

PASTOR AND PEOPLE.

A UNIQUE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

In the current number of "Blackwood" an interesting description is given of a singular German community, who have established themselves near Haifa, under Mount Carmel, and elsewhere in Palestine, and who hold that the world is to be converted to Christ, and the advent of the Messiah to be brought near, not by preaching Christianity, but by living Christian lives. Some three hundred of this sect are engaged in cultivating olives at Haifa, dealing largely with Nazareth, and living devout lives in a clean and comfortable village. Mr. Hoffman, their founder, was a Lutheran clergyman and educator of influence, and at one time a member of the Diet at Frankfurt. For some years he conducted a journal, in which he elaborated his peculiar views. The spiritual temple, he maintained, had first to be built, and the kingdom created, before the Lord could come to reign. In consequence of this teaching he was expelled from the Church. He was followed by a large number of those who shared his opinions, and they were thenceforth known as the "Temple Society." In 1867 it was determined to establish the headquarters of the society in Palestine, about four-fifths of its members, who now numbered over five thousand persons, remaining, however, in Europe and in the United States, "to bear witness for the new and higher life which they were struggling to realize." The Turkish government did its utmost to frustrate the attempt to found the colony. It refused to sell government land, except at exorbitant prices, and it was not until after twelve years that they obtained satisfactory and legal titles to the land they now occupy.

By degrees three other colonies were formed—one in the immediate vicinity of Jaffa; another, called Sharon, about an hour distant from that town; and a third in the suburbs of Jerusalem, near the Jaffa gate. Mr. Hoffman now resides with the Jerusalem colony. The united population of the four colonies is about one thousand souls; a few families are also settled at Nazareth and Beyrout. The colony at Haifa numbering, as we have said, about three hundred, consists mostly of Germans, German Americans, Russians, and a few Swiss. They possess over seven hundred acres, of which one hundred are laid out in vineyards upon the slopes of Mount Carmel. They make excellent olive-oil soap, the export of which to America is yearly increasing; they have also a wind grist-mill and a factory for carving olive wood. A steam-mill is in course of erection. They have their own physician, an architect, and an engineer, while the British, American, and German Vice-Consulates are held by members of the colonies. Their schools are supported by a two-thirds donation from the German government and one third from the colonists. Their trim little village, running back in two streets from the sea to the base of Carmel, with its double line of shade trees, its neat little gardens and its commodious houses, contrasts with the native bazaar, it is said, like some rare exotic transplanted to a foreign soil. Of all the benefits which the German colony has conferred upon the native population, the construction of roads for wheeled vehicles has exercised the most marked influence. Such a thing as a cart was unknown when they first came. Now they are extensively used by the Arabs, and their number is constantly increasing, while between Acre and Haifa, a distance of ten miles, omnibuses driven by natives run every hour. There is a good hotel, kept by a German, in the colony. It is impossible, says the writer of the article in "Blackwood" to conceive a more agreeable climate during the winter months than Haifa offers.

A REMINISCENCE OF SAKER, THE AFRICAN MISSIONARY.

I used to hear some portly "gentleman of England, who lives at home at his ease," maundering over his claret and cheroot about the luxury of our missionaries, when I know that if there are heroes on God's earth, there is to be found upon the mission field a band of Christ's own nobles, whose patrician piety dwarfs into nothing the pignoles of Petticoat Lane. It is a shame to sit amongst our comforts and our dear Penates flouting the chivalry which has renounced them all for Christ's sake, and talk across the port and walnuts of the luxury of the men who are

dying for the Master. Whenever I hear men talking thus, I fancy I can feel the skinny hand of that grand saint of God, Thomas Saker, in my grip, and see his little pallid face, like an old baby, with God's own Spirit beaming from his eyes, just about to lay its weary head upon the Saviour's breast. I saw him down in Birmingham as he sat among a group of sleek "subscribers" who were asking for "results," and wanted to see their guineas' worth in the shape of ten little niggers, all alive and warranted converted. I heard him tell, with a modesty that was like the scent of violets amidst the blatancy of home-fed platitudes, of how the wand of faith had fetched a language and forged a vernacular out of the jargon of the tribes of Africa, as Moses' rod had brought the water from the rock; how he had chimed their gutturals into the Word of God, and coined a character from the spluttering of their lips from which they might spell the promises and read the story of the Cross. Even hardware could see something in that. Even the caucus was alive to that; and political nailmakers and Radical riveters filled up their cheques in recognition of such a tidy piece of work as that. As for me, I fancied I could see a nimbus playing round the hero's head, and white wings budding on his narrow shoulders. Both are there now; and not the faintest of the notes that reach him now he is in heaven are the hymns of praise from the once savage tribes whom he has taught to sing the anthems of the Lord. — *Rev. Arthur Mursell, of Birmingham.*

WAITING.

It is a dear and patient face, framed in by silvered hair,
A light shines in the dark brown eyes, that hope has kindled there,
The feeble hands are folded o'er her fondly cherished prize—
The Book of promises—the lamp that lights her to the skies.

Her form is bowed with weight of years, but oh, the look of peace
That dwells on every feature, as she waits for her release,
The aged head now bends beneath the widow's snowy cap,
I whisper, "Grandma's fixing for her usual twilight nap."

"Not so dear child; though quiet, I am holding converse sweet
With Him, my Comforter, my Lord—I'm sitting at His feet;
My weary head He fondly takes, and lays it on His breast,
I praise Him! oh, I praise Him! for this evening time of rest."

