

Original Communications.

CHRISTMAS MEMORIES.

BY CHARLES A. SMITH, D.D.

I remember it well—the old-fashioned house. It was painted red; and that is its color still, somewhat modified by age, which with its own brush, and in its own peculiar way, has drawn lines of a deeper tinge. Red was a fashionable color in those days for house and barn, because it was durable, and did not require to be renewed every two or three years—the winter storms and the summer rains only adding to its richness, mellowing the somewhat glaring hue into a velvety tinge; not all over, but just where each clapboard lapped over its fellow, the color being deepest there, and thence lighting up into almost its original brightness. The old cherry trees that were in front of the house are not standing now; but they were noble trees in their day, large and thrifty and wide-spreading; and the cherries that grew on them were called old-fashioned for the same reason perhaps that the same name is given to primitive New England theology—because they were sour. But it is a question whether cherries or theology have been much improved by frequent grafting. The cherries, as we know, were sour; but they were also large, plump and luscious; never stung by pestiferous insects; and when subjected to pressure between the upper surface of the tongue and the roof of the mouth, you had no fear that anything would press through the skin but the juices and juice of the rich fruit, and the seed that lay hidden within coverings more sumptuous than loom ever made.

But how are these memories linked to the festival which children love so dearly—the festival of gifts, at which friendship and love have it all their own way? Not simply by the law of association; for these cherries—many of them—were preserved as luxuries for the cold winter days, and graced the tea-table as a hint of the summer past, and a whisper of the summer to come.

The old farm-house around which these memories linger, was of most ample dimensions—suggestive of the large-hearted hospitality that greeted every visitor. It was the home of ministers. They always loved to tarry there, because they were always welcome. It was not a mere courtesy that greeted them, but a generous partiality that made them feel quite at home, and rendered their intercourse unrestrained, and full of that genial freedom and innocent fun which bring healthful relaxation to the mind after weeks and months of incessant toil. Those ministerial gatherings were always expected, during the holidays, and on Christmas especially, if at no other time, ministers and their wives were invited to meet around the well-spread table. The cooking was thoroughly German—and when we say this, we intend the highest praise. Our Christmas breakfast was composed of sausage, fried-seed chicken, and apple sauce, each uncommon in its way; the sausage made of pigs fattened on the farm—none of your long-legged animals that look as if they were intended for the race course, and that can never be coaxed into fattening by any quantity of corn; but animals with legs so short as just to answer the purpose of locomotion, leaving no weary space for the eye to travel over, between the feet and the round, luscious, tender hams. And then the chickens were so cooked as to be full of richness, and rested in gravy from which the watery particles had all disappeared, to help make rainbows on some bright summer day. And then the apple sauce! Would you make it? Take cider as it flows from the press, the pure juice of the best and soundest apples, and boil it gently, until one-half at least has passed away in vapor, when you are to put in the carefully cored and quartered fruit, and let the boiling process go on until the fruit is saturated with the rich juice, and the juice itself has become a syrup so luscious that no words can describe the exquisite charm that lingers upon the palate along which it has made its gentle way. If the fruit to be preserved is sour, the cider must be made of apples that are sweet; but if the fruit is sweet, the cider must be made of apples that are sour. Secure this happy combination, and you need no other sugar than that supplied by the skillful balancing of the saccharine and acetous principles. The turkeys that graced the dinner table were fattened with plump, honest corn; and their extreme tenderness indicated the wise culture that had been bestowed upon them. The mince pies were not composed of all conceivable ingredients, but boasted of only three—apples, meat, and raisins—the meat in deserved preponderance—with seasoning suggested by most experienced housewifery. Doughnuts and crullers reigned all day with becoming profusion.

The kitchen was the most attractive room in the house. Here, around the wide, deep fireplace, the family were accustomed to sit during the intense cold weather—for the cold was intense in the region of which I am speaking. The snow-storms were genuine. For a day perhaps, the snow would fall gently, thickly, until it lay twelve or fifteen inches deep upon the ground; and then the northwest wind would begin to play its pranks until the fences in many places were buried beneath the drifts, and the roads were left bare. Then the ox-teams were called into service, and paths were broken through the fields, and the merry bells proclaimed that

