

THE DAILY RECORDER.

FIRST GENERAL CONFERENCE OF THE UNITED WESLEYAN METHODIST CHURCH OF CANADA.

No. 5.]

TORONTO, ONTARIO, MONDAY, SEPTEMBER 21, 1874.

[Vol. III.]

Poetry.

Better.

That haunting dream of Better,
Forever at our side!
It tints the fair horizon,
It sparkles on the tide.
The cradle of the Present
Too narrow is for rest;
The feet of the Immortal
Leap forth to seek the Best.

O beauty, trailing sadness!
Despair, hope's loftiest birth!
With tears and aspirations
Have ye relieved the earth.
The opening buds of April
Untimely frost may chill;
The soul of sweet October
Faints out in mystery still.

What buried thee, gay childhood?
Swift youth, what fled with thee?
Laughs't at our losses, Sorrow,
As in some god-like glee?

Away, away, forever
Our vessels seem to sail;
The Eternal Breath o'erakes them;
Home speeds them every gale.

The filmy gold and purple
Swathed not the hill we trod;
'Twas hard the common climbing,
The bramble and the clod.
The bitterness we tasted
Was Truth's most wholesome leaven;
The friends that left us lonely
Are opening doors in heaven.

And now the deeper midnight
Unveils larger stars;
And grafts of glory burgeon
From earthly blights and scars;
And now the mists are lifting—
The tides are rushing in—
'Tis sunrise on the mountains!—
Lo! life is yet to win!—Lucy Larcom.

Literary and Religious.

EARLY METHODISM IN CANADA.

BY JOHN CARROLL.

In our first article, we glanced over the first seven years, and anticipated one event seven years later. Within those fourteen years, many circumstances of interest might be narrated.

Under the second sermon in the church, a gentleman was converted, who became the first class leader. This was Wm. P. Patrick, Esq., for a life-time almost a writer in connection with the Provincial Parliament. A native, I think, of England, at least of English parentage; brought up in Kingston; well-educated, ardent in mind, prepossessing in manners, and a most melodious singer. I never knew him at fault in an attempt at anything however difficult. He carried his characteristic enthusiasm into religion. He was an ardent Methodist, almost to bigotry, and became one of the most lovable and intensely beloved of class-leaders. He was long the leader of the class five miles out on Yonge street, whither he used to tramp, coat on arm and stick in hand, once a fortnight the circuit preacher taking it the alternate Sunday. Pity, pity, that the troubles of the church in 1834, predisposed his susceptible mind to the infection of Irvingism and he was lost to a church the older members of which will ever cherish his memory with fondness. Let the governing powers in our present colonial Methodism steer clear of offending and outraging the people's political partialities.

Under Brother Patrick's surveillance, the infant Society was noted for plainness of dress to an extreme. Alas, for the wearers of bows, artificials, feathers and jewelry, who came to class, or presented themselves at the lovefeasts, they were always held in the morning before public service, and with "closed doors." "Doors opened at eight o'clock, closed at half-past eight," was the announcement.

Some of the early Toronto Methodists were very demonstrative, or as it was then phrased in plain English, "very noisy." Loud praying—all praying together—shouting, and "falling under the power," were of frequent occurrence. One instance of religious catalepsy, or "trance," as it was called, lasted for several days. The subject was a good, and not weak-minded young woman, who has served God to extreme old age, and given a son to our ministry, who not unworthily wears the degree of M.A., and is likely to influence the educational interests of his denomination for many years. Two young, zealous sisters often hugely tried the forbearance of old, unexcitable members, English, Scotch and Irish, with their uncontrollable demonstrations, when, as the phrase

ran, they "got happy." A young man of the York Society, while singing in the "stand" at an adjacent camp-meeting, an institution which this Society was famous for sustaining, under the energy of the "power," sprang aloft in the air, and pitched off the platform, over the people's heads to the ground, receiving no harm, but remained in a blissful sort of doze for about twenty-four hours. He "came to" very happy and solemn. I give no opinion as to the pathology, or psychology of the case; but must say that young man, now "in age and freshness extreme," still "stands fast in the Lord."

The first Sunday School of the town was commenced in the Methodist chapel, in the fall of 1818. It was organized by the Rev. Thaddeus Osgood, "Sunday School Missionary;" and the first teachers were, Wm. P. Patrick, Jessie Ketchum, Hugh Caffry, and T. D. Morrison. This writer, a boy not ten years old, was present the first day and hour, and indeed before the hour; for he and some other children picked up the chips and shavings around the new-built meeting-house, and made the fire in the sheet-iron stove, which was very much like some professors of religion, quickly hot, "but strait is cold again."

