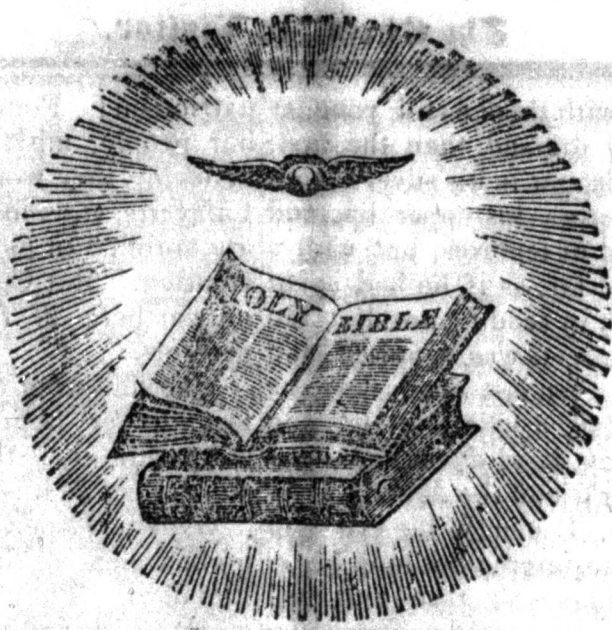


CHRISTIAN



VISITOR.

A Family Newspaper: devoted to

Religious & General Intelligence

REV. E. D. VERY,

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

EDITOR.

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[FOR THE CHRISTIAN VISITOR.]

FRAGMENT.

Those clouds float o'er the starry canopy
Like the strange deeds and legends of the past;
And the low liquid murmur of the south
Steals through the garlands of the wilderness,
Oh very sweetly.

Fair one, of wild days,
Thou Moon! which risest midst the centuries
Clad in the vestment of Eternity,
The cordon of the dark thick years is round
Thee.

And thou hast beautified the sapphire vault,
And gleam'd upon the marble solitudes—
The Cities of the Desolate, where day
And night and change and rolling destiny
Are marked no more, but mingle.

It is sweet
To hear the many murmurs of the flood,
Which are its many voices; while the ray
Sports like an infant with its silver crest;
And the impassion'd minstrels perch around
Above the banks of moss and violet,
And the wild branches bend with leaf and
flower
Until they kiss the billows.

Very fair,
And like the voice of a beloved one
Which hath been hid for many winter days,
Is this romantic spot: And I could live,
Blest as the solitary anchorite,
A life of individual happiness.
Feasting upon this scene a century.

X.

[From the Christian Watchman & Reflector.]

ADVENTURES IN PERSIA.

The last number of the New York Independent contains a letter of uncommon interest from one of its editors, Rev. Dr. Bacon, dated at Mosul, on the 4th of June. It gives a very minute account of the writer's attempt, with his son and the Rev. Mr. Marsh, to cross the mountains of Kurdistan from Mosul to Oroomiah, the perilous adventures they met with on the way, and their final return without being able to reach their destination. Also, in the last number of the New York Observer, there is a letter quite as interesting from the son of Dr. Bacon, giving a similar account of the hair-breadth escapes of himself and party while in the mountains. We condense and extract from the first, remarking by way of preface, that Oroomiah is the residence of large numbers of Nestorian Christians, who at this moment are subjected to the most cruel persecutions under the Government of Persia. In papers received by the very last mail from abroad, we read that orders have been sent into the mountains from Teheran, to have a regiment formed of 1000 Christians, rank and file, and that 300 poor Nestorians, passing from Tabreez to Teflis in search of work, were detained, and forced to enlist. One of three members of the same family, all of whom were thus impressed into service, on saying that he was not strong enough to be a soldier, was tied up to the triangle, compelled to undergo a severe whipping, and then, half-mad with wounds that were festering all over his body, made to parade for half an hour with a heavy musket on his shoulder. After this, he was asked how he relished the first lesson as a soldier of the Shah! On hearing that an order had been issued for the regiment of Christians, Nestorian youths of all classes are stated to have abandoned their homes, and fled to the Ottoman boundaries for protection. Such is the condition of things, as disclosed to us by the last mail, in that region which Dr. Bacon sought to penetrate, and whence he was too happy to escape with his life, after having been abused, robbed, and threatened with murder. Is there no way for Christian nations to put a stop to these deeds of atrocity? But we proceed to the letter.

