ABOUT BISSELL OF BUFFALO

Pointers on the New Postmaster General, His Characteristics and Habits.

PLAYED PYTHIAS TO CLEVELAND'S DAMON

How He Looks, Acts and Talks—Masterful, Close-Mouthed and Smokes Cigarettes—His Life, His Wife and His Buffalo Home.

BUFFALO, March 30.—[Special Correspondence of THE BEE.]—Ten weeks ago he was only Bissell of Buffalo. Now he is Bissell of the United States. I refer to our new postmaster general, who has lived here for forty odd years, his fat round cheeks blushing unseen in his profitable law office, and his greatness going to waste in the desert air of the corporations he has counseled in a legal way to the tune of something like $50,000 a year. It is wonderful how events produce great men, and how the elevation to power of one mortal pulls up the others about him. Benjamin Harrison raised his wand and fairylike he created national reputations for his old college friend, John W. Noble of St. Louis, for Miller, his law partner, and a score of others. Cleveland opened his lips in 1884 and Daniel Manning and William C. Endicott became national quantities, and now through his second cabinet utterance we are introduced to Bissell, Hoke Smith, Daniel Lamont and other men whose names we yet hardly know how to pronounce.

"Bosom Friend Bissell."

Mr. Bissell and Mr. Cleveland have been friends and counselors for years, and Grover Cleveland has not in the world a man who stands closer to him than his new postmaster general. He was known in the newspapers during the campaign of 1884 as "Bosom Friend Bissell," and the two, when they were practicing law together here, were called the Damon and Pythias of the Buffalo bar. He has been associated with Cleveland during his years of prominence, and the fact that he has not been better known to the people has come from his queer taste for keeping himself out of sight. During my stay in Buffalo I have chatted with close friends of both men and I find that Mr. Bissell has in the past preferred to be one of the stage managers rather than a chief actor in the elevation of Cleveland to power. It is not generally known that in the struggle between Cleveland and Blaine in 1884 Wilson S. Bissell was one of the chief directors of the Cleveland forces and that to his sagacity the democratic victory was largely due. He was Mr. Cleveland's private and personal representative all through the campaign, and it fell to his lot to nullify the scandalous stories sent out concerning his partner's past life. He had been among the foremost in securing Mr. Cleveland's nomination for sheriff, mayor and governor, and he had almost as much to do with his first nomination for the presidency as Daniel Manning, but he was not connected with the event. In the Chicago convention of last June Mr. Bissell was equal in command with William C. Whitney. He did most of the planning and the ex-secretary of the navy did most of the executing and got all the credit, although he would have shared it gladly with the Buffalo man if the latter had been willing. Mr. Bissell's name was scarcely mentioned in the newspapers, and very few persons knew then or know now the measure of his political power. He is now and has been for nearly a decade one of the great generals in the democratic party, yet when it was announced that he had been chosen to succeed John Wanamaker many democratic captains asked: "Who is Wilson S. Bissell?"

The new postmaster general, according to the statements of those who know him here, is one of the closest-mouthed men in public life. He has always kept himself in the back ground, and even in Buffalo he has been rarely talked about. He has not the widest of acquaintanceships, but he is a companionable man, broad-minded, witty and a good talker, except where his own affairs are concerned. Mention these and he shuts up like a clam and either stops talking or changes the subject.

Wanamaker and Bissell.

In this respect Postmaster General Bissell will be found far different from John Wanamaker. Our last postmaster general was generally ready to talk about anything, from his Sunday school to great postal reforms, and from his store to the chances of fortune making for young men. Mr. Wanamaker is a man of many ideas, of much shrewd common sense and of a lively appreciation of the value of the newspaper man in the way of helping on himself and his party. He had a first-class newspaper man at a salary of $3,000 a year, which he paid out of his own pocket, by the way, in the person of Marshall Cushing, and the correspondents and news gatherers were always welcome at his office. Through this his administration was better advertised and better presented to the people than that of any postmaster general of the past, and I understand that he considered his newspaper secretary one of his best Washington investments. If Postmaster General Bissell does not change the character he had here he will do differently. He has never had much to do with the newspapers and has, I am told, cut shy of them and has apparently rather feared them. Mr. Wanamaker was always accessible and I have always been impressed by his honesty and his plain, practical common sense. He knew how to deal with men and he seldom talked with a person long without making him a friend. He understood how to brush aside details and make the other men work for him. The new postmaster general has had to deal with books and legal questions more than with the managing of men, and he will not start out with the same advantages Wanamaker's experience in his store gave him.

The two postmasters general are the opposite in appearance. Bissell weighs twice as much as Wanamaker and he tips the beam at about 300 pounds. His massive skull could contain Wanamaker's head and the brown hair of the great merchant would not touch the walls of Bissell's cranium were it boxed up in its center. Mr. Bissell's arms are as big around as Mr. Wanamaker's calves and his thighs measure almost as much in circumference as does Honest John's waist. Wanamaker is about five feet eight; Bissell is over six feet in his stockings. Both are smooth shaven, both dress in black and are simple in their tastes.

