

EARLY PRESBYTERIANISM IN LANCASTER COUNTY.

In conversation with our patient and indefatigable librarian, I incidentally remarked that the Rev. Alexander Craighead, formerly a pastor of Middle Octorara Presbyterian Church, deserved more credit for the adoption of the Mecklenburg Declaration, in which was advocated the absolving of the Colonies from the Mother Country, than any other single individual, although he died before the consummation of his lifelong desire.

Our librarian, actuated by his historical instincts, insisted, nay commanded, that I should embody that Craighead fact in a paper, together with anything else pertaining to the Presbyterians of Lancaster, our mother and daughter counties. In obedience to his command I herewith present to the Society the following sketch of Rev. Alexander Craighead and other distinguished Presbyterians, almost unknown in history, for the simple reason that, while this denomination was, and is, active in making history, it has left others write it, and the result has been that justice was not always accorded to them. This is not only true of our national historians, but also of our State and county chroniclers, Dr. Egle and our own Vice President, Samuel Evans, Esq., excepted.* That prince of present his-

*The descendants of these five and one-half millions who came from England in the Mayflower have arrogated the right to write the history of not only their own outlying provinces, known as New England and under the care of the United States Government, but of the entire nation, in which only the Puritan appears; the Germans, Scotch-Irish and Dutch are unknown in their histories.

torical writers, Dr. Woodrow Wilson, President of Princeton College, in an address delivered a few days since, asserted that the true history of this country would not be written during this generation. This doubtless is true, unless Colonel McClure undertakes the task; he writes without fear or favor, and at the present time is opening up the secret annals of political corruption in the past of our country, and smashing many a cherished idol. But we are so constituted that you may attack a man's political convictions and the party with which he affiliates, and he will like you all the better; no feeling of animosity is engendered, but the first word you utter, truthful though he knows it to be, not laudatory, regarding his religious associations, he is up in arms, and you are friends no more forever; no atonement can be made for this transgression.

Our Religious History Neglected.

This may be the reason why, apparently, no mention of nor attention has been given to the religious history of the events leading up to the American Revolution. Great stress is given to the stamp act, the tea tax, the sugar tax, the Boston port bill, and the attempt to make the colonies pay a part of the \$700,000,000 of English debt, one-half of which was incurred during the seven years' war (although the colonies had paid their own soldiers in the field). No credit is given to the Christian integrity and manhood of our forebears, upon which was reared and intertwined their love of civil and religious liberty. Only the grosser passions are held up to view. The nobler virtues, sensibilities, conscientious convictions of right, love of that civil and religious liberty by which each and every man is permitted to worship

God according to the dictates of his own conscience, are entirely ignored. It is a libel upon our forefathers to teach this and succeeding generations that they were actuated to rebel solely by such mercenary motives as those first above mentioned. They were animated in their acts by higher and nobler incentives, and doubtless were instruments in God's hands for founding a great nation whose mission is to educate, to civilize, and Christianize all the heathen people of the earth. This is our manifest destiny, and God will require it at our hands. The Father, in His theocratic government, which always is over and above all other forms of government, reserved the territory, now included in the United States, for the organization of a great Christian nation, and in His own good time our nation was founded upon the granitic rock of civil and religious liberty, from the best blood, the most intelligent, religious and conscientious of all the people of the earth. Here came the Puritans, the Huguenots, the Baptists, the Mennonites, the Presbyterians, the Episcopalians, the German Reformed, the Dutch Reformed, the Lutherans, the Catholics, and the Friends, representing various races of people. Each of these several denominations had been persecuted in Europe, and in turn some of them had been persecutors.

Even our subject sect is not free from this charge.† During the religious wars in Scotland and Ireland the Presbyterians had received a training which developed them into heroes and martyrs for conscience sake, for it is by the buffetings of adversity that men arrive at the full measure of true

†From this commingling of the various races sprang a new race of people, the product of intermarriage, which for devotion to country and Christianity is unequalled on the earth.

manhood. But few who are raised in the downy beds of ease and in affluence ever attain even mediocrity. The great men of this and other nations have been schooled and trained by the trials and tribulations of adverse environments.

