

PROGRESS OF KNOWLEDGE.

DESTRUCTION OF BOOKS AND MANUSCRIPTS.

Our principal and secondary titles to the present article seem to be at war with each other.—The destruction of books would naturally imply a retrograde of knowledge, rather than progress.

It is remarkable that conquerors, in the moment of victory, or in the unsparing devastation of their rage, have not been satisfied with destroying men, but have even carried their vengeance to books.

Ancient history records how the Persians, from hatred of the religion of the Phœnicians and the Egyptians, destroyed their books, of which Eusebius notices they possessed a great number.

The Romans burnt the books of the Jews, of the Christians, and the philosophers; the Jews burnt the books of the Christians and the Pagans; and the Christians burnt the books of the Pagans and the Jews.

The reading of the Jewish Talmud has been forbidden by various edicts, of the Emperor Justinian, of many of the French and Spanish kings, and numbers of popes.

The first missionaries to the Mexicans, suspicious that superstition was mixed with all their paintings, attacked the chief school of these artists; and collecting, in the market place, a little mountain of these precious records, they set fire to it, and buried in the ashes the memory of many most interesting events.

The story of the Caliph Omar proclaiming through the kingdom, at the taking of Alexandria, that the Koran contained every thing which was useful to believe and to know, and he therefore ordered all the books in the Alexandrian library to be distributed to the masters of the baths, amounting to 4000, to be used in heating their stoves for a period of six months, modern paradox would attempt to deny.

When Abdoolah, who in the third century of the Mohammedan era, governed Khorasan, was presented at Nishapoor with a MS, which was shown as a literary curiosity, he asked the title of it, and was told it was the tale of Wamick and Oozra, composed by the great poet Noshirwan.

On this Abdoolah observed, that those of his country and faith had nothing to do with any other book than the Koran; and that the composition of an idolater must be detestable! Not only he declined accepting it, but ordered it to be burnt in his presence; and further issued a proclamation commanding all Persian MSS, which should be found within the circle of his government to be burned!

Inflamed with the blindest zeal against every thing Pagan, Pope Gregory VII. ordered that the library of the Palatine Apollo, a treasury of literature formed by successive emperors, should be committed to the flames! He issued this order under the notion of confining the attention of the clergy to the Holy Scriptures!

The destruction of libraries in the reign of Henry VIII. at the dissolution of the monasteries, is well over by John Bale; those who purchased the religious houses took the libraries as part of their booty, with which they secured their furniture, or sold the books as waste paper, or sent them abroad in ship loads to foreign bookbinders.

Even the civilization of the eighteenth century could not preserve from the savage and destructive fury of a disorderly mob, in the most polished city of Europe, the valuable MSS. of the great Earl Mansfield, which were madly consigned to the flames during the riots of 1780.

In the year 1590, the hall of the stationers underwent as great a purgation as was carried on in Don Quixote's library. Watton gives a list of the best writers who were ordered for immediate conflagration by the prelates Whitgift and Bancroft, urged by the puritanic faction.

At the death of the learned Peiresc, a chamber in his house filled with letters from the most eminent scholars of the age, was discovered.—Such was the disposition of his niece, that altho' repeatedly entreated to permit them to be published, she preferred to regale herself occasionally with burning these learned epistles to save the expense of fire-wood!

Menage observes, on a friend having had his library destroyed by fire, in which several valuable MSS. had perished, that such a loss is one of the greatest misfortunes that can happen to a man of letters. Even in the present day, men of letters are subject to misfortunes; for though the fire-officers will insure books, they will not allow authors to value their own manuscripts.

The republic of letters has suffered irreparable losses by shipwrecks, Paganio Veronese, one of those learned Italians who travelled thro' Greece for the recovery of MSS, had his perseverance repaid by the acquisition of many valuable works. On his return to Italy he was shipwrecked, and unfortunately for himself and the

world, says Mr. Roscoe, he lost his treasures!—So pungent was his grief on this occasion, that, according to the relation of one of his countrymen, his hair became suddenly white.

About the year 1700, Hudde, a Dutchman, went to China to instruct himself in the language, and in whatever was remarkable in this singular people. He succeeded to the dignity of a mandarin; travelled through the provinces under this character, and returned to Europe with a collection of observations, the cherished labor of thirty years; and all these were sunk in the bottomless sea!

