY PURENESS, BY KNOWLEDGE—BY LOVE UNFEIGNED.—ST. PAUL.

REV. E. B. DEMILL, A. M., Editor

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SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK.

NO. 42

the yoke of the Roman, but as a Saviour commissioned by the Most High to save his people from the power and also from the penal consequences of sin. Simeon also perceived that Jesus came not to bless the Jewish people alone, but that his salvation was for all peoples, for the Gentiles as well as for the Jews. This good man also perceived in what way Jesus was to save. Salvation was to be effected by dispensing truth. Jesus was to save sin and enslave the people, by the presence, reveal an amount and degree of violence which we shudder to contemplate. The Greek, and Roman, even the Jew, were as impious as the Chinese or the Hindoo of the present day.

Religion provided no check to the downward course of humanity. The Divine character and will was unknown, or had long been forgotten. The light within man had become darkness, and that darkness was most intense. Religion, instead of opposing vice, only removed the remorse and fear which assailed the vicious. Reason and conscience had become so perverted as to spur rather than check the passions of the soul.

It may be proper to notice more particularly the moral darkness of the world at the time when Jesus was born. The barbarous nations of the earth worshipped gods, whose characters were but the mirror of the depravity of their worshippers, and were superhuman only in enormity of vice. The Greeks, the Romans, and the Jews, however, were more highly civilized, and their religious systems were far superior. The Jews especially were blessed with a revelation from God.

However, when we consider the masses, we discover that they were but little superior in knowledge of truth, or the practice of virtue, to the barbarous nations which were strangers to the teachings either of philosophy or revelation. When we view the Grecian, Roman, or Jewish peoples, we find that comparatively few were in possession of the boasted light of philosophy, or the infallible teachings of philosophy among the Greeks and Romans, and the system of thought framed by the Jews, we shall find that neither philosophy nor the revelations of law dispensed any of that thick darkness which overhung the world, that in short, the Greek philosopher and the Jewish Pharisee were with their less cultivated fellow-countrymen equally immersed in ignorance and sin.

Among the Gentiles, the Grecian philosophers Socrates and Plato, seemed to have framed the most correct system of theology. The teachings of those great men respecting the Deity—His character and will—were very beautiful, and, in many respects, wonderfully correct. But they did not derive their knowledge of God from a survey of his works, nor did they frame their codes of morals after a consideration of the consequences of human action. They considered the actual as beneath their notice, and turned away from the teachings of nature and experience, and sought to discover the character and will of God by the power of reason alone. They spun their systems out of their own brains. Succeeding philosophers, without the purity or genius of those great men, copied all their faults, while they neglected what was admirable in the works of their masters. Each framed a system for himself and seemed to differ from every other. In the course of time philosophy, which in its best days exerted no influence over the masses, ceased to exert any beneficial influence even over philosophers themselves; in fact it became a handmaid to vice, and aimed to prove that men might sin with entire impunity.

The Romans boasted of no originality, and were content to imitate the Greeks in arts, poetry and philosophy. Originally they exhibited a stern virility derived from physical self-denial, but as victory succeeded to victory, and the riches of the world were centered in Rome, luxury crept in, and vice found a luxurious soil. The Romans willing to gratify their desires and anxious to silence the clamors of their wild consciences, readily imbibed the teachings of the Grecian philosophers—but they made a more practical use of this philosophy than the Greeks themselves; for while these were animated in their investigations by pride of intellect, and found a pleasure in the sophistries of the schools, the Romans, less intellectual, used philosophy only to soothe the conscience and to sharpen their insatiable appetites. At the time when Jesus was born, this school of philosophy was divided into various sections. Some thought that there was a God, and some that there was none, and some that though such a being might exist, he did not concern himself with mundane affairs. As for a future world, the idea was a theme for laughter. The truth at which the old mythology had pointed was considered a ridiculous absurdity. Charon, the ferryman, and Cerberus, the many-headed dog, were subjects of mockery, and eternity was deemed not a comedy but a farce. We may imagine the practical effect of such ideas upon those who cherished them.

