

THE PALACE OF GLASS,

AND

THE CITY OF GOLD,

COMPARED AND CONTRASTED.

A Tract for the Times.

“EXCELSIOR!”

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A WONDROUS day is coming for England, and many eyes are watching for its dawn. It will be a day of great interest, and of stirring activity. Prince and peasant, sire and child, will share in its anticipated pleasures, and the dwellers in the north, and south, and east, and west, will meet as brethren. Such, at least, is the design of that great project which is to mark the year on which we have lately entered. That it may prove a real good to our beloved country, is our ardent prayer:—but, while we breathe it, we cannot conceal the fact, that a measure of fear mars the prospect of its approach, and makes us tremble lest it should be as another Babel Tower, to provoke the Most High.

Man is ever ready to glory in that which is human, and to exalt himself,—but what saith the Lord? “All flesh is grass, and all the glory of men is as the flower of grass.” Therefore, “he that glorieth, let him glory in the Lord.”

It is not, however, our object to point out the dangers which may be at hand, but rather to improve the season by a few lessons which it suggests.

The building, which is erected for the purpose of exhibiting the skilful manufactures which shall be collected together, is worth inspection. It is singular and beautiful. Composed of glass and iron, its appearance is peculiarly light and elegant. The grand entrance is opposite the Prince’s gateway, and has seven pairs of doors. Trees are budding in a lovely avenue in the centre, and from it rows of pillars shoot off on either side.

It is destined to form a grand store-house of the arts and workmanship of all countries of the world. Under its clear canopy, all nations shall meet and walk together;—men in different garbs, and of different countenances, all eager to behold the display which shall be open before them. Numbers are preparing to join that vast assembly; it floats in the imagination of the Queen upon her throne, and the hard-working son of toil;—many,

unable easily to undertake the journey necessary to bring them to the great metropolis, are saving a little store from their daily earnings—and as the fee for admission will be reduced to a very small sum there will be opportunity given them to enter.

My friends and fellow-countrymen,—it is not a new thing to be told of a building which is prepared for the gathering of all nations. In a book which has been circulated through the length and breadth of our land, and wafted far across the waters which separate us from our brethren according to the flesh, we read of such an erection. It is thus described:—“THE BUILDING OF THE WALL OF IT WAS OF JASPER, AND THE CITY WAS OF PURE GOLD, LIKE UNTO CLEAR GLASS, AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE WALL OF THE CITY WERE GARNISHED WITH ALL MANNER OF PRECIOUS STONES, AND THE TWELVE GATES WERE TWELVE PEARLS.”

All the glory and honour of the nations are to be brought into it; and they who are saved from all kindreds and tongues shall walk in the light of it. In the midst of the street of it, and on either side of a pure river which waters it, stands the tree of life.

For this city we crave a few thoughts. Who among you are desiring to behold its beauty?

Who are seeking admission within its gates? Observe the contrast which it exhibits to the former building

Beautiful as the house of glass may appear, it is built of perishable materials; and they too who shall walk within it are perishing. To-day they meet, to-morrow they may be parted, and that for ever. This will be a painful thought in surveying that vast multitude. There they will be, eagerly gazing around them; and, led on by the god of this world, ready to worship the work of their own hands, that which their own fingers have made; and in a few short days or years the world (to them at least) will have passed away, and the lust thereof.

Free as may be the admission granted, there will be many who must remain at a distance, unable to reach its gates; and the longest day, in which admiring observers shall have traversed its walks, must come to an end, and then night will spread her dark covering, and man will retire to rest.

But the Golden City is a house not made with hands, eternal in the heavens, and they who shall enter within its gates shall walk in its light for ever.

There shall be no fear of parting, for all shall

be bound by an indissoluble tie to each other, and the Lord, and He whose name alone is Excellent, shall be worshipped and adored. Over its porch you may behold the words, "Whosoever will, let him come." There is no money asked from the poorest, nor accepted from the richest; and as a perpetual flood of glory streams from the presence of its King, it rejoices in eternal day, and its gates are never closed.

My readers, it might be interesting to continue this as a picture, and we might fill it up with very minute details; but rather receive ye it as a word of admonition. We are dying creatures, and it will matter little at the hour of resurrection whether we visited or were absent from the Great Exhibition. But of what importance will it be that we have a right to enter through the gates into the City! That right must be secured *now*. The Son of God has purchased for us a free admission, and we must ask it from Him. By His blood He opened a way of access to the City of our God.

Prophets, apostles, and martyrs, and a large company of God's redeemed people, have tried that way, and found it safe and sure. We are all invited to swell their numbers. Many, we trust, who meet in the earthly palace will meet again in the Jerusalem which is above; and to a renewed mind the lower may become a type of the higher.

But individually, whether we behold the first or not, let us be much in earnest to share the glories of the second. Let the motto which we have selected be re-echoed from our inmost hearts whenever we are led to admire or value that which is earthly—"Excelsior!"

Paraphrased in Scripture language it may be thus expressed,—“We seek those things which are above.” “We desire a better country; that is, a heavenly.” There is something beyond and above this to which my soul aspires. I am journeying to a land which is very far off.

Let none in any wise delay to enter through the door which is now open. The Prince of Peace waits to be gracious, and is exalted to have mercy; but the day of grace is fast running out, and vengeance is at hand. There are signs of coming judgment, and when that arrives the door will be shut!

“Fair distant land! could mortal eyes
But half thy charms explore,
How would our spirits long to rise,
And dwell on earth no more.

“Prepare us, Lord, by grace divine
For Thy bright courts on high;
Then bid our spirits rise and join
The chorus of the sky.”