

Our Contributors.

CONCERNING SOME PECULIAR CHURCH RELATIONS.

BY KNOXIAN

A peculiar case came before a Church Court on the other side of the line not long ago. A man asked a letter of dismissal from his Church and got one in which something was said about the time that his "peculiar relation" to the Church ceased. The man got angry and brought the matter before the courts. He said his relation to the Church had not been "peculiar." It had been a plain, straight relation, and had nothing peculiar about it.

Perhaps the man was right. His relation to the Church may not have been peculiar. Possibly the official who drew up the letter used a peculiar expression without thinking about it and was too big to correct his error. But whether this man sustained a peculiar relation to the Church or not thousands of other men do. For example, here is a man

WHO HANGS ON THE SIDE OF THE CHURCH.

His relation is peculiar. He is neither in the Church nor clean out of it. You can hardly tell where he is. He attends service once in a while and that is about all you can say. When the Session make up the statistical reports they don't know whether to count him or not. Some day there may be a column in the returns for people who hang on the side of the Church and are neither in the Church nor out of it. Their relation is peculiar and it is as unsatisfactory as peculiar

THE MUNICIPAL RELATION

is peculiar. By the municipal relation we mean the relation of the man who puts himself down in the census returns as belonging to some Church but has no other connection except that which he holds through the assessor or census enumerator. The assessor always finds more families belonging to the leading denominations than the churches can find. Why? Because the assessor is the only link that connects some people with their Church. They are related to the Church through him and because related in that way their relation is peculiar. The Church of England has more people in the municipal relation than any other religious body. Nearly everybody who belongs to no church at all puts himself down an Episcopalian on the assessment roll and census returns. This practice brings at once strength and weakness to the Church. Look at the returns and the Church seems large. Look at the work done and money raised in some places, and the results sometimes do not seem satisfactory. The explanation often is that too many people there are merely municipal Episcopalians. They are Episcopalians on the assessment roll and nowhere else. Municipal Presbyterians can also be found in any town or city. Just look over your assessment roll some day and you will be astonished and amused to see the number of Presbyterians there that can be found nowhere else. Their relation is peculiar.

A ROUNDNER'S RELATION

to the Church is also peculiar and is nicely illustrated by the Irishman who was sent by his employer to count a flock of sheep. Pat counted them and returned to give the statistics. I counted up, said he, until I got nineteen, but there was one that jumped around so I couldn't count him. Roundners do exactly the same thing. They jump around so among the Churches you cannot count them. Their relation, if they have any, is peculiar.

A CHRONIC GRUMBLER'S

relation is also peculiar. Just why a man should go to church at all if he thinks everything about it wrong is one of the mysteries not easily solved. It is very doubtful if a man can grow in grace in any Church if he has allowed himself to become soured. The experiment of changing Church relations has often been made and has often failed. The unfortunate soon finds as many things to grumble at in his new Church as he did in the old. The root of the trouble is within the man though he does not know it. What he needs first is to have a soured heart sweetened by divine grace. The next thing is to give up the abominable habit of growling at everything. If one of these unhappy people could be induced to stop for a moment and say to himself "my relation to the Church of Christ is that of a chronic grumbler," perhaps he would soon stop. Like our American friend with the certificate he would not want to have it said that his relation was peculiar. The relation of the

PROFESSIONAL FAULTFINDER

is also peculiar. It never seems to occur to this man that finding fault with the manner in which the Lord's work is done will never do the work. Of course it is a good thing at times to suggest new ways of working, and advocating new methods nearly always implies unfavourable criticism of the old. All honour to the man who can suggest a better way of doing anything. Men of that kind are always welcome in every department of life. But finding fault with everything in existence without a suggestion of anything better is a very different kind of business. Some day when a professional faultfinder has denounced everything in the Church from the General Assembly down to the smallest mission station in Muskoka how would it do for you to lay your hand kindly on his shoulder and say: "Brother, is that the best work you can do for the Lord that bought you with His own blood?"

The most peculiar relation in the Church is that sustained by the man who

NEVER PAYS.

In business his relation would be described as that of a dead head but of course names of that kind should not be used in connection with the Church. The peculiarity of this man's relation arises from his peculiar notion about finance. He thinks that churches can be built and kept open, that colleges can be maintained and missionaries sent to the heathen without money. His notions are peculiar and when he leaves his certificate should always say that his relation was also peculiar.

