

## Our Contributors.

### PREPARING AND PUCKERING.

BY KNOXIAN.

"Claudius Clear," one of the principal contributors to the *British Weekly* and a high authority on literary questions, thinks that instruction in the art of writing is about as useless as instruction in the art of whistling and illustrates his point 'by the following story—

An American gentleman arrived in a Canadian village and gave its inhabitants to understand that he had an idea of establishing a whistling school. He accordingly took a hall for the purpose, distributed his cards, and appointed an evening for his first lesson in the art. Upwards of fifty of the young farmers, thinking it would be a graceful sort of acquirement, gave their attendance. The Professor himself received the money at the door, and when they had all assembled, took his place opposite them upon the platform behind a small table, made a short appropriate speech, drank a little water, rapped the table with his cane to command attention, and said in a loud voice, "PREPARE TO PUCKER."

The admonition seemed singular, but the Professor's pupils (his name was Yow) continued to preserve their gravity, and awaited results.

"Gentlemen, are you all ready?" asked he.

"Yes, quite," was the reply.

"Very good," said Professor Yow, "then PUCKER." The young farmers looked at each other as they stood in a row, with their eyebrows elevated and their mouths screwed up. They had not yet received the order to whistle—that was altogether a subsequent affair. The sight was so absurd that two or three laughed, several others followed the example, and presently the whole room was in a roar. On this Professor Yow, apparently much disgusted and hurt at their conduct, left the stage, locked the door of the hall, and putting the key in his pocket, left the company "puckering," and unable either to express their mortification, or effect their escape.

Many a long year has passed since we first heard that story. In its original condition it lacked most of the details that "Claudius Clear" has supplied. So far as we can remember there was nothing in the version we heard about the hall, or the cards, or the short and appropriate speech, or the sip of water, or the cane. We cannot recollect that the number of pupils was fifty, or that they were all young farmers, or that the Professor's name was Yow. Had Mr. "Clear" just given us the name of the Canadian village, and the date of the opening of the school, the story would have been perfect.

However it is a good enough story as it stands, and does very well to illustrate the fact that there are some things not easily taught, whistling being one of them.

Without undue wrenching it may also be used to teach this other most important lesson—that preparing to do things is not doing them. The pupils in this school took all the preliminary steps towards the acquirement of the fine art of whistling. They came to the hall, they took their places on the platform, they prepared, they puckered, but they did not whistle. The same thing is done by thousands every day in the great school of life. They prepare, they pucker, but they never whistle.

There is a young man who has been going to see somebody's daughter for years. He is a good enough kind of young fellow; but somehow or other he never braces himself up for serious business. He means well, he fully intends to ask the young lady the crucial question sometime, but he never comes squarely to the main issue. He intends, he resolves, he prepares, he even puckers, but he never whistles.

Here is a man who tells you he is going to write something that will make a sensation. Perhaps it is a book, or a pamphlet, or a magazine, or a leading article. He tells you he is just getting the thing into shape and asks you to look out. If you know anything about the matter you know very well that writing what people care to read is a rather difficult kind of exercise, and you watch for the coming effort. It never comes. The man promised and prepared and puckered, but he never whistled.

Who has not met the man who was going to make a great speech some day. He talks about how easy it is to make a good speech; tells you how well he knows how to do it;

asks you just to see how easily he can astonish the natives. You see some preparing and puckering, but you hear no high-class whistling.

All wise professors of theology, all wise old ministers, all sensible laymen advise young ministers to make careful and laboured preparation for the pulpit. The advice is right and can never be too frequently repeated or too earnestly heeded. Ministers, old or young or middle-aged, cannot put too much work of the right kind on their sermons. But what is the use in preparing elaborately if you cannot deliver effectively. What is the use in loading up a gun if the man behind the gun cannot take aim and fire. What is the use in preparing and puckering, if you cannot whistle.

The people care nothing about what a preacher may have in his mind or on his manuscript if he cannot tell them about it in a reasonably interesting and effective way. They are not supposed to know you have a manuscript and may decline to believe you have anything in your mind, if you cannot say anything effectively.

It would not be a difficult thing to illustrate how congregations often talk and prepare and pucker, but do not whistle. A congregation that takes two or three years to call a minister does a good deal of preparing and puckering—especially puckering. So does a congregation that talks for years about a new church, but does not build one. So do all congregations that are always going to do a lot of good things, but never do them.

