

British American Presbyterian.

PUBLISHED EVERY FRIDAY AT TORONTO, CANADA.

TERMS: \$2 a year, in advance. POSTAGE by mail, 50 cent per year, payable at the office of delivery.

Cheques and Post Office Orders should be drawn in favor of the Publisher.

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P.O. Drawer 2484 Publisher and Proprietor.

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FRIDAY, OCT 9, 1874.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK

In order to put a stop to the emigration of the Mennonites, the Russian Government has determined to exempt them from actual military service, but holding them liable to duties as hospital surgeons and attendants. It is believed this will satisfy their scruples of conscience.

The Austrian Government will dispatch another expedition to the Arctic regions next year, the one-half going by way of Siberia and the other by way of Greenland, to ascertain whether the land discovered by the expedition just returned is a portion of the continent or an island.

A Methodist Professor, in dismissing a class from a theological school into the pulpit, advised them "not to seek a cheap reputation for originality by deviating from the doctrines of the Church." Excellent advice, inasmuch as "cheap" things are almost invariably poor.

The Wesleyans in England have discovered seeds of Ritualism in their liturgy, and are greatly exercised over it. At the late Conference a committee was appointed to consider the subject of revising the Liturgy and Book of Office, for the purpose of removing all expressions susceptible of a construction contrary to the principles of Evangelical Protestantism.

The trouble carried on in Germany between the Government and the Catholics has been increased by the arrest of five priests, eleven expulsions and twenty sequestrations of church property, in addition to the dissolution of the four Catholic societies, and inquiries into six others, one of which has since been dissolved.

A writer in the Fortnightly Review suggests that every university in England should have a chair of education, and educational lecturership, and an experimental school. "It would be the work of such a department to investigate and expound all parts of sciences relating to education, to show the best application of the true principles of education, to provide for exhaustive study of educational science, both practical and theoretical."

A movement is in progress in the Roman Catholic Church in Germany and in Italy for reform in church music. A numerous society has been formed in Germany to exclude "that kind of music" from the churches "which is only fit for the stage. In his brief, giving authority to the Society, the Pope says the "worldly and sentimental style of singing in the organs, theatres, and which has been so extensively introduced in Catholic Churches, can never be sufficiently deplored."

The venerable Dr. Moffat has recently delivered an interesting address on the subject of missionary work. It would be hard to find one better adapted to speak on this topic, for he has labored as a missionary for more than fifty years. There is one point in his address which we think especially noteworthy to those who live at home and have only the chance of contributing to the work by good wishes and money. There are some people who seem to be under the impression that Christianity—first civilize, then evangelize. To this proposition, speaking with all the weight of his experience, Mr. Moffat gives an emphatic negative, for he found that civilization springs, as a matter of course, out of Christianity.

Rumors prevail of differences between Germany and Russia, owing to alleged overtures made by the former to Denmark for its incorporation with the German Confederation. Russia, it is said, is unwilling that Germany should hold the key of the Baltic. The reported overtures are pronounced to be absolutely false.

POSTURE IN PRAYER.

Much has been written, and much has been spoken in regard to the proper posture in prayer; for, while standing in prayer has been for ages the uniform practice among Protestants, yet many begin to question whether this be the proper mode. Some think that instead of standing in prayer sitting with head bowed upon the book-board is the better and more becoming mode of the two, while others are of the opinion that kneeling is the most reverential posture in which creatures burdened with sin and begging for mercy can present themselves at a throne of grace. Now in searching the Scriptures it is somewhat noteworthy that we find there is no positive law on the subject, but on the contrary, a full freedom allowed in regard to posture, as there is in regard to the place of prayer; and if we look to Scripture example, we find not only all the three words alluded to, employed, and the supplicants blessed, but also another, namely, prostration, a mode for which few contend, and which still fewer adopt. If, the Scripture does not say which is the proper posture, let us see what it shows.

