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MR. WALTER KERR—for many years an esteemed elder of our Church—is the duly authorized agent for THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. He will collect outstanding accounts, and take names of new subscribers. Friends are invited to give any assistance in their power to Mr. Kerr in all the congregations he may visit.



TORONTO, WEDNESDAY, JUNE 3, 1885.

READERS may be pleased to learn that the series of racy papers by "Knoxonian" are meeting with a growing appreciation. They have been reproduced in a number of the leading journals in the United States, and extracts from them have appeared in British papers. Anonymity, however, is not altogether without disadvantage. When "Adam Bede" made its appearance, an English Church rector claimed its authorship, and as proof positive of his assertion displayed the MSS., patiently copied by his own hand. The writer of "The Bread Winners," which recently attracted attention, tells us that several of his personal friends individually informed him in confidence that it was their production. We have seen a perfectly constructed syllogism demonstrating that an esteemed city minister is "Knoxonian." It has also been claimed by his admiring friends that the "Knoxonian" papers are from the pen of a talented young divine, who, it is said, on the strength of the imputation was invited to preach in an eligible church in one of our important Canadian cities. We are in a position to assure our readers that the notable papers are written by "Knoxonian" himself.

THE General Assembly of the American Presbyterian Church met in Cincinnati on the 21st ult. With the exception of a slight breeze which sprang up during the election of Moderator the opening proceedings seem to have been happy and impressive. The sermon of the retiring Moderator was so powerful at times that the Assembly relieved its feelings by mild applause. A Scotch minister present said he knew it was outrageous to applaud in the sanctuary, but *he could not help it and just let his feet go.* Applause is not becoming in public worship, but is not so unseemly as yawning or snoring. The number of commissioners will be reduced after the present meeting to about 400. The basis of representation hitherto has been one minister and one elder to each twenty-four ministers, but for twenty-five four representatives were allowed. The twenty-five has been raised to thirty-six and this change reduces the number of commissioners by 136. On the whole the affairs of the great American Church seem to be in a prosperous condition though like ourselves they have a good many known problems to solve. They have all our difficulties to contend against and a few that, happily, we know little or nothing of. May the King and Head of the Church abundantly bless and prosper this important member of the Presbyterian family.

COMMENTING on the large number of vacant congregations and the large number of ministers in the American Church without congregations, the New York Evangelist asks the following pertinent questions:

Is it (1) because our grand old Presbyterian system is weak in its methods and appliances for joining pastors and people—shepherds and flocks—together? Or is it (2) because many of our churches are becoming fancifully exacting as to the precise qualities and characteristics of the men who are available to serve them? Or is it (3) because a certain proportion of those who have obtained the usual qualifications for the ministry are still fundamentally, naturally unfit for it, and inevitably destined to be unsuccessful in it? Or is it (4) because our churches and Presbyteries do not avail them-

selves of the facilities afforded by the genius and constitution of our system, for the supplying of each church with needful ministrations and pastoral oversight?

Our contemporary believes that these four causes work together in producing the unsatisfactory results mentioned. Some churches are fastidiously exacting; some ministers are in part or wholly failures; and the power in our system is not wholly utilized and applied for the filling of vacancies in a reasonable time. All of which applies to the Presbyterian Church here as well as to the Church across the lines. A few months hence the minutes of Assembly will report a large number of vacancies and a large number of ministers wanting congregations. And when the question is asked—why are not many of these ministers settled in these congregations? the answer in most cases may be found in one of the foregoing reasons. The remedy is not so easily found.

THE ex-Moderator of the Assembly at Cincinnati gave the brethren some historical facts of more than usual interest in his opening sermon. Referring to the origin of American Presbyterianism he said:

Some western Presbyteries have indeed a strange mixture of ministers from various places, and often with peculiar and diverse antecedents, but there is not one of them that in this record will surpass the first Presbytery organized in America. It consisted of seven ministers. Makemie was a Scotch-Irishman, Hampton was an Irishman, MacNish was a Scotchman (and these last were supported by Dissenters in London), Andrews was a Massachusetts man, Wilson was a Scotchman from Connecticut, and believed to be an emissary of the "New England doctors." Taylor is of uncertain origin and was pastor of a congregation of Independents; Davis rarely attended Presbytery. Yet out of that Presbytery the East grew to what it is now.

And yet from that Presbytery with its "peculiar and diverse antecedents" grew the great American Presbyterian Church of to-day. The ex-Moderator made a capital point when he showed, as he did farther on, that in sending men and money to the West, the East was only doing as it had been done by. The East had been helped in their early struggles by the Churches in the old land and it was nothing but reasonable and right that they in turn should help the West. The same argument holds good in regard to our North-West. Many of the congregations in Eastern Canada that are now asked to carry on the work in Manitoba and the North-West Territories were themselves helped in the beginning by the churches in Ireland and Scotland. All or very nearly all their first pastors came from the old country. In sending men and money to the North-West we are doing nothing more than was done for us. This view of the matter has not been put before the people as it should have been. We are not doing every year more for our new fields than was done for the old ones fifty years ago.

