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Contributors and Correspondents.

NOVA SCOTIA.

PERSONAL.—LEGISLATIVE.—LOSS OF THE "ATLANTIC"—A HEROIC ACT.

You have not heard much from this quarter for a few months back. Everything has been moving on in the good old conservative way. The winter has been long and cold, but fuel has been plenty and there has been very little suffering among the poor. Our Presbyterian Church work is being prosecuted with a steady, healthy vigor. Fort Massey congregation is making good progress under the faithful ministry of Rev. J. K. Smith, and all our other congregations are in good heart, and doing their work faithfully. Throughout the country our cause is progressing, and if we only had men enough to occupy the ground, the prospects of our Church were never better. The harvest truly is great, but the laborers are few. Another of our best men has been called South. The Presbyterians of Fall River have called the Rev. John Cameron, of the Presbytery of Halifax, and he has resigned his congregation with the intention of accepting their call. We can ill afford to lose him at present, although the congregation to which he goes are almost all our own people.

The contest between the two sections of the Episcopalians still continues, and now there is every prospect of its finding its way into the law courts. The chief strength of the Low Church party is in the city of Halifax. The two parishes of St. Paul's and St. George's occupy the whole of the centre and north end of the city. Under the pretext of looking after the neglected, the bishop is starting a new congregation within the bounds of St. George's parish. The others maintain that this is a mere pretext for starting an opposition church, and they have ordered the bishop and his curate to withdraw. They maintain that according to the law of their church the bishop has no right to interfere with existing parishes without obtaining their consent. The bishop maintains that this law has no force in the Colonies. Both parties have employed counsel, and the lawyers will have a lively and profitable time out of it.

Our Local Legislature is now in session. The principal thing they have to do is to deal with the protests against the return of a number of the members. Our Local Legislature can do as little in a given space of time as any other legislature on the continent. The friends of temperance are at work again, and although often defeated, are still making progress. Our city council commenced work on a bill for the restricting of the sale of strong drink, but the liquor dealers managed to get it defeated. The matter is now before the Legislature, with a fair prospect of success. Our Book and Tract Society has had its annual meeting, and the reports are most encouraging. We have a colporteur in almost every county, and the whole province is being well supplied with standard Christian literature. We expect to purchase a suitable building for the business, and hope to increase largely the work and usefulness of the Society.

Our whole city is in a state of excitement over the loss of the steamer "Atlantic." The poor sufferers are going about our streets, and every other subject seems to be forgotten by all classes of the citizens. The annals of naval disaster contain few cases more terrible than the fate of the six hundred drowned in that ill-fated ship. The "Atlantic" is one of the steamers of the White Star Line. She was bound to New York with a cargo of general merchandise, and eight hundred and fifty passengers. When off Halifax the captain determined to put into this port for coal, and early on the morning of Tuesday she ran under full steam upon one of the rocks on our coast. The steamer was fairly smashed, and out of one thousand living beings only about four hundred managed to get on the rock and island along side of it. About three hundred and fifty women and children went down with her. Not one woman and only one child was saved. The whole community is in a state of excitement over this accident, and every one feels there is something wrong. It may not be right to offer any remarks about the conduct of the officers while the investigation is going on, but whatever may be the result of the investigation, it never will satisfy the general feeling of indignation which seems to pervade the whole community. For a captain to retire to rest, when coming on a comparatively strange coast, without a pilot; and for his officers to drive their ship full steam on the rocks on a clear night; and all this

with the lives of a thousand men, women and children depending upon them is surely sufficient to make any one who has any regard for his life hesitate before taking a ticket for a trip by an ocean steamer. The sights at the scene of the wreck are most appalling. About a hundred dead bodies, most of them women and children, were lying on the shore at one time. Hundreds of coffins are being sent down from the city, and a small part of the island will be turned into a graveyard and filled at one funeral. Nearly all the passengers were German and Irish emigrants. Rev. Mr. Annett, an Episcopal minister living near the scene of disaster, acted a most heroic part, and not only urged others on in the good work of saving life, but by his personal exertions saved several who were clinging to portions of the wreck, when no one else dared risk their lives to help them. If we needed another lesson to impress upon us the shortness and uncertainty of life surely we have it in this sad calamity.

N. S.

SCOTLAND.

FAST DAY.—GREENOCK.—AYR.—CHINA MISSIONS AND MISSIONARIES.—MR. KNIGHT.—DR. WALLACE'S CASE.—THE SCHOOL ELECTIONS.

This is one of the half-yearly Fast days observed by all the Churches in Glasgow and the vicinity. All business is suspended and the populace turn out to spend the day, the most in pleasure excursions by the special trains provided for the purpose, many in rioting and dissipation, a few in church-going and means more consonant with the name and original intention of the day. I had occasion to go to Greenock this morning and found the trains crowded to excess, and on returning at one p.m. found some of the "pleasure seekers" already the worse of indulgence.

