

Our Contributors.

SHOULD WE START A PRESBYTERIAN MAGAZINE?

BY KNOXIAN.

Is there room for a Presbyterian magazine? Yes, most decidedly. College journalism has answered this question in the most practical way imaginable. The *Knox College Monthly* has grown into a magazine. The *Presbyterian Journal* of Montreal is growing rapidly into one. The real question is not, Shall we have a magazine? The question that must soon be asked is, *How many?*

It never was intended by the original promoters of these college journals that they should be anything more than good college organs representing in a respectable way the institutions with which they were connected. Circumstances and a live managing-editor made one of them a magazine in a few years; the other is fast following in its footsteps and what we contend is that the conditions that turn college journals into magazines in a few years, if taken advantage of by the right kind of man, would make a first-class Presbyterian magazine a pronounced success from the start.

It is no reflection on any one to say that the *Knox College Monthly* is not now the kind of journal its original promoters intended it to be. With the exception of a page or two at the end it has no more connection with Knox College than with any other college in the Church. It may be a better thing than its promoters ever dreamed of; it certainly is a bigger thing but it is a different thing. With some doubt as to its future the alumni association started a little college organ and have now on their hands a magazine with as distinct a tone as any magazine of its age can have. The *Monthly* must do one of two things and do that one thing soon. It must put on the brakes and back up on the original college track, or it must put on a little more steam and switch off on a track of its own. We doubt very much if it is possible for the present manager to go back again into mere college journalism. He has shown himself capable of much more important work and having been successful in a larger field it is scarcely to be expected that he would willingly go back where he began years ago.

If the *Monthly* is not brought back to its original relation to the college the name of the college should certainly be dropped from its title page. It would be unfair to the college and unfair to the magazine to keep it there. The name is no doubt an honoured one, but it connects the magazine with one college and one city. To be worth anything a magazine must be free from local influences. But there is another and perhaps stronger reason why the name should be changed. Knox College from the first day of its existence has had a distinct theological tone. For the past year the *Knox College Monthly* has also had a tone quite distinct enough to be easily recognized by anybody who is reasonably familiar with what is going on in the Free Church of Scotland at the present time. We do not now and here say anything about the comparative merits of these tones. All we say is that the tone of the *Monthly* is different from the historic tone of Knox College. As the Irishman said "One or both of them should part." Many friends of old Knox might not care to have a magazine carrying its name through every kind of theological scuffle, and the managing-editor might feel more comfortable without a name that so far has always represented a distinct type of Calvinistic theology.

It will not mend the matter to say on the title page that "Each author is solely responsible for the views contained in his article." Somebody must say whether the magazine should publish the views of "each author." The men who founded the college, who supported it through many a hard struggle, who erected the college building, who endowed the institution and who have in a hundred ways helped old Knox, may not want to see a journal bearing its honoured name, even in appearance, taking the side of the Dods school. Knox College reminds them of such names as Esson, Rentoul, Bayne, Willis and Burns, and to put the matter mildly these names suggest a different type of theology from that suggested by such names as Dods, Bruce and Smith. It is just possible that some old friends of Knox might not care to send their sons to the institution if a journal bearing its name and supposed to represent its theology became enthusiastic in its admiration of Messrs. Dods, Smith and Bruce. On the whole it would be vastly better for the magazine to be free from all college ties and for Knox College to have a journal that would give its attention mainly to college journalism.

What do we suggest? We respectfully suggest that the *Monthly* be made a magazine pure and simple, that its name be cut in two, the words *Knox College* dropped and the remaining part *Presbyterian Magazine* continued, that the constituency be enlarged so as to embrace the whole Church and that the present managing-editor be editor of the new magazine. Can this be done? Why not? The field is ample and inviting, the material for discussion abundant, and surely there is sufficient literary talent in the Church to fill the pages of the new venture to overflowing with good readable matter. To make the *Monthly* a first-class magazine is not so difficult a task as was the task of making the *Monthly* out of nothing. The man who did the one could certainly do the other if he got fair play and a reasonable amount of encouragement.

The new magazine would greatly help the weekly journalism of the Church by unloading the weekly papers of matter

unsuited for their columns. What a privilege it would be for the editor of a live weekly to be able to tell the three column writer that his valuable contribution was more suitable for the columns of the *Presbyterian Magazine*.

