

RELIGIOUS INTELLIGENCER,

And Bible Society, Missionary, and Sabbath School Advocate.

E. McLEOD, Editor.

That God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ—PETER.

G. W. DAY, Printer

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TERMS:
ONE DOLLAR A YEAR IN ADVANCE.

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All Communications and Business Letters should be directed
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The object of this paper is to do good. Its price—ONE DOLLAR A YEAR, always in advance. It is so low that scarcely a family in our country need be without it. We will supply (on proper representation) to the poor, who are unable to pay for it, a limited number of copies gratis.

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G. W. DAY, PRINTER.

Soldiers' Friend and Army Scripture Readers' Society.

The First Annual Meeting of this Society was held, May 9th, in Exeter-hall, London. The chair was taken by Lord Robert Grosvenor.

The Chairman said they were met on an interesting occasion, for the inauguration of a new society of Christian benevolence, embracing an object hitherto unattained. The army of England long ago excited the attention of benevolent individuals, who endeavored to interest others in the same object; they accordingly formed what was then called the Soldiers' Friend Society, which was now re-formed under a new title. There could hardly be a subject of greater interest than the British soldier. The Duke of Wellington used to say that the great strength of the army was the discipline of the soldier; and how could that discipline be better preserved than by the inculcation of religious principles? (Hear, hear.) Without the strong restraint of religion, indeed, the soldier, considering the temptations to which he was exposed, could hardly be expected to maintain a moral character. The mortality in the army was greater than in any other occupation; and yet the spiritual provision for the soldier was less than that made for other classes of society. Christian liberality, however, had now improved the state of things which he complained.

The Secretary then read the Report, which mentioned the various stations at which the Society's agents were located, and contained extracts from letters of the Missionaries describing the results of their labors among the soldiers. 225,000 appropriate tracts had been circulated among the military at home and abroad. The Society had five agents at Constantinople and Scutari, two at Balaklava, two at Malta, and one would shortly proceed to Smyrna. 23,000 cards of prayer, with tracts, were distributed to the sailors on board the Baltic fleet, prior to its departure last month. The Rev. Dr. Marsh said the soldiers had a double claim upon us as Britons and Christians. They had to defend our country; and they were exposed to moral and physical dangers unattended most other occupations. Nothing could remove from them the fear of death so much as the certainty of eternal life. Military life was not necessarily unfavorable to religion; and Christianity made no cowards. (Hear, hear.) "I have committed my soul to Jesus," said a brave soldier now lying wounded, "and my only fear is, lest I should offend him." There never was so much piety in the army as now and never had greater exertions been made for the spiritual welfare of the soldiers. The Scriptures were extensively circulated in the army and those soldiers who read and studied them were among the steadiest, the firmest, and the most courageous in the hour of battle. He hoped they would all unite in prayer to God that His Bible might still be circulated throughout the earth, that the means employed by the Society for the attainment of its benevolent object might be crowned with success; and that thus the War, in itself a dreadful calamity, might be overruled for good.

The Rev. Mr. Stallybrass, visitor of the Russian prisoners of war at Plymouth, said it was now fourteen years ago since he was expelled from Russia, after having labored there for twenty-four years in the distant regions of Siberia—(hear, hear)—and he did regard it as a peculiar providence that his knowledge of the language, which had been lying without use for so many years, was now being brought into requisition. (Hear, hear.) The original object of this Society was to provide Christian instruction for our own countrymen exclusively; but in the good providence of God, an opportunity was now opened for extending its usefulness by communicating to the soldiers of Russia also the glorious and soul-saving truths of the religion of Jesus Christ. He had much satisfaction in being able to state that a large edition of the New Testament, and of the publications of the Prayer-book and Homily Society, translated into the Russian tongue, had been carried through the press; and he had had the satisfaction of distributing some hundreds of copies among the Russian prisoners at Plymouth. (Hear, hear.) We know that God has all events in His own hand, and we could not, he thought, if we really believe the Scriptures, but repose with the fullest confidence in the belief that wherever those Scriptures are circulated and read they will produce a blessed effect upon the hearts of the people. There was one thing which added much importance, he conceived, to the efforts made by this Society on behalf of these Russian prisoners. If they were at home in their own country they could not obtain the Scriptures except in an old edition, printed eight or nine centuries ago in the Slavonian language, which had now become obsolete, so that even the great body of the priests themselves were not able to read them. The late

Emperor Alexander was resolved that the people should have the Scriptures in the vernacular tongue and caused them to be translated into the Russ. But, from the time that Nicholas ascended the throne not a single copy of the Scriptures in the modern Russ was permitted to be circulated. Therefore, these prisoners were being supplied with that which they could not have obtained in their own country; and if we believed the Bible to be a casket of imperishable good, which will, by the blessing of God, produce fruit unto eternal life, what might we not expect would be the blessed effect of these Scriptures upon the minds of these men?—And who could tell but that they, in their turn, would be the instrument, in the hands of the Spirit, of producing an influence for good on the minds of others of their fellow countrymen after their return to their native land. (Hear.)

