

# The Church.

"Get Foundations are upon the holy hills."

"Stand ye in the ways and see, and ask for the Old Paths, there is the good way, and walk therein, and ye shall find rest for your souls."

Vol. XIX.

HAMILTON, SEPTEMBER 7, 1880.

## Poetry

### I THINK OF THEE.

I think of Thee when I pray  
Thy wisdom mirrored in the sky  
And see Thy power reflected bright  
In every planet of the night.

I think of Thee when I survey  
The resting earth in rich array  
And view the queen of silent night  
Where every creature waits on Thee.

I think of Thee when tempests rage  
And heavy rains their force display  
When lightning flashes and thunders roar  
And hail descends from pole to pole.

I think of Thee at noon-day calm  
When every breeze is like a balm  
To cool sweet nature's languid face  
And stamp her brow with love's grace.

I think of Thee when evening gray  
Within her folds receives the day  
And bids the queen of silent night  
Come forth in all her glory bright.

I think of Thee when morning dawns  
And sheds its lustre o'er the lawns—  
The little songsters happy be,  
And hymn their songs of praise to Thee.

I think of Thee on Sabbath morn,  
Which brings sweet rest to men and women,  
The emblem of what heaven shall be,  
When I shall ever think of Thee.

## THE PRESENT STATE OF THE GREEK CHURCH IN TURKEY.

BY A TRAVELLER AND EYE-WITNESS.

During a stay which I lately made in Turkey, my attention was turned a good deal to the state of Christianity there. The number of Christian communities is very much the same as it was many hundred years ago. The hostile spirit which the Turkish Government has shown to the Christian faith has made the different religious bodies see the necessity of unity. If the old-established religions could with difficulty maintain their existence, the schismatic could hardly expect that he could succeed in supporting a new system. Turkish oppression has therefore done this benefit to Christianity in the East—it has checked the increase of sects. At the present time the Greek Church, the Armenian Church, the Greek Catholic Church, and the Armenian Catholic Church are the only Christian bodies in Turkey. The two last Churches may be said to be one and the same. The Greek Church community, and to this subject I will now limit my observations.

The traveller who goes to Constantinople by the Dardanelles sees a part of Turkey where the Christians are more numerous than the Mohammedans, but very few churches meet his eye. In these parts churches may have been more dense in the days of the Greek Empire, but there is no evidence that in any part of the East they were ever so thickly planted as in the West of Europe. It was the parochial system that multiplied the number of churches.—This valuable method of extending the Church never seems to have been adopted in the East.

The original practice of fixing a Bishop and a large body of clergy in every populous place, and of leaving the charge of the surrounding villages and country districts to them, seems to have been adhered to in the East until the present day. Here and there a resident priest is to be found in the country, but in general the services of religion in the country are supplied by priests sent from the Episcopal seats.

In Constantinople the number of the adherents of the Greek Church is not so great as one would expect, from the fact of its having been in former times the centre of great Christian empire, and the seat of the greatest Patriarch of the East; and in later times the residence of the ambassadors of the leading Christian Powers, who have been always using their influence to protect the religious liberties of the Christian subjects of the Sultan.

In Pera, which contains the greater part of the Greek population of Constantinople, there is only one church, and it is not larger than an ordinary parish church in one of our cities.

In Romania (the ancient Thrace), of which Adrianople is the capital, the Greek population has a great ascendancy in point of numbers. Several churches in which the Christian in an early period of the Greek Empire worshipped are still to be seen, and the ruins of others of the same class are to be met with, more frequently than in any other part of Turkey.

In Bulgaria most of my time was spent; and regarding the state of the Greek Church there, I am able to give a more particular account than in any other province of Turkey.

Varna was the first place in Bulgaria I arrived at; my stay there did not permit me to make any inquiry as to the state of the Greek Church. Varna has quite the look of a Turkish town. It has a number of mosques with minarets. There is, however, a Greek church, but it is not so conspicuous as to strike the eye of the general observer. I believe there is a Bishop and a body of clergy there; I was not, however, present at any of the services.

