

# CHRISTIAN



# VISITOR.

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REV. E. D. VERY,

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

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[From the Watchman and Reflector.]

## ALMOST HOME.

Recently an aged lady, whose days are nearly numbered, on being questioned with regard to her spiritual condition, calmly replied, "I'm almost home!"

When 'mid the busy scenes of life,  
Victorious in temptation's strife—  
With treasures stored in Heaven above  
Through faith in Christ's redeeming love,  
The aged matron feels the breath,  
The icy touch of ruthless death,  
Resigned, she views the world to come,  
And feels, with joy, she's "almost home."

The world can now no comfort give,  
Nor from the grasp of death relieve;  
Its pleasures all have passed away  
Like vapor 'neath the burning ray.  
But trusting in redeeming grace,  
She forward looks to that bright place  
Beyond life's dark and dreary gloom,  
And feels, indeed she's "almost home."

What though affliction be her cup,  
And joy in sorrow swallowed up—  
Though soon the tender cord be broke  
That binds to earth, by Death's fell stroke,  
She hath a love that's purer far  
Than all the ties of friendship are,  
That lights her pathway to the tomb,  
And makes her feel she's "almost home."

As when the raging tempest o'er  
The gallant ship rides safe to shore,  
No longer tossed on angry surge  
Or cast upon destruction's verge—  
So she, with trust in heavenly power  
To fearless meet the trying hour,  
When safely past life's billowy foam  
Will reach her bright, eternal home.

Worcester, May 1, 1849. L.

The following will be read by many with peculiar interest, and perhaps the more on learning that it was written by Bro. Phillips, a Welsh Baptist Minister of Massachusetts. Bro. Phillips visited this province several years since, and is yet very kindly remembered.—  
Editor.

[From the Watchman and Reflector.]

## The Character and present state of the Welsh Language.

The Welsh are often said to bear a striking resemblance to the Highland Scotch and the Irish. But this is said, not so much from observation, as from the supposition that, because they are all of Celtic origin, they must be alike. But those who say this overlook the fact, that mankind, by the admixture of races and by cultivation, are susceptible of as great changes as animals and vegetables. As far as I have been able to compare, the Welsh resemble the English more than they do any other people. It would be very strange if these two people were no very much alike, since they have for many generations professed the same religion, and lived under the same laws. The difference between them is growing less.

The great barrier to a perfect union is the language. The English people do not disguise their desire to abolish the Welsh language. The government, since the political union of the two people, has been so administered, as to make it exceedingly disadvantageous to the Welsh people to be ignorant of the English language. All laws, and all legal instruments and trials must be in that language. Should a Welshman, wholly ignorant of English, wish to lend or borrow money, buy or sell real estate, or make a will, he must have it done for him in an unknown tongue. If he commit a crime, he cannot tell

what the counsellors or the judges say for or against him. The Welshman is not, on account of his birth, placed under any civil disabilities, but he cannot fill any office under government, without a thorough knowledge of the English language, nor can he, on his own account carry on extensive business without the same qualification. Had the government acted in this matter on more enlightened principles, they might have accomplished their end before now, without wounding the national pride of the Welsh. Had they long ago established free schools through the principality, on the same liberal plan as those of New England, the Welsh would now be numbered among the dead languages.

But such a result as this the Welsh people are extremely anxious to avoid. Their national pride is immense. They deem all other languages meagre and feeble compared with their own. The "Cymraeg," indeed, is, or rather, was, a most noble language. It was in it that the renowned bards, Taliesin, Aneurin and Llywarch, "the venerable," discoursed and sung ages before the English language had an existence. It was in it that Havel Dda, the Welsh ideal of a good prince and political wisdom, legislated about the time that the Saxons were putting on the Norman yoke. The bards paid great attention to the language, and brought it to a very high degree of perfection. When well spoken, it is more sonorous and musical than the English language. There in the Welsh forty-three simple elementary sounds—nine more than in the English. These were formerly represented by forty-three letters. This ancient alphabet resembles the old Hebrew characters.—The Roman letters now universally used, are far from being adequate to represent all these elementary sounds. Several double letters, and in one instance, three letters are used to express single articulate sounds.

The Welsh verb, pronoun and adjective are more perfect than the corresponding parts of speech in English. Euphonic changes are more extensive than in the Greek language. The plural of nouns is formed in two ways—by change of vowels and by terminations. All substantives, however, may form their plural by terminations. There are twelve different terminations of the plural, and these may be used indifferently for all words, "though some are, by popular custom, appropriated to words of a particular character, that is to say, names of living beings have one class; inanimate things have another; and abstract or collective, substantives have also their terminations. Such a number of plural endings affords a vast scope for varying the expressions, and is particularly convenient for enriching poetical compositions." The adjective to a considerable extent, admits of the variation of gender and number. But the use of the plural form with plural nouns is optional. There are also terminations of nouns expressive of diminutiveness, contempt and endearment. The adjective, besides the ordinary mode of comparison, admits of prefixes, which enhance, modify or change the meaning. In construction, the substantive is placed before the adjective. For the purposes of oratory and poetry, for moving the feelings and making deep impressions, the Welsh was, in its best days, superior to the English. In the departments of science and philosophy, the English has the advantage.—The Welsh can be improved from its own resources beyond what the English can—the English can more readily be enriched from without.

