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EDITORIAL BRIEFS.

BY PRESIDENT L. M. ATWOOD, D. D.

A CHURCH must be rich indeed that can spare from its ranks a man like JAMES H. SWAN. He was an ingrained Christian and gentleman. To know him and not to admire and love him would be severe self-condemnation. His religion was of the every-day variety. Bring an integral and inseparable part of himself it went wherever he went. And how gracious and persuasive religion appeared in his person! Of course he was useful, to his denomination, to our common Christianity, to human society. There was no limit to the things people thought he was just the man to do. Perhaps the most general opinion about James H. Swan on all sides and in all the varieties of service to which he gave a hand was, that he was the indispensable man. It is difficult to persuade ourselves that his time to lay aside such manifold usefulness had come. But for those who knew him it will forever be easier to be busy in promoting human good and to be cheerful and steadfast and unpretentious in the lot assigned them by their Father's loving will.

—A phrase of Dr. Martineau's in his "Seat of Authority in Religion" has lingered with us and been the occasion of reflection. "The initiative of all higher good is with God," he remarks. His meaning is, that man, whether aware of the source of his help or not, is always drawn to higher good, in thought, feeling or purpose, by a movement originating not with himself but with God. This stamps Dr. Martineau's religious theory as radically spiritual and biblical. But we have observed that many of those who accept him as their oracle in religion construe the philosophy of religion from just the opposite pole. They teach, that God is impulsive if not indifferent, while man, by a self-originated effort, goes out and up and finds God. So came all the religions and all "higher good."

—In the course of his interesting remarks on the denominational press, Dr. Dodge said at Meriden, that he found among the contents of our papers more or less "alleged poetry." The orator's shaft was aimed at a tender spot. We have in our church family many men and women who write well,—some who write with exceptional force and grace. But it must be admitted that our strain of poets is not now either high or strong. With the departure of Mrs. Sawyer our denominational muse seems to have become well nigh voiceless. An examination of "Praise and Thanks" reveals the pleasant fact that we have some versifiers who utter themselves metrically and melodiously in hymns. But one often asks, where are the lineal successors of the Cary sisters, of Mrs. Mayo and Mrs. Sawyer, of Henrietta Burrington Bingham, of T. L. Harris and of L. C. Browne? In the last Leander are some lines by D. M. Hodge which show a talent that we could wish the possessor might cultivate.

—Since the publication by Canon Gore of the late Prof. Romanes' notes on religion, in which he not only retracts his former flatly atheistic views but answers his earlier arguments, it has been quietly given out by certain dis-

ciples of Protero-Romanes that Deuter-Romanes was suffering from brain disease when he wrote those notes. This whispered plea for the sanity of his atheism and the insanity of his religion, no intimate of Prof. Romanes has ventured to make public. But it has been widely disseminated, nevertheless. Now a young scientist who is also a missionary, gives the probable genesis of Prof. Romanes' newer and truer thoughts on the subject of religion. It began in an inquiry by Prof. Romanes as to how the scientist missionary, the Rev. J. T. Gulick, could retain his Christian belief in the midst of his scientific researches. The January *Bibliotheca Sacra* will publish the reply to Dr. Romanes' inquiry and show the lines on which his mind was led back from what he called "the overbearing shock of rationalism."

—Prof. A. A. Bevan, Fellow of Trinity College, Cambridge, a Semitic scholar of reputation; is after Prof. A. H. Sayce with a stick of considerable acuteness. He challenges the statements of the great archaeologist and traverses such of his positions as controvert the many tenets of the higher critics. He shows that a specialist in Egyptology is not necessarily infallible. In this he turns the tables neatly on Prof. Sayce who showed that a specialist in historical criticism is not infallible. "Let the good work go on," we are inclined to exclaim. These learned specialists, who also have a relish for controversy, display each the holes in the other's armor, and let the laity into the secret that they do not get all the cream from either of them.

