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## Contributors and Correspondents.

### DIARY IN THE EAST.

(Continued.)

Christmas week is always a busy time in the small Protestant population of the city of Jerusalem. Most of the Mission Schools and benevolent institutions then hold examinations or celebrations, which I was glad to attend, and thus learn a little of what was going on. The Lord's servants, who are engaged in His work in Palestine, have a very strong claim on our sympathy and prayers. They have great need of patience, for they have as yet had much to cry, and not a great deal to encourage them. The whole population of the land (speaking generally) is in a pampered state. The Jews are to a great extent supported by the native Christians, Greek, Roman Catholic, Armenian, etc., hang on to the convent institutions, and are to a great extent thus kept in a sort of dependant state.

This state of things makes it very difficult to know when any enquirer offers himself as a candidate for admission to a Protestant Church how much of reality there is in his pretension to anxiety for salvation; or how much there may be of hope of gain. This continual suspicion of interested motives must be most painful to a missionary who, while he desires to deal faithfully with souls, yet feels he must be the follower of him who did not "break the bruised reed, or quench the smoking flax." There have been some very bright instances of conversion, both among the Jews and the native Christians; but for the most part, even the true converts, from their great ignorance, need constant watchful care from their pastors. It was cheering, however, to hear that in many cases those whose weak and wavering faith and walk had kept the missionaries in continued anxiety, had, at the approach of death, proved that their faith, if weak, was yet true, and had gone through the dark valley leaning on the Lord who bought them with His precious blood.

One of the very brightest examples of a true convert had passed to his rest a few months before I reached Jerusalem. He was a Jew of the name of Stern. After his conversion he seemed to have but one object in life, and that was to bring others, especially Jews, to the Saviour who was so precious to his own soul. No abuse or ill treatment on their part had the slightest effect on him. They called him the great Apostle. They heaped every evil name on him, they beat him, still he returned again and again, entreating them, even with tears, to receive the Lord Jesus, their true Messiah.

On one occasion meeting a number of Jews outside the walls, returning from a funeral, he seized the opportunity. Bible in hand to address them, and they beat him till the Turkish soldiers came just in time to save his life. Before he was cut off by fever he had the joy of seeing one at least of his persecutors converted, and converted chiefly through the impression made on him by Stern's kindness to one who had so abused him.

The first institution that held its celebration in Christmas week was one with which Stern had been much associated. It was the House of Industry; where enquiring Jews, cast out by their brethren, can be received, and have work provided them. Thus the labour-test is applied, so that if it is for gain that they wish to become Christians, they soon find that there is not much to tempt them in the life of honest labour which they must there lead while under instruction. A small but motley group of men was gathered and addressed in German by the Bishop, and in Hebrew and Spanish by two men who have themselves long been converts from Judaism. The good Bishop's short address was very telling, as he gave them his own old experience of the blessedness of labouring with the hands, honestly and quietly, in trust on God, until he should, if it were his pleasure, open up some other way in which they might serve Him. A sort of female counterpart to the House of Industry is a Work-room for Jewesses, only there they do not live, but only come daily to sew, and receive payment for their work, which is to them an immense boon, for many of them are steeped in poverty. These Jewesses are not necessarily enquiring, but their attendance at the Work-room brings them in contact with the Gospel, for both Old and New Testaments are read during the work hour, and prayer is offered. It was an interesting sight to see these poor women, some of them with very marked and refined Jewish faces, there sitting on the ground, quietly listening while the good news of the true Messiah was uttered in their ears. Among them was one whose dark skin, and negro features, was utterly unlike all the others. On enquiring I found that she was one who had been a slave in a Jewish family, and had become a proselyte to Judaism. As a reward for her conversion and faithful service, she had not only been freed but—honour to her name!—had been married to an elderly Jew. I am not sure but what she was also baptized, at any rate he was so near that she was too glad to offer to "fit

work-room. All the workers received some rice, coffee, and sugar as a Christmas present. The work-room is occasionally denounced by the Rabbis, and then for a time it will be emptied, till the impression of the curse is worn off, or poverty pinches more than usual, and then the women come back by degrees. An English lady superintends the work room, leading a laborious life in teaching those who cannot sew, and preparing work for those who can. The great poverty of the Jews in Jerusalem might astonish those who know that large sums of money are collected for them both in Europe and America, but the mode of distribution of those alms explains all. The money is sent to the Synagogue authorities, and in dividing it the apportionment is not made according to the poverty of the recipients, but according to their position in the congregation, so that a Rabbi, however well off he may be, will receive perhaps twenty or thirty times as much as one who has not that dignity. A Jewish girls' boarding school, and another for boys, each had the annual examination in Christmas week, and very pleasant it was to hear these children repeating passages from the New Testament, and answering questions on Gospel history.

