

us to resent every real or supposed wrong? Is a nation's honour to be upheld by showing its superiority in physical force and the power of destroying its enemies? No reflecting mind has any answer for these questions but one. A nation's greatness and honour do not depend on these things. A nation's real greatness, and true honour, are to be found in the intelligence and virtue of its people, in their industry and honourable enterprise, in their progress in the useful and ornamental arts and those sciences which expand and exalt the mind, and in their respect for that religion which imparts to the whole, ornament, dignity, and grace. Hence the evidences of a nation's greatness are not to be seen in the extent of its territory, the strength of its armies, or the number of its forts and arsenals. We are to judge of its greatness by its merchant seaports, its busy factories, its well cultivated fields, its halls of science, its seminaries of learning, and its Christian temples frequented by sincere, reverent, and enlightened worshippers. The evidence of a nation's honour is not to be seen in its jealous sensibility, or in its swiftness to resent its wrongs. We are to judge of its honour by its scrupulous integrity in giving every man his due, and by its sacred sense of justice, which holds the balance equally between the poor and the rich, and which throws the shield of protection over the cottage of the peasant as well as over the palace of the prince. National honour, in the common acceptation of the term, is an *ignus fatuus*,—a glittering nothing,—shining in the moral darkness of the world, misleading nations into war, with all its attendant calamities and crimes.

In the case under consideration, we have seen that the cause of the apprehension should not have been sufficient to create any anxiety, if the principles of Christianity had been properly apprehended and appreciated. And here we may enquire, Should any cause be sufficient to drive two countries such as Great Britain and the United States into war? I cannot think so. If ever these nations go to war, there must be a tremendous shame, and a terrible sin somewhere. All war is useless. It is the barbarous remnant of a barbarous age. If myself and my neighbour cannot agree upon a question of property, that is no good reason why I should shoot him, or he shoot me, that the survivor might decide the matter according to his own way. If we cannot settle the question amicably ourselves, or by the aid and advice of friends, there are tribunals of law and equity to which we refer it, and to whose decision we yield. Now as I have already said, nations are but individuals in the mass, and all their disputes, whether of property or of policy, might and should be settled in a similar way. Law and equity might and should take the place of the bayonet and the cannon ball. Wise and thoughtful men, guided by established rules and right principles, should be the arbiters in such matters, not heated and passionate multitudes drilled to the use of deadly weapons. Moral means should be resorted to in such cases, not mere physical force. Christianity should rule and be respected, not a mere barbarous custom.

In the case before us the calamity of war has been averted. The threatening cloud has been swept away, and the sun of peace still shines upon us. In this event of the past year we have abundant reason for gratulation and thankfulness. If this had not taken place, we might have been now deploring an interrupted commerce, or mourning the absence or untimely fate of acquaintances or friends. We should rejoice, moreover, not merely on our own account, and that of the country with which we are connected, but because of the evidence which such an event affords of the growing sentiment in favor of permanent and universal peace. In both Great Britain and America this sentiment is gaining ground. During the past year many a friendly message was passed between the two countries deprecating all war, and inviting mutual efforts to secure constant peace. Boston in the old world exchanged messages with Boston in the new. Worcester with Worcester. Plymouth with Plymouth. Various Sunday schools on either side of the Atlantic exchanged similar messages, and bodies of Christian ministers also received and sent, the like olive branches. Thus, not only has the cloud been dispersed, but it has left the sun of peace shining more securely than before.

THE NEW PLANET.

But the events of God's Providence, as they have been disclosed to our view during the past year, have, of course, been various in their character. We have already glanced at some matters connected with the policy of nations and the proceedings of religionists. We shall now pass to a distinct and different topic, and notice it briefly. It could not be overlooked in a review like the present. I allude to an important discovery of the past year—the discovery of a new planet.

