

British American Presbyterian

Vol. 5—No. 1.

TORONTO, CANADA, FRIDAY, FEBRUARY 4, 1876.

[Whole No. 209]

Contributors and Correspondents.

DIARY IN THE EAST

NAZARETH TO CARMEL AND BEYROUT.—
Continued.

Soon we came to the flat across which the Kishon flows into the bay. This flat is very sandy, and in winter was sometimes impassable from the overflow of the Kishon forming shifting swampy quicksands. Across some part of this a sort of causeway is formed, but was in such bad repair that we avoided it wherever the sand was tolerably dry. We had some charming cantering ground. On the sandy dunes thin grass grew, interspersed with some pretty wild flowers, and dotted with wild pomegranates, the splendid scarlet blossoms of which were just coming out. My horse thought the sand tempting, and before I was aware what it was after, was down on its knees, and going over on its side for a comfortable roll. I got off pretty quickly as may be imagined, and used my whip pretty freely to make it jump up, before it went over on its back and broke the horns off Mrs. Vartan's nice saddle which she had kindly lent me.

Soon we got entangled amid intersecting tracks across the flat, and taking the wrong one, lost a good deal of time by going too far inland, where we were at last stopped by coming to a back-water of the Kishon which there was no means of crossing. Then we had to turn away again towards the sea, and after a little came out on the beach near the mouth of the Kishon. When this is in flood it is sometimes very troublesome to pass, but the weeks of dry weather since I left Jerusalem, had reduced the stream to moderate compass. The action of the waves forms a sand bank at the mouth of the river when the stream is not very strong, and keeping along this it is easy to cross. Dr. Vartan's horse made no difficulty about entering the water, but mine was more timid and refused to go in, in spite of encouraging and whipping. Happily there was a man in a boat a little way up the river, and I crossed the river by his aid. I slipped the most rapid of the other garments through without any difficulty. Of course he got a Bakshesh. We now had a stretch of beautiful firm sandy beach between us and Caïpha, which was very pleasant to ride along.

We amused ourselves by teaching the horses to go into the sea. There were pretty large waves breaking on the beach, and at first my horse was very nervous about them, and sidled away from them in a funny manner which gave me a good laugh, but soon it got braver, and let me take it in far enough to get it well refreshed by the cool water. Caïpha is a small town surrounded by tumble-down walls, and with nothing of any interest in it. We rode straight through it to the southern end where, immediately under the steep promontory of Carmel, there is a cluster of neat houses, surrounded by well-tilled fields belonging to a German colony. These people are of the same peculiar sect as those at Jaffa. They are thrifty and industrious, and likely to prosper if not oppressed by the government. But they were in difficulty when I was there on the matter of the tenure of their land. By the purchase of it they were in danger of putting themselves on the same level as the regular natives, and being thus completely under the Turkish government or misgovernment. Thus they much dreaded, and were not willing to relinquish their privilege of being able as foreigners to appeal to the German consuls for protection. I could not wonder at their desire to hold on to the foreign power which might save them from the grievous oppression in the matter of taxation, etc., which the native Christians often suffer under. I may give a specimen of the way in which these matters are conducted. In Jerusalem, and most of the towns of Palestine, there is a kind of town council formed of deputies from the three or four sects that number the greatest proportion of the population of the town. These are generally Mahomedan, Latin, (Roman Catholic), and Greek Churches. The Protestants being in small numbers, have no representative in most places. There being a certain sum for which the town is to be taxed, the council proceeds to divide this among the different religious bodies, not according to their numbers, but according to the councilors good pleasure. Of course each wants to spare his own purse and those of his co-religionists. The consequence is, that sometimes the taxes in Jerusalem have so been laid on that a Mahomedan would have to pay perhaps sixteen piastres and a Protestant sixty. The proportions may vary, but it is almost invariable that the Mahomedan, backed by his government, can lay the great

burden of every thing on the native Christians, more especially the few Protestants. Not long since when the Mahomedans of Nazareth failed to pay their proportion of government dues, the Christians of the town were called on to make up the sum wanting. On their refusal, some of their principal men were imprisoned till the sum was made up, and they had not even the honour of having the receipt for the money given to them. They paid, the others got the receipt for the sum. Of course had they been English, or still more, German, or Russian, an appeal to their own consulate would have brought them redress, but for native Christians there was no good in appealing, nobody would listen to them.

