

# British American Presbyterian.

Vol 3.—No. 44.]

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, DECEMBER 11, 1874

[Whole No. 178

## Contributors and Correspondents

### SAN FRANCISCO AND CALIFORNIA.

LETTER FROM DR. FRASER.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

DEAR SIR,—If you, or any of your readers thought the climate of California was depicted "in colors far too bright" in my last letter, you have my consent to *dark shade* it with the following considerations. Instead of our "beautiful snow," rain, rain, rain. In the summer, instead of refreshing rain every few days or almost weeks, drought, month after month, and not a drop of rain. Instead of one dry winter atmosphere—damp—so that the people grumble as much about the cold before the freezing point is reached, as we do in Canada with the thermometer at 20 degrees below zero; and many other minor considerations. But I must tell you about

SAN FRANCISCO.

The city is very finely and very beautifully situated. As you come in from the open ocean you enter the San Francisco Bay, by a strait not more than a mile wide, called the Golden Gate. On either side of the Gate are bold cliffs, and directly in front Alcatraz Island with its strong forts, and bristling cannon. The bay is forty or fifty miles long, and of various widths, from two or three miles, to fifteen or twenty, "according to where you measure it." Directly opposite the city, on the other side of the bay is the town of Oakland, with a population of about 10,000, fine residences, beautiful gardens and grounds. About three miles to the north of Oakland, and quite close to each other, stand the California State University, and the State Institution for the deaf, dumb, and blind. Though both good institutions, they will not bear comparison with our institution at Belleville, or our University at Toronto. From the front of the deaf and dumb institute the view is very fine. To the south is Oakland, with the long pier of the Pacific R.R., stretching out into the bay three miles, and almost reaching Goat Island; to the west and across the bay is the Golden Gate with its sentinel island; to the southwest across the bay is San Francisco, with its 135,000 people, its white houses covering ground now gently rising from the level of the bay, and rudely tossed into knolls and hills. As a back ground to this landscape, on every side paint the rolling hills, green with the verdure of the early rain, and you have what I saw bathed in the beautiful sunshine of a warm afternoon last week. I said to a young friend, a nephew of the late Dr. Griddle, who was with me, "every prospect pleases, and only man is vile." One might weep over the city, as Christ wept over Jerusalem. It is not wholly given to idolatry, but there is in it to be found, perhaps, the strangest comingling of worldliness and Godliness the world ever saw. The good men are very good, the bad men very bad. The pious walk to church on the Sabbath past whole rows of grocery stores, fruit stands, liquor saloons, news depots, &c., &c., all open, and doing a profitable business. The disregard of the Sabbath, and indeed very much of the wickedness in San Francisco, is to be accounted for by the fact that there is, perhaps no nation under heaven which has not sent some men here in haste to get rich, greedy to get gain, *honestly* if they can, no doubt, but to get it. The faces on the street tell you what the foreigners are here for, the names on their signboards and door plates tell you where they have come from. Here it is "diamond out diamond" in trade and in speculation, and the sharp swindler, in the opinion of the crowd, is "the best man." There are a great many things here that I might tell you about, but I must not. I might write of the stores where all manner of luxuries tempt the rich to buy, and tantalize the poor—some of the windows are perfectly gorgeous; of the hotels, of which there are seven or eight first-class fine establishments, and of which the chief is the Palace Hotel, now nearly completed, which is 345 feet by 275, and seven stories above the basement; inside there is a square court which is not to be paved, but to have a beautiful fountain, with trees and grass and flowers, and each story of the building has a corridor all way round the inside of the square, that the guests may feast on the oasis of greenness and beauty. I might write of the factories and foundries, of which there are many, where all manner of things are made for home use and for export to China and Japan; of the harbor, and the docks, and the wharves, and storehouses, and ship-building; for I have been prying into everything; of the public buildings—but that there are none better or indeed as good as those we have in our cities at home; of the private houses mostly built of wood, for fear of earthquakes and almost invariably painted white, some of which are palaces, the residences of the millionaires, built at a cost of \$100,000, more or less; of the churches, often various denominations, of which there are a great many on account of the diverse nationalities of the people. It may perhaps be interesting to Presbyterians in Canada, to know that Presbyterianism is in the front of the battle with the power of darkness here, and indeed in most places. San Francisco has 12 Presbyterian

Churches, 11 Methodist, 7 Baptist, 7 Congregational, 6 Episcopal, 7 Lutheran, 11 Roman Catholic, and 5 Jewish Synagogues, besides chapels of sects unknown to fame, in great number and variety. Religion has a hard battle to fight in this city, with worldliness, avarice and crime, and to the praise of many Godly Christians here, it must be said they are not lacking in faith or courage. May God prosper his own cause?

