

a fine address, and is very popular with his friends. D. G. Croly is the managing editor. William H. Hurlburt is a graceful, humorous writer, keen, sharp, and pointed. Most of the political leaders are written by Chamberlain, formerly of Philadelphia.

LXXIX.

NEW YORK INDEPENDENT.

ITS ORIGIN. — PRESBYTERIANS AND CONGREGATIONALISTS SEPARATE. — NEW ORGAN NEEDED. — BASIS OF THE PAPER. — THE INDEPENDENT AND ITS EDITORS. — POLITICAL AND ANTI-SLAVERY PLATFORMS. — THE HIGHER LAW. — TRACT SOCIETY CONTROVERSY. — MR. BEECHER AS EDITOR. — THEODORE TILTON. — CONNECTION WITH THE OBSERVER. — BECOMES CONNECTED WITH THE INDEPENDENT. — HIS REMARKABLE CAREER. — DR. LEAVITT. — HENRY C. BOWEN.

ITS ORIGIN.

TOWARDS the close of the last century the New England churches sent out their missionaries into the new states. Men were sent, not only into New York, but into the West and the South. The Presbyterians were in the field, and a plan of union was formed between the Congregationalists and Presbyterians, by which the ministers of each should occupy the same field and the same churches. The Presbyterians were very tenacious of their form of government, and this tenacity increased till it nearly swallowed up all there was of Congregationalism. About forty years ago the pressure made by the Presbyterians on the Congregationalists induced them to withdraw from the union and form small Congregational churches and associations of the same form of government. The Old School Presbyterians cut off

the New School and the Congregationalists from their Presbyteries. This led to the formation of Congregational churches throughout the West. A company of young men went into Iowa, and were known as the Andover Band, from the theological seminary which they had left. They were able men, and through their labors new congregations were founded and new associations reared in most of the Western States.

The Congregationalists had no organ out of New England. The "Evangelist," till 1837, was a Congregational paper. It then became Presbyterian. A new glory was dawning on the Congregational Church. Rev. Joseph P. Thompson and Dr. Cheever were in New York. Rev. R. S. Storrs and Henry Ward Beecher were in Brooklyn. They were men of talent and power. Their churches were large, wealthy, and influential. A newspaper through which these men could speak to the world seemed a necessity. Rev. Dr. Joshua Leavitt became the nucleus around which earnest and talented men gathered, who proposed to start a religious paper that should be second to none in the land.

BASIS OF THE PAPER.

There were in New York several young Christian merchants of wealth, who proposed to found a paper upon a financial basis that should secure its publication for five years, whether the paper was a success or not, whether it had a subscriber or not. It was to be a catholic, liberal, Christian sheet, which should not only discuss religious topics, and be the organ of Congregationalism, but also be the champion of freedom, and a

decided opponent of slavery. Three clerical gentlemen were selected as editors — Rev. Drs. Bacon of New Haven, Thompson of New York, and Storrs of Brooklyn. After much discussion, the name "Independent" was adopted, as every way fitting to indicate the position the paper was to assume on matters religious, political, and educational. An agreement in writing was drawn, defining the duties of all parties connected with the paper — editors, proprietors, and assistants.

THE INDEPENDENT AND ITS EDITORS.

On the 1st of December, 1848, the first number of the Independent was printed. It was in season to take part in the free-soil canvass of 1848. It was a part of the original compact that the Independent should speak out on the question of Liberty in no measured tones. The proprietors and the editors were anti-slavery men, but till the canvass of 1848 they were not abolitionists. The motto of the paper, suggested by Dr. Leavitt, was very significant: "But as we were allowed of God to be put in trust with the Gospel, even so we speak, not as pleasing men, but God, which trieth our hearts." Up to this time there had been much in common between the New School Presbyterians and the Congregationalists. The starting of the Independent aroused the New School branch. Mr. Leavitt, the old war-horse of anti-slavery, had many political enemies. To damage the Independent, the story was circulated that "Joshua Leavitt was to be its editor." The effect of this announcement was to bring at once from fifteen hundred to two thousand subscribers, who were anti-slavery in sentiment, to the

subscription list of the Independent. Seeing the mistake, it was then asserted that Mr. Leavitt was not to be engaged as editor, but only to gather scraps and clippings for the paper. To head off the new Congregational organ, a paper was started, called the Presbyterian, to be the organ of the New School. Theodore Dwight and L. Halsey, an Old School Presbyterian, were the editors. The latter was to receive a salary of five thousand dollars. The paper was weakly, and died at the close of the first year, and its subscription list was transferred to the Evangelist.