From Varna I took the road to Schumla. The country on both sides is thinly peopled. No single houses are to be seen. The general practice of wearing pistols and other weapons explains the absence of solitary cottages. Life and property have hitherto been but partially protected; therefore the people live in villages. The average size of these may be thirty or forty houses, built in general of mud, and presenting a very rude and uninviting appearance. In none of these could I distinguish a Christian church, till I came to Devira, a considerable village about fifteen miles from Varna, and at the termination of the chain of lakes which be-

gin at that town. It is newly built of stone and might contain about 300 people. There is no resident priest, one comes now and then from Varna, and ministers to the people. There is a school quite close to the church, and from what I saw I was led to believe that the Greek ecclesiastics are desirous of promoting knowledge among the people.

My next stage was Pravodow. This is a small town, and is inhabited chiefly by Turks. Here there is a military station. The aspect of the place is essentially Mohammedan. Although I did not see any church, yet I understood that there is a sufficient number of Christians in the place to have the benefit of a fixed priest. In the houses where we were billeted for the night there were pictures on the walls, all of them illustrative either of Christian truths or history. Six or seven miles further on from Pravodow the population becomes denser, and the cultivation of land increases in at least a double measure; still no traces of village churches, but a place which answered the same purpose attracted my attention. An oblong space near the road was enclosed with a wall about eight feet high, and no roof covered it.

From this place to Schumla the distance might be fifteen miles. Along this route five-sixths of the population are Bulgarians and Christians; but the eye sought in vain for any visible emblems of their faith.

Schumla has an appearance much less Turkish than other towns in Bulgaria. To say, however, that it looks like a Christian city is saying too much. There is but one Greek or Bulgarian church here. It, however, occupies rather a prominent place among the leading objects of interest. It is surrounded by a large burying-ground, enclosed with a high wall. No trees or plants are to be seen there.

The church is built of heavy stone. It is of an oblong shape; it constitutes one block. There are no chapels, towers, pillars, porticos, to break the monotony of the outline. The windows are comparatively small. They are square with the exception of the top, which is a slightly circular variety to the structure. There are two entrances, one is in front near the eastern end. It is certainly not more than five feet in height, and appears to be intended chiefly for the priests. The other is at the west end, and is much larger. The church being sunk several feet below the surrounding ground, as is the case with most Christian churches in the East, there is a considerable excavation in the form of a square; at the western end, and to this subject I will now limit my observations.

The roof is at variance with the principles of taste. It projects several feet over the walls on the south and north side, and probably may have been intended to protect the people, when outside, from rain and snow. It tends to increase naturally the dull aspect of the building.

The interior, however, is much more pleasing and ecclesiastical-looking. There is here an attempt at something like architecture. As one enters the western door, he finds himself in a pretty large porch, formed by a wall running across the body of the church about ten feet from the end he entered. At the north side of this porch there is a stair leading up to the gallery for the women. This is immediately above the porch. Directly opposite the outer door is the inner door. Around the walls of the porch there are some large pictures placed, the chief being of Christ, the Virgin Mary, St. John, Simeon, Basil, and Demetrius.

Over the inner portal stands representations of Heaven and Hell, intended, undoubtedly, to act upon the minds as the people at the time they are passing into the church, and to direct them to the great realities of a future state. On going into the church through this door we see at once its form. Two rows of pillars run along the body of the church. The space between the two rows is two-thirds of the body of the church. They support the roof, except where the latticed gallery for the women; two short rows of pillars, being a continuation of the others, support this. The diminished altitude of these injure the regularity of the building, and lessen the effect which it otherwise would have. Each row of pillars has on either side a line of seats, otherwise the area of the church is quite open. We believe that private seats never existed in the Greek Church. There is no recognition of secular rank, nor of money power, in the fitting up of the Church. High and low are there on the same level.

