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Contributors and Correspondents

THANKSGIVING COLLECTION.

Mr. Editor,—A circular from Rev. Dr. Cochran, Convener of the Home Mission Committee, and bearing date September 1, has been addressed to all the ministers of Ontario and Quebec, asking for the offerings of Thanksgiving Day for the Home Mission Fund.

The proposal is an admirable one. A special thanksgiving is what the day demands. The thank-offering is in some cases added to the Poor Fund of the congregation, a disposition of it with which it is not possible to find much fault. But in most congregations the Communion collections suffice for this fund. The various mission funds are always in need. Contributions to them never come amiss, and surely nothing could be more appropriate than that we should show our gratitude for the blessings of civil and religious liberty, of peace, and of immunity from the ravages of pestilence, which we continue to enjoy, and for the abundant harvest which has been gathered in, by making a special contribution for the spread of the Gospel at home and abroad.

But while the Convener of the Home Mission Committee is to be commended for his promptness in being the first in the field for this special collection, would it not be more generally satisfactory if congregations were to divide their offering among the three mission schemes—the Home, the Foreign, and the French Evangelization? There is no reason why this should not be done. It would not lessen, but increase the aggregate of the contributions. It would appeal more fully to the sympathies of the people. There would be no fear that, in this case, the widening of the channel would tend to make the stream shallower. Besides, no ground exists why the Home Mission Fund should receive the thank-offering of the Church to the exclusion of the other mission schemes. The Convener would have no reason to complain if all three funds were remembered.

Last year, as some of your readers may recollect, the French Evangelization Board made a request, though at the eleventh hour—or to be more exact, a little later, as it was made after the day was past—that the collections of Thanksgiving Day might be sent to them, when not previously otherwise designated. That that Board have not made a similar request this year, I would suppose, as one having no connection with the Board, to be owing to the circular from the H. M. Committee. It will not be considered meddling for an outsider, and equally interested in the success of all three schemes, to suggest to ministers and office-bearers that, in complying with Dr. Cochran's request, the Foreign Mission and the French Evangelization Schemes be not forgotten.

Toronto, Oct. 1st, 1877.

PRAYER NEXT SABBATH FOR CHINA.

Mr. Editor,—Would you kindly allow me a few lines to call the attention of our ministers and your readers generally to a request for prayer for China, to which you adverted in your last issue.

In May last one hundred and twenty Protestant missionaries, representing almost every denomination in Europe and America, met in Shanghai for conference. Papers of great value, both to the missionaries themselves and to all friends of missions, were read, and plans were matured for future work. An appeal for more men and women for China was issued to "the various mission boards, Colleges, and Churches of the world," and the first Sabbath of October was appointed as a day of special prayer for the outpouring of the Holy Spirit upon the millions of that vast empire.

The missionaries there ask Christians throughout the world to remember them and the heathen of China on that day. Their request should surely not be forgotten in our Canadian pulpits and Sabbath Schools and homes. Our Mission to China, perhaps the youngest, has been one of the most successful. Our brethren there will highly esteem our remembrance of them.

China, as a committee of the Conference at Shanghai reminds the Christian world, is the largest heathen country on the globe, having a more extensive territory than the whole continent of Europe, with a population of 400,000,000; it is exceedingly rich in agricultural and mineral resources; the Chinese are intellectually vigorous, and are equally able in diplomacy and mercantile enterprise with the ablest of other nations; they are the great colonizers of the East; China is utterly sunk in superstition; Christianity is her only hope; and, as the history of Missions there proves, she can be evangelized, in thirty-seven years the number of native Christians having increased from three to 18,000. Yours truly,
R. DOUGLAS FRASER.

Toronto, Oct. 1, 1877.

For the Presbyterian.

THE LARK IN SCOTLAND.

BY REV. DAVID MITCHELL, TORONTO.

The lark has come from lands remote,
Where it had gone to roost,
Mid gale and storm, o'er fragrant fields,
Too distant from my home.

