

to the report given, the denomination has, throughout the three Provinces, 7 Associations, 387 Churches, with a membership of 40,843; during the year 2,014 baptisms, being only a fraction over five to a Church.

THE following, which will be of interest to our readers, we clip from a private letter, written us by Bro. R. W. Stevenson:

I am thinking somewhat of attending the Annual Meeting at Milton, N. S. . . . I have had a splendid meeting at Montague—nineteen additions, all by primitive obedience, except one reclaimed. One whole household—parents and children—but no infants among them. Charlottetown, P. E. I., August 22.

WE heartily welcome Bro. H. A. Macdonald as a contributor to our columns; and though his first appearance before our readers his interest in his Island brethren and a knowledge of their sympathy in him and his work, coupled with a promise made by him, leads us *all* to expect that he will frequently favor us with something of interest and profit to his friends living in these parts.

THE progress of the cholera throughout Spain and France is something terrible. Since the beginning of the epidemic, there have been in Spain 170,000 cases and over 75,000 deaths, and in France about 1,400. In Marseilles the doctors are unable to cope with the plague. The cablegrams inform us the victims die suddenly without occurrence of diarrhoea or vomiting. The patient feels coldness which cannot be counteracted by reactives or even by the most violent friction. Two hours after death the body becomes black. Although the epidemic is not contagious, it is feared that 100 deaths daily will soon be recorded.

THE small-pox seems to be raging in Montreal, and causing almost a panic among its citizens. Theatres have been closed, employers have ordered their employes to be vaccinated under pain of dismissal. Disinfectants are used in the watering of streets. One fact worthy of note is, that out of something like 200 deaths, but six are Protestants. The French Canadians who are stubbornly opposed to vaccination, furnish the rest. The hope entertained by many that winter will arrest the scourge in its mad career, finds but little encouragement from the fact that during the winter months of 1877 the death rate, from small-pox, was greater by far than that for the summer months.

## ORIGINAL CONTRIBUTIONS.

### THOUGHTS AT A GRAVE.

HENRY A. MACDONALD.

I lately stood beside an open grave. This in itself was not a new experience, yet the feeling that lay on my heart was new, and revealed to me that, for the time at least, I questioned the wisdom of God; or, at best, only sullenly yielded to His will.

Let me explain the reason of my rebellious feelings.

I had been in that "silent city" a few days before, and had seen the grave close over the coffin of one who had lived past life's allotted years. She had been permitted to taste of the triumphs of life, as well as to share in its conflicts. She had passed through all the stages of human existence—innocent childhood, expectant youth, sober yet happy womanhood, and ripe old age. She had been a happy girl, a winsome bride, a radiant mother. She had plucked the blossoms, and had lived to taste the fruit. She had sowed the seed, and, as seemed meet, had gathered the sheaves. The last year of her life was one of bitter suffering; and, having completed her work, she was not only glad herself to lay down her cross and care, but we

were glad for her release as we looked upon her pale, dead face, and said:

"We sit beside the lower feast to-day;  
She at the higher;  
Our voices falter as we bend to pray;  
In the great choir  
Of happy saints, she sings and does not tire  
"We break the bread of patience, and the wine  
Of tears we share;  
She tastes the vintage of that glorious vine—  
Whose branches fair,  
Set for the healing of all nations are."

It seemed best that God should give rest to such as she.

Not so did I feel when I looked into the first mentioned grave. The departed this time was a fair young girl, just blooming into lovely womanhood. I had first met her a year before. Even then I saw that death had set his seal upon her, and marked her for the grave. All that affection could devise, and wealth procure, was unavailing to keep her with us. Our hearts were sad as we stood on the shore and watched her drift out upon the tide, until we lost her in the gloom of death.

Her disposition was singularly sweet. She never knew in herself what hate or jealousy means. We thought her influence would have been invaluable had she been spared to us.

And this was the ground of my rebellion against God—*her life seemed incomplete*. And to our minds *completed* things are best. Who has not felt regret as he has lingered over the pages of Macaulay's History of England, that it is incomplete! I have noticed that immature leaves, when touched by untimely frosts in spring, do not put on the gorgeous colors of autumn. Thus, too, we reason concerning those whose sun goes down at noon. We feel that it would be better could they live to develop the hidden beauty of their character, and perfect the dreams of youth. We cannot always understand the purpose of the life that has been so brief; and too often feel as if the goodness and loveliness that is lost to earth, is also lost to all the universe of God.

