

SONGS OF LABOUR—THE SHIP BUILDERS.

BY J. G. WHITTIER.

The sky is ruddy in the East,
The sky is grey below,
And, spectral in the river-mist
Our bare, white timbers show.
Up!—let the sound of measured stroke
And grating saw begin:
The broad-axe to the gnarled oak,
The mallet to the pin!

Hark!—Roars the bellows, blast on blast,
The sooty smithy jars,
And fire-sparks rising far and fast
Are fading with the stars.
All day for us the smith shall stand
Beside that flashing forge;
All day for us his heavy hand
The groaning anvil scourge.

Cee up!—Gee ho!—The panting team
For us is toiling near;
For us the raftsmen down the stream
Their island barges steer.
Rings out for us the axe-man's stroke
In forests old and still—
For us the century-circled oak
Falls crashing down his hill.

Up!—up!—in nobler toil than ours
No craftsmen bear a part:
We make of Nature's giant powers
The slaves of human art.
Lay rib to rib and beam to beam,
And drive the tunnels free;
Nor faithless joint nor yawning seam
Shall tempt the searching see!

Where'er the keel of our good ship
The sea's rough field shall plough—
Where'er her tossing spars shall drip
With salt-spray caught below—
That ship must heed her master's beck,
Her helm obey his hand,
The seamen tread her reeling deck
As if they trod the land.

Her oaken ribs and rulture-beak
Of Northern ice may peel—
The sunken rock and coral peak
May grate along her keel:
And know we well, the painted shell
We give to wind and wave,
Must float the sailor's citadel,
Or sink the sailor's grave!

Ho!—strike away the bars and blocks,
And set the good ship free!
Why lingers on these dusty rocks
The young bride of the sea?
Look!—how she moves adown the grooves
In graceful beauty now!
How lowly o'er the breast she loves
Sinks down her virgin prow!

God bless her, whensoever the breeze
Her snowy wing shall fan,
Beside the frozen Hebrides
Or suity Hindostan!—
Where'er in mart or on the main,
With peaceful flag unfurled,
She helps to wind the silken chain
Of commerce round the world!

Speed on the ship!—But let her bear
No merchandise of sin,
No groaning cargo of despair
Her roomy hold within,

No Lethæan drug for Eastern lands,
No poison draught for ours,
But honest fruits of toiling hands
And Nature's sun and showers.

Be her's the Prairie's golden grain,
The Desert's golden sand,
The clustered fruits of sunny Spain,
The spice of Morning-land!
Her pathway on the open main
May blessings follow free,
And glad hearts welcome back again
Her white sails from the sea!

SCRIPTURE ILLUSTRATIONS.

"Then saith the woman of Samaria unto Him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans."—John iv. 9.

By this we should understand that they had no friendly intercourse; for that they had the intercourse of traffic and common communication, seems clear enough. Indeed, we observe in the present instance, that, while our Lord conversed with the woman of Samaria, the disciples had proceeded to the Samaritan town of Sychar to buy meat. The prevalent doctrines of the Pharisees, and the claims to superior purity and holiness which they encouraged individuals to cherish, had much tendency to aggravate the difference between the Samaritans and Jews. The Pharisees indeed taught that no Jew ought to borrow any thing of the Samaritans, or receive any kindness from them, nor drink of their water or eat of their bread. Hence the surprise of the woman that Jesus asked drink of her; but we see presently that he did more still in opposition to the narrow restrictions of the Pharisees, in going to the city and eating with its inhabitants.

The sources of enmity between the Jews and Samaritans were many. The original occasion of the settlement of the Samaritans in Palestine, would in itself have been sufficient to set the Jews against them. But besides this when from ear they deemed it prudent to worship God, they did so without relinquishing the worship of their own idols—and this circumstance was not forgotten by the Jews, even when they ceased to be idolaters. Their rejection of all the books of Scripture, except the Law, of which alone they acknowledged the Divine authority; their bitter opposition to the rebuilding of the temple of Jerusalem, by the captives returned from Babylon, after their own assistance and participation had been declined; and, still more, their afterwards building an opposition temple on Mount Gerizim, where alone and not at Jerusalem, they contended that the Law (Deut. xxvii. 11—13) directed the Lord's temple to be built, and, consequently, that their own was the true and lawful temple, where alone sacrifices should be offered:—All these, and other causes, rendered the Samaritans abhorred by the Jews, even more perhaps than idolaters themselves. Hence, the son of Sirach says, "There be two manner of nations which my heart abhorreth, and the third is no nation: They that sit upon the mountains of Samaria, and they that dwell among the Philistines, and that foolish people which dwell in Sichem." (Eccles. i. 25, 26.) All intercourse of kindness was refused; and the Jews thought they could not more strongly express their contempt and detestation of any man than by calling him a Samaritan; hence, on one occasion, they said to Christ, "Thou art a Samaritan, and hast a devil."—*Pictorial Bible.*

CEYLON.—At the last accounts the cholera was raging frightfully on this island. Many were dying; and great consternation prevailed among the inhabitants. The natives were about to hold a great festival in honour of the Goddess of Pestilence, at which a grand offering of fowls and rams was to be presented to the goddess, to procure her favour. The ceremonies were to be closed by the sending forth of a scape-goat, bearing on his person the dreadful pestilence. By this means they expected to rid themselves of the terrible scourge. Some £300 had already been collected to defray the expenses of this grand sacrifice.

REINDEER.—The inhabitants of Lapland have little dependence on the fruits of the earth. They neither sow nor reap. Their comparative riches consist in the number of reindeer. Their chief nourishment is derived from the flesh and milk of these animals, with the milk also they make cheese, the skin serves for clothing, the hair for fur, the horns and hoofs for glue, the sinews are split into thread, which is very strong, bow-strings are made of the tendons, and the bones are manufactured into spoons.—*Hancock on Instinct.*