They came the Christmas-tree at the Bishop's school for native boys. There was no regular examination, but the boys were gathered round the brightly lighted tree, and before receiving their useful presents of clothing, etc., repeated most of the principal prophecies of the coming of the Lord, and the history of His birth, and sang some hymns in Arabic, German, and English. A few earnest loving words were spoken to them by the Bishop, and a young English missionary who had lately come to Jerusalem.

There are some fifty boys in the school who there receive a good useful education, and are under the constant Christian influence of the excellent master, and house father. It is hoped that many of them may be fitted to be teachers.

Two of the older boys interested me much from what I heard of their earnest desire to learn. One of them, a Mahomedan boy, had come all the way from Salt (the ancient Ramoth Gilead) to entreat that they would receive him into their school. He was rather older than those usually received, but his manifest earnestness made it impossible to send him away.

From the boy's school we went directly to the German Deaconess Institution, called "Talitha Kumee." It is a large building outside the walls, in which more than 100 native girls bide, and are taught by the Deaconesses.

There too, the children were questioned by the German pastor as to their knowledge of Scripture connected with the birth of Christ; then each received some present; several of the little ones were made happy by the gift of dolls.

The year 1873 was closed in the Bishop's house by a prayer-meeting, at which many different nations and people were represented. There were those of German, English, African, and Jewish race, and in the arrangement of the meeting each was called on especially to plead for the people in whom he was most particularly interested. It was a solemn and suitable ending to the old year.

One little event of the last week of the year I must not omit to mention. One morning the news went through Jerusalem that the Kedron was flowing.

I suppose many people in Europe still believe that this would be no news, for that the Kedron like most streams, is always flowing. But this is very far from being the truth; at least if it does flow, it must be deep underground under the immense accumulation of rubbish which has in a great degree filled up its ancient bed, for usually there is surface water to be seen. When there is any it is a sign of a great abundance of rain, and that is a great boon in Palestine. So it is quite an event when the Kedron flows. Some of its waters were brought early in the morning to the Bishop's house by one who expected a baksheesh as the bearer of good news. I was very anxious to see the stream, and as it often flows for but a few days, I gladly joined the two friends with whom I made most of my expeditions in going down to the place where it issues from the ground. Going out at the Zion gate, and skirting the hill of Zion outside the walls, we went down a very stony path to where the valleys of Hinnom and Jehoshapha unite. There at their junction is an ancient well, or fountain, now called the well of Joab, but what sounds more interesting under its old Scripture name of En Rogel. Close to this fountain the Kedron rises from the ground, a bright little stream, and flows down the valley between the Mount of Offence and the Hill of Evil Counsel. The whole of Jerusalem seemed turning out to see the unusual and pleasant sight of running water. All the steep paths leading down from the city were dotted with men, women, children, horses, mules, donkeys, for it is considered a most lucky thing to wash in the water, and every animal in Jerusalem was brought for that purpose. In some winters there never is any water at all in the Kedron, but the winter of 1873-4 will long be remembered as an unusual one, both for the amount and continuance of the rain and snow storms; so that from the 27th December to April 7th, when I left Jerusalem, the Kedron was constantly flowing, and instead of only running a little way and then being abolished in the ground, it flowed for some time at least as far as Mar Sabs, if not all the way to the Dead Sea. In short, such a winter for abundance of rain and snow could not be remembered in the memory of man, and there was much suffering among those whose scanty clothing was ill fitted to keep out the cold, and whose flat-roofed ill-built houses absorbed so much moisture that

