

**Contributors and Correspondents.**

**DIARY IN THE EAST.**

(Continued.)

BETHLEHEM, ETC.

After about one hour and a half's ride we reached the foot of the Frank mountain. It is a peculiar looking truncated cone, and its remarkable form, rising above the other eminences, or plateaus of the wilderness of Judea, is distinguishable from long distances on all hands. The cone rises some 400 feet from the crest of a ridge, and looks almost artificial in the regularity of its form. A track goes slanting up its side at so easy a gradient that I was able to ride nearly to the top, indeed it was only to save my horse a little that I dismounted at all. Just before ascending the cone, we passed ruins and the remains of a large tank. At the top too, there are ruins of a wall, and towers built of large hewn stones. There is a deep hollow that looks as if it had been excavated in the centre of the summit, which is some 750 feet in circumference. All these ruins are of very old date. There is no appearance of this eminence having been used by either Saracens or Crusaders in spite of its name and tradition. The ruins more probably go back to the Roman era. The situation and character of the hill entirely agree with the account given by Josephus of the Herodium, erected by Herod the Great, where too his body was brought for burial from Jericho, where he died. What a contrast its present solitary desolate state presents to the magnificence described by the historian, a lonely, desolate height, in the midst of a lonely, desolate land, wasted, and lying desolate under the curse of God. As we climbed the hill a large fox ran up the path in front of us; it seemed the only dweller amid the ruins of Herod's grand palaces. From the Frank mountain a wide prospect is obtained of the wilderness land in which David spent some weary years in hiding from Saul. Its present state carries one back over the settled times of Roman rule, and the prosperous days of the kings of Judah, to the unsettled times when its rugged glens and rocky hillsides afforded many a solitary hiding place for David and his herd, and the shepherds who fed their flocks on these hills were glad to be on good terms with one who protected, instead of robbing them, like other leaders of fugitive bands. But, most probably, the land is much more desolate now than even in the days of Saul. Now, as in the days of Jael, "the travellers walk through by-ways," but the "highways" of which Deborah speaks, not merely are "unoccupied," but cannot be said to exist. The utter lack of wood, too, gives a very bare aspect to the scene from the top of the Frank mountain. Under the present rule in Palestine, things only get worse and worse in this respect. No care is taken to plant, which would need to be done under authority, for the thrifless people cut down the natural wood, which might grow up into fine trees, whenever it is big enough to afford fuel. It used to make me feel quite sad to see the loads of Arbutus and evergreen oak being brought in on camels to Jerusalem, the latter cut whenever it got as tall as a good shrub. Along the Hebrew track, south of Bethlehem, there was a great deal of this scrub oak, which seemed to be of the same sort as the famous Abraham's oak near Hebron, and probably might, like it grow up to grand trees let alone.

From the Frank mountain I had the top of Tokoa pointed out to me, but we did not ride up to it, as there are scarcely any mains, and it lies a good deal on one side of the rough track which we now took. Khanrotum, where the large cave is which we were to visit. On our way we passed one of the bare rocky flats, which are used for threshing floors. It was on a high exposed spot where any wind that blew would fan away the chaff, and was set the natural rock laying exposed, perhaps artificially smoothed a little. It is no more than a slab of sandstone. Most probably that was just where the great Mosque now stands in Jerusalem, and before Moriah was built on could be just such another rocky hill summit as the one I passed.

A passing look at a swift flying partridge seemed quite suitable in this fact, so associated with David's life when he was hunted as a "partridge in the mountains." Some of these partridges are very pretty and with beautifully striped marks. Mr. Muller's little boy had one in captivity, it was a very shy, poor bird, having been taken when still grown. Close to the ruins of cave of Khanrotum, we came upon a cluster of Arab tents. They belonged to some of the people whom we had seen yesterday. They were, as usual black, but by no means attractive looking. The sound of grinding was heard in one as we passed. I was astonished to find that some of these people keep their corn laid for safety in Bethlehem, and we met a man taking a long two hour walk to get a supply for his family. We dis-

