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OUR MONTHLY.

A

RELIGIOUS AND LITERARY MAGAZINE.

JANUARY--1871.

THE MANTLE OF ELIJAH.

BY GEORGE LEE.

FRONTISPIECE.

SNOW! Snow on the housetops, where it lies white and pure; snow in the streets, where it is soon converted into a muddy slush; snow on the trees, on the fences, on the meadows, and flying in big, damp flakes in the chilly air; snow on the hats and overcoats of hurrying pedestrians, and on the broad backs of the teamsters, who cower and shiver on their high seats as they impatiently urge on their steaming horses; snow lying white and untrodden in the narrow lane, leading whither nobody wants to go, on the wooden steps of a decayed and perishing house, in a mean little room of which is a woman and a boy. The boy is lame, and the woman is dying.

"Johnny, my darling," she says feebly, "is it snowing yet?"

"Yes, dear mamma, as hard as ever it can."

She draws a long, long sigh, then says again:

"Johnny, my darling!"

"Yes, dear mamma."

"Are you *sure* the minister said he would come to-day?"

"Real sure, mamma. He said he would be here by noon."

"What time is it now?"

The little boy climbs upon a chair, and after studying for a moment the face of the clock, which ticks on its unpainted wooden shelf, says slowly:

"Half-after 'leven; but I know he'll come."

She draws another long breath, like one who is wayworn and weary, and stretches out a pitifully thin, white hand.

He goes to her and puts his own small hand into that poor thin one.

"You will be seven years old to-morrow, Johnny."

"Yes, just seven, mamma."

"What do you think will become of you when I am dead?"

"I don't know, mamma," he says, clinging to her and beginning to weep.

"You have been a great comfort to me, my darling—a better son than your wicked mother has ever deserved. You are like your father, dear child," she continues, softly stroking his forehead. "You never saw him—not even his picture. I gave it to your sister. Poor little Maggie! I wonder if she is alive."

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A GOOD CARD FOR IRELAND.

BY PROF. WM. M. BLACKBURN, D. D.

PART I.

IRELAND WITHOUT THE CARD.

THE annals are brief concerning John Edmunds, yet they give us the warp and woof of our story, while we do the weaving. His was a sad heart when the good king, Edward VI, was buried, and the hope of reform seemed to be laid in the grave, for John was one of the early Protestants of England. As honest yeomen, he and his best Cheshire neighbors had come to think for themselves, and they liked the plain talk of a preacher with the gospel on his lips, rather than the bad Latin of a priest with the missal in his hands.

"Why shouldn't we?" said John, one November day, when battening his cottage, to keep his tenderlings from the cold, and certain trusty neighbors were looking on to see how he did it. "A man can work more cheerily when big thoughts are thumping in his brain. Many a day's hard earnings have we paid to the priest, just for that we did not think the wiser thing. And I wot that the best bargain ever I made was when I gave a week's savings for that gospel book of Tyndale's, which saith: 'Search the Scriptures.' It maketh the way to heaven for us laboring men quite different from what the priest doth."

"Ye will be wise to hide it now," replied John Harvey; "for, as I hear, Queen Mary is likely to order all the Bibles to be burned, and the readers along with them."

"Do ye hear," asked Abel Ellis, "what they're doing with Master Latimer, the man who loved to preach to the like of us, and Cranmer, the archbishop, whose fault is that he hath not

wit enough to find the mass in the gospels?"

John drove no nail while it was told how these good men were arrested and thrown into the old London tower. The men talked in a low voice, with eyes glancing about them, as if a sheriff might be coming.

"They will go soon, I reckon," said John; "and when they fall such oaks as the great preachers, they'll clear off a thicket of such bushes as we are. The fire kindleth in the forest, and the twigs must burn as well as the trees."

"Would we were twigs," said Abel Ellis, "and then it were easy to be martyrs. But for one who can think, and feel, and dread the flames, and love his wife and children, it is not so easy to be burned as it is glorious. John, how would you like to beg for life with a halter about your neck?"

