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## Contributors and Correspondents.

### DIARY IN THE EAST.

(Continued.)

BETHLEHEM, &c.

It was natural that while joining in the celebration of Christmas, my thoughts should turn to Bethlehem, where the great event took place which we were joyfully remembering.

I had no desire to go, as some did, to take part in the superstitious ceremonials that defile the place where the Lord was born. But I had a great desire to look on Bethlehem, and to do it alone, so that no social intercourse might come between me and the solemn feeling of beholding the place where they laid him in a manger, because there was no room for him in the Inn. Him whom all the hosts of heaven bowed down to worship. So one bright morning in Christmas week, I got the loan of Mrs. G's white donkey, and sallied forth at the Jaffa Gate, set off along the Bethlehem road, which, though not a road in our sense of the word, is such a marked track that there was no fear of my losing my way. Proceeding southward down a steep incline between the city walls and the Valley of Gihon, I crossed the deepest part of the valley on an embankment which must have formed the upper end of the lower Pool of Gihon. The embankment at the lower end also forms a road across the glen, and between these in old days no doubt a large body of water must have filled the wide rocky empty space which now does not hold water, even when the rains have filled the upper pool of the same name. Skirting the west side of the old pool, I passed a long row of cottages, built by Sir Moses Montefiore, for poor Jews. Then, by a steep bit of rocky road, where the rocks formed steps up which my donkey scrambled nimbly, I reached the ridge of the rising ground which is connected with the Hill of Evil Counsel, and could look down to my left through the Valley of Himnon, and see how steeply the Hill of Zion rose up from it. There was now a sloping plateau rising gently before me, across which a wide track led, on which I passed many men and women on foot or on donkeys, or camels, bringing in vegetables, fire-wood, fowls, etc., for the Jerusalem market. In dry weather the Plain of Rephaim affords pleasant ground for a good canter, but after rain the unmade road or track is almost a swamp, over which the poor weary animals meander from side to side trying in vain to find firm land. Near the highest point of this plateau before it breaks down into the valley that divides it from Bethlehem, a large convent is built on the spot where, according to tradition, the prophet Elijah rested when flying from Jezebel, and had his wants supplied by angels. At the side of the road is a rock in which is a slight depression which is pointed out by the monks, and said to have been formed by the body of the prophet as he lay there and rested. Before reaching the convent I passed an old well, from which tradition says the wise drew water on their way from Bethlehem to Jerusalem, and while drawing it saw reflected in the water the star which had guided them to Jerusalem, but which they had since then lost sight of.

Several poor pilgrims were evidently looking with great interest on these so-called sacred spots. They were proceeding to Bethlehem guided by a monk, no doubt designing to take part in the great ceremonial of Christmas day in the Church of the Nativity. Of course those holy places were nothing to me, for there is no evidence of the truth of the tradition connected with them, but every bit of the road was most interesting when seen in the light of Scripture history.

Riding a very short distance past the convent, I paused on the brow of the hill, and looked across an open valley to another hill, on the sides and brow of which Bethlehem lay spread out before me.

Even apart from the sacred interest of the place the scene was very attractive. The terraced sides of the hill beneath and around Bethlehem are better cultivated than most parts of Palestine, and dotted with olive trees. The little town lay right in front of me as I stood looking south, its flat roofs rising tier above tier, and the large Church of the Nativity presenting a stately appearance at this distance. To my right away westward, a steep hillside rose up so well clothed with olive trees as almost to be called well-wooded, while the small village of Beit Jala with its large church looked very picturesque about half way up. Turning eastward my eye ranged over the valley below me, then over the wild hills of the wilderness of Judea, where David must have fed his father's sheeps, and have had his encounter with the lion and the bear which he overcame by the strength of the Lord his God.

