

## Our Contributors.

### ONE WAY OF BECOMING POPULAR.

BY KNOXIAN.

The Presbyterian congregation of Slowtown was not prosperous. Their finances were in a bad way. The minister's salary was in arrears and the contributions to the Schemes of the Church were painfully small. The attention of the Presbytery of the bounds having been called to the matter, it was resolved to send a deputation to visit the congregation. The Rev. Nathanael Smoothbore and Dr. Ioanerges Faithful were appointed to hold a meeting in Slowtown, confer with the office-bearers, address the people, and take such steps as they might deem necessary for the welfare of the congregation. Due announcement of a congregational meeting having been given, Mr. Smoothbore and Dr. Faithful went to Slowtown on the day appointed. The meeting was fairly attended. After devotional exercises Mr. Smoothbore addressed the people.

#### MR. SMOOTHBORE'S ADDRESS.

I need scarcely say I am glad to be here to-day. It always affords me much pleasure to meet with our people and discuss matters connected with our beloved Zion. I have long been anxious to visit this congregation. I knew your former pastor well. He was an intimate friend of mine. We were in college together. He is my wife's thirty second cousin by her father's side. Your present pastor has always been a warm friend of mine. I esteem him very highly, and have often held pleasant intercourse with him. We often take sweet counsel together. I have long desired to see his people. I am sure you are all devotedly attached to him and to the beloved Church to which we all belong. (Dr. Faithful began to grow very fidgety at this point.) I am sure the elders and other office-bearers do their duty. (Dr. Faithful murmured dissent and the people looked angrily at him.) I am aware that the financial condition of your congregation is not in just the highest state of prosperity, but the times are hard. Business is depressed and money is scarce. I doubt you would give thousands more if you had it. I am sorry that there are some arrears of stipend, but you would, no doubt, pay these arrears if you were as able as you are willing. (Here the pastor's wife turned her thin, careworn, poverty-stricken face away in disgust, and seemed to say: "Smoothbore, how can you talk such rubbish.") I know you are a generous people. I am sure you are loyal to the blue banner of Presbyterianism. After some further allusions to the blue banner, and an eloquent peroration about the standards and the martyrs and the graves of our forefathers, Smoothbore took his seat amidst loud applause. The people were mightily pleased and so carried away that they completely forgot all about the arrears of stipend, and the fact that they did not contribute a cent a piece to support the missions of their Church and keep the blue banner afloat in other lands—their minds were lifted entirely above such things.

Dr. Faithful then addressed the meeting. His speech bristled with facts, figures and "points," and was too long for a *verbatim* report. He began by showing that the payment of a minister's salary is not a matter of *generosity* but a matter of *justice*. They had solemnly pledged themselves in their call and in their guarantee to the Presbytery to pay the amount promised, and as honest men they should keep their promises. If they were not able to pay what they promised, they should come in an open, manly way to the Presbytery and say so, and perhaps the Presbytery would find some remedy. Christians ought to be honest men. Too many people looked upon a minister's salary as something that they might pay or repudiate at will even after they had solemnly promised to pay it. It was just such conduct as this that made many men who never attend church look at religion with contempt. He then took up the subscription list and found that the highest amount subscribed was \$10 a year while very few reached that amount. He showed that this was not quite twenty cents per Sabbath, or ten cents for each service. This amount might be enough, or more than enough, for many wage-earners or very poor people, but he would ask any candid man if twenty cents per Sabbath was anything for a wealthy farmer or a man in a good paying business. He then showed that only a very small por-

tion of the congregation reached the amount stated twenty cents a day or ten cents a service—and that—many did not pay five cents or even one cent a Sabbath, while a good many paid nothing. His brother, Mr. Smoothbore, had spoken of the hard times, but he would like to know how hard times could affect a man who paid nothing at all.

Dr. Faithful then took up the Schemes of the Church and read the amounts contributed for Colleges and Missions. He said he could not estimate the amount paid per member for Missions, because the divisor would not go into the dividend. There was no quotient. It was beyond the power of figures to show the amount per member that they were doing to send the Gospel to the heathen. There was no coin of the realm that would express their liberality. He must give it up. The same was true in regard to Colleges. He had every sympathy with men struggling against hard times; but he could not for the life of him understand how hard times could affect contributions that never were large enough per member to be expressed by any coin of the realm. The Doctor then urged them to try to make their organization more effective, as nothing could survive without good organization, and closed with a solemn, searching appeal to be up and doing while working days lasted. He took his seat amidst

#### SOLEMN SILENCE.

At the close of the meeting the people gathered around Mr. Smoothbore, shook his hand warmly, asked for his family; and half-a-dozen invited him to dinner. A few earnest workers who had been labouring hard for the welfare of the congregation, ventured to speak to Dr. Faithful, but a large majority of the people thought he was an "awful" man. Some said he was not spiritually minded, and some declared he had never been converted. Mr. Smoothbore went home feeling that he had made a good impression and congratulating himself on the fact that he was popular with the Slowtown people. Dr. Faithful went home conscious of the fact that he had done his duty. The pastor scarcely dared to say good-bye to him as he was leaving, but the pastor's wife warmly shook hands with him and thanked him for his manly speech. There were tears in her voice and a tear in the corner of her eye as she said she hoped his visit would do good. *She knew all about the arrears.*

Months passed. The seed sown by Dr. Faithful began to take root and grow. The people became ashamed of their financial position and began to do better. At the close of the year the arrears were wiped out and there was joy in the manse. The pastor preached better and his wife did not need to sit up so late making over old clothes for the children. Next year the salary was raised, and the next blue book showed that the contributions for the Schemes of the Church were greatly increased. New life was put into all departments of the congregational work, and the congregation of Slowtown became one of the best in the Presbytery. But to this day Dr. Faithful never dares to show his face there. The Doctor is not popular in Slowtown and never will be while the present generation are in the Church below.