John was on the ladder, looking at the wall, trying to beat down his emotions by using his hammer. His eye was moist. There seemed to be a mist about the nail that he wished to drive. He pressed hard together those lips which had quivered that morning, when he was reading, by his hearthstone, the Lord's words, "When they persecute you in this city, flee ye into another." He seemed again to hear the question of his little Alice, "Will they hurt you, papa?" He could not then answer her; he could not now answer the man at his ladder's foot. His friends left him in a deep study.

In those times a line of human tongues was a telegraph, and the news went up quickly from London to Chester. Reports were borne of Queen

Mary's intention to marry the bigot, Philip of Spain, to overthrow all Protestant hopes and plans, to restore the Romish worship, to put the Bible under the ban, and to punish all opposers of the mass and the Latin ritual. One Cheshire man was often shouting, "Long live the Queen," the loudest of the aldermen. He was John Edwards, the innkeeper, whose wife was the sister of John Edmunds.

"And soon die all who wish that the Queen may live long enough to repent and be merciful," said the Protestant John to himself. He also thought, "Popery knows no relationships. 'Now the brother shall betray the brother to death,' as saith the gospel." He took counsel with his neighbors. Were the rumors true? Was there danger?

"All true," said Abel Ellis, who had an ear for the latest tidings; "and you'll soon hear worse." In London they say to the bold preachers, 'You have the word, but we have the sword.' Die, or flee—that is the choice left us. As for myself, I could die bravely, if I were alone in the world; but when the strings of one's heart are tied to those of his house——" The voice of the strong man faltered.

"Why, then, one must do something more than sit still and weep over it," said John Edmunds. "'Die and show your faith,' say some, but I've a mind to flee and show mine. For doth it not require faith to go forth, not knowing whither? And how can we flee, when permission to leave the country is refused?"

John Harvey entered. It was good to see his frank face, but it seemed ill to look on the man who was following him. The stranger was a priest, well shorn and clerically dressed. He might be a spy, an informer, a traitor. "Fear him not," said Harvey; "he is a good gospeller, a secret reader of the Bible. He is Thomas Jones, of Wales."

Priest Jones explained himself. He was not suspected of being a Protestant. He could travel where he chose. He might lead a little band to some place of safety. He would like to be

engaged by some circle of gospellers as a teacher, and preach to them, rather privately, on Sundays.

"God has sent him to us," said Mrs. Ellis; "we will be his flock. But where shall we find fold and pasture?"

"The Lord is our shepherd, we shall not want," replied the happy priest; "he has green pastures for us."

"Hear my plan," said Harvey. "I learn that Ireland is not much suspected of heresy, as the queen calls it. Many are running thither, just now, and they are not yet tribulated, for the hunters care not to search where they think there is no game. It wearies the hounds, all for nothing."

"How to get there—that requires faith," said John Edmunds.

The affair was wisely managed, and no lies told. Priest Jones simply took over a few friends with him to Dublin, and the sea-port officials pressed them with no hard questions. Not even was there a rummage of their goods to find the Bibles hidden deep in their packs.

And now we read in "Ware's Annals of Ireland:"

"1554. This year, several of the Protestants of England fled over into Ireland, by reason that Queen Mary began to persecute them for their religion, viz.: John Harvey, Abel Ellis, John Edmunds, and Henry Haugh, all Cheshire men; who, bringing over their goods and chattels, lived in Dublin and became citizens thereof, it not being known wherefore they came hither until Queen Mary's death. These families having one Thomas Jones, a Welshman, a Protestant priest, privately amongst them, who read service and the Scripture to them upon Sundays, and other days, secretly: all this not being discovered until Queen Mary's death."

There were men in Ireland, Archbishop George Brown at their head, who did not take such care to keep secret their plans of reform. They struck openly and hard at the evils of Romanism. Perhaps they did not read their Bibles enough in private, nor depend enough upon God and the power of his

written word. They tried the force of law against the papal errors and practices. By an act of Parliament, the authority of the Pope had been renounced, his supporters were declared to be traitors, convents had been dissolved, and the King of England had been declared the visible head of the Church. Famous images had been destroyed; the statue of the Virgin Mary had been burned, and "St. Patrick's Staff" had been cast into the fire.

Better still, English Bibles were placed in every parish church, and King Edward's liturgy was introduced. A few zealous preachers were making known the gospel. Some altars were removed, and the communion-table set in their place, so that the mass ceased, and the Lord's Supper was celebrated.

