

British American Presbyterian,

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FOR TERMS, ETC., SEE EIGHTH PAGE.

C. BLACKETT ROBINSON,
Editor and Proprietor.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Letters and articles intended for the next issue should be in the hands of the Editor not later than Tuesday morning.

All communications must be accompanied by the writer's name, otherwise they will not be inserted.

Articles not accepted will be returned, if, at the time they are sent, a request is made to that effect, and sufficient postage stamps enclosed. Manuscripts not so accompanied will not be returned, and subsequent requests for their return cannot be complied with.

British American Presbyterian.

FRIDAY, AUGUST 18, 1876.

MR. GLAPSTONE publishes a review of the Memoir of Dr. Macleod in which he passes a high eulogium upon this eminent divine. We should not wonder to see considerable discussion arising from this review.

THE Chataqua Assembly is entitled to be considered a remarkable success. We are glad to see that our friend Mr. McNab, Superintendent of the East Presbyterian Church Sabbath School, has been saying some good things on behalf of Canada.

DURING the past week the Ontario Teachers' Association have been holding their Annual Convention in Toronto. They are evidently a body of learned, able, patriotic, Christian men, and constitute a class second to none in the community in regard to the work they do and the influence they wield.

PRESIDENT McCOSH expresses an adverse opinion upon college boating in so far as it leads to gambling and betting. The words are timely as the annual meet at Saratoga was the centre of the fast world. The days of the Saratoga race are numbered. But the new President approves of boating as a healthful and manly exercise.

WASHINGTON is claimed to have been a Presbyterian. Whether this would account for his greatness, we leave others to say. Certainly the revolution was not without its representative Presbyterian heroes. Dr. Witherspoon was one of the most noteworthy, and well deserves the splendid statue that is being raised to his memory.

LORD LENNOX in the British House of Commons has had the manliness to offer the resignation of his seat, as through no design but because of imprudence, his name has been connected with doubtful operations. While the matter affecting his lordship contains a warning to politicians, his conduct has been warmly and universally commended.

THE New York Observer has an excellent article on Presbyterian Union. All Churches of this name which as yet are keeping aloof from the larger bodies should be confederate with those and with themselves. But we ask should not this be so with all the Evangelical Churches. They should all live in harmony, work in co-operation, and go on hand in hand civilizing the earth.

THE elevation of Mr. Disraeli to the peerage removes the most remarkable man of the day from the membership of the Commons. His honor is well deserved; but as we read the last utterances of the great statesman in a forum so familiar with his voice and eloquence, a feeling of sadness comes over us. With Gladstone practically retired, and his forum so worthy of his steel, Benjamin Disraeli sitting in the House of Lords, there is an opening surely for "coming men."

WE were much struck with an observation of the Louisville Observer to the effect that seldom are Bibles found in the pews of the churches of the South, and still less frequently do the pew occupants look up the text or follow the reading of the chapter. How different this from the churchgoers of the northern country. It is also a remarkable contrast with the prevailing custom in Canada. The rustling of the leaves of the Bible is an unfamiliar sound throughout the States, though Mr. Moody has done much to make the Bible a textbook in his religious gatherings.

LOOK out for the meteors of August. It is now known they come with a periodicity that is governed by laws similar to those which regulate the motions of the planets and of comets. This fact is now recognized by Astronomers. The flood of meteors at this season affords a spectacle well worthy of being witnessed by all who admire the works of God in nature. For the ignorant such celestial phenomena may possess no attraction, but not so with the intelligent and reverent, who feel in every meteor, and every drop of rain, and every blade of grass, the presence of the Maker.

STANLEY HEARD FROM.

There is no man living whose movements are more closely watched, or whose words are more eagerly read, than those of Stanley, the great African explorer. When the announcement was made that Stanley had found Livingstone, very many were slow to believe the intelligence. It was called a hoax of the New York Herald. Even when the distinguished traveller was receiving the well-deserved compliment of the annual medal given by the Royal Society to the most successful discoverers in geographical science, there were not a few Englishmen who derided the idea of a Yankee journalist accomplishing so great a work, and it was the general talk amongst Americans that the Herald had created a sensation that would pay. These philosophers did not take into account the certainty that such a hoax would very soon be discovered, and that the pretentious journal and its imaginative African representative would suffer in exact proportion as their allegations were found to be false. But Stanley has created for himself an undying fame, not only by his discovery of Livingstone, but by his recent explorations on ground which has become associated with the great names of Speke and Grant and Burton. All cavil is now silenced. The commissioner of the London Telegraph and the New York Herald is the cynosure upon which the eyes of the civilized world are fixed.

