

Our Contributors.

WHY THE BOYS DON'T STAY ON THE FARM.

BY KNONONIAN.

The agricultural fairs are in full blast and able-bodied men who attend the banquet which usually comes after the fair are wrestling with the question, "Why don't the boys stay on the farm." Next winter there will be a large number of Farmer's Conventions addressed by various kinds of professors, and whatever else is discussed attention will most certainly be given to the old conundrum, "Why don't the boys stay on the farm."

The proper solution of this question is that in a great many cases the boys have no farm to stay on. That solution goes to the roots.

On almost any concession of Ontario you may find a farmer who has one hundred acres of land and four or five boys. The boys soon come to that time of life when they must do something for themselves. One hundred acres or even two hundred are small enough for a farm. The eldest boy usually has done the most work and there is often an understanding in the family that the farm goes to him at the father's death. How can the other boys stay on the farm? There is no farm in the family for them to stay on. "Buy the younger boys other farms," says some one. But there may be no money to buy other farms with. The only way to give each one a farm would be to divide up the homestead into narrow strips as the French do in the Province of Quebec. That system would never work in Ontario. The only reason why it works in Quebec is that a French Canadian farmer can live on much less money than an average Ontario farmer ever thinks of keeping a family on.

Thirty or forty years ago when there was plenty of good land in Western and Northern Ontario there was no trouble in keeping most of the boys on the farm. Land could be had for a small sum near the homestead or at farthest in the back townships. A thrifty family of four or five boys found little difficulty in getting a hundred acres each. They stayed on the farm because they had a farm to stay on. Now many of them leave because they have no farm to stay on.

There is grim humour in telling a young man to stay on the farm and raise wheat because law, medicine and business are overcrowded. The competition is too fierce in his own country in these lines and therefore he ought to stay on the farm and enter into competition with all the wheat producers of the world! "Business is over done," says some one. That may be true to a certain extent, but the most over done business in the world last year was raising wheat. "The country is suffering from over production," says another, therefore stay on the farm and keep away from manufacturing of every kind. True, oh Daniel, but the farmer suffered more last year from over-production of wheat than from over production of anything else. Over-production brought the price down to fifty cents per bushel. More wheat is raised now than the human family can afford to buy and young men are advised to stay on the farm and avoid over-production by raising more. The sum of the advice is this:—Avoid competition by going into competition with the whole world, avoid over-production by producing a cereal that already exists in larger quantities than the human family can purchase. If a clergyman reasoned in that way there would be a loud laugh and the usual sneer, "These parsons never did know anything about business."

The climax of absurdity is reached when we remember that in raising wheat the Canadian farmer has to enter into competition with the producer in India who gets his labor at twelve or fifteen cents per day.

It may be urged with some force that raising wheat is only one thing on a farm and that a good farmer should produce many things. True, but what does a farmer produce that does not enter into a competition just as fierce as the competition in law, in medicine or in commerce. What can an Ontario farmer put down on the docks at Liverpool that does not compete with a similar product from other parts of the world.

"The professions are over-crowded," is a cry that has been repeated until it is stale. "Too many people in business" is another that people are getting tired of. "Too many doctors" is a common cry. Well, what profession has improved as much in the last twenty or thirty years as the medical. In its personnel, in its ability to contend against disease, in its ability to prevent disease, in its resources for alleviating suffering, the medical profession of Ontario has made enormous strides within a few years. The public never was served as well by the profession as it is now. Supposing the number of doctors is increasing, what of it so long as sick people receive better attention and are treated with more skill.

"Too many lawyers" is a common cry. This profession is improving too. Not long ago Sir Oliver Mowat stated in a public speech that a clever law student knows more about his profession now than many leaders of the Bar knew when he was a young man. Sir Oliver knows all about it, and he is no doubt right here as he is in—well, very nearly all things. If there are a good many lawyers their clients don't need to hang around and coax them to do business as some of the old settlers had to do when there was only one or two lawyers in each county.

"Too many stores." Possibly, but if there is you have all the more goods to select from and all the better people to show you the goods. The old settlers had a poor time when there was only one store or so in a township and that one sometimes kept by a man who set up for a tyrant. There is a great deal of unmitigated rubbish in some of the talk we hear about over-crowding in business and in the professions. The question has two sides.

If the young man doesn't want to stay on the farm let him go, especially if he has no farm to stay on.

HAVE ELDERS THE RIGHT TO BE MODERATORS OF PRESBYTERIES?—II.

BY ROBERT M'QUEEN.

There are many such men as we have described in the eldership of our Church, godly, faithful men of long and varied experience who have been closely identified with the spiritual life and work of the congregations over which they have had the oversight for thirty or forty years. These men as a rule would be the very last to withhold from the one set over the congregation, to labor in word and doctrine, the honor to which he is entitled as by the Presbytery set apart to the exercise of these functions; and yet it is looked upon as something that strikes away the very foundations of Church order and coherency in the system, if one of these should be asked, even by the minister, to preside over the session, as if ministers as a separate order are the only conservators of the temporal and spiritual interests of the congregations; and unless that superior position of authority is accorded them, as a matter of right. Then control is utterly wanting, and that in the case of a vacant congregation the session would be completely independent of the Presbytery. Surely not! Any competent member of a session appointed Moderator, in such circumstances, would bring the session into as close touch with, and into as due subordination to the Presbytery as the appointment of one who might be largely ignorant of the congregation as a whole. In the case of a settled congregation, the right

