

freedom of speech, constitutional government, obedience to just rulers, and disinterested patriotism towards the land we live in, and the land of our birth."

### AN OPEN LETTER.

MR. EDITOR,—I say nothing about mission-fields in this letter—the Assembly have already taken their interests in hand (see Appendix to Minutes, 1878, p. 23). I say nothing about large and wealthy congregations which may be vacant—the present methods of securing pastors must in their case continue, I presume.

I refer at present to *weak* congregations and to *supplemented* charges now vacant and seeking settlement. All admit that we lose much by long vacancies and by the number of these vacancies among our less inviting charges. The conviction is widespread among our people that the evil might be greatly lessened. Many outside our own communion do the Presbyterian Church the compliment to say that there is statesmanship enough among our ministers and elders to devise a better scheme of securing the settlement of weak vacancies than what now obtains.

Others may have a different plan, perhaps a better. The writer would respectfully submit the following for consideration:

It regards supplemented congregations as occupying a midway position between mission fields which do not ask for pastoral settlement and self-sustaining charges which ask for no outside help.

Occupying such a position, it is only fair that supplemented charges should have more voice in the selection of those who minister to them than mission fields, but it is not reasonable that they should have precisely the same privileges as congregations which pay their ministers' salaries themselves.

The present proposal is that two months, in some cases three, perhaps, be allowed them to choose a pastor. If by that time they should not succeed, that they entrust the Presbytery to appoint a minister, just as now missionaries are appointed to distant fields, and students are to mission posts without a call from those people, and on the whole better satisfaction is given than if the entire choice were in the hands of the hearers.

Nine-tenths of our weak congregations would agree to such a scheme, I am persuaded, for they are weary of their present condition. Many of our Probationers would hail it, as they are heartily sick of their fruitless journeys over the country at so much outlay and personal discomfort.

In many cases the way might be clear to induct the preacher as permanent pastor; in many others it would be found more advisable to appoint him for a given time—say one year, two years, or three. In any case, his name should be put upon the Presbytery's Roll and all the privileges of a pastor given to him; he is doing the Church's work, and work requiring more self-denial than many who draw thrice his pay, and why should not all the privileges of the pastoral office be accorded?

Not unfrequently the missionary would remain there permanently, and be duly called by the people, as between him and them an attachment would spring up which would express itself in this form.

Where it was otherwise, he would withdraw at the close of his appointment, and he might immediately enter upon another field, and the congregation immediately receive another laborer.

Sometimes it might be advisable that the preacher visit the field before he accept the appointment. In any case the Presbytery would need to make with the people as careful arrangements for pay as in ordinary settlements, but these are only matters of detail.

Were such a method becoming general, it would doubtless affect the working of the present "Probationer's Scheme," but this instrument could be modified to suit the altered circumstances.

To a very considerable extent it could be put into operation immediately, and within three months from to-day the large majority of preachers and ministers now out of a charge could be settled, and a corresponding number of vacancies be filled.

Very few words are needed to show the necessity of a change in the direction here proposed.

Look at the condition of many of our smaller vacancies—adherents dropping off month by month—members too and their families—Sabbath schools neglected altogether, or only wearily maintained—spiritual life down to a pitiable state, while a critical spirit rules,

which must prove fatal to all true worship, while this "Cad" of candidates continues to come for trial.

Look at the effect on the Church's finances. It is almost impossible to get these weak vacancies to contribute regularly to the various schemes of our Church. They lack the necessary organization, they lack interest in those schemes, they are dispirited about *home*, how can they be enthusiastic about things *away from home*. When at length, a pastor is secured, the supplement required is larger than it ought to be, for the cause ran so low through the long vacancy.

Then, the interests of our ministers now out of a charge should be considered. Men might be named who have gone over the whole Province without receiving a call whose real worth was not discovered by their one or two pulpit services. Some slight defect in tone, or pronunciation, or countenance—a sermon a few minutes too long, or not of the cast the people's taste craved for just then—yes, forsooth, grey locks and a brow somewhat wrinkled, oft suffice to secure the verdict, "He won't do."

Only let some of these men be thoroughly known, let them be seen in private, at the prayer meeting, in the sick chamber, by the coffin, in the session, at the communion table—let the *whole* man be seen and his real worth will come to light.

It is a great loss to the Church to have such men so long out of a place, it is a great wrong to themselves.

The remedy lies, I humbly submit, in the direction noted above. May it take the very best form soon, and may the results exceed our expectations.

Lindsay, Dec., 1878.

J. HASTIE.

1878.

### A CHRISTMAS ANTHEM.

So sang the angels, mid the stars on high—  
"Glory to God, on earth good will to men."  
Re-echo far the anthem of the sky;  
Ye rolling ages chant the glad refrain.

Chorus—Glory to God on high  
Who gave his son to die  
For man defiled,  
We hail the hallowed morn  
The Lord of life was born,  
God's holy Child.

Let war its clamour still, and sheath the sword,  
And sceptred potentates their homage lend;  
In Bethlem's lowly shed behold the Lord!  
Adoring bow the knee, your praises blend.

That natal morn redeems all other days,  
The blessed advent of the Christian year;  
It smiles on all munificent with grace,  
A light from heaven reaching far and near.

