

Poetry.

THE RAINBOW.

The evening was glorious, and light through the trees
Played the sunshine and rain-drops, the birds and the breeze;
The landscape outlining in loveliness,
On the lap of the year, in the beauty of May.
For the Queen in the Spring, as she passed down the vale,
Lest her robe on the trees, and her breath on the gale,
The smile of her promise gave joy to the hours,
And flush in her footsteps sprang herbage and flowers.
The skies, like a banner in sunset tumbled,
O'er the west through their splendour of azure and gold,
And fast in a distance rose dense, and increased,
Till its margin of black touched the zenith, and east.

We gazed on the scene, while around us they glowed,
When a vision of beauty appeared on the cloud—
'Twas not like the Sun as at mid-day we view,
Nor the Moon, that rolls nightly through starlight and blue.
Like a spirit it came, in the van of a storm!
And the eye and the heart hailed its beautiful form.
For it looked not severe, like an Angel of Wrath,
But its garment of brightness flamed its dark path.
In the hues of its grandeur sublimely it stood,
O'er the river, the village, the field, and the wood;
And river, field, village, and woodland grew bright,
As convulsions they gave and afforded delight.
'Twas the bow of Omnipotence! bent in His hand,
Whose grasp at Creation the universe spanned,
When the rainbow was first, as a symbol of truce,
His vow from the Flood, to the end of time!

CANADIAN COLLOQUIES;

NO. V.

CONFIRMATION.

TWENTY years ago not more than a dozen families
inhabited the district of which the thriving village
of Gravelle is now the centre. Being an infant settle-
ment, many were the privations endured by the
pioneers of that portion of our new Province, and
various were the shifts to which they were reduced in
order to meet the difficulties which surrounded them.

Among the perplexities which beset them, not the
least formidable, was how their religious wants should
be provided for. The majority had been brought up
with a salutary reverence for the public worship of
God, but, unhappily, were not all of one mind in
this vitally important matter. Small as was the young
community, it was sadly rent by the rude hand of
sects, combined with a few pious but indifferently
taught Churchmen, there were to be met with, in
Gravelle and its vicinity, samples of the leading
denominations of the day, and the polemical strife,
humilitations, and deplorable for the
Christianity which they displayed.

The Churchmen and Presbyterians, who composed
the majority of the people, having made several
attempts to erect places of worship in connection
with their own bodies, it was finally resolved that a
Meeting-house should be built. This was accordingly
done, and before long a commodious stone edifice
was completed, in which every person calling
himself a Christian was permitted to officiate, provided
always that he belonged to a Protestant community.
Romanists alone were excluded from the ultra-liberal
chapel of Gravelle, which was equally patent to
the Churchman and the Plymouth Brother, the
Baptist and Jew.

As a natural consequence of this unsectarian arrange-
ment, the honest settlers were, in the course of the year,
treated to almost every variety and whim of doctrine:
on one Sunday a clergyman of the Church would insist
upon the duty of parents securing for their young
ones an admission into the fold of Christ; next week
his exhortation would be neutralized by a Baptist
teacher, who, with equal confidence, would denounce
the administration of the initiatory sacrament to any
save adults; and, perchance, an itinerant "Friend"
would contradict both his predecessors by declaiming
against Baptism and the Eucharist as unnecessary and
unscriptural.

In these circumstances it could hardly fail that the
minds of the hapless denizens of Gravelle, being
tossed about by so many conflicting words of doctrine,
would become miserably perplexed and unsettled;
and it must be observed that each service was generally
attended by all the community,—the Churchmen
assisting at that of the sectary, and vice versa.

Being informed of how matters had been conducted,
it did not surprise me to find, on my appointment as
Missionary to that quarter of the Diocese, that the
notions of my flock in the neighbourhood of the Free
Meeting-house were crude and lax to a deplorable
degree. Many of them, it is true, exhibited traces
of attachment to their almost forgotten mother,
but comparatively few were able to render a satisfactory
reason why they were not Tunkers, Independents, or
New Connexion Old Light Anti-Burghers.

His Lordship the Bishop having intimated his in-
tention of holding a Confirmation at Gravelle, I set
about to prepare my people for the due reception of
that most solemn rite. To do this the more effectually,
I visited, as far as in me lay, each individual
family, conversing familiarly with them on the subject,
and striving to convince them of its importance and
most reasonable nature.

