

The Orphans' Friend.

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From the Church Union. THE MANNER OF SALUTATION AND DINNER PARTIES IN THE EAST.

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In the East the are encircled by religious ideas. We see this in the simple meeting of two persons in the street. They convey—in a form of prayer—an earnest wish that the other may enjoy peace. Throughout the Bible, this blessing forms the staple of salutation. Salem or Shalom means peace. The Bedouins of our time have the same idea embodied in their salutation. The Arab meets his friend with "May God grant you a happy morning;" "May God grant you His favors;" "If God wills it, you are well;" "May your shadow never be less." The difference here is very considerable, according to the rank of person saluted.

The most common mode is merely laying the right hand on the bosom, and a little inclining their bodies; but, when to a person of great rank, they bow almost to the ground and kiss the hem of his garment. Inferiors, out of deference and respect, kiss the feet and knees, or the garments of their superiors.

Oriental dinner comprises about thirty dishes. Soon after the first dish comes lamb, roasted on the spit, which must never be wanting at any Turkish or Arab banquet. Then follow dishes of solid and liquid, sour and sweet, in the order of which a certain kind of recurring change is observed, to keep the appetite alive. The pillar of boiled rice is always the concluding dish.

The externals to such a feast as this are these: A great round plate of metal with a plain edge, with three feet in diameter, is placed on a low frame, and serves as a table, about which five or six people can repose on rugs. The left hand must remain invisible; it would be improper to expose it while eating. The right hand is alone permitted to be active. There are no plates, or knives, or forks. The table is decked with dishes, deep and shallow, covered and uncovered; these are continually being changed, so that little can be eaten from each. Some remain longer—as roast meat, cold milks, and gherkins, and are often recurred to. Before and after dinner they wash their hands. An attendant or slave kneels with a metal basin in one hand and a piece of soap on a little saucer in the other. Water is poured by him over the hands of the washer from a metal jug; over his arm hangs an elegantly embroidered napkin for drying the hands upon. If a Turkish or Arab Sheikh, Effendi, or Emeer, invites, he always sends a servant to call you at the proper time. This servant often repeats the very formula mentioned in Luke xvi 17, "Tetudul el asha haden—Come, for the supper is ready."

The fact that this custom is mainly confined to the wealthy and to the nobility is in strict agreement with the parable.

"It is a great evil, not to be able to bear an evil."—*Bion*.

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S MISTAKE.

I am not about to say anything of this fascinating English writer and his theory which has not been said already, and better said than I can say it. His papers upon 'Culture and Anarchy' have been widely read in America. The great beauty of his pure English, and the masterful way in which he handles his subject have won him many admirers amongst us. I don't see how any one who thoughtfully reads his writings can think of him, as many of his fellow-countrymen appear to do, as an impractical dreamer in his theory of reform.

But much as Mr. Arnold's works delight me, I am constantly sensible of one vital error in the theory of "Culture" which he preaches, and preaches with such beautiful power. My apology for writing these few words must be my conviction that, amongst many of the most intelligent people—the leaders of thought amongst us—this theory of his, with this one great mistake in it, is gaining growing acceptance. And it has a plausibility about it—this theory of culture—which renders it most easy to fail to see the mistake; and, this accepted, no words can tell the mischief that may be wrought. So every word, however imperfectly spoken, which serves to make the vital error of the theory clear, has sufficient apology for its being spoken.