The work of exploration in which Stanley is engaged is most intensely interesting. It is important to learn of an immense area of splendid soil admirably adapted to the support of a large population, of a series of enormous lakes that are destined to rival those of the North American Continent, of a climate in every way adapted to the exigencies of civilization, and of a prospective commerce that cannot but enrich the world. The scenery of Equatorial Africa must be beautiful beyond description, while its resources are exhaustless. In this all the travellers to these regions agree. Captain Speke was most enthusiastic upon the climate and agricultural wealth of Uganda, and he is more than confirmed by the clear and graphic accounts of this land of plenty now given to the world by Stanley, the prince of newspaper correspondents. While, in respect of scenery and resources, the letters of Stanley are eminently satisfactory, it is pleasing to see that the intrepidity and rapidity of action, of which formerly he furnished so many and striking examples, have not forsaken him. He is the same man that he was when he went straight for Livingstone as a bullet well-aimed would go to its target. The coolness and presence of mind exhibited by him when he pointed his rifle to the head of the man who was submerged to the chin in water, and who was carrying the precious box containing Livingstone's papers, and said he would shoot him dead on the spot if he let his burden drop into the water, are seen in him now as he confronts a whole host of naked, yelling, bloodthirsty savages. We cannot doubt that should Stanley be spared, he will solve the problems connected with the question of the Nile sources. But, above all, he will be eminently useful in filling up the map of Africa, and showing its true character. The slave trade, whose horrors he so faithfully depicts, will through his instrumentality receive its death-blow. A new commerce will be opened up. Fields for the enterprise of generations yet unborn will be disclosed. With this exploration but in its infancy, what a glorious future for Africa opens before our gaze as we contemplate the probabilities of its mineral and agricultural wealth. We wish Stanley every success. We trust to hear of his work being fully and satisfactorily accomplished. We hope that once more the day is reserved for him when he will be restored to civilization, and receive the well-merited plaudits of all who are interested in geographical science and in commercial progress.

The missionary enterprise to which the explorations of Stanley and his fellow-discoverers are leading is becoming a feature of the age in which we live. There are settlements now forming by the shores of Lake Nyanza, the Albert Lake and Lake Tanganyika. The appeal which Stanley sent forth for King M'tesa, in the heart of Africa, to send missionaries, has not been in vain. Already whole colonies are going forth to settle on the banks of these mighty inland waters, which are composed of missionaries and their families, of medical missionaries, and of tradesmen of every description. Soon all the evidences of our modern civilization will be witnessed at the Equator. The locomotive will be seen speeding on its way along the shores of the Nyanza, the steam vessel will plough the waters of these lakes, the telegraphs will throw with the pulsations of the thought of all other continents. Where now the Aboriginal tribe is found with their shifting tents, great cities may be expected to arise from the dust. The Church will rear her lofty spire to the clouds. The school house will be filled with its busy hum. The Bible will be widely disseminated.

In view of these things, let every Church

take a deep and active interest in African mission work. At this moment the Exhibition at Philadelphia is the centre of great interest and attraction, and this because on that spot are to be seen the contributions in science, in art, in literature, from every known country in the world. Let Central Africa be like the Exhibition in this respect, that every Church will seek to be represented there by suitable agents and by active work, and there will be the prospect of the growth in that benighted land, of nations that shall rival the civilizations of Europe and America. We trust soon to hear of our Churches in Canada sending forth their missionaries to this new and promising field.

Book Reviews.

SCOTCH PEBBLES. The Milton Publishing League. Price fifteen cents.

The title of this little book further informs us that it consists of "Excerpts from the Letters, Journals, and Speeches of Norman Macleod, D.D." There are in all eighty-six "pebbles," and some of them are very beautiful—real cairngorms. The compilers seem to have taken great pains in their selection. Not that there is any scarcity of them. Dr. Macleod's writings furnish an abundant supply of pebbles of all sorts and sizes, from a ten-ton boulder down to the little "chucky-stone," so dangerous in the hands of mischievous or careless boys. Nevertheless great trouble seems to have been taken to select pebbles of a peculiar shade of color; and that shade is ultra—ultra—what-do-you-call-it? Not ultramarine, but ultra-something-else. We rather think that if their author had seen them thus removed from their original setting, and placed side by side, he would have chuckled the whole collection into the Sound of Mull. Perhaps we are judging too severely; our readers can see the book for themselves; but we hope no one will form his opinion of their celebrated author from these "excerpts" alone.

