

## Our Contributors.

### DR. POLONIUS TO HIS SON WHO GOES TO THE GENERAL ASSEMBLY.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Your mother and I are very glad, my son, to learn that you are a member of the General Assembly. We are very anxious that you should acquit yourself well in the supreme court, and be a credit to your parents. Allow me to give you a few plain words of advice, which may be of some service to you when you take your seat in the highest court of the Church.

The Assembly meets this year in Hamilton. Hamilton is a generous, warm-hearted, ambitious city, largely Presbyterian. The typical Hamilton Presbyterian is a generous, large-hearted man. There is nothing small about him. Calvinism has done a good deal for Hamilton, and Hamilton has done a good deal for Calvinism. I congratulate you, my son, on the privilege of spending ten days in the good city at the head of the lake. If you don't have a good time the fault will be your own. Wherever you are sent to lodge you will be pretty certain to have a good home. If your mother and I hear that you have grumbled or made any fuss about your lodgings, we shall be forced to the painful conclusion that your parent on the female side was too economical in the use of the slipper in your young days. No young man brought up as you were should ever have any feeling other than that of gratitude toward his host and hostess. No gentleman ever has.

Let me tell you a little story, my son. Years ago a young minister attended his first Assembly in Hamilton. He was sent by one of the Hamilton ministers to lodge with a Hamilton merchant of those days. He went with considerable reluctance, as the merchant was a total stranger. He was warmly welcomed, and kindly treated. A friendship grew up that increased as the years rolled by. There is scarcely a room in the manse of that minister that does not contain some token of that good Hamiltonian's friendship. Years afterward this minister stood by the open grave of his friend, and as the coffin was let gently down, the tears could not be kept back. He felt that one of his kindest earthly friends was gone. Now, my son, perhaps you may make just such a friend as that young minister did when you are in Hamilton.

When you take your seat in the supreme court there are some things which you should not do. Don't sit on a back seat, and make sneering, cynical remarks about every member who takes part in the proceedings. If the business of the Church is to be done, any man with common sense enough to go at large ought to know that somebody must do it. Somebody must move resolutions, and read reports and discuss questions, and sit on committees. A member that can do nothing better in the supreme court of his Church than sit on a back seat and say Dr. A is pushing himself forward, or Dr. B is very officious or Prof. C is meddling, or Mr. D is trying to get his name in the minutes, has not the raw material in him out of which a good Assembly man can be made. All that may be true of a few men—very few—but to make such remarks about everybody who takes part in the proceedings is conduct that ought to be a long way beneath the character of a Presbyterian minister. Remember, my son, that bile and conceit are the principal sources from which such cynical remarks flow. Let the cynic get rid of his bile, and get a prominent place himself, and he will pose on the platform as pompously as anybody, and perhaps do very little business, and not do that little well.

If you take any part in the proceedings, my son, do it modestly and with the tone and manner of a gentleman who thinks he is right, but may possibly be mistaken. Older and wiser men than you have often been mistaken. Even your father has been mistaken at times. The whole General Assembly has made occasional mistakes. Five years ago the General Assembly started that Scheme called the "Common Fund" for the support of our colleges. The founders were so ecstatic at the birth of this Scheme that they asked the General Assembly to give thanks! Who gives thanks for that fund now? The bantering has the consumption or some other fell disease that makes it grow small by degrees and very much less, though not beautifully so. A good many Presbyterians, not conspicuously foolish, are getting ready to give thanks at its burial. No doubt the Scheme was

started with the best possible intentions, but the fact that it is said to be \$500 behind last year, and \$5,000 less than the Assembly asked, shows that the wisest and best men are quite liable to be mistaken. Therefore, my son, never dogmatize on doubtful and difficult questions. Dogmatism on such questions in the case of young, inexperienced men is too often nothing better than overgrown puppyism. If the wisest and best men in the Church are liable at times to go astray, young men like you should at least remember that you are not absolutely infallible.

You will observe, my son, before you are long in the General Assembly that much precious time is occasionally spent on matters of very little importance. You will observe that too frequently the supreme court takes ten times as much time in discussing *how* or *when* it is going to do a thing as it spends in doing the thing. Such delays are very exasperating. Job himself might lose his temper if he saw three or four hundred men, mostly ministers, spend fifteen minutes in discussing *how* they would do something, the doing of which took just five. But, my son, you should remember that all deliberative bodies work slowly. Our Assembly is not slower than any other deliberative body of the same numbers. It is very much faster and more orderly than some. Four hundred men with equal rights and privileges never do business quickly and never can. Self-government, my boy, means discussion. If we had a Pope in our Church he would run the whole thing himself. There would then be no discussions at all. No speeches either long or short—no resolutions or amendments or points of order, or anything of that kind. But, my son, you must have learned from your Church history that Presbyterian people do not take kindly to Popes—that is to say, those who are not on the watch for the Catholic vote don't. Sometimes an aspiring member has set himself up for Pope in the General Assembly, and some pastors have tried to act as Popes in their congregations, but so far the Pope business in the Presbyterian Church has been a conspicuous failure in all lands. The most courageous man scarcely ever tries it more than once. Therefore, my son, remember that self-government implies discussion, and discussion in large, or even small, bodies implies delay. You cannot have all the blessings of self-government and all the quiet of iron Pope rule at the same time, and you are not as wise a young man as you should be, considering your parentage, if you think so. If you talk too much about delay shrewd people will see that you have never been in Parliament, or in any large deliberative body, and your mother and I would be pained to know that people consider you *green*.

