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A Vision of His Coming

(By Miss Eliza Strang Baird, in the New York 'Observer'.)

On a clear morning in early summer I rose before dawn, awakened perhaps by an overwhelming consciousness which seemed to pervade my whole being, that some tremendous and unusual occurrence was about to take place.

Meadow and forest lay silent in the dim purple light, but the sweetly-scented air was full of bird songs, while just above the eastern horizon, the morning star sparkled with a splendor, more dazzling, I thought, than I had ever before noticed. A faint, rosy gleam was beginning to illumine the whole sky, and the world seemed waking into an unaccustomed gladness and beauty.

'Perhaps it will be on some such perfect morning as this,' I said to myself, 'that the Lord may choose to visit again his waiting earth, as he has certainly promised to do.' Even as I spoke the words, a responsive thrill seemed to pass through all nature. The musical notes of robins and thrushes spoke the words: 'He is coming!' and the silver ripple of the streams gave back the reply: 'To-day.' The fresh breezes of morning caught up that message and bore it like heralds everywhere:—'Coming! Coming! Coming.'

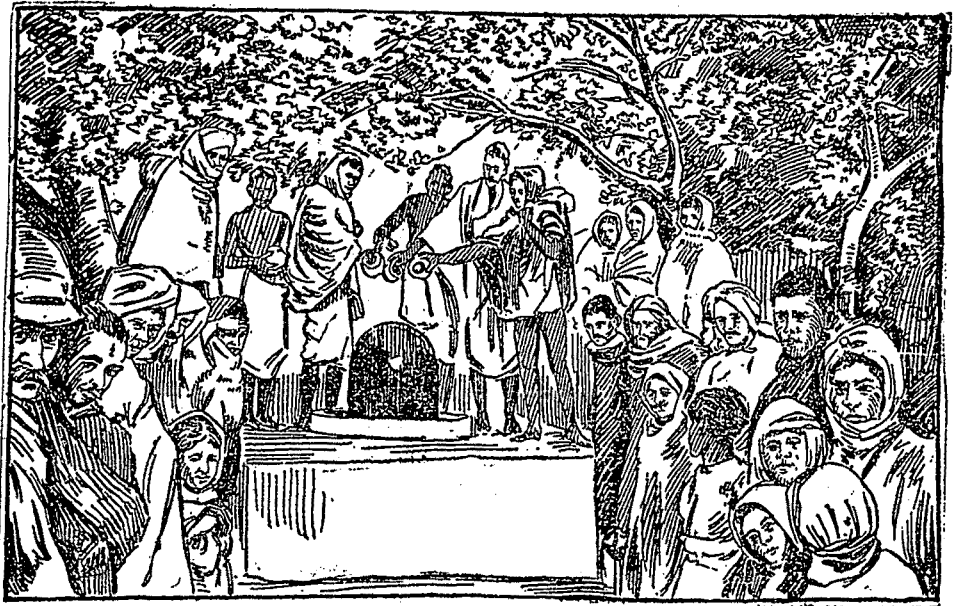
Meanwhile, the sun's golden disc had begun to display itself in cloudless effulgence, and I beheld from my window that multitudes of people were assembling on the streets, and in the open fields of the town. All the village was soon astir, not with the bustle of every-day life, but as if thrilled with a tremor of expectation and suspense. I could see whole families gathering in groups outside their dwellings, parents and children together.

Yet there was no display of fear or agitation. Every face wore an expression of calm but intense happiness. Occasionally one would speak in a low tone to another those strange momentous tidings:

'He will come to-day!'

The solid earth seemed to quiver and pulsate with a sensation of amazed, and yet joyful, anticipation, as if she awaited the most stupendous as well as the most blissful event in her whole history. And still in the streets the throngs of people were continuing to grow until it appeared evident that the overwhelming information had communicated itself from town to town, and from city to city, with a rapidity greater than that which could have been attained by electric communication.

This, indeed, must have been the result of some widely diffused prescience, which influenced all minds and all conditions alike. As far as my eyes could reach, I seemed to see in the ever brightening daylight, crowds of people standing silent, waiting without terror, and, in fact, with every appearance of a keen and delighted interest. Then, as I listened and gazed with increasing wonder, and a kind of fascinated awe, afar off in the midst of that attentive multitude, a single clear young



SHIV RATRI MELA, SEWANAR. BRAHMANS POURING WATER ON JATESHWAR NATH.

The picture shows the Brahmans in the act of pouring water on Jateshwar Nath. This idol was brought from Benares by one of the Brahmans of the place, and is said to be about a hundred years old.—'Missionary Herald.'

voice began to sing the melody from Handel's 'Messiah':—

'I know that my Redeemer liveth!'

Others caught up the air and echoed it from group to group, until like one grand chorus, the words were ringing over earth and ocean:

'And that He shall appear!'

Nothing can render a just conception of the transporting effect of that vast harmony, as it grew and deepened in extent, spreading its reverberating waves of sound in unbounded circles, until I realized that hamlet, and village, and city, were united in the joyous symphony, which was, in very truth, earth's last and most majestic anthem before the music of Heaven began.

And, now, there came to pass a wondrous and indescribable spectacle, for, as the music swelled louder, a mysterious and brilliant light began to diffuse itself over the whole sky. More vivid and more intense it grew, till it stretched from zenith to horizon, and until its lustre far exceeded that of the rising sun. Suddenly it came, as the lightning that lighteneth out of the one part under heaven, and shineth unto the other part under heaven. No portion of earth or water or sky was without its share of this new illumination, which had never been on land or sea before. It touched with a strange, undreamt of splendor and sublimity all the dull, familiar scenes and places, it fell upon the commonest and homeliest human countenances, and gifted them with a nobility and dignity.

Yet into the ineffable depths of its radiance one might gaze steadily and with a calm ecstasy, but with no sensation of bewilderment or stupefaction. At length, just as that rapturous unison of passionate voices sent forth the soul-stirring words: 'For the trumpet shall sound, and the dead

shall be raised, incorruptible, and we shall be changed,' there rang out with unforeseen abruptness from the central focus of that celestial light, one piercing blast, as if all the heavenly trumpeters were sounding in conjunction.

Never have I heard anything that resembled those tones, at once so commanding, so compelling, and yet so exquisitely melodious. And immediately they seemed to produce some subtle transformation, which was felt but could not be adequately described. The air was now pervaded by a music of unutterable beauty, and I was conscious that the depths of that matchless glory were full of blissful, transfigured faces—of bright robes and shining, triumphant figures. Yet we, mortals, who watched from below were scarcely able to concern ourselves greatly with these miraculous sounds and sights. For, lo, at the very heart of all that splendid refulgence, there appeared to us plainly the vision of a face, which we had long been desirous of viewing. A face it was which shone with fervent love, with tenderness indescribable, and with exultant rapture. Then one redeemed soul queried of another:

'Do you see him?' and the answer came:

'I see naught else.' He had come at last, the returning Saviour to rule over his ransomed people and his rescued earth. He had come to finish the work of raising fallen sinners forever to his own glory. For this joy had the Cross been endured and the shame despised.

The word of the Scripture had at length been verified: 'We which are alive and remain unto the coming of the Lord shall not prevent them which are asleep. For the Lord himself shall descend from heaven with a shout, with the voice of the archangel, and with the trump of God; and the dead in Christ shall rise first. Then we which are alive and remain shall be caught