mounted beside the tents, and giving our horses in charge to one of the men, set off on foot along the side of the deep gorge which we had now reached. We passed some remains of substantial buildings, and one of the Arabs brought us a few coons which he had lately found in the ruins. They were only copper very rough and rude looking, but one bore the wheat ears which I have been told are the sign of a Jewish coin. The path to the cave was a sort of goat track along the face of an almost perpendicular declivity. There would have been no real difficulty in it had not there been a fall from above of some huge pieces of rock which blocked up the way. Over these we had to climb. One bit of scrambling was by no means pleasant to me, especially impeded as I was by my riding skirt, and a waterproof cloak, for rain had begun to fall. The rock I had to climb over was lying at a very steep angle, immediately under an overhanging rock, under which one could only pass by stooping very low. The rock was so smooth as to give very little hold for hands or feet, and the rain making it slippery besides, I was really very glad I had passed it without rolling down into the gulf of the gorge which was close below me. Before beginning to explore the cave we sat down under an overhanging cliff to enjoy the provisions which we had brought with us. Our ride had given us a very good appetite, and the scene around made everything seem charming to me. The gorge, almost a fissure, half-way up the side of which we were seated, reminded me of some of the roughest bits of Switzerland, and, to add the resemblance, a flock of goats were feeding on the side of the opposite cliff, in places where one could not at that distance see how anything but a fly could hold on. But here all resemblance to Switzerland ended. The companions who sat by while we ate our dinner, were as unlike Swiss peasants as they well could be. Several of the Arabs had followed us from their tents, to help or hinder on the path, and in the cave, in hopes of a Bachalheesh. I saw Mr. Muller had very little confidence in them, and he would not let me show the purse from which I was to pay them till we were safe out of the cave. While we ate our meal, two of the Arabs improved the time by one submitting his head for the other to shave, after he had washed it in a pool by our side. The shaving process was cleverly performed, and the razor with which it was executed was evidently sharp enough to be a formidable weapon, had he not been on good terms with us. The rock under which we sat was beautifully clothed with maiden-hair ferns, and from some holes high above a pretty wild doves flew out and in. After we had finished our meal, we scrambled a little farther along to the entrance of the cave. This is by no means easy to find for those who are not familiar with the place. A whole party, some of whom I know, (among them two Canadian clergymen) were kept for a considerable time wandering about in search of it, though they had both a guide and dragoon with them. Mr. Muller and our guide had both been at the place before, so we had no such difficulty, but nothing could seem better for purposes of concealment than the situation of the mouth of the cave. It is a considerable height up in the face of the perpendicular cliff, so that in order to enter it we had to climb on the top of a large rock which has fallen from above. This lies a little way off from the cliff, so that we had quite as wide a leap into the mouth of the cave, as my short legs, encumbered with long skirts, could well manage. Outside, the rock was wet and slippery, inside, all was dry dust. Through this we had to go, half-stooping, half-crawling, for a short distance, then we entered the first large chamber of the cave. This is 120 feet long and from 80 to 45 feet wide. The roof is high and vaulted. The Arabs were now really of some use, for by distributing lighted candles among them, and making them scatter about, we got a much better idea of the size of the hall. A heap of dry dust in the centre showed where the Palestine Exploration Society had been excavating, but without finding anything of much interest. From this hall many arches and narrow passages branch off. Some of these go far in under the hill. Mr. Muller on one occasion spent four hours in exploring with a party, without coming to the end of the series of caverns. In all this time they did not meet with any other hall so fine as the one in which we stood, so I was well satisfied to go no further than into one or two side caves, which communicated with it by various arches and passages, that reminded me much of the crypt of some cathedral. It would have been impossible for us to explore the inner labyrinth of caves without some better escort, and more lights than we possessed. I can scarcely say I regretted not going further; the air even in the hall was close, and to get further in we should have had more creeping through low passages, than I think I could have borne. What I saw of the cave quite satisfied me that, if not really the scene of David's adventure with Saul, it had all the capabilities for such an adventure. The side passages and caves close to the great hall might afford concealment for an immense number of men, and there are endless corners, nooks, and loop-holes from which those further in might observe any intruders into the first part of the cavern without being themselves seen.

The rain had almost ceased before we left the cave, so mounting our horses, with a friendly farewell to our Arab acquaintances, we set off again for Bethlehem.

Not far from the little town we passed a small house which Mr. Muller was having built for a young Swiss, who is cultivating a newly taken in piece of land. Its cultivation was begun in order to give employment during one of the numerous famine years from which the inhabitants of Palestine have suffered. At first Mr.

