

The Christian Visitor.

A FAMILY NEWSPAPER: DEVOTED TO RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL INTELLIGENCE.

REV. I. E. BILL, EDITOR AND PROPRIETOR.

"Glory to God in the highest, and on earth Peace, good will toward Men."

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GEO. W. DAY, Printer.

SAINT JOHN, NEW-BRUNSWICK, WEDNESDAY, MARCH 22, 1855.

VOL. 8.—NO. 12

Poetry.

A Musing Thought.

Out it is strange to feel
at some coming day the sun will rise,
and the gleam of midnight's starry eyes,
the wide world's halcyon will succeed,
and my heart will not rise, I shall not hear or heed.
Man will go forth to toil,
the city streets resound with hurried tread,
who strives anxiously for daily bread
Will meet in this turmoil
who adds field to field and store to store:
at my limbs will be still, my brain will toll no more
Some will awake to joy,
the youthful heart will bound, the light foot spring,
hope soar exultant upon buoyant wing,
Gay just to jest reply:
and, radiant eyes will shine, and fair cheeks bloom:
shall be mouldering in the silent, darksome tomb.
Nature will be as now,
the fields as fair, the glorious sun as bright,
the waves as peaceful in their rippling light,
The graceful trees will bow,
the birds will whisper softly to them as before,
my heart will joy in their calm loveliness no more.
Bright genius will not die,
the deepening stream of knowledge still will flow,
the painter's dreams of loveliness still glow,
The flowers of poetry
and fragrance over earth's plains as before:
my soul will drink these blessed fountains of joy no more.
Fond friends will gather round,
and gaze upon my still and lifeless clay,
burning the spirit that has passed away:
But there will be no sound,
no voice will thrill no more my breast,
no heart's wild thrill for earthly love will be at rest.
O grant me, gracious Lord,
to improve this sad yet blessed life,
to pass through its scenes of care and strife,
My guide thy Holy Word,
to be thankful for each sunbright gleam,
to drink each pure, bright rill, that thou to earth hast
given,
that when I die I may but leave the stream
to find the fountain-head of all in thee in heaven.

Cromwell.

In the general spirit and character of his administration we think Cromwell far superior to Napoleon. "In civil government," says Mr. Hallam, "there can be no adequate parallel between one who had sucked only the dregs of a besotted fanaticism, and one to whom the stores of reason and philosophy were open." These expressions, it seems to us, convey the highest eulogium on our great countryman. Reason and philosophy did not reach the great conqueror of Europe to command his passions, or to pursue, as a first object, the happiness of the people. They did prevent him from risking his fame and his power in a frantic contest against the principles of human nature, and the laws of the physical world, against the rage of winter and the liberty of the sea. They did not exempt him from the influence of that most pernicious of superstitions, a presumptuous fatalism. They did not preserve him from the incubation of prosperity, or restrain him from indecent querulousness and violence in adversity. On the other hand the fanaticism of Cromwell never urged him on impracticable undertakings, or confused his perception of the public good. Inferior to Bonaparte in invention, he was far superior to him in wisdom. The French Emperor is among conquerors what Voltaire is among writers, a miraculous child. His splendid genius was frequently clouded by fits of humour as absurdly perverse as those of the pet of the nursery, who quarrels with his food, and dashes his playthings to pieces. Cromwell was emphatically a man. He possessed, in an eminent degree, that masculine and full-grown robustness of mind, that equally diffused intellectual health, which of our national partiality does not mislead us. He has peculiarly characterized the great men of England. Never was any ruler so conspicuously born for sovereignty. The cup which has intoxicated almost all others, sobered him. His spirit, restless from its buoyancy in a lower sphere, reposed in majestic placidity as soon as it had reached the level congenial to it. He had nothing in common with that large class of men who distinguish themselves in lower posts, and whose incapacity becomes obvious as soon as the public voice summons them to take the lead. Rapidly as his fortunes grew, his mind expanded more rapidly still. Insignificant as a private citizen, he was a great general; he was a still greater prince. The manner of Napoleon was a theatrical compound, in which the coarseness of a revolutionary guard-room was blended with the ceremony of the old court of Versailles. Cromwell, by the confession even of his enemies, exhibited in his demeanour the simple and natural nobleness of a man neither ashamed of his origin nor vain of his elevation; of a man who had found his proper place in society, and who felt sure that he was competent to fill it. Easy, even to familiarity, where his own dignity was concerned, he was punctilious only for his country. His character he left to take care of itself; he left it to be defended by his victories in war and his reforms in peace. But he was a jealous and implacable guardian of the public honour. He suffered a crazy quaker to insult him in the midst of Whitehall, and revenged himself by liberating him and giving him a dinner. But he was prepared to risk the chance of war to avenge the blood of a private Englishman.
No sovereign ever carried to the throne so large a portion of the best qualities of the middling orders, so strong a sympathy with the feelings and interests of the people. He was sometimes driven to arbitrary measures; but he had a high, stout, honest heart. Hence it was that he loved to surround his throne with such men as Hale and Blake. Hence it was that he allowed so large a share of political liberty to his subjects, and that, even when an opposition, dangerous to his power and to his person, almost compelled him to govern by the sword, he was still anxious to