WE understand that a large number of applications will be made to the General Assembly for admission to the ministry of the Church by ministers from other denominations. It is high time that the policy of the Church on this question should become decidedly conservative. The fact that a minister has a quarrel with his own Church is no reason why he should be admitted to the ministry of ours. The fact that he has been a failure in one or more denominations is a sufficient reason why he should not be received into ours. If he has been fairly successful in the Church in which he has laboured, the chances are a thousand to one that it would be better for himself to remain there. If he has not been fairly successful we don't want him. Nothing short of the strongest conviction should be considered a sufficient reason why a minister should leave the denomination whose ordination vows he has taken. If a minister has done fairly good work in another denomination and has become convinced that the doctrine and polity of Presbyterianism are Scriptural in most cases he ought to be received; but it should never be forgotten that a man may accept our standards and be wholly unfitted for our work. There is such a thing as Presbyterian instinct. A man may accept the Confession and have no sympathy with our church life. He may accept our form of government and be utterly incapable of administering it. He may admire our polity on paper and dislike it in practice. He may even preach fairly well in another denomination and have some things about him that prevents him from being acceptable to our congregations. When such is the case it is not an act of kindness to himself to receive him. It should be distinctly understood by all applicants that there is no power in Presbyterianism to give a minister a field of labour. If he cannot get a call he has no chance in the Presbyterian Church.

THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

ONCE more the General Assembly meets in the city of Montreal, one of the most central places in which it can convene. The time may come when Winnipeg will be favoured with the presence of the Commissioners, but it is scarcely yet. London is the most western city in which the Assembly has hitherto met, while the extreme east of the Dominion has twice enjoyed the privilege. So vast is the territorial extent of the Church, that no matter where the Assembly is held, long, expensive, and fatiguing journeys are of necessity imposed on a number of delegates. One thing in connection with the highest Court of the Church has never received the satisfactory practical consideration it should, viz.: the matter of travelling expenses. The friends in the cities where the Assembly has been held have invariably extended an ungrudging and generous hospitality. Much expense, however, beyond this is entailed on the delegates. In some instances the Presbyteries have tried to organize a fund for defraying travelling expenses to and from the General Assembly, but the results have not been uniformly and entirely satisfactory. Congregations, or rather persons connected with them, from whom no representative is sent, sometimes grudge to pay the costs of the Presbyterial delegation. In not a few cases the minister or elder who is perhaps least able to bear the outlay has had to defray his own expenses either in whole or in part. The slightest consideration will convince the most parsimonious that a country minister with a small salary, or an elder who can ill afford absence from his ordinary calling, ought not to bear his own expenses. Our members of Parliament are indemnified, representatives of most organizations, civic or benevolent, almost always have their travelling expenses provided. Why it should be otherwise with the Church has not yet been satisfactorily explained.

The approaching Assembly will be one of great importance and influence. Questions affecting the vital interests of the Church will come up for serious consideration. The reports of the Standing Committees, Home and Foreign Missions, French Evangelization, the State of Religion, Temperance and Sabbath Observance are much more than matters of routine. The completeness of the reports themselves, and the mature consideration they ought to receive are of the utmost consequence. Efficient organization is essential to all really valuable Church life and work. It is not all, but it is the channel through which the divine motive power ordinarily operates.

The educational reports will for various reasons be of more than ordinary interest this year. The College Question is one of considerable difficulty, that time alone does not help to lessen. Flourishing in a measure, and doing excellent work as all of our theological institutions are, there is not one of them in that state of efficiency it ought confessedly to be. Great and praiseworthy efforts have been made to lift them above the pressure which inadequate revenues occasion. Many devoted friends throughout the Church have shown a noble generosity in their efforts to help the colleges, but much yet remains to be done. The educational question this year will be complicated by the urgent pressure brought to bear on the various Synods in favour of the proposed Summer Sessions. Happily the Assembly is not a revolutionary body. It does not rush to conclusions. Grave changes are not made impetuously. The reproach that action comes first and thought afterward is not applicable to the General Assembly. The proposed measure is so grave and far-reaching in its consequences that it requires more than an oratorical pleas in its favour to remove apprehension; it demands earnest and calm reflection.

Another question that will lead to earnest if not animated debate is the proposed Time-Service for the Eldership. This is one of those questions on which opposite views may be conscientiously entertained. Here, too, it is eminently desirable that strong reasons be adduced in favour of the proposed change, and in any case rashness is to be deprecated.

Another lively debate on the Marriage Question may be anticipated. During the year perhaps no question remitted to Presbyteries has received more attention than the deceased wife's sister. Both sides have been ably discussed in our Contributors' Department by leading divines, whose scholarly attainments and whose attention have been devoted to the elucidation of their respective views. Judging from the action of the Presbyteries it might be anticipated