Muller was told it was utterly folly for him to try to raise any crops on fields not quite adjacent to his house, for that they were certain to be all carried away by robber bands. However, he persevered, and as he has succeeded pretty well, his example has proved an incentive to others, and it was quite pleasant to see parties of men engaged in clearing away the larger pieces of stone, and the biggest thorns, etc., in preparation for cultivation, and even building enclosing walls around some of the land near Mr. Muller's little farm. The workmen did not look very active or energetic, but any beginning of improvement in industry is refreshing to see in such a sad land of desolation. If the government exactors do not prove altogether unbearable, perhaps Mr. Muller may have the pleasure of seeing the example of energy and industry in members of his own household, followed by some of his neighbours. If his own little farm prospers, it will be valuable as a training place for the native pupils who reside under his roof.

M. B. W.

**Education in Common Schools.**

**EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.**

DEAR SIR,—In your issue of July 16th, there is a brief but suggestive paper from Mr. Dunbar, of Glenora, in regard to the right of the state to educate all its citizens. This right he strongly affirms, and the general principle thus so opportunely brought forward, I cordially concur. This right of the State to educate all its citizens, Mr. Dunbar asserts on the following grounds:—viz., (1.) On the ground of its very existence; (2.) On the ground of its usefulness. In regard to the first, he shows, as far as limited space and time enable him, that the ignorance and the vice of the citizen imperil the very existence of the state; and that the usefulness of the state depends upon the intelligence and morality of its people, as not merely law-obeying, but law-conforming and law-vindicating; and that because of the appreciation of its thoroughly enlightened and peace loving citizens of the benefits of public law and order, as contrasted with lawlessness and anarchy. Then, from these very simple, easily-established, and fundamental principles, he affirms certain applications. Among these, the right of the state, not merely to expend money on school-houses, teachers, etc., but to provide that something be taught, as well as that somebody is taught, and hence the duty of a compulsory law to secure that that teaching be actually imparted; else the public money would, if not squandered, at least not be applied to the purpose for which it was granted. These positions, it seems to me, can scarcely be successfully impugned. And if, Mr. Editor, there is so much truth in this first part of his brief letter, I equally rejoice to say, that the latter part of it is especially reasonable and valuable; that, namely, in regard to the right of a Protestant State to educate its Protestant citizens, in order to secure the right and adequate discharge of the duties of citizenship. And even to see to it, that Roman Catholic citizens themselves are educated; for Mr. Dunbar's general position involves it. It is gratifying also to notice, how distinct and intelligible are the grounds upon which he maintains, in opposition to a spurious liberalism on the one hand, and of a haughty and imperious Papalism on the other, that Protestantism is not a mere negation; but was worth all the expenditure of undaunted and heroic agitation of principle which its ascendancy in Britain and on the continent involved; as well as the expenditure of blood and treasure that were so freely given in order to secure that ascendancy. We must not deceive ourselves. We are now, in the providence of God, brought face to face with a bold insidious, haughty, unscrupulous, and tyrannical religionism, that bases its pretensions on divine authority, and even on the statements of the Word of God. I say, Mr. Editor, there must be no mistake on such a matter as this. Otherwise, the rapid development of obnoxious principles now hurrying on apace to their appropriate consummation, and final and irremediable doom, will suddenly startle into activity a sleeping church. The battle of the reformation, there can be little doubt, has to be fought over again; and it becomes every friend of reformation principles to arm himself for the coming conflict. We have, therefore, to thank those prominent watchmen on the towers of Zion, who, from its battlements, decry the approach of the enemy. The Gavazzi's, the Chiniquy's, and a whole host of others who have preceded them in sounding the alarm, as well as those who, on this continent, and in the old world, are following in their footsteps, are worthy of our most serious attention. And our younger clergy, especially, who are esteemed "the rising hopes of the church," would do well to make what is usually called the Popish controversy matter of sustained and earnest study. They will likely be driven to it by and by. Meanwhile, let me further say, Mr. Editor, that I think the position laid down in Mr. Dunbar's premises, legitimately carry us to further applications, as, for instance, that if it be the right and duty of the state to educate its citizens in *self preservation*, and that the usefulness of the state consists in the universality and excellence of the education thus imparted in the formation of virtuous conduct and habits in its citizens, and, moreover, that it be the right and duty of a Protestant state to educate its citizens in these prominent and funda-