Among others I visited Cornelius Stinson, who had
been one of the earliest settlers in the Township.—
He was a serious-minded, well-disposed person, who
in Ireland had uniformly been esteemed a steady
Churchman, and who had cordially welcomed me to
my new field of labour. Cornelius, however, had un-
fortunately become tainted with the virus of religious
liberalism which a Free preaching-house was so well
calculated to engender; and many were the occasions
on which he betrayed an indifference to matters of
substantial importance, from which he would have
shrunk with dismay in his native County of Fermanagh,
had it then been predicted to him. "Is thy servant
a dog, that he should do this thing?" would assuredly
have been his indignant and incredulous exclamation.
When I urged upon Stinson the necessity which
existed for his adult children being confirmed, he
manifested such an unconcern, that I felt it my duty
to bring the matter fully and seriously before him.

Accordingly, one fine summer evening, when the horses
had been released from the plough, I requested him
to walk forth with me to his orchard, which overhung
the Gravelle Creek; there, under the grateful shade
of a beautiful wide-spreading oak, the following con-
fession passed between us:

M.—You know, my friend, that our good Bishop
will be here in less than six weeks, and I am exceed-
ingly desirous that all your children who have reached
the proper age should embrace the opportunity afforded
them of receiving the Apostolic rite of Confirmation.

S.—Well, your Reverence, I am sure I have no
particular objection. If they are willing, I shall be
glad to see them do so, though, indeed, this is a very
busy time of the year for them to attend service on a
week-day.

M.—Excuse me, Cornelius; but you speak as if
this were a matter of no great moment.

S.—Honestly, your Reverence, I cannot see that it
is of much consequence. Many good people don't
believe in it; none of the Methodist sects practice it;
and Mr. Drumlog, the Catherston preacher, says that
Confirmation is a rag and remnant of Popery.

M.—You both pay and astonish me by using such
language. There is nothing which the Church teaches
more decidedly and clearly than the duty of our re-
ceiving the laying on of hands. And you will bear
with me when I add, that your careless lukewarmness
in the matter gives me but an indifferent opinion of
your fair dealing; and—

S.—Stop, stop, sir! I cannot allow you to talk
in this way, saving your presence. The Stinsons have
always had a good name for honesty, and I would
rather get the bit and the sup from door to door than
do anything which might bring a stain upon our char-
acter!

M.—Let me ask you a question: Have not your
children been all baptized in the Church?

S.—To be sure they have, and no small trouble it
gave me to procure their being so. If I went more
than thirty miles in the fall, through tremendous roads,
in order to get Patrick christened.

M.—You diligence and zeal were much to be
commended. By the way, this is a fine farm of yours;
if it be a fair question, how much did it cost you?

S.—Why, I paid one hundred pounds currency
down, and got six years to settle the balance. The last
instalment will fall due in three months, which
forces all of us to be doubly diligent at present.

M.—It must be a great difficulty, in these terribly
hard times, to make up the money. Could you not
manage to get quit of the obligation to do so? You
know Attorney Flaw, who stood for our Riding at last
election? He is a smart lawyer, and perchance could
find a loop-hole in the bond which would free you from
the last payment. Would it not be as well to
give him a fee and see what could be done?

S.—Your Reverence must be jesting with me en-
tirely! What! cheat Widow Paton out of the sum
due to her, and upon which she mainly depends for
the support of her fatherless heirs! You cannot be
serious in supposing that I am capable of such mean
and heartless rascality!

M.—You speak like an honest man; I expected
no other answer from you. Would that in Canada
such principles were more universal! But to return
to Baptism: Did the minister go through the whole
service when he received Patrick into the congregation
of Christ's Church?

S.—Of course he did; and all my children, as well
as Patrick, were baptized according to the exact words
of the Prayer Book.

M.—Then of course there were certain conditions
exact in reference to the unconscious little ones?

S.—To be sure there were, as your Reverence
cannot but know. The godfathers and godmothers
promised certain things.

M.—And are these sponsors living in the neigh-
bourhood?

S.—No. Some are dead, and some are removed
far from this; that, however, does not matter, for I
consider that I am bound to perform all that they
agreed to do. This I have been always taught, and
it stands to reason that it should be so.

M.—Your views are most correct. Now, did you
ever notice what is said at the end of the service:—
"Ye are to take care that this child be brought to the
Bishop to be confirmed by him, so soon as he can say
the Creed, the Lord's Prayer, and the Ten Command-
ments in the vulgar (or common) tongue, and be further
instructed in the Church Catechism set forth for that
purpose." Of course you must have heard this?

S.—Yes, often and often. I can say it all by heart.

M.—Now, Stinson, my dear friend, if you refuse
to comply with this requirement, which you admit
is obligatory upon you, are you not as guilty of a breach
of good faith as you would be in swindling poor widow
Paton out of her money, by availing yourself of some
misable legal rick?

S.—In truth, your Reverence, I never viewed the
matter in that light before.

M.—You see the obligation is plain as noon-day.
S.—But, after all, is the obligation a binding one?

