

"A Word in Season."

The following lines from the poems of Robert Ferguson, who was born at Edinburgh, 1751, died 1774, contain an admonition appropriate to the present season, and to Nova Scotia as well as to Auld Scotia:

"Now, while stern Winter holds his frigid sway, And to a period spins the closing year; While festivals abound, and sportive hours Kill the remembrance of our waning time; Let not Intemperance, destructive Fiend! Gain entrance to our halls. Despoiled by him, Shall cloy'd appetite, forerunner sad Of rank disease, inveterate clasp your frame. Contentment shall no more be known to spread Her, cherub wings roused thy once happy dwelling. But misery of thought, and racking pain, Shall plunge you headlong to the dark abyss."

Christian Messenger.

HALIFAX, DECEMBER 23, 1868.

CHRISTMAS

is peculiarly an English institution. Although observed more or less throughout the European nations, it is more particularly a season of joyous anticipation amongst English speaking people in every country. It is interwoven in our literature and social life as a season of reunions, of general cultivation of friendship, and of restoration of kindly feeling. Where there has been any interference with former friendliness this is regarded as a most suitable time for a general forgiveness of injuries and clearing off of old scores. The close of the year presents a period of settling matters in the past and preparation for taking a fresh start of amicable relations. A remembrance of the great event of our Saviour appearing as a little child, heralded by the holy beings who proclaimed at his birth "peace on earth and good will to men" is full of suggestion for mankind in every station in life. All classes seek to catch some inspiration from this event to help them in cultivating feelings of kindness to each other. Men who have no special regard for Christ as the Divine Redeemer are touched with the fact that Jesus came as an infant, and are drawn out towards their own offspring and the little ones of their acquaintance.

The gifts of the Magi to the infant Jesus, although perhaps, forgotten as the homage paid to a royal personage, yet suggest that presents are great pacificators to the young and old, and these are freely exchanged at the present season. Blessings are sought, especially upon those in early life, and upon the poor. Every benevolent heart is prompted to join in the "good will to men." It affords us pleasure to join in these joyous greetings, and to desire for all our readers abundance of happiness and the richest of blessings, and we wish them all, far and near, A MERRY CHRISTMAS!

We are glad to learn that our brethren in several places have recently received valued additions to their numbers:

At Great Village an addition was made on the 6th inst.

At Sydney, C. B., seven were recently received into fellowship after being baptized by Rev. W. B. Boggs.

The baptism in the Halifax North Baptist Church was used for the first time on the 13th inst., when four persons were baptized on a profession of faith in Christ.

We have learned the above indirectly from different persons but should have preferred to have had the correct particulars from the pastors themselves.

Rev. A. H. Munro informs us that "a revival is in progress in Kempt, Q. C., under the labors of brother Foster."

DEAR BROTHER SELDEN,—

Will you allow me the privilege of asking a few questions through the Messenger, in respect to the mode of singing in churches and other religious assemblies. Or in other words of the most proper and profitable manner of conducting that part of religious worship.

I have read some remarks on the subject of late in the Messenger and in other religious papers, but, as a Baptist, I very much wish to know, What is the proper course for Baptist Churches to pursue in this respect? We, as Baptists, profess to take the Bible for our Text Book. But I think we would search the Bible in vain for anything analogous to the practice now pursued in some at least of our Churches. It may be right and proper for every Church to have a Choir to lead in this most delightful part of worship, but the question arises of what material should that Choir be formed? Should they be giddy votaries of fashion, the thoughtless and even the profane? Nature may have given them a good voice and, they are willing to go in to Saturday evening training and learn imperfectly some new tune, that none outside of their own narrow circle know anything about, and even then they have to bring their Note book to help

them through. Thus often some six or eight have it all to themselves.

Ritualism will have its advocates even in Baptist Churches as well as in other Denominations; some of the Churches of which I know are vexed with this question. It evidently has its origin where all other innovations had them, in departing from the simplicity of the Gospel of Jesus Christ, who can only be worshipped in spirit and truth. This is a subject on which all Evangelical Christians might agree.

The opinion of the Editor and other Christian brethren will be thankfully received by INQUIRER.

