

THE SALVATION ARMY IN CHRISTCHURCH.

[FROM A CORRESPONDENT.]

Christchurch, Sept. 12.

I daresay some account of the doings of the Salvationists here will interest your readers. You are aware, a few months ago a small party of Salvationist officers arrived in Dunedin, and from their own point of view a successful footing has been obtained there. It was not to be expected that Christchurch, with its clerical and sanctimonious associations, would escape the notice of the Hallelujah Brigade; accordingly, a few skirmishers were detached for this duty. The Gaiety Theatre, after a brief financial parley, surrendered; and now a section of the Army "hold the fort" in Cathedral Square. It was not long before its adherents were requisitioned for a big drum and brazen instruments and uniforms, and now a number of smartly-dressed recruits, and Hallelujah Lasses in dark blue dresses and poke bonnets, testify to the liberality of the deluded ones.

This Salvation mania may be regarded as a mild form of the epidemic which swept over Europe during the sixteenth, seventeenth, and part of the eighteenth centuries, which was signalised by the burning of witches and heretics, such merciless and atrocious cruelties having only been rendered possible from the great mass of the people being thoroughly imbued with a belief in the existence of devils and demons by their catechists and teachers.

The Salvationist leaders of the present day are similarly obtaining a fictitious and transitory influence by terrorising over the minds of morbidly inclined people by conjouring up vivid pictures of a personal devil roaming about seeking for victims, and a material hell with its quenchless fire, it being represented that the only escape is plenty of knee drill, a complete surrender of the reasoning faculties by which a childlike faith in the redeeming blood of a cruelly murdered immortal is alone possible, and the miraculous sacrifice conceived and accepted as a logical, consistent, and natural event, essential to salvation, combined with liberal contributions to enable the "officers" to promulgate, advertise, and spread through the land such "glad tidings" of "peace and joy."

When the promoters of the "Blood and Fire" doctrines first commenced their missionary labours, they received a good deal of petting and patronage from high church dignitaries, it being said that good work was being done in spreading a knowledge of gospel truths among a large section of the population quite outside the pale of religion; and the generality of the clergy, knowing how intelligent criticism is extending and freeing men's minds from the trammals of creeds and dogmas, were disposed to regard with satisfaction and complacency the prospect of upraising a new multitude of devotees as a formidable counterpoise and barrier to the freethought and secular tendencies of the age. But a change in their views is already perceptible; they now find their congregations thinning, and the offertories falling off, in favour of the more exciting scenes and discourses of the rival expounders of their own doctrines, and it will be a curious commentary upon their previous encouragement and support, if, as is very probable, a pulpit crusade is commenced before long, denouncing the immorality and blasphemy of these salvationist and hallelujah meetings.

It suited the policy of General Grab-all to begin his propaganda with the low multitude as a good advertising medium for drawing funds from other classes, and appears to have admirably answered the purpose; but now the rag-tag and bob-tail may hang on to his skirts and receive a certain amount of encouragement and toleration, being useful for public demonstrations by which the adherence of a paying class has been secured—and it is a perception of this fact that is bringing about a revulsion in the public mind.

Col. Ingersoll pithily represents the new faith and the old when he says:—"I believe in the new firm of 'Health and Heresy,' rather than the old partnership of 'Disease and Divinity,' doing business at the old sign of the 'Skull and Crossbones.'"

Gems.

He that wrestles with us strengthens our nerves and sharpens our skill. Our antagonist is our helper.—Burke.

Life is not so short but that there is always time enough for courtesy. Self-command is the main elegance.—Emerson.

Do not unto another what thou wouldst not have another do unto thee; this is the whole law, the rest is but commentary.—HILLET.

Wishing, dreaming, intending, murmuring, and repining, are all idle and profitless employments. The only manly occupation is to keep doing.

Major Tucker, the leader of the Salvation Army in India, was put in prison because the commissioner was profoundly grieved that the people were addressed as sinners.

It is one of the most curious of moral facts that a stupid man, although he would indignantly reject the idea of his own stupidity, is always suspicious of the orthodoxy in his own belief of a man whom he feels to be intellectually cleverer than himself.—Saturday Review.

In heaven, we are told, there is more joy over one sinner that repenteth than over ninety-and-nine who haven't gone astray. It is just the other way here below. There is more joy over one righteous man who goes astray than over ninety-and-nine thousand sinners who have kept at it all their lives.—Boston Transcript.

A member of the Paris Ecole Pratique d'Acclimation has discovered a species of spider on the African coast the firm and long web of which resembles yellow silk very closely, and is said to be almost as good as the product of real silk worms. The syndicate of the Lyons silk merchants has closely investigated the matter, and the result is reported as highly favorable. There seems to be no difficulty in the way of acclimatising the new silk producer in France.

The Saturday Review says:—"Mr. Palmer has some amusing stories to tell us illustrative of the popular Russian view of English religion. Thus a Russian employed as doorkeeper at an English chapel, on being asked how soon the service would be over, replied, 'I think it will soon be over, for a long time since they sat down to sleep.' Again a Russian lady pitied the English, as being worse off than any other class of religionists; 'even the Lutherans have Luther, and the Calvinists have Calvin, though they don't know how to use them,' but the English have no saint to help them, so they must certainly go to a bad place."

Oblivion is infinitely preferable to the Christian theory of a future state, for, if we become insensible to happiness, we are also beyond pain. Death will be an eternal, dreamless, unconscious rest. According to Christian teachings, on the other hand, ninety-nine of every hundred human beings are consigned to a never-ending torture of indescribable horror. If my wife, if my children and friends, are doomed to endless torment, there can be no heaven or happiness to me; all the crowns of glory, all the golden harps, all the songs of heaven's hosts, could not bring me a single hour of happiness, much less the eternity of enjoyment that is promised to the faithful.—Dr. Arter, in "The Bible: Is it of Divine Origin?"

The Constantinople correspondent of the New York Tribune writes:—"One hears a great deal in America about religion that has no trade-mark of good deeds. But the full capability of the race in this respect can only be seen under Eastern skies. Here, you can see a man who thinks no more before committing robbery than before picking a ripe plum from the tree—a man who can kill a neighbour with as clear a conscience as he can wish him good morning,—a man who can tell to a hair the number of blows with a club that will kill, and the number that will merely stun, and who understands how to pad a club with sand so that it will kill without breaking the skin; and you will find the same man talking to you about love to God and about diligence in prayer, producing conscientious scruples about eating his mutton unless it has been butchered in a peculiar way, groaning in spirit when by accident he kills a flea, and calling a servant to remove a bedbug from his wrist, lest his own less skilled fingers might mangle the gentle insect."