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## Contributors and Correspondents.

### HOURS WITH A CHURCH COURT.

#### IV. NEARING NOON-TIDE.

A new day brings with it fresh interest and some new associations. So the book of life goes on unrolling ever. Nor comes there a day unworthy of a record. Especially is it so at such a time as that which has furnished the material of these more vivid fragments of our memories and impressions by the way. But of the morning hours of this new day we take little note. They have their meaning, and wider issues likely than ever we shall know; but these are not so tangible as many for the moment and so they do not strike us so forcibly in passing. Those morning hours have indeed been a busy time with some, but not such as usually awakens any large degree of interest in the majority of men, as they have been chiefly occupied with sundry memorials, requests, and the like—mostly little matters of detail. Such as love a ramble to see the sights, in preference to such matter-of-fact things as these, as our stranger gentleman of yesterday, would, it may be easily supposed, have some little trial of their patience, if they chanced to be present for the time. Committees, committees are greatly in demand now. It is a busy time for committees. Most convenient things are those committees, lightning toil and care for the many, when there is a dealing with details. Some, however, who have to do with them, deserve our sympathies; inasmuch as with them it is all toil, incessant toil, plodding on, over plodding on, the pen ever going, the brain ever on the rack, stealing away from them the very charm and life of such a gathering as this—robbing them of its bracing and refreshing influence for their other work—drying up their very life blood in a way in dealing with a mass of facts and figures and reports.

Here a recollection *apropos* flashed upon us for a moment, and we wait to look at it. The scene is in the church. A committee is being named. A gentleman gets up in Court, and suggests that there are many in the house willing and able to share in the labours so heavily laid upon a few. Another followed him in the same strain. There is no need, he thinks, to have a few doing all this kind of work. Then he is succeeded by a third, telling the same tale. Now, there is something very suggestive in that picture. Far more pleasing is it, certainly than what is elsewhere as often found as net—a few willing to act, and a great many willing to let them do it. In all matters that affect religion, as in nothing else, no one can take another's place, or do another's work. For all able and willing ones there is abundant room to move, and there is something wanting, if they are wanting, in any case; but each has his speciality, and there he specially should devote his energies and give his sympathies their fullest play. There are committee men, and these should never fail to serve on committees. There are able professors who are no orators, and talented preachers who would be lost to the world in a professor's chair. One man might impart some noble impulse to a thousand hearts, by written or spoken speech, during the time occupied by another in dealing with the details of a record, or the arranging of the matter of a report.

Everything, however, in its place. Every wall must have its mortar, no less than its stone or brick. A fountain needs its streams, as the channels of communication with the soil around. We cannot have the tree without the bark. So a Church Court, to be efficient, must deal with details, and have its harder and more routine work attended to. Every memorial, however commonplace, must be considered. Every orderly request, however limited its reference, must be regarded as a sacred thing. Committee work has a value of its own, and cannot be dispensed with, although it may often need no little patient application of head and hand.

The afternoon is hastening on, leaving a memorial still in hand, and a gem it is truly in its way. We refer now to a proposal to have an Ecumenical Council, in which all Presbyterian Churches throughout the world shall have their representatives. The very novelty of the thing, beside its extensive bearings, invests it with a more than common interest, and the reception accorded to it is worthy of its character. Profound deference seems to be the prevailing feeling with which it is received; as if regarded as a harbinger of coming good, or the dawning of a better day. A few explanations are asked and given. A few commendatory words are spoken. Then a unanimous God-speed is given to the movement. We would say that, to all appearance, a note of exultation has here touched the many minds, at the very thought of the prospect such a far-reaching conception