In the little German colony at Caïpha, I was surprised to find quite a nice small shop full of European goods, where I could help Dr. Vartan in choosing various articles that were wanted by different members of the missionary band at Nazareth.

The doctor then accompanied me to the convent on the brow of Carmel. The road up the steep hillside was fragrant with the flower of the fine olive grass at the foot. The trees were now in blossom. The road, though steep, and in some places going up by steps, was still very good for Palestine.

The convent is a large building, the best of the kind in the Holy Land. It forms a very comfortable hotel for a traveller, and there need be no scruple about making use of it as, though no bill is presented, it is quite expected that the traveller should pay in much the same way as in an inn. Dr. Vartan commended me to the care of one of the monks, whose duty it was to receive visitors. We were immediately invited to partake of a pleasant cooling drink, flavoured with fruit, which was very refreshing after our long ride.

During the twenty-four hours I spent in the convent, they were continually bringing me tumbler after tumbler of this pleasant stuff, which, being innocent of any intoxicating qualities, I enjoyed very much. Dr. Vartan left me in the convent, as he had business to transact in Caïpha. I suppose I was the only tourist in the big building; at least I saw no other. There was only one other traveller there besides myself, a young Frenchman, evidently a Roman Catholic pilgrim who had been going the round of the Holy places, staying in the different Latin convents. We supped together, waited on by one of the monks. It was Friday, so we had no meat, but good fish was served. My room was very clean and comfortable. After supper I went out to get a view over the Bay of Accha from a sort of terrace at the side of the convent. I was obliged to take a servant with me, there being a number of large fierce dogs kept about the convent for protection. At night it would scarcely have been safe to go about alone among them. It was a full moon, and the view was very fine. Some lights twinkling in the houses of Caïpha looked bright and cheerful, and made the little town very apparent as it lay just below us. The moonshine lighted up the wide bay, and showed the fine outline of the coast northward.

As the steamer to Beyrout was not expected off Caïpha till Sunday evening, I spent the most of Saturday in rambling about on the summit of Carmel, that slopes up landwards from the convent. There is very little cultivation, but the rank growth of cistus and other shrubby plants, shows that it might still easily deserve its name Carmel—harvest, or vineyard of God. Flocks of goats were browsing among the scrub, under care of a shepherd lad. A few of the spring flowers still remained in blossom, but most of them had passed away under the heat of a sun which was fast ripening the fields of corn round the houses of the German colonists. Indeed it was either on that day or Monday, May 4th, that I saw barley being cut, and thoroughly ripe too. The view was very grand. Northward the range of Lebanon was in full view, with much snow still on it; Hermon too, was, as ever, a very fine object, and the hills around Nazareth filled up the space between. Looking to the south, there was a long stretch of coast visible, including some points putting out into the sea and covered with ruins of ancient towns.

There is a light house close to the convent, under French superintendance. In the evening I had a pleasant walk on my way to the little hotel of the German colony. The serving monk sent a small boy with me to carry my carpet-bag, and show me the cave where it is said that Elijah held his school of the prophets. The cave has nothing in it at all remarkable. It is in the face of the very steep declivity by which Carmel breaks down to the beach at the foot of the promontory. A steep path down the cliff brought us to a house inhabited by Jews, built on in front of the cave so that we had to walk through among the members of the family, seated on the ground at supper, in order to get into the cave. Of course they make a little money in the form of Bakshesh from the visitors to the cave.

(To be continued.)

NEW YORK LETTER.

