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H. T. HUDSON, D. D., Cor. Editor

For the Advocate. REMINISCENCES.

BY REV. JOHN E. EDWARDS, D. D.

In Guilford county, N. C., about five miles west of Greensboro, there is a plain little Methodist Church, that bears the name, I suppose, of Muire's Chapel—in any event, whatever the present name, it takes the place of the old log meeting house that bore that name, in the years gone by. In 1822 there came a Methodist preacher to my father's house within a few hundred yards of the Church, just named, to pass the night. His name was James Reid—the honored grand-father of one of the Editors of the *Raleigh Christian Advocate*. That man was the first traveling Methodist preacher I ever saw. How he came to call I do not know. It has occurred to me since, that possibly he was going from *Rehoboth*, a Church about seven or eight miles south of my father's residence, to his next appointment—a Church called *At*, about ten miles north-west of my father's. This is a mere guess. My father was not a Church member, nor was there a Methodist, to my knowledge, in five miles of his house. So far as I can now recall I had never heard of a Methodist until the Rev. Mr. Reid called to spend the night. I was but eight years of age, and cannot therefore rely very implicitly on my memory. This I do remember, that the family was impressed by the presence of a preacher in the house, and put under restraint. "Uncle Tom," a negro man belonging to my father, was told not to play his fiddle that night. Family prayers were held for the first time under that roof. That visit was paid sixty years ago. Mr. Reid was invited to call again. He did so, making two visits that year. The first man I ever saw smoke a cigar was the Rev. James Reid, on the occasion of one of these visits in 1822.

The next year there came to my father's a little "hump-back" preacher by the name of *Thacker Muire*. He rode a beautiful animal called "Lady Jane Grey." He was talkative, cheerful, and full of song, and was less reserved and clerically dignified than the Rev. Mr. Reid. He proposed to build a church in the neighborhood. My father said he would give the land on which to build it, and furnish the timber for its erection. The next morning the site was selected. Rev. Mr. Muire cut down the first bushes, and staked off the lot. There was not a solitary Church member that had a hand in erecting the plain log meeting house in the woods. With the exception of two or three families, the whole neighborhood was made up of Quakers, the New Garden Meeting House being less than two miles distant. The Rev. N. H. D. Wilson's father and grand-father lived near, but they were strict Quakers. Renel Swain was near, and also old Dr. George Swain, but they were Quakers, as also Governor Stanly, all Quakers, Jonathan Iddings's family formed an exception. The Iddings aided in hauling logs, and in raising the house. It was soon finished. A dedicatory service was held. Religious interest was awakened. My father and mother, with a few others, professed conversion, among them a young man, reared a Quaker, by the name of Timothy Russell. A Society was organized. This was the beginning of the Muire's Chapel Church, in Guilford Circuit. Four or five years ago I visited the dear old spot, dear to me, for it was there I held my Church membership—there I first went to the Sunday-school—there my honored parents rest in the grave. The old log meeting house was gone. A few decaying remnants of the building marked the spot where it stood. All the old landmarks had disappeared. I might have passed the Church, and the dilapidated remains of the house in which I was born and reared without recognizing a solitary feature of the scenes so familiar to my youthful eyes. Where the forests stood in my boyhood, the eye was greeted with worn out hedge fields. The dear old oak that spread its branches above the spring was gone. The garden had disappeared. The pear trees, and June apple trees, were all gone. So of the chestnut trees that stood along the lane. Everything was changed. The memory of other days came back.

Lewis Skidmore was the first Presiding Elder that ever came to a Quarterly Meeting at Muire's Chapel. The first communion I ever witnessed was administered by him. It was held in the morning be-

