

JERUSALEM THE GOLDEN.

Oh land of peace! Oh land of love!
Oh land of life eternal!
What earthly hand shall stretch above
And quench Thy light supernal?

Oh gates of pearl, where mortals lay
Earth's burdens by for ever!
Oh streets of gold, whose shining way
Leads by the beauteous river!

Oh wondrous light, whose rays stream down
And flood death's vale with glory!
Oh victor's palm! Oh martyr's crown!
Oh ever sweet old story!

Ah mo! these days how wise we've grown?
We search the place of thunder,
Beliefs upon the winds we've strown,
And creeds have torn asunder.

But Oh, learned sirs, life is so hard
Despite our light, our science;
So much remains to hurt—retard,
So little worth reliance.

So vain our growing care to mark
All things with wider vision,
With but the grace so deep—so dark
To swallow life's fruition.

Yet one quaint hymn, a sweet old strain
From out the vanished ages,
Hope's lost key-note can sound again
With power unknown to sages.

It sings of life beyond the grave,
Of love, of sin forgiven;
Till faint we cry—take all we have
But leave us poor our heaven.—*The Week.*

THE PARADOXES OF SCIENCE.

The water which drowns us, a fluent stream, can be walked upon as ice. The bullet, which, when fired from a musket, carries death, will be harmless if ground to dust before being fired. The crystallized part of an oil of roses, so graceful in its fragrance—a solid at ordinary temperatures, though readily volatile—is a compound substance, containing exactly the same elements, and in exactly the same proportions, as the gas with which we light our streets. The tea which we daily drink, with benefit and pleasure, produces palpitations, nervous tremblings, and even paralysis, if taken in excess; yet the peculiar organic agent called theine, to which tea owes its qualities, may be taken by itself as theine, not as tea, without any appreciable effect. The water which will allay our burning thirst augments it when coagulated into snow; so that it is stated by explorers of the Arctic regions that the natives "prefer enduring the utmost extremity of thirst rather than attempt to remove it by eating snow." Yet if the snow be melted it becomes drinkable water. Nevertheless, although if melted before entering the mouth it assuages thirst like other water, when melted in the mouth it has the opposite effect. To render this paradox more striking, we have only to remember that ice, which melts more slowly in the mouth, is very efficient in allaying thirst.—*Blackwood's Magazine.*

CIVILIZATION AND SUICIDE.

It has been generally accepted as true that, in proportion to the population, the number of those who commit suicide is rapidly increasing, and the common theory has been that the increase is due to overwork, the restless activity of Americans in business. But recent scientific investigations into the subject of suicide in foreign countries, more thorough than have been made in this, show quite conclusively that self-destruction is increasing as rapidly in other civilized countries as in this. In England, from 1830 to 1840, there were 62.3 suicides out of every million of population, while in 1876 the proportion was seventy-three. In France, in 1827, the suicides were forty-eight in a million. Twenty-five years later the proportion was 102. Of all the Governments in Europe, Saxony leads in the matter of suicide. In 1849 the proportion was 149 to a million, and in 1877 it had increased to 391. If the result of this investigation can be relied on, it would certainly appear that there is some injustice in attributing the increase in suicides in this country to the overwork of mind and body to the extent that has been customary. There is not in Saxony or in England that habitual nervous strain in business affairs that there is in this country. The inhabitants of both these countries are more easy-going than the American people. When it is considered to be generally true that suicide is most common among people of the highest civilization, the first and most natural inference is that it is all due to the mental activity required to keep pace with human progress. But it is quite as likely that mental and physical breakdowns, which are largely the cause of suicides, are due largely to the peculiarities in the modes of living imposed by higher civilization. Industry of itself is conducive to health of body and mind.—*Providence Journal.*

BURIAL REFORM.

Within a few days the Home Secretary will receive a deputation from the Church of England Funeral Reform Association. The object of the deputation is to ask for an inquiry by Royal Commission into the condition of cemeteries and modes of burial, with a view to further legislation, the consolidation and simplification of the existing Burial Acts, and the abolition of the power of selling the right of burial into perpetuity. So much has already appeared in our columns on the subject of burial reform that it is only necessary to indicate the principal reforms which are needed. The first is greater uniformity of practice, and more safeguards against abuse in the burial of newly-born infants, whether premature, still-born, or deceased. The second is greater simplicity as regards the

burial of the wealthier classes, the total abolition of imperishable coffins, and of catacombs, vaults, or bricked graves; in short, burial in the literal sense of the word, and the resolution of the body to earth in a reasonable space of time. The third reform required is burial of the lower classes in grave plots rather than in "pits" in "common" or "public" graves, as being both more in conformity with sanitary laws and respect for the dead. There ought, in truth, to be little if any difference between the burial of peer and pauper. In the former, reform is required (with some few happy exceptions) in the reduction of excess; in the latter, more recognition of the grand principle that in death we are all equal. It is to be hoped that the deputation will not end with the usual stereotyped speeches, or even with the appointment of a Royal Commission and an elaborate report, but with "something attempted, something done." We frequently experience from time to time the disastrous results of the method of disposal of the dead in past ages; let that of the present and of the future be such as shall give offence to none.—*Lancel.*

CHRISTMAS CONSOLIDATION.

