

**LETTERS
FROM ABROAD**

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Letters from abroad by Canon Clayton

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CANON CLAYTON

**LETTERS
FROM ABROAD**

LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

BY THE

REV. CANON CLAYTON, M.A.,

RECTOR OF STANHOPE, AND EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE
LORD BISHOP OF BIPON.



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NOTICE.

THE following letters appeared first in 1877, in the localized *Stanhope Magazine*. They were addressed, month by month, to the parishioners of Stanhope, under the title, "A Voice from a Foreign Land." They appear to have interested my own people, and also others into whose hands they came. It is hoped that, by God's blessing, the letters will be made useful in this more permanent form. This will be the case if the readers are led, by what follows, to be more jealous of any departure from the teaching of our Reformed Church, and are also made to prize more highly the Lord's Day and God's inspired Word.

Stanhope Rectory.

July 19th, 1878.

LETTERS FROM ABROAD.

LETTER I.

I HAVE thought that it may prove interesting to you, my parishioners and friends, and also be a relief to Mr. Wagstaff, if during my absence from England I supply month by month, for our Stanhope Magazine, some observations and reflections concerning these far-away places.

Through God's protecting care, I arrived here safely on Saturday evening, having left Stanhope on Monday morning. Had I wished, I could have travelled this distance of 1,000 miles more rapidly; but, in my present state of health, I thought it prudent not to expose myself to unnecessary fatigue. I will narrate my proceedings day by day, in order.

On *Monday* (Jan. 1), I quitted my now desolate Rectory with very different feelings from those with which I had usually left home before. I was beginning the new year as a solitary pilgrim, without my beloved companion; alone, as it were, in the world, and yet not alone; for I trust that, through God's

undeserved mercy, I can say, "Immanuel is with me; and therefore will I fear no evil." Mr. Fox and Mr. Hill, who had been most kind and sympathizing in my deep sorrow, travelled with me as far as Auckland; and Mr. Wagstaff came on with me to York. In London I was met by other kind friends. On *Tuesday* morning I left London for Dover; and was joined at Tunbridge on my way, by my nephew, Robert Clayton, whom you know, and who, having spent last winter in Brussels, can speak French well. On *Wednesday* morning he and I left Dover for Calais. On board the steamer were many invalids, who, like myself, were seeking a warmer climate. Next to me in the cabin below deck was a young man, who was suffering from a violent cough, and who at each cough brought up blood. There was also a lady, who was going with her maid to Algiers, and who afterwards travelled with us in the same railway carriage. She was evidently far gone in some consumptive complaint.

After crossing the English Channel, as soon as we landed at Calais, the sights we saw and the sounds we heard all plainly told us that we were no longer in happy England, but in a foreign land. At the railway station, where the passengers were eager to obtain refreshments before the train started, the hubbub and jabber was most confusing, the English travellers, many of them, not understanding the French waiters; and the French waiters, many of them, not understanding the English travellers—the English, as St. Paul says (1 Cor. xiv. 11), being as barbarians to the French, and the French, in turn, being as barbarians to the English. On the platform were some French soldiers, with their red trousers and light blue pale-

tots. Here, also, were French women, very few with bonnets, most of them wearing clean white caps, and others of them entering the train with no covering whatever on their heads. Here, too, we saw the strange sight of gentlemen kissing gentlemen, as they bade each other an affectionate welcome or farewell. The proverbial politeness, too, of the French work-people was here apparent, as we observed them taking off their hats to the washerwomen and others of their own rank of life about the station.

The country from Calais, through Boulogne and Amiens, to Paris, was very uninteresting. It was flat, and oftentimes marshy; much like the journey on the Great Northern line between Peterborough and Huntingdon. We passed through large tracts where no hedge-row and no wall fences were anywhere to be seen. On each side of the main roads, on which were no hedges or walls, appeared an endless row of tall poplars, planted at regular intervals, looking very formal. We arrived at Paris at six p.m.; and, as we drove through the streets to our hotel, we were much struck with the grandeur of the buildings, and the magnificence and brilliancy of the shop windows and cafés. Here, too, an unusual sound met our ears. I refer to the tinkling of ten or twelve little bells, dangling on the necks of the horses of almost every vehicle, which sound made me hope for the time when, even in gay and pleasure-loving Paris, there shall be (Zech. xiv. 20) upon the bells of the horses, "HOLINESS UNTO THE LORD."

On *Thursday* morning we quitted our capacious hotel, with its 400 or 500 beds, and crossed the Seine, in sight of Notre Dame, the Metropolitan