Here and there, through gaps in these hills I had on my way obtained peeps of the Dead Sea, lying glittering in the sun at the foot of the Mount of Olives. These mountains were the only thing that re-

minded me of its being mid-winter, for here and there on their summit lay a slight coating of pure snow, looking intensely white in the brilliant sunshine. As I sat there surveying the wide prospect, of which Bethlehem formed the central point, I could not but think of the joy which the same sight must have given to the wise men, as the star which had guided them during their long and weary journey at length rested over the place where that young child lay, whose birth (though little noticed on earth) was heralded by the angel choir as the one means of bringing both glory to God, and peace to earth, with good will for men. I did not go on to Bethlehem, I deferred that for another day. It would not have been thought safe for me to go alone, in fact, as it was, when I returned to Jerusalem, I found my kind hostess rather anxious at my long absence. On retracing my steps, I found that Jerusalem was shut out by the ridge on which the convent of Mar Elias stands, but on more than one occasion afterwards, from a point higher on that ridge, I had a prospect of both Bethlehem and Jerusalem, thus beholding the two points between which lay the whole career of the God-man, who, though equal with God, yet took upon him the form of a servant, and while he could speak of himself as "the Son of man which is in heaven," yet for our sakes began life in a manger, and ended it on the tree of shame, "being made a curse for us."

What marvellous memories this road between Jerusalem and Bethlehem bears to the mind. By this way doubtless Abraham went up to that mount of which the Lord told him, when, on the third day, he lifted up his eyes and saw the place afar off "where he was to offer up the son of promise." By this way Jacob came on that sorrowful day when his dearly loved Rachel was taken from him, and laid in the grave which yet remains close to the road to Bethlehem. By this way Mary came with Joseph from their distant home among the Galilean hills to have their names registered in the city of their father David, the whole Roman Empire having been moved to have this registration made twelve years before the tax was collected, that thus the words of Old Testament prophecy might be fulfilled, and the "ruler in Israel" be born in little Bethlehem Ephrathah.

Though this look of Bethlehem from a distance was very interesting, it only made me long for a further acquaintance with the little town, and a German missionary who resides there was kind enough to receive me as his guest for a few days. I found his kind wife at first rather alarmed at the idea of entertaining a British lady, fearing that their simple style of living would not suit me. When I heard her description of an English family that had once encamped beside their house, with their fourteen males load of personal baggage, and had turned their whole house topsy-turvy, that one of the party might sleep under a roof instead of a tent, I could not wonder that she feared I might be a troublesome guest. A most kind hostess I found her, in spite of the busy life she led. The mission house is built almost like a little fortress, with a strong wall and gate of enclosure. It has been all needed, during the twenty six years Mr. Muller has spent in Bethlehem, he has more than once been attacked by robbers, and has been thankful that his walls and doors were strong enough to defy them. The population of Bethlehem and the neighborhood has been rather famous for its turbulence, and has suffered much in consequence. Matters are better now, but even yet it is not thought safe for a European to wander about alone. On the evening of my arrival in Bethlehem, I was made to feel almost like a prisoner by the kind solicitude of my hosts. I was going out for one of the solitary rambles that I found so attractive in Bible lands, but was hardly outside the gate when first a native servant girl, and then Mr. Muller himself, came rushing after me, entreating and insisting that I should take some one with me, and the only way in which I could get leave to go alone was by promising to keep in view of the house. Happily it stood so high that I could go a good way without losing sight of it. The family life was very interesting to me, for, besides Mr. Muller's own family, there were some dozen native boys (one a true Bedouin) and girls, who received a simple useful training; in their house, in the hope that by the grace of God their truly Christian instruction and example may result in these young people growing up to serve God, and influence their own people for good. They sat at the same table with me at meals, and after supper when the Arabic Bibles were brought out, I was glad to take my English one and follow the chapter which was being read verse about by the young people, only sorry that I could not understand the questions and comments by which Mr. Muller made its meaning plain to them. The life in the mission family came a little more near native life than my Jerusalem life was, and in that way helped to illustrate some parts of Scripture to me. For instance, a poor old beggar frequently sat by the wall either outside or inside the door of the room where we were at table, waiting to be fed from the crumbs that fell from this table, though it was far from being the table of a rich man. To an eastern there is not the least thought of its being an intrusion to go in, and sit down while a family is at table. I could easily understand how the woman of Luke vii. would come in at the ever open door, and mingling with any other unbidden guests who were sitting outside the circle at table, could come behind our Lord and perform her humble set of penitential devotion, which called forth the dignat of Simon, not on account of her intrusion unbidden, but because of her character making her very touch in his eyes pollution.

