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DEVOTED TO

SCIENCE, LITERATURE AND ART.

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THE DAVIDSON MONTHLY

IS a College Magazine, under care of the students of Davidson College, and edited by six members of the senior class, chosen by the two literary societies, three from each. It will be the earnest endeavor of the editors to make it all that such a magazine ought to be, and we hope, by the aid of liberal patronage, to render it worthy of a place in the foremost rank of the class of literature to which it belongs.

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THE EDITORS OF THE DAVIDSON MONTHLY,

Davidson College, N. C.

as seldom fall to the lot of students, and sufficient to have utterly discouraged ninety-nine young men out of an hundred. But this one happened to be that very "hundredth," and he was not to be daunted. On he went, winning the highest honors in each successive class and study until Commencement day arrived, on which he was to appear before a large and attentive audience as an *orator*. Here many of his chief admirers were fearful of a failure, but were a greebly disappointed when they listened to a learned, well-written, interesting oration on the "Life, character, and writings of Cicero." So great was the surprise elicited by the superior excellence of the address, that one of the Professors took occasion to express to the young man something of his feeling, and inquired how he had managed to write such a speech, remarking "that it must have cost him much time and labor." "It did indeed, sir," was the modest reply, "it cost me a great deal of both, I have no wish to pass for a genius, for I am anything else. But I carefully studied the subject of that speech and re-wrote the whole from beginning to end *thirty-six* times."

FOR THE DAVIDSON MONTHLY.

REV. HEZEKIAH JAMES BALCH,

And Poplar Tent Church. No. III.

REV. Richard Webster in his History of the Presbyterian Church, p. 285, perpetuates a facile mistake, when he ascribes to the subject of this sketch, an act performed by his relative, Rev. Hezekiah Balch, D.D., of Tennessee. Those who have looked over the Records of the Old Synod, the parents of our General Assembly, may remember the case of Samuel Kennedy, a minister from Ireland, which occupied much of the time of the Synod, for several years prior to the Revolution. The complaint of this man against his Presbytery, was finally disposed of in 1775, and he was ordered by

Donegal Presbytery to desist from preaching. This troubler of Israel then drifted Southward, most probably at the suggestion of members of the second Presbytery, of Philadelphia, who sympathised with him in his trials, and intruded into the good old Church of Williamsburg, S. C., founded by the Witherspoons, Jameses, Wilsons, Gordons and others, about fifty years previously, and the mother of all the churches on Black River and Pee Dee. There his immoral conduct and heretical doctrines produced a deplorable schism in the church, which lasted more than forty years. But while his case was before the Synod, in 1773, Rev. John Roan introduced an overture, which was passed, to restrain Presbyteries allowing ministers from Europe to labor in their bounds, until their credentials were properly vouched for, and approved by Synod. This act met with fierce opposition, and was repealed the following year—a substitute being offered in its stead. Among those recorded as voting against the re-consideration, Mr. Webster gives the name of Hezekiah James Balch. This is incorrect. Mr. Balch never attended a meeting of the Synod, after his ordination. From the organization of Orange Presbytery, of which he was an original member, the whole Presbytery was recorded as absent every year, with one exception, until after Mr. Balch's death. In 1774, there were in attendance, from that body, David Caldwell and Hezekiah Balch. And this was the man who voted in the negative on the repeal of Mr. Roan's overture. Together with the immortal Witherspoon, of Nassau Hall, and a number of others, he entered his *dissent with reasons*, against the abrogation of a rule which appeared to the wisest of our Ministers, to be imperatively necessary for the preservation of the purity of the Church. Many, of a similar character, with Mr. Kennedy, unsound in faith, and immoral in conduct, some of them deposed from the sacred office, found their way to this, then wilderness; region; and among a people destitute of the preaching of the word, and hungering for the bread of life, it was easy to gain the affection of the churches, and do infinite mischief before their ecclesiastical status could be ascertained. Rev. Hezekiah Balch, D.D., the founder, and first President of Greenville College, is supposed to have been a first cousin of the signer of the Mecklenburg Declaration. There is a difference of four years in the statements of members in the Balch family, now living, and that furnished by Dr. Coffin to

