

## Our Contributors.

### SQUABBLING OVER MATTERS OF DETAIL.

BY KNOXONIAN.

In a recent lecture, Principal MacVicar is reported to have said that much of the unbelief we have to contend against in Churches is caused by "seeing Churches often rent asunder by minor differences and squabbling over matters of detail."

That sentence opens up a mine that we have often thought is not sufficiently worked. A large proportion of the practical unbelief found in many of our congregations is produced in the very way described by the Principal. Men who ought to be leaders in spiritual matters magnify non-essentials, discuss trifles, and squabble over petty details, until they and everybody in the congregation forget—if they ever knew—that the main work of the Church is to glorify God by the salvation of souls and the edification of His people. Congregations are sometimes so busy with the squabbling that you might visit them and come away, if you judged merely by what you saw and heard, without the slightest suspicion that anybody there had a soul to save. Little trumpety matters, not worth five minutes' discussion, are pushed into and kept in the foreground, while the vital work for which the Church exists is belittled or ignored. And, with shame be it said, the people who squabble over petty details, and ignore the vital work of the Church, are too often people who claim to be Presbyterians of the most orthodox type. Too often they base their claim on their ability to squabble over the small end of nothing.

Let us take a ramble over the country, and see how Churches are often rent by minor differences and squabbles over details.

Here is a Church that is being rent about a question of posture in worship. The people used to stand at prayer, and sit while they sang, and now somebody wants to sit at prayer, and sing standing. Zion is convulsed. The leaders take sides. The parties are formed. The noses are counted. Men who never pray sitting or standing, or in any other posture, fight the hardest and make the most noise. Who in that crowd thinks that the main work of the Church is to save souls and edify saints? There are a few people in the Church, however, who are thinking very seriously, and what they think is, that religion is a fraud. And these thinking few who are being driven into unbelief are very often the sons and daughters of the fighters.

Here is a Church bravely wrestling with the melodeon question. More energy is displayed in fighting about that little melodeon in a month than has been displayed in fighting the world, the flesh and the devil for the last ten years. Men who have never been in prayer meeting in their lives will run every night to a meeting about the melodeon, and rise at midnight to break into the church, and throw the little melodeon out.

Who ever thinks about the conversion of souls, or the edification of saints, while a melodeon controversy is going on? Could the distinguished leaders in that great ecclesiastical struggle be expected to come down for a moment to such small considerations as conversion and sanctification? No, not for a moment. The squabble must go on, no matter where men go.

And here is a Church that has a squabble on the hymn question. One party thinks it quite right to sing about poisoning the steady pole on the boundless void of space, and to apostrophize lazy people, and tell them to look at the ants, but altogether wrong to sing "Rock of Ages, Cleft for Me," and "Jesus, Lover of My Soul." So the squabble goes on, and while it goes on, the devil takes good care to put in his work.

Sometimes one meets a congregation that is squabbling over the question whether they have heard the Gospel or not. Some stranger has visited a village or rural Church, and announced himself as a great evangelist from New York, or England, or Scotland. These people always announce themselves as coming from a large place. They know right well that there are a great many fools in this world who estimate every man by the size of the place he says he comes from. The evangelist preaches a while, and some people discover that he does not preach the Gospel, whilst others declare that they never heard the Gos-

pel before. The squabble goes on for a while, and one thing becomes painfully clear, and that is, that neither party is much under the power of the Gospel.

In a few places you may find the people greatly exercised over what they call Popish Aggression. By means which all know, they were led about a year ago, to think that there was a "crisis" on hand. The Ontario Government were probably getting out timber for martyrs' stakes. These excellent people fear the thralldom of Popery. The thralldom of meanness, the thralldom of penuriousness, the thralldom of niggardliness, the thralldom that leads a man to hide behind his woodpile when the collector comes round, they have no fear of. Some of them don't even dread the thralldom of whiskey. Rome is what they dread, and they discuss Romish aggression so much that they forget to pay their minister's salary, forget to give anything for missions, forget to pray, forget family worship; in fact forget that they and their children have souls that were ever intended to do anything but curse Rome. Neighbours and young people who know that the lives of some of these men are not as pure as the life of many a Roman Catholic sneer at the so-called champions of Protestantism, and conclude that religion is a humbug.

Any secondary matter that is pushed into a first place by squabbling produces unbelief, and does an immense amount of harm.

### HEALTH RESORTS IN THE SOUTH OF ENGLAND.

BOURNEMOUTH

is now one of the most frequented health resorts in England. Since our arrival, we have met several from Canada, some from Toronto, some from London, and others from Belleville, as well as several from the United States. The great majority, however, are from the more northerly counties of England. It is situated on a large bay at the western extremity of Hampshire, close to Dorsetshire. The bay is bounded on the west by the Isle of Purbeck, and the entrance to the town of Poole. On the east is a long neck of land called Christchurch Head, just opposite to The Needles, the white cliffs on the west of the Isle of Wight. From point to point of these headlands is a distance of fourteen miles. The sea shore all round consists of clean, fine sand, which gives an opportunity both for pedestrian and equestrian exercise from Poole Harbour to Christchurch Bay. The bold and varied forms of the projecting cliffs, and the coves which indent them, make a constant change in the scenes. The tides, owing to the presence of the Isle of Wight, are such as make it difficult to know whether it is high or low water. This, as in the case of the Mediterranean, causes the sea to be far more charming to the eye than the long tracts of bare sands to be seen at low water in the north of England.