Christmas day in New York was wet and disagreeable, and there was very little demonstration on the public streets. But the churches were not the less crowded, perhaps all the more so because of the disagreeable weather. And especially those churches which, like Trinity, had announced that the services were to be more than usually grand and imposing. The New York people feel that Christmas is a holiday time, and they make the most of it. For some time past the piers were loaded with

overseers, and at almost every green-grocer's you would find wreaths and Christmas trees for sale. And if we may judge by the appearance of the windows all over the city, and the festooning of the churches, notwithstanding the dullness of the times, a large sum of money must have been expended upon them. The boys and girls had a gay time, and, as was to be expected, were loaded with presents.

During these times a kindly spirit seems to pervade the whole of the community. Somewhat about 1000 news-boys sat turkey and enjoyed fruit and cake at the expense of Mr. James Gordon Bonnet of the Herald. The Five Points Missions provided in the shape of presents, for upwards of 700 children, but they were not able to supply all that applied. In like manner the House of Industry, the Howard Mission, and the City Mission, provided for a large number. Nor were the Tombs (the city prison) neglected, and the prisoners were supplied in their cells with their Christmas dinner. As was to be expected the churches next day, being Sabbath, were not more than usually filled. And the ministers suffered, as was manifest in the case of not a few, from the bronchial affection of the throat, by their exertions on the day before.

The New Year was ushered in with all honour, and with more than the usual noise. All the bells and chimes of the city, as well as all the steam-boats within reach of port, vied with each other who would make the biggest noise. And those quieter citizens who had gone early to bed, were made aware of the fact that 1875 had expired, by the unusual shout of joy that greeted the birth of 1876. And why not? Uncle Sam is not yet 100 years old! but he has entered the year upon which his 100th birthday occurs. And while amongst the youngest of the nations, he has grown more than perhaps any other; and is still stretching himself out for greater growth in the future. He has not forgot his birth nor the battle which he had for life. And among weaker minds the grudge against his Old Britannic mother seems not as yet to have died out. All have not grown to see to say out of adolescence. But I am glad to say that the greater part has. And, while recognizing the struggle in the past, indulge in no grudge for the present. And perhaps a larger acquaintance with the politics of the United States, will reveal the fact, that there is a warmer feeling to Great Britain and her dependencies than to any other people or empire on earth—the noise and the tumult of a certain class notwithstanding.

But this whole affair of Christmas and New Year is occupying the minds of not a few of the most thoughtful—our Presbyterian ministers prominently among the number. And the idea is expressed that the more these festivals are enlarged, that there is a stronger affinity to the superstitions of the pagan world, than the simplicity of a Christian institution. That in respect of date they are all wrong. And that after all the whole affair is not much other than a Santa Claus day—of tending to impress the mind of old or young with anything of Christian truth or character, but training an expectation of being pleased and petted—an expectation among the young that others are bound to please them, rather than for the love of Christ, they, in common with all others, should please one another. That something is to be done to show that the right gifts of Christian affection and love should never train a one-sided selfish expectancy, on the one hand, nor a self-sacrifice on the other; a sacrifice that does not tend to draw forth more than a mere expression of thankfulness because they are made happy in the gifts which they receive, which perhaps, more than we think, goes to train those principles in the young mind, that in more mature life treats the parents as old foggies, and causing them to think so much of themselves, that filial duty and regard are worn out, and behind the a.e. Such thoughts as these are talked about in circles where you would not have expected.

And lying in the same direction, not a few of the leaders of the religious world are beginning to get tired of the week of prayer, and all such human appointments. Not because there is any evil in the thing itself, but because they are fast following the foot-steps of another church and religious festivals of another church and other lands. And men and women of no great name for religious character are beginning to get up a religious fervor to last during such times, and then lapse with good grace, back to the world and the things thereof. That in their thoughts, such things are only a diversity of amusement—even though they might be horrified to be told so. Not, it may be, a profane ball, but a concert—they would not call it so—of a religious character. And they must pay attention to such things—they are Christians just as they are polite. And religion has duties that are demanded of them just as society has. And they must pay their debts in this direction just as they must pay them in any other, if they would be thought to be anything at all.