fore preaching. The doors were closed. Only those who got to the Church in time were admitted. A local preacher by the name of *Shields*—a house painter, who lived in Greensboro, the only Methodist then in the village—was present. Thacker Muire was there. It was a solemn time. The old Quakers rode by that day on their way to New Garden, without bestowing the compliment of a look on the Methodist meeting house, and its congregation. How changed since that day in my early boyhood! A new generation worships there now. But few of the Quakers are left in that vicinity, and those that remain are so changed in dress, in the mode of worship, and in their associations with other Christians, that they are scarcely recognized as the successors of the "broad brims," and plain attire, and Quaker bonnets of sixty years ago. Then, to my certain knowledge, a Quaker thought it *sinful to sing*. The Society disciplined its members for going to Muire's Chapel. A Methodist prayer meeting, with the singing, and shouting, and loud praying, common in those days, was deemed, by them, as a positive nuisance. Nor did the old Presbyterians, who lived a few miles away down towards Buffalo, regard the Methodists with any more favor than the Quakers. This was from 1822 onward for a few years, before Methodism acquired influence and popular favor. How changed! As late as 1832, now fifty years ago, an anonymous writer in the *Greensboro Patriot* assailed the Rev. Wm. Hammet as a sort of Methodist vagrant, when he went through that country as Agent for Randolph Macon College. The Agent was denounced, and the College enterprise ridiculed, and the people put on their guard against intrusting the agent with money to build a Methodist College in *Virginia*. But oh! did not the writer catch it? Mr. Hammet, who was one of the most eloquent men I ever heard, came back to Greensboro, and preached on Sunday morning, on the text: "Whom he did foreknow did he also predestinate," etc. And such a sermon! Then he gave notice that he would pay his respects in the afternoon, to the "contemptible, anonymous scribbler in the *Greensboro Patriot*." And he did. Such a castigation no mortal ever received before or since, about Greensboro. To return to Muire's Chapel. The membership grew—the congregations increased—the prejudice abated, and it became a highly respectable and influential Church, for the times. Not a few of the Quakers became Methodists. Among them some of the Wilsons, and notably at a later period, N. H. D. Wilson, a large headed, sober-sided, strong minded boy. He and I went to school together at Muire's Chapel. I was his senior by several years, but we played "town ball," and "bat," and "shinny," and "buzzard" together. He may have gone to *New Garden* with me; but I was among "the big boys" there, and do not remember him among the students in that old Quaker School. This by the way. *Nat* was a fine boy—true as steel—I always liked him. He ought to have been made Bishop at the late General Conference, and, if another man had been elected in the place of Dr. Haygood, Rev. N. H. D. Wilson, D. D., would have been the man, in my judgment. But I must come back to Muire's Chapel.

Rev. Lewis Skidmore was the first Presiding Elder that ever came to the Chapel. He was a large, portly man. His voice was like the note of a silver trumpet. Everybody said he was a great preacher. My after knowledge of him left me in no doubt that he was one of the ablest preachers that it has ever been my privilege to hear. On the subject of *water baptism*, Skidmore never had his superior in the Methodist pulpit on this continent. He was succeeded in the Presiding Eldership, of the old Yadkin District, by the Rev. Peter Doub, another large and portly man, and another great preacher. The impression on my youthful mind, produced by those big, fat, and weighty Presiding Elders was to the effect, that none but large, protuberant men could fill the office. The Rev. Moses Brock, who followed the Rev. Peter Doub, had the stature, but not the girth and avoirdupois; and by just so much as he fell below his predecessors in point of fat, plethora, and rotundity, by just so much he fell below my ideal of a Presiding Elder.

In those days local preachers abounded. They came from Randolph, and from Rockingham counties, and preached at the Chapel in the early days of its history. I remember a man by the name of *Robins*, from Randolph county. He was a ranting, vociferous, enthusiastic preacher. He generally ended in a shout, if not too much exhausted, and that stirred up Letty Dodson in the "amen corner," and such a scene followed! Bonnets flying, shawls trailing, babies crying. The good old Quakers, returning from New Garden, looked like they were frightened out of their senses. But, there was a power in Robin's preaching, and not a few were converted under his sermons. There was another local preacher from Randolph county that preached occasionally at the Chapel. I think his name was *Gray*; and a most excellent preacher he was. Another from Rockingham county, by the name of Thompson. He was a quiet, smooth, instructive preacher. The Presbyterians who came occasionally to the Chapel, when old father Paisley was not preaching at Buffalo, liked Mr. Thompson. Abner Perdue also preached occasionally. Circuit preaching came round every four weeks. The circuit was nearly as large as a Presiding Elder's District now-a-days. A sort of hallowed haze invests the years of my boyhood, as I now look back to the early history of Muire's Chapel. To my youthful eyes the little log meeting house, with its plain benches, and high pulpit, and rude walls, standing by the road-side, under the solemn old trees, was as sacred a place to me as the Temple to the eyes and hearts of the Jews who prized Jerusalem above their chief joy. To my retrospective glance, as a mist comes over my eyes, I see my dear mother, with her benignant face turned up to the preacher in that pulpit, while a smile of heavenly joy lights up her countenance, and softly uttered words of holy rapture tremble on her quivering lips. I hear again, or seem to hear, the old songs that were sung in that rustic Chapel, nearly sixty years ago. The earnest prayers that fell from the fervid lips of plain men in the prayer meeting are remembered to this day. But the worshippers that made the little Chapel vocal with their prayers and praises have long since gone to the grave. Scarcely a solitary man or woman is now living, I suppose, who was a member of the first Society formed at Muire's Chapel. The poor, unfortunate, hump-backed preacher that organized the Society is long since dead. His name would long ago have been forgotten, but for the Chapel that perpetuates it. Skidmore, and Doub, and Brock, are gone—"Their works follow them." Rufus Wiley, Thomas Mann, Jesse Lee, John H. Watson, Robt. Wilkerson, and others of the first Circuit preachers that preached in the Chapel, are scarcely known even by name, by a single person in the vicinity of the present Church. But I close abruptly, fearing that no one other than myself feels any, the least interest in these personal reminiscences.

