

With Our Readers

I.—Correspondence

A Long Journey

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

Mrs. E. M. Denney, of Ashland, Ore., has received by mail a living rose-tree from the Garden of Gethsemane. It was sent by Mr. T. J. Alley, of the Jewish Relief Mission at Jerusalem, in appreciation of that lady's untiring work for the Relief Fund. The plant was packed in a condensed milk can, the package weighing less than a half-pound, which is the weight-limit of the international post. The brave little traveler is growing beautifully in its new home, and boasts of having accomplished the longest voyage ever made by a living rose—fully 11,000 miles, and almost to the very longitudinally opposite point of the globe. J.

The Mountain Whites

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

We have within a few miles of us a community of the class known as Mountain Whites, and answering to the general features of those further South described in your paper from time to time. For the past three years we have been trying to reach these people, and we find them wonderfully responsive to our efforts. The pastor of the Episcopal church at Ivy has built, mainly at his own expense, a neat church within easy reach of the settlement, and twice a month preaches to them, while every Sunday afternoon a flourishing school is held.

In the spring some two or three of us organized a sewing and singing class for girls, large and small, which has succeeded beyond our expectations. It is held once a week, and at first met in the churchyard, but recently a hall has been given for our meetings; and now we are anxious to gather in the boys and young men as well. Our pastor, and such Christian gentlemen as will work, will give an evening of each week to entertaining these boys in innocent, wholesome amusements, provided we can get our hall fitted up suitably. Would not some of the churches send us a second-hand magic lantern? or stereoscopic views, or kaleidoscope, or illustrated papers, or pictures, or anything that will attract and interest? Or might we even hope for a discarded harmonium or other musical instrument? We are not able to purchase these things, and yet without them the boys and men will not come. Our pastor, who is an earnest, Christlike man, and has great influence among these people, proposes to give them a religious talk in connection with the entertainment, and it seems to promise an almost greater influence for good than the church itself. Anything sent should be addressed:

(Rev.) F. W. NEVE,
Ivy Depot, Albemarle Co., Va.

Dante and the American Board

To the Editors of *The Outlook*:

There is no question about the orthodoxy of the great poet. He was steeped in the religious ideas of his age as strongly as John Knox was in those of his time. He preceded Jonathan Edwards in the discussion of the freedom of the will; for, in fact, the "Commedia" is an exhaustive illustrated treatise on that subject. Commentators have been much bothered as to whether Dante is stating his belief or only allegorizing; but he says in a letter to Della Scala: "If the work be taken allegorically, the subject is man—how, by action of merit and demerit through freedom of the will, he justly deserves reward and punishment." He had considered the state of the heathen after death: a man born on the banks of the Indus, where there was none to speak of Christ, good as far as human reason sees, but "unbaptized he dies and void of faith." Dante discusses the matter very much as St. Paul does, preferring to leave the solution to the justice of God. But he allows a hope to spring up in his heart that this heathen and

his fellows may be judged mercifully. "Lo! of those who call Christ Christ there shall be many found in judgment further off from him by far than such to whom his name was never known" (Paradise, Canto 19). In the next canto the Trojan Ripheus is one of the glorified spirits forming the eye of the eagle. Dante evidently came, after much dubitation, to think none beyond hope save those "who are dead in sin and have made evil their good." He had evidently pondered over the Epistle to the Romans and that burst of the great-souled Apostle: "O the depth of the riches both of the wisdom and the knowledge of God! How unsearchable are his judgments, and his ways past tracing out! for who hath known the mind of the Lord, or who hath been his counselor?"

Dante lived over six hundred years ago, St. Paul nearly two thousand years ago, and neither of them dared to assume that they knew the mind of God in relation to the heathen, but, finding their never-failing joy in the mercy of God, dared to hope that this mercy could be extended to righteous heathen without impinging upon God's justice.

But in this age missionaries are excluded, not only from expressing a belief similar to that held by these ancient Christians, but from entertaining a hope that Christ may in some way hereafter be revealed to the heathen as he revealed himself to the spirits in prison immediately after his descent into the world of the unseen. R. G.

