

British American Presbyterian,
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FOR TERMS, ETC., SEE FRONT PAGE.
C. BLAKEETT ROBINSON
Editor and Proprietor.

TO CORRESPONDENTS.

Letters and articles intended for the next issue should be in the hands of the Editor not later than Tuesday morning.

All communications must be accompanied by the writer's name, otherwise they will not be inserted.

Articles of accepted will be returned, if, at the time they are sent, a request is made to that effect, and sufficient postage stamps are enclosed. Manuscripts not so accompanied will not be preserved, and when requests for their return cannot be complied with.

OUR GENERAL AGENTS.

Mr. Wm. S. B. (General Agent) and Subscription Agent will visit places East of Toronto in the course of this and following weeks.

Mr. CHARLES NICOL, General Agent for the Presbyterian in now in Western Ontario pushing the interests of this journal. We commend him to the best offices of ministers and people. Any assistance rendered him in his work will be taken by us as a personal kindness.

British American Presbyterian.
FRIDAY, JUNE 20, 1877.

THE FIRE AT ST. JOHN, N.B.

The sad tidings from St. John reached us last week after we had gone to press—too late to allow us to express our great sorrow and deep sympathy with the sufferers. At first it seemed almost beyond belief to be told that this prosperous city was smouldering in ashes. It was difficult to believe the despatches that met our eyes on Thursday morning, which conveyed the news of the destructive fire. The General Assembly evidently did not realize the wide-spread disaster, when they passed the resolution of condolence. It was only when the citizens of Halifax were called to action, that the Assembly knew the extent of the conflagration. In fact, the tidings took us completely by surprise. It could hardly be believed that a city like St. John should be so completely at the mercy of the elements. The change is awful to contemplate. One day the citizens rise from their slumbers, and go forth in the bright sunshine to their various tasks. The next they are rushing from the advancing and devouring enemy. In the morning the warehouses, banks, wharves, schools, are the scene of wonderful activity. In the evening they present to view one mass of darkness and blackness. It is found after careful computation that two-thirds of the city is destroyed, that its most valuable buildings are burned, that property of the value of from ten to twenty million dollars has been lost, and that about three-score of our fellow-creatures have forfeited their lives.

All this is evidence of the fact that in this advanced age there is no real protection for life and property in cities. It is to be presumed that St. John, like Toronto, prided herself on her Fire Department. The firemen were in no way inferior to their brethren in other cities in point of bravery, skill, and endurance. The engines were probably all that could be desired, and yet the city lies in ashes to-day. It teaches that while such agencies are of value for the prevention of destructive fires, they are unable to cope with the elements when they get the upper hand. A fire takes place in a workshop of the suburb of Portland. It is not extinguished in time. It quickly seizes upon the nearest building. As yet it could be easily extinguished were the engines and men on the ground. A strong breeze from the sea is blowing. It fans the flames. In a moment they rush forward, seizing upon every inflammable material. The wind continuing, sends the raging flames still forward in their triumphal march. Soon the heroic men stand baffled in presence of the raging enemy. The fire leaps frantic at the thought of its wild liberty. The post office, the Custom House, magnificent warehouses, the retail shops, the dwellings alike of the rich and poor, churches, schools—all are folded in its greedy embrace. Men despairing of accomplishing anything stand aghast, and with wild gesticulations and piercing cries, give vent to the inertia of despair. Women and children with looks of horror depicted on their countenances are flying before the remorseless flames.

Such was the conflagration, whose smoke is still rising from the exhausted embers. Or rather we should say, language fails to convey a conception of the awful horror. And yet let the citizens of Toronto and every other city, remember that it may soon be their turn. What is to hinder the same thing taking place any day in Toronto? We say, ours is a superior Fire Department. But is this sufficient protection during extraordinary circumstances? The probability is, that any ordinary fire could not resist the skillful and daring onset of our men. But let there be a fire in several localities at one and the same time, as was the case with Chicago as well as St. John, let a strong wind be blowing from the lake; the wind would fan the flames; dangerous sparks would be carried to the towers and steeples of the churches and public buildings, or to the high Mansard roofs which have become so common in our day. The Fire Brigade would prove altogether inadequate for the task. They could not cope

with such an enemy. The city of Toronto would be at the mercy of fire and the wind. But this is not the worst of it. Were our buildings generally as nearly fire-proof as possible, there would not be the same likelihood of a wide spread conflagration taking place. But look around our streets. Side by side with the stone building, there is no end to all kinds of wooden erections. And what is worse, there are many dwellings and buildings that are only wood-work veneered with plaster, or with brick. These in consequence, being deemed comparatively fire-proof, do not in a moment of excitement receive the same attention as the buildings that are to the eye wooden in structure. The flames would thus spread from house to house, from street to street, from block to block, and no matter what may be the character of our Fire Department, they might prove powerless in such an emergency. In a day our beautiful city might, like St. John, be laid low in the dust. And so with every other city that we know of in the Dominion.