To look back upon the past year, and see how little we have striven, and to what small purpose; and how often we have been cowardly and hung back, or temerarious, and rushed unwisely in; and how every day and all day long we have transgressed the law of kindness; it may seem a paradox, but in the bitterness of these discoveries, a certain consolation resides. Life is not designed to minister to a man's vanity. He goes upon his long business most of the time with a hanging head, and all the time like a blind child. Full of rewards and pleasures as it is—so that to see the daybreak or the moon rise, or to meet a friend, or to hear the dinner call when he is hungry, fills him with surprising joys—this world is yet for him no abiding city. Friendships fall through, health fails, weariness assails him; year after year, he must thumb the hardly varying record of his own weakness and folly. It is a friendly process of detachment. When the time comes that he should go, there need be few illusions left about himself. Here lies one who meant well, tried a little, failed much: surely that may be his epitaph, of which he need not be ashamed. Nor will he complain at the summons, which calls a defeated soldier from the field. Defeated, ay, if he were Paul or Marcus Aurelius!—but, if there is still one inch of fight in his old spirit, undishonoured.

Give him a march with his old bones; there, out of the glorious sun-coloured earth, out of the day and the dust, and the ecstasy—there goes another Faithful Failure!—*R. L. Stevenson, in December Scribner's.*

WHAT MAKES A GOOD NURSE?

The instinct of self-preservation—one may as well call it by a high-sounding name—makes a perfect vampire of a sick man. It is not altogether watching, or care, or constant service, or the keen sense of responsibility which exhausts a nurse, nor all of them combined. It is the presence of the patient's famished body, taking in at every pore the nervous energy of whoever is near. The weakling pants for life. Life he must have. Give me your hand. Send the full charge of your human battery along my veins. That is better than wine, better than the broad, impersonal warmth of the sun. It is the quickening of pulse by pulse, the kindling of life by life. Strange and unaccountable are physical influences, but more potent in this world than men are willing to own. They are unheeded in the hurrying crowd, where electricity passes constantly with the jostling of elbows. But the sensibilities of the insulated invalid quiver like pith-balls when brought into contact with positive and negative forces. Certain persons give and others take from him the strength which is his carefully hoarded treasure. He rebels against proximity with one, and clings like a frightened child to another. To say that the well and strong are the attractive is not enough. Often they repel by those very characteristics. Goodness and virtue have little to do with it, and sympathy is but a moderate factor. The feeling is almost wholly unreasonable.—*A. B. Ward, in the January Scribner's.*

THE CURIOUS BIBLES.

We have the Breeches Bible, which is indebted for its strange sobriquet to the translation "Adam and Eve made themselves breeches," etc. For this edition, which first appeared 1560, in quarto form, we are indebted to the English reformers exiled at Geneva; during the reign of Elizabeth, it served as the regular family Bible, its popularity being mainly due to the Calvinistic comments, which appeared freely on the margin. Then we have an edition, printed in 1717, at the Clarendon Press, known as the Vinegar Bible, because the parable of the Vineyard in the title to St. Luke xx. is a printed "Parable of the Vinegar." Matthew's Bible, printed in London, in 1551, was nicknamed the Bug Bible, from Psalm xci. 5, being translated, "So that thou shalt not need to be afraid for any Bugges by night." The original idea of the word—terror—is still to be traced in bugbear, bugaboo. The Wicked Bible was printed in London, in 1631, and was so called from the fact that the negation was omitted in certain of the Commandments, the result being that the edition was suppressed, and the printer fined £300 by Archbishop Laud, the money being, it is said, devoted to the purchase of a supply of Greek type for the use of the University of Oxford. The Whig or Placemaker's Bible, obtained its name from an error occurring in St. Matthew v. 9, where "Blessed are the placemakers" is substituted for "peacemakers." The Treacle Bible has the passage in Jeremiah: "Is there no balm in Gilead?" rendered "Is there no treacle in Gilead?" And the Douay (R. C.) version has been described as the Rosin Bible, because the same passage has the word rosin instead of treacle. Many years ago there existed in the Stowe library, the Book of Gospels, on which the English Kings, down to Edward the IV. took the coronation oath, with a huge brazen crucifix, which the monarchs kissed on its cover. The binding was of ponderous oak boards an inch or so in thickness, fastened by huge leather thongs. The Printers' Bible makes David pathetically complain that printers, in place of princes, have "persecuted him without a cause."—*Murray's Magazine.*

MR. JAMES B. WOOLKEY has been addressing a series of meetings in Edinburgh in behalf of Dr. Barnardo's homes. Professor Simpson presided over the first, held in Dr. Alexander Whyte's Church, and Sir William Muir took the chair at a great gathering on Sunday in the Synod Hall.

British and Foreign.

REV. F. B. MEYER, B.A., has undertaken the editorship of the *Christian Treasury*.

