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 or
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MIRAMICHI, APRIL, 1879.

THE SNOWFLAKE :

MIRAMICHI, APRIL, 1879.

Lines written by a niece of the Rev. John Robertson of Black River.

ON THE DEATH OF THE PRINCESS ALICE.

Blow, blow, and winds through all the lonely land;
 Oh! join with many hearts that sigh and moan;
 Oh! wail, ye wintry winds, the woe world o'er;
 Mourn with the breaking hearts around the throne.

Oh, weep the Princess fallen in her prime?
 Oh, weep the royal daughter of our Queen?
 Mourn for the Prince in his far German home,
 Now crushed to earth in desolation keen.

His funeral crown hath lost its fairest gem,
 Whose lively radiance gleamed as if to show
 The real nobility, come right from God—
 A noble soul, whether in high or low.

A noble soul was thine, oh, Princess true?
 Pure was thy heart; as fragrant was thy life,
 Breathing sweet love; and rich in tenderness,
 As daughter, sister, mother, and as wife.

Thy little ones, God heal their tender hearts!
 Ah! thou no more canst soothe them as of yore;
 God lead them gently in the path of life,
 Until they come to heaven's shining door!

Was it a presage of thy opening doom,
 That in this sad and stranger land of years,
 That ship went down, that bore thy honored name,
 Engulfing hundreds—making many tears?

Thou livest still, such virtues cannot die—
 They are immortal while the stars endure;
 Showing to court and cot example bright,
 Of all that is most noble, good, and pure.

As when on some proud rock we see enthroned
 The lordly eagle, that, while we admire,
 Beats his great wings, and mounts into the air,
 Clearing a pathway, till we see no higher;

Or as the dove that from her chirping nest,
 Speaks her white plumes one moment full in view,
 Then with a gentle motion soars aloft,
 Till lost to sight within the heavenly blue;

Even so thy royal spirit hath gone up,
 No thy most dove-like soul hath soared away,
 God's angel, death, lent thee his golden wings,
 Not for thy best beloved sought at thou stay

Farewell, sweet Princess; from thy home of light,
 If thou mayst come to cheer thy dear ones' way
 Glad welcome wait thee, as they know that thou
 Wilt welcome them to realms of cloudless day.

They keep this Christmas day in saddened homes,
 Yet are their hearts made warm by love unsworn,
 And we, with kindly wish for ours and thine,
 Hast thou, this Christmas morn, art with the Christ.

H. G. L., Xmas, 1879.

[Written for the Snowflake.]

THE MOABITE STONE.

Our readers have, no doubt, heard of the discovery of what is called the "Moabite Stone." There are strange things in the age we live in, and not the least are its antiquarian curiosities.

The country of Moab lies on the eastern side of the Jordan and the Dead Sea, a wild assemblage of blue mountains. It was, long ago, a region of very great beauty, abounding in cities, industry and wealth; it is now a wilderness peopled by roving Arabs. The stone was found by a missionary, a Mr. Klein, at a place called *Dhiban*, in a field of ruins. The attempt to remove it was not well

planned. It was a series of mishaps. In an evil hour Mr. Klein let out the secret of its value. It at once became an object of superstition with the Arabs, and to avert the calamity which, as they fancied, must fall upon them, if they would let it be taken out of the country by the sacerdotal cupidity of strangers, they lit a fire upon it, made it red hot, and then with cold water splintered the magnificent relic into fragments. What a debt the world owes to ignorance and blind zeal! It is on acts like these, that fanaticism plumes itself! Well, what of the stone, the mutilated stone, now an illustration of the explosive energy of steam! With no little pains and, in a manner, by stealth, two large fragments of it were recovered; afterwards some of the smaller ones, and now as the fruit of laborious ingenuity and perseverance, the stone is again itself, almost entire, built up again into its original form, only woefully disfigured by the rough treatment it received.

It is a piece of basalt, black, but with a tint of blue, very hard and compact, and of great weight, three and a half feet in length and two and a half in breadth and thickness, and rounded off for ornament at the top in the style, as tradition tells, of Sinaitic tables. Not a big thing to look at, but, I think I can safely aver, that if the Arabs had been less fanatical, and had stood upon their rights, and known more of science than they do, and more of the zeal of scientific men, they could have made a bargain over the "Moabite Stone," that would have driven them mad with exultation and pride.