of a session to appoint its own Moderator it is said leaves no place for the ministry. Surely this is not so unless it be held that one main function of the Christian ministry is to rule over the session, instead of the conjoint spiritual oversight of the congregation. And we hold that there is no scriptural warrant for the exercise of any such authority. We have already said, and we repeat it, "that the minister is simply a co-Presbytery so far as scriptural authority is concerned, and the view held, the ground taken and acted on, that the minister is independent of and not responsible to the session or to his fellow Presbyteries, has wrought a great deal of mischief and is a fruitful source of friction in many sessions today. In all this, there is the further implication that, without the presence of a minister sessions are not, and would not be, competent to manage their own affairs. In reply we say that, in so far as the temporal management is concerned, that the managers and deacon's court are primarily entrusted with that work, and are chosen by the congregation for that purpose, and they appoint their own chairman and officers, and as a rule are quite competent along with the congregation to manage its temporal affairs, and interference by minister or session is much more likely to create friction than to facilitate the peaceable and successful management of the affairs of the congregation. The less a minister and session interfere *authoritatively* with the conduct of the purely temporal affairs of the congregation under their charge, the better for the peace and welfare of all concerned.

Another implication is that sessions are largely ignorant of the rules of procedure and laws of the Church, and that unless presided over by a minister, who has the power to refuse to put any motion that does not suit him, or may, according to his view, be contrary to the laws of the Church they would constantly be running counter to these, and acting ignorantly and illegally. If such complete ignorance exists may it not be in part due to the fact that sessions have been taught that the minister alone was supreme in these matters, and therefore they were under no necessity of ascertaining for themselves what the rules of procedure and laws of the Church are. But surely it would be easy for each member of session to secure a Blue Book, and if he did not study it at home he could at least bring it to the meeting and refer to it when occasion required, as nearly every minister does at Presbytery or Assembly. Let me refer again to the contention that it is mainly through the minister that the higher courts have any hold on or control of the spiritual affairs of the congregation, and that the minister is more directly under the control of the Presbytery, as being ordained by it, and therefore more dependent on it, as being subject to removal, suspension or deposition thereby, while the elders are ordained by the session and are directly responsible to it. But is it not just as true that an elder can not be deposed without reference to the Presbytery, and so far as the ordination by the session is concerned, the ground covered scripturally is just as wide as that of ordination by the Presbytery. The induction covers the administration of ordinances and the laboring in word and doctrine. So that the control would be equally strong whoever might be Moderator of the session, whether elder or minister, and the objection that if a minister is not the Moderator of the session it would be to him a matter of indifference whether he attended its meeting or not, and specially if business distasteful to him in any way, was being transacted and thus make Presbyterian control less firm than it otherwise would be by the minister being present and presiding. We fail to see things in that light. The elder presiding for the time being might not be the Presbytery elder, and surely the minister and the Presbytery elder would represent the session and congregation in the Presbytery just as fully as if the minister had been Moderator and

another sent along with him to represent the congregation in that court. If a minister declined to attend the meetings because he could not *authoritatively* preside, is a point we need not discuss. When a man is ordained to be a minister, and inducted into the charge of a congregation by the Presbytery, he is not ordained and inducted primarily to control or rule the session, but to take along with the session as a co-Presbyter, the spiritual oversight of the congregation for the edification of the people of God, and for the ingathering of those who are without the fold, and to suppose that he being primarily head of the session and a spiritual Lord of the people is to make the control firmer or the bond stronger is a mistake, as much so as to suppose that practically and to any extent whatever a troublesome minister would be more difficult to deal with in the event of his not presiding in the session. The uppermost thought in that mode of reasoning is that of authority and power over, rather than that of edification and shepherding of the flock of God. The "double honor" is to those who rule well, to those who *have ruled* well; but in the case of the settlement of a young man over a congregation who has never ruled at all, he is placed at once in authority over those who have borne rule for years, and so placed as a *matter of right*, forgetting that it is *honor* and not *power* that is earned by ruling well. We feel convinced that a good many of the complaints against the efficiency of the eldership arise from the fact that a good many would like just as well if there were no sessions at all, so that personal rule would be complete; and the constant reference to the eldership as an inferior order, or subordinate to the ministry in rank, as well as *function*, serves no good purpose, and does not in the least exalt the ministry. It is needless to assign an inferior position to the eldership of the Church, and at the same time expect or demand of them the highest order of service. If the official parity were admitted and recognized, and the functions insisted on as far as possible, and to the fullest capacity, it would tend to develop a large amount of latent talent and spiritual power in the eldership of our Church. There is a good deal of speaking, and writing too, about the elders, as if they were not to be trusted with power, from the danger of misusing it, and as if the ministers were the only ones who have the welfare of the congregations at heart. The very reverse is the case. From the very nature of the relationship existing between them, the connexion of the minister with the congregation is temporary and often transient. He comes into the oversight of a congregation, a comparative, if not a complete stranger, and in a shorter or longer time, a wider door opens for him and the tie is severed, and another takes his place for a time, and thus the years roll on, with their sometimes rapidly succeeding pastorates. The real ties of deep sympathy and entire and enduring confidence between the people and their successive ministers, scarcely having time to form, much less to reach that condition of growth and depth which enable a minister to do his best work and exercise his fullest powers for edification. On the other hand the elder has been born it may be in their midst; his interests are identified and identical with theirs, his business and social relationships are interwoven with those of the congregation; he looks forward to ending his days among them; all his spiritual associations and recollections are interwoven with theirs; he has with them shared the ebbs and flows of spiritual life and congregational prosperity or decline. He has shared their joys and sorrows, their blessings and bereavements, and as a Christian man he has the prosperity of the congregation, of the cause of Christ, deeply at heart. There are few sessions, indeed, in which men of this stamp are not to be found, and in the case of the great majority their life interests are identified with those of the congregation, and we have no hesitation in saying that these men at