

## Contributions.

## On Nature.

Yes, it is indeed a desirable thing to live on this earth, to breathe the breath of life amidst so much that is beautiful and good, when one can forget self and sin and sorrow and all that blights and annoys and distresses, and standing beneath the broad blue canopy that over-arches earth, breathing the fresh, pure air of heaven, rich with the aroma of nature, who will not say it is a grand, a glorious privilege to live? There is so much in nature that is beautiful so much in the inanimate creation to admire and love. Go where you may, turn which way you will and new objects of beauty greet the sight. Take up a little pebble from the clear rippling brook, and you find it set with gems. Pluck a flower from the garden or the wildwood and scan its delicately veined and marvellously painted petals, and stand lost in wonder at its sublime workmanship. Look down at your feet on the green and gray moss-covered stones upon which you stand. Note the many spirals and columns and cells and feathery sprays of which it is composed, and where is the hand of the most cunningly skilled mechanic that can cope with the beauty and skill that is there displayed? Take up a blade of grass or a leaf from the tree, and in them you will discover a lesson for every botanist, a sermon for every preacher, a whole world of thought and study for the philosopher. And these are only the smallest particles, the minutest accessories to the beautiful garb wherewith the Divine hand has clothed the earth. The enthusiastic lover of nature can stand and view the far-stretching landscape painted in all the rich, warm, glowing colors of vegetable and atmospheric tint as no artist could paint it; with the fair, blue cloudless sky above, at the early morning hour when the rising sun flings his mantle of glory all golden out over the lively green of the trees and sod, over the blossoming shrubs and perfumed flowers, all bespangled and glittering with the quivering dew-gems of the night, and revel in the beautiful and sublime creation of nature. True, we sometimes see defects and blemishes in nature, and then again we can see that she has a cunning and beautiful artifice in hiding some of her defects and blemishes. I have seen a crumbling, decaying old tree that was once the pride of the forest, stretched upon the ground without sod or branch and that looked as if it had lain there for centuries, all cunningly covered over and bright with the beauty of living vegetation; a seed dropped by a bird on the wing, whose hidden germ has sprung into life and developed into a leafy bush or a blossoming plant; the trailing vine, whose tendrils has reached out and taken hold of the rough bark, and the rough and crumbling bark itself thickly carpeted over with rich moss of many hues, whose countless tiny cups of scarlet and bronze and silver and green look as if they were the work of fairy fingers. Nature teaches us a lesson of hope and faith. She teaches that from deformity beauty shall spring, that unsightliness and defect shall be clad in the habiliments of radiance and splendor. Yea, more than all she teaches us that from the dead life shall come forth into renewed vigor and comeliness. Year after year as the season changes does she bring before us lessons emblematic of the resurrected body and of the immortality of the soul. The apparent deadness of nature at this season of the year is not death, but sleep. 'Tis but the decaying of the outward form or visible body underneath and within, where lies silent and dormant the embryo until

the spring returns and all the pulses of nature begin to throb with awakening life and animation, warmed by the quickening influence of the sun's genial rays, fed and refreshed by the health-giving showers, nature awakened to life, putting on new garments of richness and beauty, filling the air with the distilling perfume of opening buds and flowers.

"Sun-kissed meadows stored with daisies,  
Smiling in the mellow light,  
Woodlands vying with the rainbow  
To produce each color bright.  
Gardens blush with flowery favors,  
Fairy chimes each floral bell,  
Resurrected in morn of nature,  
Sweet each bud and blossom tell"

And so we might say of the decaying of human nature, when the soul has left its mortal clay and the body lies pulseless and inanimate, it is not death, but only sleep, and when the glorious morning of eternal spring shall be ushered in, men shall the spirit—the germ—reunited with the body, quicken it in its newness of life and immortality to bloom incorruptible and triumphant over death and all decay. Nature is God's book of instruction to His children, and what lessons of faith and trust and patience may be learned from its wide open pages every day! What delightful studies in the sublime workmanship of its wonderful construction! How elevating and ennobling to the mind is the contemplation of the glorious works of the Creator, who has clothed the fields and the forests in such garments of richness and beauty and adorned the flowers in such magnificent array, that not even the glory of Solomon could compare with that of a single lily. E. C.

