

THE Presbyterian Quarterly.

NO. 45.—JULY, 1898.

I. COMPLAINT* AGAINST THE ACTION OF THE SYNOD OF SOUTH CAROLINA IN ADDRESSING AN OFFICIAL COMMUNICATION TO THE CIVIL COMMONWEALTH.

TO THE VENERABLE,

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
IN THE UNITED STATES :

We, the undersigned Ministers and Elders of the Presbyterian Church in the United States and members of the Synod of South Carolina, submitting to its authority, hereby present to your venerable body this our Complaint against the action of said Synod of South Carolina taken at its meeting at Darlington, S. C., on Monday, November 1st, 1897, in the matter of a petition to an official representative of the United States, touching certain civil affairs which concern the commonwealth.

*This Complaint as here given appears in an amended form. The nature of the subject, the time limit imposed by the Constitution, and the circumstances in which the writer found himself, combined to render it impossible for him to put the first draft of the Complaint in such form as was desirable.

The writer ought to add that he found it impossible to confer with the individuals who authorized him to sign their names to this paper as co-complainants, or even to submit to them for their formal approval the Complaint as drafted by himself. (Rev. W. T. Hall, D. D., is the single exception. To him the writer is indebted for valuable and valued advice and suggestions.) He has reason to believe, however, that on all material points he has faithfully represented the mind of his co-complainants.

W. M. MCP.

IV. THE PILGRIM FATHERS OF THE WEST.

On August 25th of last year, at Holland, Mich., a semi-centennial celebration was held of the colonization of various parts of the Union, by emigrants from the Netherlands; but especially of the forming of the large colony on the shores of Macatawa Bay.

Says the Commission: "No immigrants, from whatever shores, have made a better record, in this country, during the present century, than from 'Brave little Holland.'"

The movement began in 1847, and still the current flows, until it is estimated that over half a million of Hollanders are scattered, in smaller or larger colonies, from the Atlantic to the foot of the Rockies and even far beyond to the very shores of the Pacific.

Ever since Henry Hudson, the intrepid navigator, of English blood and Dutch affiliation and sympathies, in 1609, had discovered the Hudson River in his search of a N. W. passage to China, the thrifty Hollanders had looked to the American Continent, with a keen appreciation of its commercial possibilities, especially as regarded the fur-trade.

The "West India Company" was established, and New Amsterdam became the distributing point and centre of its enormously profitable American trade.

Hundreds of colonists, Dutch in the main, but also Walloon and of other nationalities, were carried across the seas, in the hope of bettering their condition and of securing a future for their descendants. These colonists established new centres of life and prosperity, and patterned closely after the Fatherland, in their civic and domestic establishments.

But in 1664 England laid its strong hand on the Dutch colonies, and the treaty of Breda, 1667, confirmed its possession, and thus the names New Netherlands and New Amsterdam became a memory and a tradition.

The Dutch tenacity of purpose, however, is shown by the fact that the earmarks of the Netherlands still abound, along

the Hudson and the Mohawk, where the language and the customs of the Fatherland, in an extremely untoward environment, were religiously perpetuated from generation to generation, till they died out only in the first half of this century. Meanwhile the great Indian pelagic possessions of the Dutch and South Africa had absorbed the rivulet of emigration.

Then came the mighty changes in the Netherlands, which prepared the way for the exodus of 1847 and subsequent years.

England slowly absorbed the royal trade of the Netherlands, the power of the Dutch Republic was waning, the old inspiration had vanished, and in 1795 the fabric of the commonwealth melted away. Ever since the great ecclesiastico-political struggle of the early days of the 17th century, the centrifugal and centripetal forces in the Union had been at war, with the inevitable result of slowly but steadily undermining the foundations of the proud burgher-Republic.

