

CONTINUE

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Ben Franklin to Tom Paine.

We produce from the Christian Advocate of New York, a letter written by Benjamin Franklin, which it is said he addressed to Thomas Paine, about the time that brilliant young sceptic was arranging to publish his first infidel writing. The abbreviations, contractions and capitals stand in the peculiar style in which Franklin wrote them.

"Phila., 3 July, 1786.

"Dear Sir: I have read your Manuscript with some attention. By the Arguments it contains against the Doctrine of a particular Providence, tho' you allow a general Providence, you strike at the Foundation of all Religion: For without the Belief of a Providence that takes cognizance of guards and guides & may favor particular Persons, there is no Motive to Worship a Deity, to fear its Displeasare, or to pray for its Protection. I will not enter into any Discussion of your principles, tho' you seem to desire it; At present I shall only give you my Opinion that tho' your Reasonings are subtle, and may prevail with some Readers, you will not succeed so as to change the general Sentiments of Mankind on that Subject, and the Consequences of Printing this Piece will be a great deal of Odium drawn upon yourself, mischief to you, & no Benefit to others. He that spits against the Wind, spits in his own Face. But were you to succeed, do you imagine any Good would be done by it? You yourself may find it easy to live a virtuous Life without the Assistance afforded by Religion, you having a clear Perception of the Advantages of Virtue & the Disadvantages of Vice, and possessing a Strength of Resolution sufficient to enable you to resist common Temptations. But think how great a Proportion of Mankind consists of weak & ignorant Men & Women, and of inexperienced & inconsiderate Youth of both Sexes who have need of the Motives of Religion to restrain them from Vice, to support their Virtue, & retain them in the Practice of it till it becomes habitual, which is the great Point for its Security. And perhaps you are indebted to her originally, that is to your Religious Education, for the Habits of Virtue upon which you now justly value yourself. You might easily display your excellent Talents of reasoning on a less hazardous Subject, and thereby obtain Rank with our most distinguished Authors. For among us, it is not necessary, as among the Hottentots, that a Youth to be received into the Company of Men, should prove his Manhood by beating his Mother. I would advise you therefore not to attempt unchaining the Tyger, but to burn this Piece before it seen by any other Person, whereby you will save yourself a great deal of Mortification from the Enemies it may raise against you, and perhaps a good deal of Regret & Repentance. If men are so wicked as we now see them with Religion what would they be without it? I intend this Letter itself as a Proof of my Friendship & therefore add no Professions of it; but subscribe simply.

"Yours,
"B. F....."

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J. J. Hill on the Canadian West.

In a speech at Winnipeg the other day Mr. J. J. Hill admitted that when the Canadian Pacific Railway was first projected it could not have been built as a private enterprise. It was then necessary for the government to extend its aid and credit or to build the road with public money. He said the Canadian Pacific had done a great deal for the Northwest, as the Northwest had done well by the road. He pointed out that generally railways were owned by a great many individuals. The Great Northern had from 3,500 to 4,000 owners, and among these as good a representation in the British Empire as any other railway in the world. He declared that the future of the West depended upon the cultivation of the soil more than all other interests combined or even multiplied by ten or twenty, and that this was true of every nation which had built up a good, strong, intelligent citizenship. The nation can always depend on the man who follows the plough, and the mine that he works year by year reproduces itself.

He said that in some of the Western States they had wasted their fertility, although the nation had accomplished a mighty achievement in building up all the States between the Mississippi and Missouri rivers and the Pacific Ocean. They had no public domain left which could be settled and culti-

vated without irrigation, so that all the drift of new settlers was towards Canada. As a result Canada would be settled and developed faster than Canadians could expect or even understand. He declared that he would not be surprised to see by 1925 a population in Winnipeg and the West as great as there is in all the Eastern Provinces. They were irrigating in the United States, and it was claimed they could irrigate from fifty to sixty million acres. But even if they did so and gave each farmer fifty acres of irrigated land that would mean only 1,200,000 farms and probably five million people, while the United States is now increasing from immigration and natural increase at the rate of two and a half millions a year. Hence every year it takes 15,000,000 bushels of wheat more than for the previous year to furnish seed and feed the people. He argued from this that in six or seven years the United States would cease to be an exporter of wheat, and this would mean new markets, and enhance the value of the wheat of Canada.

He wanted a railway across the West and he desired to build a good road with low grades. Transportation, he said, was nothing but overcoming the laws of gravitation. The nearer level the road is the easier it is to run trains. He pointed out that in spite of legislative obstruction there was an enormous trade between Canada and the United States, that this must continue to grow and expand, that within a comparatively short time the United States would become Canada's best customer, and that a new customer and a new market for one-quarter or one-half of what Canadians raise would enhance the value of all Canadian exports of natural products.

His Elder Brother.

An aged and doddering gentleman was on the witness stand in a case involving the inheritance of a goodly and long-litigated estate. It was necessary that the fact of the existence or nonexistence of other heirs than the old gentleman be established.

"Have you ever had any brothers or sisters?" asked the attorney who conducted the direct examination. "I never had a sister," piped the old gentleman, "but I had one brother."

"Is that brother still living?"
"No, he is dead."
"When did he die?"
"About—about—let's see—it was about a hundred and fifty years ago."

"I asked you—you must have misunderstood me—I asked you when your brother died."

"And I told you about a hundred and fifty years ago."

But I am serious in my question and cannot listen to such absurd answers. Remember you are on oath."

"I am telling you the truth," insisted the old gentleman, earnestly.

Here the judge interposed:

"The witness must refrain from levity and facetiousness and confine his answer to facts or I shall be obliged to take punitive measures for contempt."

