

Pastor and People.

THE MARTYR OF SOLWAY SANDS.

The tide was flowing on Solway sands,
And bound to a rugged stake,
A fair-haired Scottish maiden stands,
For Christ and Covenant sake.

She could die in the bloom of her early youth,
(But a passing pang to die!)
But not one word of the saintly truth
Could her guiltless tongue deny.

The water had reached her praying lips,
And dashed in her upturned eyes,
And the swoon that led through Death's eclipse
Was unfolding Paradise.

But rough and torturing hands unbound
The lass from the martyr-stake,
And she found herself upon Scottish ground,
Still mocked for Jesus' sake.

"Now swear to the king! or worse shall be!
And abjure your Covenant vile!"
"Never!" she cried; "my King is He
Who died for me erstwhile!"

"I am His! I am His! I am bought with blood!
Let me go where the saints have gone!
I will pray for your king as I plead with God,
But my truth's with Christ alone!"

And they bound her again to a rugged stake,
In a hoarse advancing tide;
And they saw the gurgling bubbles wake,
And the fair hair floating wide.

But they saw not the gleam of the white-winged host,
Nor heard, as she heard, the strain
Of the ransomed ones on the heavenly coast,
Who answered the glad refrain.

"Blessing, and glory, and honour, and power,
For ever and ever shall be,
To Him who has saved us in Hell's dark hour,
And made us His people, and free!"

But the latest voice in that heavenly lay—
The clearest of all beside—
Was hers who went to her death that day,
In the Solway's flowing tide!

O Scottish land! at fair Freedom's birth,
With what throes and pangs thou cried:
It was not a loss, but a gain to Earth,
That Margaret Wilson died!

THE GOSPEL AFLOAT.

It was early on a Friday morning when we dropped anchor in the Golden Horn—the harbour of Constantinople. As a harbour, it is beautiful and commodious. It is formed by the waters of the Bosphorus flowing in between two promontories separating Stamboul from Pera, Galata and Top-hanna. It is indebted to nature, not to man, for its magnificence. With the exception of the bridge across the Golden Horn, uniting Stamboul and Pera, there are few evidences of engineering enterprise.

First impressions in the East are the most favourable impressions. It is so here. The magnificence of the situation of Constantinople, and the fairy-like beauty of the scene beggar description. The white marble palace of the Seraglio (occupying within its enclosures the space of the ancient city of Byzantium), where the late sultan, Abdul Aziz, was confined after his deposition; the towering minarets and swelling massive domes of the mosques, with their gilded, glittering crescents; the picturesque disposition of colour—houses white, brown pink and yellow, with the dark, sombre cypress interjecting its gloomy shadows everywhere amid the scenes of light and brightness; the continuous stream of pedestrians from sunrise to sunset, in every variety of costume, crossing the bridge that spans the Golden Horn; the light, graceful caiques glancing over the smooth surface of the water with wondrous rapidity, constitute a picture of fairy lightness and grace impossible to describe.

Distance has something, however, to do with the enchantment of the scene. Closer acquaintance somewhat rudely dispels the roseate romance of first impressions. Narrow, tortuous streets, without any pretence of paving, or suggestion of a reference to sanitation, however elementary; dogs—dirty, wolfish, half-starved curs—everywhere, a series of canine municipalities (for each district has its own pack, and no invasion into another district is permitted), reduce the poetry of first impressions to the grim prose of bad smells and omnipresent dirt.

It was the Turkish Sunday. Three Sundays in a

week represent an extreme form of Sabbatarianism. Friday is the Turkish Sabbath; Saturday that of the Jews—a very large factor of the population of Constantinople; then comes the Christian Sabbath—the first day of the week.

Like most passengers, we were not slow in getting ashore. Here, as elsewhere in the East, there is a plethora of cicerones. We take counsel with the trusted dragoman of the Cunard Company, who gloried in the name of "Far-away-Moses." We found him an intelligent guide enough; but like all his fraternity, trust had to be reposed in him *cum grano*. We find that the Sultan goes in state to mosque at two o'clock. Unwilling to miss such a sight, we hurry on past Top-hanna, catch a glimpse of the Mosque of Kildsch Ali Pasha, and the Cannon Foundry, and reach as near to the Sultan's palace as the crowd will permit. The road is lined on both sides with soldiers. Behind the soldiers on one side of the street are veiled women; on the other side are the men, though not without a thin sprinkling of the opposite sex. We patiently await the imperial cavalcade. The double line of soldiers is broken and irregular till at a given signal the rugged lines assume a well-dressed martial front. The strange thing is that no hoarse voice of officer is heard ordering to position; nothing but a hissing sound which passes, or rather flashes, down the lines, and instantly all is order, silence and expectation. Presently the imposing procession appears. First come a few mounted officers, followed by the Grand Vizier and other high officers of State, enjoying, for their brief official day, the capricious sunshine of their imperial master's favour. Then approaches the portly form of the Sultan himself, conspicuous by the plainness of his dress, wearing only the plain, undecorated fez. As he passes, he lazily lifts his hand in salute, which is answered by a military cheer; but such a ghostly attempt as not to merit the name. There is no enthusiasm; no fervid, hearty reception. The people, for the most part, maintain an unbroken silence, to be accounted for, perhaps, as much by the natural apathy of Eastern peoples, as by any definite want of loyalty to the powers that be. The procession having passed, we mingled in a motley crowd. A line of carriages bring up the rear of the procession, containing some of the fair Circassian occupants of the imperial harem. The carriages, which might pass muster for second-rate London cabs, are jealously surrounded, and their yasmaked occupants guarded by those hideous eunuch guards, who form by no means a wholesome detail of a picturesque scene. The Turkish women go not to mosque to join their lords in devotion; their religious nature and demands are not recognized in this sad land, where the lot of women is as yet untouched by the ennobling influence of the Gospel of the Son of Mary. The afternoon of the Sabbath is spent up the Golden Horn with their lords, after they have performed their devotions.