Cleveland and Bissell.

Here at Buffalo I hear many comparisons of Cleveland and Bissell, and the new postmaster general seems to be in most ways the twin brother of the president. Their lives have run close together. Taes squalled in their cradles at about the same time away back in the '40s. Both came of fairly-well-to-do families, Bissell's parents being perhaps the richer and sending him to school at Yale. Both were bachelors till they were 40 years old; their wives are of about the same age and the two girls went to school together. Both families have one baby daughter, and the little girls are of about the same age. I chatted last night with an old lawyer friend of the two men. Said he:

"Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Bissell have been almost inseparable ever since the latter was chief clerk in the office of Lansing, Cleveland & Folsom in 1870. When Mr. Cleveland was elected sheriff of Erie county he wanted Mr. Bissell to become his deputy sheriff, but the clerk thought he saw better things ahead in the law line and declined. A few months after he became the law partner of Hon. Lyman K. Bass and three years later Mr. Cleveland joined the firm. The two men were seen together almost everywhere, and called each other 'Wils' and 'Grove.' When Mr. Cleveland married the daughter of another of his law partners, Oscar Folsom, Wilson Bissell was the best man, and when the present postmaster general married Louise Fowler Sturgis in February, 1890, Mr. and Mrs. Cleveland were the guests of honor. These two men have never ceased to be 'Wils' and 'Grove' to each other, and it is likely that no one in the cabinet will have more influence in the administration than Wilson S. Bissell."

The Bissell-Cleveland Law Firm.

The old law firm in the Weed block, Buffalo, of which Mr. Cleveland and Mr. Bissell were members has probably sent out more public men than any other in the United States, and Mr. Bissell is not the only postmaster general among them. The firm dates back to 1834, when Hon. Orasmus H. Marshall, the most famous of western New York historians, opened his law office. Mr. Marshall's first two partners both left him to take public office. His third partner was Judge Nathan K. Hall, who had until then been Millard Fillmore's law partner. When Fillmore became president he selected Judge Hall as his postmaster general, afterwards appointing him United States judge as successor to Roscoe Conkling's father. Nearly all subsequent members of the firms descending in direct line from O. H. Marshall have held some important office from district attorney up. One of them, Hon. Lyman K. Bass was not only a district attorney but a member of congress and his widow is now the wife of Senator Ed Wolcott of Colorado. Mr. Bass was Bissell's first partner, and Grover Cleveland joined the firm in 1874 after his term of sheriff had expired. Bass withdrew on account of ill-health in 1881, and left the firm named Cleveland & Bissell. The two men did a very large business as confidential advisers and counsel to corporations and in a year they were obliged to take in another partner. Mr. Cleveland remained a member of the firm throughout his term as mayor of Buffalo, but retired upon his election as governor of New York, leaving Mr. Bissell where he has been ever since, at the head of the firm, which is now styled Bissell, Sicard, Brundage & Bissell.

A Big Lawyer Outside the Courts.

I am told here that notwithstanding the fact that the new postmaster general has been making from $40,000 to $50,000 a year at the law, that he has never had a case in court in his life. Still he has been a member of the bar for twenty-two years and has made a fortune of something more than $500,000. He has wonderful executive ability and has made his money as counsel in big corporation cases. He is a great man on contracts, and his quickness to form a sound judgment on important matters has caused his advice to be sought in many of the largest railroad transactions of recent years. He has been president of two railroads and is still at the head of the Buffalo Southwestern, which he organized, for which he obtained the right of way and for which he conducted the appraisal by which the road was leased to the Erie and its stock brought up to par. He organized the Buffalo Geneva road, now a branch of the Reading system, procured its charter and was its first president. He also organized the New York corporation of the Lehigh Valley railroad. His present connection with the Reading system would be hard to discover, but, without exception, his railroad management has been remarkably successful. He has a faculty for getting quickly to the bottom of big matters and is a famous negotiator. Hence by tact and training he seems to be a far better man for postmaster general than most persons have supposed. I am told that the Postoffice department was the portfolio he wanted and that he said to the president he would like either that or to be secretary of the interior though he didn't care much which.

Something About His Habits.

Mr. Bissell, with all his greatness, is a devotee of the cigarette. He smokes incessantly, and uses the Russian and Turkish varieties, and with his big head as a background the little cigarettes grow smaller and smaller till it looks as though he was sucking the end of a taper rather than smoking. He smokes while he talks and he is a good conversationalist. He is simple and unaffected in his manners, and is, I find, very popular with those who know him well. He has been a club man for years. He was president of the Buffalo club, the most important institution of the kind in Buffalo, for a longer term than any one else and they tell of seeing him engaged in a three-legged race up there with a Buffalo bank president. He never was a member of the fast set, however, and now that he is married he is so devoted a husband that he is the subject of much good-natured jesting.

A Word About Mrs. Bissell.