The great Pinellian library, after the death of its illustrious professor, filled three vessels, to be conveyed to Naples. Pursued by corsairs, one of the vessels was taken; but the pirates finding nothing on board but books, threw them all into the sea: such was the fate of a great portion of this famous library. National libraries have often perished at sea, from the circumstance of conquerors transporting them into their own kingdoms.

Many works that were not destroyed by design, are also missing. Of the history of Polybius, which once contained forty books, we have now only five; of the historical library of Diodorus Siculus, fifteen books only remain out of forty; and half of the Roman antiquities of Dionysius Halicarnassus has perished. Of the eighty books of the history of Dion Cassius, twenty-five only remain. The present opening book of Ammianus Marcellinus is entitled the fourteenth.—Livy's history consisted of one hundred and forty books, and we only possess thirty-five of that pleasing historian. What a treasure has been lost in the thirty books of Tacitus! little more than four remain.

We have lost two precious works in ancient biography: Varro wrote the lives of seven hundred illustrious Romans, and Atticus, the friend of Cicero, composed another on the actions of the great men among the Romans. These works were enriched with portraits.

The losses which the poetical world has sustained are sufficiently known by those who are conversant with the few invaluable fragments of Menander. Even of Æschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, who each wrote about one hundred dramas, seven only have been preserved, and nineteen of Euripides. Of the one hundred and thirty comedies of Plautus, we only inherit twenty of the more imperfect.

ROMAN CATHOLICS IN THE VALLEY.

We have three or four more articles yet to publish under the head of "Foreign conspiracy," &c. They are suspended for a week or two. We insert, from the Christian Watchman, an extract from a letter to the editor from a gentleman in Illinois, and leave the statements with our readers as matter of reflection.

I will say to you, that all which can now be done by all christendom, would not save the Valley from having a majority of Catholics in ten years. You can have no idea of the floods of Germans, principally from Austria, that are pouring into the Valley, all Catholics. In St. Louis alone, the large church is filled every Sunday, at ten o'clock, with a German audience who hear mass, and have, afterwards a sermon in German.

All these emigrants came the present year.—They are nothing to the numbers that have gone into the country. Every steam boat brings more or less. Accounts that may be relied on, say that large bodies are coming next year from Austria, the Catholic cantons of Switzerland, and the different states of Germany. Congress, you know, has granted a township of land to a body of Poles.

Their agents are here finding a place to locate their grant. That township will be a rallying point for that people; and the agents state that many thousands of their countrymen now scattered over Europe, and thousands now in Poland, intend coming to this land of liberty, during the next five years.—They are all Staunch Catholics.

Ireland has just begun, in earnest, to come out of her hive. Many thousands of her Catholic children may be expected here, every year.—Catholic countries will now send us thousands where they formerly sent one. The reason is plain: Catholic emigrants tell me that multitudes are coming now, that would rather have starved than come many years ago. We have now priests, and Catholic churches, so that our children "will not become heathen," or in other words, Protestant. This is the reason given by them, and is undoubtedly the true one. I have no doubt but the emigration from Ireland alone, for the next five years, will yearly average fifty thousand to the Valley. Every one acquainted with the subject rates it much higher than one hundred thousand. But Germany, Switzerland, and Poland, are emigrating by wholesale. In a very short time, all these can vote, and the Catholic influence is now felt here, powerfully, and will shortly be decisive. Emigration, alone, in ten years, will give the Catholics a complete ascendancy. But every other thing works in their favor. Their schools in the Valley are numerous, even now, and educate our richest and most influential citizens' children of the Protestant class. These schools are filled to overflowing. Among non-professing Protestants, the Catholics are popular, and thousands consider them the only bulwark against a union of church and state, which they think the eastern christians are laboring to bring about. The violent publications in our religious papers aid the Catholics much. They are silent, and appear to the world's people to be most cruelly persecuted.—How imprudent are many pieces that appear!—"No Catholic ought to hold any office in the United States, for none can be believed on their oath." This, and the like, do immense injury. Non-professors, who are Protestants by name, can see no difference between a Catholic and a Protestant; both are equally good neighbors and citizens, and such tirades are put down as persecution. The Catholics of American birth scattered over the West, are very good citizens, and it is bad policy to rail against the Catholics, *en masse*. Depend upon it, the course that has been pursued in this respect has been very detrimental to Protestantism. Not all the wealth of the "Propaganda" its priests and Jesuits, could have done as much for their cause in the West, in ten years, as the "burning of the convent" in Charlestown. Popular feeling is much excited here, on this subject.—*Cross & Journal*.