THE CANADIAN MONTHLY AND NATIONAL REVIEW; August, 1876. Adam Stevenson & Co.

The article by "Fidels" on the "Divine Law of Prayer," professes to be a final summary of the issue of the question regarding the physical efficacy of prayer, which has for some time been under discussion in the pages of this periodical. The subject is ably and dispassionately discussed; and the combatants appear to entertain feelings of the greatest respect towards each other. Such discussions in a magazine of this class will undoubtedly do good, especially when they are the occasion of calling forth such articles as the present one. Those who have given their minds almost entirely to the pursuit of physical science usually place such doctrines among the superstitious notions of the ignorant; but when they find them firmly held by men whose scientific knowledge is at least equal to their own, they will perhaps be inclined to reconsider their hasty conclusions. "As Long as She Lived," by F. W. Robinson, proceeds with increasing interest. "The Faithful Wife" is an old Norse legend, tolerably rendered into English verse. There are two articles on Summer Travel, one on "Kingston and the Thousand Isles," and one on "Lake Memphramagog." "Dreamland," a short poem by Sarah Keppel, Hamilton, is truthful in sentiment, but somewhat faulty in execution. There is an able review of "The Poetry of Charles Heavyside," by Daniel Clark, M.D., of Toronto. By the reviewer's showing, this Canadian was a true poet; and his writings ought certainly to be better known and appreciated among his countrymen. Besides the copious extracts given by Dr. Clark, the present number of the Monthly contains a short poem entitled "The Dark Huntsman," supposed to be about the last that Mr. Heavyside wrote. The remaining articles are "A Woman before the Mast," "The Climate of Newfoundland," "A Texan Barbecue," "Current Events," "Book Reviews," "Annals of Canada," "Current Literature," "Music and the Drama," "Literary Notes," and some short pieces of poetry besides those mentioned.

THE Rev. Alexander McKay, D.D., Pastor of Duff's Church, East Paslinch, preached in the Free Church, Hope Street, Glasgow, on the last Sunday of July. Rev. Mr. Urquhart is the pastor of this church. It is said to be the largest congregation in Glasgow.

THE Rev. James M. Douglas, of Cobourg, who has been appointed by the Foreign Mission Committee to establish a Mission in Central India, and intends proceeding thither in the autumn, has kindly consented at the request of the W. F. M. Society to take charge of a box of ladies' work, to be disposed of at India for the benefit of the Zenana Mission. We have no doubt this will commend itself to many ladies throughout the country who may feel themselves able to do something in this way to help on the cause of Foreign Missions. Contributions to this object will be received by Mrs. McLaren, President; Mrs. Ewart and Miss Topp, Secretaries; Mrs. King, Treasurer; or any member of the Committee of the Women's Foreign Missionary Society.

Sermon on the Transfiguration.

MAT. XVII. 1.

BY REV. DAVID MITCHELL, TORONTO.

The very first expression in the passage of Scripture now read connects the transfiguration with the declaration, which the Lord made concerning his approaching sufferings. "And after six days," (the Evangelist narrates), "Jesus taketh Peter, James and John, his brother, and bringeth them up into a high mountain apart." St. Mark says the same thing; and St. Luke with a slightly different expression. "It came to pass about an eight days after these sayings," signifies the same thing. There is no contradiction between St. Matthew and St. Mark on the one hand and St. Luke on the other—Matthew and Mark recording six clear days as having elapsed, and St. Luke taking into his summation the day preceding and the day following this hiatus of six days, as the days on which the two events which are connected respectively occurred. We know not what happened between the prophecy the Lord made regarding his final doom, and the event of the Transfiguration. But it is one of the examples with which the Scriptures are filled, of the human and divine nature of our Saviour being placed side by side in vivid contrast. At the one time we find him showing "unto his disciples, how that he must go unto Jerusalem, and suffer many things of the Elders and Chief Priests, and Scribes, and be killed," and then we have to follow the footsteps of our Lord and his disciples as they strike into the solitudes of the mountain, on which the wonderful event of the Transfiguration took place. Let us draw near and gaze with reverence upon the scene so beautifully depicted by the three Evangelists.