M.—Why, as the old proverb says, "A promise is a
promise all the world over."

S.—But neither Deacon Anxious-seat nor Mr.
Drumlog think that Confirmation is a necessary thing.
They say that it is not mentioned in God's Word, and
consequently, is not binding upon those who live under
the free Gospel dispensation.

M.—And pray, Cornelius, what have you to do
with the notions or opinions of every free-trading
preacher, whose credentials for the ministerial func-
tions are, for the most part, confined to a black coat,
a pair of saddle-bags, and a white neck-tie? Now, if
I shall suppose, for the sake of argument, that the
Holy Scriptures are silent on the subject of Confirmation,
I cannot see how your case could be bettered
one whit.

S.—How so?

M.—Does not St. Paul tell us that Christians are
to submit themselves to every ordinance of man for the
Lord's sake?

M.—The Elder, I fear, reads the bible through the
spectacles of his sect, a fault common to dissenters of
all denominations. Had he turned to the 8th chapter
of the Acts of the Apostles, and perused what is there
written, with the uncontroverted simplicity of a little
child, he never would have made such an erroneous
statement to you.

S.—What does your Reverence allude to?

M.—I will tell you: Philip, who was a Deacon,
having preached the gospel at Samaria, many believed
his words and were baptized, both men and women.

The Apostles having heard these glad tidings, "they
sent to them Peter and John, who, when they were
come down, prayed that they might receive the Holy
Ghost, (for as yet he was fallen on none of them, only
they were baptized in the name of the Lord Jesus);
and then laid their hands on them, and received the
Holy Ghost."

S.—This, I must confess, is a strong case in point,
but I remember that Mr. Drumlog, speaking of the
text you have quoted, said that the Apostles prayed
for the miraculous and extraordinary gifts of the Holy
Ghost, of conveying which the laying on their hands
was the outward mode. Now, since miracles have
ceased, has not confirmation ceased likewise?

M.—We know that the gracious influences of God's
blessed Spirit are always to remain in His Church:
it is no where said that they were to be limited to the
dawn of the Christian dispensation, and therefore the
proceeding of the Apostles, in the case above men-
tioned, must be regarded as a pattern for their suc-
cessors to follow. In St. Paul's days the prayer of
faith healed the sick; would you, therefore, argue
that prayer is now to be left unpracticed because
similar results do not follow from its exercise?

S.—Of course it would be wicked and absurd to
say any such thing.

M.—Take another case, also, from the Acts of the
Apostles: we read in the 19th chapter, that St. Paul
laid his hands on certain disciples immediately after
they had been baptized. And here I may notice that
the practice of the Anglican Church is in exact con-
formity to this example. In the Order of Baptism for
those of riper years, she says, "It is expedient that
every one so baptized should be confirmed by the Bishop
as soon after as conveniently may be, that he may be
admitted to the Holy Communion."

S.—Your Reverence, I am sure, will forgive me for
being so particular, but is there any text which speaks
of Confirmation as something which was always to be
continued in the Church?

M.—Yes, there is a very striking one in the 6th
chapter of St. Paul's Epistle to the Hebrews, which
thus runs: "Therefore, leaving the principles of the
doctrine of Christ, let us go on unto perfection; not
laying again the foundation of repentance from dead
works, and of faith toward God, of the doctrine of
baptisms, and of laying on of hands, and of resurrec-
tion of the dead, and of eternal judgment." You
perceive here that both baptisms and the laying on of
hands (or Confirmation) are here styled *doctrines*:
they are regarded as part of the foundation on which
the perfection of the Christian life must be built.

S.—How comes it, then, that the Presbyterians,
and many other dissenters, reject Confirmation, while
they retain Baptism?

M.—That is a question more easily asked than
answered. In return I might inquire why Unitarians
deny the divinity of our Lord, or why Quakers have
discarded both the Sacraments of the New Testament.
But perhaps it may surprise you to learn that John
Calvin, the great founder of Presbyterianism, as he
may be called, spoke in the most decided terms as to
the duty of the Church to retain Confirmation.

S.—You surprise me! Mr. Drumlog never told
me anything of this.

M.—Such is the case, however, and as I happen to
have with me a tract containing the passage, I shall
read it to you: "He (the writer of the Epistle to the
Hebrews) connects the IMPOSITION OF HANDS with
baptism, because, as there were two classes of Catech-
umens, so was the ceremony also two-fold. For
those who were from without (he means strangers and
foreigners to the Christian community,) did not come
to baptism without first declaring their profession of
faith. In them, therefore, catechetical instruction
was to precede baptism; but the children of the faith-
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longed, by right of promise, to the body of the Church,
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