—Mrs. Elizabeth Cady Stanton, in her old age, and one suspects in her dotage, undertakes a revision of the Bible in the interest of woman. She proposes either to excise or by comment to render harmless, those passages containing any reflections on the equality of the sex. It is a large undertaking. No woman of the education requisite for the task would think of attempting so quixotic a literary enterprise. Such a Bible, so travestied by ignorance and prejudice, would have about the same value as an edition of Shakespeare edited and annotated by Ignatius Donnelly. But this is the smaller part of the absurdity Mrs. Stanton would perpetrate. She expects her recension of the Bible to be the great *novum organum* of the cause of woman's suffrage. We can assure the dear old lady that it will be the monumental proof of woman's incapacity and the standard reproach of the cause. Those woman suffragists who believe in a Devil will surely think he put Mrs. Stanton up to this climax of woman's misfortunes as he did Mrs. Adam to the beginning of her sorrows.

—The procession of events moves rapidly and not evenly. As we write, the situation is that the President and the Congress have together gone astray in the rash and unnecessary path that leads to war. There is, fortunately, a third estate. There is the Nation, which is identical with the President and the Congress only when they are one with it. In the emergency it becomes the duty of the people to make its "sober second thought" potential. The President has, in contrast to his whole record as a magistrate, uttered the rash and audacious word from which it is well nigh impossible to recede. The Congress has with unreflecting haste and amazing unanimity committed itself to the same impolicy. The people are now the resource. Let every man of influence who can command the popular ear speak out, and let it be known that the better and sounder judgment of the American people is, that there is no warrant for war nor excuse for threats. Dignity, decency, humanity, Christianity are all against this sudden and direful madness.

—The mistake of President Cleveland was in inserting that threat in his special message. If he had proposed the commission to ascertain the boundary between Venezuela and British Guiana and left himself free to say, or the Congress at liberty to say, what should be done in the sequel, he would hold a strong and safe position. It was an uncalculated menace and, premature, to go on and tell that he would do it the commission should find Great Britain to be naughty. That was an undiplomatic as well as an unnecessary threat. Of all the surprises of recent politics this unfortunate passage in the Venezuela message is the greatest. No President ever changed so quickly the confidence of people in him into distrust, nor so suddenly lost a great company of admirers.

CANTON THEOLOGICAL SCHOOL.

NOTES FROM MY READING.

BY MARY J. DELONG.

GABLES.

The significance of a horse's head placed on the gables of buildings is now almost unknown, but it springs from a very ancient custom. The completion of a building was celebrated in old times, as the laying of a corner-stone is now, with religious ceremonies, which consisted mainly in the sacrifice of a horse and the elevation of the head to the point of the gable. Horses were held to be

sacred among German and Scandinavian nations, and, next to human beings, formed the worthiest sacrifice to the gods.

At a chieftain's death his horse was buried with him. Among the Indians on our western plains a pony is strangled on the grave of a warrior, that he may be ready for the chase in the happy hunting grounds. Even among ourselves a military officer is followed to the grave by his favorite horse. Poles surmounted by bunches of leaves and flowers protect the farm houses in some parts of Germany, from lightning, and represent the offering of a bundle of grain to Odin's horses, Odin being the supreme deity in northern mythology. At Yuletide oats are thrown out for Santa Claus' horses. The sheaf of wheat that is fastened to the gables in Norway and Denmark for the use of birds, was originally feed for Odin's horses. The last bundle of grain at the harvest was thrown into the air by the reapers that Odin might feed his horses at Christmas.

THE NUMBER 13.

It is a well-known superstition that if thirteen persons sit down to eat at one table one will die during the year. Many people, otherwise very sensible, will not sit at table with that number of guests. The origin of this superstition is, according to some authorities, the last supper of Jesus and his disciples, one of whom betrayed him. Others ascribe it to the feasts of the gods of Valhalla, there being thirteen each time, one of whom was destined to die within the year.