The place for the altar is at the east end, but a partition wall entirely separates it from the church. Three doors at regular distances open into this *sacrum*, but except during certain parts of the service, they are shut. No light is thrown into the church from this end, so that in comparison of the Latin churches, whose most distinguishing feature is the large window in the chancel, this building has a gloomy appearance.

The construction of the *sacrum* marks even a greater distinction between the priest and the people than prevails in the Latin Church. In the latter, he is visible during the whole of the Mass to the people; but in the Greek Church, during almost the whole of the same service, he is invisible. The pictures within the church are very numerous. Some of the pillars and sides of the church display a few, but the place particularly chosen for these things is the wall or partition dividing the *sacrum*. From top to bottom it is covered with pictures; these placed along the line of the doors entering into the altar seem to be regarded with most reverence. The most striking of these are Christ, the Virgin, John the Baptist, Elias taken to heaven, Andrew, Eustache, St. John, St. George, and St. Nicolas. The Fall of Adam and Eve, in a series of small designs, is painted on the space nearest the door. On each of the doors which conduct to the altar there is a large painting—on the middle one, that of Christ; on the

right, that of Theodoret; on the left one, that of an angel with wings, holding a lance in his hand, and trampling with his feet upon a man with an Oriental countenance and turban, the devil standing near and looking on in a state of dismay.

Such is the aspect of the metropolitan church of Bulgaria. It seems to be the model for any churches that exist within the diocese. I visited one in a neighbouring village; its shape, architecture, and internal arrangements were almost exactly on the same principle as at Schumla. It was of a similar size, and contained a similar number of Christians to the village without exception composed—a pleasing amount of respect condition of that much-depressed church. A spring, coming out from a ravine in the lower Balkans, with all the force of a little rivulet and all the clearness of crystals, the object of much veneration to the people. My time would not permit me to ascertain the origin of the sanctity with which it is regarded.

Schumla is the seat of the Archbishop of Preslava. The description of this place, which I got in French, was to the following effect:—Le non de Preslava, veut dire ville Brillante et qui tire son nom d'un petit village qui estait jadis une grande ville et qui se nomme actuellement Stamboul.

There are several other Archbishopric seats in Bulgaria, such as Widdin, Silistria. The number of Bishops is not so large in proportion to the Archbishop, as in the north of Europe. Of these, there seem to be two kinds, a higher and an inferior sort. Priests and deacons make up the remainder of the orders. Monastic orders are unknown in this part of Turkey. The Archbishop is nominated by the Patriarch at Constantinople, so are the Bishops of towns; the Bishops of villages are nominated by the Archbishop, so are the priests and deacons.

The revenues of the Church are scanty in the extreme; those of the Archbishop are derived from the following sources:—Each priest pays him sixty piastres, or ten shillings, from each house within his diocese he has three piastres, or sixpence. The payments made to the priest are the following:—Each town is divided into so many districts, and each priest receives so much of the amount, however, is voluntary, on the part of the people. After confession, a certain payment is made. This sum is also voluntary. There is no college for the education of the clergy in Bulgaria. The higher orders are generally Greek, and are admitted at the *sacrum*, so is the education from the Archbishop. If a priest has at first a knowledge of the Greek language, he requires much less education to fit him for the office of the priesthood, than one who has to acquire that tongue. For the Greek language is not only the key to the Scriptures, but to the earliest and most valuable stores of theological literature.

Every morning at dawn there is worship in church, which is then well attended. At five o'clock in the afternoon there are also prayers; but few of the people then assemble. The church does not appear to be generally open through the course of the day. On Sunday, it is filled to overflowing from a very early hour. All is concluded between seven and eight.

