

OUR CONTRIBUTORS.

LETTER FROM DR. FRASER.

MR. EDITOR, While looking through THE PRESBYTERIAN of July 6th, I lighted on a contributed article on "China Missions" which I read with a great deal of interest, but which roused me to a most painful consciousness of my neglect in not writing to you more frequently. I have not forgotten my promise to write you regularly, but regret that it has not been more faithfully kept. But apologies and expressions of regret are of little interest and less profit. The best thing I can do, to make amends to you for the past, is to "bring forth fruits meet for repentance," and then I may perhaps hope to be forgiven.

THE SHANGHAI CONFERENCE

which is noted in the article I have referred to, as to take place on May 10th, 1877, has met and separated. It was a great success. One of the English Presbyterian missionaries in the south of Formosa who was there wrote me the other day, "I am sorry I didn't get round by Tamsui coming back from the Conference. I would have liked to have told you about it. It was a

GRAND SUCCESS,

and everybody who went regretted only that they had to leave, and that so many others had missed it. I am the better of the whole visit spiritually and physically. During my three months' absence from Formosa I visited Amoy, Swatow, Fouchow, Shanghai, Ningpo, and Soochow, meeting with nearly all the missionaries laboring at these ports. It is so interesting to know about the different fields of work and to compare them with our own." To read the like of this makes me feel what a treat we missed in not being there. Such was my fate. I have to be contented with a printed report, and I fear you will have to be contented with a more meagre one still, for only a limited number of copies were printed, and they were all grabbed up before we, in this out of the way place, heard that they were issued. I got the sight of one copy from which I made some notes which may be of interest. The total number of members attending the Conference was 124, of which, seventy-four were gentlemen and fifty ladies. Though few are foolish enough to preach Sectarianism to the heathen, or to strive to transplant in China the minor distinctions which separate Christian brethren in other lands, yet it may not be uninteresting to note the quota of members supplied by

DIFFERENT DENOMINATIONS.

Presbyterians 41, Independents 25, Episcopalians 22, Methodists 16, Baptists 14, Lutheran 1, Unconnected 5. Dividing the members in another way, we have British 72, American 51, German 1. While taking the whole number of Protestant Missionaries in China, 306, we have from Britain 148, from America 141, and from Germany 17. To give full notes of what was said and done would be to make too great a demand on your already crowded columns, but I send you a copy of the programme from which you may see the range of topics which were considered, and the subjects which are of most general interest to Chinese Missionaries, and to which they require to give most thought and attention. Among the most important resolutions adopted at the Conference was the following:—"Resolved, that a committee be appointed to prepare on behalf of this Conference of over one hundred missionaries, a fervid and earnest appeal to the various Mission Boards, Colleges and Churches of the world, for more men and women for China." I send herewith, a copy of said appeal, and I hope you may find room for it in full. The committee have done their work well. The appeal is indeed *fervid* and *earnest*, but not more so than the state of the case demands. God grant that it may be the means of bringing many more "to the help of the Lord" in China!

Apart from the fact that there is in China scarcely one missionary for every MILLION of people, it must be borne in mind that the ranks are continually being thinned. Since the Conference in Shanghai two of the veterans in our army have

LAID DOWN THEIR WEAPONS,

and put on the crown which shall never fade away. One, a Mr. Preston of Canton, whom I never met, and the other the widely known and much esteemed Mr. Douglas of Amoy, whom it was my privilege to meet on my way here. He died in the thick of the

fight. Up to the morning of July 26th he was in his usual health. At 6 o'clock the same evening he breathed his last. Cholera struck him down, and he never rose. His dying words were

"PERFECT PEACE."

May we not write, "Blessed are the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth, yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labors, and their works do follow them."

The Cholera swept off about 4,000 natives in Amoy, in the course of a few days, but its rage is now stayed there. It has, however broken out in Foochow, where I hear the natives are dying at the rate of 200 or 300 a day. Here, during the summer months there has been a good deal of sickness both among natives and foreign residents, but as yet no epidemic. Through the goodness of God we have enjoyed good health, the children keeping exceedingly well, which I ascribe in great measure to our good house in a good situation. Of the twelve miners who came out from England last year (to sink a coal shaft for the Chinese at Coal Harbor, a place about thirty-five miles from here) well and strong, one is dead of remittent fever, one is ordered home for fear he will die if he stay, a third has been off work for some weeks with chronic diarrhoea, and all the rest have been more or less sick with fever and other diseases. So that you see how much we have to be thankful for.

THE MEDICAL WORK

in the hospital goes on much as usual. As compared with a corresponding period last year there has been a slightly larger daily attendance. The attendance at the Sabbath services is also better. For the benefit of patients residing in the hospital, and of people of the place who may have no lessons through the day, a short service is held in the chapel-room of the hospital every evening. A hymn or two is sung, then a short passage of Scripture read and explained, followed by a short and earnest address, and concluding with a few appropriate words of prayer. These services which had been discontinued for a while through want of interest on the part of the people, were resumed ten months ago, and have since been better attended.

My letter is already far too long, so I will conclude with the promise of another before long. Yours sincerely,
J B FRASER

NOTES FROM SCOTLAND.