## Our Statistics.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—A great deal of attention is given just now to the Statistics of the Presbyterian Church, in connection with our recent happy Union; and it is very desirable that we should have one full and accurate statement of these for the various Churches. It is plain to any one who has given any attention to the subject, that the published statistics are very unsatisfactory. They err seriously by defect. A cursory glance reveals numerous omissions. In summing up no attempt is made to estimate the value of those blanks, so as to give an approximately full and correct statement. These blanks may often be filled up satisfactorily. The returns for the previous year might be taken, or, as in the late Canada Presbyterian Church, many blanks may be filled from the Home Mission Report. In every case a very near estimate can be made, in very many a perfectly correct and reliable one.

As an illustration of the method followed in giving such a fair statement, let us take the first Presbytery on the list of that Church, the Presbytery of Montreal. Now first, five congregations are total blanks, viz., Nazareth street, Montreal, Stanley street, Montreal, Alexandria, Lingwick, and Kenyon. The total number of families credited to this Presbytery is 2,185, members 4,592. These five congregations are omitted, and no estimate of their value given. Now the previous year, Kenyon reported 110 families, 185 members; Lingwick, ninety families, fifty-six members; Alexandria, twenty-three members, estimate twenty families. The other two are new. Estimate Nazareth street at sixty families, sixty members; Stanley street at eighty families, 120 members. This gives a total of 360 families, 894 members to be added to the returns for the Presbytery. But second: Three congregations give partial returns. Erskine Church, Montreal, Cote street Church, Montreal, and Knox Church, Montreal, return the number of members, but not that of families. Knox Church last year, gave 120 families. Erskine Church, and Cote street Church are persistently blank in this item. But taking a very low average for congregations of the same standing, we may safely credit them with 250 families each. A total of 620 families to be added. Thirdly, There are eleven Mission Stations on the Presbytery Roll. All are blank except one, Lancaster. All, however, are reported for this year in the Home Mission Statistics. The ten stations omitted return 285 families, 239 members, which also fall to be added to the general total. The sum of all these omissions, for which, let it be remembered, not even an approximate estimate is given, amounts to no less than 1,265 families, 638 members, giving as the proper return for the Presbytery a total of 3,450 families, 5,225 members, instead of, as given, 2,185 families, 4,592 members.

Now, Sir, the data on which the omissions are supplied are open to all. Evidently, they are for the most part minutely and entirely reliable. If we take the trouble to go over each Presbytery list, as in the case of Montreal, plainly we shall come very near a correct return. I have done this in the case of the late Canada Presbyterian Church, and the result is as follows:

	Families	Members
For the Presbytery of Montreal	3400	5225
Ottawa	2534	4010
Brockville	883	1534
Kingston	1473	1941
Colborne	2923	3203
Ontario	1800	2588
Toronto	3115	5077
Simcoe	1499	2365
Owen Sound	870	1272
Hamilton	2750	3497
Peterborough	1798	2741
Guolph	2931	5000
Barnham	283	1748
Bruce	1850	1992
London	2720	4120
Chatham	1531	2408
Stamford	1721	2523
Huron	2161	3914
Manitoba	350	452
	3346	6053

In the Returns for the Presbyterian Church of the Lower Provinces, which are very complete comparatively, we find thirteen blanks in congregations. In this case also, no attempt has been made to give the value of these even approximately. Professor McKnight, Convener of the Committee on Statistics, and Mr. Falconer, Clerk of the Synod, kindly examined these and furnished me with a probable estimate of each omission individually. There falls to be added to the grand total given, not less than 800 families, 1000 members. These, I think, ought to be larger. But taking these numbers as reliable we have for that Church a total of 15,124 families, 19,683 members.

With the Synod of the Presbyterian Church, in connection with the Church of Scotland, there is somewhat more difficulty. The last complete statistical returns were in 1872. Three years gives time for considerable change. At that date there were reported 11,603 families, 17,042 members. The following suggestive remarks are made in the body of the Report on Statistics: "Estimating five members to each family, our constituency appears to consist of 68,040 individuals. According to the last decennial census of the Dominion, we ought to be able to account for at least 70,000 in Ontario and Quebec, so that somewhere in these Provinces there are not less than 18,000 sheepless sheep that

want looking after at our hands." A similar fact is noted in connection with the Canada Presbyterian Church. No full statistical returns have been given since 1872. But, bearing in mind the fact noted above of this discrepancy, and that the Church has had three years to grow, an addition of at least 2500 families, and 3500 members, will require to be made to bring us near the probable numbers. The Statistics of 1872 refer with few exceptions to congregations, leaving Mission Stations unnoted. With this addition then, we reach a total of 14,109 families, 20,542 members.

