

Christian Messenger.

A REPOSITORY OF RELIGIOUS, POLITICAL, AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

"NOT SLOTHFUL IN BUSINESS: FERVENT IN SPIRIT."

NEW SERIES.
Vol. IV. No. 43.

HALIFAX, NOVA SCOTIA, WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 26, 1859.

WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XXIII. No. 43.

Poetry.

The Aurora Borealis.

The North! the North! from out the North
What founts of light are breaking forth,
And streaming up these evening skies,
A glorious wonder to our eyes!
It mounts, it spreads, it parts, it plays,
A thousand forms, a thousand ways.
The moon, to hide her silver crown,
Behind the hills is sinking down;
The silent stars more fixed appear,
To watch the blazing o'er their sphere.
The North! the North! ah! who can tell
What fires in thy cold bosom dwell,
Or e'er the grand arcana know,
Such scenery o'er the heavens to throw?

It fades! it shifts! and now appears
An army, bright with shields and spears,
That, winding on in proud array,
Up the blue heights pursue their way,
With waving plumes and banners, where
No eagle's wing e'er cleaved the air,
In serried ranks they're seen awhile;
Then, twining off, in thin defile.
Battalioned, now again they march
Beneath the high triumphal arch,
And while the vast pavilion spreads,
Gold-fringed and tasselled, o'er their heads,
A zenith loop superbly holds
Its emerald, green, and purple folds.

'Tis changed! a city looms to sight,
With towers and temples shining white!
Behind it snowy mountains rise—
Before, a foaming ocean lies,
And eager throngs impetuous sweep
Fast downward to that yawning deep;
Then pressing on the crumbling shore,
Drop off, and all are seen no more!
Their mansions melt in waning fire,
While fast the mount and sea retire.
The North! O, who can view aright
But He who said "Let there be light!"
Himself a glorious mystery,
Throned in His calm eternity?

H. F. GOULD.

Miscellaneous.

Recollections of John Leland.

BY THE HON. GEORGE N. BRIGGS.

Forty years ago, a very intelligent physician in this county became pious. He had long known Elder Leland. One day he met him on the highway, leisurely driving along a horse that he called Billy. They both stopped, and after some conversation, the Doctor told him that he should be glad to have his views upon two or three points of religious doctrine. First, as to the Sovereignty of God. This was with Elder Leland a favorite theme, and one in which his head and his heart had been engaged for sixty years. He proceeded, and occupied several minutes in repeating appropriate passages of Scripture, and commenting upon them in a most lucid and able manner, until the Doctor said that he was entirely satisfied with those views. "Now," said he, "please let me know what you think of the free agency of man." With no less authority from Scripture, and no less potency of reason, he made this point equally satisfactory. "Now, Elder," said the Doctor—"one more solution, and I shall be entirely satisfied—will you tell me how you reconcile these two great and important truths?" "Doctor," said he, "there was a mother, who, while busy with her needle, was teaching her little daughter to read. The child at length came to a hard word, and asked her mother what it was. 'Spell it, my child,' said she. The child made an effort, but did not succeed. 'Mother,' said she, 'I can't spell it.' 'Let me see it then.' She handed her the book, and the mother, after puzzling over it for some time, returned it to the child, and said—'Skip it then.' 'Get up Billy,' said the Elder, and drove along, leaving the Doctor to skip the word, or ponder over it, as he pleased.

I once heard him say in a sermon, that, in the course of his life, he had not unfrequently heard preachers—generally young men, propose to prove the sovereignty of God, and the free agency of man, and then to show the harmony between them. "At the last point," said he, "I always dropped my head; for, though they always did it to their own satisfaction, they rarely satis-

fied any of their hearers. And what is more remarkable—no two of them ever came out in the same place with their demonstrations."

ALL RUNNING TO ONE POINT.—He said he had some ten or twelve sermons that were quite distinct, and did not run into each other. When he had preached them, he took new texts, relied on the bad memories of his hearers, and got along in the best way he could. "But," said he, "if I take my text in Genesis, my conclusion carries me forward to the third chapter of John? if I start in Revelations, I must go back, and end my sermon in the same third chapter of John." I do not think I ever heard him preach a sermon in which this remark was not illustrated and verified—when the great truth uttered by the Saviour to Nicodemus was not, in terms, proclaimed to and enforced upon his hearers.