On our return to the ship we were surprised to find that we were not without kindly recognition, even in this far-off region. The genial chaplain of the British Ambassador had been aboard, and had left kindly messages. The inevitable Scotchman was also represented in the person of an officer of the Congregational Church, associated with the Dutch Embassy, Pera. He was in search of a "supply" for the Sunday. It was of no use to urge the purpose of our trip, and the necessity for rest; an engagement was accepted to preach on the afternoon of the following Sunday.

On the Sunday morning we attended the Scotch Church at Haskioi, where a fair congregation had assembled, chiefly consisting of the families of Scotch residents and engineers employed at the Turkish arsenal. Under the ministry of the Church of Scotland missionary to the Jews, the cause and worship of Christ are maintained amongst a British population, many of whom would sink to the dead level of those around them, but for his helpful ministry. The afternoon service found us at the Dutch Embassy Chapel. It was a sermon entirely divested of the circumstance of ritual. The decencies of worship seemed to suggest at least a black coat; but the heat would permit only the lightest possible garb, and broadcloth had to be surrendered. A pulpit gown of the Geneva pattern was provided for the minister, but circumstances were too much for the ecclesiastical proprieties, the gown had to be declined, and the minister, in most unclerical costume, took his place in the pulpit of the

Dutch Embassy Church. Conspicuous in the congregation, and occupying two or three pews, was company of our own "Blue Jackets." The sight was inspiration enough to the preacher's heart. They had sought and obtained permission to come ashore and attend church. Those who are acquainted with the usual pretences of seamen to get ashore in a foreign port, and their conduct when ashore, will understand the high estimate which was at once placed upon their attendance at divine worship. To not a few of them this had been the first visit to a church for years; and to me it was a promise full of hope, that the simple efforts to influence seamen on the side of the Gospel were not in vain.

I found at the close of the service that I had been unconsciously the cause of grave anxiety to my congregation. The subject of my sermon was "Christian Progress." I had sought to illustrate and enforce the necessity of progress by references to nature, and the history of nations. Under the latter heading I had been contending that if any nation had not the elements of progress within itself, its ultimate decay was inevitable. This theme was neither a safe nor a genial one in Turkey, and by it I had unwittingly roused the fears of not a few of my congregation.

Passing next morning through one of the busiest thoroughfares of Galata, amid the din and discordant clamour of vendors of bread, fruit, sherbet and water, with the howling and barking of dogs, I was more than surprised to hear my name rising above the noise of many voices, repeated over and over again. The vigorous call came from a stalwart countryman, who was making his way, more energetically than politely, through the crowds of apathetic Orientals. Grasping my hand and panting for breath, he managed to say to me: "Man! I heard you preach yesterday, and I just wanted to shake hands with you. I'm a Scotchman like yourself. Good bye," and off he went, as quickly as he came. A British face, a word, however hurried, of kindly greeting means much away from home.—*Rev. W. Scott, in The Canadian Independent.*

GOD'S JEWELS.

What does God regard as his jewels? We have in His Word the answer in His own language. It is in Malachi iii. 17, "And they shall be Mine, saith the Lord of Hosts, in that day when I make up My jewels."

Who are "they" to whom God thus refers? In the previous verse they are described not as the wealthy, nor the beautiful in figure, nor the facile in action, nor as the sweet in voice, but simply as "they that feared the Lord."

How did they show their fear? The passage says, "Then they that feared the Lord spake often to one another." They were those who loved the Lord enough to talk about Him. They were those who made His character and His work the theme of their daily conversations; who would rather talk about God's mercy than about man's selfishness; about God's saving love than about anything that savours simply of the earth.

To such conduct God is not indifferent. Malachi tells us that the "Lord hearkened and heard it." It pleased Him that men should make His work the frequent theme of their conversation. Nay, more; Malachi tells us that "a book of remembrance was written before Him for them," that through all generations their interest in God's work might not be forgotten. Shall that book be opened and read in eternity to come?

In Isaiah lxii. we are told that the Church shall be "a crown of glory in the hand of the Lord, and a royal diadem in the hand of thy God." For whom is this crown, this diadem? Can it be for any save our Redeemer? And is there a reference to this royal diadem in the words of Malachi which we have quoted, "in that day when I make up My jewels"? Is it true that those who love to talk of Christ with their neighbours, they who on earth "thought upon His name," are to be counted worthy of appearing as jewels in the Saviour's crown?

Oh, blessed privilege, and it is in reach of us all! Not all of us can write a commentary, not all may preach the Gospel, not all may give large gifts to His treasury, but all of us can "speak often to one another," and "think upon His name."

In what place on earth is this exercise more happily realized than in the social prayer meetings of the Church? Ye who would be counted as God's jewels, forget not the hour of social prayer.—*Christian Observer.*