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Contributors and Correspondents.

DIARY IN THE EAST.

DAMASCUS.

I had but a short sleep the night after my ride to the Dog River.

The W's and I had taken seats in the diligence for Damascus on May 12th, and as it starts at 4 a.m., we were very early astir. We were able to get the coupe, which only contains three passengers, so we were as comfortable as we could be in a journey of fourteen and a-half hours, during some of which the sun beat in on us in great force, and the dust rose in suffocating clouds. After the months of journeyings on horseback, I did not at all enjoy this return to civilized conveyances, and felt inclined to envy some travellers whom we met riding along with their convoy of muleteers. But the diligence has the advantage of speed, and that was a great consideration to the W's who had no time to spare. After we got beyond the outskirts of Beyrout, with its groves of mulberries and olives, our road for some hours was a continual ascent, sometimes by long slopes, sometimes by zig zags, by which it is made possible for wheeled carriages to reach the summit of the pass. The road crosses Lebanon at a height of some 5600 feet, then descending to the valley which divides Lebanon from Anti-lebanon, and which is about 2570 feet above the sea, again ascends in crossing Antilebanon to 3,600 feet, and again descends to Damascus, which is 2,200 feet in elevation. As all these changes of elevation occur in a distance of some thirty-five or forty miles, the ascents and descents are very rapid, and it has required very good engineering to make the excellent road by which the huge heavy diligences cross the mountain. On the steepest stages mules are used instead of horses, being found better for such work. On our way we passed immense long trains of waggons belonging to the same French company as the diligences, and by which the merchandize of Europe passes to Damascus, and [illegible] the mail is return co[illegible]

Some [illegible] ful. In one place we had a long stretch of road carried along the side of a steep hill, from which we looked down into a splendid valley eight or nine miles across, dotted with villages, and sprinkled with a handsome pine tree, which, though it does not at all equal the real cedar of Lebanon, yet is a very fine object. Of the real cedar I did not see a single tree. The group which travellers so often visit lies far away from the road to Damascus, high up in a nook of the mountains. It can only be reached on horseback, and at the time I went to Damascus the trip was barely practicable from the abundance of snow still remaining on the higher parts of Lebanon.

We passed a good deal of snow even by the side of the road, and the large lump which the conductor handed into me was very refreshing after the dusty heat through which we had passed before we reached the summit of the pass. As we approached the steep descent into the Bukaa (as the plain between the two Lebanons is called), we all had a magnificent view over its wide extent, spreading out north and south before us, bounded southwards by the grand form of Hermon with its crest of snow. This valley of the Bukaa, watered by the Litany, and its tributary streams, is fitted to provide food for an immense population, but there are only a few villages now dotted here and there over it. One of these is at Baalbek, which many travellers reach by leaving the diligence at the half-way-house in the Bukaa, from which, with good horses, a six hour's ride across the level plain takes them to Baalbek.

We did not attempt the expedition at this time, but I afterwards was able to make an expedition alone to the Lebanon, and then saw Baalbek. After dinner at the Half-way-house and half an hour's rest, we started again across the Bukaa to Anti-Lebanon. We soon passed an immense flock of sheep with many wild-looking men clad in sheep skin coats accompanying them. I looked at them with great interest. They were Koords. From far Koordistan they had brought these sheep, and were proceeding southwards to sell them in the plains if they were not all disposed of *en-route*. They seemed to be holding a sort of fair in the Bukaa, and would probably dispose of a good part of their flock. The sheep (like those of the Lebanon and Palestine,) had the large tails, the fat of which is so much prized.