mental principles which constitute it a Protestant state, that then it follows, as a matter of course, that the Bible must not only be introduced into our public schools by way of *toleration*, or even of *simple permission*, but must be taught as a matter of *enjoinment*. There is no stopping short of this conclusion legitimately. Nay, I think the principle goes even further; and points to the *right and duty* of the state to see to it that its citizens are educated religiously, and that the public funds may rightly and honorably be applied in this direction. It may be said, that it *does not follow*. I frankly admit it; and see no other legitimate *terminus ad quem*, at least in so far as the argument, pure and ample, is concerned. Grant me Mr. Dunbar's premises, and that is the conclusion in which the logic of the argument lands me. There may be circumstances, however, in the present condition of the state, that render such an application of public funds inexpedient. The divided state of the church, and of general society, render the present application of the principle altogether inexpedient. Indeed, they plainly point in another direction. We must not on that account, however, surrender the principle itself, else there are a great many other things that would have, on the same ground, "to go by the board." Let me at present, however, conclude by just saying, that I rejoice that the friends of our Protestant religious education, even along with secular studies, are bestirring themselves; and that our best thanks are due to our worthy friends in New Brunswick for the noble stand they have taken, to Mr. McTavish, and others, in the late Synod of Hamilton, in the Canada Presbyterian Church, and to yourself, Mr. Editor, for publishing the able report read by Rev. Mr. Pittblado, on "Education in the Maritime Provinces;" and last, but not least, for the brief letter of Rev. Mr. Dunbar, of Glenora. The publication of these, simultaneously, I regard as opportune and reasonable; especially that portion of Mr. Dunbar's letter that refers to our school-books as about to pass through the "Roman Catholic filter," in the elimination from them of everything that may not be agreeable to Roman Catholic ears. Should such a thing be attempted, I trust it will rouse such a growl from the British lion throughout the whole of the Dominion as may terrify the Council of Public Instruction from permitting the school-books from being in the least subjected to the Popish pruning knife. If there is anything more I desire to add, it is simply this, that as Popery takes the ground of religion in its haughty and tyrannical assumptions, the only legitimate and effective method of prominent defence as well as attack, is on the same ground. There the battle must be fought, and around this point the conflict will undoubtedly thicken. It is only and mainly, on religious grounds that Popery must be attacked and overthrown. Had this letter not already grown too long, I would have desired to introduce to your readers a very thoughtful and able article published in the *Christian Guardian*, in reply to certain recent utterances of the *Toronto Globe*, in regard to Bismark and Protestantism. Meanwhile, I forbear.

Yours, truly,  
Rothsary. D. A.

**Probationers vs. Laymen.**

**EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.**

The new Presbyterian Church at Big Bay, Keppel, Grey Co., was opened for divine service on Sabbath, June 27th. Appropriate sermons were preached at 11 o'clock a.m., and at 6.30 p.m., by Rev. James Scott, of Owen Sound (Methodist.) The communion was dispensed by the pastor. Nine new members were added to the Church—five on a profession of their faith, and four by letter. Three of the number were baptized.

A successful tea meeting was held on July first. From the proceeds of the service and the Sabbath collections, about \$60 were added to the Building Fund. This was the last of four new churches which have been dedicated to the service of God on this field of labour since December 27th of last year. The communion was held in the last of our four stations last Sabbath. In all the stations there have been about thirty-two new members added. Twenty by profession of their faith, the rest by letter. Nine adults have been baptized, and fifty-four children. As my time has been so fully occupied with the church opening and with communions, and necessary pastoral visitations, I was unable to notice a letter which appeared in your columns over the signature of "Layman" which appears to demand attention. Though it is gratifying to find laymen taking a part in such discussions, it is a matter of regret that this one did not confine himself more closely to the subject on which he professed to write. It was in reply to a very concise moderate, sensible letter by a Probationer.

