

# The Christian Visitor.

Hold fast the form of sound words.—2d Timothy, i. 13. SAINT JOHN, N. B., THURSDAY, JANUARY 7, 1890.

## A Dream of Christmas.

BY MRS. C. A. OFFEN.

(From the Watchman and Reflector.)  
A soft, snowy wreath on the brown hills fell,  
And the woods and vales'neath its mystic spell  
Were hushed in the calm midwinter night,  
While o'er drooping pine, and red holly spray,  
A network of diamonds twinkling lay,  
Reflecting the stars' silver light.  
A slumbering calm o'er my senses swept,  
In a beautiful dream of joy I slept.  
On the eve of a Christmas morn,  
To my spirit eye was a vision given,  
Of forms of light through the azure heaven,  
Where the star in the east was born.  
Methought at first 'twas the wind-harp's chords,  
Which echoed on high their tuneful words—  
"Good will to men, and peace on earth—  
Soon a thousand tones of rapture swelling  
In a perfect harmony the tale was telling  
Of the infant Redeemer's birth."

Then hosts seraphic, with wings of flame,  
From the high empyrean heavens came,  
Chanting the glorious story,  
On Judean hills and Bethelchem plains,  
The journeying magi caught the strains,  
"Giving God in the highest glory."  
Children's glad voices on my charmed ear broke,  
To the jubilate claiming of bells I awoke,  
To find their fair vision restored,  
For in truth to us is a Saviour given,  
As our hope of eternal life in heaven,  
And on bended knee I adored.

For the Christian Visitor.

## Saxon and Norman Periods of English Literature.

BY PROFESSOR J. BEMILL.

No. 1.  
The history of Literature is the history of thought. Literature is the thought of a nation; and as such it keeps step always in its progress with national life. Its history is far more than a mere biography of individual men; it is broader, more extended, and more profound; it is connected with the movements of races, the aspirations of peoples, and the struggles of nations.

Thus we trace the history of English literature, and as we trace it, we see that from age to age the whole character varies. The nation changes, and literature changes with it. It assumes new forms, it is affected by successive influxes of thought that comes from abroad; and swell on waves like from the continent of Europe. England perpetually receives, but also gives back something; above all, it transforms what it receives, till the thought that came from France or Italy rises up to grander proportions when it has reached this island.

First of all, for the beginning, the groundwork, and the foundation of all, we see the Anglo-Saxon people, full of vitality, rich, receptive, self-reliant, and self-possessed. It has not only muscle, but mind. It is a race which Heaven has endowed with that capacity that can rise sometimes to that power which men call genius. Whatever it touches, it uses; and whatever it receives, it makes its own.

And through the course of its life it has much to receive. Upon this race and its thought there come many influences in succession; and the observation of these forms a chief part of the work of those who seek to know the progress of English literature. For to understand this literature we must first know how to divide it into periods. Taking the Anglo-Saxon, we see it first affected by the Norman influence—the *Romanic*. These two blend, and then there comes a second—the *Italian*.

Then, finally, English thought, after having gone the mighty round, and absorbed all these things one by one, returns fondly to its first love, and Scott comes singing the "lay of the last minstrel," and reminds England of those first minstrels who, ages before, swayed her into her splendid life of song. The strains of the *Romanic* poetry are heard again, till we reach our day, when all these elements combine, and give to our literature its infinite variety. In the one great poet of this day you see them all; for they all live in Tennyson.

What preceded the Saxons had no reference to English literature. The Britons faded away from the land, leaving no more trace than the Romans upon the face of the English nation. A few words, a few terminations, form the only legacy of the Celt to our language.

Yet one might wish that there had been more, that there had been a chain of tradition coming down unintercepted from the days of Imperial Rome; that the people had mingled more largely with their conquerors, and had preserved the memory of former fame and exploits. We should then have had a stock of legends running back to the days of Cassivelaunus, and the wars against the Picts and Scots; and the struggle against the Teuton would have been eclipsed by the vengeance on Dendon and Cannulodun.

We might then have had our own home version of those exploits of which we now read in Tacitus. Caractacus would have been extolled by native bards. They would have rehearsed the memorable struggle against the Romans; extolled over the downfall of Mona. The form of Boadicea would have been portrayed, and her wrongs narrated by those who had participated in her insult and shame; her vengeance would have been told by those who had washed in blood at the spring of the tribes. We should have watched, with new feelings, the march of Agricola, and heard the fiery speech of Galgacus on the slopes of the Grampians, through the traditions of his own people.

