

"Hold fast the form of sound words."—2d Timothy, 1, 13

SAINT JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, JANUARY 2, 1868.

Old Series, Vol. XXI., No. 1.

New Series, Vol. VI., No. 1.

Whole No. 261.

She replied slowly, "I have joined company with Him who long ago said, 'I was dumb, I opened my mouth, but my speech was dumb, I saw, it is a blessed thing to see God's hand in every thing, to be willing that He should do as He will with His own. I know that He loves my child with everlasting love, and that He will lay no stroke on her which is not for her good and mine. I am satisfied, for He reigns in righteousness. I have had my days and years of fretting and mourning; but the trouble all came from thinking myself wiser than God. But I've got over that now, and have learned to rejoice in His will, whether it agrees with mine or not."

(From the Watchman and Reflector.)

The Land of Beulah.

BY MRS. J. D. CHARLES.

In the outskirts of a neighboring city stood a large, unfinished house, apparently a commentary on the folly of him who begins to build without first counting the cost. The smoke issued from one chimney, and little faces looked out from windows loosely boarded up to keep out the rain, showing that the inmates, weary of waiting for clapboards and glass panes, had resolved to be satisfied with such shelter as the house afforded in its unfinished state. Open, however, above stairs, seemed to have received more attention than the rest, the windows being glazed and curtained, and graced with flowers. That was "grandmother's room." Her little all had been invested in this house by her son, whose first aim was to make her comfortable. He was a carpenter, steady and industrious, and toiling earnestly to secure a home for his increasing family. His idea was to finish a kitchen for his wife, and a room for his mother, and then to move into the house to save rent, and work on it at his leisure time, when not employed by others. He had occupied it but a few weeks, when he was laid low by a fever, from which he never rose.

That was a bereaved and desolate group that gathered around the fire the night after the death of the family had been laid in the grave; but they were neither paralyzed nor yet hopeless. The mother of the children was young and strong, and her power awoke with the emergency. She believed that the love in her heart would carry her through till her boys, then ten and twelve years old, should be able to help her. And the grandmother, too, had strength given her equal to her day. She was not a bore and a burden to the newly made widow. She had a daughter in the meridian of life, a woman of strong good sense and fervent piety, who had long devoted herself to her, regarding it as her mission to provide for her mother's comfort, and to cheer her passage to the tomb. Nor did her kindness end here. When her toil at the needle was over for the day, she was ready to visit and relieve the less favored poor, or to sit through the long hours of darkness by the bed of pain. She seemed like one born for just such a heavy task as now fell upon her—with strength to endure, and grace to submit. She took her stand. Every thing was to go on as if the father of the family were with them. The boys were to be kept at school, and to be well dressed and fed; no charity was to be received which ought to go to the more needy; and eventually the main part of the house was to be finished, when one half of it could be let, and this yield them a little additional income. In the mean time, the needles of the two younger women, and the knitting of the grandmother, was to be relied on for support.

This noble maiden daughter and aunt was an object of admiration to all who saw her sacrificed of personal comfort for others, and they praised where they should have censured her total forgetfulness of self.

There is a point beyond which frail nature cannot go; and this woman, in her zeal for others, did not stop there. She stole hours from rest to give to charity; she wore her frail frame and crowded her sensitive brain. Soon her complexion assumed that transparent hue which is beautiful, while so alarming; her hand trembled at its task, and her foot faltered on the way to the house of prayer or the home of sorrow. But still she pressed on, declaring, with a morbid persistency, that her time was short, and that, like her Master, she must work while it was day. She forgot that the same hand that made the poor and the wretched around her, fashioned her own frame fearfully and wonderfully, and that He had placed her immortal mind within it, especially charged with its preservation; and so she pressed on to her own ruin. Soon a settled melancholy stole over her, and sighs and lamentations took the place of the sweet hymns of praise she used to sing while at her work. A cloud gathered, dark and heavy, and she said, "a black grape seed was always before her eyes." Her vision was quickened to see the evil within her own heart; but when she saw that the lost sight of Christ as her atoning sacrifice.

After weeks of this deep depression, she stood one day before her pastor, with a solemn face, and told him, in plaintive tones, that she had received a command from heaven similar to that given to Abraham with regard to Isaac. Her mother, she said, was ripe for heaven, and she was the appointed instrument to send her thither. She was to slay her; but as it was not an act of faith in her, she was to be punished for so doing; but her mother would be at rest, and not left to buffet with the world alone.

This was such convincing proof of insanity, that her best friends thought it unsafe to leave her alone at night with the defenceless mother. She was, after a few days, taken for care and treatment to one of the best institutions for such sufferers; and a deeper desolation than that which death had wrought, fell on that afflicted household. But still they were not comfortless, for Christ was true to His word, and was with them even unto the end.

(From the Examiner and Chronicle.)

Bricks and Brains.