Communications.

ROME, Jan. 25, 1855.
(Concluded.)

A stroll up and down the Corso, the principal street of Rome, on a holiday, is very amusing and instructive to the sight-seer. On such a day it is crowded with people of every class, from the common street beggar to the Cardinal in his carriage. Here may be seen a true picture of Italian life, and an amusement in which I often indulge, is to station myself at the door of a cafe with an iced cup of coffee and watch the various groups as they go by. Of all the people you see, the Roman citizen most attracts your attention. Melancholy and taciturn, he seems conscious of his descent from the mighty masters of the world and of his present oppression, and were it not for the French bayonets continually in his sight, would be the first to hurl the Pope from his throne and restore liberty and greatness to Italy. The women go by bare-headed, wearing their hair done up in massive plaits fastened with ribbons. These are the originals of the beautiful creations which you so admire in the works of Raphael and Michael Angelo. Many of these women get their living by merely serving as models for painters. Several fat, greasy Monks with shaven crowns, sandalled feet, and filthy, coarse gowns, fastened with a rope around the waist, hold out their hands to you for alms. Dozens of vile beggars bowl in your ears. A beautiful flower-girl holds up a bouquet for your admiration. A fellow, perhaps a Police spy, scans you closely, as if to detect some sign of a Republican. The dark eyed Italian, the lively Frenchman, the light featured, white-whiskered German, the stout, burly Englishman, and the tall, gaunt, cadaverous Yankee, each attracts his share of your attention. A dashing carriage, glittering with gilt, with gorgeously liveried servants, rattles along, containing one of the Counsellors of His Holiness. The Cardinal is forbidden by law to walk within the walls of Rome, and consequently whenever he wishes to go a dozen yards from his house his carriage has to be called.

One is astonished in walking about the streets of Rome, to see the immense number of places for the sale of tickets for the government lotteries. It is by these means that the Pope manages to get the little money left after the grinding of the priests and keep his people in poverty. In almost every part of Rome you will see the sign "Prenotario per il Lotto," and here you can risk any sum from two baiocchi (about a penny) upwards.

If the morality and piety of a city is to be judged from the number of its churches and priests, then Rome is fully entitled to be considered the most moral and most religious city in the world. To supply the spiritual wants of a population of not more than 130,000, there are one Pope, twenty or thirty cardinals, twenty-nine bishops, 1280 priests, 2092 monks and 1698 nuns, besides the students in the different colleges—a rather large number for a city smaller than Bristol, and only perhaps three times larger than the city where you have the happiness to call your home. Yet notwithstanding this vast amount of religious persons, Rome does not appear to be better off than other places. As to its morality, I will only say that three-fourths of its population are illegitimate, and that if you wander any distance from your hotel after nightfall, you run the risk of having your pockets picked or your throat cut.

I am becoming quite accustomed to the 'sights and sounds' of Rome, and I am sorry to say, have lost a great deal of my enthusiasm in things antique. The old proverb says, "When you are in Rome you must do as Rome does," and I find that in many things this is literally the case. I am beginning to look upon ruins, weeds, and crumbled bricks, like the Romans, as mere matters of course; the Colosseum and Forum often convey to my mind impressions very different from those which I entertained when a new-comer in month ago. Bufont and I actually found ourselves, the other day, seated upon a broken column in the Forum,—musing, you may perhaps imagine, of the departed glories of Rome,—thinking of other days, when

"The Forum all alive
With buyers and with sellers was humming like a hive;"
Ah, no! Mr. Editor, coolly and deliberately eating oranges,—which, I may add, are very good and very cheap in Italy.
I remain, yours etc.,
OUANGONDY.