St. Luke states the purpose of the Saviour in thus retiring into the mountain, "He went," he says, "to pray." This should be borne in mind in considering the Transfiguration, for we think it goes far to explain it. It would seem that Christ was in the habit of going into the mountains for prayer and meditation. It was on a mountain He preached to his disciples the greatest of sermons, and there he taught them to pray after the manner of his own model prayer. The sacred historian informs us that after performing the miracle of feeding the multitudes, "When He had sent them away, He went up into a mountain apart to pray, and when the evening was come He was there alone." And so on many other occasions we have reason to believe that Christ secluded himself in the deep recesses of the mountain sides, and there unseen by human eye, let his hearts' desires and meditations ascend to His father. It is probable that the solitariness of the Redeemer was brightened by many Transfiguration scenes, and that in the event before us as recorded, we have a glimpse of what he was in His spiritual exaltations. At all events we should not overlook the important lesson here presented, viz: that Jesus Christ was in fullest sympathy and accord with nature, that the mountain side, or wilderness, or lonely sea-shore afforded to Him a congenial retreat where He might pour out His heart before the father, and that with Him it needed not the cloistered cell or some sequestered or consecrated spot, to commune with heaven. This habit of the Saviour we should regard as a worthy example. There is without doubt great value in stated seasons and places for retirement and solitary thought. We are the creatures of habit, and must ever associate the routine of duty with fixed appointments. But there is danger connected with this, that we become cold, methodical, uniform, and crush within us those human impulses and instinctive propensities which give to prayers and meditations the zest of a genuine enjoyment. If we cannot pray but in the closet, if we cannot meditate except in the hermitage, we suspect we are still at some distance from the Kingdom of God. We will substitute monasticism for devotion, penance for penitence, works for faith. But let us have the spirit of the Master, and all nature will present herself as a Temple in which we may offer the incense of prayer, the lonely mountain-peak may become a consecrated altar, the solitudes of the wilderness will be enjoyed as our confessional, the stars will be regarded by us as the very windows of heaven, through which ministering angels are watching us, the winds and the waves willing to us with celestial strains. Wherever we are placed the still, small voice will be always whispering in our ears.

Jesus took with Him Peter, James and John into an exceeding high mountain. With the question as to whether this was Mount Tabor or Mount Hermon, we will only say that the balance of evidence seems to be in favour of Hermon. Hermon is an exceeding high mountain, while Tabor was inhabited to the very top. Hermon lay close to where Jesus was at the time of the Transfiguration, while Tabor was at a considerable distance. Hermon's lofty peak was crowned with the snows of ages, suggesting evidently St. Mark's description, "His raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow." Turn from this to the persons by whom our Lord was accompanied on the occasion of the Transfiguration. These were three of His disciples, who by their differing tempers and mental qualities were peculiarly fitted to act the part of witnesses as to the grand transactions about to take place. Here we have not only the number of witnesses required by law, but so constituted that if the event had not occurred, and was only imaginary or a mere vision, they must have contradicted one another in their account of it. Without having been present at an actual occurrence, Peter—the fearlessly honest—could not have written as he afterwards did concerning it, "We were witnesses of His Majesty, for He (Jesus Christ) received from God the Father, honor and glory, when there came such a voice to Him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son in whom I am well

