

kenle—Mr. Ross was instrumental in obtaining the appointment of a commission to visit the United States for the purpose of inquiring into the working of prohibitory law there, the report of which commission materially tended to the enactment of a more stringent Canadian law governing the sale of intoxicating liquor. The Temperance Act of 1878 received the strenuous support of Mr. Ross, and had it not been for his exertions, when this measure was before the House of Commons, it is very questionable whether it would now be on the Statute Book of the Dominion.

Besides what we have alluded to, Mr. Ross, since its formation, has been identified with the Dominion Alliance for the Suppression of the Liquor Traffic—his valuable advice and assistance being often sought and always at the disposal of that body. He is likewise Vice-President of the Ontario Temperance and Prohibitory League.

In addition to the severe work here outlined, he successfully prosecuted the study of law, so that in 1879 he matriculated at Albert University, thereafter entered a law office, and, having passed the several examinations, earned the degree of LL.B.

He is now head of educational affairs in Ontario, and, although within a month or two gazetted a Provincial Minister, has already introduced several reforms conducive to the best interests of the country.

Socially, he is of a most genial disposition, much esteemed and respected. Attracted by his many amiable traits of character, he numbers among staunch and warm friends, those who, from a purely political standpoint, cannot see with him eye to eye. This fact of itself demonstrates what manner of man he is. (The writer values his friendship, has implicit faith in his temperance views, but in the general government of the country agrees to differ.)

It seems appropriate to sum up this article, by quoting from a number of the *Canada School Journal* when giving its estimate of this gentleman whose life, more particularly as a total abstainer, we have attempted briefly to portray. It says:

"As a public speaker Mr. Ross has a remarkable faculty of grouping his facts, and presenting his argument in clear, logical order, in which we find the influence of his early training as a teacher. He is quick at repartee, possesses a retentive memory and a contagious enthusiasm which frequently expresses itself in genuine eloquence. He has the ardour and impulsiveness of a Celt, combined with much prudence and sound judgment. He is a living example of the power of continuity of purpose and indomitable will, when linked with intelligence and high motive. His life is instructive to every young man and his example is worthy of imitation. It is necessary to add, however, that Mr. Ross' remarkable powers have enabled him to accomplish a multitude of labours which would have broken down a more delicate constitution. It is only just to add also that labours in the school-room equally great would have failed to receive equal honours and present reward."

We commend the career of one so eminent, yet comparatively so young, for the emulation of our youth, with the hope that they may be encouraged to overcome difficulties and be spared to wield a powerful influence in elevating the social scale, assisting the weak, or raising up the fallen.—*Church and Home.*

VACANCIES.

MR. EDITOR,—This subject has been discussed *usque ad nauseam* from the minister's standpoint. Hear a few words, from a member. Nearly all the vacancies in small congregations in village and rural districts are caused between minister and people. After the minister has left the breach generally becomes wider. The one party blames the other for the pastor leaving. The other retorts by saying that he did not leave soon enough. That he remained long after "his usefulness had gone." In this condition, and many vacancies are in this condition, a settlement is hopeless. The one party opposes every thing proposed by the other. In some cases the services of a student are obtained and a good work is generally done. The student has been sent by the Church, and the people are spared the trouble of quarrelling over him. The student is removed in the fall, probationers are sent and the work is scattered. The apprentices build up, the journeymen pull down. During winter the visiting of the sick, the burying and marriages must be done by Methodist ministers. There is no help for this state of things. The pro-

bationers generally come on Saturday and frequently go on Monday, and, however able or willing they may be, their circumstances will not allow them to do pastoral work. The Sabbath school generally goes down and the children are divided between the schools of the other denominations. The services are irregular. When the people meet on Sabbath they frequently do not know whether to expect a minister or not. The young are attracted by the crowd, either to the Methodist church or the barracks of the Salvation Army; and the probationer, however well he may preach has next to an empty house. However able or willing he may be he can under the circumstances do nothing to prevent or remedy this state of things. The remedy which I propose is plain and simple. No new machinery is required. There are at present ten probationers and over fifty vacancies. Let the distributing committee apportion those ten with as many ministers without charge as are willing to work to the Presbyteries according to the number of vacancies in each. Let the Presbyteries through a convener send them to the vacancies, not as experiments to see how people will like them, but as pastors to take the spiritual oversight of the flock; not for any definite time, but to remain as long as they prove acceptable and useful. Let them be changed at the end of a month if necessary, and not for a year or a term of years unless necessary. Let us accept the fact that a minister may pray and do all kinds of pastoral work without being inducted. Inductions have become a mere farce. We may get a minister inducted over us, and for aught we can do to prevent it, he may go out next day and try to get a better congregation, while we are not allowed to try to get a better minister. This is not fair. Both parties should have the same chance. Congregations preferring to find their own supply to receiving from the Presbytery in the way proposed could be allowed to do so as at present. Ministers who preferred to find their own work, could have the same privilege. The advantages would be the following: all congregations except those who elected to find their own supply would be under pastoral care instead of being left, as at present, to be scattered as sheep having no shepherd. All ministers except those who elect to find their own work would be employed in pastoral work, instead of spending their money in travelling, and their labour in a way that is neither profitable to themselves nor to congregations. This would be simply applying to a part of our vacancies the system which has been so successful in the Methodist Church. The largest liberty would be enjoyed by all. Settled pastorates would not be interfered with. Those supplied in the way suggested might become settled pastorates as soon as prepared. That large class of settled ministers whose "usefulness is gone" could find a way of escape from their painful position by accepting work under such a scheme, instead of going out as candidates among the congregations. The probationers' scheme would not be required. The system of candidating, which is doing so much to degrade the office of the ministry, would be no longer necessary. It would be followed only by those who preferred it to mission work. Some change in the mode of supply is a necessity. I speak that I do know when I say that there are many congregations in the Church, that if allowed to go on as at present, like sheep without a shepherd, will be scattered beyond hope of recovery.

