

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING PREDICTIONS FULFILLED AND UNFULFILLED.

BY ENOXIAN.

How many of the predictions you have been hearing since you were a boy have been fulfilled? Not one in a thousand. Perhaps not one in ten thousand. Prophesying is as unsatisfactory as raising fall wheat at sixty cents a bushel.

One reason why the business is so unsatisfactory is because very few men of sense go into it. Sensible men know that the future is very uncertain and they are careful not to say positively what may happen ten or fifteen years hence. They know too, that the unexpected very often happens. One of the undoubted signs of a downright fool is the habit of speaking presumptuously and positively of coming events.

Do you remember the predictions that the old dominie used to make. The smart boy that he said would some day astonish the world, turned out, perhaps, a mule driver on the western prairies. The boy that he said would never amount to anything has been a prominent and influential man for twenty years. School predictions are often falsified. Once in a while a bright fellow fulfils the predictions made about him by his teachers and friends, but such cases are exceptional.

College predictions may come nearer the mark, but even the wisest of professors are often mistaken when they undertake to predict the future of their students. It was understood that Principal Willis kept a private journal in which he wrote notes on all the students who attended his classes and made an estimate of their probable future. That journal, if it exists, would make interesting reading matter now. We heard the principal once say with great confidence that his "Young friend in Guelph has the brains to put himself in a first place." The "young friend in Guelph" has been principal of the Montreal College for over a quarter of a century. If all the predictions in the alleged journal turned out as well as that one, the principal was a long way above most of our modern prophets. We rather suspect, however, that few of the estimates were so near the mark as the one made about the "young man in Guelph." College predictions are not much safer than school predictions. You never can be sure of how anybody will turn out.

Political predictions are perhaps the most uncertain of all. Before any general election every corner grocery lounge and every talkative fellow on the back concessions can tell you just how it is going to be. Sir John McDonald's overthrow was confidently predicted many a time, but during his long career he was badly beaten just once. Many phrases have been coined to describe the manner in which Mowat was to be beaten during the last twenty years, but Sir Oliver is there yet, and more likely than not to be there for some years to come. Several people have to be consulted before he retires.

It is sad to think that so many of the good things predicted about confederation have never taken place. Great statesmen who had grown old and weary in racial and sectarian war thought that when the young nation took a fresh start people would cease hating one another because they bowed at different altars. The statesmen who took this hopeful view were mistaken. Joe Howe used to say that "the smaller the pit the fiercer the rats fight." The pit was enlarged so as to extend from the Atlantic to the Pacific, but the rats fight more fiercely than ever. Sectarian strife is more intense now than it was twenty-five years ago. The separate school question is back again, and back to stay as long as money, or position, or votes can be made out of it.

McDonald, Brown, Tilley, Tupper Galt and others took the optimistic view at confederation. Dorion, Joly, Holton, and one or two more were the pessimists. It does sometimes seem as if the pessimistic predictions were to be fulfilled.

Ecclesiastical predictions of the blue ruin type are nearly always wrong. Just go back in memory to the days of your boyhood and

recall the number of times the ruin of the Presbyterian church in Canada, or of some of its parts, was predicted. The old Free church was to be ruined by the union with the U. P.'s in '61. Then all the churches were to be ruined by the union of '75. Presbyterianism was ruined when hymns were introduced, ruined again when organs were allowed, and it would be ruined a third time if ministers were inducted for a term, a fourth time if a modified system of itinerancy were adopted. In fact, there is no saying how many times a church may be ruined and still go on with its work.

There is no individual congregation concerning which ruin was not predicted every time it took a step in advance.

How would it do if we all candidly admitted that we don't know anything about the future.

There is just one kind of a man more foolish than a modern prophet, and that is the man who pays any attention to his predictions.

FROM MISSIONARY ASSOCIATIONS.

BY REV. J. B. DUNGAN.