Ye sons of wealth, your goodliest treasures bring,  
To pining haunts of poverty repair;  
Lay out your tribute to the new-born King;  
The poor of earth are His peculiar care.

Yea, stoop to cheer the wretched and the vile,  
Grudge not a hand to succour and to save;  
He stooped for you, poor slaves of sin and guile,  
And bowed His head to sorrow and the grave.

Glenarry.

C.C.A.F.

### THEIR EXCELLENCIES AT THE FLAVIE STATION ON THE INTERCOLONIAL RAILWAY.

The Vice-regal train stopped for a few minutes at this station on Thursday, Nov. 28th, while the engines were being changed and the wheels of the cars oiled. A few flags were hoisted in honor of the occasion. One of these was white and *orange*, hoisted, too, by a good Catholic! Yet nobody seemed to hoist a scowl on his face at the sight of it. The enterprising gentleman referred to had on the front of his store a motto, of which the following is as near a *fac simile* as can be given by types:

"HONOUR AND GLORY TO THEIRS EXCELLENCE THE MARQUIS OF LORNE AND HER HIGHNESS THE PRINCESS LOUISE."

This was the only motto. Very probably it was the fruit of much study. The author is a French Canadian. At first he had "his" for "her," but acting on the advice of an intelligent brakesman, he altered it. A fair number—less, however, than 1,000—awaited the arrival of the train, among whom were Lieutenant-Governor Letellier and his cabinet, and Col. Strange. At length it appeared. Fog signals were laid on the track near the station, and thus when the train went over them, it saluted itself. Neither the Marquis nor her Royal Highness appeared outside. Very few saw either of them through the windows of their car. I

had a very good view of the Marquis. He was looking through one of the windows in the direction of the loyal motto, but whether he saw it or not I cannot tell. Had the Princess seen it, she would, perhaps, have shed tears of mirth, if not of mourning, over the murder of her mamma's English. I saw her right arm, which was better than nothing, as it was the right arm of a princess. At length, two fresh weeds, abundantly decked with evergreens, roses, and flags, were fastened to the train. Other preparations having been completed, the distinguished party departed. Cheers were given when they arrived, but as a body the givers were new at the business. But when they left, scarce a farewell note was heard. Was it because the spectators thought that they had already done enough, or was it because grief at their loss choked their utterance?

Had I known soon enough that their Excellencies would disembark at Rimouski, I would have gone thither before. No doubt Bishop Langevin and his clergy were out there in full force. Not a priest was at the Ste. Flavie Station, so that the Presbyterian Bishop of Metis was, as a representative of the clergy, "all alone in his glory" in the crowd there.

I have not heard of any pockets having been picked at Ste. Flavie Station in the crowd. The place is too poor to draw any of the tarry-fingered brotherhood to it. Poverty has sometimes its advantages.

The bad English in the motto above quoted can very naturally be accounted for. "Theirs"—in French "their" is plural (*leurs*). "Excellence"—the author no doubt supposed that the last "e" is sounded in English. In pronunciation, the plural "Excellences" is, in French, the same as the singular "Excellence." "His Highness the Princess Louise"—In French, "son" is "his," and "sa" "her," that is, "belonging to her." "Allesse" (highness) is feminine, but as "sa Allesse" would make a disagreeable sound, that word takes before it "son."  
T. F.

Metis, Que.

### RUSSELL HALL, MONTREAL.

MR. EDITOR,—It may be interesting to your numerous readers to know something of the progress of the congregation that meets in Russell Hall. Last Sabbath the Communion was dispensed there to fifty-six of the members. The attendance is always good on Sabbath evenings, but on this special occasion the church was full, many present being Roman Catholics, whose behavior was perfectly respectful, and who listened with great attention both to the sermon and to the Communion addresses. The text for the occasion was in Hosea xiv. "Ephraim shall say, What more have I to do with idols?"

A number of new members sat down with us at the Lord's table for the first time, and appeared deeply impressed with the solemnity of the occasion.

Our prayer-meetings seldom number less than fifty people, and these will compare favorably for their respectable appearance with adherents of our English-speaking congregations. The Sabbath school averages forty children, actual attendance. A Dorcas Society, formed of members of the church exclusively, has undertaken to supply the wants of the poorer families of the congregation, and by a concert have made about fifty dollars. There are no wealthy families in connection with us, yet poor as they are, they have contributed two hundred and sixty-five dollars during the past year. Since the 1st of January, I have baptized twenty-three children, officiated at seventeen funerals, and married fifteen couples.

I trust, dear sir, that the friends of the work may feel encouraged by these brief statistics to come to the rescue of the Board, which is at the present time not only unable to extend its operations, but also to meet its liabilities. Missionaries have always plenty of trials for their faith, let it not be said that to them is added the "cares of this life" through the neglect of our congregations. CHAS. A. DOLDIBI,  
Minister of St. John's French Presbyterian Church,  
Montreal, Dec. 3, 1878.

WINTER is setting in on the continent of Europe with unusual severity. Falls of snow are announced in all the mountain regions of Europe. The Apennines are thickly covered and the Swiss passes are blocked up. Several weeks ago Vienna was cut off from communication with the rest of the world for forty-eight hours by a heavy fall of snow, which was several feet deep in the streets.