

EASTERN CUSTOMS AND BIBLE TEXTS.

No. III.—CONCLUDED.

The "cemetery," to use that beautiful word which the Christian creed has consecrated, and which, at least in its leading idea was not unknown to the Jews, was some distance beyond the village. We had not only seen it before, for its many whitened mounds made it conspicuous, (St. Matt. xxiii. 27), but more than once we had wandered through it in our search for knowledge. Many of the sepulchres were like vaults, some of which were carefully closed, and before the door was a large stone (St. Matt. xxvii. 60); some were neglected and open, and we could enter them at will, and did so, when not prevented by a too recent burial. A mere glance enabled us to see how it was possible for others than maniacs to find here their habitation. St. Matt. viii. 28, and St. Mark v. 2, 3.

It may here be mentioned as an interesting and, perhaps, also an explanatory fact that there are sepulchres near the pyramids of Egypt, in which again and again for many years in succession explorers and others have found shelter while pursuing their searches. Many of them are, of course, like family vaults; sometimes niches were cut in the walls, or sometimes there were shelves ranged above each other, and on these were placed the bodies of the dead. As we stood within one of these tombs one day—one which was unusually large—and saw these shelves and the swathed forms or skeletons of those who had been "buried" years before, we could, to some extent, picture to ourselves the scene of that magnificent passage where the prophet, in his grandest flight of imagination, and in a strain of sublime poetry, represents all the kings of the earth as lying in sepulchral glory, and as raising themselves from their recumbent posture in astonishment at the arrival of the haughty tyrant of Assyria. Isai. xiv. 8-11 and 18. See also Ezek. xxxii. 23. Sometimes where the nature of the country allows it, and the head of the family can afford it, the sepulchre is hewn out in the solid rock. Such was that of the "rich man" with whom, according to prophecy, Christ was "in His death." St. Matt. xxvii. 60. Man is proud in his death as in his life, and to hew out a sepulchre in the high and almost inaccessible cliffs was an undertaking supposed to confer honor and to attract admiration. In the case of Shebna it drew down the pointed and severe rebuke of God. Isai. xxii. 16.

In more humble instances the vault is a large hole or "pit" dug in the ground, walled up and covered over, leaving one small opening which can be covered and uncovered at will. Such as these the Psalmist alludes to. xxviii. 1. While some are most scrupulous in their care of the dead, others grow careless, or being the last of their families, have left none to care for their tombs. In the course of time, and under the influence of the climate, the walls decay, and the bones are dragged out by dogs and other animals which are over about the place, making the Psalmist's expression in cxli. 7 a literal possibility. If there have been recent burials in these tombs, and they are then opened either from necessity or from neglect, as above, the effluvia which proceeds from them is horrible beyond endurance. How surpassingly expressive then is that comparison, where, we are told, that the throats of those who utter foul and filthy words are like "open sepulchres." Psalm v. 9. Some of the greatest, as well as some of the humblest families, disdaining all artificial structures, make use of the natural caves which, we have elsewhere mentioned, are to be found in such numbers all through the country. Such, for example, was the patriarchal burying place of Abraham and his family for generations (Gen. xxiii. 9, &c.); such, too, was the place before which the Saviour's grandest miracle was wrought in calling Lazarus from death. St. John xi. 38.

When we reached the grave or sepulchre where the young man was to be buried, the body was borne in and laid in its resting-place. A few impressive words were uttered by an old man who stood at the door of the tomb as the young men

passed in. No priest was present, not only because none was obtainable in the village, but because contact with a dead body or a grave, &c., caused legal pollution, and would render them unfit to minister for a period in sacred things. (Numb. xix 11; xiv. 5, 6; and Numb. v. 2, &c.) So Josiah caused dead men's bones to be burnt upon the altar at Bethel (2 Chron. xxxiv. 5), so that "these altars, being thus polluted, might be held in the greater detestation."

When the simple sepulchre had been closed all dispersed to their homes, and, with the exception of those who had to obtain by proper ceremonies legal purification, the life of the people fell once more into its former quiet groove.

Much yet remains to be told of what we saw and heard while in that interesting country, but we will not detain you longer now. It is not, however, unfitting that we should conclude with the account of a burial, for the land itself seems dead, and will remain so till, in God's good time, and by such means as He sees fit to employ, it will be revived and started once more upon the grand mission which it has yet to fulfil.

Paragraphic.

The Northampton shoemakers are about to erect a church to be dedicated to their patron, Saint Crispin.

Bishop Crowther, "England's black bishop," reports that the average Sunday attendance at his stations on the Niger is 3,472. Of this number, 1,597 are nominal Christians, and 451 church members.

Bishop Williams has agreed to visit our mission in China, next October, on episcopal duty for Bishop Schereschewsky. Four thousand dollars has been subscribed by the Chinese in Shanghai to purchase land for an extension of St. Luke's Hospital at Hong Kew.—*American paper.*

The Bishop of Newcastle is forming a lay committee, from the members of which he hopes to obtain valuable information and advice regarding the spiritual wants of his Cathedral city and its neighbourhood. This procedure might be profitably followed by other prelates.

The great industrial event of 1884 will be the World Cotton Centennial exposition, under the auspices of the National Cotton Planter's association. It will be the centennial of the cotton trade in America, as the first shipment was made in 1784, the whole amount exported during that year being eight bales.