But the Britons have left no trace of themselves among us English. Their representatives are the Welsh, whose literature has no direct connection with ours. These descendants of the ancient Britons have retained their old forms with marvellous tenacity; they have saved from oblivion the poems of Taliesin, and the Welsh Triads; and for ages the mountains of Wales have echoed to the sound of—  
"High born Hail's harp, and soft Llewellyn's lay."

Thus we have received something from Wales of exceeding value; yet it has come to us not as an hereditary transmission, but rather as an importation from a foreign country.

We are Teutons. The fathers of this mighty English race inhabited all Germany, and spread over the northern countries, known as Scandinavia. In all these lands they had the same religion and language. Even at the present day, the Norwegian, the Swede, the Dane, the German, the Dutchman, and the Englishman, may easily be recognized as belonging to the same family.

In central Europe, the Teutons were German; in the north, Scandinavian. Between the two by the Saxons; while in that place which, a few years ago, was the battle ground of the two branches of the Teutonic race, dwelt those Angles from whom we get our name.

All these practical ancestors of ours, whether Saxons, Angles, or Jutes, had the habits and predilections of Scandinavians. They were seafarers—Vikings. They came against the Britons, swarming over in their ships, even as the Danes afterward came against them.

## History by Starlight.

CURIOUS SPECULATIONS ON THE UNIVERSE.

To those who believe that the recent meteoric shower was a veritable tumbling down of the sky, or who do not know that the earth is round and think that the moon is larger than the star Vega, we have little hope that the truths to be stated in this article will be intelligible, or that they will produce in such a single thrill of poetic emotion. Nor do we much expect them to turn upward the thoughts of many of the devotees of incessant, rubbing, trade, or of fickle, engrossing fashion. Yet we faintly would think we have many readers who are capable of receiving pleasure from the contemplation of something beyond corn-cobs, bank notes, calicoes, and salt barrels.

Twenty or more years ago a little work was published in England, entitled the "Stars and the Earth; or Thoughts upon Space, Time and Eternity." Its object was to show the universe to be the work of a single Creator, by showing that time and space were not conditions of its existence, but simply of our knowledge of it.

Light travels at the rate of two hundred and thirty thousand miles per second. Hence, if the moon were struck instantly out of existence, we should not know it for one and a quarter seconds. If the sun were to drop suddenly from its place, we should not know it for eight minutes. If Jupiter were to meet with a similar mishap, we should not perceive it for fifty-two minutes. If the most remote known planet were to disappear, four hours would elapse before the last ray of light that left it, though travelling at the rate of two hundred and thirty thousand miles a second, would strike our eye.

But our solar system is only a minute island in the ocean of space. The orbit of Uranus, nearly three and a half billions of miles in diameter, was, when our author wrote, the boundary of the solar *calum cognitum*, but since then a new belt, eighteen hundred millions of miles in width has been added. Yet when we have reached the orbit of the farthest known or unknown planet of our own system, we have but explored a region as small in comparison with the space that is swept by the telescope and grasped by mathematics, as is a city door yard compared with a continent.

Leaving the outer limits of the solar system upon the wings of light, we fly three weary years before we find a resting place upon the nearest of the fixed stars. Eighteen billions of miles to the bright star in the Centauri. Bewildering thought! But we have reached only a promontory of the glittering shores of the starry kingdom. Taking Struve and Bessel for our guides and winging ourselves with the light, we shall be four thousand years crossing the known stellar heavens. Twenty-four trillions of miles in space does the telescope penetrate to find a star of the twelfth magnitude. From that far off look-out, if the gaze be undimmed with perfect vision, we shall see the earth as it appeared four thousand years ago. The journey of Abraham into Egypt and his return after he had been made "rich in cattle, in silver and in gold," becomes the event of to-day. But suppose we spread our wings and fly to the dim, nebulous regions of space, whose light is woven into the delicate drapery of the Milky Way, we may look back and study the geological epochs as they succeed each other, the great Kentucky mammoth treads the trembling earth, while immense saurians, monstrous pterodactyls, and magnificent fern forests appear things of the present. Thus space is filled with the pictures of all time. Each succeeding moment before us further and further away; but if Space is boundless and Time endless, Eternity is an ever growing gallery of photographs. At some given point in the picture among the stars, this very moment, hangs a picture of the Garden of Eden. The world may perish, but the last grand scene will be painted with perfect accuracy upon imperishable canvas. Campbell's vision of the Last Man, when Earth's great and good had passed away, and only a few stragglers were left to tell of a world that was no more, is not so far from the truth as we think.