Mrs. Bissell has been living in Buffalo for only a few years, but she has made herself very popular here and I find that she has many admirers and friends. She is both pretty and accomplished and she promises to be one of the leading social figures of this administration. Let me tell you how she looks. Mrs. Bissell is tall and well rounded. Her dark brown hair is worn combed straight back without a crimp or curl. She has beautiful teeth and handsome blue eyes. She has a good tailor, but in dress she follows Mrs. Cleveland's taste for simplicity. She carries her head high in the air and gives one the impression of strong self-reliance and great energy, determination and ambition.

A Romantic Marriage.

There is as much of a romance connected with the postmaster general's marriage as with that of President Cleveland. Mrs. Bissell's maiden name was Louise Sturgis, and she comes from an old family which is well known in different parts of the union. One branch of it lives at Mansfield, O., and one of Mrs. Bissell's relatives there has a big brick house in the most fashionable part of the town. Another branch moved from Mansfield to New York city, and Stephen Sturgis is one of the unknown well-to-do men of the metropolis. He would be called rich outside of New York. The branch to which Mrs. Bissell belongs comes from Geneva, N. Y., and Mrs. Bissell first came to Buffalo to teach music in the Buffalo seminary. She had early shown a great taste for music and it was here that she had in part earned the money which took her to Germany and France, where her beautiful contralto voice was trained by Stockhausen and La Grange. Since the time she and Mrs. Cleveland had been schoolmates at Wells college she had planned and worked and studied with the idea of becoming a professional singer. When at last she was fitted to appear in public as a professional, one of her first engagements was as a soloist at a Buffalo orchestra concert. While in that city she was the guest of Mrs. George Sicard, wife of one of the members of the Bissell firm. Mr. Bissell met her there, and it was a case of "love at first sight" on both sides, and the arrows of Cupid drove the Goddess of Music off the field and Louise Sturgis, the music teacher, became Mrs. Wilson S. Bissell, the wife of the rich Buffalo lawyer and the future postmaster general.

The Bissell Home at Buffalo.

Mrs. Bissell, of course, gave up her teaching upon her marriage, but at her home here she has always had a musical circle round her, and at the capital she will form a feature of its musical as well as of its official society. She has a fine voice, and she has sung at a number of entertainments for charity. Her home here is a fine old-fashioned brick residence of two stories and a mansard roof. There is a tower in the middle of the front, and this forms the entrance on the ground floor. It is situated on Delaware avenue, surrounded by beautiful grounds, and is the house in which James N. Matthews, the famous editor of the Buffalo Express, lived and died. Postmaster General Bissell bought it a couple of years ago, and he has furnished it in a solid, substantial way which harmonizes with its big rooms and its old-fashioned character. Since he has been in it he and Mrs. Bissell have given many quiet little parties and a number of musicales, and she has shown herself a most entertaining and accomplished hostess.

I am told here, in fact, that Mr. Bissell would never have been postmaster general had it not been for his wife. It is said that Cleveland offered him a cabinet position eight years ago, but he refused it. This was before he had met his fate. With his marriage his tastes have changed, and he will do anything to oblige his wife. She has naturally great social ambitions, and when President Cleveland gave her the chance to gratify these in making her husband a cabinet minister Mr. Bissell accepted the place. Whether this story of Mrs. Bissell's persuasive powers is true or not, it is an interesting one, and I give it for what it is worth.

FRANK G. CARPENTER.

There are three things worth saving—Time, Trouble and Money—and De Witt's Little Early Risers will save them for you. These little pills will save you time, as they act promptly. They will save you trouble as they cause no pain. They will save you money as they economize doctor's bills.

In a recent sermon Archbishop Ireland told a story related to him by the late Cardinal Lavigerie about those who are more catholic than the pope. It is of two Jesuit fathers from Paris who preached a two weeks retreat to a convent in Algiers, during which the good nuns found no time to make a rochet for the cardinal, being engaged in two novenas for the pope's conversion.

ZION'S MAMMOTH TEMPLE

The Magnificent Pile of Gray Granite Reared in Salt Lake City.

DIMENSIONS, EQUIPMENT AND DECORATIONS

Overshadowing All Previous Undertakings of the Mormons, and from Its Lofty Towers Moroni Blows a Silent Trumpet—Mormon History.

The world might be searched in vain for a land equaling America as the paradise of isms. They are not confined to political life. Religious life is honeycombed with them. Mysticismand materialism, rationalism and the higher criticism, flourish side by side, while sects innumerable, good, bad and indifferent, are to be found beyond the boundaries of recognized creeds. No matter how weird and startling the tenets or theories, they find here a fertile soil and a congenial clime, and thrive luxuriantly.

The free air of liberty is a great promotor of so called religious enterprises. Every year records the breaking away of some leader from the restraints of theology or the disipline of denominations. In most cases the leaders of new religious crazes are not above sordid motives, and the salvation they seek to disburse has also in view their financial salvation. Of the many genuine native movements of dubious origin and character, Mormonism is entitled to a leading place. After sixty years of travail, persecution and prosecution, moral obloquy and crime, it is now a recognized institution, in the west.

