

Witness

5.

Day of Thanksgiving.

We beg leave most respectfully to suggest to those in authority the great propriety of appointing or recommending a day of Thanksgiving. Early this season we were surrounded and threatened by many troubles and difficulties; in our distress we cried to God, in our fear we humbled ourselves; and He has graciously listened to our cry. He has emphatically crowned the year with gladness. Our Farmers never had better crops; the Fisheries too have been highly productive. The industrious of every calling had no difficulty this year in earning their bread—labour being abundant and wages good. Let us not in the midst of our prosperity forget the Gracious Giver of all that we enjoy. Let us as a people cause our song of Thanksgiving to ascend before His Throne.

Historic Sketch of the Crimea.

The events that have recently transpired, and the fortunes that are yet to be decided, in the Crimea, will render a brief historic sketch of it acceptable to our readers. Anciently the Crimea was called the TAURIC CHERSONESUS; and the Greek legends tell us that the inhabitants, the Taurians, were an inhospitable, treacherous, cruel race, who, when strangers were cast upon their shores, seized them and offered them in sacrifice to their goddess DIANA. It was to the Tauric Chersonese that (as fable has it) the goddess snatched away beyond the billowy sea the young and beautiful Iphigenia, daughter of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, when she was to be offered up to expiate her father's crime of killing a swift-footed hart sacred to Diana. A temple of Diana is said to have occupied the very same spot that is now the Telegraph station from which communication is held with London. Chersonesus, the ancient capital of the Crimea, was founded by Hellenic Greeks, and early attained considerable opulence and power. Its situation is indicated by remains that are to be found between the French Camp and SEBASTOPOL; and by looking on an ordinary map one cannot distinguish between the site of Chersonesus and the site of that city whose very name is now a talisman and a word of fear to the world. Panticapaeum anciently occupied the site of KERCH, so lately the scene of British bravery and Turkish barbarity. There were other towns of some note in the Crimea, but these two, Chersonesus and Panticapaeum, were by far the most important; and they are met with not unfrequently in ancient history. Their corn trade was of great value to Athens and other Grecian cities. Situated on the Cimmerian Bosphorus, the only exit from the Sea of Azoff (Palus Meotis), Panticapaeum was the centre-point of trade between the "mare-milking Scythians" and the more distant Greek colonies on the coast, and the parent States of Greece on the other. Fish and wheat were the staple articles of trade. The Greek colonies on the Crimea were a subject of deep interest to the Athenians, and accordingly we find them mentioned in the speeches of Demosthenes both for their corn trade and their peculiar form of government. The Grecian States were always partial to the most democratical form of republicanism. But their offspring on the Cimmerian Bosphorus erected a kingdom and seemed to flourish remarkably under the firm but genial sway of a native monarch.

Every earthly thing is doomed to change. Cities and kingdoms wax to greatness in a few years; a few years they flourish; and in a few years more they wane and fall and are forgotten.—Thus was it with the cities and the kingdom of the Tauric Chersonese. Barbarians descending from the north in successive hordes invaded the country and laid desolate whatever stood within their reach. The Taurians also, long subject to the Greeks, were roused to resistance and revenge, by a Chief named Sarmus, who consolidated their energies under his own rule. He laid siege to Chersonesus; and a line of forts which he built on the offensive, correspond wonderfully with the present situation of the Allies before Sebastopol. Both Panticapaeum and Chersonesus were saved from destruction at this time by calling to their assistance the famous Mithridates King of Pontus. The generals of this brave man freed back the tide of northern invasion; successively overthrowing the Sarmatians and the Roxolani. It is thought that these Roxolani were the progenitors of the Russians of the present day. The little kingdom on the Cimmerian Bosphorus was