It is not my purpose to follow the various denominations, who each and all contributed so freely to the founding of this great nation. The subject would be too extensive for a single paper, but I shall endeavor to furnish a few facts of the history of Presbyterianism in our own county, and the influence exerted by the Scotch-Irish of this sect in the formation of this, the greatest of Republics.

Influence of the Reformation on Emigration.

Promising you that Alexander Craighead shall appear at the proper time, it is necessary, for a conceptive understanding of the subject multitudinous in bearings, to glance at the work of the Reformation in Europe, regarding the colonial settlements by the European emigrants. The Reformation inaugurated by Martin Luther and John Calvin spread from Geneva and Wittenberg over the entire Eastern Europe and the British Isles. Calvin, in Geneva, and John Knox, in Scotland, proclaimed Presbyterianism, and France was almost in the grasp of the Huguenots, who were Presbyterians. In England the Protestants were divided into the radical and the conservatives, the sect of Cranmer. From this branch came the Episcopalians; the former were Presbyterians. Under Mary the Presbyterians, Puritans and Episcopalians fled from England. They went to Leyden, Frankfort, Geneva and Amsterdam. When they returned under Elizabeth the Presbyterians were

no longer monarchists. From the Geneva Government they had imbibed republicanism, and they were politicians. John Knox, the apostle of Presbyterianism in Scotland, had returned from Geneva, where he had been the pupil of Calvin, during the early part of Queen Mary's reign, and his thunderings and denunciations of the Catholic religion did much to arouse the dissenters against her. The teachings of Knox spread throughout the province of Ulster, and Presbyterianism overran the north of Ireland. James II. conceived the idea of coercing the Presbyterians of Ulster to submit to his religious views by a general massacre of the non-conformist leaders. Many of these fled to the fortified towns of Enniskillen and Londonderry, where they were besieged for one hundred and five days, when James raised the siege, after the besieged had suffered untold tortures. William, Prince of Orange, came to England after he had been proclaimed King, and with an army hastened to Ulster, and on the Boyne water defeated King James, and thus ended the Stuart dynasty and Catholic supremacy in Great Britain. Six counties were escheated to the crown and the Catholics were evicted. These lands were largely settled by Presbyterians from Scotland. With King William on the throne, the Presbyterians enjoyed immunity from persecution for a time, and the Scotch emigrants caused Ulster to blossom as a rose. But after the thirty-one years' land tenure the land gentry increased the rents to such rates that the tenants were unable to pay them, and the evicted Catholics at public outcry received the lands from which they thirty-one years before had been ejected. Then it was that the Presbyterians turned their faces towards the colonies, unable

longer to bear the persecutions of the Established Church of England, by which all dissenters, Catholic and Presbyterian alike, were under the ban of the prelates. Their ministers were forbidden to solemnize marriages, and the children of such marriages were treated as illegitimate and the parents were subjected to punishment for fornication.

Result of Persecutions in Scotland.

During the bloody persecutions in Scotland many Presbyterians were banished as felons, and after the disastrous battles of Dunbar, Pentland and Bothwell's Bridge, the Presbyterian prisoners were sent to Virginia and sold as slaves. Ireland suffered like Scotland. Vexed with suits in ecclesiastical courts, forbidden to educate their children in their own faith, deprived of their civil rights, the sacramental test required and their only crime being non-conformity, they determined to seek a home where the long arm of prelacy was too short to reach them, and during the first half of the eighteenth century Down, Antrim, Armagh and Derry were emptied of Protestant inhabitants. Froude says that in the two years following the Antrim evictions 30,000 Protestants left Ulster. Similar testimony is borne by others to the unprecedented exodus of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians to the plantations in America.

Extent of the Emigration.

The Toleration Act checked the tide of emigration somewhat, but in 1728 it began anew and ships could not be procured to carry the emigrants as fast as they desired to emigrate. Dr. Baird states that from 1729 to 1750 12,000 persons annually came from Ulster to America. In 1771 to 1773 another tide from Ulster poured into Pennsylvania, 25,000 in number, all Presbyterians, and

changed the Delegates in the Continental Congress and caused the vote of Pennsylvania to be cast in favor of the Declaration of Independence. This is the greatest colonization of voters on record. Tammany is not in it.