FROM THE BAPTIST REPOSITORY. FROM LIBERIA.

Monrovia, Africa, Oct. 6, 1834.

DEAR BROTHER,—It is with pleasure I embrace an opportunity that presents, to state to you my views and feelings in relation to this place, and to the cause of colonization on this continent. Thousands here are in a state of slavery amongst the native inhabitants of this land. There is not a tribe but what has more or less slaves; even within this colony they are possessed by the natives.

If the foreign slave trade was abolished, still slavery with all its horrors would exist extensively over this whole continent. The foreign slave trade is still carried on, both to the north, and in the south, in the immediate vicinity of this colony. The natives in this vicinity believe in a good and a bad spirit; the one so good that he needs no regard—the other, the cause of all their calamities. When in any difficulty, the bad spirit is offended, and they try every expedient to appease him by offerings of rum, pipes, tobacco, and whatever they have: they really worship the devil, others worship sharks and alligators.—a yearly human sacrifice of a child, nine or ten years old, is made to the sharks within a short distance to the south, at the Bight of Benin. In such a case, can the Christian, can the philanthropist be idle? What is to be done? Shall we look on and see violence, injustice, idolatry, and cruelty, and do nothing? The misanthropist may, but the philanthropist and the christian cannot. Faith takes the field in possession of the promises of God—and reason embraces the safety and protection of the colony as a providential asylum for the commencement of her operations—whilst benevolence lifts her heart to God in fervent prayer for his blessing on her efforts, and ardently desires that asylums of a like nature, may soon surround the maritime margin of this vast continent; and that each accessible point may soon be occupied by men possessing the religious and literary qualifications, fitting them for the most extensive usefulness here as heralds of the cross; that as a surrounding army they may extend the lights of science and the religion of Jesus, from the circumference to the centre of this benighted land, when all this evil will vanish.

I am persuaded that if proper feelings were possessed by Christians generally in America, and they had a true knowledge of the facts, that men, money, and effectual fervent prayers would not be wanting to carry forward this glorious work. The light of science and religion must go hand in hand in this great work. To break those rooted prejudices, acquired by early impressions, requires in the commencement a thorough education. Schools and missionary establishments in and out of the colony in every place where the natives will admit them, ought to be established without delay. Pious male and female teachers, and missionaries are needed by the master—and may God send them, and Christians be workers together with Him in supporting them whilst engaged in their work. Will none of our denomination venture to occupy this field of danger? Who made the climate here? Did not he, who said, "Go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature?" Will any danger, laid before the gospel minister by the providence of God, the wickedness of men, or the malice of devils, be a sufficient excuse for leaving a part of the Lord's field unoccupied? Will not the souls of innocents, devoured by sharks, and of the millions, who yearly in their idolatrous ignorance, are launching into eternity without the knowledge of a Saviour, meet us at the bar of God, and accuse us of neglect of duty to that Saviour who died for sinners? And will not the blood of these souls cleave to the skirts of some of our American brethren? I am without fear, for there is nothing of which a Christian ought to be afraid but sin; for all things worketh together for their good. I am persuaded that I am in the path of duty and have God with me.—"The only thing makes me unhappy, I see more to be done than I can do; and it induces me by prayer and writing, to say, brethren "come over and help us." God has blessed my practice in the fever thus far—I hope and believe a new era has taken place as respects its mortality. I feel but little fear but that nine-tenths might be acclimated safely with proper medical treatment and prudence. May the blessing of God rest on you, and on the Israel of God. Pray for me, pray for Africa, and may God help all Christians in America to pray for us, and to pray until they feel and act with a united energy in spreading the gospel here. Yours in the faith and fellowship of the Gospel.

EZEKIEL SKINNER. Rec. Jonathan Going.

CALVERT-STREET CHURCH, BALTIMORE.

