

FLOATING DOWN THE GANGES.

One day,—it was a great festival,—we went at sunrise to the Ganges to see the pilgrims bathe in its holy waters. This surely is one of the most startling and wondrous sights in the world! The city as we entered was illumined with a soft, rosy light, the streets were thronged with natives streaming down to the river in thousands through the dusty streets and under dust-laden trees. The dress of the pilgrims consisted of the lightest drapery, of most beautiful colors, loosely worn.

How wildly their hearts were throbbing! for they have been waiting and longing for this day for a long time, perhaps for all their lives.

Every day came the pilgrims in crowds to this sacred city, to become purified by bathing in the sacred waters of the Ganges. Out of a population of three hundred thousand, half of them are pilgrims, ever shifting.

We leave our carriage as we near the river, and make our way through the dense crowds of pilgrims, not one of whom evinces the slightest interest in our presence.

Reaching the river, we take a boat and are rowed up the stream. We see the city stretching along its banks for miles. Flights of high steps line the river, and at their top rise temples, palaces and towers, and in the midst of them the superb mosque, with its two towering minarets, erected by the Emperor Aurungzebe in the seventeenth century.

The steps are like a grand stand on a race-course, thronged with natives of all ages, down to even little children, pressing into the waters as far as they can get. Rich and poor, well, ill, and dying, are either in the water or waiting their turn to enter it, to wash away their sins, to pray, and to throw into it innumerable garlands of little yellow flowers. Every conceivable kind of colored drapery is here, and in folds as beautiful as if nature had arranged it.

Some remain in the water for hours together, wrapped in the deepest thought and religious contemplation, all seeming most earnest in their devotions. Even the sparkling-eyed little children, like black cupids, wade into the water and mutter their little prayers with all the solemnity of their elders.

We float down almost amongst them. We might as well be invisible, for we attract no notice. Here and there, dotted about amongst the crowd on the steps, are immense umbrellas, made of matting and nearly flat; under these are the priests. When the bathers have finished their devotions in the river, they go to these priests, to have painted on their foreheads a small spot of a sticky looking substance, for which the priests exact a high price.

We now pass close to a burning ghaut, or the place for burning the dead, where the fire, having done its work, still lies smouldering.

In this country cremation exists in its most barbarous form, revolting not only to the finer sensibilities, but to the most ordinary decencies of life. The pyre is built of logs about five feet long with shorter logs laid across. When it has thus reached a height of about three feet, the naked body, so recently dead that it is still limp and warm, is placed upon it, the legs bent at the knees, and packed with the feet against the thighs, as only a Hindoo's legs can be bent.

More logs are then placed over the body, and with much ceremony the whole is set alight. When the body is burnt, its ashes are thrown into the holy river, which is here a turbid flood, polluted with the filth of millions, and with the bodies of dead men, which are continually passing down.

Fancy bathing in such water! and further, fancy the possibility of drinking it, as do these poor Hindoos! Some of the sights to be seen on this river are too revolting for description.

The British Government has put a stop to practices which used formerly to be common here, practices which were not discouraged by the priests, and which were

done in the name of religion. From all parts of India pilgrims would come here to drown themselves in the river. They would be tied between two large earthenware pots, and would then wade out into deep water, being kept afloat by the empty jars. These they gradually filled with water, till they sank with them from the gaze of the approving multitude on the banks.

Other practices, which have been also stopped, were the burying alive of lepers, and the burning of widows with their dead husbands, unless they preferred to be buried alive!

Cases occasionally occur even now of fanatics burying themselves alive.

In Benares there are said to be five thousand temples, and in all of them are repulsive-looking idols covered with rice and flowers, and dripping with the sacred water thrown upon them by persons coming from the river.

All we saw, excepting from a picturesque point of view, was painful in the extreme. It must be almost impossible to eradicate superstitions so inrooted as those of the Brahmins. True religion, science, and education alone can reach and cleanse these morally pestilent spots.—Hugh Wilkinson in *Youth's Companion*.

MRS. LIVINGSTONE'S GRAVE.

