

Contributors and Correspondents.

DIARY IN THE EAST.

JERUSALEM, SOLOMON'S POOLS, &c.—Continued.

When we had ridden a little more than three hours we rested half-an-hour, and ate the cold dinner we had with us. There was no shelter of any kind. We just sat down on a bank at the side of the track in a place protected from the wind, which was keen, then mounted again and rode on. As we came nearer to Hebron the day clouded over and became colder. On the last ridge above Hebron we passed through a good deal of snow lying on hollow parts of the road. My horse did not like it at all, and avoided it when possible. When within a few miles of the town we came on a very marked ancient road, parts of which are still paved. This pavement, though interesting as a monument of Roman days, was far from pleasant to ride over. The stones stood up, each independent of the others, with hollows between filled by water from the melting snow and rain. In one place we had a pretty long stretch of road, over which quite a rapid shallow stream was flowing; the slippery stones were most uncomfortable footing for our horses, and the water made it impossible to see the holes into which they occasionally plunged, sending showers of muddy water over us. It was more like fording a highland stream than any other riding I ever had. I could not but think of the change from ancient days, when the roads to Hebron would be cared for in a most special manner, since it was one of the Jewish cities of refuge, and, according to the merciful command of the God of Israel, every facility was to be provided that so the man-slayer might escape from the hand of the avenger of blood. The Vale of Eschol, Hebron, lies in a long narrow valley, much of which is even now successfully cultivated as vineyards. Though there are no walls round the town, there is a gateway at the entrance of the principal street, or lane, as we should call it.

To this gateway we rode up through a stream of water which flooded the road. Passing in, we rode along past the dismal ruinous looking houses, which are built thickly together, and sometimes overarch the streets to the Jewish quarter. There is no hotel of any kind in Hebron, but there is a German-Jewish family who put one of their rooms at the disposal of any party that likes to encamp in it, and run the risk of finding a large indigenous population that cannot be driven out. The mistress of the house must have been a beauty in her youthful days, for she still goes by the name of the "Schone Malche" beautiful Malche, and though old and wrinkled, there were evident traces of her former charms. The house lies imbedded in a network of intricate lanes, covered passages and courts, so it was not possible to ride there. Dismounting in the public street, we left our horses with the guide to be cared for as well as circumstances would allow, and carrying our bags, etc., set off for the Jewish house. The mud and filth in the lanes and courts was beyond any thing I ever saw; abominations of every description were lying on every side, so that eyes and nose were equally offended. We were glad at last to reach the house, and were ushered upstairs to a pretty large room surrounded by a raised platform against the wall, on which cushions were spread, but perfectly devoid of furniture of any kind. We were fortunate in the time of our visit, the Jewish feast of Parim was approaching, and in preparation for it there had been a great house-cleaning. Our room had been newly whitewashed, and the covers of the cushions were fresh from the tub—no, not the tub—from the side of the stream or tank, where things are washed. We were tired after our ride of six hours, and anxious to have rest and quiet, but they were not very easy of attainment. The Schone Malche seemed to have a numerous family of children and grand children, and all of those thought it their business to come and stand either in the room or at the door, watching all our proceedings. It would have offended them terribly had we turned them out, so we just had to make the best of it. We were all longing for a cup of tea, so set about preparing it. Our hostess brought in a little brazier with burning charcoal, that we might boil some water. Next she produced a little wooden stool, on the top of which she placed a large round ponderous brass tray; this was our table. On it we laid out our provisions. Every thing we had was suspected, but, being Jews, nothing was coveted but the tea. Schone Malche at once, in her strange Jewish-German, put in a petition for the revision of our stock of tea, and went away satisfied when we promised to give her what was left in the morning. After tea I went on the flat roof of the house to take a view of this ancient city of Hebron, one of the most ancient in the world.