In the meanwhile the Independent went swinging along at the most successful rate. It secured a large list of subscribers, and correspondence came in from all parts of the country. The ability, tact, and executive power seen in the management of the paper, and, above all, its readable character, gave it marked success. Besides its religious and political principles, the paper has always been distinguished for the independence, fairness, and ability of its book notices. This department has been a speciality.

The greatest harmony of opinion prevailed among the editors. A weekly consultation was held, and all important matters submitted. When a consultation could not be had, and an important leader was published, the article was usually acknowledged to be the thing needed. The utmost sympathy existed among the editors.

THE HIGHER LAW.

On the passage of the Fugitive Slave Law, in 1850, Dr. Thompson wrote a leader, in which he took ground that so infamous was the law, no Christian man was

bound to obey it. This is conceded to have been the first announcement of the principle afterwards known as the "Higher Law," which phrase is due to Mr. Seward. The announcement became the pivot on which the whole country finally wheeled. The position was in advance of public sentiment. The doom of the Independent was predicted. The stake was moved too far in advance, it was thought. Subscribers and patrons were startled. One of the original founders of the paper, who was largely in the Southern trade, withdrew from the concern. But the Independent took no backward steps.

TRACT SOCIETY CONTROVERSY.

The Independent accused the Tract Society of being an ally of slavery, assailed its position, and opened a controversy which was sustained with great vigor and ability on both sides. The whole country looked on with deep interest as the controversy progressed. An eminent clergyman met Dr. Leavitt in the street, and said to him, "Doctor, I pity you fellows. No one ever opposed that Society without getting the worst of it. I had a controversy with it myself, and it nearly killed me. You will be crushed. They will hunt you high and low, and there will be nothing left of you: they will grind you to powder." "Well," said Dr. Leavitt, "I know we are right in principle. Our paper has a financial basis that can't be shaken for five years. We can print the Independent every week during that time if every subscriber leaves us. We have three editors, among the ablest writers in the land, backed by wealthy churches, and they are all a unit in this

matter. The Congregational churches throughout the country sustain us. Our list is increasing; the great heart of the people has been touched, and we shall succeed." The war ended the controversy, and brought the Tract Society on to anti-slavery ground.

MR. BEECHER AS EDITOR.

The war produced a change in the management of the paper. The three editors resigned. Henry Ward Beecher took the editorial chair. He managed the Independent till he went to Europe, and, without any formal resignation, gradually withdrew from the control of its columns. He had previously been a regular contributor. His papers, which were designated by a star, were among the most popular and brilliant that ever came from his pen. His labors as an editor were able and satisfactory, though he wrote but little. Those savage attacks on Mr. Lincoln, in the Independent, which attracted so much attention throughout the country, not to say indignation, were from the pen of Mr. Beecher. The experiment of reporting his sermons from his lips by a phonographer proved a paying one, and was continued for several years. His celebrated Cleveland Letter closed his connection with the paper.

THEODORE TILTON.

The present editor-in-chief became connected with the Independent rather incidentally. He graduated from the Free Academy of New York, and connected himself with the Observer. He possessed a brilliant imagination, wrote acceptable poetry, was ready with his pen and tongue, and manifested a decided ambition

to make his mark. A disagreement on the matter of slavery led to his dismissal from the Observer. He was afloat in the world, with a young wife on his hands, and without means of support. He was about twenty-one years of age, a member of Plymouth Church, and in his welfare the pastor and people took a decided interest. Through Mr. Beecher's influence, Mr. Tilton was put on the Independent in 1856, to do anything that might be found for him to do.

Unknown at the start, he first attracted general attention by a controversy in Plymouth Church between himself and Mr. Beecher. Mr. Tilton took the ground that as a consistent anti-slavery man Mr. Beecher could not support the American Board. Mr. Beecher defended his position, and Tilton assailed it, before crowded audiences, who were attracted by the discussion. Mr. Beecher was tender and conciliatory. Mr. Tilton was fierce, vindictive, and denunciatory. One of Mr. Tilton's speeches was reported and printed in the Independent. It put him to the front rank as an anti-slavery speaker, and he became a favorite orator at public meetings. It brought him out as a lecturer, and he is probably now as popular and successful as any man who makes lecturing a business. When Mr. Beecher went to Europe, Mr. Tilton was left in charge of the Independent. On the withdrawal of Mr. Beecher, without any formal introduction he continued in the position which he now holds. He is sole editor of the paper. He is left perfectly free to conduct it as he will. While the drift is unchanged, he is untrammelled. The leaders, double-leaded, are from his pen.