Dr. Sprague, as to the time of his graduation. The former give the date from the records of Princeton College as 1766, the latter 1762. In their licensure, H. J. Balch had one year the precedence, being reported to Synod by the Presbytery of Donegal in 1768, his relative was reported by the Presbytery of New Castle in 1769. Both are reported as ordained—the first by Donegal, the second by Hanover Presbytery, at the meeting of the Synod in May, 1770. After some years, the future President Balch removed into the bounds of the Donegal Presbytery, and during his sojourn there, attended the meeting of Synod in Philadelphia, in 1774, and gave the vote as stated above. In 1782 he appears, from the records, to have returned to the Presbytery of Hanover. It was from Mr. Balch's occasional visits to Poplar Tent, that his name has been introduced in connection with it. He is admitted by his most ardent admirers, to have been an impulsive, and sometimes an imprudent man. His early ministry was exercised in part, in North Carolina, where he first married; and for a time he served the Bethel church, in York district, South Carolina. The two relatives bearing so nearly the same name, were distinguished by the appellatives of Poplar Tent Balch, and Bethel Balch; and from his eccentricities, the latter was honored with the sobriquet of *Mad Balch*. Prone in his younger days to boisterous declamation and violent gesticulation, he might be said, with a degree of truthfulness, to "tear a passion to tatters,"

"And split the ears of the groundlings."

And it was a source of no small amusement, if not spiritual edification, to see and hear him in some of his political episodes, (for there was such a thing as political preaching then as now) mimic the dodgings of the Tories, for whom he had conceived a strong antipathy. Concerning a man, though of distinguished talents, piety and zeal, who had stood twenty-one trials before Presbytery, Synod and General Assembly, and always came out with a good finding, we can come to no other conclusion, than that he was an adept in the art. "A man of war from his youth," he seemed always to be at home in a storm of controversy. And when the question of Psalmody was thrown practically upon the churches, he engaged with all his natural ardor in favor of the change from Rouse

to Watts. During the time of this dividing of the waters, it became his duty to preach one Sabbath in Poplar Tent church. And here we feel at liberty to shed a little light on an incident related by Dr. Foote, pp. 442 and 443. The congregation had so far compromised the question, as to sing the *Psalms* of Watts during the morning service and those of Rouse in the afternoon; the hymns had never been used. The hymns were objected to by many in England, when first presented to the public, by the Sweet Singer of our Christian Israel, and this was one of the incentives to preparing a version of the Psalmody of the Old Testament. Mr. Balch, however, disregarding the rules of the congregation, gave out one of the *hymns*. Before the singing commenced, an elderly gentleman, the father of Dr. Charles Caldwell, arose, and said, "Please give us one of the good old Psalms of David, and none of your new lilts," or in words equivalents. The man of God, in the pulpit, responded in stentorian tones, "Please take your seats sir, and don't interrupt the worship of Almighty God." The pulpit was at the side of the house, as was common in those days, and Mr. Caldwell occupied a pew in front, and not far distant from it, near the middle of the house. At the stern and thrilling rebuke of the preacher, he beat a rapid retreat down the aisle to the door and returned never again. The interval passed, and the afternoon service began, and Mr. Balch so far conformed to the wishes of the people as to announce one of the old Psalms; but during the singing, he drew himself up to his full height as he sat in the desk, and threw his head back, with lips tightly compressed, that all might see that he took no part in that exercise of praise. This incident is from the lips of the man who sat in the chorister's seat, near the pulpit, and led in part, the music of the sanctuary.

