

Our Contributors.

THE BEST, THE CHEAPEST IN THE END.

BY KNOXIAN.

The time has about come for bringing out the economy argument in Church affairs. The reports of the General Assembly will soon be published, and as the champions of the cheap look over the figures they will strike an attitude, look as distressed as if they had a severe pain somewhere, and say:

COULDN'T THIS BE DONE FOR LESS?

Of course it could. Almost anything can be done in a kind of a way and for a short time for less money than a sensible man pays for doing it.

Mr. Mowat gets \$5,000 a year for governing this little Province of Ontario. Any number of men could be found who would undertake the job for nothing. Indeed, a goodly number might be found who would gladly pay a bonus for getting the job. There are men in Ontario who would pay a good round sum for the honour of being Premier. The champion of the cheap would say, Here is a man who won't take the Premiership at less than \$5,000 a year; here is another who will pay a bonus of \$5,000 for the honour; give the place to the man with the bonus. The people of Ontario don't reason in that way. They know Mr. Mowat's services are cheap at \$5,000 a year, and that he could earn double that amount at his business. They also know that the bonus man might be a very dear Premier in a very short time. The bonus man might turn the Province into bankruptcy, and the people don't want Ontario to wind up in that way.

The Provincial Treasurer gets \$4,000 a year for taking care of the Ontario purse. Now there are patriots in this Province who would take charge of the Provincial purse for nothing. There are men who would promise to pay the Province a handsome percentage for the privilege of handling the Provincial purse. But when they handled it for a time there might be nothing in it. It might be as lean and limp and thin as the pocket-book of the average country parson.

We pay our Church officials wretchedly small salaries as compared with the salaries paid elsewhere. The Foreign Mission Board of the American Presbyterian Church has three secretaries at \$5,000 a year each, a fourth at \$3,000, and pays in addition \$6,767 for clerk hire. The people believe that is the best way to manage the fund, or they never would pay \$784,157 into the Foreign Mission Treasury. Catch an American pay his money into a fund that he thought was improperly managed. His remedy would be to stop paying until the management was made right, and he would apply the remedy at once. The fact is, it pays in the end to put a good man at any kind of work, in Church or State, and pay him a good salary. Our Church is in the happiest of all positions. We have the best of officials at very low salaries. In any other Presbyterian Church of any size Dr. Reid would have at least \$4,000 a year. He is worth that amount and more to Canadian Presbyterianism, but Canadian Presbyterianism will not acknowledge the indebtedness until the good Doctor dies. Mr. Warden is as able a business man as any secretary of any American Board who draws his \$5,000 a year. He is a much abler man than some of them. Dr. Wardrope and Dr. Cochrane manage our Foreign and Home Mission work for almost nothing, and board themselves. If anybody proposed to increase the little salary of any of our ecclesiastical officials, the champion of the cheap would instantly rise and say:

A MAN CAN BE HAD FOR LESS.

Of course he could. Any number of men would take charge of the funds for nothing. Some might even pay a small percentage for the privilege of managing them. But when they have managed them for a time there might be no funds there. That is where the trouble comes in. Very cheap management of a fund is always likely to be hard on the fund. Supposing, for example, the Church should advertise for tenders for the treasurership of the Widows' Fund. There would be some very low tenders. Some philanthropic man might offer to take the management for nothing, but after a little it might be found that he had taken the fund too.

You are a capitalist. You wish to invest a few thousand dollars. A thoroughly reliable law firm will charge you a good percentage for investing that

money. Reliable men don't work for nothing. But you can easily have it invested for nothing if you wish. Any number of men will take it from you. Getting it back, however, is the problem.

There is no man's work in the Church or in the world that somebody won't undertake to do for less than the man receives who is doing it. The real question is, Would it be economy to let the cheap man try? There is a so-called economy which is the worst kind of extravagance.

A good dentist draws your tooth in a few seconds with comparatively little pain, and charges you, perhaps, 50 cents. An amateur gets a couple of men to hold your head, puts his old rusty forceps on your jaw, takes a pry on the side of your face, the room goes round, and you yell; there is one awful, final wrench and out comes your tooth, and part of the jaw along with it. He charges you 10 cents. Then you pay a surgeon \$20 for fixing up your jaw. Was that an economical transaction? It always pays in the end to secure the services of the best man, or buy the best thing—if one can at all afford to do so.

P.S.—The champion of the cheap is seldom a business man. Business men know that it pays in the end to get the best lawyer, the best doctor, the best mechanic, the best man of every kind that one can afford. Sometimes the champion of the cheap is a minister, whose congregation pays almost nothing into the funds. We could mention another class that furnish many champions of the cheap—but we won't.

COLONIE AGRICOLE ET PENITENTIAIRE DE METTRAY.—III.

THE MODEL REFORMATORY INSTITUTION OF FRANCE.

OFFICERS AND ASSISTANTS.

There are sixty-five officers and assistants, paid and unpaid, all having been trained for their special duties. They are intelligent, well-educated men, and exercise great influence over the character and spirit of the *colons*. The principal men are well paid, and have comfortable houses, and their wives are ladies. The salaries amount to \$6,410, and allowances to \$4,560. This seems a large staff, but they are all required by the plan of the institution, which is out of criminals to make honest, respectable and useful citizens. There are seven Sisters of Charity who take charge of the cooking, washing, work-room, infirmary and pharmacy.