In regard to standing in prayer, we read of Abraham in that memorable prayer which he offered up to God in behalf of Sodom, that "he stood up before the Lord." Of Hannah it is said that she "rose up . . . and prayed unto the Lord." Our Lord, too, as he stood by the grave of Lazarus, "lifted up his eyes and prayed;" and in guiding His disciples He said, "when ye stand praying, &c., &c.; while the publican, as he prayed, "stood afar off." At the dedication of the first temple we read that "Solomon stood and spread forth his hands towards heaven," and not only so, but that when he "blessed all the congregation of Israel stood." Again, at a public feast in connection with the second temple, we read, "there stood up the Levites and cried with a loud voice unto the Lord their God;" they also called to the assembled multitude, and said, "stand up, and bless the Lord your God for ever and ever;" and elsewhere we read that "the seed of Israel stood and confessed their sins." And when we look from the Church below to the Church above, "lo! a great multitude, whom no man could number, stood before the throne, &c.

In regard to sitting in prayer, we read that David the King came and sat before the Lord," and offered prayer. Again, when Jesus, on two different occasions, miraculously fed the multitudes that followed him, we read that on both occasions he made them all sit down," and then he took the loaves and the fishes, and looking up to heaven he blessed them. Thus in both cases it is evident that the multitude sat, and our Lord stood while he looked up to heaven and blessed them.

But further, in the night in which Jesus was betrayed, we read that "he sat down with the twelve, and no intimation is given that either he or they changed their position, either during their sacramental solemnities, or during that prayer above all prayers which followed. Evidently sitting was the posture in all the services.

In regard to kneeling in prayer we read that "Daniel kneeled upon his knees, and prayed;" Jesus in the garden "kneeled down and prayed;" Stephen, in praying for his murderers, "kneeled down;" Peter, in connection with the raising of Dorcas, "kneeled down and prayed;" and Paul, in praying with the elders of Ephesus, "kneeled down and prayed with them all." These instances of kneeling in prayer, as well as some others which might be produced, have all reference to private or social devotions, and while kneeling in congregations is regarded by some as the proper posture in prayer, and not a few arrogate to themselves a superior sanctity because they follow this mode, yet it may startle some of them to ask, where is their sanction for it, for we do not remember of a single instance on record in the Word of God, either of a congregation in the church below, or the congregation of the first-born above, as a congregation over kneeling in prayer to God. We shall now only add that Jesus stood in prayer, sat in prayer, kneeled in prayer, and lay on his face in prayer. In view of all, then, "let every man be fully persuaded in his own mind," for God looketh on the heart, and as a man thinketh in his heart so is he in the sight of God.

VOCAL MUSIC IN SCHOOLS.

Has any of our readers stood before Wilkie's picture of the blind fiddler and studied there the power of music. The poor fiddler does not seem to be of much account personally in the scene, for he is an old, decrepit, poor, depressed looking man, accompanied with his wife—a plain look g woman, bearing similar marks of poverty and depression with her husband. The power that controls the company lies in the fiddle, on which he rests his chin, and across which he sweeps the bow with a graceful and skilful hand. The sound of the music has called in every one about the place from the grandfather to

the little children at play. The little crowd without waiting to look for seats dispose themselves to listen. The sweet discourse begins. The calm face of the grandfather, as he stands before the fire-place, and the dreamy expression of his eye, tell us that the music carries him into the past, where he lives once more with the old faces and familiar voices of his youthful day. The little baby crows and jumps in his mother's arms, who has laid on the floor the turnip she was peeling for dinner to dance "lille merry." The father who bears in his belt the trowel he was using when the music caught his ear snaps his finger to the child, and keeps time with his head to what must be some familiar dancing tune. Two little girls come into the scene, dragging their little cart, which stands forgotten as the music thrills and overawes them into attitudes and looks beyond their year. And one follow—a genius he must be, for we see on the wall above his sketched and hung there to astonish people; this artistic genius copies the bellows and the tongs, and falls to copy the old master, having already mastered the set of the hand and the turn of head, though his music must be somewhat harsh, judging from his instrument and the look of the woman next him, who would fain laugh at his antics, did he not so disturb the blissful peace by his extemporized accompaniment.