The Hebrews were not morally superior to the Greeks or the Romans, and Jewish theology had descended to a level with Grecian sophistry. The Jews by their traditions had made void the laws of God. They learned how to reverence the parent while he was turned into the street—to reconcile

reverence with blasphemy—devotion with deprecation of the law, and piety with vanity and ambition. Thus it ever is with tradition—first, as a perfecting of the Bible, then of equal value, and finally of higher authority—it places trivial observances above moral law, and at once satisfies the conscience and removes the barriers which even nature opposes to vice; and this remark holds good of tradition whether handed down through a Jewish Rabbi or a Christian Father. The Hebrews were even worse than the Gentiles; they harbored especially the meaner vices, bigotry and self-righteousness—vices which, above all others, resist the truth.

Such was the condition of the world at the time when Jesus was born; but Simeon foresaw a brighter and a happier day. All this darkness was to be dispelled. Jesus was to be a light upon the Gentiles, and a dazzling effulgence upon the grasping, the bigotted, and the self-righteous Jew. He was to imbue men with moral principle. He was to disseminate truth which could illuminate the mind, change the heart, and sanctify the life. Through Him the world was to become filled with the knowledge of the Lord as the waters cover the sea. What a glorious vision!

Jesus at the appointed time entered upon his work of salvation by illumination. Instead of a host of Gods, He presented the one living and true God manifested in His Son. Instead of the dreams of a false philosophy, He revealed truths to which the soul could cling with undoubting confidence. Instead of a system of ethics spun out by the human brain, without any evidence of their accordance with the will of God, or their fitness for the government of man, He revealed moral principles which he proved to be expressive of the Divine Will, and suited to render the obedient happy forever. Above all, He imparted in His doctrine a moral power to purify the conscience, to change the disposition, to impel the sinner to holiness by all the force of love to God and hope of heaven. He enlightened not merely by the words of his lips, but by all the actions of his life from the hour of His birth until he cried "it is finished." Though He confined His personal efforts to His own countrymen, yet He commissioned His disciples to go forth into all nations, and proclaim the doctrines which He had imparted.

When we review the past, we can fully understand the language of Simeon as he pointed to Jesus as the light of the world. A few centuries after this event the religion and philosophy of the Greek and the Roman had disappeared. The philosopher in the cities of Greece. The temples and basilicas of Rome had become sanctuaries of the one living and true God. The doctrines of Jesus had not only been disseminated in Greece and Italy, but the northern coasts of Africa, the western portions of Asia, had renounced their idolatries, and accepted the Gospel—may, even the barbarous nations of Europe, the Gaul, the German, the Briton, were enlightened by the doctrines of Jesus. Nor has the light dimmed in the course of ages. Though the seven churches of Asia are no more; though Thessalonica, Corinth, and Rome have forgotten the teachings of the apostle of the Gentiles, yet the truths which he preached are the less prized, are none the less powerful. Regions unknown when Jesus first appeared, are now recipients of the glad tidings which he announced. Races then barbarous have since become christianized; modern law and customs have felt the influence of christian truth; and if at this day the human race is wiser, purer and happier than in the days of Augustus Caesar, for the change, it is indebted to Jesus. Even now the teachings of Christ are being widely disseminated; and the same virtues which adorn the christian character at home, are witnessed in Hindostan, Burmah, and even in China. We anticipate that the words which Jesus spoke, and the truths which he revealed, will continue to be made known until all the inhabitants of the earth will know and love the truth.

The Jews—the chosen people—have not been dishonored by the babe who was held in the arms of Simeon and blessed. Though they rejected Him whom they had long professed to desire, yet, while He is a light to the Gentiles, He is, and will be, a glory for Israel. He has preserved the rebellious race through ages of trial and sorrow, and no doubt for a glorious destiny. He—the King of Kings and Lord of Lords—was a Jew. His relation to Him gives them an importance which they would not otherwise possess. When the purpose for which they have so long been so mysteriously preserved has been accomplished—when they shall have embraced the truth—then will the words of Simeon be better understood than now, and all will perceive that while Jesus has been the light of the Gentiles, He has also been the glory of Israel.

MATTHEWS.

For the Christian Watchman.

RECOLLECTIONS OF ROME.

NUMBER XIII.

ROMAN GOVERNMENT.