The revolution of 1795 cleft the mystic tie between the House of Orange and the Netherlands. Old landmarks were buried out of sight and old principles were scorned and trampled in the dust. A brief dream of absolute liberty, a withering intoxication with French maxims and ideas, and the strong heel of Napoleon had crushed out the life of the short lived "Batavian Republic" and embodied it in the voracious empire. For the kingdom of Louis Bonaparte had been but a fiction of independence. One of the ministers of the Emperor, Fouchè, had stated the matter correctly, when he said: "the Emperor considers the countries, which he has given to his brothers, as belonging to the French Empire. He was willing that they should bear the title of kings, but simply in order that they might govern according to *his*, not their own will." Indescribable misery was endured by Holland under the French regime, especially through its close relations with England. In the vortex of the revolution the country had lost its grasp on the former order of things; a counter-revolution must therefore establish something entirely new. This new thing was created, when William V. of Orange was re-

called from England in 1813, and as William I. was crowned as Holland's first king. But William had not been abroad in vain, and both kings and subjects had obtained new ideas in the revolution. One of the first things he undertook to do, was the reorganization of the Dutch Church, which in the 16th century had given birth to the Republic. The Dutch reformation had been at the same time a revolution; the free Church in the Netherlands existed before the free State. This Church had been intensely democratic, its government had been representative from the lowest to the highest bodies. The power, which the government exercised over it, had been coöperative rather than regulative, paternal rather than coercive. The Stadholders and Regents exercised only such supervisory functions in it, as were the legitimate outcome of the historic relation between the Church and the State. In her own sphere the Church had been claimed to be absolutely free and sovereign. At a stroke of the pen all this was changed. William's ideal was the reorganization of the Dutch Church after the pattern of the Anglican Church, with the sovereign as its practical head. All the representative bodies of the Church were set aside and replaced by appropriate Boards or "Bestwein," and the idea of popular representation, by regular ecclesiastical appointment, was utterly banished from the new organization, whilst the old test for entering the ministry was changed. Any one acquainted with the history of the Netherlands, in which Church and State are so inseparably interwoven, will readily perceive the ruinousness of this high-handed proceeding. In the end it occasioned the Free Church of Holland.

The life of the Dutch Church moved on a low plane, when the trumpet blasts of Cesar Malan of Geneva, himself set on fire by the Methodistical movements in England, resounded through the Netherlands in 1832. Holland was swept in line with the "great revival." Men of international fame, like Groen Van Prinsterer, Bilderdyh, Da Costa and others were deeply stirred by it, and in the University of Leyden it acted

like a hot blast on a small coterie of men of intense convictions and great force of character. And when the natural leaders recoiled from the logical consequences of the movement, these young men lifted high the banner of the old Church and the old doctrine, for which the fathers had bled, and the Free Church of Holland was born in 1834. Among these courageous spirits were A. C. Van Raalte and H. P. Schotte, who were destined to become the leaders of the new exodus to America. But between those years of 1834 and 1847 lie the horrors of a relentless persecution. The government tried to thwart and coerce the new movement. An old Napoleonic code against secret societies, forbidding more than nineteen people to meet in any given place, unrepealed because of its perfect uselessness, was unearthed and applied to the Seceders; and on this anachronism a bitter and shameful persecution was founded. The adherents of the new movement were fined and imprisoned, dragonnaded and mobbed, their meetings were rudely dispersed, sometimes with bloodshed, their preachers were hounded and incarcerated like the vilest criminals. Thus Holland, whose name once had been a synonym for religious liberty, in the 19th century, persecuted her sons and daughters, *for adhering to the very faith, for which the war of independence had been waged during eighty weary years.*

Meanwhile a dreadful commercial paralysis smote the country. Business of every description stagnated, work was scarce and ill paid, capital lay idle, confidence was destroyed, and a general condition of "malaise" prevailed; when the cup, already dangerously full, ran over by the blight of a double national calamity—the "rinderpest" and the "potato-rot," and thus the fever of expatriation set in.

For eleven years Van Raalte had borne the heat and burden of the day, and he had emptied the cup of persecution to the very dregs, when he was stricken with the deadly typhus. In his delirium he was ever occupied with the startling condition of affairs in Church and State, and in his lucid intervals he

vowed that, should he get well, he would lead those, who would follow him, across the sea. People were desperate, but whither? To South Africa? But the journey was long and the conditions there far from propitious. To Batavia? But the same religious intolerance would follow them to the "pearl of the Indian Ocean," from which they sought deliverance at home. And thus the pilgrims turned their faces westward, and the American emigration was a "*fait accompli*."

