LETTER XXVII.

DEAR S.:--

The next day we went to hear a sermon in behalf of the ragged schools, by the Archbishop of Canterbury. The children who attended the ragged schools of that particular district were seated in the gallery, each side of the organ. As this was the Sunday appropriated to the exercise, all three of the creeds were read--the Apostles', Athanasian, and Nicene; all which the little things repeated after the archbishop, with great decorum, and probably with the same amount of understanding that we, when children, had of the Assembly's Catechism.

The venerable archbishop was ushered into the pulpit by beadles, with gold lace cocked hats, striking the ground majestically with their long staves of office. His sermon, however, was as simple, clear, and beautiful an exposition of the duty of practical Christianity towards the outcast and erring as I ever heard. He said that, should we find a young child wandering away from its home and friends, we should instinctively feel it our duty to restore the little wanderer; and such, he said, is the duty we owe to all these young outcasts, who had strayed from the home of their heavenly Father.

After the sermon they took up a collection; and when we went into the vestry to speak to the archbishop, we saw him surrounded by the church wardens, counting over the money.

I noticed in the back part of the church a number of children in tattered garments, with rather a forlorn and wild appearance, and was told that these were those who had just been introduced into the school, and had not been there long enough to come under its modifying influences. We were told that they were always thus torn and forlorn in their appearance at first, but that they gradually took pains to make themselves respectable. The archbishop said, pleasantly, "When they return to their right mind they appear clothed, also, and sitting at the feet of Jesus."

The archbishop sent me afterwards a beautiful edition of his sermons on Christian charity, embracing a series of discourses on various topics of practical benevolence, relating to the elevation and christianization of the masses. They are written with the same purity of style, and show the same devout and benevolent spirit with his other writings.

My thoughts were much saddened to-day by the news, which I received this week, of the death of Mary Edmonson. It is not for her that I could weep; for she died as calmly and serenely as she lived, resigning her soul into the hands of her Savior. What I do weep for is, that under the flag of my country--and that country a Christian one--such a life as Mary's could have been lived, and so little said or done about it.

In the afternoon I went to the deanery of St. Paul's--a retired building in a deep court opposite the cathedral. After a brief conversation with Mr. and Mrs. Milman, we went to the cathedral. I had never seen it before, and was much impressed with the majesty and grace of the interior. Nevertheless, the Italian style of architecture, with all its elegance, fails to affect me equally with the Gothic. The very rudeness of the latter, a something inchoate and unfinished, is significant of matter struggling with religious ideas too vast to be fully expressed. Even as in the ancient Scriptures there are ideas which seem to overtask the powers of human language. I sat down with Mrs. M. in one of the little compartments, or stalls, as they are called, into which the galleries are divided, and which are richly carved in black oak. The whole service was chanted by a choir expressly trained for the purpose. Some of the performers are boys of about thirteen years, and of beautiful countenances. There is a peculiar manner of reading the service practised in the cathedrals, which is called "intoning." It is a plaintive, rhythmical chant, with as strong an unction of the nasal as ever prevailed in a Quaker or Methodist meeting. I cannot exactly understand why Episcopacy threw out the slur of "nasal twang" as one of the peculiarities of the conventicle, when it is in full force in the most approved seats of church orthodoxy. I listened to all in as uncritical and sympathetic a spirit as possible, giving myself up to be lifted by the music as high as it could waft me. To one thus listening, it is impossible to criticize with severity; for, unless positively offensive, any music becomes beautiful by the power of

sympathy and association. After service we listened to a short sermon from the Rev. Mr. Villiers, fervent, affectionate, and evangelical in spirit, and much in the general style of sermonizing which I have already described.

Monday morning, May 23. We went to breakfast at Mr. Cobden's. Mr. C. is a man of slender frame, rather under than over the middle size, with great ease of manner, and flexibility of movement, and the most frank, fascinating smile. His appearance is a sufficient account of his popularity, for he seems to be one of those men who carry about them an atmosphere of vivacity and social exhilaration. We had a very pleasant and social time, discussing and comparing things in England and America. Mr. Cobden assured us that he had had curious calls from Americans, sometimes. Once an editor of a small village paper called, who had been making a tour through the rural districts of England. He said that he had asked some mowers how they were prospering. They answered, "We ain't prosperin'; we're hayin'." Said Cobden,

"I told the man, 'Now don't you go home and publish that in your paper;' but he did, nevertheless, and sent me over the paper with the story in it." I might have comforted him with many a similar anecdote of Americans, as for example, the man who was dead set against a tariff, "'cause he knew if they once got it, they'd run the old thing right through his farm;" or those immortal Pennsylvania Dutchmen, who, to this day, it is said, give in all their votes under the solemn conviction that they are upholding General Jackson's administration.

The conversation turned on the question of the cultivation of cotton by free labor. The importance of this great measure was fully appreciated by Mr. Cobden, as it must be by all. The difficulties to be overcome in establishing the movement were no less clearly seen, and ably pointed out. On the whole, the comparison of views was not only interesting in a high degree, but to us, at least, eminently profitable. We ventured to augur favorably to the cause from the indications of that interview.

