

THEY ALL TALKED BACK.

A DARKEY BISHOP DISCOURAGING UNDER-DIFFICULTIES.

He Roused His Hearers So Completely That They Couldn't Wait Until Service Was Over to Express Their Approval—A Specimen Sunday in Florida.

[SEVENTH LETTER.]

TALLAHASSEE, Fla., March 28.—On Saturday notices were posted about the town in all directions that Bishop Arnot would preach twice on Sunday in the colored church, he being bishop of the diocese of Florida and head of the Methodist persuasion, or rather the colored portion of it. His fame as an able, stirring preacher having preceded him, the building in which he was to hold forth next day became the great Mecca towards which every footstep tended, from far and near—nor were the white gentry (among them many visitors stopping at the hotels), a whit less anxious than the sable brethren to hear the great preacher and crowd the thoroughfares. Soon the building was filled to repletion. The white folks were honored with seats in front, facing a platform about two feet high, and probably ten broad, running the whole breadth of the room, upon which were seated the members of the choir on either side of the bishop and the regular pastor, who occupied seats directly in the centre. On the level of the floor, close beside the platform, stood a cabinet organ, presided over by an excellent performer. The bishop was as dark as ebony, polished at that, for the heat was considerable, added to which the exertion to make himself emphatic caused no small amount of perspiration and polish to appear upon his venerable physiognomy. The bishop's age is probably in the fifties—of commanding, dignified presence, and having a good sonorous voice, and lung power enough to make it sound in every part of the building and in the neighborhood beyond for that matter; he was always effective and kept his audience upon the qui vive throughout the hour and a quarter which his sermon occupied.

I have heard many able preachers in my day, but seldom listened to one more effective than this colored gentleman—whether as regards language, diction, aptness of illustration, gracefulness of gesture, scriptural references in elucidation of the text, ("I am not ashamed to preach the gospel of Christ"), his exegesis, his philosophical deductions, home-thrust conclusions, which by the way told most wonderfully upon the colored part of the congregation, who, as the preacher advanced, became responsive, loud, obstreperous, so that the effectiveness of the preacher was considerably marred through the unseemly, if not irreverent interruptions, such as I will here attempt to describe, for example:

Bishop—"You must be born again, become a new creature."

Response—"Yat's a fact, ye must be born again; I say so, too."

Bishop—"You must be the husband of only one wife."

Here some of the colored folks began to scratch their heads, for the marital relationship in numerous cases in the South is not en rapport among the colored race; with "the table of degrees" set down in our prayer books. From a seat a short distance behind me, went up the response, "dat's rite, bishop, guv't him, I tells him so;" and I inferred that there had been some domestic infidelities between the lawful husband and wife, and this was the opportunity for the latter to let out upon her unfaithful spouse, backed up by the dictum of the bishop; but as soon as the preacher followed up the admonition in the next sentence by saying, "nor must a woman have more than one man for her husband," it was Darby's turn to respond, "dat's rite, bishop, givet her; now den, d'ye har dat—just sarves yer rite." Here was a thunderbolt thrown by the bishop into the midst of the camp which scorched more than one couple in that sympathetic congregation. But the responses were so loud and frequent that it was difficult for me to hold the connection in the discourse, however loud the bishop's voice. "Yat's it, bishop," "guv't 'em," "so I tink myself," "dat's so," "a fact," "hit him hard, bishop." And yet the bishop seemed to think it was all right, or rather he was prepared for and accustomed to these very irrelevant and irreverent interruptions. The music of the choir was excellent—time, tune, voice and execution seemed perfect, if I am a judge, and then they all sung at the top of their voices, loud, clear, harmonious, and might have been heard half-a-mile off; windows up, mercury 80°.

The bishop's sermon and the music were to my mind exceptionally fine, and were it not for the terrible hullabaloo or accompaniments I have attempted to describe without a particle of exaggeration, the services of that afternoon would have done no discredit to the best conducted in other churches, as regards sermon and music, where everybody is supposed to keep quiet, in the presence of "the Great King."

