

# THE AYLESFORD UNION.

"That ye stand fast in one spirit, with one mind, striving together for the faith of the gospel."—PAUL.

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## Our Armory.

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Among the great sights of old London is the Tower. Historically, it is an interesting place, but the visitor is attracted by a feature unexpected by Americans (we are all "Americans" from this side, whether we come from the United States or Canada). There, as you climb stair after stair, you are shown the ancient accoutrements of the men-at-arms—iron plates encasing the whole body; the huge sword and long spear, in the hands of the figure; men on horses, also clad in complete armor. Here, too, is the good shaft of yew, which used to do execution among the enemy. Following along, you find displayed rude arms to be touched off with a match or fuse; then the flintlock; then the percussion copper musket; then the modern rifles in thousands, ready for the soldier at the bugle call to arms. It is an impressive sight, and at the same time a fine lesson to the followers of the Prince of Peace, suggesting our need of offensive and defensive weapons.

Our armory for that battle-field which we enter at conversion is the Book of God. Step in a moment and view the weapons as they are arranged by one of our great captains. The page of the guide-book where they are described is in a letter of his to the Ephesians, chap. 6: 10-17:

"Put on the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to stand against the wiles of the devil. For we wrestle not against flesh and blood, but against principalities, against powers, against the rulers of the darkness of this world, against spiritual wickedness in high places. Wherefore take upon you the whole armor of God, that ye may be able to withstand in the evil day, and having done all, to stand. Stand, therefore, having your loins girt about with truth, and having on the breastplate

of righteousness; and your feet shod with the preparation of the gospel of peace; above all, taking the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked. And take the helmet of salvation, and the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God."

If you will gaze steadily at the weapons hanging before you, you will be impressed with the reality of the warfare and with the ample stock of armor. It is a graphic summary—but it is more; it is the best characterization of spiritual conflict ever drawn by mortal hand. The similitude is perfect. The subtlety of high spiritualities is here, but it is not hard to catch. In hostile array against the believer in Jesus stands that experienced veteran, the devil, who has gained many a battle, his average still high, for he knows his power. With him, drawn to him by the magnetism of skilful leadership, and in full sympathy with him, stands a mighty host of malevolent spirits, ready to carry out his behests against the saints. How many of the readers of this paper believe in the reality of this statement? Who of you understands this imagery? Is it figurative, high rhetoric, or is it simple fact? As you go through life, watch, and you will discover the absolute truth of the description. We wrestle against forces invisible; not against insignificant principalities, chieftains of renown, against the commandants who rule the wickedness of the world, against the strong battalions of the spirits of evil—

"They fill the air, they darken heaven,  
They rule this lower world."

If our self-confident young Christians could be made to understand at the outset that there are formidable myriads of antagonistic intelligences other than we see, there would not be so many bleached bones on the battle-field. Our own broken-down natures, our inherent tendencies to the worse, our sceptical spirit, our lower passions, are all against

the chances of success; but, in addition to all within us, lo! this multitude of invisibles. Pause and estimate the power of the enemy. Do not go blindly into the holy war!

Sir Colin Campbell, the British commander-in-chief in the great uprising against England in India, was confronted by an army ten times as large as his own, which had been drilled by Englishmen. Sir Colin ordered the cavalry to charge; the mutineers formed into squares, as they had been taught, the four fronts bristling with a hedge of bayonets, and the men in the centre, with loaded muskets, ready to repel the charge. When this disposition was made the charging horsemen were suddenly ordered to open out, and later the artillery poured grapeshot through the squares. They were broken to pieces, and fled panic-stricken. That was a 'wile' of the general. So Satan is full of devices—"the wiles of the devil". You see, the imperative need of the apostle's exhortation is "put on the whole armor of God." Take every piece of the breastplate of the Redeemer's righteousness; the helmet, the knowledge of salvation, for your poor brain; the sandals well-spiked, so that you can stand on the slippery sward against the foe; and then take the sash of the truth, and gird it tightly around your loins—it will brace your back for the fight. Then in addition to all, converging your whole person, taking the oblong shield of faith, and grasp the well tried power of the Spirit, the word of God. Then stand! If you will consult the official notes of the great duel between the two captains, Jesus our arch-leader, and the devil, the field-marshal of the hosts of wickedness, you will see how our Lord met and vanquished the foe. From a chapter in the Book of Deuteronomy, he drew his weapon and repeating: "It is written," "It is written," repelled the dire attack. He did not argue with him, he simply