

L I F E.

Metaphors are many which warn men of the shortness of life and of illimitable eternity. The pulpit, too, gives forth its warning notes, and poets have made it the subject for some of their best productions. How finely has LONGFELLOW, in his 'Psalm of Life,' expressed his conviction that life is an earnest reality; something that terminates not here; but stretches away into the vast and unknown future,—

'Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not the goal;
'Dust thou art, to dust returnest,'
Was not spoken of the soul.'

The painter has also portrayed the course of human life, through its various stages, from youth to old age; and, like the revolving year, its extremities have more in common than any other period of existence. The one feels that his race is run, his frame enfeebled and his mind unstrung. He looks back upon the past and finds it compassed round with trials and disappointments; and but few of the sunny spots with which his youthful fancy adorned the future. He now sees that it is impossible for it to be otherwise, and has no desire to again tread the rugged path of life. Youth looks on the future with very different feelings, but it is the future of its own imaginings, and has little in common with its stern realities. Ardent in spirit and big with hope, it feels able to overcome every opposing obstacle, if any such there be, and realize in the future its youthful dream. Has it been deceived? Has a promised happiness, when about to become permanent, receded at the touch? Has the heart felt a pang of sorrow? Has the eye been dimmed by tears? Hope still points the way, and thus enticed, continues to chase imaginary and unsubstantial forms. Such is life, and such has most experienced it to be.

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EMANCIPATION PROCLAMATION

The time has at length arrived for the much-belauded and much-abused Proclamation of President Lincoln to come into operation. How far the author of it may have the power to enforce its provisions, and what will be the effect of it if he have, are questions which have excited much discussion; but not more than their vast importance merits.

The Slavery question, which now confronts the people of the United States, is one of the most frightful problems which ever a nation was called upon to solve, and may well appal the stoutest courage and baffle the profoundest wisdom.

Conscientiously to unclasp at once the fetters of four millions of human beings, whose lives have been spent in slavery—whose moral natures have been imbruted by bondage and neglect—whose chief motives of conduct have been the avoidance of the lash, and a desire to escape from their hard lot—requires a more exalted faith in the ultimate triumph of justice than is usually to be met with now a days.

On the other hand it must be clear to every man of unperverted feelings, and moderate intelligence, that slavery is an abnormal state, one that must be abolished some day; either by peaceful regulation or in the turmoil of war, where many a huge iniquity has perished before. Moreover, that its evils accumulate—alike as to its present influence and ultimate extinction—with the increasing

number of the enslaved and the magnitude of the interests involved.

Numberless are the plans which have been suggested for the peaceful abolition of slavery, but a pre-requisite of all these has been the consent of the slaveholder, and this there seems not the remotest prospect of obtaining. For, while every other part of the world has been advancing in liberal sentiments; the South has become more and more devoted to the 'peculiar institution.' The language in which Southerners now defend slavery, is very different in tone from that used by the framers of the Constitution, with regard to it. At the time of the adoption of that instrument, nearly all the great men of America—and in those days she did produce great men—were abolitionists. Washington though a slaveholder declared that his vote should not be wanting, for emancipation. Jefferson proposed that slavery should be excluded from any territory, to be subsequently acquired by the Union, and Madison succeeded in excluding the word 'Slave' from the Constitution. Compelled to yield their opinions to conflicting interests, these men yet thought they were but sanctioning a temporary evil, which in a few years would work its own cure, as it had already done in some of the more Northern States. It was then universally believed that slavery depended for its existence on the slave trade, and even the slaveholders only required that this should not be abolished for twenty years. How different are the sentiments of the South now! The system which was apologetically advocated then, is now boldly proclaimed by them to be of divine origin. Belief in Slavery, then timid and hesitating, has risen to the strength of a religious creed. Not a creed of the nineteenth century, liberal and enlightened, but of the seventeenth, cruel, vindictive and intolerant. The pulpit, the press and all the energies of the National brain are compelled to do it homage. It sets its tyrant foot on every influence which crosses its path. It brooks no expostulation, or silences them with 'tar and feathers.' It permits no examination of its claims, or answers with violence and outrage.