Now just think the matter over and you will be surprised to find the number of people who sustain peculiar relations to the Church. Nor are the peculiar relations confined to the people. Some ministers stand in rather peculiar relations. A minister who scatters congregations sustains a very peculiar relation. So does the minister who kindly takes charge of the universe while he neglects his own flock. So do several other kinds of ministers. Might it not be well, when a private member, or office bearer, or minister of the Church sustains a peculiar relation always to describe the relation in his certificate.

HINTS TO MISSION FIELDS.

How to discourage a young missionary.

- 1st. Make him announce and put up notices of his first meetings. They are not yours.
- 2nd. When a business meeting is called be sure there are not more than three or four at it.
- 3rd. Send him to a hotel to board however rough it is. It will make him more earnest to study in an atmosphere laden with fumes of liquor, smoke and the oaths of the ungodly.
- 4th. Be sure you do not pray for God's blessing on him and his services in his hearing.
- 5th. If you appreciate a sermon, do take care that he do not know it. It may be the one he thought his worst.
- 6th. When he calls do not ask him to read and pray, especially if there are any members of the family who cannot get out to Church services, and when he asks to do so answer in some such way as "Oh, if you like."
- 7th. Tell him what a treat it was to hear Mr. So-and-So, that you would not have missed it for five dollars—while you usually give only five cents.
- 8th. Talk to him often about "your old minister at home" and say you long to get back.
- 9th. Do not show your appreciation of his services by word or action so long as he is with you.

Such things are among the discouragements which met me in my first seasons work, and I presume there are others as human who have met the same or like treatment. Our good people need but to have these things brought to their notice in order that they may see their duty and give to their young missionaries who are at work in our fields the help they need and which it is every Christian's duty to give.

A YOUNG MISSIONARY.

SKETCHES OF TRAVEL IN EUROPE.

BY REV. E. WALLACE WAITS, D. SC., OF KNOX CHURCH, OWEN SOUND.

THE RELIGIOUS LIFE OF GREAT CITIES—MODERN ATHENS; OR, SOME IMPRESSIONS OF RELIGIOUS LIFE IN EDINBURGH.

Paul was a great traveller and doubtless his views of men and things were broadened not a little by what he saw on his travels. He did not visit different places merely to explore their cities, or to observe their customs—mere curiosity to know about such things would never have made a great traveller like Paul; and it is a notable fact that our knowledge of other countries is mainly got from men like him, who visited them because they sought to do the people good. God has said, go and evangelize all nations, and Paul could not rest while there was breath in his nostrils, but wandered from city to city, telling about eternal life to a dark and hopeless world. So it was he became a great traveller, sojourning in many lands, and gathering not a little knowledge and wisdom and courageous breadth of thought. Let us, then, cultivate friendly relations with men of other lands as we have opportunity, noting their virtues rather than their weaknesses, and so help one another.

"To be called upon," says the Rev. W. J. Dawson, "at very short notice to put down your impressions of a country and a people, and of the conditions of religious work among the said people, is clearly not the easiest of tasks." We must now, according to promise, however, give some account of "the Religious life of Edinburgh," the great centre of Presbyterianism. It would be quite out of place here to give a detailed description of this unique city. But we must observe in passing, that there is no capital in the world where nature and art are so grandly blended, each enhancing the charms and characteristics of the other, as Edinburgh. The "Modern Athens" cannot, indeed, compete in historic interest with that classic namesake, where the Acropolis rises from groves of olives and cypresses and the distant gleams of Salamis and the sea compose a landscape unrivalled alike in living beauty and in imperishable memories. Yet, Princes Street, Edinburgh, is perhaps, in many respects, the finest metropolitan thoroughfare in the world. With its neat mixture of modern and ancient periods, its verdant gardens nestling in the city valley, and these three guardian eminences

