

Christian Mirror

AND GENERAL MISSIONARY REGISTER.

"MANY SHALL RUN TO AND FRO, AND KNOWLEDGE SHALL BE INCREASED."—DANIEL xii. 4.

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POETRY.

THE FLOATING CHAPEL.

'Twas Sabbath morn. The summer sun in cloudless splendour shone,
And tinged with gold each curling wave, as soft it rippled on;
I walked along the winding shore, bespread with pebbles rare,
For thus I hoped ere noon to reach the distant House of Prayer.

I came where by the river's bank some stately vessels lay,
And many seamen sought the beach in Sabbath raiment gay;
I marked not, as they passed along, their staid and thoughtful air,
But sighed and wished they'd turn with me and seek the House of Prayer.

At length a steamer fair and broad my fixed attention drew,
For in its folds it gave the Dove and Olive branch to view;
The seamen climbed the vessel's side which did that banner bear,
I followed, and with joy beheld a floating House of Prayer.

Above, beneath, each steadfast eye upon the preacher hung,
And sweet and holy was the strain the sons of ocean sung;
No vacant look, no wandering glance, no drowsy nod was there,
Nor did one listless form disturb the Seamen's House of Prayer.

I listened to the gospel's sound amidst a scene so new,
And saw at times the trickling tear a manly cheek bedew;
I prayed that He, who loves His own, might make that ark His care,
And many souls be born within the Seamen's House of prayer.

The rippling wave, the winding shore, no longer meet my gaze,
No more the snow-white Bethel flag my pensive footsteps stays;
But oft, amidst the sacred calm of Sabbath morning fair,
My thoughts with new delight recall the Seamen's House of Prayer.

Dr. Huie's "Sacred Lyrics."

GENERAL LITERATURE.

RELIGION IN OTHER LANDS.

LAPLAND.

THE inhabitants of Lapland are nominally all protestants, great pains having been taken for their religious improvement by Swedes and Danes; still superstition exists to a fearful extent among them, though there is good ground to hope that it is on the decline. They have so far well escaped the corruptions of the Romish see. Among their superstitions is the divining drum, which is supposed to be able to tell fortunes, to reveal secrets, or to detect criminals. This is simply a drum with a needle, somewhat with a hand like the hand of a clock, placed on its uppermost skin, acting in a magical manner in the estimation of the people, who do not perceive that the whole business is managed by means of a piece of magnetised iron, which could guide the needle as the wizard chose—the people's own alarm, or their simplicity, soon betraying to the "cunning man" which way to shape its course. But indeed the magnet itself would have been to them as much an object of superstitious awe, could they have ascertained its share in the business.

Superstitious notions of a very similar character are not unknown in our own country; where certain supposed wizards or cunning men are consulted by the weak and credulous under the silly notion that they can give information as to lost property, those who have been guilty of theft, &c.

There are many relics of heathen idolatry in Lapland—the deities of which are represented as of much the same character as those of the northern nations in general—which they imagined to be extraordinary charms in many of the diseases; and they held in fearful veneration the places where ancient sacrifices had been offered. These places are still marked by heaps of decayed reindeer's horns; and still, when they pass that way, the natives shrink with horror.

The worship of many of the Teutonic deities is still retained among them. They frequently worship the trunk of a tree, which they cut into the rude resemblance of a human face. They believe in the transmigration of souls, and set apart certain festivals for the worship of aerial spirits, and to invoke the dead.

It was once believed that there were necromancers in Lapland who had power to sell fortunate winds; and, what was worse, to send adverse ones after those who gave them offence.—So late as 1653; a French traveller in that country gives an account of going on shore with the captain of a Danish vessel to purchase a wind, in compliance with the wishes of his crew. A wizard was easily met with; for of course, as they found it a profitable business, there were always a sufficient number who pretended to this supernatural skill. They managed, as in the affair of the drum, to keep up their credit by diligently studying natural effects; in the wind case by attention to the signs of the sky, by which they

could, with tolerable certainty, promise from what quarter the wind should blow for the next few hours after they had sold their charm, or muttered their curse. Meanwhile their fellow countrymen were as much gulled as their customers. Thus in the old adage:—

"In Iceland and in Denmark both,
Witches for gold will sell a man a wind,
Which, in the corner of a napkin wrapped,
Shall blow him unto what coast he will."

Even in the reign of queen Elizabeth witches and wizards were accused of dominion not only over the destinies of men and cattle, but over the elements themselves. If the wind or a storm arose, the cry was "Ring the bells and burn the witches."

The places of worship are generally very rude buildings of logs of wood, laid transversely together, and often in very bad repair. The following is an interesting account of that part of Lapland which belongs to Norway. The clergyman was a Norwegian. His dwelling was not very much more comfortable than a common tent; it was built, like the church, of logs of wood, and consisted of two rooms, and a small closet with a bed in it. The furniture merely a stove, a few wooden tables and benches, and a very scanty supply of other necessary articles. He had a couple of tame pigs; and these were kept more as curiosities than as a part of his stock of provisions. No poultry is to be found throughout the country, but in its stead they have an astonishing quantity of game. The black cock, the ptarmigan, wild ducks, teal, becassines, and fish of various kinds were always to be had. Potatoes could not be preserved through the winter; and it was with great difficulty that even a few were saved for planting. In the summer the clergyman, in whose garden they were cultivated as a luxury, not only ate the roots, but boiled the tops of the plant, which, for want I should suppose of better, he considered a very delicate vegetable. These potatoe-tops and also nettles, helped to make out a soup, with the addition of rein-deer's tongues.

He had, besides, rye-biscuit for bread; but this was obtained from Sweden. A little barley is generally the only species of grain sown. Sometimes the crop does not ripen at all; at others, according to the favourableness of the season, it is housed in seven or eight weeks from the time the seed is committed to the ground.

As a Lapland parish often extends some hundred miles, it may be imagined the clergyman's life is subject to much fatigue and hardship. In the depth of winter he is usually settled near the church; and here his parishioners assembled from their distant homes every Sunday, some arriving the day before, if they have a very long way to travel, and taking up their quarters for the night in the church, or in one of the few log houses close by.

Here, too, their marriages take place. On one occasion a son of one of Niel's old friends took unto himself a wife, and Karin was delighted to see the grand presents that were bestowed as bridal offerings. There were