The Synod of the Lower Provinces in connection with the Church of Scotland, gives us somewhat imperfect statistics. The members number 4622 apparently by the latest returns. The families not given may be estimated at 3000.

Combining these and adding the number of ministers and congregations belonging to the various Churches at the last returns, we may give the Presbyterian Statistics for the Dominion of Canada, or for the Presbyterian Church of British North America, as follows:

	Min- isters	Con- gregations	Fam- ilies	Mem- bers
C. P. Church	330	670	25346	60553
P. C. of Lower Provinces	124	138	15124	19683
P. C. Kirk of Scotland	141	179	11108	20542
P. C. Kirk Lower Provinces	31	41	3069	1022
	626	1028	64778	101500

Now, Sir, we claim that this is the nearest approximation to a full and fair statement of Presbyterian Statistics yet given. There is a moral certainty that it is still an understatement. But for all it contains we have sufficient data, reliable and satisfactory. Yours, M. McK. Almonte.

## Our Common Schools.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—Has the state the right to educate? I unhesitatingly say it has. For the very existence, not to speak of the usefulness of a state depends upon education. If the government is of God, and in consequence a state has a right to exist, it has also the right to provide for its existence. Again can the state educate? I affirm not only that it can, but that it ought—that it is its duty to educate, and that the neglect of this duty imperils its very existence. But what is state education? It is not simply the raising and expending of money in providing school-houses and teachers; it must provide something to be taught, as well as to see to it that that something is taught, for if the very existence of the state depends on education, then there is the same right and the same need to compel children to be educated, as there is to compel the raising and expending money to provide the means of education. If the state has the right to enact laws and compel us under penalty to understand and obey them, I hold it has the same right to compel children to take advantage of the educational privileges it provides. But further, the existence and efficiency of a state is as much, if not more, dependent, on the character as on the intelligence both of the ruling and the ruled. If, then, as already stated, a state has the right to exist, it has the same right to provide for its existence; and if its excellency and efficiency depend on its character not less than its intelligence, has it not the right to establish and enforce that which is best productive of both? But further still, as a Protestant state the right to educate? None surely, will deny this? Without however defining either the privileges or peculiarities of a Protestant state, I would simply say that we are a Protestant state, and that our sovereign wears a Protestant crown. If, however, some may say that Protestantism in a state means nothing, then our forefathers were worse than fools in shedding their blood to secure it, and if there are others who can contemptuously say, be it what it may, it costs us nothing, such either show a gross ignorance of what the revolution settlement secured, or a great want of common honesty in failing gratefully to acknowledge the many benefits it has conferred. Granted, however, that a Protestant state has the right to exist, has it no right to teach ought of that which constitutes it a Protestant State? Nay, more, has it not the right, as a Protestant state, to inculcate that which will preserve and perpetuate itself in its highest excellency and efficiency? There the Roman Catholics say no. Is this just, is this generous? If further, a Protestant state has the right and exercises it, to give to Roman Catholics separate, or in other words, sectarian schools, has it not the right to confer the same privilege on itself? There again the Roman Catholic emphatically say no. They not only hold control over their own schools, but forcefully they must also hold control over ours, and to such an extent that nothing must be taught in them that has not passed through a Roman Catholic filter. Can anything be more usurping and aggravating than this? Can any Protestant defend such a course? If so, he is truckling to a tyranny that reigned rampant on the revolution, and trampling on a precious birthright which our forefathers shed their blood. I hold them, defiant and undaunted, not only that a Protestant state has the right to exist, but also that it has the right in spite of all to the contrary, to provide and inculcate that which constitutes and conserves its Protestant peculiarity, and especially that which will best promote and perpetuate the highest intelligence and the purest morality, seeing that character, not less than intelligence, is essentially necessary to the dignity and stability, the excellency and the efficiency of any Protestant state. Gleaner.

