

## Keshub Chunder Sen.

(Written for the Church Guardian.)

BY CANON CHURTON, OF KING'S COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE, ENGLAND.

THE *Liberal* and *New Dispensation* of January 13th contains the first instalment of an obituary notice of Keshub Chunder Sen, who died on the 8th, aged 45 years. It begins thus:—"We are very poor, indeed, to-day! The person whom we have been appealing to as our friend, guardian, and patron-saint, is no more! Bhai Keshub Chunder is dead! How the heart bursts when the word is uttered!"

Keshub Chunder Sen was born in Calcutta on the 19th November, 1838, and was the grandson of Ramcomul Sen, the friend of Horace Hayman Wilson. His family was the stronghold of Hindu orthodoxy, and a centre of education and enlightenment. It is said that in his childhood he shewed signs of future greatness, and that his playmates were proud of him, and were led by him in everything. He liked to dress well, and dress as a Chakta, that is, he would bathe every morning, put on a silk dhoti, and have his body painted with sardai. When he was ten, he lost his father, and his education devolved upon his eldest brother. All that he learned he made a point of communicating to others, and he was always imparting knowledge to the female members of his family. Thus, he once gave a recitation of the vision of Stirza, for the benefit of the ladies. Whenever a magic play was performed at the Town Hall, he would repeat it at his own house. Whilst he was at the Kirda College, he was an ardent student. He was fond of studying Shakespeare, Milton and Young, and gave great attention to Bacon's Essays. On one occasion he was found missing from the house. After an anxious search, he was found on the roof lying asleep, with a book in his hand. After leaving college, he developed a remarkable taste for the drama; his first attempt being a representation of Hamlet, at his native village of Garifa. Only the first act was performed, Keshub Chunder Sen, himself acting Hamlet, and Bhai Protap Chunder taking the part of Laertes. Later on, he appeared as a magician, assuming for the occasion the name of "Mr. Gilbert, who had shewn his feats at the Courts of St. Petersburg, Vienna, etc." He feigned so well the actions and the presence of an Englishman, that some Europeans on the spot mistook his nationality. (Mr. Sen appears to have revived this taste in another form, when he appeared as "the Magician of the New Dispensation," with some singular contrivances for the illustration of his doctrines).

After his marriage, in 1856, he entered upon a course of struggles and hard preparation for his life of ministration. "I entered the world," he said, "with ascetic ideas, and my honeymoon was spent amid austerities in the house of the Lord."

"He studied and thought much. The Bible was to him a treasure house of rich experiences and lessons; and even at that early age, he began to yearn after his own all-merciful God. Mr. Burne, Chaplain to Bishop Cotton, became his friend and adviser, and frequently gave him Bible lessons. He resorted to devices for the conversion of the world, posting up handbills in the streets, containing exhortations to give up sin and lust, which subjected him to satirical comments on the part of his friends. In 1857, he founded a Good-will Fraternity, which held weekly meetings at his house, and he also started the British India Society, for the cultivation of literature and science. At one of their meetings he moved a resolution that it was the duty of every member of the Society to pray."

"Soon after this, he joined the Brahmo Somaj. It was the custom in his family, one of the most orthodox in Calcutta, for every one of its members to be initiated into the mysteries of Hinduism at a certain period of life. The ceremony was conducted by the chief priest, who paid occasional visits to the house for the performance of these rites. It was now Keshub Chunder's turn. He

was asked to prepare himself for initiation. To the wonder of his elders, the youth met the proposal with a simple "No." "Upon this curt monosyllable, the fate of the New Dispensation depended. The destinies of his Church were trembling in the balance; the infinite future was awaiting with eager curiosity the utterance of this 'No.' This turned the course of religious thought in India, and prepared for it a bright future." He repeated his refusal with increasing boldness. But the clouds of persecution grew thick upon his head. Where was the young hero to get comfort and counsel? He was drawn to the Brahmo Somaj, and a visit to the venerable Maharshi Debendra Nath Tagore, chief Minister of the Society, fixed his resolution. From that time the "initiation" ceremony was practically at an end in the Sen family of Colootolah.

After joining the Somaj, Keshub Chunder Sen devoted himself with great energy to the cause of education, establishing a Brahmo School, which became the "nucleus of the Brahmo Somaj of India." His family in vain tried to divert him from his course by finding him employment in a public office. He combined great efforts of thought with his desk-work in the Bank of Bengal, and in 1859 commenced some English tracts on "The Theological features of Indian Theism." During all intervals of leisure he devoted himself to the preparation of a large work on "The Philosophy of the Brahmo Dharma." He caused a sensation by steadily refusing to sign a declaration by which the clerks bound themselves to strict silence on matters connected with the Bank. In 1860, he went to Krishnagur to begin an experiment of Missionary effort. Here he gave a lecture, which brought him into controversy with Mr. Dyson, which made a great stir in the place, the sympathies of the young Bengalis being with the young speaker. Some Pundits from Naddea came to thank him for his efforts to refute the common foe. In the same year he was persuaded to visit Ceylon, in spite of the remonstrances of his family, for whom sea travelling had especial horrors. When he stole away unperceived, they were in despair. He remained some time in the Bank of Bengal, but in 1861 sent his resignation, saying he intended to embrace the life of a missionary.