The Rev. William Leask moved the following resolution:—"That while this meeting deplores the continuance of the War in the East, it beholds in that distressing event an additional reason for the most prompt and zealous measures to be adopted for the augmentation of agents abroad, in order to meet the urgent spiritual wants of our soldiers, whether on the tented field, in the garrison, or hospital; while, at the same time, it joyfully acknowledges, with devout gratitude to God, the many manifestations of success which have attended the arduous and self-denying efforts of those who are laboring at the various foreign stations connected with this Society."

The Rev. G. A. Rogers, Incumbent of Regent's Square Episcopal Church, in seconding the resolution, said, that he did not think it well to look upon the present war as an unmitigated evil, because they might confidently anticipate that He who makes the wrath of man to praise Him, would order it well for His own glory and the welfare of the world. He could not possibly but believe that the effect of the conflict would be the destruction of the Mohammedan idolatry and the triumph of the truth in the East of Europe.

Walking with God before Sebastopol.

EXTRACTS FROM LETTERS AND JOURNAL OF CAPTAIN VICARS, RECEIVED JUST BEFORE THE ACCOUNT OF HIS DEATH.

The following will show that there are devout soldiers in our army. How mournful that men so thoroughly under the power of the gospel should be cut off by the present melancholy and destructive war!

CAMP BEFORE SEBASTOPOL,
March 5th, 1855.

MY OWN DARLING MOTHER,—I am, thank God, safe and well in both body and soul; I never was in the enjoyment of better health—and the Lord continues to favour me with the sunshine of His presence filling me with peace and joy in Jesus. Oh! darling mother, how precious I find the Saviour to be to me in these perilous times; with what trust and confidence I can place myself, both for times and eternity, beneath the shelter of His cross! He for the knowledge of the love of Christ (that he bled for us), nerves the heart to bear patiently, if not willingly, all the trials and troubles which God may send upon us, and which we are sure to meet with sooner or later in this world of tears. But what comfort religion gives to the soul, in leading us to forget the sorrows of the present in the bright contemplations of a future world, and how joyous and how light the heart, and how indifferent to all else when Christ reveals himself to us in the precious character of our dear friend and brother! With him near to cheer and assure us, we can reckon that the sufferings of our present world are not worthy to be compared with the glory which shall be revealed in us. I will now give you a few extracts from my journals:—

"At piequet the other night, I was gazing upward at the bright moon and stars, and the thought of the star in the 'East' led me to our 'Bethlehem'; then the sorrows and sufferings of our blessed Redeemer, beginning at Bethlehem and ending at Calvary, passed in review before my mind.

"This afternoon, while visiting the poor fellows in cholera hospital, who were lying cold and comfortless on the bare ground, rays of sunshine seemed to illumine that charnel tent, as I brought before them Jesus, the crucified Saviour, for tears glistened in many an eye, and smiles were on many a lip. It is a pleasure and a privilege to talk to my sick comrades and fellow-sinners of Jesus; and it seems to me that those who never visit the sick and dying deprive themselves of the deepest happiness this world affords!

"It is painful, indeed, to witness agony we cannot alleviate, but precious is the privilege of being the harbinger of the glad tidings of peace and joy to their souls, by proclaiming in their ears the great Redeemer's love, and to see some gently falling asleep, murmuring the life-restoring name of Jesus. We are still in statu quo. Do not be anxious about me. I am safe in my Saviour's arms; I know it, I feel it, whether in life or death.

27th of February.—This has been the hottest day we have had. Took a long walk with one of my brother officers; we talked on religious subjects, and especially on the uncertainty of life. O! may we both prepare to meet our God whenever he shall summon us hence. The French fired several rockets from the Victoria redoubt on the town.