A MEMBER.

"TERM-SERVICE"—REPLY TO VINDEK.

MR. EDITOR,—The writer who signs himself "Vindex," and writes in answer to "Query" on Term-service, seems to misapprehend the matter at issue. The question is not Term-eldership, which "Query" disapproves and repudiates; but it is simply whether elders were originally, and ought now to be, chosen to rule for life, or for a limited period of service. A minister, or preaching elder, does not cease to be an elder when he retires from active service in the ministry; in like manner, a ruling elder does not cease to be an elder when he ceases to rule in the congregation with which he has been connected. If a ruling elder removes from the bounds of the congregation in which he has ruled, he requires to be re-elected but not re-ordained. He cannot enter on duty as a ruling elder before being chosen by the congregation into whose bounds he has removed.

In short, "Query" heartily subscribes to the principle, "Once an elder, still an elder;" but he does

not believe in perpetual tenure of office, irrespective of the interests and desires of the people.

In reading the life of John Knox we learn that he spent years on the continent of Europe, and that he brought home to Scotland the doctrine and discipline he had learned at Geneva and in Germany. His ideas of Church government were embodied in the "The First Book of Discipline," from which a quotation was given in the former brief article. Nothing could be plainer or more emphatic than the words of this extract. They have the clear ring of Knox's voice in every syllable. Allow me to quote them again—they are worthy of being repeated.

"The election of elders and deacons ought to be used every year, least that, by long continuance of such officiators, men presume upon the liberty of the Church. It hurts not that one man be retained in office mo years than ane, so that he be appointed yearly by common and free election."

Vindex affirms that this extract is of no value whatever; but the candid student of Church History will not hastily reject such evidence in favour of Term-service.

The aristocracy of Scotland had, in those days, almost unlimited power over the common people. Patronage was therefore introduced, by which the members of the Church were deprived of the right to choose their pastors by free election, and life-service in the eldership was established, instead of term-service. Life-tenure of office was an innovation, just as patronage was a usurpation of the rights of God's people.

Let it not be overlooked or forgotten that the Reformed Churches of Europe continue to the present day the original practice of electing elders to serve for a limited term of years. "Query" has taken pains to ascertain that term-service is now practised in the Reformed Churches of Continental Europe.

Presbyterians do not fully realize that their system of Church government embraces so large a portion of the Protestant world as it does. The third Pan-Presbyterian Council is soon to meet in Belfast. The Belfast *Witness* newspaper has published a long list of the different nationalities that will then assemble. Among them we find the names of twenty-eight different Reformed, Evangelical, or Presbyterian churches of Europe alone, including the Welsh Calvinistic Methodists. Let it not be forgotten, then, that all the Reformed Churches of Continental Europe have retained term-service, as it was in the days of the fearless Scottish Reformers.

But I do not wish, Mr. Editor, to intrude too much on your space or your patience. Hoping you will allow me room for another letter on this subject, I am, etc.

QUERY.

Toronto, June, 1884.

QUERIES.

MR. EDITOR,—Has the Dominion of Canada had either son or daughter that has written anything that the world of readers cares to quote?

Have we ever had or have we now a speaker whom the world desires to hear?

Has anybody done anything that the world admires?

What cause can be given for such a total lack of the beautiful and heroic?

Is there a ghost of imagination from Winnipeg to Halifax?

Is a box of raisins the fit emblem of our learned men, knowledge squeezed and defaced? QUERIST.

A—, June, 1884.

A CORRESPONDENT of an English paper writes from Brazil: The population of Rio de Janeiro is about half a million. There are only seven Protestant ministers in the whole city, viz., two Brazilian, four American, and one English. There are only four Protestant churches. I grieve for the English people here, who are like sheep without a shepherd. England sends missionaries to all parts of the world except Brazil; I think Mr. Vanorden, of Rio Grande du Sul, is the only one from England; there are none in Rio, unless you count the English Episcopalian minister one. Nearly all the shops are open here on Sunday, and it is the great day for horse races and bull fights, regattas, cricket matches, and athletic sports. Sunday is the day for all grand exhibitions or important business; Sunday work is quite common amongst the English clerks and merchants.