Hitherto we had supposed that our solar system was bounded by the orbit of the planet Uranus. But science has cast her far reaching eye deeper into the depths of space, and found another travelling orb lying far beyond. This discovery extends the limits of our solar system to four times its former dimensions. Says Dr. Chalmers in his astronomical discourses, "The planetary system has its boundary, but space has none." This is true. But who can undertake definitely to fix the boundary of the planetary system? Until about half a century since the world knew but six primary planets. Now it has twelve.—I should rather say thirteen, for besides the discovery of the large planet, another small one has recently been brought to light.—It is a little more than half a century (in 1781) since Uranus was discovered by Herschel. This addition made seven primary planets in our system. The remaining six have all been brought to light within the present century,—that which now forms the boundary, lying at three times the distance of Uranus from the sun, being the discovery of the past year. The distance of Uranus from the centre of the system is calculated at eighteen hundred millions of miles. The distance of the newly discovered planetary orb from the sun, must, therefore, be five thousand four hundred millions of miles. The revelation here made is immense. The contemplation thereof, overwhelming.

Of all the physical sciences astronomy is the grandest. As we stand beneath the shining concave of a nocturnal sky and raise our eyes to the ten thousand starry points which stream their light upon the earth, and reflect the while, that every one of these may be a world as large or larger than our own, traversing through space in obedience to the same law which guides our own, and filled like our own with millions of intelligent inhabitants, does not the mind bow and sink beneath the overpowering weight of the conception? Every age, I am aware, is prone to vaunt itself on its scientific achievements, but I think we are amply justified by facts when we speak of the rapid strides of astronomical science in the present age. Half a century since, the powerful telescope of Herschel accomplished wonders. It penetrated the depths of nebulous masses and brought forth clusters of stars. Other nebulae it could not resolve, and at that time the great astronomer himself pronounced some of these absolutely unresolvable. But how vain are such judgments! The present age has proved their vanity. When the levithan instrument of Lord Rosse was directed to certain of those nebulae, before its resolving power they "burst into stars." Thus it is that assiduous and persevering science extends her sway, and reaches deeper and deeper into the infinite and unknown.

Discoveries of this character naturally prompt the question—where shall these cease? And who shall attempt to answer such a question? Borrowing the language of an eloquent living writer,* we may ask, "Who shall assign a limit to the discoveries of future ages? Who can prescribe to science her boundaries, or restrain the active and insatiable curiosity of man within the circle of his present acquirements? We may guess with plausibility, what we cannot anticipate with confidence. The day may yet be coming when our instruments of observation shall be inconceivably more powerful. . . . They may lay open to us the unquestionable vestiges of art, and industry, and intelligence, in those countless worlds which we see floating in space around us. We may see summer throwing its green mantle over these mighty tracts, and we may see them left naked and colorless after the flush of vegetation has disappeared. In the progress of years or centuries, we may trace the hand of cultivation spreading a new aspect over some portion of a planetary surface. Perhaps some large city, the metropolis of a mighty empire may expand into a visible spot by the powers of some future telescope."—These are bold surmises.—But who shall say they are not justifiable? None would venture to pronounce dogmatically against them who has paid any attention to the progress of science. Stupendous and magnificent is the universe of God. And every fresh discovery which brings to view more worlds and systems, constrains the pious and contemplative mind to a yet profounder reverence for Him whose power created all, and whose wisdom controls all.

* Dr. Chalmers.

CLOSING EXTRACT.

I cannot close these somewhat lengthened remarks without reminding you, that there is another world much nearer to you all, and much more important to you all, than the outward universe. I mean the world within you—the world of your own souls. What have you gained there during the past year?

What progress have you made in true and vital holiness? Remember that the soul is destined to outlive the policy, the disputes, and the physical calamities of nations, and all earthly alliances, be they ever so extensive, for evil or for good. Remember that it will survive when the planets and "the stars shall fade away, and the sun himself grow dim with age." And remember, too, that here it is in training for its portion throughout the interminable future which lies before it. What a solemn monition is conveyed in this thought! I cannot review your souls' progress during the year that is past. I can only review my own. The task is strictly a personal one. God alone can know whether we do it honestly. But it is an important work, and I recommend you to perform it. Ponder thoughtfully on the past, act with a sincere and single eye to duty in the present, and resolve righteously for the future. And piously invoke on every thought, and act, and resolution the blessing of Him who alone can build you up in every good word and work. With such a discipline, year after year will roll over your heads to find you growing in grace and goodness, and as the outward universe is reflected in the serenity of pious souls, you will perceive, indeed, that the Lord crowneth the year with loving kindness and ordereth every event in wisdom and in love.