About this time the Bengal Theists were commencing new practical work, and entering into correspondence with advanced thinkers in England. A letter was written to Professor F. W. Newman, bearing the joint signatures of the chief minister and Keshub Chunder Sen. They began to contemplate a Church of the future for the world, and not for India only. Professor Newman wrote, suggesting a new plan of national education for India, and the scheme was considered at a meeting of the Adi Brahmo Somaj in October, 1861, but it eventually fell through. The narrative goes on to speak of the efforts made by the Somaj to relieve the distress caused by the famine in 1860, and the malarious epidemic in 1861. On the latter occasion Chunder Sen made an eloquent speech, and a large amount was collected; medicines were purchased, and packed off to the Mofussil.

Chunder Sen's intimacy with the venerable Maharshi increased, and it became the wish of the latter that he should succeed him as "chief minister" of the Adi Brahmo Somaj. He went to the Maharshi's house on April 13, 1862, taking his wife with him, thus giving great offence to his family. The proposal to take a lady of an orthodox family to the house of an out-caste was considered heinous, and every step was taken to prevent him from carrying it out. But he was destined to triumph. But the result was, that he had to live in the house of the Tagores for a whole year, living as an out-caste, separated from his mother and other relations. He was also suffering from a sore, which necessitated some painful operations, which he underwent with singular patience. During his illness he was ministered to by his venerable spiritual father, who, it is said, was "a guardian angel to him." At last he recovered from his illness, and in the year 1863 he

claimed admittance to his ancestral house, where he was received with open arms by his mother and nearest relatives.

(To be Continued.)

## OUR AMERICAN BUDGET.

"THE Morgue" is the name of a drinking place in Boston, and the Boston *Transcript* thinks the title may be an illustration of the proverb, *In vino veritas*.

THE announcement of the resignation of the Rev. C. G. Currie, D. D., as rector of St. Luke's Church, and his call to Trinity Church, Newark, N. J., has appeared in the secular papers.

DR. PHILLIPS BROOKS never said a truer word than when he declared that, "If we could sweep intemperance out of the country, there would hardly be poverty enough left to give healthy exercise to the charitable impulses."

THE church expenses of New York are placed in round numbers at \$3,000,000, the police expenses at \$4,000,000, while the public amusements cost \$7,000,000, and the intoxicants \$60,000,000.

THE cause of the Ohio River floods, this year and last year, is generally supposed to be the very unusual fall of cold rains upon frozen grounds.

THROUGH the untiring industry of Miss Harriet McEwen Kimball, a cottage hospital has been started in Portsmouth, N. H., which has long been needed.

TRINITY CHURCH, Columbia, S. C., celebrated recently an interesting event in its parochial history, viz., the semi-centennial of the Rev. Dr. Shand's rectorate. Dr. Shand commenced to serve the Church as a lay reader in 1833.

IN 1830, fifty-eight of the seventy-six United States Senators, and 292 of 325 Representatives, were from States and Districts where illiterate voters held the balance of power.

DURING the last few weeks, the American Church Building Fund has received a gift of \$2,000 from some one in Boston; another gift of \$1,000 from Mr. Lemuel Coffin, of Philadelphia; a legacy of \$4,000 from an estate in N. J., and a subscription of \$5,000 from some gentleman in St. Luke's Church, Lebanon, Pa.

At a Convention of the Church of England in Maryland, held at Charleston, Nov. 9, 1780, attended by three clergymen, Dr. Wilmer moved the following resolution, which was adopted: "Resolved, that the Church, formerly known in this province as the Church of England, be now called the Protestant Episcopal Church." This was the origin of the name.

WILLIAM AND MARY COLLEGE, of Virginia, has closed its doors, having but one student at the beginning of this school year. Next to Harvard this was the oldest college in America, having been founded in 1693, and was the only one that received a royal charter. Among the most eminent men educated in its halls were Washington, Marshall, Randolph, Tyler, Breckenridge, and General Scott.

THE Baptists of Maine are not prospering. In 1844 their membership was 23,860; at present it is 20,039. In 1846 they had 300 churches; now they have but 252. In other words, their membership has decreased 2,721, and 48 churches have been compelled to close their doors. These facts were brought out at the fifty-ninth annual meeting of the Baptists of that State, and would seem to indicate that after fifty-nine years of labor failure is staring them in the face.

"BISHOP SPALDING'S Commemorative Address," delivered on the Sunday after Christmas, December 30th, 1883, marks the completion of ten years of his Episcopate in the missionary jurisdiction of Colorado. The population of Colorado and Wyoming in 1870 was 50,000; in 1880, 214,000; an increase of 328 per cent. In 1873 there were 550 communicants; in 1883 there were 2012, an increase of 284 per cent. There are now about 28 clergymen in place of 7, when Bishop Spalding commenced his ministry.