

FROM FLORIDA.

MR. EDITOR,—Opinions conflict very much this winter as to the progress and prospects of things in Florida. According to some, not only have finances gone astray, but even the condition of matters political and meteorological. It is too bad, the Opposition thinks, that the Democrats should have and hold all the power, offices and emoluments of the State. It is worse that biting cold, a temperature below the freezing point, should usurp the place of the traditional warmth and balminess of this winter climate. It is worse, think the speculators and land agents, that they have this season failed to fill their coffers as speedily and full as heretofore. As far as there is any truth in these grumbings, and it is not far, the seeming evil is likely to work real good. The cold, which has been more severe than for fifty years, will not be likely to come with such force for another fifty years. It may be necessary then, as now, to kill off the hurtful excess of insect and vegetable life, which continual warmth produces. The thunderstorm, while startling us, does not darken the heaven, or burn up the earth, but brightens the one and cools the other; so the various disturbances of the winter will not destroy the balminess of the climate, or the prosperity of the people, but will make the one purer and the other more healthful than before.

INTEREST SHOWN IN THE PROGRESS OF RELIGION.

It is pleasant to observe, though not an unmixed good, an increased interest in the religious welfare and education of the people. A remarkable zeal for establishing churches and founding denominational colleges has of late manifested itself in South Florida. Thus the Congregationalists, who till recently had neither name nor church in Florida, nor indeed in any part of the South, have organized several churches, and have, during the past year, founded a college, called "Rollin College," at Winter Park in Orange County. Suitable buildings have been erected, professors appointed and the work of instruction commenced. It is wholly done by outside capital.

The Baptists have also in the past year founded a like institution at "De Land," in Volusia County, less than a hundred miles distant from the one first named. Its existence is also due to the zeal and liberality of a few persons of that denomination.

In the same section of the State the Methodists have also determined to establish a college, and are now taking steps to carry their purpose into effect. But they mean to train up the girls only in the way in which they wish them to go, that they and in turn their children may not depart therefrom. All these laudable enterprises are animated by a strong spirit of denominationalism, and though each has now a small following they may both promote the growth of the denomination and lead to larger views of education for all.

Our Presbyterian brethren have not, as yet, to any extent, entered on this line of Christian enterprise. They have operated hitherto, very much as we do in Canada, through State institutions. Proposals, however, are being made, mostly by Northern brethren, with a view to promote higher education, under the auspices of the Church.

GROWTH OF THE CHURCH.

Twenty years ago there was but one Presbytery in the State of Florida. At the present time there are three and a fourth about to be erected. The mother Presbytery, i.e., the Presbytery of Florida, gave off, in 1878, seven ministers and eleven churches to form the Presbytery of St. John's, Florida. The new Presbytery now has fifteen working ministers and thirty-four churches, and more than three times as many members as at first. The mother Presbytery, which covers the now settled region known as Middle Florida, has also increased, having now upon her roll some sixteen ministers and thirty-three churches. The third Presbytery is that of East Florida, in connection with the Northern Presbyterian Church. It covers almost the same territory as the Presbytery of St. John's. There has recently been but little friction between the two bodies, because in the new and rapidly-widening field there is room for both denominations.

The moral influence of Presbyterianism would undoubtedly be greater in the State if all the work were carried on through one organization. It is much to the credit of the Southern Presbyterians, who first occupied and worked the field, that they have agreed to harmonious co-working with their Northern brethren

in all parts of the field not occupied by themselves. Each agrees not to interfere with the work of the other, and one not to plant churches so as to weaken or interfere with those of the other. The East Florida Presbytery has on its roll the names of some eighteen ministers and twenty-two churches. The fourth Presbytery, which is now, or will shortly be, erected, will be called the Presbytery of "South Florida," and will take some of the ministers and churches of East Florida, with a number not included on any roll as yet.

If the work is diligently prosecuted in these fields we may expect, with God's blessing, much growth in the future. No doubt some of these new churches may fail to reach strength and maturity, but most of them, though feeble, have vitality, and will, with the progress of the country, acquire strength and numbers. No doubt but many more will soon be added to the present number. The great want in the development of the Florida field, as far as the Southern Church is concerned, is men and means. If she could afford to spend two or three times as much as she now does, she would reap one hundred-fold. She is, however, doing well. The Southern Church, in no part of her wide territory, has greater growth than in Florida.

GROWTH OF MEMBERSHIP.

The opening of spring has been brightened in the city of Jacksonville by a season of special religious service and blessing. Several providential circumstances favoured this happy state of things in the Southern Presbyterian Church. First, several of its young men had earnestly engaged in establishing a mission Sabbath school in East Jacksonville. Their work was blessed. One of them, a zealous and active merchant, aided by the others, effected the erection of a mission chapel for the accommodation of the school, and all who might assemble for public worship. Visiting ministers, of whom there are a good many in winter, willingly helped the pastor of the church in maintaining religious services. A spirit of earnestness became manifest among the people. This acted helpfully on the mother church. At this juncture, the evangelists, Messrs Moody and Sankey, came to the city for two or three days' work. By God's blessing and the power of His Spirit, a deep interest was awakened among the people so that a goodly number from the chapel and in the church, in all about fifty, have united with God's people in this Church. The excellent pastor, the Rev. H. H. Dodge, writes me: "We have been greatly blessed since your visit, our communion season on the first Sabbath of this month was the most precious we have ever had. The church was filled to overflowing, and a deep spiritual interest was felt as well in, as by, the unusually large number of new communicants."

