

Pastor and People.

THE MOHAMMEDAN MOHURRUM.—ITS RESULTS IN TRINIDAD.

(Continued.)

The following description of the way in which the Mohurrum is celebrated in India is given by a Canadian lady now residing in the Mohammedan state of Hyderabad, and will be read with interest in connection with Mrs. Morton's account: "The most extraordinary feature in the commemoration of the deaths of Hassan and Hussein is the participation of the Hindoos, who are frequently seen to vie with the disciples of Ali in their demonstrations of grief and in the splendour of the pageant displayed. A very large proportion of the Hindoos go into mourning during the ten days of the Mohurrum, clothing themselves in green garments, and assuming the guise of *fakirs*. The ceremonials are not confined to processions out of doors, persons of wealth having an *Imam-barrah* constructed in the interior of their own buildings. This is usually a square building containing a hall and other apartments in which the mourning assemblage is congregated during the festival. It is decorated for the occasion with all the splendour the owner can afford. The *taziyah* or *tazie* (mimic tomb) is placed upon the side facing Mecca, under a canopy of velvet or tissue richly embroidered, and near it is a handsome pulpit richly decorated with silver, ivory, ebony or carved wood, having a flight of stairs covered with a costly carpeting of broad velvet or cloth of gold. The *taziyah* is lighted up by enormous wax candles, and near it are placed offerings of flowers and fruit presented by pious ladies to do honour to the memory of the *Imams* (Hassan and Hussein). The remainder of the hall is fitted up with much splendour, furnished with mirrors which reflect the light from the numerous lustres and lamps. The service is held twice a day, that in the evening being the most attractive. The guests are seated round the apartment, the centre of which is occupied by a group of hired mourners, consisting of six or eight persons. These men are usually of large stature and considerable muscular strength. They are usually very scantily clothed in green cloth, breasts and heads being perfectly uncovered. A priest, selected on account of his superior elocution, ascends the pulpit, and proceeds to the recital of a portion of a poem in the Persian language, which contains a detailed account of the persecution and tragic fate of the *Imams* (or sons of Ali). The composition is said to be very pure and its effect upon the audience is prodigious. After some well-wrought passages, describing the sufferings of the unhappy princes, the reader pauses, and immediately the mourners commence violently beating their breasts, and shouting "Hassan," "Hussein," until they sink exhausted on the ground amid the piercing cries and lamentations of the spectators. A part of each day's services consists of a chant in the Hindustani language, in which the whole assemblage joins, and the Shiah end it by standing up and cursing the usurping Caliphs by name, devoting the memory of each offending individual to universal execration.

"The Sunis also hold these solemn assemblies, but their grief does not assume so theatrical a character. Attired in the deepest mourning, they evince the most profound sorrow, and it is persons of this sect who manifest the greatest indignation where there is a risk of any of their processions being crossed by the heathen revelries of the Hindoos. The pomps and ceremonials which precede it are nothing to the grandeur reserved for the display on the last day of the Mohurrum, when the *taziyahs* or *tabuts* are borne to the place of interment, usually a river or tank. The pageant represents the military cavalcade of the battle of Kerbela, together with the funeral procession of the young princes and the wedding retinue of the bride and bridegroom divorced by death upon their wedding day. The banners are carried in advance, the poles being surmounted by a crest composed of an extended hand, which is emblematic of the five holy persons of the Prophet's family, and a symbol particularly designating the Shiah sect, and many make a declaration of their religious principles by holding up the hand—the Sunis display only three fingers, while the Shiah extend the whole five. The horse of Prince Hassan and his camp equipage appear, furnished with all the attributes of royalty; some of the *taziyahs*, of which there is a great variety, are accompanied by a platform on which these effigies are placed: the ass Korkla or Burak, the animal selected by Mohammed to bear him on his road to heaven, and two hours. The tomb of Kasseen, the husband of Hussein's daughter, is honoured by being carried under a canopy; the bridal trays, palanquins and other paraphernalia accompany it, and the whole is profusely garlanded with flowers. These processions, followed by thousands of people, take the field at break of day; but there are so many pauses for the reading of the poem dedicated to this part of the history of the events at Kerbela, and such numerous rehearsals of Hassan's dying scene, that it is night before the interment commences. Debut Moslems walk on these occasions with their heads and their

