

Our Contributors.

TYPICAL TOURISTS ONE MEETS IN MUSKOKA.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Muskoka is the Canadian paradise of summer tourists. There is nothing like it on the continent. Nature intended those lakes and islands for a playground and breathing place on which tired thousands can throw off their cares and take on additional supplies of nervous force. For the purposes for which it was made, Muskoka is just as useful as a farm that grows thirty bushels of wheat to the acre. It is also highly ornamental. Some enthusiast on ancient cities made this proverb: See Venice, and die. A much better proverb would be, See Muskoka and live.

A good deal has been said about the splendid exhibit Ontario has made at the World's Fair. If Sir Oliver Mowat had entered Muskoka and had devised some way of sending his entry over there, he would have beaten the world easily in the scenery class. In fact nature has not made anything in the shape of quiet scenery more beautiful than Muskoka.

Such being the case, Muskoka deserves to have a good class of tourists. It would be a burning shame to be reminded, as one sails around among those lovely islands, of the well-known lines:

"Where every prospect pleases,
And only man is vile."

Muskoka richly deserves the best summer visitors, and the great majority of them are of just that kind. Of course ten or fifteen thousand people out for a holiday do not all behave alike. People do not all behave alike even in church. Some listen devoutly, earnestly desiring spiritual benefit and a few perhaps listen in a snarling mood, eagerly seeking something to find fault with. Some follow the minister in prayer, and pray themselves, and some don't even bow their heads or close their eyes. Some listen with intelligence, and some with a vacant stare, which tells that there is lack of interest in the heart or room to let in the upper story. In this kind of weather a few nod assent to the sermon without hearing it. Well, if people do not all behave alike, even in church, it is scarcely to be expected that all will behave alike during their holidays.

Muskoka tourists come from many places and from many occupations, but there are several easily recognized types among them. Prominent among these types is

THE SOLID MAN OF ONTARIO.

He may be a merchant, or a manufacturer, or a businessman of some kind, but he is easily recognized. Usually he is about sixty, and has succeeded in life. He dresses plainly, puts on no airs, and is as solid as the rock on which he stands. He talks to any decent tourist that wants to talk to him, and never makes a fool or an ass of himself by putting on style. His signature could rake more specie out of the bank than the signatures of all the dudes around the hotel, but he does not swell as much as the most imbecile dude among them. His wife is generally along with him, and, as a rule, she is a fine motherly lady, though sometimes she aims at a little more tone than her husband cares about. These solid men made Ontario one of the best countries in the world. A considerable number of them worship in the Presbyterian Church, read the Globe, and vote for Mowat as often as the law allows. In their early days they took the shorter catechism for theology and George Brown for politics. Solid men, however, are found in large numbers in all Churches, and in both political parties. In fact, after all is said, it is the solid men that make Churches and strong political combinations. The light, noisy fellows who shout and make a fuss, don't really amount to much in business, or Church, or State.

One class of solid men—the farmers—is not largely represented in Muskoka for the simple reason that August is harvest time in Ontario.

Another interesting type met in large numbers in our Northern playground might be described as

THE PROMISING YOUNG MAN OF ONTARIO.

The promising young man is generally a student, or a clerk, or salesman, or a young lawyer, or a young man engaged in some kind of business, who gets two or three weeks of a holiday and works as industriously during his vacation as he does at home. As a rule, he is a fine young fellow, and if he has not a good time in Muskoka, the fault is not his. There is some reason to doubt whether the wearing of so much white flannel by our young men during holidays improves their appearance, but the question of clothes is one upon which the uninitiated had perhaps better not enter. We all used to wear white flannel at one period of our lives, but it was before we were old enough to climb the rocks in Muskoka.

AMERICAN TOURISTS

are usually seen in large numbers in our Northern regions, but this year that type is not so largely represented. The World's Fair and the financial crisis may have decreased their numbers. Our neighbours have been trying to get rich too fast. Some of them have been living above their means, and the usual results have followed. Both of these things are being attempted by too many Canadians, and if we would learn to avoid their mistakes, the lesson would do us more good than the unneighbourly exercise of throwing stones at them. There is no more agreeable or interesting man to meet than a first-class American citizen on his summer tour.