NEW TESTAMENT SERMONS FROM OLD TESTAMENT TEXTS.—More than forty years ago, I heard him preach one evening from this text—"I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burned." It was a discourse of great power and impressiveness. Nearly every word was made a distinct head. I—Religion is a personal matter. Will—The will is involved, and must be active and decided. Now—Its importance demands immediate attention, and precedence of all things else. Turn aside—The business and cares of life must be laid by, and the whole attention, for the time, be given to the one thing needful. And see—It demands inquiry and investigation—consequences of vast importance depend on a right decision. This great sight, why the bush is not burned—The burning, yet unconsumed bush, represented the union of the Divine and human natures in the person of the Saviour: and the great fact of the incarnation involving the destiny of the soul, and of the race, demands the profoundest investigation of man. He spoke an hour and three quarters; but there was no flagging interest in the hearers, and their silent and breathless attention continued till the sound of the last word died upon his lips. He preached some of his most interesting discourses, when, as he said, he took an Old Testament text, and preached a New Testament sermon. This was emphatically one of that class.

NOT READING RIGHT.—Many years ago, I heard him preach in Pittsfield, to a large congregation, when his text was from that chapter of the Acts in which the history of Philip and the Eunuch is given. His subject included that narrative, and involved the question of Baptism. He read on till he came to the question, put by the Eunuch to Philip—"See here is water, what doth hinder me to be baptized?" And Philip said, "if thou believest with all thine heart, thou mayest." And then read, "Philip and the Eunuch went up the broad alley of the meeting-house, and Philip put his hand in a basin of water, and laid it on the Eunuch's head, and baptized him, and they came out of the meeting-house and, the Eunuch went on his way rejoicing." "Stop, Leland," said he, "you don't read right;" and beginning again—"And they went down both into the water, both Philip and the Eunuch. Ah, that's it," and went on with the narrative; and he finished his sermon with no other allusion to the subject.

One way and the other.

"FATHER," said a woman to her husband one morning, "the boys want some new shoes."

"Want, want—always wanting!" said the man in a cross tone. "I've got no shoes; if you want them, get them."

"I don't know who should, if you can't," answered the wife, catching the spirit of her husband; and the spirit once caught, she carried it down stairs into the kitchen, where she quickly saw that breakfast was in a backward state. "Sally," she cried, "why in the world is not breakfast ready? the mornings are long enough."

"This awful green wood!" cried Sally, who until now had been doing her best;

but catching her mistress's tone, she quite lost her temper. "The wonder is breakfast's got all," she muttered; while her mistress went out, and little Joe came in from the wood-house. "Tie my shoe, Sally," said he; "the string has tripped me up awfully." "Go away," cried Sally, "and not pester me at breakfast-time." "Cross creature!" cried little Joe, pouting, and pulling off his shoe, which for mischief, or not knowing what else to do, he swung at the cat lapping her milk. The shoe sent the cat one way, the cup another, and the milk in a puddle.

"You mischievous puppy," cried Sally, giving little Joe a shake, and sending him off to the sitting-room. Joe in a terrible pet fell upon his little sister, who was playing with a woolly dog, a little toy her auntie gave her, making it bark in a wheezy tone no real dog was ever guilty of. "Give it to me," cried Joe, snatching it from her hand; whereupon Susy burst into an angry cry. Joe's mother struck him for it, and he set up a howl equal to any young cub in a bear's den; so that by the time breakfast was ready the family sky was as dark and squally as it could well be; for crossness is catching, and "the beginning of strife is as when one letteth out water." Prov. 17: 14.

THE OTHER WAY.

"Father," said a woman to her husband one morning, "the boys want some new shoes."

"Yes, I suppose it is most time," answers the husband, "but I can't so well spare the money just now. I wonder if I could not black them nicely up, to make them answer a little longer. Let's see now."

"Do not trouble yourself with them, husband," said the wife. "Let me try and see what a gloss I can put on them; maybe they'll look as good as new;" and away she tripped down stairs into the kitchen. "Sally," she said, "you are a little behind in breakfast, but I'll help you. I'm wonder; the green wood troubles you, I'm afraid."

"Please no," answers Sally; "I'll fetch breakfast on the table in a minute;" and Sally stirs about with cheerful briskness, while little Joe comes in and asks to have his shoe tied. "In a moment, deary," answers Sally, "while I run' down and get some kindlings; your ma wants breakfast."