The theory of the government of the papal states is very beautiful. At its head is the Pope the representative of Christ, elected to this station for his intelligence, learning, and piety. As the head of the church he is infallible; and it may be supposed that as the head of the state he would also be in possession of some of this infallibility. The cardinals from whom he is chosen, are a somewhat numerous body of men, supposed to be eminent in the knowledge of christian truth, and in the possession of christian graces. The college of cardinals when full, numbers seventy members. The people though divided socially in classes, are yet, in the eye of

the law, on an equality. After the ecclesiastics there are supposed to be no privileged bodies, no powerful and ambitious nobles to oppress the people and thwart the wishes of a gracious and unimpaired ruler.

Every inhabitant of Rome is supposed to be a Christian, a member of the Holy Catholic, and Apostolic Church. If he were not disposed to religion, the law suggests his duties, and calls him to a humble and penitent confession of his sins, at least once a year. In theory we have a most beautiful government. No proud and oppressive aristocracy, no turbulent democracy no acrimonious despotism, but a religious people living under the wise and benevolent rule of the vicar of Christ. Unhappily this theory does not seem to be so beautiful in its practical working.

A pope does not make so good a King as we might be inclined to imagine. The process through which a man must pass to reach the papacy does not fit him to sway the destinies of man, or to reign in their hearts. His training has not been such as to link him, by human sympathies and affections, to the masses, or by family to connect him with the future of his country. When a little, playful, merry boy, he was selected by his parent for the church, henceforth to be a stranger to the sports and pursuits of the child, the interests and aspirations of the youth, the emotions and affections of the man. He is taught to regard as unholy the tender sentiments, and the warm affections of his soul. He must burn and sear his heart until its natural throbbings have ceased, until only a scar remains of an emotional nature which might have led him to be a sharer in the cream of human bliss, connected him with all the hopes and fears, the joys and the sorrows of man, and through his own children have made the interests of all future times his own.

But the heart, though seared in its most sensitive parts, yet stirs and throbs, and from its inmost being sends out into life the sterner and more insatiable passions. By a natural law of our being the heart that would have been contented with the enjoyments, and the joys of domestic life, now, when these are denied, turns its cravings to meats and drinks, or gold and silver, or to the means of satisfying its pride and ambition. No man can have opened before him brighter prospects, as regards these things, than the priest. He may yet be bishop or archbishop, or cardinal or pope. His education has not cut off all the natural propensities of men, it has only dwarfed some of them, to make the remaining more monstrous.

The priest mounts the ladder which stands before him. He swings the censur before the altar—he raises his voice in the sacristy; he roars in scurrilous, in his gait and purple coach, and becomes familiar with the dignified title of Monsignore,—and finally he sits upon the papal throne, his widest hopes for the present, gratified. There he sits a king, but without the education, or the dignity or the chastened ambition, or the interests, or the sympathies, or the hopes of a king.

This being with a mutilated and deformed heart, surrounded by creatures as mutilated and deformed as himself is called to preside over the destinies of fathers and mothers, and sons and daughters, whose affections he has never known, whose hopes he has never shared, and whose dearest interests he cannot comprehend.

But this is not all. He is, while king of the papal states, supreme head of the Roman Catholic Church. Both offices he must fill, and his duties must often be of a very incongruous character. Now he hears mass, and then regulates the duties on tobacco; now turns from solemn services of the Sistine chapel to give directions respecting the lotteries which he patronizes; now he sends a missionary to New Zealand and then sends the police after some political offender. Then again the interests of the two kingdoms may clash; the time demanded by the spiritual state may encroach on the attention due to the temporal; political events may arise to cause the sacrifice of the interests of either church or state. The church must be protected at all hazards. No encroachment can be permitted on the privileges of the priest and cardinal. The home of the Roman must remain under control of men who know no home. A gulf as deep as that which separated Dives from Lazarus, must remain between laymen and ecclesiastics. The infallibility of the pope is not a good quality in the Roman king. Fidelity is a great virtue in a monarch; he can suit himself to the characteristics of his people and his age. He is not committed to uphold all faults and follies of his predecessors. The infallibility of the pope, though this excellence regards primarily his spiritual kingdom, yet must also affect him as a temporal sovereign. It necessarily blinds him to the change in his people, and renders him deaf to those claims for reforms which this age has made necessary.

The cardinals who select the ruler for Rome, and form his council, are not pre-eminently fitted for either office. They are men of different graces, tastes, education, and aims. In the past, popes have been elected, some because they were extremely old, and probably soon to open the way for a new election; others, because they could bribe even the congregations of cardinals; and others, again, because some potentate of Europe had found a way to the wills of the pious

electors. Hence the cardinals are not just the best men to select the best ruler for the papal states.