For Scotchmen a summer pregnant with more important events and prospects, commercial and ecclesiastical, than the present, is unusual. There was first the interesting, ridiculous, and absurd idea promulgated of Canadian fresh beef and American fish importation, followed by the fact. Then was heard the threefold cry of desolation, famine and death from three points of the compass, St. John, India, and Turkey. Nobly was the cry answered. Scotland has responded with a grand exhibition of benevolence and Christian philanthropy. England also has contributed to the Indian famine fund the munificent gift of two hundred thousand dollars from voluntary contributions.

But the crowning event of the summer in more senses than one has been the great Council too soon departed, like all terrestrial joys. I hold it the greatest privilege of my life to have been present to have looked into the eyes and gazed upon the great worthies of our Church throughout the world. There sat

"Genius high and lore profound,
And wit that loved to play, not wound,
And all the reasoning powers divine,
To penetrate, resolve, combine."

while "Admiration feasting at the eye and still unsated, dwelt upon the scene." The American delegates not only outnumbered those from any other country, but in point of oratory threw them completely into the shade.

The Canadian meat market is already an established branch of industry, and though frowned upon by both the agriculturist and public caterer its consumption equals the supply. The quality is perhaps slightly inferior to the home production, but the enormous price of the latter—thirty-three cents per pound—enables the importer to sell profitably at considerably reduced rates. It is pleasing to notice the demand for

CANADIAN FARM PRODUCE,

wheat, butter, and beef, and to observe the growing familiarity with Canada among the middle classes of society in Scotland.

The approaching winter is likely to be felt severely by the poor. So little wheat is grown in Scotland that one might travel half-a-day through the South and not see a field. Owing to the incessant and tremendous falls of rain during August the corn is much damaged, and roots are badly diseased. The harvest is now fairly begun. Though a few speculators who would even "build factories with blood" have realized fortunes from the war by early haying and quickly selling, yet it does not seem to have materially affected prices.

I have met with few theological students. The Halls re-open in November and close early in April. The students usually complete their curriculum much younger than we do—when about twenty-four years of age. Four sessions in divinity constitute a regular course, but in special cases it is limited to two. Though, then, eligible for a call, they almost invariably spend from one to three years as assistants, in which position they are not ordained, nor have any legal ministerial standing.

THE U.P. AND FOREIGN CHURCH STUDENTS

are chiefly drawn from the middle walks of life, and are usually less cultured than those of the established college whose students are taken more from the professional ranks. The inducements in the establishment, like those in Episcopal Churches, being equal to the attractions elsewhere, the wealthy dedicate their sons readily to her work. Two Sabbaths ago I preached for a minister of the establishment near England on the banks of the Annan, in whose domestic service were three female servants, a butler, coachman and footman. Attached to the manse was a beautiful glebe, where hunting and fishing—luxuries in this country—might be indulged in *ad libitum*.

Edinburgh, Sept. 22, 1877.

W. K.

THE MOTHER AND THE SUNDAY SCHOOL.

BY REV. J. A. R. DICKSON, TORONTO.

Of all the auxiliaries of the Sunday School—and there are many—the mother is the most important and influential there is. And this follows necessarily from what the mother is! She is the heart of the home. Her spirit broods upon it, and is the grand formative force that falls upon every child. The destinies of the children are in her hands. *She sows* the seed of future harvests. *She implants* the principles of future actions. *She gives* direction to the currents of life. As the potter has power over the clay to form one vessel to honor and another to dishonor, so has the mother power over the hearts of her children to form them to vice or to virtue. WORDSWORTH sings most truthfully: "Our childhood suits, our simple childhood, sits upon a throne that hath more power than all the elements." The mother commands this throne: *She nurses* the child, and *nourishes* it and *nurtures* it with her life. She ministers to it not only *FOOD*, but *FEELING*, and *FANCIES* and *FAITH*. She may thoughtlessly trifle with the far-reaching power in her hands by treating her children merely as dolls to be dressed and dandled: or she may with a wise-hearted love seek to form their minds to a deep affection for, and a thoughtful appreciation of all that is beautiful and true and good. Being in league with the central power of the child's life she may *make* it or *mar* it for time and for eternity. If there is one fact, one grand and prominent fact, that the lives of all men teach us, from the beginning of the world until now, it is this, that the influence of the mother is *paramount*, superior to all others; it is felt for ever. It is never lost; it may be weakened by conflict with other influences, but it is never lost—cannot be lost.

This is what is pointed to in the words of 2 Chron. xxix. 1: "His mother's name was;" the formative force and the abiding influence of the mother upon the *child*, the *youth*, the *man*,—"His mother's name was." Suppose it was *Abijah* as in this text—Abijah the good, then Abijah the good makes Hezekiah the good. A good mother makes a good king. Or suppose it was as in the 22nd chapter, "His mother's name was Athalia," "*that wicked woman*," as she is called in the seventh verse of the 24th chapter—then we are prepared to hear what follows—"he also walked in the ways of the house of Ahab; for his mother was his counsellor to do wickedly." It is this determining energy of the mother exerted upon the child, and felt through all the after life, that is marked by this frequently recurring phrase in the Books of Kings and Chronicles, "HIS MOTHER'S NAME WAS."