The liturgy of the Bulgarian Church is the same as that of the Greek. It is said to owe its origin to the Apostle James. Saint Basil greatly enlarged it. It was afterwards abridged by St. Crysostom. Since then it is said to be unaltered, and the same form is now used. It seems to consist of a directory for the celebration of the Lord's Supper. The manner in which this most important part of the service is gone through, exhibits the sacrament very much in a propitiatory point of view. The celebrants enter the *sacrum*, where they are almost entirely secluded from the view of the congregation. Now and then only do they come to the door, holding out the chalice, making certain signs and uttering certain sentences. While employed in these holy mysteries, their office has quite a sacerdotal and intercessory character as that of the priest in the Latin Church. In the body of the church the communion service is being gone through at the same time. I suppose in some way it harmonises with the other. The Archbishop conducts it. He sits in a pulpit, placed against one of the pillars, and about six yards from the door of the *sacrum*. He wears a black cap on his head, has a long flowing beard, and has in his hand a large staff, on which there are two serpents with their heads meeting at the top. His look is decidedly sacerdotal. He reads certain short passages from a book before him. A person like a deacon, near the opposite row of pillars, makes responses. I believe that this part of the service is a collection of select passages from the Scriptures and some of the most eminent of the Greek Fathers. The greatest part of the service is in the Bulgarian language. Except during the singing of psalms the people take little part in the service. The pulpit for preaching is on the opposite side of the Bishops, resting against one of the pillars, but lower down the church; both of these are rather elegant in shape, and well finished. They indicate better taste than any other part of the fittings of the church.

I happened to be in Schumla at the time of Easter. The solemnity is there held in high repute, and celebrated with much reverence. The Greek Church adheres to the ancient mode of reckoning the time of Easter, by which it is placed a week later than in the Latin Church. May people eat no meat from Thursday to Sunday. The service is kept up for two nights in the church without intermission. Several very important rites are performed on Good Friday. One of them is the following:—A procession formed by seven or eight priests bearing a large canvas picture on their heads issued from the *sacrum*, goes down the aisle, then afterwards down the body of the church.

The whole service of Easter Sunday is finished by eight o'clock. On Easter Monday the people in great numbers assemble at an early hour in church. Their countenances are unusually full of cheerfulness, but one would think they had just been witnesses of some very great event; out of which a happy era in their life was to arise. One ancient practice now put down in our country I saw at the church in Schumla, namely that of allowing the poor members of the flock to solicit alms from their brethren while entering and returning from the house of God. They were standing in considerable numbers near the entrances of the church, and the church. Their places were evidently assigned to them; the people seemed to be provided with a small brass coin having a cross on it, which they dropped into the plate which each poor person had. It is not a current coin, but seems to belong to the Church, exchanged for a certain amount of Turkish money. From the church to which the poor will bring these coins they will receive their value. From regard to the antiquity and the time-honoured character of this ecclesiastical usage, many who would not be chargeable with giving to the poor. Ancient Church usages should not be let down. New rites and methods have not the same influence over the minds of the people.

The special services for Easter terminate on Monday. Easter is one of those times when the Bulgarian young women are permitted to attend church. During the rest of the year, except on two separate occasions, they remain at home. This prohibition had its origin in the wrongs which the Christians formerly experienced at the hands of their Turkish masters, who made no scruple in seizing and carrying off any young Christian females whom they might cast their eyes on, and who they thought would suit their evil designs.

On their return from church on Monday, the people commence the Easter festivities. Turkeys without number are cooked for the occasion. Bread in round cakes, full of spices, and eggs boiled hard and dyed a purple color, are prepared by every family as presents to their neighbors. The children, dressed in their gayest clothes, are generally the bearers of these presents. When one comes in with his gifts he has a curious fashion of holding out his thumb to the person to whom the gifts are to be made, to touch with his. Then he puts the palm of his hand on that of the other, and afterwards the back of it. It is a doubtless an ancient Christian style of salutation. Saints' days are kept in the Eastern

Church. They are not so numerous as those that are kept in the Western Church, for this reason, that in the former the festivals are confined chiefly to the saints who lived in the East.