Karen Missions.

REVIEW OF THE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL BETWEEN 1830—1840.
The progress of the gospel among the Karens affords a striking contrast with the results of missionary labor with the Burmese. Already upwards of seven hundred of the ignorant and degraded children of the jungle have been baptized in connection with the mission of Maulmain and Tavoy. Few striking incidents or startling events occur.—The simple gospel is preached—many hear, are converted, and then imbued with love for souls, proclaim the same gospel to their fellow countrymen. The truth extends its influence. Whole villages are peopled by Christians. Societies for the propagation of the gospel are formed. The gospel penetrates still more deeply the interior, and then in every portion of the province candidates for baptism are found.

A KAREN MISSION FOUNDED IN THE PROVINCE OF PEGU.

We have traced the progress of Christianity among the Karens as far down as 1840—yet we have not surveyed the whole field in which missionary labor has been expended up to this period. We turn to another portion of Burmah where religion, in spite of obstacles apparently insurmountable, progressed with even greater rapidity than in the places to which we have alluded.

We turn to the province of Pegu. The Karens are scattered in considerable numbers throughout this province. These first heard the gospel from the lips of their own countrymen Ko-Thah-Bu. We have seen this indefatigable servant of God bringing his instruction from Mr. Boardman to receive instruction from his lips. We have seen him laboring with untiring energy for the Karens of Tavoy. We have also seen him the first to proclaim the gospel to the Karens of Maulmain—and now strange to say he is the first to bring to his countrymen scattered through Pegu, the knowledge of the crucified Jesus.

In 1833, he left Tavoy for Maulmain. After a short stay, he left for Rangoon in company with Mr. Bennett. He was soon at the work which he loved. He proved again how dear to him was the soul of the Karen. At first he met with a cool reception. Burman tyranny was dreaded. The Karens feared to attend to a religion different from that of their Burman masters. If your word be good he will attend to it by and by—was all the response which at first Ko-Thah-Bu could obtain from his people. He was not discouraged however, he had labored too long for his Saviour to be daunted by indifference or hostility. His labors were most toilsome, but this he heeded not. He fords deep streams, traverses wide plains, seeks out the Karens, and from house to house, from village to village proclaims the love of Christ. Such labors for such a master could not be in vain. Success crowned the efforts put forth; the children of the forest now found their way to Rangoon, to seek baptism at the hands of the missionaries.

REMARKABLE PROGRESS OF THE GOSPEL IN THIS PROVINCE.

This persecution which took place in 1835, was not of long continuance. During the following year, Mr. Vinton, who had been preaching among the Karens of the Maulmain mission, arrived in Rangoon. In company with Messrs. Howard and Abbot, he visited the Karens of Mautau, and witnessed a most cheering spectacle. Here Ko-Thah-Bu had labored most diligently, and the results were now witnessed. In this section of the country the missionaries now baptized one hundred and seventy-three converts, and it was supposed that at least a hundred more were scattered among the jungles waiting for baptism. This would have been most gratifying in ordinary times, but so many baptisms, so soon after a persecution endured by such a timid people as the Karens, proved the sincerity of the converts, and exhibited most vividly the power of gospel truth.

For several succeeding years we trace the progress of the gospel in this portion of Burmah with the deepest interest. We notice the peaceful, uninterrupted advance of Christianity as seen among the now highly favored Karens of British Burmah. Persecution after persecution arose; now there was a calm, and now a tempest arose. From time to time the foreign missionaries were driven from Rangoon, and the Karens were left like a sheep without a shepherd. They were fined, imprisoned, persecuted in various ways; yet in spite of this religion advanced—though so afflicted, and left so desolate, neither the mission at Tavoy or Maulmain, witnessed so many conversions.

In 1837, Mr. Abbot unable to labor in Rangoon visited the Karens in Mautau, Pantanang, and Bassein. He found the gospel advancing in spite of the opposing efforts of Burmese bigots and tyrants.
In Bassein a young chief embraced Christianity and became a zealous advocate of its claims. Mr. Abbot was called to Maulmain for a time; but in 1839 when he came back to Rangoon, the most gratifying reports reached his ears. At Mautau and Pantanang the work was advancing, while in Bassein the young chief already alluded to, had been instrumental in the conversion of numbers.—All this took place in spite of the bitterest opposition. Already there were three hundred baptized believers among the Karens of this province; while it was thought that there were at least a thousand in the villages and jungles waiting for admission into the visible church.

