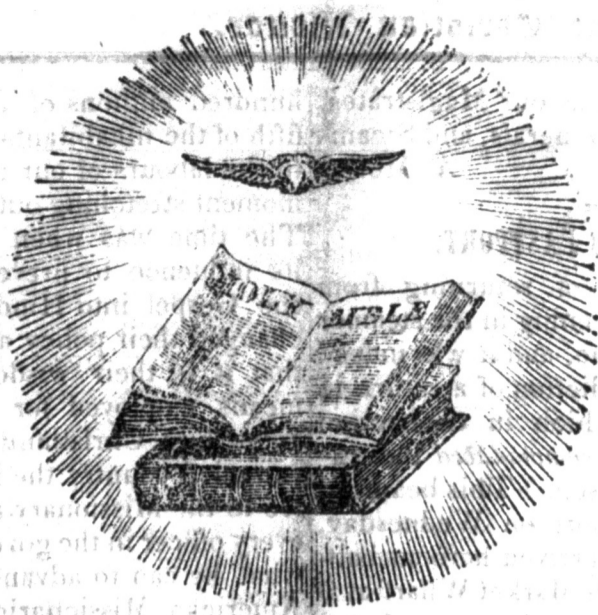


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COMMON BLESSINGS.

Closer than the morning's gemming,
Blessing-studded is our way,—
Mercy after mercy hemming
Every winding, where we stray:

Air to breathe, and sun to lighten;
Flowers of morn's and evening's hue,
Fructifying as they brighten,—
Life-sustaining fruitage too;—

Beauty ever for our scanning—
Happy are the eyes that see!
Fragrance-freighted breezes, fanning
Brows that sometimes fevered be:—

Music with the daybreak, thrilling
Every stronghold of delight;
Mountain pass and valley filling,
Sweet and solemn tones of night;—

Human footprints ever near us;
Hands that speak, in clasping ours;
Words that gently fall to cheer us;
Eyes that beam, like spirit flowers;—

Earth to till, and hands to labour,
Sweetest bread therewith to gain;
Power to help a suffering neighbour;
"Shall a living man complain?"—

Freedom's birthright—thought unfettered;
Teachings everywhere we turn,
In the book that God has lettered,
Something, ever new, to learn,—

"Nature's Own," 'tis joy to read it,
But there is a better still:
Give us, Father, grace to heed it,
Blessed record of thy will.

M. McNART.

[From the Watchman and Reflector.]

A GLANCE AT BULGARIA.

Embarking at Ibrailia—The River-Steamer—The Fortress—Town of Silistria—Turkish Pride—Customs and Contrasts—Awkwardness—Fertility of Bulgaria—Rutshuk Appearance of the Town—Junction of the Land and Water Route from Constantinople—Widdin—Turkish Monopoly of Trade—Visit at the House of a Turkish Moolah—Extent of Bulgaria—The Balkan—Shumlah—Fortunes and Character of the Bulgarians.

At Ibrailia, the chief commercial port of Wallachia, we left the sea steamer which we had reason to remember so gratefully on account of its having borne us bravely through a terrible storm on the Black Sea, and went on board the steamer Galathea, of lighter draught, commanded by a portly and gentlemanly Bulgarian captain. The cabin is well arranged for the comfort of passengers, and gave promise of a pleasant trip. It is adorned with large windows and mirrors, is destitute of berths, but furnished with broad cushioned seats on which the sleeping is done in oriental style. The boat is flat-bottomed, draws but three and a half feet of water, is impelled by an engine of 80 horse power, and stems the current at the rate of six miles an hour. The importance of these particulars those only can appreciate who can contrast this luxurious mode of travelling with those open boats and scows, which, till of late, tasked the hardiest powers of endurance. Along the Turkish shores, turbaned men and veiled women have crowded with astonishment to behold this strange machine with which "the Christian dogs" are driving through the waters of the Danube.

The first Bulgarian port which we had an opportunity of viewing was the fortress-town of Silistria, distinguished by its long and stern

resistance to the Russian arms. It was at last surrendered to the Czar and held by him as a pledge for the payment of a sum of money guaranteed by Turkey in the treaty of Adrianople, and now, the condition being fulfilled, it has been restored to the Sultan. A splendid line of ramparts greets the eye along the bank of the river. The interior of the town, however, is far from being splendid, built as it is of small wooden houses with no regard to beauty or comfort. All the architectural skill of Silistria is lavished on the fortifications. The Turkish shop-keepers have an air of extreme indolence as they sit amidst their merchandize, their feet bent beneath them, smoking their long pipes with a composure so settled that it seems as if a new thought had never ruffled it.