Look for a minute at its chief leader—a man short of stature but well proportioned and of commanding aspect; with an uncommon expanse of forehead; clear gray-blue eyes of wonderful expressiveness; a smile, which was a revelation; lips firm and full of decision, nose prominent, chin indicative of strength of character; a man once seen never to be forgotten, a man of rare powers of eloquence, of brilliant education, of great administrative ability and rare organizing talent; a man among a thousand, specially and providentially fitted for his great life-work. Such was Albertus C. Van Raalte. What Robinson was to the Leyden pilgrims, that and far more than that Van Raalte was to the pilgrims of 1846. In September of that year he set sail, with his immediate followers, in a small sailing vessel, variously named in the documents "the Sultane" and "the Southerner," and on the 17th of November they reached New York, where the pilgrims, whose history was well known in America, were warmly welcomed by members of the Reformed Dutch Church, among whom Drs. De Witt of New York and Wyckoff of Albany and elder Forrester were most prominent. And now the wide Western world lay before them. It is almost inconceivable what changes the last fifty years have wrought on this continent. The "WEST" in 1847 had still an ominous sound, in which the rustle and roar of the mighty forests, the breath of the prairies, the thunderous hoof-beat of the lordly buffalo, and the wild Indian war-whoop were strangely blended. Van Raalte had carefully studied the situation and had selected the woodlands of Eastern Wisconsin as a place of settlement. But even in New York this

decision wavered. The cost of travel was a serious consideration, the means of transportation in the West were limited and primitive, the distances were great and the people were poor. Why look far away, when near at hand a suitable situation offered itself? Michigan just then offered special inducements.

The preposterous speculative feature, which had ruined thousands, had brought its inevitable reaction and cleared the atmosphere; the main current of immigration had sought other channels; lands were comparatively cheap. It was just ten years ago that the territory of Michigan had been, somewhat irregularly, admitted to Statehood. It was three years ago that the Supreme Court had declared the law unconstitutional, under which the "*wild-cat*" banks played their nefarious game with public interests. In 1800 Michigan was an unknown and ill-famed wilderness. In 1830 it had 32,000 inhabitants, which number more than doubled itself in the next five years. Its ruinous financial policy caused the new State, in 1839, to totter on the very verge of total collapse. Wiser counsels prevailed, and in the next decade there was slow but marked progress; and in this period Van Raalte reached these parts. The advice of prominent New York people and the general poverty of his followers decided the choice, and thus the fall of 1846 found the pilgrims at Detroit, where Van Raalte left his family, and whence he began a systematic exploration of the country, for the selection of a proper site for his colony.

Since 1833 there had been a slow infiltration of white settlers into the basin of the Grand River valley, and to this location he was specially attracted. In December, therefore, he traveled from Detroit to Allegan, with such facilities as the state of society afforded, and at Allegan he found, in Judge Kellogg, a life-long and trusted friend and adviser. To the West of this place lay the maiden forests in an unbroken chain, sparsely inhabited by the Potawatamie and Ottawa Indians, among whom the Rev. S. Smith labored as missionary. And to the lowly blockhouse of this man Van Raalte was led by Judge Kellogg and a few other friends, travelling on horse-

back and in single file, along the Indian trails and deer-tracks, which formed the arteries of the untouched wilderness, along which its life seemed to pulse. Hospitably received, the pioneer at once began his work of exploration, and several times these excursions in mid-winter, in his weakened condition, came near killing him. Once, as he was crossing a swollen creek on a tree, cut down for the purpose, the unstable bridge lost its equilibrium, and only the unequalled agility of Van Raalte saved his life. On another occasion he became benumbed with cold, miles away from home, and begged the Indians, who accompanied him and who endeavored to arouse him, to leave him to his fate. With infinite trouble these faithful souls succeeded in getting him back to the block-house of the missionary.

At last the work was done and the location of the new colony selected, on the shores of Black Lake, a beautiful bay of Lake Michigan. Late in January he returned to Detroit, and preparations were at once made for removal to their chosen forest home. On the boundary-line of civilization the women and children, with most of the men, were left behind, whilst a few sturdy pioneers and one single woman, who soon paid with her life for her temerity, went ahead to prepare some sort of shelter for the colonists. And thus on Tuesday, the 9th of February, 1847, these pioneers, led by Van Raalte, reached the spot which had been selected, and after a fervent prayer, in which the colonists joined with rapt devotion, the first axe-blow was struck and the first tree was felled.

