

# The Wesleyan,

265

Rev. A. W. NICOLSON,  
Editor and Publisher.

Published under the direction of the General Conference of the Methodist Church of Canada.

\$2 PER ANNUM IN ADVANCE  
Postage Prepaid.

VOL. XXIX

HALIFAX, N.S., AUGUST 25, 1877.

NO. 34

WESLEYAN BOOK ROOM,  
125 GRANVILLE STREET,  
HALIFAX, N.S.

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## OUR ENGLISH LETTER.

THE NEW PRESIDENT.

DEAR MR. EDITOR.—The honored and beloved minister who has been raised to this high dignity, is widely known by his invaluable theological works and profound scholarship. He is moreover endeared to a very large number of the younger men in our ministry by the tie of a strong personal friendship formed while in the Theological Institutions, and to all these and many others the elevation of this quiet, retired, yet thoroughly able and powerful man—is an event of no ordinary interest and joy. Nor is it feared that Mr. Pope will be unequal to the heavy demands which will be made upon his tact and executive strength. He is a man of extensive ability, and will reveal the possession of stores of reserved power, as many other distinguished occupants of the Presidential chair have done aforetime. His views upon the question of the admission of laymen into Conference are not those of the majority of his brethren, but he will wisely and loyally administer the laws of the Connection, and in reality the great change in our administration will not occur until Mr. Pope's successor will be in the chair. We have in the election of our President a proof that the brethren do not vote upon party lines or questions when filling the highest place in the chair. They seek for a godly man, one of power and wisdom, and when the choice is made all unite to support and pray for him, and yield him all the honour due to his high position.

THE FEENEY LECTURE

was delivered by the Rev. E. E. Jenkins, another of the gifted and distinguished men of our day. The lecture is reported to be one of rare ability and power, up to the requirements of the times, grappling with the exciting questions which now agitate the minds of so many. It exposes the shallow fallacies of the atheism which is now so current, and the lecturer is earnest in the presentation of the truth as it is in Jesus, who makes known to us the personal and only true God and our Saviour. The lecture will soon appear in print and will form a most valuable addition to the literature of Methodism.

THE MISSIONARY SECRETARIAT

has recently been reduced to two by the lamented death of Mr. Perks. The work has proved so laborious, and the demand upon the time and strength of the brethren so formidable that the committee was constrained to recommend the appointment of two additional secretaries. The Conference cheerfully acceded to the request and proceeded to the election. The choice fell upon Mr. Jenkins, and Marmaduke C. Osborn. These brethren will fill the important posts with all needful requirements. There is a strong admixture in the two men of wide acquaintance with the mission field, platform and pulpit power, and financial skill. The entire staff at the Mission House is an admirable selection. We have Dr. Punshon, John Kilner, and the brethren now recently elected. But all this is not too much for the church to yield for the oversight of this vast department of its work.

THE PREPARATORY COMMITTEES

were well attended and exhibited about the usual amount of life. They gave no sign of approaching dissolution, and their work was promptly and well done. There was not the usual discussion on some points which annually bring forth a few of the prominent men, who ventilate their peculiar views to which the committee listen with quiet forbearance and then pass on to real business in hand. It was evident that there are some great questions which are quietly held in abeyance until the laymen are at their posts in the Conference. This is notable in relation to the extension

of the Theological Institutions so as to enable all students to have three full years training, and the changes necessary in the arrangements for the education of minister's children, both boys and girls. The girls school are not upon a permanent footing and are not well provided for in buildings and other ways and means. The legislation of the future will have to be on a broader scale, and must comprehend the devising of liberal things.

MR. FARRAR'S RETIREMENT

after a most lengthened and useful career was felt to be an event demanding special notice. He has served our Church in her highest offices, and now retires full of days and honor. It is pleasing to know that a wide circle of Mr. Farrar's friends have combined to raise by means of a testimonial such an amount as will suffice to render his retirement easy and comfortable, and be a life-long expression of the gratitude and love of his brethren and admirers. It is determined that Mr. Hellier is to succeed Mr. Farrar as the Governor at Headingley, and Mr. Hellier's post of Classical Tutor will be ably filled by Robert Newton Young.