Greenock might almost be regarded as one of the suburbs of Glasgow, so intimate is the connection between the two, especially in the shipping and regular business. For the latter there is an Exchange opening into the R. R. Station, where the refiners of Greenock every morning meet their customers from Glasgow and in half an hour incredible quantities of sweet stuff are bought and sold by sample. At 10.30 the bell rings and the buyers step into their train again, and are whirled back to Glasgow, in time to "go on Change" there before noon. Meantime the refiners remain another half-hour to transact with the "raw sugar" men, Greenock is an old place with narrow, dirty streets, almost always wet, but there are fortunes to be made here, and the "comfortable" abound. There are more men here, they say, with incomes over £20,000 a year, in proportion to its size, than any other place in Britain.

The striking story of one man's career recently came before the public. In seventeen years he had made £470,000, and had just bought 12,000 tons of sugar which had suddenly risen in value so as to put £70,000 into his pocket by this one operation, when as suddenly "the rich man died" and left the world as naked as he had entered it; such is life.

Ayr is another and much more largely frequented resort of excursionists and many hundreds go down every Saturday to remain till Monday. I had the pleasure of visiting it the other day and strolling amid the scenes made famous by the genius of Burns. A long walk takes you past the old clay "biggin" where the poet was borne to the beautiful monument which his proud countrymen have erected on the banks of the bonny Doon. Opposite to it I mounted the well worn stone steps into Ailsa Kirk yard, where at once you are met by the tomb of Burns father. It bears a tribute to his virtues from the poet's pen, which is marked by the want of any allusion to his godly life or Christian death. After peering through the vacant doors and windows of the roofless kirk, and recalling in fancy all the wonderful sights beheld by Tam O'Shanter on that memorable night, we resumed the course of that worthy across the narrow and lofty Auld Brig, still in good repair, but alas, bereft of its beautiful mantle of ivy by its laughing repairers. Down the lovely stream and across the new brig a pleasant country road brought us back to town as the sun set behind the mist-wreathed Arran. There are many things about Ayr worthy of further attention, did I time and space permit, but I prefer to give what is available to what interested me more than all.

Being entertained with kind hospitality by a gentleman who is the brother-in-law of Dr. Carstairs Douglas, the great medical missionary of Amoy, I had the privilege of learning much of that important field and work from the Dr. who had come to take a last farewell of his aged mother—over ninety

—before returning to his post. He carries with him a noble trophy of his industry and ability—the first printed Chinese Dictionary. It is a bulky volume, all in Roman characters, and has already been sent on in parts as soon as completed, to his fellow missionaries, to whom it will be invaluable, as well as to all English residents. Amongst others our own Mr. McKay has been so favoured. It was curious to hear his opinion of the prospects before Mr. McKay and his field, and your readers will be gratified to hear that our Canadian missionary has already taken a high place in the estimation of the other China missionaries with whom he met, and that in the opinion of those well qualified to judge two things all important in beginning a mission have been secured—a good man and choice locality. As to the management of the work I carefully questioned Dr. Douglas regarding the desirability of opening a medical mission in the north of Formosa, as I noticed Mr. McKay had expressed a desire for such aid in one of his letters. To my surprise he strongly disapproved of such a course at present, as experience has shown that it is a great mistake to send a medical missionary to any station where there are not, at least, four others (Europeans), to co-operate with him, as it were, sow and harrow, and water the ground which he is merely suited to break up. Cases in point were mentioned where years had passed without a single convert from want of attention to this very thing. One or more active, well trained men marked by zeal for Christ and souls and linguistically endowed would be most desirable at present to strengthen Mr. McKay's hands. Under these a staff of native Evangelists' valuable and inexpensive, would soon spring up. The language, especially, with the aid of this new dictionary, is by no means so formidable as many suppose.

Mr. Knight having refused all retraction, a committee of three, Messrs. Bruce, Dunlop and Dr. Wilson, has been appointed to draw up a libel.

Dr. Wallace's case is at present in the hands of a committee of Presbytery whose proceedings have leaked out. On communicating with the Canadian lawyer, whose published notice of his sermons had been denounced by the Dr. as "nonsense and falsehood," it was found that gentleman said to be Mr. Mack of Quebec—most distinctly renewed his affirmations. Whereupon the committee asked the Dr. for his M.S. and were refused on the ground that he had given his word as a man of honour, and would do no more, and so the matter stands.

The Elections for school boards here and in Edinburgh have resulted in large majorities in favor of "use and wont" i.e. both Bible and Shorter Catechism. Here a Mr. Long was placed at the head of the poll by the Orangemen of whom there are 75,000 in Glasgow. Of Irish there are over 100,000, but many of these have no votes, still they placed two priests next to Mr. Long, far above Drs. Buchanan, Jamieson, McEwen, &c.

