

THE PULPIT VS. THE BAR.

By Knoxonian.

Why don't our ministers drop their stiff, professional style of preaching and speak more like members of the Bar? Why don't they hold the attention of their hearers as counsel do the attention of jurors? The story of King Charles and the egg comes in here. As a matter of fact some lawyers do speak in as stiff and stilted a style as ever grated on the ear of a long-suffering pew-holder. As a matter of fact counsel do not always hold the attention of jurors. Just the other day a prisoner in one of our courts, when asked to give reasons why sentence should not be passed upon him, complained that two or three of the jurors who had found him guilty were sound asleep during his trial. We have even heard of a learned judge who takes an occasional nap during the delivery of long addresses by counsel.

But supposing it were true that gentlemen of the long robe were able in all their efforts to keep the court and jury spell-bound by their eloquence, it would not even then follow that the oratory of the bar is superior to that of the pulpit. The work of the preacher is so utterly unlike that of the pleader that no analogy will hold. To begin with, the lawyer's audience take a solemn oath to hear all that he has got to say, and to come to some conclusion about the merits of the case immediately after the case has been heard. They have a judge set over them who may rebuke and punish anything like marked inattention on the part of a juror, if noticed. If a congregation could be sworn at the beginning of each service to listen to the sermon and "a true deliverance made" concerning it, probably a very small number of them would be inattentive. There is no precedent, however, for "swearing in" a congregation, and we are not aware that any ecclesiastical reformer is taking steps in that direction. As long as jurors are sworn to attend to a case, and hearers can do as they please about attending to sermons, lawyers will always have the advantage in this regard. There are other circumstances too in favor of the lawyer. The jurors who listen to him do not probably serve more than once or twice in five years. His task is simply to address them at intervals of several years in connection with certain matters which they are sworn to investigate. The preacher often addresses the same people one hundred and fifty times a year, and continues at his work for twenty years. Assuming that he preaches twice every Sabbath and conducts a weekly meeting and remains in his congregation twenty years, he addresses the same people 3,000 times! During these twenty years a barrister practising in the same town would not in all probability address the same jurors more than a dozen times. Let the average lawyer address the same jury three times a week on the same case for twenty years, and both he and they would most likely die of sheer wear-

ness before half the time had expired. Holding the attention of the jurors for 3,000 addresses on the same case, however, is a small matter compared with some other things which must be done to make the work of the preacher and the pleader anything like analogous. The preacher's audience come voluntarily. The lawyer's are summoned by the sheriff and fined if they don't attend. To make both alike in this regard jurors must be allowed to remain away if they wish so to do, or congregations must be fined for not attending church. The preacher's audience have to pay his salary. How would a lawyer get on if he had to "dun" the jury for his fees? The preacher's audience build the church and keep it in repair. What would the gentlemen of the long robe think if in every town they were charged with the duty of collecting money from jurors to build a court house? The preacher's audience are asked to give liberal collections for various objects during the year. Would it not interfere slightly with the effect of the most brilliant effort ever made at the bar if the orator had to close his address by taking up a collection from the jurors on behalf of the Law Society or some other institution? When we find a lawyer whose jury voluntarily attend court, and who addresses them three times a week with a reasonable degree of interest for ten or fifteen years—who induces them to contribute towards his fees with a reasonable amount of liberality—who gets them to build and keep in repair a court house, who asks a special collection from them at the close of every court, then we will admit that there is some analogy between the work of that lawyer and the work done by many of our ministers.

We have not alluded to the fact that the preacher has often to address his hearers on subjects that are most distasteful to them, while the lawyer is never put to any such serious disadvantage. Nor have we said anything about the fact that the faithful discharge of pastoral duty and the administration of discipline often put the preacher at a great disadvantage with some of his hearers. Enough, however, has been said to convince any reasonable man that the talk which we occasionally hear about superiority of lawyers over clergymen as public speakers is unmitigated rubbish. Law is a noble profession, and some of the most brilliant statesmen and purest patriots the world ever saw have been lawyers; and some of the best citizens Canada ever saw have been members of the bar.

We have no sympathy with the vulgar cry, about the dishonesty of lawyers, often raised by men who never saw as much money in their lives as many a lawyer could make by betraying his trust once. We have just as little sympathy, however, with the thoughtless ignoramus who goes away from listening to a first-class special spread himself for half an hour in good style under the stimulus of a hundred dollar fee, asking "why don't our ministers speak like that?" All lawyers are not "specials." There was only one Blake at the Equity bar, and there is perhaps not a common law lawyer in Ontario who has not his peer in some pulpit within a mile of him. As an effective speaker the average Presbyterian minister is head and shoulders over the average lawyer, and we cannot think of a locality in Ontario in which there is not a Presbyterian minister quite the equal, as a public speaker, if not greatly the superior of the best of his legal neighbors.

MONTREAL.

The Rev. W. J. Clark, who has come from London, Ont., to be the pastor of St. Andrew's church, Westmount, preached his first sermon in his new charge last Sunday morning. The church was filled. The Rev. Professor Mackenzie, of the Presbyterian College, conducted the first part of the service and introduced Mr. Clark to his congregation just before the sermon. Mr. Clark's discourse was on pastoral duties, and, although he did not, strictly speaking, take a text, he referred to the second epistle to Timothy ii., 14, as the keynote of his exhortation. He spoke of the work of the late pastor of the church, of his character, and his death, remarking that he would not wish to rob the church of one thought or remembrance of him. Then Mr. Clark asked what a church had a right to expect of its pastor. It had the right, he replied, to expect preaching thoughtful, earnest and interesting, which would strengthen the members in the knowledge of things eternal. There must be times when such preaching, if it were faithful, would call forth dissent from some members of the congregation, but in the fair discussion of any such question might be found strength. The members had a right to expect that their pastor should be glad in their prosperity, and sympathetic in their adversity, while the sick and the aged had ever a first claim upon him. The congregation, in their turn, Mr. Clark said, must help the pastor. They must notify him when sickness and trouble were abroad in his congregation; as a congregation they must be ambitious; they must plan for years to come, and in such plans he looked for the assistance of those members of the congregation who knew the situation and who would offer suggestions which would prove helpful to him.

With reference to the litigation over the union of the Northern and Cumberland Presbyterians in the neighboring republic it is interesting to note the difference between the decision of a judge of the Superior court of Indiana and the finding of the House of Lords in the case of the United Free church in Scotland. We quote from an American exchange: The decision was on two cases, one from Washington, Ind., in which the anti-unionists sued for possession of the church property, and the other from Vincennes, Ind., in which the unionists ask for an injunction to prevent the anti-unionists from interfering with the possession of the property. The issue turned upon the legality of the union and the constitutional right of the two Presbyterian churches to enter into the union. In all elaborate decision the Judge recounts the history of the many Presbyterian unions in the last two hundred years and decided that such uniform action amounts to an inherent constitutional right to form any union that the churches might adopt, if action is taken in conformity with their own law. This he decided has been done in every particular in these two cases.

The Legislature of British Columbia has before it a bill for the setting aside of two million acres of crown lands within three years, and further enacts that the university shall include faculties of arts, medicine, law and applied science. It is stipulated that no part of the revenues shall be devoted to any purpose which is not strictly secular and non-sectarian.

No person is without influence. Why not make the most of what you have? Since you cannot grasp that which you wish, why let what you have slip through your fingers? No person in the world is exactly like you. You have your own faults, but you have also your own excellencies, individual to yourself.