REVIEW OF THE KAREN MISSION DOWN TO 1840.

In Pegu and the Tenasserim, there were now probably upwards of two thousand converts. This work had been accomplished through the foolishness of preaching, and mainly by the most feeble means. A few Karens ignorant of human literature, knowing only Christ and him crucified, had gone forth to tell of Jesus. They were undeterred by toil or opposition, untrifled by persecution, and now from a hundred villages the increase of prayer and praise ascends to the Eternal God, through the mediation of his Son. Thousands who not long since had been degraded and vicious, now have received new hearts. They are struggling with bad habits, aiming at holiness, cherishing holy desires for the welfare of their fellow creatures. Such results had been achieved by the preaching of the gospel.

(To be continued.)

Written for the Christian Visitor.

The Theatre.

As there is evidently a desire on the part of some, to get up a theatre in our midst; and as many amongst us are doubtless, altogether ignorant of the numerous evils invariably attendant upon, connected with, and arising out of such an establishment; we shall, by the kind permission of the editor, give in this and succeeding numbers of the Visitor the main points of an admirable lecture on "The Theatre" by the Rev. W. W. Everts of New York. It contains a withering exposure of the theatre as it is, and may, perhaps, open the eyes of some to the dangers that threaten our comparatively moral community in the prospect of a theatre being erected in our midst. As intimated in our article on the Stage last week, we shall reserve our own remarks till next month when, in order to fulfil a conditional promise, we may have to go to full length into the subject. If the secular press will at this point, desist from all further agitation of the question, and will henceforth refuse insertion to letters of correspondents favourable to the establishment of a theatre; we shall, for the present, at this point,—with the exception of the insertion of the main parts of Mr. Everts' lecture—also desist from all further discussion of the subject. But should the editors of the secular press refuse to do so, then we promise them some employment of their leisure time next month. Like the ghost of Hamlet's father, we can a tale unfold. And as we think that we happen to know more perhaps, than any one in this community of the dangerous tendencies, and, in multiplied instances, of the ruinous consequences of theatrical representations; like the afore-mentioned ghost we shall our tale unfold. So deep is our repugnance, so intense is our dislike—and we have good cause for it—to all theatrical exhibitions, that we are firmly, and unalterably resolved—if the question continues to be agitated—to exert with energy and perseverance all the influence we can exert both from the pulpit and from the press to prevent the erection of a theatre in our City.—We are resolved on this in the face of all opposition, as a sacred duty which we owe to God, to conscience, and to the community in the midst of which Divine Providence has placed us as a spiritual watchman to give warning of approaching dangers. Should we fail to prevent the erection of a theatre—as probably we may; for the great adversary, and destroyer of souls gets help in his work of ruin and death where we should least expect him to obtain it—we shall at all events have the satisfaction that in doing what we could to prevent this gigantic nuisance, we did our duty. Meanwhile let the lecture, the introduction to which, we give below be read by all, and read slowly, carefully, and thoughtfully. Young men, read it; and learn the insidious nature of the vices to which you will be exposed, and may be tempted, should a theatre be erected in our midst. Christian parents, read it; and learn the new sources of anxiety that will open to you, and the increased watchfulness you will have to exercise in guarding from contamination and ruin the morals of your sons and daughters, should a theatre be erected in our midst. Ministers of the Gospel, read it; and learn what is your duty in view of the danger that threatens, viz.: to employ all the influence you can exert to prevent the erection of a theatre in our midst. Editors of the secular press, read it; and learn the fearful guilt you will incur if you favour and agitate, and are mainly instrumental in the success of the erection of a theatre in our midst.

CHARLES MACKAY.

INTRODUCTION.

