

Society for Pro. Christian Knowledge.

Tuesday, March 1st, 1853.

The Rev. Dr. RUSSELL in the Chair.

The Rev. Algernon Gifford, in a letter dated "Parsonage, Fortian, Labrador," requested a grant towards the completion of a small church and the repairs of a school-house in his mission.

It having appeared that this object was not included in the cases stated to the Society by the Lord Bishop of Newfoundland, to whom a grant for church-building was assigned at the last meeting, the Board voted £25. on Mr. Gifford's application.

A letter was read from the Lord Bishop of Rupert's Land, dated "The Red River, Nov. 24, 1852." The following are extracts:

"I write chiefly at present to forward the accompanying letter of Mr. Taylor of the Assiniboine.

"I have to thank the Society for the very beautiful Service Books granted for our contemplated church of St. James.

"I am glad that for once I am not obliged to beg from the hands of the Society. I have only lately returned from my distant tour to the eastern part of the diocese. I was much pleased with the simplicity of the Indians of Moose and Albany. The Gospel is indeed taking root there, and flourishing in the tents along the Bay, and I shall always cherish an affectionate remembrance of those confirmed and baptized during my tour. I also received no little kindness from those connected with the Honorable Hudson's Bay Company at the different forts, especially at Moose. I have left two most laborious and estimable clergymen in full orders in the Bay. If, ashamed of pleading for myself, I might beg for them, I would say send a small library of a better description of books from your Catalogue, say to the amount of £4. or £6., for circulation at Moose, and it would cheer and encourage them in their labour of love.

"Commending my poor and wide spread diocese to your earnest prayers, believe me ever, &c.

The Lord Bishop of Gibraltar, in a letter dated Malta, Feb. 8, 1853, recommended an application from C. H. Bracebridge, Esq., for a small grant towards the restoration of the church at Athens, which suffered so much from the hurricane in October last. The Bishop said:—

"I have the less difficulty in making this request, from having seen how much the Society was formerly interested in the erection and consecration of that church. It has been, and I hope will continue to be, not only the cause of much spiritual good to our countrymen visiting or dwelling in Athens, but as giving to our Greek fellow-Christians a better knowledge and impression of our religion than they ever before had."

The following letters from the Lord Bishop of Sierra Leone, dated "Ordinance House, Freetown, January 6, 1853," were read to the Meeting:—

"When I landed at Bathurst, on the Gambia, during my voyage here, I went with the Chaplain, Mr. Monarrat, to see the building at present used as a church; it is small, and in a very miserable condition, but I think conveniently situated; and we both agreed that the enlargement and improvement of the present edifice would be far preferable to the erection of a new one. Under these circumstances I deemed it advisable to request at once the payment of £200. which was liberally voted by your Society, in order that we might at once proceed to work, and that no unnecessary delay might take place, I, therefore whilst at the Gambia, drew a bill for that sum."

The Rev. Brymer Belcher [grandson of the late Hon. A. Belcher, formerly of Halifax] moved.

"That it be referred to the Standing Committee to consider the desirableness of petitioning Parliament on the subject of the Clergy Reserves in Canada, and of drawing up such a petition as they may consider advisable against the next Monthly Meeting of the Society."

The Rev. S. Smith seconded the motion, which was carried.

Forth's Department.

NEVER, SINCE I WAS A CHILD.—These words affected me deeply. They came to me through the grate of a prison door, from a young man about twenty-five years of age, of good form and intelligent countenance, but quivering and trembling from the effects of intemperance. "When was you brought in here?" "Yesterday." "On what charge?" "Drunkenness and disorderly conduct." "Where are you from?" "Philadelphia." "What was your occupation there?" "Some carriage I had a very good place in a draper's store but I fell into bad habits and lost my place. Then

I tried peddling books. Yesterday I came here and became intoxicated, and was put in jail." "Were you religiously brought up?" "Not by my parents; but I had religious instruction in the Sunday School?" "Then you have attended Sunday School?" "Yes, sir." "What were your first steps astray?" "Going about in the evening, and taking walks out into the country on Sunday." "Did you drink when you went on those excursions?" "Sometimes we did, sometimes we did not." "Have you been in the habit of praying to God?" "Never, since I was a child."—*Journal of Contemner.*

MR. LITTLE FLOWER-BUD.—Rapidly she grew worse, till the little fingers relaxed and the crushed flower-bud, a pale, dead thing, laid on the coverlid, an emblem of her own fleeting loveliness.

The trial-hour had come. Our angel smiled often and sweetly, as the white wings of death fanned the moisture from her brow. Thaisun came faintly, in; it was near twilight.—Her beautiful head rested wearily and heavily upon my bosom; her wax white limbs laid like marble upon my arm. Suddenly she looked up to me and while a flash of wondrous intelligence shot from her dying eyes, she whispered, "Mamma, Duglak Pm God's little flower-bud; shan't I be an angel to-morrow?"

O! my beautiful Mary, transplanted so early, little dreamed I the lesson thy innocent lips were teaching, when they offered the flower-bud to God!

And is my flower-bud in heaven? Can it be that she still moves and lives, surrounded by love and glory? Yes! I know it is so. Dust lies upon her form of perfect beauty: the fingers that in their dimpled whiteness gathered roses from my little garden, mingle now with the ashes of her shroud. Those more than beautiful eyes that I sometimes thought looked out of heaven upon me, shall see, no more the flowers, the stars, the sun, the glorious things of earth. But my little flower-bud—a thing of beauty and a joy forever—is she to her "high-born kinsmen" in the palace of my Father.