Now, what is it that gives so singular an interest to that mass of black basalt? What is the riddle of its preciousness? A block of stone picked out of an unsightly heap of rubbish! How many a straggler had heedlessly gazed on it, how many a footstep had idly trod upon it, a neglected, worthless thing, a wreck among wrecks, a ruin for reptiles to creep on, or foxes to frisk about it, or crows to perch on it, and yet, when the infidels of Europe were casting doubt on the authenticity of the historical records of the Bible, and employing all their powers of criticism to prove them to be only oriental fictions, there, in the meantime, lay the stone of Moab, a silent witness to the fidelity of these very re-

ports; yea, a witness whose voice must carry all before it, a witness contemporary with those very Kings, a witness come down to us from the living scenes of the history itself; come down in stern and unchallengeable veracity on a marble of three thousand years, to confound those critics and prove to the world that the Bible has nothing to fear from the merciless rigour of criticism, the facts of science, or the scorn of infidelity.

There is an inscription on the stone. It was set up by a King of Moab, whose name was *Mesha*, to perpetuate the glories of his reign. Now, we find in the Bible the names of only three kings of Moab, and curiously enough, *Mesha* is one of one them. He was a contemporary of *Ahab*, and *Ahab* is also on the stone; and so is *Omri*, the father of *Ahab*. The inscription says that *Mesha* had wars with those Israelitish kings, very long and sanguinary wars; and that he and they were implacable enemies.

The names of forts or strongholds are on the stone, and of shrines of idolatry. Not a few of them are old acquaintances of readers of the Bible. We recognize them at first sight. But how strange to see them there, like antique fossils, relics of the historical past, *Dibon, Madihat, Balthaton, Bazar, Kiriothaim*, etc. *Mesha* tells how he built this one, decorated that, and laid another in blood and ashes. He was a merciless and dashing warrior.

The inscription contains one thousand letters. But, owing to the injury of fire and breakage, only seven hundred or thereabouts, are in existence. The gaps in broken sentences, can pretty well be filled up; in the case, however, of proper names, conjecture avails but little.

The letters in which the inscription is written are of the old Phœnician type, and similar to the capitals of our own alphabet, only that they are turned backwards or in reverse. The language is Hebrew, but not just the Hebrew of the Scriptures. The difference is one of dialect, and it has also an Arabic complexion, a very interesting fact for Philologists. The territory of Moab was so situated as to have a purely Hebrew-speaking people on the one side and a race of Arabian origin on the other.

"The date of the stone is about 900

B. C. It was engraved, according to the opinion in the second year of the reign of *Ahaz*, King of Israel. It is older than *Homer*, and is in all likelihood written in the same characters as those used by *Darid* in the Psalms, and by *Salomon* in his correspondence with *Hiram*, King of *Tyre*. From every point of view the stone is of the deepest interest and importance. "It is like another chapter added to the Bible." It throws light on historical portions of the Bible that were greatly obscured by the mists of antiquity. It is a confirmation of the truth of Scriptural History. Not that the Bible needs to lean on evidence like that. It is its own witness. It carries its divine credentials in its bosom. It speaks to the heart of man as no other book ever did. It is omniscient. Its voice is the voice of God. A Christian does not need such evidence as antiquarians dig out of ruins, or drag out of the crypts of mouldering sepulchres, to prove that the Bible is divine. He knows on what he builds his hope, and if there were no monuments of any kind, no strong register of forgotten cities, nor slabs from the uncovered palaces of Chaldean plains, nor hieroglyphics from the Nile, his hope would still rest there. How do I know that a plant is a work of creative intelligence, and not a thing of chance or circumstance? Is it not by the marks of wisdom and of purpose which I can trace upon it? Itself tells the story of its origin. In the veins of every leaf and in the hue of every petal it unfolds the wonderful skill of the hand that fashioned it and gave it all its grace and loveliness. And, so, there is a character, a self-witnessing power in the Bible that proclaims it to be the conception not of man, but of God. A Christian does not need such evidence for his faith as that of the stone of Moab, but it can be used to stop the arrogance of a sceptic.

A few notes, now, about the land of *Moab*. It does not figure much in history. But when the Romans held it, it was celebrated for its riches and power. All that, however, has passed away. Under the rule of the *Turks*, *Moab* has shrunk into a desert. The standard of *Mahomet* was a crescent, a thing that gives the idea of a splendour that waxes or expands, but by what fatality is it that the crescent of the *Moslems*, wherever it has moved has been the baleful

[Continued on fourth page.]