The Salt Lake Temple.

Apart from the crimes committed and the abominations practiced by Mormon leaders in Utah, the spirit of heroic self-sacrifice manifested by the followers of the prophet Joseph command admiration. And the people of the west, particularly, appreciating the hardships endured and the difficulties overcome, may honestly rejoice with them at the dedication of their magnificent temple in Salt Lake City on the 6th inst. It is a monument to the labor and devotion of the Mormon people extending over a period of forty years.

A souvenir of the approaching dedication, issued by the Union Pacific, gives an interesting history of this many-towered temple. As early as 1851 a general conference decided that a temple should be built. Nearly two years elapsed before definite action was taken, and on February 14, 1853, the ground was measured and laid off. According to the original design Temple block was to contain forty acres, but later on this area was reduced to ten acres, its present size. On April 6, 1853, the twenty-third anniversary of the church, work had advanced sufficiently to allow the laying of the corner stone and this ceremony was performed by the full hierarchy of the church. The foundations were commenced June 16, 1853, and finished July 23, 1855. The capstone of the temple was laid April 6, 1892, with impressive services and in the presence of the largest assemblage ever gathered together in Utah.

Immediately after these ceremonies the work of surmounting the capstone with the figure representing the angel Moroni was proceeded with. This figure is of gigantic proportions, being 12 feet 5½ inches in height. The idea conveyed by the statue is that of a herald, or messenger, in the act of blowing a trumpet, an embodiment of the fact of Moroni bringing the gospel to the earth in this latter day dispensation. The figure is admirably proportioned and its pose is graceful. It is made of hammered copper, is gilded with pure gold leaf, and surmounting its crown is an incandescent lamp of 100-candle power. The placing of the ornamental spires on the other towers was continued till all were in place, each being provided with electric lights; the tower walls were washed, pointed and received the finishing touches, and gradually the scaffolding was removed, leaving the building, so far as the exterior was concerned, completed, and with nothing to mar the sight and study of its magnificent beauty.

A Mighty Undertaking.

Although forty years have flown since the commencement of the structure they do not by any means represent a period of continuous work. On some occasions, when the workmen on the walls had overtaken in their work the stonecutters and quarrymen, there would be a season or two of inactivity in the former department. It should be remembered, too, that until the completion of the railway from Salt Lake City south, and the completion of the Union Pacific railway, each stone had to be hauled by ox team from the quarries, twenty miles distant. Every Salt Laker of the age of 35 years and downward recalls, as a boy, the curious spectacle of six or eight toiling oxen drawing a cart, underneath which was suspended by chains a monster rock from the mountains. It frequently took four days to bring a single rock from the quarry to the Temple block, and the road was strewn with the wreckage of wagons and carts unable to bear the strain put on them. When the locomotive reached the quarries, however, there was a great change. Tons were transported easier than pounds could have been formerly, and a whole train load of great granite blocks rolled into the temple grounds every few days during the building season.

Dimensions of the Temple.

The principal dimensions of this grand edifice are worthy of note. Its whole length, including towers, is 186½ feet, and the width 99. There are six towers, three on the east and three on the west end of the structure. Other measurements may be summarized as follows:

	To end of rock work.	To top of spires.
Height of central east tower	210 ft.	222½ ft.
Height of central west tower	204 ft.	219 ft.
Height of side east towers	188 ft.	206 ft.
Height of side west towers	182 ft.	194 ft.

	To top of rock work.
Height of walls	167½ ft.
Thickness of walls at bottom	9 ft.
Thickness of walls at top	6 ft.
Thickness of buttresses	7 ft.

The whole rests upon a footing wall 16 feet thick and 16 feet deep. The building covers an area of 21,850 feet, and has cost upwards of $3,500,000.

A circular stairway in each corner tower extends from the basement to the very top; the steps, upwards of 200 in number, are all of solid granite cut by hand, built into the massive walls and the gigantic newel post of solid masonry; the only wood work is a wainscoting of heavy oak, crowned with molding and relieved by a hand rail; the whole giving an impression of the time-defying castles of the middle ages, built to stand, without crack or quiver, for a thousand years. The building is lighted by electricity, heated by hot water and equipped with fire apparatus.

Interior Finish.

The marble-tiled baptismal room in the basement is grand and impressive in all of its appointments. The capacious bronze font rests upon the backs of twelve life-sized bronzed oxen, a reminder of a like feature in the house built by Solomon, which "stood upon twelve oxen, three looking toward the north, and three looking toward the west, and three looking toward the south, and three looking toward the east, and the sea was set above them, and all their hinder parts were inward." This large room has a pavement and base of fine white marble. A smaller room on an upper floor, resplendent in blue and gold, is paved with an artistically designed native-wood mosaic, the blocks being no more than an inch square and finely polished. White and gold are the prevailing colors throughout, and harmonious tints, judiciously distributed remove every suggestion of too dazzling brightness. Notably is this the case in the overhead and side decorations of a large high room on the north side, which is exquisitely chaste, harmonious and natural in color as well as in every appointment. So it goes from foundation to summit—everywhere are symmetry, solidity, richness and purity.