if ever realized, will live forever. The poetic reader may indulge himself in historic readings from every conceivable point in space. Imagine that the observer upon a star of the twelfth magnitude could descend to the earth upon a ray of light in an immeasurably short time. The events of four thousand years would be seen at a glance. Says our author: "The human mind, it is true, grows giddy at the thought of such a consecutive train of events; but we can easily attribute to a higher spirit the power of distinguishing and comprehending with accuracy every individual event in the astonishing stream."

Hence the notion that the Deity makes use of a measurement of time, is become clear and intelligible to us. When it is written: "Before God a thousand years are as one day," it is a mere empty word, unless the idea is rendered perceptible to our senses.

The duration of time is unnecessary for the occurrence of events. Beginning and end may coexist, and still include everything intermediate. Having this, so to speak, differentiated Time by a sort of celestial calculus, the author proceeds to dispose of space.

We have seen how the events of four thousand years can be compressed into a single second. So, if we start with the image of a dewdrop in a morning flower, we may travel with it and study it four thousand years, though the drop itself rested but a second in its flower cup. The eye of Deity can so follow the image not only to a star of the twelfth magnitude, but follow it farther. That is, it sees in the great picture gallery of the Universe, of which we have spoken, not only the exact image of every object, but of every aspect that object presents in the course of its indefinitely multitudinous changes. This view is microscopic, if we reverse it we condense all space into a point—but that point is not space—yet it contains all the images of space. "We have thus completed," says the author, "the outline of the argument which we proposed; for we have shown that a point of view is conceivable, from which the Universe no longer requires the expansion of Time and Space, in order to exist, and to be intelligible to us; and since our human method of contemplation, inasmuch as it considers this expansion, leads only to inextinguishable contradictions, so we are compelled to seek for the higher point, and to look down upon the world, in consequence of the limited nature of our powers; for with such a point of view, and by it alone, can we imagine and completely understand the universe to be the work of a single Creator."

We have simply outlined the argument in our own language of the wonderful little book—the circulation of which, says the late President of Harvard University, would be of benefit both to science and religion. To religion, by showing, so far as it goes, that science leads to faith. To science, by pointing out to younger students the true spirit, in which she should proceed, and which she should be in a holy wood still more, by presenting her in a holy

## The Horrors of the Spanish Inquisition.

Individuals have borne the torture and the dungeon for fifteen years, and been burned at the stake at last. Execution follow confession, but the number of criminals was allowed to accumulate, that a multitude of victims might grace each gala day. The *auto de fe* was a solemn festival. The monarch, the high functionaries of the land, the reverend clergy, the populace, regarded it as an inspiring and delightful recreation. When the appointed morning arrived the victim was taken from his dungeon. He was then attired in a yellow robe without sleeves, like a herald's coat, embroidered all over with black figures of devils. A large conical mitre was placed upon his head, upon which was represented a human being in the midst of flames, surrounded by imps. His tongue was then painfully gagged, so that he could neither open or shut his mouth. After he was thus accoutered, and just as he was leaving his cell, a breakfast, consisting of every delicacy, was placed before him, and he was urged with ironical politeness to satisfy his hunger. He was then led into the public square. The procession was formed with great pomp. It was headed by the little school children, who were immediately followed by the band of prisoners, each attired in the horrible yet ludicrous manner described. Then came the magistrats and nobility, the prelates and other dignitaries of the church, followed, all on horseback, with the blood-red flag of the "sacred office" waving above them, blazoned upon either side with the portraits of Alexander and Ferdinand, the pair of brothers who had established the institution. After them came the fabled. When all had reached the neighborhood of the scaffold, and had been arranged in order, a sermon was preached to the assembled multitude. It was filled with laudations of the inquisition, and with blasphemous revilings against the condemned prisoners. Then the sentences were read to the individual victims. Then the clergy chanted the fifty-first psalm, the whole vast throng uniting in one tremendous miscere. If a priest happened to be among the culprits, he was now stripped of the canonicals which he had hitherto worn, while his hands, lips and shaven brows were scraped with a bit of glass, by which process the oil of his consecration was supposed to be removed. He was then thrown among the common herd. Those of the prisoners who were reconciled, and those whose execution was not yet appointed, were now separated from the others. The rest were compelled to mount a scaffold, where the executioner stood ready to conduct them to the fire. The inquisitors then delivered their usual words with them tenderly, and without blood-letting or injury. Those who remained steadfast to the last were then burned to the stake; they who at the last extremity renounced their faith, were strangled by being thrown into the flames. Such was the Spanish Inquisition—technically called. It was, according to the biographer of Philip the second, a heavenly remedy, a guardian angel of Paradise, a lion's den in which Daniel and other just men could sustain no injury, but in which perverse sinners were torn to pieces. It was a tribunal superior to all human law, without appeal, and entirely owing no allegiance to the powers of earth or Heaven. No rank, high or humble, was safe from its jurisdiction. The royal family were not sacred, nor the beggar's hovel. Even death afforded no protection. The holy office invaded the prince in his palace and the beggar in his sordid. The corpses of dead heretics were mutilated and burned. The inquisitors preyed upon the carcasses and rifled the graves. "Notley's History of the Netherlands."