It was thus that I felt by the grave that day. But better thoughts came on the wings of calmer hours. I ceased to think that the beloved one had died before her time. Does she not live, although beyond our ken? Has she not attained the purpose of her earthly life, and tasted the fruition of her cherished hopes? The life she lived is not ended, but she has again taken it up under better conditions; and death, dark and mysterious as it is, has not separated her from God, nor is she less near to Him now than when we beheld her face. For "neither life nor death \* \* \* shall be able to separate us from the love of God which is in Christ Jesus our Lord. I had always loved the poet's voicing of my own faith, and now applied it to the dead—

"I know not where His islands lift  
Their fringed palms in air,  
I only know I cannot drift  
Beyond His love and care."

And so I was content to leave her with her God, and rejoiced to think, yea, *know* that it is well with those who sleep in Jesus. God called her into being. He gave her to the world to do some work for Him and His, and, having accomplished her mission here, is it not best that he should call her to tasks in other worlds?

"I know transplanted human worth  
Will bloom to profit elsewhere."

Comforted by these thoughts I turned from the grave and lifted up my heart to God in thankfulness that another of my flock was safe *at home*.

Pompey, N. Y.

### THE CONGRESS OF CHURCHES.

M. B. RYAN.

In my last I promised to give the readers of THE CHRISTIAN an account of some things said and done in the "Congress of Churches," which con-

vened in Hartford, Conn., on the 11th day of last May.

The "Congress of Churches" was, in many respects, one of the most remarkable assemblies of a religious character ever held in America. It was a convention of representatives of almost every religious body in the Protestant world. Its design was to promote union among Christians; and its method was to bring the causes of difference to the front, and to freely and manfully discuss them, instead of keeping them in the background as had almost always been done heretofore.

There were many things said which would not have been tolerated fifty years ago; things which show a mighty current of conviction which is setting in against divisions and sects, and which, let us hope, will swell and flow until it sweeps away all barriers to a union of all who love the Lord.

Dr. Parker, of Hartford, in his address of welcome made use of the following language: "It cannot be doubted, I think, that serious defects or evils do exist in our American Christendom which imperatively call for some methods of correction. There is a lack of harmonious operation; there is a wasteful expenditure of money and of energy both at home and abroad; here there is a glut of gospel provision, while yonder there is a famine of the word; there are disastrous competitions where there should be generous co-operation; there are irritations and disagreements and contentions which a freer interchange of views, and a better mutual acquaintance, would terminate, \* \* \* in short, there is a serious failure on the part of our churches to make just that impression on the world which our Lord desired and prayed that they should make—namely, that they are His agents and representatives—and this failure is largely due to their culpable negligence of that union which he regarded as essential, and for which, in their behalf, he so earnestly prayed."

Dr. Howard Crosby, a Presbyterian, used the following vigorous language relative to a divided Christendom: "The Christian Church is divided. Paul, Apollo and Cephas, are set up as heads, instead of Christ, and the curse of the Corinthian Church rests upon Christendom to-day. Apostolic utterance, and that is the utterance of the Holy Spirit, is against us, and we are bound to take heed on every reason of reverence and safety. There can be no millenium for a divided Church. It matters little that the names that divide us are expressive of important ideas. I presume the Corinthian Church could have said the same, and certainly the names of Paul and Cephas and Apollo were as good as those of Luther and Calvin and Wesley. The fact remains, and the trouble lies in the fact that we are divided, when no ideas, important or otherwise, ought to divide us. It is the oneness of believers, which our Lord declares to be the mighty argument to the world, that the world may believe that the Father had sent Him."

Dr. Hopkins, of this city, a High Church Episcopalian, said, in reference to sectarianism: "Aggressive work is thus paralyzed at home by the multiplicity of sects. And how is it abroad? The statement is made that no less than nineteen different varieties of Christianity are at present trying to convert the Japanese. The nineteen do not agree as to what the ministry is, nor as to the Word. \* \* \* Nor are they agreed as to the sacraments; so, too, on doctrine, discipline and worship, there are all sorts of contradictions of belief. Now, if the Christians, with eighteen centuries of accumulated tradition cannot agree, how can we expect the poor heathen to solve the great riddle? The Missionaries feel, most keenly, the need of a visible unity, and they would be glad to bring it about, but that would dry up supplies and stop their work altogether."

Much more was said by those men, and others,