

Correspondence.

For the Christian Messenger.

Spirit Teaching.

AN INDIAN SKETCH.

"Ye who trust in God and nature,
And believe that in all ages
Every human heart is human,
That in even savage bosoms
There are longings, yearnings, strivings,
For the good they comprehend not,
Listen to this simple story,
To this tale of wild Acadia. —Longfellow.

It was night—in the wilderness the winds sighed mournfully through the pines of the old forest, the dusky shadows, taking courage at the decline of the sun, came stealthily out from their hiding places and settled down closely amid the branches. There was no sign of human life around, except a small cloud of smoke, that is now and then visible, curling from an Indian wigwam. But the rough curtain that covers the doorway is suddenly raised, evidently for the purpose of admitting the air for the comfort of a sick child, who is stretched on a coarse matting in one corner of the tent. But even that lonely wigwam is brightened by the purest of all earth-lit torches—the light of a mother's love. But a more blessed light is there—even the light that shineth from the Sun of righteousness—that light so pure so bright in its ethereal radiance that it can penetrate the deepest recesses of the forest and the darkest corners of the human heart, however savage. The little Indian child had heard of Jesus, and, touched with the spirit of Him who when on earth had said "Suffer the little children to come unto me," she had learned to love that sacred name, and often at the quiet twilight hour she would sit by the open door of the wigwam and watch the stars as they shone brightly out, or listen to the wind as it whispered softly in the forest trees around her, and tell her mother in her wild dialect that it was the angels whispering messages of love to her from the great Spirit. But the mother understood it not, she only shook her head mournfully and told the old chief, her husband, that it was a "bad sign;" and when the little Tassie was taken ill the mother searched every corner of the forest for barks and herbs most famed for their medicinal qualities; yet she whispered to the old chief at her side that it was "no use."

On the night of which we first speak, Tassie, after moving restlessly on her rude couch, had fallen into a quiet sleep; but as the wild dark eyes of the Indian mother gleamed upon her she saw that her lips were parted in a bright smile, though she was still sleeping, and she bends low to catch the words she murmurs so softly, and though but a few words reach her ear, she starts quickly back, and an expression of intense agony flits across her dusky features—for however beautiful to the soul of the dying the glimpses of the gates of Glory they are permitted to catch as the billows of time rise almost on a level with the shores of eternity, yet to those who are borne back by the receding wave—borne, it would seem to them, into colder, deeper waters than they ever passed through before, to those, especially if they know not God, it is but the grating of the prison key which is to fasten them forever from their view.

But to return to the wigwam. When the child awoke she told her mother she had dreamed the angels had come to take her home, and begged to be carried into the open air, for, to use her own expression, it was nearer heaven. Slowly the mother arose, and with the bitterest agony in her heart, yet, with the true Indian stoicism, she gave no sign of the agony she endured, save the almost convulsive manner with which she clasped the child to her breast as she carried her forth from the wigwam and sat with her under the drooping shadows of an old pine, where Tassie had been wont to play when in health,—she sat and watched her eyes as they grew dim in death, and caught the single expression of "come mother" that fell from her lips ere they were closed forever, and through the remembrance of that long night the mother sat with her dead child clasped wildly to her breast, and her head bent low on that little breast that had been so full of love for her. The next day they made her a grave beneath the pine tree where she had died, the richly embroidered mantle of the chief was folded around her slight form, the pretty bead moccasins were drawn for the last time on her small feet, and all her cherished playthings were buried with her. And though there were no wild bursts of sorrow heard from the wigwam, yet day after day the old chief leaned moodily against the tree under whose shadow she slept. An expression of intense wretchedness settled upon the face of the Indian mother.

The brightest light she had had faded from her forest home, and she longed to know what that "land of the hereafter" could be to which Tassie had so earnestly bidden her come. She had had a dim idea of a land where the braves of all nations dwell peacefully in one common hunting ground, where the trees wave in eternal green, and the wild free dash of the cataract is never bound in the icy chain of winter.—But Tassie had not spoken of these. Who was this Jesus of whom her child had whispered so lovingly?—this father in heaven who would make her an angel?—her untutored mind groped vainly to discover. Beyond the grave all was mystery. Ah, ye who know the way to Calvary, send light to the dark rangers of the forest, whom Hell and Popery combine to keep in darkness.

Hillside.

IRENE.

For the Christian Messenger.

The Roman Catholic Church and Presbyterians.

MR. EDITOR—

Having lately seen several pieces written by members of the Presbyterian body concerning Baptists and Catholics, I think it right they should know that they themselves are nearer allied to the Catholics than many of them wish to believe. If you ask a learned Catholic priest from whence he obtains his Infant Baptism, he will frankly tell you not from the Scripture,—as no such thing is to be found there—but from tradition. All Pedobaptists take it from the Catholic church. Yet if you ask Pedobaptists if they regard the Romish church as the church of Christ, they will tell you it is not. A little history connected with the New School Presbyterian General Assembly, held in Buffalo, in May 1854, will illustrate this, and ought not to be allowed to pass without improvement.

