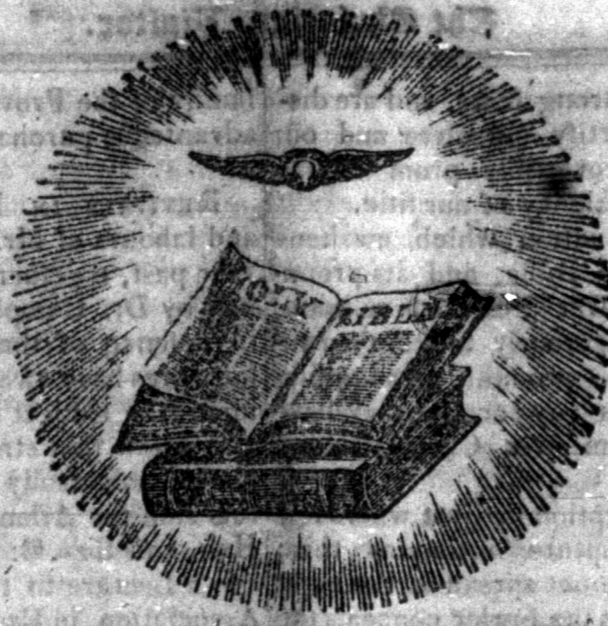


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REV. E. D. VERY,

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

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THE ANCIENT CAPITAL OF ENGLAND.

[From the Watchman and Reflector.]

Messrs. Editors.—Among the cities of England there are few more interesting to the traveller than Winchester, its ancient capital. Its peculiar glory as a royal residence, has departed, but the remains of former magnificence are well worth visiting.

Here dwelt Vespasian, father of Titus, the good emperor; here the famous Arthur, with his knights, assembled about the round table, which is still preserved in the Antiquarian Hall. Egbert, England's first king, was born and crowned in Winchester; and here also lived Canute, who, not far off, administered the memorable reproof to his impious courtiers. Alfred the Great held his court, died, and was buried in the old city; and greatest of them all, William of Wykeham, in Winchester, first displayed his genius; and here the fruits of his unrivalled munificence are still enjoyed. With bright anticipations of pleasure I started from London, and in two hours the Southwestern railway train left me in this fine old city. It is built on a declivity overlooking the river Itchen, which river in New England would pass for a very respectable brook. There are several hills in the neighbourhood, from which lovely views are obtained. The prospect from the barracks is indescribably fine. The building now occupied by the soldiers, which is on the highest point in the city, was built by Sir Christopher Wren, and intended as a palace for "our most religious sovereign, Charles the Second."

Passing down the Castle Hill, through a narrow street, lined with many old-fashioned gable-end Elizabethan houses, and spanned in one place by a massive Gothic archway, the grove surrounding the cathedral is reached.

Externally the structure has a mean appearance; lacking elevation, being "a long, low, black" pile. Entering the west door, a glorious view bursts upon you, extending nearly 600 feet. It is the largest cathedral in England. It was commenced in the year 1093, by Bishop Walkelin, carried on by various architects, and completed by William of Wykeham, 300 years after it was begun. Wykeham's tomb and chantry are the chief attractions here. Around it one delights to linger. It is a spot consecrated to genius and piety, there, surrounded by the magnificent creation of his own genius, reposes one, by many called the noblest man his country ever produced. The tomb and chantry, or small chapel, are very beautiful. They have been decorated, and are kept in repair by the Fellows of the two Colleges he founded in Oxford. The other chantries and tombs—and there are many—are highly decorated; Cardinal Beaufort's and Bishop Wulfete's gorgeously so. In the centre of the nave is the tomb of Gifford, one of the architects, of whom it is said, "He refused the splendor of the mitre for the poverty of the cow." On the top of the screen wall, at the east end of the choir, are six very ancient iron-bound chests, which contain the remains of the Saxon kings and prelates, King Ethelwolf, the father of Alfred, Canute, Eldred, &c. At the east end of the cathedral is the Lady Chapel, on the walls of which are very singular fresco paintings, representing scenes in Scripture history. They had been covered by a coat of whitewash, and were accidentally discovered a few years since. In this chapel the marriage ceremony between bloody Mary and the bigotted Philip of Spain, was performed. The chair on which her majesty sat that day, is still shown. But I must not detain you with the cathedral, attractive as it is. Passing out the north door, across the garden into the street, the arched gateway of the college is seen. This college was founded and endowed by Wykeham, in 1337. It,