## Summerside Letter.

In a former letter I promised to tell you something about this island; and something about the work and workers connected with the church of Christ. I shall first tell you something about P. E. Island. It is situated in the southern part of the Gulf of St. Lawrence and is separated from the mainland by the Northumberland Strait. The nearest point to the mainland is Cape Traverse, which is only nine miles from Cape Tormentine, in New Brunswick. In shape the island is long and narrow, being about 130 miles long and having an average breadth of about eighteen miles. Its coast is indented by many inlets from the sea, many of which form good harbors. At Summerside, the point from which I write, the distance from shore to shore is only four miles. Just who discovered the island I cannot say, as there is a dispute about that. It is said that John Cabot landed here on June 24, 1497, and called it St. John in honor of the day. It is also said that Verazani claimed the island for the King of France in 1523. In 1663 Capt. Doublet received a formal grant of the island from the King of France. By the treaty of Utrecht in 1713 Nova Scotia (Acadia at that time) was given to the English. This caused a large number of the French inhabitants of this province to move to the island, which still remained as a French possession. In 1758 England sent out a large fleet to conquer Canada. Quebec and Louisburg were the principal strongholds. These yielded to the courage of the English, and this island passed over to the rule of the British. The civil history of this island as a British possession begins in 1763, when the treaty of Fontenbleau was executed. In 1766 Capt. Holland finished a survey of the island, which he had carried on under the direction of the government. By this survey the island was divided into sixty seven lots or townships. These lots were granted to in-

dividuals and companies, and they in turn rented to others. This system of landlordism proved unsatisfactory and from time to time gave rise to disturbances, but wise legislation made proper arrangements, and at present the old system is looked upon as a thing of the past. In 1873 the island became a province of the Dominion of Canada. It is now divided into three counties and contains a population of about 100,000. Charlottetown is the capital and is a city of about 13,000. There are very good opportunities for education provided by two colleges and several high schools, as well as a plentiful supply of district schools. The principal industries are farming and fishing. We have here some of the richest soil in Canada. The Roman Catholic is the prevailing religion. Among Protestants the Presbyterian is the strongest body.

The Disciples have eight congregations, with a total membership of about 800. Four preachers are engaged upon the island—Bro. G. D. Weaver at Montague and East Point, Bro. O. B. Emery at Charlottetown and Lot 218, Bro. D. Crawford at New Glasgow, and the writer at Summerside, Tignish and Tryon. The work in this as in the other Maritime Provinces has not grown very rapidly, although much faithful work has been done. Bro. D. Crawford for nearly half a century has been a faithful soldier of the cross, and I do not think I am saying too much when I say that the growth of the churches on this end of the island has been, owing to his energy and love for the faith once delivered to the saints, advanced more than by any other man. He is now in his seventy-third year, preaches regularly, is editor of the *Christian*, and is as earnest as he can be. He is truly a father in Israel. The late Dr. Knox was also an earnest worker, especially on the east end of the island. Notwithstanding the earnest work of these and others, our churches have not multiplied very fast, the chief reason for this being the exodus from the province of our young people to the United States. P. E. Island has sent a grand lot of good men to swell the ranks of the Disciples there. The church of which I am pastor has sent from its fostering care a number of good preachers, among whom I might name A. McLean, Neil McLeod, etc. The brethren are warm-hearted to a man, and preaching brethren from other places are always welcomed. We have an annual meeting, which is held on the second Lord's day in July, this year at Montague. At that season of the year the country is at its best, almost like one huge flower garden; beautiful fields of timothy and clover fill the air with a delicious aroma, while the tall wheat and oats present a soft color to the eye as the emerald green moves to and fro in the wind; and then the acres of potatoes covered with masses of fragrant blossoms, all help to make a drive through this country a very pleasing affair. Then there are the farm houses snugly sheltered from winter's cold and summer's heat in a grove of beautiful shade trees. The fields slope gently toward the river bank and the stream goes on its way and the music of rippling waters adds a charm to the beautiful scene—but I think you had better pay us a visit.

W. H. HARDING.

Summerside, P. E. Island.

Halifax, N. S.

Feb the 12th was a good day for the church in Halifax. It was the day of the dedication of their new church house. The day was fine, the house was well filled, there were four preachers present: Bro. Stewart, of St. John, N. B.; Bro. Gates, of Hants Co.,

N. S.; Bro. Storms, of King's Co., and the writer, of Milton. There were also a number of brethren from Hants and King's counties. The writer spoke in the morning, and Bro. Stewart in the afternoon and evening, and Bro. Gates Monday evening. One hundred and fifty dollars were taken in the collections. This was the best day our brethren ever saw in the city of Halifax; they have now a very fine, neat and commodious house of worship. It is well finished and furnished, and well lighted with the electric lights. It will seat 350. It has a baptistry and two dressing rooms. The circular form of the pews makes it easy for all to see the speaker, and its acoustics make it easy for all to hear. Its location is in the north of the city, where there are no other churches very near, and where the city is rapidly building up. Never in the history of this church has there been such an encouraging outlook, and such favorable prospects for success as the present. These brethren have made a noble and a generous struggle. It has been a strong pull, and a long pull, since the beginning of the primitive gospel in their city. It has been a tug of war with them. They have been through the conflict of opposition, battered and shattered time and again, but they nailed their colors to the mast and have stood steadfast, immovable, and we think have passed the Rubicon. The brethren in these Maritime Provinces are deeply interested in this work, and are coming up to their help with financial aid in a commendable manner.