The first "stationed preacher," strictly speaking (for he had little, if any work besides the town), was the then portly and personable Samuel Belton, a bachelor, much esteemed. His term was the year 1818-19. His successor for the next two years was vastly the superior of any one who had appeared in the York pulpit before. This was the Rev. Fitch Reed, whom a later generation in Toronto made the acquaintance of as an aged minister at one of the Toronto Conferences, some years ago. He was then young, well-educated, refined in his manners, and consistently pious, and was greatly respected by all classes. He had not room for enlargement, his ministry coinciding with the advent of the Rev. Henry Pope, British Missionary. 'Twas pity that two such personable, talented, and right-hearted young ministers should have been pitted against each other. Such, however, is one of the beauties of Methodist sectionalism, so ardently held fast to by some. May all reasonable pretences for its continuance be swept away by an enlightened energy! Amen.

Then came days when York was united with Yonge street and other county circuits, and we had plainer preachers, such as Shepherdson, Culp, I. B. Smith, and others, with such local, or located preachers, for intermediate supplies, as Father Youmans, Cornelius Flummerfelt, James Bosefield, John Cushman, &c. When I became a member, in 1824, we had two promising young ministers on the Yonge street circuit, namely, John Ryerson and Wm. Seaton, who supplied the term ordinarily, two Sabbaths out of the four, the Ancaster preachers usually taking the other two. The appointees from Ancaster were Messrs. I. B. Smith and Culp; but Mr. Smith's health failed before the year was out, and he never did full circuit work in Canada again. I cannot recall him, if I ever heard him, but he had the fame of being "very deep" and logical. His place was supplied for the balance of the year by a neophyte who has since made full proof of his ministry, and still lives a venerable and much revered superannate. This was the then modest and raptly devotional Joseph Messmore, whose preaching was unctious to my young heart.

I might speak of W. H. Williams, Joseph Atwood, James Richardson, Egerton Ryerson, John Beatty, &c., but I forbear, for the present. In my next, I may say something of the palmy days of the next two twin pastors—Wm. Ryerson and Franklin Metcalf, two preachers who stood "head and shoulders" above all the rest for pulpit ability, but that ability each of it own peculiar type.

Satan a Bad Paymaster.

"What does Satan pay you for swearing?" said the deacon to one whom he heard using profane language.

"He don't pay me anything," was the reply.

"Well, you work cheap: to lay aside the character of a gentleman; to inflict so much pain on your friends and civil people; to suffer, and, lastly, to run the risk of losing your own precious soul, and (gradually rising in emphasis,) and all for nothing! You certainly do work cheap—very cheap indeed."

Our Portrait Gallery.

THE DELEGATES TO THE GENERAL CONFERENCE.

REV. JOHN POTTS.

Pastor of the Metropolitan Church, where the Conference is held. The short, unpretentious name at the head of this sketch, undecorated with academic titles, would not promise much of the person who bears it to those who know him not. But to those who do know him, and, though comparatively young, he is already extensively and favorably known throughout the Dominion and the United States, that name stands as the synonym for commanding personal beauty, manly sense, unfeigned piety, great ministerial ability, fidelity, and success, and a combination of qualities which go to make up the urbane Christian gentleman, and the simple, dignified Christian minister.

Old Ireland has the honor of giving natural birth to this fine specimen of physical manhood, namely, Maguire's Bridge, County Fermanagh; and Hamilton, Ontario, of being his spiritual birth-place. The Rev. Charles Lavell, A.M., his spiritual father, is more than repeating his own valuable ministry in this his promising son. Mr. Potts' natural birth took place only thirty-six years ago—his spiritual birth eighteen years ago. He entered the ministry one year after his conversion, the intermediate year having been spent at Victoria College. His early education, natural discernment, and diligent study have led him to acquire a large amount of knowledge proper to the ministry, and to make an effectual use of it when gained. His circuits and stations have been as follows: Markham; Aurora; Thorold; London city; Yorkville; Centenary, Hamilton; Great St. James Street, Montreal; Metropolitan Church, Toronto. He was Financial Secretary of the Hamilton and also of the Montreal Districts.