Our horse lay in the lower part of the town. Eastward from it the houses climb the slope of the hill, and are crowned by the celebrated mosque, which covers the

cave of Machpelah, the objects of which form the most prominent subject in the view. The town is divided into three pretty distinct quarters. Two of these lie partly in the valley, partly on the slope of the eastern hill; the third is on the slope of the western hill. Looking towards it I saw some tents pitched on the open hill side, so evidently there were other Hebreans in Hebron as well as ourselves. At first I was inclined to envy them their encampment outside, but as the night proved exceedingly cold, with hoar frost on the ground, I began to be thankful of stone walls and a roof over our heads. And whether from the cold, or the whitewashing, I know not, but we were happily undisturbed by the insects which we had so dreaded. Outside our room was a little sort of court open to the sky. I suppose it was on the roof of some under room. In it, next morning, I was introduced to the eastern mode of washing, by having water poured over my hands from a metal jug with a spout not unlike a coffee-pot. There was a metal basin too, but it was not intended to be used as we use hand-basins, but merely to receive the water as it is poured over the hands. Beds, of course, we had none, but their things, something between a quilt and a mattress, were laid on the floor, and we could rest either there or on the divans round the room, as we liked best. It made me feel really in Bible land, when I saw how easily the command to take up a bed and walk could be obeyed. In our worship, night and morning, we read some of Abraham's wonderful history, and rejoiced to know that, though no angel visitants were visible to our eyes, the Lord, who, in this very place, appeared in human form to his faithful servant, was present with us too, and was giving his angels charge over us, to keep us from accident and alarm. Perhaps one of them stood unseen between me and the edge of the bank over which I expected to fall, and would not let my horse take me over it.

We had to start in good time in the morning, in order to go round by Abraham's Oak, so, after an early breakfast, Mr. W. and I sallied out to see all we could of the town, mosque, etc. B. did not go with us as she had been in Hebron before. We rambled through the bazaars, which are much more eastern in appearance than the Jerusalem streets. Our purchases were not costly. I invested in bracelets, and got nearly a dozen for 2 1/2 English. These bracelets are circles of glass of different colors, which the people wear on their wrist. Even tiny infants have them put on, and if they are not broken they are left on the wrist till the hand grows too large to take them off. Glass is manufactured pretty largely at Hebron. Passing through the bazaars we had many offers of guidance, had took a little boy to lead us through the intricate lanes up to the mosque. It is so placed on the side of the hill that one can easily believe in the existence of a natural cave under it. Of course we could not get admittance, even to the mosque. Very few Christians have ever been admitted there, and when they did get in, they only saw a hole through which they looked down into what was said to be the cave. Even Muslims are not admitted to the cave itself. It is one of the places which Mahomedans, Jews, and Christians, all agree in believing in. Whether the bones of the father of the faithful, and the mummified form of Jacob still rest undisturbed there, no one can say positively, but seems very probable. There is one little bit of the natural rock outside the Mosque, to which Jews and Christians may approach. It is reached by a flight of steps at one corner of the oblong Mosque enclosure. We mounted the steps, and a man who was standing there, first pointed out a little hollow in the piece of rock, and then asked Bakesesh for doing so.

From the Mosque our boy guided us to another interesting ancient structure. A large tank, believed to be the pool beside which David hung up the murderers of his adversary Ishboseth. It was very full of water from the constant rains, and a good deal of the low land beside the town was entirely flooded. After a walk up the slope of the western hill, from which we had a good view of the town and mosque, we returned to the house and packed up for our start back to Jerusalem. The day was much finer than we had expected from the murky sunset, and gave us much cause for thankfulness, as we rode off about 9 a.m., enjoying the clear air and bright sunshine. We needed sunshine to help us to laugh over the difficulties of the way in going to Abraham's oak. It is reached by a lane shut in by vineyard walls, which was in many places a couple of feet or more deep in water and tenebrous mud. B's poor white pony did look a wretched object struggling through this mud bath, and slipping over the big stones that lay hidden in the mud. It took many a struggle for the little creature to get through, but its high spirit was by no means daunted, and when it got to a piece of firm ground it was quite ready to toss its wise little head and set off at a canter again.

Abraham's oak, of course, in no measure deserves its name, unless as a last remnant of the many fine oaks which probably were numerous in his days. It is really a terrible sight. It must have been a splendid tree before the storm which carried away one of its mighty arms. Even now it is very grand in its decay. It is in an enclosed space of ground, and close to it the Russians have built a large house of the same character as their hospice at Jerusalem. Their pilgrims are, perhaps, about the most numerous of any nation. From the oak we turned up a side lane, which would lead us back to our road of the day before. When about half way through the lane, our way was blocked by a train of camels which filled it almost from side to side. To make matters worse another train of these animals laden with bags of charcoal, was coming from the opposite direction. How