28th.—A cloudy day; the rain kept up until the afternoon. I went out with Captain Hammond; went to the hospital, and gave away several tracts to the patients, amongst them a number of "Come to Jesus." O! that the Holy Ghost may lead many to find peace and rest in the Saviour. Took some jam (thanks to dear nephew John) and biscuit to

one of my company, John Cartley, for which the poor fellow was most grateful; give him a hymn-book—Ryle's—of the band gave away several little books to my company.

March 1st.—Poor Cartley, one of my men, died in the hospital last night. O! Lord, do thou keep me in thy great mercy from forgetting what thou hast suffered for me in body and soul; may I never be drawn by the cares of life from Jesus my friend and Saviour, but may I daily live closer to his cross; above all, would I ask thee to fill me with the Holy Ghost.

2nd.—A cold day and snowy. Borrowed Smith's horse, and rode over to the light division, with my pockets full of tracts, books, and cards of prayer, which I gave away to the sick of the 23d, 33d, 34th, and rifle brigade. Cary came in the evening, and we walked off together to the camp of the 2d division, where we distributed several more to the 41st, 4th, guards, and 62d regiments; we then called on Captain Vandeleur of the Royal Artillery. He was not at home. We sat in his tent for nearly an hour. I read aloud the 13th of Hebrews. Had Cary and some others to dinner. Spent a most pleasant evening together; and read a little tract, called "Believe and Live," and then the 40th of Isaiah; after conversing on them we offered up a prayer. May the Lord bless these meetings together for our eternal good, and the glory and honour of Jesus Christ.

4th, Sunday.—Had divine service in the camp, but it was hurried over in a careless manner. We afterwards met together in a tent, six present. Cary and I went laden with tracts to the remaining hospital of the 3d division, where we distributed all we had. I prayed with one of the sick, who asked me to do so with tears in his eyes; poor fellow, he was much oppressed with the weight of sin on his conscience; I spoke to him of Christ, told him to look to Jesus. Read and prayed with Major Segrave and Lieutenant Drummond, in the latter's tent. O! what a happy day this has been. Bless the Lord, O my soul, and forget not all his benefits. I must now, dearest mother, get ready for the trenches. We have had rather light work lately, but we expect it will begin again soon as at first. But I am quite happy, dearest mother. I keep a journal, as you see; I can but scribble a little in it at night. Give my best love to dearest Clara, Polly, and Georgie. You are all constantly in my thoughts and prayers. Love to Lord R. God bless you, my own precious and darling mother.—Ever your own most dear and warmly attached and devoted son,

HEDLEY VICARS.

This was Captain Vicars' last Sabbath on earth: He was shot dead the same week.—British Mes.

The Religion of Rome, in Rome.

A correspondent of the N. Y. Observer, writing from Rome, describes some of the religious ceremonies performed there during the latter part of Lent. For the information of our readers we copy the following:—

PILATE'S STAIRCASE.

For several days before the close of Lent, the pictures and various ornaments in the churches are kept constantly covered. The pope and cardinals who usually wear a gay and showy attire, put on what is called mourning, deep purple, or violet. On the Friday previous to Palm Sunday, the pope, attended by his cardinals, entered St. Peter's, an one after another stopped at the celebrated iron statue of St. Peter and kissed it, touching it with their foreheads as do all the faithful. An attendant stood by the statue with a napkin in his hand, and wiped the toe after each one had kissed it, saving them the trouble of using their pocket handkerchief, as do the more refined class of pilgrims to this shrine. It is sufficiently humiliating to see the ignorant, who have been taught this form of idolatry and know nothing better, come up one after another and kiss an iron image; but to see the head and the highest dignitaries in church and state conforming to such a custom, excites thoughts and feelings which I will not attempt to express. I was told by one who met the pope at St. John Lateran, that on the same day he ascended Pilate's Staircase on his knees. This staircase, it is pretended, was brought from Jerusalem, and is the very one which our Saviour descended when he went from Pilate's judgment hall to his crucifixion. Unlike most of the pretended relics which abound here, this has an interest for Protestants. It was one of the first places that I visited on coming to Rome. Soon after Luther had become partially enlightened in the truth, but not so far as to break loose from the corrupt church which he afterwards renounced, he was summoned to Rome to answer for his 'recipient heresies. As one part of his penance he had to ascend this stairway on his knees, repeating a Pater-noster or some other prayer at every step. While he was making the ascent, he seemed to hear as from an audible voice, loud as thunder, that passage of holy Scripture which had before been his guiding star, "The just shall live by faith." He instantly sprang to his feet and left the hall, convinced that if this were true, such a humiliation could be of no avail. This was one of the epochs in his history and in the history of the Reformation. I have never seen the blind devotees crawling up these steps, and stopping at each one to kiss it, without recalling Luther, and wishing that the same voice might reach their ears.