The city has all these things common with other places. It has societies, social, religious, benevolent, protection, masculine, temperance, literary, historic, &c., &c., in fact it has societies, associations, and clubs of all sorts—the Americans can do nothing except by *associations*. It has its places of amusement, legitimate and illegitimate, thronged daily and nightly by thousands, bent on what they call pleasure, though the heavens should fall; and it has its ornaments most elaborately laid out and ornamented, to which continually are being borne the corrupting bodies of these whose souls have been summoned to meet their God, and the marble or granite slab or obelisk tells the passer by what good people they have been. But I need not, and must not write of these things.

There are, however, some things for which San Francisco is noted, and which are really worth seeing and knowing about. The visitor should endeavor as soon as possible to master the system of Street Railways, for once master of it you can go to almost any part of the city for five cents. There are right lines of rail aggregating a total of 48 miles; on some of the roads you may make sure of a car every three minutes run according to a time-table, and on the others every five. Everybody rides in the street cars here. Last year they carried 21,284,897 passengers, and of course earned \$1,064,210, for no one rides free.

Now, if you know how to use the street cars, take one for Lone Mountains, and then "mount the bus" for Cliff House. After a ride of about 7 or 8 miles in this way, across the peninsula on which the city stands, the vast panorama of the blue waters of the broad Pacific, covered with ships and steamers, converging from all points towards the Golden Gate, spreads out before your eyes, and you gaze in rapt admiration. The bus stops, and you get out at the Cliff House, so called because built on a high cliff overlooking the ocean. You sit on the sea-ward verandah of the house, and listen to the foaming of the waves against the rocks far below, and look at the seals in hundreds disporting themselves or lolling lazily in the sun on the three huge rocks just in front, while the sea-birds circle about with easy sweep or dive under the waves with lightning speed to catch some luckless fish. Then you come down from the cliff and walk along the beautiful sloping sandy beach, and watch the big waves as they roll in, and break, and boil, and foam, and every now and then they chase you further inland, for the tide is coming in, and every wave rolls further up the shore. Then look up and down the coast, and as far as the eye can reach, you see a long line of breakers, and rolling hills stretching back from the coast. It is a grand sight, but it is beyond my pen to do it justice. I shall never forget the afternoon I went to Cliff House.

Some other day in the morning take the Mission Street cars for Woodward's Gardens. The gatekeeper will admit you for twenty-five cents, and you may easily spend the day there, for it is a delightful and beautiful place. When you are tired you may sit down to rest, in all sorts of curious and fantastic places, in easy chairs or on rustic benches. When you are hungry you may order what you wish in the restaurant on the grounds, and at very reasonable prices too. What is to be seen? Why, nearly everything! There are five acres enclosed, and the place is filled with objects of interest. Everywhere are statues, and fountains, and trees and shrubs; in the zoological department are to be found as many wild animals of different kinds as would stock a first-class menagerie, and what is lacking here is more than made up, by the stuffed zoological specimens, of which there are between 3 and 4 hundred. So also is it with the birds; those not found living are to be seen beautifully stuffed as natural as life. Birds from all climes, of all colors and sizes, from the huge condor to the tiny humming bird, from the gray owl or black raven to the bird of paradise, brilliant and as many coloured as a rainbow, are here. In the lakes are to be seen numbers of seals at play, or basking on the rocks, just as in their native ocean freedom; in the aquarium, in glass cases, are fish—200 varieties or more, from the shark and his cousin the dog fish, to the beautiful little gold fish—fish just hatched, fish a few weeks old, fish full grown. In the conservatories are to be found plants, and flowers, and fruits, indeed every kind of tropical and semi-tropical plants of which one has heard, or which one would like to see. But I mustn't keep you in this delightful and instructive place, any longer. It is a wonderful place and is thronged with visitors every day in the year. I am ashamed and grieved, though, to tell you that it is open every Sabbath, and that more people are to be found there, than, perhaps in all the churches put together. Theoretically such places open on the Sabbath, lead people up from the saloons to the house of God, but practically they are nearly always found to lead in precisely the opposite direction. Alas! that man should be "lovers of pleasure more than lovers of God." Would that they would "seek first the kingdom of God and his righteousness."

