

Our Contributors.

DR POLONIUS GIVES SOME FURTHER ADVICE TO HIS SON

BY ANOXONIAN.

I dare say, my son, you would like to make a speech or two in the General Assembly. The ambition is rather a praiseworthy one. There is no reason why a young man brought up as you have been should not make his voice heard occasionally in the supreme court. If you speak well, and help to throw light on any question, you are doing your duty; and, even if you speak poorly, you have just as good a right to bore the Assembly as any other man. Your mother and I hope you may yet make some of the best speeches ever made in the supreme court: it would sorely puzzle you to make the worst.

Allow me, then, my son, to give you some paternal advice about this matter of speech-making. And, *firstly*, my son, when you rise to speak *be sure you have something to say*. This may seem unnecessary advice to a young man like you, but your father is older and more experienced than you are, and he knows how important this advice is. The number of men who can speak half an hour and say nothing is large. To be able to speak elegantly about nothing is a highly useful accomplishment at marriage breakfasts, public dinners, tea-meetings, and other places of that kind, but saying nothing about nothing in a General Assembly is a poor business. Be sure then, my son, that you never rise without having some clear, clean cut ideas in your mind. And be sure that they *are* ideas. A man may think he has an idea when he hasn't. And remember that a man often loses his ideas in the act of rising. The idea seems very clear and important as long as he sits. The argument is masterly until he moves. But the moment he rises the idea vanishes into thin air, and the argument falls to pieces. Be sure, then, my son, that you have an idea, and that you can hold on to it until you assume the perpendicular.

Never speak on a subject that has been thoroughly threshed out by other speakers. Rehashing other men's arguments is like keeping a second-hand clothing store. If you cannot throw a ray of new light on a question keep your seat. The only exception to this rule is when some glaring wrong should be denounced or some right defended. In such cases it is often a duty to speak to show that one is on the right side. In such cases, my son, speak out in ringing tones like a man. If you have nothing new to say in the way of argument, you can at least show that your heart is right. On all questions, however, that are matters of opinion and have confessedly two sides, it is the very climax of absurdity for a man to speak when he cannot produce a single point that has not been handled half a dozen times. If you want to stand well in the supreme court, my son, and do credit to your parents, let threshed-out questions alone.

When you begin your speech always strike the nerve of the question in the first or second sentence. Have no introduction. If you have made one while thinking over your points, strangle it on the spot. Don't begin by saying, "Moderator, I feel I cannot give a silent vote on this question." The fact that you are speaking should be enough to show that you are not silent. Never mind telling the Assembly how you feel. The members don't care a brass farthing how you feel. No collection of men ever does care how a man feels. Taken singly they are kindly enough, but collectively they don't care whether one feels like speaking or not. Quite likely nine-tenths of them would prefer that you didn't feel in that way. Therefore, my son, don't do anything so cheap as tell them how you feel. If you have any nice flowers of rhetoric keep them for your next public speech. Never dream of wasting nice theoretical things on ministers and elders. Have no conclusion. I don't mean by this that you are never to stop. I mean have no formal conclusion. Stop when your points are presented. Cut your speech off at both ends, and give the fathers and brethren the middle. If when you have cut off the introduction and the conclusion you find there is nothing left, then conclude you have no speech.

Be careful about your temper, my son, when you address the supreme court. Ministers and elders won't be scolded. They don't take kindly to being even lectured. If you address them in the schoolmaster style you may get sat on. Presbyterians are

solid, heavy people, and if a General Assembly sits on you you will feel like going home to your parents. Avoid the schoolmaster style, my son, as you would avoid rattlesnakes. Your father has seen some men suffer from adopting that style, and there are a few others who, in the near future, may wonder what has struck them if they don't drop their domineer habits. Now, my son, don't come home here thoroughly sat upon, because you tried to play schoolmaster in the General Assembly, and say, "You didn't know it was loaded." You do know now, for your father has told you. Speak modestly, respectfully, and with the manner and tone of one who knows he is addressing a learned and able body of representative men, many of whom are older and wiser than himself. Avoid that narrow dogmatism which mars the manner of a minister and makes him offensive. Devotion to principle does not turn a man into a human porcupine. Conscience does not make one coarse. Vigour and vulgarity are not twins. Swagger is not strength. Above all things, my son, never masquerade in the old clothes of the Covenanters and martyrs. You are too light for a Covenanter. Make no allusions in ordinary debate to Drumclog, Bothwell Bridge and other historic places. The bridge that troubles a Canadian minister is usually a corduroy one. The only drum that annoys him is the drum of the Salvation Army. The clogs that worry him are the clogs of clay that stick to his buggy, his boots and his trousers. On high occasions it is well to stir the memories and fire the hearts of our people by reference to the past. The man who can do that kind of thing well on great occasions does a good work. But an appeal to the history written in martyr blood does not come kindly into a discussion on the difference between tweedledum and tweedledee. Politicians say that an appeal to patriotism is often the last refuge of a scoundrel. An appeal to the Covenanters and martyrs on such a question as the bound of a mission station or the call of a minister is usually the last refuge of a man who, if not absolutely senseless, has nothing sensible to say. Therefore, my son, if you wish to be considered a sensible young man, and to do credit to your parents, don't indulge in appeals of that kind when doing ordinary business.