While it is true that the higher orders of ability in all callings and enterprises were never so amply compensated as now, it is equally true that the orders below are without the stimulus which a better compensation would afford, and that the aggregate production of capital and labor is less than it would be under a juster distribution. We run to luxury in every direction, and this tendency everywhere necessitates the employment of eminent skill, but the products of this skill are so much abstracted from the possibility of products diffusing a wider well-being. Merchants pay large rents for elegant and costly stores, rather than for skill in all the departments of their service—for bricks rather than for brains, and so restrict sales and profits, and the general welfare, by prices necessarily higher. The enterprising owners of magnificent steamers on the Hudson and the Sound compensate the taste and skill of architects and decorators in proportion to the results which their achieve. But they are forced to economize on the employees who man and run their steamers, and to charge fares which narrow the sphere of patronage and public convenience. The luxurious cars, sleeping cars, and drawing-room cars, and ordinary passenger cars, which competition has forced upon our railways, really compensate nobody but the artists who design them. They are ruin to tracks and engines by their enormous weight, they render high speed and low fares impossible, and so diminish the benefits of railroads, and the numbers of the people who those benefits can reach. When the Fifth Avenue Hotel is placed on wheels, railroad travelling will be a luxury which not many people can afford. Every possible comfort and convenience in travelling could be attained in cars of half the present cost, to the immeasurable advantage of the companies and the public.

In all these instances, which are but conspicuous examples, luxury overlooks the fundamental law of civilization, that that expenditure is wisest which best benefits and develops the aggregate man. It does not forbid expenditure on taste, for taste is a part of man's cultivated nature; it does not forbid the perfection of architecture and decoration, but it denounces the wisdom of excessive expenditure. It regards capital as a trust, most productively expended when its product is men. It would make the employment and rewards of labor such as to lift the whole mass. The tendency of a luxurious and false civilization is to the lifting up of a part, and the depression of the rest.

It is not strange that the church is affected by the character of the time. The church of today is made up of the men and women of today. They bring the tendencies of the age into the church, because they themselves are wrapped up in those tendencies, and are drifting unconsciously as society drifts. It is a part of their Christian wisdom, it is of the essence of their Christian character, to become aware of those tendencies, and to resist them in proportion as they lead not to Christ, and to a spiritual, unworldly life. Christ has said of his disciples, that they, even as he, are not of the world. It is of their weakness and imperfect sanctification, that they follow the world to evil. We see this in relation to the matter we have now in hand. We are far more willing to spend enormous sums on costly church edifices and artistic music, than on talents and power in the pulpit. We do this often to find that our elegant edifices are empty, and our "holy opera" unheard.

In the mingled motives, good and questionable and bad, which govern men, the young man of talents and force, who feels in his more spiritual hours a call to the sacred office, is seduced by his more worldly ones by the enterprise and hopes of commerce, and in the unhappy moment rejects the pulpit, because of the unnecessary self-indulgence which it seems to him to cost. A less costly edifice with a better pastoral support would have taken him from his duty, and would have given to the church the benefit of talents perhaps pre-eminent and extraordinary. He is in fault, indeed, but his brethren are as fault likewise. To Christianity the most potent thing on this earth is not architecture or music, but a man—a man raised to the full stature of intellectual and moral development. For its progress it calls for the labors of all; and it seeks to raise all to the highest efficiency by their personal character and ability. Pre-eminently is this so in respect to the ministry.

The gospel is to be proclaimed by its living witnesses, most of all by ministers, and when the church depends on bricks rather than brains, the hour of its weakness has come. Bricks rather than brains may do for a religion of superstition, but never for one whose appeals are to the intelligence of rational men.

ABYSSINIA.

The following from a contemporary will give our readers some idea of the country which the British Government is at war.

"First let us see what sort of a country it is with which we are at war. Abyssinia is in East Africa, bordering on the Red Sea, and the Straits of Babel Mandeb. Near the coast is a belt of barren, unhealthy flat land; but the interior rises into splendid mountain ranges of fertile and salubrious tract of table land. Some of the mountains are 15,000 feet high, while the table lands on which most of the people live are from 7,000 to 10,000 feet in elevation. It is from these hills and highlands that the Blue Nile rushes down with its fertilizing floods to refresh Egypt. Abyssinia is about 600 miles long by 500 broad.

The people are Asiatic, and bear close resemblance to the Arabs. The only negroes in the country are slaves. The Abyssinians embraced Christianity in the fourth century, and they are remarkable as the only African nation that was able to resist the triumphant march of Mohammedanism. The history of the Empire is full of remarkable vicissitudes. In the tenth century a Jewish princess overthrew the reigning dynasty. In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries the Portuguese entered into close relationship, political and religious with Abyssinia. The land is amazingly fertile, and yields at least two crops annually. The cities are small, and numbering more than 10,000. The trade of the country is in its infancy. No doubt the present war will do much to retard its development. Slavery and the slave trade exist in all their horrible atrocity.

We have said that Christianity was introduced into Abyssinia in the fourth century. It was the *Ethiopia* of which we read in the Acts of the Apostles (vi. 27). Egypt had long held the country in subjection, but shortly before the birth of our Saviour a native dynasty of women, holding the official title of Candace, ruled the country and successfully resisted the Roman arms. Josephus tells us that Moses made war against the "Ethiopian"—the very same people against whom General Napier is now leading British soldiers! If the British should conquer Abyssinia they would do only what Egypt and Assyria did long ago. It is a curious coincidence that the Egyptian Government of the present day is very loyal to the British Government. The British have a native dynasty of women, holding the official title of Candace, ruled the country and successfully resisted the Roman arms. 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