From this breakfast we returned to dine at Surrey parsonage; and, after dinner, attended Miss Greenfield's concert at Stafford House. Mr. S. could not attend on account of so soon leaving town.

The concert room was the brilliant and picturesque hall I have before described to you. It looked more picture-like and dreamy than ever. The piano was on the flat stairway just below the broad central landing. It was a grand piano, standing end outward, and perfectly banked up among hothouse flowers, so that only its gilded top was visible. Sir George Smart presided. The choicest of the élite were there. Ladies in demi-toilet and bonneted. Miss Greenfield stood among the singers on the staircase, and excited a sympathetic murmur among the audience. She is not handsome, but looked very well. She has a pleasing dark face, wore a black velvet headdress and white carnelian earrings, a black mohr antique silk, made high in the neck, with white lace falling sleeves and white gloves. A certain

gentleness of manner and self-possession, the result of the universal kindness shown her, sat well upon her. Chevalier Bunsen, the Prussian ambassador, sat by me. He looked at her with much interest. "Are the race often as good looking?" he said. I said, "She is not handsome, compared with many, though I confess she looks uncommonly well to-day."

Among the company present I noticed the beautiful Marchioness of Stafford. I have spoken of her once before; but it is difficult to describe her, there is something so perfectly simple, yet elegant, in her appearance; but it has cut itself like a cameo in my memory--a figure under the middle size, perfectly moulded, dressed simply in black, a beautiful head, hair à la Madonna, ornamented by a band of gold coins on black velvet: a band of the same kind encircling her throat is the only relief to the severe simplicity of her dress.

The singing was beautiful. Six of the most cultivated glee singers of London sang, among other things, "Spring's delights are now returning," and "Where the bee sucks there lurk I." The duchess said," These glees are peculiarly English." It was indeed delightful to hear Shakspeare's aerial words made vocal within the walls of this fairy palace. The duchess has a strong nationality; and nationality, always interesting, never appears in so captivating a form as when it expresses itself through a beautiful and cultivated woman. One likes to see a person identifying one's self with a country, and she embraces England, with its history, its strength, its splendor, its

moral power, with an evident pride and affection which I love to see.

Miss Greenfield's turn for singing now came, and there was profound attention. Her voice, with its keen, searching fire, its penetrating vibrant quality, its "timbre" as the French have it, cut its way like a Damascus blade to the heart. It was the more touching from occasional rusticities and artistic defects, which showed that she had received no culture from art.

She sang the ballad, "Old folks at home," giving one verse in the soprano, and another in the tenor voice.

As she stood partially concealed by the piano Chevalier Bunsen thought that the tenor part was performed by one of the gentlemen. He was perfectly astonished when he discovered that it was by her. This was rapturously encored. Between the parts Sir George took her to the piano, and tried her voice by skips, striking notes here and there at random, without connection, from D in alt to A first space in bass clef: she followed with unerring precision, striking the sound nearly at the same instant his finger touched the key. This brought out a burst of applause.

After the concert we walked through the rooms. The effect of the groups of people sauntering through the hall or looking down from the galleries was picture-like. Two of the duke's Highland pipers, in full costume, playing their bagpipes, now made their appearance, and began

to promenade the halls, playing. Their dress reminds me, in its effect, of that of our American Indians, and their playing is wild and barbaric. It had a striking effect among these wide halls and corridors. There is nothing poetic connected with the history and position of the family of which the fair owner of the halls does not feel the power, and which she cannot use with artistic skill in heightening the enchantments of an entertainment.

Rev. S. R. Ward attracted attention in the company, as a full-blooded African--tall enough for a palm tree. I observed him in conversation with lords, dukes, and ambassadors, sustaining himself modestly, but with self-possession. All who converse with him are satisfied that there is no native difference between the African and other men.

The duchess took me to look at a model of Dunrobin--their castle on the Sutherland estate. It is in the old French chateau style in general architecture, something like the print of Glamis. It is curious that the French architecture has obtained in Scotland. Her grace kindly invited me to visit Dunrobin on my return to Scotland in the autumn, taking it after Inverary. This will be delightful. That Scottish coast I love almost like my own country.

Lord Shaftesbury was there. He came and spoke to us after the concert. Speaking of Miss Greenfield, he said, "I consider the use of these halls for the encouragement of an outcast race, a consecration. This is the true use of wealth and splendor when it is employed to

raise up and encourage the despised and forgotten."

In the evening, though very weary, C. persuaded me to accept an invitation to hear the Creation, at Exeter Hall, performed by the London Sacred Harmonic Society. They had kindly reserved a gallery for us, and when we went in Mr. Surman, the founder and for twenty years conductor of the society, presented me with a beautifully bound copy of the Creation.

