

THE FRENCH PRESIDENT.

BY GEORGE M. TOWLE.

Ag eminent French writer, who several years ago described Marshal MacMahon, said of him, "He is fond neither of society nor politics. I think he would rather mount to an assault than the tribune. His tribune, indeed, is the tower of Malakoff, whence he speaks to the Russians; a rock of Kalyia, where he unmasks the Arabs; or the walls of Antwerp, of Oran, and of Constantine. Whether in the drawing-room, or sauntering along the boulevards, cigar in mouth, MacMahon always seems to be marching under the tricolor."

The new President of the French Republic is a soldier, and only a soldier. His life has been spent in battle, camp and barracks. Unlike many, it may even be said of most French generals, who have become ardent politicians since political generalship became so successful after the First Revolution, his tastes and ambition are and always have been absorbed in his profession. He is ill at ease in any other than a military situation. He becomes positively unhappy when, forced by the exigencies of his rank, he appears in the saloons of the capital. Still less fitted is he for the wordy turbulence of French politics. Power to him takes the form of commanding an assault, accomplishing a forced march, or supervising a masterly retreat. The din and dash of battle are his supreme delight; the wrangling of factions vexes and disgusts him. One other profession might, perhaps have satisfied MacMahon's singular individuality. When, in early youth his father wished to see him a soldier, his mother pleaded that he should enter the priesthood. The combined asceticism and enthusiasm of his character might, had he not been destined to be Duke of Magenta and Marshal of France, have made him Archbishop of Paris or General of the Order of the Jesuits.

From his parents, Maurice de MacMahon imbibed the military spirit of his father, and the zealous and submissive Catholicism of his mother; and while he has, if not developed military genius, at least achieved almost uninterrupted military success, he has been throughout distinguished for his piety and devotion to the Church of Rome.

His impassive countenance, the listless, almost weary manner, the almost melancholy expression, when seen on the boulevard or in the drawing-room, give no hint of the real character and quality of the man. On the field of battle he changes into a warrior of such fiery courage that in this trait he is pre-eminent in the French army. "The demon of combats," says the writer before quoted, "possesses and agitates him; he is transformed; his eye glitters, his visage grows red, his lips tremble, his glance is rapid and sure, and he goes straight as thought to his end." The Algerines, against whom he fought so long and brilliantly, used to call him the "Invulnerable," and "the fire-god." An enthusiastic Frenchman said that he was Ney and Marsena combined: the "bravest of the brave," and "the favorite child of victory." As a soldier, in a word, MacMahon is as spirited and prompt, as firm and undaunted, as bold and intense, as in inaction he is dull, silent, and almost morose.

His early achievements were upon African soil. During the Restoration and the Orleans dynasty, the military enterprise of France was almost confined to the acquisition, extension and defence of her Algerian colony. This field afforded brilliant opportunities to ambitious young officers, and the fame of Changarnier, of the Duke d'Almale, of Marshal Bugeaud, and of MacMahon, was achieved in the long and long-doubtful conflict with Abd-el-Kader and his brother chiefs. MacMahon was rapidly promoted for gallantry at such hard fought contests as the assault on Constantine and at Bad-el-Taza; and participated in most of the wars with the Algerines from 1827 to 1854. In 1854, he returned to Algiers with the rank of Marshal and the dignity of Governor-General. His two most memorable successes, however, were achieved in the Crimean war and the Italian campaign of 1859. At Sebastopol he displayed a heroism which at once carried him to the summit of military fame. He was in command of a division of infantry; and it was he who, on the evening of September 7th, 1855, was chosen to make the grand and well-nigh desperate assault upon the Malakoff. When this was proposed to him, and the generals surrounded him to volunteer their anxious advice, he said, "Be assured, gentlemen, I shall enter Malakoff to-morrow, and I promise you that I shall not retreat from it alive." The next morning he advanced at the head of the Zouaves, in the face of the Russian

cannon, scaled the ramparts, and gave his orders from the breach with a calm intrepidity which electrified his men. Polissier, who was observing him with a spyglass, exclaimed, "He is too audacious! Hasten and tell him to come down!" MacMahon's reply was, "Thank the Marshal for me: I am where I ought to be, and here I shall remain." Six times the Commander-in-Chief renewed the order to retreat, but MacMahon disregarded it, and ere long the French tricolor floated from the tower of the Malakoff. The immediate result of MacMahon's intrepid courage was the fall of Sebastopol and the final triumph of the allies.