as that. There is a hoary father, who has long desired to see the partition walls broken down, which in council have separated him from men, whose piety he has learned to revere, and whose wisdom he has learned to prize; and now he sees in this a gleam of hope rising on the horizon, that the thing desired is coming soon. Here is a native youth, to whom the rancour of sectarianism, especially among churches in almost everything the same, has been a great stumbling block; and now it is as if a burden were taken from his shoulder, to see such a feeling of brotherliness at work. Here again is a vigorous hater of bigotry in every form, and he is gladdened to think that it is dying so effectually in the Church with which he has chosen to cast his lot. This, we believe, is no mere fancy picture, but a thing of real life. A grand idea, certainly, is this Ecumenical Council. Once realized, there will be the attainment of something like catholicity, in at least one great family of Christianity in the world. And realized it seems not unlikely to be at no distant day. A few churches have already spoken in its favour, both in the old world and the new, and the rest, there is no reason to doubt, will follow suit. Meanwhile we hail it as a happy omen. As we think of it, a touching vision rises up before us of a deeply interesting group sitting together, and enjoying a hallowed fellowship together, though differing widely in their characteristics, as members of the great family of man. Celt and Saxon, German and Scandinavian, the Negro from African wilds, and the Indian from the banks of the Ganges, the Persian and the Syrian,—the Mother-in the old lands and her daughters in the Colonies—the Missionary and his children in the Lord—all exchanging courtesies, and consulting together for the common good, with common aims, and with hearts wonderfully at one. Each of these at the same time bringing something of his own to the common fund of the humanities, serving to make up a glorious whole. The Celt contributing his characteristic impulsiveness, his reverence for established custom, and his disposition to look at the brighter side of things. The Saxon casting in his intense practicalness, his thorough hatred of shams, with his large development of the critical faculty. The German, with his northern neighbour bawling, his large share of the ideal, his leaning to the transcendental, and his tendency to move slowly but steadily. Orientals bringing their quickness of thought, their warmth of imagination, and their uncommon power of deep emotion. Missionaries imparting an inspiring element of devotedness and zeal. The foster children of missionaries contributing their Christian simplicity and the ardour of their first love. Old lands lending their ripened experience. New lands adding their freshness and vigor of youth. All in the meantime owning a common symbol, and making a confession identical in essence, while under every variety of manner. The picture makes us feel more than ever that to belong to a Church which is striving to some effect towards ideals such as this is to be a citizen of no mean city.

#### MEMORIAL.

##### The November Assembly Meeting.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

DEAR SIR,—I have lately noticed several articles in your interesting paper respecting the adjourned meeting of the Canada Presbyterian Assembly. As a lay elder I will briefly give you my views. I always considered the Commissioners to the Assembly were appointed for one year, and although it is not customary to have more than one meeting the same year can see no reason why there should not be more if found necessary or even expedient. In a very good Summary of the Laws of the Church of Scotland, published in Aberdeen, in 1853, I find in the First Book of Discipline, Title 15; Sec. 5, that Assemblies have power to meet yearly or oftener *pro re nata*, and in section 26 they may translate or adjourn but must finish before the year is out. Then besides I can see no law against an adjourned or second session, and surely in our present circumstances it is highly advisable to finish all details regarding our anticipated union so that it may finally be consummated in June next. If I am not mistaken the Free Church of Scotland held two meetings of Assembly the first year of its existence. I like fine high sounding Indian names like Stadacona, and I would like to see a grant number of Indians in our Church, so I will sign myself.

ONONDAGA.

26th of August, 1874.

There is said to be a great dearth of evangelical ministers in Holland. Over 150 churches are without pastors, and for all these vacancies there are but 25 candidates. As soon as an evangelical candidate has passed his examination, even the very day of it, he receives perhaps ten calls to the most important places.

