

Moral and Religious Miscellany.

From a Thanksgiving Sermon by the Rev. John Thomson, D.D.,
of New York.

BRITISH AND AMERICAN ALLIANCE.

Look ye for a moment to that great tract of country—itsself a little continent—stretching from the Mediterranean away eastward and northward to the Caspian Sea. It is the very heart of the Eastern hemisphere; and in the keeping of an enterprising and ambitious people, it would be the key to one grand Eastern empire. With its lofty mountain ranges, its broad and deep rivers, its far-stretching and fertile plains, that country is destined to be, even as the ruins of ancient splendour testify that it has been, the abode and the nursery of a mighty people. There, however, dwell a slothful and effeminate race, nominally for the most part Christians, but in all things "too superstitious," and, until late years, wholly surrendered to the evil influences of an ecclesiastico-political despotism. The Greek Church, of which not only within his own territories, but also within those of other and dissimilar nations, the Russian Emperor claims to be regarded as the Head and Protector, is the prevalent Church there. The Greek, the Turk, the Muscovite, the Kurds, dwell there amid scenes of ever-recurring strife and contention. There, and amongst these tribes and peoples, American men—men of God—men, with the weapons of truth and love—men, with hearts big, and bold, and all-embracing, have planted anew the vine of Gospel doctrine, fresh from God's own Word, and blessed, and abundant above all expectations, are the fruits which are being gathered there. Almost the entire country belongs to Turkey, and is subject to Turkish rule; but to the zeal, and faithfulness, and piety of American missionaries, Turkish antipathy to Bible doctrine has been, in the providence of God, compelled to yield, and must yield yet more, for the law that pronounces death upon the convert from Mohammedanism, *must be repealed*, even as has the law of excommunication, with all its pains and penalties, against every convert from a lifeless superstition to the life and invigorating power of a truly Christian profession.

The labours of our missionaries in the Turkish dominions, and the success with which, with God's blessing, they have been attended, have attracted towards them the attention not only of the British Churches, but of British statesmen. In a speech delivered in the House of Lords, little more than a year ago, the Earl of Shaftesbury most honourably testified to the great change in Turkey, inchoated by the missionaries from the American Churches—spoke of their Bible distribution, their large tract-printing operations, and their zealous and effective evangelistic labours; and by the assembled peerage of Britain, the accounts of this great moral conflict in the East, waged by our own brethren, were received—O, not with jealousy nor with freezingly suspicious—but with unfeigned gladness of heart.

The effect of this too upon the British Churches, it is equally pleasing to contemplate. Recognising the whole land as already occupied and zealously cultivated by our American missionaries, they sought not to interfere with their operations by the establishment of rival organizations, but resolved, through their leading men, upon the formation of a society to aid our brethren in still further extending their labours. The society was formed, and is now zealously pursuing its honourable and noble course. And thus is there in operation an alliance in heart and in ac-

tive labour between the Christians of Britain and America for the regeneration and the elevation of the Turkish people; an alliance that offers them a security against Russian aggression more durable by far, and more highly to be prized, than that of trained and disciplined armies, though well found in all the munitions of war. There is not, indeed, about these silent operations, the glare, and the romance, and the pageantry of war, but the result of such operations will not be disputed by those to whom the recent elevation of the Sandwich Islanders is known. Is it not the phenomenon of the age, that while the united armies of Britain and France are engaged in bloody and fierce conflict with the sworn aggressor upon Turkish liberties, expending treasure and human life to an extent which the world has seldom if ever seen, with the determination to secure freedom for all that eastern land, the Christian Churches of America should be engaged conquering that land for Christ—in instructing and educating its various tribes and people for the appreciation and improvement of the liberties which the allied armies are now endeavouring to secure for them?

If it be remembered that the Russian Emperor claims the protectorate of the whole Greek Church, and that the refusal of Turkey to accede to this claim was the ground of the present disastrous conflict, who can fail to see that every member of that Church, delivered from its soulless and debasing superstitions, and joined to the Protestant community, now fully organized and amply secured in the possession of all rights and immunities, is just so much subtracted from the moral territory to which the unjust demands of Russia extend. If it be kept in view that this work is advancing with most astonishing rapidity, and that its ultimate success is now, in the good providence of God, placed beyond all hazard, and beyond all doubt, who does not see, if he have the Word of God in his hand, that the Christians of America have commenced a work which will, with God's blessing, fit the people of that glorious land for preserving and maintaining their own rights, and which will place the cope-stone of peace and tranquillity upon a work whose foundations have indeed been bathed in blood; and then from that very land, so near to the cradle of the human family, and itself the first resting-place of undefiled religion, shall go forth 'the true light,' both among the barbaric tribes of the north, and south, and east. 'The mountain of the Lord's house shall be established upon the tops of the mountains.' This mighty engineering work, in which the Churches of America and of Britain are now happily engaged, is indeed 'a drying up of the River Euphrates, that the way of the Kings of the East may be prepared.'

Thanks be to God that he gave to American Christians the prescience of that land as a grand and fitting field for evangelistic labour, for it is the key of the great Eastern hemisphere. Thanks be to God for the success that has attended their efforts. May that success be an incitement to increased liberality, and to more earnest and importunate prayer. Thanks be to God for that now visible alliance between the Christians of America and the Christians of Britain; between all that is noble and good on this side of the Atlantic, and all that is noble and brotherly on that—an alliance of loving and kindred hearts—an alliance that will baffle the intrigues of revengeful men—that will put to silence the malicious sayings of the mere politician, and that will crush in a moment, by the weight of its own innate worth, the attempts of either Government to fasten a quarrel upon the other, and to plunge the two nations into the horrors of a murderous and disgraceful war.