This Probationer's letter contained three points or questions. First. How long should a Probationer remain in one vacancy? He argues that as at least one-fifth of the vacancies are mission stations, and a number more should be on the list of Mission Stations (this statement is within bounds), any time at all is too long to spend in such places. "Layman" replies by abusing Probationers generally, and thus one in particular, for laziness and inefficiency generally, and for an unwillingness to do Home Mission work. The Probationer, as far as I could understand him,

did not object to go to all such stations as such. He only complained that things were not called by their proper names. The great objection to the Probationer's scheme is that these Probationers are kept travelling hither and thither over the country, wasting their time and money, and are not allowed to do mission work.

The 2nd question was: Should Probationers visit? The Probationer says no—because in the one or two Sabbaths which they remain in a place they cannot do it efficiently, and they would be suspected of canvassing. "Layman" says so—because visits from such a source would not be acceptable. Though set out from such opposite points they both agree that Probationers in an do little or no good by visiting. With respect to the 3rd question: What is a vacancy?—as "Layman" in defining the position of his opponent, has left off the negative syllable from the principle word in the principle sentence, completely changing its meaning. The point he is alluding at is not easily seen.

As the epithets which he so freely uses, viz., "whimpering probationer, ghastly counsel," etc., are digressions from the subject—they require no notice. I heard before a justice of the peace in the West, to sue for a divorce. The man had a broken nose, the woman a pair of black eyes. The man addressed the justice as follows: "Look at this broken nose she has given me, and at those black eyes I have given her, and say if we should not be divorced."

We have these numerous letters by Probationers showing that there is a universal feeling of dissatisfaction among them. We have this letter of "Layman," which although it fails to meet the points in the argument, is still valuable as showing the state of feeling on the other side. When such a state of feeling exists, is it not high time for a change.

D. McNAUGHTON,  
Presque Isle, Ont., July 20th, 1875.

**Our Statistics.**

**EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.**

SIR,—I read the letter on Statistics from "M. McK." with much interest. He has evidently put himself to some trouble to obtain the statistics of the several parts of the United Church of Canada, and taken pains to correct the returns that fell into his hands. He will permit me, however, to point out some particulars in which he has failed to be as accurate as he might have been. My remarks will bear on one section—the late Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces.

That Church he credits with 124 ministers and 188 congregations. The statistics for the past year appear in the *June Record*, a copy of which I infer from his letter "M. McK." got when in Montreal. According to what is published there, 124 ministers and 188 congregations is an understatement of the facts. Take the ministers first. The tabular number of the *Record* referred to give the names of 128 ministers, and those are the *pastors* in actual employment only. There are besides two Professors in the Theological Hall, Messrs. McKnight and Currie; two Professors in Dalhousie College, Principal Ross and Dr. Lyall; the Agent of the Church, the Rev. D. G. McGregor, who was the last Moderator of Synod, and at least one retired minister, the Rev. John Stewart of New Glasgow. Here are six to be added in order to make the figures correspond to the 889 of the late Canada Presbyterian Church, making in all no less than 184 instead of 122. Of course, "M. McK." cannot be found fault with for omitting the six, if he had only that copy of the *Record* in his hand.

Then as to the congregations. It could not be from the *Record* that he got the number 188, the figures that are there when summed up make a total of 149. Nor is that all. Before a comparison can properly be made with the 650 of the late Canada Presbyterian Church, an explanation is necessary. The 149 represent pastoral charges, many of which include two or more congregations. In but a few of the cases are separate returns presented. When the separate congregations are enumerated on the same principle that prevailed in the Canada Presbyterian Church, I find that the congregations of the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces mount up to at least 201 instead of 188 or even 149.

In the course of two or three years when the Statistical Committee of the United Church shall have induced the several branches to fall in with a uniform mode of returns, more accurate figures will be obtained, and the strength of Presbyterianism in the Dominion will be more correctly estimated.

Yours, etc., S. H. Tecumseh.

The Roman Catholic clergy of the town of Grotte, in Sicily, together with 8,000 of the population, have declared themselves Old Catholics. The occasion of the movement was the excommunication by the Bishop of Geraci, of five priests who refused to accept the dogma of the personal infallibility of the Pope. The other priests of the town, twenty-five in number, took their stand on the side of their brethren, and informed the Bishop that they should henceforth refuse to recognize his authority, and were resolved to sever entirely their connection with Rome. The people followed the lead of their clergy, and in every church of Grotte a Te Deum was sung, and worship according to Old Catholic rites commenced.