After a few weeks, when some rude preparation for shelter had been made, the rest of the colonists came with their families; whilst three months later the wife and children of Van Raalte arrived, who had meanwhile been the guests of the estimable family of Judge Kellogg at Allegan. And now the battle began in earnest. Lands were distributed in severalty and the gigantic task of *clearing* began. One who has never seen an untouched maiden forest can scarcely conceive

of its tangled density and wild, awful grandeur. Every tree, which is endemic to the temperate zone, grew here in wild profusion. Mighty forests of pine and hemlock, bordered on mightier forests of oak and beech and birch and maple and all manner of hardwood trees. Game abounded, and partly civilized Indians roamed through the wilderness, in a state of slow decadence. And to the stupendous task of creating a kosmos out of this chaos men addressed themselves, whose early training had wholly unfitted them for it. Few of them were familiar with forests, none with nature in a state of complete abandonment, and not one of them was skilled in wood craft. They had been bakers and carpenters and ship-builders and tailors and painters and merchants and teachers and clerks; but what did these occupations avail in the forest. And yet they succeeded, by sheer will power and indefatigable industry and faith in God, in converting the howling wilderness of 1847 into the blooming paradise of 1897, with its substantial buildings and rich farms and sleek cattle and evidences of prosperity on every hand.

But how they suffered and toiled! What heartaches and home-sickness, what disappointments and privations, what despair often and soul-hunger, lie buried beneath the ruins of these magnificent forests. Their poverty had led them to the wilderness rather than to the prairies, as the comparative wealth of a second band of colonists, who under Rev. H. G. Scholte settled the rich plains of Iowa, had led the latter to the prairies rather than to the forest. And the poverty, which brought them here, chained them to their apparently forlorn hope and to their gigantic struggle. The destruction of trees was indiscriminate and often apparently wanton. More timber was leveled than could be disposed of, and these prostrate trees, as after events proved, grew into a terrible menace to the little city, which formed the throbbing heart of the entire settlement. In all those years Van Raalte was the soul of the enterprise, and his removal at any time would have been a disaster to the colony.

In the first few years of their history death moved with swift strides among them. Four mighty allies served him. First came the unaccustomed work and its exhaustive nature. In the second place, insufficient shelter. The first homes of the colonists were mere tents and booths, and later on rudely constructed shacks and log houses. In the third place, they had to contend with a new and very trying climate, coupled with insufficient and unwholesome food and poisonous drinking water, and almost universally insufficient clothing. And last, but not least, came the pestilential exhalations of the newly broken soil. Every clearing became a plague-spot. The merciless sun of the hot summer months beat on the stagnant pools, which could not be drained on account of the encircling forests, which blocked the way to the creeks and rivers, the natural drains of the soil. And thus death reaped a rich harvest and held wild carnival in those early days of the colonial history.

Fever-and-ague, bilious, typhoid and scarlet fever, bloody flux, measles and smallpox and other diseases appeared in the settlement, till it was devastated and resembled a huge hospital. Every log house and booth and tent contained dead and dying settlers; dumb despair laid hold of all hearts; funerals were so numerous that they were conducted without ceremony or religious rites. Dickens' desperate picture of "*Eden*," here seemed to be realized. A settler, returning home late at night, found a tent with a deathlike stillness hovering over it. Turning back the sheet, which formed its door, he saw an appalling scene. On a rude bed lay two dead children, the mother, in her death struggles, had rolled off the bed and lay on her face on the frozen ground. As darkness came on apace and the way was long, all he could do was to place the mother beside her children and cover all with a sheet. When he returned in the morning, the tent was gone and the dead slept beneath the freshly turned soil. This was not an extreme case. Whole families were found dead together, all of them yielded their quota to the spoils of the dread de-

stroyer. During this critical period Van Raalte, while preaching in the forest, from a stump, was so overcome by mental agony, that he broke down in his discourse and wailed, in the anguish of his spirit: "*O God, must we then all perish.*" And yet those Sabbaths were the uplifts of those Puritans, schooled by adversity, who dragged themselves for weary miles along impassable footpaths through the wilderness, to attend the inspiring ministrations of the great preacher. His prayers carried them beyond their present sufferings and steeled them to new courage and new effort. His sermons were like Pisgah's mountain top, whence he bade them survey the future, the land of promise before them; and with new vigor and indomitable determination they were sent back to resume their gigantic task and to struggle onward into the slowly breaking day of better things.

