

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Whoever shall come unto the king into the inner court.—Esther iv 11.

The law here mentioned was a general one and although, in its original intention, the queen was probably not thought of, the present queen knew that she was not necessarily exempted from its application. We have frequent instances that the proverbially fixed laws of the Medes and Persians admitted, less than any other ever known, of modification, exemption, or alteration. Of this we have another instance just below; for Mordecai was persuaded that a general law for the destruction of the Jews having been issued, even the queen herself would not be spared, when it became known that she was a Jewess; and so, afterwards, in her address to the king, we see that Esther considers her own life compromised by the edict. With regard to the present instance, it was known to the Greek historians that none were admitted to the king without being called; but they do not appear to have known that queens and princesses were included in the application of this rule. They give many incidental statements concerning the difficulty of access to the king.—The rule seems to have been that even when the king was in their outer apartments, no one was admitted to his presence uncalled or unannounced; and that when in his interior residence, not even the most dignified inhabitants of the interior palace might presume to appear before him unbidden. The historians relate that the freedom of access to the sovereign presence was first checked by Dejoces, king of Meda, who directed that no one, of whatever rank, should appear before him unless especially called, but that all business should be transacted through messengers and ministers, his nearest attendants only being allowed to see his face. The Persians adopted this and other regulations of the Median court; hence we may understand the destination allowed to the seven princes "who saw the king's face," that is, who might appear before him uncalled. Even these, however, were not admitted when any of the king's wives were with him; and this restriction enabled the king to see them as little as he pleased, as the door-keeper had only to intimate that the king was thus engaged. One of the privileged nobles who disbelieved the excuse, cut off the ears and noses of the two door-keepers; for which he and all his family (excepting his wife and eldest son) were punished with death (Herodotes, i. 99; iii. 118, 119). Subject to variations from individual character, most Oriental kings have, in like manner, rendered their presence rare and of difficult approach;—not only as a precaution against treachery, but in order that their subjects, seeing them but seldom, and never but in circumstances of state and splendor—never under circumstances of human infirmities and wants—might be brought to regard them as beings of a higher and finer nature, and therefore the more cheerfully submit to the powers which they wield, and which are usually far greater than those with which it seems safe or proper that a man should be intrusted.—The effect is well calculated; for it is difficult to imagine the intense veneration with which the royal persons in and has been regarded in Persia and other countries of the East.

DEATH OF THE REV. PATRICK M'FARLAN, D. D., OF GREENOCK.

The Free Church has sustained another heavy loss, in the death of the Rev. Dr. M'Farlan of Greenock. The event has been as sudden and unexpected as it is painful. It seems but yesterday that he was refreshing the hearts of many in this City by his ministrations during the late season of communion. The common observation among those who were then privileged to hear him was, that never at any period had he preached with greater warmth, and vigour, and earnestness, or set forth with more clearness and fulness, and

force the glorious truths of the gospel. Alas! at the very time when his friends and the Church were rejoicing in his restored health, and in the pleasing prospect of having yet, for years, to come, the benefit of his important services as one of our most experienced and venerated ministers,—he has been taken from us. On Tuesday week, as we understand, he assisted at the examination of a school in Greenock, where he caught a chill that seems to have been the commencement of his illness. No serious symptoms, however, appeared till the end of the week. An affection of the chest had by that time showed itself, which caused considerable alarm.—When this had at length yielded to medical treatment, and hopes had begun to revive that the attack was passing away, he was seized on the afternoon of Sabbath with a violent pain in the region of the bowels, under which his strength gradually sunk, and he expired softly, without a struggle, about seven o'clock on Tuesday morning. His work was done, and the Lord, whom he had so long and faithfully served, took him to his rest and reward.

Such deaths make mournful blanks in society, and especially in the Free Church. They are like the gaps made in a forest by the fall of the larger trees. Some one may be easily put in the room of him who is gone, but the place left void is not filled. It is saddening to think how many losses of this kind the Free Church has already sustained. Chalmers, Welsh, Brown, Brewster, McDonald, M'Farlan! Who can estimate the amount of influence which has passed away with these men!