"If you insist upon the English liturgy," said Dowdal, the primate, "then shall every illiterate fellow read service."

"No," replied the lord-deputy, Saint Leger, "your grace is mistaken; for we have too many illiterate priests among us already, who can neither pronounce the Latin, nor know what it means, any more than the common people that hear them. But when the people hear the litany in English, they and the priest will then understand what they pray for."

"Beware of the clergy's curse," said the angry primate.

"I fear no strange curse," answered Saint Leger, "so long as I have the blessing of that Church which I believe to be the true one."

This liturgy is said to have been the first book printed in Ireland. Its date was 1551, and one mistake was not to print it and the Bible in the Irish language. Truth and worship are of little avail, unless rendered in the common tongue of the people.

The acts of these reformers were discovered before Queen Mary's death. She might have overturned them, had not a card raised a laugh, when a commission was intended to terrify.

PART II.

HOW THE CARD WENT TO IRELAND.

Queen Mary was troubled about the Irish affairs. Heresy had crept into "the isle of the saints." The reformers, in her eyes, were deforming the Church. To pray in English was a great sin! To burn images, renounce the Pope, read the Bible, set aside the mass and the altars, and make Protestant laws, were evils that must not be endured. She would send over a special commissioner, to restore the old order of things.

She chose Dr. Henry Cole, dean of St. Paul's, for the business. A very fit man, for he had taken an active part in the burning of Cranmer, and he knew how to apply fire to heretics so as to make it effective. By this time (it was the year 1558) he was able to show a long list of persons who had been punished with death for their heresy, and threaten to make another as long among the Irish, if they did not come meekly back into the Roman fold. Doom was coming with Dr. Cole.

His commission was given to him. He put it nicely into a leathern box, and departed. On his way he rested at Chester, greatly to the delight of the mayor of that city, who called to see him at the inn.

"I'll teach the Irish how to handle our religion," said Dr. Cole, freely and pompously; "St. Patrick did not make cleaner sweep of the serpents of that country, than I shall do of the disturbers. They burned his staff; they shall now find my commission more terrible." Then, taking the tremendous document out of his box, he said: "Here is a commission that shall lash the heretics of Ireland."

The mayor enjoyed the ardent speech, and a sight of the queen's paper. But the hostess, Elizabeth Edwards, sister of John Edmunds, was not of his temper. Such bigotry and boasting were more than distasteful. She listened in silence, and waited her time to defeat the mission of the dean.

Perhaps her thought was, "Let not him that girdeth on his harness boast himself as he that putteth it off."

The doctor felt quite at home, and when the time for parting came, he very politely showed the mayor down stairs, and paid some fine compliments at the door. "That's the man for the work," thought the mayor, as he proudly walked away, "and the Cheshire fugitives may be glad to sail back to their native town."

While the doctor was thus so polite to his visitor, the hostess, Elizabeth, opened his box, took out his commission, and in its place put in a sheet of paper, with a pack of cards wrapt therein, a very knavish card being uppermost. "Let him beat the Irish with that club, if he likes," she said to herself, and then studied how to entertain her guest, so as to keep him from boasting of his commission. The next day he rode to the water-side, and the wind and weather serving him, he sailed for Dublin, where he was housed in the castle early in October.

"I have an important message from the queen," was the word sent to Lord Fitzwalter, the governor.

"Serious business," thought this high official, and he at once summoned the council, and required the doctor to appear before that wise body, and present the case.

Such promptness was pleasing to the man whose power was to shine forth from the leathern box. He appeared before the council, and spoke on this wise: "Her Majesty, our gracious queen, being solicitous for the happiness of all her subjects, especially those of this long-blessed isle, and devoted to the cause of that holy religion of which our gracious father, the Pope, is the guardian on earth, hath sent me, a most unworthy servant, to proclaim such edicts, and ordain such measures, as shall serve to restore to Ireland that ancient religion, which hath been threatened by heretics and sectaries, those wolves which are let loose to harry and devour the flock."

"Hear! hear! Long live the queen!"

was the response of certain councillors. "A hearty welcome to the queen's commissioner!"