While far away on wing intent
To hush the water's rust,
And bore's blasts and driving sleet,
Methought my island was a lost

But now that summer cheers our hearts,
And warm the sullen ground,
As walking o'er the fields at noon
The lark again I found.

He sat upon his now made nest
Below the stubble laid;
He watched the gliding noisy clouds
Beneath their pleasant shade.

The sun then shone with brilliant light
On trees, on flowers, and mead;
The lark arose with steady wing—
His Maker's praise to lead.

Honoured on high till like a speck,
It looked against the sky,
And there he stood with hovering tread—
His wings had ceased to fly.

I heard his song come pouring down—
It seemed to fill the air,
It showered on fields a melody
So sweet—both full and rare.

A still small voice in whispers said,
Be humble like the lark,
Content to dwell in lowly cot,
And clothed with raiment dark.

Thou'lt soar aloft in thought to Heaven,
And sing in sweetest lays,
The Saviour's loving grace and truth,
And hymn thy Father's praise.

MISSION WORK IN PARRY SOUND DISTRICT.

The following report was presented to the Presbytery of Owen Sound by one of its members who recently visited the district.

Of the twenty-six townships which compose the Parry Sound District, there are thirteen more or less settled, and stand in need of the Gospel. Most of these we have not as yet visited with the message of peace; and the few which we have visited have been visited but partially, and to little effect. The Knox College Missionary Society has for years sent, during the summer months, a student to the Townships of Humphrey, Monteith, and Christie; but the missionaries under our auspices have not gone so far into the interior. Two years ago, it is true, students visited and held services at Manawaba Dam and McKellar Falls in the Township of McKellar, and also at Dunclurch and Kelsey's in the Township of Hagarman; but our principal stations are Foley Station, Carling (Blair's) Station, and Parry Sound village.

Foley Station is six miles distant from Parry Sound village. There are seventeen families in connection with it, two of which occasionally worship at Parry Sound village, and contribute to the support of ordinances there; but the others cannot on account of distance avail themselves of this privilege. The people are far scattered from each other; they are poor in circumstances, and have small families not able to help them in a struggle for life. Have they not therefore a claim, a strong claim, on our Christian sympathy and liberality? Do we hear their cry "Come over and help us?"

Carling (Blair's) Station is about eleven miles distant from Parry Sound village. There are five families in connection with it, of which three consist of nearly forty members; there are a great number of young people in the neighbourhood who always attend service in connection with the Presbyterian cause. They have no other than "Presbyterian preaching," but they occasionally meet by themselves to read a sermon and engage in devotional exercises. They have kept up a Sabbath school both summer and winter for years; the average attendance of scholars is about thirty; there are five teachers; there is a small library. There is a strong desire for increased services. The five families, in the meantime, raise forty dollars for the support of ordinances, and will endeavor to raise more, if possible, from adherents and attendants. This is an excellent station, containing the germs and giving the promise of a good congregation.

Parry Sound village is made up of two parts—Parry Sound and Parry Harbour. In the one there are 600, and in the other 400 inhabitants—in both together 1,000 inhabitants. The people here are, in many respects, highly favored with advantages. They have a daily mail in summer and one three times a week in winter; they have telegraph in connection with the post office, and it may also be stated that the Parry Sound post office is the distributing office for the Northern offices, including the Manitoulin Islands. They have also ample and convenient means of travelling. During this summer there are five steamers that have called at Parry Sound and Parry Harbour, viz.: the *Silver Spray*, *Seymour*, *Waubesa*, *Northern Belle*, and the *Magen-*