CANADIAN ABROAD.

A RARE SPECULATION.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

DEAR SIR.—It is surprising to me that no Barnum or Advertising Agency has yet taken hold of the pulpit as a means of advertisement, or that the shrewd managers of some of our churches have not taken up the idea of letting the pulpit out for a consideration, for this purpose. One thing is certain, that with, or without considerations, the pulpit is fast becoming like the cars, newspapers, railway stations, &c. an advertising agency, to the disgust of many of the members of our Churches and it is high time a limit were put to it. I do not object to intimations of meetings connected with the church in which these intimations are read, (although some go as far as this, saying that Elders, Deacons and managers should know when their stated meetings are held), but that all sorts of meetings, religious or otherwise, should be advertised from the pulpit, with the price of tickets, and where they are to be had, is surely not right. Especially does this remark apply to our city churches where the pulpit might be united and the newspapers patronized. As it is, the number of intimations sent on Sabbath is alarming and they appear to be on the increase, so much so, that it is time to be on our guard and reduce them to the smallest number possible.

After a sermon that has seriously improved a congregation or after engaging in earnest prayer to God that the truth presented may be blessed, and take root in the minds and hearts of the hearers, it is important that we should leave as little to distract the attentions as possible, and I do trust that we shall see some reformation in this matter at once in our Presbyterian churches.

PRIZES.

Montreal.

ISMS AND EGO-ISMS.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN

SIR.—A worthy and well-beloved Professor was wont to warn his students over to use soft words but hard arguments, and a higher authority still teaches all not only ever to speak the truth, but ever "to speak the truth in love." I was forcibly reminded of these maxims while reading in a late issue of the *Sword and Trowel* a series of pontifical presumptions on the subject of infant baptism, uttered with all that "eccathedra" air and authority which were wont in days of old to solve all difficulties, settle all controversies, and silence all contentions. These I will now set in order before you, with this proviso, that it may be I am too stupid to understand them, or too sceptical to believe them, or too bigoted to bow to them; but with your assistance, Mr. Editor, we may together discover all they mean, and settle at once, by their weight, alike their wisdom and their worth.

1. "Surely the circumcision theory only needs to be carefully thought over to be for ever renounced by spiritual men and, indeed, by all rational people." Just so. The thing is said and settled, and if any dare to dispute it the only appeal is to *The Sword*, which this valorous champion seems to wield as zealously though not so successfully as did Mahomet in days gone by. The above statement implies that either the advocates of infant baptism are not "spiritual," nor even rational, or, supposing that they are both spiritual and rational, they have not "carefully thought over" the "circumcision theory," else they would have "for ever renounced" it. Now if the fact that this theory has not, by a certain class, been "for ever renounced" is an evidence that it has not been "carefully thought over," and that again a proof that such are not "spiritual men, rational people," does not the very fact that they are not spiritual and rational preclude the possibility of the theory being by them "carefully thought over?" And as this is their misfortune rather than their fault, do they not merit and should they not meet with Christian sympathy rather than pitiless scorn. And what other inference can be drawn from the whole but this, that none but those who have "forever renounced the circumcision theory" have "carefully thought over" it, and that they, and they only, can lay claim to the assumed distinction of being "spiritual men and rational people." In view of all I leave you, Mr. Editor, to say whether statement number one more resembles a rational argument than "a railing accusation."

2. "It is one of the weakest of the various defences of infant baptism which the ingenuity of error has devised." Infant baptism then has defences, "various defences;" these, however, mark you, are not discovered, but "devised," not discovered by the investigation of truth, but devised by "the ingenuity of error." Self-convictions, however, are not always sage conclusions. Nevertheless, the writer has conclusively said that of all these devised defences this is "one of the weakest, it is a web, scarcely strong enough to retain a fly." Here is at once the proposition and its proof, and I leave you to mark the wisdom of the one and the weight of the other. Weak as this defence may be, yet it has oft withstood many such a windy gust as this, and many a boisterous water flood besides, and is there by none the weaker. It is often asked, more in the spirit of taunt than of teachableness, What is the use of baptising an infant? But let such go a step farther and ask of God—What was the use of circumcising an infant? And having gotten God's answer to the one, the other will not be hard to find. Although such a defence may be a web so weak as not to hold a fly, yet the spider knows the strength of its web and is satisfied; but not so the foolish fly until it has fatally tested its power and finds its own strength unequal to its entanglements. From our inmost heart we pity the conceit of any man who is carried away with the conviction that his comprehension is the compass of all existence, and comes to the conclusion that what he does not see does not exist. To such the prescription contained in Matt. vii. 3-5 might not be out of place.

