

Our Contributors.

Church Services in England.

BY REV. PROFESSOR JORDAN, D.D.

During the past summer I spent nine weeks in England and Scotland for "change and rest." I found plenty of change and perhaps as much rest as might be expected under the circumstances, at any rate I had an opportunity of testing the common statement that change is rest. In the three months of my absence from Canada I preached every Sunday on sea and land, and in almost every case twice on each Sunday. A few remarks then on these services may be interesting for some of the readers of the DOMINION PRESBYTERIAN. The services on land included the following:

We-Iyan, United Methodist Free Church, Congregationalist, English Presbyterian, Church of Scotland, United Free Church of Scotland. The form of service in all these denominations is very similar, only one is impressed with the fact that the same material of say two Scripture lessons, four hymns, three prayers and a sermon can be arranged in a wonderful variety of ways. The points at which I had the privilege of conducting service were as far apart as Cowes on the Isle of Wight and Innellan on the west coast of Scotland, and several places in between. The communities that I have mentioned represent a large section of the Church life of England and Scotland. The Roman Catholics and Church of England of course stand apart and live their own life but among the other large churches there has been during the last ten years an increase of fellowship and co-operation. I was pleased on the whole to find in these various places bright reverent services with good attentive congregations.

It seemed to me that there has been an improvement in the choral part of the services. All the churches have good modern hymnals, and in some cases the rendering of hymns and anthems was remarkably good. Perhaps in some places there is a danger of the singing overbalancing the rest of the service, five or six hymns and an anthem take too large a proportion of the time in a service which is less than an hour and a half. This was the *tendency* in some places; but taking things altogether it is not very pronounced as in these churches the sermon still plays an important part. One large Congregational church at Plaistow (London) had a specially fine choir of forty or fifty members. The minister was invited to meet them before the service for the purpose of offering prayer, and one felt that there was reverence as well as energy and good musical ability. In this case the singing was congregational as well as high class. I believe that at this place Mr. Curwen, of tonic sol fa fame, was at one time the minister; so that it has a good tradition to maintain. At Innellan, on the Clyde, the choir consisted of a large number of children and young people who had been trained by the minister's daughter, and the result was very satisfactory. One innovation I noted which was not confined to any one communion namely, the practice of having the amen at the close of the benediction sung by the choir instead of spoken by the minister. At the evening service this is followed by "a vesper" or brief prayer in the form of a verse sung by the choir while

the people still have their heads bowed. This is regarded by many as a graceful and reverent finish to the service while possibly some look upon it as a danger-divergence towards ritualism. I fancy that in England there is considerable freedom and elasticity in such matters. People think that within reasonable limits there can be freedom and adaptation combined with a firm adherence to Evangelical principles.

The church extension committee of the English Presbyterian church draws the line at the "corner pulpit." I conducted service in the John Black Memorial church, Sunderland, a new structure built in Gothic style with the pulpit at the side, and there are other new Presbyterian churches on a similar plan; but if a congregation wants a "corner pulpit" it must pay the whole cost out of local funds. This view seems to regard the "corner pulpit" as a luxury rather than a danger. However after all the great thing is the man in the pulpit and the gospel he preaches.

One of the most inspiring services I had the privilege of conducting was held in Dock street Methodist Free Church, Sunderland, on Sunday evening June 23rd. This is the largest and most influential Nonconformist congregation in that part of the town, the present Mayor and other leading citizens are among the worshippers. It has in connection with it a specially fine and convenient Sunday School arranged on the most modern plan. Here is no suggestion of corner pulpit but a rostrum with large choir gallery and organ immediately behind. There is a commodious gallery all round the church and the building when full, as on this occasion, presents a handsome appearance. On this particular evening a young man's Bible class, numbering 125, was present, that is the first 10 pews of the church were filled with young men from 20 to 30 years of age. Among them there were two who had recently returned from South Africa; after giving thanks for their safe return I ventured to say that while it was not inconsistent with patriotism that there should be difference of opinion about the origin or management of the war we could all recognize with gratitude the readiness to serve the country which had been shown by our young men in all parts of the Empire. We in Canada did not suppose that any one party had a monopoly of patriotism; but we felt that it was important that we should stand together against wanton aggression. It was a fine sight to see this splendid array of young fellows who meet together week by week to study the Word of God.

I cannot now enter upon a discussion of Church work in Britain but must confine myself strictly to the subject of church services. The Church has great difficulties to face in England. The drink evil is a pressing problem; poverty, carelessness and indifference all conspire to hamper the work of the church, but my summer experience in Britain made me feel that there is much real healthful, inspiring worship; and while sometimes I would have been glad to have listened to others, and have enlarged my experience in that way, yet to be thrown personally in contact with such varied congregations had certain advantages, and did not leave me with depressing or pessimistic views of Church life in the mother land.

No woman has entered the Convent of St. Catherine, on Mount Sinai, for 1400 years.

Other Acts of Other Apostles.

BY N. A. O.

When the apostles which were with Jesus were fallen asleep and the brethren were persecuted and scattered everywhere abroad, there was great vitality in the church.

But there followed a long period of spiritual deadness throughout all the west of Europe, until the days of the Reformation, when Knox and Calvin, and Luther, and John Huss and Wickliffe, and Savard were raised up in the providence of God to stem the tide of unfaithfulness.

Meanwhile God had still a witness in the west of Asia, and in Russia, and in the mountain fastness of the Alps, and in the Island kingdoms of England and Scotland and Ireland.

But a new and great continent was discovered that came to be known as America, and many of God's people went thither, and many unbelievers also. And the Macedonian cry of old resounded from above in the ears of the Apostles and brethren of the newly awakened church in the old land—Come over and help us!

And the priests of the Latin Church who are called Jesuits crossed the ocean and made their way, with much toil and suffering, far into the interior of the continent, ministering in the name of Christ with great faithfulness to the early settlers in the land, as well as to the native tribes of the country who were heathen.

And the church in England and Scotland sent others of their number to Canada and to the New England States, in the new land; and there they preached unto them Jesus. These, taking up their abode in Quebec, Boston, New York, Philadelphia, Montreal, Toronto and London, as the apostles who were with Jesus did after his death and resurrection and ascension, in Europe and Asia, preached the gospel in the country round about. And the church was established, the message of salvation being received with mingled gladness and resistance. And the number of the disciples multiplied greatly.

Literary Notes.

If you have a piano, or are interested in music, send your name and address to A. D. Hill, 1123 Broadway, New York City, N.Y., and he will send four pieces of new music absolutely FREE.

Suggestion, a Chicago magazine devoted to "Scientific investigation of the occult," has in its August number an article by the editor on "The Secrets of the Seance" in which it pitches heavily into Brother Austin, late of the Canadian Methodist Church, for allowing himself to be duped by spiritualistic "slate-writing." "You must remember, Brother Austin, that there are many people who have been investigating these things for years before you ever thought of them, and many of them have gone through your stage of experience and have cut their eye teeth by this time. You may, later on, perhaps. Remember that the bumble-bee is always largest when first-born, he shrinks later on. Investigators of the 'occult' seem to manifest the same law of growth." This is rather hard on Brother Austin, but it does not seem to be any more than he deserves.