Mr. Caldwell, as has been before stated, lived on the place, which was afterwards the residence of Rev. Dr. Robinson, and died there while his son Charles was studying medicine in Salisbury. Whatever may have been his character as a christian, he seemed to place a higher estimate on his own abilities, than others were willing to accord, and he savored more of the bigot than the true philosopher. There lived in the congregation, during the transition period from the old psalmody to the new a Physician by the name of Thomas Donnell. He was a godly man and prepared for the ministry, and was reported

as a Licentiate by the the Presbytery of Orange, to the Synod, in May 1782. Some bodily infirmity however necessitated his giving up the work of preaching the gospel and devoting himself to the practice of medicine. But while caring for the welfare of the mortal parts, he was not unmindful of the maladies that afflict and slay the never dying souls of his fellow-men. A truly evangelical christian, he was said to be as zealous and as useful in the church as the pastor himself. He warmly though discreetly, espoused the use of the sublime and devotional lyrics of Watts, in preference to the antiquated version formerly in use. In order to afford the people information on the subject, and to exhibit the scripture authority, for the use of human compositions, in praise as well as in prayer, a day was appointed to meet and discuss the subject in oral debate. Dr. Donnell was expected to lead the discussion on one side, and it was known that Mr. Caldwell would not be silent on the other, though utterly incompetent to reason to edification. When the multitude assembled, the pious physician, foreseeing the unhappy results of an inflammatory discussion on minds already excited, prudently advised the indefinite postponement of the whole matter. To this the major parts readily assented. But our champion on the other side, exhibiting no dubitable signs of anger, met Dr. D. face to face, and taunted him with fear of being unable to maintain his side of the question successfully, against himself on the other. The meek though firm reply of the Doctor was, "I would as soon hold an argument with yonder pine tree as with you," at the same time pointing to a large pine tree that stood on the brow of the gravelly hill above the old church. The wise counsel of Dr. Donnell prevailed, and the people departed to their homes, the larger portion gradually according to the new Songs of Praise, the others conscientiously opposed to them going off to churches where the old and more literal version of Rouse was still in use.

Here it may be not inappropriate to state that within the memory of the writer, the remains of the first house of worship, in which Mr. Balch preached, were still visible. That building stood on a lower spot than the red frame edifice which was erected early in the present century, and about fifty yards to the South-west of it. This second house was built by Ebenezer Flinn, and the high pulpits, with sounding board dotted with stars of white wood on a ground of black

walnut, was an imitation of the one in the Goose Creek Episcopal church, twelve miles from the city of Charleston. When the old house was vacated for the occupation of the new, the antiquated structure was, like most old things, badly cared for, and stood with its windows strangers to glass, and rude shutters creaking and swinging to and fro in the wind. And when abandoned by the living, the dead took possession, and held it in fee simply, for their own use and behoof; and many were the duties of ghosts and other incorporeal entities, tangible to the sight, if not to the feelings. Many a veritable goblin, if we might accept reports, made this once hallowed spot the theatre of his performances, to the great annoyance of the superstitious; and many a luckless wight compelled to pass there at night under the influence of John Barleycorn, witnessed scenes scarcely less interesting than those of Kirk Alloway and Tam O'Shanter. A pedestrian not over-credulous in spiritual apparitions, passing the house one dark night thought he heard a noise within, and putting his courage to the test, hurled a stone in at the entrance, and as the clattering missile ricocheted along the aisle, a flock of the laniferous tribe sufficiently numerous to have satisfied the demands of old Polyphemus himself and all his "Ætnean brothers," came bounding in full flight over his head at the door. His hair, as a matter of course, performed its duty of standing up as stiff and straight as is usual on such occasions. A denouement would furnish a similar result, in all spiritual apparitions, if they were properly examined into.

An anecdote similar to that given by Dr. Foote, on p. 444, touching Rev. Robert Archibald, as a Universalist, will here be not out of place. After Mr. Archibald had, for some time, been preaching the doctrine of the suffering and final restoration of all men, he was met near his own residence by a wicked, fun-loving young man, by the name of Mc——, who asked him how long a person would be doomed to suffer in hell. Mr. A. replied that, that would depend on the amount of sin he had committed in this world. "How long would a wicked fellow like me have to burn?" asked Mr. Mc——. "Well, perhaps a thousand years," responded the fallen minister. "And would'nt I, after burning a thousand years, be a pretty crackling to go up among the angels in heaven?" answered the other. Mr. Archibald rode on without uttering another word.