DR. LEAVITT.

This gentleman is associate editor. He was one of the original founders of the paper, and has held an important place in its management from the start. Trained a lawyer, he is a preacher of marked ability, a writer of pith, sharpness, culture. With extensive knowledge, he was able to assume any place, and fill any vacancy. Forty years ago he came to the city, and was editor of the *Sailor's Magazine*. A decided Congregationalist, he edited the *Evangelist* when that paper was in the interest of that body. Under the control of Dr. Leavitt, the *Evangelist* took the side of reform, defended Congregationalism, assailing slavery, and vindicating revivals. In 1842 he became editor of the *Emancipator*, which was removed to Boston. He closed his connection with that paper in 1847, and was called into the original council, in 1848, by which the *Independent* was started. Many years before, Dr. Leavitt commenced the system of reporting sermons as they were delivered from the pulpit. The celebrated lectures of Mr. Finney, in Chatham Theatre, reported by Dr. Leavitt, attracted so much attention that professional reporters were brought from Washington to do the same thing for other papers.

HENRY C. BOWEN.

This gentleman, who, twenty years ago, united with other young merchants in establishing the *Independent*, is now the sole proprietor. His executive ability is very marked. He is liberal, generous, and considerate. The editors are untrammelled, their pay is

large, and they are allowed to call in any aid needful to give the paper a position among the best in the land. Large sums are paid to writers,—not any great sum to any individual, but a fair compensation to a large number. The proprietor intends to secure the best talent in the country, and pay that talent a handsome remuneration. Correspondence is not as much sought for, either foreign or at home, as formerly. Articles of merit, essays on important subjects and themes, take the place of gossiping letters. The new feature of the paper is the advocacy of female suffrage, to which it is as fully committed as to religion, anti-slavery, or temperance. Mr. Bowen is a genial, companionable, agreeable man, with great business talents. He has made the paper a paying success. It is, without doubt, the most profitable religious journal in the world.

FINALE.

In cutting itself loose from Congregationalism, as a partisan organ, the *Independent* has changed none of its principles. It is still an unflinching advocate of freedom in church and state. It advocates the reforms and humanities of the age with surpassing ability. Its editor-in-chief, scarcely thirty-five years of age, is a very marked man in appearance. He is tall, with a decided stoop, a face in which the energy of youth and the maturity of age seem to struggle for the mastery. His hair, lightish-brown, is long, flowing, and prematurely gray. He walks the streets with his head inclined, his eyes on the pavement, taking no notice of even his friends. He is genial, warm-hearted, and sociable, has strong, warm friends, to whom he attaches himself as with hooks of steel.

FINANCIAL SUCCESS.

For twelve years the Independent was conducted on a sectarian basis; but it never was a financial success. The original owners fell off, one by one, till Mr. Bowen became principally responsible for the publication of the paper. It never paid its expenses. The editors were allowed to draw on him for any funds necessary to make the paper what it ought to be. He never questioned their expenditures, and paid all the bills cheerfully. While he was making money, a few thousands one way or the other amounted to but little. At the opening of the war, the Independent was indebted to Mr. Bowen in the sum of forty thousand dollars. This, with the heavy losses resulting from the war, obliged the house of which he was a partner to suspend. During the long years of its existence the proprietors had received no income in any way from the paper. He entered the office, rolled up his sleeves, and resolved to try the experiment whether or not the Independent could be made a paying paper. Twenty thousand dollars in cash have been paid for advertising since Mr. Bowen became the publisher. The indebtedness of forty thousand dollars has been paid from the profits. Two hundred thousand dollars was paid to extinguish the interest of parties in the paper. One half million of dollars has been refused for the paper. The salaries are liberal. The editor went on to the paper at a salary of eight hundred dollars a year, and is now paid six hundred dollars a month, or, in round numbers, seven thousand five hundred dollars a year. Dr. Leavitt, who started with the paper, has his salary

increased with his infirmities, and will be supported when he is too enfeebled to labor. The ablest men of the different evangelical denominations are secured to swell the editorial force. A department for temperance, Sunday schools, and other important causes, is to have an editor who shall be second in ability to none in the land. The Independent is claimed to be the best paying paper in America, except the Herald. And this has been the fruit of cutting loose from party, local and sectarian issues, and launching out on the broad ocean of Christian union, and giving its energies to the whole church. A splendid marble building has been secured on Park Place, to be fitted up elegantly as a banking-house for the accommodation of the increasing business of this enterprising concern.