

SPECIAL
ARTICLES

Our Contributors

BOOK
REVIEWS

ONE WAY OF BECOMING POPULAR

By Knoxonian.

The Presbyterian congregation of Slowtown was not prosperous. Their finances were in a bad way. The minister's salary was in arrears and the contributions to the Schemes of the Church were painfully small. The attention of the Presbytery of the bounds having been called to the matter, it was resolved to send a deputation to visit the congregation. The Rev. Nathaniel Smoothbore and Dr. Bousenges Faithful were appointed to hold a meeting in Slowtown, confer with the office-bearers, address the people, and take such steps as they might deem necessary for the welfare of the congregation. Due announcement of a congregational meeting having been given, Mr. Smoothbore and Dr. Faithful went to Slowtown on the day appointed. The meeting was fairly attended. After devotional exercises Mr. Smoothbore addressed the people.

Mr. Smoothbore's Address.

I need scarcely say I am glad to be here to-day. It always affords me much pleasure to meet with our people and discuss matters connected with our beloved Zion. I have long been anxious to visit this congregation. I knew your former pastor well. He was an intimate friend of mine. We were in college together. He is my wife's thirty-second cousin by her father's side. Your present pastor has always been a warm friend of mine. I esteem him very highly, and have often held pleasant intercourse with him. We often take sweet counsel together. I have long desired to see his people. I am sure you are all devotedly attached to him and to the beloved Church to which we all belong. (Dr. Faithful began to grow very fidgety at this point.) I am sure the elders and other office-bearers do their duty. (Dr. Faithful murmured dissent and the people looked angrily at him.) I am aware that the financial condition of your congregation is not in just the highest state of prosperity, but the times are hard. Business is depressed and money is very scarce. No doubt you would give thousands more if you had it. I am sorry that there are some arrears of stipend, but you would, no doubt, pay these arrears if you were as able as you are willing. (Here the pastor's wife turned her thin, careworn, poverty-stricken face away in disgust, and seemed to say: "Smoothbore, how can you talk such rubbish.") I know you are a generous people. I am sure you are loyal to the blue banner of Presbyterianism. After some further allusions to the blue banner, and an eloquent peroration about the standards and the martyrs and the graves of our forefathers, Smoothbore took his seat amidst loud applause. The people were mightily pleased and so carried away that they completely forgot all about the arrears of stipend, and the fact that they did not contribute a cent a piece to support the missions of their Church and keep the blue banner aloft in other lands—their minds were lifted entirely above such things.

Justice Not Generosity.

Dr. Faithful then addressed the meeting. His speech bristled with facts, figures and "points," and was too long for a verbatim report. He began by showing that the payment of a minister's salary is not a matter of generosity but a matter of justice. They had solemnly pledged themselves in their call and in their guarantee to the

Presbytery to pay the amount promised, and as honest men they should keep their promises. If they were not able to pay what they promised, they should come in an open, manly way to the Presbytery and say so, and perhaps the Presbytery would find some remedy. Christians ought to be honest men. Too many people looked upon a minister's salary as something that they might pay or repudiate at will even after they had solemnly promised to pay it. It was just such conduct as this that made many men who never attend church look at religion with contempt. He then took up the subscription list and found that the highest amount subscribed was \$10 a year while very few reached that amount. He showed that this was not quite twenty cents per Sabbath, or ten cents for each service. This amount might be enough, or more than enough, for many wage-earners or very poor people, but he would ask any candid man if twenty cents per Sabbath was anything for a wealthy farmer or a man in a good paying business. He then showed that only a very small proportion of the congregation reached the amount stated twenty cents a day or ten cents a service—and that many did not pay five cents or even one cent a Sabbath while a good many paid nothing. His brother, Mr. Smoothbore, had spoken of the hard times, but he would like to know how hard times could effect a man who paid nothing at all.