## MUSKOKA DISTRICT.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

DEAR SIR,—As many of your readers take an interest in the Mission fields, I send you an account of what we have commenced to do here. Feeling that little could be accomplished unless a beginning was made, some of us determined to bring matters to a point, and hence receiving the promise of assistance from the Rev. Mr. Gray of Orillia, a social was announced to come off on Tuesday evening the 25th, the arrangements were very hurried, and yet everything went off as well as if a longer period had been spent in the preparation. For some time we have had service on the boat (the Nipissing), every other Sabbath evening and felt there was a growing interest in our cause, hence the determination to make an effort at establishing a congregation and building a church here. At present there is no room in which we can meet. The Wesleyan Methodists have a Church a mile and a half from here, which they have kindly allowed us to occupy for our afternoon service, and so we would like to return the compliment by having a building put up here, for the accommodation of all parties, but yet decided to the Presbyterian Church. We have the prospect of getting a beautiful site, overlooking the lake, and expect to secure it immediately. Of course we have the usual cry of poverty and in our case a real fact, as the principle efforts of the settlers are expended in furnishing themselves with the necessities of existence. This is a great resort for summer tourists, and well repays a visit for health's sake, hence more especially should we have a church here that the Sabbath may not be neglected by those seeking recreation, as is too often the case. We hope the church will soon find itself able to send an ordained missionary here as it is a very important centre. How would it do for one of our wealthy congregations to take up such a field as this, and send an ordained missionary, supporting him as regularly in connection with their congregation and demanding therefore a regular report of proceedings and prospects say once a quarter. It might localize the interest of the members.

Our social was a decided success. Mr. A. P. Cookburn M.P., who has done more than any other man in opening up this Muskoka country, very kindly consented to occupy the chair, and gave us great encouragement in our undertaking. In fact he takes great interest in everything for the good of the district. Our worthy reeve Mr. Grier also gave practical evidence of his interest in our undertaking and the prosperity of the village. The burden of work however rested upon Mr. and Mrs. Best to whom much praise is due in making the necessary preparations. The evening's entertainment, after a beautifully provided tea had been disposed of, consisted in choice music by the Misses Birtis of Buffalo, Misses Burnett of Toronto, Miss Halo of Oakville, Miss Chestnut of Hamilton and Mr. Ditchburn. Besides the able and eloquent address of Mr. Gray, speeches were given by Mr. O'Burin of Port Carling, Rev. Mr. Hartley, Mr. Craswell and Hamilton. The Rev. N. Battrick was also present but was obliged to leave early in the evening. A recitation was also well rendered by Mr. Richardson. After the usual voter of thanks, the gathering separated, well pleased with the entertainment. The proceeds form the germ we hope of the amount necessary to build a church here. I hope to send you some account of the field and work here before long. Yours truly,

A. M. H.

Rosseau, August 28th, 1874.

The Interior says:—Within the past five years a pastor who has just taken a charge in New York, has been a Methodist, Lutheran, Presbyterian, and Congregationalist.

The first conference of the Methodists in Rome has recently been held. Besides the English missionaries who direct the work, there were present, twenty teachers representing as many centres of religious labor. There were reported 1,007 communicants, 111 probationers, 472 Sunday-school scholars, and 582 day pupils.

The conversion of the Jews to Christianity has always been a subject of considerable interest to the Christian world. Opinions have greatly varied. Some have no faith in the conversion of this peculiar people, while others believe the time will come when they will all be brought under the influence of the gospel. Just at this time greater interest than usual is manifested in some sections to the work among the descendants of Abraham. More than £800,000 were contributed in Great Britain alone the past year for this object. In Jerusalem there are sixty Jewesses meeting daily to hear the gospel; ministers are now welcome in every house in Jerusalem. Within the last six years, since the establishment of the society, 25,000 people have been converted to the Christian religion.—*Christian Era.*

## The Constitutional Question and Stadacona.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—This question can be settled in a very few sentences by way of quotation from the constitution and rules by which the General Assembly is governed.

Some of your readers may have been misled by one of your correspondents who gave what professed to be the Barrier Act, but which was not a correct quotation of its language; it seemed to be the Barrier Act of some Presbyterian Church, but it is certainly not our Act. By turning to the 27th page of the Rules and Form of Procedure of the Canada Presbyterian Church, we find that answers of remits sent down by the Supreme Court are to be sent to the Assembly Clerk before next meeting. Had the words been, "before the next Assembly," then Stadacona and others who take his view would have had at least the letter of the law to stand on in defence of their position. But if it is clear beyond dispute that the meeting to be held in Toronto in November is the next meeting of this Assembly after the sending down of the Remit on Union, then by the Barrier Act itself, Presbyteries are directed to send their answers to that meeting and not to next Assembly.