The matter mentioned by "Inquirer" in the above communication is one of much importance to all congregations of Christian worshippers. We might easily lay down a theory as to what we think should be done in such cases as that to which he refers, but theories are only valuable as they may be carried into practical effect, and we apprehend our friend wishes for something practical.—We have no doubt about its being the duty of all Christians to join in singing the praises of God in the public sanctuary, and even in their more private devotions also, but how to accomplish this is not so easy a matter to determine.

If all the members of a church were musicians they might form one large choir, each person taking the part best adapted to the capacity of his or her voice. In the present state of musical education however, this is not to be expected; although we think that the ability to sing is much more general than is supposed, and many who think they cannot sing have never tried to do so. In the absence of a general knowledge of music those persons in a church who are most capable of conducting the singing usually unite together to assist each other in this part of Divine Worship, and so become what may be, more or less correctly, termed a choir. This they do, or should do, not to be heard merely, but to sustain and direct the worshippers.

The introduction of new tunes by a choir requires great care and caution. It should be done first, if possible, at a meeting of the congregation for the purpose of learning such tunes.

Our friend "Inquirer" evidently has not been accustomed to receive assistance from a "note book" or he would not speak slightingly of one. Good musicians often have more difficulty in remembering a tune although perfectly familiar to them, than those who know nothing about notes, and they need "to bring their note book to help them through." It will be perceived then that we see no impropriety in a Choir or in a Note-book, both should be for the purpose of assisting the congregation in their service of song. Whatever will really assist and combine the vocal expression of praise in a congregation we regard as desirable.

Now as to the persons who should compose a choir. We think there need be but little hesitation in pronouncing the "profane" as entirely unsuited to conduct a congregation in the exercise of praise. None but Christians can fully and properly participate in Christian exercises. The most capable members of a church should we think be entrusted with the management of this part of the worship of Almighty God. If they can obtain help from other persons, who maintain a correct deportment, we see no reason for rejecting them. There should be a readiness on the part of those who have received the benefits of the gospel to render whatever aid is in their power for improving the music of the Church. If they give no countenance to what is inconsistent therewith the instances would be rare in which improper characters would persist in a course of profanity, and a continuance of such prominence in the church. The evil complained of is not a new thing. In apostolic days there were some from whose mouth proceeded "both blessing and cursing," but the apostle adds, "My brethren these things ought not so to be."

Marriage with a deceased wife's sister has been brought forward more prominently of late by the fact of the Rev. W. M. Punshon having removed from England to Canada, it was reported, that he might contract such marriage without becoming amenable to the law as he would have been in Great Britain. It was reported that by so doing Mr. Punshon had subjected himself to discipline in the Methodist Church. This was subsequently denied. It has certainly placed the Conference of which he is a member in an anomalous position.

A petition to the Imperial Parliament emanating from the Marriage Law Reform Association in London, was recently lying in the Merchants Reading Room for signature. The statements of the petition were as follows:

That in the judgement of your petitioners, confirmed by that of universal Christendom, the marriage of a widow with the sister of his

deceased wife is not prohibited in Holy Scripture;

That it is highly expedient that such marriage should be made lawful in the United Kingdom, and its dependencies, as they are in all other nations;

That the legislature of South Australia has three times passed an act for making such marriages valid in that country, but that the Royal Assent has three times been refused on the ground of contrariety to the laws of England.

That one uniform law ought to exist for the whole Empire, a result attainable only by the action of the Imperial Legislature.

THE WINTER RHETORICAL EXHIBITION by the Students of Acadia College on Friday last was an occasion of much interest at Wolfville. A large congregation assembled to participate in the exercises. The Rev. Dr. Crawley presided, Rev. S. W. DeBlois opened the meeting by prayer. The programme was as follows:

- Music—"Peace on Earth."
"The joy of realizing."—ATWOOD COHOON, of Port Medway.
"Jacta est alea."—R. W. ELLS, Cornwallis.
"Mankind, progressive."—J. B. MILLS, Granville Ferry.
Music—"The Lord reigneth."
"Moral Courage."—C. A. WHITMAN, New Albany.
"Memory."—W. H. WARREN, North River, P. E. I.
"Results."—(Excused) C. H. MASTERS, St. John, N. B.
Music (Chant)—"Abide with me."
"Uses of History."—W. E. MARSHALL, Cornwallis.
"Incentives to action."—J. W. NELLY, Wilmot.
"Design."—I. B. OAKES, New Albany.
Music—"Calm on the listening ear."
"Earth's Infancy."—J. W. BANCROFT, Round Hill.
"Extremes."—W. A. SPINNEY, Wilmot.
"The Will."—(Excused) J. R. STUBBERT, Little Bras'Or, C. B.
Music—"Bless the Lord."
"Per aspera ad astra."—J. W. LONGLEY, Paradise.
"The Inevitable"—(Excused) E. P. BOWLES, Cornwallis.
"The Living Dead."—H. E. MORROW, St. Peter's Bay, P. E. I.
Music—"Roll on last of the year."

The Orations we are informed were remarkably appropriate and excellent, the Choir discoursed peculiarly sweet music and executed the pieces in the intervals in masterly style.

The President, Rev. Dr. Cramp, gave a brief address at the close of the evening, and pronounced the benediction; after which the National Anthem was sung in full chorus. The beaming countenances of the large body of students indicated that the coming brief vacation is no less welcome to them now, than such seasons were in earlier days. Quite a number of the students left on the following morning to spend a few days at home. May they have the Divine protection over them during their absence, and all meet together again to pursue with fresh relish and vigor their preparation for the battle of life.

Letters Received.

- W. W. Pride, \$4. N. Logan, Ward Eaton, Esq., (2), \$2.37 1/2. W. F. Cutten, Esq., (2). Dr. W. L. Bent, \$4, 1 sub. Rev. T. H. Porter, Jun., \$9. Rev. Dr. Tupper, (2), 1 sub. Rev. L. B. Gates, \$7, 2 subs. Rev. A. Martell, J. P. Nowlan, J. D. Frail, Rev. W. C. Rideout, \$2. W. J. Gates, 2 subs. W. T. Hammond, \$2. Rev. E. C. Spinney, \$8.50. Jas. Cohoon, \$5. Rev. A. H. Munro, Rev. E. N. Archibald, 1 sub. S. Smith, \$2.50. W. Longley, W. Churchill, Esq., Rev. I. J. Skinner, \$9.50.—Rev. W. L. Parker, H. Webber, Rev. Jos. Murray, \$4, 1 sub. P. Paint, Jun., 1 sub. A. M. Wheelock.

Our friends in various parts will please accept our thanks for timely remittances. We are getting a supply of New Type for the New Year and shall require all available funds. Our readers will receive the benefit in having a clear impression, which will be pleasant to read, and we trust a large number of them also in a feeling of satisfaction that it is by their prompt payment that we have been able to provide this necessary improvement in the appearance of the Messenger for 1869.

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JAMES I. FELLOWS, Chemist, St. John, N. B.

General Intelligence.

Province of Nova Scotia.

PROVINCIAL APPOINTMENTS:

Provincial Secretary's Office, Halifax, N. S., 21st Nov. 1868.

Hants Co.—To be a Notary and Tabellion Public—Clarence Watt McCully.

Guysborough Co.—To be Justices of the Peace—Victor LeDantic, of the Strait of Canso, in the place of James Wallace, removed to Halifax; Donald Kennedy, Tracadie; James R. Atwater, Manchester; and Thomas Condon, Guysborough.

Halifax Co.—To be Commissioners of Sewers for Lawrencetown—John Crook, George Hawkins, Jr., and John Crook, Jr.

Annapolis Co.—To be Justices of the Peace—Thomas A. Gavaza, Wm. V. Jones, John G. Balcom, Wm. H. Ray, Dow J. Morse, Samuel Pickup, (of Granville Ferry), Samuel Hall, Job Wade, Edward Barreau, George Hardwich, David McLellan, William McLoughlan, Thomas Banks, Wm. Miller, and Wm. B. Balcom.

