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British American Presbyterian.

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 26, 1878.

NEW SUBSCRIBERS.

Now is the time to subscribe for the PRESBYTERIAN. We shall mail to all who now send in \$2 a copy of the PRESBYTERIAN from this time to the end of 1878.

TOPICS OF THE WEEK.

The agitation over Mr Foster's School Law still continues in England.

The Emperor of Germany is understood to have been struck with paralysis, and is not likely to survive a long time.

The famine in Bengal threatens to be very serious, involving, it is to be feared, the sacrifice of thousands of lives.

The war against rascality is being carried on with a great amount of vigour in the States. The trade of Swindler under the gaze of politicians is, in secret, becoming a dangerous one.

The Cuban difficulty is understood to be now quite over, though explanations have been given that make the U. S. Government not so content about the Virginius having had any right to be protected by the Stars and Stripes.

Dr. Cheney, of Chicago, has been consecrated Missionary in the Returned Episcopal Church. His congregation gave consent on condition of his retaining his connection with them. An immense assemblage was present at the consecration.

There is some talk of our Dominion Ministers dissolving Parliament. If they do, we believe they will sweep the whole country from Halifax to Vancouver Island. The great mass of the people are not so demoralized as some astute politicians thought they were.

SCHOOL MATTERS.

The letter we publish in another column about school matters and educational wire-pulling is of very great importance. We believe our correspondent is correct in supposing that there is something far wrong about the present management of the Normal School. Indeed, that mismanagement is not of yesterday. Unfortunately, for a good while back the head-masters of that institution have not been gentlemen, and have been in the habit of treating both the young men and women who were under their charge with scant courtesy.

DR. GUTHRIE.

The first volume of the life of the late Dr. Guthrie has made its appearance. It is chiefly made up of an autobiography, begun in the summer of 1868, and the connecting links and explanations are supplied by his sons, who are his literary executors. The autobiography is, as might be expected, very interesting, both from the narrator being what he was, and the scenes through which he passed being of so great and general interest. Yet, truth to tell, the narrative partakes a good deal of the garrulosity of old age, having almost interminable digressions and moralizings, which are far from attractive.

The sketch given of students' fare in those days is very amusing, and very truthful.

The habits of students then were formed on a much less expensive scale than they are now. Our one apartment was bedroom, parlour, and study. For it, with coals, attendance, and cooking, we only paid 5s or 6s a week. We lived on Bristo Street. Our landlady was a highly respectable woman, the widow of a banker's clerk, whose children, wisely and piously trained at home, sought their way up through their straightened circumstances to affluent and highly respectable positions.

With the exception of some "swells," few students had ampler accommodation than ours, and our living was on a par with our lodgings—the usual bill of fare being tea once, oatmeal porridge twice a day, and for dinner fresh herring and potatoes. I don't think we indulged in butcher's meat more than twice during the whole first session at college; nor that, apart from the expense of fees, books, and what my tutor received, I cost my father more than £10. Though not luxuriously brought up at home, this was not great a change for a growing boy, who shot up into six feet two and a half inches without the shoes by the time he was seventeen years of age. Nevertheless, it is better for boys to be so trained than taught, on the John Bull system, to make a god of their belly. My expenses were higher in the two succeeding sessions, when I had different tutors, and lived in better lodgings; but even then, and afterwards when, during the last seven years I spent at the University, I ceased to be under tutors, they were much less than is common now-a-days. One winter, six of us had a common table, and we used to make up for the outlay of occasional suppers by dinners of potatoes and ox livers, which we reckoned cost us only three half-pence a head.

Sydney Smith might joke about Scotchmen cultivating the arts and sciences on oatmeal, but the struggles which many an ambitious lad makes his way on through college is a feather in the cap of our country.

I know one poor fellow who brought up a large box with him to Edinburgh. He never took a meal outside of his own room, which was a poor chamber in a mean house, near the scene of the "Burke and Hare" murders; and the landlady told me that he had lodged with her for three months, never served with anything else than hot water. That chest, the inside of which he was too proud to let her see, contained, she had no doubt, oatmeal; and her belief was, that, by the help of a little butter and salt, which he had brought with him also, he lived on "brass," as it is called in Scotland—on nothing else but brose for these months. Such food was fit only for the strong stomach of a ploughman; whether due to this or not, the poor fellow went mad before the close of the session. I came to know the case by his landlady applying to me to get him, as I did, received into a lunatic asylum.