DUNHLANE Presbytery has approved of the plan for the restoration of the cathedral.

THE Presbyterian Church in Australasia has now nearly 500 ministers in settled charges.

THE Queen has accepted a copy of Professor Bruce's "Life of William Denny, of Dumbarton."

DR. DONALD FRASER, has returned from his visit to India, and Ceylon, and has recommenced his pulpit duties.

THE stained-glass window of heraldic design, forming part of the Montrose memorial in St. Giles, has been completed.

THE Rev. William Morison, of Rosehall Church, Edinburgh, has obtained leave of absence for six months owing to ill-health.

SIR E. CURRIE, the great London distiller, has been a total abstainer for some time, and has now given up his connection with the business.

ST. ANDREW'S Presbytery, on the motion of Professor Mitchell, has approved unanimously of the Assembly's overture on creed subscription.

THE Rev. G. D. Cullen is now the only surviving member of the original Board of Directors of the Edinburgh Medical Missionary Society, which was founded in 1841.

LADY ABERDEEN is the president of a society for promoting the return of women as county councillors. Lady Sandhurst and Miss Cobden have already consented to stand.

PROFESSOR ROBINSON SMITH delivered the Burnett lectures in Marischal College, Aberdeen: his subject this year being "The Religious Institutions of the Ancient Semites."

PROFESSOR CANDLISH gave notice in Glasgow Presbytery that at next meeting he will move an overture to the Assembly calling for an alteration of the formula of the Confession.

THE Edinburgh deaconess institution and training home is having a series of lectures to women on the subject of Church work. Rev. George Wilson, St. Michael's, delivered the first recently.

THE Rev. Dr. Kennedy, of North Richmond Street Church, Edinburgh, has obtained leave of absence in order to avail himself of an opportunity of visiting Egypt and Palestine.

THE German military authorities have issued a general order, prohibiting under pain of severe punishment, the imperial mariners at Kiel, from attending the services of the Salvation Army.

MELBOURNE is to be made the headquarters of the New Hebrides mission. The largest number of missionaries of any Church on that group of islands are supported by the Presbyterian Church of Victoria.

MR. HENRY GEORGE delivered an address in the City Temple at the close of Dr. Parker's morning service, his subject being the land question from a Christian point of view. There was a large congregation.

THE Rev. John Moore Fergusson, M.A., who has been ordained to Rockferry Church, Cheshire, as colleague to Mr. Henderson, is a son of Rev. Donald Fergusson, of Leven, Fife, and studied at Edinburgh and Princeton.

MR. LAIRD, of Cupar, has received congratulations on his selection for the Moderator's chair of the Free Church Assembly, not only from the Presbytery of Cupar, but also from many ministers of the Establishment and other Churches.

THE severance of Glasgow U. P. Presbytery into two, appears not to have been altogether a success. Mr. Brown, of Pollokshields, has given notice that he will move at next meeting of South Presbytery that reunion take place.

THE U. P. Synod's Disestablishment Committee have issued a memorandum, urging that the question of disestablishment should be pressed on political representatives and candidates, and not set aside because of the Irish question.

THE Rev. William Watt, of Tanna, strongly urges the formation of a British New Hebrides trading company. He believes it would be a financial success, while benefiting immensely the natives and lightening the burden of the mission vessel on the Church.

THE brilliant success of the performance of the "Messiah" by the Royal Society of Musicians in Westminster Abbey lately, has led to the suggestion that the venerable building should be utilized more frequently in this manner. The effect was far more imposing than it could be in the concert-room.

MR. THOMAS M'LELLAN, on the attainment of his fiftieth year as a manager of Barrhead Church, was presented at a congregational soiree on a recent Friday with a photograph of a pony phaeton that is being made for him, subscribed for by the members. He has been for forty-five years an elder and for forty, treasurer of the church.

DR. THOMAS SMITH gave notice, in Edinburgh Presbytery, of an overture to have one collection every two months for the eight or nine collections in the course of a year that are prescribed by the Assembly. Rev. W. Balfour would abolish all collections and take up the contributions for all the missions quarterly like the Sustentation Fund.

DR. MATHEWS, secretary of the Pan-Presbyterian Council, at a meeting in its behalf in Mayfield Church, Edinburgh, said there were in the world about eighty different Presbyterian organizations, with 22,000 ministers and about 20,000,000 members and adherents. Wherever the English language was spoken Presbyterianism seemed to be in the ascendant.

SOME excitement has been created in the Borders on its becoming known that through the death of a gipsy named Blythe in California three years ago a share of an enormous fortune will come to the Faas of Yetholm. The United States Consul at Edinburgh is at Yetholm this week collecting evidence from the late "queen" Esther's sisters and other gipsies.

A HINDU god, two and one-half inches in height, made of gold, and studded with precious stones, was sold by public auction last week, the price being \$12,750 and the buyer a New Bond Street jeweller. It was preserved in an ancient temple at Delhi for more than a thousand years, and was purchased during the mutiny from the Queen of Delhi when pressed for money.