Meanwhile other bands of pilgrims had come from various Dutch provinces and branch colonies were established for miles around, and in ever widening circles the stroke of the axe was heard and the crash of falling timbers. As the clearings grew in extent and the settlers in prosperity, comfort began to replace want and the promise of final success developed into faith and assurance. Among the pioneer leaders of the Michigan pilgrims, Revs. C. Van der Menten, the genial Leeland pastor, and S. Bolhs, the shrewd and sturdy minister of the Overisel settlers, occupy a prominent position. Especially the former became Van Raalte's trusted friend and coadjutor; but as before he remained *the* leader. With true Napoleonic instinct, he never allowed his people to think of the insurmountable obstacles before them; with inimitable optimism he caused them to scorn the thought of possible failure; new plans and projects ever boiled up from his resourceful brain and were realized or at least attempted, and thus the disappointments of the pioneers were largely forgotten in the feverish expectations of new issues, which were ever preparing.

And slowly the evidences of progress became marked, and gradually the city of Holland, nestling cosily by the side of

the beautiful bay, was evolved from the wilderness; order had been developed from chaos.

The parallel between these pilgrims of 1847 and those of 1620 is exceedingly close. Religious intolerance was the ultimate cause of both movements; both sought abroad what they could not find at home—the betterment of their physical condition, but above all religious liberty. Both hailed from the same country and from the same port, although they were of different nationalities. Both held an identical faith, a faith which in history has proved itself a nation builder; a faith which may disappoint aesthetically, but which never disappoints in the ethics of a people thoroughly swayed by it. Both were pioneer movements in an unbroken wilderness, and wrought out their salvation by infinite toil and pain. In both success was attained by the sacrifice of large numbers of pioneers; both had eminent leadership and achieved marked results. What the Puritan of 1620 was to New England, the Puritan of 1847 proves himself increasingly to be to Michigan.

No sooner were the first trees felled but a log church was erected,—the first building constructed,—and a portion of that primitive structure was set apart for *School purposes*. “Education alone can save you from complete materialization”—was Van Raalte’s ever recurring warning to his people. And in the elucidation of this maxim, ideas were evolved from his fertile brain, which for many years, to say the least, seemed visionary and optimistic. But Van Raalte was a seer, he felt the needs of the future and saw what was hidden from others, and he tried to meet those needs. A school of high grade must be established, to be developed into an academy, then into a college, then into a seminary. He felt the need of accomplished leadership in every sphere, and only education could furnish it. And thus primary schools were established in every branch colony, which were to be feeders to the higher something which Van Raalte had in mind. In February, 1847, the first tree fell in the colony, two years later the pilgrims had ecclesiastically associated themselves with the Re-

formed (Dutch) Church in America, and in 1850 Van Raalte arose on the floor of the Particular Synod of Albany at Schenectady to plead for higher education. After hearing him, they said to him: "Your fervor is commendable, but you anticipate on your development. First try to reach a decent degree of physical prosperity in your colony, and then you may begin to think of a college." Here is Van Raalte's reply: "How could we answer to God and to posterity, if we took care of material affairs and not, nay especially not, of the intellectual and spiritual interests of the future. Neglect here were a crime." Such a man *must* succeed, and succeed he did! For in October, 1851, Walter T. Taylor, of Geneva, N. Y., who there presided over a flourishing school, arrived in the colony to open an academy.

