

Miscellaneous.

A SCOTTISH PROFESSOR ON THE AMERICAN CHURCH AND NATION.

Address delivered by Rev. Prof. McCosh, LL.D., D.D., before the Evangelical Alliance in Bath, England, Oct. 18th.

It will enable my hearers the better to understand the account which I have to render of my small services in behalf of the Evangelical Alliance, to begin with a very brief narrative of my tour in the United States. I landed at New York on May 13th. Staying only two days in that city, I took a connected series of railway tickets for St. Louis, some fifteen hundred miles away. I passed up the banks of the Hudson, a river not at all like the Rhine, but quite equal to it in beauty, and on through the State of New York, with its apple trees in full blossom, to Niagara. The great Falls, when first seen at a distance, are disappointing—they look dumpy; but as you go above them, and follow the magnificent river hurrying down these terrible rapids with such determination to its fall, and go below them and realize their mysterious gloom and the irresistible plunge of waters, you are soon made to feel that they have a grandeur and sublimity far transcending your highest anticipations; and the feeling of awe is not lessened when the sun shines out, and calls forth a peculiar beauty in the rich cerulean hue of the central waters, and the gem-like sparkling of the spray. From Niagara, I passed through a portion of Canada, and saw our colonial settlers at all stages of advancement, from their first operations in entering the virgin forest and cutting down trees to build a log cabin, onward to their realizing a reward of their toil in well-cultivated fields, comfortable dwellings, and thriving villages. Passing into the Federal States at Detroit, pleasantly situated on Lake St. Clair, I had an enjoyable day in moving on among the oak openings of Michigan. A day was profitably spent at Chicago, a town which had no existence thirty two years ago, but which now, by its numerous railway centres and the shipping on its broad lake, by its grain elevators and its two hundred thousand busy people, is an all-important commercial link between East and West; and shows by its embryo University full of promise, and its two theological colleges, and its fine upper schools, that it reckons education an essential element of a nation's greatness. Onward, next, through Illinois, across a fertile plain of hundreds of miles, lately unbroken prairie, but now partially cultivated and yielding exuberant grain, to the great Mississippi and St. Louis—a place old for an American city, and with a history, but far more remarkable for its present growing commercial prosperity than for its antiquity. Here I spent ten days; preached by special request before the General Assemblies of the two great Presbyterian Churches, the Old School and the New School; took part in joint meetings for prayer and for sacramental communion by the two bodies, who now cultivate the most delightful feeling of amity toward each other; and was assured that the American churches were most anxious to cultivate a closer relationship with the British churches.

I now took tickets by rail and boat one thousand miles (it gives one an idea of the distances to be travelled in that country) to St. Paul's and St. Anthony's, far up the Mississippi. It is a most delightful feeling which one experiences in floating for days on the placid bosom of the Father of Waters, round lovely wooded islands, or bold promontories, which seem as if they would bar all progress, and showing openings only as we put trust in them and advance; and ever between heights they call bluffs, rising three, four, or five hundred feet, with jagged ledges covered with fresh green grass, or more frequently by dense forest, at times coming to the edge of the river, and at times receding miles away, giving us glimpses of gleams of singular beauty, or letting in the dark waters of rivers famed in Indian story. In coming down the stream, I struck off into Iowa, one hundred and fifty miles west of the great river; and there I revelled in unbroken prairies, with their ocean of green verdure, relieved by numberless wild flowers; and visited a Scotch colony on the outskirts of civilization, and making the rich land yield a liberal return; and a wigwam encampment of red Indians, as wild in their forests as their forefathers were when the white man entered their country. I now turned my steps eastward, and lingered for a time in the great cities of Cincinnati and Pittsburgh; and saw evidences of the underground wealth of the country in oils and coal and metals; and of the determination of the people to make their schools and colleges, their churches and benevolent institutions, keep pace with their growing population and wealth. Crossing the Allegheny range, which looks bold after one has been so long in the flat Western country, I got a glimpse of the rich and well-cultivated farms of Pennsylvania, and passed on to New York, to aid in forming an American organization of the Evangelical Alliance.

