

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

AT REST.

BY JOHN A. CLARK, DUNDAS.

"There remaineth therefore a Sabbath rest unto the people of God."

Under the green sod,
Quietly sleeping,
Her soul with God,
In safe sure keeping.

After the weariness,
Such blessed rest,
None now the tired one
Can e'er molest.

After the wearing toil,
Quiet and peace,
And the still Sabbath calm
That ne'er can cease.

And all the dreary life,
Day after day,
Gone, like a stormy night,
All passed away.

Pity her not, who live
Only to roam,
Sad, weary wanderer,
She's safely home.

THE GIFT OF HEALING.

The gift of healing scrofula and similar diseases, claimed for centuries by our kings, lasted, as we know, to the age of Queen Anne, and the service used on the occasion can be read in the Common Prayer Book printed in her reign. That very sacred king, Charles II.—if we may believe an eye-witness, one of his own surgeons—performed many hundreds of cures, and is said to have touched in twenty-one years upward of 92,000 sufferers. "God give you better health and more sense," was the benediction of William III. over the only person he could be persuaded to touch. The writer observes that though the belief in the virtue of the royal touch was a silly superstition, it was not, as Macaulay terms it, an imposture, since patients were often cured by the impression produced on the nervous system, the excitement caused by the royal touch in cases of scrofula causing a freer flow of blood to the part affected. The remedies given by a physician in former days appeared to be often founded on conjecture, and were sometimes worse than the disease. Cardan, a man of great genius, and as much renowned for mathematics as for medical skill, wrote a prescription composed of pearls, gems and the bone of a unicorn, and when troubled with sleeplessness he relates that he applied bear's grease to seventeen places on the body. Cardan, who, by the way, was summoned in the last illness of Edward VI., was very superstitious. His son had been executed for poisoning his wife, and the father, in a dream, heard a voice telling him to put into his mouth the emerald he wore round his neck, and that would enable him to forget his son. He did so, he says, with such good results that he was always oppressed when he could not have the stone between his lips.—*The Spectator*.

THE TIME IT TAKES TO THINK.

We can determine the interval between the production of some external change which excites mental processes, and a movement made after these processes have taken place. Thus, if people join hands in a circle, and one of them, A, presses the hand of his neighbour B, and he as soon as possible afterward the hand of C, and so on round and round, the second pressure will be felt by each of the persons at an interval after the first, the time depending on the number of people in the circle. After the hand of one of the persons has been pressed, and an interval very nearly constant in length passes before he can press the hand of his neighbour. This interval, which we may call the reaction time, is made up of a great number of factors. A period elapses before the pressure is changed into a nervous message or impulse. This time is very short in the case of touch; but light working on the retina seems to effect chemical changes in it, and these take up some little time, probably about 1-50 second. After a nervous impulse has been generated it moves along the nerve and spinal cord to the brain, not travelling with immense rapidity like light, but at the rate of an express train. In the brain it must move on to a centre having to do with sensation, where changes are brought about, through which a further impulse is sent on to a centre having to do with motion, and a motor impulse having been prepared there is sent down to the hand. Another pause, 1-200 to 1-100 second, now occurs, while the muscle is being excited, after which the fingers are contracted, and the reaction is complete. The entire time required is usually from 1-10 to 1-5 second. The reaction varies in length with different individuals, and for the several senses, but as long as the conditions remain the same, the times are very constant, only varying a few thousandths of a second from each other. One may wonder how it is possible to measure such short times, and with such great accuracy. It would not be easy if we had not the aid of electricity, but when it is called to mind that a movement made in London is almost instantaneously registered in Edinburgh, it will not seem incredible that we can record to the thousandth of a second the instant a sense stimulus is produced, and the instant a movement is made. The time passing between these two events can be measured by letting a tuning-fork write on a revolving drum. The tuning-fork can be regulated to vibrate with great exactness, say 500 times a second; it writes a wavy line on the drum, each undulation long enough to be divided into twenty equal parts, and thus time can be measured to the ten thousandth of a second.—*The Nineteenth Century*.

A WINGED MESSENGER.

In the Midwinter *Century* George Kennan has another of his Russian articles in which, after describing the means of intercommunication between political prisoners, he adds: It would be thought that human ingenuity could go no further in the contrivance of schemes to relieve the monotony of solitary confinement by a secret interchange of ideas and emotions with other prisoners, but in the fortress there were occasionally practised methods of intercommunication even more extraordinary than any of these.