The pass by which the Diligence road traverses the Antilebanon, is in some respects even finer than that over Lebanon. I have a vivid remembrance of two parts of the road. The first was the glen by which we left the Bukaa, and the great attraction there was the abundance of bushes of sweet-scented yellow jasmine, and other pretty evergreens. The other was the wild gorge by which we descended towards Damascus. At first the grand lofty cliffs on each side rose up in gloomy ruggedness, while the road wound in and out round masses of rock that had fallen from above by the side of a pretty sparkling brook. From this gorge we emerged on a stretch of desolate flat of great extent. Bare and barren, not a house nor a tree to be seen. The blazing sun brought out all its features of desolation. This barren district is said to contain some 100 square miles. Crossing it from west to east we suddenly came to a deep glen which appeared as if by magic before us, and presented the most wonderful contrast to the barren flat. It was the glen of the Abana, into which the road suddenly dived, and as I saw the wonderful richness of growth of trees and flowers by its side, I could not wonder at the delight and pride of the Damascenes in this little river. Now, as in the days of Elisha, no doubt there are thousands ready to say with Naaman, "Are not Abana and Pharphar, rivers of Damascus, better than all the waters of Israel?"

I never saw the fertilizing effects of water more strikingly visible than during this drive. For a good distance we had on one side of the road the bright river rushing along in full volume in the midst of fields and trees of the most luxuriant growth and brightest green. Just on the other side of the road the mountain rose up abruptly, either perfectly bare, or only dotted with the grey-green shrubby plants of sage, thyme, etc., which look scarcely brighter than the dry soil from which they grow, while sometimes the light coloured rocks reflected the sun with a glare quite painful to the eye.

At last we passed out of the glen and reached Damascus, driving across meadowy land by the side of the river, which was partly flooded by the unusual abundance of rain and snow, and was dotted with large apricot and other fruit trees, their boughs bending under the load of fast-ripening fruit. The diligence office is outside the city walls. There we descended, and found a hotel-agent looking out for travellers, who took us under his charge, and conducted us to the one hotel which Damascus boasts of. It is built in the usual style of the Damascus houses, round a court, paved with black and white marble, on which each room of the ground floor opens, while galleries around it admit to the rooms of the second floor. The large orange trees, and the tank, and fountains of fresh water in the court looked very refreshing. [illegible] Our days were spent in rambling about the miles of covered lanes that form the bazaars of Damascus, and in visiting the few other sights of the city.

The bazaars are quite sight enough themselves, they are so quaint and eastern in themselves, and in the busy life that pervades them. The cook-shops amused me much. The fire of charcoal was on the counter of the booth in a sort of shelved stand of metal, on each shelf of which some glowing embers sent out a clear heat. In front of this revolved a perpendicular spit, on which a tall pile of scraps of meat was cooking. When any one wanted a dish, some of the outside of the mass of meat was pared off, thus leaving the uncooked part within bare to receive the influence of the heat. In other places little knobs of meat, not much bigger than a walnut, were stuck on a skewer and cooked over a brazier of hot charcoal. We did not indulge in any of these dainties, but we paid many visits to one of the innocent drinking-booths, where tumblers of lemonade, orangeade, and other such beverages, flavoured with rose water, etc., were to be had, cooled with snow brought from Lebanon. It is packed in a sort of woolen or hair-cloth bags, and carried to Damascus and Beyrout, where it is used largely for these refreshing drinks, which take the place of the poisonous intoxicants with which the inhabitants of Great Britain and America vainly endeavour to quench their thirst. On the counter of every restaurant a heap of snow stands ready for some to be put into the tumbler of lemonade or other drink. For these, and for confections of different kinds, Damascus seems quite celebrated. Walnuts are largely used in the sweetness, either pounded or only divested of their shells, and cooked with sugar into a solid mass, of which quantities are eaten, especially in the weeks of lent and other feasts among the native Christians. One lady in Jerusalem told me she had put her servant on board-wages during one of those long feasts, from the difficulty of knowing how to feed her, and that she believed she lived almost entirely on bread and the Damascus sweetmeat of pounded walnuts and sugar.

We visited the part of the bazaars appropriated to gold and silversmiths. There, in a large sort of hall, very dingy and crowded with little stalls and counters, were dozens of men employed in making or selling very pretty fillagree work in gold and silver wire, much like the work for which Malta is celebrated. Another quarter is appropriated to silkmercers. Another to shoemakers, and so on. Through the bazaars passed men on horses, and donkeys, tall camels laden with merchandize, frightful looking holy beggars in the filthiest rags, barely covering them decently, veiled women, etc., etc. It was a curious and busy scene.

(*To be continued.*)

THE Solar Eclipse, March 25th, will be annular in British Columbia.