Some other day, before the Assembly meets, I will give you some plain directions on how to make speeches in the Assembly, and will also say something to you about what you should put in your valise along with your linen, etc. Meantime, my son, ponder over the few words I have spoken to you today, and resolve to acquit yourself in the supreme court in a manner that will bring credit to your parents.

### WINTER STATIONS ON THE MEDITERRANEAN.—I.

#### INTRODUCTORY PARAGRAPH.

I propose to describe, in a few letters, the leading characteristics of some of the winter stations on the shore of the Mediterranean—particularly those on the Western Riviera—that portion which extends from Hyères to Genoa—a distance of 203 miles. My object is to aid in a general way invalids and others in selecting the locality which offers the best climate, and the greatest variety of distractions (in the French sense) or means of passing the time pleasantly and profitably. I may begin by saying that the parts of each station sometimes differ more from each other than the stations themselves. None of these are entirely exempt from cold winds; all suffer more or less from the Mistral, or north-west wind.

I shall state some facts regarding the physical features and social customs, as well as the climate, of the different stations between Hyères and San Remo—the former of which is considered the coolest—mean winter temperature, 47.4 degs. Fahr., and the latter the mildest—mean winter temperature, 48.89 degs.—of all the winter resorts on this coast.

As regards the expense of living, I may say that while some places are much dearer than others, those who arrive in good time can make special arrange-

ments with the proprietors of hotels and *pensions* to suit the purse of each—say from eight to twelve francs per day. The charges in the height of the season vary from ten to twenty francs per day.

To invalids who need quiet, sunny walks, Hyères and Bordighera are strongly recommended by those who have made a study of this part of the Riviera. Let me begin with

#### HYÈRES,

the most southerly of these health resorts, as well as the nearest to Paris and England—which is fifty-three miles east of Marseilles and eleven miles east of Toulon, the great French arsenal on the Mediterranean. Like all the winter stations on this coast, Hyères consists of an old town on the sides of a steep hill, to which has recently been added a new town, having fine boulevards lined with handsome shops, good hotels and comfortable *pensions*, fitted to attract foreigners. Villas, too, are built in pretty spots for the use of rich families, with carriage-houses and every modern convenience. This, like all these winter stations, has suffered for some years from the presence of cholera at Toulon and Marseilles, else it would, doubtless, have increased still more in size and in prosperity.

A plain, some two miles in extent, separates Hyères from the sea, and the wooded Maute mountains (2,556 feet) protect it, to some extent, from the north winds. Palm trees are planted in different parts of the town, which give something of an oriental appearance to the place. In a garden near, animals, birds and plants are reared for the "Jardin d'Acclimation" of Paris, of which it is a branch. Visitors find here a pleasant retreat where they can walk and sit, and make purchases of plants, flowers and milk.

#### THE OLD TOWN,

with its narrow, steep and dirty streets, dark, gloomy abodes and picturesquely clad inhabitants, interests visitors, who are soon found exploring its tortuous lanes. In one of the narrowest streets in old Hyères—Rue Rubaton 7—was born Massillon, the greatest of French preachers, June 24, 1663. His father was a notary, and the business was carried on from father to son in the same house from 1647 to 1834. It will be remembered that on one occasion, when Massillon preached before the court of Versailles, his sermon made the profligate Louis XIV. exclaim, in presence of his court: "Father, I have heard several good orators, and have been satisfied with them, but whenever I hear you I am dissatisfied with myself." It is a pity it did not also lead to reformation.

On the top of the hill on which the old town is built, stands the château of Hyères, 657 feet above the sea. From it a complete view can be had of the town beneath, of the plain, and of the islands some distance from the coast. Walks and drives in the valleys and hills around are numerous, amongst olives, vines and cork trees, the principal

#### PRODUCTS OF THIS COAST.

The trunk of the olive tree has a tendency to separate and form new limbs, so that it is far from being a handsome tree. It can bear a cold of 12 degs. Fahr., while the orange and lemon trees are killed by a cold of 22 degs. The cork-oak trees are numerous here, the bark forming an important article of commerce. A cork tree does not produce fine-grained cork till it is fifty years old.

Naturalists find here the curious caterpillar of the moth—*Bombyx processionaria*—which feeds at night on the leaves of the Aleppo and maritime pine trees. Their nests, shaped like a soda-water bottle, are attached to the branches of these trees. When they leave the nest they go in procession, following each other with great precision. Many rare butterflies are also found about Hyères, one—*Nymphalis jasius*—is said to be the only representative in Europe of the genus *Charaxes*.

On the summits of the Maures, and on all the mountains bordering the Riviera, grows the heath *Erica arborea*, from whose roots pipes are made. The digging up and preparing of these roots for the Paris manufacturers form an important industry in the mountain villages. In England they are called briar-root pipes, briar being a corruption of the French word *bruyère*, signifying heath.

#### CLIMATE.

Hyères is said to be specially suited to old people and young children whose constitutions need to be strengthened. Dr. Edwin Lee says: "The chief attractions