SELF FLAGELLATION.

One evening during the latter part of Lent, I witnessed (though in the darkness I did not see) one of the most curious exhibitions of popery that

I have ever heard of. I could scarcely have believed that such a scene would occur, had I not been present. Hearing that in one of the churches near the centre of the city a self-flagellation took place every evening, I went one afternoon just before dark, but found the church filled with females, and was told by the sacristan that the flagellation of the men would take place the next night. Accordingly I went at the appointed time. The church was nearly dark, only four or five small candles being lighted at the high altar. It was difficult even to see the forms of those who entered and took their stations in different parts of the building. Presently two priests came out from the sacristy and commenced a mournful service, in which the congregation joined, and which had the most dolorous effect. While this was in progress a priest passed around the church distributing the lashes to be used by the penitents. At length three loud raps were given on the door leading to vestibule, when it was suddenly closed and fastened. The lights were removed and the most perfect darkness ensued, painful to the eye. It was a darkness that could be felt. Presently some one near the high altar commenced in a musical voice, the tones of which were modulated to give it effect, a discourse upon the sufferings of Christ. His manner was at first perfectly unimpassioned and his words were measured with the precision and uttered with the beauty of poetry. It was altogether the most musical Italian to which I have ever listened. He became more animated until, at a certain point, the whole congregation commenced whipping themselves. The noise of the lashing nearly drowned every other sound, but a dolorous chant was commenced and responded to by those who were engaged in the flagellation, making the scene one of the most singular character. After some time had elapsed, a bell was rung for this form of penance to cease, but it was some minutes before the summons was obeyed by all. The candles were brought back, the door was opened, and the ceremony was over. One after another those who had taken part in it, and who were not priests but ordinary citizens, retired, probably supposing that they had either atoned for many sins or added greatly to their virtue by this act of will-worship, as if God could be appeased or pleased with such a service. There was no attempt at concealment, any one that chose could enter the church before the signal was given for fastening the door. I was careful to secure a place on a platform at a convenient distance from the lashes of the multitude, and from this point, in the midst of the most abject darkness that I remember ever to have felt, I contemplated the scene with the same feelings, which I should regard the self-laceration of the devotees of the forms of heathenism which prevail at the present day, or of those in the time of Elijah, who "cried aloud and cut themselves after their manner with knives and lancets, till the blood gushed out upon them."

Habitations of Cruelty.

The present state of the Fejee is deplorable in the extreme, notwithstanding the numerous triumphs of the gospel there. A few incidents given in Wesleyan Missionary Notices by an eyewitness, illustrate the actual condition of the islanders:

"Strangling of widows has engaged our frequent attention, and called forth our utmost energies. Six or eight women have been directly saved from this inhuman practice by our interposition, and several others indirectly and principally by the influence of what we have done. Some of these have subsequently lapsed. These scenes require no ordinary promptitude and sacrifice. We have to adopt the Feejean national custom of presenting property when requesting a favor; and hitherto each life has involved the expense of about £1.

"But sometimes our interference is prevented, and sometimes it is spurned and ineffectual. A few months ago a man died in a leathen town within a mile of ours. Mr. Malvern and I at once hastened to the abode of death; but the people, fearing our arrival, and having heard of our success in other quarters, had already strangled the widow. We entered the house; there were the husband and wife both sleeping in death. We examined the woman's body; but the last spark of life was extinguished. Ah! and there stood the son of those now dead, who with fiendish expression lifted up his hands, and told us that by those hands that mother died!

"Ah! was our language, 'this is seen in heaven; this will not be forgotten in heaven; its punishment will follow.'

"A few weeks afterward I stood by an open grave in that town. I had gone in pursuit of the widow of a young man brought home a corpse from war. Her friends had consigned her to our care, and she had escaped from us. I stood by the open grave, that I might witness the ceremony of a heathen burial; the corpse was brought out shrouded in mats; a bullet had pierced the brain. I looked upon the dead, I recognized the features—it was the matricide!

"Ah! I exclaimed, as the corpse was laid in its last resting place, 'did we not speak the truth when we said, "his sin was seen in heaven; it was written in heaven; its punishment would follow!"'