THE population of Ireland is 5,412,397, showing a falling off of 3,000,000 in less than twenty-five years.

NOTES FROM NEW YORK.

(By Our Own Correspondent.)

For the present New York is, in certain circles, all excitement. But in a city like this, these circles are so vast, and contain within themselves so many persons, and such a variety of interests, that it is not only possible, but actually the case, that you may live toward the centre of any one of these circles, and think all the world is moving round them, and scarcely dream of other circles that lie beyond them, of whom it is true, as you think it true of the circle in which you live. And so you must not be surprised, if from two correspondents, you find two reports, not positively contradictory, but as opposite the one from the other as can possibly be.

But as for your purposes—church matters, or those that concern morals, and its highest department, religion, are what you are most interested in, and of that, we have for the time being, most of. It may interest you to know not only that immense crowds wait upon Moody and Sankey, but that every where in the city there are efforts being put forth in the same direction. And that these are in very many cases crowned with success. Union daily prayer-meetings are springing up on every side, and are largely attended. And no doubt much good is being accomplished. And to those at a distance, and in the very vortex of the excitement, good is all that makes its appearance. A passing shadow may flit before the mind, to be forgot as soon as past, and well that it is so, but to persons of greater reflection, the shadow may toll of the clouds that are gathering—we trust to fertilize the soil—but it may be perchance to cause to spring up other results than those anticipated.

In a strongly heated atmosphere you may expect some of the clay to be baked into bricks, not of the orthodox description. And some so equivocal that it is hard to say whether it is for good or evil. The tendency to excitement beyond a certain degree is ever subject to reaction, [illegible] of discursive consequence. And that in the face of all the [illegible] of [illegible] And upon a more mature consideration of the whole subject, perhaps it is well that it should be so. It may be impossible, as things are, to push on the work of Christ otherwise. As it may be the law of our nature, that through mistakes here as well as elsewhere, progress is made. And we do not always know what may turn out to be a mistake. We ought, then, in all cases, to be tolerant. But this fact will not make it wrong in us to mark certain indications that may either speak of the decay of superstition or the progress of it in the mind.

We have no doubt but that the almost universal rage after ornaments in the form of the cross, has caused that emblem to be of very little importance, and calls up, to the minds of most of the wearers, as little of Christ as any other emblem would. But when religious intimations are being made in the form of a cross, or an exhortation in such a form accompanies, as from the enclosed you will see is done here, there can be little doubt but that the parties who send them are thinking of the cross of Christ, and no doubt love it, and mean it to suggest to the reader what they themselves think of it. But the efforts may produce the effects which ornaments have upon the public—to cause it to be of little account or signification. And perhaps it is well that it should, for the sooner that we get quit of the idea that the cross has anything to do with salvation, and not a mere consequent, and in many respects, a preliminary condition of a true faith in Him who hung on it, the better. We may glory in the cross, but so soon as it becomes a favourite in public estimation, our glorying is then vain, and, in the Apostles' sense, becomes a vanity on our part.

As you are aware of the fact, that in respect of numbers, the Moody and Sankey meetings are a great success. The Hippodrome, the property of Barnum, who, for the present, does not require it for his show, has been divided into two main halls, the one holding 7,000 and the other 4,000. Seats for all, with two inquiry rooms of a very large size between, that are generally presided over by Moody in the one, and Sankey in the other, with a staff of workers accredited by the several pastors of the city. The larger of these halls is entered by Madison Avenue, and when full, an intimation is placed over the entrance that the hall is full, and all that now come are requested to go to the other hall, and thus unless the evening is more than usually stormy, the halls are both full. The fact that from ten to eleven thousand can be gathered together any evening to listen to a simple, unadorned presentation of the Word of God, is one not to be despised. No matter how it comes about, whether from the long expectancy or the reported success of the movement in other places, or the persistent and united efforts of so many [illegible] same end in view, or from [illegible] fact remain[illegible] and th[illegible]

And [illegible] of this [illegible] appeal to the [illegible] rooms, but to the bitter prej[illegible] tature of ungodly persons on the public platform, and in the press. The very bitterness of the utterances of these two in certain quarters, and the continued silence in some other directions with the compelled notice of such meetings, go to show what a hold these have on the public mind. Whatever may be the result, it is manifest that a deep spirit of solemn inquiry pervades the community. Men more in earnest than Moody and Sankey, or men that lack almost all meretricious accomplishments, we can scarcely imagine; and yet the fact of success is there, trace it to what source you please, if not, as we believe, to the God of all grace, that is using these men for his own purposes.