The emigrants from Ireland and Scotland generally landed at the ports of Boston, Philadelphia and Charleston; three-fourths of the entire number landed in Philadelphia. Those who unshipped in Boston united with the Puritans in forming Congregational churches; those who landed in Charleston united with Congregationalists from New England. Those who came to Philadelphia settled in Delaware, Northeastern Maryland and Pennsylvania. Some located at Neshaminy, in Bucks county, others at the Gap, Donegal, Pequea and Southern Lancaster and Chester counties. In these localities they were in such numbers that they formed congregations, built churches and established schools of high grade. The ministers were generally the principals and teachers of these academies, giving the schools a decidedly theological tendency. With the basis for a classical education few of the "Mothers in Israel" but desired to see one of their boys don the ministerial mantle. To Francis Makennie, of Donegal, Ireland, licensed by the Presbytery of Logan, in 1681, is generally conceded the honor of establishing the first Presbyterian Church in this country at Snow Hill, in Maryland, in 1684. Some writers claim that the Rev. Richard Denton had charge of the Hempstead, Long Island, Presbyterian Church, as early as 1644 to 1658.

Early County Churches.

The Presbyterian Churches in Lancaster county, formerly a part of Chester county, in priority of organization, are: Donegal in 1722, some authorities say in 1714; Pequea in 1724;

Middle Octoraro in 1727; Chestnut Level, Mr. Weidly says, 1711; Leacock in 1741; Little Britain, Mr. Henry Weidly claims, in 1760; Log church, below Wakefield; Lancaster, 1763; Columbia, 1807; Colerain, 1816; Marietta, 1822; Belleview, 1832; Strasburg, 1832; Mount Joy, 1839; Cedar Grove, 1839; Mount Nebo, 1858; Caernarvon, unknown; Memorial, 1885; Christiana, 18—; Bethany, 1902; United Presbyterian, Middle Octorara, 1754; Muddy Run, another Psalm Singing Church, established 1740, in Drumore; Free Presbyterian, Octorara, 1857. The last has ceased to exist, having quit business after the emancipation of the slaves by proclamation by President Lincoln.

As has been stated, around each of the early churches of the above enumeration was a settlement of Scotch and Scotch-Irish, with a sprinkling of Huguenots. The most important of all these settlements was Donegal. Here Presbyterianism asserted its rights and could not be subjected by the Quaker rulers nor intimidated by the wards of William Penn, but in violation of the Penn edicts protected their homes and families from the midnight attacks of their savage foes when no other redress could be obtained.

The great number of Scotch-Irish Presbyterians landing in Philadelphia alarmed the Friends, and James Logan, President of the Proprietary Council of Pennsylvania, and identified with the Friends and unfriendly with the Presbyterians, stated that if the Scotch-Irish continue to come they will make themselves masters of the Province, a prediction fully verified in after years.* In order to check the influx of

*Nathaniel Grubb, of Chester county, member of the Provincial Assembly of Pennsylvania, in reply to appeals for protection from the Indians, said: "They are a pack of insignificant Scotch-Irish Presbyterians, who, if they were killed, could well enough be spared."

the Scotch-Irish Presbyterians into Lancaster and York county territory, the proprietors ordered their agents to sell no more lands in Lancaster and York counties to the Scotch-Irish, and also to make advantageous overtures to the Scotch-Irish settlers in Paxton, Swatara and Donegal townships, to induce them to move on, to migrate to the Cumberland valley, which offer, being liberal, was accepted by many, and we find the names of Works, Moores, Galbraiths, Bells, Whitehills, Silvers, Semples, Sterrets, Woods, Stephensons and others in Cumberland county; they were from Donegal township, Lancaster county. President McKinley claimed a Stephenson, of the Donegal family, as an ancestor; the McKinley family were originally settled in York county, Pa. Among the early settlers in Donegal and Cumberland county we find the names of Craighead and Jack, destined to become historic in relation to the Revolution.

Ministers Ejected.

