

amongst lemon or olive trees, which generally stand on terraces built up with two stone walls, without plaster. One of the most frequent excursions on donkeys or on foot is to San Remo (1,700 feet), four miles to the north. Higher still is Piano del Ré (3,500 feet), and

#### MONTE BIGNONE,

(4,235 feet), which occupies about five hours from San Remo. The whole route is practicable for donkeys, and at every turn glorious views present themselves the path being sometimes through pine forests, at other times along the edges of steep ravines and precipices. The highest point is marked with a stone obelisk, and when this is gained, the prospect in some directions extends 150 miles. On the east are distinctly seen, in clear weather, the mountains on the eastern Riviera (between Genoa and Spezia), with the Apennines in the background. To the west the coast, with all its windings, is visible as far as the Esterels beyond Cannes. Northward stand out the snow-clad peaks of the Alps as far as Turin; and in the south the snowy summits of Monte Rotondo in the island of Corsica.

#### THE CLIMATE.

The mean temperature of San Remo is 49 degs. Fahr., nearly as high as Dr. Bennet's estimate of that of Mentone. "The climate is warm and dry"—says Williams in his "Winter Stations,"—"but from the protecting ranges not rising precipitously as at Mentone, the shelter from the northerly wind is less complete. At the same time the vast olive groves screen the locality from cold blasts, and temper them into healthful breezes, imparting a pleasing freshness to the atmosphere, and removing sensations of lassitude often experienced in too well-protected spots. The size of the sheltered area gives patients a considerable choice of residences, which can be found either close to or at varying distances from the sea, according to the requirements of the case; while the numerous wooded valleys, abounding in exquisite wild flowers, provide plenty of donkey and foot excursions."

#### CONCLUSION.

I have now finished what I proposed to say regarding the physical aspects of the chief winter stations on the Mediterranean. I might have found something to say *against* every town and village on both the French and Italian coasts, but the enchanting roads which wander from one town to another cause all that is disagreeable to be forgotten. The soft refreshing air, the brilliant sunshine, vegetation almost tropical in character and luxuriance, the sea, "blue, sweet and calm"—all these have power to animate the spirits and excite the mind. They make physical exercise a joy—mere existence a pleasure.

If, then, we cannot always be like the swallows in Lord Tennyson's ballad, "flying, flying south," or seeking the shelter of "golden caves" at the first touch of winter's hand, the next best thing, perhaps, is to be able to hold in memory the impressions of a winter so spent amongst citron and orange groves, and flowers which blossom nearly the whole year round. "The island valley of Avilion, or that remote spot on the sea where, steeped in forgetfulness of home, and friends, and companions of other days, Ariosto's fabled hero lingered in the toils of the Fay Morgana, could hardly boast more substantial charms than these."

I may at some future day add a little to describe the religious privileges enjoyed by visitors to these stations, and the Christian work which is being done.  
*Bex, Vaud, Suisse, May, 1886.* T. H.

#### THE FIRE IN VANCOUVER CITY.

The following touching letter from the Rev. T. G. Thomson, Presbyterian minister in Vancouver City, has just been received by Dr. Cochrane. It will be read by many with feelings of deep sympathy.

MY DEAR DR. COCHRANE,—I should have written you sooner regarding the sad calamity which befell us last Sabbath, but I have had so much to do I could not find time. The forenoon of Sabbath was delightful. The new church was nearly full, it was our fourth Sabbath in it, the collection for the morning service alone was over \$18. We were to have had communion on the 27th inst. Over half the sittings in the church had been allocated, and applications were being received every prayer meeting night for others. Of those taking sittings we were forming a voluntary weekly subscription list for the support of ordinances, intending on July 1 to have a congrega-

tional meeting, and decide from that list the amount to be paid for salary by the congregation. These were already nearly at the rate of \$500 a year in a very short time from the congregation alone. The salary would have been \$1,200, so that from July 1 we intended to declare ourselves self-sustaining. It was also talked of, to, as soon as possible, refund to the Home Mission Fund as much as possible of what aid had been received since my coming here. Our rapid success financially is largely due to the increased and better accommodation we had in the church. Our people here have done nobly in contributing toward ordinances and toward the building. The building, land and furnishings cost over \$4,000; we borrowed \$1,200 to pay the contractor. This is due on August 4. We owe the contractor \$120. We have the last payment on the land coming due on July 11, of \$250. We would have been able to have met these payments as they came due; but the terrible loss sustained by our people renders them entirely unable to pay a single dollar of what remains on the subscription list now. The church was insured for \$2,000. This will enable us to pay all we are owing, and have a little over. On Sabbath we went to Sabbath school at three o'clock p.m., and though there was a good deal of smoke and fire all round the city, we had no thought of danger; but there was so much smoke in the church I found it necessary to dismiss the scholars. Some of them did not get to their homes, being met by friends fleeing from the fire. By the time I got to my house there was fire all round it, and on looking back toward the church, it was then a mass of flame, and we had only time to get a few things out of our house when it caught fire. I saved some furniture and clothing to begin house-keeping. There is not a single family of this congregation that is not seriously affected by the fire; the majority have lost everything. Most of the ladies who were at church in the forenoon, on going home laid aside their best dresses, and lost them, barely escaping with their lives and what they had on. In the main part of the city there was no time to save anything. The whole city was on fire inside of half an hour from the time the first building caught fire. Now we are worse off than when we started here over a year ago. We have no church; there is no hall of any kind to meet in; the people are not able to do anything. Those who have anything left have to build homes, refurnish them, and clothe their families—the majority can do neither of these. Many tears have been shed since the fire by the people as they stood on the hill and gazed on the ruins of our beautiful Zion. They come to me, saying: "Mr. Thomson, what are we to do now? Will the people in the East not help us?" Build we must again, and that immediately, and in the meantime we make an earnest appeal to the whole Church to send us aid to rebuild. This is our only hope and only solution of our present difficulty. I send with this the local paper giving an account of the fire. Our people are very grateful for the expression of sympathy of the General Assembly, and are now hopeful that ere long help will be sent to enable us to build. Very little can be raised toward salary for the next three months at least, and I would ask you to continue the grant.