Think of it! An academy in the wilderness, among a people wholly unacquainted with the English language, and struggling with adversity and death itself, and having but a precarious hold on existence. *From such stuff empires are built.* The school was established and began to develop. The noble Taylor also was forced to yield to hard work and malarial fever, and the youthful John Van Vleck took his place. In 1857, ten years after their arrival, the colonists saw the first academic and dormitory hall arise, principally through the tireless work of Van Raalte. Two years later, Dr. Philip Phelps, jr., took charge of the nascent institution, whose large idealism and wonderful tact and scholarship, ably seconded the efforts of Van Raalte, till in 1863 the academy developed into a college, and in 1866 into a theological institution, with full collegiate and theological courses.

Thus the dream of Van Raalte was realized. From the beginning he had called this school his "Anchor of Hope"—and these words are immortalized in the present seal of "Hope College," which consists of an anchor, around which the legend is written, "*Spera in Deo.*"

The most serious trial of Van Raalte's life came on the 9th of October, 1871. Little more than three months before, he

had lost his beloved wife. In the fall, that phenomenal fall of 1871, the forests avenged themselves on their victors. Simultaneously with the great Chicago fire, the beautiful little city of Holland, with its 2,400 inhabitants and growing industries, was all but annihilated by fire. For days, before the blow came, it had been expected. The air was full of fire and thick with smoke. A long continued drought had enabled the forests to do their worst. At midnight, when nearly the entire population was fighting the fiery demon in the neighboring forest, he suddenly flung himself on the largest church in the city and on the bark piles of an extensive tannery plant. Within two brief hours Holland, the centre of the colony, was practically wiped out. Nearly a million dollars worth of property, the fruit of almost a quarter of a century of toil and thrift, was hopelessly lost. The insured and the uninsured fared alike, through the collapse of numerous insurance companies, by the Chicago fire. Fortunately no lives were lost, except that of an old woman, but many narrowly escaped by plunging in river and lake. Besides the city, numerous isolated farm houses, in the colony, were destroyed by this fire.

The morning dawned on a sad scene; the city was in ruins, the citizens in despair, and Holland's fate trembled in the balance. Then once more Van Raalte's old spirit flamed up, and, in a memorable address, he poured, as of old, courage and strength to endure and to hope, into the hearts of his people. He ended with these memorable words: "With our Dutch tenacity and our American experience, we will rebuild Holland."

And he lived to see the day of the partial fulfilment of his own prophecy. Death claimed him on the 7th of November, 1876. That death and that funeral showed how deeply he had embedded himself in the hearts of his people. A perfect shower of resolutions and encomiums fell upon his coffin. All business for miles around was suspended, city and county, church and college mourned, and well might they write on the memorial tablet in his own old church: "*A man mighty in word and deed.*" For such he had proved himself to be.

He had his meed of praise during his lifetime. Both the University of New York and Rutgers College, N. J., honored themselves by giving this man the honorary title of Doctor of Divinity. But the future will know Van Raalte better than the past and the present.

Nearly a quarter of a century has elapsed since he passed away, and the colonists and their children have celebrated the semi-centennial anniversary of his great colonization effort. What changes these fifty years have made! The little town, he planted, has developed into a prosperous city, throbbing with life and industry, and more than realizing the extremest ideals of the pioneers of 1847. The College and Seminary, though modest yet in their equipment, lift their heads without shame. With their fifteen professors and two hundred and seventy-five students, with their thorough courses and established reputation, they look hopefully ahead and trust in God. The great original hives have swarmed again and again and the Michigan colonies have been duplicated in almost every Western State. They are found in Wisconsin and in Illinois, in Minnesota and Nebraska, in Ohio and Kansas, in Iowa and the Dakotas, as well as in New York and New Jersey, in Montana and Washington. Truly those early "Pilgrim Fathers" of 1847 built better than they knew. The immigration of 1847 and subsequent years has given to America a class of citizens, who may gratefully and proudly repeat the challenge of the Semi-Centennial Commission.

The pioneers of 1847, and their children and grand-children, with a countless host of their American friends and admirers, assembled on August 25th and 26th, 1897, to intertwine the star-spangled banner and the three-color; to raise a votive altar to the memory of the heroes of half a century ago; and above all to place a garland and to drop a tear on the grave of the man who conceived the plan of this building, and who succeeded in rearing it, with consummate skill and courage and faith: "*Requiescat in pace.*"

Holland, Mich.

HENRY E. DOSKER.