

Our Contributors.

SOME ENTRIES THAT STAND A GOOD CHANCE.

BY KNOXIAN.

As we noticed last week, the *Homiletic Review* has a Blue Monday column, in which there is a competition going on for a prize for the Best and for the Meanest parishioner. We gave a few of the entries last week, and add two or three more now. If any of our readers think they can beat the specimens described, they should send their entries to the *Review* at once. In our judgment the best entry for Best Parishioner so far made has been sent from Ontario. Possibly we could beat in the other line too.

From time immemorial the meanest things have been done about marriage fees. Where is the parson of twenty years' standing who has not a string of instances showing how the happy man failed in the matter of the marriage fee. Here is a good one. Referring to the Meanest Parishioner, the writer says:—

I have found him. He came to me to be married; said his girl was modest, wished to shun publicity, and would like to come with a few warm personal friends and be married at my house. My wife and I threw open the parlours and turned on all the gas, and made everything as lovely as possible. The ceremony over, the party, who had driven in carriages in the most stylish way, reentered their hacks and departed, the "best man" leaving a sealed envelope in my hand, which, when opened, disclosed a cheque on one of our leading banks for \$20. We were, of course, very happy; but not so a day or two afterward, when, presenting the cheque, we learned that it was utterly worthless, as our generous friend had not then and never had had a cent of money in the bank. We of course swallowed our indignation and said nothing; but that night about nine o'clock the "best man" came to enquire about the contents of the envelope he had so innocently handed us, saying that upon a similar cheque, but drawn upon a different bank, where the groom had never made a deposit or owned a cent, he had advanced the money and paid for the carriages and all the other expenses of the wedding. The bride was a beautiful and accomplished girl. By some inadvertence she learned of the bogus cheques, and was so overwhelmed with mortification that the groom was forced to come and make a pitiful apology, and promise to redeem the cheque; but up to this time the parson only holds a promise as worthless as the original cheque, and at last accounts the "best man" was still out for the carriages. Surrender the case and send on your prize.

This entry should stand a good chance, but we have heard of cases in Canada that would run it very hard. There was a maple sugar case in Western Ontario in which the sugar never came. Perhaps the bride found out that all the sugar they could make was needed to sweeten her husband. There is a case in which the bridegroom asked the loan of the little fee after it was paid, and forgot to return it. There has always been a number of "see you again" cases. Lately a delightful change in the wording of this fee, and the vanishing benedict whispers: "Will see you later on." Later on is more money.

That brother with a cheque that wouldn't draw anything out of the bank was in a bad way, but he did not lose anything except his time. The brother who makes the next entry had to work for nothing, board himself and draw upon his capital:—

The writer, then pastor of a country Church, was called to go a number of miles out of his parish to marry one of his parishioners. He hired a horse and carriage and spent all day and received five dollars.

The affair was considered "grand." Gifts of \$500 and \$1,000 in cheques and an abundance of gold and silver ware attested the wealth of the parties.

After the ceremony the usual marriage certificate was given. The couple were not satisfied, and they were informed that whenever they procured another and more satisfactory certificate it would be filled out, but that a more costly certificate than that given the poorest parishioner could not be furnished, for the pastor treated all alike.

In a short time the bridegroom came with one of those cheap "gilt-edged" affairs, and it was filled out.

He then said: "Give me \$1.50 for the certificate. I bought it and paid that amount. The five dollars were then handed to him with the remark: "Here is the whole fee. We will have no trouble." He received it and offered the change, but after all put it in his pocket and went home satisfied. One day's work, horse and carriage hire, one certificate and a photograph.

Is that mean enough?

That is a good entry, and will be hard to beat. Still we have heard of cases in Canada that would match it fairly well. Canadian competitors should not be discouraged in advance. We think we know the name of one Canadian person who has a fighting chance.

One of the competitors is fairly certain to win the red ribbon for the meanest elder. Here is the entry:—

INTRODUCTORY.—I took charge of four congregations at a salary of \$300. I was compelled to purchase a horse for \$125 and paid \$100 rent, thus leaving \$75, with such perquisites as marriages and donations might bring, to support myself, wife and child.

OCCASION.—I had served probably two months, when an elder of one of the congregations came to borrow the young and high-spirited horse. Very reluctantly the horse was loaned to him on condition of being carefully handled. As afterward ascertained, the elder re-loaned the animal to a son of his, who took him to a race-course and gave him a three-mile heat. The horse, overheated, took cold, and a sudden inflammation of the lungs set in, from which he died in the elder's stable.

MEANNESS.—The elder never even apologized, much less offered a remuneration, and seemed to think that Providence had thus ordered it, to keep his minister more humble and dependent.