A more fortunate case was that of a poor lad, who restricted himself for a whole year to two shillings and sixpence a week, went hungry to his classes and hungry to bed, but fought his way through to become a doctor in medicine, and (till death in a distant land suddenly closed his career) occupy as a physician and a Christian a position of the highest respectability.

In this connection we have a remark on the importance of good manners in clergyman which even in this new world some might not be the worse of bearing in mind: Now, however, it is themselves, the common people appreciate and admire good breeding and gentle manners in their ministers. There was an old minister of Brechin grandfather of Dr. John Bruce of Edinburgh, who maintained, and rightly, that every truly pious man, very true Christian, had in him the elements of a true gentleman. I have heard the old people of Brechin tell how he illustrated a that by appealing to the manner in which Abraham received the three Strangers who approached his tent, and, certainly, the single chapter in Genesis which relates that story is worth more than the whole volume of Lord Chesterfield's Letters to his Son. He would also refer to Joseph when summoned from prison to the palace of Pharaoh. It is said that Joseph shaved himself and changed his raiment. "Joseph," said old Mr. Bruce, "did not go to Pharaoh and became as he lay in prison. No; but he got himself shaved and shined like a gentleman, and then he went in unto Pharaoh!"

Dr. Davidson, one of the ministers of Edinburgh when I attended college (brother-in-law of the celebrated Lord Cockburn), a man of limited property, and—better than all—one of the most pious and devout ministers of his day, was so impressed with the importance of ministers adorning the doctrine of God their Saviour by all freedom from vulgarity and a certain polish of manners, that I have heard of the good old man actually himself teaching such manners to a pious but awkward lad from some remote island or glen of the north. To the back of the door went the venerable Doctor, and to the amazement of the gaping boor, opened it to make him, and teach him to make a profound bow! On another occasion, it is said, he slipped a bank note into the hands of a poor student, beneath whose coarser crust, however, no discerned both uncommon piety and uncommon talents, saying, "Take that, my dear lad, and go to Mr.— (naming him), 'you will be much the better of a quarter at the dancing.'"

When a student, Dr. Guthrie paid a visit to London, and thence passed over to Paris. His experiences in attempting to perfect himself in French conversation were somewhat trying though whimsical:—"Though I could read the language pretty well, I had never learned to speak it. Determined, however, to do so, I asked the Colonel, on our reaching Paris, to recommend me to an hotel where I would meet with none who could speak anything but French. This he did; and, on driving into the court, I soon found into what a scrape my determination to plunge over head and ears into the French tongue and French society had brought me. There I stood beside my luggage, surrounded by a bevy of servants, men and women, who jabbared away at me in vain, while I, as much in vain, sought to reach their understandings. I now began to think I was a big fool, to have left my comfortable home for such a ridiculous and uncomfortable predicament. From this I was extricated by the sharpness of a demoiselle, who, making something out of my crude French, directed one of the porters to hoist my trunk on his back, and, with most gracious smiles, beckoned me to follow, led the way into the house, and up three pairs of stairs to a bedroom. When the porter had deposited his load and retired, she poured on me a rapid volley of French, in which I could make nothing out but the word 'eau,' or water. The lass wanted to know whether I wanted warm water, for she saw my cheeks and chin with a crop of three day's growth. However, I had forgotten that 'eau' was feminine, and could not for the life of me make out what she meant with her 'de l'eau chaude,' contenting myself with pointing her to the owners that stood airily filled. She laughed, and I laughed also, at our absurd position. At length, however, she lost all patience, and began to dance round me, screaming out at the pitch of her lungs; when all of a sudden a happy thought occurred to her. Some way or other she had caught hold of the English word that, with some help from the language of signs, was to solve the mystery. So, planting her finger on her cheek, and, making it describe the sweep of a razor, she cried, 'Shave, Shave, Monsieur!' They are a smart set, these French, men and women of them. It had been long till a Scotch or English lass had done anything so clever as that!

Some amusing anecdotes are told in connection with some of the Doctor's predecessors in Greyfriars Church. For instance, the gentleman that immediately preceded him, is hit off in the following terms:—"My worthy predecessor, who mouthed his words, and delivered commonplaces things with the greatest pomposity, imagined himself an orator and accomplished elocutionist; but to be absolutely perfect in the latter art, he resolved to seize the opportunity of John Kemble (the great tragedian) having come down to Edinburgh, to see how he would read a certain passage of Scripture.