Colchester.—To be Justices of the Peace—James Maxwell, Lower Stewiacke, James E. Dickie, Upper do., Abraham N. Tupper, do., David McGill Johnson, do., David Nealon, Truro, Isaac Barnhill, Onslow, Robert Putnam, do., John Weir, Upper Londonderry, Frederick M. Pearson, do., Alexander B. Fletcher, do., James Campbell, do., Josius Crow, do., Thomas W. Crow, do., R. N. B. McLellan, Lower do., David A. Davidson, do., Robert Grant, do., William Hill, do., Samuel Morrison, Economy, John A. P. McLellan, do., Ebenezer Fales, Five Islands, Wm. Blackwood, Tamagouche, John Clarge, do., Hugh Munro, Earlton, John T. B. Henderson, New Annan.—To be Coroners—George Fulton, Upper Stewiacke, Daniel C. Fulton, Upper Londonderry, Dr. Leander Peppard, Lower do.—To be Commissioners of Schools—Robert Gammell, Upper Stewiacke, Fred. M. Pearson, do., Londonderry, David Murray, Lower Londonderry.

Antigonish Co.—To be Justice of the Peace—John McDonald, Antigonish Harbor, in the place of G. M. Cunningham, removed from the County; Hugh McDonald, Malignant Brook, in the place of James Ross, deceased; Hugh McAdam, Arisaig.

Yarmouth Co.—To be Prothonotary—James Huntington, in the place of Alexander Murray, resigned.

Victoria Co.—Murdoch Campbell, of Neil's Harbor, to be keeper of the Half way House between Antigonish and Cape North.

THE ANNUAL EDUCATIONAL CONVENTION will be held in Halifax next week, commencing on Monday at 8 o'clock, p. m. It will continue in session till Thursday.

On Friday last one of the floors of the Nova Scotia Brewery gave way under the weight of the many hundred bushels of barley, and came down with a great crash.

A man named Turner had all the fingers of his left hand cut off, on Thursday morning, at Bain's Steam Mills, Upper Water Street.

FIRE AT DARTMOUTH.—We regret to hear that on Saturday night an unoccupied house, situated in Dartmouth, belonging to Mrs. Slayter, was totally destroyed by fire. It is supposed this fire was the work of an incendiary.

ACCIDENT.—A collision occurred on Thursday evening, between a waggon belonging to Mr. Robert Ainsley, and one of the city railway cars. The wagon was rendered useless, but fortunately the occupants escaped without injury. The collision was caused by the wheel of the wagon getting jammed in the rail, preventing Mr. Ainsley from getting out of the way in time.

SUBURBAN LIGHTS.—The plan of lighting a part of the suburbs of the city with oil lamps, is in progress. Each lamp, with its post, will cost about three dollars, and the oil consumed will cost about a cent a lamp per night. Attendance will cost about \$100 per annum.

HALIFAX DISPENSARY, ARGYLE STREET.—The benefits conferred on the resident and transient poor by this institution, may, in some measure be estimated from the following statement of work done during the first year of its re organization, which has just closed:

Table with 2 columns: Patients treated at the Dispensary, Applications at Dispensary, Patients visited out of doors, Number of visits made to these, Prescriptions made up and dispensed by the resident Apothecary, Total number of applications and visits, Surgical operations performed, Midwifery cases attended.

Six regular practitioners give, between them at least 18 hours a week at the Dispensary.—Two Physicians visit the patients, North and South, respectively, who are unable to come out. Five of the Senior Medical men of the city act as consulting Physicians and afford important assistance. The Institution is constantly visited by the Directors.

A detailed Report will be issued early in January, and it is hoped that the generous public will feel satisfied that a great and benevolent work is being carried on in our midst, and that they will show their appreciation of it by liberally sustaining the funds of the Institution.—(Other papers please copy.)

A man named James Henneberry sought to obtain goods of H. D. Frost stating that they were to be charged to Mr. H. Fryor, Stipendiary Magistrate for Halifax. On enquiry it was found that Mr. P. knew nothing of the man, and on being arrested, he was fined \$4 or 40 days imprisonment.

Another man named Stephen York tried by false pretences to obtain money from Rev. Mr. Abbot. The man was arrested.