Being assured that this work was in the way of completion, I paid a visit to the famous University and Theological Seminary at Princeton, and then passed on through Maryland to Washington, the noble marble Capitol of which ever greets the approaching traveler, and raises expectations which are not realized by the city itself, which, however, is, in this respect, a type of the country—that is, it is yet unfulfilled. Here I had the honor of being introduced to not a few public men of eminence, and here, and in the adjoining district of Virginia, I began my visits to colored schools and churches. Leaving the capital, I passed down the Potomac, crossed the Rappahannock, and the terrible "wilderness" of thick forest trees and brushwood through which Grant pushed his way, hearing thrilling tales of the fearful way by those who had taken part in it, and of the labors of the Christian Commission and the chaplains in administering the instructions and the consolations of religion to the soldiers in the camps and battle-fields. Virginia is yet, as it has ever been in many parts of it, an unbroken waste, showing that it is not by slave labor that

the capacities of a country are to be called forth. Richmond, notwithstanding all the sad scenes through which it has passed, still smiles upon us from its lovely heights; its fine villas stood embosomed among magnolia and tulip trees in full blossom; and I saw such indications of industry in restoring her business streets which had been burnt, as to convince me that her career in the future will be far more prosperous than it has been in the past. Here I busied myself in seeking out black congregations, and in examining black schools. I could have wished to go farther South, and had many temptations to do so in the proffered hospitalities of the people, but it was now past midsummer, and an unusually hot season, and I contented myself with floating down the James river, with the scenes of terrible conflicts on both sides, to Norfolk, whence I turned up the Chesapeake Bay to the beautiful city of Baltimore. Here, as in Richmond, I met with those who had been strong secessionists, and I pressed upon them the necessity of educating the colored population. On the 4th of July, I was fortunately in that model of street regularity—the flourishing city of Philadelphia; and I saw there the remains of the regiments of Pennsylvania, with the orphans of soldiers who had been killed in the war, marching in procession, and depositing their flags with the Governor of the State—flags mostly torn and tattered to fragments—I saw one that had been with the regiment it belonged to in forty-two battles and sixty-one skirmishes.

I now hastened northward, to visit some of the famous schools and colleges of New York and New England ere they closed for the year, and spent five or six weeks pleasantly and profitably in this work, not forgetting, as opportunity presented, to take a view of the agriculture and manufactures of the country. I believe I was in most, if not all, the New England States. I visited colleges or theological seminaries at New Haven (Yale), and Amherst, and Boston (Harvard), and Hanover (Dartmouth), and Bangor, and Andover, and Williamstown, and attended an influential meeting of regents, presidents and professors of the State of New York, at Albany. Meanwhile, I had delightful rambles among the grandeur of the White Mountains, and the rich beauties of the Green Mountains, and of Berkshire. Having now been fourteen weeks in the country, constantly traveling, I thought it time to set my face homeward. I calculate that I have traversed altogether between thirteen and fourteen thousand miles by sea and by land. In this extensive tour, I have not only beheld boundless forests, and extended prairies, and magnificent rivers, I have seen much of the people in their places of business, in their farms, and in their workshops, in their church and collegiate meetings, and in their Congress, as they traveled, and as they lived in their homes, which were everywhere thrown open to me. I have received kindness which I will never forget while I have a memory; I met for a week, a day or an hour, with numbers of interesting people, and formed friendships which, I trust, will last through life, and be renewed in eternity.

I noticed, as I passed through the country, that there was not a single tree precisely the same in the Old World and in the New. I saw abundance of oaks in America; they were not the same as our English oaks, but they were brother oaks; they were not identical with our birches, but they were sister birches. It is much the same with the people of that country, with the Churches of that country; they are not just the same as the people of this country, as the Churches of this country, but still they are very like them. I felt, as I went along, how important it would be to make them know each other better. I was sure that if they did so, they would love each other more. I therefore labored, as God gave me opportunity, to show that the two countries should acknowledge each other as brothers, being, in fact, of a common fatherhood; and that the Churches should acknowledge each other as sisters, being daughters of one mother, that Jerusalem which is the mother of us all.

I was not a deputy from any public body. I traveled for my own relaxation and instruction. But I had a sort of commission from ministers of the Free Church of Scotland to speak words of Christian affection to the Presbyterian Evangelical Churches. I may have to report elsewhere the gracious manner in which these were received. I carried with me a letter from the British Branch of the Evangelical Alliance, instructing me to promote the cause of Christian union. I have now to report the result of my voluntary mission.

Organization of the Evangelical Alliance has been virtually formed. A very influential committee, including distinguished ministers and members of the various Evangelical churches, has been appointed. A constitution, embracing the doctrinal basis of 1846, has been adopted. I had the pleasure yesterday of laying that constitution before the council of the British Organization, where it was received with the utmost satisfaction. The British and American branches are thus in circumstances to enter at once upon correspondence and co-operation.

