

Our Contributors.

JOTTINGS FROM BERMUDA.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Take a map of North America. Put your fore-finger on the city of New York. Run it—your finger, not the city—in a South-easterly direction for seven hundred and twenty miles. Now you are at Bermuda, the most isolated piece of ground in the world, except, perhaps, St. Helena, and the most strongly fortified spot in the British Empire except Gibraltar. If you ask why John Bull attaches so much importance to this isolated coral rock, I must, in the meantime, merely reply that John knows his business. Later on I may try to explain the reason why this island bristles with cannon, why red coats and marines meet you at every point, why several beautiful hills are turned into forts that no civilian is allowed to enter, and the North American fleet cruises proudly around a little island with an area of less than twenty square miles. Meantime we leave you to guess the reason and repeat that old John knows what he is about in naval and military affairs. If there is only one kind of a point that he understands it is a strategic point.

"The Bermudas," as they used to be called, are a group of coral islands numbering, it is said, 365, one for every day in the year. If there are 365 the great majority of them are mere rocks that rise a little above water. A large number are small—about the size of an average Muskoka island. Only five are of any considerable size and for all practical purposes the five are one, being connected by bridges. In these jottings the five will be considered as one island and will be called by the modern name—Bermuda.

For some reason best known to themselves, the coral insects constructed Bermuda in the form of a fish-hook. The line end of the hook points in a North-easterly direction, and the bait end is turned towards the American continent, being directly opposite the city of Charleston and about six hundred miles East from that city. The hook is twenty miles in length and averages about two and a half miles in width. The area is less than twenty square miles and the population is 15,000, the same in number as Brantford, the home of the telephone and of energetic oratory.

Bermuda is a coral rock, covered in most places with a thin layer of soil. Hills without number, and of considerable height dot the whole island. Hills of course limpy valleys and these valleys are the farms of Bermuda. For the most part the hills are covered with cedar trees and I understand it is a criminal offence to cut down or in any way injure one of these cedars. The palm tree and oleander are grown in abundance, and if there is anything in this life better for a weary sick man than the sight of these hills from the deck of a steamer after he has journeyed 1,300 miles from a temperature 20 degrees below zero I have yet to learn what it is.

THE BERMUDA FARM

averages about five acres. On these few acres the Bermuda farmers seem to be as well fed, as well clad, as well housed and as happy, as the average Ontario farmer is on two hundred. The chief productions are sweet potatoes, onions, bananas and lilies. The potatoes are sold in New York and Boston at high prices. One reason why they bring such good figures is because they are on the market when Canadian and American farmers are putting their potatoes into the ground. The Bermuda onion is said to be the best onion in the world. I cannot give an opinion on that point as I never eat onions at home and therefore cannot make a comparison. Here of course one must eat onions to retain his place in society, and so far as I can judge the onion has not done me any harm from a physical, mental or moral point of view. Bermudas great export just now, however, is the lily. Were

I to say the plain truth about the lilies that are being sent to New York for Easter my reputation for veracity would be as badly gone as Othello's occupation. There are two things on this side of the globe that no man, however great his inventive powers, can ever exaggerate, the one is the fertility of a Manitoba wheat field and the other is the beauty of a Bermuda lily field.

Bermuda soil grows no grain of any kind. Nearly everything that a man wears and eats has to be brought here, except potatoes, onions, fish and bananas. Oranges and lemons were once raised in abundance but some insect enemy killed them off. If you ask how it comes that a Bermudian, even on a rented farm, gets along so well, perhaps the main answer should be that he raises *four crops a year*.

THE BERMUDA HOUSE.

