

Our Contributors.

TWO GREAT SPEECHES VERY MUCH NEEDED.

BY KNOXONIAN.

Some Canadian statesman of first-class rank should come to the front and make a mighty oration on the advantages of self-government. For a peg on which to hang the oration we would suggest Macaulay's dictum that the only remedy for the abuse of freedom is freedom. If Macaulay is right a little more freedom might make us all better people and made Canada a much better young nation.

It is difficult to see how our freedom could be extended with safety to the body politic. Almost every citizen, not a pauper, a lunatic, or a criminal, has a vote already. In fact all the members of some of these classes are not rigidly excluded. The franchise cannot be extended any farther unless we give each male citizen more votes or allow the women to mark ballots. Some enterprising male citizens do attempt to enlarge their privileges by voting several times at the same election, but the law is rather against that way of enlarging the liberty of the subject. Our orator should put a paragraph or two in his speech to show that recent increases in the number of votes have been a great boon to this country. There is room for argument on that point. Some of us are skeptical but we are willing to be convinced. We would, however, like to see the man who can convince us. Some people, not regarded by their neighbours as fools, are old fashioned enough to think that responsible Government might move along without the aid of patriots who sell their votes for a dollar. Let there be reasoning on this point.

Freedom of the press is supposed to be one of the essentials of a free country. The press of Canada enjoys a fair degree of freedom. Public opinion and the law of libel are the only limitations to the enterprise of a newspaper man if he has no conscience. Public opinion is not very exacting in some parts of this country, and the law of libel is of little use to a citizen who has not enough of money to stand a law-suit. It is difficult to see how Macaulay's dictum could be applied to the press of Canada.

Freedom of speech we have to the full. Members of Parliament speak for a whole week without stopping and for the next six weeks there will be an orator on every stump in the Dominion.

One of the things the Irish Home Rulers complained about was that Ireland did not enjoy the freedom of public meeting. There will be a political meeting in every Town Hall and school house in the Dominion in a few days. Whatever this country suffers from it does not suffer from the want of meetings.

Any high class speech on responsible Government in this country would show that wherever and whenever it has failed the failure has arisen from the fault of the people themselves. But there will be no speech of that kind. Have we one statesman strong enough to stand before an audience and tell them that if they are not well governed the fault is their own. Sir Oliver Mowat came very near doing it when he said that the Ontario Legislature was as good a body of men as the people could be persuaded to elect. Nicely put, was it not?

IN THE CHURCH.

We greatly need one or two able speeches on Voluntaryism at the present time. The circulars asking for money are so numerous and so clamant that people are in danger of doubting whether after all Voluntaryism is such a good thing. The number and size of the threatened deficits may shake the faith of some in the voluntary system. A great speech that would go down to the roots and show by a triumphant argument that pure voluntaryism is right in principle and successful in practice would help to re-assure

people. It might be of special value in those Presbyteries and congregations that do little or nothing for some of the schemes. It might do good to the people who give a cent on ordinary occasions and on special occasions double their contribution. A large number of our people are giving all they can. Some are giving even more than they can well afford to give. The people who give little or nothing need to be convinced that voluntaryism is a great thing—in practice. No doubt most of them are sound in the theory already. They would put up a fight against church and state connection that might make the bones of Wellington rattle in his grave. How bravely some of them do make war against the union of church and state in Quebec: In their opinion the mode of supporting the state church there and in Great Britain is almost an unpardonable sin. But all this patriotic indignation does not put a cent into our own Church treasury. We need a great speech on Voluntaryism to show that it means something more than mere denunciation of church and state connection. If our information is correct, and we think it is, we could name a church that vociferates against state churches more than ours does. One of its Home Missionaries and his family lived on turnips.

SEEKING A CALL.—II.

BY WANDERER.

THE PROBATIONER.

One day a few weeks after the events described in the previous sketch the writer was sitting in a railway car reading the morning paper, when a pleasant looking middle aged gentleman in clerical dress entered. He carried in his hand an umbrella, and a well-worn portmanteau of considerable dimensions. The offer of a seat was politely accepted, and the stranger let himself drop into it in such a manner as betokened weariness. A glance at the kindly face was sufficient to convince one that the gentleman was somewhat discouraged and inclined to be downhearted.

We were soon chatting freely on various topics, and when my new friend informed me that he was the Rev. Mr. B—, formerly of Z., but now without a charge, I at once embraced the opportunity to glean some information from the standpoint of a probationer, and the following conversation ensued:

"I suppose you are kept very busy supplying vacancies, Mr. B—?"

"No, not very busy. The fact is, we do not get anything like constant employment."

"I understand the General Assembly has appointed a committee to attend to the proper distribution of probationers?"

"We have such a committee, but it is greatly hampered in its operations owing to the fact that many vacancies are never reported to the committee. A number of our people are very much prejudiced against those ministers whose names are on the Probationer's List. A friend of mine expressed this dislike very strongly to me one day and said, 'I hav'na a particle of sympathy with probation of any kind, either present or future, besides, we a' ken verra weel, that thea probation bodies have maistly a' seen their best days.'"

I tried to suggest something about experience in any profession being most valuable, but my words had no weight with my friend.

"Do many ministers on account of this prejudice decline to hand in their names to this committee?"

"Yes, quite a number of our ministers would never think of placing their names on the Probationer's List, but even these men have considerable difficulty at times to get a hearing in a vacant charge. There is such a feeling of unrest in many of our churches that, as soon as a congregation of any size becomes vacant, a score or two of settled ministers will apply for a hearing in the course of a few days. The result is that even the small congregations imagine that

ministers are so plentiful that they can get any man they have a mind to call. In speaking about this the other day the friend that I mentioned before said: 'If our colleges continue to turn out young Birkies as fast as they do th' noo, we'll soon be compelled to pay off the auld men to make mair room for the fresh blude.'"

