

A PRAYER.

If love of me doth drag him down,
Narrow and cramp his soul,
Rob him of life's intended crown,
Make part serve for the whole—

Hold back from that high destiny
That means all great endeavour,—
Let him from that weak love be free,
And cast me forth forever!

—Matthew Richey Knight, in *The Week*.

INDIAN HUMOUR.

The Indian has a keen appreciation of humour, and is like a child in his mirthfulness. No orator can see the weak spots in his adversary's armour or silence a foolish speaker more quickly. Old Shah bah skong, the head chief of Mille Lac, brought all his warriors to defend Fort Ripley in 1862. The Secretary of the Interior, and the Governor and Legislature of Minnesota, promised these Indians that for this act of bravery they should have the special care of the government and never be removed. A few years later, a special agent was sent from Washington to ask the Ojibways to cede their lands and remove to a country north of Leech Lake. The agent asked my help. I said: "I know that country. I have camped on it. It is the most worthless strip of land in Minnesota. The Indians are not fools. Don't attempt this folly. You will surely come to grief." He called the Indians in counsel, and said: "My red brothers, your great father has heard how you have been wronged. He said, 'I will send them an honest man.' He looked to the North, the South, the East, and the West. When he saw me, he said, 'This is the honest man whom I will send to my red children.' Brothers, look at me! The winds of fifty-five years have blown over my head and silvered it over with grey, and in all that time I have never done wrong to any man. As your friend, I ask you to sign this treaty." Old Shah-bah skong sprang to his feet and said: "My friend, look at me! The winds of more than fifty winters have blown over my head and silvered it over with grey; but they have not blown my brains away." That counsel was ended.—*Bishop Whipple in North American Review for April*.

COLOUR IN THE ANIMAL KINGDOM.

Colour in the animal kingdom is due to two causes—either to the presence of colouring matters, of pigments, or to the presence of fine sculpturing, which produces an optical effect of a certain colour. What we term metallic colours in birds—humming birds, for example—and in butterflies, are not caused by pigments of that tint, but by fine grooves upon the feathers or scales, and thin laminae of horny substance. Very often these two causes are combined; they are, for example, in the peacock. An albino peacock is by no means a rarity; and if the tail-feathers of one be closely examined they will be seen to show a pattern like that of a damask tablecloth. This pattern is due to the fine grooves ruled upon the feathers, which are differently disposed in the rings which form the "eye"; but the blackish-brown pigment is absent, and so the grooves produce no effect of colour. Very often the colour of an animal is due to two pigments combined; for instance, the beautiful green of the iguana lizard is due to a distinct yellow and a blue pigment. But these colours can not be washed out by water, though they soon fade after death—at least the yellow does—leaving the animal of a grayish-blue colour, which is the prevailing hue of stuffed lizards. Among butterflies "mechanical colours" appear to be the rule; but the "brimstone" is an exception, for from its wings a yellow pigment can be extracted. The questions relating to the colour of animals were once only the theme of poets, but are now the property of scientists, who have built up most interesting theories to account for the nature and distribution of colour. But these theories have, for the most part, dealt with the question in reference to such intelligent groups of creatures as birds and insects, and have rather ignored worms and starfishes and crabs, and such like beings of a limited intellect, whose æsthetic sense, even of the most ardent followers of Darwin, must appear somewhat doubtful. A congregation of blue, purple, and red invertebrates living four miles below the surface of the sea can not reap much advantage from being impressed by their neighbour's gaudy attire, even if they could see it; but they can not see, for the very good reason that, for the most part, they have no eyes, and, if they had, it is too dark to see. On the other hand, even among insects and birds, the greater number are plainly coloured, and show no great difference of sex; and we must assume, therefore, that even between closely-allied species belonging, in some cases, to the same family—or it may be genus—there is an enormous gap in intellectual development if we are to accept a theory of "sexual selection." It is in reality probably necessary to disentangle, from their very intimate relationship, the two classes of colours mentioned above, before we can arrive at any useful hypothesis as to their meaning.

A MODERN RAILWAY.

The Burlington Route, C. B. & Q. R. R., operates 7,000 miles of road, with termini in Chicago, St. Louis, St. Paul, Omaha, Kansas City and Denver. For speed, safety, comfort, equipment, track and efficient service it has no equal. The Burlington gains new patrons, but loses none.

THE MISSIONARY WORLD.

A MESSAGE FROM CHINA.

