

# THE CANADA CHRISTIAN MONTHLY.

SEPTEMBER, 1874.

## Editorial.

### THE NOBLE SAVAGE.

The noble savage! Where is he? We have read about him in story books, and in recent works of a science that is falsely so called, but real specimens of noble savages are few and far between. If indeed, men in their savage wilds can attain to virtue and eternal happiness without the Gospel, as some are fond of maintaining, then one would conclude that Africa must be a very virtuous and happy country. That vast continent, which has stood for so many centuries closed against the Gospel of our Lord, is now being opened to the gaze of Christendom, and what do we find? The scenes recently opened up to our eyes in the heart of Africa by adventurous travellers, by laborious missionaries, and by daring soldiers of our Queen, show us with sorrowful clearness what man becomes without a written revelation from God and a dispensation of the Spirit. Shut up in the heart of a trackless continent, and shut out from the Bible, the natives of Central Africa had abundant opportunity, during these long centuries, to show us how high man can raise himself without that Book and its glorious Christ. How high have these native tribes risen? To what have these savages attained in knowledge, in virtue, in happiness and in fitness for entering that kingdom beyond the grave into which nothing impure can come? The answer to this question is of such a character as to force us to cast out for

ever from our vocabulary the designation given as the heading of this article, and to cast out for ever from our creed the wicked fallacy that the heathen can be saved without the Gospel.

Before the steps of Livingstone, and of Sir Garnet Wolseley, the noble savage has fled until no place is any more found for him in sober history. The noble savage is a myth. He never had any existence except in the brains of fools and romancers. Paul the Apostle, who was as unwearied and as adventurous a traveller, in his way, as Livingstone, who was a man of observant eye, and great candour, never met with a noble savage, as far as we can gather from his writings and sermons. He exhorts his converts not henceforth to "*walk as other Gentiles (or heathen) in the vanity of their mind, having the understanding darkened, being alienated from the life of God because of the blindness of their hearts, who being past feeling, have given themselves over unto lasciviousness to work all uncleanness with greediness.*"—Ep. iv. 19.

Long ago India brought us the sad truth that since the days of Paul heathenism has made progress only in the direction of greater degradation. "At the base of the Himalah mountains," says one of its missionaries, "is a belt of land called Terray; it has been designated the 'Valley of Death.' At periodical seasons the heavy rains from the mountains convert it into a swamp and