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Our Contributors.

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Then and Now: A Reminiscence, 1834-1836.

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DEAR MR. EDITOR,—I count myself happy to be included in the list of your "old friends" who have been asked to join in celebrating the Silver Wedding of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN; and I thank you for the kindly suggestion that my humble contribution might take a "reminiscent form."

Having been a "constant reader" of the journal from its commencement, I may just say in a word or two that I very soon contracted a liking for it that has not decreased with the lapse of years. Indeed, I have noticed with interest its yearly increasing usefulness. So far as I am capable of judging, THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN has faithfully reflected the mind of the Presbyterian Church in Canada in all the important issues that have arisen during the last quarter of a century, and I trust that it will long continue to hold forth, and to hold fast, the principles of truth and righteousness by which it has hitherto been guided, and that it will receive the recompense of reward to which its literary merits justly entitle it.

A REMINISCENCE has these two difficulties for me at the outset. I scarcely know where to begin, and I shall not know where to end. I have only a dim recollection of the death of King George IV., in 1830. The outburst of popular enthusiasm that followed the passing of the Reform Bill in 1832 left a deeper mark on memory—not that I took any interest in the merits of the question, for, like the boy who carried Jonathan's artillery, I "knew not anything about it;" but the dazzling illuminations, the bonfires, the military pageants, the trades processions, with banners and bands of music; the multitudes of country people who poured into the city, women sitting behind their husbands on horseback—these sights made an indelible impression on my youthful mind, as did also, a few years later, the most fascinating spectacular event of the period—the Eglinton Tournament. But it is to the years 1834-1836 that I shall always look back with the greatest interest, as it was then that I was sent from home to begin the battle of life at a boarding-school, and to become a pupil in the new Edinburgh Academy. Fagging was not practised in the Scottish schools; but another custom prevailed in Edinburgh at that time, namely, that every newcomer must show the stuff he is made of by fighting one of the others. My *vis-a-vis* at initiation was a raw-boned Highland lad about my own age, and a tough customer at that. We fought it out in approved fashion—across the bonnet—and after both of us being sufficiently "punished" to satisfy the onlookers we shook hands and were ever afterwards the best of friends.

The Academy was rather a famous school which had been founded in 1824, through the influence of Sir Walter Scott and a few other literary men, as an offset to the High School which traced its history back to the 12th century, and had on its list of pupils the names of more men eminent in Literature, Science and Art, than any other educational institution in Scotland. Dr. Williams, Archdeacon of Cardigan, was rector of the Academy, and had under him a large staff of teachers in classics, modern languages, mathematics, engineering, etc. The discipline was rigid. Flogging was one of the fine arts in those days. The boy who entered the school-room after the door had been shut for prayers had no need to be invited up to the desk; he just went of his own accord, held out his hand, received so many *loofies*, put the stinging hand into his pocket and meekly took his place in the class. For a major offence I have seen the master divest himself of his coat in order that he might the more freely and effectually indulge in the pleasure of thrashing some unfortunate culprit.

In its main features Edinburgh is unchangeable; but vast improvements have been made since 1834. St. Giles Cathedral, then cut up into three ugly churches, has since been restored to something like its original beauty. Heaps of disreputable tenements in the Old Town have been replaced by fine specimens of baronial architecture. Where the handsome Free Church College now stands, there stood a pile of dingy houses fourteen stories high. Princes Street was not then adorned with the Scott Monument, or

National Gallery, nor with the fine statues of Allan Ramsay, John Wilson, Livingstone, Sir James Simpson, and other Scottish worthies.

Never in the history of the Scottish Metropolis could it boast of a more brilliant galaxy of eminent men than at this time. The "Great Wizard of the North" had passed away only two years before, but his town-house on Hanover Street continued to be the resort of tourists and literary pilgrims. And great Guthrie had not yet appeared on the scene to clothe the naked, and feed the hungry, and draw crowds of peers and peasants to listen to his enchantment—and some of them to *greet*. But Dr. Chalmers was there in full-orbed fame, as Professor of Divinity in the University. The irrepressible "Christopher North" occupied the chair of Moral Philosophy, Pillans, of "Humanity," Dunbar, of Greek, and the silver-tongued Sir William Hamilton, of History. Dr. Candlish, of the massive head, powerful in speech, and of boundless enthusiasm, had lately succeeded the illustrious Dr. Andrew Thomson in St. George's Church; Dr. John Lee was minister of the "Old High." Dr. William Cunningham, of "overpowering logic," was in the College Church; Dr. David Dickson and John Paul, in Old St. Cuthbert's. Dr. Robert Gordon, one of the most accomplished and eloquent men of his day, was one of the ministers of the High Church. Dr. James Begg, who came to be known as the greatest debater in his Assembly, was the minister of the adjoining parish of Liberton. (He will be remembered by many in Canada as one of a deputation sent here by the Free Church in 1845). Dr. David Welsh, afterwards famous as the retiring Moderator of Assembly in 1843, was already a noted man in 1835 and minister of Carsphairn in Galloway.

Among the eminent laymen at this time in Edinburgh were: Sir David Brewster, the experimental philosopher; Dr. John Abercrombie, who stood at the head of the medical profession; Dr. John Lizars, equally famous in surgery; Francis Jeffrey, the Lord Advocate, the founder and editor of the *Edinburgh Review*, and the most trenchant writer of the period; Lord Henry Cockburn, the Solicitor-General, and Hugh Miller, the eminent geologist, best known to us nowadays by his autobiography, "My Schools and Schoolmasters," was the champion of "Non Intrusion," and editor of the *Witness* newspaper. The "Ten Years' Conflict" had begun that culminated in the memorable transactions of May 18th, 1843, when 478 ministers of the Church of Scotland, for conscience's sake, abandoned their churches, manse, and emoluments, severed their connection with the venerable Church of their fathers and entered on the new undertaking that was to astonish the world by the self-denial of the clergy, the liberality of the people, and the administrative ability of its leaders. Adam Black, the original publisher of *Encyclopedia Britannica*; the brothers William and Robert Chambers, who revolutionized the publishing business by their issues of cheap and useful "Information for the people"; and William Blackwood, the founder of the popular magazine that has so long borne his name: these were also among the illustrious Edinburgh men of that time, and of whom it may be said—"their works do follow them."

