

St. John's Church Record, And Parish Notes.

EDITED BY THE RECTOR, ASSISTED BY MEMBERS OF THE
YOUNG MEN'S ASSOCIATION.

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PARISH NOTES.

The end of another parochial year naturally brings with it a consideration of progress, of plans formed in time past, with the measure of their accomplishment, and, above all, a survey of the state of our church as a religious society, existing for the spiritual benefit of all its members. Two interesting letters, in our last and present numbers, have brought before us some important issues, the consideration and impartial discussion of which cannot but be of benefit to our readers. The letter of "TIMON," in our March number, was a declaration of war against the system of proprietary pews, in answer to which another correspondent urges the plea of present necessity, at least as far as regards the renting of seats. He is right, there can be no doubt, in urging that in the present depressed state of our city and province, with population decreasing and enterprise seemingly at a stand-still, it would be a very ill-chosen moment to make an appeal involving a considerable effort of sacrifice. But it is an advantage to have our eyes thoroughly awakened to the situation and our purpose fixed firmly upon a future amelioration. It cannot be a satisfactory feeling to any of us to realise that this is the only church in Canada which sells its seats to the highest bidder. An atheist, or a man of notoriously evil character, might own seats and sublet them to whom he pleased. Against such an evil, it is cheering to think that all ecclesiastical parties are at one. High Churchmen, to their honor be it said, have always advocated free seats under all circumstances. And the Evangelical party, now worthily represented in Canada by Wycliffe College and the *Evangelical Churchman*, are not likely to be behind hand in the support of such a cause. Our correspondent TIMON is correct in reminding us that Mr. Troop appealed successfully to his people to abandon rented pews, and to give the former payment as a simple offering to the church. It may be said that this was the exceptional case of a small and wealthy congregation; but we are informed that St. Martin's Church is still in debt, and so capable a churchwarden as Mr. Strachan Bethune, Q. C., would hardly have assented to a Quixotic plan likely to injure the financial status of his church. But another case is more forcible. When invited to accept the rectorate of St. Paul's in Halifax, Mr. Hague laid down as a condition that pew rents must be abolished. The church then was not in good circumstances. The congregation had much dimin-

ished owing to various causes. But the effort had to be made, and it has been as successful as at Montreal. And we believe that if we only take courage we shall find no real difficulty before us. Four years ago, at the first congregational meeting after the present rector's appointment, the question was brought up by Mr. W. M. Jarvis, who generously offered to surrender his own pews to the corporation with the view of finally putting an end to the abuse. The topic was not further discussed at the time, and other matters, such as the need for a new Sunday-school, have since occupied our minds. But now the time is ripe, not for a hasty and ill-considered change, but for careful consideration and steadfast purpose for the future. A resolution will be submitted to the general meeting of the congregation on Easter Monday to this effect:

"That the Vestry be instructed not to sell in future any pews now belonging to the corporation, and (so far as possible) to obtain possession of all pews which are offered for sale, and to invite the voluntary surrender of ownership from those who desire that God's house, in course of time, shall be made free."

This resolution, it will be seen, does not touch upon the question of pew-rents, and therefore should cause no controversy. We trust that it will be unanimously accepted by a representative gathering, and that this will be the harbinger of new congregational life and of vigorous effort for the future.

The Lenten services have been well attended, even when the weather was very inclement. This was especially the case on Wednesday evenings, and the wish has been expressed that further instruction in Church history may be given in future. It is the purpose of the Rector to restore before long the weekly devotional service which Mr. Armstrong conducted nearly to the time of his decease, and when an assistant can be found, whether as curate or lay-reader, a Sunday afternoon Bible-class will also be arranged.

During the last nine months the Rector has been greatly helped in the important work of visiting our poor by Mrs. G. Whiting. Her tact and kindness make her visits most acceptable to all, and many cases of need have received prompt relief through her agency.

COLLEGE LIFE IN FREDERICTON.

College life in Fredericton has changed considerably during the last few years. Only five years ago the students still resided in the college and the freshmen trembled under the juniors' yoke. But in 1888 the blow fell, the students were driven out to seek homes in the city, and residence became a thing of the past, one of those institutions that would-be pessimists look back to and lament. The change materially had a great effect on the life of the students, whether for better or worse is a disputed question.

The advent of the ladies in 1886 was another blow to the nerves of the conservative student, but he is now getting accustomed to them, especially as the fear expressed that the