

The Christian Messenger.

A RELIGIOUS AND GENERAL FAMILY NEWSPAPER.

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WHOLE SERIES.
Vol. XL., No. 2.

POETRY.

For the Christian Messenger.

Farewell to 1875.

Farewell, Old Year!
The mournful wind is sighing, Farewell!
What barren hopes are on thy bosom lying,
Alas! Old Year,
And yet we weep not, whilst we see thee
dying,
Farewell!

Farewell, Old Year!
Thy face is gone forever, Farewell!
The next comes on, but thou returnest
never,
Departed Year!
Thou'rt not the only friend time hastes
from us to sever,
Farewell!

Farewell, Old Year,
Thy changeless record bearing, Farewell!
Thou hastest on, for wear or woe not caring,
Thou stern Old Year!
Giv'st no more time for doing or for darning,
Farewell!

Farewell, Old Year,
Thy scroll together rolling, Farewell!
The writing now is past all our controlling,
Relentless Year!
Thy memory is not cheering nor consoling,
Farewell!

Farewell, Old Year,
Into the dead past speeding, Farewell!
No vain regrets of ours art thou heeding,
Cruel Old Year!
We'd say it firmly, though our hearts were
bleeding,
Farewell!

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RELIGIOUS.

A Baptist Church among the Bedouins.

BY REV. PHILIP BERRY.

Who planted it?—The Lord. How?—That is the aim of this article, and I must begin in the midst of a remarkable story.

About twenty-five years ago a company of young men started out from Damascus, headed for Jerusalem. They had not gone far before a body of armed horsemen surrounded them, and ordered a halt. The leader said the caravan might move on, unhurt and unharmed, if they would deliver up one of their number, a young man named Randall, who should not suffer if he would come along with them peacefully. The terms, though hard, were acceded to, and the last look his companions had of him was to see him mounted on a fine horse, attended by the gay horsemen of the Bedouin Sheikh of the Le Arish tribe, which tribe usually winter in the neighbourhood of Damascus, and in the summer move south and east over the great plain, seeking pasturage and water for their flocks and herds.

The young man was taken to the Sheikh's tent, and to his surprise, found a magnificent entertainment awaiting him. What does it all mean? Arzalia, the Sheikh's daughter, has seen the young man, and fallen passionately in love with him, and this is the wedding feast. The young man and Arzalia are married. There was no escape for him. His tent was guarded by night, and his person watched by day lest he should escape, and the guard kept over him for years. He and Arzalia, however, seemed happy; children were born to them, and their domestic life was marked by kindness, courtesy, and true affection. Randall rapidly acquired the Arabic language; his wife as readily mastered the English. Their children were taught in both.

Now who was this Randall? In Oneida Co., New York State, lives his father, who has never seen his sons. This father is now a man of some seventy years, who was brought up among the Indians, and has travelled again and again with the hunters of his tribe over the entire Mississippi Valley, in search of fish and game. At the age of twenty-one, the chief of his tribe said: "You had better return to the white people, for among them you can be more of a man than among the Indians." He returned, married a Welsh lady for his wife, and while she was on a visit to her relations in Wales, this son was born. The mother dying soon after his birth, he remained until manhood with his kindred in Wales, and was taking a trip through Syria, previous to his return to America, when

he was captured by the Sheikh and compelled to marry his daughter. His mother was a Baptist, and he, before he left Wales for the Orient, was baptized. When he was admitted to the Sheikh's family, they had to receive his religion as well as his person. Through him his wife became a Christian; his father-in-law became a patron of his son-in-law's faith; his children were brought up in "the fear of the Lord"; his son has become Sheikh of the tribe, the father-in-law having died. All the surrounding tribes have become favorable to the new religion, and have pledged their swords in its defence. Many have been baptized; hundreds of children have been taught the new religion.