If there are any who read these lines whose hearts are moved toward this little band of brethren of 40 members, let them feel assured they could do nothing more profitable and worthy, and that would be more highly appreciated than to forward to them a dollar, more or less, better more. There is yet quite an indebtedness on the house. To pay this and to support preaching there, will tax these brethren beyond their power. They will therefore be compelled to look for help outside of the city. But the same faith and works that have given them success, so far, and that has moved the hearts of the brotherhood toward them, will give them continued success.

H. MURRAY.

## Selections.

## A Gross Outrage.

SCHOOL CHILDREN FORCIBLY BAPTIZED INTO THE ROMAN CATHOLIC FAITH.

The *Patriotic American*, of Detroit, Michigan, publishes the following letter from Elroy, Wis.:

"There are thousands of people in the East who will be loath to believe the high-handed manner in which the representatives of Rome conduct themselves where they get the opportunity; but the case which has been decided in the Circuit Court here, and which has been appealed to the Supreme Court, will give their authentic information and open their eyes.

"This town has a very large Roman Catholic population. It is not a large place, having a population of about 1,600, and is located on the C. and N. W. railway in Juneau county about seventy miles west of Madison. They have one Public school with four rooms, in charge of four teachers. There are three school commissioners elected by the voters, and last fall two of those elected were Roman Catholics and one a Protestant. They met and elected one of the Romanists president and the other secretary.

"At the regular meeting the two Romanists would not attend, so there would be no quorum; then they would call a special meeting and not notify the Protestant. They appointed three Roman Catholic teachers and retained one lady who had long been teaching there, and who was a Protestant, though there was a clamour among the

Romanists of the town for her removal also—but they seemed satisfied with 75 per cent. of the teachers.

"Then came the priest of the Roman Catholic Church and ordered the Bible out of the schools. This was done. Then he ordered that the Roman Catholic catechism should be taught in the schools; the Protestant teacher objected, but she had to submit or resign. Then came the crowning outrage of all. One morning the priest came into the school and ordered the three Roman Catholic teachers to take all of their scholars over to the church at once.

"He then went into the other room and notified the lady to take all her pupils over to his church, as some interesting proceedings were to take place. She protested; but he marched every one of his scholars off, and, taking every child over to the church, he publicly 'consecrated' or baptized them into the Roman Catholic faith, Protestants and all, and many of the little folks did not know what was being done to them.

"This last indignity was too much for some of the Protestant parents, and with the Protestant School Commissioner they applied to the Circuit Court for an injunction to restrain the priest from further interfering with the Public school. The court has granted the injunction, and the priest and his backers have appealed the case to the Supreme Court. This is the Supreme Court that last year decided that the Holy Bible was a sectarian book and must not be read in the Public schools.

"The Supreme Court decides such appeals on the briefs submitted, and the Roman Catholics have plenty of money to retain the best attorneys to fight their case, while the Americans have no such powerful organization.

"In case the Supreme Court decides in favour of the priest, what will he do next? And what will every priest in Wisconsin do if the people submit? This is in America in 1893.

"The records of the Juneau county, Wis., court will verify every particular as given above."

Let Canada beware. Give equal rights as citizens, to all; but special privileges, on account of race or religion, to none.

## Exemption of Church Property From Taxation.

In beginning my study of this question of exemption of church property, I was favorable to the taxation of lands only, but the more thorough investigation of the subject has led me to the conclusion that the buildings also should be taxed. The religious uses of church property furnish no reason why it should not be taxed the same as other property. To make the religious use of church property a reason for exemption is, as far as it goes, a virtual union between Church and State. It, in effect, concedes the principle that the support of religion is one of the duties of the State, which I do not believe to be true.

The objection is raised that churches do not belong to individuals, that they are public property as really as a city hall or a postoffice, and hence should receive official recognition and help. This objection does not in my mind accord with truth. Church property is not public property; it does not belong to the whole community any more than the Bank of Hamilton does. It is private property, owned and controlled by individuals or a religious society. The Government does not own it, nor does it control its uses any more than it controls the uses of all private property. It is very true that the uses are in the moral interest of the community as a whole, but this does not constitute it public property. If it did by the same theory nearly all private property would be public property, and hence might claim exemption.

The land on which all our churches are built is property, the buildings erected on these lands are property, in the aggregate making a large amount, and it is, in the strictest sense, private