MORAL.—Don't spend your life preparing and puckering—do something!

### OBITUARY.

REV. GEORGE CRAW.

The following remarks in reference to Rev. G. Craw were made by his pastor, Rev. D. D. McLeod, of Barrie, at the close of his sermon, Jan. 28th:—

My thoughts were directed to this subject this morning by the removal from our midst by death, of our esteemed fellow-member and minister of Jesus Christ, the Rev. George Craw. Mr. Craw was a native of Campbeltown, Argyllshire, Scotland. He was born in June, 1821; and died in his 73rd year. He was trained in Glasgow University and spent one year in the Divinity Hall there. During part of his time he was missionary at Houston, Renfrewshire. His theological course was finished in Knox College, Toronto. In 1859 he was ordained and inducted into the pastoral charge of Flos and Medonte; his labors covered a wide area extending throughout these two townships. As the years passed by the outlying stations were dropped off until for several years his labors were confined first to Craighurst, Hillsdale and Elmvale, and finally to the latter two. In the year 1890 he resigned his charge and came to reside in Barrie, where he died on January 17th. During his residence among us he took part in the work of the congregation so far as his strength permitted, most willingly giving us his aid in visiting the sick and in conducting the prayer meeting, or in any other way he could, on which occasions his services were very acceptable. There are some good people, and I think our departed friend was one of them, who deem it wise to be very reticent in the pulpit, regarding the character and life of deceased members of the church, and I agree with this view to a certain extent; but it appears to me that there are occasions when some special reference to departed friends is highly proper and appropriate, and that the death of a venerable servant of God who has labored in the church for so long a period as he did, is an event that ought not to be passed over in silence. It is due to the departed that public expression of regard for his character and work should be made. His life work was that of an "ambassador for Christ," of which we have been speaking.

The first opportunity on which I had the pleasure of hearing Mr. Craw in the pulpit was at the induction of a minister into one of the congregations in our Presbytery. He delivered the charge to the minister, and his address was a very able one. It bore the impress of most careful preparation. It was clothed in language conspicuously clear and

forcible, and in a style which was dignified and impressive. It set forth the office of the ministry in its true scriptural nature. It showed that Mr. Craw was a man of ripe wisdom and experience in the sphere of the ministry, that he cherished a high conception of the sacred calling, and that he was a man "instructed in the way of the Lord," a workman that knew how "rightly to divide the word of truth," and I refer to this because the views expressed in that address were characteristic of the teaching and habit of mind of our departed friend. He had a high estimation of his office and work as a minister of the gospel. We have a striking testimony to this in the fact that his four sons have chosen the ministry for their life work. Mr. Craw could not commend the office because of any worldly advantages connected with it in his experience. His labors, like those of many of his brethren in circumstances similar to his own, were never adequately recognized in the stipend which he received; but this aspect of the minister's position was not regarded by him. He looked upon it in its spiritual relations, and he was right in recognizing that there is no higher vocation in which his sons could spend their lives, or be more useful, or in which they could find a truer satisfaction. Another characteristic of our venerable friend was the exceeding faithfulness with which he prepared for the discharge of his public duties. Whatever might be the occasion on which he was called to officiate, he did so with a carefulness of preparation, and impressiveness of manner, which showed the desire to serve his Master at all times to the best of his ability. Most punctual in keeping his engagements, all his utterances, whether in his sermons, addresses or public prayers, indicated that he was most careful, both in the arrangement and expression of his thoughts. Therefore his preaching at all times was adapted to the occasion and instructive to the hearer.

In this regard for the dignity of his office and for the correct and faithful discharge of the duties of it, both pastoral and pulpit, he set a high example to younger ministers of the gospel. It would be well for the church if this somewhat antique conception of the ministry were more common, and if more of us who are in the ministry kept before our minds the height of our calling. It would be interesting to trace in detail the life of a pastor, who for thirty years with undeviating fidelity, toiled in the new, rough fields of a Canadian country charge, visiting, preaching and teaching, and it would be profitable to the church to hear such a story. The weary journeyings, the frequent discouragements, the disappointing obstacles which are always met with in such a field in its early history, would fill a pathetic chapter in the story. But on the other hand there were also brighter experiences. A generation grew up instructed in the doctrine of the gospel. The example and teaching of a life of steadfast fidelity to duty, has left a deep impression upon many lives, and his work will endure long after his name is forgotten.