In 1661 Charles II., of whom it is told that he never said a foolish thing nor ever did a wise one, ejected thirteen Presbyterian ministers from their churches for non-conformity. Among the number is found Robert Wilson, ancestor of Francis Makennie, and brother-in-law of Mrs. Elizabeth Jackson, the mother of President Andrew Jackson. Another ejected out of his church was Robert Craighead, ancestor of Alexander Craighead, who belonged to the Donegal, Lancaster county, family, and was in 1734 pastor of Middle Octorara Church. Some authorities claim he served the Pequea Church also. He was an ardent supporter of Colonial independence and was known as the Apostle of Liberty. His attacks upon King George and the Established Church were resented by

the leaders of Penn's followers, and he was forced to leave Pennsylvania. A venture in Virginia fared no better, in which colony the Established Church ruled other denominations with a heavy and willing hand, and he was driven to Charlotte, Old North State, which locality was more tolerant of civil and religious liberty.

A Church and a School.

Dr. Miller, of Charlotte, says that unto him the people of Mecklenburg county are indebted for that training which placed them in the forefront of American patriots and heroes. Rev. Craighead established Sugar Creek Church, and in connection therewith a seminary of learning, in which many of the uncompromising advocates of Colonial independence were educated, and, although he did not live to see the fulfillment of his prayers and works, yet generations unborn will rise up and bless his memory.

In 1748 Rev. Hezekiah J. Balch was born at Deer Creek, Maryland, and was licensed to preach by the Donegal Presbytery. In 1766 he removed to North Carolina, and was pastor of Poplar, Tent and Rocky River Churches. He was chairman of the committee which reported the Mecklenburg Declaration. Dr. Ephraim Brevard was a native of Maryland. He graduated at Princeton College, removed to Charlotte, North Carolina, and read medicine with our own Dr. Ramsey, of Drumore township, Lancaster county, after removal to South Carolina.

Dr. Brevard is the reputed author of the Mecklenburg Declaration. In 1740 John Alexander, ancestor of the distinguished family of this name, left Scotland, settled in Armagh, Ireland, and in a short time he and two nephews and Mr. Black, a nephew by marriage, emigrated to Nottingham,

Chester county. Afterward they removed to Charlotte, North Carolina. Six of the descendants of this family signed the Mecklenburg Declaration; one was Chairman of the convention, and John McKnitt Alexander was Secretary and on the committee with Dr. Brevard. Samuel Polk, of this family, was ancestor of James K. Polk, President of the United States. The Jack family are found in Lancaster, York, Cumberland and Westmoreland counties. Some went to Charlotte, North Carolina. James Jack carried the Mecklenburg Declaration from Charlotte to the Continental Congress in Philadelphia by pony express, in May, 1775, more than thirteen months before the passage of the Declaration of Independence. It is said that, with one or two exceptions, all of the signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration were Presbyterians; one was a minister. Some writers claim nine, others say eighteen, were Presbyterian Elders; the others of the rank and file. In May, 1776, the Presbyterians of Hannastown, in Westmoreland county, another outcrop of Donegal (the town was destroyed by the Indians during the war), sent to the Continental Congress at Philadelphia declarations similar to the Mecklenburg Declaration. A few days later the Presbyterians of Cumberland county, Pennsylvania, sent to the Congress declarations of like import.

Presbyterian Schools.

In the Presbyterian settlements not only did they establish churches, but, being advocates of popular education, they also instituted schools alongside of the churches. Their motto was:

"Dread not the skeptic's puny hand
When near the school the church spire
stands,
Nor fear the bigot's blinded rule
When near the church spire stands the
school."