MINISTRY AT LARGE IN BIRMINGHAM, ENGLAND.

(From the Boston Monthly Magazine.)

We have lately read with great pleasure the second annual report of Rev. J. G. Brooks, Minister at large in Birmingham. The report is replete with the tokens of the sound judgment, good feelings, untiring industry of Mr. Brooks, and indicates most clearly that in his appointment our friends of the Unitarian faith in that city have laid our whole denomination, if not the world, under new obligations. We may well rejoice that so excellent a fellow-labourer is added to the distinguished corps of ministers at large in Great Britain. We know, both through the reports of enlightened Americans, and still better from the admission of intelligent Englishmen of the Established Church, that liberal Christianity is nowhere producing better, greater, or more generally acknowledged results than in the ministers of this class in London, Liverpool, Manchester, &c. Who does not feel thankful that Birmingham has entered into the race with her sister cities? Who will not offer an earnest prayer for her and their equal and continued success? We should be happy to quote very fully from Mr. Brooks's report. The plan pursued in his ministry is that familiar with our ministers at large, embracing a Sunday-school and chapel service, sewing and evening schools, reading-rooms and libraries, lectures and social gatherings. There is but one opinion in regard to the expediency and efficiency of these agencies for our own large towns and cities; but let it be remembered that our brethren abroad are maintaining such things in the land of Oliver Twist and Little Nell, and who can question for a moment the effects of the enterprise?

We must content ourselves at this time with a single extract from the Report in question. It shall be upon a point of great interest and importance, to which no little attention has been called by the press of our own country, and upon which no pains should be spared in guarding against every tendency to perversion or abuse. We mean "the Ragged Schools." We have been told of the establishment of one in Boston; but trust, for the credit of our city, that it is not so. We are sure that hopes are entertained, if steps are not already taken, in many places, for the opening of such schools; and we beg every one to listen to Mr. Brooks before proceeding any further in a course that does not appear to be founded in reason, justice, or humanity.

"I might multiply instances; but these are sufficient to show our great difficulties and the importance of these schools in such localities. Still I most strongly object to their receiving the degrading name of 'Ragged,' though this is now becoming so fashionable. Brand these children as Pariahs, accustom them to the name, and the great danger is, that as such they will always be content to remain. They are too low already, and we ought not to multiply difficulties in the way of their self-elevation. If we do our duty to them, the children will improve and become fitting objects of our Christian sympathy and aid. "We must, as far as possible, bring them in contact with higher classes than their own, accustom them to more improving influence, and thus destroy the isolated feelings and habits which mark them as a separate and despised caste. When this is done, the character of the school is changed, and consequently the name becomes a degrading misnomer.

"During my visit to London, last April, I paid a visit to one of the Ragged Schools, and there the above thoughts were deeply impressed on my mind. I was surprised to find the police in attendance to preserve order among the pupils; thus giving the strongest assurance that the teachers felt little or no confidence in their scholars; but little love and no respect. How is it possible that love can exist without confidence on both sides? And how is it to be expected that moral power, the true element of success, in these and all other schools, should exert its true influence when allied in such close union with the constable's staff? I could not help contrasting the singular disorder and want of respect, with our own orderly and busy schools."

Dr. Tuckerman maintained this principle through the whole of his ministry. All his conditors or successors in this country and Great Britain, we are glad to say, have virtually coincided with him. We are confident that, with Mr. Brooks, they may trace no small portion of their success to this single but all-important feature of the Ministry at Large.

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