But CALIFORNIA and GOLD are always thought and spoken of together, and as San Francisco is the focus of California, though Sacramento is the capital, you will naturally expect me to say something about the effect which the vast mining

city. The great majority of those who come here, come to make money, and spend their time in nothing else. It is not competence that the San Franciscan hopes for, but opulence, and for this he plans and works. You must, however, come with me to the Stock Exchange if you wish to see the strife for wealth concentrated. Most of the rich mines of gold, silver, and quicksilver are owned and operated by companies having their headquarters here. The land in which the precious metals are found is very minutely subdivided—sometimes a foot of *frontage* being cut up into three or four imaginary parts, and each of these parts are called a SHARE. According to the yield or promise of the mine, the share sells for a few cents, or for two or three hundred dollars. These shares when in the market are called *mining stock*, and those who buy and sell them for others, are called *Brokers*. These brokers are about 70 or 80 in number, and have a monopoly of the business, and they constitute the San Francisco Board of Brokers which meets every day, forenoon and afternoon, at the Stock Exchange, for the buying and selling of stock. So much as \$15,000, has been paid for a seat on this Board. Pretty expensive sitting, but duty makes it pay.

You wish to buy so many shares of some stock, you go to a broker and he buys it at the board, and charges you so much *commission*. All right and fair as long as men are honest, but men are not honest, especially men who are in haste to get rich, and so stock is continually "run up," or "run down," by false reports of designing men concerning the state of the mines, or by cunning plots among the artful. The ignorant and the simple are swindled out of competence into poverty in a day. It is very simply done. A trustful broker to offer a great deal of a certain stock; consequence, said stock declines in value. The "nervous" begin to tremble and rush to their brokers, and instruct them to sell all they have of that stock; consequence, down, down it goes. A can now buy as much of it as he cares for at a very low figure, and he does buy. Consequence, the stock is "in demand," and rises rapidly in value, so that A's money which he has invested, is doubled before long, and then he sells out again. This is the way in which "large operators" often do business. The crowd is ignorant and so gullible that they soon lose all they have "dabbling in stocks;" a few grow immensely rich, a few "canny ones" gradually gather their thousands, the rest earn the money which these pocket. In the eagerness of the brokers at the stock exchange to execute the commissions with which they have been entrusted, their bidding on stock offered, and their shouting the stock they have for sale, all speaking at once, is more like my ideal of Pandemonium than anything I have ever seen. This stock exchange is the pulse of *mammon*, it is the thermometer to indicate the degree of heat the desire for wealth has attained. How many passages of God's Word were verified to me in the little while I stood and looked on! I have no difficulty in believing that "the love of money is the root of all evil." May a merciful God deliver us from it! This gambling in stocks does more to demoralize San Francisco and California, than all other sources of demoralization put together, for the stock exchange here is the counterpart of that on Wall Street, in New York, or indeed in any other large city, with this difference only, that *mining stock* is peculiarly easy to manipulate by the "knowing" ones, and peculiarly liable to fluctuation—hence the speculations and gambling.

The actual yield of the California, Nevada, and Oregon mines, cannot be exactly estimated. There are so many ways in which the precious metals find their way out of the country, and I am assured, by those who ought to know, that the produce of the mines is much greater than the export of bullion. In this way California is growing very rich. Much of her wealth is invested at home. The profits are invested in the business, and if a mine turns out well, it is "operated" more vigorously the next year. There being such an abundance of gold and silver, it is natural to expect to find a mint here, and so there is. I am only sorry that I have not been able to go through it, that I might give you a notion of how money is made. The most that I can do is to give you a few interesting statistics. The new mint has just begun operations. It is a large three story building, on the corner of Fifth and Mission streets. The first story above the basement is of grey granite, massive blocks and rough picked, the other stories are of beautiful freestone, the style of architecture, plain Corinthian, and the whole effect very fine and pleasing. The building is 275 feet square, and contains the appliances and machinery necessary for bringing the gold and silver through the necessary processes and operations to which they are subjected, and through which they pass, from the time they leave the mines till they are lodged in the bank vaults, or rung on the broker's counter, or nestled up to one another in rich men's pockets, or are laid up in the corner of some poor woman's handkerchief till market day, bright and beautiful new coins. There are 150 officers and employees constantly engaged in the manufacture of coin, and the amount produced last year in the old mint, with a much smaller capacity than the new one, was, of gold coins of various denominations, 1,110,000—value, \$21,154,500; of silver coins, 1,871,7000—value, \$920,000.

I must stop just here. Some of your readers will be more interested to learn about the Chinese in this city, and on this coast, and of them I will write in my next. I am afraid this letter is so long that you will have to print it in two instalments.

Your very sincerely,

J. B. FRASER.

## NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE.

BY A CANADIAN STUDENT.

Since our last several anniversaries have transpired, which cannot fail to be interesting to Christian people everywhere, viz: that of the Foreign Sunday School Association, the City Missions, and the opening of the session of what is known as Dr. Talmage's Lay College.