I was in Schumla on St. George's Day. Besides the service in church, there is a singular custom connected with the service of this day. Every Christian family kills a lamb, in honor of St. George. It is necessary, however, that it should be blessed before it is eaten: A priest goes round the town service over each lamb. The people to whom the lambs belong make offerings of small sums of money to him. Confession is enforced at least twice a year. It is considered desirable, however, that it should be made oftener. It is also necessary for the people to receive the Holy Communion twice every year. The bread is soaked in wine and given to them. There is often in church a distribution of small cakes of bread to the people by a priest, whose hand they kiss on receiving it. Some mistake this for Communion. It is, however, nothing but the celebration of the ancient love-feast so regularly observed for the purpose of brotherly unity in the primitive Church.

The burial of the dead is a highly religious ceremony. The body on a bier is brought into the middle of the church. The neck and face are adorned with flowers. The priest reads a service over it. When taken to the grave, the service is continued; the body is incensed, and wine poured over it by the priest; then the grave is filled up. The consecration of the dead bodies of Christians marks the adherence of this Church still to the doctrine of the material resurrection, and which is as unbroken as the spiritual one.

The number of Bulgarian houses in Schumla is 2,000. The inhabitants all belong to the Greek Church. An educational establishment has been introduced there, which, if not checked, cannot fail, in a few years, to make the people of the place as enlightened in general things as most of the inhabitants of Europe. The buildings stand quite close to the church, and include four large class-rooms with lofty roofs, several termination-rooms, and apartments for the chief teacher. The style of the establishment is evidently German. There are four or five masters. The first one is a Greek from Constantinople; he is a man of greater acquirements, as far as the knowledge of language goes, than many a man in our country who fills the rank of a professor of eloquence. He is acquainted with ancient and modern Greek, German, French, and Bulgarian. The branches of knowledge that are taught by him and his assistants are—Bulgarian, Greek, universal history, the Church catechism, writing, arithmetic, arithmetic, and geography.

The number of day scholars is upwards of 300; in the evening there is a class of young tradesmen, and of others employed in business. The attendance at the school is increasing at the rate of thirty per annum. The school is entirely under the jurisdiction of the Church.

I have only to add that the Bulgarians, a people poor in the extreme and shut out very much from the civilized world, deserve the greatest credit for holding fast their faith, during the many ages that they and their forefathers have been exposed to Turkish persecution and oppression. They have shown a steadiness and a spirit of endurance which would have been honorable to a people possessing many higher advantages than they ever enjoyed. The claim which they have upon the sympathy and respect of all Christian nations who have been blessed with religious liberty is, in my humble opinion, a very strong one.

## THE BANKERS OF CANADA.

Correspondence of the N. Y. Tribune.

Toronto, Friday, Aug. 18, 1880.

We Canadians are some twenty-five hundred thousand strong; our commercial intercourse with your thirty-one States, and also, partly, with the rest of the world through them, is valuable and extensive, and every year becoming more so; I shall, therefore, devote this and another letter to an account of our Banks and Currency, about which but little is said by American commercial writers.

The Bank of Montreal is our oldest non-converted corporation. I think it was opened in 1818. On last June 30, its liabilities had reached \$6,143,064; its capital exclusive, its means or assets were \$11,786,572. It has some 15 to 25 branches and agencies spread through Canada, each or most of which issues notes payable at its counter, as if each branch were a distinct institution; and if offered in payment of debts due to the bank, at any of its offices, except the one that issued them, I think there is usually or occasionally a percentage exacted, as brokers do with uncurrent paper. It is the same with the other banks that have agencies, and a motion being made in Assembly last session to stop this shaming process, it passed in the negative. In the head office and all the branches on the above day there were, of specie, \$7,582,204; they held of the bills of other banks, \$2,083,034; balances were due them from other banks, \$651,582; and the bank held government securities (probably what are called bonds, issued by one or more municipal corporations, under a queer sort of provincial debenture. We are and we are not indorsers of your paper) statute) \$520,000.