Let us trust that due attention will be given to this matter—the most important science of the age. The art of extinguishing fires is, in our day, carried to perfection, but the science of the subject is wholly and sadly neglected. It should be made a special study alongside of chemistry and electricity. But this consideration apart, it is a matter of rejoicing that the country has been roused into a noble and enthusiastic outburst of benevolence in the view of the wide-spread suffering entailed by the great fire. The cities are vying with one another as to which will do her best. Toronto has come to the front, and will probably contribute as a whole not less than fifty thousand dollars. Other cities have done equally well. Hundreds of towns and cities are yet to be heard from. In the United States action in this direction has taken place in many of the leading cities. The fire of benevolence will doubtless leap over the oceans; and we will be made glad to learn of the considerate donations of the peoples of the Old World. Let us hope that a sufficient amount will be contributed to lay anew the foundations of the stricken city. From her ashes, Phoenix-like, St. John will undoubtedly arise in grander proportions, and with more solid structures. Her citizens are not paralyzed or vanquished. They live to-day, and are already making their old energy and enterprise felt in presence of the blackened ruins. It will be well if we all learn the many lessons that are addressed to our common sense and to our immortal souls in the midst of such a terrible calamity.

The General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church in Canada has accomplished a great deal of valuable work since our last issue. It has evidently gone at its task with enterprise and determination. The calibre of this Assembly is quite worthy of the noble Church it represents. There is a large number of very able debaters. But what is remarkable they are all pretty thorough business men. It was with pleasure we listened to the honestly made remark of the delegate of the Northern Presbyterian Church, U.S.A., to our General Assembly, and who spent the Sabbath with us in Toronto, that the impression upon a stranger is that there are many men in the Canada Presbyterian Church of great mental force and energy. By the way, it was with much delight we read the criticism of the *Globe's* reporter on the appearance made by the Rev. Mr. Laidlaw of Detroit, the American delegate to whom we have just referred, before our Assembly. Mr. Laidlaw in graceful terms conveyed the friendly greetings of his church, spoke good humouredly of being a Canadian, and revisiting his old home at Halifax, and expressed with much warmth the earnest desire that the Presbyterian Church in Canada might go forward with faith and determination to her noble work. The reports read at this Assembly of the Home and Foreign Mission Boards, of the French Evangelization scheme, of the Colleges of Quebec, Kingston, Halifax, Montreal, Toronto and Manitoba, of the Committee on the Lumbermen's department of the Home Mission Board, and of Sabbath schools, have been eminently satisfactory. The discussion upon representation of elders was instructive. We were glad to see the elders coming to the front and speaking out like men. That is the way to make themselves felt and prized. The discussion upon Hymnology was rather disappointing. There should be immediate action upon this subject. It becomes the Assembly to legislate for the greater part of her congregations in a matter so important as this, and not to leave it in its present undetermined state.

He who waits to do a great deal of good at once, will never do anything.—*Dr. Johnson.*

MATTHEW HENRY, a little before his death, said to a friend, "You have been used to take notice of the sayings of dying men: this is mine, that a life spent in the service of God, and in communion with Him, is the most comfortable and happy life that any one can live in this world."

Ministers and Churches.

(We urgently solicit from Presbyterial Clergy and our readers, generally, items for this department of our paper, so as to make it a general epitome of all local church news.)

It is reported from Halifax that the Rev. John MacLachlan of Woodstock has received a call from Inverness, Scotland.

TWENTY-SIX names were recently added to the roll of Granton congregation, making in all seventy-seven new members received during the last nine months.

THE Rev. R. Hamilton, of Fallonton and Avenbank, has sailed for Edinburgh as a delegate to the Pan Presbyterian Council, which meets there in July. At the Wednesday evening meeting preceding his departure his congregation presented him with a purse of \$116 to assist in defraying the expenses of his journey, and to show the sincerity of their good wishes for him.