"Several women have, in spite of our efforts, been strangled; and wherever there is a son, he is chosen to be the principal agent in the murder of his mother. Within my own knowledge, a father has, with his own hands suffocated (by choking or gagging) his own daughter who was sick. One day, standing by the corpse of a warrior,

painted and blackened as if for war, the club lying by his side, I turned round to his brother, and inquired the cause of his death. The reply from that brother was, 'He was very ill, and so I suffocated him.'

Infanticide is written on another page of Feejean life. I wish to confine my illustrations as much as possible to cases that bear directly upon the point, and that have passed under the immediate notice of myself, or other missionaries, or credible informants. Nothing do I state on mere rumour. A woman brought me a child who, from want of proper treatment, was nearly dead. I undertook to prescribe for it, if the mother would for a time reside in the house of one of my servants, so that I might see that it met with proper attention. My treatment was successful; the disease was subdued, the child could again run about, talk, and eat; in a day or two the mother could have returned to her friends, but maternal patience was exhausted, and one night she suffocated it. A man was informed that his wife had given birth to a daughter. Hearing of its sex, he at once directed it to be strangled. Again, a female child was spared for several months; its death was then resolved upon by its parents. They dug a deep hole in the centre of the earthen floor of their house—the father flung into this grave his helpless and innocent babe. He then cast some heavy stones with violence upon it, and filled up the grave with earth. These inhuman parents still occupy that house. They daily tread over the decaying remains of their murdered child. Such is Feejee at the present time.

Search for Wives.

Where do men usually discover the women who afterwards become their wives, is a question we have occasionally heard discussed, and the custom has invariably become of value to young lady readers. Chance has much to do in the affair; but then there are important governing circumstances. It is certain that few men make a selection from any of the places of public gaiety; and nearly as few are influenced in what may be called showing off in the streets, or by allurements of dress. Our conviction is; that ninety-nine hundredths of all the finery with which women decorate or load their persons go for nothing as far as husband-catching is concerned. Where and how then do men find their wives? In the quiet homes of their parents or guardians—at the firesides, where the domestic feelings are alone demonstrated. These are the charms which most surely attract the high as well as the humble. Against these, all the finery and airs in the world sink into insignificance.

We shall illustrate this by an anecdote, which, though not new, will not be the worse for being again told:—In the year 1773, Peter Burrell, Esq. of Beckenham, in Kent, whose health was rapidly declining, was advised by his physicians to go to Spa for the recovery of his health. His daughters feared that those who had only motives entirely mercenary would not pay him that attention which he might expect from those who, from duty and affection united, would feel the greatest pleasure in ministering to his ease and comfort, they therefore resolved to accompany him.

They proved that it was not a spirit of dissipation and gaiety that led them to Spa, for they were not to be seen in any of the gay and fashionable circles—they were never out of their father's company, and never stirred from home, except to attend him either to take the air or drink the waters—in a word, they lived a most reclusive life in the midst of a town then the resort of the most illustrious and fashionable personages of Europe. This exemplary attention to their father procured these three amiable sisters the admiration of all the English at Spa, and was the cause of their elevation to that rank in life to which their merits gave them so just a title. They all were married to noblemen—one to the Earl of Beverley, another to the Duke of Hamilton, and afterwards to the Marquis of Exeter, and a third to the Duke of Northumberland—and it is justice to them to say that they reflected honour on their rank rather than derived any from it.

Fancy and Faith.

We have been sometimes greatly impressed with the manner in which some are effected by ideas presented to the mind, though they have not even a shadow of reason to regard these ideas as true. It appears evident, that, in such cases, there is a want of distinguishing what is purely and properly fancy, from what is properly considered faith.

In fancy, we merely think, or have a thought before the mind—in faith we not only think but believe, or think the idea before the mind true, for some reason or other which seems, to us at least, to prove it.

For example the thought that God is at a distance and indifferent to you, comes before your mind. It is perhaps strongly and vividly presented to you. Without asking whether you have any evidence to prove such a thought true, you are apt to regard it as something which you believe, while it is merely something which you fancy or imagine, or, perhaps, something which is presented to your mind by the tempter, and which you do not believe at all. That which is properly speaking believed, is regarded true for certain reasons which are taken to be evidence of its truth.—Your voluntary consideration of that evidence leads to the conclusion or belief that the idea is true. When you have no reason, real or imaginary, for regarding an idea true, then however strongly you may fancy it, you are not properly believing