There are four floors, counting the basement, and each one, excepting the top, is divided into rooms of varying sizes. This upper or assembly room occupies the whole extent of the building, except the towers, being 120 feet long, 80 feet wide and 30 feet high, with a seating capacity, including the gallery, of nearly 3,000 persons. The gallery is of graceful sweep; is railed with bronze, and is reached with circular stairways in each of the four corners. The elevated stands for the priesthood at either end, the choice hand-carved decorations of dais and balcony, the broad auditorium, the artistically paneled ceiling and frescoed frieze, with innumerable permanent lights mingled in the cornice, and five dependent chandeliers—all combine in presenting a scene which will be equally imposing by day or by night.

Birth of Mormonism.

The establishment of the Mormon church is credited to a Yankee. The original prophet, seer and revelator was a native of Vermont, born December 23, 1805. Amid its rugged hills and impenetrable forests Joseph Smith roamed and dreamed his early days away. The family moved to Ohio in 1815, later to New York, settling near Palmyra. It is pretty well settled that Joseph did not conceive the idea of Mormonism. He is classed by biographers as an indolent and ignorant person, possessed of a cunning which enabled him afterwards to profit by the ideas of others. But he proved an apt pupil in the hands of Sidney Rigdon and a man named Spaulding. Joseph's tutors were developing a plot to give the world a new religion. Spaulding had written a religious romance, a copy of which fell into Rigdon's hands. The romance in question and in brief told about several nations of people who resided between the Isthmus of Darien and the extremities of North America. These nations were at war, and finally the great battle of Cumorah was fought at a spot where Palmyra, N. Y., is now located. The contending hosts were the Laminites, who were the heathen of this country, and the Nephites, who were the Christians. The battle resulted in great slaughter; in fact, the nation of Nephites was destroyed, with the exception of a few, among them Mormon and his son, Moroni. They were righteous men. God directed them to make a record of all those important events upon golden plates and bury them in the earth to be discovered and translated at a future age.

Smith had little difficulty in unearthing in the forests near Palmyra some wonderful plates, which, however, not being gold, but copper or brass, served as well, for the hieroglyphics were there. These, through the power of inspiration, Joseph Smith deciphered, and from them "The Book of Mormon" is said to have originated. Other historians claim that the book was written by others, so that there is no certainty as to what its actual origin was. It matters little, however, in the light of the fact that there is a "Book of Mormon." Smith and his coworkers had little difficulty in securing a large and devoted following. Mormonism spread rapidly over the eastern and New England states. Proselyting then, as now, was openly and zealously carried on.

"The Book of Mormon" is not only a sacred book for many thousands of people, but it is a literary curiosity, and one of the rarest products of the early press of interior New York. It is an octavo of 590 pages, and was printed at Palmyra by E. B. Grandin in 1830. It contains about one-third as much matter as does the King James version of the bible.

Moving West.

Late in the '30s Smith and his followers moved westward. Settlements were formed at Kirtland, O., and at Independence, Mo. in both places they thrived and increased in numbers, not so much from proselyting as by the influence of their patient industry and wonderful economy. The crookedness of Smith in business affairs provoked vigorous prosecution. Smith was tarred and feathered and many of his followers hurled into the Mississippi to drown. In 1839-40 the decimated band settled in Hancock county, Illinois. Here they founded a new Zion—Nauvoo. A temple was started and $1,000,000 expended on it, but it was not completed. The city flourished, and as the Mormons prospered envy and distrust spread among non-Mormons. Rascals of every grade flocked to the neighborhood. Dissensions arose in the temple. These irreconcilable elements eventually resulted in the massacre of Nauvoo, the death of the prophet and the flight of the Mormon remnant. Hardly had they crossed the river into Iowa than the torch was applied to the temple and to their abandoned homes.

The sufferings of the members of the faithful band on the bleak Iowa prairies in the winter of 1848 is one of the saddest chapters in western history. Theirs was a trail of blood from the Mississippi to the Salt Lake valley. The wanton destruction of their property, the massacres and the hardships endured rendered explicable, if they fail to justify the crimes subsequently perpetrated by themselves in Utah.

Mormonism has seen its best days. It is shorn of its plumage. Its path is one of decay. It is utterly incapable of maintaining its supremacy in the midst of modern surroundings and the search lights of education. But its temples will stand for ages as monuments to an amazingly potent, though misguided, zeal.

EASTER MEDITATIONS.

Belle Hunt.

See the Lenten maid demure,
With her earnest face and pure,
And that transcendental, tender smile upon it;
As to mass she wends her way,
Prayer-book, cross and rosary,
She is meditating on her—Easter bonnet.

