

Presbyterian Review.

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THURSDAY, FEB. 7, 1889

DR. ROBERTSON OF IRVINE

DR. JAMES BROWN has given us, in the Life and Letters of Dr. W. B. Robertson, a very charming book. The biographer had, in this instance, it must be admitted, an unusually good subject, and, as the volume shows, ample materials of a very interesting kind.

few survivors who heard it in the Gould Street church, Toronto. There could not be claimed for Dr. William Robertson, the third of this distinguished triumvirate, the massive force of Dr. Cairns, or the severe precision and exquisite beauty of Dr. Kerr, but in originality of conception, in quickness of thought, and in wealth and brilliancy of fancy he was not equalled by either.

According to all accounts, the early home of W. B. Robertson, the subject of this memoir, was an ideal Scottish home; one adorned by the twin graces of refined culture and of earnest piety. Five sons went out from it to study for the Christian ministry.

William, who was sent to Glasgow University at the absurdly early age of twelve years, after finishing his studies in Scotland, and taking an additional year in Germany, was settled over the United Presbyterian congregation in Irvine, a town on the coast of Ayrshire.

or other, during these seventeen years into whose inmost heart of love the angel of joy or the stronger angel of grief has not admitted me? Do city brethren rightly apprehend the close relationship between a country pastor and his people?

After labouring for a little over a quarter of a century among this loved people, he was overtaken by an illness so severe, that he could not again take up the actual duties of the pastorate, though his voice was frequently heard in the pulpit both in Scotland, England and on the Continent.

Dr. Robertson, with his lively fancy and impressionable nature, could scarcely escape being a poet as well as a preacher. The volume contains many lyrical pieces, some of which are both striking and beautiful, though most readers will find more enjoyment in the letters than in the poetry.

EDITORIAL NOTES

The attempt made last week, in this city, to form a local Branch of the Evangelical Alliance for the Dominion of Canada, was not altogether as satisfactory as could be desired.

out harmony being restored; but it is understood that the composition of the Committee will be further discussed at another meeting to be held shortly.

The purpose exists strongly in the minds of many to form, all over the country, Branches of the Dominion Evangelical Alliance of such an operative and positive character that it cannot be said of them that they have only a nominal existence.

It would appear that the taint of ritualism is not confined to certain High Church circles in Toronto. The Hamilton papers of last week contain reports of the airing before Bishop Hamilton, on the part of the Church Defence Committee, of certain grievances alleged to be troubling large sections of the diocese.

We have received for publication two letters on Formosan affairs addressed to the Editor of the PRESBYTERIAN REVIEW, the one from Rev. John Jamieson of Tamsui, the other from Mr. Thomas Paton, for many years a Colporteur of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Formosa and other parts of China.

A wedding in Canton; and what our girls' school loses this month of February, the Canadian Presbyterian Mission gains. We can only present our congratulations to Miss Baird, and hope for her, as Mrs. McClure, equal opportunities for such happy and efficient service as she has rendered the past five years.

BY MAIL. I shall take every opportunity to get subscribers for the REVIEW, as I would like to see it in the hands of every member of our congregation.

THE Chair of English in the Provincial University has been filled by the appointment of Mr. W. J. Alexander, Munro Professor of English in Dalhousie College, Halifax, N.S., to the position.

many graduates of the Provincial University itself. The disagreeable dilemma that, in the circumstances, must force itself upon the attention of Toronto University men, is that either the University has failed to produce a man qualified to fill this Chair, or that the qualifications of its graduates are, owing to some sinister influence, ignored.

At a meeting of Methodist Laymen, representatives of the Guelph, London and Niagara Conferences, held in Guelph last week, the following "platform" was adopted: (1) That the Stationing Committee be composed of ministers and laymen in equal numbers.

From this it would appear that our friends of the Methodist laity are looking towards the adoption of Presbyterian principles of Church government in large measure. Presbyterians cannot but sympathise with the laity in their efforts to modify which occasionally produces much like ecclesiastical tyranny.