together with Eton and the Universities of Oxford and Cambridge, was specially exempted, when all monastic establishments were suppressed and their revenues seized by "Henry the Eighth, of blessed memory." Upon the principal tower of the building is an effigy of the founder. Underneath it his coat of arms; and motto, "Manners makyth man." Manners in his day meant more than it does now, answering to virtues or morals. The College Chapel is a chaste and elegant building, of the decorated Gothic style. The east window is much admired. It is called the Jesse window. A vine is seen, having its root in the breast of a human figure representing Jesse. In each pane is a figure, and highest of all our Saviour, whose genealogy it is designed to portray. On the south side of the chapel are the cloisters. Cloisters are square, covered galleries, surrounding a small garden, and formerly used by the monks for exercising in. Nearly all cathedrals have cloisters or the ruins of them. In the centre of this little garden is a beautiful Gothic building once used as a miss house for the repose of the dead. It contains the college library. Entering another quadrangle, the recitation room is reached. The interior is furnished in the rudest manner—the desks being old oaken chests—the seats hewn oak plank.—The seats are the identical ones placed there when the College was founded, and are worn smooth by the uninterrupted usage of 433 years. Among the worthies who have sat on these old benches may be mentioned, Young, Collins, Otway and Warton. On the wall, above the master's seat, are painted a crosier and mitre, with the words in gilt letters, "Aut discite!" beneath, a pen and a sword, with the words, "Aut discite;" and under all, a cat-o-nine-tails, with the words, "Manet sors tertia caedi." Which freely rendered, words and pictures, means—Study, and you may be an author or a hero, possibly a bishop; but fail to study and you may depend upon a flogging.

Across the meadows, eastward, at the distance of a mile, rises a circular hill, crowned by a lovely grove. To the top of this hill, all the students are compelled to walk, at least four times a week. A good regulation, by which the physical man is cultivated. To this hill, many long years ago, a homesick student was accustomed to retire and in the grove retire. Here he composed the celebrated Dulce Domum, returned to the College and died.—This is the tradition. The sweet, familiar song of Home Sweet Home, is founded on the Dulce Domum. The Latin ode is sung by all the students on the eve of vacation. I subjoin what is generally regarded as the best translation. It is very beautiful, and has the merit of following the original closely.

Sing a sweet, melodious measure;
Waft enchanting lays around;
Home! a theme replete with pleasure!
Home! a grateful theme, resound!

Chorus—
Home! sweet home! an ample treasure!
Home! with every blessing crowned!
Home! perpetual source of pleasure!
Home; a noble strain resound!

Lo! the joyful hour advances;
Happy season of delight!
Festal songs, and festal dances,
All our tedious toils requite.

Leave, my wearied muse, thy learning;
Leave thy task, so hard to bear;
Leave thy labor, ease returning;
Leave this bosom, O my care.

See the year, the meadow smiling!
Let us then a smile display;

Rural sports our pain beguiling,
Rural pastimes call away.

Now the swallow seeks her dwelling,
And no longer loves to roam;
Her example thus impelling,
Let us seek our native home.

Let our men and steeds assemble,
Panting for the wide champaign;
Let the ground beneath us tremble,
While we scour along the plain.

O, what raptures! O, what blisses!
When we gain the lovely gate;
Mother's arms, and mother's kisses,
There our blest arrival wait.

Greet our household gods with singing;
Lend, O Lucifer, thy ray!
Why should light, so slowly springing,
All our promised joys delay?

I have a little more to say of Winchester,
which I must leave for my next. G. M. V.
Winchester, England, 1351.

(From the British Banner.)

SOUTH AFRICA.

Port Louis, Mauritius, Sep. 9, 1851.