There is no contempt, judge," protested the witness. "I mean what I say and if your honor and the attorney will give me an opportunity to explain I shall make it clear to you."

"The witness may have the opportunity to set himself right if possible," said the judge.

"Well, your honor, my father married when he was 17. A year later his wife bore him a child and died. The child died within three months. My father remained single until he was 72, then married a young woman, to whom I was born a year later. I am 95 years of age."

After profuse apologies the examination proceeded.

Quaint notions of Canadian geography still prevail even amongst English writers. Mrs. Humphrey Ward is one of the most learned of current English authors. Her fame as a linguist is well established, but her ideas of Canadian geography need strengthening. In her last novel, "Fenwick's Career," there is a passage where one of the characters is represented as looking over the blue waters of Lake Superior from a fruit farm in the Niagra district. This may easily be forgiven Mrs. Ward, however, in consideration of the pleasant references to Canada which occur in the book.

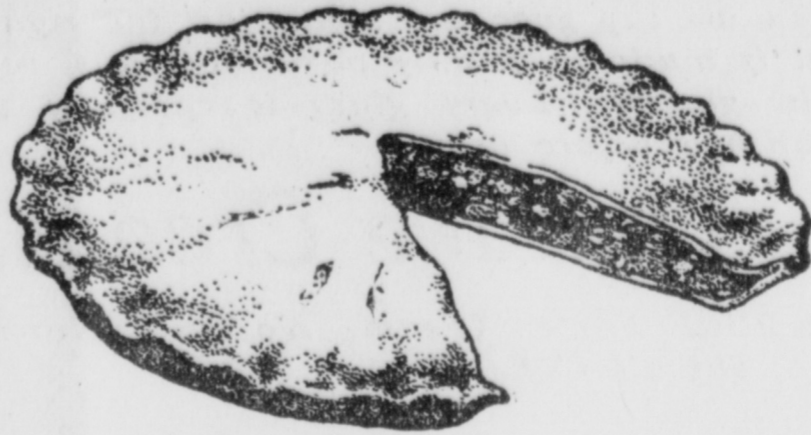


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Summer School in Woodstock.

A Summer School in the interest of Sunday School work will be held in St. Paul's church, Woodstock, July 1st—6th. The school is being held under the auspices of the Maritime Synod of the Presbyterian church in Canada, whose plans are being carried out by the Presbyterians of St. John and Miramichi. Similar schools have been held in New Brunswick for the past three years in St. John, Fredericton and Newcastle with much success. The Summer School follows along the line of the College Extension idea. It is an Institute rather than a Convention. Its aim is not simply to stimulate but to educate. The Woodstock School will be opened on Sunday, July 1st, by Rev. Principal Falconer, D. D., of the Presbyterian College, Halifax, N. S., who will preach morning and evening in St. Paul's church and in the afternoon at Richmond Corner. The course of studies will include the following:—

- 1.—Studies in "Life of Christ," (5 lectures) by Rev. Principal Falconer.
- 2.—Studies on "The Teacher and His Work," (5 lectures) by W. T. Kennedy, M. A., Principal of Halifax Academy.
- 3.—Studies in "Israel Before the Monarchy," (3 lectures) by Rev. A. H. Foster, B. D.
- 4.—Studies in "Jesus and His Times," (4 lectures) by Rev. Gordon Dickie, M. A.
- 5.—Lessons on the Use of the Blackboard by Mr. S. H. McFarlane.
- 6.—Address on Sunday School Management by Robert Reid.
- 7.—Address on Supplemental Work—its use and Value by Rev. J. G. Colquhoun, B. A.

A committee of St. Paul's church are making all necessary local arrangements. Special rates are being provided by the railway lines. Printed programmes will be issued in a short time. The committee earnestly hope that Sunday school and church workers, especially those in the congregations of this part of the province will not fail to appreciate and take advantage of the opportunity open to them in the Woodstock Summer School.

Acting in Real Life.

The better a man plays his part, the better he succeeds. The more a man knows of the art of acting, the greater the man, for, from the king on his throne to the beggar in the street, every man is acting. There is no greater comedian or tragedian in the world than a great king. The knowledge of the art of acting is indispensable to a knowledge of mankind, and when you are able to pierce the disguise in which every man arrays himself, or read the character which every man assumes, you achieve an intimate knowledge of your fellow men, and you are able to cope with the man, either as he is or as he pretends to be. It was necessary for Shakespeare to be an actor in order to know men. Without his knowledge of the stage, Shakespeare could never have been the reader of men that he was. And yet we are asked, "Is the stage worth while?" Napoleon and Alexander were both great actors; Napoleon perhaps the greatest actor the world has ever seen. Whether on the bridge of Lodi, or in his camp at Tilsit; whether addressing his soldiers in the plains of Egypt, whether throwing open his old gray coat and saying, "Children, will you fire on your general?" whether bidding farewell to them at Fontenoy; whether he was standing on the deck of the Bellerophon, or on the rocks of St. Helena; he was always an actor.—[Richard Mansfield.]

The admission of 97 cases of bribery by the agents of the Conservative member for Worcester proves that even British elections are not quite sun-clear. Still, if we in Canada could reach up to the British standard of bribing constituencies by endowing hospitals and subscribing to flower missions, instead of bribing the individual, politics would be the sweeter for it. The Worcester member is probably sorry now that he reverted to the old style.

Shakespeare's works are among the "best sellers" in England, there having been an average of 9 new editions a year for the last 6 years. For the information of those who never read anything but the "books of the hour" it may not be out of place to say that Mr. Shakespeare was a writer of plays who is now dead.

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