

Our Contributors.

THE NEW MODERATOR'S OPENING SPEECH.

BY KNOXONIAN.

A day or two before Parliament meets the leading journals usually publish the substance of the Governor's opening speech. The matter is obtained from some official, and the papers, without giving the exact words, tell their readers what his Excellency may be expected to say. It is not so easy to get the opening speech of a Moderator of the General Assembly. The principal difficulty is that you never know who the new Moderator may be. Perhaps three or four gentlemen are preparing impromptu speeches at the present moment. Impromptu speeches are sometimes carefully prepared. If you did apply to any of these prospective Moderators perhaps he would not give you his points. He might stand on his dignity and say he did not care anything about the newspapers. Men have been known to talk in that high-toned way and then search all over the paper for a report of their speeches next morning before they got out of bed. We can only guess at the opening address of the coming Moderator. Perhaps some of the secular parts of his effort may run something like this:

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—I thank you most heartily for the honour conferred upon me in appointing me to this high position. The honour is as unexpected as it is undeserved. Your reasons for conferring this honour are as inscrutable to me as the reasons for making some men Doctors in Divinity. I hope to be able to discharge the duties of my high position with some degree of efficiency. While I may not be able to preside with the dignity, urbanity and tact of several of my predecessors, it is consoling for me to know that I cannot do much worse than some of the others. I crave your indulgence, and may possibly need it several times before this meeting is over.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—You meet on historic ground. Halifax is an old city. Some of you love the old, especially old sermons. Your liking for the ancient may be fully gratified in this historic city. It would be bad taste to introduce innovations in this ancient capital, and therefore I may confidently express the hope that the Assembly will not be troubled with such innovations as term service for the elders and other matters of that kind.

Be kind enough to remember that the Nova Scotians are a people noted for brains. Owing to their fish diet, or some other cause, they produce more distinguished men to the square mile than any other Province in the Dominion. As you are assembled among a people noted for brain power it is to be hoped that the Assembly will not show any conspicuous lack of that useful power. Mental imbecility is not attractive in any place, but it is particularly unlovely in a city like Halifax. If there are any commissioners present whose upper story is not furnished fairly well, they will please not make themselves too prominent until we get safely out of Halifax.

Be kind enough to remember too that Halifax is the home of Canadian oratory. Young, Johnston, Joe Howe and other mighty men thundered in the old parliament buildings a few yards from the spot where you now sit. If you think Halifax people don't know good oratory you don't know Halifax. Nova Scotia has produced more genuine oratory than any province in the Dominion. It will be necessary then for those who speak at our popular evening meetings to speak well. If they don't Presbyterianism may suffer.

I hope that the clerical members of the Assembly did not forget to put a few of their best sermons in their carpet bags. The Halifax people expect good preaching next Sabbath, the very best the Church can give. They have a perfect right to expect preaching of a high order. They are a warm-hearted, generous people. They entertain the Assembly well, and the least the Assembly should do is give them good food next Sabbath. I hope the committee of arrangements will see that our liveliest preachers are put in the Methodist pulpits. Methodist people think Presbyterian preachers are dull, slow, heavy men. Put preachers in all the Methodist pulpits that will dust the cushions, wake up the amen corner, and

stir up things generally. That is the best way to make the Methodists respect us.

If the Assembly intends to send down any questions to Session next year asking how our members and office-bearers vote on the Scott Act or any similar law, it might be well to devise some simple and inexpensive plan for finding out how people mark their ballots. Voting is secret in this country, and it is very difficult for a Session to know how their people vote.

If the Assembly in its wisdom should see proper to recommend or enjoin our people to vote in favour of specific legislation of any kind, it might be well to devise some plan by which their action might be enforced. Presbyterian electors have a painful habit of voting as they see proper. To counteract this habit it may be necessary for the Assembly to adopt new measures.

FATHERS AND BRETHREN,—I hope ample time will be given to the discussion of such important subjects as Home Missions, Foreign Missions, the State of Religion and Theological Education. It deeply grieves the best people in the Church to see precious time frittered away on small matters that might be given to these vital subjects.

In selecting a place for next meeting of Assembly try to choose one not more than 2,000 miles distant from any of the members.

A TRIP TO THE PACIFIC.

CHICAGO.—ITS CHURCHES, MINISTERS AND SABBATH SCHOOLS.

As travelling is now about as pleasant as it is possible to make it, we undertake journeys which a few years ago would have seemed impossible to complete in any reasonable time or at any moderate expense. There are no doubt many, both in the Old Country and in the Lower Provinces, if not in our own Province of Ontario, who are turning their eyes, and probably in thousands of cases their steps also, toward the Pacific coast, and this for many reasons. Some to get better health, some to make more money, and others again to see as much of the world as possible. What formerly required months to accomplish can now be completed in as many weeks if not days.