—the Castle Hill, Calton Hill, and Arthur's Seat—lending their green slopes and gray crags to amplify the picture. In that grand roadway the citizen or the visitor paces between the present and the past. As he comes up under the Calton Hill from Holyrood, full of the recollections of Queen Mary and Rizzio, Old Edinburgh rises upon his left hand, much as John Knox and Bothwell beheld it. There are still the Grass Market, the Canongate, and the Cowgate, with inn-yards and closes and many storeyed tenements replete with traditions of the days of the Tudors, when Scotland was almost more French than British. To wonder among those mediæval ways and lanes is to plunge into the "Edinboro Town" of Sir Walter Scott, whose magical genius re-created the land, and has planted the standard of his fancy upon every league of its soil from the border to the Kyles of Bute and Ben Wyvis. Yet, turn to the right, and there sits a stately and entirely modern metropolis, looking across the green thickets of the Princes Street gardens upon the climbing flats of the High Street, and the battlements and roofs of the Castle are in full view. This is one of the striking contrasts of the beautiful city; the other—which never wearies for those accustomed to the unrelieved brick and masonry of London, Liverpool, Manchester, Birmingham—is the perpetual presence amidst the ancient and modern buildings of those natural eminences which have been kept so wisely unspoiled. The Castle belongs to the Castle Hill—as fitly in its way as the Parthenon to the Acropolis—and seems, indeed, to have grown out on it. On the Calton Hill there are monuments, more or less worthy of that superb site, but, on the whole, harmonizing very well with the city and the surroundings. But Arthur's Seat and the buttresses of Sailbury Crags, with the ridges of the Grey pent lands beyond them, are a veritable "Cantle" of the Highlands built into the Scotch metropolis and embraced by it. So that at the cost of a steep but short climb the Edinburgh citizen may tread the crisp turf of a real brae, and gaze from amid rocks as real as those upon Ben Venue of Scotch hallow upon the extended capital on one hand and the sand-dotted Firth of Forth on the other. But Edinburgh pays cruelly for her high seat in "one of the vilest climates under heaven." The weather is raw and boisterous in winter, shifty and ungenial in summer, and a downright meteorological purgatory in the spring. And yet the place establishes an interest in people's hearts, go where they will, they find no city of the same distinction, go where they will, they take a pride in their old home.

Edinburgh is not only the metropolis of Scotland, but of its religious life. Here the three great branches of the Presbyterian Church are fully represented. Besides the University, there are three Divinity Halls for the Established Church, Free Church, and United Presbyterian Church, respectively. The time was, when one stayed in the city over Sunday, the great attraction was Dr. Chalmers, Dr. Guthrie, Dr. William Arnot, and Dr. William Hanna. And it would seem that there have not been men who could take their places. At least not men who have obtained such world-wide renown. Still there are a number of good preachers in Edinburgh in all the churches. The minister who took McNeill's place when he was called to London is eccentric, and draws great crowds. The Rev. John Robertson's Church has become too strait for the masses who desire to hear him tell in his own way the story of God's love to sinners. In one of his sermons he says, "The love has washed us in the precious blood of Christ—strange effect of love, the washing; strange result of the affection of the Lord. The washing—you, mother, can understand it. Your little son has been out all the summer day. He has had splendid fun, oh, what enjoyment! And he has stayed out till the shadows have fallen, and he is very tired, tired even of amusements. He comes into the house where love is, and what does love do! Oh, he is very sleepy, just let him go to bed. 'Mother, I am awfully sleepy; I am not for any supper; indeed, I am so tired. But love has something to say, love has some action to go through, before the dirty little boy can get between the clean sheets. Love draws out the bath into the middle of the floor, and love puts the towels there, and love puts the soap there and love catches the old of the little fellow's collar, and in spite of grumbling, in spite of the little fellow's bad temper—for he is sleepy, God help him—plunges him into the bath, and love takes him out spluttering, but clean. Do you think that God would have shed the precious blood of his Son had it not been necessary? Was it superfluous? Was it a mere superfluous reddening of the laver? It was necessary, God saw it."

What can wash away my sins?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.
What can make me whole again?
Nothing but the blood of Jesus.

All this is very homely, but very graphic, and takes hold of the hearts of his hearers.

But the two divines who wield the greatest influence in Edinburgh are not seated in congregations at all, but are professors from Glasgow. We refer to Professors Marcus Dods and Henry Drummond. During our stay, the latter delivered an address at a Sabbath morning fellowship meeting in the Free Assembly Hall, which was characterized by marvellous life and power. He said: "The immediate need of the world at this moment is not more of us, but, if I may use the expression, a better brand of us. To secure ten men of an improved type would be better than if we had ten thousand more of the average Christians distributed all over the world. There is such a thing in the evangelistic sense as winning the whole world and losing our own soul." Professor Drummond and D. L. Moody have done more for the reli-