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ERRATA.—On page 207, Vov. II. No. V. Deep Creek should be *Deer Creek*—Conegal read *Donegal*. Page 208, for variety, read *vanity*. Page 209, for no active part, read *an* active part, for Seonnell, read *Sconnell*, for Joseph Lowry, read *Joseph Young*. Pages 210 and 211, for Wm. Balch, read *Mr. Balch*. Page 211, for were nearly horizontal, read *more*nearly horizontal.

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FOR THE DAVIDSON MONTHLY.

REV. HEZEKIAH JAMES BALCH, No. 2.

POPULAR Tent congregation can exhibit an honorable record of men, who have won their way to distinction. As of the city of the Great King of old, it may be said, "this and that man was born in her." The celebrated Charles Caldwell of Kentucky, was born on the place, where lived the the Rev. Dr. Robinson, during the time of his long pastorate; and his fame as a Medical Instructor attracted many young men from western Carolina to attend his lectures. Dr. Charles Harris, who spent a long life in its bounds, was scarcely less gifted, and may be said to have had a Medical school of his own. His brother Samuel Harris was a Tutor in Princeton College, of which he was a graduate, died and was buried at that place. Israel Pickens, a Member of Congress of 1812, and the first Governor of Alabama, was a native of the same community. Charles W. Harris Esq., the first President of the North Carolina University, was born at Mill Grove two miles from the Church. Franklin Cannon, who first saw the light three miles from the same, filled the office of Lieut. Governor of that State, and was one of the six vice-Presidents of the Convention that nominated Martin Van Buren for the Presidency. Aunt Martha Alexander, an eminent practitioner among her suffering sisters, was a gifted child of nature, uneducated it is true, but far more deserving of an imperishable fame, than those better known specimens of her sex who are now making a history for themselves of a no enviable character.

Less prolific in Ministers of the Gospel than Rocky River, Poplar Tent has nevertheless given the Church a number of excellent men. A. W. Ross, Joseph Y. Alexander, Henry Reid and John W. Reid, have rested from their labors and their works do follow them; and a slender youth converted in the old red house of worship in 1833 under a sermon on the Almost Christian, by the first President of Davidson College, is, says a correspondent, "one of the pillars" of a Presbytery

west of the Mississippi. Extending our views a little farther out, old Mecklenburg gave birth to one President (Polk), and possibly another (Jackson). Andrew Flinn, reared, though not born there, was the first pastor of the 2nd Presbyterian Church in Charleston and Theophilus Stork, a native of Cabarrus, is now an eloquent preacher in the city of Philadelphia. With these examples of intellect and piety before us, who can with any show of reason say, that the Old North State is not congenial to talent, as has been sneeringly said in our hearing, and the soil where genius sickens and fancy dies? And was the brief distinction of the talented Balch, prognostic of the talent and piety that have emanated since his day, from the two congregations to which he ministered? And has his posthumous influence been in any way connected with the pleasing facts? Talents we know are the gift of God; but it is a truth frequently demonstrated, that innate mental ability often exists undeveloped and unknown to its possessor, until some external influence calls it into action. The scintillations genius struck out by the attention of one mind on another are matters of every day's experience. Patrick Henry is supposed to have owed much of the distinction to which he attained as a public speaker, to the eloquence of Samuel Davies, whose ministry he frequently attended in early life. A minister of eminent godliness will form a people after his own model.

A man of commanding mien and graceful manners will, to some extent, set his impress on those over whom he bears influence. Powerful intellects and impassioned oratory in any profession in life, will stimulate the latent genius of youth, to emulate these excellencies, and call into active exercise, powers that otherwise would have forever lain dormant.

