

MORNING STAR.

Jaffna, September 13th, 1849.

OUR WONDROUS ATMOSPHERE.

The atmosphere rises above us with its cathedral dome, arching towards the heaven, to which it is the most familiar synonyme and symbol. It floats around us like that grand object, which the Apostle John saw in his vision—"a sea of glass like unto crystal." So massive is it that when it begins to stir, it tosses about great ships like playthings, and sweeps cities and forests, to destruction before it. And yet it is so mobile that we have lived years in it before we can be persuaded that it exists at all, and the great bulk of mankind never realize the truth that they are bathed in an ocean of air. Its weight is so enormous, that iron shivers before it like glass; yet a soap-ball soars through it with impunity, and the tiniest insect waves it aside with its wing. Its ministers lavishly to all the senses. We touch it not, but it touches us.—Its warm south wind brings back color to the pale face of the invalid; its cool west winds refresh the fevered brow, and make the blood mantle in our cheeks; even its north blasts bring into new vigor the hardened children of our rugged clime. The eye is indebted to it for all the magnificence of sunrise, the full brightness of mid-day, the chastened radiance of the gleaming, and the clouds that cradle near the setting sun. But for it the rainbow would want its "triumphal arch," and the winds would not send their fleecy messengers on errands round the heavens. The cloud weather would not shed its snow-fathers on the earth, nor would drops of dew gather on the flowers. The kindly rain would never fall, nor hail-storm nor fog diversify its tanned and unshadowed forehead and heat dazzle and burn up all things. Were there no atmosphere, the evening sun would in a moment set, and, without warning plunge the earth in darkness.—But the air keeps in her hand a sheaf of his rays, and lets them slip but slowly through her fingers, so that the shadows of evening gather by degrees and the flowers have time to bow their heads and each creature space to find a place of rest, and nestle to repose.

In the morning, the garish sun would at once burst from the bosom of night, and blaze above the horizon, but the air watches for his coming, and sends at first one little ray to announce his approach, and then another, and by and by a handful, and so gently draws aside the curtain of night, and slowly lets the light fall on the face of the sleeping earth, till her eyelids open, and, like man; she goeth forth again to her labor till the evening.—*New England Puritan.*

PRESS ON.

We find the following striking sentiment, the key to fortune, in a little English periodical:

The mystery of Napoleon's career was this: under all difficulties and discouragements to press on. It solves the problem of all heroes; it is the rule by which to judge rightly of all wonderful success and triumphal marches of fortune and genius. It should be the motto of all, high and low, fortunate and unfortunate, so called—"press on," never despair, never be discouraged, however stormy the heavens, however dark the way, however great the difficulties or repeated the failure, "press on." If fortune has played false with thee to-day, do thou play true for this to-morrow. Let the foolishness of yesterday make thee wise to-day. If thy affections have been poured out like water in the desert, do not sit down and perish of this, but "press on"—a beautiful oasis is before thee, and thou mayst reach it if thou wilt. If another has been false to thee, do not thou increase the evil by being false to thyself. Do not say the world has lost its poetry and beauty; it is not so; and even if it be so, make thine own poetry and beauty, by a brave, a true and above all, a religious life.

FAVORABLE INDICATIONS FOR AFRICA.

Rev. J. L. Wilson, a missionary of the American Board at Gaboon in West Africa, has an article in the Southern Presbyterian Review, in which he specifies some features of society in Africa which favor the introduction of the Gospel. We give a sketch of some of his thoughts.

The social character of the natives is favorable. Not that they now are in the enjoyment of social and domestic peace—not that they have not, by the agency of foreigners been excited to great cruelties. But they are in their natural dispositions mild; their choice of pursuits is peaceable, and they are sociable in their natural intercourse. The African is ever ready to share with others his pleasures, and everything that he can call his own. This disposition, unfolding under the influence of the Gospel, and the agency of the Holy Ghost, lends a powerful aid to the diffusion of the Gospel.