Now let us turn to the 12th page of the Form of Procedure and the fifth section, and there we read that "the General Assembly meets at least once every year." It is here invested with power to meet oftener than once in the year, and the Barrier Act directs answers to Remits to be sent to next meeting.

Have we not here a *desiderata* coincidence between the wording of the constitution and of the Barrier Act? It may be objected that the reasoning proves too much, and that in every year when more than one meeting of Assembly is held, all answers to remits would have to be sent to the second meeting. To this it may be replied that the Assembly in sending down remits always directs when the answers of Presbyteries are to be given in; the usual phrase being, "and report to next Assembly." Hence, while it would be competent for the Assembly to call for answers within the year, if need be, it ordinarily orders otherwise, but is free to take either course.

If we now turn to page 16 and read section 19, we find that "the Assembly being the Supreme Court of the Church &c., is entitled, when circumstances seem to require it, not only to alter from time to time any of its forms of procedure, but also in a case of urgent necessity to dispense with the observance of them." These forms are merely intended to point out the most advisable and orderly course to be followed in ordinary circumstances, and are not designed to abridge or limit the undoubted and inalienable right of the Church rulers to exert the authority conferred on them by the Great Head of the Church for the maintenance of her purity and the edification of her members.

Suppose that the letter of the Barrier Act were against the procedure complained of, yet here is a discretionary power, with which, by the constitution under which it exists, the Assembly is invested and by which in any emergency that may arise the Assembly is raised above the mere letter of the Act, and of any of its ordinary rules of procedure, and is left free to follow the course which in its wisdom it may deem to be for the interests of the cause of Christ. On these grounds I consider the course of the Assembly both constitutional and expedient.

Yours very truly,

W. T. McMULLEN.

Woodstock, Aug., 31st, 1874.

#### Knox Church, Oro.

About ten years ago, when the Rev. James Ferguson settled in Oro, the congregation of Knox Church owned neither church, glebe, nor manse. At the period of his demission of the charge of the congregation in April last, the estimated value of church property was: Church, sheds and ground, \$500; glebe of 100 acres, well timbered, with 18 acres cleared, \$1,900; manse, \$1,500; well, pump, &c., \$200—making in all \$4,000. On this there is a debt of \$100. For this result thanks are due, in some measure, to friends in Toronto, Barrie, Orillia, Beaverton and Woodville. The arrangement for the last few years requiring almost all the services of divine worship to be conducted in Gaelic, rendered it necessary for Mr. Ferguson, on account of his family (they not understanding that language), to resign the charge.

The Committee appointed to prepare a resolution, on the occasion of Mr. Ferguson's demission of his charge, presented the following resolution, which was received and unanimously adopted:

"The Presbytery, in accepting the resignation of the pastoral charge of Knox Church, Oro, by the Rev. James Ferguson, desire to express their high esteem for Mr. Ferguson as a Christian, and as an earnest and devoted minister of the Gospel; and we desire to bear testimony to his unwearied diligence in the Lord's work in the midst of many difficulties, to his constant attendance on Church Courts, to his readiness to every good work, and to the brotherly kindness which characterized his whole deportment in his intercourse with his brethren. It is with sincere regret that we part with our brother with whom we had so much pleasant fellowship. And our earnest prayer is that he may speedily find another sphere of labour, and be greatly instrumental in the edification of God's people, and in gathering many to the fold of Christ."—Extracted from Minutes of Presbytery, by Robert Moodie, Clerk Presbytery of Simcoe.