Mr. Arnold holds that the prime duty of man—the "one thing needful" for him—is self-perfecting—an harmonious development of his nature upon all its sides. He concedes to religion a place in history—the place of developing to its perfection the moral side of man's nature. But that, he says, is not the whole of man; he has other sides besides this moral side, which must get their perfecting in other ways; the man who is only religious is a narrow man, incomplete, one-sided, is not rightly conceiving the high end for which his life was given him, is not doing his first duty. In a word, religion is a means to an end, in this theory. Self-culture—the attainment of self-perfection, is the end; being a child of God, a Christian, is one of the means helpful to that end. Presented as Mr. Arnold presents it, this doctrine has a marvellous fascination about it for many minds. It sounds plausibly. It has a look of innocence, and a garb of goodly attractions. But there is a place of vital weakness in it. "He can not serve God and Mammon;" and Mammon is self, whatever the role in which that self may array itself, or by what name it may call itself—even though it take so seemingly a name as self-perfecting, or 'sweetness and light,' in the phrase our author loves to use. The truth would seem to be that this attractive thing—a rounded and perfect human character and human life,—may only be had, like many another comely and beautiful thing that our hearts wish for, by ceasing altogether to think of it or seek it as our chief end, and by lending our endeavors to another end higher than that. A

person becomes graceful and attractive down in the little sphere of his daily life, not by laboring for grace and attractiveness as ends sufficient in themselves, but by setting other ends and higher before him, and laboring for them—by trying to be kind, and helpful and gracious of heart. So a man attains this thing that has such powerful winning in it for our author's mind, and for all our minds, completeness and roundness of fully developed character and life—not by thinking of that, and setting that, as it were, in the eye of all his life, but by losing sight of that as a chief aim, and aiming at pleasing God, and conforming himself to God's will instead.

If religious people, as Mr. Arnold alleges, do not verify this by their lives, if Christians in general do not exhibit, as the fruit of their religion, such growth and ennobling of character, such ever-increasing approach towards perfectness, the answer is that this is their fault, not the fault of their faith. The only sure basis of perfect character—the only root out of which the "sweetness and light" our author labors for can come—is acceptance of that chief aim—that "one thing needful," which religion proposes to man. Here, it appears very convincingly to me, is the weak place in the theory of Mr. Arnold, and of the followers with him of the theory of culture. Because I believe that many are growing to think of life and the philosophy of living much as Mr. Arnold's works teach the matter, I have ventured these few words on the subject. As he puts it, the matter states itself to me only as Culture versus Religion; and God, I believe, has planned the true philosophy of life for us all.—*Ec.*

THE RITUAL OF THE TEMPLE.

Every morning before the break of day the captain or chief officer of the Temple guard opened the door of the court, where the priest in residence for the week had slept for the night, and the procession often passed round the court in white robes and bare feet to kill the morning sacrifice. As the first rays of the rising sun struck upon the golden lamp above the porch, the trumpets sounded; and those of the priests who had drawn the lot entered the temple for the offering of incense. That was the moment, if any, for any preternatural visitation to the priest. Then they came out, and having slain the lamb on the altar, they pronounced the benediction, the only relic of the sacerdotal office which has continued in the Jewish Church to our own time. On greater days the solemnities were increased, but the general plan was the same, and it was this worship, with its sacrificial shambles and its minute mechanism, that furnished the chief material for the theological discussions and ecclesiastical regulation of the Jewish Church of that period. The High Priest was still to be kept from falling asleep on the eve of the great fast, by pinching him and by reading to him what were thought the most exciting parts of the Bible. Five times over in the course of

that day had he to take off and put on his eight articles of pontifical dress, and on each occasion behind a curtain put up for the purpose between him and the people, he plunged into the great swimming bath or pool, which if he was old or infirm, was heated for him. He then put on all his gilded garments—goat's hair gilt—to penetrate into innermost sanctuary and sprinkle the blood, like holy water, round the pavement eight times, checking his movement, like the officer who laid on stripes on an offender, by numbering them. When he came up he was thrice to utter the benediction, when all were hushed in deep stillness to catch the awful Name—which then only in each year of an Israelite's life could be heard—pronounced in that silence so distinctly that, in the exaggerated Rabbinical traditions, its sound was believed to reach as far as Jericho. * * * *