But a dervish, a zealot of the Mohammedan faith, had for a long time been endeavoring to stir up opposition and persecution; strove to have Randall's sons thrown out of the employ of the Turkish government, and failing in this, turned his assault upon a daughter of the foreigner, and charged her with witchcraft and apostasy from the true faith. She was brought before the *mejlis*, composed of 144 venerable sheiks and efendis, to answer charges which involved her life. The charges having been presented and substantiated as best they could be by witnesses, she was called upon to answer them through her advocate. She, although but 14 years of age, and dressed in the neatest manner, and with a placid face and calm heart and unflinching trust, responded: "Most venerable fathers, I will reply in person;" and then with fervor and faith and power, holding her Bible in her hand and frequently reading passages from it; and when she finished, the unanimous verdict was in her favor, and the chiefs of the tribes pledged each other their swords anew, to defend all Christians who thought and felt as Rosa did. But the old dervish breathed revenge, and determined to take that young life. The trial was in October, 1872. In June, 1873, while Rosa was teaching a class of 42 little girls, in a grove, the way to heaven, the dervish approached, and before any one was aware, he had murdered the maid and fled. The fleetest horses of the tribe, with armed riders, went in pursuit. He was soon captured, tried, and executed. But the work is growing, the truth is spreading, and a new chapter in the history of spreading Gospel light has been unveiled to us, alike startling and impressive. When the whole story is told (as it soon will be), a more remarkable chapter in the history of the preaching of the Gospel, has not been offered this century.

In the last letter from Lady Arzalia Le Avish Randall, giving all the particulars of her child's trial and tragic death, occurs this beautiful sentence and earnest request: "Pray for me, that my piety may be as humble as the violet, as enduring as the olive, and as fragrant as the orient." We hope in the course of a year, to offer the readers of this sketch, the entire story from the hut of the Indian to the tented church of the Bedouin; but we could not consent to keep "the glad tidings" to ourselves any longer, and so have told our story in brief to-day. *Laus Deo!—Nat. Baptist.*

The first New-England Baptists.

CENTENNIAL NOTES.

By Professor Heman Lincoln, D. D., of Newton, Mass.

THE FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH IN MASSACHUSETTS.

The first Baptist church within Massachusetts was formed in the town of Rehoboth, in the limits of Plymouth Colony. Here Obadiah Holmes and a few associates withdrew from the Congregational church and held Baptist meetings in the year 1650. But he soon removed to Newport, R. I., to enjoy greater freedom, and it is probable that the others followed him.

A large body of Baptists settled in Rehoboth, a few years later—emigrants from Ilston, Wales. They belonged to

one of the earliest churches formed in Wales, in 1649. This church grew rapidly, numbering 260 members in 1660. When the Act of Uniformity was passed by Parliament in 1662, and persecution against Dissenters became active, Elder Miles, the pastor, and many of his members, emigrated to Plymouth Colony, bringing the church records with them. They settled at Rehoboth, and organized a church in 1663. For four years they seem to have been undisturbed, and Cotton Mather says that being good men, they were not persecuted with any harder means than kind conferences to reclaim them. But in 1667 the Colonial authorities interfered, and Elder Miles and one of the members were fined five pounds each for "setting up of a public meeting without the knowledge and approbation of the Court, to the disturbance of the peace of the place," and were ordered to desist from the said meeting in that place or township, within this month." But the Court graciously added, "In case they shall remove their meeting into some other place, where they may not prejudice any other church, and shall give us any reasonable satisfaction respecting their principles, we know not but they may be permitted by this government so to do." In October of the same year, the Court made an ample grant of land to them, including the present town of Swanzy, whither they soon removed.