Lenox, Mass.

II. Notes and Queries

1. Please tell me what is meant by "Messianic prophecy." I had supposed it meant the passages directly foretelling, with more or less clearness, the coming and character of the Messiah. But in Dr. Blakeslee's lesson on the preparation of the world for Christ's coming, the passages referred to are Gen. iii. 14, 15; "I will put enmity between thy seed and her seed," etc.; the promise to Moses, "I will raise up a Prophet like unto thee," the promise to David of the splendor of Solomon's kingdom and its continuance, etc. Are these properly Messianic prophecies? Do you think, in the first one from Genesis, the writer had in mind the thought of the serpent as the type of evil, and that he spoke his conviction that the human race should eventually conquer in the conflict with sin? Or are these meanings read into the passage, while confessedly foreign to the writer's thought? Are not all the other references clear allusions to the history of the times? Or is this true of all Messianic prophecy, and is its application to Christ the afterthought of succeeding times? Please tell me where I can get clear statements on the subject, in accord with the best thought of to-day. 2. What is Dean Stanley's authority for his translation of "Talitha cumi" (Mark v., 41)? I have never found it in any commentary or note-book. Why is it not given if his beautiful rendering is correct? T. R. R.

1. Your general idea is correct. Dr. Briggs's book on "Messianic Prophecy" and Professor W. R. Smith's article in the "Encyclopædia Britannica" may be consulted. The proper substance of truly Messianic prophecy is its ethical hope, its promise of a righteous Judge, Redeemer, and King. Around this nucleus is grouped a variety of oracles in which religious imagination has found the Messianic idea, but whose Messianic reference is disputable. Such are the passages you quote. 2. The writer having neglected to give reference to book and page, we cannot hunt it up for answer. The Revised Version gives the proper meaning.

Can you inform me where I can find a poem which appeared in *The Christian Union* some years ago, commencing:

"There was an old woman as always was tired,
She lived in a house where help wasn't hired?"
Also, where is to be found the sentence, "He tem-
pereth the wind to the shorn lamb"? O. S.

The first poem was, if we remember rightly, copied by us from the daily press, in which it has been floating about for some years. Perhaps some reader can send us a copy to reprint. 2. Laurence Sterne in "Maria." Henri Estienne had written (A.D. 1594), "Dieu mesure le froid à la brebis tondue"—literally, God measures the cold to the shorn lamb.

In reply to inquiries as to how the bank statement which is found weekly in our Financial column is made up: First, the increases

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or decreases are made up on the plan of a general average. The increase or decrease, for instance, of specie and legal tenders does not represent the actual changes in these, but the average changes, estimated by taking to account the amount and the day of the week on which the amount was added or withdrawn. The addition of \$1,000,000 (as an example) of specie in the middle of the week would only count, in the average, as \$500,000 increase in the weekly statement. The method for ascertaining the increase or decrease in the reserve is by computing the net increase or decrease of the two items, specie and legal tender, and then by adding or deducting from this sum of increase or decrease one-quarter of the increase or decrease of deposits; the reason for this is that the item of deposits is a liability, and the law calls for a reserve equal to a quarter of the liabilities. We will illustrate: Supposing there has been an increase of \$1,000,000 in specie, and a decrease of \$500,000 legal tenders, and a decrease in deposits of \$2,000,000, these figures would show a net increase of \$500,000 in the first two items named, which (if deposits were the same as the week previous) would make the reserve \$500,000 increase; but as deposits are decreased \$2,000,000, that decrease releases 25 per cent. of the reserve due to the \$2,000,000 decrease in deposits (which item, you will bear in mind, is a liability), and that released 25 per cent. of reserve counts as increase in reserve. The reserve has, therefore, increased the net amount of increase in specie and legal tender (which is \$500,000), plus the \$500,000 reserve released because of the decrease in deposits; and the increase in reserve is, therefore, \$1,000,000.

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