The ceremony of the scapegoat still continued, though it had all the appearance of a terrified ritual in its last stage of decadence. The creature was conveyed from the Temple to Olivet on a raised bridge to avoid the jeers of the irreverent pilgrims of Alexandria—who used to pluck the poor animal's long flakes of hair with the rude cry of "Get along and away with you!" Then he was handed on from keeper to keeper by short stages over hill and valley. At each hut where he rested an obsequious guide said to him, "Here is your food, here is your drink." The last in this strange succession led him to a precipice above the fortress of Dok, and hurried him down, and the signal was sent back to Jerusalem that the deed was accomplished by the waving of handkerchiefs all along the rocky road.—*Dean Stanley's Lectures on the History of the Jewish Church.*

Not long since a graduate from one of our eastern theological schools was called to the pastoral charge of a church in the extreme Southwest. When about to start for his new parish he was unexpectedly detained by the incapability of his Presbytery to ordain him. In order to explain his non-arrival at the appointed time, he sent the following telegram to the deacons of the church: 'Presbytery lacked a quorum to ordain.' In the course of its journey the message got strangely metamorphosed, and reached the astonished deacons in this shape: 'Presbytery tacked a worm on to Adam!' The sober church officers were greatly discomposed and mystified, but after grave consultation concluded it was the minister's facetious way of announcing that he had got married, and accordingly proceeded to provide lodgings for two instead of one.—*Chicago Inter-Ocean.*

Conversation between an inquiring stranger and a steamboat pilot: "That is Black Mountain?" "Yes, sir; highest mountain above Lake George." "Any story of legend connected with that mountain?" "Lots of 'em. Two lovers went up that mountain once and never came back again." "Indeed—why: what became of them?" "Went down on the other side."

KEEP STRAIGHT AHEAD.

Pay no attention to slanderers and gossip-mongers. Keep straight on in your course and let their back-biting die the death of neglect. What is the use of lying awake nights brooding over the remark of some false friend, that runs through your brain like lightning? What is the use of getting into a worry and fret over gossip that has been set afloat to your disadvantage by some meddling busy body who has more time than character? The things cannot possibly injure you, unless indeed you take notice of them, and in combating them give them standing and character. If what is said about you is true, set yourself right; if it is false, let it go for what it will fetch. If a bee sting you, would you go to the hive to destroy it? Would not a thousand come upon you? It is wisdom to say little respecting the injuries you have received. We are generally losers in the end if we stop to refute all the backbiting and gossiping we may hear by the way. They are annoying, it is true, but not dangerous, so long as we do not stop to expostulate and scold. Our characters are formed and sustained by ourselves, by our own actions and purposes, and not by others. Let us always bear in mind that "calumniators may usually be trusted to time and the slow but steady justice of public opinion."—*Selected.*

A beggar posted himself at the door of the Chancery court, and kept saying, "A penny, please, sir! Only one penny, sir, before you go in!" "And, why, my man?" inquired an old country gentleman. "Because, sir, the chances are you will not have one when you get out."

It is said—with what truth we know not—that the change of style which has been noticed in George Eliot's later works is due to certain literary partnership with her husband, Mr. Lewes. His thoughts are said to be discernible in *Middlemarch*, and even more than thoughts in *Daniel Deronda*. However this may be, *Daniel Deronda* is a book every body wants to read.

The Rev. Mr. Emerson, of Gloucester, Mass., recently said: "My friends, was the age of miracles returned? I do not know that they turn water into wine, but they do say that there are those who can turn water into milk! How happens it, friends, that herring caught on the coast of Maine become "Labrador herring" on touching the hands of some Gloucester dealers? How does it happen, too, that Bank codfish, worth five dollars a quintal, become transformed—changed in the twinkling of an eye—to George's fish, worth fifty cents more? Can any one here tell me how these wonderful transformations take place?"

Talleyrand once complained that the English had thirty-nine religions and only one sauce, which evoked the retort from a witty Englishman, "And the French have thirty-nine sauces and no religion."