they were to pass each other, and how we were to pass them, was at first a mystery. These meetings as were not inclined to back out of the lane, those in front of us could not get back for us. Such a scene there was of shouting and gesticulating. Happily there was a wide lane not far from the laden camels, and after considerable delay, a man from in front of us rushed forward, and seizing one of the laden camels, got it into the side lane and the others followed. But such a grunting and grumbling, and showing of teeth there was before we all got past, and on our way again. Our further course was without adventure, till we made our midday halt. There we produced a tin of jam, which, though bought in Jerusalem, had come all the way from Aberdeen. We enjoyed the Scotch gooseberries very much, but just when Mr. W. was beginning on a particularly nice slice of bread and jam which B. had prepared for him, a tremendous wave of rain came down on our unsheltered heads. There was nothing for it but to get to our horses, and ride off before the saddle-covers were soaked, and we had a good laugh over the celerity with which the bread and jam was swallowed in the emergency. We had sunshine and showers by turns all the rest of our way to Jerusalem, and were thankful that we were on our way home, and not setting out for Hebron in such violent rain. We again took rather more than six hours to the ride. It can be done in very much less time with good horses, when the ways are not so bad as we found them. It is quite impossible to go fast over the low parts when the rain has turned the path into a sticky swamp, but in fine weather these very parts afford good sporting ground.

(To be Continued.)

Regeneration. What is it?

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—The doctrine of regeneration, without which a man cannot see the kingdom of God, is one of vital importance to every human soul. It is, however, matter of regret that there should be any diversity of opinion among professing Christians about the nature of it or the means by which it is effected. In these days of rapid progress in every department of knowledge, the views of this doctrine held by our forefathers have undergone a considerable change. They generally held that it is the wish of the Holy Spirit through the instrumentality of the word, and that in its operation man is entirely passive. Our Saviour in his discourse with Nicodemus illustrated it by the action of the wind, the sound of which we can hear while we feel its effects, and the action of which we have no power either to judge or resist. But how differently is it represented to us by revivalists and others of the present day. Mr. Moody at one of his meetings in London once asked what regeneration meant, replied, "Just believe, and you are regenerated." In the *Sower and Gospel Field* the writer of the lesson for the 25th ult. says: "The Word of God received and believed is the means of regeneration." And in the same lesson in your own excellent paper it is said, "Men are born again by the Spirit, somehow when they believe in Jesus." And again, "The great things to be taught, the need of a new nature, and the way to get it by going to—believing in Jesus." According to this doctrine then faith must be exercised before regeneration takes place, for the means towards the accomplishment of an end must be used before the end can be obtained. When I look at this phrase of the doctrine it appears in my view liable to some very serious objections.

With your leave, sir, I would wish to state a few of these objections, and would be very glad to have them satisfactorily answered. Jesus said to Nicodemus, "That which is born of the flesh is flesh; and that which is born of the Spirit is Spirit." Again it is said, "The flesh lusteth against the Spirit, and the Spirit against the flesh, and these are contrary the one to the other; so that ye cannot do the things that ye would." Eph. v. 17. Here then are two natures or principles directly opposed to each other; the one is in a state of death the other of life, the former is descriptive of the natural man, the latter of the spiritually minded man. Now, of the natural man it is said: "The natural man receiveth not the things of the Spirit of God for they are foolishness unto him, neither can he know them because they are spiritually discerned." 1st Cor. ii. 14. I ask then is the faith which brings a person into union with Christ a spiritual act; if it is can a living act of faith be exercised by a soul dead in sin. If it can, then it is obvious that spiritual motion must precede spiritual life, for faith is the soul's motion to God. If the natural man cannot discern spiritual things how can he believe the things of the Spirit of God while he is unable to discern them. In the 2nd chapter of the Epistle to the Ephesians the Apostle speaks of regeneration as a resurrection from the dead, "You hath He quickened who were dead in trespasses and sins." Here regeneration is giving life to the dead. In the 1st chapter of the same Epistle the production of faith in the soul is ascribed to the mighty power of God that raised Jesus from the dead. According to this it is the prerogative of God's Spirit to give the power to believe, but He does not believe for us. The exercise of faith is a man's own act, and never can be acted for him by any other being. The work of Jesus which faith receives is imputed to the believer, but faith itself is never obtained by imputation. It is the act of a living man quickened by the Holy Spirit by which he receives Christ and all his benefits. Now the question I would wish to have solved is, can this living act of faith which brings a man into union with Jesus be exercised by one who is spiritually dead,

who can neither receive, know nor discern spiritual things.