It will be seen from the statement of brother Adams in our present number, that he declines removing to Baltimore. We have much pleasure in stating that our brother Crane has succeeded in procuring the services of a brother from Massachusetts, Elder Binney of West Boylston. He will remove to the field of his labors towards the close of the present month. The M. H. purchased by W. & J. C. Crane, has been undergoing some repairs, but is now ready for worship. Brethren Kerr and Taylor, of this city, purpose spending 3 or 4 weeks in Baltimore, during the month of February, with a view to hold a protracted meeting in the Calvert-street M. H. in conjunction with the Sharp-street church. It is expected that they will be aided by Elder W. F. Broadus; and that a church may be constituted to occupy the Calvert street M. H. Our brother W. Crane, who is now on a visit to this city, speaks in encouraging terms of the prospect of ultimate success in his effort to establish a new interest in this important city.

Rel. Her.

Revival in Foxborough Mass.—Rev. T. C. Tingley, in a letter which we have received, dated 13th ult. writes—"There has been a pleasing revival in this place for several months past. Last spring, a very special anxiety was felt by the church for impenitent sinners, and we believe many fervent petitions were addressed to God in their behalf. The result has been such as demands our warmest gratitude. Seventeen have been baptized, and others, it is expected, will soon be 'buried with Christ' in this holy ordinance. A protracted meeting which we recently held, was greatly blessed, and a number, during that season, were brought to the feet of Jesus. The work still continues, and sinners are enquiring, 'What must we do to be saved?'

COMMUNICATIONS.

FOR THE RECORDER.

ON THE IMPORTANCE OF MISSIONARY READING.

1st. Importance of a judicious selection in general.

At the present period of the world, when it is deluged with books, reviews, pamphlets and newspapers, it is no easy task for common readers to direct their attention so wisely, that much of their time shall not be lost, and worse than lost, by an injudicious choice of matter.

It is no easy task for them to make a proper selection from the immeasurable and heterogeneous mass, that has been accumulating for ages, and that is daily augmenting by the labor of a thousand pens.

It is no easy task to confine their attention to such topics and such works, as would afford them the most substantial benefit, by enlightening their minds, elevating their views, expanding their hearts, and increasing their happiness;—exciting them to noble, vigorous, and successful enterprise; preparing them for the most extensive usefulness in the world, and for the highest enjoyments of God hereafter.

These are the proper objects of books and of reading. Happy would it be for the church and the world, if all the rubbish that fails of this end, and all that is positively pernicious, were burned with the books of the Egeesians, that the word of God and of truth might prevail. Then the energies of the active might be concentrated, well directed and efficient. Then the rising generation, instead of being deluged with fantastic trifles, might be instructed by sober truth;—instead of being poisoned with error, might be nourished with the bread of life; instead of being ruined for this world and the next, might be fitted for usefulness and for heaven.

2nd. With this view of the importance of a judicious selection, it may be proper, in this place, without attempting to give a general directory, to suggest some hints on the utility of missionary reading.

At this era of the Christian Church, when her movements are becoming so general and interesting, as to eclipse the glory of the most splendid revolution of earthly empires, a course of reading which exhibits her progress, and present state, the means by which her borders are enlarged, and by which her triumph is to become universal, demands the first attention of her friends.

From the connexion between knowledge and action, it is obvious, that an increase of knowledge must precede an increase of action. And it is equally obvious, that nothing has contributed more to form the distinguishing features of the present age, as "the age of action," than the discovery and dissemination of important facts, which have led to the production of the grandest designs, and called forth the best efforts of the present generation, and which will finally result in the noblest achievements.

If men are to be universally excited to the work of extending the influence of Christianity and of supporting its institutions, no human means could more directly lead to secure this object, than the dissemination of religious intelligence. If men are expected to aid the Missionary cause, they must be made acquainted with it; and they are best prepared to aid successfully, when they have a clear view of what has been done, what is now doing, and what remains to be done by Missionaries and the friends of missions.

Without extensive knowledge on this subject, who would be competent to manage the mighty engines that are coming into operation, to make them bear with resistless force upon the empire of Zion's adversary? Who would be able to marshal for the glorious enterprise, and lead forward to certain victory,

"The sacramental host of God's elect?"

It might indeed have required some effort in the dark ages to prove "that ignorance is the mother of devotion;" but surely in this era of light, the point need not be labored, that knowledge on Missionary subjects is the parent of a Missionary spirit.

