

THE DESERT WEEKLY

PIONEER PUBLICATION

ROCKY MOUNTAIN REGION.

ESTABLISHED

TRUTH AND LIBERTY

JUNE 1850.

NO. 5.

SALT LAKE CITY, UTAH, SATURDAY, JULY 27, 1889.

VOL. XXXIX.

WARFARE.

I.
My hand hath lost its cunning and its power;

I cannot fight.
My arm hangs helpless, like a wounded flower,

Killed by a blight!
My tendons, once of steel, are limp and shrunk—

Each yields and bends;
My iron frame is like the blasted trunk
That lightning rends!

II.
And where my armor? Is it also gone?
I wake to find

That I am standing here, disarmed, alone—
With youth behind—

And strength, and beauty, and all else that dies,
Looked chill in death,

Gone, like a vision of the night, that flies
At morn's first breath!

III.
What has my warfare brought me? What great gain?

How much renown?
Where are my trophies? Where my conquered slain?

And where my crown?
What are my victories, that I should share
The victor's seat?

I fought as one who vainly beats the air,
And gained—defeat!

IV.
And this the end is! this the climax grand,
The acme won

The final downfall of a house of sand,
The last root run!

And what my profits are, I ask in vain,
For none are shown;

Nothing is left that I can count as gain,
Or call my own.

V.
I toyed with shadows, while the sands of time
Rolled swiftly on;

And said not, "This is youth," until its prime
Was past and gone!

And now, in shame, before the Head Supreme,
With garments rent,

I crave for grace, that I may yet redeem
The time mispent!

NANNIE POWER O'DONOGHUE.

LETTER FROM PALESTINE.

Our Mohammedan friends have a hard time of it just now, and have had for some time. This is the ninth month of their year, called *Ramadan*, and as this month is par-

ticularly holy, the Mohammedans fast during the whole month; that is to say, not a bit to eat, not a drop to drink, of any description, must be taken from sunrise till sunset. The farthest a good Moslem can go during this period of trial is to take a mouthful of water, enjoy its refreshing qualities for a few minutes, and then spit it out again. But, although no food nor drink can be had in the day-time, during the night no abstinence is required. As soon as the sun sets the hungry people are at liberty to do their best, and avail themselves of the opportunity. A natural result of this reversing of the common order of things, from night to day and day to night, are numerous derangements of the physical functions and consequent sickness which always accompany the so-called "fast." In the night time, during this month, the streets present quite a lively scene. The minarets are illumined, and the interior of the mosques shine through the hour of prayer with magical light. The reason why this month is so holy may here be told. The 27th of *Ramadan* is the very day on which the Prophet Mohammed received the Koran from heaven. No wonder, then, that this event should be celebrated for a whole month every year. One circumstance is awkward, though. The Mohammedan year is a moon year. It is therefore eleven days shorter than ours. For instance, their year 1304 commenced on September 30th, 1886. Their year 1305 commenced eleven days before in the next year, that is September 19th, 1887. Their present year is 1306, and commenced on September 8, 1888; and the new year will commence on our August 29 this year. It will hereby be understood that the Mohammedan year has no fixed dates, as it were. Any of their days will in course of time coincide one after another with all our days in the year. The *Ramadan*, which now happens to fall in our spring, will another time occur in the winter, in the autumn, or in the summer. Yet the Moslems celebrate the receiving of the Koran on one and the same date, whether this falls at the end or at the beginning of the actual year. To me this practice of celebrating the same event at any time of the

year seems somewhat absurd, but it is, after all, just as good as, for instance, the celebration of the birth of Christ in December, and so on. The night between the 27th and the 28th of *Ramadan* is a very holy time. It is called *Lailat-ul-kadr*—the Night of Omnipotence. During its sacred hours thousands of miracles, visible to the imagination of the faithful, are performed, and the prayers then offered are particularly pleasing to God. The fast-month is followed by three days of festivities, during which time everybody rejoices at having successfully passed through the ordeal of fasting for thirty days and eating for thirty nights.

Yesterday it was my privilege to witness a baptism, the first since my arrival in the Holy Land. The candidate was a native of Austria. From his early childhood he had been in contact with the light-bearers of the Catholic Church in his native country, and what he has seen and experienced, what he has suffered from fanaticism and bigotry, and what he has been offered as religion, he says, had driven him to the verge of doubting even the existence of God. A strong desire drove him to leave his country and visit Palestine; and although he could not explain the reason why, or produce any particular plan, yet he followed this desire, and came after a long journey overland here. Hearing the Gospel, after diligent search he was led to accept it and can now see why the Spirit should drive him from his own country where, as yet, the sound of the gospel messengers has not been heard. It was beautiful last evening. As we wended our way down to the shore the moon was hidden behind a thick cloud; but gradually her silver rays broke through. The waves of the Mediterranean, sometimes very unruly here, were quiet and calm; and as the candidate was immersed in the watery grave, in the name of God, the dark, cloudy veil was broken and a flood of rays from the light-bearer in the sky was poured out upon the very spot and all around, making the impression upon those present not easily forgotten. It is to be hoped that this fruit of the Austrian nation may prove to be, like the first fruits in the ancient times, entirely set