many came down altogether, even the very best houses in the city were not proof against the long continued wet. I had many pleasant walks in the Kedron valley, where in bright days, numbers of people might be found, some washing their clothes, others sitting on little stools under the olive trees beside the running water, smoking their hookahs, and enjoying the musical sound of the murmuring stream, while numbers of happy children played by the brook. Certainly the East is the place to learn the true value of the expressive "living water," as contrasted with the often stagnant pools or tanks from which so much of the water used there must often be taken. In Jerusalem the greater part of the inhabitants depend for their supply of water in the tanks, in which the rain water is collected from the flat roofs. In such a wet winter as 1873-4 there is plenty of water, but when the supply has been scanty many suffer severely before the long months of summer and autumn are past, in which not one drop of rain falls, and even those who have large tanks find the water apt to be rather lively before the early rains come to give a new supply. In the hotel at Jaffa I did not need a microscope to convince me that there were living creatures in the water given me to drink, and I was very glad that I had taken a pocket filter with me.—M. B. W.

### THE LATE MR. ANDREW SKINNER, HAMILTON.

In Mr. Andrew Skinner, Hamilton, lately lost one of her most respected citizens, and the Presbyterian Church one of her fastest friends and most enlightened supporters. At the comparatively early age of 47 Mr. Skinner passed away from the midst of his usefulness and "entered upon his rest." His friend and former pastor, the Rev. Dr. David Inglis, of Brooklyn, N. Y., preached in John Street Presbyterian Church, Hamilton, a suitable sermon on the occasion, in the course of which he paid a high tribute of respect to the general worth of Mr. Skinner.

We have room only for the following extracts:—

In the flush of his early youth Mr. Skinner came to Hamilton, and some years after entered into partnership with his brother. Though he has been taken from us at a comparatively early age, yet he was one of our oldest merchants, and his life, as a man of business, is known to this whole city. I can say, surrounded by those who have been most closely connected with him as a business man, that no one ever breathed a whisper against his name and integrity all these years. Starting with little or no capital, his brother and himself built up a business which was largely due to energy and indomitable perseverance in doing right. On this point, however, I am not qualified to speak at any length, and I shall confine my remarks to the things with which I was personally most familiar in him—his intellectual, social, and religious qualities. As to the first I have no hesitation in saying that he was a man of the very clearest understanding and the strongest common sense I have known; he had the power, above most men, of casting off all the superfluities of a question, and seizing upon its great cardinal points. He carefully shut out the side-lights and allowed nothing but the direct rays to fall upon the subject presented to him. As a result of this he was able, in a few words, to place a subject of conversation for debate in the clearest possible light, producing immediate conviction in the minds of his hearers. He was intimately acquainted with all that was best in our rich and varied English literature. He drank deep of the Perian spring. I have often wondered and felt rebuked at the amount of careful reading he accomplished after a hard day's work at his desk. He was well read in the authors both of the earlier ages and of contemporary literature. No man delighted more than he in suggestive authors—DeGomez, John Wilson, Ruskin, Macaulay, Hugh Miller, and, above all, Thomas Carlyle. He read with the eagerness of a healthy intellect; yet his was no mere echo of other men's opinions, and, with rare intellectual ability, and independence of mind, he thought out every subject for himself. It was rarely that he could be induced to deliver lectures or to write for the press, yet when he did so he succeeded beyond most men in clothing plain truths in strong language. His materials for illustration were well nigh exhausted, while the fine coloring and literary polish of his style made you forget all the defects of his elocution in delivering his lectures. He left no man in doubt as to his meaning, and he drove home that meaning with power to the heart and conscience. Then there was always such a tone of manly indignation against all that was false or mean, against all mere seeming, which left the conviction that he was thoroughly honest and intensely in earnest. Many of you will remember his lectures on "Money" and on "Preaching," as illustrations of what I have now said. In reference to his social qualities I feel as though I were speaking of a brother rather than of a friend. For a time I was member of his family, and his house has always been to me a home. Married to a lady who to the full appreciated her husband's gifts and excellencies, and who has through all these years been his soul-mate as well as his helpmeet, his domestic happiness was unbroken save by the repeated bereavements of three years ago, of which I shall have occasion again to speak. Devoted as he was to study, yet he never allowed his book to absorb his mind to the neglect of family duties, and he was always ready to attend to the amusements of his children. In