There is a Frisian legend which indicates good luck instead of bad, which may be of some comfort to anxious souls. According to this authority the twelve mythical legislators of the Frisii, called the Aesga, were in the habit of rowing out into the open sea in order to discuss matters of particular importance in utter seclusion. It happened on one occasion that they lost their rudder and were tossed about by a heavy wind. To make the matter worse they were unable to agree upon certain points of law and usage. They besought the gods to send one of their number to row them ashore. Suddenly the thirteenth appeared in answer to their prayers, out of the clouds, and rowed them to land. Having given them instruction upon the points in dispute and endowed them with wisdom to establish the "Friesenrecht," the unknown thirteenth vanished and, so far as is known, they never saw him, or it, again. The people ever after considered it a good omen when the number thirteen appeared as connected with any public enterprise.

MAUNDY PENNIES.

The word "Maundy" means command, and refers to the commandment given in the 13th chapter of John's Gospel: "A new commandment give I unto you; that ye love one another."

Thursday in Holy Week, the week preceding Easter, is especially designed in the Roman Catholic church as the commemoration of the Lord's Supper, an account of which is given in that chapter. One of the services connected with the commemoration of the event was formerly the washing of feet. This practice is of such antiquity in the church as to suggest that it might never have declined, until a very late date, since the example set by the Master at the Paschal supper. In both ancient and modern times it was the custom to distribute money, or "dole," James II was the last English sovereign to wash the feet of the poor on Maundy Thursday; he was also the first sovereign to distribute the dole himself, it having been done before his time by the Lord High Almoner. In 1838 the Maundy men received money payment from the clerk of the Almonry office; the ceremony of the celebration of the day has been confined to this payment since the time of James II. The Queen's dole is now put in to red and white purses and distributed in Westminster Abbey.

The Maundy pennies are made of silver of the value of one, two, three or four pence, or a full face value of ten cents. They were first coined in the reign of Charles II., and are smaller than the gold dollar which used to be coined in this country. They are promptly sold by the recipients to banks or individuals for about sixteen times their value. The number of doles, or pennies distributed was regulated by the number of birthdays of the reigning sovereign. A full set of Maundy pennies of a reign of Queen Victoria is worth more than five English pounds to the one who receives it, and would sell for a very handsome sum, being worth from fourteen to seventeen shillings for each set.

OSHKOSH, WIS.

TWO CHICAGO SERMONS.

Christmas and the War Cloud.

At St. Paul's Church, Rev. Dr. A. J. Canfield preached on "Christmas," Sunday, December 23, devoted a part of his sermon to the Venezuela affair. He said:

"We are celebrating the advent of Christ, which was accompanied by the overture of the angels announcing 'peace on earth, good will to men.' In all ages we find mankind cherishing an ideal of social order in which the dire confusion of struggle and strife shall be ended and heart shall knit to heart and hand to hand in good will and fellowship. This is the dream of the ages.

"During the last twenty-five years comparative quiet has prevailed among the great powers of Christendom, but they have been far from idle. Indeed, the master stroke of our vaunted science is the perfection of the art of mowing down men. Is not the uppermost idea in Europe and America at this moment national armament, preparations for war on a more extensive scale than ever before? The wealth of the civilized world is making ready for the manufacture of destructive weapons. Skill and inventive genius were never so alert and busy as today in devising instruments of mortal pain.

"In regard to the possible outcome between the diplomatic champions of this country and England at the present time I see no occasion for extended speech from the pulpit. It is not now, though it may become, a question of principle and national honor. Neither is it as yet a conflict for self-defense or for the liberation of any class or race. I do not see what possible objection England can have to our inquiry concerning the boundary line of one of her colonies. When it comes to the Monroe doctrine there may be a different aspect, since that doctrine is quite as sacred in our eyes as is the 'balance of power' doctrine in Europe and Asia. Still, I look upon all these dynastic questions as subjects of diplomacy rather than of strife upon the battlefields. The thought of actual war between England and the United States is so unspeakably horrible I am slow to believe in its probability. At the same time I repudiate the doctrine of 'peace at any price,' which is the most dangerous enemy to universal and permanent peace. The sure preventive of war is absolute justice, or, better still, good will towards all men.