At the conclusion of the sermon the regular pastor of the flock stepped forward and informed the congregation that he must have \$100 on that occasion to pay off the church debt, and he knew that there were three persons present who of themselves could subscribe that amount and not miss it. Some of us thought that this was rather a hit at the front seats, but as I felt that the cap did not fit, I thought it better for all the other white folks to form their own

individual conclusions, and if so disposed, make up the hundred dollars. The baskets, however, went ahead all the same, the organ and the singers let out in right good earnest and at the same time the minister kept calling upon his brethren to shell out. "I must have \$100 this day." This he repeated over and over again, an occasional remark thrown in, comical enough to give us all the titters. But the preacher knew how to work upon the enthusiasm of his people, and so by thus hammering away upon the red hot anvil, he could beat them all into shape and thus secure the \$100. When the baskets were emptied upon the table, the minister and one of his deacons began to count the money—the singers keeping at it all the time. When it was all counted it was ascertained that the sum required was nine dollars short. "Come, I must have the balance right off," ejaculated the minister. One by one the folks went forward to the table and put down his or her mite, in some cases a quarter, a dime, or a nickel, (there are no cents in this place.) Several put down a quarter and got change, as the quarter was all the money they had and they wished to give a dime out of it. In this way the amount was made up—and the minister announced the fact with emphasis. We were also informed that the bishop would preach again in the evening, and for everybody to bring all the money they had.

On the benediction being pronounced by the bishop there was a general stampede, precisely as in the case of children being dismissed from school. Every one commenced talking, laughing, shouting even, as if their pent up powers, which had been kept under some discipline for an hour and a half, could endure the pressure no longer, and now came a universal outburst. The bishop, apparently not accustomed to so much of this irreverent, irreligious vocalization, shouted out, as if addressing so many children, "Be quiet—be quiet—be quiet, I say;" louder and louder with each repetition; and his stentorian commands produced considerable effect—for after that, and until they reached the doors of the building, the clamor among the crowd was quite moderate; but once outside, and fairly upon the sidewalk, the din was renewed with unctious enough to put to flight the armies of Israel.

It must not be supposed by your readers that it is through a spirit of levity that this account is written, or even that it is an attempt to caricature an inoffensive people—much less to make light of matters which should ever demand our most serious consideration. The object on my part is to convey a glimpse of the habits and customs of this primitive, unsophisticated race; and however incredible the account may appear, it will be corroborated by numerous witnesses in this part of Florida where the article will be read.

The flora of this great treasure house of nature continues to unfold new charms. The bloom of the wisteria, the Cherokee rose, the LeConte pear, the crab-apple and the peach is all passing off, and a new creation of efflorescence is taking their place—such as the banana blossom, the magnolia, the oleander, the liliam-auratum, which are all getting ready to burst into flowers, but only waiting a wee until the orange blossoms, now in full fragrance, are ready to go with the gentle breezes, which woo and waft them hither and thither into azure space and nothingness. The whole air is aromatic with this orange blossom—the trees a short distance beyond are enshrouded in a white sheen of bridal dazzliness, the real thing itself, and no mock imitation. The roses continue to hold their own, keep on blooming longer and longer with each new crop, upon bushes and trees 20 feet high.

G. E. F.

A Home in the Country.

The residence built and occupied by Henry Titus, situated about one mile and a-half above the village of Rothesay, is offered for sale. The house is two stories in height and contains rooms enough for a large family, and stands upon a six-acre lot, more or less, and is admirably adapted for a summer residence, as well as all the year round. There are large barns upon the premises, and the place at present cuts about five tons of hay. The view of the Kennebecasis and its islands is magnificent. The railroad runs within half a mile of the property, and a siding might be placed in the vicinity for the accommodation of passengers.

This valuable property will be sold at a great bargain, as the owner of it now resides at a distance and wishes to get it off his hands. House can be examined any time. Apply for further information to E. S. Carter, office of PROGRESS, Canterbury street.—Advt.