now extinguished—Mithridates annexed it to his own empire—and Chersonesus with the rest of the Crimea, became tributary to him. Mithridates will be remembered as one of the most persistent, formidable, and sanguinary foes of the Roman empire. For upwards of twenty years he waged continual and bitter war with the veterans of Rome; he was never subdued; for when Pompey expelled him from his old dominions, he found a home, peaceful and strong, in the Crimea. But his son, "a bloody and pitiful man," made peace with Rome, and lived and died ingloriously. The Roman Emperors permitted petty kings to reign in the Crimea—in consideration of their paying taxes and doing homage, and towards the end of the fourth century HUNS crossed the Cimmerian Bosphorus and utterly destroyed Panticapaeum, the town of which that town was the capital. The town of Chersonesus resisted the attacks of the barbarians, and under a Byzantine Emperor, continued to flourish in security till the end of the century, when the whole of the Crimea fell into the hands of the Russians of the brave Vladimir. This prince, a braced christianity, and was baptised in the town which he had conquered. Vladimir did not choose to keep possession of the Crimea, which reverted, therefore, to the Byzantine Emperor. In the twelfth century the maritime States of Italy commenced a lucrative trade on the shores of the Euxine, and under the patronage the Crimean towns rose to great prosperity. The trade with India was at this time, owing to the cruelties carried on almost exclusively by way of the Black Sea, and the merchants of Venice and Genoa monopolized it. Towards the end of the thirteenth century the Crimea fell under the dominion of the Tartars, who encouraged commerce as much as possible. The Genoese, after many struggles, succeeded in getting into their own hands the entire trade of the Black Sea Coast. On the Crimea they founded the town of Galata, and also KAFFA, which for a time rivalled Constantinople itself in magnificence and power. These continued in the hands of the Genoese till 1453, when Mahomet the Second took Galata. Twenty years later, Kaffa fell into the grasp of the same fierce conqueror, who robbed it of forty thousand of its inhabitants to re-people his capital. Still it flourished; and shortly before it fell into the hands of Russia it had a population of 85,000. Under Russian rule Kaffa became a desolation; and the same may be said of almost every other part of the Crimea excepting Sebastopol. It was in 1783 that the Russians gained possession of the Crimea. They wrested it, partly by intrigues and partly by force, from the Tartar Khans. The Porte protested, but he was too weak to cause his protest to be respected. This happened during the reign of the Empress Catharine; and with the entire consent of Joseph the Emperor of Austria. He himself prepared to seize a portion of the Turkish territories, but France threatened him with war and he forbore.

With all its smoke, and noise, and speed, Railway travelling seems to be the safest possible. Woful accidents sometimes do occur, but, most frequently, these accidents are the result of woful mismanagement; and from the remarkable reduction that has already been made in their number it is reasonable to expect that in process of time they shall be entirely extinguished. In England during the last year no more than 12 railway passengers met their deaths from causes beyond their own control—and the entire number of passengers was one hundred and eleven millions. On the year previous the number of deaths of the same class was 36—though the total number of passengers was eight millions less. The number of passengers on English railways in 1851 is nearly double the number in 1849; and the receipts for traffic are in the same proportion. Of every £100 received, £45 go to pay working expenses. Of these expenses the largest part, viz. 53 per cent, goes to provide carriages and engines. The opened English railways gave, in 1854, employment to 90,409 persons. This number includes navies, engine drivers, firemen, guards, brakemen, porters, messengers, &c. The unopened railways employed 55,896, making a total of railway labourers, of 135,310. The entire capital invested in English railways up to the 31st December, 1854, was £286,063,794.

The Rev. Mr. Forrester, Principal of the Normal School at Truro, is at present in Cape Breton. He has been with us for the purpose of delivering the lectures of the course of the Island. From all quarters we have the most glowing accounts of his activity, intelligence, and extraordinary powers as a lecturer. We have had the privilege of hearing him ourselves on several occasions, and derived no small benefit from his lectures. On the 10th of the month he lectured in the Court of Sessions at Sydney. At the close of the session it was moved and unanimously agreed to, that the thanks of the meeting be tendered him for his powerful and very eloquent address. On the following day he had meetings for conference respectively with the commissioners and teachers. On Friday he lectured at Miramichi, in the open air, to a congregation of about five hundred. On Sabbath the 13th he preached in the forenoon in St. Andrew's Church to an overflowing congregation, and in the evening lectured on the moral training of the young. His visit, as a whole, produced the very best results, and the conviction is deep and general that his appointment is the best which could possibly have been made.—Under the charge of one so devoted and so well qualified the Institution cannot but prosper, by the Divine blessing. We look for great things, and we feel confident that we shall not be disappointed. Cape Breton, 21st August, 1855.