THE OPEN SESSION

of Conference appears to have been of more than ordinary interest. The array of speakers was first-rate, and those who had a fair opportunity spoke with great animation and power. The old custom of reading the addresses was adhered to, and as usual much valuable time was taken up, and the vast congregations uninterested. There are very few men who can read our Conferential addresses and make them "tell" and "grip." The time will come when the press will relieve public meetings, and "taken as read" more frequently prevail.

August 6, 1877.

NOTES OF A VISIT TO NEW-FOUNDLAND.

On my return from Old Perlican, I took part in our Educational Meeting which was held in Harbour Grace. The Ministers who had been attending Conference had left, but good service was rendered by Bro. Dove, the Superintendent of the Circuit, and Bro. Peach who kindly came to our assistance. The following evening I preached at Bay Roberts, to a very respectable and very attentive congregation. On the next day Bro. Ladner conveyed me to Brigus, where I spent Sabbath, 1st July.

Brigus is situated among the rocks. Hence it is impossible to get from any one point a distinct view of the town. The streets are crooked and most of them are very steep and narrow. But there is an ever varying aspect of sea and shore, of wharf and store, of antique residence and modern villa, meeting the eye at every turn. In full view as, on a broad and level road, there stand on the highest eminence and in contiguity to each other, the Episcopal and Methodist Churches. The former is not quite finished, the latter is, though of recent construction. It is a handsome edifice and capable of seating over a thousand persons. When our people are at home, it is usually filled at the Sabbath services, and the only difficulty—and a serious one—is the want of accommodation.

I have already referred to the interesting service on the Sabbath evening, when the case of the St. John congregations was presented to the liberality of our people. I may now add that in the morning the subject of Christian Education was dealt with; and that in the evening we had also a delightful Sacramental service. The peculiar circumstances of the people were manifest here by two facts—nine-tenths of the communicants probably were females; and a large proportion of the congregation bore in their sabbath dress, the marks of recent bereavement. The exposure of the people of Newfoundland to the dangers of the deep was still more vividly brought before me in the graveyard of Cupids, where, side by side, are interred nine bodies, part of a shipwrecked crew belonging to this village. This melancholy sight was, however, greatly relieved by the testimony of Bro. Heal, who just about to leave the Circuit, and who had gone through all the trial of this bereavement among his people, that several of them had been avowed disciples of Him who has said, "If a man keep my word he shall not see death."

Cupids, where I preached in the afternoon, is but a short distance from Brigus, and was once the centre of great commercial activity. It is now the home of a well to do class of seamen, many of whom are interested in the crafts they sail in more ways than sailing them. They are a remarkably spirited people and have lately erected a commodious and elegant church—in keeping with the neatness of their own dwellings—and are now engaged in further building operations. A new School-room and Teacher's dwelling, and the re-modelling of the old into a Parsonage, will give them a fair start as a Circuit—the full responsibilities of which they have this year taken upon themselves.

As elsewhere, so in Newfoundland, great changes are taking place, changes which will effect all classes of the community, and all its interests too, whether social, political, or religious. By universal consent, the inshore fisheries are pronounced a failure, and year by year are becoming more so. Up in the bays, where fish used to be plenty they are now exceeding scarce, and even outside the catch is becoming more precarious every succeeding season. Hence those who are engaged in this employment—and these are still the bulk of the population—are obliged for their summer's work to go farther and farther from home. Even on the Labrador coast it is found to be necessary to proceed far to the North of what formerly was sure fishing ground in order fairly to anticipate success. It is obvious then that with an increase of population, and the prosecution of the fishery under the disadvantages of increased time, increased risks, and diminished supplies, some other means of obtaining a livelihood must be found, or pauperism and starvation will inevitably, if gradually ensue.