Well, one day when Kemble is reposing in his lodgings, the servant announces that a gentleman wishes to see him, and thereupon ushers into the room a grand and reverend-looking man, dressed in the garb of a minister, with a Bible in his hand. It at once struck Kemble that this was some divine who had come to condemn the theatre, and rebuke him for pursuing the business of a playactor. So he was not a little relieved when the guru, stepping up to him with great pomp and dignity, announced itself as the Rev. Dr. Anderson, who had embraced the opportunity of Mr. Kemble's visit to Edinburgh to hear how the great tragedian would read such and such a passage of Scripture.

John Kemble, to use a common expression, took in at a glance the measure of his visitor's foot, expressed himself happy to see Dr. Anderson, and how much pleasure he would have in giving him his advice. "At the same time," he said, "the best way of going to work is not for me, but for you, Dr. Anderson, to read the passage first."

The worthy doctor, who had too high an opinion of his own powers to be daunted by John Kemble or any other man, proceeded to deliver his oration. "Whom upon Kemble, not a little amused with the inflated style of his visitor, gave him this sage advice,—one it would be well for all aspirants at public oratory to remember,—'Sir, when you read the Sacred Scriptures, or any other book, never think how you read, but what you read.'"

The following account of an unorthodox Aberdeen occupying Dr. Hugh Blair's pulpit for an afternoon, is also not bad:—It being arranged that his old student should preach for him, Dr. Blair went with fear and trembling to church on Sunday. Nor were his apprehensions groundless. The fashionable congregation who had assembled to hear Dr. Blair were amazed at the unorthodox being who had taken the place of the polished and elegant divine. These tones, and that pronunciation jarred on their delicate ears; nor were they less astonished or Blair less tortured by the matter, than the manner. The preacher gave out a text, announcing that his object was to prove to them that day that man was a fallen creature, or, as he expressed it, that he was 'fallen'; and rushing at once in medias res, he undertook to prove this, first, from the 'reluctance anatomy.' Having somehow or other got hold of the fact that while the felino tribe are carnivorous, and horses and swine omnivorous, the pig, like man, is omnivorous, using equally and thriving on both kinds of food—and that there are thus, as might be expected in these circumstances some points of resemblance between the digestive organs of the pig and of the human race—he launched this out on the astonished heads of the polished aristocrat of Edinburgh, saying, 'It is well known that the sou has a' the puddens o' a man except aue; and it that does na' prove that man has fa'en, there's naething ill!'

It seems that Dr. Chalmers himself had doubts about the legality of the celebrated Veto law, the working out of which caused so much trouble and issued at last in the disruption. Here is what Dr. Guthrie says on the subject:—"Such an Act we thought the Church had power to pass, independent of the State and her courts. So Lord Moncrieff and Lord Jeffrey maintained; so, too, did Lord Glenise—the oldest man and by far the ablest judge on the bench—and other lawyers of great eminence besides. The astute and long-headed Dr. Mc'Gie, who was perhaps better acquainted than any of them with the constitutional law of the Church of Scotland, and was certainly not behind any of them or all of them in sagacity and penetrating genius, was of a different opinion. He took a deep and most kindly interest in our struggles, but thought that, without the consent of the State, the Church had no right to pass over the Veto Act. Dr. Chalmers had his doubts upon this point, and advised that application should be made in the first instance to the State; but he went in with the vastly preponderating majority in passing the Veto Act. This Act did not satisfy us Anti-Patronage men within the Church. We desired the entire abolition of patronage. But, though growing larger year by year, we were still a comparatively small handful. We had no influence in the councils of the Church, were regarded as wild and extreme men, when, in point of fact, in our case 'wisdom dwelt with prudence.' Had Dr. Andrew Thompson lived beyond 1831—lived to sway, as he would have done, the Church and the country—there would probably have been no Disruption—an event which was due to the desire of Lord Moncrieff and Dr. Chalmers to preserve patronage more than to any other circumstance. Neither had there been any Disruption had the whole Evangelical party, instead of regarding us Anti-Patronage men as impracticable fools, adopted Andrew Thompson's policy; certain (through the change the Reform Bill had brought into the country, transferring a vast amount of political power from the favoured few to the many) of ultimate and not very remote success. We would have stirred the whole country from Cape Wrath to the Boreas—and that had not been ill to do—to go to a Reformed Parliament asking a reform in the Church as well as in the State; asking that Patronage, which was restored by Queen Anne's Government, and had remained ever since, contrary to the will of the people—should be utterly abolished; and with a little patience, our efforts in that direction would certainly have been crowned with success, to the extent, at least, of giving legal effect to the Veto Law, if not of altogether abolishing patronage."

that although a fat little, she was not a fool. "The cows," she said—drawing a nice metaphysical distinction between what are not and what are works of necessity and mercy that would have done honour to a casuist "The cows canna' milk themselves, so to milk them is a clear work of necessity and mercy; but let them out to the fields, and they'll feed themselves." Here certainly was scrupulosity; but the error was one that leaned to the right side."