On these sands children are always to be seen digging and playing, and here, too, invalids stroll, inhaling the sea air, while protected from all winds but the south, by the cliffs which are from 100 to 120 feet high. These cliffs are being gradually worn down, and carried seaward to form land or rock in some future geologic age. The bathing in summer must be delightful, as there are no rocks.

THE TOWN

extends some four miles in length, being built on two cliffs, and on the slopes of the intervening valley, which has been converted into pleasure gardens, running more than a mile from the beach in a north-west direction. Through these gardens flows a streamlet—the Bourne which, after rippling over tiny cascades and under rustic bridges, pursues its short course to the sea.

On each side of this brook are well kept lawns, intersected with beds of rhododendrons, plants, tulips and other flowers which must look bright and pretty in spring and summer. The sloping borders on either side of the valley are planted with evergreens, deciduous trees and shrubs, and higher up with pines in great variety. Quiet secluded paths lead in all directions, and seats are provided for invalids and the public generally. The East and West Cliffs are both sheltered by pines—the East the most. The West Cliff is said to be more bracing and is of course drier than the valley. In the summit of the hills the air is pure and invigorating, but strange to say, these conditions are changed at night, the high lands being warmer than the lower and more sheltered parts. This is said

to be particularly noticeable in the western district. All persons, therefore, who come here in search of health, can find what their peculiar troubles may demand. It is something to be able to have a choice within no great distance. There are railroad stations on both cliffs, and these are connected by a line which is soon to be opened.

THE PIER OR PROMENADE

is the great centre of attraction. It runs direct south from The Gardens, some 838 feet into the sea, being thirty-five feet wide at the entrance, and at the extremity 110 feet. There are glass screens on both sides, which protect from the wind without excluding the view. Comfortable seats are arranged so as to give shelter in all kinds of weather, and invalids sit reading and listening to the band, which plays daily at certain hours. The prospect from the pier in bright weather must be delightful on all sides. To the west is the Isle of Purbeck, in front of which stands the perpendicular pillars known as "Old Harry," and not far off is another which has been named "His Wife." To the east is Christchurch Head and The Needles, large ledges of rock at the western extremity of the Isle of Wight. The pier must be a lively place in summer, when excursion steamers are arriving from and departing to all the ports around the coast. It was only about 1854 that

ATTAINED ANY IMPORTANCE.

either as regards size or reputation as a health resort. Now each year adds to its popularity, so that in summer it is full of pleasure seekers, and in winter full of invalids. Medical men have written it up, some think far beyond its merits. In October, when we arrived, the weather was very fine, and during November and December, so far anything more dreary and dismal for delicate persons I can hardly conceive. It is certainly not cold, and perhaps those from the north may find it comparatively pleasant. The sun occasionally shines out between showers and then the air is enjoyable. It is certainly not a place of winter residence for those who possess a measure of good health, for the humidity of the atmosphere and the unsocial character are sufficient to drive away to brighter skies and livelier scenes all who are not compelled to remain, and who must find company in the society of men and women described in novels and romances.

THE SANITARY ARRANGEMENTS

are all that could be desired. The houses on the cliffs are detached, admitting a current of air all round them. They are built on sandy soil, through which rain percolates and leaves the surface dry. The local authorities spare no expense in keeping the streets and roads perfectly clean and free from garbage of every kind. The drainage is admirable, being carried out far to sea. The water supplied to the town is pure and soft. The hotels are excellent, the churches numerous and handsome, lectures frequent in some of the halls; concerts are held in the town hall, and bands play everywhere. There is also a club on the seashore where elderly gentlemen read the papers and play whist. There are afternoon tea parties where the ladies meet and chat for an hour or more. Such are the mild enjoyments of the place.

The whole district around is on the chalk, over which are beds of whitish clay and sand. This table land has a barren, sandy and flinty soil, covered with various heaths, gorse and plantations of fir, which give a certain attractiveness to the neighbourhood. Between these pine woods and the cliffs are walks, exposed to the bracing air of the sea. The cliffs are broken wherever a streamlet occurs, into ravines of various lengths and widths, according to the size of the stream. These openings are called here, as in the Isle of Wight, by the name of

CHINES,

which cause a long detour, just as happens so often on the shores of the Mediterranean. These chines are amongst the best known geological features of the district, and occur under other names wherever the same physical causes operate. They are deep fissures or gulleys eaten out of the soft strata of the lower greensand by the action of running water, and derive their name from the Anglo-Saxon "cine," or "cyne," a cleft. The verb "to chine" was used by Spenser in the "Faerie Queene"

Where biting deepe, so leadly it impress  
That quite it chyned his backe behind the sell

Dryden also uses the same word "He that in holiday did chine the long rib'd Apennine"