We are now, then, to understand that there is an American Organization of the Evangelical Alliance established, with New York, as the largest city in the Union, for its headquarters, but with ramifications all over the country, and embracing members of all Evangelical churches. I regard this as one of the most important events that have occurred in the whole history of the Evangelical Alliance. Hitherto we have had no branch in the United States in actual and continued operation. Always, when there was an attempt made to bring the Christians of the two countries into formal union, that most offensive of all subjects—slavery—cast up, and the parties drew off in anger as in sorrow. But now, by the good providence of God, and by the energy and sufferings of the American people, following the leadings vouchsafed to them, that reproach has been wiped away for ever. I found, wherever I went, that the love toward British Christians, which had been so long restrained and dammed up, was ready to flow forth in a stream, broad and deep as that of their great rivers. I anticipate, always with the blessing from on high, the greatest accession of good from this confluence of two powers that had been divided, from this combination of American and British prayers, and wisdom, and activity; and I reckon it one of the highest honors and most distinguished privileges of my life, that I had a small share in consummating this happy marriage union, and that I am now in circumstances to proclaim it to the British public. It is all good that we should have branches on the Continent of Europe; we may, by our wealth, our counsels and our prayers, do much to encourage those who are contending for the faith in the midst of Rationalism and Popery. But in the American Organization we have received an immense accession of strength to ourselves. I would say that, under God, our power for good has been doubled by this adherence, not of a country, but of a continent. I tell our excellent secretaries that they have some cause for jealousy; for if the Americans take up the cause as they ought—that is, with their accustomed determination and unrivaled power of organization—there is a possibility of their outstripping the English Branch in activity and in influence.

I see great purposes to be served by thus uniting formally Christians on the opposite side of the Atlantic. First, it is a public manifestation on a grander scale than has ever been displayed before of the oneness of Christians. It combines believers in prayers for common objects, and if we may look for prayer to be answered wherever two or three may agree touching what they should ask, much more may we expect the largest blessings when two continents are petitioning for common objects. Americans will report to us what they are doing in their own vast country and in other countries; and we will report to them what we are doing at home, and what is being done on the Continent of Europe, in India, and in other regions in which we have Christian agencies; and as iron sharpeneth iron, so may the churches be stimulated by mutual intercourse. As we meet together, misunderstandings will be removed, and not only Christian churches, but the countries in which they have a footing will be brought into closer union. In the conferences held, measures will be suggested for combining the scattered energies of Christendom all over the world, especially in the mission fields at home and abroad, among Jews and Gentiles. All the practical ends which the Evangelical Alliance has kept steadily in view, such as the suppression of bitterness and personal insinuation in controversy, the protection of the persecuted, and the better observance of the Lord's Day, and the contest with Romanism on the one hand, and Rationalism on the other, will be more effectually promoted when the New World combines with the Old, when the one brings its fresh energy and the other its old experience to the accomplishment of a common purpose. I believe that when the union is thoroughly accomplished, we might have a new spirit and a new life put into our Annual and Triennial Conferences. I have often thought that at these conferences, keeping all that we at present have, we might have a far wider range of subjects discussed by able men whose thoughts have run in special lines, or whose labors had been expended in particular walks of usefulness.

We might take an example in this respect from the British Association for the Promotion of Science, and the Congress for the Promotion of Social Science, and have sectional meetings in the forenoons for the reading of thoughtful papers by our higher class of Christian thinkers. I do not propose to discuss theological or denominational differences; these may be taken up more expediently elsewhere and otherwise. But within the bounds embraced in our Catholic creed there are a hundred topics which might be introduced by competent men, and have light thrown upon them by the remarks of Christians from various countries. To refer to only three of these topics: What should be done in this country and in America to oppose the systematic attempt of the Romish hierarchy to get our Governments to place money at their disposal to enable them to teach their tenets from morning to night, in schools and colleges supported by the State? This, as we know in Ireland, is a momentous subject, which must force itself more and more on public notice as it becomes fully known that, as the Society of Jesus threw back the advancing Reformation by taking up the education of the young, so now it is the Romish policy to have all education under Ultramarine control. Again, great good might arise from a consultation as to what should be done with the degraded populations in our great cities. I think we