ATTEMPTS TO ESCAPE

are few, and these are confined to boys newly arrived, and unaccustomed to the ways of the colony. Considering the character of these young lads, and the fact that there are no walls or other enclosures to prevent escape, this seemed to me the most remarkable thing about Mettray. The number who attempt to run away is now not more than 18 1/2 per cent. When a boy does run off a flag is hoisted on the steeple of the church, during the day, and a lamp at night, and a reward of thirty or forty francs is given to the person who brings him back. Since 1840, when the colony was founded, until the date of my visit, and I presume to the present, there has not been one successful escape. There are lads there from fifty-two departments, so that the study of character would be interesting to a psychologist. The Breton is obstinate, persevering, devout and fond of field work; the Norman is better adapted to take charge of cattle; the Parisian is intelligent, but full of levity, and so on. A boy who had twice attempted to escape from prison, at the risk of his life, when asked why he did not fly now when there was nothing to hinder, replied: "I have thought well of this, but there is something here which prevents me. At Mettray there are no walls." Another said, "I could easily get away from here, and have often wished to try, but when I think of the confidence of the directors in us, I could not find it in my heart to do it." Lads living near spend the Sundays at the colony, mix with their school fellows, eat at the same table and so look forward with much pleasure to the meeting. "When I caught sight of the steeple of the colony," said a boy once to M. de Metz, "I could not walk any longer, I was forced to run." All this shows the influence Mettray has over the young criminals.

THE PATRONAGE SYSTEM.

M. de Metz soon found that to complete the reforma-

tion commenced at Mettray it would be necessary to devise some means of having a supervision of the boys after they left to enter on life's duties alone. To abandon them to their surroundings and their own evil inspiration at such a time would, in many cases, undo the good which, at so much cost and labour, had been effected. He therefore established, early in its history, an agency, whose duty was to watch with paternal solicitude over every colonist, to procure for him suitable employment, to correspond with him and assist him in every way. After the colony grew to large dimensions, the assistance was obtained of benevolently disposed individuals residing in the district where the youths were located to exercise a kindly surveillance over them. These persons are called Patrons, and amongst them are chief magistrates and other authorities, all being persons occupying respectable positions in society. It is no doubt due to this watchfulness that so small a proportion of the Mettray boys—from four to ten per cent.—fall back into vicious courses of life.

LA MAISON PATERNELLE.

Quite apart from the agricultural colony and the preparatory school is a third institution, or college of re-pression, which deserves a few sentences before closing my story of Mettray. In some families in France, as elsewhere, there are lads who will not submit to parental authority at home, nor to discipline at school or college. Chastisement only irritates such boys, and even gentleness fails to move them. They are perhaps expelled from school, and the parent sends them away to the army or navy to be subjected to strong wills and stricter discipline. French law authorizes a father, in such a case, to imprison his son; but what good effect could confinement in an ordinary prison have upon such, even if the parent could bring himself to adopt such an expedient? M. de Metz felt there was a want in the French system of education in this matter, and long pondered how to meet it. At last he had erected in the grounds of Mettray the "Paternal House," to which boys of this class, under sixteen years of age, might be sent. In this each boy is assigned a small room, and while here he has no communication with any one. Even his name is unknown to any one except the director. A teacher is appointed to each, who superintends his studies, and, in the most interesting manner possible, continues the course on which he had entered at school in classics or science. This system of separation permits the application of distinct treatment in each case—in one great kindness, and in another severity. Reflection is constantly keeping before the boy's eyes the picture of his past life, and in solitude there is no place for pride or self-love. Soon labour seems an occupation for him, and even a pleasure. In this way, what he formerly considered a painful task becomes the greatest comfort, so that to be deprived of occupation would be the greatest punishment. Generally speaking, therefore, a brief sojourn suffices to cure the most rebellious, for in isolation there is nothing to arouse the spirit of insubordination. There are relapses, I was told, but they are rare. After the departure from Mettray, the director redoubles his care by correspondence, and even visits them, to encourage and to strengthen their good resolutions. During the first fifteen years of the Maison Paternelle, 800 boys were benefited by this strong but salutary discipline, many of them being the children of widows. Of course the expense to the parents is necessarily large, for nothing is spared to contribute to health, both of body and mind.

Afterward M. de Metz had a small house built, with a court on one side and a garden on the other, for each pupil, one room being occupied by the boy and others by the teacher. The partition separating the teacher's apartment from that of the pupil is pierced by small holes, furnished with an apparatus called in French *giltent*—a movable slide which can be opened only by the master. In this way the pupil, when shut up, is, in a sense, never alone. He can be seen at any time by his tutor. There are several of these isolated dwellings, each in the midst of an English garden, laid out in the most attractive style, so that after hard study the boy may have rest, his eyes and his imagination being diverted and refreshed by lovely scenery. In the court is apparatus for exercise of every kind; and from the height on which they are placed the valley of the Loire is visible to a great distance. Everything about these habitations was organized by a physician of great experience.