Then, as his advisors, they are not remarkably well adapted to promote, by their counsels, the welfare of the Roman people. Their interests are mainly those of the church to which they belong; the state is a secondary consideration, some of them have been brought into the congregation easily and rapidly, through princely influence; others have forced their way by toll or intrigue. But however they may differ in taste, and education, all seem equally unfitted to be the advisers of a temporal sovereign. They have no homes, no sympathy with the purest enjoyments of the people, no interest in its future progress. Some of these cardinals like Antonelli, are the very incarnations of pride and haughtiness, others like supple, wily men of the world; and others, again, are only fat. None of these qualities are essential to the welfare of the Roman people.

Now let us trace some of the effects of this peculiar government. The priests are very numerous. Each order of monks and nuns in Europe is represented here by a monastery or nunnery. The monks may be seen at any hour of the day, with sandalled feet and bare head, robed in coarse brown cloth, and carrying on their shoulders a wallet nearly stocked with cold victuals which they have begged. The priests are much more dignified. They for the most part appear somewhat fat, with a very long coat reaching nearly to the heels, with their heads surrounded by a very low-crowned, broad-brimmed hat. They seem to look with some contempt on their brethren of the monastery.

In Rome there are about 50 cardinals, 30 bishops, 120 prelates, 1700 priests, 2500 monks, 1800 nuns, and 500 students.

The press is kept under close surveillance. The only journals in Rome are edited by priests, who suppress or modify at pleasure the little news they choose to give their readers. The newspaper, about the size of a sheet of foolscap, containing an elegant panegyric on absolutism, a denunciation of liberty of every description, a notice of some benevolent offering to the church, and some half dozen advertisements. Every book, whether printed in the city or imported, must undergo a severe examination. All works displeasing in any way to the censors, are placed upon the index expurgatorius. In consequence, every book worth reading is recorded in this index. Then with these regulations, there is an enormous postage on letters, hence we conclude, that whether the works of the papal government be evil or not, it certainly hates the light.

While the people have no voice in their government they are heavily taxed, and since ordinary taxation will not supply the necessities of their rulers, queer schemes are devised to make up deficiencies. A large portion of the revenue is derived from lotteries. The lottery offices are nearly as numerous in Rome as whiskey shops in Glasgow. This mode of gambling so fascinating for the poor and drinking so heavily their resources, is not only permitted but encouraged by the vicar of Christ. Lotteries have been prohibited in America, England, and Germany, and we believe, even in France, except for religious purposes, but in Rome they receive the sanction of the head of the church.

The laws, such as they are, are understood to be wretchedly administered. It is generally believed that justice favors the man who can make the most judicious use of his money; and so far as the custom and passport system is concerned, corruption is so prevalent, that the traveller feels quite lost when, leaving the Roman states, he comes to countries where he is not invited to bribe.

The natural results of this government have been witnessed. A city with nearly 200,000 inhabitants, without a rail road, or any of the stimulants to industry and enterprise which we see everywhere else,—a people impoverished with the incessant drain on it by its rulers to keep up an expensive court, a government constantly on the verge of bankruptcy, living from hand to mouth, letting the morrow take care of itself,—streets swarming with beggars, priests and soldiers, and prisons crowded with criminals, or with men who do not believe that it is impious to think of deliverance from the tyranny of their rulers, though he be Pope of Rome.

The Roman people are dissatisfied with their government. They have longed for liberty, and learned how to defend it. Though their struggle in 1849 was a vain one, yet Roman patriotism knows how to exhibit a spirit of self sacrifice, and the soldiers of the young republic did not hesitate to meet in the shock of battle the veterans of France.

How then, we ask, can the people be kept in subjection to this incompetent and unpopular ruler? This brings us to notice an effect of past misgovernment and the cause of the present subjugation. You see the French soldier everywhere, in the museums, wandering over the ancient ruins, sitting in the cafe, drinking in the wine shops, strutting about proudly conscious of his importance as a soldier of France.

This state of things cannot last long. The Roman has seen the dethroning of Napoleon and the triumph of liberty in Italy; and he yearns to see in his loved city the government and institutions of a free and united people. Should Napoleon see fit to free him from the presence of these insolent *militaires* as he may do at any

moment, Pio Nono will soon behold the downfall of his temporal power, and Rome will once more rejoice in the possession of freedom. She will rise from her low estate to be once more the capital of a nation, and enter upon a career of prosperity and grandeur.