CLIMAX OF MEANNESS.—The elder's subscription for my support was \$10, and when he was asked by the deacons to pay it, he actually handed in a bill of \$10 for doctoring the minister's horse that died, a borrowed horse, in his stable. Against all remonstrances he persisted, and thus paid his subscription. He was, however, so magnanimous as not to charge anything for burying the horse.

Canada would be hopelessly beaten in that competition. We have no such elder. We make no entry. Give that fellow

the red ribbon at once and then depose him from the eldership.

In the contest between denominations for the meanest man, we think the Baptists would win with the following entry:—

In the Free Baptist Church at Belmont, N.H., was an old man. He was worth nearly \$100,000. Just before his death a child came to buy some eggs. He went to the barn for them. Took pay for twelve, when there were but eleven, and when a friend who saw him count them, protested, he said, "Keep still." When the mother of the child tried to use them, she found a part of them nest eggs and rotten. She sent the child back with them, and he said, "I have no money," though his safe stood in the house well filled. This is a fair specimen of his life. He said that he had not had a new vest for thirty-five years.

There must have been some mistake about that old man's immersion. Perhaps it was not *total* enough. He should have been anchored out in the river for a week or two until he got softened.

The following entry will remind many a minister of experiences he had when he expected somebody was going to do something very generous, but didn't:—

A man who was a member of another denomination often called on a neighbouring Baptist minister, expressing his great satisfaction in said minister's sermons and services. One day, after thus freeing his mind, he said: "I have often intended to help you." As the gentleman was very well-to-do, the minister thought something substantial was forthcoming. But he went on to say: "Now there is a pond of water in one of the fields back of my farm, and any time you wish to baptize there you can do so, and it won't cost you a cent, either."

The *Review* does well in publishing these specimens of meanness. A few telling, concrete cases knock meanness far harder than columns of abstract denunciation of the sin. Few people read the columns, but everybody looks at these entries, and, we hope, tries to be very unlike them. In a week or two we may give some specimens from the Best Parishioner list. We could easily match any that have yet appeared by Canadians.

DISTRIBUTION OF PROBATIONERS.

There are three things that should be steadily kept in view by all concerned.

1. That the Head of the Church raises up, qualifies and appoints His ministers over the various parts of His Church. He holds the seven stars in His right hand.

2. Under Him, the Church trains up and educates men for the work of the ministry, and, after licensing them, sends them forth among her vacant congregations to preach the Gospel.

3. Under Him also each vacant congregation may invite one to be their pastor who has so united its members by his preaching the Gospel and by his Christian deportment that they are ready to receive him as their minister from the Lord.

To carry out the above in an orderly manner, the following regulations are recommended, partly selected from the Interim Act, the report of the Home Mission Committee, the supplementary by the special committee and partly adopted from the regulations of the U. P. in Scotland that have been in force for over a quarter of a century to the entire satisfaction of that Church.

I.—THE COMMITTEE OF DISTRIBUTION.

1. There shall be a committee of three members appointed by the General Assembly whose duty it shall be to keep a correct list of all probationers, including licentiates and ministers without charge, and also a correct list of all the vacant congregations as they may occur.

2. It shall be the duty of this committee to distribute the probationers among the vacancies—giving as equitable a distribution as possible quarterly, or when vacancies occur during the quarter—giving them the supplies they need.

3. This committee might also be used as a medium of procuring supplies for ministers' pulpits when required.

II.—VACANCIES.

4. All vacancies shall receive their regular supply from the distribution committee.

5. They may, however, have the liberty of providing their own supply, but always through the Presbytery, on four Sabbaths each quarter, or they may apply for a hearing of two probationers during the quarter ensuing, and if consistent with equity of distribution should get them.

6. Each vacancy shall pay a minimum of \$10 for a day's supply, or more in proportion to the usual stipend paid by the congregation, together with board for one week if required, and if there be more than one preaching place shall provide a conveyance.

7. Each vacancy reported as requiring supply for a given number of Sabbaths shall be held responsible for the employment of the probationers sent them for these Sabbaths.

8. Students shall not be employed to fill the pulpits of vacant congregations except in cases of special emergency.

III.—PROBATIONERS.

9. Probationers shall receive their appointments to vacant congregations quarterly from the Distribution Committee.

10. Those reported by Presbytery as newly licensed by them may remain on the roll six years, and ministers without charge three years, if not otherwise removed, without any periodical application to the committee.

11. The General Assembly shall appoint annually a small committee on complaints from congregations, probationers or Presbytery or distribution committee.