For her, why shed I tears? I will weep no more. Gather them in, O reaper pale—gather the flowers into thy fair gardens. Here the full-blown rose withers, and envious winds rob it of its sweet perfume.—There the flower-buds make an immortal wreath to garland the shining throne of God. Gather in the flower-buds, O reaper pale.—*Oliver Branch.*

THE BIBLE.—How comes it that this volume, composed by humble men, in a rude age, when art and science were but in their childhood, has exerted more influence on the humble mind and on the social system, than all the other books put together? Whence comes it that this book has achieved such marvellous changes in the opinion of mankind—has banished idol worship—has abolished infanticide—has put down polygamy and divorce—exalted the condition of woman—raised the standard of public morality—created for families that blessed thing, a Christian home—and caused its other triumphs by causing benevolent institutions, open and expansive, to spring up as with the wand of enchantment? What sort of a book is this, that even the winds and waves of human passion obey it? What other engine of social improvement has operated so long, and yet lost none of its virtue? Since it appeared, many boasted plans of amelioration have been tried and failed, many codes of jurisprudence have arisen, and run their course, and expired. Empires after empires have been launched upon the tide of time, and gone down leaving no trace upon the waters. But this book is still going about doing good, leavening society with its holy principles—cheering the sorrowful with its consolation—strengthening the tempted—encouraging the penitent—calming the troubled spirit—and smoothing the pillow of death—Can such a book be the offspring of human genius? Does not the vastness of its effects demonstrate the excellency of the power of God?

Selections.

INFLUENCE OF THEATRES.—The following is an extract from Milner's Church History, vol. 7, p. 434, London Ed., 1819. It may be read with profit in these times.—

"The decision of Cyprian is doubtless, that, which piety and good sense would unite to dictate in the case. A player was ever an infamous character at Rome; and was looked on as incapable of filling any of the offices of State. The Romans, at the same time that they showed in this point, the soundness of their political, evinced the depravity of their moral sense; for there were still maintained, by them, at the public expense and for the public amusement, a company of men

who,—they know,—must of necessity be dissolute and dangerous members of Society. If this was the judgment of sober pagans, we need not wonder that the purity of Christianity would not even suffer such characters to be admitted into the bosom of the Church at all. To say, that there are noble sentiments to be found in some dramas, answers not the purpose of those, who would vindicate the entertainments of the stage. The support of them requires a system in its own nature corrupt;—a system, which must gratify the voluptuous and the libidinous, or it can have no durable existence. Hence, in every age, complaints have been made of the licentiousness of the stage; and the necessity of keeping it under proper restraints and regulations has been admitted by its greatest admirers. But it is, I think, a great mistake to suppose that the stage may remain a favorite amusement, and, at the same time, be so regulated as not to offend the modest eyes and ears of a humble Christian. The gravest advocate for the theatre expects pleasure from it rather than instruction; if, therefore, you believe that human nature is corrupt and impure, only ask yourself what sort of dramatic exhibitions and conversations will be most likely to meet with the applause of the people;—and you will soon be led to conclude, that the play-house is and must be a school of impurity.

The first Christians felt the force of this obvious argument, and they rejected the stage entirely. A Christian, renouncing the pomps and vanity of this wicked world, and yet frequenting the playhouse, was with them a solecism. The effusion of the Holy Spirit, which, during three centuries, we are now reviewing, never admitted these amusements at all. The profession of the dramatic art, and the profession of Christianity, were held to be absolutely inconsistent with each other.

It is one of the main designs of this history to show, practically, what true Christians were, both in principles and manners; and, in this view, the case before us is exceedingly instructive. What would Cyprian have said had he seen large assemblies of Christians, so-called, devoted to these impurities, and supporting them with all their might, and deriving from them the highest delight?—Such persons must, certainly, be strangers to the joy of the Holy Ghost; and I cannot but wonder why they choose to retain the name of Christians. Then, if he had examined their stage entertainments, and compared them with those that were in vogue in his own day,—would he not have seen the same confusion of sexes,—the same encouragement of unchaste desires, and the same sensuality, with the same contemptuous ridicule of Christianity?—if, indeed, in his time the Gospel was ever burlesqued on a stage, as it has frequently been in ours. In some points of lesser consequence, the ancient drama might differ from the modern; but, on the whole, the spirit and tendency was the same; and, doubtless, this excellent bishop would have been astonished to be told, that in a country, which called itself Christian, actors and actresses and managers of playhouses amassed large sums of money;—that many exemplary clergymen could scarcely find subsistence; and that theologians of great erudition enlisted in the service of the stage, and obtained applause by writing comments on dramatic poets."

LAURA BRIDGEMAN, IN THE ASYLUM OF THE BLIND IN BOSTON.—I have told you of Laura Bridgeman, the poor little girl with only one sense. What it might be asked, could be done for her? Great difficulties were in the way of doing anything, but a benevolent old gentleman, Dr. Howe, resolved to see what could be done. He first took knives, forks, spoons, keys, and other common articles, and pasted upon them labels with their names printed in raised letters, and gave them to Laura. These she felt very carefully, and soon found that the crooked lines spoon differed as much from the crooked lines key as the spoon differed from the key in form. These small detached labels, with the same printed on them, were put into her hands; and she soon observed that they were similar to the ones fastened on the articles. She showed she understood this, by laying the labels upon them. But this was the effort of imitation and memory. After a while, instead of labels, the individual letters were given to her on detached bits of paper; they were arranged side by side, so as to spell lock, key, and other things. Then they were mixed up in a heap, and a sign was made for her to arrange them herself, so as to express the words locks, keys, &c.; and she did so. Thus, far, her kind benefactor compares the success obtained to that of teaching a very knowing dog a variety of tricks. The poor child sat in mute amazement, and patiently imitated what he did, by feeling his hands and then imitating the motion. But now the mind shut up