The ministers in the churches being educated men, sixty per cent. being graduates of Edinburgh, Glasgow and Dublin, they were well prepared to act as Principals and teachers. The Log College at Neshaminy, founded in 1728 by Rev. Wm. Tennant, a graduate of Trinity College, Dublin, was famous for its theological teaching, and became in after years the justly famed Princeton College. Donegal Church had schools of high grade, presided over by the ministers. In 1743 New London Academy was taken under the care of the Synod, and Francis Alison had charge of it until he removed to Philadelphia to take charge of a school which in 1755 became the University of Philadelphia, now the University of Pennsylvania. Alexander McDowell succeeded Dr. Alison. The school was subsequently removed to Newark, Del., and became the Delaware College. Among those who received their education in New London Academy we find the names of Charles Thompson, Secretary of the Continental Congress, and three of the signers of the Declaration of Independence, Thomas McKean, George Reed and James Smith, Irish-born, and all of Scotch-Irish parentage. McKean was born in New London, near the school site. Here, also, were educated Dr. Rogers, Provost of the University of Pennsylvania, and Dr. Ramsey, our own Drumore, Lancaster county, historian. A classical school was instituted at Fagg's Manor Church by Rev. Samuel Blair, known as Blair Hall, where some of the leading lights in the Presbyterian Church received their education. Dr. Samuel Finley, in conjunction with Nottingham Church, established the Nottingham Academy, from which went out both churchmen and statesmen. Dr. Benjamin Rush, Governor Martin, of the old North State,

and many other distinguished scholars were pupils in this institution.

Dr. Robert Smith, in connection with his pastoral duties, established a scientific and classical school at Pequea, and here many ministers, doctors and lawyers of eminence received their training. The Strasburg Academy was founded by Rev. Mr. McCarter. In 1770 Rev. James Latta opened an academy near to the church in Chestnut Level. Some of the brightest lights in southern Lancaster county were pupils in this school. Later we had Rock Mills and Bartville Academies, presided over by James McCullough; still later, Chestnut Hill Academy, under Thomas Baker, and the Union High School, under James Andrews, A.M., all of which schools left an impress upon the community. Risking the charge of invidiousness and egotism, I present you with some statistics collected from the history of the United Presbyterian Middle Octorara Church, which never at any time had more than seventy-five communicants, all Scotch-Irish, and their descendants, to prove the great desire for education manifested by this race. The membership, with Dr. William Easton, pastor, included the well-known families of the Collinses, Hawthorns, Wilsons, Montgomerys, McClures, Pattersons, Campbells, Houstons, Agnews, Geists, Thompsons, Carters, Borlands, Fogles, Reeds, and a few others.

Eminent Men Educated in These Schools.

During half a century there went out of this church Rev. Wm. Kerr, a pastor of Donegal; Rev. E. Stevenson, Rev. Thomas Simpson, M.D.; Rev. James Hawthorn, Revs. William and Joseph C. Campbell, and Rev. Wm. Anderson. Among the graduates in medicine we find Robert Agnew, D.

Hayes Agnew, LL.D.; William Boone, William Easton, John Houston, Jr., J. W. Houston, Samuel Houston and John C. Campbell. The editorial staff sent out consists of the veteran friend of Col. A. K. McClure, J. M. W. Geist, and Robert Montgomery. The legal profession is represented by Theodore Boon and Judge Hutchinson, of Kansas. To prove their devotion to their country during the Civil War the church furnished many Union soldiers, amongst whom we note one Colonel, two Majors, two Captains, one Lieutenant and a goodly number of non-commissioned officers and privates.

Soldiers, Too, Were There.

Though the Scotch and Scotch-Irish Presbyterians and their descendants did not number one-third of the three millions of the population of the colonies at the time of the Revolution, yet they furnished a great many of the general army officers. While at this late day it is difficult to trace their religious affinities, enough can be proven to justify the assertion that the Presbyterian colonists were brave and able in the battles of the Revolution. Among the Major Generals are found John Stark, Hugh Mercer, Thomas Sumpter, Henry Knox, Wm. Alexander, known as Lord Stirling, Alexander McDowell, Richard Montgomery, John Sullivan and William Moultrie. Of Generals, Daniel Morgan, John Beatty, Francis Marion, Griffiths Rutherford, George Graham, William Irvine, John Moore, Charles Stewart, John Armstrong, William Davidson, Joseph Graham, Isaac Hughes, Andrew Pickens, Arthur St. Clair and Joseph Reed. Of Brigadier Generals, John Armstrong, Jr., Jethro Sumner, Matthias Ogden, Otho H. Williams, Stephen Moylan, Francis Nash, Elias Dayton, Edward Hand, Andrew Lewis,