Prof. Drummond, at Chautauqui, told of his visit, in the heart of Africa, to the grave of David Livingstone's wife, Dr. Moffatt's daughter:

"We were to spend the night within a few yards of the place where Mrs. Livingstone died. Late in the afternoon we reached the spot—a low ruined hut a hundred yards from the river's bank, with a broad verandah shading its crumbling walls. A grass-grown path straggled to the doorway, and the fresh print of a hippopotamus

I looked at the forsaken mound and contrasted it with her husband's marble tomb in Westminster Abbey, I thought perhaps the woman's love which brought her to a spot like this might not be less worthy of immortality."

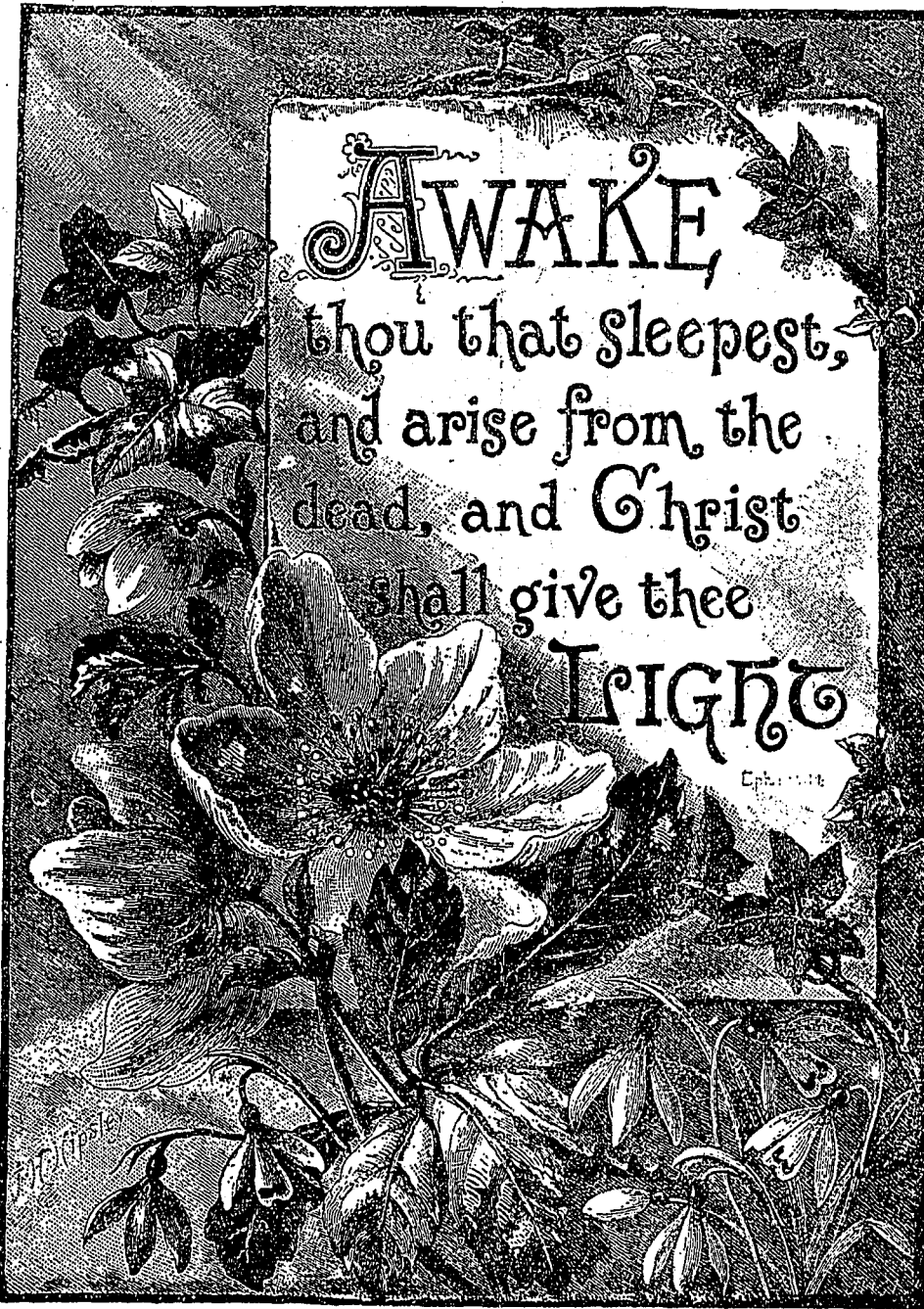
HOW NEAL DOW BEGAN.