Another favorable circumstance is, the high estimation in which the white man is held. Everywhere

among the natives is found the same intense desire to see the white man, and meet his wants, and the same readiness to acknowledge his superiority. This superiority, in the hands of wicked men, has been turned to unlauded purposes; and in the hands of a faithful missionary, it may be made an instrument of incalculable good. And the more so, since the tradition is universal in West Africa, that the white man owes all his advantages to the fact, that he has not departed from the religion which was given to the parents of the race.

In the next place, the pagan tribes here, have no attachment to any well defined system of false religion. They have a vague belief in one Supreme Being, but allow him no actual participation in the government of the world. They have some notions of a future state; they believe in evil spirits, supposed to be the spirits of wicked men now dead, and capable of inflicting injuries upon the living. But all their religious notions are fragmentary, incoherent, and capable of opposing no effectual resistance to the Gospel.

There is now a general desire among the maritime tribes for Christian teachers. Fifteen or twenty years ago, the feeling was just the reverse. Now, the superstitious dread of reading and writing has disappeared, and every tribe on the coast would gladly welcome a Christian missionary. This results mainly from a view of the secular benefits which attend the Gospel, yet it opens a wide door of usefulness.

Decided success has attended missionary efforts here. Before 1833, no Protestant mission had been established between Sierra Leone and the Cape of Good Hope. Since that period, no less than ten distinct missions have been established on the West Coast, and all are in a flourishing condition. Eight thousand children have been gathered into mission schools—more than six thousand persons have been hopefully converted from heathenism. There is a wide and effectual door open for Christianity on that continent.—*New England Puritan.*

GREAT PAY FOR LITTLE WORK.—At a late meeting in London, Sir Culling Eardly Smith stated the following facts, and invited contradiction if he were wrong.

"In the year 1842, the Pope received a sum of between £10,000 and £20,000 from the King of Naples to make a Neapolitan woman a saint. In the year 1839 or 1840, or thereabouts, the Pope received a sum of between £5,000 and £10,000 from an Indian Begum, the mother of Colonel Dyce Sonbe, to say one single mass for the salvation of her soul."—*N. York Obs.*

VELOCITY OF ELECTRICITY.—Notwithstanding the almost inconceivable speed of this subtle agent, its velocity has been reduced to actual measurement, by a contrivance which is both simple and unerring. It is found to pass along a coil of wire at the rate of 200,000 miles per second.

LEISURE HOURS.—It was a beautiful observation of the late William Hazlitt, that "there is room enough in human life to crowd almost every art and science in it. If we pass no day without a line—visit no place without the company of a book—we may with ease fill libraries or empty them of their contents. The more we do, the more we can do; the more busy we are, the more leisure we have."

NEAT REBUKE.—"Are a man and his wife both one?" asked the wife of a certain red-eyed gentleman who, in a state of stupefaction, was holding his aching head with both hands, "Yes, I suppose so," was the reply. "Well, then," said she, "I came home drunk last night, and ought to be ashamed of myself." This back-handed rebuke from a long suffering, but affectionate wife, effectually cured him of his brutish propensity.

VALUE OF HONOR ON A DEATH-BED.—A distinguished character had an extraordinary mark of distinction and honor sent him by his prince, as he lay on his death-bed. "Alas said he," looking coldly upon it, "this is a mighty fine thing in this country; but I am just a going to a country where it will be of no service to me."—*New York Obs.*

A HINDU THE INSTRUMENT OF CONVERSION.—The Rev. Dr. Strinckhoff once visited a man in Myrtlebone workhouse, who gave the following account of his conversion fifty years before. "He said, that being in an English vessel at Calcutta, he had gone one Sunday on shore to perform some work. While he was engaged in it, a Hindu observing him, said to him, Do you call yourself a Christian? To which he replied that he did. Why, said the Hindu, does your God require you to work on the Sabbath day? To which he did not attempt to make an answer; but on returning to the vessel he found these questions incessantly recurring to his mind, till they brought him on his knees to acknowledge his ignorance and sin; and from that moment he dated his conversion to God.—*ib.*

[We are most happy to receive Mr. Layard as a Subscriber and Contributor for the Morning Star. We commend to the attention of our readers the subject of his present letter, and hope it will awaken interest enough to draw out a response from some of our native friends. By such co-operation, valuable information may be gained, and ideas suggested, of great practical importance to the active and enterprising. To such, we would say: Here stands forth a friend, ready to help you in the attainment of what may be both useful and profitable. Be true to your own interests then, and join hands with him in the undertaking.]