Bermudians are said to be the best housed people in the world. Sixty per cent. of the people are coloured but the coloured brother has a good place for himself and his numerous family to live in. With very few exceptions—I know of only two—the houses are built of coral blocks taken from the cellar or from a neighbouring hill-side. The coral when not exposed to the atmosphere is cream-coloured and is sawn much more easily than wood. The ordinary block used for building purposes is two feet long, one foot wide, six inches thick and can be produced for seven cents. Laying these blocks is a simple operation. The roof is made of the same material sawn into slabs and the chimneys too are of coral. Being porous, in order to prevent dampness, the house is covered with a thin layer of Portland cement and this whitewashed, roof, chimneys and all, with a lime made from the coral. The result is a house white from foundation to chimney-top. No small part of the beauty of Bermuda consists in the houses. Imagine a splendid house—and many of them are splendid—white as the driven snow standing in the bright sunlight on a hill side, surrounded by palms, cedars and many other varieties of semi-tropical trees; a beautiful flower garden in front with roses, geraniums and lilies in full bloom; the whole surrounded by a hedge of oleander, and you have some idea of what a good Bermudian home resembles. And remember, too, that Bermuda has nearly a thousand people to the square mile, and the houses must be near one another over the whole island.

THE BERMUDA ROAD

is of coral. It is smooth, hard, clean, and never anything but clean. The coral being porous the road dries up in a few minutes after any kind of rain. The roads wind around or cut through the hills and one of the chief pleasures of a visit here is a drive. Some of the roads were made by convict labour—many years ago when Bermuda was a penal colony. Driving on any road I have seen on the island simply means winding around lovely green hills, on a white road, clean and smooth as a floor. The main roads, called the North shore, middle and South shore, run the whole length of the island. Oleander hedges are as common on the waysides as fences are in other countries.

Bermuda is a small island but the people have solved social, political, fiscal, educational and ecclesiastical problems in a manner that might make them an example to larger communities. They have done so because they have had sense enough to understand what Principal Grant so well said the other day: Government of a mixed people must be government by compromise. But, as Prof. Young used to say, More anon.

Rev. T. Fenwick: A great deal of downright rubbish is uttered by some D.D.'s against the so-called "cursing" Psalms, proving that the speakers "understand neither what they say, nor whereof they affirm." They take good care not to say anything about the "cursing" parts of the New Testament.

HINDUISM ALARMED.

BY THE REV. JOHN WILKIE.

There has come into my hands a copy of a publication of the Arya Somaj, or rather of the Theosophical Society of India. In imitation of our Christian methods they have attempted the establishment of a Tract Society, Hindu Boy's Association, etc., and they have published this monthly journal, of which I have in my hands the first number. Here are one or two sentences from it:—

"To be morally pure and spiritually great implies a higher state of existence, which ought to be the aim of every living being. Our ancestors were such—will you therefore sign on 'A' or 'B' or both, and send them to the secretary."

Under "A" are 7 rules, of which the 7th is, "I shall study our own religious books if time allows;" and the other six rules are simply moral in their character.

Under "B" they promise to observe their old religious rites. In the introductory article we find the following:—

"It grieves my heart to see the young generation rising up like the young savages, ignorant of their splendid and ancestral literature and philosophies, falling, through the sheer neglect, indifference and blindness of their elders, a prey to specious materialists or perverted by the clever arts of the missionary caustics into utter religious scepticism."

Another sentence: "I admire the courage of some of your club boys who have stood up for the ancient faith against the ridicule of the missionaries."

Again: "It is a matter of great regret that our country is so much overrun by the preachers of alien systems of religious doctrines and our countrymen are becoming perverted every day, at least in their thoughts and ideas by alien systems of philosophies, when our own systems are being neglected mercilessly by a universal hatred towards them, as full of superstitious views and unscientific principles."

"This apathy towards our philosophical system is no doubt owing to our country being ruled by foreigners, whose alien and unscientific religious doctrines are being universally adopted by ignorant and easy going persons who have not the power of diving deep into the mysteries of our own philosophy. I am of opinion that if they can once have a look into its unexplored wealth they will no longer praise and admire the comparatively insane and unsound thought of the philosophers of the west, whose works are generally of lengthy discussions on merely trivial matters and who have shown their utter ignorance of matters Spiritual by declaring mind and soul to be one and the same thing.

"It is perhaps not known to many that the Aryan Rishis of old are still living in their physical bodies and are influencing the minds of the modern Indian Yogees by an unknown and wonderful means."