"Tis joy, this dear communion that we hold from day to day,
'Tis sweet to know His loving hand has led me all the way;
Down through those checkered years of life, and sunshine
and thro' rain,
His smile shone through the rifted cloud, and bore away the pain."

"What though my ear grows dull to sound, I still can hear His voice,
'Let not your heart be troubled,' thus He speaks, and I rejoice;
And though my eyes grow dim with age, clear shines my spirit's sight,
I prove His blessed promise true, 'At eve it shall be light.'"

"I am happy while thus waiting for the coming of the King,
I do not fear the shadows, for each day will nearer bring
The feast of my beloved, who is coming soon, I know,
And gladly will I welcome Him, and leave these scenes below,"

"My dusty robe of pilgrimage will then be laid aside,
For one of snowy whiteness, well befitting fairest bride;
My staff of faith I will not need, faith will be changed to sight
In heaven's noontide glory, where 'the Lamb shall be the light.'"

"Sometimes I have sweet visions of that happy ransomed throng,
And I sometimes catch the echo of the saints' triumphant song.
Oh, I long to hear the summons, but my Lord, He knoweth best
When to take His weary pilgrim to her home of joy and rest."

—*Mrs. W. Fawcett, in Frank Leslie's Sunday Magazine for July.*

DEACONESSES.

In the New Testament there is a distinct trace of the existence of deaconesses—that is, women who were regularly employed for the care of the poor and the sick, and to administer hospitality among the female portion of the congregation. In the Orient and in Greece, the sexes were more strictly separated (as they are to this day among the Mohammedans, Jews, and Gentiles

than in Christian Europe and America. Hence there was a practical necessity for a special class of female officers who had access to their own sex and could discharge the charitable functions of the diaconate much more easily and effectually than men. Phoebe is called a deaconess of the congregation of Cenchrea, the port of Corinth, and was intrusted by Paul with the important mission of carrying his Epistle to the Romans. (Rom. xvi. 1.) The pious and devoted women, Prisca, Mary, Tryphæna, Tryphosa, and Persis, who "laboured much in the Lord," and are saluted by Paul (Rom. xvi. 3, 6, 12), were in all probability likewise deaconesses; for just in that capacity women could make themselves most useful in the Church without stepping outside of their proper sphere, or violating their native modesty. Whether certain passages in the Pastoral Epistles (1 Tim. iii. 8, 9; Tit. ii. 3) refer to the same office is a matter of dispute among commentators.

In the Eastern churches, the office of deaconess continued down to the end of the twelfth century. The candidates were solemnly ordained. In the Roman Church the congregational deaconesses ceased or were superseded by sisterhoods devoted to charitable work. Everybody knows what a powerful, though silent, influence these sisterhoods exert in public and private hospitals, female seminaries, in afflicted homes, and how effectually they commend their Church even to Protestants and the indifferent world. Far be it that we should detract one iota from the merit of these noble women who, prompted by the love of Christ, devote their fortune and their lives to the relief and comfort of their suffering fellow-men, and find their happiness in this labour of love. We rejoice in every manifestation of genuine Christianity in the Roman Catholic or any other Church. It redounds to the honour of Christ, our common Lord.

Among Protestants, similar sisterhoods have been founded by the Moravians, and in Lutheran, Episcopal, and other Churches. The most useful institution and society of that kind is the sisterhood of Kaiserswerth, on the Lower Rhine, founded by pastor Fliedner, which has sent out branches to various parts of Germany, Switzerland, France, Russia, Sweden, Alexandria, Smyrna, Beirut, and Jerusalem. The sisterhood is an honour and benediction to Evangelical Christianity.

But, while all these sisterhoods derive their inspiration from the love of Christ and from the New Testament, they cannot do the full duty of the apostolic institution, which provides for a regular congregational office. They do occasional and special work of great importance, and are most indispensable in seasons of war, pestilence, and the raging of contagious diseases. But they cannot do the local work in every community. There is no church in the city or the country where there are not some poor and suffering mortals who appeal to the sympathy and support of Christians. "The poor," says the Lord, "ye have always with you." Every congregation, therefore, ought to have a regular band of deacons and deaconesses to attend to these charitable duties. The revival of the apostolic diaconate—male and female—is an important practical question for the churches to consider. — *Dr. Philip Schaff, in Sunday School Times.*

PARENTAL SOLICITUDE.

In this graphic way Solomon sets forth the idea that the good or evil behaviour of children blesses or blights the parental heart. I know their are persons who seem to have no special interest in the welfare of their children. The father says: "My boy must take the risk of life. If he turns out well, all right; if he turns out ill, he will have to bear the consequences. He has the same chance that I had. He must take care of himself." A shepherd might just as well thrust a lamb into a den of lions and say: "Little lamb, take care of yourself." Nearly all the brute creation are kind enough to look after their young. I was going through a woods and I heard a shrill cry in a nest. I climbed up to the bird's nest and I found that the old bird had left the brood to starve. But that is a very rare occurrence. Generally a bird will pick your eyes out rather than surrender her young to your touch. A lion will rend you if you come to near the whelps; even the barnyard fowl, with its clumsy foot and heavy wing, will come at you if you approach its young too nearly, and God certainly intended to have father and mother as kind as the brutes. Christ comes through all our households