

Our Contributors.

Some Notes From London, G. B.

The Great Metropolis Now Called Pagan London. Some Aspects of Moral and Religious Questions.

Rev. Robert Herbison, late pastor of Stewarston Presbyterian church, who has been having a holiday tour in "the old land" on his wheel, brought up in London a few days ago. The great metropolis has long been known as "the Modern Babylon;" now it is "Pagan London" as will be seen from the appended extracts which the DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN is privileged to make from a letter received from Mr. Herbison by one of his friends in this city. The letter is dated June 27 and reached Ottawa, July 6.

It is a stirring time in London just now in church circles. Archdeacon Sinclair in the course of an address said only about 18 per cent. of Londoners went to the churches, that were "like fairy lamps" glittering in the midst of "Pagan London." That gave Marie Corelli the cue and she replied in a lengthy, bitter and sarcastic article, saying that if it be "Pagan" London the fault lies at the door of the "Pagan clergy." Then, in her overdrawn and exaggerated style she characterized the "society clergyman of "the church" in London. And then came the retort courteous, etc. It is making no end of fuss, for the gist of the matter is, the clergy of the national church begin to see that "the church" is not meeting the situation in London in a practical or adequate manner.

In St. Paul's I heard the Bishop of Stepney preach two strong sermons acknowledging this, taking as his text, "Judgment shall begin with the house of God." He instanced the French revolution and showed that if the wealthy and powerful did not recognise their responsibility the judgment must come in a national form, and if the church, *i. e.*, the Church of England, did not fulfil her mission, judgment must come to her. And in proof of the latter he instanced the rise of many sects and organizations, religious bodies that sprang out of some need and fulfilled some mission not hitherto carried out. I was surprised and pleased with these strong and direct words. They showed that the clergy are at any rate not all "Pagan."

I heard Dr. Clifford last night and he referred to these utterances quite extensively, but as the heroic Caleb that he is, he proclaimed his belief that London was less "Pagan" now than fifty years ago and that true Christianity was getting a grip on London such as it never had.

I heard Rev. R. T. Campbell in City Temple, and while he pronounced no opinion, and recognised the greatness of the evil, his outlook was optimistic, born of the optimism of Jesus, who knew and suffered and sorrowed more than any of us can. He closed with Browning's "God's in His heaven; all's right with the world." He is one of the most tender and loving men, with wooing, sorrowing love in his very tones. He is without doubt London's preacher to-day. His church is crowded at noon on Thursday and that with men—hard-headed business men. But he is but one in this so great city—one prophet, the other clergymen.

"Pagan" in a sense London is no doubt, in this sense that two thirds of the population are given up to seeking their own pleasure, or to buying, selling and making gain with no serious idea of responsibility, with no concern whatever for the sorrows and

pains of others. Still, London is not exceptional in that regard. I would say from what I have seen that it is not so wickedly wicked as either Chicago or New York, nor yet so cruelly selfish. But the fact remains that with the genuine good nature and kindness of heart characteristic of English people, they have here become calloused and indifferent to the "sorrows of the poor." The reason partly is just the fat comfort of their own condition; and on the other hand the consciousness that individual charity seem to be no real remedy for such general misery and only to encourage idleness and chicanery. English people are not hard-hearted. Real distress appeals to them, and they are more generous in spirit than the majority of Americans.

But "the church" really seems to be giving no message to the people, or to be the inspiration to noble deeds. And while Marie Corelli is so extravagant as to be false, yet underlying her statements is the truth, that the best of English churchmen feel themselves that somehow they are being weighed and found wanting.

The Salvation Army people are making no small stir at present. Everybody, even to the king himself, now commends the movement and recognizes the "General" as a great and good man. In City Temple, in St. Paul's, in Dr. Clifford's Chapel, I heard words of praise and appreciation. The only one who spoke otherwise was, I am sorry to say, a poor narrow-minded Presbyterian minister who, in this great movement, could see and speak only of the fact that they erred in neglecting the communion.