So in regard to the seal fishery. The time was when a thrifty man who possessed a schooner, or shares in one, might rise to affluence by the successes of a few years. And though the business was always attended with uncertainty, yet the losses were not so great as now, while the chances for success were more common. There are still found up and down these shores, men in the decline of life with sufficient laid past to make the evening of their days comfortable, who acquired their resources at a time when sailing vessels alone were engaged in the seal fishery. No such acquisitions can be hoped for in the future. Everything has changed. Steamers have taken the place of sailing vessels; and with the rapidity of the movements of the former, and their ability to escape danger, or to run against the wind or current as the case may be they leave the latter at an immense disadvantage. They both from the greater amount of capital required to get a steamer, and the liability to greater loss if her voyage do not succeed, few comparatively of those who might afford to own a schooner can ever expect to possess a steamer. It is doubtful whether the ordinary seaman can hope, on the whole, to do so well. In a sailing vessel they obtained half the proceeds of the voyage; in the steamer they obtained but one-third. The tendency then of the new state of affairs is to put the business into the hands of rich capitalists, who alone are able to bear the loss when it occurs, and who of course make a proportionate gain when they are successful. And these capitalists are often men from abroad, who do not spend their wealth where they make it. What then, it may be asked, so far as the population is concerned, is the probable remedy for this state of things? It would ill become one whose opportunities for observation were so limited to speak with any degree of positiveness on this subject. It is with great diffidence that the writer would suggest that two courses seem to him to be the only alternatives in this case. Emigration to more highly favored localities, or an increased attention to the cultivation of the soil. For the former, there are many difficulties in the way of its realization. The Newfoundlanders are warmly patriotic. From their youth they are brought up to fishing, which with all its hardships, dangers, and poor remuneration has a powerful attraction, amounting to a fascination, for them. It would ordinarily require a severe pang to part with their Island home, and their usual employment, and it may be doubted whether, even then,

they could easily, or at all adapt themselves to the new circumstances and pursuits of a strange land.

But why should this be thought of? No one needs to emigrate. Newfoundland is, with all its drawbacks, a grand country. Granted that its winter is dreary, its spring late, and its summer short, yet there is season enough to ripen good crops of hay, of oats, and of potatoes, and this on the most exposed part of the Island. The land, undoubtedly is rocky, but, once cleared, it is surprisingly productive. Then, we are told that at the head of the larger bays, away from the Arctic ice and the Atlantic storms, there is a great deal of good land and a finer climate. There barley, wheat, and apples may be grown. In some other portions of the Island there are splendid forests, where lumber of a superior quality is being manufactured and where the soil is excellently well adapted for farming purposes. Nor ought it to be forgotten that rich mineral deposits are known to exist, and have already begun to be worked in this country. A thousand men are engaged in our mining centre, and ship loads of most valuable copper ore are now annually exported to England. Newfoundlanders then ought to stay at home; and while they can hardly be expected wholly to give up their fishing—nor is it desirable that they should—yet they ought to addict themselves more and more to the cultivation of the soil, to the development of their mining resources, and to the extension of such manufacturing industries as are suited to their circumstance. And of these there are not a few. Were a little attention given to Agricultural chemistry in the common schools, and encouragement given to the formation of Agricultural Societies among the common people, a great economy might soon be anticipated in the matter of fish and other manures, and a great deal of progress made in the growth of root crops, and the fattening of cattle. Very lately, it was announced that a vessel laden with live cattle and farm produce had sailed for Newfoundland. In the fall of each year there is a fleet of such vessels. But there need not be. Newfoundland can supply all its own wants, in this respect, and help its neighbors too, if it but resolve to do so. Potatoes in Newfoundland were selling last spring at a dollar a barrel. It is said that a third more of land is placed under crop the present than on any former year. This is a step in the right direction. Now if the dogs which are used in winter for drawing wood, and are allowed in summer to run about at large, were so diminished as to give the sheep a fair chance, that would be another step; and the consequent supply of mutton and wool would soon enable the peasantry to put horses in the place of dogs, and would raise them to a position of independence even when the fisheries fail.