The object of the Foreign Sunday School Association is "to establish Sunday or Bible Schools in foreign civilized countries." A very interesting report was given of the work in Germany, France, Spain, Italy, Switzerland, Mexico, and South America, showing about 3,000 schools with 175,000 scholars. Also operations in Hungary, Denmark, Sweden, Holland, Russia, Japan, and China, with an expenditure of over \$3,000.

Drs. Storrs, Crosby, Hall, Tyng, and Roosa, took part in the meeting. Did your space permit, brief notices of some of the speeches would be enjoyable, especially the able electrifying address of Rev. Dr. Storrs, of Brooklyn, whose reply to Tyn-dall, delivered at the late Congregational Council, is not less admired than that of Dr. McCosh.

Not less interesting was the annual meeting of the City Missions. The Rev. Mr. Minkins, superintendent of the missions, Dr. Adams, Hall, &c., delivered affecting addresses. No narrative of work among the heathen could be more touching than the triumphs of the Gospel in the second-growth-heathens of the slums of this city, which was aptly termed "the cess pool of the wicked of the globe."

No words can ever draw the picture of the bottomless depths of poverty, sin, and degradation, or the marvelous transformation effected entirely by the truths as it is in Jesus, as seen and related by the superintendent in his rounds among the lowest strata of the city. Strong, stern men, as well as silvery-tressed sires, and tender-hearted mothers, were deeply moved by the simple artless tale—not so much by the wail, woe and wretchedness revealed, as by the wondrous, gentle power of the Cross, in making so many moral heroes in their daily combat with temptations on every hand, such as few Christians have any conception, much less any personal experience of. A host of earnest male and female workers are employed in this noble work, visiting Bible reading, &c. Over \$50,000 are annually expended in this mission.

The inaugural lecture of TALMAGE'S LAY COLLEGE, was delivered by Rev. Dr. Daryea, of Brooklyn; subject: "The use of the imagination in the study of the Bible." As the lecture is published in the *Christianian Work* (Talmage's paper), we may only add that it was one of those acute, lucid, erudite productions of a Principal Caven's or Prof. Young's style. By the way, on dit has it that he (D.D.) is already marked as the successor of Dr. Hodge at Princeton. The Lay College has four classes attended, open to and attended by persons of different denominations. The first, or junior class, is intended to use Dr. Talmage's parlance—to round off the sharp corners and brush up the English education of those attending. The second and third classes are to instruct and qualify for Sun-day-school teachers, &c., &c. The last, or senior class, is for those aiming to preach. A staff of four or five Professors give instruction each evening in Church history, Biblical criticism, Theology, &c.

A brief reference to POLITICS may be allowable just now. The storm is over and things are settling down into their usual course. There is an impression in Canada that political meetings over here are boisterous, and the speakers addicted mostly to *dundee*. This is a great mistake. The writer attended meetings of both parties, when good order and speaking prevailed. For instance, a Republican meeting at Cooper Institute, having not less than five or six thousand present, there was the best order. George W. Curtis, a writer in *Harper's* Series, said to be one of the best speakers in the Union, Ex-Governor Noyes of Ohio, and others spoke. The speeches for ability, candor, and moderation to opponents, clearness and force of appeal, compare favorably with the best efforts of any Canadian Statesman we have heard either in Parliament or out of it.

Indeed Blake is about the only political orator on that side who would gain anything by a comparison with the above or other speakers here. A Democratic meeting at the notorious Tammany Hall—3,000 to 10,000 present the night of the election—was not nearly so noisy as the least boisterous one ever attended by us in Toronto. The contrast is striking and unaccountable, but the papers are more vituperative and reckless. A novel innovation is the interlarding music and songs between each speaker, the song being a burlesque on the opposite party or candidate, or a rousing party battle-call. It takes immensely. As to the result of the election, to use the current phrase, they have "Gone Democratic, and Graustium is doomed." Still it is not a party victory, the reason chiefly is that old party lines are melting away. The leading men in politics are swinging loose from all parties, so is the mass of the intelligent Christian people.

Most of the leading papers are professionally independent of either party, viz: *Chicago Times*, *Missouri Republican*, *New York Herald and Tribune*, and a host of minor ones. Indeed there is not one of the leading papers of this city a decidedly party organ.

A very large proportion of the right thinking people here, as in Canada, are convinced that partyism has prostituted both rulers and ruled, hence the only remedy is the union of the good and true of all parties to purge the political Augean

Letter from the Rev. John James, of Albany, on the Death of the Rev. J. T. Byrne, Agent French Canadian Mission.