I dare say by the time this letter reaches you, some information will also have reached England on the subject of the renewal of trade with Madagascar; and, as a first step often leads to a second, it will be supposed that friendly relations with that country are also restored, and then that the Missionaries are permitted to return, and perhaps that Mr. Freeman has already got to Tananarivo. Unhappily, I have nothing so favorable or promising as this to report. The whole of the case is this,—the Queen Rivalona has accepted a "douceur" from M. de Lestelle, (who is connected with a mercantile house in Bourbon,) and has given him permission to export his stock of produce on hand on the coast of Madagascar. He has paid her as a present fifteen thousand dollars, say three thousand pounds sterling, for this permission to export goods till January 1, 1851. It is said that he has 4,000 tons of sugar on hand, of his own manufacture, on the east coast, and that he has 10,000 head of cattle ready for exportation, with sundry other valuable articles of commerce, such as gum copal, bees-wax, &c., in large quantities. The whole monopoly of the east coast is in his hands. Two ships sailed last week for Tamatavi to fetch cattle. I endeavored to procure a passage by one of them, but could not succeed. I happen to know the Captain, and he would have taken me if he could; but the arrangements made by the above named M. de Lestelle were most stringent. No passengers were to be permitted to come on any account whatever,—nor even merchandize,—no, nor even a letter! The whole affair is shut up in his own hands, for the simple exportation of his stock. However, I did not like to let the opportunity of communication quite slip away without an effort, so I wrote two or three letters, including one to the Queen, and sent them to M. de Lestelle himself by one of his own friends, requesting him to forward them to the capital.

But this state of things, as it respects the trade with Madagascar, is most vexatious and injurious. The suspension of trade on the part of the Queen has now lasted upwards of five years, that is to say, since the attack made on Tamatavi in June, 1845, by the two captains, Messrs. de Fosses and Kelly, and the consequence in this island is, that with a greatly increasing population, all provisions have risen in price. Cattle and rice were formerly imported in large quantities from Madagascar. Rice has long ceased to be imported; but the

cattle of that island has been almost the only source of the supply of meat for Mauritius, and, that being cut off, not only has the comfort, but the health of the inhabitants been greatly affected. The supply of meat sent in from Algoa Bay, Port Natal, and occasionally the west coast of Madagascar, has not been at all equal to the demand. The price of beef is from a shilling to sixteenpence a pound.—Wages are about 3s. 6d. a week, with lodgings, rice, and a little salt fish, &c., to the Indian emigrants;—about double that amount to good workmen from among those called Apprentices (formerly slaves), and some artisans of moderate skill and application earn about 12s. per week. The Coolies from India, of whom there are about 60,000 in the island, do not use much animal food, and, so far, their demands do not directly affect the prices of meat from Madagascar or elsewhere, but their consumption of other provisions is enormous, and hence, as the market now consists almost entirely of those other provisions, the prices are greatly raised to all purchasers and of all articles.—In one very important particular the Government suffers. I refer to the Commissariat for the British troops here. The difference between what is now paid for the supply of meat for the troops, and what would be paid, if the trade were opened, amounts to £3,000 sterling per annum—that is to say, we, we English folks who pay the Queen's troops, have paid £15,000, during the last five years, in this one article of provision, more than we need to have done, if the interruption had not taken place, or, having taken place, if we had entered into immediate and friendly arrangements with the Madagascar Government. Now, it does not exactly belong to me to say with whom the fault rests. The Governor here is anxious to have friendly relations restored with Madagascar; he would like to send an embassy there with a handsome present, but his hands are tied up by orders from home. Lord Grey thinks the people of Madagascar must get so tired of being without commerce, that they will, ere long, seek a renewal of trade themselves. This is a mistake. If the Queen and her few favorites can get a supply of dollars, as they are now doing, through M. de Lestelle, things may remain as they are for five years longer. The country may suffer, and the people may groan—they dare scarcely utter a complaint; that would be to impeach the Queen's wisdom, and amount to treason—but neither their sufferings nor their groans would effect any relief. But even our own interests ought to induce us to take some immediate steps towards the renewal of friendship and commerce. I should think the existing state of things is a commercial loss to this island of many thousands a-year. Instead of an annual importation of 7,000 head of cattle, (the average number for the ten years preceding 1845,) there have been imported only 1,100 annually since then. The former number was paid for partly in merchandize, principally of English manufactures. The latter number is now paid for in cash. I think the loss altogether to the island cannot be less than £31,000 per annum, to say nothing of the absence of the nutriment required, and on which health so much depends.

I am not sure whether the affair properly belongs to the Colonial Office, London; Madagascar is a foreign and independent country. Formerly arrangements regarding it fell into the hands of the Foreign Office, and I think that the matter ought now to be referred to Lord Palmerston. The Queen of Madagascar regards it as a matter between her Government and the Governments of France and England. I presume she would be willing to treat with those Powers separately, supposing they could not be induced to act conjointly; but it is clear that the matter is placed beyond