Rev. Wm. Anderson, LL.D., of Glasgow, in his book on regeneration, page 29, says regeneration being mental it is effected not on the faculties of the understanding, but on the affections and passions of the soul. Now in the Scriptures I find the natural man described as having the understanding darkened, as having ears but hearing not, and eyes but seeing not. Is it possible then that a man can be regenerated and the understanding not be enlightened. In natural generation the quickening power permeates and vitalizes every member of the body, and motion is the immediate result. Precisely so it is in regeneration. When the Holy Spirit breathes upon and quickens the dead soul, every faculty of the soul is vivified. The dead ear is unstopped, the blind eye is opened, the understanding is enlightened, so that the subject of this change can discern the things of the Spirit of God as he never did before; he is then enabled to apprehend Jesus as an all-sufficient Saviour, and faith is the blessed result. It is conceivable by any human being that the regenerative power of the Holy Spirit would vivify the affections and passions, and leave the faculties of the understanding in darkness and the stillness of death. In incapacity to discern spiritual things be a characteristic of the natural man, and if regeneration effects only the affections and passions, is it by these that he first discerns the things of the Spirit of God. If it is, I confess that hitherto I was as ignorant on this subject as David was when he uttered the prayer.—"Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of Thy law." Psalm cix. 18. I might quote numerous texts of Scripture to show that the understanding of the natural man is darkened and that in the regenerate it is enlightened, but must conclude for the present. Yours, etc.,
A LAYMAN.

Ministerial Rest.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Yonder they are coming, wearily bearing their exhausted frames homeward! Returning coolness of the weather brings them back like birds from a far off clime! And who are they, all these? They are the shepherds of Israel who left their flocks for a season, to return with renewed strength, that they may tend and feed them the better. And is this right that pastors should take temporary leave of absence from their flocks, and leave them to graze alone? Yes, verily, ministers need rest. All nature takes a season of rest, and why not ministers be entitled to the same privilege? The earth that gives forth her abundance for man and beast needs rest. The faithful horse that turns the furrow to receive the seed from the hand of the sower needs rest. The brown son of toil needs it. The fruitful tree needs a period of rest and takes it, asking no questions. The lawyer whose brain is exhausted by weaving webs of sophistry to clothe his client, flies to the country for rest, and so we might multiply examples. But the poor minister is often found fault with if he assumes the right which heaven and nature bequeathed upon him as a royal legacy—Rest. It is too seldom thought of that the feverish brain, the languid limb and spirit borne down with the cumbrous cares of a charge (and these intensified by the rigid economy incident upon limited incomes), honest intervals to be rolled off and forgotten, that the poor lacerated back and spirit may be healed or better prepared to be resaddled. Of course there are many happy exceptions to the rule, but these are too few. But why not make ministers an independent class of men—for men they are like lawyers, doctors, and statesmen? Why should they not be their own masters in this particular like other men? There is something wrong here. It was never intended that the ambassadors of the Lord should be subject to such cruelty and wrong, to bend and cringe to their flocks, and be afraid to open their mouths to their own interests. The flock should look up to their minister instead of the minister looking up to the flock, and ministers have themselves to blame when they do not teach the people their duty. But how should ministers rest when they get the opportunity? They seem to differ widely in their ideas on this point. Some arm themselves with two or three of their best sermons, and repair to some great centre—New York or Brooklyn—or somewhere else, and expend what little strength they have left in elaborating those sermons to vast concourses of people, with a view to a call or enlarging their coffers. Is this rest? Not according to the ideas of the writer. This is adding fuel to the fire to burn up instead of regenerate the impaired strength and vigour. And hence, they return, not rested but fatigued, not in high spirits, but dejected, worn out, and unfit for work.