It would not be a bad plan to present the new council of Public Instruction with a copy of this picture of Wilkie's, to be hung up in their council room. The new council enter upon a great work at an interesting period in the history of Ontario. With regard to education in this Province we surely can say now "The Winter is past the rain is over and gone." Dr. Ryerson and his old council carried on their work when the country was poor, and when men had to be content with the necessities of intellectual life; and on the whole they did their work as well as could be expected. The foundations have been laid, the walls have been raised, the rooms have been plainly and comfortably, and some of them handsomely furnished, in the educational fabric into which the new council enter. There are however, grave defects about our educational system that ought to be looked into: crying wants which it ought to be their study to supply. One of these is their want of vocal music. Singing in a school, like the lubricating oil of the many-wheeled machine, makes the works move on sweetly; singing shortens the tedious hours; singing makes joyful a place which to most children is sorrowful enough with hard lessons, severe discipline, and quarrelsome chums; singing subdues the turbulent, soothes the irritable, reassures the timid, and converts for the time the largest school into one personality, thinking the same thoughts, speaking the same words, and feeling the same emotions—the girls to help their mothers, marry and raise children,—and the boys to rough work, one to follow the plough, another to stand behind the workman's bench, a third to walk the deck of the ship during the night-watch—what greater boon can these young people carry from school with them next to reading and writing, than the power to sing a good song, sweet hymn, or a grand old Hebrew psalm.

It is true that many of our public school teachers are not now qualified, and could not by any means be now qualified to teach vocal music to their pupils. That is true, but as this is to a great extent the result of past neglect, we might expect it to be remedied in the case of a new generation of teachers. But in such cases, as are common, where the teachers is defective in voice and ear, it is within his or her reach to learn to play on some instrument to the degree of being able to start a tune and lead the school. The question of vocal music in our schools is a question of time, attention and money. Granted these three things, to a very reasonable and limited degree, and our Canadian schools might be what the schools of Germany have long been, nurseries of song and patriotic sentiment. Did we only give this subject proper thought, matters would soon easily be so arranged that no school would be considered complete without its cabinet organ. A pair of globes is very good, and it is very good to teach children how to use them; but if the choice must be between the globes and the organ give us by all means the organ, with the singing, and we will find out about these globes—the one beneath and above us—and, as we walk about painfully on the one and joyfully under the other.

It gives us pleasure to see Mr. Jessup, the able and pains-taking Superintendent of the Public Schools in the Province of British Columbia, calling attention to this matter on the Pacific board. These are his words which we would do well to read, ponder, and inwardly digest.

"This branch of instruction (vocal music) is not so generally considered in our schools as it ought to be. It should be our essential, instead of an unimportant non-essential. I would scarcely go so far as to assert that a knowledge of vocal music 'is of more practical value than mathematics,'

yet there is no gainsaying the fact that probably that nine out of ten persons of both sexes will find far more use for, and derive greater benefit from, a fair knowledge of this subject than from mathematics beyond the simple rules of arithmetic. But its practical value in after life is but one argument, among many, why it should be carefully and generally taught. Its utility in the school room in maintaining order, in the enforcement of discipline, and as an incentive to study, could be over estimated. It comes in here as a powerful auxiliary in aiding and assisting the teacher; and while occupying a place side by side with arithmetic, grammar, and geography, it becomes what these studies never are: namely, a healthful and soul-enlivening recreation. "Singing is as natural to children as speaking, and for any reason that appears to the contrary, it should be as universal." "If music is thus an instinct of our being," says the late Dr. Forrester, of Nova Scotia, "if an endowment bestowed less or more upon all by the beneficent Creator, it must have been intended to be cultivated and developed, and how could that be? more effectually done than by 'making it a branch of education in our 'Public Schools?' But it might be argued that all teachers have not a taste for vocal music; probably not; neither have all teachers a particular bias for English grammar or algebra, yet all are obliged to teach the former at least. With the requisite amount of application, the theory of vocal music can be acquired and taught by all; and in nineteen cases out of twenty the practical portion of it may be mastered even after the attainment of mature age.