Of bank-notes circulating as money, there were about \$3,577,195, on which the Montreal and other chartered Banks pay a small tax to the Government. Last year the Montreal paid \$35,461 of tax, while the interest moneys received on its average paper circulation would come to \$215,000.—It had cash deposited in its vaults liable to be called for any day, \$1,692,548, and also of cash deposits, \$360,141, on which it was

paying three or four per cent of interest.— Besides lending its credit in the shape of the above three and a half millions of bank-notes it had lent of the above cash deposits \$1,300,488, receiving six per cent of interest, which is our legal rate, and, as I think, far more just to society than your seven per cent. I regret to perceive it, while all New-England and Pennsylvania pay and receive in ordinary dealings the same rate as we do. Balance due by the Bank to other banks about 170,000, and their bills for \$9,480,445, and how far they are worth their face you may readily know just as much as I or the public here. The above statement is taken from a return upon oath made 11th ult., and published in *The Canadian Gazette*, and its weak point is not showing the real value of the debts. I suppose we are expected to understand that they are all very good, and they may be so; but when I see some twenty sets of directors or managers widely scattered over Canada, not a few of whom are doubtless glad to get rid of as many as possible of the 'promises' of their slow-coach business customers upon the Bank, minus their indorsement, I am likely to infer that such losses, nobody being to blame, diminish greatly the year's gains of such institutions.

Neither to Banks, railways nor insurance offices are commissioners of investigation sent, but in a Savings Bank act of May last, a sort of financial commissioner is created.

The City Bank, Montreal, a far more modern institution, returned its liabilities last June at \$1,787,943, of which \$737,466 was cash deposits, upon less than half of which sum it was paying three or four per cent of interest. Its gold and bullion were \$172,500, and it possessed \$77,600 in public securities, including which its assets were \$2,833,141.

A third bank in Montreal is a branch of a corporation whose headquarters is in London, with a British charter there, and certain powers are conceded to its branches in the Colonies. It comes forth 31st May last with a statement of some of its affairs, but only to the close of 1878, announcing net profits equal to \$190,000. It has branches or agencies here and in Quebec, Montreal, Brantford, Bytown, Dundas, Hamilton, Kingston, London, (U. C.) Sault Ste. Marie, Sherbrooke and Three Rivers; and on the 15th of September last had \$4,786,187 of its notes in circulation, as money. Last October 31st only of its capital was employed in Canada, and that its branch, (Montreal) had the use of capital of \$1,200,000.

A monthly or weekly summary of the capital, circulation, specie, deposits, loans and discounts, and the amounts due to and from the banks, would enable business men and politicians to understand more accurately the condition of each bank, and of the banks as a whole. Government could readily supply this summary through some clerical staff, but it is too lazy to give the order; and if such knowledge is obtained it becomes the property of the law. You may readily judge of the book-keeping of banks when I tell you that the Receiver-General of Treasury of Canada had not taken a trial balance of his ledger in six years, from 1849 to the end of 1854!

When the extended charters of the Bank of Upper Canada and that of Montreal were placed on the statute book monthly statements were to be returned. I have seen none from the Bank of Upper Canada for many months. Perhaps it is not accepted of the charter it prayed for.

Under a statute of 1849 bank stock may be seized for debt by such creditors as can find out who of their obstinate debtors own any. The Montreal Bank, under the management of the Hon. P. McGill of the Legislative Council, its President, prints a list of its shareholders, with the shares they severally hold and their residences, annually; but I know of no other bank that has disclosed such a secret as this at any time during the last fifteen years. Last year Mr. Mackenzie moved in Assembly that certain chartered banks, then seeking an increase of capital and an extension of their charters, should tell the House who and where their stock holders were, and what number of shares they severally held. The majority, two to one, rejected the motion, and none were more anxious for secrecy than bank directors and shareholders having seats.

Without any notice of an intention to apply the charters of six banks were extended from 1862 to 1871; and the capitals of the Bank of Upper Canada; Bank of Montreal and Commercial Bank at Kingston, were increased \$2,000,000 each; the City Bank, Montreal; \$500,000; the Bank of Montreal; \$1,000,000; and the Bank of Montreal; \$1,000,000.

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