PETERSBURG, VA., AUG. 25th, 1882.

For the Advocate.

THOMAS G. LOWE.

MR. KINGSBURY'S ORATION.

Rising from the perusal of Mr. Kingsbury's Oration on the "Life and Character of the Rev. Thomas G. Lowe," I feel impelled to lay my humble tribute beside this brilliant garland on the grave of North Carolina's wondrous son.

I do this with the mingled emotions produced by the recollections that Kingsbury was my pupil and Lowe, for more than a quarter of a century, my devoted friend. From him I had many a token of affection and from my first knowledge of him I always loved him. We are friend and—friend. He was "a brother born for adversity." With gentlest manners, manners which would not be unbecoming a pure maiden, there was in him a tenacity of purpose which quickly clung to his convictions and kept him to his moorings. He could not "hurray" for any cause he espoused or any friend to whom he was attached, but he could give quiet support and aid that was better than any noisy demonstrations. I shall never cease to cherish the memory of the man who was so great and spotless in himself and to me such a noble, devoted friend.

In the spring of 1842 I was in Newbern. Under the ministry of John E. Edwards

and John Todd Brame a great revival of religion occurred. I had just attained my majority and reached Newbern as Agent of the American Bible Society. There I preached twenty-eight times in twenty-five days, under circumstances I have never seen paralleled. Towards the close of those services Thomas G. Lowe arrived. He was tall, slender, fallow. He was gentle and unobtrusive. I was told that he was uneducated. He preached several sermons, the like of which I had never heard and have never heard since.

I shall not attempt to add to the full and fully deserved description of his powers which Mr. Kingsbury has made. But, a few things I will mention. In preaching he was absorbed by his theme and gave no evidence of self-consciousness. The plans of his sermon seemed mapped by his imagination, rather than wrought out by his logical understanding, but they endured analytic examination. His arguments were pictures; but they were no daubs; they were master-pieces, many of them very beautiful, some of them gorgeous. His voice—oh! his voice—what miracles of music it wrought. I can even yet feel their delicious thrills along my nerves. I have heard Mr. Lowe and Dr. Hawks. These will never be forgotten. The organ-like sonority of the latter as he once read the Episcopal service in Spanish from the pulpit from which I afterward preached, nor the soft and luscious tones of the former, in which flutes and hautboys mingled with the notes of larks as he leaned on the pulpit in Newbern and preached of the "pleasures forevermore."

Mr. Lowe had a little peculiarity which interested me. Every now and then he licked his lips quickly—I do not know how else to express it—as if the words he was about to utter sent forward their sweetness to his tongue and he seemed to be tasting what we were about to hear.

He had another peculiarity. He was as ignorant of grammar as was Father Taylor, the great sailor-preacher of Boston. The latter once, in a gale of eloquence, got tangled in an intricate sentence which he could not straighten, but carried everything before him by clapping his hands and shouting, "Brethren, my verb has slipped my nominative and I can't get it aboard again, but, nevertheless, glory be to God, I'm bound for the kingdom!" Lowe's sentences were sometimes intricate, parenthesis within parenthesis, but I never heard him, under any circumstances, utter a single grammatical error. I cannot say that of any other orator.

Above all, he was pure and thoroughly religious. No woman in all my acquaintance has left in my memory and heart a sweeter, deeper sense of purity than has this unspotted man. He believed the gospel he preached. It was through and through him. It both subdued and exalted him, and when he preached you felt that on the altar whence came down that blessed thing, which "touched Isaiah's hallowed lips with fire," there are still burning the glowing coals of God.