Edinburgh, then as now, the citadel of Presbyterianism in Scotland, had at the time I am speaking of twenty-three parish churches, eight of them being collegiate charges, and nearly as many dissenting places of worship. James Haldane, the eminent Baptist, was then preaching to his congregation of 3,500 in Leith Walk, where he continued to preach, without any salary, for fifty years!

In 1835, Glasgow had forty-six Presbyterian churches, of which twenty-six belonged to the Church of Scotland, the remainder being divided among half-a-dozen "dissenting" bodies, of which the most numerous was the "United Associate Synod of the Secession Church." The late Principal Willis, of Knox College, Toronto, was then a minister in Glasgow of the "Original Burgher Associate Synod," which united with the Church of Scotland some years later. The outstanding ministers in Glasgow were the Venerable Principal Macfarlane, of the "Inner High"; Dr. John Burns, of the Barony, who ministered in that parish for seventy-two years; Dr. Robert Buchanan, of polished eloquence, was minister of the Tron Church; Dr. Lorimer, of the *Ram's Horn*; Dr. John Smythe, of St. George's; Dr. Norman Macleod, father of the illustrious Norman of a

later date, was minister of St. Columba Gaelic Church, and was almost idolized by his people; Dr. Matthew Leishman was the beloved minister of Govan, and Alexander Turner of the Gorbals. Dr. Robert Burns, afterwards of Toronto, was minister of St. George's Church, Paisley; the saintly W. M. McCheyne had just commenced his ministry in Dundee; Rev. William Burns, the Scottish Revivalist, was aflame with evangelistic activity at Kilsyth; Dr. John Macleod, of Morven—"the High Priest of Morven," as he used to be called on account of his commanding stature—one of the most venerated ministers in the Church, and who lived to be the patriarchal head of the Macleod family, was then in the prime of life, ministering to the congregation that had been ministered to by Macleods for a hundred years. He, too, came to Canada as a deputy from the mother church in 1845, and left behind him impressions not easily effaced. One more name I must mention as identified with 1835. I refer to the Rev. Dr. John Macdonald, of Fernintosh, "The Apostle of the North," as he was called, the most popular preacher and platform speaker in the Highlands. Ten thousand people were wont to gather round him on the recurrence of the Communion season, and wherever he went he drew crowds of his countrymen. It is said of him that visiting Dornoch in winter, when the roads were blocked with snow, his conveyance got stuck in a snow-wreath, whereupon the people turned out in force and carried the minister—gig and all—over every obstacle.

Public worship was held in the cities and towns at eleven a.m. and two p.m. In country places the two services were frequently merged into one, which continued without intermission for about three hours, during which time two distinct sermons would be preached. Sunday-evening services were unknown in the churches. Hymns were not used, nor was there instrumental music of any kind for many years later. As long ago as 1805, an organ had been introduced into St. Andrew's Church, Glasgow, but it created such a disturbance that it was soon discarded and sold to a neighbouring Episcopalian Chapel, and no more was heard of the "sinfu' kist o' whistles" in the sanctuary until fifty years later, when Dr. Robert Lee, at the risk of his *status*, resumed the innovation of instrumental music in Old Greyfriars Church, Edinburgh, of all places the most unsafe for such an experiment; but the organ came to stay.

There were very few Sunday schools or Bible classes in Scotland in 1835, but the "exercises" at home made ample amends, though I fear they would be accounted by most of my readers a weariness to the flesh. The domestic servants, each with Bible in hand, assembled with the family in the dining-room. A part of psalm or paraphrase was sung, not very artistically sung perhaps, but sweetly, nevertheless. Questions from the Shorter Catechism were put to old and young. The Scriptures were read, verse and verse about, after which one of Blair's sermons, or one of Dr. Chalmers' astronomical discourses, which were immensely popular at this time, would be read by *pater familias* in sonorous tones. A vivid recollection haunts me still of the effort to keep awake and the expedients resorted to to recall us to a sense of propriety. These protracted meetings were concluded by a long prayer and the reciting of some verses of psalm or paraphrase by the juveniles. The first sixpence I ever earned was for repeating the whole of the 119th Psalm.

It goes without saying that tea-meetings, socials, church festivals, concerts, and other modern devices of a like kind, had then no existence. They would have been deemed indecorous in a high degree. To read a secular book or newspaper on the Sabbath day was regarded as a flagrant breach of the Fourth Commandment. To be seen walking about on the Day of Rest, except going to or from church, would have met with a solemn rebuke and warning not to do it again. The garden gate was sacredly locked on that day; as also were all the public parks and gardens in the kingdom. It is only a few years since the Princes Street Gardens in Edinburgh were thrown open to the public on Sundays. The startling innovation met with strong opposition for years, but when it did come in the spring of 1879 it was remarked that no less than 28,000 persons availed themselves of the privilege on the first day of opening!

"The sacramental season" all over Scotland was then a time of special solemnity, and the elaborate services were calculated to fill with peculiar awe the minds of the rising generation. In the Lowlands, the celebration of the communion took place twice a year. Like the Jewish festivals of old, it partook of a national character, and had services connected with it which lasted for the best part of a week. Thursday preceding the communion Sabbath was the "Fast Day"; the youngsters used to call it "Wee