12. Adopt No. 4 Interim Act giving notice of acceptance of a call, etc.

13. Adopt No. 5, changing "one month" to "two weeks," the

last clause reading "and shall submit to the Presbytery a report in the form of a schedule filled up, prepared by the district committee containing the items stated in No. 5."

14. No. 6 adopt, the probationer failing to fulfil, etc.—refer all such cases to the Committee on Complaints.

15. The Presbytery shall report to the distribution committee (1) all vacancies within their bounds, describing their condition, etc., as in No. 2 Interim Act, and shall obtain for them full or partial supply, (2) shall report all congregations as they get settled, and (3) they shall also report all students licensed by them and recommended to be placed on the list of probationers.

16. No Presbytery shall give appointments to a vacant congregation to any probationer who is not on the list of the distribution committee, except in very special circumstances, or in accordance with regulation 5 as above.

17, 18, 19 adopted from additional regulations proposed by Mr. Torrance, and marked 15, 16, 17.

20. The Presbytery Clerk shall be the medium of communication between Presbytery, probationers, the vacant congregations and the distribution committee.

21. The General Assembly shall enforce the strictest attention of all parties concerned to the above regulations.

A. A. DRUMMOND,
Convener of Committee.

TESTIMONIAL TO REV. J. R. MACDOUGALL, M.A., FLORENCE.

I lately received from the brother above named a pamphlet containing an account of a surprise festival in his honour, translated from the Italian by the Rev. H. Pigott, of the Italian Wesleyan Methodist Church, Rome. A very fine likeness of him who is the principal figure in it adorns the title-page. The substance of the account, necessarily in a very much condensed form, will, I think, be acceptable to many of the readers of THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN. But before giving it I must say a word or two by way of preface.

During the past thirty-four years Mr. Macdougall has been a minister of the Free Church of Scotland in Italy. Since 1870 he has added to his labours as such those of treasurer and foreign secretary of the Evangelical Church of Italy, formerly the Free Italian Church. His present connection with the latter was formed in the following way: In 1870 that Church, "reconstituted under new forms and on new ecclesiastical lines, felt at once the need of a man who, under God, should be over it, as father, friend, counsellor and helper. It prayed God to provide it with such a man. In the General Assembly of the same year Gavazzi exclaimed: 'The man exists; he is Mr. Macdougall!' There and then it appointed him to the offices already mentioned. 'To him more than to any other man is due, under God, its present high position on the field of Italian evangelization.' As Sig. Borgia, of Milan, the chairman of the festival, said: 'He deprives himself of the sweets of domestic life, shuts himself up in his study, writes, prints, publishes reports and circulars, keeps up an enormous correspondence both with our own labourers and with friends innumerable all the world over.' 'Two o'clock of night has struck:—four, the dawn breaks, and the sun comes to greet him yet in his study. He has not seen his bed nor closed an eye; a mountain of letters is lying on his table, attesting the labours of the night.' 'But to my tale.'

How could the Evangelical Church of Italy but delight to honour Mr. Macdougall? Accordingly, its Committee of Evangelization, on January 13, 1891, decided to make him, as an expression of the gratitude of the whole Church to him, a present in the form of an honorary inscription on parchment and of an album containing addresses from all the Churches of the Mission and photographs of all the labourers. On the 25th of May following, the presentation took place in the church of the Florentine congregation in the Via dei Benci. This church once formed part of the Convent of St. James; and is now, together with other adjoining rooms of the old convent, the property of the Evangelical Church of Italy. It was the first acquisition which what was then known as the Free Church of Italy made, and it was so through the exertions of Mr. Macdougall. "Of friends, though all publicity had been avoided, there was a goodly array. Many more, especially of ministerial colleagues of other Churches, would have been present but for an unlucky mistake, through which several invitations were delivered too late, and also for the care taken by the committee to keep the whole demonstration secret from the beloved friend in whose honour it was designed." "With successful secrecy had the committee conducted its operations that not only to himself, but not even to his wife and daughter, had there oozed out the slightest intimation of the conspicuous part assigned to himself in the proceedings of the evening."

The gift was officially presented by Sig. Fera, secretary of the Evangelization Committee of the Church. "The preparation of the gift had been entrusted to the Rev. S. Bernatto, of Venice, with the sole instruction that it was to be made artistically worthy of the occasion. And, by the admission of all, most admirably has he executed his mandate. The memorial is in the ornate Gothic style of the fourteenth century. There is in Venice, in the famous Church of the Miracles, a picture of St. Jerome in his study. "The chair in which he is there seated is marvellous for the beauty of its symmetrical lines and for its rich imitation of velvet tint and texture. Sig. Bernatto, who had already produced in the workshops of his institution a copy of the chair in wood, that had sold for 90