See her kneel before her pew,
Lift her eyes, so heavenly blue,
To the altar, with the decorations on it:
See her scan the service page
With the air of saint and sage,
As she fondly dwells upon her Easter bonnet.

See her to confession go,
With a step sedate and slow
Seek the penitential stool and kneel upon it;
Hear her "fess" all sorts of sins,
Sized from elephants to pins,
Still cogitating on her—Easter bonnet.

Let the pretty maid alone,
She is giddy—that we'll own,
But she's innocent—I'll stake my life upon it!
Let her choose twixt flowers and wings,
Fancy pins or velvet strings,
For what is spring without the Easter bonnet?

RELIGIOUS.

Rev. F. E. Clark, the originator and president of the Christian endeavor movement, is a Canadian by birth.

Rev. Dr. Morgan Dix, rector of Trinity church, New York, has ordered a bell to be placed in the Episcopal church at Cooperstown, N. Y., as a memorial of his father, General John A. Dix.

The American Baptist Year book, just issued, furnished the following statistics: Baptized during the year, 166,322; total membership, 3,383,160, a gain of 113,354; ordained ministers, 24,793; churches, 36,793; associations, 1,458.

Rev. Dr. Faunce of the Fifth Avenue Baptist church in New York asked his congregation to contribute $25,000 last Sunday to convert the heathen. The contribution box went around and the collection footed up $30,000 in cash. And still the heathen rage.

Father J. J. Nouri, the Armenian priest who recently gave a circumstantial looking description of what he claimed to be Noah's Ark, which, he alleged, he had discovered on the top of Mount Aararat, has been adjudged insane and committed to a hospital in Napa, Cal.

Rev. J. W. Riley, pastor of an Ohio church, is a muscular Christian. A few nights ago he called upon the Steubenville town constable to quiet a gang of toughs who had entered the church, and when the latter failed in his mission the pastor thrashed the whole crowd.

The British and Foreign Bible society since 1804 has printed and distributed 127,851,581 volumes of the scriptures; the National Bible society of Scotland has distributed 12,710,320 copies; the Hibernian Bible society, 4,268,450 copies; the Prussian Bible society, 6,659,801 copies, and a hundred other bible societies have for generations been swelling the total annual output.

The Rev. C. H. Tyndall of New York is the first person to illustrate his sermons with menagerie effects. He used a stuffed lion as his latest inspiration, and to make it more impressive had it fixed up with a roaring apparatus which enabled it to emit a soul-corroding sound like that of a dull saw tearing its way through a knotty board.

A great deal of information is given in the new catalogue of Pennsylvania university, which will appear soon. It shows that the university covers forty-one acres; its real estate and endowment fund is valued at nearly $5,000,000; it has 2,013 students in the various departments, while in 1881 there were only 998 students; the total number of professors in 1881 was forty-four, while there are at present 205.

The railroad branch of the Young Men's Christian association in New York city, in its statistics for 1892, shows a total membership of 2,962. Of these 342 are brakemen, 192 engineers, 174 firemen, 108 conductors, and 613 clerks. The total attendance on all meetings at the different places was 285,829, the average 788, and Sunday average 469. This shows a gratifying increase on the preceding year. An interesting item is the statement of the librarian that, out of 15,476 books circulated among them, only 7,904, or 52 per cent, were works of fiction; works of literature, biography, travel, history and railroads follow in order of popularity. It is said that the average circulation of city libraries is above 90 per cent fiction.

OF FOREIGN FISHER FOLKS

Peculiar Habits and Customs of British Toilers of the Deep.

ENGLISH COASTWISE SIGHTS AND SCENES

Graphic Pen Pictures of the Way a Unique People Live—Indescribable Sadness Broods Over All Who Dwell by the Sea.

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LONDON, March 20.—[Correspondence of THE BEE.]—Pilgriming in many lands, I have been much among their waterside folk—with the fishermen of Algiers, who are a conglomerate race of Greeks, Italians, Spaniards and Arabs; with the fishermen of Sicily, gloomy and voiceless as Gypsy dogs; with Chioggian and Apulian fishermen, those most majestic sluggards of all Italy; with those of Barcelona, the giants of the south of Spain; with Biscayan, Breton and Cornish fishermen, superstitious and sodden above all others; with the brave, kind men of Claddagh, at Galway, and those along the wondrous Kerry coast; with the stern yet tender fisher folk of Manxland; with the lazy fishermen of the dreamy Azores, who, transferred to American coasts, prove the most valuable recruits to our east shore fishing fleets; with the cap-and-tasseled pescadores of Cuba, brigands all in looks and ways; with the squatty Eskimos of the Labrador coast, satisfied with any fruitage of the deep which will barely sustain life; with the crofter fisher of the north Scottish and Shetland coasts; and with our own brave Gloucester men who risk their lives upon the Grand Banks, and the Quoddy fishermen whose chief quarry is the herring, all along the grand Maine coast to the mist-wreathed crags of wild Manan.