"Therefore I fling upon the burdened atmosphere wherein thunderbolts are sleeping, the white dove of Christian peace. Not 'peace at any price,' but such as the angels proclaimed at Bethlehem—the peace of Christ, the Lord. That is more needed among the nations today than either the balance of power or the Monroe doctrine."

REV. R. A. WHITE.

"The Monroe Doctrine" was the subject of a prelude by the Rev. R. A. White at the Stewart Avenue Universalist Church on Christmas Sunday. He said:

"Curious that as the sacred shadow of the Christmas season mantles the earth and the globe is circled with the holy chant of 'peace on earth and good will toward men' a nation most committed to a policy of peace should be talking war. In my memory this nation has not been so stirred up by the jingo spirit as at present, or for so little reason. But there will be no war with England. Our close social and race relations with England make war difficult if not impossible. It is too late in the affairs of the world for two civilized and cultured nations to step into the prize ring and settle a trivial dispute like two bullies. Neither England nor America can afford to risk the fortunes of war. Still it ought to be emphasized that American patriotism cannot be bribed by Wall street or the Chicago Stock Exchange. Americans will not now or ever permit themselves to be humiliated by another nation at the bidding of the money kings, nor need England expect to intimidate us by raiding our securities.

"I should not be a true American, however, if I did not insist that the Monroe doctrine in its full meaning must be upheld and maintained. We can have no further aggressions on this continent by European powers. The Venezuelan question involves the Monroe doctrine. Prof. von Holst to the contrary notwithstanding. A foreign nation need not swallow up a whole republic on this side of the sea before the Monroe doctrine applies. Encroachment by diplomacy, bribery, stealthy advance of boundaries, or in any manner 'controlling the

destiny' of any portion of these continents other than is already controlled is an infringement of the Monroe doctrine. Whether England has done this in the matter of Venezuela is a question of fact only to be passed upon when facts are known. If England has advanced 33,000 square miles beyond her actual rights, though the result might not be as menacing as the seizure of Venezuela, the principle involved is the same. No one doubts the patriotism of von Holst, but many will doubt his judgment even in his chosen field of investigation.

"That the Monroe doctrine is not international law, as Salisbury intimates and von Holst echoes, is not to the point. Enough that it is American unwritten law. 'No taxation without representation' was not considered international law by England, but it went just the same. The declaration of independence was not international law in the eyes of England, but it stood.

"The President may possibly have been premature in his attitude. There may be some bluff in his message and some politics. No one knows for sure. But this much is certain—the American people will approve a courteous word of warning to our English neighbors. The courtesies of nations or arbitration will settle this particular dispute without doubt but it will not be at the expense of or the infringement of the Monroe doctrine."

FORWARD THE RED CROSS.

BY HENRY N. DODGE.

How shall I carol a Christmas song
While my heart is ablaze with a burning wrong?
How shall I sing of peace and good-will
While my pulses, indignant, within me thrill?
How shall I sing of the angel-choir
While the Moslem is glutting his vengeance-dire?
How shall I sing of the manger-bed
While my brethren are mourning their martyr-dead?
How shall I sing while that bitter cry
Rises piercing and long through the Orient sky?
How long will the mighty sit watching for gain,
While the nations grow faint with the blood of the slain;
While the Church of the Saviour is covered with shame
And his innocents slaughtered for loving His name?
How shall I carol a Christmas song?
Sing weeping, O Heart, love is stronger than wrong.
And the Babe that lay in the manger there
Has heard that terrible cry of despair.
And while armies and navies are counting the cost,
Though the helpless should perish and honor be lost,
Lo, He summons love's forces from over the seas
Where his Red Cross banner floats out on the breeze;
And millions of hearts hear his whispering voice
Where afar, in sweet freedom, his people, rejoice.
From the land where no tyrant is suffered to live,
Haste, Angels of Mercy, your succor to give!
Now arise, all ye hosts who adore His great name,
Let your labors of love put the mighty to shame!
MORRISTOWN, N. J., Dec. 20, 1895.

