

IN A COLOURED CHURCH.

English tourists who cross the Atlantic for a holiday sometimes record their impressions for the benefit of general readers. One under the title of "Some American Notes," writes a racy description in *Macmillan's Magazine* of a rapid and extensive tour through the United States. He attended service in a coloured church in the Shenandoah Valley, which he thus describes:

On Sunday I attended an African service. The barber of the hotel, a coloured man, was a deacon of the little church, to which he lured me with a lantern on one of the darkest nights I was ever abroad in. There is a college for the training of coloured preachers at Harper's Ferry, where the officiating minister of this evening had been trained. He had been a slave in his youth, and learned to read by stealth when it was penal for a negro to possess a book. His style was a little rambling, his address was frank and earnest. "Love your enemies," was the text: it was not easy, but—"the Saviour done it," he said with quiet simplicity. An interesting feature of the service was the method by which the collection was obtained. After the sermon was over, two deacons got up and stood behind a table placed immediately below the pulpit. The men sat together on the right side of the church and the women on the left. One deacon said, "Now I want five dollars from the men"; and the other added, "And I want the same from the women." Then they all began to sing a hymn. Still no one moved. They sang another hymn, and at the close of it I rose and started the collection with a ten-dollar bill. "We're getting on pretty well this side," said the deacon of the males, knowingly. Another hymn was sung without much effect; but later on a stirring melody about "seeing de fine white horse when de bridegroom comes," broke down the reserve, and when they came to the verse,—

Drive 'em down to Jordan when de bridegroom comes,
the dimes and nickels rattled down upon the collection table with aggregate music. The sum collected was large for the resources of the congregation, and reflected credit upon the dark-skinned worshippers.

MILTON'S ORIGINALITY.

The originality of Milton in his two religious epics consists to the highest degree in an originality of style. England, which has produced so many splendid poets, has given birth to none so supreme as Milton in the workmanship and artifice of poetic style—none who, out of the material of language, has raised for himself so majestic and vast a building, so harmonious in all its parts, so peculiar to its inventor in the order of its architecture. A poet may be almost in the very highest rank, and yet prefer to live like a soldier-crafter, in the house of some one else, or, like a caddis-worm, in a home built of fragments. Virgil did the first of these, and Keats the second. But Milton's place is not totally unlike any that preceded it, it has been found impossible ever since to live as he lived in an English house that is not unlike his. The originality of Milton's style, then, being granted as his main peculiarity, the conventional character of much of the material he worked into it must none the less be admitted. His epics were compendiums of what had been said and thought before him, certain images and fancies having become a kind of canon with the religious world, and most of all with the Protestant world. Various commonplaces, in illustrations of Scripture, had by the middle of the seventeenth century become general to devout minds, commonplaces in which something of the sensuous colour of the Renaissance was fused into the uninspired side of Biblical belief. The early Flemish and Tuscan artists had so often painted the archangels with Tyrian mail and azure wings, had so often spangled the train of cherubim with rainbows and starry eyes, that all this rich and florid imagery hung, to the popular mind, like a familiar embroidery round the bare history of Scripture. All this was common property, and not individual to any one religious poet, to Da Bantas or Giles Fletcher, to Vondel or Quarles. Milton came at last, and gathered it all up into his stately compendium of Protestant imagination.—*Edmund Gosse*.

OPIMUM AUCTIONS.

A certain number of chests of opium, as fixed by notification from the Government of India, are sold by public auction every month in one of the rooms of the Board of Revenue, in Calcutta. The secretary to the board presides at the auction. The auctioneer is one of the assistants of the board. The auction room is filled with intending purchasers, several of them millionaires or their representatives, who have their recognized seats, to which they are admitted by tickets. The auction is usually conducted in that calm and quiet manner which is suitable to transactions in which hundreds of thousands of pounds are involved. Each lot consists of five chests, and a native clerk holds up a black-board on which he exhibits in chalk the amount of the last bid. The excitement about the bidding is usually confined to the first few lots, when any good or bad news from China may have led to an alteration in the value of opium subsequent to the last monthly sale. The rival millionaires counsel by a quiet nod to the auctioneer. The ruling price for the day is soon settled between them, as they well know to what limit they may safely go. The purchaser of one lot of five chests is at liberty to claim the next ten lots at the same price. The auction list is thus quickly run through. When the millionaires have satisfied their wants for the day the smaller speculators bid according to their requirements. As each lot is knocked down, a clerk goes about with a little book to each purchaser, in which he gives a promissory note, payable on demand, for one-fourth the value of his purchase, with an engagement to pay the balance within ten days. From an unknown speculator a deposit in money is taken. Failure to complete a bargain is of very rare occurrence; but if default occurs the chests are put up for sale at the ensuing auction, at the risk of the defaulting purchaser, who is liable for any loss that may accrue if the price of opium has fallen when the re-sale takes place. In the

course of an hour the auction room is empty, and the noisy outside crowd, which fills the courtyard of the board's premises, has dispersed. Payments for opium purchased are made by the merchants through the Bank of Bengal, and on the production of a certificate of payment the merchant receives a delivery order for the chests which he has purchased, and he at once removes them from the Government warehouse and consigns them to his agents or correspondents in China and the Straits by the swift steamers which trade between Calcutta and China.—*The National Review*.