One afternoon in the summer of 1881, said Doctor Melnikoff to me, in the course of a conversation about his fortress life, I was lying on the bed in my casemate, wondering how I should get through the rest of the day, when there flew into the cell through the open port-hole in the door a large blue-bottle fly. In the stillness and loneliness of one in those casemates any trifle is enough to attract a man's attention, and the occasional visit of a fly is an important event in one's life. I listened with pleasure to the buzz of his wings, and followed him with my eyes as he flew back and forth across the cell until I suddenly noticed that there was something unnatural in the appearance of his body. He seemed to have something attached to him. I arose from the bed in order to get nearer to him, and soon satisfied myself that there was a bit of paper fastened to his body. How to catch him and secure that paper without attracting the attention of the guard in the corridor I hardly knew, as he was flying most of the time in the upper part of the cell beyond my reach. For ten or fifteen minutes I watched him without being able to think of any way to capture him; but at last he came down nearer to the floor, and as he passed me I succeeded in catching him in the hollow of my hand without injuring him. Attached to his body by a fine human hair I found a small folded scrap of thin cigarette paper, upon which a man's name had been written with the burnt end of a match. It was not the name of any one whom I knew; but as it was evident that some strictly-guarded prisoner hoped by this means to let his friends in the bastion know either that he had been arrested or that he was still alive, I fastened the paper again to the fly as well as I could, and put him out into the corridor through the port-hole, saying "S'Bogom" ["With God," or "Go with God"—a Russian expression commonly used in bidding a friend good-bye].

QUEBEC.

The out-door life of Quebec surprises a stranger from a more southern climate. Having in mind the furious tempests of a Canadian winter, when very often neither man nor beast is safe outdoors, he fears that suffering or even death is frequently met here when one leaves the house. And certainly Nature looks into Quebec with uncommon freedom; the entire dome of the sky, raising from a vast expanse of waters, plains and mountains, is visible from many parts of the town; so that when the sun shines in this exceptionally clear northern air he beams on everything, in a great rustic effusion rare in a city sun; you almost take the firing of the midday gun for his universal guffaw, rolling through the cloudless sky. Then when a gale swoops down it bears in upon you familiarly, even with a terrible eagerness and ferocity; and I fancy too that the moon and stars hover close about Quebec, for when I go out on a clear night they stare with large-eyed wonder—as well they may, at a near view of such a creature! But the Canadian winter, excepting during a tempest, is a season full of comforts and enjoyments; for business sleeps, the Lower Town seems empty, and life turns either to the frolicsome out-door sports—for which the good air furnishes abundant vigour—or to warm and intimate social pleasures. Even if the thermometer be as low as ten degrees below zero, you will often find the children outdoors—cherubic bundles of fur and wool wallowing in the snow as if it were hay, the babes in their little sleds, and people out snow-shoeing, skating in the rink, or driving in the cozy "carioles;" the horses may be silvered over with frost, and your own eyelashes laden with globules of ice, or now and then you may have to rub your nose with snow to warm it after freezing; but, as a rule, everybody is very comfortable in furs, with the help of moderate exercise. This French people in America seem to have overcome the dependence of their blood on a warm, sunny climate; they walk the streets in any weather with a comfortable, moderate, often perhaps a mincing gait, while their English friends stride over the snow with a martial earnestness. The poor hackmen have the hardest experience; in fur caps and long buffalo coats with collars coming up to the top of their heads, they look like bears masquerading as men; they tighten the national red sash about their waists, stamp their feet, swing their arms, and keep up a continual scuffling and joking to shorten the tedium of their long hours; and I should not omit to add that their rubicund noses promise well to defy the frost. In braving the gloom and ferocity of a winter storm the city has a certain savage as well as pathetic aspect; a north-east gale comes up the St. Lawrence in bounding gusts, and scaling the cliffs of Cape Diamond, throwing the snow back defiantly into the sky; and the battlements shake out hoary manes from their crests. But the human elements of the scene are more timid: the little houses crouching down into the snow-drifts look like tattered toques with tassels of white smoke floating out on the wind: mercy on any poor soul that cannot escape the snow-laden gusts, cutting as a sand-blast! with bowed heads, and occasional turning about to catch a breath, even the well-clad hurry on, and like silent phantoms soon flit out of sight into the white obscurity. When the brooding gloom settles over the city at twilight, the bugle throws its cheery notes into the arctic silence of the glacia; as you struggle along the ramparts the Angelus rings from over the monastery wall, while the cannon point to the night approaching over the mountain-tops.—*C. H. Farnham, in Harper's Magazine for February*.

British and Foreign.

A NEW Free Church is to be erected at Tarbert, Loch Fyne.

A NEW United Presbyterian Church is to be erected at Craigmare, Rothesay, at a cost of \$15,000.

THE Rev. Dr. Alex. Whyte, of Free St. George's, Edinburgh, preached recently to University students.