the supremacy of winter was undisputed. During a storm like this, imagine yourself with others encircling the ample fireplace, containing a back log cut from the trunk of some massive tree, all aglow with sparkling fire, and sending out its heat like a huge piece of iron just drawn from an angry furnace—the forestick carefully supported, and the intermediate wood so piled as to let the oxygen that crept in along side of the window casings and beneath the door, have free play. No other light was required. And while the nerves were pacified into a gentle agitation of delight by the howling storm without and the blazing fire within, nuts and apples and jokes were handed freely round. Then the sleigh-ride, if the storm was not too violent, or if the roads were already broken, and well-beaten, was a leading experience of the day. The old-fashioned sleigh was made to hold twenty at least. Buffalo robes were in great demand; for the atmosphere was so thin and sharp that it was sure to cut nose and ear if they were not well protected. The horses entered fully and understandingly into the sport. They neighed and pranced as if eager for the start, and then trotted gaily and swiftly over the frozen track, stimulated by the creaking snow and the jingling bells. These were sleigh-rides in which even Charles Lamb would have delighted, for they would have braced his nervous system up to a glad and thankful confession of their utility.

But these memories linger most fondly and tenderly around the years of childhood—around the Christmas tree, and the gifts that hung upon it, and that were so eagerly looked for and so boisterously welcomed by the young heart, fresh and undisturbed in its belief, that if a father's or a mother's hand had anything to do with them, they were, nevertheless, prompted by a higher than human love. Is it an idle fantasy, or the germ of a true faith that enters the imagination of the child, when it regards these tokens of parental love as in some way related to the Christ-Kindle—the little Christ-Child? If it were not for that Child, what would become of those gifts that cheer and gladden the Christian home, and what would become of the tender, gentle, childlike affection that bestows them? Christmas is emphatically the child's holiday; and as often as it dawns it makes the man a child again—inspires anew, and thus helps perpetuate those youthful feelings and sympathies which should be ever present in the soul as elements of a true manhood, because of a true humanity. Therefore, inasmuch as we should never cease to be children in the truest, purest sense, do we love this festival. Therefore would we have it fling the light of its presence into every Christian home, where right indications will reveal its true meaning and secure its highest joy.

DR. McILVAINE IN ROCHESTER.

FROM OUR ROCHESTER CORRESPONDENT.

Rev. Dr. McIlvaine, now Professor in Princeton College, for twelve years pastor of the First Presbyterian Church of this city, has been passing a couple of Sabbaths with his former charge. It was easy to see that he enjoyed speaking so long to the people to whom he had ministered so long, and quite as plain that the whole congregation gave him a hearty and generous welcome. They could not have disguised their pleasure if they had tried, and we did not see any one that tried. It must have been in the highest degree gratifying to the Professor to find that he is so kindly remembered.

But we heard from the lips of one and another, "How much he has changed; he has improved; he has become more liberal; he is almost a new school man now; he's strong for reunion; he wants all Presbyterians to be one." And so we found, and more also, on this last point. On a late Sunday evening he preached on union. His text was, "That they all may be one, that the world may believe that you have sent me." He spoke of the nature of this unity. First, it is spiritual, in that all are agreed. Secondly, it is outward. On this, people might differ, but he regarded this also as essential. Cut the vine into a thousand pieces and it dies. Discover the members from the human body, and they perish. These were his illustrations. Organic unity, or an "organism," is necessary to life. So, the church is "organically" dead without organic unity. And this is the reason why the world is not converted—why they do not believe that Christ is sent of the Father.

In confirmation of this view, he cited the history of the first three centuries. There was organic unity all that time. There were differences in the church just as great as those which separate the denominations now, but organic unity. He accounted for this by the fact that their symbol of faith was so brief and simple, only the Apostle's Creed. We had lost ground by losing this organic unity. He doubted if there are any more Christians now than there were at the close of the fourth century.

The time of the reformation was the age of controversy. For two hundred years, no Missionary was sent to the heathen. The policy of the devil is to divide and conquer. We must allow full and ample toleration to all who hold the essentials of the Christian faith. If Christ receives any one, the one church should receive him.

He found as many good Christians among the New School Presbyterians as among the old, or

vice versa—so of the Baptists, Methodists, Episcopalians; and he would have all one church in outward organization, because this is essential to spiritual union, and necessary that "the world may believe" that Jesus Christ is the only Saviour.

Whatever may be said of the sentiments of the discourse, the spirit and manner were admirable. The preacher was evidently sincere and in earnest. He plainly desires the thing so highly commended, and gave his best reasons in such a manner as to hold the undivided attention of his audience from beginning to end.