Where is the man, whose heart melted in tender compassion for the miseries of the heathen, while he was unacquainted with their ignorance, their delusions, their abominable and bloody rites, the extreme wretchedness of their "habitations of cruelty," and the awful danger of their eternal ruin? Where is the friend of the heathen, whose bosom is kindled with the hope of their speedy deliverance and salvation, and whose soul is fired with the zeal of an Apostle to effect this glorious and benevolent work, while ignorant of the means by which it is to be accomplished? Where is the man of a true Missionary spirit, who is borne forward by the broad, and deep, and resistless current of a "passion for missions," who is furnished for a successful enterprise in that cause, and prepared for all the self-denials, toils and hardships of a missionary life, while unacquainted with missionary characters, with the history of missionary operations, with the situations of the opening field, and with the nature of the work before him? But suppose the missionary spirit to exist without this knowledge—what could it accomplish? What would it do at home? Would the friend of the heathen give his substance for their salvation, if he knew no means by which his liberality could afford them any important benefit? If so, why is this thricebare pretext so often used, "We know not what becomes of our money, or what good it will do to the heathen." What would it accomplish in the field? "Knowledge is power;" but power without knowledge is weakness. What hope of success could a company of bold athletic men, ignorant, undisciplined and unarmed, encounter the embattled hosts of a well disciplined and regular army? Would you send a child, who had never heard of a battle or a siege, to take possession of a fortress, simply because he exhibited a daring, warlike spirit? The man needs to be thoroughly furnished, who is to take possession of the strong holds of Satan. Some skill in the use of armor that has been proved is requisite, that a stripling might vanquish the champions of error, "that one might chase a thousand, and two put ten thousand to flight."

Should we look at the influence which knowledge of various kinds has upon the characters of men, in the different professions of Divinity, Law, Physic, &c. we could not avoid the conclusion, that extensive knowledge on missionary subjects must have a powerful and salutary influence upon the life and character of the friend of missions, and produce in the world, the most happy effects. It is, perhaps, too often maintained, that a set of peculiar talents are necessary to the Missionary.—No man was ever born a Divine or a Lawyer. No man is born a Missionary;—but a person is formed to that character, by discipline. Born a depraved and selfish being, "he must be born again," and taught by the Holy Spirit to deny himself, and to love the souls of men, and to love the Redeemer of lost men more than he loves his dearest relations or his own life. Then, from the word of God, and other valuable sources, he must derive his principles of action,—his plans of operation,—his commission and his armour,—his hopes and his consolations. Thus thoroughly furnished upon all good works, while the sacred impulse stirs within him,

waking the energies of his soul and urging him to action, with well directed ardor he engages in the benevolent enterprise of rescuing the perishing heathen from the power of the Prince of darkness. Thus furnished, he is prepared to meet disappointments, privations and persecutions; to penetrate the darkest regions of paganism; to parry the fiery darts of the adversary; to disarm the champions of error; to struggle with the wayward disposition of ungodly men, which none but an Almighty arm can rule; to pull down the strong holds of delusion; to put to flight the armies of the aliens; and fearless, to maintain his ground, when infidelity, with all his terrors and deformities,

"From his dark den, blaspheming, drops his chains, And rears his brazen front with thunder scarr'd." Thus furnished, he is prepared to toil, and preach, and pray, with ardor and perseverance, for the salvation of those who hate and abuse him; or with unshaken confidence in God, and christian resignation to his will, to enter the flames of persecution,—the martyr's chariot of fire, and thus in triumph to ascend to glory.

Not is extensive knowledge on Missionary subjects needed by the Missionary alone. To the Ministers of the Gospel too, an acquaintance with this subject is indispensable. On them devolves the management of missionary concerns; and without this knowledge, how could they, as good stewards, discharge this important part of their duty? Under their hands too, the Sons of the Church are to be trained up for missionaries and pastors; and how can ministers acquit themselves in this responsible part of their work, without missionary information and missionary ardor? Or how can they rouse their people to action, and diffuse among them the spirit of the age;—how can they waken the slumbering dead around them, and enlist their powers in the great work of evangelizing and renovating the world? It is presumed, that there is not a neighbourhood in North Carolina or in the United States; which has not a missionary field in the midst of it. When will these fields that now lie waste, be occupied and cultivated, if ministers do not breathe the spirit of missions, and practice the self-denial of missionaries? When also will the destitute and languishing churches, and the waste unorganized population of our land, be furnished with a competent supply of zealous, able, and faithful preachers of the Gospel?