—The recent death of Mr. Henry Reeve C. B. D. C. recalls the fact that for forty years he was editor of the Edinburgh Review. The British Weekly describes him as a "dry, dull, eminently proper and respectable old Whig, with much composure of manner and consciousness of personal dignity," which is frank if not especially gracious. Mr. Reeve was the hero of a well-known story about Carlyle. Carlyle in advanced life was dining out, and Reeve was one of the party. He was in a very didactic mood that night, and attracted Carlyle's attention. After a long scrutiny, Carlyle thus soliloquized with himself in words perfectly audible by his neighbors: "Eh, man, you're a pair, wretched miserable cretur." Mr. Reeve was, however, a person of considerable parts, and accounted one of the very best French scholars in Europe. He translated De Tocqueville, and edited the famous Greville memoirs.

—Dr. Barrows, of this city, who is soon to go to India, to give lectures on Christianity, says, and well says: "The world needs the Christian religion. I have given five of the best years of my life to the examination of this question, and I have had opportunities, such as no other man ever had, of seeing and knowing the best side of the ethnic religions. I count as my friends Parsees and Hindus, Buddhists and Confucianists, Shintoists and Mohammedans. I know what they say about themselves. I have looked at their religions on the ideal side, as well as the practical, and I know this: That the very best which is in them, the very best which these well-meaning men have shown to us, is a reflex from Christianity, and that what they lack, and the lack is very serious, is what the Christian gospel alone can impart, and I know that beneath the shining example of the elect few in the non-Christian world there is a vast area of idolatry and pollution and unrest and superstition and cruelty, which can never be healed by the forces which are found in the non-Christian system."

Fetes in the Czar's Realm.

Russian Holiday Customs.

BY SOPHIE FRIEDLAND.

[SPECIAL ARTICLE.]

THE dry weather and no sleighing this time of year is certainly a surprising fact to the inhabitants of our capital, and they can hardly realize that Christmas is so close at hand. Christmas in our country is considered a great holiday, and not even the unpleasant winds are able to keep our people from crowding the streets, stores and principally the great markets, for which our Northern Palmyra is quite famous. These are certainly most interesting places to visit before Christmas and Easter.

St. Petersburg, situated as it is on marshes and swamps, does not produce anything edible, but lives entirely on the surrounding villages, which, before the holidays, send their productions to our markets. It is hard to realize that this quantity of frozen meat will barely suffice to feed the hungry mouths of the common classes through one week. Frozen provisions are never bought by the wealthy, but the working people, who never touch meat during the many weeks of Lent which precede Easter and Christmas, are quite ready to spend the last copper they possess in buying these good things, without which according to their belief, Christmas would not be Christmas, and Easter would not be Easter. If we had less holidays in the year I believe our people would be better off; but how can they be saving if they have "to eat and drink and make merry" the greater part of the year?

A Children's Holiday.

Christmas here, as in all other Christian countries, is the holiday of the children, who have a three weeks' vacation, and the Christmas tree is the great feature of it. As a rule the Christmas tree is lighted on the eve of the holiday, which, like all our holidays, counts from the last sunset. On the eve the little lamps before the image which decorates every room, store, restaurant, etc., is lighted, and the orthodox people never omit going to the evening service. Contrary to other churches, the Greek Catholic church looks upon the holiday which celebrates the birth of Christ as inferior to the holiday which celebrates his resurrection, and the Christmas service at our church only differs from the Sunday service by a procession of priests, who, carrying images and banners, go three times around the aisles of the church. In Easter the Russians celebrate not only the Resurrection of Christ, but also the awakening of nature after a six months' sleep, and they regard it as the greatest holiday in the year.

Some weeks before Easter the streets of the cities assume a different aspect. Everywhere there is life and movement, and the crowds of common people that gather before the bazaars and in the market places show that all are anxious to get their shopping done before they make their devotions, which is usually a week before Easter. Those who have been so fortunate as to visit the "Palm Market" in St. Petersburg or Moscow two weeks before Easter have witnessed a sight not easily forgotten.