Few preachers have so many things in their favor as Mr. Potts. First, commanding person, standing as he does six feet and a half inch in height, being well proportioned and weighing two hundred and ten pounds, his fair skin, with open countenance, handsome face, smooth and spacious forehead, mild blue eyes and blonde hair, constitute an ensemble possessed by few. Secondly, strong, clear, well-balanced mind, he having no idiosyncrasies or eccentricities that we know of; thirdly, sound, sure, practical judgment; fourthly, just that fair share of memory, fancy, imagination, fervor, invention, and extempore talent, which furnish an aptitude and adaptation for preaching, not reading merely; fifthly, his voice being very agreeable, strong and flexible, adapt him for reading as well as speaking. Then he has good business talents and tireless industry as a pastor. He is plain, affable, and artless, and yet polite and attentive to conventional proprieties. A person so well balanced will not startle you as a genius, or surprise you by his originality, but he will earn your respect, confidence, and love, as a pastor, and satisfy you as an earnest, varied, ever appropriate preacher. It was an unspeakable blessing, that the great Metropolitan Church, with its numerous and fashionable congregation, so early, fell into the hands of one who has ably and fearlessly "declared the whole counsel of God," who has met with such marked success in the work of saving souls, and who is impressing a character for piety and evangelistic zeal on the Metropolitan Methodists.

Some will say we have been too eulogistic, but in all honesty, if we knew of any darker lines, we would certainly put them in. If we did not believe him unspoilable, as so far, despite his unbounded popularity, he is unspoilable, we should not have said what we have; for we should be very sorry to contribute to spoiling him. He will no doubt unite with us in ascribing this assemblage of excellencies to the "Giver of every good and perfect gift." Mr. P. is not forward in controversial matters, considering his strong position; but, if spared, he will one day fill the very highest offices of the united church, and fill them well.

JOSEPH LISTER, ESQ., HAMILTON.

Is a compact, short man, of fifty-one years of age, with a large head, indicating a massive mind. His parents before him were Methodists. He has been a member of the Wesleyan Church since 1839, and a steward almost ever since. He is now recording steward of the Centenary Church, trustee of

John-street Church, and has been a director and treasurer of the Wesleyan Female College, Hamilton, since its commencement, also director of Dundas Wesleyan Institute. He is not a ready public speaker, but he is capable of writing well, and of forwarding measures of any kind which require business talent. He is a son of the late Dr. Lister, and went into business early and succeeded. Has retired from merchandise for the last twenty years.

He has been an Alderman for the city of Hamilton on several occasions, and is much respected in the community. While a Catholic minded Christian gentleman, who loves all who love our Lord Jesus Christ in sincerity; he is to all interests and purposes a Methodist, and will make a valuable member of the General Conference.

REV. WILLIAM BRIGGS.

Is among the younger members of the General Conference. His known talents and the personal esteem in which he is held by his brethren have had more to do in giving him this position, than any forwardness in taking part in the debates of the Annual Conference Sessions. He is of medium height compactly, but not stoutly built, genial and sociable in private life, with something more than the ordinary enjoyment of wit and humor. Mr. Briggs unites in a high degree two distinctions that are not often found combined. He is both ready and capable as a business man, and an eloquent and poetic preacher. In other words he is a master both of figures of speech and figures of arithmetic. Mr. Briggs' strong point is his gift as a preacher and platform speaker. He has a natural taste for beauty of thought and language, with a special facility of illustration, which added to a vigorous and well stored mind makes him a most attractive and impressive preacher. Since he first entered the ranks of the ministry he has steadily grown in popularity and power, till he now stands in the front rank of the preachers of his Conference.

He is native of the north of Ireland, and still seems to be some years on the sunny side of forty. He came in childhood to England, and while yet quite a youth was converted to God in Liverpool, and united with the Wesleyan Church. He exercised his gifts first as a Sabbath school teacher, and afterwards as exhorter and local preacher, in the North Liverpool Circuit. He received his education in that town, first at the Mount Street public school, and afterwards at the Collegiate Institute, of which the celebrated Dean Howson was then Head Master. After leaving school, he spent some years in a prominent commercial firm, where he obtained that practical knowledge of business which makes him so capable and correct as a District Financial Secretary.