BAPTISM.

THREE ANECDOTES.

First.

A correspondent of the Christian Secretary furnishes the following:

"Mr. S. an old friend of mine who is a Congregational or Presbyterian clergyman (I am not sure which), and who twenty years ago was the efficient Principle of the Centre School in your city, was making me a call some time since.

Mr. S. is a fine scholar, a graduate of Amherst College. Rather incidentally in our conversation the subject of baptism was introduced by my friend. I seldom introduced it myself in conversation with those of opposite tenets, possibly too seldom. Addressing himself to me, my friend said, 'there is not much difference betwixt your denomination and mine except on one subject, viz: the subject of baptism, and' he continued, 'on that subject the classical and historical argument is pretty much all on your side.' I told him I supposed so.

He then went on to relate an anecdote of an occurrence in Amherst College when he was a student there. Himself and a shun whom he named, and who both, he said, had read Greek enough to know that neither Baptism nor Baptizo could ever mean to sprinkle, came to an agreement on this wise: In their Greek lesson (in Xenophon I think) there was a passage, where in some of the conflicts of the old Greeks, one plunged (baptizo) an iron poker into the eye of his antagonist and put it out. Now the agreement of the two youngsters was that in their division recitation, if the passage in question, came to either of them, and they supposed it would come to one or the other, he to whom it came should render the 'baptizo,' sprinkle.

To his companion the passage came, and he with roundmouthed, roared it out. 'He sprinkled (baptizo) the poker into his eye. The whole division laughed out at the fun.

The professor in attendance on the recitation, was the Rev. Mr. Fisk, a very superior Greek scholar, and a Congregationalist. He was an odd sort of a man, and after some grimaces of surprise, said, 'Well, no doubt the true meaning of that word is dipped.' He understood the allusion of the humorous student, and although as a minister he went by his creed, yet as a scholar and Professor he would not mislead but speak out his true opinions.

Second.

G. P. a very consistent and thoughtful young man, a graduate at Yale College, two or three years ago united with the First Baptist Church in this city by baptism, during his senior year.

In relating his experience before the church, he said that being Congregationally educated and living in a town where there were few if any Baptists, his thoughts were never turned to subjects of Baptism, until he read Wayland's Life of Judson. In reading the account of the change of Judson's mind on the subject under consideration, he said it struck him that the reasons given by Judson were strong. He thought however, that he would read the other side, and turned and read what are esteemed the best Pedobaptist authors on the subject. But their arguments he said seemed to him so feeble, that his confidence in Pedobaptism was weakened instead of being strengthened by their perusal—especially as he knew these authors to be capable of writing so well on other subjects.

He then turned and studied the scriptures for himself, and was not long in embracing the doctrine of believers' immersion as held by us.

Third.

Sister V., a worthy member of the First Church in this city, was formerly a member of the South Congregational Church at Hartford. She had no scruples upon baptism—her attention had never been turned to the subject. Her attention was first turned to the subject by hearing the Rev. L. N. Sprague's (of the Fourth Congregational Church) Lectures in Defence of Infant Baptism in the Spring of 1851. Those lectures made Sister V. a Baptist.

Rev. Mr. Sprague asked her subsequently, 'Sister V. what made you a Baptist?' 'It was the lectures that you preached on Baptism,' rejoined the sister.

I leave my three stories (for the authenticity of all of them I can vouch) to produce their own impression, without comment from me.

AUSTRALIA.—A serious riot has occurred at the Lambing Flat Digging, in Australia. A mob of hundred assassins, numbering from 2,000 to 3,000, came upon the poor unsuspecting Chinese gold-diggers unawares. The latter offered no resistance, but fled, leaving everything at the mercy of their barbarous assailants, who disgraced the name of Englishmen, and brought reproach on human nature itself. The poor offending creatures were overtaken in their flight by a mob of these desperadoes, their tails were cut off, and they were otherwise maltreated. Several of the ringleaders having been taken into custody, the police were attacked in their barracks and fired at the mob demanding the release of their companions. The police fired in return, killing several of the rioters. Military assistance having been procured from Sydney, the riot is, for the present, suppressed.