But as the grant was made to a company of five men, of whom the first two were Pedobaptists, the church was hampered with certain conditions not in harmony with Baptist principles. Captain Willett, the leader of the company, being a pedobaptist, the conditions were: 1. That no man of an evil behaviour, or contentious person, be admitted, either as an inhabitant or sojourner. 2. That no man of an evil behaviour, or contentious person, be admitted. 3. That none may be admitted that may become a charge to the place." The church, hard pressed for a home, assented to these conditions with certain modifications, restricting errors to great heresies, or to denials of the civil rights of magistrates; and claiming full freedom "for pedobaptism, anti-pedobaptism, church discipline or the like; and that the minister or ministers of the said town may take their liberty to baptize infants or grown persons as the Lord shall persuade their consciences, and so also the inhabitants take their liberty to bring their children to baptism or to forbear." It is possible that the church had not attained to the broadest views of religious freedom, and to a denial of the right of the civil magistrate to interfere in religious matters. But, as they never restricted the largest freedom, after the town was organized, it is more natural to suppose they accepted the conditions as the best to be obtained, without any idea of enforcing them. They enjoyed perfect peace in their new home, the Plymouth Colony making no attempt to modify their views or restrain their practice. But the Colony of Massachusetts Bay looked on them with malignant eyes, and imposed heavy fines on Elder Miles and his brethren when they visited Boston to comfort the Baptists of that town in their sore tribulations.

In 1684 the charters of all the Colonies were repealed by Charles the Second; and by the new charter, granted by William of Orange in 1691, Plymouth and Massachusetts Bay were united under one government. By this charter equal liberty of conscience was assured to all Christians, except Papists. The Baptists and all lovers of freedom rejoiced over this guaranty against future persecutions. But their joy was premature. They soon found that a good charter did not ensure protection; that there was a broad distinction between law and government. The wise toleration of Plymouth disappeared in the new Colony, and the stern policy of Massachusetts Bay prevailed. In 1692, only a year after the grant of the charter, the General Assembly in Boston enacted that the inhabitants of every town must support

an able, learned and orthodox minister; and if they neglect to do so, the County Court may order a tax to be assessed by the Selectmen of the town and collected by the Constables, like any other tax; and each man shall be obliged to pay his several proportion. This enactment was a restoration of the old regime, by which every citizen could be taxed for the support of ministers of the standing order.

Under this act persecutions were carried on with new vigor in the Colony. A blow was aimed at the church in Swanzy. A warrant was sent from the Bristol Court, requiring "the town of Swanzy to choose a minister according to law." This warrant, of course, meant that they should choose a minister of the standing order and support him by general tax. The town held two meetings to consider the matter, and decided, Oct. 17, 1693, to report to the Court that Elder Samuel Luther was their minister. He was pastor of the Baptist church, the only one in the town. As the Plymouth Colony had officially recognized him as pastor, and his church as the church of the town, the Court did not enforce the warrant, and the plan of oppression failed. The Court had power, by act of the Assembly, to summon the Selectmen, in case of disobedience, and fine them forty shillings for neglect, for the first offence, and four pounds for every subsequent offence. In 1719 the Bristol Court proceeded a step farther, and summoned the Selectmen to appear at its bar, "for not having a minister according to the law of the Province." But they proved that Elder Wheaton (who had succeeded Elder Luther) was their minister, being competent, not to pay costs. But what could not be done directly was done indirectly, for as Elder Wheaton and many of his members lived within the borders of Rehoboth, they were taxed by that town to support its minister, and had no remedy in law.

Other towns fared worse than Swanzy, for this power of taxation for the support of Congregational ministers was exercised rigidly in the neighboring towns of Tiverton and Dartmouth. The towns replied to the warrant of the Court that Elder Wanton was the minister of Tiverton, and Elder Tabor of Dartmouth. But the Court would not accept the answer as satisfactory, and presented a complaint against the towns to the General Assembly in 1722. The Assembly imposed a tax of £171 for the support of ministers, which the Selectmen refused to assess. The Court ordered two of the Selectmen of each town to be imprisoned in the county jail at Bristol for this offence. The towns at once made an appeal to his Majesty George I. of England, imploring that such violations of the charter guaranteeing freedom to all citizens might be arrested. The Royal Council acted promptly, granting the request of the petitioners, and ordering the authorities of the Province to remit the taxes imposed, and to release the prisoners from jail. The Selectmen had been confined thirteen months, but were determined to resist to the end an unjust law.