Now let me tell you some things that you should put in your valise when you go to Hamilton. Put in two or three of your best sermons—your *best*, mind. Some people who think themselves very clever say in a fault-finding way that when ministers go from home they always preach their best sermons. If nature has not made such people complete asses they have a perfect right to supplement the efforts of nature in that direction. Never mind what they say. It is your *duty* to preach the best you can every time. The people you preach to, rich or poor, few or many, in city or country, have a right to expect the best you can give them every time. You are not doing justice to your Church or your Master if you don't preach your best every time. In Assembly time the people who reside in the city where the Assembly meets expect good preaching. They have a right to expect it. If the Assembly cannot give them good preaching let them meet at some point in the backwoods where the fare during the week will correspond with the fare on the Sabbath. Those who have charge of the arrangements sometimes complain that they have much difficulty in supplying pulpits. This is not creditable to a Church that has been made mainly by preaching. Therefore, my son, put in some of your very best sermons, and if you are asked to preach preach the very best you can.

Along with your sermons put in a large quantity of common sense, patience, geniality, Church loyalty and brotherly love. Don't forget to take these out when you go to Hamilton. You will need them more in the church than you will in the friend's house where you lodge. Don't put in one ounce of the fault-finding, carping, sneering, nibbling, jealous, or contentious spirit. If you can't act as a generous, loyal Presbyterian commissioner stay at home and let somebody go who has a more generous heart and a larger soul. Some men are too small for Presbyterians. There is not enough of them to make a decent Presbyterian minister. My son, I hope you are not going to be one of the small, jealous, nibbling kind. If you turn out a small, mean man your mother and I will be ashamed of you. Therefore, my son, pack your valise with large, generous, noble, genial, manly qualities, and when you go to Hamilton be sure you take them out and use them.

If you have any notes of eloquent speeches on the deceased wife's sister or the college of Moderators or similar questions, leave them at home. Your notes on the deceased wife's sister may be useful to your own sister when she wishes to curl her hair. Your speech on the college of Moderators and similar mediæval issues may come handy when your father wishes to use his briar-root.

Now, my son, go to the supreme court, and when there try to do some good to your Church and bring some credit to your parents.

FOR THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN.

EVANGELISTIC WORK.

BY W. M. R.

"When a Church ceases to be evangelistic it will soon cease to be evangelical," is a striking utterance attributed to the late Dr. Duff. Happily there seems little likelihood of its being illustrated by any of the Presbyterian Churches of our day. In all of them there seems to be a preponderance of Gospel preaching and a growing appreciation of evangelistic methods. The latest noteworthy instances in point occur in the two foremost cities of the United States. In these, like other large cities, iniquity abounds, infidelity is rampant, and worldliness boldly invades the Church of Christ. She is compelled to heed the divine admonition, "Put on thy strength." She must assume her most aggressive attitude or lose ground.

IN NEW YORK

a very decided step in advance was taken last autumn. The Presbytery appointed a committee to arrange for a series of special services to be held successively in the principal churches in the city, under the care of their pastors, who gave mutual assistance in conducting them. As a good deal of prejudice against such services lingered in some quarters, some uncertainty as to their success was felt; but this was soon replaced by surprise at the general appreciation of the movement shown even among such conservative sticklers for old-time usage as the Dutch Reformed Brethren. Among these the probably unprecedented sight of Christian women rising to testify to blessing received was witnessed. And now that the series is concluded, reported upon and calmly reviewed, a prominent member of the Presbytery writes: "The services have been successful up to and beyond our expectations. The Churches have been very much revived. The people threw themselves into the effort very zealously. Large accessions to the membership are reported from many Churches. The pastors have been brought into closer fellowship. Yesterday the Presbytery, encouraged by the very cheering report from the Convener, appointed a new committee to devise and formulate another plan of city evangelization for 1886-87."

IN CHICAGO

there has been the same jealousy as in New York and elsewhere of anything which seemed to detract from the importance of the stated services of the Church; but the necessity of something further to reach and move the careless masses in their growing indifference and ungodliness has been becoming ever more and more apparent. Along with this there has been a growing dissatisfaction with the work done by outsiders and the very great desirability of internal agents and agencies for the prosecution of evangelistic work under Presbyterian and pastoral supervision. This has much to do with the failure of even their own honoured fellow-citizen Moody, to get from his townsmen the means he desired to establish among them a training school to be operated in connection with the preparatory ones at Northfield. And now, says the *Interior*, "our Chicago Presbytery last year mapped out the destitute parts of the city and made an urgent appeal for the means to occupy them. . . . And at the meeting last week they sent an overture to the General Assembly, soon to open its session at Minneapolis, presenting to that body for its consideration and action a subject of high importance relating to our mission work among the masses in city and country in our land. Immense numbers of the people are not reached. The present supply of men for Gospel preaching does not equal the pressing demand for more labourers. We must not lower the present high standard of ministerial education for those who can meet its demands. The Church cannot, on the other hand, approve of men undertaking the office of teaching the sacred Word unless they are properly