

debts by instalments. If such a plan were adopted creditors would be satisfied because they would get their money; debtors would not complain because they would not be crushed to ruin as at present; and, looking higher than either, justice would be tempered with that quality which a high authority assures us is an attribute of the Great Judge of us all.

WM. TRANT.

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The Old Church on the Hill.

THE congregation in which I was born, baptized, catechized and brought up contained some elements worthy of a better historian. It was originally composed of a handful of Scotch folk just emerging from the log-shanty period of their settlerdom—men who had “the root of the matter in them.” During that time their weekly Bethel had been only the living room of a neighbor's shanty, and their environment demanded little in the way of elegance of attire in the place of worship, nor did any reason exist why their bearing towards each other should ever stiffen into anything more than everyday familiarity. Afterwards, in the next stage of the church's evolution, when they were called upon to live up to a white frame building, with frosted windows and a big porch, they were still by no means slaves to convention in manners and customs, and many clung to the fashion of the days when a man could go to the meeting in his shirt-sleeves, a clean everyday flannel shirt being made to do for the Sabbath's day's wear too; the which brilliant garments, while they made the dance and the logging-bee to rejoice and blossom as the rose, when worn with a sadness of countenance befitting the Lord's day, became sober and comparatively unobtrusive finery. Traces of the easy days when parliamentary procedure was an unnecessary impediment in their business gatherings are found even now in their periodical solemn rows, politely termed congregational meetings. Some of these Barriresque characters still dominate the congregation. Consequently the music follows the old-fashioned pattern of the Covenanters who sang upon the hillsides and among the heather a hundred years ago; and the mention of an organ in the service would cause a pious shiver to run down our Scottish spines. The singing is led by a precentor only, and nothing less than the Psalms of David or the Paraphrases of Scripture, sung to such tunes as “Dundee's wild warbling measures or plaintive Martyrs, worthy of the name,” is ever borne through the sanctified air of this church. The singing is radically different from that of a city congregation. Instead of being alarmed lest we are heard beyond our own pew, and so become disagreeably conspicuous, it is the aim and object of each individual there to be heard above all the rest. One dishonorable person used to take a mean advantage when we got to the second or third verse, and start in a note or two before the precentor. A certain tune, beloved by the men folk, had a solo for the bass, who would hold their breath a line ahead so as to be ready to burst upon it. A manly old woman whom, as a child, I remember sitting across the aisle from our pew, who ay praised her Maker wi' a' her birr, and sang through everything, used always to join the men in this performance.

The church itself, a low rakish erection, was just the usual white frame building which the country editor delights to refer to as “a sacred edifice,” and the severe simplicity of its outward appearance was not contradicted by any inward grace. It had no “storied windows richly dight.” They were frosted most puritanically with white paint. No more subtle means of ventilation being provided, in summer they were thrown wide open, and at the evening service it was a priceless boon to be allowed to sit next a window through which our wandering thoughts and vain imaginations careered after stray crows or solitary cranes flapping across the sunset fields, or were entertained by the challenges of an irreverent, pugilistic robin calling from the tombstone of some departed president of the township agricultural society; and through it all to perceive the delicate back-ground of sound sent up by the crickets and mild-eyed melancholy frogs in the beaver meadow.

The pulpit, with its red damask cushion and adjuncts, formed the sole piece of color in the wide desolation of white-wash. As to the pulpit itself, little railings and flights of steps, fretwork, corner posts painted a most barefaced imitation of stone, with wide cracks running up and down them, made up a unique piece of ecclesiastical furniture, resembling

an elaborated witness box, and when the minister stood up in it, he was away up near the ceiling some place. When our old pastor gave up his charge, his successor, a Knox College young man burning with zeal, rested not day nor night until the pulpit was lowered and made to look not quite so like the one from which John Knox harangued Mary Queen of Scots.

The whole building was heated by two stoves, both at the end opposite the pulpit, and long, dreary stretches of stovepipe, supported on wooden posts, wandered disconsolately up the length of the church, turned aside to avoid the sacred neighborhood of the pulpit, and thence proceeded to their separate chimneys, one leaving on the wall, as it went, a large brown stain of soot. These two stoves, however fiercely and viciously they ramped and roared, never abated in the least degree the rigor of the climate at the northern end of the edifice, and in frosty weather the breath of the worshippers near the pulpit sent up a steady incense during the whole service.

I remember clearly when the collection was taken up by two grey-bearded elders who each thrust in and out of the pews a pole about six feet long with a small black velvet bag or pocket attached to the end. This sound-deadening velvet arrangement put a premium on copper coin, and those rare ones who dropped in five-cent pieces felt bitterly that they gained no credit thereby.

The crowning glory of this regime, the thistle on top of a haggis, was Hendry the old janitor, one of those loud-throated Scotchmen who never converse, but always shout and enjoy being shouted at. It is thought to be a sign of sterling qualities and sound principles. He was a man who feared not the minister neither regarded the session. He had none of the self-effacing suavity and politeness that are the beautiful earmarks of a city sexton. He wadna' gang the length o his fit to get the church key for a person on a week day.

At the evening service he insisted that the church be empty and lights out about three minutes after the last word in the benediction; and the boys had often to grope round in the dark after their hats while they listened to his remarks that it was time a' decent fowk were in their beds. He himself had never gaid hashin' aboot at nights, and hence at seventy-three years of age he looked scarcely fifty. Once our minister stopped in his sermon and asked timidly that Mr. So and So, naming Hendry, should shut the door, as he felt chilly. Hendry sat stolidly in his seat, and thinking he had not been heard, the minister preferred his request once more, whereupon a cavernous mouth was opened, and Hendry roared, not by any means as gently as a sucking dove, “There are nae doors open here.” On Sabbath morning when the congregation was assembling, and the gallant old stoves at the end of the church were doing their best to ameliorate the extreme frigidity of the atmosphere, old Hendry would proceed solemnly up one aisle and down the other to test the temperature, sniffing vociferously, as if heat were felt by the sense of smell. At intervals he would remark, “She'll dae a'm thinkin'; she'll dae, a' fawncy; she'll dae,” which in the vulgar tongue would be, “I find that the church is sufficiently and equally heated.” When the young church members formed a Yung People's Society of Christian Endeavour, and held their meetings after the Sunday night service, Hendry took it as a direct onslaught on his early-retiring habits and formulated his declaration of independence one evening as he followed us out in the dark; “I'll hae nae mair o' thae on-gauns. A'm detairmined on that.”

But Hendry's long blustering reign came to an ignominious close when a new church, magnificent in stained glass and other adornments, reared its gorgeous red-brick height on the main street, and the old church was abandoned. His place is filled by a Chesterfieldian young man, whose care for the furnace is equalled only by his deftness in the matter of polishing lamp chimneys; but it is difficult to tell whether his flock are any more whole hearted and sincere in their comfortable polished pews than those in Hendry's tempestuous charge.

JEAN GIBSON.

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A wholesome and feeling view of the woman question, by Mrs. Burton Smith, of Georgia, is to appear in the March *Popular Science Monthly*. Mrs. Smith entitles her essay: “The Mother as a Power for Woman's Advancement,” and shows that women, especially mothers, have opportunities for advancement far superior to what any proposed laws could give them.