

LETTERS

OF THE LATE PROF. MACKERRAS.

(CONTINUED.)

PENSION SUEDOISE, MENTONE, FRANCE.

December 5, 1874.

MY DEAR SISTER.—As I promised in my last letter a fortnight ago, I now address to you a few lines, giving an account of our welfare up to the present date.

I think that I told you what glorious weather we had during our first fortnight in this place. It seemed as if we had at length reached the land of perpetual sunshine. Day after day found us making active excursions into the picturesque environs of the town. New walks, opening up romantic peeps and drawing us on and up were tried with the enthusiasm of children. The foothills of the Alps, rising up several hundred feet and terraced with oliveyards, orange trees, lemon orchards to the top, presented to us such novel scenery that we were fairly bewitched and we walked, and almost ran—we climbed and well nigh flew under the excitement of the air and the strange aspect of everything. All this time we imagined that we were daily making large additions to our stock of strength, whereas, victims of a delusion, we were only exhausting the reserve we had brought from Scotland. We felt ourselves suddenly running down and could not account for the prostration. So I determined to consult Dr. Bennett. He was a leading London physician, whose health failed him many years ago. His throat was the organ chiefly affected. Obligated to seek a dry and sunny clime, he tried Spain, Italy, Algeria, other parts of France, but none availed for the purpose of recovery, until he had tried Mentone. When his health was re-established he published a book giving his experience of the several places visited by him; and suddenly Mentone found itself famous. He has made this his home now during the winter season and is very much resorted to as a Consulting Doctor. I spent nearly an hour with him. He made a very searching examination of my chest and back and throat. Stethoscope and laryngoscope were called into requisition. His opinion agreed very much with that of Dr. Mackenzie. The whole box of the larynx was the seat of the disease, and *rest* as well as bringing up the general system were to be the main remedies. He gave me a tonic, which is certainly doing much to increase my appetite. Also a gargle, to use alternately with Dr. Mackenzie's Inhalent. He also gave me several valuable hints, suggested by his long and intimate experience of Mentone. We are to take daily exercise, when the weather is favourable, but it must be done in moderation. His programme is this: In the early forenoon stroll out, lunches in our satchel, to some sunny and sequestered nook in the country, say two miles—there lounge for three or four hours under a tree, half in the shade and half in the sun—and after spending the heat of the day like young pigs, then return home about three o'clock in the afternoon. We have to sleep with our window slightly open so as to admit a free circulation of fresh air into the room, and the first thing which I have to do in the morning is to take a sponge bath. We are faithfully carrying out all Dr. Bennett's directions except as to the strolls into the suburbs—and that we have not had an opportunity to carry into effect, owing to the unfortunate weather which we have had for upwards of a week. We have scarce been over the door since last Sabbath. As we were returning from church, drops began to fall and those were the gentle precursors of such rain as we have rarely seen before. There has been hardly any rain here for six months, and this accounts for the present deluge from the clouds. According to the wont of usual seasons, they should have had a spell of 10 days' rain in October.

Then the country was favored with only one day; so that now we are making up for the arrearage. But all parties who know this climate,—old frequenters of the town as a winter health resort as well as residents, assure us that so soon as this rainy spell is over (and it is expected to pass away in a day or two hence) we shall have for weeks a succession of beautiful days, with scarce a speck of cloud to dim the bright, blue sky. Thus, we are living in hopes of the good time coming. But while the weather has been bad, relatively to that which usually prevails here, it has not been so very unfavorable judged by the experience of Europe and Western Asia generally during the past ten days. Violent snow-storms have swept Eastern Italy. Avalanches, causing accidents greater than have been known for 50 years, have desolated parts of Switzerland; while hurricanes have done great damage to shipping along the coasts of Sicily and Asia Minor. So we must not complain.

The Free Church have a station here. It is at present supplied by Dr. Walker, of Carnworth, a man of culture, scholarship, ability and piety. Unfortunately, he is an invalid, in search of health like the rest of us, and hence cannot undertake more than one service on the Sabbath. It has so far been attended by about 25 or 30, embracing every shade of Presbyterianism. There are here also two other Free Church ministers, suffering from their throats, Messrs. Macpherson of Dunkeld, and Logan of Abingdon. Also the Rev. I. C. Muir, established minister of Cockpen, brother of the convener of the Colonial Committee.

I am cheered by the good prospects of Presbyterian Union in our land. What a pity that we have so many dissentients! They may offer a good deal of obstruction in the Parliamentary Committees, but I trust and believe that ultimately their opposition will not amount to much. I was distressed to see in a paper received to-day the death of James Craig, of Cornwall. His death will be a great loss to the church as well as to his family; for lately he had come into prominence, by his sound common sense and right views of things in the counsels of the Synod.

PENSION SUEDOISE, MENTONE, FRANCE.

December 19th, 1874.

MY DEAR SISTER.—Your affectionate and very welcome letter of the 26th ult. arrived a week ago, and it afforded us much gratification to learn that you were all in your ordinary health. What an inestimable relief it is to have a Throne of Grace to which to run and where one may spread out his whole case before the Lord, in some moment when worrying care tears at the heartstrings! How often within the past few months have I had to seek this source of consolation. On Him we are entreated to cast all our care. To Him we are invited to carry all our burdens. And really one feels his load wonderfully lightened in the process of unfolding the trouble to One whose ear is not heavy that He cannot hear—whose arm is not shortened that He cannot help.

It is matter of regret to me that I am unable to report much change in our weather here. During the past fortnight it has been very much of the same nature as during the previous fortnight and may be characterized as unfavourable. Every alternate day at least the sun has been obscured and thus we have been deprived of our natural source of heat. It has rained much and the cold winds have managed to get round the protecting capes which form the horns of our bay. Hence we have not been in the open air nearly so much as we were on our arrival, or so much as we desire and feel to be for our benefit. We have been able to take our luncheon with us and sit out