At the recommendation of the Rev. Dr. Stinson, Mr. Briggs came out to Canada with a view to enter the ministry of the Wesleyan Church. His first year was spent in Lower Canada. His ability as a preacher soon attracted attention, and secured for him fields of labor of more prominence than usually fall to ministers at the same period of ministerial life. He has occupied such stations as Toronto, Hamilton, Montreal, London and Belleville, where he is now stationed. On all those fields he has been useful and highly appreciated as a preacher. Mr. Briggs is warm and faithful in his personal friendship, and consequently makes many strong friends on his circuits. At the organization of the Toronto Conference he came within a few votes of being elected Secretary. We pray that he may have many years of usefulness in the future.

JOHN ADAMS, ESQ.

Here is a gentleman so modest he will never declare his history. We thus recite it for him. He was born on the beautiful banks of the St. Lawrence, in the township of Edwardsburgh, opposite several very picturesque islands, and near the noble rapids, called the Gallops (pronounced "Galloos.") His parents were of the U. E. Loyalist stock, and father and mother were members of the Rev. Mr. Pope's (British Missionary) Society in 1817 and 1818. After the arrangement of 1820 between the American and the British Conferences, Mrs. Adams (the elder we mean) joined the American Society; but elder Adams (Joel was his name) never, although he was friendly. In 1833-34, under the labors of the venerable Healy and Rev. I. B. Howard, about a dozen young people were converted

in Edwardsburgh, and stood fast, among whom was young John Adams and Miss Ruth Fenton, his affianced bride. The Revs. John Carroll and George Playter succeeded in the circuit the following year, and principally through the instrumentality of these newly converted young people, a still larger number, mostly young, were added unto the Lord. The circuit preachers, finding that they were very unfounded in Scriptural matters, set up a Bible class, which they conducted in town, on a week-night, in their fortnightly rounds. At first the young people were very timid and would scarcely answer; but they were gradually drawn out, and became very much interested in the study of the Bible. These young people became exceeding intelligent and steadfast members of the church. When a circuit difficulty, some years after, shook the steadfastness of the old members, these stood fast; and the young men became the various office-bearers in the church; and at this day they may be found at the head of large families in such capacities there, and in the surrounding circuits whither they have moved. Among these young persons John Adams was, at first, one of the most retiring, and Miss Fenton one of the best and readiest and best to answer. They now live together on the old Adams' homestead; she one of the best read women in these parts; and he, one of the most well-to-do and shrewdly, prosperous, and influential man in the community. As a retired farmer he gives much of his time to the interests of the church, as well as to township and agrarian matters. He is the Recording Steward of the Edwardsburgh Circuit; and now, what his first Bible preceptor has not the honor to be, a member of the General Conference. He is now sixty years of age, but not looking so old, rather below than above the medium size. He will not be forward to speak in the Assembly, of which he is a member; but will be quietly, observant of measures, and will give an intelligent vote. His practical sense would make him valuable on committees. By looking at his answers to our publisher's circular, we see that he gives the date of his "identification with the church, September 21, 1834." That would place it within Mr. Carroll's superintendency, and not Mr. Healy's, and make this length of his membership exactly forty years.

REV. W. TINDAL.

was born in West Gwillimbury, County of Simcoe, Ont. Ancestry English. Many of them connected with Methodism almost from its commencement. His cousin, the Rev. John Tindal, is now superannuated in Manchester, after forty-two years service, for long a member of the "Legal Hundred," is a personal friend of Punshon, having being one of his superintendents.

W. T. was converted under Wesleyan instrumentality, and joined that church when a lad. Subsequently removing from Wesleyan ordinance, he united with the Methodist New Connexion.

Entered the itinerant work at the age of nineteen. At different times has declined openings into the ministry of other denominations in Canada and the United States, under the impression that he had a providential mission where he had been called. Was led, upon acquainting himself with Methodism, to deplore its unseemly divisions. Was one of the earliest advocates of Union, into which movement he threw his whole sympathies and prayers and influence. His friends, after playfully declaring that he had "Union on the brain." Moved the first resolution which led to action in the New Connexion on that subject. Was Secretary of Conference in 1865, and in that capacity communicated to the Wesleyan and other Methodist bodies the resolution which led to the appointment of committees, of which has grown the present happy consummation. Was a member of the Union Committee during the negotiations, and with some of his brethren visited the last Wesleyan Conference as a deputation on that subject. Has been for several years a District Chairman. Has served on most of the Connexional Committees, and is now a member of the Executive. The last revision of the Discipline fell solely on him in 1866. Successfully managed the preparation and passing through the Legislature of two "Bills" respecting the property and funds of the Connexion. Had the New Connexion remained intact he

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