Churchmen will rejoice to learn that the new Archbishop of Canterbury will, when the Deceased Wife's Sister Bill is again brought forward, lead a combination of the Bishop against the measures in the House of Lords. In Conservative circles, this announcement has given great satisfaction.—*Church Review.*

The question, "How long is it necessary to keep children away from school after an infectious disease?" was answered some time since by the Academy of Medicine, Paris. With scarlet fever, diphtheria, measles, and small-pox, isolation is to be maintained for forty days. Chicken-pox and mumps lose their contagious power after twenty-five days.

The telephone would seem to have been foreshadowed by Leonardo da Vinci. He says, if upon a lake, one puts the opening of a trumpet into the water, and holds the point to the ear, he can perceive whether ships are moving at a remote distance. The same thing occurs if he thrusts the tube into the ground, for then also he will hear what is going on far away.

Mr. Mackonochie, late of St. Alban's, Holborn, has just concluded an eight days' series of mission services in St. Michael's Chapel, High School yards, Edinburgh. The services began on Sunday fortnight, when there was a large congregation, but in the evening the chapel was so crowded that chancel and altar-steps were thronged with attentive hearers. The service was of the simplest character, and consisted solely of the *Miserere*, a metrical Litany of Penitence, and some hymns from Messrs. Moody and Sankey's collection, in all which the congregation joined heartily.

The agitation for closing all workshops on Sunday is becoming stronger in Berlin. A petition in its favour signed by 6,000 people has been presented to the Reichstag.

According to a correspondent of the *Eastern Express*, the raising of opium has become a leading branch of industry in Kurdistan during the last few years. The Government tithe for last year amounted to about 400,000 piastres.

The tower of the parish Church of Winterton, Norfolk, one of the loftiest in the country, and once used as a beacon for mariners, is to be restored at the sole expense of Mrs. Burnley Hume, who has given £1,000 for the proposed work. Some years since the nave was entirely restored by the munificence of the same lady.

A portrait of Anne Boleyn has been added to the collection of the National Portrait Gallery in London. It is in oil, and was taken before she was queen. She wears a necklace of large pearls with a pendant Capital B. She has chestnut colored eyes and hair, her lips are pinched and prim, and she wears a French hood covering a cap of gold thread, and a black veil.

The wonderful multiplication of insects is one of the miracles of nature. A female house fly produces in one season 20,080,320. A queen bee will lay 20,000 eggs daily for fifty days, and the eggs are hatched in three days. There are brought to Europe annually, for scarlet and crimson dyes, from 600,000 to 70,000 pounds of cochineal, and 70,000 insects are required for a pound. The Scripture may well speak of "creeping things innumerable."

It is announced that the bishopric of Sierra Leone has been accepted by the Rev. Ernest Graham Ingham, vicar of St. Matthew's Leeds. Mr. Ingham, who was born about the year 1850, is a native of Bermuda. He was educated at St. Mary Hall, Oxford, where he took his degree in 1873. He was ordained in 1874 by the Bishop of Chester. He has held the curacies of Holy Trinity, Toxteth-park, Liverpool, and St. Matthew's Rugby, and was appointed vicar of St. Matthew's (or Little London), Leeds, in 1880. Mr. Ingham is reputed to be an Evangelical Churchman of moderate opinions.

From the new edition of the *Manchester Diocesan Directory* it appears that from his consecration in 1870 to the 30th ult., Bishop Fraser consecrated ninety new Churches, providing 51,061 sittings of which 42,658 are free. The cost of erection, exclusive of endowments and cost of sites, has been £629,529. Eighteen new Churches have been consecrated in lieu of former Churches, at a cost of £196,200 these eighteen Churches contain 13,450 sittings, of which 10,097 are free. Since October 29, 1881, seven ecclesiastical districts have been formed, making a hundred formed during his lordship's Episcopate.

The oldest prelate of the Church of England is the Right Rev. Richard Dunford, D.D., Bishop of Chichester, aged 80; the youngest the Right Rev. Rowley Hill, Bishop of sodor and Man, aged 46. The oldest prelate of the Irish Church is the Right Rev. John Robert Duley, Bishop of Kilmore, aged 82; the youngest the Right Rev. Samuel Gregg, Bishop of Cork, aged 48. The oldest prelate of the Scotch Episcopal Church is the Right Rev. Robert Eden, Bishop of Moray and Ross (Primus of Scotland), aged 78; the youngest the Rev. George Richard Mackarness, Bishop of Argyll and the Isles, aged 59—*Who's Who.*

Referring to 'Krao,' the so-called missing link now exhibited in the Westminster Aquarium by M. Farini, the *Medical Press and circular* says she is simply an exceedingly hairy Siamese child, and it is unpardonable hyperbole to speak of her as a human monkey or the missing link. But of all unfounded hypothesis to explain inordinate hairiness, none could be more mischievous than that advanced in the case of Krao. Thousands who look at her—and she certainly presents a very curious and unique appearance—will go away with a crude notion that the problem of the descent of man is solved, and that a showman has struck a fatal blow at orthodoxy. Thousands will think she is a missing link in the chain of being; whereas she is only a long well-recognised link in the chain of moastrosity.