

The Orphans' Friend.

VOL. III.

OXFORD, N. C., WEDNESDAY, AUGUST 15, 1877.

NO. 33.

INFLUENCE OF CHRISTIANITY.

The change in thought and manners among the negroes of Soudan and Guinea has been very great in recent years, and is attributable, in a large measure, to the influence of Christianity even over those to whom as yet the Gospel has not been directly proclaimed. They are growing weary of the superstitions of the old time.—The snake house of the King of Dahomey—whose abominations have been seen and described by travelers still living—is a thing of the past.—This was a sort of temple, in which serpents of all sorts, some of immense size—were kept and held as sacred.—They were fed so abundantly as to be seldom mischievous; but so highly revered were they that when one appeared on the streets of the town he was saluted with reverence, and none dared to touch him. The King of Ashantee, so lately humiliated by the red coats under Sir Garnet Wolsey, has within a year sent to a Wesleyan missionary, requesting a visit from him to consult on educational matters. He went and was treated at every step with the most marked respect.—Those who have read Stanley's account of his journey over the same road must be struck with the number of things which that astute man and daring explorer did not see; but every facility for observation was given to the Christian missionary; he saw every thing. The king treated him with great consideration, and strove hard to perfect arrangements for the establishment of an educational institute in his capital. But as a politician—for State reasons—the black monarch felt unable to allow the Christian religion to be taught, and the civilization of Christianity from its doctrines; and for these reasons only the arrangements were broken off for the present. Before long, however, not only Coomassie, but all the great towns of the interior will be centers of Christian learning. The progress of Mohomedanism, of which we have heard so much of late, is regarded by wise missionaries as an aid rather than as an obstacle to the spread of the true faith. It intensifies the thirst for knowledge.—*National Repository for July.*

ANCIENT PUNISHMENTS OF DRUNKENNESS.

The offence of drunkenness was a source of great perplexity to the ancients, who tried every possible way of dealing with it. If none succeeded, probably it was because they did not begin early enough, by intercepting some of the ways and means by which the insidious vice is incited and propagated. Severe treatment was often tried to little effect. The Locrians, under Zaleucus, made it a capital offence to drink wine, if it was not mixed with water; even an invalid was not exempted from punishment unless by order of a physician. Pittacus, of Mitylene, made a law that he who, when drunk, committed an offence, should suffer double the punishment which he would do if sober; and Plato, Aristotle, and Plutarch applauded this as the

height of wisdom. The Roman censors could expel a senator for being drunk and take away his horse. Mahomet ordered drunkards to be bastinadoed with eighty blows. Other nations thought of limiting the quantity to be drunk at one time, or at one sitting. The Egyptians put some limit, though what it was is not stated. The Spartans also had some limit. Arabians fixed the quantity at twelve glasses a man; but the size of the glass was, unfortunately, not defined by the historians. The Anglo Saxons went no further than to order silver nails to be fixed on the side of drinking cups, so that each might know his proper measure. And it is said that this was done by King Edgar after noticing the drunken habits of the Danes. Lycurgus, of Thrace, went to the root of the matter by ordering the vines to be cut down. And his conduct was imitated in 704 by Terbulus of Bulgaria. The Suevi prohibited wine to be imported. And the Spartans tried to turn the vice into contempt by systematically making their slaves drunk once a year, to show their children how foolish and contemptible men looked in that state. Drunkenness was deemed much more vicious in some classes of persons than in others. The ancient Indians held it lawful to kill a king when he was drunk. The Athenians made it a capital offence for a magistrate to be drunk, and Charlemagne imitated this by law, that judges on the bench and pleaders should do their business fasting. The Carthaginians prohibited magistrates, governors, soldiers, and servants from any drinking. The Scots, in the second century, made it a capital offence for magistrates to be drunk; and Constantine II. of Scotland, 861, extended a like punishment to young people. Again some laws have absolutely prohibited wine from being drunk by women, the Massilians so decreed. The Romans did the same, and extended the prohibition to young men under thirty or forty-five. And the husband and wife's relation could scourge the wife for offending, and the husband himself might scourge her to death.—*'Liberty of the Subject,' by James Paterson.*

KNOWLEDGE.