You will not think, Mr. Editor, be surprised to learn that there is more than usual quietness in the city during this season. And little parade is being made about the week of prayer. And many of our best men are quietly dropping it out of sight. And yet I am persuaded that there is more of real life and religious fervor in our midst than we get credit for. We are looking forward with great expectations to the visit of Moody and Sankey

to the city in a few weeks. And many preparations are being made, not merely in respect of the place of meeting, but in regard to the workers that are to engage with them in the enquiry room. The fact is well known that such men as spontaneously rush into such places, are not, after all, the best for the purpose designed. Men of fitful emotion, that flit back and forth from one scene of excitement to another, and who cannot remain long in one place without disturbance of some sort—these men of all others are not fitted to lead others into the quiet harbour of peace. As the peace they have, are the little lulls, which they have in their voyage of life, arising more from coming under the lee of some great rock or head land, where for a little in their exhaustion they have taken refuge, and will surely sail again when they have got a little rested and repaired. And so, for these reasons and others, there is a steady preparation going on. And some of our ministers have opened classes for the study of such subjects as may be required on such occasions. And it is proposed that none should be allowed to enter the enquiry rooms that is not recommended by some pastor or other well known earnest worker in the Lord's work.

REVIVAL.—II.

Editor BRITISH AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN.

Sir,—From the testimony of those who have had full knowledge of the movement from the beginning, as well as from a personal observation, I am satisfied that a most interesting and encouraging work of God has been going on in

MOOREFIELD AND NEIGHBOURHOOD.

Let me give a few notes of its history and characteristics, that all who read may judge for themselves, and it is to be hoped, "thank God and take courage." In the little Union Church there, Methodists, Baptists, and Presbyterians, have for some years had more or less regular services, but of late coldness and death have reigned, and our church had almost completely lost its hold. One of our students visiting some friends there in the early part of the summer, finding the wants of the place so great, began Sabbath services, and after a few weeks the communion was dispensed to about twenty persons. Sicknes required him to return to his home at Galt, and one of the young men of Knox Church, to whom I referred in the close of my last letter, was asked to take his place. He found a few friends there longing and praying for revival, and prepared to join heartily in special services. A helper was summoned from Galt, and at once it became evident that the Lord was with them to bless His work, and in the course of the few months which followed, many scores of the people in the vicinity, with many strangers from abroad, professed to find Christ, as their Lord and Saviour. As far as man can judge, almost all of these are in their lives manifesting the "fruits of the spirit." I spent two evenings with them, and was struck with the

"LOVE, JOY, AND PEACE,"

which seemed to prevail among the converts. The little church was filled with over a hundred of the happiest people I ever had the pleasure of meeting. I was told there was only one in the church who did not profess to know and love the Lord, and certainly they drank in every word about Jesus with the utmost eagerness, and were equally ready to bear testimony for Him. Their love of the

WORD OF GOD,

and readiness in using it, and from it giving a "reason of the hope that was in them," were very marked. They seem to have learned to prize it as the "Bread of Life," and to use it as the pilgrim's staff and the soldier's weapon. As I sat and talked with a good friend of the cause in the little room over his store, we could hear Scriptures quoted and earnestly discussed in the shop below. As I expressed my surprise, he told me that for weeks at a time the Bible would never be off the counter—ready at any moment to furnish bread to the hungry, or the cup of water or flagon of wine to the faint, or it might be that the sword was needed for the enemy, for such were not wanting. This gave us a glimpse of how God's people were

EARNESTLY WORKING

out of the meetings as well as in them. In the after-meeting I found a very happy couple together, one of whom informed me that they were the first two fruits of the work, one of them the very first night, and the other, through the instrumentality of the first, the night following. So each in turn as he found the Saviour, set himself to bring others.

Another indication, which struck me as favorable, was

SENSITIVENESS TO SIN.

This appeared in their prayers and in some things which were related to me. A young convert inadvertently off his guard, found himself put in a false position, liable to be misunderstood and to bring dishonour upon Christ. Realizing this, his distress of mind was great, and, though he had left the neighbourhood, a petition for special prayer for himself was presented the second evening I was there.