While the excitement lasts, we do not imagine that the churches of the city, with its population, out of all proportion in the greatness of its numbers, to the amount of church accommodation, will lack their usual attendance. But as to whether, after the excitement is over, the effect will be to relapse to a state of quietude, as if it were a rest after a long continued exertion, is yet to be proved in the experience of the future.

New York is apt to have her festivals and her seasons, and the crowding of service at one time is apt to be looked upon as sufficient for all the rest, or till the season again returns. But if these things are to be avoided by any class of men, or any kind of arrangement, they should be avoided here and now. And we hope that it will be so, and the Church of Christ for long have cause to rejoice in the present movement. The special features of this movement we cannot enter upon, but the Sabbath afternoon meeting for women, and the evening one for men alone, are, both of them, strikingly grand and impressive. The thought of so many thousands of either sex gathered together separately, is well worthy of note and reflection.

The advisory counsel in Beecher's case has come to a close with very varied results, in the opinion of different parties. And very unjust remarks seems to be made by many from whom we would have expected better things. It will be remembered that the counsel was called to settle a question of discipline, and it seems to us more to please the parties who were the subjects of that discipline, than for any other reason, and why should they be found fault with if they refused to travel in the case of personal scandal against Beecher himself. We cannot say that we are in any way very partial to Beecher, but it seems strange that because that counsel was all but unanimous in their approbation of the Plymouth Church and its pastor in regard to the case in hand, that insinuations should be thrown out, not of a very complimentary kind, in respect of the independence of its members, that in some way the shadow of Beecher was too much for them. How much more would have been made of it if they had not been so unanimous? One thing is certain that the general feeling in New York is much more favourable to Beecher than ever it was. And however much one may question the wisdom of an investigating committee of five, selected by three men nominated by that advisory counsel, yet, in all fairness, it would be difficult to see how it could be more impartially done. Of course those behind the scenes may know of some other reason, but it is quite possible that the reason which they know, may as much blind the eye as the want of all reason would.

We trust soon that that matter will be settled never to rise again, but as a warning to all parties, and a reason why we should all seek to live nearer God than we have done.

The notice of the death of Dr. Jennings, of Toronto, at a comparatively early age, has produced a feeling of deep solemnity in the minds of all his old friends in this city. And we are sure we express the feeling of all in conveying to the bereaved widow and family, our respect and sympathy in the sad loss which they have sustained.

New York, Feb. 28, 1876.

Young Ministers and Large City Congregations.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—Here is a subject that is of great importance to congregations, to students, and to our denomination at large. Congregations are at the present day fond of very young ministers, just fresh from College, and it speaks well, both for our Colleges and our young men, that it is so. But it appears to me that more caution and consideration should be exercised in reference to the field in which young ministers sometimes commence to labour as pastors. When a student has just finished a seven or eight, or for that matter, a ten years' course of study, it is manifest that such a long strain on his nervous energies, must, to a greater or less degree, have weakened his constitution, and rendered it highly expedient that he should have a considerable interval for recuperation. His spirit may be buoyant, and he may think himself strong, but he may have far more spirit than strength. Ordain that man over a city charge where he has two sermons a week to prepare, and there is great risk that he will wear out and die in the feverish struggle. The risk will be all the greater if he is a young man of brilliant gifts, and natural genius. A dull man would stand the position, though the congregation might not stand it as well. But the young preacher of genius can [illegible] come up to his own ideal of what [illegible] delighted his audi[illegible] efforts. They [illegible] such ease and [illegible] to him to [illegible] laboured so hard in the study, that they find it no labour whatever to sit and hear him on Sabbath. Like the high-spirited steed that will kill himself without being urged by either whip or spur, the young minister of genius and sanctified ambition, may kill himself by over-effort without knowing what he is doing. A dull phlegmatic man may be placed anywhere, either in a large congregation or a small one, and he will do himself no harm; but not so the man of nervous temperament, who is full of magnetic power and fire, as a preacher. He burns out rapidly unless care be taken. Would it not be for the interest of such men, and for the interest of the cause of Christ at large, that they should commence their ministry in some quiet position for a few years, where they might acquire full physical strength, and accumulate a stock of discourses, and gain experience which would make the work easier to them in the advanced position, which such men are sure to get sooner or later? In a Presbyterian Church, the liberty and free unfettered choice of congregations must not be interfered with, and neither can the right of probationers to accept a call given in an orderly way, but friendly counsel in some cases at least, might be given to the great advantage of all concerned. What has been the history of the most eminent ministers of the Church, in both Europe and America? Did they, as a rule, commence in large city charges? A few did no doubt, but very few.

