

That precedence rests on a circular despatch of Earl Grey, bearing date the 20th of November, 1817, which, on a literal construction, would appear to indicate that Roman Catholic archbishops should rank immediately after Anglican archbishops, and Roman Catholic bishops after Anglican bishops. If, however, this were Lord Grey's intention, it was, to a certain extent, modified by a later decision, conveying in a despatch to the Governor of New South Wales, dated the 9th of January, 1819, in which he expresses his opinion that the Anglican Bishop of Sydney, exercising the functions of a Metropolitan over the other Anglican bishops of Australia, should retain precedence over the Roman Catholic archbishop, exercising (I presume) similar functions over bishops of his communion.

This decision, however, is far from settling all the questions which may arise upon the creation of any new Roman Catholic Archbishopric, or by the grant of Metropolitan powers to Roman Catholic prelates. As, therefore, I feel no doubt with respect to the rule which ought to be observed, I think it best to give you at once such instructions as may preclude any controversy in the colony under your government.

I have no wish or intention to depart from the spirit of Lord Grey's despatch, nor to withdraw the recognition of the Roman Catholic Episcopate, which it conveyed. But I think it most undesirable, and I doubt whether my predecessor himself could have intended, that Her Majesty's Government should occupy itself in discussing the comparative rank due within that and other Episcopates to archbishops and to bishops, or to bishops exercising, and to those not exercising metropolitan jurisdiction. And I think it wholly objectionable that the precedence of Prelates of the National Church should be made dependent on the internal constitution of the Roman Catholic Hierarchy, and so consequently on the act of foreign authority.

I am clearly of opinion, therefore, that, neglecting all subordinate distinctions, the Episcopate which derives its rank from the Queen's Letters Patent, should take precedence of any other Episcopate not deriving its rank from any such Letters Patent, and that the dignities of Metropolitan Archbishop, or (it may be) Patriarch, should only be recognized by Her Majesty's Officers when admitted by Bishops of each Communion as regulating their precedence *inter se*. If not so admitted, you will not take notice of them, but will consider all Roman Catholic Prelates as taking rank within the colony of Jamaica, according to the date of their consecration to the rank of Bishop.

I have the honor to be, Sir,

Your most obedient humble servant,

Governor Darling.

NEWCASTLE.

### Foreign Ecclesiastical Intelligence.

#### EXCURSIONS IN PALESTINE & SOUTHERN SYRIA.

DAMASCUS TO BAALBEK.

THE GREAT MOSK OF DAMASCUS, FORMERLY THE BASILICA OF ST. JOHN BAPTIST—THE ADANA AND PHARPAR—SUK-WADY-BARADA, ANCIENT ADILA—ZEDDANI—ANTI-LIBANUS—HOLLOW SYRIA—LEBANON ILLUMINATED.

Friday, May 19.—Before quitting Damascus, I must note down one or two observations which I made there of historical or antiquarian interest. And first, the noble church of St. John Baptist deserves more than a passing notice, being probably one of the most venerable churches in the

world, and certainly by far the most ancient building in this city. It is now used as a Mosk, and jealously guarded from the approach of Christians, so that I could only steal furtive glances at it through the door which opens into one of the bazaars. It appeared to be a basilica of noble proportions, consisting of a nave and single lateral aisles, the columns having their capitals richly foliated, and supporting—not arches, as in the Basilica of Justinian, now the Mosk El Aksa at Jerusalem—but an architrave, which carries the wall of the clerestory, as in the Basilica of St. Helena at Bethlehem. The history of this magnificent structure has been fully investigated by M. Quatremère, and most learnedly illustrated from Arabic sources in a note to his excellent translation of Makrizi's "History of the Mamlouk Sultans," to which I must refer the ecclesiastical archaeologist for further information, which would be scarcely suitable to these pages. One question, however, I was unexpectedly enabled to clear up beyond all doubt, and the discovery was extremely interesting in every view. From the various and sometimes conflicting accounts which the ancient Mohammedan writers have given of the conversion of the site of the old church into a Mosk, it is extremely difficult to determine whether any part of the original structure was spared, and although the present appearance of the building, as has been intimated, would certainly warrant the conclusion that the building is substantially the same, yet this fact might have been accounted for by the circumstances that Abdel-Melik employed Greek Christian architects in the erection of his Mosk. But the actual existence of an original Greek inscription on the building is decisive as to its original designation for the purpose of Christian worship. While walking through the bazaar adjoining the church a Christian shopkeeper informed us that by ascending to the roof of the bazaars we could survey the whole length of the Mosk externally, and he guided us up some narrow and decayed stairs to the roof. We measured 150 paces along the side of the building and about 30 yards more, to which we could not gain access,—giving a length of not much less than 500 feet. We noticed a very richly carved cornice, which must have surmounted a very lofty door, in the north transept, as the frieze is above the roof of the bazaar, which abuts upon it: and along the architrave immediately below the cornice, we deciphered the following fragment of an inscription,—

ΤΟΝΑΙΟΝΟΝΚΑΙΗΔΕΠΟΤΙΑΟΤΕΝΕΝΕΑΙΚΑΙΕ-  
ΝΕΑΙ.