In many years of intercourse with these lowly folk I have been continually impressed with the almost indefinable and wholy indescribable sadness that seems to brood over and among all this class of people. It is in their cabins and homely social life. It is in their voices and looks. In repose, it sits on their faces pitifully. Roused into some great activity, in storm, in taking fish, or in saving lives, they have grand, earnest faces, these fishermen. But in the quiet hours, there is something hunted, haunted, wearied, worried, dreading and dreadful, to be read in the lines of their faces, in the tremulousness of their voices, and in the light which shines from their eyes, that all their brave and hearty ways cannot hide or disguise.

They Are a Sad People.

It is as if the sea, from which they live, had whispered in secret to each consciousness some savage threat of reprisal; as if over every little comfort, home joy, or well-earned content, hung the specter hand of fate coming closer to the inner vision every time the fisherman's heart grew glad. In whatever degree this is universal, it seems to me to be more marked among the fishermen of England, Ireland and Scotland than I have ever found it elsewhere revealed. I believe Dickens saw and felt this at the old fishing port of Great Yarmouth when he created out of his great and tender heart the pathetic characters of the Peggottys—simple, tender, true, scorning baseness, resolute in all manly attributes, majestic in suffering and forgiveness, and through and over all the pathetic thread of sadness, quivering like an endless plaint in a melodious, though mournful, song.

In this experience strange and tender, weird and sad, pictures of fishing towns and villages, sea reaches and coasts innumerable, each one a study for a master's brush, are stored within the memory. Here are a few of their outlines:

Grand Pieces of Nature's Work.

The mighty southwest of Ireland Kerry coast, with weird Bray Head, and majestic St. Michael's mount upon Great Skellig rock, darkening along the eastward landward horizon; and at sea, justto the north of the great liners way, the spring mackerel fleet—from Kerry hamlets, from Manxland and from France, altogether from 3,000 to 4,000 craft—frequently so densely massed that water cannot be seen from a fishing smack's deck; thousands of seagulls whistling and flapping their white wings above; and to the west, a sea horizon of rose and orange where the setting sun still shows a flaming edge; while more than 10,000 lusty men, under a third as many flashing cruciblights set amidships of the smacks, are silently "shooting" the great brown seines for the night.

Matchless is that picture, ever tinted by the near presence of fisher folk and their storm-whipped homes, you may see from Shetland's most somber sea wall height, mighty, mournful Fitful head. It is the White mountain of the Norsemen, on account of the luster of its slate formation. Its highest crag rises fully 1,000 feet above the sea, but the legendary habitation of Norna, a bold, almost detached, cliff lifting its sea front into a point as sharp as a church spire, is not more than three-fourths that elevation. It is quite accessible after a rough scramble, and its sides are the haunts of myriads of sea fowl. Horrible indeed must be the place in time of storm. But away down there below the sea is often as calm as a Highland loch. From the higher headland the whole of Shetland can be seen—waste, moor, hillock, valley, glen; a land without forests, split and serrated by the ceaseless gnawings of the sea. Tremendous precipices rise everywhere. Lochs and tarns show without copse or verdure. Shadowy "hellyers" cut the sea walls where the tide is ever at ebb or flow. Here a fishing station; there a dreary hamlet. Yonder a gravelly beach, with fish-curers at their sodden toil; beyond, a weird gio with a herd of seals turning their shining sides to the low, red sun. Over all, a filmy, dreamy, tender presence; for in the brief days before the dark, long winter sets in, it is the fisherman's "peerie summer" in the Shetland Isles.

Fishermen of the Solway Shores.

Strange, quiet, Godfearing souls are the fishermen of the Solway shores, whether they live on the Scottish side, where every stream and brae and vale has a reminder of the immortal poet of the lowly who rests within the sound of Solway's tide-thunderings, or on the English side, in rock-girt Cumberland, in the brave old houses built from Roman walls. Giant frames have these folk, and wondrous height, wide fair brows, great blue or hazel eyes and leonine heads of flaxen hair. I always remember them with their apparent alertness of attention, an unconscious habit and attitude of listening. For it is said these folks can hear the oncoming sweeps of the great tide-bore from the Irish sea—which brings the harvest of fish and often terror and death—for twenty miles away!

Long before this, if you are standing on the cliffedge above ancient Bowness, you will see the fishers, waist deep in water, hurrying on the tightening of their upright nets, which for ten miles below seem like tiny fences of rush; and away seaward with your glass you can see them scurrying up from the ebb-slime and sands toward safety and the shore. Then to your unpracticed ears come the faint reverberations of a hoarse roar; and soon, like a pillar of flame in the play of the sunlight, the great mist-banner of the advancing waters is flung from Scotland to England, almost from Criffel to Silloth, and moves toward you like a lurid cloud above a running battle. In a few moments more the brilliancy of the phenomenon is greatest.

Preceding the advancing cloud along the seething front of a wall of water five miles wide, glitters, foams and hisses a bank of spume and spray, zoned, rimmed and interlaced with tiny rainbows. The roaring of the bellowing water hosts becomes deafening.