For an Idle Hour.

Ticknor's semi-monthly is always on time and always welcome. No 50 cent paper issue is so popular in St. John for that best of reasons, none is so good. Fools of Nature, by Alice Brown, the latest, is a bright and natural story, as entertaining as it is well written. Published by Ticknor & Co., Boston, and for sale here by Alfred Morrissy.

They're Worth Money.

If you happen to have any "New Brunswick" 5 cent stamps with the head of O'Connell, I grip them hard. The London Standard says that such are "rarely parted with under £30."

PLUCK AND PUSH WIN!

GEO. F. BAIRD, M. P., MERCHANT, POLITICIAN AND MAN.

A Story of His Life and Its Important Incidents—Perseverance, Pluck and Ability Have Brought Him to the Front, Where He is Likely to Stay.

I once heard a Queens county Liberal give his opinion of George F. Baird. The speaker was a countryman—a rough and ready farmer who spoke as he thought, and never minced his words. "George Baird puts me in mind of a thoroughbred bull dog. He never lets go." Inelegantly, perhaps, but exceedingly terse. Mr. Baird may not feel flattered at this published opinion of him, but it struck me at the time that few men deserved the compliment so well, for indeed few deserve it at all.

The tenacity, persistency and perseverance of so few about me that I can count them on my fingers. Mr. Baird, the subject of this sketch, has all of them, and to them in no small degree does he owe his prominence of today.

The residents of Wickham, Queens county, are rather proud of the fact that Mr. Baird grew up among them. Whenever they get the chance they show their regard in a substantial fashion, whether it be in the way of votes or good will. Thirty-eight years ago the present representative of Queens saw his county. He



GEORGE F. BAIRD, M. P.

lost no time in getting ready for the work that was cut out for him. At first, a country boy thinking of nothing save school between the hours of 9 a. m., and 4 p. m., and his "tasks" at night, he soon began to show what ability and pluck was in him. Getting beyond the depth of the rural pedagogue was not uncommon in those days, and young Baird was soon able to instruct his former teacher. Then it was that he was sent to that place of discipline and scholarship, the Kingston Grammar school, where such men as Mauger, Wetmore, Scovil and Raymond reigned, and every pupil was a loyal subject. With many other men of the present day Mr. Baird retains pleasant recollections of this well known and famed school. I may be permitted to digress a moment and tell them that since the removal of the shiretown to Hampton, the old Grammar school building has been moved from its former lofty and isolated site, and where once nothing was heard but the everlasting drill of English and French, Latin and Greek, the sound of saw, hammer and plane has been prominent, and even since the walls which once bore nothing but pencil sketches and blackboards, have been decorated with shelves bearing canned goods and spices. What a change!

From 1870 to '74, Mr. Baird was supposed to be a student-at-law. The fact was that he entered about the first date and then roamed around the ocean on a vessel's deck for nearly three years. Getting enough of that he settled down to hard study in the city and bending, every energy to his task, was ready for and passed his attorney's examination in 1874. One year later he was sworn in as barrister.

It can be said that this was the turning point. Mr. Baird was in a good office with a fine business. He was the right man in the right place, and in a short time was in a position to acquire and carry on the business for himself. Lawyers were not so plentiful in those days, and there was more work for them to do. Before and after the fire it seemed as if every man had something for the lawyers. The result was—money. Mr. Baird had been a keen observer during his seafaring life, and when he began to make money he was sharp enough to invest it where it would pay him best—in coastwise shipping. Fortune seemed to smile upon his commercial plans. Shippers were in a panicky state and as fast as they wished to sacrifice their vessels Mr. Baird was on deck with the cash for them. His money made money, for at no time during the shipping depression did his coast property fail to pay.

In 1881 he became associated in a professional co-partnership with Mr. G. W. Allen, and later with Mr. W. B. Chandler, which continued until he entered the political arena. Few people realized at the time what that meant to George F. Baird. He could only run for one county and it seemed little short of madness for him, a conservative, to expect any show of success in the banner Liberal county of the province—a county which had known no public men in dominion politics save Ferris and King, to whom it had been loyal to the backbone.