general society he was retired and reticent, but in the company of genial friends his literary requirements and conversational powers were fully brought out, and those of us who knew him best will remember the tenderness of his sympathy with all real sorrow, in combination with the fierceness of his indignation at all shabbiness, which flashed disdain on all pretensions. He was pre-eminently a pure-minded man. In all my long and intimate intercourse with him I never knew him utter a word or suggest a thought that could give pain to the most sensitive mind. His reading, his thinking, his gathered stores and natural gifts, all combined to make a most interesting companion. He always gave you the impression that he was speaking out of a full mind—not because he must say something, but because he had always something to say. His thoughts came forth bearing the clearly defined image of his own individual mind, and sometimes in forms of singular beauty. I can only pay a passing tribute to virtues and affections as a son, a brother, a husband, and a father; but I cannot refrain from saying that no man ever could be a truer friend than he was. Many here can join me in this testimony to him, as one who was always true, and hearty, and self-denying, and wise in his friendship. He was, in the highest sense of the word, a true and noble Christian gentleman. I must now turn to the far more important subject of his religious character. When I knew him first he had rested every hope in Christ as a Divine Redeemer, on this strong foundation he built for eternity, and the rock never moved. With a mind constituted as his was, and studying the authors he did, it was not possible for him to escape great struggles of mind in reference to some points of the Christian system. There was a period of some years when this struggle was fearful in its intensity, but to me it was beautiful to watch how, aided only by prayer, in the efficacy of which he had the most child-like confidence, one after another of his difficulties gave way, leaving him not only with an entire and profound reverence for the Word of God, but with his faith in all its great doctrines intensified and strengthened.

It was quite evident to all who came into close contact with him that, during these last years of his life, there was in him a growing tenderness and reverence of spirit. With manifest satisfaction he read and heard the Word of God—as a priest in his own house he maintained the worship of God. How fondly he loved the gates of Zion. What a deep and affectionate interest he took in the welfare and all the work of this congregation. In early life he had thrown himself heartily into the formation of the McNab street church, and now with all his powers matured he again, with fresh enthusiasm, took hold of this new effort at church extension, and among his last thoughts and words were his associates in this effort and the church itself. While cherishing the utmost affection and sympathy for all Christian men and Christian movements, he felt a special interest in the church of which he died an honored elder. His money, as well as his talents, were consecrated to the Lord; and with large and hearty liberality, and with a wide catholic interest, he gave for the advancement of the cause of Christ and for the relief of suffering. His life, so beautiful, had a fitting consummation. In all the weakness and suffering of these last weeks of his life his faith held with firm grasp to the rock, or rather the risen Lord, upheld with His powerful hand, and at length he passed away, he departed—went home—his sun set, and left the firmament bright with its radiance. "Who hath ears to hear let him hear." Hear, young men, and learn the beauty and the power of early religion. The only preparation for eternity is a lifelong preparation. It is not only true that without religion you are not prepared to die, but without Christ you are not prepared to live. Hear, ye men of business, and learn that there is a possession which is of more value than all your wealth, more important than all your speculations. Hear, ye office-bearers and members of this church which he loved so well, and give yourselves with a new consecration to the Lord's work. Hear, ye mourning and bereaved ones, be followers of the blessed Lord, and think not so much of this short life as of the eternal life begun. We can only say, as we close, farewell thou man of God; farewell, thou noble Christian merchant—friend, brother; farewell now, till then.

### Ministers' Incomes.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

MR. EDITOR,—In your last issue I observed a sentiment attributed to me, which I never entertained and could not possibly express. Whether your correspondent was present at last Assembly or not I cannot say, but he has very much mistaken the nature and bearing of my remarks. As to the report of what was said by me I cannot answer, as I never saw any report of my remarks, but it is not fair to make a report the ground of a serious charge. The subject on which I was speaking is one in which I could have no personal interest, further than what my interest in the whole church would lead me to take. And that was one reason why I feel free to speak on a subject that requires to be spoken upon, for many of our esteemed brethren are exceedingly sensitive and reluctant to speak on a matter in which they are personally concerned.