pleased, and this voice which came from heaven we heard, when we were with Him in the Holy Mount." James was the first martyr, who died for his faith in Christ. He is thus to be esteemed for his bold and unwavering truthfulness. John, again, as the disciple whom Jesus loved and who lived to the age of upwards of a hundred years, in faithful and affectionate witnessing to Christ, furnishes testimony most precious to all who like Him, rest on the Saviour's breast. These three witnesses severally commend themselves to the Heathen, the Sceptic, and to Believers, and their united testimony is of great value in determining the reality of the Transfiguration. May we not well exclaim, in view of the special favor conferred upon them, what a privilege to accompany Jesus and see Him in the act of praying! It was night; and now that deep shadows had wrapped the mountain and the sublime silence of the hour was felt—unbroken except by the rustling leaf, the whirr of the startled bird, or the dripping of water from the projecting crag,—what a precious opportunity was afforded for beholding Christ in the highest exercises of His soul! Yet, strange to say, as St. Luke tells us, that "Peter and they that were with him were heavy with sleep." What! exclaim some of you, asleep in such company! Yes, the frailties of the flesh are indeed great, that sleep should overtake one when about to receive the greatest boon. But they were doubtless worn out with the fatigues of the day. They were overcome with the journey. They shared not the spiritual exaltation of the Master. The sweet breath of a summer's wind, and the gentle rays of stars—as well as the holy engagements of the Lord,—all sung with monotonous cadence their souls into deep sleep. Meanwhile the praying manner of their Lord is lost to sight. Precious words fell soundless on their slumbering ears. While it was natural to sleep at such an hour, yet it involved the loss of those lofty thoughts which were poured into the Heavenly Father's ear. What a contrast between the sleeping disciples and the vigilant Master! But let us not blame them—who when our souls are blunted with worldly engagements and our bodies drag on our jaded minds, sleep away the valuable moments of divine worship, or become unconscious while we are listening to the words of some valued friend. Jesus does not rebuke them by word or look, and perhaps it was because He, feeling for them, allowed them to rest awhile that they might be well prepared to witness the sublime spectacle that was about to pass before them.

St. Luke informs us, "that as he prayed the fashion of his countenance was altered, and his raiment was white and glistening." The words of St. Matthew are, "he was transfigured before them; and his face did shine as the sun, and his raiment was white as the light." While St. Mark says, "his raiment became shining, exceeding white as snow, so as no fuller on earth can white them." The disciples awaking out of sleep, now witness this wonderful change. We are to remember in attempting to explain this event, that Jesus went up to the mountain to pray, and that he was thus employed when sleep fell upon the eyes of his three followers. If we connect the Transfiguration with the fact that he was praying, we will at once concede that the change was brought about by some external cause. The rationalist makes easy work of the explanation by saying that the rays of the setting or rising sun fell upon Him, and lit up his face, and were reflected from his garments. But the Apostles would not have been so struck as they were, at sight of their transformed Master, though it must be confessed, that light at certain seasons is followed by strange and magical results. We have seen it throwing a weird like mantle of beauty over scenery, which at another time would scarcely attract attention. Has it not to the eye of the traveller changed the desert into a sea of glass, or robed the barren mountain with garments of silver and gold? But something more than this is involved in the Transfiguration of our Lord. He had risen through his praying moods, from one degree of spiritual intensity to another, till all that was Divine within him was expressed in his countenance and form. We have seen some of our fellow-beings passing through intense excitement of sorrow or joy, and they were so changed to our eye that we could hardly recognize them. Does not conversion often produce a marvellous change in the appearance—imparting a new light to the eye and irradiating the countenance? Take the Christian as he is engaged on the Lord's Day in the exercises of the sanctuary, and it may be that in the sacred hymn, or by a thought from the preacher, his soul is wafted upwards, and catching the light of Heaven, there is given to the eye a peculiar brilliancy, which it knows not in its ordinary moods. Let any one engage in some ennobling work of charity, and all his love seems to settle up on his countenance, and to impart to it a new expression. Or look at the transforming power of mind in the artist at the moment he conceives the living idea which his skilled hand will afterwards impress on canvas, or on marble; or in the poets when words give wings to his thoughts, and they are poured forth in forms that will live forever; or in the inventor as he discovers some hidden principle in nature, and applies it to the capable machine or instrument. They are changed for the time, from their ordinary look and expression. Their thoughts looking out at the windows of the eyes, fill them with a wondrous light. Now, apply this well recognized principle to the Saviour, and suppose him to have been what some persons say—a man, namely, but the noblest and the best of men,—a man reaching in his Transfiguration prayer the loftiest altitudes of spiritual excitement, a man whose one thought was to fulfil in his lifetime the mission of doing good, now approaching the throne of God in the utterances of his soul. At such a moment would he not be transformed indeed! We cannot imagine the appearance he would have presented. His eye turned heavenwards and enkindled with the light of God's love, his countenance irradiated by the intensity of an inward joy, his frame electrified with emotional excitement. What a sublime spectacle! But, when we add to this, that He was the Beloved Son of God, that He was