We are very needy just now. Our loss is heavy. We saved all our bedclothes from the fire, but the Indians stole them from where we thought them safe. Mrs. Thomson lost nearly all her clothing. I lost all my underclothing and overcoats. We got nothing out of the kitchen. These are things we have to buy now. You will thus see the need we have for money; besides Mrs. T. is confined to bed, suffering from fatigue and effects of the smoke.

I hope ere long these dark clouds will pass away, and that our success will be greater than ever during this year. Do make a strong appeal for us, and let me hear from you soon. With best wishes,

I am, yours very faithfully,

THOMAS G. THOMSON.

P.S.—By the way, my sermon barrel and all its contents was burned, so I can no longer work on old stock.

Contributions in aid of the rebuilding of the church in Vancouver City, or for Mr. Thomson himself, will be received by Dr. Reid and Dr. Cochrane, and duly forwarded, or, if preferred, they may be sent direct to Rev. T. G. Thomson, Vancouver City, British Columbia. Friends who can assist should do so at once.

#### DR. CHALMERS AND HIS TIMES.

BY K. ROBERTSON, STRABANE.

(Concluded.)

In 1832 Chalmers was elected Moderator of the General Assembly, which of itself shows the estimation in which he was held. It was here the vexed question of the right of the people (to whom he was to preach) to call a minister was discussed; four Synods and seven Presbyteries protesting against the system then in vogue, soon to be followed by others, showed that of patronage to be in opposition to the feelings of the people. The next year the question was again discussed, and Chalmers, with that broad view and higher standpoint which could overstep the local and personal interest of his own time, saw "the greatest good to the greatest number" lay in the necessary change, and with characteristic manliness assumed the practical leadership of the Evangelicals. No further evidence of this being the right method is required than that all the Presbyterian Churches of Scotland now practise it—the very institution for which the Church was divided, adopted by those who fought against it.

For seven years after this the subject of Church extension claimed the energies of Scottish divines, and Chalmers found this well-beloved and congenial work, and in which he took a leading part, being appointed Convener of the new "Committee." The land was made to ring with the subject in hand, and two hundred and twenty new churches added to the Establishment was the handsome result, and this without help from Government, but by voluntary contributions.

Honours were coming in fast now, one following another in rapid succession. He was Vice-President of the Royal Society of Edinburgh; then came a message from Paris choosing him as corresponding member of the Royal Institute of France, soon followed by another conferring the degree of LL.D. by Oxford University. Shortly after this he was invited to London to deliver a course of lectures on "Church Establishments," where we are told from time to time his enthusiastic eloquence held the audience, who ere the close of his finest passages, rose from their seats and broke into tumultuous applause. His lectures were scattered broadcast over the land, and but a short time after he who so strongly advocated establishment was to take the lead in the setting up of a disestablished Church. Although at the time many, and he among the rest, thought that any difference between the Moderates and Evangelicals would be agreeably settled, yet these lectures were searched in vain to condemn him, and with devout reverence the spirit through all was *Christ as the Head of the Church*. The Court of Session termed this to be an absurdity, and that from which it derives all its powers to be the Parliament. Can we wonder the Church was fast becoming lifeless with such a head? A living body and a lifeless head surely are incompatible! However, these principles were but generally laid down, and excepting occasional differences between pastor and people, all went on as before. One of these cases may be cited for example, which shows the difficulties under which the people were labouring:

A minister decidedly objectionable to the people, over whom he was about to be placed, had but one name—and he the keeper of a public-house—signed to his call; nevertheless, the Presbytery, being Moderates, would install this minister. The public can never be forced, and a Scottish public have never been noted for their yielding propensities when thus pressed against their wish and better judgment.

Such a state of things could not long exist. Something had to be done. If the law but granted this one point—option of the people to choose their own pastor—all might yet be well. But with what seems to us—a free-thinking, free-acting people—extreme folly, they refused to concede anything, and forced the Evangelicals to a disruption.

Quickly and quietly, like all great movements, it was done. When the Assembly met in the spring of 1843 a protest was read to the effect that the liberties of the Church had been infringed, that without a violation of the terms of union between the Church and the State, business could not be further proceeded with; and those who for years had struggled for freedom, followed by the flower of the divinity students, soon left the Church in possession of the Moderates. It would be difficult to find a more trusting and happier collection of people than they who thus left.