Yet, excellent as the language is, and dear as it is to the Welshmen, it is the greatest obstacle to his advancement. It is spoken exclusively only by some four or five hundred

thousand. In two extensive districts of Wales, the English alone is used. The wealthier portion of the population, where the Welsh prevails, understand English. All the clergy of the Establishment and most of the Dissenting ministers can read and speak English. Owing to these circumstances, the sale of Welsh books is so limited, as to make them very costly. Large and expensive works cannot be published. Still, considering how confined the use of the language is, it may be deemed very rich in poetry and theology.—But it is fast falling into decay. I never have known of a Welsh school. Elementary reading books are very scarce. A Welsh grammar, arithmetic and dictionary, wholly Welsh, I never have seen. There are grammars of the Welsh language, and Welsh-English and English-Welsh dictionaries. It would be difficult to find a preacher among the Dissenters in Wales—and they are the most strenuous for the preservation of the old language and of distinct nationality—who has ever studied the grammar of his own mother's tongue.—The consequence is, that the language is now in a very degenerate state. It is thickly bespattered with foreign words, and the syntax is becoming more and more like the English. The English language is gaining apace, and as the education will improve, it will gain more rapidly. Quite a number of English weekly newspapers are now published, in Wales, and about fourteen monthly magazines, in Welsh.

Twenty years ago, education in Wales was in a miserable state. There was no system, no acknowledged standard, but every man did as was good in his own eyes. Free schools were very rare. In market towns, there were private institutions where the common English branches were taught. Here and there through the country, a minister, wishing to eke out a scanty salary, was in the habit of taking a limited number of scholars. In thinly peopled districts, years might pass away without any kind of school. More populous regions could command better advantages.—The ordinary branches taught in rural districts were reading, writing and arithmetic. The teachers, with scarcely an exception, were very incompetent. They were men who had run through their fortunes, or had in some way been disabled to follow their ordinary business. It was very seldom that any of them knew how to read English, much less to understand and speak it. Indeed, there was no effort made to teach the language at all. Their pronunciation could not be worse.—Matters now are greatly changed, and there are indications of still greater and more beneficial changes.

Still, there was, twenty years since, much mental discipline in Wales. Scientific and literary, well and extensively read persons, were few, but there were many wide awake and active intellects, sound thinkers, and acute reasoners—persons who could criticise sermons with far keener judgment than the more highly educated farmers and mechanics of New England. Their education was theological. They united, in a very high degree, the most implicit faith with the greatest freedom of inquiry. By the absence of newspapers, books and politics, they were shut up to their faith. All classes of people were in the habit of repeating what they had heard, as they returned from meeting. But it was the Bible class and the Sabbath school that did the most towards cultivating the intellect.

Justice Abbott, in the court of king's bench, (England,) decided, and laid it down as law, that a tenant has no right to remove the trees and shrubs he has planted on the premises he occupied.

## A STEAMBOAT INCIDENT.

It was a pleasant evening, when a few christian friends were making their passage from New-York to Boston. The steamboat was gliding swiftly over the smooth surface. These friends were sitting together behind the ladies' cabin, retired from the rest of the passengers. Here they commenced singing familiar hymns. And the music of Coronation, and other popular airs, eventually attracted no small company both of performers and spectators. It so happened, that there was among the passengers, unknown to the christian singers, a famous comic actor. He, it seems, conceived the purpose of amusing himself by acting a part somewhat unusual for him.—So with all the gravity of a staid christian, he addressed the persons that had been singing, as his christian friends, and informed them that there was a missionary on board, and proposed that a contribution should be taken up for him. The others remarked, that it was proper that they should first have an opportunity, to see and hear him, that they might judge of his claims upon their patronage. The actor assented; and though more accustomed to acting Jim Crow, than to arranging the preliminaries for a sermon, he went direct to the captain and got permission to occupy the cabin with an address by the missionary. He then went to the cabin and with all gravity required the card-players to lay aside their occupations and make way for the missionary. The obedience was instantaneous and universal. The missionary was introduced, a young modest preacher connected with some Baptist mission—a stranger alike to the actor and to the company. Being thus called upon by he knew not whom, he could do no less than to give them a discourse appropriate to his vocation. He did it, and his hearers were deeply interested in the facts which he related, and the appeals which he made.

At the close of his discourse, the Comedian arose, as grave as before, and remarked that he had previously determined to commence the contribution, by giving five dollars, but he had been so much interested in what he heard, that he should double the sum and commence with ten dollars. He then carried round the hat, and gathered a contribution of more than thirty dollars, and paid it over to the missionary. The scene passed away; the passengers retired to rest, and none but those who knew the man, had any suspicion, that he was acting a comedy for his own amusement. Indeed, in the morning he was seen introducing his wife to the missionary, all appearing as grave as before.

But the special point of the incident is that which reveals the providence of God. The missionary informed some of the contributors, afterwards, how opportunely the contribution came. He was on a journey, and his money was exhausted, and he was in great straits, and previous to this unlooked for occurrence, he was casting in his mind with great perplexity, what he should do? So it seems that while his thoughts were thus laboring, God's providence was moving the mind of a comedian—one far enough from all sympathy with missionaries, to find his sport in bringing a supply.

There seems in this to be a parallel with Elijah's being fed by ravens. As ravens might be supposed to be the last birds to bring meat to men, such a Jim Crow would seem to be the last to supply the wants of a penniless servant of God.—*Puritan Recorder.*

A salad was a rare treat in England in the early part of the Reign of Henry VIII.—Queen Catharine, when she wished for one, had to send to Holland or Flanders for it.