"Thy kingdom is [.....a kingdom] of all ages, and Thy dominion throughout all generations."—Psalm clv. 13.

It was consolatory to read this testimony to the inflexibility of Christ's kingdom on a mosk, and to find that, while the ascription of praise from human lips in reasonable service has been silenced for upwards of a thousand years, the very stones have cried out of the wall, witnessing that this usurped dominion of the false prophet is not for ever, but that the Galilean will again one day conquer.

I investigated with much diligence the question of the waters of Damascus, and obtained from the Patriarch and his attendants the following information, which was afterwards tested and confirmed from other testimony. I had already learnt incidentally, from an independent witness, that the city of Damascus is supplied with drinking water from two principal sources; while the most copious streams which permeate the gardens are wholly unfit to drink, and are, in fact, not touched by the inhabitants, as the water produces

glandular tumors resembling *goitre*. I inquired of his holiness why it was that, since Damascus is watered by eight streams,—as I had learnt was the case,—two only should have been specified so particularly by the Syrian captain? He told me that all were derived from two main sources, viz: the Barada and the Phegee, and that these are doubtless the Abana and Pharpar respectively. The general accuracy of this statement I had the opportunity of testing on the morrow: but I find that Mr. Porter does not confirm the account, and as he has resided so many years in Damascus, and seems thoroughly to have examined those questions, I must defer to his opinion, based upon fuller knowledge, while I can by no means accept his identification of the Pharpar.

We left Damascus at 3.15, and pausing a while at the well known Sheikh's tomb above Salahiye, to take a last fond look of this lovely city, we saw below us, on the south, at the foot of the hill, Barada issuing forth, in a copious and rapid stream, from a rocky formed in the roots of Anti-Libanus. It is thence divided into many channels, whether by nature or art I cannot say; and after saturating the gardens, its small residue is collected again into one stream, which flows through the plain El-Ghutah, and is finally lost in the large marshy pool called Bahret esh-Shurkiye.....

Pursuing our way over rough, broken ground, the skirts of Anti-Libanus, we came, at five o'clock, to a Khan, situated at a bridge over a stream, here called Yezid, near a small village named Dummur. The stream was narrow, but rapid, and the channel very deep. The water is said to be excellent and flows from a very copious fountain about three hours up the valley, which fountain is the Phegee of which the Patriarch spoke. A little lower down than the Khan and village of Dummur, part of the stream runs off into the Barada, rendering the waters of the latter less unwholesome than they were above this confluence; and the native doctors say that the Barada would be deadly poison but for the admixture of the Phegee—of the excellence of which all speak with perfect enthusiasm. It runs as far as Salahiye, from whence it is conveyed by closed pipes to Damascus, where it supplies almost every house in the city with a small fountain of drinking water. We had not time to visit the fountain, the picturesque beauties of which are described by old Maundrell, and, in more recent times, by Porter, in his "Five years in Damascus."

Having halted a few minutes at the Khan, and refreshed ourselves with bread and coffee, we crossed the Nhar Barada and proceeded up the right bank of the river through Wady Barada, the waters of which presented a striking contrast, even in appearance, to the sparkling waters of the Yezid or Phegee. They looked dull and heavy, and rolled down in their channel like molten lead, resembling much the turbid brooks which flow from metallic mines,—only that these waters were treacherously clear. We passed several villages near the river in the dark, for it was 9.30 before we reached our halting place, at Suk Wady Barada, where we encamped under the shadow of a great rock opposite to the village, and drank of the water without much apprehension from the exceptional use of it. Far different is it with the poor people who inhabit the villages on its banks; and a friend of mine who passed a night at this place a few months before me, had experience of its fatal effects. He was asked to prescribe for a poor woman whom he found in the last stage of *goitre*. He was no *hakim*, except in the estimation of the natives, and had he been the most skilful physician in the world the case