The Home Mission Fund and all the other funds of the church will not receive the liberal support to which they are so well entitled until all her ministers throughout the whole church see to it that some form of missionary organization is put in operation in their congregations. In rural districts, villages, and in the larger towns, to trust to Sabbath collections is a delusion. The distance that many of our members and adherents have to travel, the badness of the roads at certain seasons of the year, the inclemency of the weather, sickness and other causes render attendance at church very irregular. It may happen—in fact it does frequently happen—that on the very days appointed for the taking up of the collections, not half, sometimes not one-third of the people are present. Even when the attendance is fairly good the offerings are not so liberal as they would be if monthly or quarterly calls were made from house to house by members of the Mission Band. There are many advantages connected with the adoption of this or some such plan for raising necessary contributions. It is very important that our young people should become interested in the work of the church and have some share in furthering it. As giving is a good habit that gathers strength by frequent exercise, it would prove highly beneficial to the givers themselves. In announcing the monthly or quarterly calls the minister would have a favorable opportunity for pressing upon the hearers the duty of giving systematically and freely in support of the gospel at home and abroad. He would, moreover, feel it to be necessary to impart at suitable intervals information concerning the operations of the church in home and foreign fields. The spiritual tone of the congregation would be improved. That a special blessing would accompany and follow a dutiful regard to God's will in the matter of giving is not open to doubt. If wisely and kindly put before them as alike their duty and privilege to give, no minister need fear or should fear his people taking offence. Nor need he be at all apprehensive lest they should give too largely, and he may keep his mind easy as to the question of his own support. It is not those congregations that give sparingly, but those that give bountifully that are most honorable in this particular. Perhaps, very likely indeed, the rich and well-to-do portion of our friends could and should do better—not in an emergency merely, but habitually—in the way of giving. Many such are open-handed and generous, it must be admitted, and so are deserving of just recognition. Too much dependence, however, should not be placed in this source of revenue. What is most urgently needed is the help of all the congregations all over the church in cities, towns, villages, country sections and mission stations. How this help is to be got—got from all our congregations regularly, and in measure proportioned to their resources, except through the agency of some missionary association—I cannot understand. I find it difficult to believe that there are many, if any, of our ministers who do not know per-

fectly well that the paltry dribbles of Sunday collections will never—in the existing state of matters at least—meet the urgent requirements of the church's work. SENEX.

FRAGMENTARY NOTES.

MONTREAL, THE COMMERCIAL CAPITAL—
THE FAY MILLS REVIVAL.

Although the thermometer stood 22 below zero, it did not in the least damp the fervour of Christian zeal which rose to fever heat during the stay of the Rev. Mr. Mills, the celebrated evangelist, who visited this city, and who had a most successful mission, if one could judge by the size and enthusiasm of the meetings, which were crowded to overflowing, hundreds having been turned away from every service.

It is not too much to say that Mr. Mills made a good impression by his visit, and by his powerful addresses and sermons not only awakened many careless souls to a sense of their danger, but stirred up and strengthened many believers. Such a season of spiritual privilege will, no doubt, be a lasting benefit to a large city like Montreal; and as usual, under such circumstances, views have been expressed which will not always be endorsed by all our intelligent people, still the general effects must be good. Mr. Mills' assistant, Rev. Mr. Fleming, is still in the city, and continues to hold meetings, which are well attended. As a result of the visit of Mr. Mills, there will be large additions to the membership of the various churches, a thing gratifying to all Christian people.

Montreal may properly be called the city of "brotherly love." I hardly think there is a town or city in Canada where the Protestant denominations work and co-operate more cordially than in Montreal; and why should they not? Protestants are in a minority, and by the judicious efforts of the French Evangelization Society, of which the Rev. J. S. Taylor is secretary, are steadily gaining ground, and are winning many over from the Romish faith.

OUR HOME MISSION.

This mission has a strong advocate in the Rev. Dr. Robertson, the superintendent, who would seem to be the most ubiquitous of men, as he is always turning up; but he is always welcome to the pulpits of our church and to the homes of our ministers. He is an indefatigable worker, and from personal conversations which I have had with missionaries in the Northwest, and on the Pacific coast, he is doing a grand work for our church, and it will only be when the history of Presbyterianism in the Northwest and British Columbia is written, that his herculean labours will be thoroughly understood.