If Baird was not a polished and eloquent speaker, he was a ready, forcible talker. He had every favorable fact on his tongue's end; he indulged in no personalities; he knew his people, and he was a native of the county. He was fighting the great battle of his life, with the friends of his boyhood rallying around him. He had the ablest and most astute lieutenants in the country, and I cannot be blind to the fact that behind all this was a well-filled purse, so necessary, it would appear, to the success of any political candidate. With even all these aids, the county was Liberal, and returned Mr. King by 61 votes.

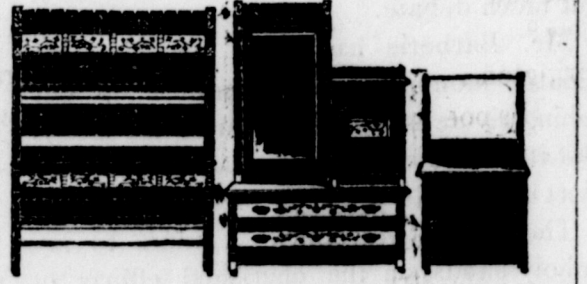
Mr. Baird was declared elected! The returning officer based his declaration on a legal technicality, and Mr. Baird took his seat in parliament. When the session was over, he resigned his seat—which, in my opinion, he should have done on declaration day—and a few months later deposited Mr. King again, and was returned as the member for Queens.

I can say, without hesitation, that when Mr. Baird entered politics he lost sight of his own interests. He is better fitted in every way for commercial than political life, and I believe that his greatest successes will be scored, not on the hustings or upon the floor of the commons, but at his business desk in Palmer's building. It cannot be said that he has not the requirements of a good representative—he has shown, more especially this year, that his business talent, applied in the interests of his country, is of great value, and in the eyes of his constituency, which looks, I suppose, to county rather than country, his work must be appreciated. It was only a few days ago that his shipping experience came into action in the house. Certain legislation was proposed regarding the deck-load law, and Mr. Baird, thoroughly conversant with the subject, presented such strong arguments against the passage of the section that the government dropped it.

But I would not be surprised if, when the herald sounds the political challenge again, the name of George F. Baird did not appear on the list. His politics interfere with his business. Three months absence at a time is not usually in favor with good business men, and Mr. Baird belongs to that class. In fact so strong a hold have his shipping interests upon his attention that some time ago he took second place, though even now he never neglects his clients' interests, and is regarded as one of the best maritime lawyers in the province.

Mr. Baird is a self-made man, and as such must command the admiration of lovers of energy and perseverance. He stands today ahead of any self-made man of his age in the province. Personally he is well liked, and no man who knows him has aught to say against his personal qualities. When free from the cares of daylight he is an entertaining companion. He presents his views in a forcible, ready style, and always gives his listeners something to think about. E. S. CARTER.

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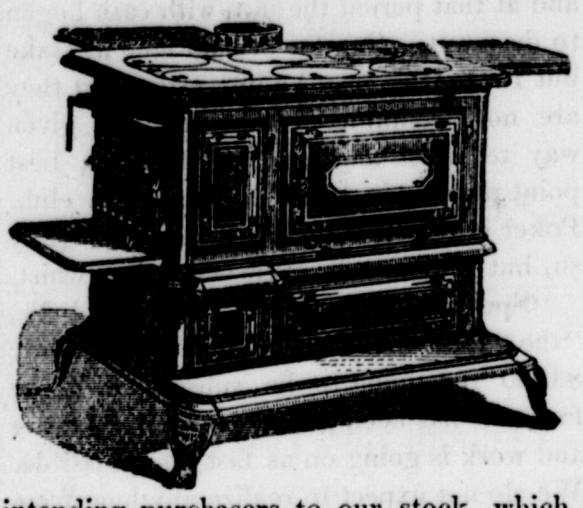
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