The young men of Maschalipattan resolved to form themselves into an association because "their hearts were full of grief that their time-honored religion was needlessly reviled and slandered by the local Christian community."

These words may be of interest to the friends at home as showing, at least, that Christianity has at last aroused to active opposition those who so long, in professed contempt of the influence and power of Christianity, ignored it. Enquiry is of necessity forced upon numbers that a few years ago accepted unquestioningly the dictates of their religious teachers and we know that all that is needed is honest enquiry to expose and to overthrow that religion, that has so long ruled in this land. The appeal is now made largely to the Vedas, but only because they are so largely unknown. They can no more stand the light of investigation than the Purannas. The absurdly filthy and degrading stories of their licentious, drunken gods can never be excused or tolerated, because of the few moral precepts found occasionally in them, or the philosophical covering that is thrown around them.

It is not worth while noticing the statements made in this and other periodicals that are now covering this land. The leaders recognize the danger of their old faith, and know what its overthrow means to them. The great mass of priests with their fat livings will have to seek for some other more difficult means of subsistence. The Brahmanical claims will of necessity be

ignored. The Brahmanical and national pride therefore combine to up-hold the system, and, hence, desperate efforts are being made to counteract the influence of the Christian missionaries. Their methods are in harmony with their past training in too many cases; but in spite of all their misrepresentations the result is that they are stirring up enquiry; bringing to light that which will not stand the light and so hastening the very end that they are seeking to avert.

As I to-day hear the filthy disgusting songs and see the shameless, open, gross sensuality of the "Holi," it is hard for me to understand the brazen-faced impudence of those Hindus, who in Christian lands dare to palm off as Hinduism a product of their own imagination and the influence of Christian teaching, and it is almost as hard to understand how those who know and value Christian purity can be found to give the system any encouragement whatever. The "Holi" is a part of Hinduism directly encouraged by their so-called religious books and teachers, and no amount of philosophical casuistry can make it anything else; whilst that taught by the Hindu apologists at the Parliament of Religions is not that practised to-day by the people, nor taught in their sacred books.

Only to-day some Hindoos from the Holkar College asked the loan of my magic lantern slides that they might get up some entertainments in the city during the Holi, so interesting as to draw the boys of the city away from the filthy scenes of the streets—Hindoos actually trying to save their companions from the degrading influences of Hinduism!! Can we do less? The day is coming when its gods will be as much an object of derision as are to-day those of Greece or Rome. And even to-day in the face of the bold misrepresentations of it, all lovers of truth and purity must speak out clearly that those who do not know may at least be led to inquire lest they be found in their ignorance to encourage that which their heart loathes. Let all true Christians have a care how they countenance those pious deceivers from Hindustan.

Indore, March 6th, 1895.

THE PEOPLE'S BIBLE.*

BY REV. W. S. HANNA, B.A.

Romans, Gorinthians, Galatians. To produce an acceptable exposition of these master epistles in a single volume, requires ability of no common order. To attempt such a task is to invite keen criticism, for these epistles have engaged the attention of the great thinkers of the church. Yet Dr. Parker has produced a work that will be a permanent addition to any Bible students library.

It is not an exposition in the ordinary sense of that term. The narrow limits of a single volume and the author's method do not admit this kind of material. It is rather a series of expository discourses on certain selected passages, suiting the practical demands of the City Temple pulpit, but, as such, a work of no ordinary power.

Of course the passages selected are not such as the majority would have chosen, for Dr. Parker's thinking is a *sui generis*. He sees meanings and finds lines of instruction that seem to lie out of the way and are often overlooked by others. Still if the volume be read through, its true value will be appreciated and its author will be found to be far other than a belated gleaner in a well reaped harvest-field. For by his striking originality he rivets the thought of his reader and by the modern concrete embodiment he gives to familiar truths, affords enlarged conception of the great riches of this portion of scripture.

Under his treatment these four (so called hard, dry) doctrinal epistles seem more

* The Peoples Bible Discourses upon Holy Scripture, by Joseph Parkes, D.D., Romans—Galatians. 500 pp. Funk and Wagnalls, New York and Toronto.