The only thing needed that we do not now possess is money. Perhaps someone can say how that needful thing can be obtained. With daily journals like the *Globe* paying liberally for articles that can be written at a dash and American journals ready and willing to pay handsomely for literary matter that suits them, it is absurd to expect that anybody able to write what people want to read will continue to write even for "our own magazine" for nothing and board himself.

A MISSIONARY TOUR IN HONAN.

The following letter from Rev. D. McGillivray, dated House Boat, Chang Tien Village, on An Yang River, four miles north-east of Changte Fu, has been kindly forwarded for publication: On February 20 my colleague, Dr. McClure, arrived; that evening the Presbytery met and by five p.m., February 21, we were off for Honan. Two house-boats, four foreigners and five Chinese servants and assistants. Our boat was rather small as we hoped to pass under bridges right up to the walls of Changte Fu, but, as the heading indicates, we got up within three miles or so. Last year the boat was left at a place much farther away and the brethren went by cart to the city, staying at the time at the inn. This time we have the rest of the boat every night, going and returning by barrow morning and night, Dr. McClure on one side of a barrow and I on the other to keep the balance true. When we reached the first customs barrier we found that, owing to the neglect in not obtaining previously an exemption bill, the teachers must return to the city to get it that Friday night. It came late on Saturday morning. After considerable discussion with the underlings regarding a gratuity, we at length got away scot free, the great rope which stretches across the river at these barriers was let down and away we went. The river is very winding all the way, and the distance by water is generally twice as far as by land. There is a great deal of shipping constantly passing up and down. Only when there is a full, fair wind do the "trackers" come on board. These form part of our crew of four men with three women and one child cooped up in the little cabin at the stern. The cry of the trackers of large cargo boats is novel and interesting. The leader of the line gives the cue to the rest. The river is so shallow that the crew are constantly poling the boat along, marching from stern to midships with a measured stamping. Several times we were aground, but as we are flat-bottomed and there are no rocks, we are safe.

The cargoes we noticed are ready-made furniture, cooking pans, iron bars from Shansi, grain, coal, bamboo made-up goods. A large bamboo raft with mat huts on it passed down the river. No bridges impede navigation on the Wei river. Ferries of antediluvian build are frequent. In fact all the boats on this river remind one very strongly of the pictures of Noah's ark. Every day we walked a good deal along the bank. With a head wind or no wind we could easily leave the trackers far behind, especially if we cut across the bends. We were often asked if we were coming by steamer. I am told that last year a small steam launch passed up to Wei Hui. The banks are in most places very high, but the soil is crumbly and all of the same nature, so that there is nothing to determine the course of the river but its own sweet will. We passed one or two places where a breach was made by the high flood. In one spot we saw a coffin end projecting into the air, the river having worn a way into the grave. Flocks of wild geese flew at no distance above our heads. Wild ducks were equally tame. They do not fear man. The celestials can't afford the powder to shoot them even if guns were common.

We spent our first Sabbath at Chien Chuang, a village of 1,000 families, to whom two priests and three nuns minister (Buddhist). We went to the inn, treated sixty-two cases, preached and sold books all day with much success. The people were filled with curiosity. Old ladies brought their yarn and sat down in the inn yard to see the bustle. The preachers found a place of vantage in a shop door next the inn door, away from the noise and crush around the doctor's room. The Catholics are not far away. Nearly everywhere we met persons who knew of them as not being very far away. They are not in Changte Fu, but west of it, as we met a great many who took us for Catholics. Mohammedans are also pretty well scattered along the route. There are some in Changte Fu.

On Monday we had a splendid wind, and made forty li. In the afternoon the boatmen burnt papersilver and incense on the bow of the boat, making his kneeling and knocking head to the dragon king who gives his name to a large place where we stayed Tuesday night. As if to prove the uselessness of the idol worship we had scarcely any fair wind during the whole of the voyage. On Tuesday we passed a town which takes its name from the temple to Tai Shan Nai-nai, of which goddess and mountain I have written before at length. Not far away is a ruined temple on the edge of the river. The god has not been able to save his domicile from the wreck of time. In fact his godship may be seen sitting under the open sky in helpless wooden imbecility. On Tuesday we met an old Christian boatman from Tientsin. It was very refreshing, indeed, after two days boat-travel to meet a Christian Chinese. Tuesday evening we caught up to Goforth and Smith whose boat each day out-distanced ours, but

we always spent the night together, where we had English worship together. We learned that during the day a small sailor lad had fallen into the water, but had been rescued without difficulty. At Lung Wang Miao several cases were treated by the doctors and a good number of books sold. Last year the supply of books was limited; this year we have plenty and also a good variety. On Wednesday evening we passed two heads of criminals in cages on a pole by the river bank. They had robbed a coal merchant who called on us and bought some books. We also passed a dead body in the water which no Chinaman would dare to bury for fear of consequences, legal and ghostly. We now come to a region where four-wheeled carts are used by the farmers. The wheels are solid wood, about the size of locomotive small wheels, and are inclosed in a box-like frame which also reminds one of a rudimentary car wheel frame.