"These fanatics, deceivers, wicked and abominable men, robbing Ireland of her glory, and fattening on the spoils of the churches—these image-breakers and haters of the holy mass are rebels and traitors, and I come to repress them, by good laws, if they will receive them, but by just punishments if they resist."

"Ireland wants no persecutors," said one of the bolder men in the council. "If these Protestants are in error, invite them to meet you; and then, if you are able, convince them by argument."

"Argument?" exclaimed the excitable doctor; "here is my argument—the queen's order and commission. And be sure that I shall use the full extent of the power granted therein to me."

"Let the commission be read," said Lord Fitzwalter, receiving the box from the doctor, and handing it to his secretary.

The box was opened, when nothing appeared, save a pack of cards, with the knave of clubs uppermost!

"What! how is that?" was the general utterance, amid the astonishment and confusion. The governor began to smile. The faces of those who had so heartily welcomed the speech-maker were fiery.

"Well, I know that I had a commission when I left the royal court," said Dr. Cole; "but what has become of it?" That was the perplexing question.

"Let us have another commission," replied the governor; "and, meanwhile, we will shuffle the cards."

Back to London went Dr. Cole, venting his wrath upon the way.

PART III.

WHAT THE CARD DID FOR IRELAND.

On the English coast, in mid-November, was a man waiting for the

storms to lull, and a favorable wind to carry him over to Dublin. We know him by his leathern box, which he guards as if it were full of gold. If he has anything to do with cards, it is only to amuse himself while the waves are growling against him.

Suddenly he hears tidings which disturb him. Queen Mary is dead. The commission, which cost him so much pains to renew, is worthless. He turns back, leaving the sea to its storms, and Ireland to the heretics. His life-work is about done; the new queen will have little use for such a man.

We cross over to Dublin. In the house of John Edmunds is a company of secret Protestants, who scarcely dare to thank God with their lips for His removal of the queen, but they feel it in their hearts. They, too, have laughed over the joke upon Dr. Cole, although Mrs. Ellis has said of the affair, "This is the finger of God." Had they been as superstitious as some of the papists of Dublin, they would have said that

the cards had, by a miracle, crowded out the terrible commission.

In due time the mystery is cleared up by a letter from the sister of John Edmunds, who replies to her: "You saved Ireland from an awful scourge of persecution."

Protestant affairs move on again, in that country, with moderate success. The hidden worshipers of God may come into the light of open day. Thomas Jones may preach the gospel with public boldness. Wiser men follow those who had started the movement for reform.

One day, in later years, if we may credit the tradition, Elizabeth Edwards is surprised by a strange commission from her queen. She is to have her reward. For Lord Fitzwalter has often told the joke of the cards, and found out by whose strategy it had come to pass. He has informed the queen, Elizabeth, and she grants to the good woman of Chester, during her life, a pension of forty pounds a year.

EDGAR A. POE.

THE Westminster Review for October, contains an article on American literature that will take rank as one of the most amusing criticisms of the English press. It is fortunately constructed like some old blunderbuss, and kicks harder than it shoots. Though aimed across the Atlantic, it recoils most disastrously on British literature. But we refer to it here, only because it gives us the text upon which we would speak. The time has, perhaps, come when the wicked world of literary prejudice and favoritism will hear some words about the man whose name heads this article, which shall be neither apotheosis nor malediction. The pendulum of literary judgment is usually carried as far past the truth, on one side, as the impetus it could get from its variation from the truth on the other side would carry it. Only after the world is weary of the

oscillations does it rest at last in that temperate verdict which all history can approve. Twelve years ago the Edinburgh Review said, "Edgar A. Poe was incontestably one of the most worthless persons of whom we have any knowledge in the Republic of letters."

But the Westminster, in its last issue says, "Next to Longfellow, the American poet, most popular in this country, is the erratic and ill-fated Virginian, Edgar A. Poe." Whether it be complimentary to English taste to say that the "most worthless man in the Republic of letters," is the second most popular American poet in England, is a question the decision of which we leave to the Reviews. We quote these sentences only to show the two opposite elevations of the pendulum, and what a tremendous arc it has described in twelve years. *In fact*, Poe is not