Dr. Robertson arrived here on Saturday evening and preached in St. Paul's Church on Sunday morning, and in Melville Church, Cote St. Antoine, in the evening. The latter is one of the rising congregations of Montreal, and the esteemed pastor, the Rev. John McGillivray, is making his influence felt on all sides. The present church, which is not only a new church but a handsome one, is already too small, and in the near future must be enlarged. Mr. McGillivray is well known in the west; he is brother of Rev. Donald McGillivray, the missionary in China, in whom the congregation of St. James Square Church, Toronto, takes such a friendly interest. Mrs. McGillivray is also from St. James Square congregation, and ably seconds his efforts in the important work which lies before him in Montreal.

THE AMERICAN PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH is a prosperous congregation; the building, which is situated on the corner of Dorchester and Drummond Streets, is among the finest church edifices in Montreal. The congregation is thoroughly united and harmonious, and under the leadership of their new and youthful pastor, has before it a bright future.

The pastor is the Rev. T. S. McWilliams, M.A., who has recently entered on the work here, and judging from the congregation present, the new pastor has every reason to be encouraged. The large church was filled in every part, and the service was such as to edify and strengthen the large audience. The occasion was the ordination of three new

elders which made the apostolic number twelve in the congregation; and the minister prayed "that there might not be a Judas in the twelve." The Rev. Professor Ross, of the Presbyterian College, gave the charge to the congregation, which was replete with wise counsel and instruction. The speaker insisted on three points: Honor, obedience, and encouragement, all of which he enforced in simple but beautiful language.

The communion was dispensed at the close and from the statements of the pastor, I concluded that the congregation had benefited largely from the revival services which had been held, as there were nearly 100 had applied to be received into membership.

The Rev. Mr. McWilliams is a native of the United States, has a youthful appearance, but a grave and impressive manner, and evidently understands the polity of the Presbyterian church, and although he admitted that differences of opinion existed as to the Confession of Faith, yet he stood up for the Confession as a whole.

Professor Ross will be a source of great strength to the teaching staff of the Presbyterian College. He is a graduate of Queen's University, Kingston, and held a charge in Perth, Ontario. He is yet only in middle life; and has, to all appearance, many years of usefulness before him. K.

Montreal, March, 1894.

THE HYMNAL AND PSALTER.*

The service of praise in public worship is one well worthy of the earnest consideration of Presbytery. It has a most important bearing on the future of the church. The present discussions in Presbyteries, guiding the decision of the General Assembly, will determine largely the character of the book soon to be issued; therefore the question deserves our best attention. There are some principles which, if adopted at the outset, will make the course of Presbytery clearer.

1. The book of praise should be adapted for the use of the entire congregation, both as to words and music; hymns should be clothed in such simple language that the sentiment can be clearly understood by the average worshipper; the spirit of devotion should pervade it. It may contain lofty thoughts, exalted conceptions of God expressive of adoration, thankfulness or petition, yet the language be simple.

2. Our hymnal should contain the best of the hymns of the past, but at the same time there should be an effort to supply such hymns as will express the devotional spirit of our own time. There is no doubt the work of the church in connection with special services, aided by what seems to be a tendency of our age, have formed a taste for warmer expressions of devotion, and more exuberance of thankfulness and joy; more pressing invitations to the unsaved, and tender pleading for their salvation, than are to be found in the stately classical hymns of our collection. It will be observed that about ninety per cent. of the hymns sent down for consideration are of the stately class, and these united to the very large number of the present book will give an overwhelming preponderance to this high class of hymns. This is, perhaps, as it should be. The ideal hymns should give tone to the book, in time their educative influence will raise the popular conception of praise. Nevertheless the church will be wise if she incorporates a very considerable number of the best of these so-called evangelistic hymns. It will probably deter pastors occasionally at Sabbath evening meetings, and in special services from abandoning our hymnal and using Sankey's 750 Sacred Songs and Solos. Besides there are a great many devoted servants of Jesus who love to sing these hymns, their tastes and feelings should find expression in the new hymnal as well as the tastes of others. The General Assembly's committee only recommends one additional hymn of this class, No. 113, in the list of proposed new hymns. Quite a number will, of course, be transferred from the children's hymnal to the church hymnal, but we think there should have been more effort to meet the reasonable desire for hymns of this class. There may

* Paper on the Psalmody and Hymnal Questions read to the Presbytery of Lindsay, on Feb. 20, by Rev. David Y. Ross, M.A., convener of the Committee on Remit.