I regret that want of time prevented my visiting any other of the scenes of awakening in the neighbourhood especially Glendon, where I am told the work has extended

and is progressing with great power. This is all the more remarkable, that at first the number, and elders of the latter place were not first, and for a long time, more than cold and doubtful about the whole movement, but have since been led to fall in with it most cordially, and have already, some at least, received rich blessing in their own personal and families.

I cannot close without asking attention to what seems so plainly taught.

(1) That this is a "time of vacation for our church and country.

(2) That God is now returning his zeal upon that form of special effort known as "evangelistic work."

(3) That the responsibility of our ministers and sessions under the circumstances is unmistakable.

Praying the great Head of the Church to make the path of duty still plainer, I am, etc.

W.M.R.

Ashburn, Jan. 26, 1876.

HOME MISSION WORK IN THE NORTH WEST.—LETTER FROM REV. ALEX STEWART.

The Convener of the Home Mission Committee has sent us the following letter for publication. We are glad the Committee have secured such men as Mr. Stewart for these frontier posts, and that our people will come to their help in supporting our self-denying missionaries.

REV. DR. COCHRANE.—I suppose I ought to have reported to you long ago. The reason why I have not sooner done so is the fact, that I have been only a short while settled in the field, although it is more than three months since I arrived here. I was very much disappointed at finding in the neighborhood of Fort Polly, nothing but a few Indian and Half-breed huts, in none of which I could venture to pass the winter. The H. Bay officer in charge at the Fort is a staunch Presbyterian and treated me with the utmost kindness; but owing to the stringent rules of the Company, he could not receive me into any of their buildings. I was therefore obliged to apply for shelter at the barracks of the Mounted Police Force, about ten miles to the north of the Fort. There I found myself forestalled by a Methodist minister—the Rev. Mr. Morrison. During a visit some months previous, the Rev. Mr. Young of Winnipeg, made arrangements for the accommodation of a missionary of his own Church, and it was doubtful whether another could be received. Col. French, the Commissioner of the Police, was absent at the time of my arrival, and the matter could not be settled before his return. The officer in charge however, during his absence, received me very kindly, and did all he could to make me comfortable. Col. French, shortly after his return, informed me that he had lately received instructions from Ottawa to supply rooms and rations to one missionary from each of the three churches represented in the force, viz.: the Presbyterian, the Episcopal, and the R. Catholic. None of the men being Methodists, no provision was made for a missionary of that denomination. Mr. Morrison informed me of this decision a short time ago, and immediately returned to Winnipeg, leaving me in the field for the remainder of the winter.

As yet, the members of the Mounted Police Force, and the employees of the Department of Public Works, constitute the whole population of the capital of the North-West territories. A good many of both these bodies of men are Presbyterians, but their residences here is of course only temporary. Not until the Government is actually established can any fixed population be expected.

At the Hudson Bay Fort the average attendance is twenty. More than half of these are Indians or Half breeds, whose knowledge of English is very limited. It is my intention to visit, early next spring, all the forts and posts in the Swan River District. This will require a journey of about six hundred miles, but by travelling along with the Hudson Bay Company's trans it can be accomplished with comparative ease and safety.

Owing to Custom House regulations and delays on the Red River, I was obliged to leave Winnipeg without my baggage, and I regret to say that all Mr. Robertson's efforts to have it forwarded to me have proved fruitless. Now that is winter, there is not the least hope of seeing it till spring. All I succeeded in taking with me was the light summer suit I happened to be wearing, and a few little books and articles of clothing in a valise. This would have been a most serious matter had I not been able to purchase of the Government stores here. The clothing I now wear is the reverse of clerical in appearance—to tell the truth it is police uniform—but it is very convenient, and that is the main thing in this vigorous climate. The books I miss very much, as there is no way of supplying this want. There are a good many about the barracks, but very few of them are the kind I need.

I have lately decided to open a little school for the children living in the barracks. Most of them are very young, but about a dozen are able to attend. I think I can devote a part of each day but Saturday to this without interfering with my regular work.

If you have any communications to make please use the address at the foot of this letter. No other is safe.

Yours faithfully,
ALEX. STEWART.
Swan River Barracks, Fort Polly, North West Territory.
Jan. 7th, 1876.