This was partly owing, doubtless, to his speaking extemporaneously. Many remarked upon this as a great improvement upon his manner with a written discourse. He had only the briefest notes before him, and seldom referred to those. It was so with two other of his discourses, and all were delighted with it. He has plainly taken this people captive again, as he did once before. We shall be much surprised if they do not give him a loud and importunate call to return to them, and once more be their pastor. We do not know that he would leave his present position for any pastorate, and we are not authorized to speak for the church, but it is plain to see that he would receive a very cordial welcome if he should return here, and we think the church in its present circumstances, will be fortunate if they can get him. A new church edifice would soon follow, and all would rejoice in the returning prosperity of this once first church of all the region.

ONE OF THE LECTURES.

We learn from the Auburn Advertiser, that Prof. North of Hamilton College, has been charming the people of Aurora, with one of his beautiful lectures, aimed particularly at the pantheistic tendencies of the day. Of course he was "rich in imagery and classical allusions, sparkling with gems from Aeschylus and Homer." Who ever heard the Professor lecture when he was not "rich in imagery," beautiful also in thought, pure in style, clear and classic in diction, ever and anon lighting up his themes by the keenest sallies of genuine Attic wit.

The following shows well the drift of a part of the lecture: "The professor examined minutely the polytheism of the Greeks, exhibited its grossness and human origin, relieved its hollowness and sadness by showing the prophetic longings of Socrates, and Plato, and Aeschylus, painted in words poetical and pathetic the bitter, self-welcomed tortures of Prometheus on the peaks of Caucasus, and showed how in this great heroic self-sacrifice was dimly foreshadowed the agony of Gethsemane and the redemptive offering on Calvary."

REPORT OF THE SAHARANPUR STATION.

We have received the annual report of the missionary brethren at Saharanpur, Northern India. It will be read with the deepest interest, and we trust will lead all the members of the Ref. Pres. Church to sustain her representatives in that distant and heathen land with increased prayerfulness and liberality. In a letter accompanying the report, dated Nov. 18th, 1868, Mr. Calderwood writes: "During my thirteen years in India I think I have not met as much encouragement, as within the past twelve months. The report speaks of this subject up to September. Since then the encouragement continues. Two of the most advanced and promising boys of the High School have declared to me privately their intention of soon becoming Christians. They are as far above the average as to honesty and good character as they are in education."

Report of the Saharanpur Station for the year ending Sep. 1868. (Established 1836.)

Missionary.—Rev. W. Calderwood. Native Missionary.—Rev. T. W. J. Wylie. Head Teacher in High School.—Mr. J. Ferguson. Teachers, (Christians).—Messrs. H. McMillan and J. H. M. Wells. Female Teacher and Bible Woman.—Mrs. Walter Lowrie.

PREACHING TO THE HEATHEN.

The daily preaching of the Gospel in the streets of Saharanpur City, has been kept up during the year. A one horse vehicle having seats for six or seven persons, has been ready at the door of the missionary's house about two hours before dark daily, except on the 1st and 5th days of the week, when other duties on the mission premises are attended to. In this vehicle the missionary and assistants have been in the habit of going to preach in the city which is about a mile distant from the mission houses. In the city usually two parties are formed who proclaim the Gospel in various parts of the city. During the past year severe and protracted sickness in the family of the missionary has much interfered with his discharge of this duty, but it has been very seldom that the native brethren have failed in this respect, and never without good reason. During the past year, the audiences in the streets have been larger and more attentive than the year before. Nearly every evening a party of preachers occupied the platform in front of the High School building. On the street close to the platform are placed benches which the people are invited to occupy, and here much more respectable audiences are obtained than generally elsewhere. Here those who desire to hear the Gospel, usually come and take seats. There are perhaps fifteen or twenty persons who have been in the habit of coming—not every evening—but often, and of these five or six have long declared that they believe the Christian religion reveals the only way by which they can be saved. It is said that they remain so long dominantly professing what in private they deny. The great worldly sacrifices they would be called upon to make in uniting with the Church of Christ, is doubtless, the chief reason of their delay. Several of them have con-

ferred this. Still of them there is ground for hope. One of the most useful native preachers belonging to our mission was for a long time one of their number.

At the *Hardwar Mela*, several of our assistants preached for eight or ten days. As usual, the audiences were large and often apparently attentive. Several *small melas* and weekly *pitls* or markets in the neighborhood of Saharanpur were attended by the missionary and assistants, and very encouraging audiences were often obtained.