## Braeside Academy.

We had the pleasure yesterday of paying a visit to Braeside, where Professor McGregor, A.A., of the Metcal Normal School, intends to establish an academy for young gentlemen. The work of preparation is now well advanced, and if it progresses as favorably as, from appearances, we are led to expect, everything will soon be in readiness for the opening of the school. The additional three story building which Mr. McGregor has erected in the rear of, and adjoining to, his own residence, is in every respect adapted to the purpose for which it is intended. It is solid in structure, ample and commodious, and its space is divided in the best possible way to meet the necessities of the scholars. Provision has been made for the accommodation of from 85 to 100 boarding pupils. Arrangements are made for the supply of every household convenience usually found in city dwelling houses, including bath-room, &c. The grounds are large, and there is a fine garden, containing a pond which may be used for bathing, so that there will be no lack of room and opportunity for recreation. On the premises is a fine spring well, from which water is conveyed to the house by means of pipes. To make escape easy in case of fire, ladders reach along the roof of the original building to the front windows of the school-house; and to guard against accident, the upper windows are provided with bars of iron. The surrounding scenery is varied and picturesque, and its constant presentation to the eye cannot but be conducive to the health and purity of the mind. The locality, it is needless to say, is most healthful. In fact, it would be difficult to find anywhere a spot which combines so many advantages, and so suitable, in every respect, for the site of such an institution as Mr. McGregor proposes to establish. So much for the place, its arrangements and its surroundings. As to the character of the teaching which may there be procured—that, of course, is to be earned. But from what we know, and from what many of our readers know of Professor McGregor's qualifications as a teacher, of which in his calling he has achieved speaks so highly, we have not the slightest doubt that it will be of a high standard. It is his aim to prepare boys for commercial life, or to fit them for entering college—according to the desire of their parents; and he thinks, not without reason, that he can do more justice to his pupils, in a school, the nature of which allows him to dispense a good share of attention to individuals and their peculiar needs, than he could do in an establishment where the too great number of the scholars limited such attention. It is also his desire, as far as lies in his power, to care for the comfort, health and physical and moral as well as intellectual development of those entrusted to him—his chosen motto being, "a sound mind in a healthy body." In his work Mr. McGregor will be assisted by a competent staff of teachers.

There is a Presbyterian Church at Cote des Neiges, at which services are held every Sunday—of the Presbyterian Church in the forenoon, of the Church of England in the afternoon. The Principal will also hold a Bible Class in his own house on Sunday evenings. Convinced, as we are, of the necessity of such a school for Protestant boys in the neighborhood of Montreal, and assured of the amount of good that may be effected by it, we wish Professor McGregor every success in his undertaking.—*Montreal Gazette, Aug. 26th.*

For the following particulars relative to a severe accident which recently befell the Rev. C. Chiniquy; we are indebted to Rev. C. Lafontaine, of St. Anne, Kankakee; this letter is dated 25th of August:

Before this letter reaches you, you will probably have heard something of the narrow escape of Father Chiniquy the 19th of this month. This escape from death has really been a miraculous one. His horses took fright and launched his buggy on a board fence with such a violence that it seems impossible for a human life to escape. There was only one mind among those who saw that sad occurrence, viz., that it was the last hour of the apostle of temperance in Canada. But God has ordered differently. As quick as thought, Mr. Chiniquy raised himself up from among the debris of the carriage, and though covered with blood, he could walk with the help of some friends to the next apothecary where Doctors Cornell and Condo dressed his wounds. As there are no broken bones or internal injuries, we hope, by the great mercy of God, that Mr. Chiniquy will be able to resume his evangelical work here, in Canada, and even in Great Britain, where he is invited to go again. Mr. Chiniquy requests me to ask you and your Christian readers to pray to the throne of Mercy for his speedy recovery."

Mr. John McRae of Berwick, says the Cornwall Gazette, has just returned from a prospecting tour in Manitoba. He is said to be highly pleased with the climate, soil and future prospects of that Province and it is understood he has made an extensive purchase of real estate within three miles of Winnipeg with the intention of moving there with his family in the spring.

It was said that one of the cries in the late election in England, which resulted so disastrously for Mr. Gladstone, was, "Our National Church and our National Beverage." And now comes the London Telegraph, which says that the puzzle of Mr. Disraeli's administration is to know what to do with "the sale of drink," and what to do with "Ritualism." It believes that a Ministry might as well try to fight against the law of gravitation as against the profoundest theological and alcoholic instincts of the nation."