stawan, all carrying passengers as well as freight. There is a daily stage from Rossan to Parry Sound in summer, and a tri-weekly stage from Bracebridge to Parry Sound in winter. The distance from Parry Sound to Rossan is twenty-four miles, from Parry Sound to Bracebridge fifty-two miles, and from Parry Sound to Gravenhurst, the present terminus of the Northern Railway, is sixty-four miles. But let us now proceed to note what is in the place. There is what is rare in a village of the same size, a reading room, which furnishes to the public excellent reading matter. Let us give a sample of it. First—Periodicals: *The Edinburgh Review*, *The British Quarterly*, *Blackwood's Magazine*, *L'Hour*, *Sunday Magazine*, *Harper's Magazine*, *The Scientific American*. Second—Old Country newspapers: *London Times*, *Scotsman*, *Scottish Review*, *The Graphic*, *Public Opinion*, *Punch*. Third—Newspapers of Canada: *The Daily Globe*, *Daily Mail*, *BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN*, *Grip*, and similar papers from the States. This reading room is in connection with a literary society, which meets during the winter months for mutual improvement and entertainment. There are two schools, one in Parry Sound and one in Parry Harbour. There are three churches in the place—an English, a Methodist, and a Presbyterian. The English and Methodist Churches have service morning and evening every Sabbath; but the Presbyterian Church has service only in the morning. Our cause there forms the nucleus of a strong congregation. The membership is as yet not large, but the general attendance is good and the people well disposed towards it. At present there is no communion roll, and the membership is therefore not exactly known; but there are, speaking in round numbers, about sixty-five members belonging to the three stations referred to in the above statement, of which the greater number belong to Parry Sound station. The leading men in this station are men who have sat under our best ministers, who have taken an active interest in the ecclesiastical affairs of our Church, and who are well qualified to play an active part in the promotion of our cause in Parry Sound. Chiefly owing to them a nice commodious church has been erected on a lot, the gift of William Beatty, Esq., and another lot adjacent to it has been purchased for the erection of a manse. Their present liability is \$212.04, but the half of that sum is expected to be wiped off in a few weeks. In connection with this station there are a Sabbath school and Bible class, the average attendance of scholars is about sixty; there are seven teachers, and a library of 250 volumes. The sum of \$225 is contributed by the three stations for the support of the ordained missionary now labouring among them. He began his work among them on the first Sabbath of June, with the promise of a salary of \$700, subject to the approval of the Home Mission Committee. It is in the meanwhile arranged that he preach two Sabbaths in Parry Sound village on the forenoon; in Foley and Blair's settlement respectively in the afternoon; and to preach at the uplying stations every third Sabbath, and to visit the people in said stations during the week. This is, however, regarded as a mere temporary arrangement until some better one can be effected for the success and prosperity of the mission work in that neighbourhood.

There is, on the part of the people in Parry Sound, a strong desire that they should have a morning and evening service, not simply as a privilege to themselves, but as a condition necessary to the success and prosperity of mission work in the whole district. They, in the first place, regard their thus having service as necessary to the success of their own cause in the village. There are, as has already been stated, two other bodies who have morning and evening service every Sabbath; and our people therefore feel that they are not on equal terms with said bodies to succeed and prosper. From the lack of such service, they know that they have lost ground with the public; and from the supply of such service, they feel assured that they will gain ground with the public. If it is granted to them they promise to pay \$325, with a gradual rise, for the support of ordinances among them, and expect in a few years to be a self-sustaining congregation. They, in the second place, regard their thus having service as necessary to the success and prosperity of mission work in the whole district. It is observed by our people that the bodies in the village who have service morning and evening every Sabbath are getting on better, are gaining a firmer hold of the popular ear, and resting on a surer footing in the confidence of the public as to the supply of service. It is further observed by our people, that mission work under said bodies in the village succeeds and prospers better in the rural districts from