In the Italian war he was equally conspicuous for his dash and infectious vehemence of attack. He went thither in command of a corps d'armée; and at Magenta, the first important and very bloody battle of the campaign, he won a victory which thus early foreshadowed the sure triumph of the French army. Ten thousand Austrians were put hors de combat, and MacMahon took five thousand prisoners. The Emperor Napoleon telegraphed to Paris, "MacMahon has covered himself with glory;" and at the field of battle named him Marshal of France and Duke of Magenta. He participated in the battle of Solferino, dividing its laurels with the less impulsive Niel. It is related of MacMahon that when, after Magenta, the French soldiers entered Milan, a little girl approached and offered him a bouquet. He came down, took her in his arms and embraced her. "I want to stay with you," said the child. "Well, so you shall," replied the Marshal; and he entered the city with the little girl sitting before him on the saddle, holding her bouquet of roses. MacMahon's part in the disastrous war of 1870 is too well known to need narration. He betrayed, in situations the most desperate, all his old impetuous and hopeful courage; but the whole tide of war was against him, and the sturdy old veteran, like Francis I. at Pavia, "lost all but honor" at Reichshofen and Sedan. Happily, his bravery was rewarded at Sedan, by a wound which saved him the humiliation of the fatal surrender which decided the war against France. As soon as the Provisional Republic was established, MacMahon was appointed Commander-in-Chief, and up to the time of his election to the Presidency. In succession to M. Thiers, devoted himself to the reorganization of the shattered ranks of the army, keeping sedulously aloof from all political intrigues and combinations.

In personal appearance, the veteran Marshal displays in every lineament and movement the experienced, weather-beaten soldier. Grizzled and bronzed by his African campaigns, he has a chivalrous, frank bearing, without the least trace of the vanity which is so obtrusive a weakness of many French soldiers. Of medium height, with an iron, muscular build, thick-set but not obese; a dark blue, clear, thoughtful, honest eye, a face calm and amiable, with a serene energy slightly tinged with sadness; a round head and face, the hair light and spare, and the moustache long and carelessly falling; a dignity and unaffected manner, a sort of "aristocratic negligence;" quiet resolution and singleness of purpose in every line; these are the chief traits discernible in the President as seen on the street. In conversation he says little, is halting and timid, as if his thoughts were far from the present scene; essentially taciturn, he is at his worst in the saloons, appears ill at ease, and though gallant in a military sense, does not shine in the society of ladies.

As President of the Republic, Marshal MacMahon finds himself in a wholly new and most perplexing position. He owes it to his military position, and was chosen exclusively as the representative of the military power in the State. A Catholic and a conservative, he possessed the confidence of the monarchial party in the Assembly, which doubtless hopes for his active assistance in bringing about the substitution of a monarchy for the present republican form. MacMahon, however, has hitherto been popular with all parties, and has been esteemed as less a partisan than a Frenchman. Like all the army officers, he longs for the time when his country may take vengeance upon the Prussians, and recover Alsace and Lorraine; and should he remain in power for any length of time the reorganization of the army will doubtless be his chief task. But it can hardly be expected that one who has not only devoted a long life to camps and barracks, and who has a positive distaste for politics, as well as absolute ignorance of tortuous political ways, will achieve brilliant success in his new duties; and the only way

in which his administration can be effective is by the application to the turbulence of parties of the military arm, always an unfortunate resort in a civil settlement, and especially so among so mercurial a people as the French. MacMahon may be a Monk, and be the instrument of another Restoration; or may be a Cavaignac, and quietly lay down a distasteful authority in obedience to the will of the Nation.

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

DEAN ALFORD.

Life, Journals, and Letters of Henry Alford, D. D., late Dean of Canterbury Edited by his widow, London, 8vo. pp. 532.

A fitting memorial of one of the greatest and best of the workers in God's Church, in this century.

Dean Alford was a lovely Christian, and he loved all Christians. He is now a saint in glory. If it were lawful to prefix the title "Saint" to a man's name he was more worthy of it than hundreds of those on whom it has been bestowed.

"I do not myself hold any such thing as Apostolic Succession, or a derivation of authority by virtue of which we are ministers of Christ. I see no warrant for such a belief in Scripture, and think it to be contrary to the spirit of the Lord's promise that He will be with His Church always, not by delegation or succession, but by His Holy Spirit, even to the end of the world. If I derive my official authority through a stream of human hands, then I do not derive it immediately from the Lord himself, as I firmly believe to be the case. It may be a fact, and an interesting one, that our orders are traceable to Apostolic Succession, but it is the same kind of interest as attaches to a venerable building, or any thing else ancient, not therefore one whit the better for its purpose, but only more venerable." p. 175.