#### THE NORTH-WEST.

MR. EDITOR,—A few lines from the North-West Territories at the present juncture of affairs may not prove unacceptable to many of your readers and *impromptu*, I must mention that my *status quem* is that of a sexagenarian Presbyterian who has resided in these Territories six years.

This personal introduction will enable me to touch *seu ex cathedra* as to the few topics alluded to in this letter.

#### THE REBELLION,

let it be understood, is confined to the north-eastern portions of the country, and chiefly along and north-west of the Saskatchewan River, upon whose banks stand Edmonton, Battleford, and Prince Albert and the country beyond. The C. P. R. runs westerly in a line about seventy-five miles distant from the boundary line, and when your readers know that all the country south of the C. P. R. and all the country north of it for about 100 miles are in a perfectly peaceful state, with everybody attending to his own business without let or molestation and that the din of war is not heard therein, they can better understand our true condition. The farmers throughout this immense

country are now busy putting in their crops and in blissful inexperience of the horrors of war. In connection with this subject I must say that the Presbyterians in this country were exceedingly pained to read of a prominent Toronto minister standing up in his Presbytery at a late meeting, and with the evident approbation of his co-presbyters, publicly laying the guilt of this unnatural rebellion at the door of the Roman Catholic Church. The statement made by that respected minister is calculated to do only evil, and particularly so if it be entertained by the General Assembly at next meeting. The assertion is, in our belief, to be without evidence or any foundation whatever. On the contrary, it is contradicted by the conduct of all the Catholic clergy and Catholic people in these Territories. In this country no clergyman has denounced the wickedness of this rebellion in more unsparing terms than his Grace the venerable Archbishop of Winnipeg, and the fact that several Catholic priests remained firm in their allegiance to the Queen and exposed their persons to the violence of the blood-thirsty Indians, and died at their posts in endeavouring to restrain the murderous ferocity of savages, should forever silence such calumnies. Those men did not flee for safety to the older settlements, nor even betake themselves to the forts for protection, but died like brave men at the post of sacred duty. Such behaviour should forever silence such a calumny. I need not allude to the gallant conduct of the 65th Battalion from Montreal, under Lieut.-Col. Ouimet, a Catholic regiment from the Colonel downwards. In the far West—at Calgary, where the wild Indians abound, and the signal-fires were nightly blazing on every hill-top, these Catholic soldiers have held the savage hordes at bay, and preserved the lives of thousands of our Protestant citizens, while under Otter and Middleton the Catholic soldiers have fought and fallen side-by-side with their Protestant comrades and lie buried with them on the banks of the Saskatchewan.

Upon the field all rancour healed  
There's no discordant hue,  
The Orange marches with the Green,  
The Rouge beside the Bleu.  
One purpose now fires every eye,  
Rebellion foul to slay,  
"Forward for Canada" 's the cry,  
And all are one to-day.

#### THE BRANDON OVERTURE

anent the ordination of laymen to qualify them to perform the sacred duties of the holy ministry in these Territories, if carried out, will perpetrate a monstrous travesty of religion and bring our Church into general contempt. The Presbyterians here are altogether different in education and intelligence from the stalwart immigrants who first settled in the old Provinces. They are largely composed of the second and third generations of those grand old toilers, and have been educated under the noble system of education existing in Ontario and the other Provinces, while those hailing from the old country have been trained in the famous Parish Schools and are mainly very intelligent. These settlers, as a rule, venerate the sacred calling of the holy ministry, and could not be induced for any consideration to thrust themselves into that office. They would rather wait years than have some impecunious individual, too lazy to work, occupy the sacred desk. We have plenty of "strapped" gents out here who pull up either among the Mounted Police, or try to play the minister to get a "rise" to start them on their farms. This is well known, and I now solemnly warn the Church that the ordination of such men can only end, as a general rule, in great detriment to the Church at large and in the annihilation of our congregations. We all know that it is with difficulty that even *bona fide* ministers, with all the advantages of a literary and theological education and of lives wholly devoted to their sacred office, can gather and hold together congregations in these days of scepticism and of anti-religious literature. Much less shall our average farmer or blacksmith or cobbler succeed in doing so when acting out of his sphere in the holy ministry. Our intelligent congregations will not tolerate it. Imagine the feelings of congregations listening to the crude, ill-connected "havr" of the village smith or shoemaker, or even of a homesteader, who is not superior in intelligence to his neighbours! I could mention more than one mission station that has been extinguished by such men. Our people will not listen to more than one or two harangues, when they settle down in their cabins to sleep away their Sabbaths, or