To the Editor of the Presbyterian Witness. Sir,—I thank you for admitting my former letter into the number of your paper dated the 4th ult., and for acceding to the request I made therein, by publishing, in a later issue, an authenticated copy of the deed of St. James' Church, Dartmouth. The deed, as I now read it, contains the confidence I reposed in the report on this property, submitted to the Synod of the Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia at its last meeting, and re-assures me that since the court was called upon to dispose of the reference made to it on the subject by the Presbytery of Halifax, the action which I proposed, in the resolution which I moved, was not the one which might have been adopted. In the circumstances, the best and most Christian. From this it follows that I consider the statement you have made and reiterated—that the Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia "has no legal claim to the building"—as, I will not say morally, but in point of opinion, a false witness.

Every one knows what the object is in drawing out a deed of property in favor of an individual or body of men, and what is the amount of legal evidence afforded by its registration. The deed, in this case, is not in favor of a congregation which may choose to worship, or be allowed to worship, for a period of 12 years, in St. James' Church, Dartmouth. It not only defines, in the plainest and strictest manner, what was the religious persuasion and church connection of the congregation when the property was decided; but it also declares, as especially as there is any need for, that, in all time coming, so long as the deed shall be in force, the legal occupants, as stated worshippers in that building, can only be of one persuasion and connection, that, namely, "known and denominated the Kirk or Church established in that part of Great Britain called Scotland." It evidently does not contemplate that the congregation shall belong to one denomination this year and to another the next year. With such an interpretation a deed of church property would be altogether inadmissible: the law of the Province would have excluded the deed from the public registers. It would be paying a wretched compliment to the intelligence of the Presbyterian inhabitants of Dartmouth, if it were imagined that there could be found among them four men willing to attach their names to a deed capable of this construction, even if there existed the slightest possibility of founding it upon the form of a letter or the position of a word. It would amount to this: that they declared their church connection to be of a particular kind, generally "known and denominated" in this country by a certain title, which may denote one of several denominations! The congregation of St. James' Church, Dartmouth, was not and could not be bound by the deed to continue in the same connection. But though the congregation may change, and that to a man, the property, which is the thing decided, is, in the eye of the law, deemed the property of Trustees being members of the particular denomination of christians specified in the deed.—That denomination has passed through a season of weakness; another, unknown and unthought of when the property was registered, has arisen. Surely the former, though not occupying or using the building in the interval, does not lose the claim solemnly admitted and given; surely the latter can assert no "legal or equitable claim."

I shall now notice your observations upon that clause of the deed which defines the particular denomination of christians, to which, so long as the deed is in force, the legal trustees and occupants must belong. I do so the more readily, as, in connection with your observations, you have borne special testimony to the fact that all your readers are possessed of an ordinary share of intelligence. Following your example, I ask such of them as are possessed of unprejudiced minds, if they have any difficulty in discovering what denomination of christians is referred to by the term, "the Kirk or Church established in that part of Great Britain called Scotland." Their decision will, of course, be guided by the year in which the deed was executed, that is, the year 1829. Some of your readers, I know, belong to the Presbyterian Church of Nova Scotia. The two denominations in Scotland, with either of which they or their fathers are likely to have been connected, were, a few years ago, happily united into one denomination called the "United Presbyterian Church." Will their intelligence lead them to identify "the Kirk or Church established in that part of Great Britain called Scotland," with this denomination. More of your readers, I dare say, belong to the Free Church, which, as an institution, first saw the light in 1843. I am sure they have sufficient intelligence to conclude that "the Kirk or Church established in that part of Great Britain called Scotland" is not identical with what they designate "the Free Church of Scotland." This being so, you will observe, Mr. Editor, that the work of identification becomes very easy, and laying all prejudices aside and exercising a very ordinary amount of intelligence, your readers will, for the most part, I think, conclude that what in the deed is called "the Kirk or Church established in that part of Great Britain called Scotland," means "the Church of Scotland," of which "the Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia" is a branch. It is true, your readers will not find in the deed either of those names which, just before quoting the clause to which I am alluding, you have enumerated, but they will find a name by which the Church of Scotland was in 1829, and is still generally "known" in this country; and it appears to me that the "Act concerning Religious Congregations and Societies," when it provides that persons forming themselves into a congregation or religious society, "declare the particular denomination of christians with whose doctrines such congregation is connected," require nothing more than that a name be employed which shall sufficiently express that denomination. At all events it occurs to me that the first thing to be done, seeing that a certain term has been employed in the deed to express a particular denomination, is to ascertain whether there be not, at this time, in Scotland a denomination which can be identified with what is called "the Kirk or Church established in that part of Great Britain called Scotland," instead of attempting to show that the said term conveys no legal meaning at all, as certainly it will not, if you can make out that it means simply the Presbyterian Church "set up, maintained, and organized in that part of Great Britain called Scotland." I think the course I have just suggested is the usual one when men want to find the rightful owners of a property, and, in all honesty, I think it must be proper that we should distinctly agree that no owner exists before the very questionable procedure to which your remarks would lead can be fairly adopted. I must confess that if I were ever to have had occasion to write in a formal manner concerning the Church established there, I would, as likely as not, put down "the Kirk or Church established in Scotland," satisfied that all who might read it would understand what denomination of christians is understood.