The misunderstanding has arisen from a remark made when urging the formation of a *Sustentation Fund*. I said: "Our people demanded a learned ministry, that our

church was the only one which systematically and of necessity demanded it, and that it would not be creditable to us as a church, if, with this demand, we felt behind other churches which made no such demand, in the support of our ministry, for the very training through which our ministers have to pass in fitting them for their work increased their wants, and that as our country grew in material comforts and culture, the discrepancy would continue to be more and more felt, unless something were done to remove it. I said, in making a personal reference to my intellectual and other requirements were greater than they would have been had I remained a laboring man, destitute of the training which fitted me for the ministry. And passing from the particular to the general position, I further intimated, that as a community advanced—as our country was advancing—its wants became more numerous, on the same principle as had been said, that it takes more to support a civilized man than a savage. Judged the statement was not my own, it was given by an esteemed minister on the floor of the London Synod, when speaking on the overture which was then before us, and from whom I quoted. Being called away suddenly and unexpectedly from a committee to speak, when I had no time to put my thoughts into shape, I may have, through some ambiguity of speech, conveyed to some a wrong impression. But surely no one will imagine that I would harbor the sentiment attributed to me—a sentiment from which my whole nature shrank, and which I take this opportunity of disclaiming.

I think your correspondent mistakes also the tone and temper of our Assembly, when he affirms that there is something like caste, or class feeling in it. So far as my knowledge and experience go, I know of no body of men freer from such a feeling, and of no place where a man will be more honorably dealt with or more likely to get his proper place.

J. THOMPSON.

### Affairs in Tecumseh and Clarksville.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

MR. EDITOR,—We attend a very pleasant meeting in Clarksville on the 24th June. A Soiree in the afternoon and Social in the evening, to aid in repairing the Presbyterian Church, brought together a large assemblage. Although the severe rain-storm which was so destructive in many places, began some little time before the time for the afternoon meeting, it did not intimidate the good people of Clarksville and vicinity. The attendance was large and the tea was excellent. The Alliston brass band and the Clarksville choir were in attendance, and discouraged such music as would delight the most fastidious. After tea had been served, the pastor, the Rev. James A. McConnell, took the chair, and introduced the Rev. Wm. Fraser, of Bond Head, to deliver the opening speech. Mr. Fraser, in his usual able and happy manner, addressed the audience, dwelling at some length on the lately consummated union of the various branches of the Presbyterian Church in the Dominion. The Rev. Mr. Gee, of the Methodist Church, followed in an eloquent speech, discussing church repairing, building, and church-work in general. The Rev. J. M. McIntyre, of Onabruk, gave an able speech on "Variety," and Rev. Wm. McConnell, of Innisfil, closed with an address on "Will it pay?"

The Social in the evening was quite a success. In addition to speeches by the chairman, Rev. J. A. McConnell, and Rev. Messrs. McIntyre and McConnell, recitations were given in a masterly style by Messrs. Stewart and Sutherland. The proceeds of Soiree and Social amounted to \$92.00.

The Tecumseh charge is in a prosperous condition—pastor and people seem mutually pleased with each other. We have read and heard of several donation parties visiting the manse to give the pastor and his family tangible proofs of their appreciation of his services. Not only has his salary been promptly paid, but it has lately been increased, and in many ways it is evident the Master is approving the labor of this under-shepherd, and making him acceptable and successful in his portion of the vineyard.

May the Lord still more and more prosper His servant, and bless the people of his charge; and may their zeal and liberal spread like leaven, till the benign influence of the Holy Spirit in widening circles, and with increasing power, shall overspread our whole land.

Yours, &c.,  
AMIGUS.

### Statistics.

EDITOR BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

SIR,—It may not be of much importance to notice small errors in statistics which purport to be merely "approximate," but if you think it worth while you might say that the roll of ministers of the Canadian Presbyterian Church, as read by me at the Union Meeting in Montreal, on the 15th ult., contained 260 names, not 838 as stated in the letter of "W." in your last issue.

WM. FRASER.

Bond Head, July 1, 1875.

NOTWITHSTANDING the severity of last winter, the grasshoppers have survived it. These destructive insects have appeared in great swarms in Manitoba this Spring, and farmers are fearful of the consequence to their crops. No efficient method of destroying these insects has yet been discovered.