Dr. Faithful then took up the Schemes of the Church and read the amounts contributed for Colleges and Missions. He said he could not estimate the amount paid per member for Missions, because the divisor would not go into the dividend. There was no quotient. It was beyond the power of figures to show the amount per member that they were doing to send the Gospel to the heathen. There was no coin of the realm that would express their liberality. He must give it up. The same was true in regard to Colleges. He had every sympathy with men struggling against hard times; but he could not for the life of him understand how hard times could affect contributions that never were large enough per member to be expressed by any coin of the realm. The Doctor then urged them to try and make their organization more effective, as nothing could survive without good organization, and closed with a solemn, searching appeal to be up and doing while working days lasted. He took his seat amidst

Solemn Silence.

At the close of the meeting the people gathered around Mr. Smoothbore, shook his hand warmly, asked for his family; and half-a-dozen invited him to dinner. A few earnest workers who had been labouring hard for the welfare of the congregation, ventured to speak to Dr. Faithful, but a large majority of the people thought he was an "awful" man. Some said he was not spiritually minded, and some declared he had never been converted. Mr. Smoothbore went home feeling that he had made a good impression and congratulating himself on the fact that he was popular with the Slowtown people. Dr. Faithful went home conscious of the fact that he had done his duty. The pastor scarcely dared to say good-bye to him as he was leaving, but the pastor's wife warmly shook hands with him and thanked him for his manly speech. There were tears in her voice and a tear in the corner of her eye as she said she hoped his visit would do good.

She Knew All About the Arrears.

Months passed. The seed sown by Dr. Faithful began to take root and grow. The people became ashamed of their financial position and began to do better. At the close of the year the arrears were wiped out and there was joy in the manse. The pastor preached better and his wife did not need to sit up so late making over the old clothes for the children. Next year the salary was raised, and the next blue book showed that the contributions for the Schemes of the Church were greatly increased. New life was put into all departments of the congregational work, and the congregation of Slowtown became one of the best in the Presbytery. But to this day Dr. Faithful never dares show his face there. The Doctor is not popular in Slowtown and never will be while the present generation are in the Church below.

THE WITNESS FAMINE FUND.

Those whose hearts have been moved by the recent terrible distress in China, will be glad to learn that the China Famine Fund monies cabled by the Montreal Witness amounted in all to \$10,000, most of which was cabled during the last two weeks of the fund.

These gifts were received from all over the Dominion, and a good many more Witness readers were preparing to remit when they learned that the fund was closed.

The Witness has always lent itself to this work of receiving and forwarding subscriptions for worthy causes, and vast sums have been collected by it for such purposes, one fund the Armenian Relief Fund, alone amounting to over \$15,000. The amount of work and expense involved in receiving, acknowledging and forwarding these large sums of money is very much greater than the general public can at all realize, but the Witness has done it gladly and ungrudgingly, making no charge whatever for services or for newspaper space used.

NEW COACHES FOR THE G. T. R.

The Grand Trunk shops at Point St. Charles have completed five new passenger coaches of the latest model and standard of that Company. The exterior of the cars are bottle green with gold lettering, and the interior is finished in polished mahogany. The seats are the latest high swing-back pattern, upholstered in green plush. The body of the car will seat sixty people and the smoking room, which is upholstered in leather, twelve people. A strip of Wilton carpet covers the centre of the car, and Linoleum is used as the floor covering for passages and smoking room. Pintsch gas is installed for lighting, seven large four-burner lamps being used for this purpose.

The cars are equipped with apparatus for steam heat, air signals and high-speed quick action air brakes. They have standard wide vestibules with steel platforms and are mounted on six-wheel trucks. The length of the cars is 75 feet 6 inches; weight 106,000 pounds. They embody all the latest improvements in passenger equipment, and are examples of the high-class rolling stock which the Grand Trunk are continually adding to their service. These coaches have been assigned for service between Montreal and Chicago.

Happiness is increased not by the enlargement of the possessions, but of the heart.—John Ruskin.