If we were to judge of the theatre by the degree of confidence with which its claims are commended, or, rather, obtruded before the public, we should yield to its precedence over all other social institutions. Its edifices, erected along the principal thoroughfares, and on the most accessible and conspicuous sites of the city, invite the attention of the passing multitude with as much of brilliant attraction and magnificent promise, as if they were the gates of heaven. Mammoth show-bills stare upon us from the corners of the streets, and from places of numerous resort, with their gay colors, starred exclamations, and superlative language, with as great confidence of appeal, as if they announced the paramount interest of all, or heralded some message from above. A large number of the secular press, refraining from any proper exercise of their censorial functions, yield their hired columns and service to blazon the advertisements, promote the popularity, and surprise

the young and enthusiastic into the most prodigal patronage, of the stage. And their notices of "respectable," "elite," and "brilliant houses;" of the names of distinguished persons that are persuaded, by polite attentions and free tickets, to spend a half hour at the theatre; of the "benefits" of actors and actresses; of the particular entertainments for the holidays, with an almost uniform strain of commendation, without animadversion, or allusion to the unfavorable opinions of the larger and more moral portions of the community; evince a biased devotion that seems incompatible with their relations as guardians of the public morals, and are adapted to allay in the minds of the unreflecting and credulous, all suspicion of disreputable association, moral exposure, or pernicious example, in an habitual attendance upon theatrical entertainments.

In proceeding to question the claims of an institution so conspicuously and necessarily paraded before the public, and commended by so much of mercenary artifice and appeal to the passions, to avoid misapprehensions, we shall promise three things.

In the first place, we shall have reference in the discussion, to the theatre as it is, and not waste time in speculations as to what it might be. The admission that there might be, under a proper management, with an expurgated order of plays, and a more reputable class of players, a pure stage, would avail us no more toward a justification of the existing theatre, than a declaration of the abstract right of war toward a vindication of all the wars from the time of Alexander to Napoleon; or than a declaration of the abstract right of traffic in ardent spirits toward a justification of the present system of saloons and porter-houses; or than a declaration of the abstract right of travelling on the sabbath, toward a commendation of a general arrangement for sabbath travelling by stages, railroads, and steamboats. The pure theatre to which the apologists of the stage have so long been pointing, and for which the moral community have been with forbearance, waiting, is yet but a pure abstraction.

Nor, in the second place, can we admit the plea that evils flowing from the theatre are necessarily and uniformly merely abuses, to be classed with the evils attendant upon the pursuits of trades, professions, and commerce, the use of the press, and the institutions of religion. To justify this comparison, it would be necessary to show that the theatre is as specifically demanded by the primary wants of society, as trades, professions, commerce, and the ordinances of religion; and that the closing of the play-house, like the suspension of these institutions, would interfere with the whole economy, and subvert the very foundations of society. The abuse of any institution is that which occurs as the exception and not as the rule of its influence, arising incidentally, and not growing out of its main design. "It implies that the institution is fitted to do much more good than harm, even in the present state of the human mind, and of society; that good is its natural and general effect, evil is the incidental, man being as he is; for if it be not calculated mainly to do good until human society shall have grown incomparably more virtuous, and thus attained a state capable of neutralizing its operations, or even converting it into something beneficial, it is plainly, for any present use, absolutely bad, necessarily and in its regular operation. And to call this operation an abuse is disingenuous and deceptive language." It would be like calling demented forms, mortgaged estates, and increasing pauperism and crime, the abuses of dram-shops; or pillaged countries, sacked and burnt cities, ensanguined fields, and heaps of the slain, with attendant bereavement and woe, the abuses of war.

Nor, in the third place, is it proper, in discriminating the claims of the theatre, to confound it with the drama. The written drama should be judged like any other class of writings, and, according to its literary and moral character, be interdicted or commended to the perusal of the young. It is studied by thousands who would feel themselves disgraced by the associations of the theatre.—The stage is but a mode of teaching of the drama, a mode which is wholly inapplicable to a portion of it, can not be made available to the masses, with appropriate personation and scenic representation, and with its best arrangements, seldom assists the cultivated mind in the appreciation of its genius. All the intellectual impulse, inspiration of sentiment, or lofty moral purpose, ever traced to the theatre, is due to the drama itself, and has been rather restricted than abetted by the scenic representations, or the dissipating associations, always attendant upon the stage. The affectation, therefore, of all the credit of the drama by the existing theatre, is like an imbecile and depraved man seeking credit from casual association with a person of eminent virtue and distinction.

Confining our attention, therefore, to the theatre as it is, in its general and necessary influences, and as distinguished from the written drama, we shall endeavor, by tracing its particular bearings and the separate and combined operation of its elemental principle, to show that it is, according to the common opinion of the religious and moral portion of the community, an unnecessary and greatly demoralizing institution.

• Foster.

LIFE AND DEATH.

Man's life is a glass, life's like water,
This worldly world's about;
Six pious life, death breaks the glass,
So runs the water out.