It is with extreme regret that we are compelled to report that preaching in the villages of this district by the missionary, was almost entirely prevented by very severe illness in his family during the cold season—the only time in which such work can be done. The Gospel was preached during the season in only some forty or fifty of our one thousand villages.

We are glad to report that the sale of religious vernacular publications at *melas*, &c., has been much more encouraging with us the past year than ever before. Several hundreds of such books and tracts have been sold, at of course mere nominal prices, but still dear enough to prevent their being purchased for any other purpose than for reading. It is the settled opinion among us that the few books thus put into circulation promise much more fruit than the large numbers that in former years were gratuitously distributed, and often used only as waste paper. No new plan was adopted for the sale of books, which was always attended to by natives, and usually by young Christians who were incompetent to preach.

THE NATIVE CHRISTIAN COMMUNITY.

The usual *Lord's-day public services* and the *weekly prayer-meeting* has been regularly maintained, and generally conducted by Rev. Mr. Wylie and the missionary alternately. It is due Mr. Wylie to state that during the past year these duties have been attended to by him much more than half of the time. The congregation numbers from fifty to sixty. From time to time the session of the Church have seen gratifying evidences that these services have been often followed by the saving and sanctifying influences of the Holy Spirit.

The *Sabbath-school* for the native Christian community, held in the latter part of the day, has been attended as usual by about fifty persons. To the "whole school" at each of its sessions the missionary, when in the station, has expounded a paragraph of Scripture, endeavoring to show its meaning as well as its practical application to every-day life. In this way during the past year he has gone over the Book of Esther and a part of the Book of Job.

During the year there have been admitted to church membership by certificate two persons, and by examination thirteen. One of the latter was a Mussulman of high respectability and intelligence, who had for nearly two years persisted in demanding admittance to the church of Christ, and it is hoped that he will be an honor to it. Although he expressed a desire to devote his life to the preaching of the gospel, on account, partly of his somewhat advanced age it was thought best he should continue in a secular avocation. This he has done, and his office—a servant of Government—speak in high praise of his abilities and services.

THE ORPHANAGE.

Twelve of the numbers admitted to church membership after examination by the session of the church, are young men of the Orphanage. We rejoice with thankfulness to the Head of the church, that a more gratifying report of this interesting institution can be given than it is believed would ever before have been made. In no former year have so many of its members been admitted to the full privileges of the church, and six or seven of these have made much higher attainments in secular learning than any one ever did before in this institution. Their well doing, religiously and morally, has not been without the usual accompaniment of persecution on the part of some of their companions. But this too, has been followed by its usual fruit—the strengthening of good principles in the persecuted. The Daily Prayer-meeting spoken of two years ago, as begun voluntarily by the orphans among themselves, was dropped for a few weeks in the early part of the year. It was re-commenced by only four or five of the most zealous of the orphans, and by them persevered in for two or three months, in the face of constant and bitter sneers and contempt. Neither such petty persecution nor courageous zeal, it is believed, was ever before known in the institution. The good triumphed over the evil. The numbers attending the prayer-meetings began to increase—a room nearly twice the capacity of the one that had hitherto been used for this purpose was required and obtained. Not satisfied with one meeting in the day—held about 11 o'clock, A. M.—a second was some months ago established, held about 3 P. M. The religious devotions of the institution, which all in it are required to attend, (1) at the opening of the morning school, (2) at the opening of the afternoon school, and (3) at the opening of the evening school, prayer only, and (4) at the opening of the morning school, reading the Scriptures, and prayer. With so frequent times of devotion appointed by the superintendent, he has not thought it proper to exert any direct influence in favor of additional seasons of social prayer, but on the other hand he has not felt at liberty to, in any way discourage them. He has, of course, never been present in these prayer-meetings, and only incidentally, and when necessity arose, as when he received a petition for a larger room, has he taken any notice of them. O that this institution, and all similar ones, might even be as prayerful as this one now is! The number attending for some weeks past, the now bi-daily prayer-meeting has been from twenty to thirty. The members of the church—fifteen in number—who are in the orphanage, conduct the meetings generally in succession, often, however, some who are not church members, by invitation, read passages of Scripture and lead in prayer. So far as the superintendent is aware, no one in these meetings has attempted to offer remarks. The time being occupied by singing psalms, reading the Scriptures and prayer.

The whole number of orphans in the institution is forty—no death has occurred among them during the year. Six are members of next to the highest class in the High School.

SCHOOLS.