"In Christ Jesus Episcopacy is nothing, and non-Episcopacy is nothing, but the new creature; and in whatever way the spiritual temple of the Lord may be but reared under the various circumstances which His providence has appointed, in that way would I humbly acquiesce, whether Episcopacy or Presbytery, or whatever else it be called. I find my own place and office in the Church of England. She appeals to the written word, and gives me therefore the great warrant that I am in the way of the Spirit, whose witness that word is; and she oppresses no man's conscience, but sends us to God's word to see whether these things are so. If she did the contrary, if she oppressed the conscience, commanded me to adore baker's bread, or how to the day's work of a stone-mason, I would as unscrupulously leave her and become a dissenter as I now gladly adhere to and minister in her communion." p. 176.

"I am persuaded we are on the eve of a great struggle for the inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. In this contest it will be most essential, for the cause of truth, that we should be at least as well armed as our adversaries; every difficulty must be thoroughly opened, solved honestly and fairly, if capable of solution, or shown and confessed to be incapable. There must be no ignoring, no healing over of difficulties, as has been too much the case in past time. In God's word, as in God's works, we must be humble and adoring, but at the same time truthful towards the bringing about this important end. I have cast in my humble contribution, with fervent prayers that the God of faith may bless it; in doing this, I expect to encounter no small share of opposition and misunderstanding. I have no sympathy whatever with rationalism; one of my great objects is to deal thoroughly and truthfully with the word of God, that I may, if it pleases Him, furnish to our students of Scripture fitting weapons for the coming struggle with infidelity." p. 195.

In 1857 he attended the Conference of the Evangelical Alliance at Berlin.

"Sept. 13, Sunday. At nine A. M. we all went to the Hotel de Russie, where about 150 English Christians of all denominations received the communion together; no form except the reading of the words of the institution, a thing I should imagine without parallel in the history of the church." p. 277.

On this occasion Dean Alford assisted by distributing the elements. This gave great offence to some high churchmen as being contrary to the canons. But the Archbishop of Canterbury (Sumner) was

very lenient; he said, in a letter to the Dean, "I must take this opportunity of saying how much I have resented the bigotry and uncharitableness which the Berlin Communion has excited. It is very right that at home we should keep out of canon shot; but widely as the range has been extended of late years, I never before heard that it could be stretched across the Channel." p. 281.

"Dec. 31, 1860. I am now writing with the ten midnight bells ringing in 1861. God be praised for all the mercies of another happy year, in which I have been enabled to finish my Greek Testament, the work of eighteen years. May He grant that future years, if I am spared to see any, may be spent more to His praise! If I am to live, keep me with Thee; if I am to die, take me to Thee," p. 300.

"June 24, 1870. I have just returned from our first Revision meeting [the revision of the Authorized version of the New Testament]. Nothing more interesting has been done since the Reformation. We received the Communion round Edward VIth's tomb, three bishops, two deans, two archdeacons, several clergymen, an Independent Professor, a Wesleyan ditto, Scotch Presbyterian ditto, a Scotch Establishment ditto, a Baptist ditto, and a Unitarian: such a body meeting around Edward VIth's tomb was a sight England has never seen before," p. 447.

"Dec. 31, 1870. Sat up to the New Year. God be praised for all His mercies during this year of great events. He only knows when this my course will end. May its evening be bright, and its morning eternal day," p. 470. He died Jan. 12, 1871 worn out with hard work.

His works comprise—  
The Critical Edition of the Greek Testament—four volumes.

New Testament for English Readers—two volumes.

How to study the New Testament—three volumes.

Revision of the Authorized version of the New Testament.

The Queen's English.

Quebec Chapel Sermons, Hulsean Lectures, &c.—fourteen volumes.

Twenty single sermons.

Several volumes of Poems.

Numerous articles in Good Words, the Sunday Magazine, the Contemporary Review, &c.

His works "praise him." The people of Canterbury called him the Good Dean.

[We are sorry the following article did not reach us in time for our last week's issue, as we presume it was intended that it should.—Ed. C. M.]

For the Christian Messenger.

AN ERA IN OUR DENOMINATION.

This is a day of great events in the Baptist body composing our Convention. We are rapidly making history. Almost all our Denominational work is now in a transition state. This is true of our Institutions of learning, and of both Home and Foreign Missions—our three great interests. Our Annual gatherings are just at hand, and much of our future depends upon the action of the next few weeks. What then is the spirit that should now characterize us?