and attractive garb to the notice of men. It is a book of sublime poetry; and it will be a happy day for all men when they have learned that, as poetry signifies creation, so is the creation poetry; and science causes the heart of its faithful student to sing a perpetual hymn of praise and joy.—Chicago Post.

## The Microscope and its Revelations.

Great improvements have been made of late years in the microscope, and the most important aid has been rendered, during the time, more or less, to scientific investigation by that instrument. The perfection of the microscope has been sought, not as an end, but as a means.

Human vision, alone, unaided by optical instruments, was unable to form any conception of the heavenly bodies, and it was, therefore, not surprising that, before the invention of the telescope, the sky was supposed to be a mere starry vault, with its rim resting on the outer edge of the earth, which was supposed to be flat. And as with the telescope, so with the microscope, it had brought to light terrestrial objects heretofore invisible to the naked eye, and had unfolded new wonders in objects that were visible. On the knowledge gained by aid of the microscope of these invisible objects depended in a large degree the welfare of the human race. Its contributions to sanitary science were most important and valuable in indicating the source of many zymotic diseases. It had also acquainted us with the cause of diseases in plants, such as the potato rot, diseases of vines, &c. Valuable assistance had also been afforded by the microscope in the study of morbid anatomy, as well as in all forms of organic life. The microscope, no less than the telescope, was calculated to shock the ideas of those who were accustomed to regard the earth and all that it contained as made for man alone. The wonders unfolded by the microscope exceeded even those of the telescope. It showed us below two thousand millions of animals, of perfect and most delicate organization, could live and move in a drop of water. Extensive geological formations, covering hundreds of miles in extent, were constructed out of the fossil remains of organized animals, whose existence had been unknown to man except for the instrument. In questions of medical jurisprudence the information furnished by the microscope was often decisive. It tells us whether the blood found on the knife of a suspected murderer is that of a human being or not, and enables us sometimes to detect the part of the body which the blade adhered to in an analysis of the secretions which adhere to it. In the detection of poisons, drugs, groceries and the like, it is also invaluable. The qualities of the supplies furnished to the United States army was ascertained through the aid of the microscope, and enabled the government to detect imposition.

John Newton. Extracts from "John Newton, an Autobiography and Narrative by the Rev. Joseph Bull, M. A.," published by the Religious Tract Society, THE BAPTISTAL SERVICE.

Although a pious Churchman, I cannot undertake to vindicate every expression in our baptismal service. The rubric tells us gravely that those who die in infancy may be baptized, but I believe they may be, and are saved, whether baptized or not; for I cannot think that the salvation of a soul depends upon a negligent or drunken minister, who cannot be found when wanted to baptize a dying infant. In the homilies, however, they speak more to the purpose. The fathers, or some of them, did indeed speak of baptism and regeneration, or the new birth as synonymous, but while Scripture, experience, and observation contradict their pay little regard to their judgment (p. 317).

Spurgeon a Worker. Spurgeon is a worker. His immense membership is divided up into working forces, that so, by a division of labor, they may spread themselves over a broad