## Statistics.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—It may not be of much importance to notice small errors in statistics which purport to be "approximate," but if you think it worth while you might say that the list of ministers of the Canada Presbyterian Church, as read by me at the Union meeting in Montreal, on the 10th ult., contained 350 names, not 338, as stated in the letter of "W." in your last issue. Wm. Fraser.

Bond Head, July 1, 1875.

## Explanation.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—The letter headed "Irregularities," and which was written by me, and published in your last issue of the BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN, I am hardly responsible for, as I wrote you not to publish it. It was written hurriedly, and it was also written in ignorance of the fact that Mr. Skelton's position was unknown to the Presbytery, and that I myself never for a moment imagined that I was a member of it.

This alters the case very much. It may be too that I misapprehended Mr. Skelton's motives in bringing the matter up before the Presbytery. I deeply regret the publication of the letter. It adds another testimony to the necessity of watchfulness as well as to pray not to be led into temptation, and that in many things we offend and come short of our duty.—W. E. McKAY. Orangeville, 18th July, 1875.

## The Irish Presbyterian Assembly and Sacramental Wine.

One of the keenest discussions in the late meeting of the Irish Presbyterian Assembly was in reference to the "unfermented" wine question.

The Rev. Professor Watts, D.D., in response to an overture brought before the Assembly to the following effect:—

"That, whereas differences of opinion exist among the members of our congregations in regard to the kind of wine appointed by our Lord to be used in the celebration of His supper; and whereas these differences of opinion have greatly disturbed the peace of our churches, and led, in some instances, to what many regard as grave departures from the teaching of Scripture in the observance of this most sacred ordinance, this Presbytery earnestly asks the Assembly to issue a pastoral letter to all the flock over which the Holy Ghost hath made them bishops, for their information and guidance, setting forth authoritatively the views of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on this question."

Moved the following resolutions: First—"That the Assembly approve the overture, and declare that, as the wine used in the oblations under the Old Testament at the Passover, and by the Lord Himself in the institution of the Supper, was the ordinary wine of the country, that is, the fermented juice of the grape, they cannot sanction the use of the unfermented juice of the grape as a symbol in the ordinance." Second—"That the Assembly direct sessions to deal in a spirit of Christian charity with brethren whose consciences are troubled; and with this view, and because we should serve God with the purest which can be secured, recommend them to use a mild natural wine as most in accordance with the institution of this sacrament and the general practice of the church in all ages." Third—"That the Assembly deprecate the agitation for the introduction of the unfermented juice of the grape; affectionately exhort all members of the church to adhere to the simple and significant usage of Scripture; to avoid minute questions and divisive courses; to cherish brotherly kindness and forbearance, and to keep the unity of the Spirit in the bond of peace; and when celebrating the dying of the Lord Jesus Christ, to lift their thoughts to the inestimable blessings which have been purchased by His blood, and to seek that spiritual communion with Him and that fellowship with one another which may be enjoyed by all who worthily partake of the memorial of His sufferings." Fourth—"That a committee be appointed, in accordance with the request of the overture, to prepare a pastoral letter embodying these resolutions as setting forth authoritatively the views of the Presbyterian Church in Ireland on this subject, and, if occasion require, to advise and assist the brethren in carrying them into effect."

To this an amendment was moved by the Rev. Mr. Shanks, to the effect that, inasmuch as many persons have conscientious objections to the use of fermented wine at the Lord's Supper, on the ground that our Saviour used unfermented wine at the institution of that holy ordinance, fermented wine was an unseemly emblem, and that its use in that ordinance formed a link of connection between the church and the liquor traffic.

The amendment was lost on a vote by 301 to 20.

The Rev. Mr. Pettigrow then moved in further amendment, seconded by the Rev. Hugh Hanna.

"That without pronouncing an absolute judgment as to the kind of wine that must have been used by our Lord at the institution of the Supper, the Assembly declare that the ordinance is only observed in the use of ordinary wine. While they do not consider it necessary to issue instructions to congregations with regard to the kind of wine that must be used, the Assembly at the same time earnestly and affectionately exhort all their members to avoid unnecessary agitation on this question, and to study things that make for peace in the celebration of the Lord's Supper."

This was lost by a vote of 18 to 20.