To the Editor of the Morning Star.

Sir,
Having at various times seen a few copies of your paper and being much pleased with the exertions made to introduce through its medium, knowledge and improvements among the inhabitants of this District, I beg you will enroll me among your Subscribers and I herewith send you my subscription.

I trust you will occasionally permit me to avail myself of your columns to lay before our Tamil brethren a few facts and theories which have for some time occupied my attention. In so doing my object is as much to gain information as to impart it and I invite your readers to come forward and offer their suggestions on the various topics broached.

And first a few facts and questions concerning Bees and their produce. In England the culture of bees is followed by rich and poor for pleasure and for profit and the profits are often large—a good hive yielding in one season from 20 to 100 lbs. of honey at 2s. per lb. In America I have seen much beautiful honey gathered from the wild bees, but this uncertain supply is fast giving way to the culture of the bee under the fostering care of the bee master. And why should we not cultivate the wild bee of this country? What is wanting but a little industry and energy at first? In the south of the island wild bees often take up their abode in houses, chatties, hollow trees, &c. and I know of one swarm which selected an old lantern for their hive and made good honey in it, and I am informed that a yearly supply used to be taken from a hollow in the noble Tamarind tree which overshadows my Court House. This proves that they will readily take up their quarters in covered dwellings. How long will the same swarm remain in such places and will they multiply and become domesticated?—How many varieties of bees are there which produce edible honey? I know of several very similar to the European bee, besides which there is a small black species with the Chingalese call "*Canea mimassa*."—I am informed that in this Province there are two kinds—one frequenting holes in trees, the other suspending its comb from branches, is much less than the first.

Do your readers know of any one plant which is very much frequented by bees, one to which they give a decided preference? if so, how long does this plant continue in flower? I find a bean or creeper, called palla by the Tamils, very much resorted to and evidently with success from the loads my little friends carry away with them.

I must not however take up too much of your space at one time, Mr. Editor, and will therefore close my letter. Should I find that the subject engages the attention of any of your correspondents and meets with your approbation I will in my next describe one or two useful and simple hives, with the treatment adopted in Europe and India (where I am informed bees are domesticated largely, more particularly in the Nilgiris) and offer suggestions as to the mode of management best suited to this country.

When this subject has been fully discussed I propose treating of the silk spinning moths of this country and the possibility of rearing the cochineal and gum-lack insects, and rendering servicable many of our indigenous productions.

I remain, Sir, yours, &c. E. L. LAYARD.

[For the Morning Star.]

THE JAFFNA NATIVE IMPROVEMENT SOCIETY.

The subscribers to the above Society and the Public are respectfully informed that through the kindness of the Honorable the Chief Justice, the Patron of the Society, the Committee are enabled to lay upon the Library Table, the following periodicals, viz—

The North British Review Chamber's Edinburgh Journal; the Economist; the Examiner the Edinburgh Christian Magazine; the English Presbyterian Messenger, &c.

All who are willing to read them may read in the Library by conforming to the rules of the Society. Those who are at a distance may have the privilege of reading them at their homes by raising their subscriptions, each to one shilling and six pence a month. Names of subscribers will be thankfully received by the President or the Secretary and the privileges of the Society will be invariably extended to all who are willing to join the establishment.

By order of the Committee, J. BASKAMPULLY, Pro. Secretary.

Jaffna, Sept. 10, 1849.