LAST Sabbath being the festival of Saint John the Baptist, the Knights of Malta celebrated the day with an appropriate sermon, preached in the Central Presbyterian Church. At six o'clock the Knights assembled at their hall, and proceeded thence to the church on Grosvenor street. Over one hundred and fifty members were present. The building was crowded with a large and attentive audience. The organ was admirably handled by Mr. Reynolds, and the choir and congregation rendered the praise with great taste. After brief devotional exercises, the Rev. David Mitchell announced as his text Acts xxi. 30, "A citizen of no mean city." He said the Apostle was proud of his birth-city. I address you as citizens of no mean city. Here the speaker spoke at length of Toronto, as beautiful for situation, as the seat of government, as a place of learning and commerce. "From her rapid growth, her intellectual vigour, the sterling qualities of her people, her enterprise in commerce, her ambition in learning, her devotion to religion, the city of Toronto is destined with the advancing years to rise to a high and commanding position amongst the great cities of the world. It should be a matter of pride and rejoicing that we are its citizens. But at the same time, it ought to inspire us with a sense of the duties and responsibilities which devolve upon us. Every one of us is responsible for making this no mean city in regard to her political institutions." The preacher here drew a strong picture of the bribery and corruption of New York, and spoke of the duty of electing none but patriotic and efficient men to occupy high official positions. He spoke of every one doing his utmost to make this no mean city in respect to morality, and to the great reforms that were needed to repress the evils which abounded. He next referred to the fact that upon every one rested the responsibility of making this no mean city in the matter of commercial integrity. It should be the aim of every one that the city be widely known as a place in which honest dealers alone can thrive. Again, he said, let it be our endeavor to secure for the city the reputation of being not mean, or worthy of being despised, as regards education, general intelligence, and the circulation of a pure literature. And, lastly, let it be our life work to make our city distinguished for religious liberty, for her Protestantism, and her Christian benevolence. Mr. Mitchell said he addressed the members of the order before him, as those who were marching under the blue banner of the covenant, and commended what they were doing for Protestant evangelization, not only in the city, but throughout the Dominion.

Book Reviews.

SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY. New York: Scribner & Co.

The July number opens with an illustrated paper on "Bow-Shooting" by Maurice Thomson, who deals with the subject in a practical vein. Mr. Thomson is accustomed to shoot his game with the bow, and he gives his reasons for preferring it to the shot gun. There are anecdotes of some of his archery trips in Florida and Indiana, and explicit directions are given as to the manufacture of the implements, with directions for their use.

There is a remarkable story of twenty-five pages, translated from the Russian of Tourgueneff and entitled "The Nobleman of the Steppe," in which a distinguished part is played by a Cossack horse, upon whose identity the interest hinges. The following extract illustrates the improvidence, tyranny and caprice of Russian noblemen of the last generation:—

"Pantalei Jeremaitch's father had received his estate in a broken-down condition. In his turn he had lived in a free and easy way, and at his death had left to his only heir, Pantalei, the mortgaged village of Besonovo with thirty-three male and twenty-six female serfs, and fourteen and a half dessiatines of badly located land in the wilderness of Kolobrod; moreover, no deed of this tract was found among the papers of the deceased. He had, it must be admitted, succeeded in ruining himself in the most singular manner. According to his views, a nobleman ought to have nothing to do with tradesmen, bourgeois, and 'rascals' of that stripe. In his house he established work-shops for

mechanics of all kinds. 'That is more proper and much cheaper,' he used to say. 'Rural economy!'—this destructive notion he did not abandon to the end of his days, and it was really that which wrought his ruin. But then in return he lived in pleasure and satisfied every one of his whims.

Among other things it occurred to him to have a family carriage built under his own directions and it was so large that, in spite of the combined efforts of all the horses of the village and their owners, it fell on the first downward slope, and upset to pieces. Jeremaitch (for that was the name of Pantalei's father) had a monument erected on that spot, and gave himself no further trouble about it. He also took it into his head to build a church, alone (of course), and without the aid of an architect. The burning of the tiles consumed a whole forest; he had a mighty foundation laid, as if he intended to erect a state cathedral, built the walls, and began the vault of the cupola; but the cupola fell down. He made a second attempt; the cupola broke down once more; a third time there was the same result. Then Jeremaitch grew thoughtful; 'there is something wrong about this affair,' he thought, 'some cursed witchcraft,' and he gave an order that all the old women in the village should be flogged. The old women were flogged, but for all that the cupola would not stand.