PROFESSIONAL MEN.

abound in Muskoka in August. The lawyers are legion. The parsons are there too, though not always seen in strictly professional costume. The Presbyterian parson who goes to Muskoka as regularly as he goes to Presbytery, may be seen standing at his wharf or on a rock on his island in a style of dress, or rather of undress, that we would not dare to describe. No pen could describe him. The photographer is the only artist that could do him justice. Doctors are sometimes met, but their number is not nearly so large as that of lawyers or clergymen. A doctor in large practice is perhaps the hardest worked man in any community, and he finds it harder to get away from his work than any other member of the community. Some people indulge in a good deal of small wit at the expense of the medical profession. As a matter of fact, a medical man in fair practice does more for the poor and suffering without fee or reward than is done by any dozen of other men in society.

The real Simon Pure dude does not abound in Muskoka. He should abound anywhere. A dude is not worth feeding, even when fall wheat is worth only fifty cents a bushel.

THE TEACHING OF THE CONFESSION OF FAITH ON THE SCRIPTURES.

The late Professor Young, of Toronto, was, with other accomplishments, an exceedingly able mathematician. The writer of this paper once asked of him the process, by which he so readily reached the solution of a problem. His reply was, "I first fix my attention upon the data given, then clearly upon what is wanted, the lines in infinite number begin to simplify with angles and curves till the figure forms before me." A true mathematical instinct. Sir Isaac Newton was a great mathematician, and wonderful were his researches and discoveries therein. As an authority he could be safely followed. He essayed to interpret Scripture prophecy. Except on the curiosity shelf of a library, his work thereon is forgotten, and even there neglected. The mathematical inerrancy was no security that as an exegete he might be followed with confidence.

Bezaleel, of the tribe of Judah, was "filled with the spirit of God, in wisdom, and in understanding, and in knowledge, and in all manner of workmanship, to de-

vised cunning works, to work in gold and in silver, and in brass," etc. (Ex. xxxi. 2-5). But that did not inspire him to teach the deep things of God, or those things the angels desire to look into. Hiram, of Tyre, was also "filled with wisdom and understanding, and cunning to work all works in brass" (I Kings vii. 14). He may have ranked high in masonry, but, by no means appears as an authorized teacher in the way of righteousness, or as a revealer of the will of God for worship in the temple erected by his skill. There are diversities of gifts, of ministrations, of operations, but it is the same God which worketh all in all. The hand, perfectly adapted to its own end, would make but sorry work of walking for practical purposes, and the eye would utterly fail in speaking to a friend, that the Saviour of sinners was near.

Apply these facts to the teaching of the Confession regarding the authority of the Holy Scripture. They are given "to be the rule of faith and life"; they declare, "the whole counsel of God concerning all things necessary for His own glory, man's salvation, faith, and life"; and the final appeal is to them "in all controversies of religion." To these ends we may trust implicitly their inspiration, and thus Paul declares (2 Tim. iii. 16). "For doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness."

It would appear then strictly construed, that neither Scripture nor the Confession commit to the position that even in the originals, there is inerrancy in, e.g., chronology, or even historical narrations, where matters of doctrine are not concerned. In other words, holy men of old spake of things pertaining to salvation, as moved by the Holy Ghost. Let us not be misunderstood: we are not arguing for mistakes in the original writings, or even surmising that errors occur. This is not an article on either exegetical or critical lines, we are endeavouring to make plain some of the limitations of the Confession's declaration regarding the Scriptures, and to understand the liberty given therein to inquiry and opinions, to define the position of the standards of the Church as distinguished from mere inferences from them.

In these presentations we disavow all attempts at special pleading, or at theorizing. Nor do we admit that the Westminster divines were strangers to the questions which perplex the theologian and the critic to-day. Let any one make himself, even in small measure, acquainted with the writings of the old English divines, and with Calvin's commentaries, and he will be at once convinced that the compilers of the Confession knew whereof they affirmed and recognized, what we too often fail to see, the hopeless perplexity which must arise when theories of inspiration are made to obscure the acceptance of the simple fact. We may implicitly trust the prophets as they testified beforehand concerning the grace to be revealed in Jesus Christ, even should it be discovered that they followed current tradition as to the history of their nation; and fearlessly criticize, even correct if need be genealogical tables, such as Genesis x., while we reverently search for the teachings that point to the Christ who suffered and entered into His glory.