MY DEAR DR. THORNTON,—The family and numerous friends of Rev. Mr. Byrne, in Canada, will no doubt desire to have some particulars concerning his very sudden death, which occurred in this city on Saturday morning last, and of which I telegraphed to yourself, and to Mr. Court, of Montreal, immediately after.

Mr. Byrne arrived here on Wednesday evening, I understand, on his way from Philadelphia to Buffalo, where he had an engagement for the Sabbath. On Thursday he made a few calls on those friendly to the French Canadian Mission, and in the evening took tea at my house, in company with the Rev. Dr. Halley, of the Presbyterian Church. He was looking well and was in cheerful mood. He remained over Friday as he was under engagement to address our weekly meeting in State Street Presbyterian Church. I had given out the opening hymn when he entered the meeting and came upon the platform. He seemed then in perfect health, and spoke for half an hour with great freedom, and with much interest and profit to our people. I was much interested and pleased at the time by noticing this, as the main thread of his theme; viz: that those in whose behalf this Mission was carried on, were kept far away from Jesus the only Saviour, and that the aim and desire of the Society was to present Christ as the only but all-sufficient Saviour and Redeemer. As an agent collecting money for a special institution or Mission, I was delighted to hear him commend so fully and highly the preciousness of the Lord Jesus.

At the close of the service we had some general conversation, a few of my people joining in it; and counting up his low subscriptions he expressed himself as pleased and encouraged by his visit to Albany. He spoke no word then, nor gave any sign that he was in any degree unwell. I learned afterwards, however, from Mr. Rancour, one of our church members, in whose company he walked up to church, that he was obliged to stop twice on the way coming up hill, and told Mr. R. that an affliction of the heart troubled him when he attempted to walk up hill after a hearty meal. He also delayed outside the door, holding up his left arm, and taking a few long breaths before entering the meeting, and hence his lateness, for he intended to be early so as to learn the order of services.

We had a friendly party, and he spoke hopefully of his visit to Buffalo, for which city he intended starting by the nine o'clock train on Saturday morning. As we had rather a thin attendance at our meeting, on account of the snow fall, I said he might call on Mr. James Wilson, as he was not present, if he had time before leaving; Mr. Rancour promised to accompany him to Mr. Wilson's office next morning. Mr. Byrne had an early breakfast at his boarding place, was well and cheerful; went to the depot and bought his ticket for Buffalo, left his valise in Mr. Rancour's office, which is high at hand, and as Mr. Rancour had not yet come down, he started alone to call on Mr. Wilson. Mr. Wilson says he was hale and hearty when he parted with him; but on his way back to the depot, he was seen to lean in the doorway of an unopened store, as if resting; then, as if he had made an effort to proceed, he was seen to stagger and fall back in a reclining position against the store door. A porter in a neighbouring store, (whom I questioned) was now attracted to him, to render assistance, and obtaining three others to help, carried him across the street into Mr. Brown's drug store, and a doctor was immediately sent for. The doctor when he came pronounced him dead, and the porter says he believes he was dead when he went up to him at the store door. Coroner Harrigan was notified, and took charge of his remains and effects. Meanwhile Mr. Rancour became concerned lest he should be late for the train, or saw that he was late, and sent a messenger to enquire, and messengers were sent to them, one of whom (my own son) startled me by looking in at my study door and announcing, "Father, Rev. Mr. Byrne dropped dead on Broadway a little ago." I immediately went to the coroner's office, saw the remains, and telegraphed to Rev. Mr. Heacock, Buffalo, to cancel his engagement there, and to yourself and Mr. Court, as before stated.

The remains of Mr. Byrne, were, according to the advice of friends received on Saturday afternoon, sent on by express from here to Whitby on Saturday night, and probably the mournful arrival will take place while I am writing these sad particulars this morning.

There was a very solemn impression made on many minds by the painful occurrence in our city on Saturday, and my own congregation was deeply solemnized and many affected to tears, when I spoke of the event at our morning service yesterday. To think that a Brother, who appeared before us on Friday night, should be so suddenly and unexpectedly called away; and his remains now being carried to his home at such a distance, was truly a solemn and sad reflection.

I wish to express my sympathy and that of many friends here, with the bereaved wife and family, and sincerely pray that the God of all grace and consolation may sustain and comfort them under their sudden bereavement. And may the lessons which it teaches us be pondered and improved, so that when the Master calls, we also may be ready to depart and to be with Jesus.

My kind love to yourself and family, with best wishes for your prosperity and happiness. I remain, yours very sincerely,  
JOHN JAMES.