The peasants were to live on a new principle, all according to his 'rural economy.' He had their houses built three and three together, so that they formed a triangle, in the midst of which a pole was raised, with a little house for the starlings, and a flag. Every day he invented something new; now he made soup out of burrs, now he cut off the tails of the horses to adorn the caps of the servants, now he sowed nettles instead of hemp, fed the pigs on mushrooms, etc.

One day he read in the *Moscow Times* an article by the landed proprietor, Chriak Chrupperski, on the utility of good morals for the peasantry, and immediately he gave command that all his peasants should learn the article by heart. The peasants obeyed. Their master then asked them, they really understood what they had learned, and the overseer answered for them, 'Why shouldn't they understand it?' About the same time, for the sake of order and rural economy, he had all his serfs numbered and the number of each sewed on his collar. Whenever they met their master, every one cried out, 'Number so-and-so passes by,' and the master answered graciously, 'Go, in God's name.'

The next thing that attracts our attention is a paper of Anecdotes of Gilbert Stuart, the painter, by his daughter. Of these anecdotes we select two: the first will probably be highly appreciated by many of our contributors and correspondents, and the second is of general interest:—

"Stuart once painted a head of a friend to whom he was very much attached, and who had recently died. But the panel upon which it was painted began to split through the middle. My father tried to find some one who could join it without injury, but all declined it as an impossibility. One person who happened to see it, however, declared with great confidence that he was sure he could do the work satisfactorily. He took the panel away, and in time it was returned, joined in the neatest and firmest manner; but lo and behold, the man had shaved the picture down until the features met! The nostrils came together, also the corners of the mouth, entirely leaving out the bridge of the nose. When things are written with care for the press and then are cut down to suit the publishers, I am always reminded of this occurrence, for the latter process produces an uncomfortable vacancy, and brings to a very sudden termination circumstances that require explanation."

"Ruggles, an old cabinet-maker, of Boston, told me that he used to make Stuart's panels for him. They were made of mahogany, and as Stuart complained that he misused the rough surface of canvas that was favorable to the sparkle of his color, Ruggles invented the way of producing that sort of surface by cutting teeth in the plane-iron and dragging it backward, that proving the best way of indenting without tearing the wood. Ruggles said that at the time he used to work for Stuart, his shop was in Winter street, on the ground floor, and one day, sitting at his shop door, he saw Stuart coming down the street, in earnest conversation with a gentleman. Stuart came into the shop followed by his friend, and, said Ruggles, 'I saw that the gentleman was urging him to tell him something that he was unwilling to trust him with.' Stuart said: 'Mr. Ruggles! have you got a piece of chalk?' I gave him a piece; he then turned to the other and said: 'I know a secret; that stands for me,' and he made a mark thus, i. 'Now, you are my good friend and would like to know my secret; you are a man of honor, and if I tell you, it will do no harm, and, at any rate, it will gratify you as a mark of my confidence, so I tell you,' and making another mark, i, 'that stands for you, so there are two that know it. But you are a married man, and as your wife is a discreet woman, and you never have any secrets between you, some day when you are alone together, and have nothing to talk about, you tell her you know something curious, but are afraid she will speak of it. She will be indignant at not being trusted, insists that she ought to know; promises she never will whisper it to any one, and perhaps cries a little, so you tell her, and that stands for her; he made another mark, i. 'Now, how many people know it?' 'Three,' said his friend. 'There are one hundred and eleven that know it,—111,' said Stuart."

In his Editorial on "The New Temperance Movement," Dr. Holland is perhaps somewhat severe on those advocates of temperance who are not prepared to go the length of total abstinence:—