But the salutary influence of missionary reading is not confined to public characters. It extends with powerful effect to private Christians. It promotes, in a high degree, their happiness, their activity, and their usefulness. It elevates their hopes—it opens and warms their hearts;—it regulates their affections;—it purifies their desires;—it multiplies their sources of enjoyment, while it directs their powers more exclusively to the service of Christ, and the advancement of his kingdom.—How many, warmed by the fervor of Maryn, and stimulated by the pious ardour of Anne Hasseltine Judson, have felt a new impulse to Christian action, and more cordially espoused the cause so dear to their hearts. How many thousands, cheered and guided by the light of that orient star, Claudius Buchanan, or the self-denying labours of that eminent servant of God, (lately dead) Wm. Carey, have brought their talents, their influence and their treasures, as grateful offerings to the Prince of Peace, and with pious joy laid them down at his feet. How many thousands more who now scarcely lift a finger to extend the blessings of the Gospel through the earth, would be filled with grateful admiration, and most cordially come up to the help of the Lord, did they but know all that he is doing and intends speedily to do for his kingdom?

But all that can be said of the importance of missionary reading as to its influence on the private christian, the pastor, and the missionary, applies with double force to those who have the ministry in view, and are in the incipient or immediate stages of preparation. He is now forming his character for public life. He has now the best means of pursuing such a course, and of deriving the greatest benefit from it. Without the benefit of such reading, he must fall below the standard required by the spirit of the age in which he is to act. The standard of 1820 would not answer for the spirit of 1835, much less the standard of 1835, for the spirit of 1850.

Every young man, having the ministry in view, who is aware that the spirit of Primitive Christianity ought speedily to be revived throughout the Christian world, and that the spirit of the Apostles must extend its benign influence through the pagan world, and who hopes to see the day, when this spirit shall pervade the earth, cannot but feel the importance of cultivating such a spirit in himself and others, and of forming such a character as to take a leading part in the majestic movements and the rapid advances of the church for 30 years to come. If missionary reading does cherish "this spirit of missions," he will not question its utility, nor refuse its proffered aid.

By such a course of reading, the class of persons now in view, may obtain another view, which in its bearing on the progress of the Gospel, is of no ordinary importance. It will afford him much assistance in deciding the difficult and too often unanswerable questions, "What will you be?"—"What will you do?"—Though he is resolved to obey the call of God, and to devote himself to the service of the church, as an ardent, animated, indefatigable preacher of the Gospel, yet the momentous question, whether he shall be employed in planting or watering churches;—whether he shall preach to Christians, Jews, Mahomedans, or Pagans;—in short, whether he will be a Pastor or a Missionary, may still remain to be decided. It is a question which, at the present day, must be examined; and with prayerful solicitude and deliberation, must be decided in the fear of God, by every intended preacher of the Gospel. Can this decision be safely made, without surveying the vast field that is to be occupied, and the mighty work that is to be accomplished for thirty years to come? Can he ascertain what part of the great field of the world demands his labour, without a comprehensive view of the real and comparative wants of different nations,—the means adapted to supply them most speedily and successfully,—and the prospects of the comparative usefulness of his own talents in different parts of the field, and different parts of the work required in the conversion of the world? And where can he obtain this comparative view of things, without a course of missionary reading? Or how could he, without this view, be prepared to fill that public station in the kingdom of Christ, which the Great Head of the Church is pleased to assign him?

But the direct influence of this course of reading is not limited to the followers of Christ. The revivals of religion during the last twenty years, which have in no inconsiderable degree been prompted by religious and missionary intelligence,—the testimony of those who have been awakened and brought to repentance, by missionary reading,—together with the nature of the subject itself,—abundantly prove that it is wisely adapted to promote the spiritual and everlasting good of those who have no true love to Christ;—no interest in that Saviour, who has redeemed and who is now gathering in his elect. In this view it may be recommended to them also, as infinitely more worthy of their attention, than the productions of abu-