The following letter, condensed translation, is addressed by Chinese Christians to the churches of Great Britain:

The Christian churches of Canton respectfully address the Christian churches of England. . . . This year when holding our annual New Year's meetings we were favoured with a visit from a western evangelist (Alfred S. Dyer), who told us how the Christians in India, to the number of several thousands, had improved the opportunity afforded this year, before the time fixed for the revision of the commercial treaty in reference to opium expires, to appeal to the Executive Council and to the Emperor of China, to co-operate with your Government in abolishing the opium traffic. Having been told this, we were incited thereby to prepare this letter, signed by representatives of all our churches, beseeching your churches, pastors and teachers to combine your strength in devising some efficient means to remove this curse of opium. . . . The introduction and sale of opium extends to all the cities and villages of the land, the Chinese expending upon it more than \$50,000,000 (£8,000,000 approximately) on foreign opium alone. By this means the rich are made poor, and the poor are led to sell their children, and its curse appears in the dissipation of the wealth of the land. . . . While these evils are preying upon the people of China the obstacles they present to Christian work are not a few. Your people come to preach the doctrines of the Gospel, which are indeed the truth, and your real desire is to lead many to believe; but those who hear them say that opium and the Gospel come together from England, and the doubt arises and finds expression in words that the Gospel is false. Your missionaries come with the real desire to benefit the people, but those who see them maliciously declare that opium and missionaries are alike English productions, and they suspect the missionaries of secretly doing evil. Moreover, the Church opens free schools, and, although they are meant to benefit the youth, yet it is impossible to stop the mouths of those who are not taught, while opium remains unforbidden. The Church has opened hospitals, but, although they are saving men from disease, it is impossible to influence the hearts of those who have not been healed while opium remains unforbidden. Your Christians with singleness of heart are zealous in many good works, but while opium remains they are all like so much water poured out. . . . An opportunity having now been providentially afforded by our friends in India, etc., to renew the agitation of the matter in the memorial they have presented to the throne of China for consultation and prohibition, our hope is that your Christians will, with one heart, exert themselves, without regard to profit or loss, and be enabled to abolish opium, that the Chinese may be released from this yoke of bondage and the obstacles to the preaching of the Gospel be removed. We have but little strength, but night and day we pray the Lord above to reveal Himself and help England and China to abolish this great evil. May this exceeding blessing come to us and to China. For this we reverently wait.

Signed on behalf of London Mission (300 communicants), Leung To, An Fung-Shi, Yeung Wing Chi. English Wesleyan Mission (700 native communicants), Chau Hok Shue Mak Kang Nin. Berlin Mission (350 native communicants) U Pin Om, Wong Kwong Fuk. Baptist Mission (470 native communicants), Fung, Fung Tsun Tuk. Presbyterian Mission (600 native communicants), Kwan Hin Sham, Eu Mung Ling, Tsu Tau Shan. American Scandinavian Mission (ten native communicants), No Yen Li.

AN UNPUBLISHED LETTER OF DR. LIVINGSTONE.

The letter was addressed to a friend in Scotland, and is dated Kuruman, January 14, 1851.

MY DEAR SIR,—The reason why I now address you is the total inability of your brother, Mr. Hamilton, to do so himself. On arriving here more than a month ago, I found him in a very weak state of health, and as he had been so for twelve months previously, you could not of course hear from him. His bodily powers were completely prostrate, and during that time he was never at church. He has, however, rallied a little, and has on the last two Sundays been able to move on crutches as far as the house of God. He desires me to say that during the whole period of his illness Mr. and Mrs. Moffat have bestowed upon him the most unwearied care and attention; they have been more kind to him than if he had been their only son. Mr. Moffat sat up at night with him, and supplied every want with affectionate tenderness; indeed, no missionary in South Africa would have done the half that he has done both by day and by night. They were his devoted nurses during a period of many months; and as he can never repay them, he prays that God may abundantly bless and reward them; and make all their bed for them in their time of sickness.

Mr. Hamilton will take it kind of you if you let his other brothers and friends know that his extreme debility prevents him from writing to them. His eyesight is so far impaired he cannot see even to read. But his friends may write to him, as he will always be glad to hear of their welfare so long as he continues in the land of the living. He sends affectionate remembrances and salutations to all his friends and relations.