feet bare, beating their breasts and tearing their hair and throwing ashes over their persons with all the vehemence of the most frantic grief, but many content themselves with a less inconvenient display of sorrow, and leave to hired mourners the task of exciting and inflaming the multitude by their lamentations and bewailments. The zeal and turbulence of the Shiah are peculiarly offensive to the Sunis, who are shocked by the almost idolatrous frenzies displayed by their less orthodox brethren, and the expression of this feeling often leads to serious disturbances, which break out upon the burial of the *taziyahs*. Private quarrels between the two sects are frequently reserved for re-adjustment to this period, when, under pretext of religious zeal, each party may make an attack upon his enemy without exposing the real ground of his enmity. When the procession reaches the water's edge, the *taziyahs* are stripped of their ornaments, and when little remains but the bamboo frames, they are immersed. This ceremony usually takes place by torchlight, the red glare of innumerable flambeaux adding much to the wild and picturesque effect of the scene."

Having thus seen how important an occasion the Mohurrum is, and with what pomp and enthusiasm it is celebrated in the East, we can the better understand the account given by Mrs. Morton of the collision which it has produced between the Coolies and the authorities in Trinidad.

(To be continued.)

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

THE LORD THY STRENGTH.

Poor trembling soul I fret not at coming woe,
For, with thy sorrows, help shall come to thee,
A heavenly power controlleth all below,
And, as thy days are, so thy strength shall be.

However dark the valley to be crossed,
Though heavy be the burden thou must bear,
Though faint may be thy soul and tempest tossed,
Yea, driven to the verge of grim despair.

Yet still be sure a Guiding Hand leads on,
Able to quell the foe which thee alarms;
His promise thou may'st safely rest upon,
Beneath thee are the everlasting arms.

Happy art thou to have a refuge sure;
Accept the aid He freely offers thee;
His promises for ever shall endure
And, as thy days, thy strength shall surely be.

II.

MOHAMMEDANISM vs. CHRISTIANITY.

Africa, that dark, forgotten continent, rimmed around by mountain ranges of an altitude from 1,000 to 9,000 feet high, divided into fair and fertile basins, and watered by mighty rivers and peopled by countless millions! A fleet of Arab vessels sails across the Red Sea; an army of these fanatics debarks; they climb the steep passes of Abyssinia and surmount the lofty plateau. They are mounted on fleet dromedaries, with coverings of velvet adorned with gold and silver filigree, on coursers of Yemen and white asses of Arabia. They unfurl their standards, and, with banners streaming, they advance against Paganism with the fierce cry of "Death to the Unbeliever! There is no God but God, and Mohammed is his prophet." Terror precedes them, death accompanies them, desolation follows them. The Apostle of Islam knows no mercy. Ages elapse, and this creed overruns North Africa; from Guardafui to Cape Juby the Crescent is triumphant. The Libyan Desert and Sahara are traversed, and, invincible and dauntless, the proud riders advance towards the Equator, when suddenly the camels are stricken down as by a pestilence, the high-spirited steeds become nerveless and die, and the white asses shrink under this mysterious change of nature. Baffled, they return, to resume their conquests over the dry deserts and rocky plateaus of Northern Africa, leaving the southern half of Africa to other influences and to higher nations. That is one picture.

The other is of a more modern period. From the Cape of Good Hope advances a Christian missionary, with a meek and humble following of Hottentot servants, a waggon, and a few teams of oxen. He advances northward toward the untravelled wilds of Southern Africa. He seeks the heathen in his home. To his astonishment he hails him as a brother. He soothes the benighted man with the vision of a heaven, comforts him with the assurance of a Redeemer, and infuses into him the hope of salvation. And ever as he advances northward he repeats the song of the angels which they sang over Bethlehem: "Peace on earth, good will towards men." This same Christian arrives finally on the banks of the Zambesi, and thence directs his paths westward to the Atlantic Ocean. Back again whence he came he retraces his wearied steps, and he halts not until he has viewed the waters of the Indian Ocean, and along all that vast route he has dropped the sweet words of peace and love. After a short pause among his own kind he returns to Africa, and for fifteen years more he continues to move among the lost nations, loving and loved, blessing and being

blessed, and at last surrenders his life in their midst on the shore on Bangweolo; and as we turn to the map of Africa to regard the traces of his footsteps, we behold the outlines of the Cross of the Redeemer drawn by Livingstone during his thirty-two years of travel in the southern half of Africa.