Notwithstanding the sarcasm and Italics to boot with which you have recorded the fact, in your Editorial which has called forth this of your former letter, I do think there was a considerable touch of generosity in the course adopted by the Synod of the Church of Scotland in Nova Scotia, when, according to its resolution, it was deemed expedient to give occasional services to the members of the Church of Scotland residing in Dartmouth, and the Presbytery of Halifax was instructed to give, from time to time, such services in St. James' Church there, as may be in their power conveniently to give, and further to grant permission to the Free Church congregation, under present circumstances, to occupy the Church for the worship of God, at all such times as it is not required by this Church.—Speaking for the congregation, at present worshipping there, you do not seem ever to have thought to whom they are indebted for the use of the building they now occupy. At least you have never communicated any expression of gratitude from that quarter. But the highest representative Court in these Provinces of that Church which is their parent, not much accustomed to be sure to the compliments of her youngest daughter, yet, with a generosity characteristic only of maternal regard, allows still an almost undisturbed use of the building to the congregation at present worshipping there—the exception being occasional services by the Presbytery of Halifax. This is the generous act which you are pleased to style, an "entirely unprecedented, unjust, and unbecoming" proceeding, and in which you have discovered a mighty obstruction to co-operation and union.

I remain, Your's, &c., W. SNODGRASS. Charlottetown, 28th August, 1855.

For the Witness. The Rev. Mr. Forrester, Principal of the Normal School at Truro, is at present in Cape Breton. He has been with us for the purpose of delivering the lectures of the course of the Island. From all quarters we have the most glowing accounts of his activity, intelligence, and extraordinary powers as a lecturer. We have had the privilege of hearing him ourselves on several occasions, and derived no small benefit from his lectures. On the 10th of the month he lectured in the Court of Sessions at Sydney. At the close of the session it was moved and unanimously agreed to, that the thanks of the meeting be tendered him for his powerful and very eloquent address. On the following day he had meetings for conference respectively with the commissioners and teachers. On Friday he lectured at Miramichi, in the open air, to a congregation of about five hundred. On Sabbath the 13th he preached in the forenoon in St. Andrew's Church to an overflowing congregation, and in the evening lectured on the moral training of the young. His visit, as a whole, produced the very best results, and the conviction is deep and general that his appointment is the best which could possibly have been made.—Under the charge of one so devoted and so well qualified the Institution cannot but prosper, by the Divine blessing. We look for great things, and we feel confident that we shall not be disappointed. Cape Breton, 21st August, 1855.

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I remain, Your's, &c., W. SNODGRASS. Charlottetown, 28th August, 1855.

Important from the Pacific. PETROPOLASKI is destroyed! It never rains but it pours! Three glorious victories are brought to us by Steam and Telegraph within the same few hours. Sveaborg and Petropoulaski in ruins, and the Russians defeated on the Tchernaya! Petropoulaski was closely blockaded for 50 days previous to its destruction. The garrison escaped in two Russian vessels that made their way through the blockading squadron during a thick fog. The destruction of this town makes amends for the sad affair that happened before it last year.