That Mr. Balch was a man of talents, is evident from the prominent part assigned to him in the Mecklenburg Convention. It was not simply because he was a minister of the Gospel, that he occupied the high position of being one of the assembly. As a political document, it was decidedly proper that Brevard should be the author of the Declaration, as it is universally acknowledged he was; but the just criticisms and approval of Mr. Balch, it was evident, would go far in making it acceptable to the people. And it was judicious that his judgment as a Divine, and his power in debate, were called into requisition, to remove the conscientious scruples of some who had taken the oath of allegiance to the King, and to embolden

the timid who feared the results of taking so daring a step as declaring independence. Living fifteen miles from Charlotte he attended with three of his members, two of them Elders, Reese, Wilson and Patton, and having thrown his whole influence in favor of the movement, with them signed the Immortal Document. Graydon tells us, that the Declaration adopted by Congress more than a year afterwards, appeared at one time in danger, of being rejected—Independence was quivering in the scale when the venerable Witherspoon arose and said, “that he would infinitely rather that the silvery locks that fall upon his shoulders should be reddened with his own blood, shed by the axe of the executioner, than desert the cause of Independence at that time;” and the effort was effectual. A similar result, it is evident, flowed from the efforts of the younger clergymen, at an earlier period, and in a humble sphere. Dying so early in life, it is true but little is known of Mr. Balch; and the productions of his mind have mainly passed into oblivion. But “he being dead, yet speaketh,” in that silent, unobserved influence, which has flowed through his churches down to the present day. But more than this; from a communication written from Paris more than ten years ago, by a near relation of his, we learn that he wrote a treatise on Church government; and if this document is yet in existence, it is possible that his autograph can be had, to place side by side with those of the other signers of the Mecklenburg Declaration.

MR. BALCH'S MARRIAGE.

On the authority of Dr. Foote and Dr. Sprague, Mr. Balch remained unmarried and died without issue; and this seems to have been the current belief of the members of the family now living. How the facts of his marriage came to be overlooked or unknown to his nearest relations, we cannot explain, unless we take into consideration, the absence of facilities for communication between different parts of the country, at the time. An apparently unimportant incident, however, has snatched this interesting event in his life, from oblivion, and made it a matter of imperishable record. Rev. Richard Webster, in his history of the Presbyterian Church, p. 129, says: that his Presbytery called him to account for having been married by an Episcopal minister, and in accordance with

the forms of that Church, for the solemnization of marriage. Mr. Balch offered in his defence, that Mr. Bay, then the minister of Deer Creek church, was absent, and that he was thus laid under the necessity of securing an officiating clergyman of another denomination, or go unwed. Mr. Webster, it is presumed, obtained his information from the records of Donegal Presbytery, by which Mr. Balch was licensed and ordained, and to which he was accountable. Rev. Andrew Bay, pastor of Deer Creek, now Churchville, was the father of Elisha Hall Bay, Chief Justice of the State of South Carolina; and we find, by reference to the Records of the Presbyterian Church, testimony corroborative of the defence of Mr. Balch, in Mr. Bay's having taken a journey to the South about that time.

Thus far the *lex scripta* on this point. But in addition to this, the venerable man to whom we are indebted for so much of our information, always spoke of Mr. Balch as a married man. The allusion to Mr. Bay in this connexion would seem to indicate that he married some where in the sphere of his ministrations. There is a distinct impression remaining on the mind of the writer, that he heard this same gentleman say, that Mr. Balch married a lady by the name of Sconnell. John Sconnell lived within half a mile of Mr. Balch, and one of his daughters married a man by the name of McLaughlin, moved to Georgia, and died without issue; but whether Mr. Balch was a member of the same family cannot be positively asserted. On a map of the Brandy-wine battle ground, in Lossing's Field Book of the Revolution, there is marked near the scene of bloody action, a place called Sconnelltown, now a waste, and this for aught we know, may have been the scene of Mr. Balch's first experience in connubial bliss. But the testimony does not close here. In the year 1849, I made a somewhat extended inquiry of the aged people then living, who either knew Mr. Balch personally, or his family after his decease. Mrs. Ann Cannon, the mother of Dr. Franklin Cannon, already mentioned, who had spent a long life within three miles of Poplar Tent church, in reply to my inquiries, related at length her intimate acquaintance with the family, and stated that she was at their residence when they left for the far West, and that she accompanied Mrs. Balch, now Mrs. McWhorter, (for she had married again,) as far as the church, where the mother brought her children to take a last look at