There was pomp and majesty in the proud advance of Mohammed into Abyssinia, but the picture of the lone Christian wandering in those untrodden wilds of South Africa, with charity and good-will for his motto, is almost divine. It is grand to think of the brave, undaunted Arabs, so invincible in war, carrying the Crescent flag from the Red Sea to the Atlantic; but it is still grander to think of the large conquests achieved by this meek and patient follower of Christ by the simple power of Christian love. Give due heed to the Arabs for the valour and matchless courage with which they carried their faith over many a thousand leagues in Northern Africa; but the undying constancy, the persistent resolution, the patient fortitude of this lone soldier of the Cross, during his long and blameless crusade in the strongholds of Paganism, is sublime.

Well, then, since this Christian, with all his unrivalled goodness and piety, has declared that the end of geographical feat is the beginning of commercial (the missionary) enterprise, do you wonder that I, the last of his race and colour who talked with him, should take up his work with the view of redeeming Africa from its forlornness and squalid poverty by initiating legitimate commercial enterprise? If even Brummagem were the means of awakening the Africans from their torpor, let Brummagem were be consecrated as the means which caused Livingstone's hopes to be fulfilled.—H. M. Stanley, in *Scottish Geographical Magazine*.

OUR SUNDAY MORNINGS.

Sunday should be the brightest and best day of the week, when the specks of rust can be cleaned from our moral armour, and our weapons burnished for the work that is before them. A day for pure thoughts, for high resolves, for the keenest and most delightful exercise of the intellect, as well as of the even nobler powers of the soul; a day full of active deed-doing, with every faculty in fine and clear working order. Much can be accomplished on Sunday in the way of practical usefulness to our fellow men, "our neighbours," which the business engagements and the cares of weekdays do not permit. Of all days, this sweet, joyous Seventh is the last to be wasted, to be dozed away in thick, sluggish lethargy, which not only devours time itself, but clogs the energies of mind and body till nightfall. In the silvery, pure hours of the morning while the day is unshadowed by the cares and passions, the little evils and worries, that gather about the fairest human lives; when hurt minds have been soothed by the balm of sleep, and the tired body refreshed and strengthened for good work; then let us be wide-awake, with eyes sparkling, and lungs filled full with that sweet, sun-bathed air which only the early hours know. The birds are awake, and all fluttering and singing with the joy of new life, every Sunday morning. Can we not be sparrows for a while?—Willis Boyd Allen.

ALL SEEN AT LAST.

It is not too much to think that when God shall have made up all His jewels, and the number of the elect shall be complete, He will make it a part of their happiness to look back from the height of heaven upon all their winding track and to see that every step has been ordered in infinite love; that their sorest trials have been merciful, and that their freest choices have been links in God's chain of purpose, that their very sins have been over-ruled for good. And if this shall appear amazing in the history of an individual, how shall it shine resplendent in the nations of them that are saved, when ten thousand times ten thousand intermingling and entangled lives shall visibly accord with one infinite plan and centre in one sovereign purpose! The great end of Creation and Providence and Grace is God's own glory.—Rev. F. W. Alexander.

A CONTEMPORARY says: Many persons fancy that there is a decay of religious sentiment at present in the United States, and that a profession of Christianity is becoming rarer year after year. It is not difficult to show the fallacy of such a supposition, as statistics prove beyond cavil that a most remarkable increase in a continually enlarging ratio has taken place in the number of Evangelical communicants since the commencement of the century. In 1800 there were in the United States 365,000 Evangelical communicants, being seven per cent. of the population of the country at that time. In 1850 there were 3,529,988 of such communicants, being fifteen per cent. of the population. In 1870 there were 6,673,963, being seventeen per cent. In 1880 the communicants had risen to 10,065,963, being more than twenty per cent. of the entire population of the country. Since 1800 the increase in the population has been ninefold, but that of the Evangelical communicants has been twenty-seven, or three times as great as the ratio of the increase of the population.