I may mention that the work in which your brother has been so long engaged does not seem to have made much progress during the last year; there exists a peculiar deadness in

all the mission churches; there are few candidates and no conversions. We need the outpouring of the influence of the Holy Spirit to awaken the dry bones to life. Let your prayers ascend to heaven in behalf of these heathen, that the dwellers in the wilderness may soon come and bow down before Him, who is King of kings and Lord of lords. The translation of the whole Bible into the language of the people is the only work on which we can at present look with unmixed satisfaction. It proceeds in the hands of Mr. Moffat with great briskness; and when he has finished that he will be able to say he has not lived in vain.

A number of men of Dutch extraction, called Boers or Boors, prove great plagues to the natives of the regions beyond this, and they are hindrances to the progress of the Gospel. As they possess guns and horses, and look upon the natives as so many baboons, which may be shot without guilt, their deeds are horrible. A French missionary lately attempted to go to the natives who are living in subjection to these Boers, but they compelled him to return whence he came. They forbid us to speak unto the Gentiles, that they may be saved. And yet these Boers are very religious in their own way. Each one has his Bible, and many of them conceive they are the peculiar favourites of heaven. Indeed, not a few of them imagine that they are in the same position as the children of Israel were when led by Moses. They left the colony because the British Government would not allow them to keep slaves. They hate the English most devoutly. The Scotch have rather more favour in their eyes, but they would as soon meet the devil as a missionary. They frequently murder the native chieftains, steal cattle and children. Their deeds often prevent the natives from thinking on better things, for when the native mind is preoccupied by rumours of attacks, they cannot attend to our instructions. The worst feature in the case of these Boers is their belief that they are Christians; this belief is fostered by their ministers, who, to the disgrace of our country, are generally Scotchmen. I saw two of these worthies, called R— and F—, baptizing their children by hundreds; they received into fellowship many whom I knew to be murderers, and then they returned to the colony and told what a godly set of people they had visited, and as a proof of their goodness, they added, we baptized 450 children. The secret was they were paid so much for each child, and they seemed afraid to refuse any one who came to them. How confounded some men will appear in the day of judgment! May we be kept pure and preserved safely to the heavenly kingdom of Christ.

We do not know how we shall succeed in the new region opened up in the north. The Portuguese slave trade extends as far up into the centre of the continent as the river Tamunakle. The Lake Ngami is at certain seasons of the year unhealthy, but probably there is high land beyond that. The population is said to be large; the people are very black. One tribe has the peculiar custom of knocking out the upper front teeth when they attain their fourteenth or fifteenth year.

One chief, called Sebotoane, has attained to great power. He was one of the large swarm of Mantatees who were in former years defeated at Moruo, and when driven back went away into his present position, and by plundering others made himself a great man. May the Gospel of the blessed God soon penetrate into these dark regions, and dispel the shadow of death by the beams of the Sun of Righteousness.

MISSION WORK AMONG THE ZULUS.

The Rev. J. Scott, a Free Church missionary, writing to the *Monthly Record*, thus describes his visit to the up-country stations:—

"At Hlatikulu, Saturday, 22nd February, was spent in the examination of candidates for baptism; but as some had to come long distances, the examination had to be continued on Sabbath morning, and was only completed when the last bell rang for service. The little church can comfortably hold about eighty persons, and the number of candidates for baptism was 110, old and young. Probably another hundred were inside, while three or four hundred listened at the windows. I was assisted by our faithful Petros Muyalie, and also by Absalom Duba and Luke Kunene, two elders who joined us some years ago. Fifty adults and sixty children were admitted by baptism to the visible Church of Christ. The majority of the adults were women, many of them bringing two and three children with them. In two cases mothers brought twins, and also another child, the older child carrying one of the twins on its back. The very presence of the twins is a testimony to the power of the Gospel, as the Zulu custom is to smother one twin, it being, as they say, impossible for the mother to do her work and care for both. In the afternoon, with visitors from other churches and our own people, about two hundred sat down to the Lord's table—not in the church, for that would have been impossible, but in nature's great temple. We remembered our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. The services of a busy day were brought to a close at nine p.m. by the baptism of a little one whose mother had been unable to come in time for the morning service. I felt a little weary, having been continually at work from before seven a.m., with short intervals for meals; but I could scarcely rest for very joy and rejoicing. My heart was full of praise, and praise only, to God the Father for His great goodness in allowing me to see such wonders—to see such a number worshipping God through Christ Jesus, where but a few years ago there was nothing in the shape of worship save the superstitious mummeries of the witch doctor."