

## THE DIFFERENCE.

"How are you 'his morning, Mary?" said a gentleman to his sister, as the sun-light streamed gloriously into an elegant breakfast room.

"Very well, thank you, George," was the animated reply. "We had a delightful party last night, decidedly the pleasantest of the season. Mrs. Tomkinson's rooms were never before so elegantly decorated, and the supper was superb."

"I thought, as you passed my bed-room last night, I heard you complaining that Murray hastened you away before that important part of the evening's display came on."

"And so he did; but Ellen Tomkinson, finding I must leave, begged her mamma's permission to take me to the dining room, that I might at least see the exquisitely arranged table. And was it not too bad, George, for Murray to insist upon coming away at half-past eleven, as if half an hour made any difference. It is so very rude to leave a party before supper is announced, and always annoys one's hostess, who knows that one departure is always followed by others in rapid succession."

"Still, Mary, as you know your husband acts from conscientious motives, and really thinks it wrong for Christians to spend so much time in convivial engagements, you should, I think, yield more gracefully, since you have too much good sense not to comply in the end."

"But, George," said the still young and pretty wife, "here is my difficulty. It is so absurd for Christians always to be doing something to attract attention. It really injures the cause they have espoused, when they act so strangely. I apprehend we should take great pains to render religion acceptable to those about us, and to court singularity is not the best way in the world to accomplish that."

The step of the master of the house was heard in the hall, and the gentleman had only time to whisper in his sister's ear, "Be not conformed to this world"—"a peculiar people," when they took their places at the breakfast table.

"We had a delightful Missionary Meeting last night, George," said Mr. Murray to his brother-in-law, one morning not long after the scene above described. "I was particularly interested in the remarks of Mr. Carleton, on the importance of cherishing a spirit of prayer for the descent of the Holy Ghost upon our churches."

"Yes," said the younger man, "but I preferred Mr. McIntosh. His statements were so very clear and forcible; his appeal was so fervent, that I thought no Christian could listen without feeling the necessity laid upon him to live more to his Master's glory. Did you not like it, Mary?" he continued, turning to his sister.

"I did not hear it," said she. "Mr. McIntosh must have spoken after I left. I only heard two speeches after the report, and was so very tired I could not remain."

"You were ill, then, sister?"

"No, I was not ill; but really they do drag out these meetings to an unreasonable length. The idea of listening for two or three hours to addresses upon one subject is preposterous. They should remember people must have some time to sleep. Here for one whole week we have had a public meeting every evening, and I think there is such a thing as religious dissipation."

"Did you come home alone, Mary?"

"Yes, Murray put me in the carriage which I had ordered at half-past nine, and then returned. I believe he never requires sleep: for there he has sat night after night till after ten o'clock, devouring every word. He makes it a point never to leave till all is over, and the lights out."

"But," said the gentleman, "you must have been the first to leave the church, and that is so very embarrassing."

"Embarrassing! oh no: why should we mind it? Besides, plenty of people followed my example; for even before the carriage drove off the Winton's and Eston's both came out."

"Still," continued the brother, "when you go to a place, it is so very rude to leave before the entertainment is finished; and, moreover, Christians should endeavour to avoid singularity. Is not this your doctrine, Mary?"

The lady looked up, caught the quick satire in her husband's affectionate smile, and the roguish expression of her brother's face; and, conscience beginning its work, she cast down her eyes, blushed, and fell to musing on *The Difference*.

The brother, too, began to reflect on the same subject. "Why is it," said he to himself, "that those who profess to follow Jesus Christ are so very fearful of disgusting or affronting that 'world' of which He said, He who will be its friend is the enemy of God, while they hesitate not to disturb a religious meeting, to wound the feelings of Christian ministers by leaving while they are speaking, and thus to mark, in the most emphatic manner, that they *grudge* to the Lord's service one single evening of the six which they have for amusement or secular employment. Surely, to say nothing of the excessive ill-breeding of the course thus pursued, does it not evince a decided want of conscientiousness, especially when it is taken into account that the midnight hour frequently finds them in the social circle? Did these disciples believe in the presence of the Great Master of Assemblies in his house on these occasions, would they dare thus to conduct themselves?"

Montreal, November 11, 1846.

## CROSSING THE DESERT.

(From *A Year and a Day in the East; or, Wanderings over Land and Sea.* By Mrs. Elliot Montauban.)

We left Cairo in a small desert van, engaging the four places therein for our own accommodation, and fortunately we were enabled to secure the services of the best European driver at that time employed by the Transit Company. He curbed the spirit of four wild Arab horses with great skill, and was remarkably attentive and obliging. We arrived at Station No. 2, in two hours and a half, a distance of twenty miles. The throats of three more than half-starved chickens were immediately cut, in honour of our arrival, and a scanty supply of bad potatoes boiled; impenetrable seabiscuits were substituted for bread, which were only eatable when steeped in hot water. The drinking-water was most repulsive in appearance and taste. The beds were dirty, and consisted of one mattress over a hard board. Pillows were considered a superfluous luxury; and some reluctance was manifested to indulge us with sheets. No 2, in addition to tables and kitchen, has four small rooms for refection and sleeping, partly fitted up with divans. At seven o'clock the following morning we started for Station No. 4, twenty miles distant, and reached it at eleven. We remained at this, the centre station, nearly three hours. It is very superior to the other resting-places in the Desert, and possesses seven small apartments, as neatly arranged as any sleeping-room in the hotel at Cairo; there are also dining and drawing-rooms. The break-fast consisted of fresh-killed tough chickens and bad water. At half-past one we arrived at the sixth station, twenty miles from No. 4. The beds here were a second edition of those at No. 2, with the addition of bugs in abundance, and swarms of mosquitoes; and the water worse than before, equally offensive to the organs of smell and taste. As usual, skeleton chickens were provided for our repast, to the great discomfort of the inner man. After sleeping at No. 6, we recommenced our journey the following morning. Suez was distant twenty-four miles, and these were accomplished in four hours and a half. Only two small trees are to be met with in the Desert—a space of eighty-four miles—one of which is decorated with, and consecrated to, the rags of the pious pilgrims who cross the sandy and rocky waste over which we passed; they *en route* to Mecca, we to a less holy shrine. The tree is thickly covered with pendant fragments of the well-worn garments of countless pilgrims, deposited there in memory of their desert journey. The only remarkable sights *en route* are numerous skeletons of camels bleaching in the sun, and occasional heaps of bones, covering the remains of the wild warriors of the Desert, who have perished in battle; a few weeds scattered here and there; barren rocks in the distance, and a vast plain of sand. The mirage was beautiful; sometimes assuming the appearance of a harbour, at others of a lake, reflecting various objects in the vicinity on its surface. At night the profound and solemn stillness was only broken by the occasional sound of the cricket. We encountered a party of armed Bedouins on the third day's journey, a fine-looking set of powerful men; thanks to the Pacha they are no longer seen with dread by the traveller in the Desert. The camels that bear the boxes containing the Indian mail, and those that are laden with the baggage of the passengers, are never unloaded between Cairo and Suez; a short halt at the station houses, and a trifling supply of food, is all their kind masters vouchsafe to these hard-worked animals. The horses employed in the transit vans are very badly