Every one who has started out in life with a thirst for knowledge has suffered disappointment. He began with a few material facts and moral axioms, and learned from these to expect sure footing, however rough and difficult the way might be, in whatever direction he chose to travel. What he took to be mountains he found to be clouds. What appeared to him navigable streams he found to be mirages. We suppose there is no student who does not recall the surprise and disappointment, often painful, with which these discoveries were made, and the sense of weakness and worthlessness which overcame him. Now, the further he goes, the more laboriously and extensively he studies, the more of these disappointments he must meet. The effect is widely different upon different minds. Some, like Stuart

Mill, become misanthropic, and deny there are any foundations for knowledge outside of a few material facts and mathematical axioms. Others are unwilling to be dark and wandering spirits over an abyss of doubt, and try to find truth through the medium of the heart. They reach out after God and the hope of immortality with the hand of faith, and find God near, and are satisfied and at rest. Now this, from the nature of things, always must and will be so. The type of faith set up by Christ in a little child was the ultimate fact of all our philosophy and study. The result ever must be that the most of those who are widest and broadest in their intellectual grasp and penetration, and the most profound in their learning, will be Christians. God hedges us into himself on every side. If we break through those hedges, we must do it wilfully and determinedly.—*Interior.*

BAROMETRICAL APPARATUS.

The *Nouvelles Meteorologiques* describes a new self-recording barometer, the construction of which is pronounced to be of superior adaption to the purpose required. The instrument consists of an ordinary syphon barometer carrying a very light ivory float, upon which is fixed a vertical steel wire terminating in a point. A horizontal needle rests upon this point, and its other extremity is in connection with a double series of clock-work, the wheels of which move either forward or backward, according as the ivory float rises or falls. The movements of the clock-work are followed by a pencil which draws a curve upon a revolving cylinder. This arrangement is regarded as far more advantageous than that in which the connection between the horizontal lever and the wheel-work is an electric one—subject therefore to all the uncertainties, which at some times are considerable, of the electrical batteries and connections.

Thus, in this improved barometer, no electricity is employed, the entire apparatus depending only upon gravity and atmospheric pressure, its regular and reliable working being by this means perfectly insured. An aneroid barometer may be made to record its indications in the same manner as the mercurial, such instruments having recently been introduced and finding much favor for their correctness of showing. A method has also been proposed for applying a similar automatic system of registration, and with equally satisfactory results, to the indications of the magnetic needle.

Virtue is certainly the most noble and secure possession a man can have. Beauty is worn out by time and impaired by sickness. Riches lead youth rather to distraction than welfare, and without prudence are soon lavished away—while virtue alone, the only good that is ever durable, always remains with the person who once entertained her. She is preferable both to wealth and a noble extraction.

THE NORTHERN SITUATION.

The labor troubles are not ended. So much is clear. In more than one district the coal miners are at war with their employers, and on the lines of some of the railroads, a spirit still prevails which tells more of a defeat than of reconciliation. The Baltimore and Ohio, and the Pennsylvania roads are partially open. The former company yesterday moved twenty-three freight trains between Baltimore and Cumberland. Beyond the latter point the road is still closed, and difficulties are not improbable in the West Virginia mountains. The Pennsylvania Road has freight trains in motion between Altoona and Pittsburg; the record of incidents connected with the reopening being, however, unpleasantly suggestive of bad blood and future annoyances. The gain both in Pennsylvania and Maryland is, then, decided, so far as the conflict between authority and lawlessness is concerned. It is far from complete as regards the relations of the companies to their workmen and their sympathizers. At West Albany yesterday, some apprehensions were felt respecting the men in the locomotive departments, but the feeling was not of long duration. The men refused to listen to the appeal of the mischief makers, and an entire resumption of work to-morrow is anticipated. The position on the Delaware and Lackawanna and the Morris and Essex is not satisfactory, though the strike which was talked of did not take place last evening. From Chicago and St. Louis the reports leave little room for anxiety. The most serious of all today's tidings is from the line of the Pittsburg, Fort Wayne and Chicago, which remains in the hands of the strikers.—*New York Times.*

HOW TO SOW SEEDS.