Blessed be his memory! And blessed be our friend Kingsbury for this tribute! May the future raise up for the Church many a man whose name shall deserve to rank on the rolls of glory with that of Thomas G. Lowe

CHARLES F. DEEMS.

New York, Aug. 30th, 1882.

For the Advocate.

OUR ALABAMA LETTER.

Josh Billings sighed for "them good old days when a fellow could see more fun with a dime than with a dollar now." In this country I have been enabled to see much that interested me at little expense. A few weeks since I attended a quarterly meeting 50 miles East of here on a mission embracing a portion of West Florida and Covington co., Alabama. The preacher in charge who walked to this meeting had been on the work six months, had received \$50 from the missionary fund but not a cent from the people, and sometimes pays for his meals and washing, and yet he is cheerful. Methodist preachers are pretty much the same the world over, they like to be called from poor to better paying circuits and do not object to a road to heaven taking in a few city charges, but a mission is not despised—they are willing to take anything to help forward the general good or develop themselves without the help of capsules. On Sunday a collection was taken up

and \$3.50 was raised for the support of the mission. I brought the Presiding Elder back to Evergreen with me and advised him to go back there no more. Now, while there is an excellent family occasionally in Covington county, yet its general reputation is such that a preacher who had once traveled that work was afterward, in another part of the State, annoyed by girls standing on seats when penitents came to the altar, and though being often reproved still those girls would stand on the seats until the preacher asked the Lord to have mercy on these stiff back girls and have them to do better, or send them to Covington county. Whether he considered Covington county rather worse than Hades, or a "shade better," I do not know but the petition took the girls off their feet.

The P. E. says he has quite a nice country East of there, embracing the little towns of Freeport, Uchuana, Mariana, Elbu, &c., and the nice farming country on the Chipola river and in Holmes Valley and Cambelton where he ventured to ask for \$50 for missions and got \$65. Even this mission has done better but now has the "die back." In South Florida, the roots of orange trees sometimes strike a hard subsoil and the trees begin to fail—take the "die back"—a Northern man seeing a small grove in yellow leaf and being told it was the "die back," took it to be a new variety of orange and said something in a letter to his home paper about the "die back variety." Well, you have places in N. C., where the churches "die back" as they do elsewhere. Missions and circuits that flourish in Summer, but when the Christmas holidays approach and conference is shifting preachers, the country fiddler who has a plan of the circuit also, says; "now little brown jug you and me," and where they go, the "die back" spreads like measles. Gen. O'Neil, a brigadier of Jackson's corps and the Governor elect of Alabama, don't look like a governor, but he is a Methodist and he polled none the less votes on that account, when at this place all Conecuh co., came to hear him and many from other counties, among them Mr. J. C. Travis, who lives 7 miles beyond Garland. Last week I carried out a promise to visit him and I shall not go to Garland in a buggy again—never—well, unless the Rail Road is moved. Like a trip down the crooked Oclawaha, it pays but once only. I have seen such rough rocky roads in Western North Carolina and Virginia, but did not dream of such so near the seacoast, for nearly two miles I went down mountains of rocks into the valley of the Sapulga and then two miles up again. I was glad to get to Mr. Travis', and rest and have him tell me how, when there were no rocks in this country at all, the Traveses came from Edgefield District, S. C., with their "duds" on pack horses or in barrels rolled along Indian trails and of his visit last Summer to San Antonio and the old Stone Fort—the Alamo—where his brother Col. Wm. B. Travis, then a young lawyer 27 years old, unfurled the Lone Star Banner from its wall, answered Santa Ana's summons to surrender with a shot, and when after Travis was shot off the parapet of the fort, Crockett and the little band of Texans held the Mexicans at bay till all were killed but four, and they were murdered by the Mexicans after they gained entrance. Travis is now growing old and limps badly from wounds received in fighting for "the lost Cause."

PRIMUS.

Evergreen, Ala., Aug. 26, 1882.

Speaking of inaccuracies in statistical reports, the New York *Christian Advocate* says: "In a Conference between New England and California during the present year the editor heard a Statistical Secretary declare that more than half the reports were wrong, and he moved that the committee the next year be authorized to publish them as they were sent in." In the debate that arose on this motion the following errors were shown in reports: One charge has 12,000 churches; another, a parsonage valued at \$6. One Sunday school has 130 teachers and 10 scholars; another charge has 188 local preachers and no members; another, 262 probationers and no members. One pastor, after deducting 7 probationers from 1, has 145 remaining. A pastor runs a \$30,000 church without any current expenses."

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