HOPE ON, HOPE EVER.

Hope on, hope ever. Though dead leaves are lying
In mournful clusters 'neath your wandering feet;
Though wintry winds through naked boughs are sighing,
The flowers are dead; yet is the memory sweet
Of summer winds and countless roses glowing
'Neath the warm, warm kisses of the generous sun.
Hope on, hope ever. Why should tears be flowing?
In every season is some victory won.

Hope on, hope ever, though you deck loved tresses
With trembling fingers for the silent grave;
Though cold the cheek beneath your fond caresses,
Look up, true Christian soul; be calm, be brave!
Hope on, hope ever. Though your hearts be breaking,
Let flowers of resignation wreath your cross,
Deep in your heart some heavenly wisdom waking,
For mortal life is full of change and loss.

Hope on, hope ever, for long-vanished faces
Watch for your coming on the golden shore,
E'en while you whisper in their vacant places
The blessed words: "Not lost, but gone before!"
Hope on, hope ever, let your hearts keep singing,
When low you bend above the churchyard sod,
And fervent prayers you, chastened thoughts are winging,
Through sighs and tears, to the bright throne of God!

Hope on, hope ever. Let not toil or sorrow
Still the sweet music of Hope's heavenly voice.
From every dawn some ray of comfort borrow,
That in the evening you may still rejoice.
Hope on, hope ever—words beyond comparing,
Dear to the hearts that nameless woes have given;
To all that mourn, sweet consolation bearing,
Oh, may they prove the Christian's guide to heaven!
—*Chamber's Journal*.

FRENCH DOMESTICS.

Even yet well-to-do people in France never dream of keeping the same number of servants with whom those in a like station in England would consider it incumbent on them to be pestered. The daughters of the family are not ignorant of domestic duties. The mistress is a lady who considers it her part to superintend every department of her household; while the servants, being treated in a different manner from those in an English family, are more faithful, and if not more efficient, are certainly less troublesome. They are regarded as humble dependents, and come with the intention of remaining all their lives, or until they marry. The members of the family treat them with easy familiarity, and it is quite common—as it was in England in an old and, so far as this is concerned, a better time—when any of them are from home, to send their remembrances to Marguerite, or Alphonse, or Jeannette, just as they would to their brothers or sisters, or cousins, or personal companions. In short the French domestics are not a caste by themselves, and neither resent such kindness as an undue infringement of their prerogative of "knowing their place," nor abuse the good nature thus evinced. This expensive mode of housekeeping made many men rich who are now poor.—*From the Peoples of the World*.

A DREAM WHICH CAME TRUE.

Sir William Staines, who was London's chief magistrate in 1801, started in life as a bricklayer's labourer, and at city banquets, with great glee, he used to introduce the following anecdote.—When he was a youngster, he was employed in repairing the parsonage house, Uxbridge. One day going up the ladder with his hod of mortar, he was accosted by the parson's wife, who told him that she had had a very extraordinary dream. She told him that she had dreamed he would one day become Lord Mayor of London. Astonished at such a prophecy, Staines could only scratch his head, and thank her for such a vast promotion. He said he had neither money nor friends. The parson's wife, however, was not so easily to be turned from her prognostication, and this dream had evidently left a great impression. Her mind was bent on young Staines, and Lord Mayor he should be. The same dream occurred again, and the same communication was repeated to him that he was to be Lord Mayor. The matter passed off, and young Staines left the parsonage house at Uxbridge with no other impression than the kindness that had been shown and the notice that had been taken of him. It was not until he became sheriff that the dream came to be talked about, though there is little doubt that the dream made a lasting impression upon his own mind, and was an incentive to laudable industry through life. The Uxbridge parson had by this time become old, but he lived long enough to be chaplain to Staines when sheriff, and he died during his shrievalty.—*From Cassell's Greater London*.

THE Church of Scotland has 1,442 congregations and a membership of 555,622.

ENGLISH law makes a difference between ordinary lectures and those delivered at universities. It has been recently decided, on appeal, at Glasgow, that a university student may take notes of lectures and publish them, if he pleases, without the consent of the professors. The lectures are considered public property.

British and Foreign.

THE Edinburgh Sabbath School Teachers' Union numbers 2,710 teachers and 23,552 scholars.

BOUSAADA Presbyterian Church has, according to a telegram from Algiers, been destroyed by a shock of earthquake.