The most successful seed sower we ever knew lets his garden ground get a little dry before sowing. Then he stretches the line along where the seeds are to go, sows the seed on the surface and then walks sideways along the line, pressing the seeds with "his flat foot." He says he never has a seed to miss, and so he sows them thinly just where every plant is to grow. There is not only no waste of seed, but no waste in thinning. There is no raking in of the seed, and the whole is as simple as possible. His wife is a good flower-gardener. Her mignonette and phloxes always grow; a ten-cent paper is enough for the whole garden. She sows on the surface, "pats" down, as she says, the earth with the back of her cast-steel trowel, puts the stick with the name in the centre of the little patch, and they sprout at once.—*Amateur Gardener.*

When Daniel Webster was once asked, "What is the most important thought that ever entered your mind?" after a moment's reflection he seriously replied, "The most important thought I ever had was that of my personal responsibility to God."

A NEW THEORY.

A correspondent of *The English Mechanic* insists that musical sounds stimulate the growth of plants. He gives an instance in point. In a barren section of Portugal he built a small conservatory and endeavored to cultivate roses and other flowers under shelter, but in spite of his precautions and industry they did not flourish. One day he took a harmonium into the greenhouse and played for several hours. This practice he maintained for several months and was surprised to see a gradual but rapid recovery of health on the part of his plants. He attributes their improvement to the influence of music and unfolds the theory that the singing of birds is conducive to vegetable life. Let the piano be moved from drawing-room to the greenhouse and let the young ladies of the family practice there. Let the farmers of Westchester County hire all the organ-grinders of New York to make music in their corn-fields all the glad Summer long. Let the brass bands be sent into the wilderness until it blossoms like the rose.—*N. Y. Tribune.*

JEWISH STATISTICS.—The Jews recently held a convention in this city, in which the following statistics were made known: There are in this country 250,000 Jews, who are divided into 3,000 congregations: They own 5 hospitals, 6 orphan asylums, and 3 institutions for poverty-stricken aged Israelites. The value of their synagogue property is \$6,000, 000. They publish 15 papers and periodicals, some weekly, others monthly. The oldest Jewish congregation in America is the one at New York called Shearith Israel, and was organized in 1684, the next in age is the Lancaster, Pa., congregation, 1776; and then comes the Philadelphia church, 1780.—*N. Y. Observer.*

THE CURE FOR GOSSIP.—What is the cure for gossip? Simply culture. There is a great deal of gossip that has no malignity in it. Good-natured people talk about their neighbors, because, and only because, they have nothing else to talk about. The confirmed gossip is always either malicious or ignorant.—Reading is a safeguard against gossip. People who can talk of books do not have to talk of persons. When you see a family in which literary magazines and newspapers are taken, you see one where there is little gossip.—*Robesonian.*

—A natural pianist has been discovered near Frostburg, Alleghany county, Md. His name is William Tagan, sixteen years old, who wears blue jeans pants tucked into his boot tops, and does not usually rejoice in a coat, but he plays over three thousand classical tunes in a wondrously accurate manner, and is considered a musical prodigy.

The first duty of scholars has been included in this one piece of advice, to love those who teach them as they love the knowledge which they derive from them; and to look upon them as fathers, from whom they derive not the life of the body, but that instruction which is, in a manner, the life of the soul.

We cannot conquer fate and necessity, yet we can yield to them in such a way as to be greater than if we could.

What word is there of five letters that by taking away two leaves one? Stone.