As a people they have no skill in manual art. They are foes to improvement because they abhor innovation. A new idea is scouted as a vile intruder. They are too proud to be indebted to a Frank for anything. If by chance one of them had obtained the knowledge of a foreign language, particularly of a Frank nation, he would wish to conceal the fact from his neighbors. In almost every line of life they adopt modes of action exactly the reverse of those practiced by Christian people. In building a house they begin at the top, and actually construct the foundation last of all. An American stone-mason stands to do his work; a Turk sits while using the trowel. An American carpenter pushes the saw from him; a Turk draws it to him, the teeth being set inwards. An American barber, in shaving his customer, draws the razor towards himself; a Turk pushes it from him. In riding on horseback, the Frank soldier uses long stirrups, and sits erect; the Turk uses short stirrups, and sits with his knees bent up towards his chin. This Tartar race, who have seated themselves in Christian Europe, are still like their fathers, and "diverse from all other people."

Near the shore at Silistria, we saw a Turk attempting to guide a boat through the current. His mismanagement was so ridiculous as to be a source of amusement to our German passengers. "Does it not give you pain?" said one to me, "to see human beings so clumsy?" We had scarcely predicted that this poor oarsman would have a cold bath before he reached home, when his boat capsized and gave the Franks around an opportunity to show their good will by kindly assisting him. In all that relates to manual skill, the Turks are personifications of awkwardness, unless their dexterous horsemanship be considered an exception. With all their points of difference, however, we could not but notice that in one respect they were like our German and Hungarian companions; that is, in their taste for smoking. In this, they cannot be surpassed; they love to smoke, to smoke long pipes, and to smoke without ceasing.

Proceeding up the Danube from Silistria to Rutshuk, the Bulgarian side has an aspect more inviting than the Wallachian, being more finely sloped, more richly cultivated, and adorned both with forest and fruit trees. The river expands itself into lakes, divides itself capriciously, and forms numerous islands. Fruit is abundant and cheap; grapes as choice as any in Portugal sell for a cent a pound, and it is said that water melons, in their season, attain an enormous size and may be obtained at prices proportionately low. Nature has been bountiful to Bulgaria, and nothing but a true Christian civilization is necessary to render it an Eden.

Rutshuk is a fortress town, containing about 100,000 inhabitants, composed of Turks, Greeks, Armenians and Jews. Here fountains and coffee-houses gratify the Turkish

taste for personal cleanliness and idle lounging; and we learned with pleasure that schools for boys had appeared among the Turks of this place, indicating a tendency to progress and improvement. Some of the houses have glass windows; but as few dwellings face the street, the town is not very inviting to a pedestrian. A long bazaar exhibits signs of a lively trade. Indigo, corn, and cloth are sent in large quantities to Vienna, and the Turks here, have a more lively manner and a higher degree of civility than is usually attributed to them.

Rutshuk is the terminating point of the overland route from Constantinople to the Danube. Having entertained the project, for a time, of passing over this route on horseback, we sought information from all sources respecting the road, the country and people of Bulgaria. We did not repent of our conclusion, however, to take a steam voyage on the Black Sea, in pursuing which, we first touched Bulgaria at Varna on its eastern border and now found ourselves on its northern shores. We did not, indeed, hail Rutshuk with that joyous emotion which the weary land-traveller experiences when its tall white chimneys first greet his eyes, when the waters of the Danube here sparkle before him in the sunbeams, and assure him that he may exchange his hard saddle for the couch of the steamer; but we left it with agreeable impressions of its character as a Turkish town, with vivid remembrances of that fortress before which the hordes of Russia long recoiled and of that soil where many thousands of these northern barbarians found a grave.