THE Rev. Albert Goodrich, Glasgow, has received a call to Brixton Congregational Church, vacant by the death of Baldwin Brown.

THE Rev. J. P. Chown, an eminent Baptist divine, on account of failing health, has resigned the pastorate of Bloomsbury Church.

AUCHMITHIE, near Arbroath, the village generally regarded as the "Musselcraig" of the Antiquary, had a new church opened recently.

A SON of Baptist Noel is one of the band of enthusiastic Englishmen who are working with Mr. M'All in his noble efforts to evangelize France.

DR JOSEPH PARKER, having been ordered by his medical advisers to curtail his public work, has discontinued his Thursday morning service for the present.

THE Rev. Mr. Spurgeon is confined to bed with a sudden and severe attack of rheumatic gout. It is not likely that he will be able to leave London for some time.

FOR the rent of a room which is used as a chapel by the M'All Mission in the Rue de S. Honoré, Paris, a zealous band of ladies in Philadelphia pay 10,000 francs a year.

LORD SALISBURY, it is said, thinks of appointing a commission to inquire into the religious and other questions which have sprung out of the existing educational system.

THE Rev. Dr. Somerville looks on his appointment to the Moderatorship of the Free Church Assembly as a token of its appreciation of evangelistic work at home and abroad.

AN eminent physician has placed it on record that sixty per cent. of the male losses in the insurance company with which he is connected are due, directly or indirectly, to alcohol.

THE members of the Society of Friends who sat in the last parliament have been exceedingly unfortunate in the recent elections, though Sir J. Pease has been triumphantly returned for the Barnard Castle division of Durham.

BERLIN, with a population of 1,400,000 has seventy-eight apothecaries, or one for every 20,000 inhabitants. New York, with a population of over 1,500,000 has over 500 apothecaries, or one for every 3,000 inhabitants.

PAISLEY Free Church Presbytery has resolved to abolish fast-day services in its country parishes, and is to co-operate with the other Presbyterian ministers of the town in an attempt to separate communion from fast-day services.

PAISLEY Presbytery had under consideration at their last meeting the proposal to augment the stipends of ministers. It recommends that all Presbyteries should be enjoined to visit congregations within their bounds every three years.

THE opium trade continues to flourish in India. In 1883 8,071,120 pounds were produced, and 876,454 acres of land devoted to its culture. Its use among the lower classes is on the decrease, but the rich suffer a great deal from over-indulgence.

THE Rev. G. James, junior pastor of Bristo, Edinburgh, who is ordered to the South of France for the benefit of his health, has received leave of absence for four months from his Presbytery. Mr. James is a brother of Dr. James, formerly of Hamilton.

A MOVEMENT to give greater power to laymen in the management of Church affairs is gathering strength in the Presbyterian Church of Victoria. This movement originated in the alleged high handed action of Melbourne Presbytery in the Strong case and in other matters.

THE Rev. John Mackenzie is writing a narrative of Sir Charles Warren's successful expedition to Bechuanaland. He resided in that country first as a missionary and then as deputy commissioner. He is now in London. Mr. Mackenzie was an eye-witness of the events to be described in his forthcoming volume.

AFTER seeing all the sights of the French capital a little party of American visitors dropped into one of the M'All Mission rooms. As they walked back to their hotel through the gay crowd of thoughtless Sabbath-breakers, they could not help turning to each other, and saying: "Surely we have just seen the best thing in Paris!"

THE Rev. W. C. Reid, rector of Copenhall, Crewe, has affixed to the notice board in his church a request asking prayers for the repose of the soul of one of his predecessors, and on being requested to contradict a statement that he had done so declares that he boldly teaches the duty of praying for the dead and utterly denies that the practice is Roman.

LORD ABERDEEN has consented to become president of the Turkish Missions Aid Society in succession to the late Earl of Shaftesbury, who was one of its founders. The departed Earl often expressed his admiration of the services rendered by those American missionaries in the East, whose work it is the office of this society to advocate and promote.

THE keen electoral struggle in the St. Andrew's Burghs has resulted in a tie, 1,256 voting for Mr. Stephen Williamson, the son-in-law of Dr. Thomas Guthrie, and the same number for Sir Robert Anstruther, who was nominated by Principal Tulloch. The polling was on Monday, and on the preceding Sunday night Dr. Macgregor of St. Cuthbert's, Edinburgh, preached a political sermon in Cellardyke Parish Church, admission to which was by ticket.

CUPAR Established Presbytery had to deal at their last meeting with a disputed settlement at Flisk. At a congregational meeting thirty-eight had voted in favour of Mr. MacLaren and thirty-five against him; but it was held that four of the majority had no right to vote as they were communicants in another parish. Because of this the validity of the election was questioned. It was resolved to postpone the decision of the question till further light was obtained.