An enquiry was introduced into that body as to whether Romish baptisms and ordinations should be considered valid? A committee of junior and senior Patriarchs was sent out to consider the subject and to report. They failed to agree. The majority reported negatively. But there were sundry grey-haired Doctors who saw the logical consequences of such a decision, and, indeed, any decision they, as Pedo-baptists, could make; and those consequences would certainly be precipitated upon them by their Baptist friends and Catholic foes.

The reports were read in the Assembly and a warm discussion ensued. The majority reported that all ordinances at the hands of Romish priests were invalid, because the Romish Catholic church was no church of Christ, and no part or branch of it; but manifestly "Anti-Christ;" "the scarlet harlot riding on the beast with seven heads and ten horns, drunk with the blood of saints," the baptism and ordinations of such an apostate body are, therefore, null and void; to pronounce them valid would be to pronounce the Church of Rome the Church of Christ; and involve Presbyterians and all Pedo-baptists set in the guilt of schism, since they rent the body of Christ when they came out of Rome.

But the party who sustained the minority report, or were unfavorable to a decision, urged on the other hand:—"that if you deny the church of Rome to be a true church and decide that her baptisms and ordinations are invalid then do we, to all intents and purposes, unchurch ourselves, unless we can baptize the ashes of Luther and Calvin, from whom we have received our baptisms and ordination. If the baptism and ordination of Anti-Christ, the man of sin and perdition, are invalid, then Luther and Calvin were unbaptized, as were all the members that composed the first churches of the Reformation! Then they were unordained, and, consequently, had no authority to baptize these followers, or other ministers to follow them; in a word, all Protestant societies are unbaptized bodies, and, consequently, no Churches of Christ; since a body of unbaptized persons, however pious, cannot be considered a church. All Protestant ministers are both unbaptized and unordained,—consequently unauthorized to preach officially and administer ordinances."

Thus we see the dilemma into which the query precipitated them. To decide that "Anti-Christ," "The Man of Sin," "The Mother of Harlots" is a true church of Christ would be a monstrous solecism. But this would convict all Protestant sects of sin, and destroy at once every claim they could set up to be churches of Christ; for they would confess themselves schismatics.

2nd. To decide that the Romish apostasy is not the true church of Christ is to accede that all her ordinances are invalid, and, consequent-

ly, that all Protestant societies are bodies of unbaptized persons, and therefore not churches of Christ, and all Protestant ministers are both unbaptized and unordained, and, consequently, unauthorized either to preach or administer the ordinances.

3rd. To say that we cannot decide a question so manifest will arouse the attention of the people, and awaken their suspicion at once that there is a great wrong and a great failure about the Protestant churches somewhere. Finding that they could not extricate themselves from this labyrinth of fatal consequences, they moved an indefinite postponement of the question; their membership, which they have led into their societies and the world, which they are now using every possible effort to entice into their societies, should loudly and constantly demand of them to decide whether the Romish apostasy is a true church of Christ or not; for let Protestant societies decide it affirmatively or negatively, according to their own admissions, they cut off all their own claims to be considered Christian churches.

Baptist ministers and people, every where, should constantly call attention to this dilemma, as they trace their membership through another channel. Many of your readers have not seen the foregoing, and I thought it might come in very well just now, when some of those ministers were bringing erroneous charges against Baptists, whereas they obtain their baptism from the Catholic church, and no where else, and acknowledge that they take it from tradition. What a pity that ministers who follow the traditions of man instead of the positive instruction of Christ, cannot get along without quarrelling with those who endeavor to do their Master's will. Every pious minister should do his best to win the minds of the people over to the truth. Let every one do all he can to set forth the truth according to the word of God. They should bring forth, "thus saith the Lord," for all they say and do. They should try by their good and holy example to bring them to the truth, for one good loving word will do more good than fifty in abusing and calling them names. O what searching and examination we should have to know ourselves whether we are in the truth, and that we are not following some system built upon tradition, perhaps, from the very same source we undertake to abuse. I repeat it, teach nothing that is not clearly set forth in the Word of God, and then you will always be right. That all the servants of the Lord may be brought to do this is the prayer of a friend to all true believers.

August, 1858.

J. W.

For the Christian Messenger.

Tea Meeting at Brookfield.

DEAR MR. EDITOR,

To the kind exertions of Messrs. T. H. Porter, Junr., and William H. Porter we are mainly indebted for the Meeting-house being commenced here. At our Tea Meeting in Brookfield, on its behalf, there was a good attendance. The day was remarkably fine, and all appeared to enjoy themselves highly.