Leaving Toronto at noon we reached Chicago next morning, where we spent Sunday, which is a good place to strike on that day, for notwithstanding the fact that Chicago is a fast city, and the Sabbath disregarded in many ways, still there is every opportunity for spending a pleasant and profitable Sunday. If this immense city abounds with saloons, theatres and other places of amusement, many of which are open on Sunday, it also abounds with churches, Sunday schools, young men's associations, temperance societies and the like, so that all varieties of taste can be gratified.

In the prominent hotels there are large cards which give the names of the various churches, ministers, hours of worship and directions how to reach the one selected, a plan which might be followed by smaller cities with advantage.

I found my way to the Third Presbyterian Church, formerly supplied by the Rev. Dr. Kittredge, now of New York, and under whose ministry the congregation prospered and grew to be a power in Chicago. The present pastor is the Rev. Dr. Withrow, late of Boston, with whose name many in Toronto will be familiar. Dr. Withrow was settled in his present charge about a year ago, and so far would seem to be filling to the utmost the expectations formed of his power as a preacher and his administrative ability as the head of a large and influential congregation.

It was Easter Sunday, and, judging from appearances, the congregation and the preacher "did not forget it." The pulpit and platform were elaborately decked with the choicest flowers, the audience such as would inspire a much duller preacher than Dr. Withrow.

The services were to commence at half-past ten, but for an hour before that the strangers' seats at the back end of the church were being occupied. Those comprising this portion of the congregation are not shown to seats until after the introductory exercises, and the stated congregation have taken their accustomed places. The Doctor appeared in splendid form. He is fully up to middle life and over the average height, with well-arranged gray hair, dressed in gown and bands, and however these outward

decorations may be disregarded generally by Americans they lend a quiet and increased dignity to Christ's ambassador.

The text was the last clause of the 19th verse of Matthew xx, "And the third day He shall rise again."

The discourse was in every way worthy of Dr. Withrow's high reputation as a Gospel preacher, and held the rapt attention of an overflowing audience. The points specially dwelt upon were (1) He rose as He said He would; (2) He rose under such circumstances as He said; (3) He rose in such a way as to show His people that they will rise. The sermon throughout was a splendid vindication of the things most surely believed among us, and dealt some crushing blows to sceptics and agnostics, and wound up with a scathing reference to the "broken-down prophets of the past and present age," than whom the eloquent speaker said "there were no classes of men deserving of less respect." At the conclusion he made a pleasing reference to the church decorations, and made the modest request that twelve ladies of the congregation undertake to put flower-pots on the platform every Sunday for one month each, which would cover the whole year. No doubt the Doctor's request will be complied with. Many of our pulpits and platforms in Canadian churches could be relieved of their dull and dingy appearance by a little attention of this kind from the ladies of the congregation.

In the evening a Sabbath school service was held, when the church was again crowded, and, as announced by the pastor, there were 2,500 present by actual count.

The services had reference to the centenary of Presbyterianism held in May in Philadelphia. They were conducted by children between the ages of seven and twelve, and consisted of songs, recitations and readings, and were highly creditable to the young folks, who gave evidence of a training and culture truly remarkable and worthy of imitation. At that time it was proposed to raise a fund of \$3,500 to assist a weak and struggling Church in a section of the city not far from the place where their own church stands. It is but right and proper that missionary work should not only begin at home, but be strengthened when necessary.

One feature of this children's service was the offerings, which should never be despised. Twenty boys, whose ages ran from twelve to sixteen, marched down the aisle two and two and took up their little baskets for the collection, and returned in the same order, each having a rose in his button-hole, and left his basket at the platform.

Everything was arranged with consummate ability and furnished a good specimen of commercial union and that too after the most orthodox fashion.

Dr. Withrow will be a decided gain to Chicago, but what shall we say of the city and congregation who have lost his services?

Boston is flooded and paralyzed with Universalism and Arianism, and so powerful had the influence of Dr. Withrow become that his old church in Boston was styled "Brimstone Corner."

Chicago is spreading on all sides, but just at that time business was dull, owing to strikes on the various railroads, which have since been happily arranged, and business has resumed its usual channels.

June, 1888.

(To be continued.)

AMONG THE INDIANS.

The following letter to Dr. Wardrope from Rev. Hugh Mackay, Round Lake, will be read with much interest:

I know you are anxious to have a word from Round Lake, and to know something about what we have been doing during the past winter. I think in a former letter I have given you a description of our new buildings, and of our opening. The buildings are large, and have been very comfortable during the past winter, and will easily accommodate over fifty scholars.

I have been making out our report for the quarter ending March 31. We have had an average attendance of thirty-seven. The health of the children has been good; a few cases of sickness in the early part of the term, but under the skillful treatment of Mrs. Jones all have recovered and are well. We have had four hours in the school room each day. The rest of the time was occupied by the girls in knitting or sewing, also doing housework, washing, baking, cooking,