Having never heard it before, I could not compare the performance with others. I heard it as I should hear a poem read, simply thinking of the author's ideas, and not of the style of reading. Haydn I was thinking of,--the bright, brilliant, cheerful Haydn,--who, when complained of for making church music into dancing tunes, replied, "When I think of God my soul is always so full of joy that I want to dance!" This Creation is a descriptive poem--the garden parts unite Thomson and Milton's style--the whole effect pastoral, yet brilliant. I was never more animated. I had had a new experience; it is worth while to know nothing to have such a fresh sensation.

The next day, Tuesday, May 24, we went to lunch with Miss R., at Oxford Terrace. Among a number of distinguished guests was Lady Byron, with whom I had a few moments of deeply interesting conversation. No engravings that ever have been circulated of her in America do any justice to her appearance. She is of a slight figure, formed with exceeding delicacy, and her whole form, face, dress, and air unite to

make an impression of a character singularly dignified, gentle, pure, and yet strong. No words addressed to me in any conversation hitherto have made their way to my inner soul with such force as a few remarks dropped by her on the present religious aspect of England--remarks of such a quality as one seldom hears.

Lady Byron's whole course, I have learned, has been one made venerable by consistent, active benevolence. I was happy to find in her the patroness of our American outcasts, William and Ellen Crafts. She had received them into the schools of her daughter, Lady Lovelace, at Occum, and now spoke in the highest terms of their character and proficiency in study. The story of their misfortunes, united with their reputation for worth, had produced such an impression on the simple country people, that they always respectfully touch their hats when meeting them. Ellen, she says, has become mother of a most beautiful child, and their friends are now making an effort to put them into some little business by which they may obtain a support.

I could not but observe with regret the evident fragility of Lady Byron's health; yet why should I regret it? Why wish to detain here those whose home is evidently from hence, and who will only then fully live when the shadow we call life is passed away?

Here, also, I was personally introduced to a lady with whom I had passed many a dreamy hour of spiritual communion--Mrs. Jameson, whose works on arts and artists were for years almost my only food for a

certain class of longings.

Mrs. Jameson is the most charming of critics, with the gift, often too little prized, of discovering and pointing out beauties rather than defects; beauties which we may often have passed unnoticed, but which, when so pointed out, never again conceal themselves. This shows itself particularly in her Characteristics of Shakspeare's Women, a critique which only a true woman could have written.

She seemed rather surprised to find me inquiring about art and artists. I asked her where one might go to study that subject most profitably, and her answer was, in Munich.

By her side was Mrs. Chisholm, the author of those benevolent movements for the emigrants, which I have mentioned to you. She is a stout, practical looking woman, who impresses you with the idea of perfect health, exuberant life, and an iron constitution. Her face expresses decision, energy, and good sense. She is a woman of few words, every moment of whose time seems precious.

One of her remarks struck me, from the quaint force with which it was uttered. "I found," said she, "if we want any thing done, we must go to work and do; it is of no use to talk, none whatever." It is the secret of her life's success. Mrs. Chisholm first began by doing on a small scale what she wanted done, and people seeing the result fell in with and helped her, but to have convinced them of

the feasibility of her plans by talking, without this practical demonstration, would have been impossible.

At this réunion, also, was Mr. George Thompson, whom I had never seen before, and many of the warmest friends of the slave. During this visit I was taken ill, and obliged to return to Mr. Gurney's, where I was indisposed during the remainder of the day, and late in the evening drove home to Surrey parsonage.

The next evening, Wednesday, May 29, we attended an antislavery soirée, at Willis's rooms, formerly known as Almack's; so at least I was told. A number of large rooms were thrown open, brilliantly lighted and adorned, and filled with throngs of people. In the course of the evening we went upon the platform in the large hall, where an address was presented by S. Bowley, Esq., of Gloucester. It was one of the most beautiful, sensible, judicious, and Christian addresses that could have been made, and I listened to it with unmingled pleasure. In reply, Mr. S. took occasion still further to explain his views with respect to the free-grown cotton movement in England, and its bearings on the future progress of the cause of freedom. [Footnote: We are happy to say that a large body of religious persons in Great Britain have become favorable to these views. A vigorous society has been established, combining India reform and free cotton with the antislavery cause. The Earl of Albemarle made, while we were in London, a vigorous India reform speech in the House of Lords, and Messrs. Bright and Cobden are fully in for the same object

in the Commons. There is much hope in the movement.]

After the addresses we dispersed to different rooms, where refreshment tables were bountifully laid out and adorned. By my side, at one end of them, was a young female of pleasing exterior, with fine eyes, delicate person, neatly dressed in white. She was introduced to me as Ellen Crafts--a name memorable in Boston annals. Her husband, a pleasant, intelligent young man, with handsome manners, was there also. Had it not been for my introduction I could never have fancied Ellen to have been any other than some English girl with rather a paler cheek than common. She has very sweet manners, and uses uncommonly correct and beautiful language. Let it not be supposed that, with such witnesses as these among them, our English brethren have derived their first practical knowledge of slavery from Uncle Tom's Cabin. The mere knowledge that two such persons as William and Ellen Crafts have been rated as merchantable commodities, in any country but ours would be a sufficient comment on the system.

We retired early after a very agreeable evening.