After the interval of another day we enjoyed the opportunity to explore the fortress town of Widdin, one of the most important places of Bulgaria. Although it has an aspect of greater neatness than we had expected to see, the shops and marts of trade wear an air of languor and stagnation. There is good reason for this in the fact that the Pacha monopolizes all the business, and fills his own coffers without the fear of rivalry. He is said to be worth half a million of dollars, is as great a trader now as ever, and was waiting for our boat in order to send a large quantity of sheep-skins to Vienna. Thus, the Turkish government cuts the sinews of commerce. The Pacha buys his place of the Sultan at a high price, then demands the half of all the produce as a tribute, and for what else he buys, pays what he likes. When any thing is imported by a foreigner there is a tax demanded on entering the port, and an inland tax also by every different Governor through whose dominions the article may pass—a tax for ingress and egress. Thus a selfish tyranny crushes enterprise and keeps the people poor.

The Moolah, or Judge of the Civil Court of Widdin, had been our fellow-passenger from Constantinople. He was affable and polite, and invited two ladies of our company, (wives of missionaries from India,) to visit his wife. They accepted his invitation, and on their return told us they had been kindly received. The exterior of the house was poor, but it was splendidly furnished within. The lady was richly dressed, having a diamond ring on each finger, and her manners were agreeable. But then, her mind was uncultivated, her thoughts were childish, and all her inquiries related to the merest trifles. Not a question did she ask respecting the home and country of her visitors, not one that evinced a laudable curiosity, or a desire for useful knowledge, but confined her inquisitiveness to such points as the health and age of the ladies, the number of their children, how many they had lost and how many were living, and things of this nature. It was truly deplorable to see a woman occupying so high a station in life, with a

mind so dwarfish and meanly furnished. Nevertheless, such is the effect which the religion of Mahomet produces on the position of women universally, treating her as a soulless creature, the toy and slave of man, and at the same time deprives him of that refining, genial influence which she was designed to exert on his character. The elevation of women is the trophy of Christianity.

Not very far above Widdin the river Temok, (the ancient Timacus,) a small stream, empties into the Danube, and forms the boundary between Bulgaria and Servia. The former extends from this line to the Black Sea, and from the Danube to the Balkan Mountains, which separate it from Roumelia, the ancient Thrace. This lofty range is 500 miles in length, and is one great reliance of Turkey against the danger of a Russian invasion.—The Turks, so comparatively weak in the open battle-field have done wonders in defending forts and mountain passes. At Shumlah, a beautiful town of 60,000 inhabitants, lying at the foot of the Balkan, they have always succeeded in arresting the progress of a Russian army. This success is the pride and boast of Shumlah, a place which is the central point of communication between Constantinople and all parts of the Danube. It occupies a splendid position, whence landscapes of rare beauty expand themselves to the view, and displays within itself an unusual scene of life and activity. The mosques, the domes and glittering minarets which abound in the upper, or Turkish portion of the city, the constant arrival of travellers from all quarters, the variety of costumes which enliven the streets, the gardened slopes decorated by the hand of Art, all combine to form a picture which the visitor can never forget.

The Bulgarians came originally from the banks of the Wolga, nearly twelve centuries ago. They sustained themselves against the Greek empire, defeated Constantine 3d, and Justinian 2d, were established as a Province by Basilius, and brought under the Turks by the renowned Bajazet. They were taught Christianity by the Greek church, received Greek bishops, and now have worship performed in the Greek language. They have few schools, are quite illiterate, but are distinguished by the virtues that honour a rural population. While the Turkish peasantry are barbarous, cruel, inhospitable, sensual and sullen, the Bulgarians, are kind, generous, polite, cheerful, and exhibit those very traits of character which dignify the Swiss mountaineers, and endear the name of Switzerland to the hearts of mankind. As the spirit of Western institutions is proceeding fast to renovate the Eastern world, it will find in the Bulgarians apt materials for its plastic hand to mould anew, and to prepare for a distinguished place in that great fabric of Christian civilization which it is destined to rear.

Slave Trade in Brazil.

The slave trade, from all accounts, is carried on almost as extensively as ever, between Brazil and Africa. The dealers in Brazil first send a vessel with goods, which the traders in Africa use in buying slaves, or "black diamonds," as they are called. Small craft are used, and a vessel of fifty tons often carries as many as 450 slaves, at from \$60 to \$80 each. A Baltimore clipper is said to have made eleven voyages to Bahia (where there are a dozen vessels engaged in the business) in four years, and cleared \$400,000. The traffic is illegal, but the Brazilian Government winks at this abuse of the laws. The goods sent out to purchase slaves with are generally of British manufacture, and composed of munitions of war, rum, and things of like character. Formerly, by treaty with Great Britain,