A recent number of the Toronto Globe stated that the Rev. Mr. Irvine, of Hamilton, a Free Church Minister, was to assist at the celebration of the Lord's Supper in the United Presbyterian Church, Toronto. A few weeks since the same paper contained an account of an ordination service, deeply interesting to all desiring the union as far as practicable of the Lord's people. The ordination was that of Mr. John Lees to the pastoral charge of the United Presbyterian congregation of Ancaster. The following extract from the account of the services is very pleasing:—"Mr. Lees, who was for some years a resident of the village, on receiving license, enjoyed the warm interest of the population, and especially the Presbyterians of all denominations; and a very harmonious opinion prevailed that, if he would become their minister, they would merge their differences. Consequently the ministers both of the Free Church and Church of Scotland in Dundas, who had service in the village on each Sabbath, withdrew, and the place of worship of the Free Church was offered and accepted for holding public worship, and that of the Church of Scotland was offered and accepted for holding the ordination services. It is very pleasing, also to mention that the Rev. Mr. Barnes, of St. Andrew's Church, Hamilton, and the Rev. Mr. Irvine, of Knox's Church, Hamilton, were present, and, on invitation, took part in the "laying on of hands" to the ordination service. When we see the harmony of the people, and the ministers of the three Presbyterian Churches thus uniting as one, the absurdity of our Presbyterian divisions seem more apparent, and the wish for an incorporated union becomes more heartfelt.

Church of Scotland.

On Monday evening last, at the close of the session of the Synod of the Presbyterian Church of New-Branswick, in connection with the Church of Scotland, a very interesting and unanimously attended public meeting of the friends of the Church was held in St. Andrew's Church here, to allow the members of that Synod, and the corresponding members of the Synods of Canada and Nova Scotia an opportunity of explaining the present and future prospects of their respective Churches in these Colonies. The following resolutions were ably and eloquently supported by the different speakers, and unanimously adopted:—It was moved by John Wishart, Esq., and seconded by John Waddell, Esq., M. D., that the Hon. JOHN ROBERTSON take the Chair. The Chairman called upon the Rev. Wm. Henderson, A. M., to open the meeting with praise and prayer.

The Chairman in a few appropriate remarks explained the object of the meeting and then called on the Rev. Dr. McGill, of Montreal to move the first Resolution, which was seconded by the Rev. John Ross, of St. Andrews, viz:—1. That this meeting desire to express their thankfulness to Almighty God, for the amount of success that has accompanied the efforts of the Church of Scotland at home and in the Colonies, to extend the cause of the Redeemer, and promote the spread of his Gospel.

It was then moved by the Rev. Professor Weir, of Queen's College, Kingston, C. W., seconded by Professor Jack, King's College, Fredericton—and supported by the Rev. William Donald, A. M., and resolved:—11. That, as the Church of Scotland in the Colonies has suffered much from want of a sufficient number of labourers—this meeting express their approbation of the efforts that have been made and are making for raising up a native ministry.

It was moved by the Rev. George Spratt, of Halifax, and seconded by the Rev. Dr. Brook, of Fredericton, and resolved:—11. That, as the successful prosecution of any scheme depends much, under the blessing of God, on combination, this meeting think it highly desirable that a closer connection should subsist between the several branches of our Church in Canada, New-Branswick, and Nova Scotia, that their respective measures for the advancement of the cause of Christ may be presented in concert.

There after it was moved by Robert Jardine, and seconded by Alexander Balloch, Esq., that the Hon. John Robertson do now leave the Chair, and that John Duncan, Esq., do take it, and that the thanks of this Meeting be given to the Hon. John Robertson for his conduct in the Chair. This being done, the Hymn "From Greenland's icy mountains," was sung by the Choir, and the whole was concluded with the apostolic benediction.—St. John Courier.

Latest from Newfoundland.

The R. M. S. Spray arrived on Sunday from St. John's, Nfld. Papers to 22nd inst., contain intelligence of a very interesting nature. The Merlin rock, at the entrance of St. John's harbour has been successfully and triumphantly removed—nine feet additional depth of water are thus secured. The soundings now show only seven feet below ordinary low-water mark. The blasting was completed on the evening of 21st inst., when the last piece brought away was as firm and solid as adamant. The arrival of the American steamer James Alton, with her numerous party, gave great satisfaction in St. John's. A re-union of the most pleasing character was held on board soon after her arrival, and a return banquet was given on shore the following evening. The principal inhabitants were also invited to an excursion on the steamer, when she proceeded as far as—

The property owned by the Messrs. Baners in Water Street, was sold at auction on Wednesday, for the sum of £9,565. Sailed on Thursday last H. L. M. S. Penelope, Captaine Fornier, for St. Pierre, Mic.