THE following which we clip from the current issue of Woman's Work for Women will be read with interest by the many friends of Dr. McClure of our Mission in Honan:— A wedding in Canton; and what our girls' school loses this month of February, the Canadian Presbyterian Mission gains.

FROM A MEMBER OF THE W. F. M. S. I shall take every opportunity to get subscribers for the REVIEW, as I would like to see it in the hands of every member of our congregation.

FROM A LADY SENDING IN A LIST OF NAMES OF NEW SUBSCRIBERS:— "At Christmas I visited in homes where the REVIEW was regularly received, and I was roused by its perusal to the fact that our people who do not take it are without much missionary and other news that is most interesting, readily accessible in its pages.

THE ALTAR OF EARTH, by Mrs. T. S. Childs. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work. 7 x 4 1/4 inches, pp. 207. N. T. Wilson, London. The title-page motto, "Without shedding of blood is no remission, and the imprint of the Presbyterian Board are sufficient guarantees of the orthodoxy of this little book.

Literary Notices

THE HISTORY OF CANADA. By William Kingsford. Vols. I, II. Toronto: Rowell & Hutchison; London: Trubner & Co.

The politico-religious situation in the Province of Quebec makes Mr. Kingsford's able and dispassionate history most timely publication. French Canada has not merely had a distinct history, but the French-Canadian is a peculiar sense the product of history. A survival of medieval feudal life and habits of thought in the midst of the most progressive nation in the world is a unique phenomenon.

When Mr. Kingsford opens his narrative the mainland of America was strongly exciting the interest and cupidity of Western Europe. Pious romanticism was grotesquely intertwined with avarice. Quartier and his mates had no more settled purpose before their minds than had the French explorers of the Golden Age.

When we pass from Quartier to Champlain we stride from the dreams of childhood to a period—alas, too short!—sagacious and wise statesmanship. Mr. Kingsford's panegyric on Champlain, the new founder of Canada—is not only eloquent but true.

Dragon's teeth was sown as to embarrass civil government in Quebec ever since. This difficult and important chapter of our early history Mr. Kingsford works out with much skill and patient research—evidently drawing for original materials upon Mr. Brymner's valuable Archives.

Like our great river, the stream of our history deepens and widens when we view it from the citadel of Quebec. The struggle there determined the language, the laws, the institutions of North America. As we weigh the momentous issues that are trembling in the balance, how interesting to all Canadians—may, all Americans—become Kirke's conquest of Canada in 1629; Phipp's attempt to repeat Kirke in 1690; and even the fiasco of 1711, when Walker and Jack Hill—by the grace of Queen Anne's waiting-maid, admiral and general of the Quebec expedition—brought disgrace upon England, and gave Quebec the church of Notre Dame des Victoires.

At the close of Mr. Kingsford's second volume, the irrepressible New England colonists are pushing their way to the shores of the Great Lakes. From their post at Albany they have diverted the fur trade from the St. Lawrence to the Hudson. Bent on restoring the current of trade to its old channel, the French build a block house at Lewiston on the Niagara. To this move Governor Burnet, of New York, replied in 1724, by despatching his men to Lake Ontario, and by then and there founding and fortifying Oswego. Scarcely does this apparition cast its shadow upon the waters, when we hear of Burnet's agent among the Indians of Lake Nipissing and the Sault. Our historians will, doubtless, in his next volume lead us through interesting details to the fact that the French, to keep Oswego in check, founded Fort Rouillé, whose site Torontonians have, by an obelisk commemorated as the cradle of their city.

THE ALTAR OF EARTH, by Mrs. T. S. Childs. Philadelphia: Presbyterian Board of Publication and Sabbath School Work. 7 x 4 1/4 inches, pp. 207. N. T. Wilson, London. The title-page motto, "Without shedding of blood is no remission, and the imprint of the Presbyterian Board are sufficient guarantees of the orthodoxy of this little book. It is written in the form of familiar letters from a Bible-class teacher to one of her pupils, who had imbibed disrespect for the Old Testament sacrifices, as of a ruder age and for a ruder people, from a popular but unsound preacher. The style is interesting, and very full treatment is given of the various Old Test