Yours, etc., OBSERVER.

Feb. 28, 1876.

Praiseworthy Example.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—The following are the preamble, and some of the resolutions adopted at a congregational meeting lately held in Springville in the Presbytery of Peterboro. They will speak for themselves as to the object of the meeting:

"Whereas it has become known to us that mission work among the French Canadians in Montreal is being greatly owned of God in the turning of multitudes from the errors of Popery; and whereas great privation is being experienced by many of those who have been converted to Christianity, through the persecution of Papist friends and relatives.

Therefore Resolved:—1st. That this meeting rejoices in the success of Mr. Chiniquy's work among his fellow-countrymen, and heartily sympathizes with those who have forsaken fathers and mothers, wives and children, houses and lands for the sake of Christ.

2nd. That a subscription list be now opened for the obtaining of funds to aid in the relief of sufferers who have been brought out of the Church of Rome, and in the further prosecution of the work of French Evangelization."

Before the conclusion of the meeting steps were taken to give opportunity to all the friends of the cause, both of our own and of other denominations, to aid in the promotion of the good work.

There has been obtained as the result of the effort the sum of over sixty dollars. Between fifteen and twenty of these, however, have been given by friends of other churches. The balance comes from about twenty-five subscribers of the Springville congregation. Not a few withheld their contributions on the ground that they had no faith in the honesty of most of the persons professing to have left the Church of Rome.

The forty dollars and over, now to be remitted from the Springfield congregation, are in addition to thirteen dollars sent some three or four months ago on behalf of "French Evangelization." This little congregation of eighty members has raised this year nearly one hundred and forty dollars on behalf of the schemes of the Church.

WM. BENNETT.

Springville, Feb 29th, 1876.

Missionary Meetings and Collections by Rev. J. Fraser Campbell.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Will you allow me, Mr. Editor, to report the following collections sent forward by Rev. J. Fraser Campbell:

Quebec, $91.18; Huntingdon $51; Ormstown, $13; Georgetown, $18; St. Louis de Gonzaque, $5.31; Valleyfield, $7.53; Chateauguay Basin, $7.5; A Gentleman in Beauharnois, $5. Total, $198.7

At a meeting held at Indian Lands, a valuable gold ring and a breast-pin formed of a gold nugget were found in the collection. These will be sold for the benefit of the Foreign Mission Fund.

Toronto, 22nd Feb., 1876. W. REID.

THE Great Thesaurus of the Sanscrit Language published at Calcutta by Professor Taranatha Tarkavachaspati, has now reached as far as the letter K. It fills 1,678 pages 4to, and will far exceed in bulk, the dictionary published by Messrs. Boetlingk and Roth.

THE most terrible poison known is Osmium. Twenty pounds of this metal would be enough to poison all the inhabitants of the globe. One-thousandth part of a grain of osmic acid, set free in a hundred cubic yards of air, would possess so deadly an influence, that all the persons breathing the air would be nearly killed.

THE Rev. James W. Alexander, D.D., began his "Thirty-one Rules on How to Read the Bible," with, "In all your readings, bear in mind that it is the Word of God;" and ended them with the weighty injunction, "In all your reading, remember that it is for the salvation of your soul."—*S. S. World.*