ASSEMBLY'S MISSION TO INDIA

The following letter has been received from the Rev. Dr. Joseph Warren of Monar, Gwalior, India, bearing on the subject of the Canada Presbyterian Church organizing a mission in Central India. It deserves the prayerful consideration of our ministers and people. We are indebted to the Rev. T. Lowry, of Montreal, Secretary to F. M. C., for the manuscript:—

"I hope you will approve of what we have done as to placing your young ladies for the present (Misses Fairweather and Rogor), and take up that you will like the proposition to also set a station in Central India, which Dr. Brodhead communicates in his letter. That arrangement would, so to speak, complete a line of Presbyterian posts across India. Our taking up Monar has been considered an experiment by some; but it seems to me that it is no more so than any other station. I do not think it being a Native State is any objection; our missionaries at Kolapore think it is all the better for that. And so I do not think you need hesitate, on this account, to follow Dr. Brodhead's advice. Your missionaries there would not be out of the world at all; railroads are as near that it would be perfectly accessible.

I think your Board will send out at least two gentlemen next year for those places—Mhow and Ludore. They ought to be married men, so as to afford homes and protection to Miss Fairweather and Miss Rogers. Unmarried ladies can keep house in this country; but not conveniently, unless they are unanimously fond of caring for themselves; and when they are as young as our friends here, they ought not to live by themselves if it can be avoided. Then there are thousand things in the secularities of a Mission, which few women can well attend to.

"We like these ladies very much, and ardently wish that an effort now being made to get them away from us will not be successful."

Since the above was written, they have been moved from Monar to Mynpooni. There is reason to believe that this removal will be only temporary.

OPENING OF ST. ANDREW'S (C. P.) CHURCH, DUNVILLE, P. Q.

A little over two years ago a Presbyterian congregation was organized in Danville. Six months later they called a minister, the Rev. J. M. Macalister, who had labored among them as a missionary since the organization. Then, though few in numbers, they resolved to build a house of worship, and set about making the necessary preparations. The Presbytery of Montreal granted them a considerable sum of money that had been raised for Church building purposes in the eastern Townships, and with this assistance they saw their way clear to the erection of a Church. Last May the foundation was laid, and on the 20th of September last the building was opened for public worship. It is a neat frame building with a steeple, having a good sized vestry in the rear, suitable for prayer meetings, &c. The cost was about \$2,300, and of this some \$400 remains to be paid; but a new call is being made on the members of the congregation for renewed subscriptions, which will likely result in the very material reduction of the debt, if not in wiping it out altogether. The opening services were conducted by the Rev. Principal MacVicar, L. L. D., Montreal Col'ge. He preached in the morning from the text, Eph. III, 17; and in the evening from the Conversion of the Philippian Jailor. In the forenoon the Church was crowded; but in the afternoon and evening the day turned out so large, so that the evening service was not so large.

The morning service was followed by the Communion, at which a number of the members of other Churches participated.

On the Tuesday following, the Rev. R. P. Burns, D. D., of Montreal, lectured in the Church on "Dr. Livingstone." The audi-

ence was not as large as had been hoped for; but those present enjoyed an interesting evening in listening to this able lecturer's account of the African Missionary and explorer. This brought the services in connection with the opening to a close; and the congregation at Danville have great cause for thankfulness to God for his blessings so abundantly poured out upon them while erecting a house in which to worship Him.