In another place, the town of Maitland, in Orange County, some two hundred miles farther south than Jacksonville, on a recent Sabbath, we aided the Rev. Mr. McCarkle, the worthy pastor of the Presbyterian Church in the above town, in dedicating their newly-erected church, we preaching the dedication sermon. Soon after that happy day, a deep religious interest developed in the community, chiefly among the Methodists and Presbyterians. The beautiful new church has been honoured to become the birthplace of many souls, some twenty to thirty of whom have since made a profession of faith in Christ and united with the Church. The growth of the cause of Christ in these new places furnishes specimens the like of which is going on in others. They speak precious words of encouragement to young ministers entering upon mission fields whether in Florida or in Canada, to sow by all waters, to sow in the morning and not withhold their hand in the evening. The church dedicated in Maitland, the preacher said, was the twelfth Presbyterian Church in that county. He said that just fifteen years before he had enjoyed the pleasure of dedicating the first Presbyterian Church ever built in the county, and now see what God has so speedily wrought!

I thank you for sending THE CANADA PRESBYTERIAN after me. I am always glad to receive its budget of interesting items and newsy pages. Pardon me for here quoting the remark concerning it made to your correspondent by one who is himself the editor of a first-class religious paper. Said he: "It is one of the most newsy and readable religious papers I take up."

Florida, April 15, 1886.

MORE ABOUT PEOPLE THAT CAN'T BE PUT DOWN.

BY OUTSIDER.

"Knoxonian's" article on the above subject set me a-thinking. It may not be amiss, however, to jot down a few cogitations I have had about the matter.

The devil can't be put down. He is the same irrepressible devil that he was "when Adam delved and Eve span." The tale-bearer cannot be put down. The slanderer cannot be put down. The mischief-maker cannot be put down. The conceited person cannot be put down. The selfish politician cannot be put down. The charlatan cannot be put down. Manifestly, therefore, the mere fact that people can't be put down is not to their credit. There are those who ought to get down, without any putting.

Again, many have been put down without any blame attaching to them. The martyrs were put down. Thousands of patriots have been put down. Many good and worthy ministers have been put down. Conscientious people, who would not tell a lie nor do a mean act to keep themselves up, have been put down. Jesus Christ was put down, and had He been only a man, would have stayed down. The Holy Spirit can be put down. "Quench not the Spirit."

Moreover, it is of the very nature of self-denial and self-sacrifice to submit to be put down. The law of the spiritual kingdom often requires it. "He that exalteth himself shall be abased, and he that humbleth himself shall be exalted."

Many who are in high places would be put down, while others who have been put down would be lifted up, if public sentiment were right. The low moral qualities of their fellows form the pedestal on which many have climbed into conspicuous notice. Their exaltation is neither creditable to themselves nor their supporters. In point of fact it is a fictitious affair altogether.

Pigmies are pigmies still though perched on Alps,
And pyramids are pyramids in vales.

One is reminded here of a discourse preached by one of the early Methodist preachers on the text: "The men that have turned the world upside-down are come hither also." The heads of discourse were:

1. The world is wrong side up.
2. It needs turning upside-down.
3. We are the people to do it.

If things were set to rights in this disordered world there would be some startling changes of position. Many that are now up would be put down, and many that are now put down would be uplifted. Revised public opinion would ask of the upstart, "Who art thou, O great mountain?" and would say to the ignored man of real worth, "Friend, come up higher." We have the prediction that "every valley shall be exalted, and every hill shall be brought low" when the Great Righter of earthly wrongs shall appear on the scene.

It is no proof of "first-class work" that a man cannot be put down, because the great mass of those who judge the work are incompetent for the task. If paintings of every class, good, bad and indifferent, were submitted to the general public for adjudication, the daubs would get the premiums. Moral performances are judged in a similar manner by mankind at large, until they become popular. "Not this man, but Barabbas."

One of our Gospel hymns has this refrain: "The crowning day is coming, by and by." It is not yet. We must await the final scrutiny and award of Omniscience. "The fire shall try every man's work, of what sort it is." Not a few of the best men and women on earth have to toil now without appreciation, in solitude and amid discouragement. "The world knoweth them not, because it knew Him not."

Full many a gem of purest ray serene
The dark unfathomed caves of ocean bear:
Full many a flower is born to blush unseen,
And waste its sweetness on the desert air.

The moral is, do not live for the transient present. "Judge nothing before the time, until the Lord come, who both will bring to light the hidden things of darkness, and will make manifest the counsels of the hearts; and then shall every man" (who really deserves it) "have his praise from God." (R. V.)

POLLOKSHAW'S U. P. congregation has decided not to introduce instrumental music at present, only 137 out of 500 members having voted in its favour.