Before the long line of stores that compose the "Gostinoy Dwor," the great colonnaded bazaar of our capital, a whole forest of willow branches (the Greek Church uses the willow to celebrate the festival of Palm Sunday) is piled up, for every man, woman and child takes one branch of willow to decorate his room. Driving in this place is prohibited for a week, and the numberless booths and stalls that fill up the entire street offer cheap articles and candy of the most varied kinds to those who cannot afford to spend much and would hardly believe it to be Easter if they could not offer a trifling present to their friends or have something sweet on their Easter table.

During the six weeks of Lent, the common people, who are very observant of the rules of their church, have lived mostly on rye bread, potatoes, cucumbers and weak tea, and are longing for Easter and Christmas to make up for lost time.

The stomach that has been deprived of any nourishing food for six weeks can hardly stand the amount of indigestible things that it is likely to receive on Easter and Christmas. Statistics furnish the proof that a number of death cases are the result of overeating. The Lent that follows

Easter is broken by Ascension Day, which, although celebrated without any particular ceremony, is one of the great days of the twenty holidays observed by the Greek Church. In the southern provinces of Russia, where spring begins earlier, the Blagoveschtschenie, in English "Lady's Day," is one of the principal festivals of the year. On this day the peasants ask God's blessing for the success of their work, and their plows, barrows and other materials used for agriculture are got ready for this day and brought to church for the sprinkling of holy water. The next day they start their work.

Paying Prisoners' Debts.

In olden days, even to the beginning of this century, multitudes of beggars were allowed to gather on Lady's Day before the gates of the imperial palaces, where they received food and money. A great many religious Russians are still in the habit of giving thousands to the poor on this day, and their benevolence even goes so far as to liberate a number of prisoners who were imprisoned for debt. Some years ago a wealthy merchant spent nearly a million in paying the debts of others. Old traditions are fast dying out, or at least changing. In this case instead of giving freedom to men, freedom is now given to birds on Lady's Day. If a stranger passes our markets the day before he will surely be surprised to see the number of caged birds offered for sale, whose destiny it is to gain freedom on the morrow. From Whitsuntide to the day of the Assumption of the Holy Virgin on the 15th of August there is no merry-making among the Russian peasants, for our summers are short and they have to work hard during the few months. Whitsuntide is the festival at which the young and old rejoice. On this day it is the custom to wear something new, and every churchgoer carries a little bouquet, with which he decorates the altar. In every corner of the house or hut they put a young birch tree, and the floors are strewn with sweet rush. Singing and choral dances, pick riding and flower gatherings are the pleasures of Whitsuntide. We have a number of holidays which are kept up by tradition and are celebrated by the common classes.

St. John's Day.

St. John's day is celebrated in the Baltic provinces and little Russia. On the eve of this day a great fire is lighted in an open square, and the youth who succeeds in jumping over it is sure to marry the same year. New Year's eve and the eve of St. John is the time when our young peasants try, through different charms they employ, to get a peep into the future. Our poets have often taken these nights as a subject for their songs.

I have nearly forgotten to speak of another festival day, which, if not considered as important by the church, is regarded as indispensable by the priest, the government officer and all serving classes, as well as society people. This is New Year's day, the day of calls.

The priest and his deacon have long been waiting for this occasion to make a round of visits to the members of their parish. People who are not anxious for a call of their pastor take care to send him before Christmas a certain sum of money—for these congratulatory calls are regarded by the civilized world as a begging tour.

On New Year's day the government gazette publishes the promotions of the government officials, and many as yet undecorated breast hasives in hope and fear.

If the owner of a house means to live in peace with the officials of his ward (police station) I should advise him to be liberal on New Year's day; for, from first to last they (the policemen) all expect to be remembered.

The afternoon of New Year's day is devoted by the gentlemen of the "beau monde" in making calls. On this occasion the parties most to be pitied are the ladies, for they often have to receive hundreds of callers. The person most to be envied is the footman, who opens the door, for he often finds himself wealthier by a large sum of money, thanks to the generosity of our gentlemen, who never forget to drop a rouble bill in his "open" hand.

ST. PETERSBURG, RUSSIA.