"There seems to be a revival of the popular interest in the temperance question, not only in this country, but in England. Indeed, it seems to us that the peculiar phase which the revival presents in this country is born of the English fact. The terrible state of things in that coun-

try among the poor, which has given rise to such noble efforts for temperance by Cardinal Manning, has roused, at last, the ecclesiastics of the English church, and it is becoming quite respectable now in England to work for temperance. That makes it respectable here, of course, and it is really very encouraging to see wine-bibbling clergyman and church member trying, in a moderate way, to counteract the legitimate effects of their own pernicious example. It is a little irritating to listen to their declamations of sympathy with the 'extremists,' who have made temperance a hissing and a by-word among respectable people. It is a bit rasping to the original Adam in an old-fashioned teetotaler, who has denied himself that he might save his fellows, to be told that he is looked upon by the people of the new departure as a fanatic; but he understands exactly what that means, and should forgive it and forget it. It is a comfort and an encouragement to know that the results of intemperance have become so well appreciated that 'men of moderate views' cannot keep on with their wine-drinking without doing something against their consciences. It is even amusing to see them hold to their wine-glasses with one hand, while they gesture furiously with the other about the abuses of the excise law, and stand upon their rights as freemen, gentlemen, and Christians, with one foot, while the other is lively in kicking the illegal rum seller. But we would not make fun of them, for, however much they may be blinded as to their own position and the position of those whose principles and policy they have decided for so many years, they are to be congratulated that they have awakened to the fact that something must be done, and that they have a duty to discharge in the matter. Nay, we are willing to go farther than this, if they prove themselves to be in earnest. We will follow their lead, knowing, of course, where an earnestly pursued purpose will conduct them. All the earnest workers for temperance land in a common conclusion; and the total abstainer may be sure that if these men are in earnest they will soon be in his company. There is no help for it, as he has thoroughly learned by experience and observation."

The number contains many other clever and valuable articles, and is, on the whole, a very fair sample of this deservedly popular magazine.

ST. NICHOLAS. New York: Scribner & Co.

This attractive magazine for the young continues to combine instruction and amusement in very judicious proportions. The following paragraph is taken from an article on George III., by Noah Brooks, in the July number:—

"For one, I love to think of the pure and simple life of George III. As kings go, he was decent, reputable, and well disposed. His palace life must have been dreary and humdrum to the last degree; but it was clean and wholesome, which cannot be said of the life of some of the kings and princes who came before him, or who have lived in England since his day. His daughters were handsome and accomplished: that is to say, they played the piano, worked elegantly in floss silks, painted impossible flowers on white satin, and furnished whole suites of rooms with their own needlework. The sons were big, rough, unmannerly, and much given to rude sports. Of these the king loved Frederick, the Duke of York, the best; and when York visited Weymouth, where the king was living for a while, a portable house was built for him close by his father's. The fond father clung to the arm of his dear Frederick, but the boisterous young prince was stupefied by the dullness of the little court circle: he broke away and fled, after staying only one night in the house which his father had been at such pains to provide. The Princess Amelia was her father's darling, and in all the history of George there is no more pathetic picture than that of her sickness and early death. When her father was old and blind, she was attacked by a lingering illness. The poor, sightless monarch spent hours by her bedside, passing his fingers, from time to time, over her face, as if to assure himself that she was there. She loved him with unalterable affection when he was deserted by others, and on her deathbed he was more than ever assured that she loved him for himself alone. A touching sight it was when the king, one gloomy day, told of the death of Amelia, threw up his clasped hands and cried: 'It is too much. This was caused by poor Amelia; and so parted in agony from her reason.'"

Intelligent young people are very fond of writing that is so much in sympathy with nature as the following taken from "And the Sun smiled," by Margaret Eyttinge:—

"Go away, for a little while," said the rain to the sun. "Don't you see I am preparing to visit the earth? And as you ought to know, the sun shouldn't be shining when the rain-drops are falling."

"It's such a lovely—such a very lovely day," said the sun, "and the earth is so beautiful and pleasant to see, that I don't want to 'go away.'"

"I shan't stay long—not more than five or ten minutes," said the rain. "I'll only make a shower-call."

"But I'm not content to lose sight of all this joy and loveliness even for five or ten minutes," said the sun. "Ever so many new buds and flowers came out to greet me this morning, and ever so many baby-birds sang to me their first twittering, tremulous song, and the brooks dimpled and laughed as my rays kissed them, and the fairies looked straight up at me with frank, fearless faces, saying, 'Welcome, dear sun!'—and the buttercups proudly showed me their pretty blossoms, that I might see it was my color they wore; and they are all, at this moment, as happy as happy can be. Why can't you leave them alone? According to my way of thinking, they have no need of you in the day-time, when I am here to make life bright and warm. Wait until night lifts her curtain from the other half of the world to throw it over this. Then I shall be shining on far-distant lands, and the moon and stars will be in the sky in my place, and I dare say they won't object to your clouds veiling their faces for an hour or two, for their light and power