Early in the year the lower classes of the High

School were formed into a branch school, and a rule was made that no boy should be admitted into the High School till he had passed an examination in the first reading book in English, and the same in Urdu, together with other elementary studies in both of these languages. This and other arrangements have greatly promoted the efficiency of the school, which now contains a greater number of advanced students than ever before. A few months ago a young man of experience in teaching, who passed the entrance examination to the Calcutta University, some years ago was employed as a teacher. The school is still, as during the past four years, under the energetic management of Mr. Ferguson.

We have three *Branch Schools*, in which the elements of a vernacular and also of an English education are taught. They contain in the aggregate about 200 scholars. Grants in aid of these, and also of a second Girl's School, have been asked for, and the Director of Public Instruction has kindly intimated that he hoped to make the grants from the beginning of his next fiscal year.

Owing to the severe illness of Mrs. Calderwood, during a large part of the year, she has not been able to give the personal attention to the *Girl's Schools* and *Zenana Work* that they have received from her. The native Christian woman who from the time of the establishment of the schools has aided her in them, and taught in them daily, some months ago went with her husband to labor at another station. We are thankful to be able to say that an excellent successor to her has been obtained. The number attending the first school has increased, but the second is still small. The girls are taught to read, write, &c., in Urdu, by heathen teachers, but a female native Christian teacher has given them instruction daily in religious knowledge, and in various kinds of needle work.

Including the orphan school, the whole number attending our five boys' schools is about 350, and the two girls' schools about 50.

To aid in defraying the expenses of these schools, and in relieving the wants of a number of indigent lepers and others, the European residents of the station have continued their generous contributions.

W. CALDERWOOD.

Saharanpur, October, 1868.

MUZUFFARNUGGAR SUB-STATION.

(COMMENCED IN 1867.)

Native Evangelist.—Rev. Kanwar Sain.

Scripture Reader.—Mr. Reilly McMillan.

While at their station, the brethren have occupied their time almost entirely in the direct preaching of the Gospel. In the early part of each day they have visited in a quiet way the shops and residences of the natives, endeavoring to become acquainted with the people, and to present to them individually the blessings of the Gospel. In these visits they have been far better received than was expected. The natives of this place have evidently no objection to enjoy the friendship of a Christian. In the latter part of the day the brethren have endeavored to obtain audiences in the streets, and in this also they have met with encouraging success. None of that virulent opposition that is usually met with on taking up new stations has been here experienced. The evangelist from the outset determined to endeavor to woo the people to Christ, instead of *lash*ing them with stinging arguments on their religion. The esteem with which the native representatives of Christianity are regarded here by the people, we consider an important token for good. Several have been met with who declare that they prefer the Christian religion to all others, but are not prepared to profess it openly. One has asked for baptism, and may perhaps soon receive it.

The Gospel has been proclaimed in many of the villages near Muzauffarnuggar City. The brethren, during the cold season, and up to the close of the *Hardwar Mela*, where they preached, in April, labored in the Saharanpur district, chiefly preaching in villages, at *melas*, &c.

W. CALDERWOOD.

Saharanpur, October, 1868.

DE AVARITIA.

No men with bundles pass through the strait gate. God does not value, as we do, yellow gold-dust and white ingots of silver. He clothes every saint in pure white raiment, and no thanks to any one who tries to bring in divers goodly Babylonish garments of his own. And before such people can enter, they must learn to spell over the notice on the door-post, "All encumbrances to be left outside."

Consider that church member who has fallen. It may be that for years, whenever he has written the word "God," it seemed as though it would have looked better if a small letter began it. For, then the insertion of *l* before *d* would not be so flagrant an outrage on rectitude, and for "God" one might very naturally read "gold." Such a man for these years, may have to all appearance, gone on rightly, and honorably, and well. His praise may have been abroad among the churches. But, for all that he has been a poor reader, and in obeying the "world" and not the "word," he has added another of those letters which bring the stench of the pit.

To "make" friends of the mammon of unrighteousness" is to use it as we are to use the golden streets of the New Jerusalem—to walk upon and not to worship. If we only knew the blessedness of giving, it would be safe for God to let us all grow rich.

Agar ought to have added an avaricious man to those four things in his prophecy which never say, "It is enough."

Satan is so covetous that he wishes to possess more souls than God. For between heaven and hell the circulating medium is the life of man. One says no longer "Give us this day our daily bread." He changes it to "Give me this day my daily gain."

There be those who pray daily that the times of half cents may soon return. S. W. D.