The tables were tastefully arranged, and loaded with the good cheer that the ladies know so well how to prepare. The only drawback was the want of sufficient room in the house. Two tea tables and a fancy refreshment table were therefore spread out under the shade of a grove—the novelty of which pleased many. The Fancy Table, in particular, was a great attraction,—thanks to two or three friends in Halifax, and others in Truro, Onslow, &c., for their contributions. Between four and five hundred were comfortably provided for. The price of admission was put at the low figure of 1s. 3d., yet some kind friends gave more.

After the tables were cleared away, W. Faulkner, Esq., was called to the chair. After prayer was offered up, the meeting was addressed by the Rev. D. W. C. Dimock, followed by Messrs. W. H. Porter and T. H. Porter, to whom the people in this place owe a large debt of gratitude for their faithful untiring labours. May God reward them. As it was growing late, a vote of thanks to the ladies was moved by the Rev. D. W. C. Dimock and seconded by James W. Stevens, Esq., which was responded to by the people all rising. The meeting was then dismissed in the greatest good humor, all being delighted with the afternoon's entertainment—many declaring that it was the best tea meeting they had ever attended.

The nett proceeds amounted to the very respectable sum of £28 16s. 6d.—Much more than was anticipated.

I remain, Mr. Editor,

Yours, very respectfully,

ONE PRESENT.

August 30th, 1858.

For the Christian Messenger.

Lunenburg County,

On the southern shore of Nova Scotia, is inhabited principally by Germans.

THE PEOPLE are hardy and industrious, and are employed in fishing, lumbering, and agriculture. There is vast room for improvement in their system of farming: their implements are not after the most approved models, but being mostly of their own manufacture, they cost but little—and this, with the frugal Dutchman, is quite a consideration. Their fields often present the appearance of young forests, rising up successfully to claim the inheritance wrested from their progenitors. Their system of planting in small patches is somewhat peculiar. In one field, we counted no less than seventeen distinct patches of grain and potatoes, besides a quiet corner allotted for beans.

The women delight in out-door employment, and labor diligently in planting, hoeing, and harvesting. They are plain in their apparel; though on Sundays many show their love for finery; and appear as blooming with their furbelows, feathers, and bugles as their fair sisters in more polished circles.

The country abounds in hills, peaceful lakes, and flowing streams. It is unsurpassed in its multitude of lakes, many of which are very beautiful. One in the neighborhood of New Cornwall exceeds anything of the kind I ever beheld.

The scenes from Mahone Bay to the Labare River need no description. My pen cannot do them justice. I will merely recommend your readers to go and witness for themselves.

Lunenburg has numerous natural advantages and undeveloped resources of wealth. Its moral aspect, however, is far from pleasing.—With regard to education the people are much behind the age. This is owing in a great measure to their peculiar circumstances. Isolated, as they are, from the rest of the world, the spirit of enterprise does not carry them so rapidly onward. They may suppose they are doing well enough, because they know not that others do better.

In the villages, when the means of mental culture is provided, the standard is low, very low: while in the more remote settlements you seldom find a school worthy of the name.—When one is able to read at all correctly he is considered "a good scholar;" but a large proportion of the country people are unable to read at all. To multitudes the Bible is a sealed book. It is, however, just to state that the "old people" are mostly able to read in the German tongue. Preachers of various denominations visit almost every settlement, but there is a lamentable ignorance of Gospel truth. In heathen countries we may expect to find those who know nothing of their Maker, of their own state as sinners, and of the remedy provided in the Gospel; but such ignorance in Nova Scotia shocks and shames us. Many families have no religious training. Parents ease their consciences, and meet all the requirement of their spiritual instructors by causing the children to be sprinkled, and at the required age to submit to the rite of confirmation. Since they are "regenerated and made inheritors of the kingdom" what need they besides? Surely all further anxiety is needless. Thus, we presume, they reason, if they reason at all upon the matter; for their children at the age of twelve, or in some cases after they have become men and women, cannot tell who made them, or who came into the world to die for sinners. On this subject we speak what we know. If any doubt our assertion we would advise them to ascertain for themselves, and if they have the love of God in their hearts they will be induced to make some sacrifice for the sake of the perishing around them.

Baptist churches, seven in number, are planted in some parts of the county. The brethren there meet with difficulties unknown in other parts. Many of them seldom hear the preached word, not because they do not prize it—their fixed attention and eyes suffused with tears, when thus favored, testify to the contrary. When we visited these destitute ones, we felt the force of our Saviour's words, "The harvest truly is plenteous but the laborers are few."

In considering the moral aspect of Lunenburg, we are reminded of a field overgrown with weeds. The good seed has been sown but the noxious plants have prevented its growth. Here and there you behold a few solitary stalks, while in some more favored localities the wheat is seen to flourish so as to overtop the weeds that threatened to choke it. Joseph Dimock and his worthy coadjutors came to this field.—They sowed in faith, the Lord of the harvest blessed their efforts, and soon parts of the desert were made to "rejoice and blossom as the rose."