It seems to me that, in the first place, a deep sense of personal responsibility should rest upon us. Each should feel that he counts one, and that that one should be his best, individuals must decide all these questions, and our machinery is so framed that all may share in the responsibility and service. Let none then say, Those who are capable must do this work, but nothing is required of me. Brethren, this will not do. Be assured the Lord has laid this burden upon you, and you cannot shirk the obligation.

Second, we must take enlarged views. We must look over all the field. We must consider the interests of the whole people, instead of those of the individual, the party, or even the Province. We must think of the future as well as the present. And we must not be afraid of change. That is inevitable. The only question is, which is best?

Third, we must divest ourselves of ill-nature and old grudges and prejudices. We must have more charity for each other. At present, in some cases, it is to be feared we have lost all confidence in one another. This must be restored. It is true of none of us that we are seeking only to serve ourselves or our clique. We all love Christ and His cause. We want to love them more and ourselves and our selfish interests less. Some have erred—have greatly erred it may be. But

who has not? And because we have must we forever be held responsible for it? Is there no forgiveness among brethren? And because we have must it be concluded that there is no good in us and we can and will do nothing but wrong? Brethren, this will never correct the wrong. And to feel thus is not christianity, it is not real morality, it is not sound reason and good sense. What of it is not childish is simply "devilish."

By what spirit then, shall our Associations and Convention be characterized? Shall they be scenes of strife and bickering, of personal and party contests, of contentions as to who shall be greatest? Or shall all work only in the interests of the great cause committed to us by a great Master, our blessed Saviour? If we come to these meetings to serve individual and selfish ends, what can we expect but that God will refuse us direction, and disgrace and disaster result from our action? But if we can rise above these, and each be willing to be anything or nothing for the sake of the common good, what a future have we reason to hope we will be instrumental in making.

The Lord grant to each grace to deeply feel our obligations, clearly see our own duty, and be perfectly willing to be guided by the Word, the Spirit, and the Providence of God. And may we go to our Anniversaries singing with the Spirit and the understanding the 122nd Psalm, and as we return may we find in the 116th a fit expression of the feelings of our grateful hearts.

UNUS.

For the Christian Messenger.

IN MEMORIAM.

JAMES BROWN

Died at Perea, Cornwallis, May 20, 1873, Mr. James Brown in the eighty-first year of his age.

He was born in Shelburne in the year 1792, and left home when quite a youth. His footsteps were directed to Fort Cumberland, where he resided till he enlisted in the British Army in 1808. During the war of 1812, between Britain and the United States, he faithfully discharged the duties of a soldier. The hardships he endured, especially during a winter march of the regiment from Nova Scotia to Canada, were such as none but men of great physical endurance could stand. More than once, men who sat beside him to rest, never rose from that position, frozen to death.

He was in a number of engagements in Upper Canada, and though his comrades often fell at his side, his life was spared. At the close of the war he was discharged, and came on to this part of the Province, where he settled and raised a large family.

According to his own statement his first deep religious convictions were realized in his eighteenth year while in Cumberland. On a bridge between Sackville and Amherst, he spent nearly the whole of a stormy night in agonizing prayer, on account of sinfulness before God. He could not leave the place until he found relief.

That night he determined to lead a Christian life. His vows, however, were after a time forgotten, but the memory of that night of soul-agony, could not be wholly obliterated from his mind. About twenty-seven years ago he was aroused to a sense of the importance of a personal enjoyment of religion, under the preaching of Wesleyan ministers, and finally united with the church of which he continued a member until death.

He loved the fellowship of God's people of every name, and as he was some distance from Wesleyan services, his later years were spent chiefly among the Congregationalists in his own vicinity. During the last two years, his devotion to God was more marked than ever. He was ripening for glory.

His house was ever the welcome abode of the ministers of the Gospel. His death was sudden, though his health had been declining for a year. On the day of his death, he was about the premises attending to the work he was able to perform, coming in wearied, he sat down and read the book of books, which to him was dearer than any other book. Suddenly he closed the book and began to sing of Jesus suffering on the shameful tree, when he faltered, leaned back his head, and without a sigh or groan, ceased to live on earth. In less than three minutes after the tones of his voice, in singing had been heard he was in the eternal world. There sat the body on the chair with a smile on the face, but the spirit was gone.

Death for a moment silenced faltering song,  
But soon his spirit with the blood-washed  
Began to sing with all the heavenly host,  
Praise God; "Praise Father, Son and Holy  
Ghost."

G. O. H.