But we have no time here for details, nor would he desire any rehearsal of them. He was a man of retiring nature. A man silent and modest, where his abilities would have warranted his taking a more prominent part. And it seems to me, that a life like this, of continuous, diligent discharge of duty in a limited sphere, a life which holds on its way in silent, patient working for Christ as the opportunity is given, though it may not attract so much notice or applause as the life which flashes brilliantly for a few months in different localities, and then ceases to be known, is one which does more for humanity and more for the cause of God in the world.

Mr. Craw did his appointed work as best he could in such environment as he had, content to leave the issue in the hands of the God whom he served. Up to his latest moments in life it was apparent that his thoughts were occupied with those gospel engagements in which he had spent so many years. In all his declining days, as in the days of mental and bodily vigor, his faith rested firmly upon the Lord Jesus Christ his Saviour. He has entered into his rest. He has left behind to his family a name which will always be mentioned with respect, and an example which it would be well for us all to follow.

To the glory of God the Father, the Son and the Holy Ghost. Amen.

### OUR INDIAN MISSIONS.

Dear Sir,—In your issue of the 24th inst., I find an anonymous letter signed "L. A. C.," on the subject of Missions, in which there are several statements that seem to me to require notice. The objectionable portions have reference to the work of the Presbyterian Church among the Indians, and the first is to the effect that the mission to the Indians "never seems to have enlisted the sympathy of contributors." This charge is utterly unfounded. Not only does our Indian mission receive contributions in money to the amount of \$20,000 per annum, which is more than is given to any other of our Foreign Missions except Central India, but the church, through the Woman's Foreign Missionary Society, does for this mission what it has never done in any considerable degree for any other mission—it sends supplies of clothing, made and unmade, bedding, etc., for the relief of the destitute. These gifts were so generous last year, and came from so many quarters, that they aggregated more than thirteen tons. Not only is this a great help in carrying on work among these poor people, but it is pleasant to think how many homes have been pervaded by a sympathetic interest in the red-men, and how much planning and managing and loving thought and taking of personal trouble these bales and boxes imply. Indeed, I doubt if even the large sum of money I have named is as decisive a proof of home-like fellow-feeling for the Indians, as is this supply of clothing, selected as it is and gathered and packed and despatched by loving and willing hands. In the face of all this (and it has not been done in a corner), that man is either very bold or very ignorant who asserts, even under cover of a *nom de plume*, that the mission to the Indians has not elicited the sympathy of contributors.

The next paragraph of the letter says that "Presbyterians do not appear to have taken kindly to the Indians. This has mostly been left to the Roman Catholics, Episcopalians and Methodists." To see how little foundation there is for the first part of the statement, it is only necessary to note that the only department of our Foreign Mission work in which there are twice as many volunteers for service as can be employed is that among the Indians, and that some of the most highly appreciated laborers in Church of England Indian missions have been and are subscribers to the Confession of Faith. I have no taste for comparing the work done by other churches with that done by our own. But there are none more willing than the members of some of these denominations to acknowledge the energy with which our work has been conducted, and the success which has attended it. When the Presbyterians led the way a few years ago, in establishing the success of Indian mission boarding schools, conducted on industrial lines, an Episcopalian high in official circles said in his report to the Government, that in his opinion more good had been done in that year in the Rev. Hugh McKay's mission school at Round Lake than in all the Indian day schools in the country. Only a few days ago a Methodist minister, a former president of the North-west Conference, and himself an Indian missionary of many years' experience, said to the conveners of the committee which has charge of Indian missions, "You Presbyterians have done more for Indian mission education in the last eight or ten years than we have done in fifty." Then, again, as has been duly reported in the press, the first prize of \$70 for the best conducted Indian day school in the North-west, given by the Government and awarded on the recommendation of its inspector, has been won for two years in succession by a Presbyterian school. I have spoken in this connection about schools rather than about other missionary agencies, partly because I have no right to ask for enough space to enable one to go over the whole ground, and partly because school work offers a platform on which we can unite the other churches on an equal footing, for our ideals in this matter are much more in harmony than in regard to the evangelistic side of our work, but this latter has by no means been neglected.

It will not avail for "L. A. C." to say that his letter was intended to refer to the