their prestige in the village as a reactive and diffusive influence on the outlying field; and also as a centre of action in the superintendence of mission work, occasionally visiting the stations, to countenance, to encourage, and to strengthen them; or exchanging with the local preachers, to attend to baptism, to the dispensation of the ordinance of the Lord's Supper, and other necessary things. Again, our people have experienced that, from the want of regular service, the attendance becomes less regular; that from the uncertainty of service as to when it should be, the attendance becomes as uncertain; that from attending other bodies people become less attached to the Presbyterian cause, and that therefore service morning and evening every Sabbath is necessary to the success and prosperity of our mission work in the Parry Sound District. There can be no doubt as to the soundness of the positions thus set forth by our people in Parry Sound. These indicate the proper policy to be pursued in the work of evangelization, not by scattered or diffused but by concentrated action. As a Church we have lost much by scattered or diffused action in the Parry Sound District. Our students have successfully occupied some parts of the field, but so soon as they left, other bodies came in to reap the fruit of their labours; thus, the labours of our students formed to others the nucleus of a good cause, or the skeletons of good congregations. As a Church, we could by a proper system of mission work effect much in the Parry Sound District. There are, according to the census, more than one half of the people Presbyterians. There is always a large attendance whenever there is "Presbyterian preaching;" many of the people belong to no body, but are inclined to attend the Presbyterian body. In view of such facts, it would be well for the success and prosperity of our cause in the Parry Sound District,

1. That service morning and evening every Sabbath be, as soon as practicable, granted to Parry Sound village.

2. That the Home Mission Committee empower the Presbytery of Owen Sound to offer (or they themselves do so) to some one of our ministers, capable of the work, a good salary to go to Parry Sound, there to labour in the work of the ministry, and also to superintend the whole mission work in the Parry Sound District.

3. That students and catechists be sent out to work under him in that field.

Acts and Proceedings of the Late General Assembly.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

DEAR SIR,—Of all men deserving pity there is none more so than a chronic grumbler, and "Sigma"—one of your correspondents in last week's paper—is surely one of them. He grumbles because only one man from the Province of Nova Scotia was on the Assembly's Committee of Bills and Overtures. Answer—(1) Our Assembly does not, in striking committees, recognize Provinces, but Presbyteries and Synods. (2) The statement is incorrect that there was only one from Nova Scotia. All the Presbytery Clerks who were members of the Assembly were members of the Committee referred to.

"Sigma" grumbles that "perhaps because of" the composition of the Committee of Bills and Overtures, only five Maritime Province men are on the French Evangelization Board. Answer—(1) "Sigma" seems to know nothing about the work of the Committee on Bills, else he would know that that Committee does not appoint the French Board at all. That and all other Boards are appointed by the Assembly itself, on recommendation of a special Committee, viz., the Committee to strike Standing Committees. (2) The Synod of the Maritime Provinces has as large a representation on the French Board as the Synods of Toronto and Kingston, London, and Hamilton, and Manitoba,—as large a representation as any Synod outside the one in which the Executive of the Board resides.

"Sigma" grumbles because out of five eastern men on one of the Boards, only one is a native of the Maritime Provinces, the other four having "come from the west not long ago." Answer—(1) The statement is not true. (2) Are not those who came from the west "eligible for appointment equally with the 'blue noses'?" "Sigma" thinks not, doubtless anxious that all western men settled in the Maritime Provinces should be ostracised. Instead of "No Irish need apply," the law has gone forth that no minister "who came from the west not long ago" need apply for a position on any committee, but only those educated in the Maritime Provinces." By the way, did Dr. Burns or Dr. Waters or Mr. G. M. Grant—the men who do a very large share of the Church's work—receive their "education in the Maritime Provinces?"

Other statements in "Sigma's" letter are equally incorrect. For example, he states that the highest salary this year is that paid to Mr. Black by Erskine Church, Montreal, viz., \$4,300. Mr. Black's salary is not \$4,300, but only \$3,000. "Sigma" had better get posted a little before he again appears in public. Yours, etc.,
ANTI-GAUMBLER.

Toronto, Oct. 1, 1877.

The Registration Act.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

MR. EDITOR,—Will you oblige by publishing to the B. A. PRESBYTERIAN the enclosed correspondence, first the minister and elders within the bounds of the synod may know what action has been taken in the matter entrusted to me, and the result. I am yours, etc.,
JOHN LAING

The Manse, Dundas, Sept. 22^d, 1, 1877.
To the Honorable Oliver Mowat.