Lachlan McIntosh, Wm. Thompson, Andrew Porter, James Moore, Wm. McPherson and James Ewing. Of regimental officers we will not attempt an enumeration, as they were legion. Mad Anthony Wayne has been claimed by Quakers and Presbyterians; his ancestors were Irish, and the best I can do is to place him under suspicion. I have corresponded with those who should know, but get no satisfactory answers. He was certainly a bad Quaker, but would have stood muster as a Presbyterian. I think if he was a Quaker he, like Jakey Einstein, got his religion in his wife's name. Jakey had all his assets in his wife's name.

Scotch-Irish as Patriots.

The Scotch-Irish Presbyterians in energy, enterprise, education and intelligence were the peers of any of the colonial settlers; in love of civil and religious liberty they were excelled by none; in the struggle for religious freedom they were ever on the side of the people. Their republicanism and patriotism were never questioned. Pennsylvania owes much of her grand history to the fact that many of her colonists were Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. The Declaration of Independence was their work. King George thought so when he denominated the American Revolution the Presbyterian Rebellion.* During the trying struggle of the colonies to free themselves from the mother country Judge Futhey said such a thing as a Scotch-Irish Tory was unheard of—the race never produced one. The first public voice heard in the colonies for separation from Great Britain, Bancroft says, came from the

*He said: "It is these pestiferous Presbyterians. They are always in unrest, and will be in unrest until they are wiped out." The process of wiping out is not yet perfected. (Dr. Egle.)

Scotch-Irish Presbyterians. When the question of colonial independence was being debated in the Continental Congress, John Witherspoon, a Scotch Presbyterian, and a descendant of John Knox, said, speaking of the Declaration of Independence: "That noble instrument on your table, which secures immortality to its authors, should be subscribed to this morning by every pen in this house; he who will not respond to its accents and strain every nerve to carry into effect its provisions is unworthy of the name of freeman. Although these gray hairs must soon descend into the sepulchre, I would infinitely rather they would descend thither by the hand of the public executioner than desert at this crisis the sacred cause of my country." John Adams' "Live or die, sink or swim" speech was not in it. When all others hesitated to sign the instrument John Witherspoon stepped boldly up and affixed his name first. There was abundant reason why the Presbyterians and Catholics should enter into the colonial independence movement with a determination to cast off the yoke of the mother country. The Presbyterians had not only been for generations fighting the battles of the Reformation in common with the Lutherans and their first cousins, the German Reformed, the Dutch Reformed, the Congregationalists, the Huguenots and Puritans, but for years had been in conflict with the Established Church, and had suffered all the ignominy and persecution, rivaling the Inquisition, which it was possible for human fiends to conceive of. And when their last refuge in the colonies was invaded and an attempt to dominate Episcopacy, from which they had suffered so much, their course is only to be commended. The components of civil

and religious liberty, happily embodied in our national Constitution, did not spring, Minerva like, from the brain of any one individual, but were the resulting influence of generations of persecution and suffering endured by God's people in the Old World. And just so far as our Presbyterian forefathers had shared in these struggles against the politico-religious tyranny of England, and so far as their descendants had imbibed the opinions of their ancestry, were they prepared to take a leading part in the organization of a nation the cornerstone of which should be civil and religious liberty though at the cost of life itself.

In compiling these pages I have quoted largely from Froude, a member of the established Church; from Bancroft, Dr. Baird, Craighead and Hunter, of North Carolina, whose work was kindly loaned to me by our secretary, whose extensive library contains many rare and valuable works.

A Pertinent Inquiry.

In conclusion, let me ask you Scotch and Scotch-Irish, who have such a glorious ancestral record, what are you doing to preserve it for future generations as a stimulus to urge them on in the paths of education, patriotism and Christianity? Are you not degenerate sons and daughters of worthy sires? The Quakers have their histories published and are proud of them. Our German cousins have their societies and publish two or three volumes of their glorious history annually, but such a publication of Scotch-Irish history is unknown. Why not emulate our German friends' example?

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