Scenes of Awful Grandeur.

That passed, while you thrill with the mystery and awful grandeur of the spectacle, the great tide head is abreast of you, a true tide-bore, such as breaks majestically into Minas and other estuaries of the Bay of Fundy, cylindrical and straight as an arrow across the firth, and from six to eight feet in height, which sweeps past with a bellow and shriek like that of 100,000 coast foghorns howling in unison; while close in its wake is a hillocky, tempestuous mass of waves brilliantly gorgeous in fitfully-swept prismatic colors—and the Solway tide is in.

This is the picture that comes to me from Ireland's craggy north: The eastern shore of wild Lough Swilly is a succession of ruins, dainty villages, like Buncrana and Fahan, and of pilgrim-haunted shrines. Over to the west are wilder shores, huts, round towers, fisher cabins; and here and there the patched sails of the herring-fishers smacks lie white against the background of the headlands and hills. Here the sweetest herring known to man are taken. The brawny herring fishers of the north are here in greatest numbers. They are sodden, hopeless, hard. But they are brave and as strong as iron. They have tremendous frames; are brown as bronze, and form groupings of startling impressiveness. They are simple and peaceable, I am told. But were pirates wanted, were fleets to be fitted out with men for work giving one a shudder to contemplate, these sea giants would furnish incomparable human, heartless flint. But if they are flint, their wives are steel.

Brawny Race of People.

Above six feet in height, broad and strong as their burly mates, with legs corded like a man's, and bare to the knees; with arms long, crooked and fleshless as wood; with flat, hairy breasts often bared from neck to the waist, and tanned by salt, sun and wind to the color of the mottled alder bark; with wide jaws, half-toothless mouths, sunken cheeks, eyes blue-black and flashing from deep, yellow sockets, and brows bushy and ragged with bristling hairs; with narrow, creased foreheads, and great, wide, saffron-colored ears set straight out from behind like dirty "wing-and-wing" sails; and their square heads crowned by once black hair, faded into snuff-brown like an ill-kept animal's, which is matted and knotted upon the shoulders, and frequently to the waist—and you have but the faintest picture of this half-animal who subsists upon kelp, dulse, black oatcake and half-raw fish that the buyers, who come to the beaches in their carts from Londonderry, refuse as even unworthy of sale to mendicant and crouching man-beast of the town.

And the children of these!

They drag out the same horrible lives; help make the British navy; or turn traitor to the brood of half pirates behind, becoming the most remorseless of coast guard, or mountain poteen hunting, officers. And yet how the old blood occasionally blossoms through this limitless degradation. A daughter of just such a one as I have pictured was the most perfect type of wild and simple human beauty I ever beheld. Bare legged and bare breasted as her mother; brown as a hazel nut; ignorantly innocent of fear; for four copper coins she rowed me across Lough Swilly to where her father's work lay, mending seines, like an Amazonian man-of-war's man; while I sat speechless, contemplating her marvelous beauty and majestic proportions; hating myself because I was not altogether an artist, and wondering in all reverence why God, or God's nineteenth century civilization, could not wait upon the African missions for a little, and reach to and succor such as these.

Beauty of the Ocean.

Standing upon the huge headland above ancient St. Ives another remarkable picture is yours. It is of one of the most interesting fishing ports in Europe. The bay itself faces the north. At your feet are purple heather and waving ferns parted from the crystaline water by glistening sands. To the right and east the green hillocks of the eastern shore. Then the broad, yellow beach of Porthcocking, or the foreland. Dominating this is the great headland of Pednolva. Beyond, gleaming like a field of gold, are the magnificent sands of Porthminster; and, farther still, the headland and rocky islet of Godrevy, with the latter's white lighthouse set cameo-like between the purple of the sea walls and the tremulous blue of the ocean.

Before you, the silent, shimmering bay, with a few white-winged fishing craft scarcely moving, it seems, the distance is so great from the height where you stand; the ocean beyond, shining and blue and still; rythmic reaches of incoming tidewaves, miles in length, advancing and retreating and breaking softly upon the shelving sands in tiny ridges of sparkling spume; and here, to the west, a great jumbled mass of gray—old St. Ives crouching in a little pocket of the rocks, like a mass of mossy stone in some shadowy glen, sleeping away the centuries, unconscious of the thunderous sea.

Dazzling Array of Wonders.

Aside from these, and half a hundred more picturesque spots that cannot even be named, there are the sleepy hamlets and sand shores of orange from Blackpool to Whitehaven, along the Irish sea; the nilles of villages speckling the sides of the winsome sea-combes of Somerset and Devon; the quaint scenes among the fleets and homes of the fishermen of Penzance, Falmouth, Plymouth and Torquay; the countless fisher haunts in the seething chines of the winsome Isle of Wight; the drearier reaches of the English east shore where the battles with the storms and tides are ever fierce and strong; the wild, wailing, wayful coast from Yarmou