And yet that influence can not be altogether lost. The memory of the just is blessed.—Though dead each man yet speaks, and will continue to speak, for generations to come. We cannot at present enter at large into the character and services of Dr. M'Farlan. We hope soon however to indulge ourselves and our readers with a fuller notice of one who has left few like him behind. "Help Lord, for the godly man ceaseth, and the faithful fail from among the children of men."—*Scottish Guardian*.

The Record.

PUBLIC THANKSGIVING.

Thursday, the third day of January, has been appointed as a day of general Thanksgiving throughout the Province, for the manifold blessings that we enjoy, and especially for the removal of the cholera. It is to be hoped that the day will be observed in a becoming manner. While other Nations have been suffering under the yoke of the oppressor, or rent asunder by civil war, we have enjoyed the blessings of peace, and the sweets of civil and religious freedom, and have been protected by the good Providence of God from the horrors of famine; and, although for a time, the pestilence walked amongst us, we have been mercifully delivered from its ravages. What more befitting than that the heartfelt thanksgivings of a grateful people should ascend to the Giver of all good! National blessings demand national acknowledgment.

At the last meeting of the Presbytery of Toronto, a deputation was appointed to wait upon His Excellency the Governor General, and to request that a day should be set apart for public thanksgiving. His Excellency, who perhaps had anticipated the Presbytery, promised to give the matter due consideration, and assured the deputation that their request was quite in harmony with his own feelings and wishes. In the United

States the late Thanksgiving day was religiously observed; and we are gratified to learn from British papers that the day was kept with as much decorum throughout the kingdom.

"THE NATIONAL THANKSGIVING.—Thursday witnessed the august spectacle of a national acknowledgment of the goodness of God in assuaging the pestilence. The day was on the whole observed with that solemnity and decorum befitting so important an occasion. Business was generally suspended, and the banks and public offices were closed during the day. In the established and Free Churches there were two diets for public worship, as on the Lord's day. Some of the Dissenting churches did not meet, while others assembled in the afternoon or evening. The day was observed in a similar manner throughout the rest of Scotland. In London every shop was closed, and the city had the same aspect as on a Sunday. All the churches and chapels were densely crowded, and the form of thanksgiving and prayer was read. The congregations responded cheerfully by giving alms in aid of the various charities. The Thames presented an unusually quiet appearance, and very few crafts were to be seen, and there was less activity than on a Sunday. Several Steam-boat companies would not allow their boats to run, and very few omnibuses or other vehicles were seen in the streets. We learn from various parts of the English provinces that the day has been kept with equal strictness in all the principal towns."

ST. GEORGE'S CHURCH, PAISLEY.

The congregation of St. George's, formerly under the pastoral care of Dr. Burns of this city, have lately, by a vigorous and successful effort extinguished the whole of their remaining debt, amounting to £1200. The same congregation four years ago made a similar effort to clear off the debt, at that time amounting to £1430. The new debt was incurred by repairing and enlarging the church, and erecting a Presbytery-house and library. When the appeal was made to the congregation, all classes heartily responded to it. The *Scottish Guardian* from which we condense this notice, says "We learn that the number of subscribers was about 600, and every one seemed anxious to take part in it. In no case was it necessary to urge or press subscribers, either to give or increase their contributions; but in numerous cases it was necessary to restrain the people from giving as much as they wished; and often one-half of the sum proposed was marked down.—Many who were not called upon, on account of their supposed poverty, brought the money to those appointed to receive it." The humbler said it was their duty to bear a share of the burden with the wealthier members. The Deacons' Court had agreed that such as chose might pay in three or four annual instalments, but all resolved to pay their subscriptions at once. The *Guardian* proceeds, "We would very respectfully, but earnestly, press upon those congregations who may be in similar circumstances to attempt a similar effort; and we have no doubt that it would be equally successful. There need be no fear that such an effort will disturb other objects; and even if it should, the disturbance can be but temporary. In the case above referred to, some of the largest subscribers to the debt gave, at the late collection for the Highlands, more than double the amount which they ordinarily contribute to the schemes of the Church. In fact such a general and simulta-