"Let me go," says little Joe; "I'll bring you some beauties;" and away scampers the little boy, who soon comes back with an armful. "There, Sally," he cries, "won't that help you?"

"Yes, deary," cries Sally; "now let me tie your shoe;" and while she does it, Joe is looking at pussy lapping her milk. "Pussy's had her breakfast," said Joe, "and I'll take up her cup, lest somebody should step on it and break it. Come, Pussy, go with me," and he carries her into the sitting-room. "Pussy has had her breakfast," he said to sissy; "now will she think your woolly dog a real dog? Let's show it to her." Sissy put down her plaything, a little woolly dog, and sure enough, puss, as soon as she saw it, bushed her tail and backed up her back, just ready for a fight! but pretty soon she saw her mistake, and ran under the table, as if afraid to be laughed at. How the children did laugh; and what a pleasant breakfast that was, where kindness was the largest dish: for "pleasant words are as a honeycomb, sweet to the soul, and health to the bones." Prov. 16: 24.

The Great Eastern and Noah's Ark.

The great leviathan of ships is about to visit our shores. Until something still more stupendous and colossal in the line of marine architecture is attempted, the Great Eastern may be regarded as one of the wonders of the world. Her dimensions are even greater than those of Noah's Ark. According to the calculations of Sir Isaac Newton and Bishop Watkins, the length of the Ark, between perpendiculars, was 515

to 547 feet, while that of the Great Eastern is 680 feet. In breadth the Ark was a few feet the widest; but in depth the Great Eastern has the advantage of several feet, while its tonnage capacity exceeds that of the Ark by several thousands, being 23,092. It is capable of carrying 10,000 tons of coal, 5,000 tons of freight, with 10,000 passengers. Should all of its passenger-rooms be occupied on its first trip across the Atlantic, a census of its inhabitants would exceed that of some of our incorporated cities.

Some theological writers have thrown doubt on the literality of the scriptural account of the construction and dimensions of Noah's Ark, on the supposition that so long a vessel would be broken in the middle by the force of the waves. In an elaborate article published in the *Church of England Quarterly*, several years ago, on the Deluge, occurs the following paragraph:

Now as it is clearly impossible that a vessel of the length and breadth of the Ark could be otherwise than a floating vessel, designed entirely for perfectly still waters, we have supposed it to be flat-bottomed and straight-sided; both as making it the more buoyant and as giving to it the greatest capacity. It was devoid of all sailing properties; had neither rigging nor rudder; its build was simply that of a huge float, to all outward appearance wholly at the mercy of the winds and the waves, liable to be drifted or driven about according as currents or winds for the time prevailed; but as we shall show, the Ark could not for a moment have been subjected to the influence of either wind or tides. The extraordinary length of the Ark proves at once, the miraculous power that was at every moment in exercise for its preservation, since no vessel of the Ark's proportions could naturally live in disturbed waters; the very first wave that rose would inevitably break its back and rend it entirely asunder; nor with all our experience in ship-building would it be possible to construct a vessel of the Ark's proportions and to navigate it from Dover to Calais in rough weather—the least swell of the ocean, by raising one end and depressing the other would break it in the middle and cause it to founder, nor could any possible contrivance or ingenuity of construction prevent this consequence. And if the very peculiar construction of the Ark had not made such a conclusion irresistible, the purpose for which it was built would have proved that such was the fact, for had the Ark pitched in the least from the swell of the waves, or rolled at all from side to side under the influence of the wind, which from its great length and little width it must most distressingly have done, the whole world of animals therein contained, could not have kept their footing; of very necessity, therefore a dead calm must have prevailed around the Ark during the whole of the one hundred and fifty days that it was floating on the waters.

In the face of the above theory, the Great Eastern, longer by 133 feet than the Ark, is about to traverse the tumultuous ocean for three thousand miles, and to put winds and waves at defiance.

Says the *New York Courier and Enquirer*:

The late Dr. Scoresby conclusively established by a series of experiments on the waves of the Atlantic, that a vessel of some 600 feet in length, could never fall into the trough of the sea, as one wave would counteract the effect of another. Thus instead of a miracle to save the Ark's back, it would have taken a miracle to have broken its back, constructed as it was. The English Churchman is not the first man who has been superserviceable in clearing up Scripture difficulties which had no existence but in his own imagination. The sacred record needs no eking out by human ingenuity; it is best left to its own simple statement.—*Life Illustrated*.