Of the deteriorated sentiments of the South on the question of slavery the most abundant proofs are at hand. Take for instance the celebrated Richmond speech of Mr. Stevens, Vice President of the Southern Confederacy, and unquestionably the ablest thinker in the Southern Cabinet.

After finding fault with Jefferson and the men of his day for their half-heartedness in the cause of Slavery, Mr. Stevens said:

'Our new government is founded upon exactly the opposite ideas: its foundations are laid, its cornerstone rests upon the great truth, that the negro is not equal to the white man; that slavery, subordination to the superior race, is his natural and moral condition. (Applause.) This our new government is the first, in the history of the world, based upon this great physical, philosophical and moral truth.'

But more convincing proofs than either speeches or writings furnish, are to be found in a code of slave laws, the most inflexibly barbarous—the most systematically oppressive—that ever disgraced the Statutes of any nation. The helots of Sparta and the slaves of Rome may have been subjected to more personal cruelty by their masters, than those of the South, but the laws of those pagan times did not shut the Slave out from all hope of freedom, nor deprive him of the benefits which a humane master could confer. The laws of the South do. A southern slaveholder may be desirous of doing everything in his power to improve the condition of his Slaves, but legal difficulties meet him at every point. If he attempts to educate them, he is subject to a heavy fine.

In Georgia, North Carolina and Mississippi, he cannot allow them to go at large, nor to trade on their own account, not even to cultivate a patch of ground, nor accumulate stock of any kind. In

South Carolina, Alabama, Georgia and Mississippi, a master cannot emancipate a Slave, without obtaining an act of the Legislature in each case.

It is impossible to conceive that a people who can approve such sentiments, and sanction such laws, will ever take any step toward Emancipation, or will ever quietly submit to it. Emancipation then must come from without if it come at all.

For our own part we must confess that the only interest we take in the present war, relates to the Slavery question.

Throwing this question aside, there is little in either side of the contest to enlist the sympathies of Canadians. But in this question we are vitally interested, alike from the dictates of humanity and of self-defence. Slavery is chronic war, ready to burst into a conflagration at any time, and who can answer for that conflagration always being confined to the place of its origin. We are by no means sanguine of the potency of President Lincoln's Proclamation; nevertheless we welcome it as a step towards a solution of this formidable question.

TO OUR FRIENDS IN THE SISTER PROVINCES.

It is our earnest desire to make our journal a welcome visitor in every part of British North America. We look forward with confidence to a day when all the Provinces included under this name shall be politically one. But while the tendency of affairs is indubitably in this direction, it cannot be denied that they are at present in a state of isolation from each other, which is greatly to be regretted. The public mind of Canada is comparatively unacquainted with the natural resources and manufacturing and commercial industry of the sister Provinces. We know far less of the affairs of our neighbors of New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and Prince Edward's Island, than we do of those of the United States; yet we form part, with them, of the same great Empire, our loyalty is given to the same sovereign, and, geographically, we lie contiguous to each other. It is highly desirable then that our relations should be more intimate, our sympathy stronger and our interest in each other's welfare more family like. To this end the "Illustrated News" will be in part devoted; and we respectfully solicit the assistance of our friends in the other Provinces. This can best be rendered by sending us photographs and sketches for illustration in our pages, together with descriptions or other matter connected with them. We shall at all times prefer photographs, but sketches will be welcome when their accuracy can be relied on. The subjects of which we most particularly desire illustrations, both of pen and pencil, are, natural scenery, public buildings, portraits of public men, mining, the fisheries, &c.

'THE GOOD TEMPLAR.'

We have received the first number of this new periodical. It is to be published weekly, at Woodstock, C. W., and is edited by Messrs. McWhinnie and Ferguson. As its name implies, it will be devoted chiefly to the cause of Temperance. It contains four pages of excellent reading matter, especially interesting to members of Temperance organizations; but by no means uninteresting to the general reader. The paper is good, and its typography decidedly creditable. It is furnished at the low price of one dollar per annum. It is evidently in hands who are thoroughly capable of conducting it. We earnestly wish our new confrere the most abundant success.

Our readers will, we trust, excuse our late appearance this week. The holidays, together with some other arrangements we have been forced to make have caused the delay; but for the future we shall endeavour to have the paper in their hands earlier.