Instead of the black, trim tight fitting clerical garb, let him attire in the costume of a rustic, and let him exchange the elaborate sermon for a hook and line, and let him brook himself to some remote brook adorned by the border of a green forest, and there let him fish and eat fish, and make brains, and build up his system, which will give elasticity to his homeward step. Let him be natural with the surrounding beauty. Let him hold communion with nature, as perhaps he too seldom holds communion with the Lord. Let him read her poetic descriptions of her Maker, as he seldom reads the glowing descriptions of Isaiah's vision. Let him put him out of formality,

let his mind and body relax, and let his soul be enlarged by the wonderful works of the Lord, or let him equip himself with a gun, and let him about the wide world that dip in the brook or snarl on its bank, let him eat thereof, and his thirst for work will be quenched, and the first taste of blood makes the lion for ever after unattractable. In this way he will be seeing the Lord and the Church much better than by discharging his sermons, or by dropping his prepared bait to haul in a wealthy congregation.
August 26th, 1876. ER. CHEROBS.

Statistics.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Your correspondent, "J. P." seems to have misunderstood a former communication of mine. I did not denounce the publication of statistics (although I may entertain the opinion that it is a little overdone.) What I objected to, was the habit into which the Statistical Committee have fallen in spending a great deal of time, and putting the Church to a great deal of expense, in ascertaining averages "which prove nothing, and which can never be made the basis of any just action." Those who are low in this average come to the conclusion that they are less able than those who are high, and are not stimulated. Those who are high come to the conclusion that they (at least), are doing their duty, and are not stimulated, so that as I look at the matter evil is done instead of good. In regard to statistics as a whole, there is a strong tendency to exaggeration, which some of the recent letters that have appeared in the PRESBYTERIAN have not, I humbly think, helped to correct.
Yours, etc., H.

"To The Jew First."

The following remarkable case of conversion is vouched on authority the most unquestionable:—

"On the last Sunday that Mr. Moody was at the Opera House, a young man was passing the Haymarket. He was a Jew; for twelve years he had led a most dissipated life; had travelled a great deal in connection with a house of business, he had been a great gambler, and been in the habit of attending most of the race meetings in England. In addition to all this, for the last five years he had been accustomed to attending night after night a well-known dancing saloon near the Haymarket, where he was a paid dancer, and was consequently constantly in the society of the most abandoned of both sexes.

On that Sunday evening he was on his way to a card party, when his attention was arrested by a crowd of people at the Opera House. A gentleman invited him to come in. At first he refused, but at last consented.

The first thing which arrested his attention was the arrival of Lord Cairns. He thought—if the Lord High Chancellor of England takes an interest in a meeting like this, there must be something in it. Then the choir sang No. 11—"The old, old story," which had a wonderful effect on him, softening and subduing him in a way he had never before experienced. Then followed some prayers—so different from what he had ever heard at the synagogue, that he could not help weeping—feeling quite broken-hearted—and when Mr. Moody preached about the thorn that was crucified with our Lord, and told how he said, "Lord Jesus, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom," the thought came into his mind, "If I could only say the same words, I might also be saved;" and there then, before the sermon was over, and heedless of the thousands present, he fell on his knees and asked the Lord if he would remember him. He felt relieved, but did not enter into full peace that night. After the sermon he stood up with some 200 others to testify that he wished to become a Christian. In the inquiry-room he pointed to Jesus as the promised Messiah, and had a long conversation with a gentleman.

On the Tuesday night following he went to the young men's meeting in connection with the Opera House services, and there heard, among others, the testimony of another Jew, who is now a bright and happy Christian, but who had for four years previously been a spiritualist and a medium, and who was converted at Mr. Moody's meetings; and that night he accepted Christ as his Saviour, and has been rejoicing ever since in the knowledge of sins forgiven, and in the felt indwelling of the Holy Ghost. This has enabled him to bear the great trials which have followed his conversion—cursed by his father and mother; sisters, brothers, and relations lost; turned out of his employment, not knowing as yet how to gain a living; insulted by Jews to whom he speaks of Jesus—he has indeed had his faith severely tried, but he remains humble and firm, "looking unto Jesus" for all things. Last Sunday he was baptized at Trinity Church, Little Queen-street, E.C. 4, by the Bishop of Jerusalem.

One incident I may mention, as illustrating that the Holy Spirit is indeed working in him. Some days ago he was telling of Jesus to a Jew, who became very bitter, and at last spat in his face; yet he bore it meekly, having even then learnt the spirit of his Master, and went away to pray for him who had so despitately used him. And the prayer was answered, for the day before yesterday the Jew came to him, and begged for forgiveness. May God open a way for him to get employment (he has a Christian wife and child), and may he be able to be used as an instrument in God's hands for the good of many.

Over 200 tons of old rubber shoes are manufactured into ear springs in Boston annually.