If (writes a correspondent of the *Boston Herald*) a man wishes to engage in a business that ensures long life, let him become a mild-mannered apostle of prohibition. Here is General Neal Dow, now nearly eighty-four, as youthful and as fresh as at forty. Sitting in his study in his house at Portland the other night he told me how it happened that he first undertook the big task of abolishing the liquor traffic. "It was," he said, "a good many years ago. I was sitting in this same house one evening quite late. In answering a knock at the door I found a lady whom I knew very well as the wife of a Government official in this city. He was a periodical drunkard, and on this very night was down town on a spree. His wife wished me to get him home quietly, because if he were drunk the next day he might lose his position. I started out, and found him in the back room of one of the down-town saloons. That was in the days of license in Maine. I said to the keeper in a quiet way: 'I wish you would sell no more liquor to Mr. Blank. Why, Mr. Dow,' he said, 'this is my business; I must supply my customers.' 'That all may be,' I replied, 'but there is this gentleman with a large family depending on him for support. If he goes to his office to-morrow drunk he will lose his place. I wish you would sell him no more.' He became somewhat angry, and told me that he, too, had a family to support; that he had a license to sell liquor to whoever he pleased, and that he didn't care to have me meddling in his business. 'So you have a license, have you?' said I, 'and you support your family by destroying that man's? We'll see about this.' I went home thoroughly determined to devote my life to suppressing the liquor traffic in the best way possible. The Maine law originated in that rum shop."

GUN ACCIDENTS.

The number of gun accidents this year has been unusually large, and the carelessness which caused some of them unusually great. One young man at Lake Placid was actually driving over rough roads in a buckboard with the muzzle of a loaded gun laid against his body and the stock between his feet, and in lighting a cigarette he gave the trigger the needed twitch with his foot, and blew his elbow off. Another young man in Pennsylvania met with a more extraordinary accident still. He had loaded his gun, and inserted the top of a lucifer match in the hammer, to make sure of a discharge, and, thus prepared, leaned on it with the muzzle close to his face. The stock slipped, the trigger caught in a plank, and the charge tore the side of his head off. The accidents do not diminish in number, because a fresh crop of youths take to gunning every summer, and because they never seem to learn anything more about a gun than how to load and fire it. The fact is that the carrying of a sporting gun is fully as important a part of sporting drill, if we may call it so, as the shooting. A man beginning to shoot should at once acquire habits of carrying which will stick to him, without his taking thought, so that he will instinctively keep the muzzle away from him. It ought to be disgraceful and ridiculous for a sportsman to be seen with the barrel of his gun pointing into his body, or using it as a staff to lean on, or as a walking-stick to hit things with.—*Watchman*.

Clutch thy difficulties fast,  
With a determined hand,  
Until in thy victorious grasp  
They crumble into sand;  
He who overcomes at last  
Will not moan about the past.  
—"The Dove on the Cross."



The temples are crowded with worshippers, and the floors are flooded, considerably over the soles of one's boots, with slush of water, rice, and trampled flowers, and the heat and smell are nearly overpowering. Little niches in the walls of the streets have each their hideous idols, and they too are deluged with water, rice, and flowers.

Everything in Benares is worshipped, even pebbles from the river and dust from the streets. One temple we visited is sacred to the Brahmin bulls. There were many bulls there of huge size, fat, content, and garlanded with flowers.

There are also many wells, all most sacred. One to which we went, the well of knowledge, the water of which the pilgrims drink, is nearly filled up with the flowers which the worshippers have thrown in as offerings. The smell from these wells is absolutely choking in its offensiveness, and the slush about them nearly ankle-deep.

told how neglected the spot is now. Pushing the door open, we found ourselves in a long dark room, its mud floor broken into fragments, and remains of native fires betraying its late occupants. Turning to the right we entered a smaller chamber, the walls bare and stained, with two glassless windows facing the river. The evening sun, setting over the far-off Morumballa mountains, filled the room with its soft glow and took our thoughts back to that Sunday evening, twenty years ago, when in this same bed-room, at this same time, Livingstone knelt over his dying wife and witnessed the great sunset of his life.

"Under a huge baobab tree—a miracle of vegetable vitality and luxuriance—stands Mrs. Livingstone's grave. The picture in Livingstone's book represents the place as well kept and surrounded with neatly planted trees. But now it is an utter wilderness, matted with jungle grass and trodden by the beasts of the forest; and as