The persecution of the Swanzy church ended with the attempt on the part of the County Court, in 1719, to force on them a minister of the standing order; and with the taxes levied on them by the town of Rehoboth for the support of the minister in that town. These taxes could not be collected, after the Royal Council had sent such stringent instructions to the magistrates, touching the towns of Tiverton and Dartmouth.

But the church suffered a serious inconvenience and loss by the knavery of one of their own deacons. When the grant of land by the Plymouth Colony was made to the first settlers in Swanzy, they set apart certain parcels for the use of future pastors and teachers. At a later period the town of Barrington was set off from Swanzy, and with it several of these lots, which were appropriated to the Pedobaptist minister of the new town. The surveys of these

lots were all entered in the book of church records which had been brought from Ilston, Wales. In 1718 Richard Harden, a man of great energy of character, but unscrupulous in his ways was chosen deacon and clerk of the church. He occupied one of these lots near the meeting-house, and made various improvements on it. Eager to secure his own interests, he cut out of the record-book all the records between 1663 and 1718, thus destroying the official surveys of these reserved lots. He supposed that if the proof of such reservation were removed, he could hold the lot on which his house was built, as a part of the common land open to all settlers.

But his fraud was useless. The church saw that the titles to all the reserved lots were forfeited if his claim from the loss of the records, was held to be valid. They persuaded, therefore, their Pedobaptist neighbors in Barrington to bring a suit for the ejectment of Harden, and to establish the validity of the old titles, offering them two fifths of the amount recovered. The Barrington people assented, and as the government, in the hands of the Pedobaptists, was inclined to favor their own party in all just claims, the suit was decided against Harden in the County Court, and in the Superior Court on an appeal, and he was ejected from his home, receiving only a consideration for the improvements made on the land.

The church in Swanzy enjoyed peace and prosperity from that time forward; and for more than a century from its origin, no other denomination had a foothold in the town. The church again will this year be led by the eminent men sent forth to be leaders in other churches.—*N. Y. Ec. & Chronicle.*

FOREIGN MISSIONS.

CASTE.

Caste is a terrible institution. It is a dead-lock on progress—the devil's brake, by which the wheels are effectually stopped. "Those of one caste," says Mr. Churchill, "will have nothing to do with another caste: they will not eat together—nor sleep together—nor occupy the same place together—nor even use water from the same well or tank. To break any of the rules regulating the system is to lose caste, which is worse than losing life, as many would prefer to die rather than become outcasts. As an instance of the way they regard any interference in this:—while we were away on our tour we were one evening driving through a town and passed a well, where some women were drawing water. Being very thirsty, and not thinking, I dipped a small dish in one of their jars of water. I saw at once that I had committed an offence, and our catechist told us that as soon as we were out of sight the woman broke the jar all to pieces. It would be a great offence and insult for a European to enter a Hindoo's house. It would have to be thoroughly purified at once."

BURNING THE DEAD.

"I saw the burning of a Hindoo some time since. The man belonged to one of the upper castes. He died suddenly in the evening at the hospital, and the next day the body was carried on a light bamboo frame by four men to the place of burning. There was very little ceremony. A pile of wood and dried cow dung was built up about two feet high, on which the body, nearly naked, was placed, and over the body was laid more wood. Fire was set to this by the son of the dead man, and after some time the whole was in flames. Once, I suppose, the widow would have been burned beside her husband."

A DAY'S WORK.

"Our native helper, Aaron," says Mr. Armstrong, "is engaged in preaching, in this and adjacent towns and villages. He reports to me every day the work done on the preceding day. That you may the better understand