the grave of their father. And it may be proper to state, that sometime after the death of Mr. Balch, his widow married a man by the name of McWhorter, who tradition says was a professional teacher; and that they emigrated to Tennessee, to which region many others from Carolina went about the same time. How many children Mr. Balch left is unknown. On Mrs. Cannon's authority there were two or more, as she used the plural number. Mr. Balch having married before he came South, and dying in 1776, seven years afterwards, may have left as many as three to inherit his name. To what county in Tennessee the family removed, and what became of them, cannot be ascertained. Many from that part of Carolina settled in Davidson, among whom was the family of General Davidson, who fell at Cowan's Ford, and for whom that county, in Tennessee, was named; others went to Wilson, Rutherford and Shelby.

There being none now to claim their paternity from Mr. Balch, the only conclusion we can form is, that the children all died early, and the family became extinct, as was true of some others who migrated to the same region, sufficiently known to the writer. Amid the dangers and privations incident to a new country, especially such an one as Tennessee then was, a savage wilderness, the extinction of entire families was not an uncommon or isolated event.

MR. BALCH'S GRAVE.

The first Pastor was among the first, whose mortal remains were laid to rest in Poplar Tent grave yard: We know not that the Minister had ever followed the sable hearse of any of his beloved people to that sacred repository of the dead, as no memorial stone is there dating father back than 1783; but we do know that a weeping congregation gathered round the grave of their revered pastor cut down in the strength of manhood, and rolled the clods upon his coffin lids. That he might sleep in the midst of his flock in death, as he had moved and labored among them in the active duties of life, they buried him in the centre of the sacred ground. I heard the faithful Elder tell his venerable Pastor, Dr. Robinson, as the two sat by a newly opening grave, that when Mr. Balch died, his people struck diagonal lines across the yard, and where they crossed in the centre, they buried him, that they might sleep around him,

dust guarding dust, and rise with him in their midst in the morning of the resurrection. The first burying ground was enclosed by a ditch, the vestiges of which are still visible. In 1849, two persons instituted a search for the grave; the lines were run as they had been 73 years before, from corner to corner, and in the centre a small stone was discovered in the grass almost covered with earth; and this humble memorial was all that remained to mark the grave of Balch. The venerable Mrs. Cannon always retained a remembrance of the sacred spot, and was able to point it out to us, before we made the examination as already stated. A few years previously to this a number of gentlemen met at the church for the purpose of considering a railroad enterprise, and while there, the project of erecting a monument over the remains of Mr. Balch, was conceived and ultimately carried out. Delicacy to the feelings of the two gentlemen of that community, who exercised a commendable patience and zeal in this enterprise, forbids us giving their names. Thus after a period of nearly eighty years from his decease, about 1855, a plain, but handsome monument was placed over the unconscious remains of Hezekiah James Balch. On it is the following inscription:

BENEATH THIS MONUMENT

REPOSE THE MORTAL REMAINS OF

THE REV. HEZEKIAH JAMES BALCH.

First Pastor of Poplar Tent Congregation, and one of
The original members of Orange Presbytery,

He was licensed a Preacher of the everlasting Gospel,
By the Presbytery of Donegal in 1758, ordained to the full
Work of the Holy Ministry in 1769, and rested from his
Labors, A. D. 1776, having been the Pastor of the united
Congregations of Poplar Tent and Rocky River about 7 years,

He was distinguished as one of the *Committee of Three*,
Who prepared that *Immortal Document*, the *Mecklenburg*
Declaration of Independence:

And his eloquence, the more effectual from his acknowledged wisdom, purity of motive and dignity of character, contributed much to the unanimous adoption of that instrument, on the 20th of May, 1775.

The Craggs, Ala.

J. A. W.

(TO BE CONTINUED.)