It may also be mentioned that as a slight acknowledgment of the kindness received from the Wesleyan Methodists, whose Church the Presbyterians have hitherto used, the latter presented a pulpit Bible to the Methodist congregation, similar to the one presented to themselves by a gentleman in Montreal.

DOMINION EVANGELICAL ALLIANCE.

The first meeting of this Association was convened in St. Andrew's Church, Montreal, on Friday last. There was a fair attendance of delegates. Principal Dawson occupied the chair. The Rev. Gavin Lang, Secretary, after reading the rules adopted for conducting the business, announced that Ex-Governor Wilmot, of New Brunswick, was nominated President of the Conference, and Rev. Dr. Taylor, of Montreal, Vice-President. These gentlemen were then unanimously elected by resolution.

A number of very interesting papers have already been read. That on the "Selection of Art to Church Worship," by Dr. Donald Frazer, is pronounced by the *Witness* a brilliant effort. In an early issue we shall endeavor to make room for Dr. McCosh's able reply to Tyndall's recent address at Belfast. Altogether the gathering at Montreal is a most satisfactory one, and cannot fail, under Providence, to be productive of much good.

CHOICE EXTRACTS.

It is sometimes desirable and advantageous to know what others think of us. The following extracts will show the opinion entertained by us by certain High Church Episcopalians. They are taken from a Manual or Catechism, entitled "some questions of the Church Catechism, and doctrines involved, briefly explained," by the Rev. Fredrick Aubert Gace, M.A., vicar of Great Barling, Essex, England.

In Q. 84, he asks, "is not the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, as it is denominated by law, considered by the Church as one of its branches? A. No; and therefore there is a branch of the true Church of Christ in that country, which for the sake of distinction is called the Episcopal Church." Q. 85. "We have amongst various sects and denominations who go by the general name of Dissenters. In what heretics are we to consider them? A. As heretics; and in our Litany, we expressly pray to be delivered from the sins of false doctrine, heresy, and schism." Q. 86. "Is then their worship a laudable service? A. No; because they worship God according to their own evil and corrupt imaginations, and not according to his revealed will; and therefore their worship is idolatrous." Q. 91. "But why have not Dissenters been excommunicated? A. Because the law of the land does not allow the wholesome law of the Church to be acted upon; but Dissenters have virtually excommunicated themselves by setting up a religion of their own, and leaving the ark of God's Church." Q. 95. "What class of Dissenters should we be most upon our guard against? A. Those who imitate the most nearly the true Church of Christ." Q. "Why so? A. Because we are more liable to be deceived by such, the points of difference being apparently few and unimportant; whereas the very circumstances of their being Dissenters shows that they have fallen from the unity of the Church Catholic, and consequently are not in a state of salvation." Q. 97. "But are there not some Dissenters who use the same form of prayers as ourselves? A. Doubtless; but the prayers of the Church being for the most part for the priest to offer up in behalf of the people, it must be sinful and presumptuous for those persons who are called Dissenting teachers, to address the throne of grace, usurping the priestly office." Q. 98. "Is it wicked to enter a meeting-house at all? A. Most assuredly; because, as was said above, it is a house where God is worshipped otherwise than He has commanded; and, therefore, it is not dedicated to His honour and glory; and besides this, we run the risk of being led away by wicked, enticing words; at the same time by our presence we are witnessing our approval of their heresy, wounding the consciences of our weaker brethren, and by our example teaching others to go astray."

Letters have been received from missionaries in Palestine giving accounts of the terrible famine now prevailing there. They tell a story of suffering and death which will be read with pain throughout the United States. Since the sources of information are trustworthy, and the extremity of the distress appears to be so great, the duty of our people is plain. We have before us now starved millions of creatures; and the appeal to our sympathies to-day is as pressing and direct as it has ever been. The missionary who has reported the famine estimates that 5,000 have already died of starvation, and thousands more are barely surviving.—Chicago Tribune.