Letter from Rev. Harvey Grant, Honan.

WEI-HUI-FU, HONAN, April 30th, 1904.
The Y.P.S.C.E. Kingston Presbytery, Ont.,
Canada.

Dear fellow-endevoters:—

Just now a partial lull has occurred after a very busy six weeks work, of which I shall attempt to give you some account.

We were in the first place favored with the holding here of certain examinations which were preliminary to the B. A. examinations, there were about 3,000 students in attendance; many of these visited us and were cordially received by the missionaries and native helpers and were shown over the premises after they had heard the Gospel for some time in the Dispensary Chapel inside the front gate. This work occupied us for about three weeks, after which I, with Mr. Ch'eng, one of our native helpers, started on a cart trip to visit some of our Christians in the towns and villages north-east of Wei-hui-fu. The cart was the ordinary two-mule springless cart which is used here. In this we travelled over 170 miles in 8 days, and were away from home altogether 10 days. When we left home the country was very dry, but the second day we were on the road rain began to fall, a welcome rain indeed! as the country was parched with long drought, very little snow having fallen all winter and no spring rains having previously fallen. There was a great fear of ruined crops upon the hearts of the people, and wild stories were beginning to circulate about us and other foreigners in these parts. The railways which are being built received among the

natives much of the blame for this distressing state of affairs, but the missionaries came in for their share of blame also, and so we were all glad to see the rain, and when it began it really did rain a steady soaking rain which thoroughly saturated the ground and assured a good harvest to the people.

One morning, after a continuous night's rain, the day promised to be fair, and I resolved to leave the cart in the inn in the city of Feng Ch'iu where we had stopped over night, and to walk with the helper four miles out into the country to visit a man who had been interested for some time and who desired to have his name recorded as a Christian. After a pleasant, though somewhat soft walk we reached his village and found him at home and were hospitably received by the man, Dr. Fan, and his son; we examined both as to their knowledge of Christian truth and found Dr. Fan well-informed in all the essential truths and recorded his name, but the son, whose knowledge we found deficient, we advised to study the truth more carefully and come forward for further examination sometime later.

Soon after our arrival it began to rain, and rained steadily until about an hour before dark, when it cleared a bit and we decided to return to the inn in the city where we were staying.

Dr. Fan tried to persuade us to remain over night, but when he saw us determined he said he would at least send us part of the way in his cart, so he ordered his cart to be hitched and soon we were on board and started for the city. After going two miles we reached more sandy ground where the walking was better and we persuaded the driver to allow us to dismount and walk the rest of the way while he returned home, as darkness was beginning to fall. We had not however proceeded very far when it began to rain again and soon was descending in torrents with a brisk wind blowing in our faces. We were soon soaked to the skin and quite chilled by the cold breeze. We plodded on regardless of both mud and water; sometimes we retained our shoes on our feet with difficulty in the sticky mud, at other times we were over the shoe tops in the waterholes that covered the road, the two miles seemed long and we were glad indeed when the walls of the city loomed up amid the driving rain and shades of night. When we reached there the streets were dark and empty, and the inn-keeper was astonished to see us crawl in like drowned rats. He very kindly brought a few bundles of dry straw to our room which he lighted upon the mud floor, this for a time created a welcome warmth which relieved to some extent the chill we felt, but soon the accompanying smoke became most distressing and remained with us long after the heat had departed; a bowl of warm Chinese food soon made us comfortable again, and after evening worship we soon fell asleep listening to the music of the rain drops pattering upon the roof.

Next morning the sun was shining brightly, and as soon as possible after daybreak we left the city and proceeded on our way in the cart for twelve miles over exceedingly bad roads to a village where another of our Christians lived, we spent some hours with him, and as many others crowded in to see the first European who had visited their village we had an excellent opportunity to speak of Jesus to many others besides the man we had specially gone to see. Late in the afternoon we decided to proceed four miles further to a larger town where there was an inn in which we might stop overnight. We reached this inn just at dark and scarcely an hour later our friend whom we