As an evidence of the mental aberration of this, but little less than "arch-angel ruined," it is said that he waxed worse and worse down to bold infidelity. And being invited to preach or lecture by a wealthy gentleman of the same belief, in his store house a few miles from the church, he indulged in a tirade of ribaldry and scathing sarcasm on religion and its professors, charging its ministers with the vilest hypocrisy, preaching doctrines which they did not believe to be true, confessing that he had himself preached fire and brimstone till the very walls of the church would smoke and smell, and then—shut up the doors and go home, leaving all these horrible things behind, and think no more about them, and when he had ended this profane and blasphemous diatribe, he offered a fervent prayer to God, as had been his custom in happier days, and in the name of the Lord Jesus Christ. His host with withering rebuke for his inconsistency, bade him never attempt to preach in his presence again.

But little is known of Mr. Archibald, after his sad fall and deposition from the ministry. On the authority of the late Hon. D. M. Forney, he taught a school for a time in the vicinity of the Tuckaseege Ford, in Lincoln county, and Mr. M. availed himself of the advantages of his instructions. His melancholy end is reported as being in harmony with the latter years of his life. Stopping over night in a hotel somewhere in South Carolina, he recognized a man who had committed a capital crime in North Carolina, and fled from justice, and addressed him by name. The wretch finding that he was identified, and fearing arrest on Mr. A's testimony, it would seem, determined on the destruction of the witness. On the following morning, Mr. A. proceeded on his pedestrian journey, and before night he was found dead in a rivulet, too small and shallow to have caused his death by drowning. What a melancholy end of the course of one, who had for many years held a high position as an Ambassador of Jesus Christ! And pondering his case, the question has often recurred, was this body ever a "temple of the Holy Ghost?" Would a covenant God suffer one of his own elects, so far to wander intellectually, as to deny the Lord that bought him—reason to totter on her throne, until she knew not the awful guilt of trampling under foot the blood of a compassionate Redeemer? The case of Cowper is before us, and others not a few, who succeeded in the overt acts of the *felo de*

se. More painful still the view, when we regard him in the character of a child of the wicked one, a castaway, although he had preached the gospel to others, and doomed to sink under the stern rebuke, "Depart I never knew you." We are relieved when we close the record, and wait for the clearer light of eternity.

J. A. W.

The Crag, Ala.

FOR THE DAVIDSON MONTHLY.

A TRUE GHOST STORY.

ONE cold, bright day in December, I set out with my dog and gun, for a locality about fifteen miles from home, where I had heard that game was very plentiful, anticipating a fine hunt. Besides my gun, I had also a "Navy-six." Thus equipped, I commenced my expedition. But it is not of my hunt that I would speak. Suffice it to say, that I had succeeded in killing some twenty-five or thirty birds, and was meditating on my return, when I noticed that the sky was overcast with black and angry clouds. I saw that in a few moments their contents would be showered on my head, and immediately began to look about me for some place of shelter. I espied a small cabin about a quarter of a mile distant, and hastened thither. I had not gone more than a hundred yards, when it began to rain, and I was compelled to quicken pace. I soon found myself under its sheltering roof, and kindling a comfortable fire. As soon as I had thoroughly dried my apparel, I began to take a critical survey of my new abode. I found it to be a double log cabin, consisting of two rooms, a passage between, and some planks thrown across the joist above. An old rickety ladder led up into the upper story, or more properly speaking, the "loft." Up this ladder I went to see what could be seen, I found an old boot covered with mould, and some wood, the last of which I carried down. I noticed that several of the boards had been taken from the roof, thereby a hole being made, through