Dr. Bacon and his party left Mosul on the 21st of May last, just before sunset, crossed the Tigris, rode through the line of mounds that mark the site of Nineveh, and on the 22d, they reached Akkre, a little town in one of the gaps that form an entrance into the Kurdish mountains. This town, though dirty and comfortless, containing a population of 500 families, including thirty Christian ones of the Chaldean and Jacobite sects, is yet embowered among vineyards and gardens, in the midst of fig and pomegranate trees, and unfailing streams. Being delayed here, they attended on Sunday, at sunrise, the morning worship in the Jacobite church, of which an account is given:

We were conducted to the place by a deacon who had been sent to wait upon us. On our arrival, the service immediately began, though we three were at first almost a majority of the congregation. The service was commenced in the church-yard, under the open sky, and was continued and concluded in the church—a cavern, partly natural, as I suppose, and partly artificial, in the precipitous side of the mountain. Lessons and prayers, with the exception of a chapter in Arabic, were in the ancient Syriac, of which the priests, the assisting deacons, the worshipping congregation, and we American spectators were all equally ignorant; but as I understood the proceedings, that part which was performed in the open air was the "ante-communion service," and that which was performed within doors was the communion service and mass. The old cavern-sanctuary was dimly lighted with wax candles; in shape the excavation was "cruciform," and as to the position of the altar, it was duly "orientated." Our friends of the "Ecclesiological Society," would have been delighted to have been present, and to hear the chanting of that old Syriac liturgy which lingers among those mountains, a faint and dying echo of the Christianity which was proclaimed here in the primitive ages. I was not unconscious of some sympathy with such feelings as theirs would have been; but when I saw and heard the worship which was offered to the sacramental elements, and the noisy mummery which attended the supposed conversion of these elements into the real body and blood of Christ, I felt a sentiment of mingled pity and disgust, with which I would that those ecclesiological triflers would more profoundly sympathize. During the heat of the day, we resorted, in accordance with a previous arrangement, to the comfortable shade in the garden of a Jacobite deacon, and there Mr. Marsh and our two servants had much religious conversation and discussion with a little company of Jacobites who were glad of an opportunity to learn something about Protestant opinions and practices.

The supposed distance between Akkre and Oroomiah is about six days' journey. On Monday, the 25th, about sunrise, they left the village, and began to scale the first great outwork of the Kurdish mountains. They reached the Zab river that night in company with some Kurds who had joined them during the day. On the 26th, after seven hours of laborious progress, they reached Biyeh, where they found a hospitable reception, having spread their beds on the roof of a house. An adventure is here narrated:

The house which gave us its little flat roof for a resting-place, was built against the hill-side, so that on the rear it was not more than four feet above the ground, and a projecting rock conveniently near served us instead of ladder or staircase. That our baggage might be safe from nocturnal pillagers and "snatchers up of unconsidered trifles," and that we and our men might sleep without anxiety on that score, we hired an old man of the village to keep watch on the roof through the night.

In the course of the night Mr. Marsh was awakened by a low sound of voices in a kind of suppressed conversation. Raising himself a little from the pillow, and propping himself on his elbow, he saw in the star-light several men—he thinks there were six—stealthily approaching the house towards one of the corners where the roof comes nearest to the ground. Observing that he was awake they suddenly stopped, and after exchanging a few whispers, one of them came upon the roof with his gun in his hand, and without giving any answer to Mr. Marsh, who addressed him in Arabic—to him probably an unknown tongue—he entered into conversation in a low voice with our sentinel, who appeared to have been asleep and just then to have waked from slumber. By this time I had begun to be aware that something was going on around me; and Mr. M. spoke to me, and told me that there was a man upon the roof. Our unwelcome visiter soon descended and went off with his companions. Khudr, who had been waked from a profound and well earned sleep, and who like the rest of us, was not without alarm at what we had seen, inquired of our sentinel as to the meaning of all this. His report to us was that these were men of the village, who, returning home at a late hour, and perceiving that there had been an arrival of strangers, were curious to inquire about us. Satisfied with this explanation, we slept on till morning.

In the morning, another story was told them, that the men were from the next village, and intended to kill them. After a long and serious consultation among themselves and with their guide, they determined to go on. At a distance of two hours from Biyeh, by the base of a projecting ledge of rocks, an armed party of six men were waiting to receive them.