Foreign News.

An eccentric British admirer of Garibaldi is alleged to have offered £1,000 for the ball taken out of the Great Liberator's wound.

CARDINAL WISEMAN has given instructions to the clergy under his jurisdiction to preach sermons on the first Sunday in Advent, in aid of the fund for the relief of the distress in the north.

GROROB PEABODY & Co. have offered a reward of £1,000 for the discovery of the parties who have stolen £50,000 from the Bank of America.

THE number of students enrolled in Glasgow University is 1262, being the greatest number who have attended during any one session for the last thirty years.

ON Monday, Mrs. Thorneycroft submitted to the Queen the design for a colossal equestrian statue of the Prince Consort to be erected at Liverpool.

AT Windsor, on Wednesday, her Majesty planted an oak in memorial of the Prince Consort. Her Majesty's health and spirits have much improved.

THE Eagle steamer, which left the Clyde on Confederate account some days ago, sailed from Belfast on Sunday for Nassau, N.P. She had undergone repairs at the patent slip on Queen's Island previous to her departure.

LORD RADSTOCK mentioned, at a meeting held in London last week, that seventy of the little shoeblacks had contributed £7 for the distressed, and that one of them had given 15s., or 1s. in the pound, on the capital which he had saved. The statement was received with loud cheers.

THE LANCASHIRE DISTRESS.—There are now 370,000 requiring aid from the unions or the Relief Committee, and the average aid is about 1s. 4d. per head per week; the numbers are daily increasing, and the allowance is manifestly too small especially in winter. Assumes then, that in a few weeks the distressed operatives in Lancashire and the adjacent district, amount to 500,000 and that an allowance of 2s. per head is made, the sum of £50,000 per week will be required.

The Greek community of Liverpool met on Monday evening, to determine, as far as they could, the choice of a sovereign for their country; and, as was anticipated, the lot fell on Prince Alfred. The Prince was unanimously selected, and the speeches delivered at the meeting were no less complimentary to British institutions, than they were to the ability and earnestness of the speakers. The opinion which swayed the meeting was, that a prince brought up under a strict constitutional rule would value the liberties of those over whom he was called to govern.

In what other part of England are we to look for benevolence like that of Sir Elkanah Armitage; who, ever since his mills were closed has fed and clothed his 1,200 work-people, and intends to do so? Or like that of the Fieldens, of Todmorden, and their contribution of £300 a-week? Or like that of the gentleman mentioned in the Times of last Thursday, who is incurring a loss of £50,000 rather than let his hands go without work, and yet is abused because he has given nothing to the 'Relief Fund'?

MORE CLYDE STEAMERS FOR THE SOUTH.—The fine paddle steamer Havlock, 360 tons register, was to sail on Saturday night for Nassau. On Tuesday, Mr. Laurie launched a fine screw steamer of 600 tons, named the Georgianna, from his yard at Whiteinch, and immediately laid down the keel of a similar vessel. On Friday, Messrs. Barclay & Curle, Stobcross, launched a 250 ton screw steamer, which is now getting in her engines at Greenock. All these vessels are destined for the Confederate Government.

THE Edinburgh Workmen's Houses Improvement Company is engaged in the erection of two rows of houses at Dumbiedykes, generally of three stories high, entering by common stairs and galleries. The front row consists of 70 houses, the second of 62—in all, 132 houses. All the houses contain three rooms, and are supplied with modern sanitary appliances, coal-bunkers, presses, and gas, and most of them have a large store closet in the lobby, or a scullery. The name which has been suggested for these houses is 'Prince Albert Buildings.'

NOBLE CONDUCT OF A FRENCH SOLDIER.—A soldier was tried the other day at Bordeaux for not having been drawn for the conscription. In defence it was stated that he had been in California since he was nineteen years old. He was returning on board the *Golden Gate*, and when the fire broke out he took all his money, fastened it in a belt round his waist, and leaped into the sea. A drowning woman near, however, implored him to save her child. He was a good swimmer, but he could not reach the shore with his money—about £8,000 in gold—and the child together. So he unfasted his belt, cast away the money, and got safe to land with the child. The prisoner was acquitted by the tribunal.