MR. SAMUEL STITT, of Liverpool has completed fifty years of active service as an office-bearer in the Church.

THE Rev. John Gray, Rothesay United Presbyterian Church, has intimated his wish to resign his charge owing to ill-health.

THE Newcastle Presbytery has adopted an address congratulating Rev. R. Leitch on having attained the semi-jubilee of his ministry.

THE Rev. George Wilson, of Canonbury, has been appointed to the new position of literary secretary in connection with the Bible Society.

VALEDICTORY meetings were held in Free St. George's Church, Edinburgh, in connection with the departure of Rev. A. Gregory for China.

THE interment of Dr. Phin took place on the 17th ult., a preliminary service being conducted at the Assembly Hall by Dr. Hutcheson, Moderator, and Dr. Gray.

THE Lord-Lieutenant of Ireland has appointed the Rev. Matthew Kerr, of Queen Street, Cork, chaplain to the Presbyterian inmates of the Cork Asylum.

THE Bishop of Salisbury, having been applied to, states that the rector of Swanage, Dorset, or any other clergyman, has a right, if he sees fit, to dismiss a member of the choir.

ARCHDEACON PHILPOT, formerly Archdeacon of Sodor and Man, who is in his ninety-eighth year, took part the other day in a marriage service at Kensington Parish Church.

THE death of Rev. Matthew Armstrong, of Skirling, is announced, and also that of Dr. Scott, a well-known medical practitioner of Newcastle-on-Tyne, and respected elder.

NEW features of interest are developing in connection with the West London Mission. Two spacious rooms have been taken in which work girls can meet during the evenings.

THE Rev. Peter Carmichael, Dr. Edmunds' co-pastor, is giving a series of lectures in Highbury Church on the Evidences, the subject on Sunday evening being "The Bible and Nature."

PROFESSOR WITHEROW delivered the third of the Smyth memorial lectures for the year, in Magee College, Londonderry, lately. The subject was, "The Protestant Evangelical Church of Germany."

THE Rev. Duncan Campbell, who was recently appointed assistant at Columba Gaelic Church, Glasgow, has mysteriously disappeared since the 7th ult., when he went to Paisley to attend a meeting.

THE Rev. W. S. Swanson, Moderator of the English Synod, addressed a missionary meeting at Newport, Fife-shire, in connection with which the various sections of Presbyterians in the place united.

ON January 6, the opening services took place at the St. Andrew's Presbyterian Church, Bournemouth, commencing in the afternoon, and being continued in the evening, when the gathering took the form of a public meeting.

MR. WALKER, the contractor of the Manchester Ship Canal, according to the *Manchester Examiner*, has applied to Rev. Charles Garrett to select five evangelists to work among the navvies during the construction of the canal.

MR. W. STEVENSON, farmer, Alton, Campsie, an elder for half a century, noted for his racy reminiscences of Dr. Robert Lee and other parish ministers of the past, died suddenly on the 2nd ult. in his eighty-sixth year. He had four brothers ministers in the Church of Scotland.

THE Rev. Dr. Donald Mackinnon, of Strath, Isle of Skye, died suddenly lately in his seventy-first year. A native of the parish, he had been its minister for nearly thirty-five years, being translated thither on the death of his father. His grandfather was also minister of the same parish.

MR. BAYNES has had another interview with the King of Belgium with reference to the Congo work of the missionary society. The king accepted a copy of Mr. Bently's dictionary and grammar of the Congo language and expressed his pleasure at the completion of that undertaking.

THE Rev. Alexander Oliver's new course of monthly lectures in Regent Place Church, Glasgow, are attracting crowded congregations. At the third, given on a recent evening, on "The Destiny of the World," every inch of space in the aisles and on the pulpit stairs was occupied.

THE Rev. Matthew Cochrane, M.A., minister of St. Peter's Parish Church, Glasgow, since 1849, died lately in his seventy-sixth year. Though in failing health for some time past he preached on Christmas Day, and two days before his death was able to leave the house. He was a native of Portpatrick.

THE Rev. Dr. Gordon, of St. Andrew's Episcopal Church, Glasgow, in his annual homily on theatres, delivered on a recent Sabbath evening, devoted himself particularly to the defence of ballet dancing and of the costumes worn by the girls engaged in that doubly debasing department of theatrical art.

THE Rev. Dr. Thain Davidson gave one of the course of winter lectures to young men in St. Cuthbert's Parish Church, Edinburgh, his subject being "The Perils of the Great City." Besides giving a lecture in Edinburgh on the following evening, Dr. Davidson preached to the Young Men's Christian Association in Glasgow.