The pressing wants of Methodism in Newfoundland at the present time are many. Chief among these may be mentioned some special supply for the regular supervision of the distant stations, and of those occupied by the young men. In fact these two are usually co-incident. As a matter of necessity, young men are sent to occupy new ground. They are thus often at a great distance from the nearest ordained Minister, and are sometimes cut off from all means of communication with their brethren for several months in the year. It is not fair to them, it is not fair to their people, nor can it be conducive to the stability of our work, that year after year, these remote Circuits should be unvisited. As a mere matter of economy it is essential that they should have direct superintendence at least once in twelve months. And how important too in regard to spiritual interests. We lately saw a statement that the Episcopal Bishop of Quebec had gone on a tour of visitation to the Labrador coast. This is doubtless a wise arrangement. But it is as important in our case as for the Episcopalians. We have an important work on that coast, and a very extensive and prosperous mission on the French shore, which for sacramental and other purposes require systematic and sustained oversight. But no provision has hitherto been made to overtake this work. It cannot longer with safety be delayed. Strenuous efforts must also be made to increase a native agency. Many uncultivated fields are "white already to harvest."

Large tracts of country, thinly settled, it is true, but with here and there groups of families, are totally without the ordinances of religion. In other districts, where sin and superstition prevail, there are openings and invitations which lay upon us the obligation to go in and labor. All honor to the men who have come from other countries to help us in this crisis. But we cannot in reason ask or expect a much larger supply from abroad. We need not do so. Here are the young men, born, brought up, converted, and, it may be added, called to this work, in the country itself. If a system of lay-agency could be more fully developed, and if the most approved could from time to time be sent to our Sackville Institution for further training, a supply every way fitted for the exigencies of our work might continually be at hand. As a preliminary to this, wise and generous encouragement should be given by every Superintendent to young men, whose hearts "God has touched." They should be looked out, and set to work. When God gives the material, we should do our best to improve it.

Our Brethren in Newfoundland are worthy of the prayers and practical sympathy of our entire connexion. They have, in common with other good men and true to lay well the foundations of a young and rising country. They must teach and exemplify the righteousness which exalteth a nation. Having to bear "a banner because of the truth," we believe that they will gladly co-operate with all true Protestants—and we rejoice to know that there are such in all the Churches—in the diffusion of the gospel of the grace of God. In proportion to the magnitude of the work entrusted to them, in proportion even to the success given to them in this work, is the humility of soul which shall still ensure the Divine blessing. Denominational prosperity ought of all things to abase us most; and the self-abasement which gives God all the glory is that to which He gives the encouragement, "Go in this thy might and thou shalt save Israel."

C. S.

MR. SPRAGUE AND HIS MISSION.

(From the St. John News.)

The Mission of the Rev. H. Sprague to England bids fair, it appears, to prove decidedly successful. In another column our readers will find the gist of the finely conceived and telling address delivered by him before the Methodist Conference of Bristol, England. The Conference had previously adopted the report of a Committee to which the documents bearing on Mr. Sprague's mission had been referred. This report, submitted by Mr. Albrighton, well remembered here, and its adoption, eloquently moved by Dr. Punshon, seconded by the Ex-President Macaulay, and supported by Mr. Arthur, the most influential man, perhaps, in British Methodism, ran thus:

"That, in harmony with the proposal of the New Brunswick and Prince Edward Island Conference, we cordially commend its Secretary, the Rev. Howard Sprague, M.A., to the sympathy and co-operation of the superintendents of the respective circuits in this country."

Subsequent to the passage of this resolution, Mr. Sprague was called upon to address the Conference, and he acquitted himself, as the record shows, most admirably. We are informed that the *esprit de corps* prevailing in the Conference is strong, and it appears that Mr. Sprague's appeal brought it out in full strength, and quite carried the Conference with him. In this connection we may remark that a reputation well known for ability here, can, as has been often proved, be easily maintained elsewhere. It is gratifying to reflect that St. John was so well represented on such an important occasion, and that Mr. Sprague did honour to the Province in which he was educated and to the city in which, for some years, he has been domiciled.