In your issue, Mr. Editor, of Aug. 16th, "Layman" asks from me a more full and clear explanation of the proper course to take in expounding Scripture. May I say that there is no attempt on my part at this juncture to even touch upon that important theme. In some measure, the Church's attention is being directed to the limitations within which her teachers may enjoy legitimately liberty of expression as to the authority of Holy Scripture. We are simply endeavouring for ourselves and for others, to distinguish things which differ; to separate the teaching of the standard from the traditions of the schools, and to assert the liberty without license, which the Church is ever ready to accord to her children. In doing so, we are not sitting in the chair of the dogmatist, but on the seat of the enquirer.

PRESBYTER.

LIGHT IN THE CLOUDS.

BY REV. E. WALLACE WAITS, B.A., D.DC.

Written for the CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

Many years ago the patriarch of American poetry wrote:—

"Be still, my soul, and cease repining,
Behind the cloud is the sun still shining."

That second line of Longfellow's familiar verse is simply a paraphrase of the words of the youthful Elihu. A young man of great genius and high culture, his thoughts are deep and devout, and his expressions clear and eloquent. "Men see not the bright light which is in the clouds;" or, more literally, "Men cannot look upon the bright splendour that is on the clouds, for the wind passeth along, and maketh an opening!" The idea seems to be, that the wind appeared to sweep along over the clouds, as the tempest was rising, and they seemed to open and disperse in one part of the heavens, and to reveal in the opening a glory so bright and so dazzling that the eye could not rest on it. That light or splendour made in the opening cloud was the symbol of God, approaching to wind up this great controversy, and to address Job and his friends in the sublime language which is found in the closing chapters of the book.

Let us all be reminded that we live on the unillumined side of the cloud, and only needful rays shone through; and yet the rays are quite sufficient for our guidance. Although the reference in Job, chap. xxxviii., is of course to the physical fact, it is certainly suggestive of the mental tendency, which is very strong in some, to look at the dark side of things. You see this tendency in the sceptic, in relation to the dark things of revelation. There are confessedly many dark things in the Bible. There are apparent historical discrepancies, contradictory statements and insoluble problems. But over all these clouds there is a bright light; the darkest has a silver fringe. The love of the Infinite Father, the unspotted holiness of our great example, the elements of moral restoration, and the existence of a blessed immortality, are bright lights surrounding all. But the sceptic will only look on the cloud, he will not look at the light. We have quite sufficient truth shining through the cloud, for us to walk in the paths of obedience, waiting for the time when we shall get above the cloud and behind the cloud, into the overwhelming brightness that plays for ever round the Eternal Throne.

You see this tendency in the desponding Christian in relation to his own experience. In the experience of the best of men there is much that is cloudy; reminiscences of wrong, doubts, and fears are clouds rolling over the soul. A pious old churchman of the last generation, Joshua Watson, used to say that as life advanced his abhorrence of evil in himself and his longing for it so increased, that in his latter days confession of sin, which in youth had seemed to be somewhat exaggerated, because the sincere voice of his heart. The desponding man sees the clouds and nothing else. He often says, "I walk in darkness, and there is no light." But there is a light in the clouds, the light of divine promise. "Blessed are they that mourn, for they shall be comforted." "He shall feed His flock like a shepherd." "Come unto me, and ye that labour and are heavy laden, and I will give you rest." Let us struggle against the tendency, and learn to see in all the clouds hanging over us, the bright light. The light is there, but not always visible.

"Judge not the Lord by feeble sense,
But trust Him for His grace:
Behind a frowning providence
He hides a smiling face."

The Infinite Light behind the cloud is Infinite Love. And among these rays of love that shine through upon us, pilgrims of eternity, I am sure of this that God means every adversity for our good, and every trial to work out "an exceeding and eternal weight of glory."

But so far we have been only stating