I suggested that it might not be such an easy task to pay off the old men, but my friend was ready with his answer: "We will just adopt the method of the good folk of R— with their auld man, when he got a wee bit tiresome. For twa years or so they were behind with his salary, and some of the elders hinted that he better leave, but he was slow in the uptake. In the end they a' agreed to stay away frae the kirk, and for several Sabbaths only a wheen bairns were present to hear the man speak. He cud'na thole that verra lang, and he was forced to resign."

"But surely the Presbytery took action in that case?"

"Our Presbyteries have their own difficulties in such cases, and too often our brethren in the ministry are not as loyal to each other as they should be, and perhaps some of them think that it is only sacrificing one man for the good of the many. Sometimes, also, a congregation has threatened to bolt, and such a threat generally brings any Presbytery to time."

"Is it true that some vacant congregations go so far as to ask a man's age before they consent to give him a hearing?"

"It is quite true that an elderly minister stands a very poor chance of getting a call. I am free to confess that in some cases, perhaps some of us have not kept up with the times, but many excellent ministers, of large experience, scarcely get even a respectful hearing because they have crossed what is called 'the dead line of fifty years of age.' And long before ministers have reached that age they have to walk pretty straight if they are wanting a call, or else some member in the congregation will detect signs of old age. A very dear friend of mine who is not yet forty years old preached in a vacancy a few weeks ago, and I met one of the managers the next day, and I asked how he liked the minister on Sabbath. He replied: 'Many of our people thought very highly of him, but we felt sorry that he is troubled with rheumatism. He preached very good sermons, but most of the congregation think that it would be very unwise to call a man of his age and infirmities, and besides he is quite baldheaded.' I replied that people do not generally trouble themselves about what is outside of a man's head. 'No,' said another member of the congregation, 'with a' ordinary folk we dinna fash about what is outside of a man's head but rather's what is intil. As regards ministers, however, it is different. If possible we maun hae them sound o' body, mind and limb, an nae disfigurement.'"

"It is said that the moderator of Session exercises considerable influence at times. Have you found any difficulty in that line?"

"Not very much I am glad to say. The moderator of Session has his own peculiar difficulties. Many of the applicants for a hearing are very importunate, and they get their friends to intercede on their behalf. In fact the competition is so keen now that unless a man is somewhat of a politician he will stand a very poor chance in many places. I do not say that wire pulling always succeeds, but I think it is generally felt that there is too much wire pulling done in connection with calling a minister. Sometime the moderator exercises too much authority and very often a word from him will go a long way. For instance when a man's names is mentioned, the moderator may maintain absolute silence, and that itself may be enough to arouse suspicion. And he who is suspected for any reason, true or false, strikes against invisible barriers at every step, while in the same way, if the moderator is so inclined, he can by word and look show his confidence in a man, and thus, as

it were, give him wings to bear him along to victory.

"One moderator of whom I heard always asked regarding any candidate, 'Do you think he will draw?' No person, who was not popular enough to attract a crowd that would contribute at least a half hundred per Sabbath, would be granted a hearing on any consideration."

At this point it was necessary to say "Good-bye," and so we parted.

PERSONAL APPEARANCE OF JOHN KNOX.

BY REV. THOMAS FENWICK.

To an admirer of the great Scottish Reformer, a description of his personal appearance cannot but be most interesting. To one who wishes to paint his portrait, but has only a picture in black and white from which to copy, a statement of the color of his hair, eyes, and complexion, cannot but be most acceptable. I have twice painted a likeness of him. While I was engaged on each, I did my utmost to obtain full information on the three particulars just mentioned. I do not exaggerate when I say that I was painfully anxious to make my picture as historically correct as possible. All my efforts were, however, in vain. But if I should paint one now, I could do so with comparative ease, for my difficulties above specified have been removed. In a letter addressed in 1579—seven years after Knox's death—to Beza, by Peter Young, the tutor of James VI., the personal appearance of him "who never feared the face of man"—as the Regent Morton said—is thus described:—

"In stature he was slightly under the middle height, of well-knit and graceful figure, with shoulders somewhat broad, longish fingers, head of moderate size, hair black, complexion somewhat dark, and general appearance not unpleasing. In his stern and severe countenance there was a natural dignity and majesty, not without a certain grace, and in anger there was an air of command on his brow. Under a somewhat narrow forehead his brows stood out in a slight ridge on his ruddy and slightly swelling cheeks, so that his eyes seemed to retreat into his head. The color of his eyes was bluish gray, their glance keen and animated. His face was rather long, his nose of more than ordinary length, the mouth large, the lips full, the upper a little thicker than the lower, his beard black, mingled with gray, a span and a half long, and moderately thick."

This description of Knox's "bodily presence" corresponds more with what is called the Beza portrait—the one of him which we commonly see—than with what is called the Summerville portrait, which Carlyle maintained was the correct one.

Woodbridge, Ont.

Y. P. SOCIETIES AND S. S. COMMITTEE CO-OPERATION.

BY D. F.

The action of the General Assembly in regard to Young People's Societies is surely wise, and the desire of its committee to suggest among other things a course of reading and self-improvement will meet with every encouragement from all thoughtful people. Your suggestion that this Committee and the S. S. Committee could well co-operate deserves more than passing notice. A thorough course of study and a fair test at regular intervals by examination seem intimately dependent the one on the other. Why should not the departments now established by the Assembly's S. S. Committee in the Higher Religious Instruction course be modified or enlarged to meet this new development? We have in the Higher Religious Instruction course, first the Biblical Department, junior, intermediate and senior. Our young people should be close students of the Bible all their days. Most members of Young People's Societies would take the