may frankly acknowledge that all the efforts which have hitherto been made in such cities as London, Liverpool and Glasgow, have not yet reached the core of the evil, they have as yet let in no stream to clear away the accumulated impurity of ages. Surely there was an important era inaugurated by an American citizen, when Mr. Peabody devoted so large a sum to the elevation of our working classes, by providing suitable dwellings for them in the capital of our country. It appears to me that the Lord Provost and the merchants of Glasgow are also proceeding in the right path, when they are buying up those degraded dwellings in which it would be impossible, without a miracle, to train a young generation to virtue, and purposing to erect streets from which temptations to vice will be banished. Now we in this country might warn our American brethren that the evils that have been generated in our country will also spring up in their great cities, unless they take efficient steps to prevent it. And I believe that they might help us in finding an outlet for our lapsed population, at least for the children of that population. I found that in some of their great cities, as in Cincinnati and New York they had a most effective way of dealing with the children begging or running idle in their streets and getting beyond parental control. By means of a State or municipal act giving authority to a charitable society, they move these children to the Western States, where there are people willing to receive them and to train them in a Christian manner, in the certainty of being remunerated by the labor which they thereby secure. Another subject would and should be discussed at these conferences. What should the two countries do in the way of elevating, educating and training to industry the foreign rates that have come under their protection in the providence of God? What are they to do in the way of exalting the colored race in their Southern States, and what are we to do in Jamaica, and in the Cape Colony, and in New Zealand and Hindostan? If we had deliberated on these topics in time, perhaps we might have been saved that terrible outbreak in Jamaica and these distressing trials. Now, these, and such like, are the most important questions that can be discussed in meetings of Christian philanthropists. They are acknowledged to be difficult of solution but I should expect that much light might be thrown upon them by the thoughts of Christians being specially directed toward them, and by learning the results of the experiences and experiments of Christian philanthropists in various countries.

Being certain that what had been so well begun in New York would in due time be perfected and publicly proclaimed, I sought, wherever I went in my extensive tour, to press the duty and importance of the two countries, and of Christians in the two countries cultivating a closer friendship and more intimate communion. I showed them that there were stronger bonds to unite Britons and North Americans than those which joined any other two nations on the face of the earth. We are substantially of the same race; of a somewhat mixed descent, but the main element in both is the Anglo-Saxon, with its love of independence, its industry and its enterprise. We resemble each other in having a noble history in the past, in being able to point to a glorious company of patriots and of martyrs who acted and suffered for their country's good. We are alike in having liberty such as I believe no other nations enjoy—liberty of thought and liberty of action. We are more than alike, we are one, in our language and literature, reading the same works of history, and of poetry, and of religion, and thus drinking in the same spirit at the fountains of knowledge. Above all, we are one in being a Christian people, with the Word of God open to all, with numberless churches and schools, and a quiet Sabbath on which to read and meditate, and worship the God of our fathers and of theirs. I ventured to speak a parable to them. An Old Englishman and a New Englander were fiercely contending with each other. Not far from them were a mother and daughter scolding and tearing each other. "How wicked!" said the two men, as they stopped their quarrel for a moment to separate the combatants. A bystander came up to them, and quietly remarked, "Are not you two equally wicked? Are you?" he said to the one, "ashamed of the men and women who came in the weather-beaten Mayflower, and have left an impress of their own noble character upon your country in all succeeding ages, communicating a spirit to your nation in its childhood which, thank God, it has retained in its manhood? Surely you do not forget that these men and women came from England, bringing with them the best characteristics of their country, to leave them as a legacy to you? Are you," he said to the other, "ashamed of your own flesh and blood—of your own sons and daughters—led by the love of enterprise, or driven by poverty or ill usage at home; to other shores, where they bear your very features, and carry with them your excellencies—alas! also, your defects; but favoring industry, and liberty, and education, and religion, as you had done before them?" I acknowledged that in the relations of the two countries there had been at times sources of irritation. I allowed that the mother had been not a little vexed at the time because the daughter, falling in love with a prepossessing gentleman called Mr. Independence, had made a sort of runaway marriage many years ago. I admitted, moreover, that the mother, thinking herself a perfect model of a housekeeper, and believing that, in order to support her dignity, it was necessary to keep up a large number of upper-servants, was not very well pleased because her daughter chooses to regulate her establishment after a somewhat different manner. But I affirmed confidently that, despite these and other points of difference, the mother and the daughter did love each other—though not very willing at times to admit it—did love each other sincerely and strongly in the depths of their hearts.

(To be Continued.)

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