DEAR SIR,—At the meeting of the Synod of Hamilton and London which was held at Woodstock Ont., on the 10th and 11th days of April last, I, as moderator, was appointed to bring under your notice as Premier of the Ontario Government what was felt by the Synod to be a grievance, and respectfully to urge the modification of the law complained of.

The Act referred to is the one passed in 1875 to provide for the Registration of births, marriages and deaths.

The grievance is that clause VIII. requires any minister or other person burying, or performing any funeral service etc., to make a return unless he has the certificate of the Registrar that the death has already been duly registered; while clause XVII. requires this to be done under a penalty not exceeding \$20 and costs.

The overture which brought this matter under notice of the Synod and which was adopted, thus sets forth the grievance. "These enactments interfere with religious liberty, in as much as they prohibit under penalty the performance of a purely religious service in connection with the burial of the dead by any minister unless said minister shall have first performed a certain act of civil service."

The modification of the act respectfully sought by the Synod is, the removal of the penalties enacted in case of burial having been performed without certificate of Registration having been first obtained or returns being afterwards made.

The Synod are aware of the importance of having the returns on vital statistics full and reliable, and are willing to aid in effecting this if it can be done without compromise to their religious liberty, but so strongly are they convinced of the unjustifiable character of the requirement which prevents the performance of a purely spiritual act except by permission of the civil power, that many expressed themselves as determined to resist it at all hazards.

Having thus laid the matter before you as appointed, I have only to add that if any further representation is desired, I am prepared to wait upon you at your convenience personally, or to receive any written communication you may see fit to favour me with. I have the honor to be, dear Sir, your obedient servant,

JOHN LAING, Moderator of Synod.
The Manse, Dundas, Aug. 28th, 1877.

Rev. John Laing, Moderator of Synod, the Manse, Dundas.

MY DEAR SIR,—I have your letter of the 28th complaining of the 8th and 17th sections of the Act of 1875, for the Registration of births, deaths and marriages. I hope that no serious grievance is thought to be involved in these enactments, as you inform me that "the Synod is aware of the importance of having the returns of vital statistics full and reliable, and are willing to aid in effecting this." The difficulty of obtaining such returns even as the statute now stands is very great, and I know of no substitute for the clauses to which you refer that would supply their place. I hope the Synod will not think it necessary to move in the matter until some alternative, equally efficient and practicable for the important object in view, can be contrived. Yours truly,
O. MOWAT.

Toronto, Sept. 8th, 1877.

Presbytery of London.

The regular quarterly meeting of the London Presbytery was held in the Lecture Room of the First Presbyterian Church, on the 25th ult., the Rev. Neil McKinnon, Moderator. A large number of ministers and elders present. The Home Mission Report was the first business taken up. Considerable discussion about re-adjusting the present arrangements existing between several congregations and mission stations took place. It was agreed to refer the matter back to the English Settlement and Proof Line for their further consideration, and that a deputation be appointed to visit them in connection with the matter. Mr. Baikie's resignation of the pastoral charge of Port Stanley was accepted, and a Committee appointed to draft a minute expressive of the Presbytery's esteem for him, and their sympathy with him in his long-continued illness. A call from Delaware to Mr. Peter C. Goldie was presented and sustained. The following young men were examined and certified as students to Knox College: John Urquhart, Andrew Henderson, Wm. McKay, and Angus McKay.

Mr. Spurgeon has returned to his work in London from his trip in Scotland, but his health is not much improved.

A bull regulating the procedure to be observed by the Conclave of Cardinals on the death of the Pope has been completed at the Vatican. It empowers the Cardinal Camerlengo to either summon the conclave immediately, or await the arrival of foreign cardinals.

According to the *Chinese Recorder*, there are six missionary societies operating in Peking, which was first occupied as a missionary station by the London Society in 1861. The other societies now represented there are the Church Missionary, the American Presbyterian, the English Presbyterian, the American Board, and the American Methodist societies. The London has the largest number of members—255.