They first addressed our guide, and seemed disposed to quarrel with him for having taken us under his protection. It was explained to them that we were going to the agha: but after a brief conversation between them on one side, and the muleteers and Khudr on the other, they refused to let us pass without a present, or *bukshis*, of fifty piastres, a little more than two dollars. This we consented to give them, glad to escape at so cheap a rate; but we stipulated with them, and they accepted our proposal, that in return for our *bukshis* they should escort us to the agha. But here arose a new difficulty. We had not so much money in our pockets, and all that we and Khudr could make out was less than twenty piastres. The remainder of our travelling money was packed away among our luggage. We feared to unload a mule in the presence of such persons, whose forbearance was not likely to be proof against much temptation. Our proposal to pay a part of the money in advance, and the remainder on our arrival at the agha's house, was fiercely rejected, and while we were consulting for a moment among ourselves, they hastily primed and cocked their guns; three of them placed themselves in the narrowest part of the pass before us, and the other three leaped behind the rock, which served them as a parapet, and resting their long guns on the rock with a grin of fiendish gladness, took aim at us. Negotiation was obviously at an end. We gave them to understand that we surrendered, and immediately prepared to unload the mule in order to get at the writing case in which our money was deposited. In this emergency our chief muleteer, Mohammed, who had at first declined rendering us any such aid, offered to loan us as much as would make up the fifty piastres; and the matter being thus adjusted, we set forward under the charge of our stipendiary cohort.

After a while, the village of Melul agha was approached. Near it, in an isolated position, stood a castle, or small rectangular building.

Men, women and children came out to this castle to see them, apparently under great excitement.

We came to the platform before the door, and while we were in the act of dismounting, the rapacious scoundrels flew upon our two servants, tore from them the arms that were attached to their persons, slashing the straps and belts with their daggers, seized every thing that was in their pockets or girdles, stripped from their heads the caps which they wore bound round with handkerchiefs like turbans,—and all in a twinkling. At the same moment another snatched a handkerchief from the pocket of Mr. Marsh's linen coat, tearing out in his violence the buttonhole into which the corner of it was fastened, while still another tore the umbrella from the hand of my son. This was evidently a perilous place to come to; but on the appearance of the lord of the castle, *Melul agha*, the process of stripping was suddenly arrested, and something like order was restored. He was taller, and evidently stronger than any of his men, with some marks of superiority in his aspect and bearing. This was the agha to whom we had come for protection on our journey, and behold we were at the mercy of a band of savage robbers.

The chief directed them to a place under a spreading mulberry tree. It was noon-day. The savages kept near them. Soon, the guide came, and said the savages intended to kill them. They at once decided upon their course, and sent for the agha. The moment of suspense was favorable for prayer.

Not wishing to attract the attention of our Moslem captors, we made a only slight change of position, and our supplications were offered in a voice which none of them could hear.—With one voice and mind, we committed ourselves to the power, the care, the loving kindness of a redeeming God, to live or to die as his wisdom should determine. We prayed that if it were consistent with his counsels, we might be delivered out of the hands of these unreasonable and wicked men; and that he in whose hand are the hearts of men, and who can turn them as the rivers of water are turned, would so influence their thoughts, dividing their minds and turning their counsel into foolishness, as to baffle their purpose and procure our deliverance. If we were then and there to die, we would die trusting in Christ and saying, Lord Jesus receive our spirits; and we prayed that whatever should befall us might turn out for the furtherance of the gospel.—We prayed for the dear ones far away, bound to us by the tenderest ties of human affection, those faces, perhaps, we were never again to see among the living. For all their welfare, temporal and eternal, we committed them to our covenant God. We prayed for the dear churches in our native land in which we were specially interested, and for the universal kingdom of Christ. We prayed for these dark mountains, full of the habitations of cruelty, that the dayspring from on high might visit them, and that even the men that were thirsting for our blood might put on the nature of the lamb, and learn to sit at the feet of Jesus.

The guide returned. The Agha could not come until the cool of the day. So, with the best mind they could, they prepared their dinner. An incident during the repast brought the Agha suddenly among them.

He came striding up from the castle, and having satisfied himself as to the medicine-box, proceeded to search the bag from which it had been taken, and then required us to open all our luggage. In Mr. Marsh's writing case was a bag containing a thousand piastres, (about \$43 50,) all that remained of the money we had taken for our journey. In my own writing-case were sixty piastres belonging to Khudr. These two sums of money,