On Thursday, February 26, I first set foot on Honanese territory. We walked a good deal to-day. Although nothing is yet in full or even partial bloom we saw that this is indeed the promised land. Villages to the north have mud-houses and lime-roofs. Here with scarcely an exception all the houses are brick with tile-roofs. This can be taken as a clear proof of prosperity. Soon after crossing the boundary of Honan, a helper caught up to us on a donkey. He had been written for months before and as we had not heard a word of him we had given up hope of him. He comes from Dr. Nevins, and is with Goforth. Our helper is a reliable church member from near Pang Chuang. On Thursday about two o'clock both boats arrived at the parting of the way. We said good-bye and parted, they going south to Hsun Hsien and Wei Hui Fu, and we going up the An Yang river to Changte Fu. Our mast was lowered at once, for from this out bridges to the number of twelve or thirteen span the river, which indeed is much narrower than the Wei River, but the water is beautifully clear and is a great contrast to the muddy Wei. During all our progress up this river crowds thronged the shore. The news quickly spread from village to village. Last year the brethren excited no crowds. This year we spent the whole day nearly in walking among the people and selling books. All were anxious to see the doctor as he had fore-clothes. Frequently they said I was not a foreign devil, they do still here. Others said we were Coreans, the only foreigners they ever saw or heard of. They express great surprise "that they understand our language." Their jargon is execrable. If this is the Honan dialect, save me from it. The great majority of the people speak very indistinctly. We speak good mandarin, and they say they understand every word. Of our helper they say they do not understand some words, because they are peculiar to his district. On Friday morning we were roused from sleep by the people calling on us to come out, which we did, selling many books before taking our breakfast. This day we sold to over 500 separate purchasers. The people would congregate on the bridges and wait for our arrival.

Friday night we came to a bridge recently repaired. It had good stone piers; most other bridges had wooden supports and were very primitive affairs. According to the public economy of China, a bridge is repaired by subscription. Accordingly a stately old man approached us with a yellow bundle in his arms. Carefully unfolding the official wrapper he held forth a large book for our inspection. I sought to buy him off with the gift of a Sabbath calendar sheet, and left for other parts in the crowd. But he was not to be bribed. He returned the sheet and came to the side of the boat, while his satellites came on board. Dr. McClure flourished his passport and the helper in a bold tone enquired of the venerable sage his honourable name. This scared him. "Why do they ask my name?" said he in a dazed way to the bystanders. He smelt a rat and fled up the bank. Later we asked his whereabouts, and learned that he had been seen cutting for the village some li away! The rope which was stretched across was let down and we passed under. Ingenious people, to build a bridge to hinder navigation, and then levy on the boats to pay for it. But they don't do things on the British plan in China. On Saturday we passed the bridge before which the brethren were stopped last year. The water this year is much lower and we scraped through. But in the afternoon we came to one too low to pass through. After much parley, the boatmen promised to take down the little cabin behind on Monday. So we made up our minds to spend Sabbath here. But before night the helper and I went off to a county fair and preached and sold many nooks. On Sabbath the helper and I walked four miles to another county fair, a very large one, lasting for three days, and preached and sold books. My Chinese dress I pronounce a complete success in enabling me to move freely among the crowd. Dr. McClure has been called foreign devil ten times to my once. A man once asked me confidentially if there was a foreign devil over there, meaning Dr. McClure, who was at the other end of the village. There is, however, no concealment in the dress. I always freely avow my identity and the people express approval of my plan. On Sabbath evening I had a long and delightful talk in the moonlight with a Chinese countryman. I do not excite fear, and get along famously with the people. The active work of a doctor on the other hand rather requires the more handy foreign dress. On Monday we got up to shallow water and Dr. McClure and the helper set out for the city four miles away. We decided to occupy the same inn as last year in the south suburb and to go and come each day. We dine Chinese fashion at the inn, but Dr. McClure's cook, who remains on the boat, prepares breakfast and supper foreign style. Everything is quiet and clean here on the boat,