These extracts may give our readers some idea of the book, and will, no doubt, lead them with only the greater eagerness to peruse it for themselves. It bears abundant marks of Dr. Guthrie's raucy humour, and in spite of some of the moribund digressions, which could have been spared, is an exceedingly interesting and readable volume.

Presbyterian College, Montreal.

At the close of the lectures of the above institution on Tuesday evening, 16th inst., the students met en masse in the Principal's lecture room and presented him with the accompanying address. The Presbyterian College is now an institution established on a sound basis. The staff consists of Principal MacVicar, Professor Campbell, so popular among the students, and whose reputation as a historian is far more than local, Prof. Cousens, who so ably conducts the French classes, and Rev. Mr. Gibson, whose extensive acquaintance with ancient and modern languages makes his lectures in Exegesis so valuable. The students room and board in the College building, and the accompanying address is only an illustration of the esprit de corps which has prevailed among them throughout.

ADDRESS.

To Rev. D. H. MacVicar, L.L.D., Principal of Montreal Presbyterian College:—

DEAR SIR,—As the time of our separation for the Christmas holidays is now drawing nigh,—some of our number leaving the College to-morrow morning,—we beg leave, before separating, to offer you our congratulations on the healthy state of the institution over which you preside, and on the auspicious circumstances with which we are surrounded this session; and more especially have we met you this evening to offer you our sincere thanks for the deep interest you have always taken, not only in our advancement in literary and professional studies, but also in our personal comfort. You have spent many hours of toil and anxiety in securing the erection and fitting up of the beautiful building which is now our home.

At present our expenses are reduced to a minimum, and we are in a position to enjoy the benefit of one another's society, so that we feel more truly than we have ever felt before that we are students; and we cannot but remember that for these advantages we are largely indebted to your unflagging energy. Have the kindness to present our thanks to Mrs. MacVicar and to the ladies associated with her for the part taken by them in furnishing the comfortable rooms which we now occupy, and for the kindly interest they have shown in seeking to secure our comfort. We pray that happiness may ever attend you in your family, and that you may see this college grow larger and stronger as the years roll on, and that each succeeding year may see a larger and larger army of the soldiers of the cross going forth from these walls fully equipped for the work of subduing the world to Christ.

(Signed by all the Students.)

Montreal Presbyterian College, Dec. 16th, 1878.

REPLY.

Dr. MacVicar spoke to the following effect in reply:—

GENTLEMEN,—I thank you most heartily for your kind address. Had you given me a hint beforehand of your intention to present such, I should be better prepared than I am at this moment to give expression to my feelings in reply. You refer to the sound and prosperous condition of this college, and to my efforts in connection with it in the past. Allow me to say that in everything I have done, I have been cheered and sustained by the generous confidence of the friends of the institution, and especially by the thorough loyalty and devotion to its interests of all our graduates and students.

This, as well as a regard to our Church at large, had much weight with my mind when pressing overtures were made to me to accept another position. I cordially join with you in your fond hopes as to growth and usefulness in the future. The Lord hath blessed our feeble exertions hitherto, and if we continue faithful to Him, He will yet bless us more abundantly.

The improvements which we contemplate and the additions which we hope to make to your facilities for the pursuit of sacred studies and general culture, were to some extent indicated in my remarks at the opening of this building. I need hardly ask you to exercise patience until these are accomplished.

From your present standpoint you see that no delusive hopes were held out in the past, and this, as you kindly indicate, inspires confidence for days to come.

I rejoice to night in being surrounded by such a large band of devoted and earnest students, and in sharing the work of the institution with a staff of professors, so scholarly, accomplished, and able; and let me assure you that we are all of one mind, in seeking to promote your comfort and success.

I thank you especially in your expression of appreciation of what Mrs. MacVicar and other ladies have done in connection with our new building. May God bless and prosper you all.—Montreal Witness.

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