3. "The countless evils which daily arise from the departure from the primitive ordinances should drive all Christians to their Bibles for plain warrants for every article of faith and practice." To this we heartily say Amen, and trust that what this self-sufficient writer counsels "all Christians" to do, he does not neglect himself, for to love our neighbor as ourselves is the extent of God's requirement, and to do more is neither commanded nor commended. And let me kindly tell him that both in disposition and in declaration he lays himself temptingly open to the telling taunt, "Physician heal thyself."

4. "Happy will that day be for the Church, but it will usher in the downfall of many a cherished idol, and paedobaptism will perish with the rest." Ah! indeed, then paedobaptism is an idol, and of course paedobaptists are idolaters. Is this the evidence and the ground for saying that he finds "plain warrants" for the utterances he makes and the epithets he employs? If so, verily, the world must be much the wiser and the writer much the mightier for the expostulations. Surely this caps the climax. This is a "veni, vidi, vici," with a vengeance. Rightly or wrongly, we have not so learned Christ, not so understood that charity which never fails, nor have we discovered that such were the teachings of him who was "meek and lowly in heart." In short, we fail to find in the Bible, for such utterances, either sanction or sympathy.

Without unduly occupying your space, or overtaxing the patience of your readers, both of which I may already have unwittingly done, I would only lay before you another "ism," presented in a late number of the *Christian Union* in the form of question and answer. The question is, "Is there any harm in young men and young women amusing themselves in parlor games, which naturally arise around the fireside, on Sunday evening?" The answer which the paper gives is—"We cannot see any positive sin in the occurrence described by our correspondent, though there does seem to be an indecorum." And what, pray, is "an indecorum?" The writer says it is something in which he "cannot see any positive sin," while the dictionary says it is something unbecoming, improper, indecent, and yet we are told it is no "positive sin." I could wish to have said more, but your space forbids, and it may be that the simple setting forth of the sentiment is its best condemnation, for if the Sabbath exists at all, we know that He who made it not only sanctified it himself, but tells us ever to remember both its existence and its requirements. And if "young men and young women amusing themselves in parlor games on Sunday evening" are either remembering "the Sabbath day" or keeping it "holy" or wholly, then I fail to gather what sanctifying the Sabbath means. However great the names of the Editors of these respective periodicals, yet with the thought there comes the caution, call no man master, "for one is your Master, even Christ." D.

Glennorris.

PRESBYTERY OF HURON.

This Presbytery held a regular meeting at Clinton on the 8th of April. On account of the bad roads the attendance was small. The following are the more important items of business transacted. Mr. Grant tendered his resignation of that part of his charge known as the Huron Congregation. The resignation is to be disposed of at a special meeting of Presbytery to be held at Aetfield, and within the Canada Presbyterian Church there, on the 28th inst. The congregations of Huron and Aetfield to be cited to appear for their interests. Messrs. Ferguson and Walker were appointed members of the Synod's Committee of Bills and Ordinances, and Ross and Kernichan members of the Assembly's Committee of Bills and Ordinances. The remit on the status of "Retired Ministers" was taken up. After some discussion the following motion and amendment were submitted. Moved and duly seconded that the Remit be approved, *o simpliciter*. Moved in amendment and seconded that the following words be added to the Remit, viz. "it being always understood that the persons admitted to a position in our Church Courts by such exceptional legislation shall not have the right to vote." Votes being taken the amendment was carried. The Rev. Mr. Reid was nominated as the next Moderator of the General Assembly. Mr. McCaig gave a report of his visit to Toronto, setting forth that he secured the services of 8 students for the ensuing summer and that the Assembly's Home Mission Committee granted aid as requested by Presbytery to the Mission Stations of Stephen at the rate of \$2.50 per Sabbath, and to Bethany at the rate of \$1.50 per Sabbath. The Presbytery Roll being increased by the addition to it of Mr. Danby's name, and thus giving the Presbytery the right to appoint two Commissioners more to the Assembly, a Minister and an Elder, Messrs. McDermid and Elliott were accordingly appointed. Mr. McCaig was appointed in place of Mr. McAsh, who declined the appointment. Mr. McDermid gave in his resignation of his pastoral charge. The resignation was allowed to lie on the table till next regular meeting, to which all parties concerned are to be cited to appear for their interests. Mr. Gracey gave notice that at next meeting he would move that the time for holding the April meeting of Presbytery be changed. Mr. Leask gave notice that at a meeting of Presbytery to be held at Stratford during the meeting of Synod, he would bring forward an Overture unto the Board of Examiners of Knox College. A committee consisting of Messrs. An. Ross, McCaig, Young and McLean was appointed to examine Students. It was agreed that the evening *sermon* of next regular meeting be held in a Conference on Sabbath Schools—Mr. Gracey to introduce the subject. The next meeting of Presbytery is to be held at Stratford on the 2nd Tuesday of July at 11 a.m.